



[www.vancouverpostcardclub.ca](http://www.vancouverpostcardclub.ca)

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The Vancouver Block, circa 1912.

## Our Upcoming Postcard Show May 28, 2017

It only happens once a year, but our annual club show is just on the horizon! The event is promising to be one of the largest and best in recent years as most dealers are returning with loads of new postcards and other material, and we are welcoming at least one new dealer to our show. There will be several dealers interested in buying postal history as well as old postcards, so you are encouraged to bring your collections for review & sale. In memory of her father Abe, Jill Charkow has donated the prize

money for the first place display at our show. Dealers, collectors, and all attendees are encouraged to bring framed or display items from their collection to vie for this prize. The show is open to the public from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Admission is free, but donations are gladly accepted. Refreshments are also available. In addition to street parking, limited parking is available in the Community Centre lot, but overflow parking is readily available behind the Community Centre, as shown in the map below. —JV



### In this Issue:

**Page 1** – Cover story – Jason Vanderhill

**Page 2-3** – Early B.C. Postcards by the Major Publishers: The Postcards of Thomson Stationery – Ron Souch

**Page 4** – The Sports Section – Fred Hume

**Page 5-6** – Mailbag

**Page 7** – The Vimy Ridge Centennial Anniversary – JV

**Page 8** – Postscript – JV

# The Postcards of the Thomson Stationery Company

by Ron Souch



The Thomson Stationery Company Ltd. evolved from Thomson Bros., Booksellers and Stationers, a partnership between Melville P. Thomson and James A. Thomson. These men came from Ontario and were selling books and stationery in Vancouver in the 1880s. In the early 1890s their business

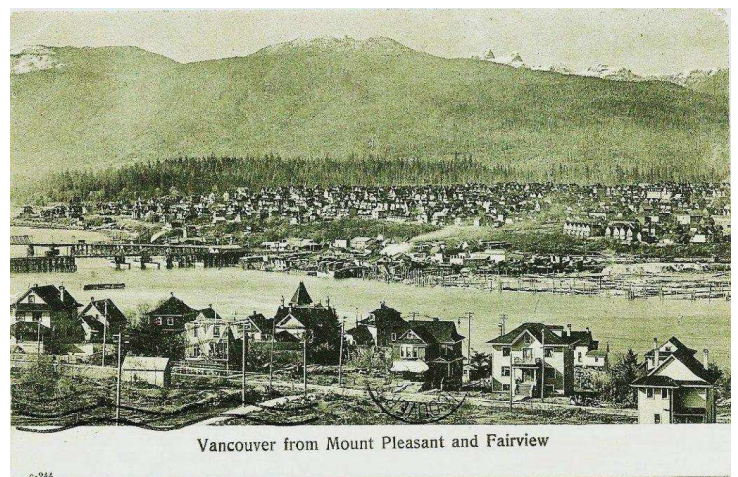
was expanded to include printing and lithographing. In mid decade the limited company was formed with James as president and manager, and Melville as vice president. At the beginning of the new century the company moved from 108 Cordova Street to larger quarters at 325 W. Hastings St. Later in that decade, company advertising stated that they “are probably the largest and most completely equipped in Vancouver” and “they occupy a floor space of close upon 7,000 square feet. There are seven departments - Printing, Bookbinding, Lithographing, Electrotyping, Rubber Stamp, Blue Printing and Engraving, employing about 40 hands.” The company had a retail outlet in Nelson which was at one time owned by a nephew, William G. Thomson. In 1909 three of Thomson Company’s employees became the new owners of the Thomson Stationery Co. They were E.F. Odlum, M.J. Gaskell and Albert Stabler. By the end of World War I, the Thomson Stationery Company and the Nelson store were both gone from the Vancouver and Nelson business directories.

