

Postview

The Newsletter of the Vancouver Postcard Club

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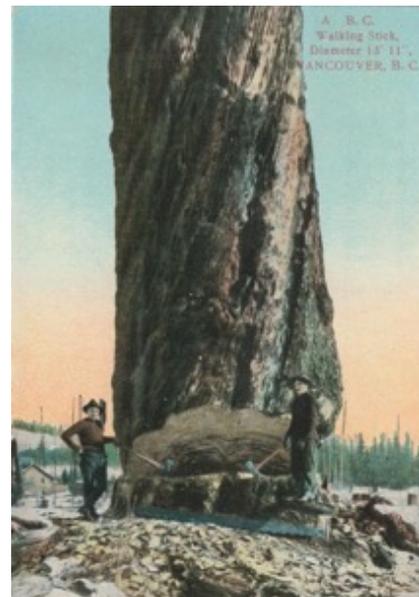
"The Granville Bridge from Fairview, Vancouver, B.C." European Import Co., 1911.

Season's Greetings

The Holiday Season arrived early at the monthly Vancouver Postcard Club meeting on November 2nd when Neil Whaley showed this little gem from his postcard collection. Titled "English Bay, Vancouver, B.C.", the postcard was mailed to Mrs. Hewetson, Kelowna, Okanagan from her friend Dorothy Lamb in Vancouver in the afternoon of Dec. 17, 1910, and delivered on Dec. 19. After sending her best wishes "for a jolly Xmas and a very happy New Year", Dorothy adds – "This looks somewhat chilly for this time of year – does it not?"

In the style of local photographers Bullen & Lamb, but unidentified, this postcard checks all the boxes for Neil – a high-quality real photo postcard that tells a story about Vancouver in the pre-WWI years - with the bonus of an unusual view of the English Bay Pier in the background. Season's Greetings to all our readers!

Stand clear!



"A B.C. Walking Stick, Diameter 13' 11", Vancouver, B.C." European Import Co., Chromo-Serie No. 87, 1910.



We don't envy the task of these tree fellers as they pose for a photo beside one of Vancouver's last great "monarchs of the forest". One of the themes of this issue of *Postview* is the contribution postcards can make to B.C. social history (sometimes referred to as "history from below") - postcards illustrating the day-to-day activities of ordinary people. Fortunately for social historians, the B.C. logging industry is well documented in postcards, like the one above from 1910.

Vancouver Postcard Club News

Club President's Message

Rein Stamm writes: For those following along at home, a recap of our monthly presentations. Here is what you missed:

September 7: The Club was treated to three mini-presentations. **Samir Budhdeo** gave us an interesting overview of Ontario publishers, photographers, and postcards. **Dave Johnson** shared his collection of Blackpool, UK postcards. **Rein Stamm** spoke about women in the Canadian Armed Forces during WWII.



The British Columbia Women's Service Corps was a self-funded volunteer organization formed in the early years of WWII, to support the Canadian military. Headed by Mrs. Joan Kennedy the BCWSC clearly demonstrated that women had a role to play in the war effort; this paved the way for the 1941 creation of the Canadian Women's Army Corp.

October 5: Our presentation was a series of show-and-tells, thanks to: **Art Davies** (Lions Gate Tourist Court, 1946-80); **Fred Hume** (Teresa Waclawik mural & Starlite Theatre, 1990-97); **Tim Woodland** (BC's 10,000 lb Centennial cake, 1958); **Rein Stamm** (35 repro postcards by Pioneer Postcards c.1975); **Jim Burton** (Leonard Frank, Black-faced minstrels c.1910).

The final item from **Bob Horsell** is an unexplored rabbit hole. The 1905 postcard is of a Peigan Indian gathering in Alberta; publisher - Pugh, Toronto. The rabbit hole is in the bottom right-hand corner: Two African gentlemen in uniform, each with a **Pickelhaube** (thanks **Tim M.**), for headgear. Each show-and-tell was followed by a thunderous applause from the meetings appreciative attendees.

