



Victoria Historical Society Publication

SPRING 2008

SPEAKERS FOR THE 2007 ~ 2008 SEASON

All meetings will be at the James Bay New Horizons Centre 234 Menzies Street at 7:30.

February 28, 2008

“Fortune’s a River: the Collision of Empires in the Pacific Northwest” Dr. Barry Gough, author, will give an interpretation of the clash of European empire ambitions off the Northwest Coast of North America in C 18-19.

March 27 “Ripple Rock: Its Discovery and Demise” Michael Layland, historical geographer, has done research on this BC coastal navigational hazard blown from the waters of Johnstone Strait in 1958.

April 24 “A Most Unusual Colony, Vancouver Island 1849 -1860”, Maureen Duffus, author, will speak based on her research. Mary Yates’ fictional letters give an authentic picture of Fort Victoria seen through female eyes. Illustrated

May 22 “Steam in the Mountains”, A people’s viewpoint of the logging history of Vancouver Island. Dr. Richard Mackie, UVic historian, has researched and written on this subject giving the point of view of the loggers who worked in the woods. An illustrated lecture. (The Society’s AGM will precede this talk which will begin at 8:30.)

OUTING TO THE ROYAL BC MUSEUM’S 150TH ANNIVERSARY DISPLAY

Some Friends will know of the special exhibit developed for the 150th Celebration, described in the RBC periodical *Discovery*.

It is titled FREE SPIRITS CELEBRATED. and depicts aspects of the experience of British Columbians over the years 1858-2008. Tim Willis, the curator, says: “This is not just us telling you about the BC story, this is also us asking you about the BC story. It is interactive and dynamic.” The exhibit opens March 13th and continues until January 11, 2009.

We (VHS Council) propose an outing on **SATURDAY APRIL 13, 1:30 - 3:00 PM.** We can meet in the lobby of the RBCM, and go from there, taking as much time as we wish. Afterwards we can have refreshments in the RBC food services. There is no extra charge for this, if you have a RBC Friends of the Museum membership. If you do not, standard rate applies: \$14 or \$9.50 for seniors.

Please let Arnold Ranneris know by April 10 so he can confirm the booking numbers. Arnold’s tel. no. is 598-3035, or email WL545@shaw.ca



SPECIAL EDITION OF THE TIMES-COLONIST

Victoria Historical Assn. members will cherish the Special Edition of the T-C which was published on Jan 2, 2008. This is a multi-section production, in many ways a celebration of our newspaper which has been continuously published (under various names) for 150 years. The sections are titled: People, Early Journalism, Events, How We Lived, Arts and Leisure. Photographs are included throughout. The editor (Dave Obee) and T-C staff are to be commended. In addition to the print copy, it was also made available in PDF format to be downloaded to your computer

If you do not have this issue, it will be available at the Public Library and BC Archives. .

Failing this, contact me and I will try to get you a copy via my daughter Karen who works at the Times Colonist

Arnold Ranneris 598-3035.



UBC'S CENTENARY IN VICTORIA

UBC is celebrating 100 years of achievement in 2008 with a diverse line up of events.

On March 7, 1908 in Victoria, B.C., the University Act was signed to establish and incorporate a university for the province of British Columbia. Join your fellow alumni in Victoria to mark the centenary of this seminal moment in UBC's history.

Friday, March 7, 2008

Hotel Grand Pacific, Vancouver Island Ballroom

463 Belleville Street, Victoria, B.C.

6:00 PM - 8:30 PM

PARKING: \$1/HOUR

*GUESTS WELCOME NO COST
HORS D'OEUVRES CASH BAR*

Are you curious about UBC's history and how it all started 100 years ago? Dr. Patricia Roy, BA'60, PhD'70, Professor Emerita, Department of History at the University of Victoria will deliver an engaging keynote regarding the political and social landscape in B.C. in 1908 that led to the creation of a provincial university.

Use the URL below to read the original 1908 University Act

www.library.ubc.ca/archives/pdfs/misc/universityact1908.pdf

For more information, please contact Caely-Ann McNabb at caely-ann.mcnabb@ubc.ca or at 1-800-883-3088.