The large majority of the postcards by Thomson Stationery are good quality collotypes; either black and white or colour tinted. A few of the early ones are half-tone printings and three of the later ones are real photos. There are various printings of many of the views; sometimes in a different format, or other times just with a different title or number. It appears that the company’s postcard printings were sub-contracted. The location of the printers are unknown, except for the real photos which state “Printed in Saxony”. The earliest cancellation noted to date is on a Vancouver card dated January 22, 1905; so the Thomson Co. probably started

producing their cards in 1904. Almost all of the cancellations noted are between 1905 and 1912. The Nelson area cards also started appearing in 1905, first with the Thomson Co. name; then for most of the same seven years, with the name of W.G. Thomson. It is not known if the new owners produced any new cards. It is quite possible that all of the views on Thomson Stationery cards are from before 1910. During their few years of production they published cards from a few hundred different photographs, and they include the works of some of B.C.’s most notable photographers of the period including Howard Chapman, Edwards Brothers, Phillip Timms and Richard Trueman. In addition to the views from the first decade of the century, there are also a few from the previous decade. No.171, the Blackfoot Indian Sun Dance is from a photo credited to Trueman in 1893. Almost half of Thomson’s cards are from the Vancouver area and nearly a quarter are from the Nelson area. The rest are divided between the remainder of B.C. and Alberta. About half of Thomson’s cards have numbers. They run between 1 and 570, but there are gaps in the numbers where no cards have been noted. Some card numbers have a prefix c. No difference has been noted in the view between a numbered card with the c and the one without, but in some cases the title has been changed.

Collecting the cards of Thomson Stationery is one way to acquire an interesting selection of early views at reasonable cost, but there is only a very small selection beyond the Vancouver area and the West Kootenays.

– RS



Vancouver from Mount Pleasant and Fairview, a Thomson Stny. card, circa 1905, courtesy of Ron Souch.



CVA 201-08 - Group of Thomson Stationery Company employees when they were located at 325 W. Hastings Street circa 1908, photograph by Charles Frederick Chapman, City of Vancouver Archives.

 <p>Second Canyon Capilano River, near Vancouver PHOTO BY BULLEN &amp; LAMB    HALF TONE BY ANGELL ENGRAVING CO.</p>	<h3 style="text-align: center;">Manufacturing Stationers</h3> <p><b>THE PRINTING AND MANUFACTURING DEPARTMENTS</b> of the THOMSON STATIONERY CO., LTD., are probably the largest and most completely equipped in Vancouver; located at the rear of the Hastings St. Store, (through which is the main entrance) they occupy a floor space of close upon 7,000 square feet. There are seven departments—Printing, Bookbinding, Lithographing, Electrotyping, Rubber Stamp, Blue Printing and Engraving, employing about 40 hands. Each department is under the direction of an expert of wide experience and no expense has been spared in securing the best men obtainable in their various lines.</p> <p>As in all other departments of the THOMSON STATIONERY CO., "system" is the keynote. From the time the customer's order is received in the Printing Office, an accurate account is kept of its progress until delivered to the customer. Any job can be located almost instantly and reported upon. In the same way previous orders can be located very quickly.</p> <p>We are now at work perfecting a system which will locate future orders with as much certainty.</p> <p>We are prepared to undertake all classes of Printing, Bookbinding and Lithographing, Illustrated Catalogues, Magazines, Periodicals, Bank, Insurance, Mining and Special Forms of all descriptions, Lithographed Stock and Bond Certificates and Letterheads.</p> <p>We take an interest in your work and guarantee good service and satisfaction whether the order be large or small.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>PHONE SEYMOUR 3520—PRINTING DEPARTMENT</b></p>	 <p>Stanley Park, Vancouver PHOTO BY BULLEN &amp; LAMB    HALF TONE BY ANGELL ENGRAVING CO.</p>
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Ad from a promotional brochure of Vancouver Scenery published by Thomson Stationery Co. circa 1909, via [https://archive.org/details/cihm\\_81394](https://archive.org/details/cihm_81394)

# Stephen Harper and a Hockey Icon

by Fred Hume



The inspiration was felt following the presentation made by local hockey collector Craig Bowsby at a Post Card Club meeting last year. It caused me to revisit a post card in my collection that when purchased was intriguing, but not apparent to me it's true place and importance in history. Its cachet was realized only after some research.

The image on this dated 1906 card titled "The Arena, Montreal" is, according to one source, the world's first arena designed expressly for hockey. I would add, if not the first, certainly the largest. Known as "The Arena", the "Montreal Arena" or "Westmount Arena" it opened in December 1898 at the corner of St. Catherine and Wood Avenues and was the home to Montreal amateur and professional hockey until 1918.