November 2: Club members received an early Christmas present from **Neil Whaley** (shown on p. 1.)

Without a doubt Neil's collection of Vancouver postcards and ephemera is one of a kind. It is a collection that should be seen by anyone who has an interest in the early social scene of Vancouver. Simply amazing. Thank you Neil.

Upcoming Club Meetings

The December, January, & February meetings will be at the **Roundhouse Centre**. Our March meeting will be held at the **Roedde House Museum**. All sessions start at 1:00 PM and end at 3:00 PM. Presentations begin at 2:00 PM.

2025

December 7: We meet in Room C for our annual family and friends Christmas cake eating, and coffee, or tea, drinking event. There will not be a formal presentation.

2026

January 4: Room number to be announced. Presentation: Tim Woodland's topic will be a surprise (but maybe BC lighthouses).

February 1: Room number to be announced. Presentation: Ron Leith (of Ron Leith Auctions) will provide an overview of the auction market for postcards, ephemera and philatelic material.

March 1: **NOTE - No Roundhouse meeting.** Instead we meet at Vancouver's **Roedde House Museum**, 1415 Barclay St., to see if we can enroll a few new members. Presentation: Club members' Show & Tell.

April 5: Room number to be announced. Presentation: Peter German's topic will be RCMP Postcards.

May 3: **NOTE - No Roundhouse meeting.** Instead, on **May 9 (Saturday)**, the Club will hold its **Annual Postcard Show & Sale** at Burnaby's Nikkei Centre. Additional details will be posted in the new year. There is still room for a few more dealers; if interested please contact Rein at stamm@telus.net

June 7: Room number to be announced. Presentation: Derren Carman's topic will be the de Havilland Comet Airliner.

July 5: Room Number to be announced. Presentation: Neil Whaley's topic will be early Vancouver Hotels.

Tommy O's

by Fred Hume

This postcard was both a surprise and delight to receive as a gift from a friend. The image acknowledges in part the new Skytrain passing through the Broadway and Commercial area but the feature and source of delight in having this card (also with a little melancholy) is the presence of Tommy O's Off Broadway. This, I suspect, is perhaps the only card depicting my (and family's) favourite restaurant which existed during the years 1978 through 1998.

This card, with its personal connection and memories, is actually clever artwork by talented Vancouver artist Peter Lynd and keeps in mind not only the wonderful meals experienced by my wife, sister and myself but also the man himself, the creator of this iconic Italian restaurant, Tommy O'Bryan.

Tommy (never Tom), was a soft-spoken, modest and meticulous friend and restaurateur. I met Tommy in 1974 when he was putting the finishing touches on his first restaurant, O'Doul's—the original—at Robson and Jervis in the West End. We hit it off, largely because of our mutual interest in baseball, its history and fascinating memorabilia. He soon became a generous and trusting buddy who fancied the three Humes who patronized his popular bar and restaurant. He was definitely hands-on, stressing to staff the importance of cleanliness and organization--- everything just so---as he himself could be seen polishing the brass hand rails and sweeping the parking lot.

Tommy, ever the entrepreneur, moved on from O'Doul's to his ultimate creation, Tommy O's Off Broadway, pleased to say, celebrated on this postcard. Tommy continued his rules of authenticity at his new pride and joy along his keen sense of whimsy and nostalgia. Tommy



O's food and service was legendary with Tommy's fingerprints all over the place...ever present, pitching in, minute details looked after, a definite uncompromising vision.

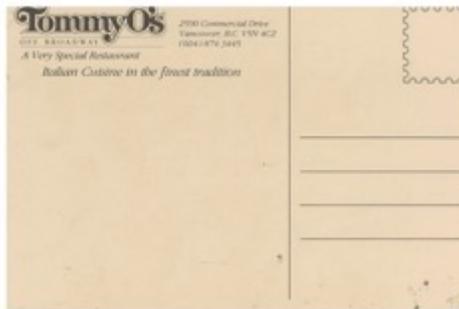
Being regulars we were, frankly, treated royally. We were there not just because of the food, the host and his top-notch staff but also for the special touches only Tommy could provide including Opera singers serenading customers and the presenting to regulars their own personalized beer mugs. Our favourite for twenty years!

