

Vancouver Postcard Club

Newsletter

September 2010

www.vancouverpostcardclub.ca

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Published by Harry Smith in 1938, #222 is one of 24 Vancouver views in the "Canadian Art Deeptone" Series (201 - 224).

Upcoming Postcard Events

Please make a note of the following events coming up in the next few months:

Sept. 19; Club meeting 12 noon - 2 p.m.. Show & Tell. Bring the treasures you have found during the summer.

Sept. 19; 41st Century Flea Market, Croatian Cultural Centre, 3250 Commercial Drive, Vancouver

Sept. 25; West Coast Collectibles show in Nanaimo at Beban Park on Bowen Road near Northfield

Oct. 2-3; VICPEX, Comfort Hotel, Victoria

Oct. 15-16; VANPEX, Community Hall, West Burnaby United Church, 6050 Sussex Avenue, Burnaby

Oct. 16-17; Greater Portland Postcard, Stamp & Paper Collectibles Show, Oregon Army National Guard Bldg, 10000 NE 33rd Dr., Portland, OR

Oct. 17; Club meeting 12 noon - 2 p.m. Art Davies will speak about the photographer Helen McCall and will show some of her work.

Oct. 24; Victoria Book & Paper Show, Sidney

Nov. 21; Club meeting - Milt Blackburn will make a presentation on Gowen & Sutton.

Members: Can you help?

One of the perks of editing this newsletter is being invited to attend the Club's Executive meetings. It's a hard-working group chaired by Don Steele, Club President, with Ron Souch, Vice President and Margaret Waddington, Secretary Treasurer. With two of the Executive Committee positions now vacant, all of the responsibility for the Club's administration falls on these three officers - assisted behind the scenes by Jill Charkow.

With the Club's AGM scheduled for December 19th, please consider whether you might fill one of the vacant spots - Program Director (arranging speakers for the monthly meetings) and Postcard Show Chairman. If you're interested in the above positions, or just able to lend a hand with organizing the Postcard Show, or assisting with the maintenance of the club's website, please let Don Steele know. You'll find a warm welcome!

Despite the small size of the leadership group, 2010 was a good year for the Vancouver Postcard Club. At the last Executive Meeting, Don reported that the current roster of members is larger than 2009, which was itself larger than 2008. Attendance at club meetings has increased and there was an outstanding line-up of speakers for these meetings. Those unable to attend missed some excellent presentations.

Financially the Club is in strong shape with over \$3,000 in the bank - news of a dividend payment is keenly awaited! The sold-out Annual Show in May 2010 made a useful financial contribution. There are over 200 visitors to the Club's website each month and the addition of new links has increased the number of hits and requests for information.

As members know, the Hastings Community Centre informed the Executive that due to budget cuts our regular meeting time on Sunday afternoon would no longer be available. A membership poll showed a clear preference for the new time of 12 noon to 2 p.m. on the third Sunday of the month. Come and meet your fellow members; bring some postcards to trade and see you at the HCC at High Noon.

Biographies of B.C. Photographers

WILFRED THORNTON, 1888-1962

Compiled by M. Waddington



Refreshment Booth / Victoria Day 1912 / Ucluelet

Ucluelet photographer, Wilfred Thornton, was born September 28, 1888 at 20 Mapperley Road, Nottingham, England to Richard Thornton, a hosiery manufacturer, and Elizabeth Wadd.

According to the 1911 census, Wilfred came to Canada in 1909. His two older brothers, Edgar Lionel and Richard Sidney soon followed, arriving at the port of Quebec on the "Megantic" May 22, 1910 with the intention of fruit farming on Vancouver Island.

On February 19, 1910, Wilfred and R. Bacon preempted lots 478 and 480, but this was later cancelled. On November 14th the brothers preempted a half section of land (lots 478, 479 and 480) at the head of Ucluelet Inlet, on the west side near Thornton Creek.

The Thornton homestead was later leased to a lumber firm headed by Harry McQuillan and subsequently sold to MacMillan Bloedel. In 1962 it was a MacMillan, Bloedel & Powell River logging camp, headquarters of the Kennedy Lake division.

On Sept. 20, 1915 Wilfred married Marjorie Karn, daughter of William and Kate Karn, in Ucluelet.

With the outbreak of WW1, Wilfred enlisted in the Canadian Engineers, C.E.F., February 19, 1917 in Victoria, returning to his family in Ucluelet at the end of the armistice.

