



# Victoria Historical Society Publication

NUMBER 30 WINTER 2011-2012

## ~ VICTORIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ~ PROGRAM 2011-2012

24 November 2011

*Alexander Caulfield Anderson: The Pathfinder.* Nancy M. Anderson will speak about her ancestor's important role in developing new brigade trails for the Hudson's Bay Company in New Caledonia in the late 1840s. Her biography of A.C. Anderson will be published this fall.

08 December 2011 6:00 for 6:30

*Holiday Banquet at the UVic University Club.* Our speaker author/story-teller Sylvia Olsen will share her expertise in the history of *Coast Salish Woolworking*: an amazing story of innovation, hard work and cultural fusion. Dinner and admission arrangements will be announced at the September meeting.

26 January 2012

*Feeding Victoria: 100 Years of Food and Drink in Victoria.* Bob Griffin's talk will be based on new book of this title which he has co-authored with Nancy Oke

23 February 2012

*History of Beacon Hill Park.*  
Ken Johnson. Ken is the President of the Hallmark Society

22 March 2012

*Juan de Fuca's Strait.* Professor Barry Gough. This talk will be based on his forthcoming book on the history of the strait.

26 April 2012

*Forty Years in Forty Movements: A History of the Victoria Conservatory of Music.* Joan Giles

24 May 2012 7:00 p.m. start for Annual General Meeting.

In honour of the 150th anniversary of the incorporation of the City of Victoria, VHS vice-president Sylvia Van Kirk will end the season with a talk on *Thomas & Eliza Harris: The First Mayor & Mayoress of Victoria.*



## ~ VICTORIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ~ CHRISTMAS DINNER 2011

Thursday, 08 December, 2011

The University Club, University of Victoria  
Seating begins at 18:00

Tickets are \$37.50 per person - guests are welcome.

Ticket order forms will be available at the September, October and November meetings. Payment by cheque is preferred; cheques payable Victoria Historical Society.

Order forms and cheques may be handed in at the September, October and November meetings, or sent by mail to:

The Treasurer  
Victoria Historical Society  
PO Box 50001 RPO Fairfield Plaza  
Victoria. BC V8S 5L8

**Tickets will be sent by mail.**



~ AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR SYLVIA  
OLSEN IS XMAS BANQUET SPEAKER ~

Her book *Working with Wool: A Coast Salish Legacy and the Cowichan Sweater* won the 2011 Lieutenant-Governor's Medal for Historical Writing presented by the BC Historical Federation. It was also nominated for the Roderick Haig-Brown Regional Prize and was a finalist for the Victoria Butler Book Prize.

Sylvia Olsen is well known for her award-winning books exploring the complex territory that lies between the First Nations and non-First Nations culture. Olsen is also a knitter who was involved for many years in all aspects of the production and marketing of Cowichan sweaters. After moving to the Tsartlip First Nation almost forty years ago, Olsen was drawn to the wool-working taking place in almost every home. She blends her own experiences working with knitters and sweaters from the late 1970s to the early 1990s with extensive research into this fascinating story of this cultural fusion and has retrieved more than 100 archival photographs. The Cowichan sweater is an evocative symbol of British Columbia. "We have all been touched by, or involved with the sweaters in one way or another" Olsen says.

This presentation is one you won't want to miss. And you are invited to bring along your Cowichan sweater or other items if you wish. Be sure to get you banquet ticket soon.

*The book will also make a memorable Xmas gift and is available at local bookstores*



~ CORRECTION ~

A typographical error occurred in the last newsletter. In the article 'Nisqually and Cowlitz Revisited' by Cliff Chandler, the section devoted to Cowlitz Prairie should read in part:

...In his memoirs, Tod recalled that in the first year of operation, there were 1,000 acres ploughed, also a fine horse park and large dairy. 8,000 bushels of wheat, half that of oats and also some barley and potatoes were produced'...



