

ArchivesNews

A publication of the City of Richmond Archives
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New Community Records

The City of Richmond Archives preserves, protects and makes accessible both municipal and community records. We accept donations of records from the community that reflect the social, political and economic life of Richmond and provide informational, research and historical value to current researchers and future generations. Richmond's documentary heritage is uniquely reflected in community records in a way that could never be captured in municipal records. With gratitude, this issue of *Archives News* highlights two special community acquisitions recently added to our holdings.

Harada family photo albums - 1900-1970.

The Harada family has deep roots in Richmond dating back to 1908 when Eikichi Harada emigrated from Japan. Eikichi was born in Ibusuke on the island of Kyushu. Eikichi's granddaughter Jeanne Ryan and family donated 13 photo albums consisting of approximately 1,200 photographs and 100 negatives. Documenting multiple generations of the Harada extended family, their friends and work mates, this photographic record pays tribute to an entire community's strength and resilience. Researchers for generations to come will benefit from this important donation.



Jeanne in the Archives Reference Room with photo albums compiled by her father Eiichi Harada.
City of Richmond Archives photograph.



Jeanne in Alberta, ca. 1949-1950.
City of Richmond Archives, photograph #2023 13 5 28.



Eiichi Harada with daughter Linda, ca. 1952-1953. Photograph was taken in front of the Chinese workers bunkhouse, located across from the Hong Wo Store.
City of Richmond Archives, photograph #2023 13 5 120.

Save Richmond Farmland Society records - 1986-2014.

Save Richmond Farmland Society formed in 1987 in opposition to Council's plans to remove Terra Nova, a 465 acre parcel of land in the north-western corner of Richmond, from the ALR (Agricultural Land Reserve) and rezone it for housing. Former Terra Nova resident Pat Montgomery had begun a petition to oppose this removal, and, in late 1986, the petition was presented to Council during a hearing on the Official Community Plan. The Society grew to over 1000 paid members. They raised significant funds to challenge a component of the 1988 public hearing process for Bylaws 5110 and 5115, resulting in the matter going to the Supreme Court of Canada in 1990. During the November 16, 1996 municipal election, voters passed a referendum question that authorized the City to borrow up to \$28,538,500 to purchase land in the area. Prior to this, some of the land adjacent to the dyke had been acquired by the City through various negotiations. Today, Terra Nova Rural Park and Natural Area is a 100 acre site offering immersive natural experiences, walks among farms and gardens, and breathtaking views of the Salish Sea. The Park we enjoy now is in large part thanks to the grassroots community efforts of Save Richmond Farmland Society. The Society's records were donated to the Archives by Marion Smith, a key figure in the Society since its inception.



"Save Terra Nova" bumper sticker

City of Richmond Archives accession #2012 51.



Marion Smith in May 2023 with a City van filled with boxes of Save Richmond Farmland Society records. Photograph was taken in Terra Nova Rural Park.
City of Richmond Archives photograph.

From the Richmond Archives Blog

Peace Together - Ling Lam & the Hong Wo Store

2023 marks 100 years since the passing of the Chinese Immigration Act. Also known as the Chinese Exclusion Act, from 1923 to 1947, fewer than 100 Chinese people were allowed to enter into Canada. Richmond has been home to many Chinese-Canadian families over the decades. The following article, written by John Campbell, Friends of the Richmond Archives Social Media Coordinator, features the Lam family. The Lam family operated Richmond's first grocery store. The online version of this article, which includes many more photos and images than is shown here, may be accessed at: www.richmondarchives.ca.

In the late 19th Century, a teenage boy arrived in Victoria from China and began working in a store owned by members of his family. A year later Ling Lam moved to Vancouver where he studied English at the Chinese Methodist Church and worked in the canneries in Steveston. He started out in business by teaching himself how to bake bread and peddled buns door-to-door around Steveston. In 1895 he bought property and opened a store which became one of those places that embeds itself into a community's collective memory.

Ling Lam named his business Hong Wo, meaning "Peace Together" or "Living in Harmony". Located outside the dyke near the foot of Trites Road and near the Nelson Brothers Cannery, the place was a true General Store. If you couldn't get what you needed at the Hong Wo Store, you probably couldn't get it anywhere. The building was located adjacent to a wharf where fishboats could tie up and get supplies before the next fisheries opening. To streamline the process an order form was developed and issued to the fisherman who could check off the items they needed and the order would be ready for pickup at the specified time. He sold provisions to fishermen, canneries, boatbuilders, farmers and the general public.



