



# VICTORIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY PUBLICATION

NUMBER 39 SPRING 2014

## FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

24 April, 2014

The Life and Times of the Hon. Alexander Rocke Robertson.

Ian Robertson.

A native of Ontario and a lawyer, Robertson came to Vancouver Island in 1864. Because the Vancouver Island bar only accepted British-trained lawyers, he had great difficulty in joining it. He served as Mayor of Victoria in 1870, went into provincial politics, established the Public Schools Act, and became a Supreme Court Justice in 1880, sadly only to die a year later. Several members of his family have become lawyers and judges.

Ian Robertson, a family member and lawyer, recently retired and moved to the island. He is a member of the VHS.

22 May, 2014

More Than Emily Carr's Sketching Partner: The Life and Art of Edythe Hembroff-Schleicher.

Christina Johnson-Dean

Christina Johnson-Dean is a graduate of U of C, Berkeley, and has an MA from U.Vic. She had the good fortune to meet Edythe. She has written on the Unheralded Artists of B.C., such as Ina Uhthoff and Edythe Hembroff-Schleicher.

May being the AGM, the business meeting starts at 7:00 pm.

## THE FUTURE OF THE NEWSLETTER

I have acted as editor of the VHS newsletter for close to ten years and during this time the content has been supported by a small core of three or four members. The lack of contributions from the bulk of the membership leads me to believe that the newsletter has, for whatever reason, become irrelevant.

In the early years of my editorship I was in the habit at each meeting of exhorting members to contribute, and as you may have noticed I no longer do so since for the most part my pleas fell on deaf ears.

The lack of feedback from the membership is extremely discouraging; with the notable exception of two or three members, I receive neither bouquets or brickbats.

I therefore believe it is time to rethink the utility of the newsletter and whether it is worth the time and effort needed to produce it.

We would of course continue to publish the list of speakers in various formats and continue the practice of alerting members by E-mail to forthcoming meetings of our society and to those of other societies.

This topic will be open for discussion at the AGM and comments or suggestions beforehand will be welcome. Please send comments by E-mail, to [bitterne@shaw.ca](mailto:bitterne@shaw.ca) or by mail to our PO box. For E-mail contributions please make the subject line: VHS NEWSLETTER.

## COMING EVENTS

### *Help Required*

Attention all extroverts, exhibitionists, transvestites, aspiring thespians and just plain folks.

We have received the following plea from VEMRA.

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Seeking costumed historians (1900-1914) to participate in a unique history event at Fort Rodd Hill National Historic Site!

"Mobilize, Victoria: A City Goes to War" - a 3 day Living History event in partnership with Parks Canada at Fort Rodd Hill. 8th to 10th August 2014

VEMRA (Victoria-Esquamalt Military Re-enactors Association - [www.vemra.ca](http://www.vemra.ca)) will tackle the heady and chaotic days of the Mobilization in Victoria with a focus on the 22 days (August 4th to 26) prior to the sailing of The First Contingent from Victoria.

#### Activities

A Public Picnic - there are few moments of gaiety in The Great War and these 22 days are the days to take advantage of. We hope to excite the Public to dress up, bring a picnic hamper, spread a blanket and participate in the day.

Fun and Games: 1914 style - Tug of War with dozens a side, learn to play croquet, watch a cricket match, and many parlour and field games of all ages.

"And the Band played on..." - Enjoy your picnic while listening to the Regimental bands of the 5th Garrison Artillery Regiment and the 50th Gordon Highlanders - Victoria's 1914 Regiments.

"Join Quick! It will all be over by Christmas!" - A 7 bell-tent company street where each tent will focus on a regiment or unit being mobilized. Public are encouraged to sign up, get issued with a broom handle and bits of uniform and kit and learn 1914 Foot and Arms Drill

Boiled Salt Beef and Hardtack - Those who are

brave enough can dine upon Soldier's Fare at our 1914 Field Kitchen

High Tea and Cool Soda - Those with a more refined palate can join the Patriotic League for tea, chilled period sodas and learn how to support the families of those Going Abroad to Fight for King and Country.