~ E-MAIL ADDRESSES ~

*I have incorrect E-mail addresses for the following members:*

ANDREWS, Mary  
ELLIOT, Marie  
EDWARDS, Helen & John  
GRAEME, Toni  
STEVENS, Janet  
TURNER, Camilla  
TAYLOR, Robert & Anne

Please send a blank E-mail with **VHS** in the subject line to: [bitterne@shaw.ca](mailto:bitterne@shaw.ca)



~ VHS SCHOLARSHIPS ~

The VHS post graduate scholarship for this year was awarded to Vincent Gornall, a history student at the University of Victoria. His letter of appreciation follows:

To the Board and Members of the Victoria Historical Society

It was with great surprise, excitement and gratitude that I received an E-mail last week informing me that I had been awarded the VHS Scholarship. I am very grateful for the honour you have bestowed on me.

I am currently in the first year of a two-year masters Program in History at the University of Victoria. My focus is on urban history, so I am taking an interest in various aspects of local history. Several of your upcoming lectures have piqued my interest, so I am hoping to take out a membership in your organisation and attend them as a way of extending my education.

Next year, I will be writing a thesis comparing the creation and uses of public spaces at World's Fairs in Vancouver and Seattle. As part of my research, I will be travelling to archives in both cities. This scholarship will help defray the costs associated with both trips, and for this I am very grateful.

Thank you again for your support.

Your truly,  
(signed)  
Vincent Gornall



~ BOOK NEWS ~

*Glorious Victorians: 150 Years/150 Homes*

From cabins to castles, Victoria has a truly amazing collection of beautiful homes. But what makes one house a heritage building, and another one bulldozer bait?

*Glorious Victorians: 150 Years/150 Homes* celebrates buildings that reflect changing architectural fashions and that tell a story about the prosperity of British Columbia's capital city. What is Queen Anne style? Did a premier live here? Who were the great architects? Do some values trump others? (cost of construction, age, building materials, owners?) What important buildings have been lost over the years? And what will tomorrow's heritage buildings look like?

Heritage researcher, writer and photographer Nick Russell puts all this together to make an informative and entertaining read, capturing the essence of Victoria for both those who love to live in the city, and those who love to visit.

A little too large to put in the stocking but a valuable addition to your Christmas 'wish list'.

*More English Than The English ~  
A very social history of Victoria*

By Terry Reksten, foreword and revisions by Rosemary Neering.

Twenty five years ago, Terry Reksten, who died in 2001, wrote *More English than the English* "for those who might not usually find pleasure in reading about the past", and strove to create a social history that portrayed the spirit of the times from the mid-nineteenth century into the 1930s. Deliberately selective and anecdotal this is a delightful collection of stories and sagas of the people who fashioned a fort, a town, and finally a city on the rocks and meadows of southern Vancouver Island.

SoNoNis press \$19.95 paperback

~ BOOK BARGAINS ~

*Mountain Timber & Logging By Rail*

*Mountain Timber*, a book written by our member Richard S. Mackie, and *Logging By Rail* by member Robert Turner are available, at the time of writing, in Munro's Bookstore at heavily discounted prices. Bargains if ever you saw them! Hurry on down, limited stock.

Great Gift Item  
for Victoria History Buffs

**FORT VICTORIA  
LETTERS, 1846-1851**

Introduction by  
Prof. Margaret Ormsby

Hudson's Bay Record Society, vol. XXXII, 1979

Limited Edition \$40

Books are available from Sylvia Van Kirk who is acting on behalf of the Centre for Rupert's Land Studies which is located at The University of Winnipeg, Winnipeg, Manitoba (Ph. 250-385-0894 or E-mail: sylvansea@shaw.ca)

NOT TO BE MISSED ~

The Historical Society and the Hallmark Heritage Society will co-sponsor a special public lecture during Heritage Week, next year. The City Hall Ante-Chamber will be the venue, 7:30 p.m., Monday February 20th., for a richly-illustrated talk tentatively titled, *Bird's Eye View — Three views of Victoria...and the mystery of Annie Ross.*

Annie Ross painted a huge water-colour of Victoria in the manner of the "Bird's Eye View" artists — but her picture, now in the B.C. Archives, measures some 11-square feet, and has one astonishing aspect...to be revealed on Feb.20. The talk will show close-up views of the great landscape, and compare the pictures with photos of the day, and modern photographs of the same scenes.

