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# ARCHIVES

news



## “[www.richmond.ca/archives](http://www.richmond.ca/archives)”

In 1996 the Friends of the Richmond Archives supported the purchase of the Archives’ first scanner. In a newsletter article archivist Ken Young, said, “This technology has great potential for the Archives.” He continued that it may be possible to have the scanned images appear on computer screens, “allowing remote access to holdings 24 hours a day.” A lot has happened in 12 years!

### In The Works

The August/September issue of the Archives Newsletter will bring you up to the minute on Minutes. We will show some examples of the Township’s earliest Minutes and talk about new projects using today’s technologies to make these important municipal records more accessible.

We now have six virtual exhibits including two full books, 1,300 maps and 8,500 photographs available for viewing and accessible through searchable databases. It is also possible to search online the finding aids to all the archival records in our holdings. The most recent additions to online resources are the book “History of Lulu Island” by Thomas Kidd and the transcriptions of both volumes of the Henry Barker Letter Books.

It was only 10 years ago that the first 4,200 photographs were scanned and made available on a relatively new City of Richmond website. At that time the City Archives was one of the first archival repositories in Canada to have its own separate web pages with searchable finding aids, and photographs. Staff had also made it possible to search the Archives main descriptions database which listed descriptions and file titles for the miles of documentary holdings. (Continued on Page 2.)

## Richmond's Postal History by Bill McNulty

“Before the advent of rapid communication, little was looked for with more anticipation than the arrival of the mail, a letter from a loved one, news of the ‘outside’.” With this sentence local author and historian Bill McNulty sets the scene for another in the series of Richmond Archives books about the development of our community.

This is the fifth in a series of local history books to use the resources of the City of Richmond Archives in helping us understand more about the origins of our community. The books are published by the City of Richmond Archives with funds provided by the Friends of the Richmond Archives. The goals of the publishing program, in addition to a general enrichment of the community, are to use the resources within the City Archives and make them accessible to the public; and to acquire new holdings related to the subjects at hand. In this case, some new photographs and documentary materials related to Richmond's postal history have been acquired.

The author, Bill McNulty, is recently retired after a long career as an educator at Magee Secondary School in Vancouver. He has served continuously as a Councillor for the City of Richmond since being elected in 1993. Councillor McNulty has been able to meld two of his interests - local history and philately – into the production of this book. Mr. McNulty has been a volunteer at the City of Richmond Archives for 18 months working on additions to the Reference Files in the subject area of demographics.

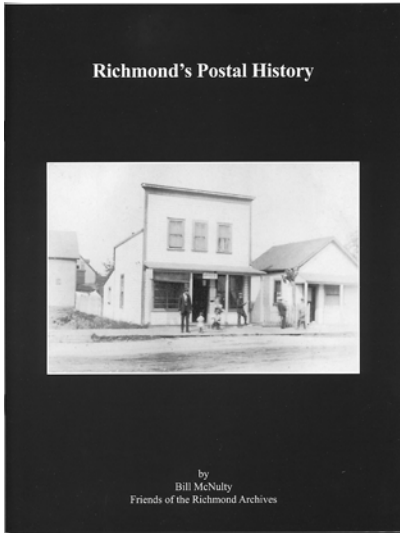
The book has followed the format of several recent publications that have looked closely at the development of the school system in Richmond, Sea Island, the South Arm neighbourhood, and the sports of thoroughbred horse racing and lacrosse. The book, “Richmond's Postal History,” is available for sale at the Archives, Cultural Centre Information Desk, Chapters and Coles in Richmond, and the Steveston Museum.

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Every new project has been supported financially by the Friends of the Richmond Archives and by grants from either the National Archives Development Program, the Irving K. Barber Library at UBC, or , during the 1990s, the now discontinued Provincial Community Archives Assistance Program.

The Archives staff annually handles between 1,500 and 1,800 reference requests from phone, email, and in-person visits. These figures were far exceeded in 2007 by more than 325,000 page views of photographs, finding aids, and virtual exhibits on the Archives web pages. As Ken Young predicted 12 years ago, this technology has great potential for the Archives.



McNeill's Mail Stage at Steveston, circa 1900. City of Richmond Archives Photograph 1984 17 12.



Gertrude Chilton, 1913. City of Richmond Archives Photograph 2006 39 6.



Moncton Street looking east, 1945, from the photograph album of Ruth Yuswack. City of Richmond Archives photograph 2003 30 37.

## Family Albums - Community Treasures A New Exhibit at City of Richmond Archives

Usually thought of as a treasure only to immediate family, often the family photograph album has great value to a community archives. The Chilton family album is one of these. A carefully restored photograph of a Steveston street scene was used on the cover of Bill McNulty's new book, "Richmond's Postal History" - see the back page of this newsletter. Photographs from this album are forming the basis of the new exhibit at the City of Richmond Archives Reference Room which opened during Heritage Week in February.

This remarkable collection of family photos was taken between 1913 and about 1920. The Chiltons came first to Steveston in 1914 when Albert Chilton became an employee of the Northern Crown Bank. One of the family members, thought to be an aunt visiting from England, was an avid photographer who captured many street scenes in the village. In some cases her photos are among the very few we have of some buildings and activities and demonstrate unique integration between Canadians of Japanese and European backgrounds.

