

# ArchivesNews

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## The Archives and COVID-19

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Richmond Archives was home to a regular group of in-person volunteers who diligently worked on numerous projects every day. In addition to this dedicated group of volunteers, a variety of other people would visit the Archives reference room on a regular basis, with historical questions to ask, photographs to track down, or in-depth research to conduct. However, as was the case with Archives across Canada, all of this face-to-face contact changed when the Richmond Archives, along with City Hall and all City facilities, were closed to the public on March 23<sup>rd</sup>. The next few weeks were, in particular, filled with uncertainty as the health of our community took clear precedence over any in-person gatherings.

While closed to in-person visits, the Archives swiftly adjusted and realigned our services to a virtual delivery model. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the Archives has remained open virtually with researchers able to access online services 24/7. Further, we expanded our remote reference services by on-site staff. The Archives may have been closed to in-person interactions from mid-March to mid-August, but the work continued on behind the scenes! On the volunteer front, and with thanks to the Friends of the Richmond Archives Social Media Coordinator John Campbell, regular Facebook posts have continued without any interruptions since the start of the pandemic.

Story continued on page 2

## 1918 Pandemic in Richmond

In the spring of 1918 Richmond's Medical Health Officer W.H. Hall reported to Council on the incidence of the routine infectious diseases of the day: measles, whooping cough, chicken pox and mumps, which by

June had disappeared. Then, on October 8<sup>th</sup>, the Township received a telegram from Victoria: Spanish Influenza was spreading. For preventive measures the Township was being given the power to close all schools,

FORM T. D. 10  
CANADIAN PACIFIC R.Y. CO.'S TELEGRAPH  
**NIGHT LETTERGRAM**  
The Canadian Pacific R'y Co.'s Telegraph transmits and delivers this night lettergram subject to the terms and conditions printed on the back of this blank. J. McMILLAN, Manager Telegraphs

vi-po. 67 N. L. 2 extra.  
VICTORIA, B.C., Oct 8, 1918.  
d-99--Reeve District of Richmond,  
Eburne via Vancouver.

Provincial Board of Health has proclaimed regulations empowering all municipalities to close all schools, churches, theatres and other public meeting places to prevent the spread of Spanish influenza. Please confer with your local board of health and advise us at once as to conditions there and as to the necessity of putting these regulations into effect in your municipality. Victoria has already taken such action.

J. D. Maclean,  
Provincial secretary.

2140k

Telegram included in the Minute book of the Township of Richmond, MR SE 1, Vol. 12.



Isabelle Clemens, 1924.  
City of Richmond Archives, photograph #1985 39 64 (detail).



Kathleen McNeely, ca. 1920.  
City of Richmond Archives, photograph #1987 3 4 (detail).

churches, theatres and other meeting places. As a result, Richmond schools were ordered closed and church services were cancelled. An emergency hospital was set up by the Medical Health Officer and Chief of Police at the Minoru Park Clubhouse. Local teachers Kathleen McNeely and Isabelle Clemens volunteered to act as local nurses at the makeshift hospital, which was rented by the Township. The Richmond Red Cross and local residents helped with supplies and meals. By the end of October, there were four cases admitted to the hospital and at least one death.

In November, total cases in the Township reached at least 100 and then began to subside. On November 29, because the threat seemed to be diminishing, schools were re-opened, although attendance was low. When the hospital closed on December 7, a total of nine patients had been admitted; however, a second wave was already under way with 35 cases reported later in December. In 1919, on January 20th, the schools were closed for a second time. At the beginning of February the Medical Health Officer wrote in his monthly report to Council: *"Cases of Influenza reported 70, besides a large number which were not reported, especially amongst the Japanese population of Steveston with two deaths. However at present 90% of cases have completely recovered and only a few convalescent patients remain; thus we have reached the end of the second epidemic of this disease amongst us."*

Finally, on April 30, 1919 Dr. Hall was able to report: *"For the past two months the municipality has been enjoying the best of good health and therefore I have nothing exciting to tell. I may say there have been no infectious diseases reported which comes as a relief after the epidemic which prevailed during the winter months."*

(The sources used are the reports from the Chief Medical Officer, captured in the Township of Richmond Council Meeting Minutes, and the Minutes of the Richmond School Board.)



