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ARCHIVES

news

In This Issue...

Hugh McNair
BC Packers
Student Intern
'Friends' News

Right: Wes Knapp, left, and his brother Frank, standing by the exhibit of photographs from their mother's dance school. Photo Courtesy of Don Gordon.

Below: Aida (Trueman) Knapp in Paris, 1934. Mrs. Knapp had a successful career as a dancer before settling down in Richmond to raise a family and offer the developing community professional standards in dance instruction.

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For more photographs from private donors, see the back page.



Donations of Photographs Featured at Archives Tea

Donations of photographs from private individuals to the City of Richmond Archives were featured at the recent Archives Tea sponsored annually by the Friends of the Richmond Archives. Wes Knapp spoke about his family's donation of more than 100 photographs from the Aida Knapp School of Dance. The collection documents the life of one Richmond resident whose important work expanded the education of so many children and enhanced the cultural life of the community. Wes and his brother Frank, Aida Knapp's sons, visible in many of the photographs, attended the Tea and enjoyed visits with former students and old Richmond Friends.

Also exhibited were photographs from the collection of Ruth (Lockett) Yuswack. Ruth's first job as a teenager was at Glendale Cannery, Knight Inlet 1943. (Continued on back page. See "Community Photographs...")



It is a tradition at the Richmond Archives that students are photographed placing their first processed records on the storage shelves. Here Susan Walters shelves the first box of the Grauer Expropriation records.



Hugh McNair had an ongoing project at the City Archives to search through old newspaper files for articles of historical interest.

Hugh McNair Missed by Archives Colleagues

Hugh McNair, a long time volunteer with the Friends of the Richmond Archives, died in August. He was 80 and had lived his entire life in Richmond. His father was Max McNair and his mother was Winnie Blair. Hugh farmed until his retirement in 1997. He had a wealth of first-hand knowledge of Richmond's history which he was happy to share through his visits to the Archives, at Heritage Week and at the events of the Friends of the Richmond Archives.

UBC Intern learns Archival 'ropes' at Richmond Archives

by Susan Walters

In 1981, the Master of Archival Studies program was introduced at the University of British Columbia. It has developed, 22 years later, into an internationally recognized program that attracts students from many different countries. In the first year of the two-year program, students are expected to complete at least seven of the eight courses that are required for graduation. These core courses - Diplomatics, Arrangement & Description, Juridical Context of Canadian Archives, Preservation, Management of Current Records, Selection & Acquisition, Public Services and Information Technology - provide students with the foundations of archival theory. However, it is the optional Internship course that provides students with the practical, first-hand experience of what it is like to work in an archives.

During my 12 week internship at the City of Richmond Archives, I was given the opportunity to apply theory to practice by accessioning maps, photographs, and textual records as they have come into the Archives. I arranged and described two sets of community records. The first one, donated to the Archives by Alexander Hannay, was an accrual to the West Richmond Community Association fonds, records that demonstrate the positive role an organization can have on community affairs.

The second, and much larger group of records, was the Grauer Expropriation Litigation Case Collection, a large body of legal records reflecting the determination required to fight a 32-year expropriation battle with the Federal Government. At the end of the two projects I produced finding aids, available in the Reference Room and on the Archives webpages, to make the information in the records accessible to the public.

With guidance from City Archivist Lynne Waller, I gained valuable experience in providing reference service to city employees and the general public through a variety of very different types of documents, maps, photos and tapes. I was also given the chance to enlighten children about Archives by organizing tours to complement the Museum's "Time Travel" adventure camps studying Willy Green and Yukie Murakami.

In addition to increasing my knowledge of Richmond's community and municipal affairs, I now have a greater appreciation of the challenges an archivist faces in dividing time between archives administration and basic archival tasks, and I have witnessed the valuable contribution of volunteer groups such as the Friends of the Richmond Archives.

I have met many wonderful people this summer but a special thank you must be extended to Lynne Waller, Ken Young, Bill Purver, Mary Keen and Graham Turnbull for their guidance and friendship. It has been a wonderful experience to take with me as I enter my final year of studies.

Editor's Note: The Richmond Archives has hosted interns from the Master of Archival Studies Program at UBC for nearly 20 years. We are grateful UBC continues to think highly enough of our operations here to entrust their finest students to us.