For a number of years the Thornton farm produced black currants and gooseberries which were shipped to Victoria canneries.

Wilfred served as district road foreman for many years and was responsible for the first road built between East Ucluelet (later Port Albion) and Long Beach.

He also operated a construction company and built many local docks and floats. In addition he operated a water taxi to Port Alberni and west coast points, and later fished for a number of seasons.

Wilfred died May 20, 1962 in St. Joseph's Hospital, Victoria, survived by his sons Harold and Philip. He and his wife Marjorie, who died April 20, 1933 in Port Alberni, are buried in the Ucluelet Cemetery.

Wilfred's Victoria Day cards, which are stamped "Photo by Thornton Bros. Ucluelet, B. C." were taken south of the present town at Spring Cove or Francis Bay.

Special thanks go to Don Stewart who discovered the Thornton Bros. cards, Ron Greene who located Wilfred's obituary and Ken Gibson and Leona D. Taylor who provided background information on the Thornton family.

References:

- Ancestry.com Canadian passenger lists, 1865-1935.
Orig. data: Library and Archives Canada. RG 76: Canadian passenger lists 1865-1935 (in mfm T-4766)
- BC Archives marriage registration: 1915-09-158936 (in mfm B11385) (marriage Wilfred and Marjorie)
- BC Archives death registrations:
1962-09-006753 (in mfm B13256) (death Wilfred)
1933-09-483868 (in mfm B13148) (death Marjorie)
- B. C. directories: Ucluelet: 1912-1915; 1923-1928; 1930-1932; 1934-1948; 1950-51; 1951-1955
- GRO (UK) birth registration, Dec. quarter, 1888, in Nottingham registration district, vol. 7b, p. 301
- Library and Archives Canada, RG 31: Statistics Canada 1911 census, British Columbia, dist. 8: Comox-Atlin, sub-dist. 5: Alberni (Ucluelet and Clayoquot), p. 2, household 22, lines 5-7. (in mfm T-20333)
- Library and Archives Canada, RG 150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 9678-10, Regimental Number 2005563: "Wilfred Thornton"
- Tofino-Ucluelet Press, Ucluelet, B. C., May 24, 1962, p. [1]: "Early settler laid to rest." (obituary Wilfred)



Victoria Day 1911 / Ucluelet

[Annotated on the back: "This is one of the Pic-nic. "The Ladies Egg Race." Most are picking up their eggs. First kneeling down is Mrs. Wilkins, then Mrs. Hillier, then Mrs Lyche, then Miss Maclean, then Mrs. Kvarno and the one running is Mrs. J. Hillier and she won the race."]

BIPEX 2010

The annual British International Postcard Exhibition (BIPEX) was held in the Lawrence Hall of the Royal Horticultural Society in London from 2nd - 4th September. By the time your editor arrived at the show at 11.00 a.m., when the doors opened on the first day, there was already a line up of over 300 people! But everyone was in by 11.30. It was worth the wait!

Inside the Lawrence Hall was a sight to whet the appetite of any postcard lover - over 100 dealers at more than 130 tables! The dealers were mostly from across Great Britain but there were also several from Europe and our own Dr. Richard Moulton from Victoria, who appeared to be doing brisk business.

It's an interesting experience attending a large international postcard show like BIPEX because it gives you a good idea what other collectors are looking for these days and it's surprising to those of us whose main focus is the postcards of B.C. how few Canadian cards are carried in dealers' stock in the U.K.! Most dealers don't organize their Canadian cards by province so to find any B.C. postcards you have to plough through a lot of tedious views of Toronto and Montreal! Even worse, many UK dealers have a single section for "The Americas" and our Canadian cards get lumped in with those of our friends to the south (yes, the ratio is about 10 to one in favour of Uncle Sam).

Despite the relatively slim pickings for Canadian postcards, BIPEX is definitely the place to go if you're looking for artist-signed Tuck postcards. Be warned - you'll be among a lot of similarly-minded collectors from the old country.

