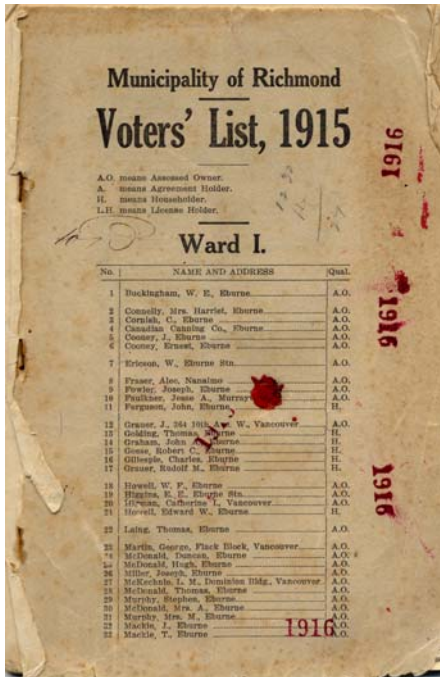


ARCHIVES

news



Front page of voters' list, 1915
 City of Richmond Archives, MR35, File VL-1915

Focus on the Record: "Election Records"

This is the second of an ongoing series of articles on the types of government records housed at the City of Richmond Archives. This issue of Archives News examines records at the Archives relating to municipal elections.

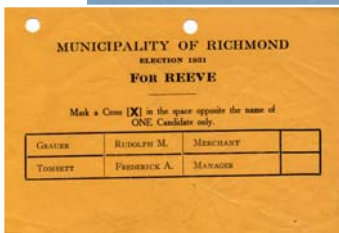
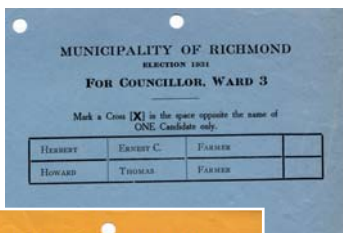
With municipal election day nearing (Saturday, November 19, 2011), we thought it timely to provide an overview of the records in the holdings of the City of Richmond Archives relating to past elections. These records not only provide evidence of election procedures, nominations and final results, but also document the evolution of voting rights and voting systems in the municipality.

Official election results, dating back to the first municipal election in 1880, can be found in the reports of the Returning Officer/Chief Election Officer. These reports form part of the minutes of Council, and are accessible to researchers at the Archives on microfilm. The original minutes are housed in the Archives' vault. The reports document the precise vote count for all candidates and for all referenda or plebiscites put to the electorate. It is interesting to note that although the first election for Council was carried out in January, 1880, the first actual balloting occurred with the election for Council of 1889. Prior to this date, all candidates had been elected by acclamation.

Council minutes, and various bylaws, also document the establishment of a ward system for Council representation. Initially, the municipality was divided into three wards but for the municipal election of 1891, five wards were established. All voters in the municipality could vote for Reeve (the term used before the adoption of the title "Mayor") but those registered on the voters' list for a specific ward or district could only vote for a councillor nominated to represent that ward. Ward 1 constituted Sea Island, Ward 2 the northwest part of Lulu Island, Ward 3 Steveston and area, Ward 4 most of the South Arm and parts of eastern Richmond, and Ward 5 eastern Richmond. The ward system was discontinued after the municipal election of 1946, when an "at-large" system was adopted for the election of councillors.

Another important group of election records at the Archives are the official voters' lists. They provide not only detailed listings of property owners and residents in Richmond but also illustrate the evolution of the voting system and the municipal franchise. The first complete voters list at the Archives dates to 1915. It is assumed that earlier lists were lost in the fire of 1913 which destroyed the original Town Hall.

The 1915 list shows voters registered by ward and also contains the names of women who owned property in the municipality, demonstrating how women



Election ballots, 1931
 City of Richmond Archives, MR35,
 File 4501 – Election Procedure



Municipal Clerk Ted Youngberg with election staff (Elaine Smith, Bill Lowe, and Bev Harper), 1965

City of Richmond Archives Photograph 1986 16 4

focus on the records continued . . .

were given the right to vote in municipal elections prior to being granted the right to vote in federal and provincial elections.

The voters' lists also show how provincial legislation discriminated against the rights of First Nations people and people of South Asian, Japanese and Chinese ethnicity. The names of property owners of South Asian descent first appear on the voters list of 1948, following changes to provincial statute in 1947 giving them the right to vote in municipal elections. The names of First Nations, Japanese-Canadian, and Chinese-Canadian property owners do not appear on the voters list until 1949, again following changes in provincial legislation in 1948 granting them the municipal franchise.

Voters' lists for municipal elections of 1915 through 1985 are available to researchers at the Archives. Other election records available at the Archives include extensive election files, including the records of the Court of Revision, all of which document the procedures carried out by municipal officers to ensure the validity of the election process.

Researchers are welcome to make an appointment to consult these records.



Above: Judy Lo and Graham Turnbull inspect their handiwork

Right: Looking northwest from Granville Ave. and No. 3 Road, 1951

City of Richmond Archives Photograph 1984 17 5



Pictorial History of Minoru Park

An exhibition of photographs from the holdings of the City of Richmond Archives depicting the history of Minoru Park has recently been created and will be displayed on a recurring basis at the Richmond Library and Cultural Centre (Minoru Boulevard entrance). The exhibit was made possible with the support of the Archives, the Friends of the Richmond Archives, the Richmond Cultural Centre and the Richmond Arts Centre.

The photographs illustrate the evolution of Minoru Park from its beginning as a racetrack to the multi-purpose cultural and recreational complex of today.

