



# Victoria Historical Society Publication

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## SPEAKERS FOR THE 2008 ~ 2009 SEASON

All meetings begin at 7:30 at the James Bay New Horizons Centre, 234 Menzies Street except the December one

### 4 December

*Christmas Dinner and Seasonal Celebration* at Gorge Vale Golf Clubhouse, 6:00 pm. The evening will include a musical and story presentation on aspects of British Columbia's history, by Kelt Eccleston, local actor and performer at Royal BC Museum's 150th Exhibit. Cost of the dinner is \$28 and this will be collected later in the autumn.

### 22 January 2009

*H. R. Macmillan, the Man Who Gave Away*. The Rev. Robert MacRae will tell about the man who made millions in the forest industry and proceeded to give a lot of it away to BC institutions and causes.

### 26 February 2009

*Here Before Christ: The Hudson's Bay Company in BC*. Richard Mackie has done extensive research on the company that in many ways founded and developed the early British colonies.

### 26 March 2009

*The Trail of 1858*. Greg Dickson will give a visual talk on the events of 1858 around the goldfields — the subject of a recent book by Greg and Mark Forsythe.

### 23 April 2009

*Victoria's Industrial Harbour*. Bob Spearing, local historian of our maritime history, will describe the evolution of the harbour.

### 28 May 2009

*Making the News: A Times-Colonist Look at 150 Years of History*. Dave Obee, Editorial Page editor of the Times-Colonist, will speak and illustrate aspects of this history as seen by journalists.



## ~ BOOK REVIEWS ~

### VICTORIA UNDERFOOT

Victoria Underfoot is a collection of essays on the archaeology and history of southern Vancouver Island, designed to be highly accessible to the layperson. Eleven different authors include college and university archaeology and anthropology teachers, Parks Canada, the Royal BC Museum, consultants and historians. Profusely illustrated and beautifully printed with dozens of colour pictures and a variety of archival photos, the book tells the story of some two thousand years of local history. Writers explain how artifacts tell stories of the past, and describe hundreds of different finds from stone mauls to Victorian wine bottles.

Of particular interest to readers of the Historical Society newsletter will be John Adams' articles on the Old Burying Ground and the use of ground-penetrating radar. But there's much else — from D'Arcy Island lepers to Rodd Hill, from the Royal Jubilee Hospital garbage dump to the Ross Bay Villa.

*Victoria Underfoot: Excavating a City's Secrets*. Edited by Brenda Clark, Nicole Kilburn & Nick Russell. Harbour Publishing, October 2008. 144 pages. \$24.95 at good bookstores.

Nick Russell

## ~VOICES FROM THE SOUND ~

Following the success of her recent book, *Cougar Annie's Garden*, (Salal Books, 1999) Margaret Horsefield is again tackling the oral history of central west coast of Vancouver Island.

Taking as her starting point a serendipitous meeting with Leona Taylor who pointed her towards the Dawley Papers collection at BCARS, she uses this rich and varied source as a springboard to introduce to us the varied and sometimes peculiar characters of Clayoquot sound and environs during the first third of the twentieth century.

Walter Dawley was a merchant based in the Clayoquot Sound area, and throughout his life he maintained a copious correspondence with companies and individuals far and wide. Although much of his outgoing correspondence does not appear to have survived, he was a meticulous collector and collator of his incoming correspondence. Whether through a sense of history or from an instinct for completeness and order in his business affairs we may never know, but we must surely be thankful for his diligence, and to that of Margaret Horsefield for her realisation that this material would provide a fertile source of material for a fascinating book. We are given a delightful picture of an area in transition from an isolated outpost with few non-native inhabitants to a flourishing village, populated, then as now, with a rich tapestry of individuals - individual as to both lifestyle and psyche.

Leavening these eccentrics are the diligent priests and nuns whose singular devotion to what they perceived as their duty towards the indigenous population resulted in the founding of educational institutions in this remote area, for which many have cause to be grateful. The diaries of father Charles Moser are among the many additional resources used by the author.

To read this book is much like renovating an old house, the more you open it up the more surprises you find. Because of Dawley's unique position he was more than simply a storekeeper. In addition to requests for supplies he was often consulted on matters such as the best way to skin a deer and prepare its hide, to seek and dispatch workers to logging camps and to be in fact a general factotum for the district.

We are introduced to his often petulant employee, Frederick Thornberg, whose admonitions to his employer, and his eccentricities which later developed into dementia, make fascinating reading.