British Columbia Packers Grant Project

by Robert Edwards

The records of British Columbia Packers Limited were scattered to the four winds. Some have come to rest at the University of British Columbia Library Special Collections division, some at the City of Richmond Archives. Others are in a number of community archives in the Lower Mainland and the North. Many important records apparently remain in the custody of the holding company that succeeded British Columbia Packers Limited after the shutdown of its operations in Steveston in 2001.

This lack of consolidation of the records cannot be said to be a wholly positive development and there are a number of practical and theoretical reasons for it that we won't go into here. However, the scattering of documents and photographs was probably inevitable given the nature of the company that was BC Packers – a geographically diverse entity that grew and evolved over many years, largely through the acquisition of companies and their assets that were going concerns, with a existing presence and history in communities scattered throughout BC and elsewhere.

The body of records being arranged and described in the current project – formally titled “City of Richmond Archives Accession BCP 2001-34” – reflects, at least to some degree, the way this growing, evolving, consolidating, and “downsizing” company administered the records produced by their business operations. However, the bulk of the material in BCP 2001-34 is “documentary” in nature. Rather than being business records per se, it contains many images, apparently compiled in an effort to visually document the company's operations, the nature and extent of its physical assets, and its corporate culture.

The visual media it contains includes thousands of photographic prints and negatives (some more than 80 years old), and a large number of slides, videos, and film, as well as a body of artwork. While a good part of the this material could also be attributed to a public relations function, it seems increasingly clear that British Columbia Packers Limited was a company vitally concerned about posterity and its place within it.

As the project continues, we hope to learn more about how the business of BCP Limited was documented. With information about the context of these records, the documents themselves will become a rich source of knowledge about this company and its place in the history of British Columbia and Canada. Equally important will be the contribution made to the visual history of the fishing and packing industry by public access to this rich collection.



Mary Keen, President of the Friends of the Richmond Archives, and Councillor Bill McNulty, at the Tea.

Friends of the Richmond Archives

The Friends of the Richmond Archives held their seventh annual Archives Tea, October 3, 2003. The event took place at the Richmond Library and Cultural Centre in the Lecture Hall. The Friends sponsor the Tea to promote the use and welfare of the City Archives and to encourage people to donate textual and photographic records of historic interest to the community.

Mayor Malcolm Brodie was a keynote speaker and thanked the Friends for their volunteer efforts on behalf of the community. He talked about the importance of the Archives as the City plans celebrations to mark its 125th anniversary in 2004.

Reiko Lindsay Tagami was the winner of the Friends of the Richmond Archives Prize awarded annually at UBC. The recipient is a student in the Masters of Archival Studies Program who excels in the study of community archives. The \$300 prize is funded by a \$5,000 endowment given to UBC in 1998.



Archivist Lynne Waller with Friends member Lee Heddy at the Tea. Mrs. Heddy facilitated the donation of her daughter Lynn's Red Cross records to the Archives.



Ruth (Lockett) Yuswack, left, and fellow cannery workers, Knight Inlet, 1943. CRA 2003 30 41

Who Uses the Archives?



Janet Lee of Policy Planning braved a renovation construction site to do research in the Archives Reference Room in July. Janet is shown here reviewing City Council Minutes on microfiche. Using the microfilm copies for research, rather than the original Council Minutes, helps to preserve the originals.



Steveston, 1943. Looking East on Moncton Street. City of Richmond Archives, Ruth Yuswack Collection. 2003 30 37

Community Photographs Become a Public Treasure

Continued from Front Page.

Snapshots from fishing seasons in the War years and scenes of Steveston from the 1920's to the 1940's are included Mrs. Yuswack's photograph collection recently donated to the Richmond Archives. Collections such as these provide rare images of the work and life of ordinary Canadians during the "between the wars" era when cameras were not as available as they are today. In addition to general historical research the photographs are used by City staff to study heritage buildings and streetscapes while planning Richmond's neighbourhoods.

Private photographs such as these have much value to individuals and families. Their donation to the community is therefore very meaningful and much appreciated.



Loganberry pickers, Lockett farm, 1930.
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Archie Blair transporting hay by horse and wagon, on the Lockett farm, Railway Avenue, circa 1922. CRA 2003 30 27



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Public Reference Room Hours
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