A whiff of cordite - Weapons demonstrations by Parks Canada staff will allow the Public to hear and smell the sound of a 1914 firing range.

"A little knowledge is a dangerous thing..." - We will have a small and intensely interesting Open-air lecture series with a dozen topics such as:

McBride and the submarine scandal of 1914

The Ross Rifle: The Devil you know

"You expect me to eat that?": Soldiers Field rations of 1914

First to Serve: Victoria's Nursing Sisters

Those interested in participating as costumed historians, Costumed Visitors or those who desire to give a short Open Air lecture on topics of passionate interest, please contact:

Simon Sobolewski  
[www.vemra.ca](http://www.vemra.ca)  
250 893 1860 - mobile



## VHS SCHOLARSHIPS

We have received the following letter from one of the winners of the 2013-2014 VHS scholarships.

I am writing to say thank you for awarding me the Victoria Historical Society Scholarship. I am a Double Major in Canadian History and Environmental Studies. As an undergraduate student in the final year of my degree, I am very grateful for your contribution toward my post-secondary education.

Learning about history has always been a passion of

mine. In elementary school, I happily worked through history readers. In high school, I diligently worked towards a better understanding of world history in Social Studies. Upon my graduation in 2008 from Sa-Hali Secondary in Kamloops, I decided that I would enroll in an introductory Canadian History course in my first year at the University of Victoria (UVic). It was an introduction of a lifetime. Now, as a senior undergraduate student, I have one academic foot in the study of Canadian History and the other in Environmental Studies. As such, I enjoy working with historical topics related to land-use, First Nations studies, and the early history of British Columbia. I appreciate your recognition of my academic achievement as a Canadian History Major with the Victoria Historical Society Scholarship.

In addition to completing a Double Major, I am currently enrolled within the UVic Co-op Program. The Co-op program allows students to intertwine work experience alongside their academic education. This September, I started my third co-op work term with Devon Energy as a member of their Aboriginal Relations Team based out of Calgary, AB. In Spring 2014, I will complete my final academic semester in Victoria.

As a Double Major, I am interested in the intersections between Canadian History and Environmental Studies. Through my studies in both disciplines, I am gaining a better idea of what I want to pursue once I complete my undergraduate degree.

Thank you very much for your support. I am grateful to receive the Victoria Historical Society Scholarship.  
Sincerely,  
Jennifer Comrie.



## ~ THE HERITAGE DETECTIVE ~

One of the most interesting homes in Fairfield is 59, Cook Street. The building, designed by noted Victoria architect Thomas Hooper, is best known for its semicircular front porch with double-storey classical columns. The house has fourteen rooms, including a finished basement, panelled and beamed dining room, living room, den, and six fireplaces. The interior also features oak floors, two sets of pocket doors, and four bathrooms. Other exterior features include a porte-cochere and two verandahs. Plans show a “Chinaman’s apartment” (accommodation for a live-in Oriental servant) in the basement). The building permit with a value of \$15,000, was issued on June 6, 1912, at the height of the building boom in Victoria.

Development of the land in this area was enabled when municipal authorities decided to drain the Fairfield marsh and culvert the Fairfield streams. The construction of the causeway on Government Street in 1904 began the process of drying out the land, and in 1908, James Douglas’ grandsons, one of whom maintained a home near Moss Rocks overlooking the neighbourhood, began selling large parcels through the BC Land and Investment Agency Ltd. At one time the company owned or controlled half of the land in the Victoria area. Smaller parcels of the Douglas land were sold up to 1909. The creation of a residential infrastructure during this period, with development along a strict rectilinear grid, similar to that in downtown Victoria, reminds us of speculative confidence in the early years of the twentieth century in the anticipated growth of the city population.