During its early years, it was used by amateur teams, then from 1904 to 1909 and from 1911 to 1918 was the home of the Montreal Wanderers and from 1911 through '18 the first home of the Montreal Canadiens. According to historians this was the first ever "arena" rather than what had previously been referred to as "rinks" in that this was the first facility designed to provide for and serve spectators rather than just users. Other "arenas" were later constructed in Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal with this designed feature, that of providing spectators comfort, safety and an unimpeded view, with this Westmount Arena being the benchmark. Investment in the 1890s for this Westmount or Montreal Arena was solicited based upon the increasing

popularity of hockey which at the time according to the media, was "Canada's pre-eminent winter sport." It was equipped with a "refreshment buffet" and smoking room and according to sources could hold as many as 7,000 to 10,000 people.

It was a fire in its ice making plant, the world's first by the way, that caused the Arena to burn down on January 2, 1918. Six years later, the Montreal Forum would be built one block to the east.

But what about the accompanying letter from the Prime Minister you might ask. Just after acquiring this card I learned Stephen Harper was writing a book on the history of hockey in eastern Canada. I thought he would be pleased if not excited, to receive a laser colour copy of the post card's image, an important early piece of hockey history, an image he might not have. Indeed I did send it to him and in turn received this thankful signed response which was appreciated.

When finally the opportunity arose to look through his book, I was interested to know if he had in fact used the image from this post card. Even though his book refers to "Montreal's great Westmount Arena", alas no image of this icon appears. Your book could have used it Steve!

— FH



PRIME MINISTER • PREMIER MINISTRE

June 13, 2007

Fred Hume  
Athletic Historian  
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Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z1

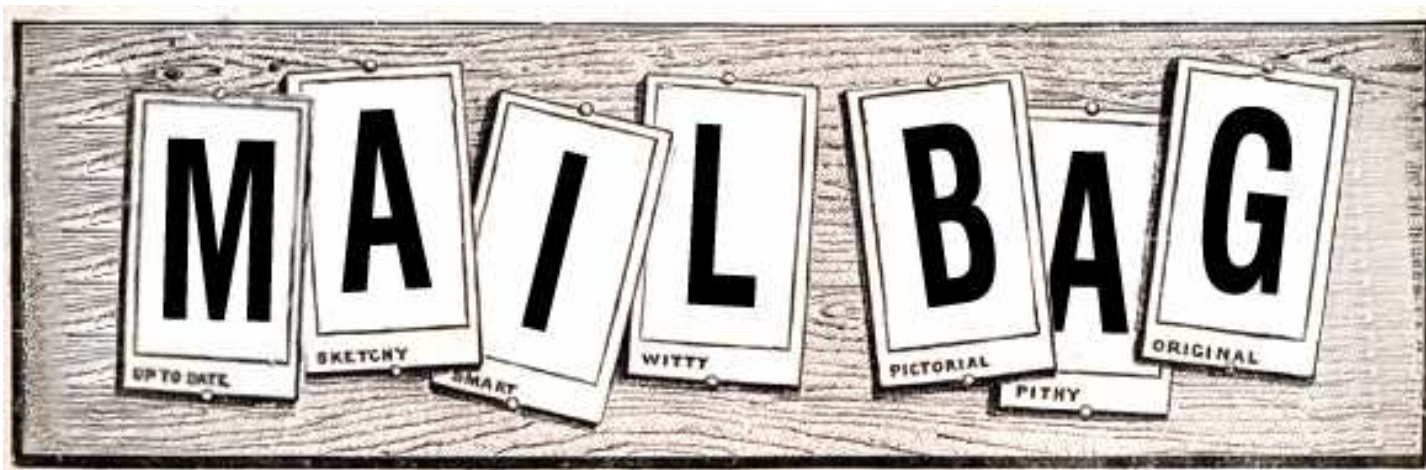
Dear Mr. Hume:

I would like to extend my personal thanks for your thoughtful letter of June 5 as well as the enclosed copy of a rare photograph and description of "The Arena" in Montreal circa 1906. Please know that I truly appreciate your interest in my hockey research.

