



Victoria Historical Society Publication

All meetings, except December, begin at 7:30, and are held at the James Bay New Horizons Centre.

23 September, 2010

Those Amazing Kondike Sternwheelers. Robert D. Turner, noted transportation historian will explore the iconic sternwheelers that plied the waterways of the Yukon. He has a book with this title, and has made a recent trip to the Yukon for new research.

28 October, 2010

Echoes of Distant Wars. John Azar has detailed a knowledge of military history, based on personal study and work as an assistant curator of war art at the Canadian War Museum. He will give a presentation on how “far-off wars” impacted Victoria/Esquimalt variously.

25 November, 2010

Royal Canadian Navy Centennial. This year, 2010 we will mark the 100th anniversary of the RCN. Dave Obee, journalist at the Times Colonist, and keen local historian, will give some news stories. Adm. Bill Hughes, ret. will speak of some of his experiences and perspectives.

02 December, 2010 6:00 for 6:30.

Christmas Dinner meeting at the UVic University Club. John Adams will introduce us to his friend *Dr. John Sebastian Helmcken*. Dinner and admission arrangements will be made later this fall.

VHS SCHOLARSHIP

Ron Greene, President of the Victoria Historical Society is pleased to announce that a scholarship has been awarded to University of Victoria Graduate student Amy Mattewson.

The scholarship is awarded to a graduate student studying Canadian history, preferably B.C. History. Selection is made by the University of Victoria Graduate Admissions and Awards Committee upon the recommendation of the Department of History.



ROBERT SWANSON

For those members who have taken the opportunity to attend the *Tall Timber* musical revue at the RBCM, the following information from *Wikipedia* will be of interest.

Robert Swanson (1905-1994) was a Canadian researcher and developer, and is credited with the invention of the first five and six-chime air horns for use on locomotives. Swanson had worked as the chief engineer of a company called Victoria Lumber Manufacturing in the 1920s, when he developed a hobby for making steam whistles for locomotives. Eventually, Swanson designed and built a large steam

whistle for the mill where he worked. He also built a set of whistles that were on the old BC Hydro building that played the first four chords of "O Canada" at noon every day.

Later, Swanson, the son of Alfred Swanson, worked as the chief inspector of railroads for the Province of British Columbia. It was here he met his future partner, Don Challenger, who operated a logging company. The two knew each other through the logging industry, which relied heavily on rail transportation at the time.

Swanson published four books, including *Whistle Punks* and *Widow Makers*. He supplemented his university education selling books called *Rhymes of a Western Logger* that he sold from a wheelbarrow that he pushed down Granville Street.

Swanson was the driving force behind the restoration of the Royal Hudson, supported by the New Democratic Party and Dave Barrett. However, Grace McCarthy attempted to take credit for the idea.

Swanson was a qualified locomotive engineer, stationary engineer, professional mechanical engineer as well as chief inspector for the BC provincial department of railways. As chief inspector, he wrote the provincial "Boiler Code" in 1948, and he required that all locomotives running on British Columbia provincially-regulated railways be equipped with a five-note whistle, rather than the three-note whistle requirement for federally regulated railway locomotives.

Before his death he was an active member of the Ladysmith Railway Society. Many artifacts this society acquired were the direct result of his enthusiasm. Vancouver Island, and in particular Nanaimo and Ladysmith were his particular areas of activity. His whistle test station was on Nanaimo Lakes Road where he serenaded neighbours for miles around.

RECENT BOOKS

William Robert Broughton's Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific 1795-1798.

Andrew David (Editor)

Hardcover: 340 pages

Ashgate Pub Co (Aug 15 2010)

ISBN-10: 0904180972

ISBN-13: 978-0904180978

Edited and richly annotated by Lt Cdr Andrew David, this volume offers for the first time a complete transcript of the handwritten log kept by William Broughton on his voyage to the North Pacific (1795-98), together with supplementary letters and the journal of Broughton's journey across Mexico. An extensive introduction by Professor Barry Gough places the voyage in its historical context. Broughton had first visited the North Pacific in 1792 in command of the brig *Chatham* during Vancouver's voyage. When negotiations between Vancouver and Juan Francisco Bodega y Quadra reached an impasse, Broughton was sent back to London to seek fresh instructions, travelling across Mexico and returning to Europe in Spanish ships. Back in London in July 1793 he was appointed in command of the sloop *Providence* with orders to rejoin Vancouver in the Pacific, taking with him the astronomer John Crosley. The outbreak of war with France delayed Broughton's departure until February 1795, with the result that, on reaching Hawaii, he learned that Vancouver had already sailed for England. After consulting with his officers, Broughton decided to cross the North Pacific and complete the surveys left unfinished by Cook's third voyage and to enable Crosley to make astronomical observations. Accordingly, Broughton made for the north coast of Honshu and proceeded to examine the southernmost of the Kurile Islands before making for Macau, examining the coasts of the Japanese Islands on the way. In Macau Broughton purchased a schooner before continuing

his survey. Sadly the *Providence* was wrecked on an uncharted reef off the Ryukyu Islands, the crew being rescued by the schooner. Broughton returned to Macau, resumed his survey in the schooner, and in her reached the head of the Gulf of Tartary and examined part of the south coast of Korea. He ended his voyage in Macau in November 1797.