A one-mile racetrack, first known as Minoru Racetrack, was opened for thoroughbred racing in 1909. The track was named after the horse "Minoru", winner of the English Derby that same year. The track was closed during World War I and re-opened as Brighouse Racetrack in 1920, before closing in 1941.

The municipality purchased the old track for parkland in 1958. When the City purchased the Brighouse Estates in 1962, the park size increased to 65 acres.

During its period as a racetrack, the park was often used as an airfield, prior to the opening of the airport on Sea Island in 1931. The first flight in western Canada took place at Minoru Racetrack in 1910, and the first commercial flight carrying mail across the Rockies took off from Minoru in 1919.



Brighouse Race Track looking northwest, 1923

City of Richmond Archives Photograph 2001 9 34

New Guide to Records of Early Chinese-Canadians in Richmond

Those of you who visited the Archives this summer will no doubt remember the smiling face of Claudia Chan as she diligently carried out research into the records at the City of Richmond Archives.

The result of Claudia's four months of volunteer work is a comprehensive guide to the historical resources at the Archives relating to Chinese-Canadians in Richmond from earliest times to 1949, the year when they were first allowed to vote in municipal elections. The guide details records and other historical resources at the Archives which document activities of Chinese-Canadians working in Richmond in the fishing industry, and as road builders, market farmers, business owners, and domestics.

The new guide is available in binder form in the Archives' reference room and will soon be added as an online resource on the Archives section of the City of Richmond web site.

Claudia is a Richmond resident who is entering her third year of studies in the History Department at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario.



Claudia Chan reviewing finding aids in the Archives reference room

Early Waterworks Records Find Their Way Home

A mystery package arrives in the mail. An Alberta return address. A shudder of anticipation as the Archivist opens the flap. And lo and behold, as the contents of the package are revealed, a find! Old municipal records coming home.

The Archives has just received an old file folder containing records of Charles Jones, who began work for Richmond in 1913 and served as Waterworks Foreman/Superintendent of Waterworks from 1916 to 1952. The file, dating back to the 1920s and 1930s, includes water reports to Council, annotated copies of draft bylaws and agreements, original typescripts of waterworks studies and other reports, correspondence, memos, and memoirs.

The return of the records was made possible by Mr. Jones' son, living in Alberta, who recognized the importance of his father's records and realized they belonged at the City of Richmond Archives.

The records document a number of important events and activities in the development of Richmond's physical infrastructure, including issues relating to the municipality joining the Greater Vancouver Water District in 1930, the setting of water rates, early water and soil analyses, and the innovative construction of a water main from Lulu Island to Sea Island. The records also include reminiscences by Charles Jones on the early history of Richmond's waterworks.

And, as is often the case, only a week after receiving the records, they were made accessible to city staff for immediate research needs relating to early water distribution systems in Richmond.



"Chinese Contract" with Hong Wo & Co. to supply workers for Phoenix Cannery
City of Richmond Archives, Hong Wo records
(1991 26), File 2



Portrait of Wong York, early resident of Richmond

City of Richmond Archives Photograph 2006 40 1



Friends of the Richmond Archives 15th Annual Archives Tea

The Friends of the Richmond Archives hosts its annual Archives Tea this year on Friday, October 14 at 2:00 pm in the Richmond Library and Cultural Centre. This year marks the 15th anniversary of the Tea, which brings together Richmond residents old and new to celebrate the Archives and its role in preserving and making accessible the evidence of the city's interesting and colourful past.

This year, the Tea will feature a pictorial display on the history of Minoru Park, along with student exhibits relating to aspects of Richmond's history. The event is always a great afternoon of companionship, reminiscences, and shared stories of the past.

The Tea is also an occasion to renew your annual membership in the Friends, with dues at a very low \$5 per person. As always, books published through the joint City of Richmond Archives/Friends of the Richmond Archives historical publication program will be available for purchase at "Tea Special" prices.

Those wishing to attend are asked to contact the Friends through the City of Richmond Archives by phone at 604-247-8305 or by email at archives@richmond.ca.



CITY OF RICHMOND ARCHIVES

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Richmond, B.C. V6Y 1R9
Archivist: Bill Purver
Phone: 604-247-8305
Email: archives@richmond.ca
www.richmond.ca/archives
Public Reference Room Hours
Monday–Thursday, 9:00–4:30
Appointment recommended



Left: Visitors taking the history challenge at the Friends' booth at London Farm

Above: Christine McGilvray, Ruth Yuswack, and Barbara Williams at the Salmon Festival

Friends of the Archives Out in the Community

Thanks to the volunteer work of Christine McGilvray and Barbara Williams, the Friends of the Richmond Archives produced two new interactive displays this summer to promote the Archives at the Steveston Salmon Festival and the London Heritage Farm's Family Farm Fair.

The displays highlighted historical images from the Archives' extensive photographic holdings, as well as providing information on the records and other historical resources available to researchers at the Archives.

Christine, Barbara, and Ruth Yuswack staffed the display booths and answered questions from the public about Richmond's history and its Archives.



Barbara Williams accepting award on behalf of the Friends of the Richmond Archives

Friends of the Archives Receive City Heritage Award

The Friends of the Richmond Archives were honoured this year with the City of Richmond Heritage Award in recognition of the group's ongoing historical publication program.

The award citation recognizes the Friends "for funding and authoring ten unique publications about Richmond's rich and colourful past."

A framed certificate was presented to Barbara Williams, Vice-President of the Friends, at a ceremony held in conjunction with the annual Richmond Heritage Fair.

The award can be seen in the display window in the vestibule leading into the Archives' reference room.