BRITISH COLUMBIA HISTORICAL FEDERATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE

NEW WESTMINSTER

WITH A FIELD TRIP TO FORT LANGLEY

MAY 8 - 11, 2008

THURSDAY WORKSHOPS

~ Workshop No. 1 ~

FINANCIAL PLANNING AND REPORTING FOR
NON PROFITS

Speakers Albert Foster, CGA, Harry Peterson, Insurance Broker and Debbie Lucas, Senior Charities Officer, Canada Revenue Agency will review and offer advice on:

- how to convert your organization's goals into a workable budget
- how to monitor your budget and create understandable financial statements
- the merits and how-to's of directors, liability and event insurance for non-profit groups
- charitable tax status and reporting requirements.

~ Workshop No. 2 ~

BRITISH COLUMBIA'S HISTORIC LAND
RECORDS - THE INSIDE STORY

The Land Title and Survey Authority of British Columbia invites you to learn about our historic land records, including the original survey plans for the province. Learn about progress on the inventory and appraisal of the materials. This day includes a behind-scenes walking tour of the New Westminister Land Title Office. Speakers Godfrey Archbold, CEO-Land Title and Survey Authority of B.C. and Archivist Walter Meyer zu Erpen, other LTSA staff, John A. Whittaker, Warren Sommer and Diane Rogers.

The pre-conference workshops will be held Thursday May 8th, 2008 from 8 am thru 4:30 pm at Douglas College located at the corner of Royal Avenue and 8th Street and is two city blocks up the hill from the Inn at Westminister Quay. Parking is available behind Douglas College Centre off Victoria Street.

Register early as space is limited. Early bird registrants eligible for a door prize.

Full Conference Registration includes opening reception two lunches banquet dinner walking tour field trip to Fort Langley. Partial registration available

Registration forms available from:

bchistory.ca/conference/2008/registration form

For a Conference package by mail phone 604-274-4383

Friday May 9th Inn at Westminster Quay

8 am Advocacy session

9 am Speakers on themes related to BC's first capitals, Langley and New Westminster

Royal Engineers re-enactors, Jim Wolf on New Westminster, Charles Hou on Gold Rush and trails

The book fair will be open at 9 am and open to the public at noon

12:00 noon Bus to Fort Langley - box lunch provided. Guided tour of Fort Langley historic site and time to visit other museums in the area or shop in the many interesting stores in the Village and enjoy high tea at St. George's Anglican Church.

7:30 pm (approx) return to New Westminster

The rest of the evening is free.

Saturday May 10th

8:30 am - AGM Douglas College

12 noon - lunch at the Galbraith (a restored Victorian mansion)

1:30 - 3:30 pm Walking Tours

[a] Guided Waterfront Tour - includes the Samson V Maritime Museum, the last of the Fraser River paddlewheelers, info on the new Fraser River Discovery Centre and a walk along the boardwalk [on level ground at leisurely pace].

[b] The Museum of the Royal Westminster Regiment - a level 2 block walk from Galbraith House. Two blocks further the Royal Engineers present a living history display at Irving House

[c] Walking tours of the historic Queens Park neighbourhood. One tour will focus on heritage architecture; another on what used to be and who lived where. These are fairly strenuous tours.

3:30 pm free time

6:00 pm Awards reception, banquet - Inn at Westminster Quay.



ANOTHER BRICK IN THE WALL

Victoria Area Brick Makers 1850 - 1950

Prior to the 1870s when large volume steam brickworks were established in Victoria, bricks were imported as ship's ballast from England. Some early Victoria area buildings were constructed from this source including Fisgard Lighthouse (1860), Temple Emanuel (1863) and Mount Saint Angela (1865). However, the old Windsor Hotel (formerly Victoria Hotel) at the north east corner of Government and Courtney Streets was constructed in 1859 from bricks made locally at Arthur Porter's yard on Saanich Road (now Douglas) at Burnside.