Thomas Hooper was born in Devon, England in 1857. His family moved to Canada in 1871, settling in London, Ontario, where Hooper apprenticed as a carpenter and joiner after completing his education. The family followed the booming Canadian economy to Manitoba and finally to Vancouver in 1886, arriving months after the fire that destroyed much of the city. Establishing a private practice in

1887, he was responsible for major commercial, religious, industrial and domestic commissions throughout the province. In the 1890s, Hooper established a Victoria office, although he maintained offices in both centres. Hooper is known for residential work in Victoria including Pinehurst (Battery Street, 1890) and Haterleigh (Kingston Street, 1902), his own home. By this time, Hooper was well established as an architect and had changed his focus to large-scale commercial and institutional projects, calling himself a 'specialist in steel-framed structures.' Major commissions included E.A. Morris Tobacconist (Victoria, 1909), Revelstoke Courthouse (1911-1913), Chilliwack City Hall (1910-12), Vernon Courthouse (1911-14), ice arenas in Victoria and Vancouver (1911-12), later additions to St. Ann's Academy (1910), the Carnegie Library (1904), and several buildings for the Royal Bank of Canada.

The first owner was Miss Christina L. Haas about whom little is known. She appears in Victoria City Directories for a few years. There are passenger records that indicate a person of this name travelled from Victoria in 1900 and 1902 to California to visit a brother, Charles, but there is no definitive proof that this is the same person. There was a very rich Haas family in San Francisco with a son Charles, but their daughters were named Florine and Alice, so we know she was not part of this group. It is possible that our Christina belonged to the farming and merchant family that settled in Solano County in the 1850s. Their youngest child was named Charles. A daughter named Christina appears in the US census listing in 1870 and 1880, disappears for 1900 and 1910, then reappears in 1920. Further research is needed to prove the true identity of the first owner of 59 Cook Street. In any event, we know that she sold 59 Cook Street around 1919, and there is no record of her anywhere in Canada thereafter.

John Edward Day was the next owner of the property. He was a fascinating character who exemplified the entrepreneurial spirit of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Born in Gibraltar, the son of Englishman John Edward Day and his wife Catarina Fasha, on November 22, 1862, he entered the Royal Navy in 1880. He served aboard HMS *Express* from February 7, 1880 - October 7, 1881, then between November 1, 1881 and May 17, 1882, he moved to HMS *Excellent*, a shore establishment in Portsmouth. Originally housed in a number of hulks named HMS *Excellent* since 1830, it was formally established in 1869. It moved ashore in 1891 and remained active as a "stone frigate" until 1985, when it ceased to be an independent command. A number of ships were renamed HMS *Excellent* whilst serving as homes or tenders of the establishment. Following his training, he moved to HMS *Jumna*, an iron screw troopship. His next posting would have been an interesting one as a crew member on HMY *Osborne* from July 20, 1883-December 31, 1884. The vessel was a paddle steamer Royal Yacht, launched on December 19, 1870 to replace the yacht of the same name formerly known as HMY *Victoria and Albert*. It was used for cruises to foreign countries and later on the short run to Queen Victoria's residence, Osborne House on the Isle of Wight. For the next four years, Day served aboard HMS *Triumph*, Swiftsure-class battleship launched in 1870. His final posting with the Royal Navy was HMS *Amphion*, a Leander-class protected cruiser. This class of ships was used primarily for trade protection. When *Amphion* berthed at Esquimalt on July 9, 1890, he left the Navy "at his request" and began his civilian life there. He would soon become a major player in both the hotel and brewing industries.

Shortly after his arrival, John purchased the Esquimalt Hotel which he owned until it was taken over by the navy in 1943. John married Jessie Wilson Price on September 24, 1890. She was born in 1863 in Barrhead, Renfrewshire, Scotland, the daughter of Henry Price and Margaret Wilson, and had landed in New York on April 30, 1875. She was accompanied on the trans-Atlantic voyage by her grandmother, Elizabeth Price, and her brother, Joseph, as well as her step-sister Elizabeth Price. The

family travelled across the continent where they eventually settled in Metchosin. By 1881, she was living with her father, Henry; uncle, Richard; grandmother, Elizabeth; and her brother Edward.