As it happens in life, nothing lasts forever and about ten years after this postcard was issued Tommy O's closed and Tommy retired. He had achieved his restaurant dreams together with a sterling reputation and induction into the BC Restaurant Hall of Fame. Tommy O's Off Broadway was his baby, exactly as he wanted it, his high standards always maintained. He cared, yet he made some difficult life sacrifices while carrying out his passion.

About fifteen years following the closing of

Tommy O's our friend Tommy passed away but his memorable Celebration of Life was an exclamation point! As you approached the gathering you were greeted with his legendary Irish Coffee ceremoniously prepared by professional bartenders, a baseball-

themed vintage popcorn machine, restaurant memorabilia, a personal memory lane display, all vintage Tommy—a lot of effort in ensuring his personal touch. It was the most “fun” and impressively unique life celebration we've been to. A great way to go out and be remembered. It was a sad yet happy occasion---there is only one Tommy O's and only one Tommy O'Bryan.



Lance Arnett – A Collector of Social History

in conversation with Philip Francis



“I would have made a great cop” says Lance Arnett wistfully “but they said I didn’t have good enough eyesight.” For much of his childhood, Lance dreamed of joining the RCMP – he had a strong resume of voluntary service and, by age 18 when he applied, Lance had all the attributes of size, athleticism, intellect and community engagement that more than qualified him for a career with the Mounties. But it was not to be.

Instead, the Mounties – or more specifically RCMP collectibles, including clothing, posters, books, photographs, postcards and the hundreds of knick-knacks that carry the iconic Mountie logo – have been a lifelong collecting interest. Lance’s RCMP collection now occupies an entire room in his home just outside 100 Mile House in the South Cariboo.

I dropped in for a conversation with Lance while the weather was still good and before winter tires become mandatory on the Cariboo Highway (Hwy 97) – Oct 1 – Mar 31. Among B.C. postcard collectors, Lance is known and respected for his interest in the social history of British Columbia, particularly the first half of the 20th century. Who better to have a conversation with on what “social history” means and how postcard collecting can contribute? But first, some background.

Lance was born in 1942 in Abbotsford, the second of five children. He went to high school in Abbotsford and after being turned down for the RCMP he followed in

dad’s footsteps, learning a trade and he worked as an apprentice gas fitter with what was then BC Hydro’s Gas Division (sold to Inland Natural Gas in 1988, eventually becoming FortisBC). It was the start of a successful 38-year career as a licensed gas technician – a skilled tradesperson working in residential, commercial and industrial settings. The work involved extensive travel and led to a wide range of personal and business relationships all across B.C.

One of Lance’s happiest achievements in the Gas Division was meeting Norma Joan Reilly, who was then working as a dispatcher at the company. Norma and Lance were married in 1968 and had a son Jeffrey and two grandchildren. In retirement they moved to Lone Butte, 25 kms south of 100 Mile House, and then to Westbank in West Kelowna on Okanagan Lake. Sadly, Norma passed away in 2018 and Lance decided to move back to the Cariboo, buying a property near 100 Mile House. He is an active member of the 100 Mile House Legion and has many good friends in the area.

You know you’re meeting a man with diverse interests when the first thing you see in his living room are two full-sized jukeboxes, both in fine working condition – a classic, art deco Wurlitzer, with bubble tubes and coloured lights and a companion Rock-Ola. “Several of my clients owned cafés and bars and whenever I saw a jukebox I’d ask if they were interested in selling. Well, several were! At one point I had five of them – and that’s when Norma put her foot down...” It is one of the many collecting interests that keep Lance busy and still give him a lot of enjoyment today.

What were some of Lance’s first memories of postcards? “When I was 9 or 10 I remember my mom giving me a couple of shoeboxes of Granny’s old postcards and asking me to sort them. And I loved it!”



W.P. Blackmon, Shredded Wheat Co. 1935. Unknown photographer.