The earliest local brick makers are associated with Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) and its subsidiary Puget's Sound Agricultural Company (PSAC); first at the Fort brickyard located between present day Quadra and Vancouver streets near Humboldt, and from 1853 at Craigflower Farm. These bricks were likely hand moulded and used to build ovens, fireplaces and chimneys for HBC and PSAC facilities. It is estimated that an experienced brick moulder with assistants could make three to five thousand bricks a day. These 'green' bricks were then air dried for a week or two prior to being stacked into their own kilns, fired using wood for fuel and burned under controlled temperatures for two weeks.

Among the pioneer brick makers were brothers Jesse and George Mason, both HBC indentured employees. Surprisingly, neither are commemorated in the Fort Victoria brick project. George came to Victoria from London, England in 1851. Mason was assisted at the HBC brickyard by Robert Porter, brother of the previously mentioned Arthur, who arrived in Victoria from England in 1850. Indentured to HBC for five years, Porter later operated butcher's shops in the city. By 1870, George had opened his own brick making business on Saanich Road at Burnside. This yard turned out 16,000 bricks a day and in mid 1875 had 600,000 bricks on hand. By 1882, this enterprise was operating as Pioneer Steam Brickyard, a

partnership with brother Jesse and contractor John Coughlan, until George Mason's death in 1893.

Early buildings in the downtown core were mainly wooden structures, being cheap and easy to build. The move to brick construction came about in 1886 when the city introduced codes requiring masonry buildings. The spur for this was the frequency of fires and the deteriorating building fabric. The result was substantial upgrading of the city core throughout the late 1880s and 1890s providing a boon to contractors and brick makers. As an example of the change, it is stated that some fifty wood structures were demolished in the town centre in 1893 – 94.

Brick and Tile makers are listed in census returns of 1881, 1891 and 1901 as 10, 41 and 25 respectively. This would suggest that brick making was at its peak before the turn of the century but may also reflect consolidations within the industry. Many of the brick makers were also contractors and competition between them was fierce. In the mid-1880s there were a number of newspaper articles and advertisements claiming that bricks made at the Chinese owned yards and by "non-white" labour were inferior. These complaints were likely made to influence voters in upcoming elections and reflect the racial prejudices of the time.

Maurice Humber arrived in Victoria in the 1860s. Born at Ventnor on the Isle of Wight, he resided in Ontario before moving west. Employed as a bricklayer, he lived on Courtney Street until 1882. About 1880, he started making bricks on property north of Topaz. Both Humber and first son Luke built residences on the north side of Topaz in 1882, adjacent to the brickyard. This yard was to become one of Victoria's largest, reportedly making three million bricks in 1885. Steam powered plant was introduced a year later to replace horse power. Later, Humber acquired property for clay deposits in the Gorge Road/Garbally area; building brick homes here for sons Arthur & William. Of all the Humber homes, only William's residence remains; an important heritage building at 602 Gorge Road East.

The earliest steam powered brick making machines were introduced by contractors John Kinsman & Samuel Styles in 1875 to make bricks for the new penitentiary in New Westminster. These machines could make 26,000 bricks a day and a million were required for the project. Production was thus substantially increased from machines operated by horse power.

Baker Brick and Tile Company founded by brothers John & James Baker in 1891 operated in the main brickyard area, bounded by Douglas Street, Tolmie Avenue, Topaz Park and Topaz Avenue, into the early 1950s. The business was managed by Aaron Parfitt by the late 1930s and operating at 3129 Douglas Street. After the Second World War, the yard was operated by Evans, Coleman & Evans. Interestingly, Baker bricks were the only ones identified by a "frog" or maker's name imprinted in the brick.

Contractors John P. Elford (born Australia 1850) and William J. Smith started making bricks in the late 1880s on property south of Tolmie at Douglas under the name Queen City Brick and Tile Works. The company, later known as Victoria Brick and Tile Company Ltd operated until the early 1930s. Wrigley's 1930 directory gives addresses at 1207 Douglas and 3001 Douglas. A feature of this yard was the 750 foot Victoria and Sidney Railway trestle built in 1894 to continue the railway south from Tolmie. Associated with this enterprise were brothers Samuel and John Jennings (arrived in Canada from UK 1873). The 1899 directory shows them as proprietors at the above address, however census data from 1892 and 1901 shows them variously as employees and brick makers.