We learn of the enigmatic Fred Tibbs who, in addition to building his so-called castle, topped a spruce tree at 100 feet and constructed thereon a platform, accessed by an enclosed ladder, from which he serenaded the local population with his cornet.

In addition, the book is enlivened and decorated with photographs of the many individuals whose stories we read, copies of decorative letter-heads and invoices, and delightful sketches by Briony Penn, all of which help us to grasp the aura of a past era.

This hard-cover book is beautifully designed and produced, with clear type on rich cream paper. With the Christmas season approaching, this would be an ideal gift not only to friends and relatives but also to the most important person on your list — you!

*Voices from the Sound.* Margaret Horsefield. Salal Press, Nanaimo. September, 2008. \$45.00

*Mike Harrison*

In anticipation of its 100th Anniversary in 2009, the British Columbia Women's Institute has produced a commemorative history: *100 Years of the BC Women's Institutes 1909-2009* Info from: Jean Johnson at: [granby@sunshinecable.com](mailto:granby@sunshinecable.com)



## A LITTLE 1950'S NOSTALGIA AND A CHRISTMAS ANECDOTE

Those of you who have lived in Victoria for some years will remember that before the opening of the Mayfair Mall, Woodward's had their store on the corner of Courtenay and Douglas streets.

Behind their store, facing Courtenay Street, was a large storage garage — the Empress garage — (No relation to the Empress Hotel)

The Empress Garage, operated by the Hughes brothers, was formerly used as the old Coach Lines Garage, being right across the street from the Coach Lines Bus Depot. (Now a multi-storey car park) The Empress Garage extended back right over the government liquor store on Humboldt. It was primarily a parking garage, but it also included gas pumps inside the building and did lube jobs and car washing as well. Probably most of the customers were from businesses in town and parked there on a regular basis. They also looked after the trucks for Woodward's who at that time had their own trucks,

mostly smaller, but with one large van. The back portion of the garage was used for storing new cars for J.M. Wood Motors.

In 1952 I worked Saturdays at the Empress Garage, parking cars, pumping gas and greasing cars and some trucks. This later developed into a summer job for me before heading over to UBC the following September.

Woodward's also had a "Santa's Sleigh" — a float-like vehicle which had Santa's reindeer and carried Santa around town during few days before Christmas season. (These were the days when Christmas began in December, not, as nowadays in October. Ed.)

Two or three years later, after spending a couple of Christmas holidays helping to deliver the mail, I obtained a part-time Christmas job at Woodward's assisting in their shipping department. They knew I was familiar with their trucks because Courtney Haddock, the manager of Woodward's, always parked his car in the Empress Garage. I believe the understanding at the time I got this job was that if there was anything that had to be delivered in a hurry, I could handle it.

Santa's Sleigh used to be stored in the old Staneland Paint Co. warehouse on the corner of Shakespeare Street and Bay Street. This had become Woodward's warehouse.

One night very close to Christmas someone came into the shipping department and said "Santa's Sleigh had to go back to the warehouse. Have Brian take the sedan delivery and act as its lights." So off I went in the nice little 1952 Chev. Sedan Delivery to escort the sleigh back to the warehouse.

The only problem was that they either didn't tell the driver or he got away so fast I didn't have a chance to get in front of him to be his headlights. As I quickly pursued the route I thought he would take, I got as far as Blanshard and Yates Streets where a policeman was directing traffic. As I slowly passed him I stuck my head out of the window and said "Pardon me, have you seen Santa's Sleigh go by?" The only thing that saved him from thinking I was a smart Alec is that it said 'Woodward's' on the side of the truck and he would know what I meant. Needless to say the sleigh got there before me!

*Brian Bassett*

## CFUW VICTORIA IS 100 YEARS OLD!

### *University Women's Clubs Helped with The Founding of The University of British Columbia*

University Women's Clubs originated in Canada and the United States at the turn of the last century and were an effort of female university graduates - thin in numbers in that era - to come together for purposeful undertakings. Formerly known by its founding name, the University Women's Club of Victoria, the Club was, in 1908, the third of its kind to be formed in Canada (after Toronto and Vancouver) and was a founding member of the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) in 1919. Just this year, at its Annual General Meeting in May, the Club voted to change its name to CFUW Victoria to conform with the standard practice of CFUW Clubs.