This event will be especially significant as Victoria kicks off its 150th Anniversary celebrations.

Ms. Ross is a largely unknown artist, resting in the Ross Bay Cemetery, with some artistic ancestry.

Hosting the talk will be local historian Russ Fuller and researcher-writer Nick Russell, who has just published *Glorious Victorians: 150 Years/150 Houses.*

## ~ THE ESQUIMALT BRICK ~

The Society is happy to be associated with the forthcoming centennial celebrations of Esquimalt and their Centennial Memorial Walkway Project. This walkway will consist of inscribed paving bricks “paying tribute to a pioneer family, those who answered our country's call, special loved ones, or acknowledge individual contributions to Esquimalt”.

As part of its commitment to the promotion and preservation of local history, the Society has agreed to purchase one of these commemorative bricks, and to dedicate it to the late Major Frederick V. Longstaff. For those who are unaware of the credentials of Major Longstaff, a short biography follows.

### *Major Frederick V. Longstaff 1879 - 1961*

Frederick Longstaff was born in 1879 in Ilkley, Yorkshire, U.K. (not wearing a hat!). He was one of seven children born to Lt. Colonel Llewellyn Longstaff and Mary Longstaff, neé Sawyer. He was educated at Eton and Cambridge and trained as an architect.

Coming from a military background it was inevitable that he too would join the military. In 1899, while he was still a student at Cambridge he joined the East Surrey Regiment. He was later commissioned and rose to the rank of Major. In later years, in Canada, he became a member of the militia.

He came from a family of adventures, climbers and explorers and his first visit to Vancouver Island was in 1903 when, accompanying by his father and brother, he was on a climbing expedition in the Rockies.

A few years later, in 1911, he came to Victoria, B.C. to live. He was prominent in the Victoria community as an architect and author. He worked for a time with the well-known architect Ridgeway Wilson and assisted in the design of St. John's Anglican Church and the James Bay Anglican Hall, and later wrote a history of Christ Church Cathedral.

In addition to his mountaineering activities, Major Longstaff always exhibited a keen interest in maritime affairs and was instrumental in the formation of the Victoria Lifeboat Association. He was the representative of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution for the Pacific Coast of Canada and his background served him well with the

foundation of the VLA. He was largely instrumental in the founding of the early maritime museum on Signal Hill. He was also a founding member of the Thermopylae Club, an institution still going strong.

His dedication to public service was renowned. He was a strong supporter of the Connaught Seaman's Institute which was opened in 1914 at the junction of Superior and Kingston streets, a building still standing and now occupied by the Superior Café.

He was a committed member and officer of Christ Church Cathedral and founded the First Victoria Company of the Boy's Brigade. He was a prolific author and published many articles on naval history and climbing, together with innumerable letters to the editor of the local newspaper. It was said that there was no subject about which Major Longstaff did not have an opinion. His book *Esquimalt Naval Base*, published in 1941, remains an important reference for naval historians.

During his lifetime he amassed a considerable library and collection of photographs, the bulk of which were donated to BCARS and the MMBC after his death in Victoria in 1961.



The following extract is taken from **Reminiscences of Old Victoria** by Edgar Fawcett published in 1912. The astute reader will notice the references to global warming.

### **CHAPTER XVIII.**

#### **CHRISTMAS IN PIONEER DAYS.**

*“...When I remember all the friends so linked together  
...Fond memory brings the light of other days around  
me.”*

I HAVE been requested to give my recollection of a Victoria Christmas in the good old days, as to how it was spent and conditions generally. In the first place, in speaking of “the good old days” of the sixties, I would not convey the impression that they were literally so good, for they were, so far as I can remember, some of the hardest that Victoria has seen.