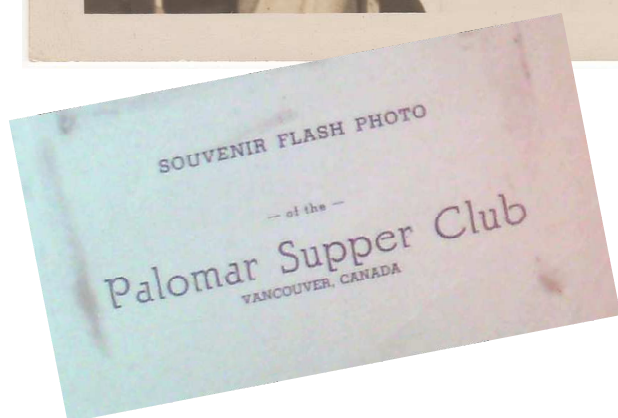
Once again, thank you for taking the time to write. Please accept my best wishes for the future.

Sincerely,

The Rt. Hon. Stephen Harper, P.C., M.P.  
Prime Minister of Canada



The masthead above has been adapted from a British turn of the century men's penny weekly magazine called *Photo-Bits*.

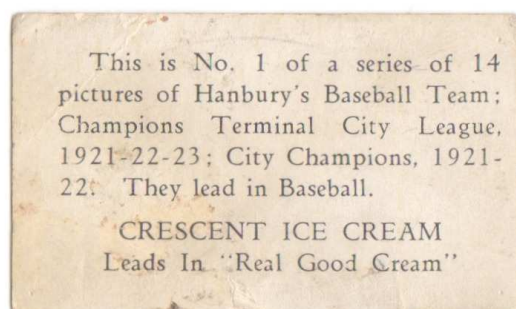
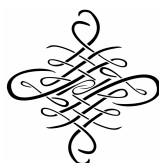
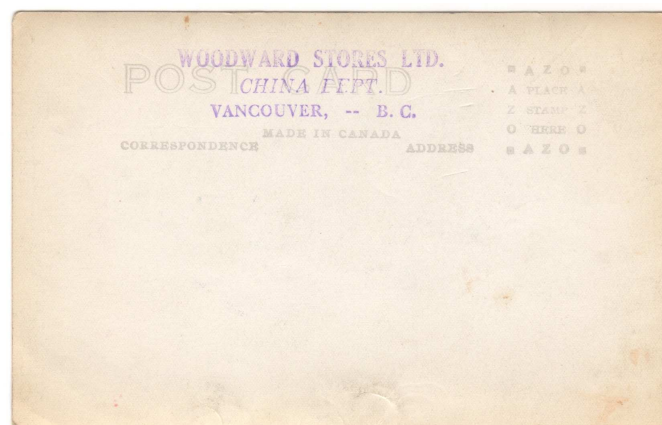


As a followup to Maurice's Night Club talk in March, here's a great table photo from the Palomar in Vancouver believed to be from November of 1950, featuring Sammy Davis Jr. at right, and a straight faced Mel Tormé at his side! The rest of the folks in the photo are as yet unidentified. It's a rare treat to see such a celebrated cast in a table photo!



Woodwards China Department, ca 1920s-30s (pre-1934). Aunt Margery Lester, front row, third from the left. Third from the right is Williamina Robertson, front row.

Images on this page are from Vancouverite Jane Heather, showing the Woodward's China Department in the late 1920s / early 1930s where her Aunt Margery Lester and friend Williamina Robertson worked. It was Margery who introduced Williamina to her brother Jack, and the two were married in 1934. This unposted RPPC shows the entire department in it's heyday with everyone dressed in uniform. A sign overhead announces "The Hostess Shop".



And in his younger days, Jack Lester (mentioned above) was a local baseball legend – he was Hanbury's Baseball Team Mascot! This rare and collectible baseball card is also from Jane Heather, and in fact, Jack Lester was her grandfather. The Vancouver team were champions of the Terminal City League 1921-22-23. This card was the first in a series of 14 cards. A rare treat!

## Mailbag Followup:

In our March/April issue, we were attempting to identify the artist's signature on an editorial cartoon depicting Winston Churchill. Michael Rice wrote in with a suggestion, stating:

"I believe the signature is Patrick MacGill (1890-1963), who was best known as an author and poet, but also did artistic work as a cartoonist from WW1 through and post WW2. The signature is in 2 lines - P Mac ...and then it swoops around with a large "G", followed on the lower line with ... "ill". Just a strong feeling about it..... others' thoughts may vary !!"