"Wild and Picturesque"

Sunday, October 17; "Wild and Picturesque: The British Contribution to Early British Columbia Photography". David Mattison, author of "Eyes of a City: Early Vancouver Photographers, 1868-1900" and the website "Camera Workers: The British Columbia, Alaska & Yukon Photographic Directory, 1858-1950" will be the guest speaker at the AGM of the Friends of the British Columbia Archives, 2-4 pm at the Newcombe Conference Hall, Royal British Columbia Museum, 675 Belleville St., Victoria

New website links

If you've visited the Vancouver Postcard Club website at www.vancouverpostcardclub.ca recently you'll have noticed some useful changes. In addition to information about the Club, its meeting times, postcard services and recent publications, including back copies of this newsletter, you'll find a helpful page of links to other websites.

We were particularly pleased to see the recent addition of links to two outstanding postcard club sites in Seattle and San Francisco - the Pacific Northwest Post Card Club (PNPCC) and the San Francisco Bay Area Postcard Club. The PNPCC is celebrating it's 30th Anniversary this year!

The two websites contain a treasure trove of information about postcard collecting and if you want to see what a really professional postcard club newsletter looks like, take a few minutes to browse through the latest issues on both of these websites. We particularly enjoyed the review by Mark Sundquist in the PNPCC's "Moccasin Box" May issue of Robin Shannon's latest book - "Seattle's Historic Hotels", with beautiful illustrations.

Our good friend Lew Baer, editor of the SFBAPCC newsletter, sets an incredibly high standard for a club newsletter. Lew is well known to several members of the VPCC and a regular visitor to BC. One of the highlights of the month is browsing through Lew's newsletter - archived copies can also be found at www.postcard.org.

VPCC members are indebted to Don Steele for designing and maintaining our website. With Don's many other Club responsibilities we hope that a member will step up to help Don as Assistant Webmaster. Give Don a call!

Storing your Postcards

We're often asked about the best ways to organize a postcard collection so here are a few thoughts. There a number of considerations but most important of all is that postcards are meant to be seen! It is a sad fact that some public archives have no idea what to do with old postcards since in many cases they are too valuable to be left around in boxes for unsupervised public viewing but on the other hand it takes time and often scarce resources to digitize a collection for online viewing. As a result, postcards sometimes get stuffed into boxes and held somewhere out of sight in a vault.

Some of the same issues face us as private collectors. We want our postcards to be seen and enjoyed. But as our collections grow in size, sometimes rapidly, it's not really practical to keep them in postcard albums. The albums are expensive and take up a lot of shelf space. But the main problem with albums is that you're constantly rearranging the cards in the album. Let's say you're trying to collect the 100 numbered cards in the Pugh series of Vancouver real photos. Do you leave a lot of blank spaces waiting to be filled? Or do you store the cards sequentially and then have to reorganize them when you insert a missing card?

The solution adopted by many serious collectors is to use postcard boxes, divided by index cards. These boxes are stocked by Office Depot and retail for around \$14.99. They hold approximately 400 postcards. You can use 4"x6" Card Guides to separate the cards, also sold in boxes of 100 by Office Depot. While there are other types of postcard boxes available from postcard dealers, most of us starting a collection use shoe boxes - a much cheaper, if less elegant, alternative!

It's also a good idea to store your postcards individually in soft sleeves, to save them from scratching, greasy thumb prints and other unwanted damage. Many of your cards may be over 100 years old and if they are to last another 100 they need to be carefully stored, particularly away from the damp or small sticky fingers! We recommend UltraPro acid free, clear polypropylene sleeves that come in packs of 100 for around \$2 from John Cheramy.

How to organize your collection so that you can find cards quickly - whether by publisher, location, subject or series etc - will be the subject of a future article! This is not an insignificant issue as your collection grows in size! It's important to be able to find your postcards easily. But it's even more important, when you're visiting a show, to know if you've already got a card that you see in a dealer's box so that you avoid the "after-show blues" - you get home and find that you already have six of the ten cards you bought at the show! For those of us in our mid years, remembering what you've already got is more and more of a problem! So we take our listings along with us.

What many of us decide to do is to store a few of our finest postcards in albums, that can be readily viewed by our friends and other collectors. But to hold the bulk of our collections in postcard boxes, which take up much less room.

Front or back?

"Front" and "back" are terms applied in many walks of life. In cricket, an adventurous batsman plays on the "front foot" - in politics, a defensive Minister answers an awkward question on the "back foot". The same Minister may travel at the "front of the bus" while us lesser mortals sit in cramped conditions at the "back of the plane". And if, after all these years, you're learning to ride a bicycle again, it's important to know the difference between the front brake and the back brake (we didn't and went over the handlebars).