The clubhouse at Minoru Park, which stood near the site of the present Archives, was used as a temporary hospital during the 1918 epidemic.

City of Richmond Archives, photograph #1978 32 35.

## ***The Archives and COVID-19 continued from page 1***

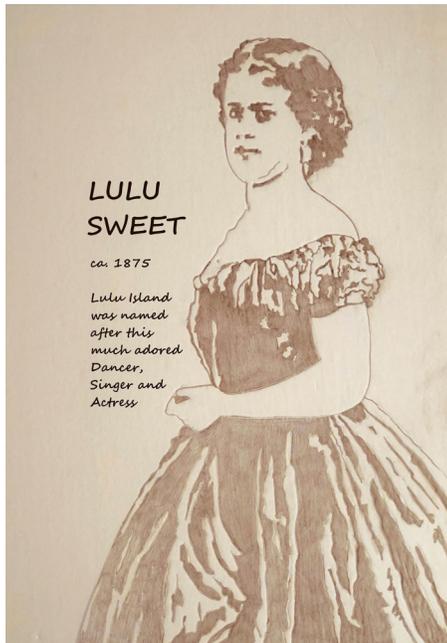
Planning for the restoration of all City services began early in May. The City's plan to restore services at all City facilities can be found at [www.richmond.ca/safety/COVID-19.htm](http://www.richmond.ca/safety/COVID-19.htm). The City Services Restoration Plan consists of five steps for the restoration of services. The timing and order of each step, and the restoration of individual programs and services within each step, is subject to change as the COVID-19 pandemic evolves.

With the goal to safely enable in-person visits once more, the Archives developed its Safety Plan under the guidance of the City's Joint Health and Safety Committee. With the City Services Restoration Plan as a guide, along with critical information from WorkSafe BC, a thorough evaluation of our procedures took place with the safety of the public and staff in mind, as well as the protection of the historical documents we are responsible to preserve. With this work completed on August 17<sup>th</sup>, the Archives reopened for research by appointment only. Physical distancing measures, restricted occupancy, quarantining of accessed records, and cleaning and disinfecting protocols have all been introduced. To read the full details of our Safety Plan, see [www.richmond.ca/\\_\\_shared/assets/Archives\\_Safety\\_Plan56671.pdf](http://www.richmond.ca/__shared/assets/Archives_Safety_Plan56671.pdf).

As long as it is safe to do so, the Archives will continue to remain open to the public with our new safety protocols in place. If you have any questions about the restoration of services at the Richmond Archives, please do not hesitate to contact us at 604-247-8305 or [archives@richmond.ca](mailto:archives@richmond.ca). Updates will also be posted on-line at [www.richmond.ca/cityhall/archives/about/services.htm](http://www.richmond.ca/cityhall/archives/about/services.htm).

## Photo Murals in the Hamilton Village Care Centre

Hamilton Village is a new senior's long-term care centre in Hamilton and, thanks to interior designer Dianne Grover, it is decorated with wall murals depicting scenes from Richmond's past. The Archives provided Dianne with historical photographs which she enlarged and placed directly on the walls. The murals help with wayfinding as residents live in neighbourhoods called Brighthouse, Minoru and Steveston. The hair salon is called Lulu's Salon, the meeting room is the Mitchell Island room, and the multipurpose room is the Sea Island Bistro. This was a project taken on with some enthusiasm by Dianne as her mother-in-law was Jean Grover, one of the founding members of the Friends of the Richmond Archives. Dianne was happy to continue Jean's legacy of sharing Richmond's past with the community. Dianne also contributed her own drawing of Lulu Sweet for one of the walls the facility!



Drawing by Dianne Grover – at Lulu's Salon in the Hamilton Village Care Centre.



Hamilton Village Care Centre. Photo: Dianne Grover.