Translating as "Peace Together" or "Living in Harmony", this sign was located on the wall inside the Hong Wo Store and is now one of four signs from the store in the Richmond Museum's collection. City of Richmond Collection 006.23.20.

The lot that Mr. Lam had built his store on was approximately 235 feet wide by 425 feet long (2.27 acres), and extended over the dyke to the high water line. Mr. Lam also acquired acreage north of that lot which was bordered on the north side by the CN Railway right-of-way and on the east by Trites Road (1.3 acres). Open fields to the north of the railway line (11.03 acres) became his farmlands, another arm of his business.

Once Ling Lam had his retail and farming businesses running, he returned to China to get married. When he was joined by his wife in Canada they lived in an apartment above the store. Around 1908 the store was destroyed by fire and the family moved into a cannery house until the new store was built. The Lam children walked three miles along the dyke into Steveston to go to school. With the business and farm prospering, Mr. Lam moved the family into a house in East Vancouver around 1914.

To order stock for the store in the early days, Mr. Lam would ride a bike to New Westminster to his supplier's offices. The order for the season would be delivered by boat to the wharf and shed behind the store. The bicycle was eventually retired when a telephone was hooked up in the store, one of the first in Richmond, and orders could be phoned in.



Ling Lam
City of Richmond Archives accession #2013 52.



Entrance to the Hong Wo General Store in 1969.
City of Richmond Archives, photograph #2006 13 13.

Around 1914 Mr. Lam began to act as a labour contractor to two canneries, providing seasonal Chinese workers. He also employed the workers on his farms, supplying accommodations, food and a cook for a temporary crew of about 30 during the growing season and harvest. A full time foreman, assistant and truck driver were also employed.

During its peak, the farms owned by Mr. Lam produced tomatoes from about 30 greenhouses. Potatoes and beans were grown in the open fields along with a large crop of cucumbers for pickles. A complex of buildings was built on the lots south of the rail line. These included a pickle factory, complete with at least 20 eight-foot deep concrete vats for brining, storage buildings and greenhouses. Several bunkhouses were located on the property as well as a cookhouse with a large brick and metal wok and a building where barrels were assembled. Mr. Lam also invented a machine to sort cucumbers for dill pickles, a product which formed a large part of his farming business.

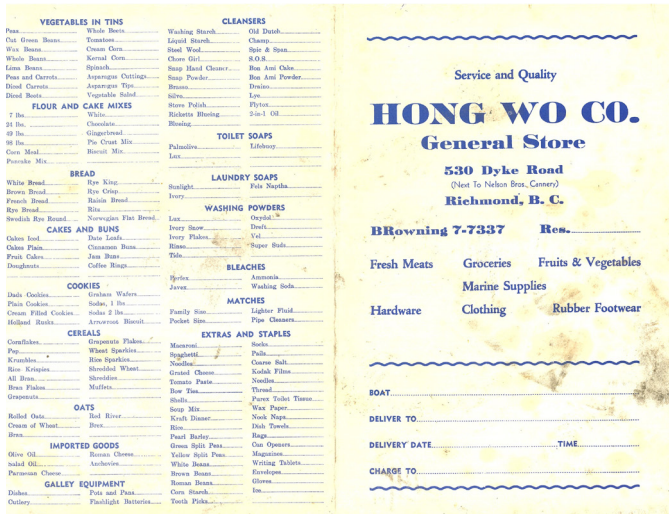
As reported by his daughter Jessie Lam Ross in a 1968 *Richmond Review* newspaper article, “He was a big name among the Chinese growers. He contracted with Empress, Royal City, Nalley’s, and other companies, and kept about 250 acres under cultivation in Steveston. Day and night he was on the go. He used to haul cukes in and pile them in huge stacks for the dill pickles.”

Ling Lam was also very active in Vancouver’s Chinese community, acting as the chairman of the Chinese Merchant’s Association, serving as an Elder in the Chinese United Church and starting the Chinese Farmer’s Association. He was known as a dedicated, principled, hard working man.

“I never saw him in work clothes,” his daughter Jessie remembered,” He always wore a blue serge suit and, in the summer, a shirt and tie and blue serge pants. He only took two holidays in his life, and then it was to go to California to look for seeds.”

After Mr. Lam’s death in 1939, his son George Lam and daughter Jessie Lam Ross took over his business, operating his store until 1971. With the store’s closure the property and buildings on it began to deteriorate, causing concern for the owners of nearby cannery buildings after several fires had been extinguished by the Richmond Fire Department. Efforts by the Steveston Historical Society to have the Hong Wo buildings declared a heritage site proved to be in vain and the store and surrounding buildings were destroyed in 1977.