In the summer of 1908 sixteen women met together and organised the University Women's Club of Victoria. Their action was the outcome of a visit to the city of Mrs. J.W. deB Farris (Evlyn), the enthusiastic President of the University Women's Club of Vancouver, which had been founded one year earlier. The first President of Victoria's Club (1908-1911) was Mrs. H.E. Young (Rosalind). Although their husbands were on opposite sides of the political spectrum in BC the two women and the Clubs they had founded worked together to advance women's issues and the cause of higher education. The sixteen charter members of the University Women's Club of Victoria had received their degrees from 10 universities in Canada and the US, and one, Dr. Helen E.R. Ryan, had received her medical degree from Queen's University in 1885! These women were truly pioneers in higher education and perceived its value.

On November 15, 1912 the Executive of the University Women's Club of Victoria passed a motion that the Club support a Victoria female student going to the provincial university (UBC) with a bursary. The Club was only four years old and was the first group to take such action. A letter from the Minister of Education (Hon. H.E. Young), to the Secretary of the Club, dated January 15, 1913, states,

The Government feel very gratified indeed to know that the University Women's Club of Victoria should be the first in British Columbia to recognize the obligation of the public to the university; and we hope that your example will be followed by other bodies, and by many of our monied men.

In 1908, an Act establishing the University of British Columbia had been passed. In 1909, Vancouver was chosen over Victoria as the site for this institution. In 1912 a convocation was held in which members of Senate were chosen. The 1908 University Act had given any university graduate who had resided in the province for two years, the right to be registered as a member of the convocation. It was the University Women's Club of Victoria which provided refreshments to visiting graduates that congregated at South Park School. Both University Women's Clubs worked hard to get their members to register and vote and furthermore to nominate women for the Senate. They decided it would be best to have one nominee in Vancouver and one in Victoria. Evlyn Farris was the nominee for Vancouver and Mrs. A.T. Watt (Madge), President of the Victoria Club, the nominee for Victoria. Both women were elected to Senate. The University, however, did not open its doors to students until September 1915. Of course, both Vancouver and Victoria had colleges affiliated with McGill University from 1899 and 1903 respectively through Vancouver High School and Victoria High School, and in 1906, the McGill University College of BC had been established in Vancouver.

Rosalind Young was the wife of the then Minister of Education, Dr. Henry Esson Young. Evlyn Farris was the wife of John Wallace deBecque Farris who became Attorney General in the Brewster and Oliver governments. During that time, Evlyn moved to Victoria and became the eighth President of the University Women's Club of Victoria. (1920-1922). Both women were eventual recipients of Honorary Doctorates from the University of British Columbia – Evlyn in 1942, and Rosalind in 1961 - in recognition of the work each had accomplished on behalf of higher education in the province. Seven of the 16 charter members eventually served as President of the Club. Miss Jeanette Cann served twice (1912-14, and 1928-29). Many early members of the Club were luminaries on the local scene.

Madge Watt, the second President had moved to the Victoria area with her husband Alfred Watt who became Medical Officer at the Quarantine Station at William Head. Although living 20 miles out of town, that did not prevent Mrs. Watt from becoming active in the Victoria Club. She was also active in the Metchosin Women's Institute. In 1913, after the death of her husband, she moved to England with her two sons. There, she organized the first Women's Institutes in Britain and had a dream of a world-wide association of all the country-women in the world and this was realized with the founding of the Association of Country Women of the World in

Stockholm in 1933. Mrs. Watt was President until 1947 when she stepped down at the age of 79 years.

The Club appointed Honorary Members from time to time and these have included: Dr. Alice Ravenhill (elected 1911), Margaret Jenkins (elected 1913), Mrs. J. Durand (elected 1924), Audrey Alexandra Brown (elected 1932), Margaret Clay (elected 1935), Emily Carr (elected 1937), Nancy Hodges (elected 1944), and Elizabeth Forbes (elected 1968). Currently the Club has eight members who have been continuous members of the Club for over 50 years. Many individual members are also members of the Victoria Historical Society.

During the past century the Club has espoused many causes and enjoyed many celebrations. The following item may be of interest to Historical Society members:

The most unusual money-making scheme ever undertaken by the Club was in 1926 when it chartered the S.S. "Princess Mary" for an excursion to San Juan Island. This included a tour of points of historical interest on the island, a barbecue supper at Roche Harbour, and an address by the president of the Victoria Branch of the B. C. Historical Association.