There is a something in recollections of the past that have been pleasant that is indescribable. It is easier felt than described, and I have no doubt is felt by many old-timers in this city to-day. Ask them to describe these feelings and they would be nonplussed. “Mark Twain” was written to by the pioneers of California inviting him to come and speak of the early days of San Francisco, when he

was himself a pioneer of the Pacific. What his reply was I now forget, but it was something to this effect: "Do you wish to see an old man overcome and weep as he recalls those pioneer days?"

These were a few words of what he said in reply to that invitation. "The good old days" may not have been the most prosperous, nor the happiest that "Mark Twain" may have spent, but there was a something, a charm indescribable that he felt, but could not express. I feel this way myself.

It is Christmas and its surroundings in any age that help to make these pleasing regrets. The incidents and the persons connected with them are gone and can never be recalled. The friends we knew then, whom we may have met at one of those Christmas gatherings, we see them as they pass before our mental vision. Where are they all to-day? The Quadra Street Cemetery might be able to tell, for each is "in his narrow cell forever laid".

I would remark in passing that Christmas, to be genuine, should be bright and frosty, with a flurry of snow, and this with walking exercise makes the blood to flow freely, and makes one feel better able to enjoy the festive occasion.

Well, we had just such weather in those days, and such weather is sadly lacking in these. Our climate has changed very much since then. Less snow and cold and more rain now. Tinkle, tinkle, tinkle! The merry sleigh bell! After the advent of the first snow, and when deep enough, there might be heard the sleigh-bell, either on a grocer's or butcher's sleigh, or on an improvised sleigh made from a dry-goods case with a pair of runners attached, to which would be fastened a pair of shafts from a buggy or wagon not now usable. Everyone who owned a horse had a sleigh at little cost, and good use was made of it while the snow lasted. Long drives in the country or to church, or to a Christmas party or dance. I can see such a merry sleigh party of young people, the girls well wrapped up peeping over their furs, laughing and dodging the snowballs thrown by a party of boys around the corner, who are always waiting for the next one to come along.

*"Where is now the merry party I remember long ago,  
Laughing round the Christmas fire, brightened  
by its ruddy glow;  
Or in summer's balmy evenings, in the field upon the  
hay?  
They have all dispersed and wandered, far away, far  
away!"*

We nearly all went to church — the Anglicans, and many Nonconformists with them — on Christmas

morning, and the Catholics on Christmas Eve. But first of all there was the preparation for the event. About a week before wagon-loads of young fir trees were brought in from the outskirts, and every storekeeper and many householders procured enough to decorate the front of the house or shop, a tree being tied to each verandah post. In those days no shop was complete without its wooden awning, as may be seen in many of the old photos of that period. Imagine Government Street, both sides, from end to end, one continuous line of green, relieved with, it might be, white; just enough snow to cover the ground, "bright and crisp and even".

I have often longed for such a Christmas in these degenerate times, when rain is nearly always the order of the day. All the Christmas shopping was done during Christmas week. The fancy goods stores of those days were few — "Hibben & Carswell", "The London Bazaar", and David Spencer. The former was then on Yates Street, corner of Langley, and the other two in Government Street; and I must not forget Thomas Gorrie on Fort Street. There was not the choice in toys and fancy articles then. Children were satisfied with less, and were just as happy. The beautiful and expensive dolls then were of wax, and being susceptible to frost, were taken great care of. The butchers' and grocers' shops were then as now a great attraction at Christmas, and we had all to pay one visit at least to Johnny Stafford's (afterwards Stafford & Goodacre), Thomas Harris' two shops, and Fred. Reynolds', on the corner of Yates and Douglas, and I doubt if a better show (for quality) is made to-day.

At Christmas there was the usual influx of miners from far-off Cariboo down to spend the winter in Victoria, with pockets well-lined with nuggets. It was "easy come, easy go" with them, and liberal were the purchases they made for their relations and friends.

Christmas Eve, after dinner, mother or father or both with the children were off to buy the last of the presents, visit the shops or buy their Christmas dinner, for many left it till then. Turkey might not have been within their reach, but geese, wild or tame, took their place. Sucking pig was my favorite dish. Wild duck and grouse (fifty cents per pair), with fine roasts of beef. Of course plum pudding was in evidence with poor as well as rich, although eggs at Christmas were one dollar per dozen.