The Family Albums Exhibit also contains images collected by Renate Wahl after her immigration to Richmond following World War II. In this era before ESL she had to be in classes with students several years younger than herself. Education must have been important to her as she carefully kept all her class photographs, many of them new to the Archives' holdings.

Ruth Yuswack's albums containing photos taken by her and her brother David Lockett, show us what Steveston and the fishing industry looked like without Japanese Canadians who had been interned during and after World War II. The women hired temporarily to cover these labour shortages became a permanent part of the Canadian workforce.



Renate Wahl as a young girl newly arrived in Richmond, circa 1946. City of Richmond Archives Photograph 2007 23 1.

## Friends of the Richmond Archives

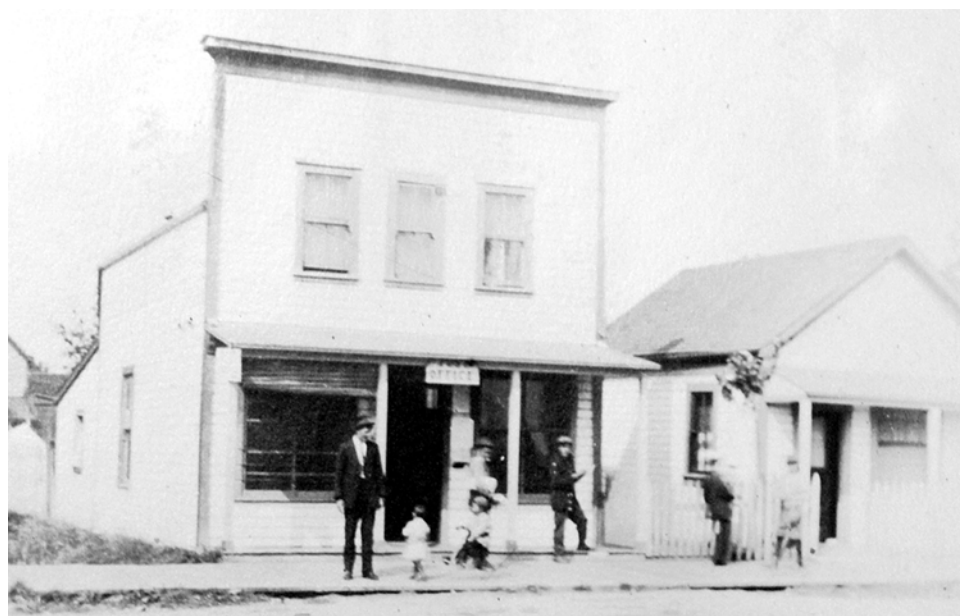
The Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the Richmond Archives will be held March 19, 7:00 pm at the Archives Reference Room. This is the yearly business meeting at which the Friends elect a new executive and committee chairs, report on financial matters, and set a budget for the coming year.

The membership year for the Friends runs from October 1 to September 30. Those members who are in arrears are encouraged to send their fee (a very low \$5 per person) to the Friends, in care of the City of Richmond Archives, 7700 Minoru Gate, Richmond, BC V6Y 1R9. Telephone to 604 247-8305 if you aren't sure about your membership status.

This is one of the best membership deals in Richmond! Members receive an invitation to the annual Archives Tea, two newsletters per year, and have the satisfaction of knowing that their fees support a unique publishing program that has seen the production of 8 books of local history in the last 10 years.

The Friends also use their funds to purchase specialized archival equipment for the City of Richmond Archives. They have endowed a UBC award for students in the Masters of Archival Studies Program and over the years have supported a number of award programs for local students.

The Friends welcome donations. The Society is a registered charity and can issue tax receipts for amounts over \$10.00.



A Steveston Post Office in 1914. City of Richmond Archives Photograph 2006 39 17.

## CSI Methods Solve Photograph Mystery

The photograph above was taken in 1914 and those involved in the publication of the new book on Richmond's Postal History by Bill McNulty debated whether or not to use it. While we thought the sign over the door read, "Post Office," the photo quality was such that we were not certain.

City of Richmond Graphics Coordinator Morgan Muir used advanced photo correction techniques on the old photograph to heighten the resolution and prove that the sign did, in fact, read, "Post Office." He scanned it at a very high resolution to capture more image detail, and used levels and curves in PhotoShop to enhance the detail in the shadows and highlights of the image. Readers who are "CSI" fans will be familiar with these tactics as they are the same used by the TV crime scene heroes to extract licence plate numbers from the most blurry of surveillance videos.

This was not end of the questions we had about the photo. It was found in the Chilton family album, currently being featured in an exhibit in the Archives Reference Room. On the album page it reads, "Noted Buildings in Steveston,



Morgan Muir at work at City Hall.

B.C." but fails to give a street address. Information from Canada Post states that the post office in Steveston that year was in the Hepworth Building which is a large brick building at the southeast corner of Moncton Street and 2nd Avenue. This may have been a temporary location. This is yet another mystery for local historians to solve.



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Public Reference Room Hours  
Monday - Thursday 9:00-4:30  
Appointment recommended