By the 1891 Canadian census, John and Jessie Day are living in Esquimalt with her brother Joseph boarding with them. John Edward soon became involved in the brewing industry. In 1902, Robert Tate along with his sons Frederick and Reginald had built a brewery on a one-acre lot on William Street, where his son Fred brewed Silver Spring Old English Ale and a fine stout. In November 1908, this business was sold to a former employee of the Victoria-Phoenix Brewery, Harry Maynard, and his associates John Edward Day and Philip Crombie. Their brew master was Adolph Brachat, who had been a brewer with Anheuser Busch in St. Louis, and whose father was a master brewer in Switzerland. Silver Spring Brewery acquired the old Fairall Brewery site at the corner of Catherine Street and Esquimalt Road, and built a modern new brewery in Victoria West, donating their former site for a playground to students of Victoria West Public School. In 1910, the year Adolph Brachat's son Victor was born (Vic would become longtime brew master at New Westminster's Lucky Lager-Labatt's Brewery in later years), Silver Spring offered its first lager beer. By 1928, Silver Spring Brewery was amalgamated with the Victoria-Phoenix Brewery under the Coast Brewery's corporate flag. The company was dissolved in 1959 when it was absorbed by Lucky Lager Breweries Ltd.

Over the next few years, John and Jessie lost six children - four stillborn and two daughters who lived for only a few days. The couple purchased a large plot of land on Esquimalt Road and, in 1907-08, they built a house which they named Glenday (now 1382, Esquimalt Road). They also built a small cottage on an adjacent lot, named Glen Cottage (now 1376, Esquimalt Road). Jessie died on February 4, 1909 and is buried in Ross Bay Cemetery. John married Dorcas Lillian Pearson, the daughter of Charlton Pearson and Selena Pargeter on November

30, 1910. He was 44 and she was 21. John filed for divorce on December 4, 1916 when Dorcas moved to Washington State. The divorce was finalized on January 12, 1917. She re-married to Jessie Swartz on September 4, 1917 in Seattle and had three children. John did not stay single for long, as he married widow Eliza Amelia Hygh (nee Pargeter) on October 22, 1917; she being 43, and he, 53.

In 1919, the residence at 1382, Esquimalt Road received an extensive renovation that produced a Regency-style house. The house next-door also was renovated at the same time when it was raised with a basement added. The main floor was expanded and a second half-storey was added. The Days did not live much in either house, instead renting them out to military personnel.

The next year, John Edward Day moved to 59, Cook Street. He lived there quietly with Eliza, remaining active in community activities including the Navy League, the Naval Veteran's Branch of the Canadian Legion, Esquimalt Lodge NO. 24, A.F. and M., Oddfellows Order, and the Victoria Rotary Club. He was also an enthusiastic bowler and had served as president of the Victoria Lawn Bowling Club. He died unexpectedly at his residence on January 30, 1944, being found slumped over a card table by his nephew, Lieutenant-Commander Ivan Day. He was survived by his wife, nephew, a step-daughter, Mildred, and a granddaughter Lola.

Shortly after John's death, Eliza moved to 911 Bank Street and died in Victoria on March 30, 1954. Both are buried in Ross Bay Cemetery. From 1946, the house at 59 Cook Street was operated as a rooming house with 5 suites. It is still there with its trademark massive columns. Drive by and think about the interesting people who lived there. If those walls could talk, what stories they could tell.

*Helen Edwards*



## THE MAYWOOD GROCERY

This 26½ mm aluminum token first came to the author's attention in 1986. It is typical of a number of bread tokens issued in Victoria in the first half of the 1910's made of aluminum, of octagonal shape, and which give the name and a phone number, but not a city name. They could well have been obtained from one supplier.



The Maywood district of Victoria and Saanich was along Douglas Street, between the intersections of Burnside and Cloverdale, opposite the Baker Brick and Tile yard which later became the Mayfair Shopping Centre. There was almost nothing in the area in 1908 but the 1909 Vancouver Island Directory lists a Mrs. Mary Wilson Iredale as postmistress of the Maywood P.O. at 3128 Douglas.