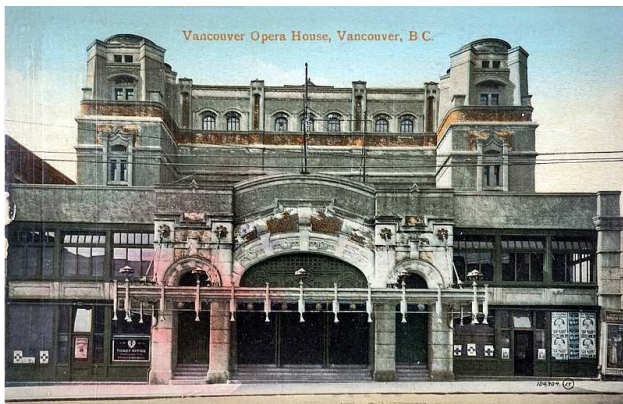
Thanks so much to Michael for the reply! We tend to agree, Patrick MacGill is a very likely candidate! An Irish expat who moved to USA in 1930. Perhaps delving into his biographies could provide a few more clues where this cartoon could have first ran. Postcard mysteries never cease to amaze! Well done, Michael!

## Vancouver Postcard Show and Sale

Sunday, May 28, 2017

10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Hastings Community Centre,  
3096 East Hastings Street, Vancouver, BC



Admission is free, but donations are gladly accepted.

## The Vimy Ridge Centennial Anniversary

by Jason Vanderhill

April 9, 2017 marked the 100th anniversary of the battle of Vimy Ridge, and on this special occasion, we were privileged to have local military historian Fred Hazell as our guest speaker. Armed with a collection of physical artifacts from the War, as well as his collection of WWI postcards, Fred presented close to 100 cards in an hour. The presentation was not chronological, nor was it a comprehensive history lesson on the causes and consequences of the war. Instead, it was a frank look at the postcard as a document of the war.



Postcard portrait from Fred Hazell's collection, annotated on the back as Jack, killed 26<sup>th</sup> of March, 1917, the First Battle of Gaza, Egypt.

From the presentation emerged a few types of postcards; on the one hand, there was the staged portrait of the soldier, often times in the comfort of a photo studio, before reaching the battlefield. On the other hand, there was the documentary view from the battlefield, showing the horrors of the trench warfare, and the direct impacts of combat.

But even when seeing the view from the front lines, we could not always be certain what exactly it was we were looking at. Who's side were we on, and which uniform were we looking at? Was this scene staged in some manner, or was it in fact, taken from the enemy, and used as fodder in a propaganda war of postcards? Fake news, even in WWI, was a thing.

Fred's knowledge and skill were tested on occasion. There were times when just a hint of a uniform was visible, often with little or no captions on the back of the postcard to provide explanation, and Fred was still able to identify a most likely country of origin. There were even occasions when Fred's expertise could be used to debunk annotations that were clearly incorrect, based on the what the picture actually depicted. The fog of war, indeed! Very special thanks to Fred for his presentation!

— JV

# The Back Page

by Jason Vanderhill



This handmade postcard comes from the Surrey Archives collection, and has the distinction of being signed by the soldier in the photograph, Rupert Girard Sweetland. We can see from the illustrations that Rupert was stationed in Mesopotamia, what looks like 1915-1917. From the Veterans Affairs website, we can learn a bit more about him. A member of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, 3<sup>rd</sup> Division, he was the son of Mrs. A. Sweetland, of 1410, Sixth Avenue, New Westminster, BC. Tragically, he was killed January 26, 1917 very shortly after this postcard was sent. He is buried in the Amara War Cemetery in Iraq. His memorial page is here:



Special thanks to the Surrey Archives for the above postcard (SMA89.23).

<http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/canadian-virtual-war-memorial/detail/630408>

## Postview

*Postview* is the newsletter of the Vancouver Postcard Club. Published four times a year it contains articles about the postcard collecting hobby and related matters. The views contained in the newsletter are those of the Editors and Contributors, where shown, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Vancouver Postcard Club.

Although every effort has been made to check the accuracy of articles, neither the Vancouver Postcard Club nor its officers or members are liable for any errors or omissions. The Editor of the current issue Jason Vanderhill, a board member and social media editor for the Club. Any questions or concerns may be addressed to him at [jasonvanderhill@yahoo.ca](mailto:jasonvanderhill@yahoo.ca).