Brick making activities on the peninsula included Sidney Island Brick and Tile Company operated by J. Skene and G. Courtney which commenced operations in 1909. Thirty staff were employed turning out 40,000 bricks a day. Lim Bang, a Victoria born businessman acquired forty acres on Bazan bay in 1907 and the Sidney Brick and Tile Company (later Bazan Bay Brick and Tile Company) commenced operations. Bricks from this yard were shipped to the Victoria market by the Victoria and Sidney Railway. The plant was destroyed by fire in 1915 but continued on under different ownership and was listed in directories until the 1950's.

Brick making was clearly an important part of Victoria's economy. The brickyards supplied coastal areas as far north as Prince Rupert, as well as the Lower Mainland and Port Townsend. Seattle became an important client after the fire of 1889. Bricks were moved by scow from locations on the Gorge waterway. By 1900, the cost of bricks had risen \$2 to \$7 a thousand due to high demand. Brickyard owners were prominent business men and many became Aldermen, including James Baker, Coughlan, Kinsman, Styles and Elford.

Others engaged in brick making over the years include plasterer Madison Bailey on Dallas Road

(1876), American brothers Christopher & Thomas Kempster who had the contract for the original dry-dock and whose yard may have adjoined Humber's, W. & R.T. Williams with clay deposits on the Gorge and merchant Samuel Grey (1891). B.C. Pottery and Terra Cotta Works operated on Constance Cove at the turn of the 20th century and Silica Brick and Lime Company was located in Colwood (1912). There was also a brickyard on the Millstream at Parson's Bridge in the mid 1880s.

By the 1950s, only Baker Brothers and Bazan Bay were still listed in directories. By then bricks were manufactured in large volume yards in the Fraser Valley. Victoria's brick makers are remembered now in street names; Redbrick Road, Elford Street, Mason Street and Humber Green. Ross Bay is the final resting place of Maurice and Luke Humber, George Mason, John Elford, Robert Porter, John Kinsman, Samuel Styles and James Baker.

Cliff Chandler.



~ BOOK REVIEWS ~

SOUTH PARK SCHOOL: MEMORIES THROUGH THE DECADES

Debbie Marchand and Linda Picciotto

Since both Eric and I had taught at South Park School, we were pleased to know that an account of its history had been recently published. The attractively bound, well-illustrated, not-so-slim volume should be of considerable interest for readers with a taste for local history

Opened in 1894, and contemporary with Francis Rattenbury's design and construction of the Parliament Buildings, South Park School was built to educate ever-increasing numbers of students in the southern section of Victoria which was rapidly developing. It can claim to be "the oldest school that has been in continuous use in Western Canada." The school archives, plus numerous interviews and donations of photographs and memoirs from former and current students, families and staff, form the core of diligent and scholarly research on the part of the authors.

Yet this is no dry historical tome; rather, it is a highly readable, sometimes humorous account of a special community in which several generations of local residents have clearly taken pride. Often, notable names are evident such as Carr family students, teacher H. B. MacLean (later to develop

the MacLean's Method of Writing used in B. C. well into the twentieth century), or A. A. Campbell, the longest serving Principal and great-grandfather of Alex Campbell, founder of Thrifty Foods.

The book's content is conveniently arranged in chapters featuring roughly a decade, and each chapter is put into historical context with a Facts and Events section for Victoria, B.C., and Canada. At \$25 per copy, including tax, South Park School: Memories Through the Decades is an affordable treasure which I have no hesitation in recommending.

June Domke.