She was also listed as a grocer. The address given was on the west side of Douglas between Speed Avenue and Alpha Street. Whether Mrs. Iredale called her operation the Maywood Grocery or

not is unknown but her phone number was 619.

By the 1912 city directory a J.W. Williams was the proprietor of the Maywood Grocery at the corner of Douglas and Alpha. The phone number was 619. There was also a Maywood Meat Market, operated by W.A. King at the same address. By 1913 the Maywood Grocery had moved along Douglas to the corner of Tolmie Avenue, operated by Frank McPhee, who was also the postmaster, H.W. Bown and J.M. Murray. In the next city directory, for 1914,

Leslie D. Roscoe was shown as the proprietor and Rupert Roney as the manager. The next proprietor of the Maywood General Store was Sydney Blackmore at 3196 Douglas, but he moved next door to 3194 Douglas by 1915. The March 1915 phone book again lists a Maywood Grocery, but with the phone number 3220 which it retained for quite a few years. The 1917 directory shows another change for the Maywood Grocery was then at 3200 Douglas Street and G. Silburn was the proprietor. S. Blackmore was listed as on active service. Silburn continued to run the Maywood Grocery at the 3200 Douglas Street address for many years. About 1942 his son Ernest took over the business and operated it until 1954. In 1955 the business was still being run as Silburn's Grocery, although L.N.G. Rusk was the proprietor.

Some years ago Bill Kersey wrote a reminiscence of his time in Victoria with many references to the period between 1908 and 1914. He wrote that he had made some money speculating on real estate in 1911 and decided to enter business. He thought that the Maywood area was a good place for a bakery. He thought the Baker Brick and Tile yard would be a good place for a subdivision and the population would blossom in the area. He recalled only three businesses in the area; Maywood Meat Market, the Maywood Grocery and post office, and Emsley's Grocery at the corner of Douglas and Cloverdale. He opened for business on April 15, 1912, an easy day for him to remember because the news of the sinking of the Titanic came that day. He canvassed the Maywood area and met with instant success. He sold his bread at four loaves for a twenty-five cents. With no small change in use in Victoria, he would sell a single loaf at 10 cents, or two for fifteen cents. To help overcome the cost of buying a single loaf he also had aluminum tokens which he sold at eight for 50 cents. It is unlikely that these tokens, which are not known today, are the same as the Maywood Grocery tokens. Kersey's experience probably is typical as there were quite a few other bakery tokens in use in Victoria in the

period. Bill's son, Morris, later ran a peanut butter factory near the corner of Douglas and Burnside. Can you remember Kersey's Peanut Butter?

From the telephone listing information we should date the first issue of the token to the 1911 - 1913 period.

*Ronald Greene*



## COUNCIL OFFICERS 2013 ~ 2014

### *EXECUTIVE*

Sylvia van Kirk	President	385 0894
Patricia Roy	Vice-President	384 4556
Ron Greene	Past President	598 1835
Tom Pound	Treasurer	595 6487
Michael Halleran	Secretary	382 0837
Kathleen Hadley	Membership	388 6984
Michael Harrison	Newsletter	360 1509

### *COUNCIL MEMBERS AT LARGE*

Doris Schuh	Book Raffle	595 7087
Cliff Chandler	Publicity	383 1150
Mary Doody-Jones	Reception	388 4046
John Whittaker	Special Events	598 3982
Russ Fuller	Member at Large	386 8628
Joyce Mackie	Member at Large	598 7844

### *VOLUNTEER ASSOCIATES*

Arnold Ranneris	Special Correspondance	598 3035
Helen Edwards	Webmaster	386 6598
June Domke	Refreshments	389 1418

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 19:30 and comprise a short business meeting and a refreshment break followed by a talk or presentation by a guest speaker.

Visitors are 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 website:

[www.victoriahistoricalsociety.bc.ca](http://www.victoriahistoricalsociety.bc.ca)

and at our regular meetings at the door.

### CONTACT US

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