Historical Dreadnoughts Marder and Roskill: Writing and Fighting Naval History.

Barry Gough.

Hardback 320 pages

Seaforth Books (5 July 2010)

ISBN: 9781848320772

This is the story of the remarkable, intersecting careers of the two greatest writers on British naval history in the twentieth century – the American professor Arthur Marder, son of immigrant Russian Jews, and Captain Stephen Roskill, who knew the Royal Navy from the inside. Between them, these contrasting characters were to peel back the lid of historical secrecy that surrounded the maritime aspects of the two world wars, based on the privileged access to official papers they both achieved through different channels.

Initially their mutual interests led to a degree of friendly rivalry, but this was to deteriorate into a stormy academic feud fought out in newspaper columns and the footnotes of their books – much to the bemusement (and sometimes amusement) of the naval history community. Out of it, surprisingly, emerged some of the best historical writing on naval themes, and a central contribution of this book is to reveal the process by which the two historians produced their literary masterpieces.

Anyone who has read Marder's *From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow* or Roskill's *The War at Sea* – and they were both bestsellers in their day – will be entertained and enlightened by this story of the men A J P Taylor called 'our historical dreadnoughts'.

Built by Luney Bros. Nancy J. Hughes
Wildflower Publishing \$30

Available from local bookstores or directly from the publisher at
Wildflower Publishing House
4378 Wildflower Lane, Victoria, B. C.
Canada V8X 5 H1

Architects are historically remembered. The people and construction companies who built Victoria's buildings have been historically forgotten or, at the least, overlooked. *Built by Luney Bros. Ltd.* is the first book written that recognizes the hard-working risk-takers who made a significant contribution to the building and growth of the City of Victoria from 1885 – 1962. The book contains never-before-seen photos and gives new and different information on many of Victoria's old and historical buildings. The book focuses on over eight decades and five generations of the Luney family. Their contributions to Victoria's streetscape were unparalleled.

The author is the granddaughter of Walter Luney. She grew up in Victoria and attended St. Ann's Academy and Oak Bay High School. Her purpose in writing and publishing this book was to record the part her grandfather's business played in the development and growth of the City of Victoria, British Columbia.



NOT ALL GRIMM IN THE BUGGY BUSINESS

*A survey of Carriage Manufacture in
Victoria*

Carriage manufacturing in Victoria evolved out of horseshoeing and blacksmithing. Some wagons and carts were likely locally made in the early days but travel beyond the fort, due to lack of passable roads, was generally on horseback. As the need for passenger vehicles arose, carriages and carriage supplies started to be imported from San Francisco

(Waterhouse & Lester Company among others) and from manufacturers in Eastern Canada (including W. J. Thompson, London, Ontario).

While a buggy usually denotes a horse drawn vehicle for transportation of one or two passengers, carriages, which included hacks, gladstones, landaus, phaetons and victorias, were designed for conveying multiple passengers in varying degrees of comfort. However, the carriage building industry also included the manufacture of dog carts, wagons, carts, drays, sleds, agricultural implements and specialty vehicles for municipal use. The businesses were often family affairs with sons working with fathers and uncles. Groups of skilled craftsmen such as blacksmiths, trimmers (upholsterers), painters and wheelwrights often worked together in partnerships or more informal arrangements. The 1881 Victoria census identifies 12 carriage makers and 61 blacksmiths. By 1891, these numbers had increased to 32 and 162 respectively.

One of the pioneer carriage manufacturers was Simeon Duck who arrived in Victoria in 1859 (died 1905). In 1877 he sold his business to employee William Grimm, a German native, to spend more time with his political interests. The business was located at the corner of Government & Pandora Streets. In 1880, Grimm moved the business to premises at the north west corner of Johnson & Douglas Streets. The various wooden structures grew to cover 1/3rd of an acre after acquiring G. Tomkins carriage business in 1885. A "sociable phaeton was built for his honour the Lieutenant Governor (Cornwall) by Mr. Grimm. ... how strange that people will send abroad for their vehicles when they may have better ones built at home." The Daily Colonist also noted in May 1884 the first local manufacture of a landau hack carriage by Grimm's for a Mr. Minekler. Moving again in 1890, the firm then leased

731 Johnson Street, an attractive brick building now known as Maynard Court.

The firm continued to have success and was a frequent exhibitor and prize winner at the fall B.C. Agricultural Exhibition. William Grimm & Sons clients ranged from Lady Douglas to prominent local businesses and tradesmen. The firm moved in 1895 to 553 Herald Street, the former premises of another carriage builder, J. Fisher. The last location at 650 Pembroke was from 1909 until the business ceased operations in 1931, by which time it had moved into the Auto Body business. It is of interest to note that a forge is still active in the Pembroke building to this day.