TO FEEL THE SPIRIT OF OUR 150TH THE TRAIL OF 1858; BRITISH COLUMBIA'S GOLD RUSH PAST

Mark Forsythe and Greg Dickson

Harbour Publishing, 2008, \$26.95

This is a most interesting and enjoyable book, a sort of almanac of events and people who participated in this early period of British Columbia's history. The authors are associated with CBC Radio's *BC Almanac*, and have used a journalistic style to give a good sense of the many events that took place in those early years. It includes many photos, stories and excerpts from the *British Colonist*, maps, and diary & letter reproductions. Dave Obee, an editor of the Times-Colonist, writes: "At times the book is like a gazetteer, describing how the communities along the gold rush trail were given their names. By putting their emphasis on the years when British Columbia was a colony, Forsythe and Dickson have given their book a tight focus."

The book is also available at branches of the Greater Victoria Public Library.

Arnold Ranneris



FORTHCOMING TOURS OFFERED BY THE OLD CEMETERIES SOCIETY

Except where noted*, meet in front of Starbucks Coffee, Fairfield Plaza, 1516 Fairfield Rd. \$5 - no reservations needed. Phone 598-8870 for more info.

February 17, 2pm - Ross Bay Cemetery. Heritage Week. A team representing many of Victoria's pioneer firms offers a special tour on this year's Heritage Week theme: Taking Care of Business.

February 24, 2pm - Ross Bay Cemetery. Black History. In the 1850s and 1860s Victoria was a haven for blacks escaping racism in California. Interesting new stories this year identify many of those at RBC.

* March 2, 2pm - First Memorial. Find out about one of the city's funeral providers and tour their modern facility and beautiful Garden of Memories. Meet at First Memorial, 4725 Falaise Drive.

March 9, 2pm - Ross Bay Cemetery. Pioneer BC Educators. Historian Dr. Patrick Dunae discusses teachers, administrators and innovators from colonial days to the early 1900s in this interesting new tour

* March 16, 2pm. St. Luke's Church and Churchyard. Tour the historic Anglican church and explore the quaint churchyard with Bill Magee who will include many of Gordon Head's early families. Meet in the church parking lot, corner of Cedar Hill Road at Cedar Hill Cross Road.

COUNCIL OFFICERS 2007 — 2008

Russ Fuller	President
Ron Greene	Vice President
Michael Layland	Past President
Eric Domke	Treasurer/Membership
Arnold Ranneris	Program
Michael Harrison	Newsletter
Michael Halleran	Secretary

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Anne Moon	Publicity
Mary Doody-Jones	Reception

VOLUNTEER ASSOCIATES

Carolyn Webber	Webmaster
June Domke	Refreshments
Shirley Cuthbertson	Archives
Ruth Ralston	Care & Concern

March 23, 2pm. Ross Bay Cemetery. Poetry Hath Charms. Writing poetry was popular in the 1800s and this tour features a collection of sentimental, corny, humourous and even good poems written by people now buried at RBC.

March 30, 2pm. Ross Bay Cemetery. BC 150 Pioneers. The first of two different tours presented by OCS's Research Committee which has been hard at work to find fascinating tales about nineteenth-century characters from BC's epic year, 1858.

* April 6, 2pm. Chinese Cemetery. In honour of Ching Ming (grave sweeping day), Charlayne Thornton-Joe leads a tour of this National Historic Site, including her grandfather's grave. Meet at the cemetery, foot of Crescent Road, off King George Terrace.

April 13, 2pm. Royal Engineers. Members of the Royal Engineers Living History Group in full regalia and other volunteers conduct this first-time tour to graves of many engineers who helped build roads and cities of gold-rush BC

April 20, 2pm. Ross Bay Cemetery. Awake and Dreaming is the name of Kit Pearson's award-winning juvenile fiction novel that features a ghost at RBC. The author leads this popular tour and reads excerpts on the graves that inspired her writing.



THE VICTORIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Victoria Historical Society holds its meetings on the fourth Thursday of each month from September to May, at the James Bay New Horizons Centre, 234 Menzies Street, Victoria.

Meetings begin at 7:30 and comprise a short business meeting and a refreshment break followed by a talk or presentation by a guest speaker.

Visitors are always welcome and encouraged to become members of our Society.

This newsletter is published four times a year and distributed to members electronically or by mail. It is also available on our web site and at our regular meetings at the door.

Visit our website at:

www.victoriahistoricalsociety.bc.ca