In postcards, "front" is for the picture side and the "back" is for the address. Postcard enthusiasts can often be heard debating which is the more interesting of the two (unlike philatelists who only have one side to worry about). The "front brigade" point out with some logic that a postcard is meant to be seen and not heard and that since the view is on the front - well it's the front of the card that matters most. It's the front that offers the timeless insights into social history, or that may represent a work of art or a fine photographic specimen.

The "back school" claim that the front is of little interest without the back since it's there that the number of the card or series can be found, with the name of the publisher and where the card was printed, perhaps an interesting message or a rare postmark and even, if a stamp collector hasn't got there first, a nice stamp. Back-looking collectors can be seen at postcard shows hunched over a handful of cards riffling through the backs.

Front-looking collectors suggest that this type of behavior is more suited to postcard analysts rather than collectors. They have it back to front and the practice of differentiating one card from another on the basis of minute variations in the printer's layout of the back, risks missing the whole point of the postcard, which is to enjoy the picture on the front! What are your thoughts on front and back? Any comments to philipfrancis@shaw.ca.

Artist-signed Postcards

One of the attractions of postcard collecting is that there are so many different types of cards to select from. The largest category is "topographical" - often based on photographic views of local places of interest. Then there are the different styles of printing - collotype, lithochrome and real photos for example and thousands of different publishers or photographers to choose from. Another way to collect postcards is by subject or topic - trains, ships, churches, forestry, maps, cats etc.; or postcards commemorating specific events. And even within these subjects you can specialize further. The attractive content is what differentiates postcard collecting from other hobbies such as stamps or tokens or coins.

In recent years there's been increased interest in "themed" postcards. For example, some collectors now specialize in "patriotic" postcards - cards containing a Canadian flag or crest or symbol such as the Maple Leaf or Canadian Mounties, or a patriotic verse. Others collect "novelty" cards - such as "hold-to-light" or "mechanical" (pull a lever or tab for something to happen) or pullout postcards - open a flap to find many smaller images. Another theme would be "advertising" cards - as their name implies, postcards advertising a hotel or motel, a bookstore or new restaurant.

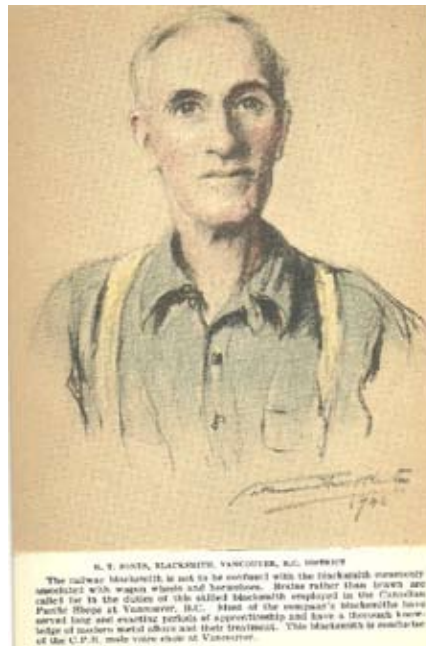
There's also been a revival of interest in so-called "artist-signed" cards. These contain paintings or pencil drawings of people, subjects or views that have been produced as postcards, typically with the artist's signature on the front. In Canada we are fortunate to have many fine examples of this genre and we have recently seen lovely collections of postcards by the following artists -

John Innes (1863-1941) - recognized as one of the finest Canadian postcard artists - who produced 63 postcards in seven different series.



"Mounted Police Scouts Canadian West" by John Innes - one of the "Troilene" N.W.M. Series published by W.G. MacFarlane

Kathleen Shackleton - sister of the famous explorer Ernest - whose sensitive portraits of Canadian Pacific Railway employees in the early 1940s form a highly



collectible series of 48 postcards. At left is R.T. Jones, Blacksmith, Vancouver, B.C. District.

Edward Goodall (1919 - 1982) - who produced over 500 different images in a variety of styles, mostly black and white pencil or pen and ink drawings and a more limited number of water colour scenes.

Many of the drawings are views of B.C. hotels and other local landmarks.

One of the best sources for a collector with a special interest in artist-signed cards are the postcards of Raphael Tuck & Sons, one of the most prolific publishers of postcards in the first half of the 20th century and a dominant influence in the growth of the postcard industry in the "Golden Era" pre-1914. There are many fine examples of artist-signed postcards of Canadian views published by Tuck - well over 300 images - and together they form an attractive collection. One of the better known Tuck artists was Charles E. Flower, who produced many fine paintings of Canadian views in several different series.