While the Hong Wo Store has been gone for nearly half a century its 75 years of service to industry and community make it one of the unique components of Richmond’s history. The store’s story and that of Ling Lam, a self-made man who built a thriving business from humble beginnings, are memorialized in a sign at the corner of Trites Road and Westwater Drive near the location of his pickle factory.



Filling out this order form would ensure that your order would be ready and waiting for you to pick up at the wharf behind the Hong Wo Store.

City of Richmond Archives accession #2013 46.

Who Uses the Archives?

What is an Archives? How can archival records be used as a resource for teachers? We were thrilled to welcome School District No. 38 this spring. Teachers-in-training (referred to as teacher candidates) were introduced to the Archives in two separate Community Field Experience workshops.



Elementary School Teacher Candidates
City of Richmond Archives photograph.



Secondary School Teacher Candidates
City of Richmond Archives photograph.



Artist Julie Pappajohn in the Archives Reference Room working on her City Hall Galleria exhibit entitled “Ditch.” On display until September 19, 2023, Julie’s exhibit draws from personal memory, collected stories, and archival materials. Her exhibit commemorates her childhood growing up in Richmond from the 1950s to the 1970s. The title references the exposed drainage ditches situated in front of many houses in Richmond of that era.

City of Richmond Archives photograph.



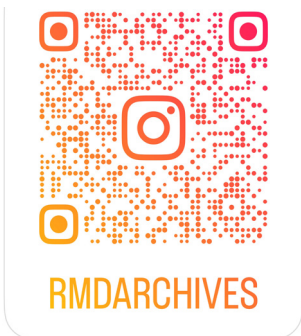
2022 Donations

In 2022, the Friends gratefully received \$1,445.00 in donations. Your generous donations help to support: the Social Media program; the Digitization Program; the Community Exhibit program; the annual Archives Tea; and more.

The Friends of the Richmond Archives is a registered charity and welcomes donations to assist with its activities to support the City of Richmond Archives. A receipt for income tax purposes will be issued for donations over \$10.

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Archives

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Public Reference Room Hours:
 Monday–Thursday: 9:00am–4:30pm
 Appointment recommended

With Gratitude to Dody Wray

The Archives Welcomes an Archives Intern in September

It's not every day that the Friends of the Richmond Archives receive an exceptionally generous donation of \$25,000. Long time friend and supporter of the Archives, Geraldine (Dody) Wray, did just that. After Dody passed away in September 2018, daughter Jackie Brown found a post-it note in a drawer that expressed Dody's wishes to have \$25,000 donated to both the Friends of the Richmond Archives and the Regional Animal Protection Society (RAPS).

Due to the pandemic, the Friends have been unable to embark on a project funded by the Dody Wray Special Project Fund. This changed, however, when the Friends successfully applied for and received a federal Young Canada Works Building Careers in Heritage grant earlier this year. It is the hope that this will be the first of three grants that the Friends will receive over the next couple of years, thereby maximizing what can be done with Dody's generous donation. For this year's grant, the Archives has hired an Archives Intern who will work full-time from September to December 2023. The Archives Intern will work with both community and City records.

The projects that will be worked on include:

- (1) History of Education Photo Exhibit;
- (2) Community television records;
- (3) Government Publications; and
- (4) Planning & Development Dept. slides.

Hiring a young professional to work on these important projects is exciting news. Dody was an educator in Richmond so hiring an up-and-coming archivist is a fitting way to honour Dody's legacy and her generous gift to the Friends and our community. Please stay tuned for further updates in upcoming editions of *Archives News*.



Dody Wray at the 2017 Tea. Dody joined the board of the Friends of the Richmond Archives in 1998. She published books and was active with the Friends long after she left the Board in 2012. City of Richmond Archives photograph.

Friends AGM

On March 29th, the Friends of the Richmond Archives held their Annual General Meeting. Our first in-person AGM since 2019, we were very grateful to all the members who attended this important meeting.

At this yearly business meeting, the Friends review the previous year, report on financial matters, and adopt a work plan and budget for the upcoming year. At the AGM, the following slate of officers were elected for 2023-2024: Christine McGilvray (President), Ron Hyde (Vice President), Jackie Brown (Secretary), Jon Henderson (Treasurer), John Campbell (Director) and Precilla Huang (Director).

Following the AGM, all members received copies of a selection of AGM materials such as the President's Report, the Archivist's Report, the Work Plan and Budget.



FOTRA Executive: John Campbell, Precilla Huang, Jackie Brown, Christine McGilvray, Jon Henderson, and Ron Hyde. City of Richmond Archives photograph.