A great feature of Christmas time was shooting for turkeys and geese at several outlying places, and raffles for turkeys at several of the principal saloons



and hotels. The place I best remember was the Brown Jug, kept by Tommy Golden.

A special feature of the saloons on Christmas Eve was “egg-nog”, and all we young fellows dropped in for a glass on our way to midnight mass at the Catholic Church on Humboldt Street. It was one of the attractions of Christmas Eve, and the church was filled to overflowing, and later on there was standing room only.

We went to hear the singing, which was best obtainable, Mademoiselle La Charme, Mrs. A. Fellows (daughter of Sir Rowland Hill), Charles Lombard, Mr. Wolff, and Mr. Schmidt. These were assisted by the sisters, many of whom had nice voices. Amongst the well-dressed city people were many Cariboo miners — trousers tucked in their boots, said trousers held in position with a belt, and maybe no coat or vest on. When the time came for the collection, all hands dug down in their pockets and a generous collection was the result. My old friend, Tom Burnes, was one of the collectors on one occasion. There were not sufficient collecting plates, and Mr. Burnes took his hat and went amongst the crowd who were standing up in the rear of the church. As he passed through a group of miners, friend Tom was heard to say, “Now, boys, be liberal”, and the response was all that could be desired; for, as I said before, it was “easy come, easy go”. “Twelve-thirty”, service is over, we are off to bed, for we must be up betimes in the morning for service at 11 o'clock.

“When I remember all the friends so linked together”, who met on those Christmas mornings long ago, I think, how many are there left? Those of the choir who led in the anthem, “And There Were Shepherds Keeping Watch”, and the hymns, “Christians, Awake”, and “Hark, the Herald Angels Sing”. Of those who met at the church door afterwards to shake hands all round, “A Merry Christmas”, “The Compliments of the Season”, and many other good wishes — of all these a few are left, amongst them Bishop Cridge, Senator and Mrs. Macdonald, Dr. Helmcken, David W. Higgins, Judges Walkem and Drake, Mrs. Wootton, Charles Hayward, Edward Dickinson, Mrs. Ella, Mr. and Mrs. George Richardson, Mrs. Pemberton, and Mrs. Jesse, and maybe a few others I cannot now remember. Well, all things must come to an end, and so must this reminiscence of an “Early Christmas in Victoria”, and in closing I wish all those mentioned here a “Happy Christmas and many of them”.

(Note.— Several of those mentioned are since dead. — E. F.)



## COUNCIL OFFICERS 2011 ~ 2012

### EXECUTIVE

Ron Greene	President	598 1835
Sylvia van Kirk	Vice-President	385 0894
Tom Pound	Treasurer	595 6487
Mike Harrison	Newsletter	360 1509
Michael Halleran	Secretary	382 0837
Kathleen Hadley	Membership	388 6984
Russ Fuller	Past President	386 8628

### COUNCIL MEMBERS AT LARGE

Doris Schuh	Book Raffle	595 7078
Cliff Chandler	Publicity	383 1150
Mary Doody-Jones	Reception	388 4046
John Whittaker	Special Events	598 3982
Joyce Mackie	Member at Large	598 7844
Arnold Ranneris	Care and Concern	598 3035

### VOLUNTEER ASSOCIATES

Carolyn Webber	Webmaster	384 2557
June Domke	Refreshments	389 1418
Shirley Cuthbertson	Archives	382 0288



The Victoria Historical Society meets 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 [www.victoriahistoricalsociety.bc.ca](http://www.victoriahistoricalsociety.bc.ca) and at our regular meetings at the door.

### CONTACT US

By regular mail at...  
The Victoria Historical Society  
PO Box 50001  
Victoria BC V8S 5LB

By E-mail at...  
[inquiry@victoriahistoricalsociety.bc.ca](mailto:inquiry@victoriahistoricalsociety.bc.ca)