Most of Victoria's carriage building was concentrated in the Government/Douglas north of Johnson corridor. An exception was the carriage factory of the Victoria Transfer Company located at the south-east corner of Broughton & Gordon Streets. In 1887, the partnership of P.W. Dempster & J.F. Beek took over the business. A brick building was erected on the site two years later for F. J. Barnard and leased to the partnership. Dempster, from Ontario of Scottish stock, dissolved the partnership in 1894 and moved to the former William Grimm location on Johnson between Broad & Douglas. Active in Masonic orders, Dempster relocated in 1909 to 658 Pembroke (extant), later moving to Dupplin Rd. After the demise of carriage building, Dempster entered the automobile repair business with his son John, operating as Dempster's Tourist Garage on Blanshard Street.

The Broughton and Gordon business was bought by T. M. Brayshaw, an Englishman who learned the carriage trade in New Zealand. He was successful with municipal contracts, possibly due to his active role in local politics and the masons.

Other carriage builders were Charles Ball, active in the 1870's, William Powell's Ontario Wagon & Carriage Shop on

Johnson Street in the late 1880's and early 1890's and the Ledingham Brothers; George, William & Robert, active from about 1889 through the end of the first World War. Robert was in partnership with E. J. Christie in the early 1900's, the business being located on Cormorant between Douglas & Blanshard. The Christie residence on Fort Street is now Christie's Carriage House Pub. Later, Robert sold the horse-shoeing part of the business to John McKay on Johnson Street and began to install rubber tires on carriages and acted as agent for Baynes Carriages of Hamilton, Ontario. James Millar, a native of Scotland who arrived in Victoria from Ontario, was active in masonic circles and a notable singer. His general blacksmithing and wagon business (active 1878 to 1884) was located at the corner of Government & Pandora. His specialty was agricultural implements and he had some success at fall fairs.

William Mable, a blacksmith with Gerow & Robertson on Yates Street, went into business in 1885 with G. Giles, trimmer and J. Beek, painter. Their premises, in wooden buildings on Johnson Street between Douglas & Blanshard were replaced by a brick structure in 1908. The building is extant and the company's advertising may still be seen at the top of the east wall. Mable, originally from Ontario, was active in masonic and political circles. He was elected Alderman in the early 1900's. The company built a number of notable carriages, including one for the Dominion Hotel in 1901, claimed to be the largest hotel bus on the Pacific coast and a Police Patrol wagon in 1904. By 1909, Mable was agent for MacLaughlin buggies manufactured in Ontario. There were newspaper reports about this time concerning the difficulty of local carriage manufacturing due the dearth of skilled workers.

John Meston, also a Scot, arrived in Victoria via the Beaver from Alaska in

1876. Shortly after, he went into business with Nova Scotia native James McKenzie on Government Street between Johnson & Pandora. Meston, active in masonic orders, was a popular singer and later a Victoria Alderman. The partnership had some success at the fall fair in 1884 for farm implements and was dissolved the following year; McKenzie opening up a business on the West Shore. Success continued for Meston at fall fairs in the late 1880's and 90's with awards for farm implements, buggies and carriages. In 1889, Meston relocated to 1407 Broad Street (extant) where the company would remain until the 1940's. In 1899, he donated a used ambulance to Jubilee Hospital. Meston claimed the distinction in 1901 of building the first rubber tired bus in Victoria for Mrs. Walt's Vernon & Dallas hotels.

John Meston died in Victoria in 1917. The company eventually shifted into auto painting, auto bodies & tops and finally collision repairs until ceasing operation in 1993 at 932 Johnson Street. Not a bad record for a company which survived the end of the carriage era, adapted to the automobile and remained in business for almost 120 years.

Cliff Chandler.



E-MAIL ADDRESSES

I have incorrect E-mail addresses for the following members. If you wish to continue receiving timely information and news items from the Society, please send an E-mail to bitterne@shaw.ca with **VHS** as the first word in the subject line. Thank you.

Harvey Buckmaster Stan Evans

Leah North Joe Prentice

Tatiana Schneider Beryl Tonkin