When did you develop an interest in social history? “It wasn’t a conscious decision. I just found that, over time, I had an interest in postcards showing ordinary people “doing things” – it might be a young man working as a sales rep (as shown above); or getting a haircut in a logging camp (“shave and haircut” 50 cts!); or dogs or other animals pulling children in carts (“drafting”); or a group of office workers having fun on a company picnic.” Anything, it seems, that illustrates lived experiences – at work or play, in family life or everyday situations – shopping, working a gas pump, having swimming lessons - people of all ages and ethnicity and how the experiences changed over time.



(Untitled) “Life in a Logging Camp”, Vancouver Island, ca. 1930
Unknown photographer”.

Looking through Lance Arnett’s social history postcard boxes is like stepping back into everyday life in the first half of the 20th century. Focused largely on B.C., Lance has assembled impressive collections of postcards in the logging, mining and hospitality (tourist) industries. It is quite a treat to browse through so many high quality, real photo postcards across such a diverse range of subjects, including Indigenous.

Over time, Lance has traded up for better cards in his areas of interest. In the early days he did a lot of business with Albert Tanner (“we used to trade a couple of boxes at shows”) and Lance was also an active member of the Vancouver Postcard Club in the 80’s and 90’s buying and selling with members and dealers all across B.C. – where his business travels would often take him. From time to time he has bought and sold whole collections – both at auction and privately. He is now a better seller than buyer.



(Untitled) Watson’s “Second Big Boot Bonfire”. Unknown photographer.

Are there special areas of his collection that he’s particularly proud of? “Some of the more rare and valuable cards are early B.C. hunting scenes – bears, wolves and other animals hunted for trophy or antlers etc. In some cases, only a handful of real photos would have been produced, just for the hunters themselves, and I may have the only remaining postcards.”

Any favourite photographers? “We’re fortunate to have had so many world-class photographers to chronicle B.C. history – Philip Timms, C.F. Smith, George Barrowclough, Leonard Frank etc. and I still have a few of their real photos. But these are now worth more to other collectors. In recent years, I’ve seen more value in J.C. Walker postcards – he published some fine black & white street scenes from the 50’s and 60’s.”



(Untitled) “Goat-powered wagon”. ca. 1904. Unknown photographer.

Lance will be offering much of his social history collection for sale at the Vancouver Postcard Show on Saturday 9 May, 2026. You’ll be sure to find many postcards you haven’t seen before from local dealers.

“Collecting has given me enormous enjoyment from an early age” says Lance. “From the days I started trading postcards at the Lougheed swap meet, to the auctions and antique sales in Burnaby, Kelowna and Prince George, to the countless meetings and shows of the Vancouver Postcard Show I’ve had nothing but pleasure and I’ve made many friends along the way. I now want to get my postcards back into the market for future generations of collectors to enjoy.”



(Untitled) “The Log Home”, Prince George, 1928. Unknown photographer.

Vigilante Justice

by Neil Whaley

The Wild West was alive in northern British Columbia when New Hazelton residents shot and killed bank robbers in 1914. Accounts vary widely, and this version is pieced together from newspaper articles.

The police were based in Hazelton three miles away. There was little police presence in New Hazelton and residents were unimpressed with what there was. Hold-up men had escaped with \$16,000 from the same bank five months before.

A gang of seven robbers who split time between Vancouver and the north arrived at New Hazelton's Union Bank soon after it opened on April 7 1914. Armed with rifles, the men took \$35 from a customer, removed \$1,100 from the teller's drawer and ordered staff to open the safe. The safe could only be opened by the bank manager and another employee jointly as each had either half the combination or a key, and bank manager Barrie Tatchell was still on his way to work.

The bandits either fired shots when the employees couldn't open the safe or they fired when bank employees "reached for their guns" as the robbers went to leave. Bank bookkeeper Reay William Fenton suffered a minor scalp wound.