## New Records Analyst

At the end of April, Faythe Lou began her temporary full-time position as Records Analyst with the City Clerk's Office. Faythe is a recent graduate of the Archival Studies program at UBC. She has worked in museums and archives near and far, including with the Red Cross in Geneva and, most recently, right next door at the Richmond Museum! At the museum, she worked with the artefact collection, notably cataloguing the voting machine donated by the City Clerk's Office in 2019. Faythe grew up in Surrey, where she currently volunteers for the Surrey Heritage Advisory Commission.

Faythe first became interested in archives after studying Canadian history at the University of Ottawa and discovering

a love for research—but couldn't pick just one thing to focus on for graduate studies! She says: *"I love that archives gives me the opportunity to continuously learn and apply my skills to a broad range of subjects. One of the projects I've been working on is cleaning up the Names Access field in the database, which has been a great way to get an overview of the Richmond Archives' holdings. Through this project and others, I've already learned so much more about Richmond's history. During the rest of my time here, I'm looking forward to meeting new friendly faces from a safe distance."*

Thank you Faythe for your flexibility and enthusiasm in support of the Archives in these strange times.



Faythe Lou, Records Analyst.



## Annual General Meeting 2020

Our members may be wondering about this year's Annual General Meeting which had been scheduled for March 18, just as public health measures were imposed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the time we cancelled the AGM we all regarded it as a postponement, possibly until the Fall.

Under the BC Societies Act and our own Bylaws, FOTRA is required to hold an Annual General Meeting once in a calendar year prior to December 31. However, the BC Registrar of Companies has made provision under Ministerial Order for delaying both the 2020 and the 2021 AGMs until no later than November 2021, and this appears to be the best option for the FOTRA Board at this time. Members will be kept informed.

## Friends of the Richmond Archives' Tea

The Board of the Friends of the Richmond Archives are very sad to announce that the Annual Archives Tea—an event we look forward to very much—has to be cancelled due to COVID-19. This October social event would have been the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Tea and was to have been held at the new Minoru Centre for Active Living. We know our members will understand that with the current restrictions on mass gatherings, the application of social distancing requirements, and the impossibility of providing a buffet service for food and drink, the decision was determined for us. We can only remain hopeful that we will gather as usual in 2021 to celebrate the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Tea.

We will miss our annual gathering, and we will miss the opportunity to use the occasion to say "Thank you" for your continued support of the Richmond Archives. A small token of our appreciation for our members—a FOTRA 2020 Bookmark—has been

sent out to everyone along with this Fall Archives Newsletter. The bookmark bears a sentiment that expresses the reason for the existence of the Friends and the Archives and reminds us that our contributions are indeed important.



Jean Grover and Mary Keen cutting the FOTRA 20th anniversary cake at the 2006 Archives Tea.

## Memberships

The Friends would also like to remind members that the membership year runs from October 1 to September 30. Those members who are in arrears are encouraged to send their annual dues (\$10 per person) to the Friends of the Richmond Archives, c/o City of Richmond Archives, 7700 Minoru Gate, Richmond, BC V6Y 1R9. Phone 604-247-8305 or email [archives@richmond.ca](mailto:archives@richmond.ca) if you are unsure about your membership status. Please note the Archives is closed to drop-in visits.

## Stay in the Loop with our Social Media

Since the closure of City Hall and the Archives' reference room, John Campbell, our FOTRA Board Director who is also the Archives volunteer in charge of the social media program, has continued to make regular postings to our Facebook page.

These are well-received in the community and produce much chatter and interaction between Richmond-ites young and old. During the pandemic shut-down and advice to stay home wherever possible, many people have taken to using social media. If you have the opportunity, please check out John's dedicated volunteer work on **Friends of the Richmond Archives Facebook** posts of archived photographs and stories.

Also, take the opportunity to catch up on his informative and fascinating stories, which can be found dating back to October 2014 by visiting Friends of the Archives **Outside the Box** blog site at [richmondarchives.ca](http://richmondarchives.ca). Who can resist such tantalizing tales as *"The Skookum Slide: A Slippery Slope into Childhood"*; or *"Arrested Development – Sturgeon Bank"*; or *"Richmond 150 – From Bog to City"*.

**CITY OF RICHMOND**  
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Public Reference Room Hours:  
Appointment-only  
Monday–Thursday, 9:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m.