Other popular Tuck postcard artists include Harry Payne, Lance Thackeray, Henry Wimbush and Louis Wain. While some of these artist-signed cards can still be bought fairly inexpensively, others - particularly the cat cards of Louis Wain or the Art Nouveau images of Raphael Kirchner for example - can set you back hundreds of dollars. Select your artists with care!

A collection of artist-signed postcards is a refreshing change from the more prosaic colored views that form the bulk of dealers' stock. Next time you come across a postcard image painted by John Innes, for example, marvel at how well the postcard serves to illustrate the artistic gifts of this great Canadian artist.

Cheramy's Chatter

By John Cheramy

June -- Received "The Holedown", the Fraser Valley Antiques and Collectables Club bulletin, President Lorne Dennison, Editor Mike Hocevar, both VPCC members. Mostly about old bottles (liquor flasks, Brewery, soda, medicinal, etc.) but also sometimes includes postcards. In the article "local items spotted on eBay" in the May/June bulletin, I spotted 2 postcards. One was from New Westminster "Fraser Transfer Company Truck", price realized \$13.00. To me this is an \$80 to \$100 postcard. I'm sorry for the seller for having his card go unnoticed! The other card was from Chu Chua, BC "Railway surveyors circa 1912" in front of a crude tent, price realized \$33. Again, way too cheap!

The club holds its annual show in Queens Park Arena, New Westminster, usually the last weekend in April. Our own Stan Stewardson has been a member for quite a while as has Mike Wagner. Tim Mustart, also a member, was our concession host for our annual Post Card show last May. Other members who we see at various antique shows, are Carl Elsner and Pat McNamara, their show coordinator.

It was a very quiet summer postcard-wise except for a few packages sent to us on approval from England and the US, and a few from Canada.

July -- Had a visit from Andrew Scott and Tracy Cooper, both postal history experts, but also dabbling in postcards. We ended up doing some trades and both walked away with some very nice cards. They are both involved with the BNAPS show coming up in Victoria early Sept. 3, 4 & 5, and were here to work out various details, exhibits, etc. While Tracy was going over some of our stock, he found a box of New Westminster postcards that I hadn't looked at for a few years (see scans of a couple of New Westminster store interiors).



Written on back (both views) "Smith & Champion Store, 1903"

August 22 -- Comfort Inn Stamp & Coin show. A man came up to me and asked who I was. He said, "do you remember someone by the name of Ed Parker?" The name sounded familiar and when he said Winnipeg, it all came back. Ed Parker was a serious token collector who I met a few times at coin shows held at the Marlborough Hotel in Winnipeg. Ed passed away in 1979 and his widow and son Craig contacted us about his token collection. Glenda and I visited them not long after and we ended up buying his collection which really boosted ours, to be just behind Jim Astwood -- the leading Manitoba collector to this day. Well, the man talking to me was Ed's son Craig. He and his wife were on an Alaska Cruise trip and staying at the Comfort Inn and just stumbled in to us! Serendipity!!



August 24 -- George Arthur's daughter Elizabeth invited all the Muffin Break stamp members to her father's memorial get-together at Goward House on Arbutus Rd in Victoria -- a beautiful setting amongst some very tall trees. George had passed away on August 6th. George had moved to Victoria from Regina in 1993. He had just retired from his position as Professor of Archaeology and decided Victoria was to be his retirement home. George, Bill Sach (ex-Saskatoon), and Art Kohlman (ex-Ottawa) and I had almost weekly coffee get-togethers at Johnny's Café on Fort St for several years. George was well into postcards and postal history and was one of the four original founders of the Muffin Break stamp club, but after suffering a powerful stroke, he was dependant on friends to help, but still managed to fill bourse tables at local shows for many years. I still have postcards that I bought from George -- we all miss him!

Sept 3 -- 5th -- BNAPS Meeting and show in Victoria at the Conference Centre, attached to the Empress Hotel. We'll have more to report on this show next issue!

We'll be looking forward to the Nanaimo Antique show at Beban Park, Sat. Sept 25th. Hope we see many of you there!