The gunshots alerted the bank manager outside, who went to a nearby hardware store and "summoned a dozen men who got their rifles into play in quick time" including the best rifleman in town, preacher Donald Redmond "Doc" McLean. Some men crouched behind a chest-high two-ton display of ore which the Silver Standard mine was exhibiting 50 yards from the bank. Gunfire was exchanged for 15 minutes, and New Hazelton women brought fresh supplies of ammunition to the local men.

When the bandits dashed for the bush, two were killed on the spot and a third died in hospital later. The local men pursued the rest, wounding and capturing three of the remaining four; the ringleader escaped with the money. The gang had a camp two miles from town.

The manager of the town's drugstore used his newly installed telephone to call the Hazelton police station and hospital. Two doctors treated the injured. The police chief and one officer arrived after the action was over and took the three into custody. The police arrived *unarmed*. Hazelton's newspaper The Omineca Herald dryly suggested that the last robber was "likely to remain free unless he presents himself to Prince Rupert's new provincial police chief." The three dead

robbers are buried in what was then known as the Indian cemetery.

The three who were captured, "big strapping men of desperate appearance", were sentenced to 20 years in prison. Newspapers described the robbers as Russian labourers. The men's defence was that after arriving from Russia, the other members of the gang coerced them into crime. One of the convicts was released after 12 years for good behavior on the condition that he leave Canada.

When I told the story to a friend, his first question was whether the residents were charged in the killings. No, the bank held a banquet for them, "the largest and best banquet yet served in the northern part of this province." The bank's Victoria manager and its Vancouver superintendent travelled to New Hazelton to organize the evening and to lead toasts to the citizens. "Many optimistic remarks were made upon the future which was bound to come to a city of such unbounded public spirit.



"Apr. 7. 1914. The New Hazelton Bank Robbery. Two Dead Robbers." Photo. by WWW.

This real photo postcard by WW Wrathall was purchased on eBay earlier this year. Two robbers are lying on a wooden sidewalk on Pugsley Street in New Hazelton. This same photo was published in BC newspapers within a week of the crime - **Neil Whaley**.

Editor's Note: Congratulations to Neil on a recent mention in a book by Jamie Jelinsky - ***Needle Work: A History of Commercial Tattooing in Canada***, published by McGill as part of their Canadian Foundation Studies in Art History Series. The author asked permission to include a 1913 real photo postcard of a Vancouver arcade from Neil's private collection, for which Neil received recognition.

Stephen J. Thompson: An “unsung hero” among Canadian photographers – by Ron Souch and Philip Francis

Few early Canadian photographers have had more impact on the development of postcard photography in British Columbia than Stephen J. Thompson (1864-1929). David Mattison, former archivist at the B.C. Archives in Victoria, and the leading authority on B.C. photographers, describes Thompson as “among the most important and so far least noticed commercial practitioners of the art of “shadow-catching” (photography) in the last years of 19th century British Columbia...Several of Thompson’s contemporaries mirrored aspects of his career, but few could equal the exceptional quality of his imagery.”¹

Stephen Joseph Thompson was born in Ontario in 1864 and, following his education, he started in business in 1883, moving to New Westminster, B.C. in 1885 or 1886. By 1889, he had established his own photography business in New Westminster, offering both studio portraits and landscape views, several series of which were commissioned by the government to advertise and attract settlers to western Canada. An early example of his studio portraiture is shown below, credited on the back with “S.J. Thompson, Artistic Photographer, Bromide Portraits, Family Groups etc., finished in Indian Ink or Crayon...Views of British Columbia Scenery always on hand.”



Captain Charles M. MacNaughton, commander of No. 1 Battery, B.C.G.A. Born 1855 in Sydney, Nova Scotia. Died Dec. 4, 1889.

With the opening of an art store and portrait studio at 610 Granville St., Vancouver, in 1897, Thompson’s business flourished. He was married on Dec. 29, 1897 to Constance Victoria Clute in New Westminster.

¹ David Mattison: *Picturesque British Columbia: The Life and Photographs of S.J. Thompson*. Journal of the West, vol. 26, no. 2 (April 1987), pp. 17 – 26.