Another early example of the Victoria Club's initiative in supporting higher education came in 1946. Hearing that Dr. Norman MacKenzie, President of the University of British Columbia, would be in Victoria in November, the Club approached Lieutenant-Governor and Mrs. Woodward, suggesting that they should invite a group of interested persons to Government House to discuss the International Exchange of University Students. The Club representatives explained that they felt it would be particularly appropriate to have graduate students from Chinese Universities attend UBC. His Honour and Mrs. Woodward acted upon the suggestion and the reception was held at Government House. Guests included Dr. Norman MacKenzie and other prominent education officials, representative Victoria Chinese citizens and members of the University Women's Club. Dr. MacKenzie expressed himself completely in favour of the plan for the exchange of students but felt that it should not be limited to one province but applied to the whole country. He urged the University Women's Club of Victoria to press the matter through the Canadian Federation of University Women and promised to discuss the scheme with the Senate of the University of British Columbia. Two weeks later he wrote to the Club that the

Senate had granted four scholarships to graduates of foreign countries, two in China and two in Chile.

### *The Victoria Club Today and its Awards Program*

The Club has 270 members of all ages from over 90 universities worldwide who are divided into 14 neighbourhood groups and 40 interest groups so they may get to know each other more easily. Members believe in the empowerment of women and ultimately their children through education. As has been illustrated, the Club's Founding Mothers recognized the importance of this as early as 1912. That first award of \$50.00 was eventually given in 1917 to Miss Patricia Hamilton-Smith who became a well-known Victoria high school teacher and the Club's 21st President. The Club's second award was established on the occasion of its 50th Anniversary and was named in honour of its founding president – Rosalind Watson Young. Other Club members for whom awards are named include: renowned artist and printmaker Pat Martin Bates; pioneer public health nurse Esther Gardom (nee Naden) who attended Alice Carr's school in Victoria in 1906 and the following year attended a tent school in Prince Rupert and subsequently enrolled in the first nursing degree program at UBC; Katharine Youdall who taught at Oak Bay High School and became Head of the French Department there and was also involved in school and community drama initiatives; and Joy Russell who was for many years a teacher at St. Margaret's School. Esther and Katharine were both winners of the Club scholarship in 1919 and 1932 respectively.

This year (2008) there are 22 awards totaling \$23,000 being given to three post-secondary institutions in the Greater Victoria area – the University of Victoria, Camosun College and Royal Roads University. This is the largest annual award program of any Club within CFUW. The University Women's Club of Victoria was nominated for, and received, the Outstanding Philanthropic Service Club Award in the Vancouver Island Division on National Philanthropy Day, November, 2007.

The Club's motto is: *Altissima Spectamus* – “We reach for the highest” and this is reflected in not only 100 years of effort but also in our Centennial plans for the period 1 May, 2008 to 30 April, 2009. Goals for the Centennial include offering a variety of Special Events for members and the Victoria community, and completing the \$100,000 Centennial incentive to make all of the Club's awards fully endowed.

### *CFUW Today*

The Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) is a voluntary, non-profit, self-funded, bilingual organization of close to 10,000 women university graduates in 122 Clubs across Canada. CFUW members are active in public affairs, working to raise the social, economic and legal status of women, as well as to improve education, the environment, peace, justice and human rights, and health. CFUW is one of the 78 member affiliates of the International Federation of University Women (IFUW) also founded in 1919. Club members take an active interest in their provincial and national organizations, have served on the Provincial and National Executives and attended Regional, Provincial, National and International meetings.

Club members across Canada work on issues of current concern through the annual CFUW Resolutions process. In the last two years the Victoria Club has successfully researched and presented Resolutions that have been accepted at the national and international levels. CFUW follows through on national resolutions with the Canadian government and because CFUW is non-partisan it has developed a reputation for reasoned research and is a respected voice in Ottawa. Locally, the Club was a sponsor of a Forum on Homelessness in 2007 and sponsored a Federal Candidates' Meeting in September 2008.

For further information contact:  
Club President: Paddy McGowan  
smcgowan@pacificcoast.net  
Website: <http://www.cfuw.org>  
*Audrey Thomas*

Audrey M. Thomas, is a Past President of the Club and a member of the Victoria Historical Society.



We note the recent death on 22 September, 2008, of long-time member Edith Mary Helmcken. Edith was born in Victoria in 1925, and was a g.g.granddaughter of Sir James and Lady Douglas. She was predeceased by her parents Edith and Ainslie Helmcken. Throughout her life she held a strong interest in the history of the province her ancestor brought into being, and of the city of her birth. She was an enthusiastic member of our Society, but in recent years her declining health had curtailed her active participation; she is remembered with affection.