American Views - "You Auto See These Postcards"

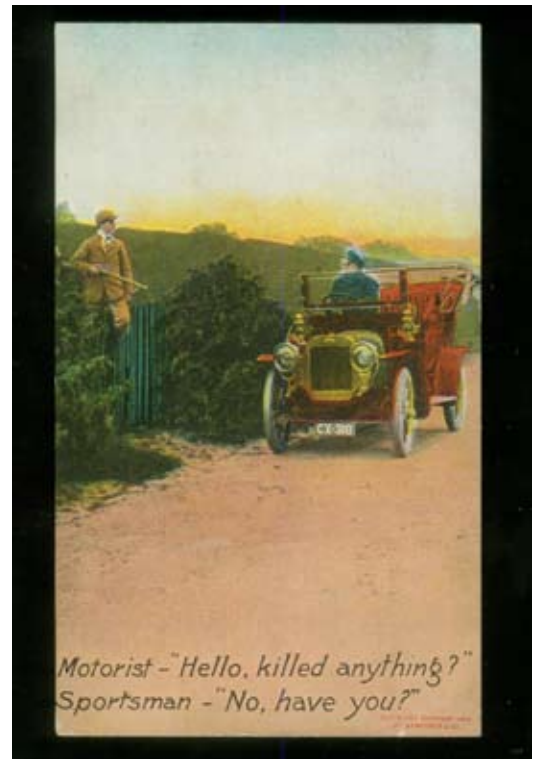
By Buzz Kinninmont

Cars and postcards came into existence at about the same time, late in the 19th Century, with both enjoying immediate popularity and success.

Since that time, many thousands of car-related postcards have been published. Automobile manufacturers have long used them to advertise their products, with perhaps the most appealing of that genre being those from the 1930's, '50's and '60's.



But my personal favourites are the early comic postcards that document the social history of motor cars – as markers of social status; as mechanically unreliable nuisances; as escape vehicles to out-of-town picnics and back-road romances; as gas & money guzzlers; and as potentially deadly menaces on the roadways:



In the early days, the output of postcards far exceeded that of automobiles, but what about now? "Wikipedia" says that annual worldwide vehicle production peaked in 2007 at more than 73 million, dropping back to about 61 million in 2009. How many million postcards, do you think, were manufactured last year...?

(Colour images of the above cards, plus a few more car-comic images can be seen by going to <http://www.beachnet.com/~buzzwds/cars/car1.jpg> and then changing "car1" in that Web address to car2, car3, etc, - up to car20 .)

Can you identify?

It's unusual these days to find good quality portraits or family photos on old postcards. They provide an interesting window into the past containing, as they often do, much that is of interest to social historians.

Here are three nice examples of real photo portraits and we wonder if you can identify any of the subjects or provide any clues to help us find out who they are.

The first is an image of an unknown young man. It was photographed and printed by the Electric Studio, 117 Hastings St. East, Vancouver and the AZO stamp box on the back dates it to approximately 1904 - 1918. Ron Souch's invaluable "B.C. Historical Picture Postcards - A Guide to the Publishers" tells us that The Electric Studio was owned by George H. Buck and produced a few real postcards between 1912 - 1915. Do you know anything more about the Electric Studio or who is the subject?



We have quite a lot more help in identifying our second image, obtained from a dealer in the UK. Undated, although from the same period as the Electric Studio portrait, the postcard is addressed to Mr. B.H. Evans of Lynn and according to a handwritten note on the back is a portrait of P.H. Evans and family of 4450 James St., Vancouver. Sitting on the wooden front steps of her home, Mrs. Evans holds one of her young daughters while Mr. Evans poses with the other. What type of uniform is Mr. Evans wearing with the distinctive insignia on the front of his peaked cap? Notice the cedar shingles on their home and the front verandah of the arts and crafts home behind them, probably dating from around 1912. Do you know anything about the Evans family that you can share with us?



Our third image simply states "Victoria, 1940" on the back - no photographer or publisher is mentioned. Who is this distinguished looking couple - he in well-tailored 3-piece suit with stylish fedora; she in dark overcoat, checked dress and summer hat. A sign identifies the building as the Bank of Montreal?



If you have any information to share about any of these real photos please send to philipfrancis@shaw.ca and we'll be pleased to publish it in the next issue.

This Issue

Special thanks to Margaret Waddington for her assistance with this issue and, as always, to John & Glenda Cheramy and Buzz Kinninmont for their contributions. The next issue will appear in November.