Throughout the 1890’s, Thompson travelled widely, photographing scenes along the newly-opened Canadian Pacific Railway, from Ontario to B.C. His spectacular images of the Canadian Rockies, Selkirk Mountains and Lake Louise are among his best-known work. He was also one of the few photographers of that era who photographed Canada’s Indigenous peoples, particularly in Alberta and the North West.

Stephen Thompson’s scenic photography was much in demand during the “Golden Age” of picture postcards. Between 1904 and 1909, Thompson Studio published 300 - 400 of Thompson’s 1,400 or so numbered views of Western Canada that have so far been identified, some 200 of which are known to be B.C. postcards.²

During this period Thompson continued to travel extensively and many of his picture postcards introduced the magnificent scenery of Western Canada to an eager public in Britain and Europe. Meanwhile, he gave a start to many young photographers, one of whom – Philip T. Timms – would eventually take over the studio, when Thompson retired in 1911. His glass negatives were bought by Shaw Bros of Vancouver, who continued to publish them as postcards.



No. 867 – Group of Canadian North west Indians
Stephen J. Thompson, Publisher, Vancouver, B.C.

Thompson’s postcards (not to be confused with those of Thomson Stationery) were produced in several formats, mostly numbered and easily identifiable. The majority are half-tone printings made in England by John Walker & Co. Ltd. of London (a distinctive “anchor” logo on the back is the Walker trademark).

There are also many coloured lithochromes (printed in Germany), B&W collotype postcards and a small number of real photos. Since Thompson’s postcards were often produced in large quantities, they are still readily available to collectors, at more reasonable prices than many lesser photographers of that era.

² B.R. Souch: *Picture Postcards of Western Canada by Early B.C. Photographer Stephen J. Thompson* (A Listing Compiled by B.R. Souch in 2003).

Back Page Miscellany

Tuck Postcards of the CPR

Many told us how much they enjoyed author Tom W. Larkin's article, "A Postcard Diary", a fictional exchange of postcards from Glacier House in the Selkirk Mountains (*Postview*, Summer 2025 issue). Tom, a member of the Vancouver Postcard Club, is currently planning a magazine feature story about Tuck 'Oilette art' postcards pertaining to the Canadian Pacific (its steamships, trains, and hotels). He has asked if there are any Club members who could help him dissect the themes and timelines of such cards in Canada? If so, Tom (tomparkin1951@gmail.com) would like to speak with you. The story Tom is putting together looks at how the CPR marketed itself, and its routes.



Canadian Rockies, Banff Hotel and Bow Valley. Raphael Tuck & Sons, Oilette, The Canadian Rockies, Series 1, Postcard 7783, 1911. Philip Francis Collection

Can you identify -

this group of men and women and the event? Here's a clue – that's the late and much-loved Fred Thirkell on the extreme left...(spoiler alert! – the answer is below!).



The answer – it's the Vancouver Postcard Club's 10th Anniversary Celebration, December 17, 1991. Sadly, a number of the postcard luminaries of that year are no longer with us – in addition to Fred, we see the late Abe Charkow, Don Steele, Stan Stewardson, Albert Tanner and Margaret Waddington (front row centre). The good news is that, 34 years later, several early members of the Club are still active postcard collectors

– perhaps you can identify a few? We see Ron Souch, for example, and at the centre of the back row, a youthful Lance Arnett, who kindly forwarded this great photo.

Calling our Postcard Sleuths!

We often come across unidentified places and events in our postcard searches. Unfortunately, many early photographers didn't sign or date their photos or weren't credited by the publishers (who themselves are often unidentified). And we're often asked for help in locating a particularly view, or identifying a photographer, and it's sometimes possible to make an informed guess, based on style and date or region in which the photographer was known to work. But we have to admit that we were floored by the following two real photos, both from B.C. collections and wonder if you have any ideas? Answers on a postcard please!

The late John Cheramy has written "Hospital" on the back of this postcard from the early 1900's.



This lovely real photo has railway tracks in the foreground; the taller building at right has "E. Rogers Flour & Feed Store" above the first-floor windows:



Postview

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