

Mouth of the Fraser

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Commission Launches Inventory Up-date

by Mark Bostwick

Heritage involves the connections between place and memory. We recognise places (“That old house is still there”). Place stimulates memory (“I once walked by that house on my way to school.”) The combination of place and memory leads directly to other memories, other places. These connections, in turn, form the basis of patterns, of narratives, of stories. And these stories when connected become the heritage of the community. The Richmond Heritage Commission is launching a year long project eliciting memories of places and locating landmarks. It is called a Heritage Inventory.

Late last century the Commission met with two heritage experts, Robert Lemon and Julie MacDonald, to review the criteria used by the

previous inventories of 1985 and 1989. We learned that many communities supplement the traditional emphasis on architectural history with consideration to landmarks that do things such as:

define the character of a particular neighbourhood, remind us of important social and economic changes, prompt our memory of important (not necessarily “famous”) people or events, or possess some special visual and symbolic character. In other words, by broadening the criteria which we use to assess sites, we hope to provide the basis for a richer, more comprehensive understanding of Richmond today and yesterday and, of course, a better bridge to tomorrow.

An inventory is really the product of a search. This search is a little like what happens when you go into the closet to stash unused Christmas wrapping paper and come across an old high school annual. Memories start flowing. You begin to remember things you did not even know at the time: that the old band room was once the office of Radio Canada. (Who remembers this Richmond

site?) Memories attach to memories, knowledge to knowledge, places to places. Together they begin to form a narrative.

Sites listed in Heritage Inventories these days include: a horse trough that signifies a suburban community’s roots as a logging camp; a smelter smokestack that served as a landmark long after it was no longer in use; World War II “temporary” buildings; an early solar heated house. Note: increasingly heritage inventories will include selected sites that are newer than the conventional fifty year milestone.

The assessment and evaluation of possible inclusions to the Heritage Inventory require the research skills of an expert. But the clues, suggestions, the memories and reminders that provide the expert with material must come from those whose lives are connected directly to Richmond. The Heritage Commission will be asking Richmond residents to give us guidance, to suggest sites that deserve investigation. We will also be making some suggestions on how you might go about renewing your connections with the past.

The data collected by the Commission will be examined and some sites investigated in greater detail. In the end, we hope to produce a new listing of places of interest, and encourage the use of this list for further explorations into what is important about this community.

What's In a Nail?

by Graham Turnbull

As most of you already know, we lost the Ewen Barn in East Richmond, in November '98, and in November '99 the wood from the barn was salvaged for use in other city projects. The Community Fisheries Development Centre and the City of Richmond made the salvage operation possible.

Almost 200ft of floating docks have already been constructed for use at Britannia and McDonald Beach. Joe Wideski supervised the project for the city and did a wonderful job to make everything run smoothly. Other projects at London Farm and Britannia are being planned, using more of the salvaged timbers.

The granary portion of the barn was built of laminated 2" x 6" and produced an incredible amount of usable boards which became the deck of the wharves. However, during the dismantling these laminated boards were nailed together with round wire nails. The construction of the barn was in 1892 and completed in 1893 and this raised the question "Were round nails available at that time?" My thoughts were that they were not and maybe the granary was built at a latter time.

Thanks to Marilyn Clayton, who works for the City at Britannia, who supplied me with a Technical Paper, NAIL CHRONOLOGY produced by the U.S. Parks Service which answered most of the questions about the nails. In fact there is more information about nails than you would think possible.

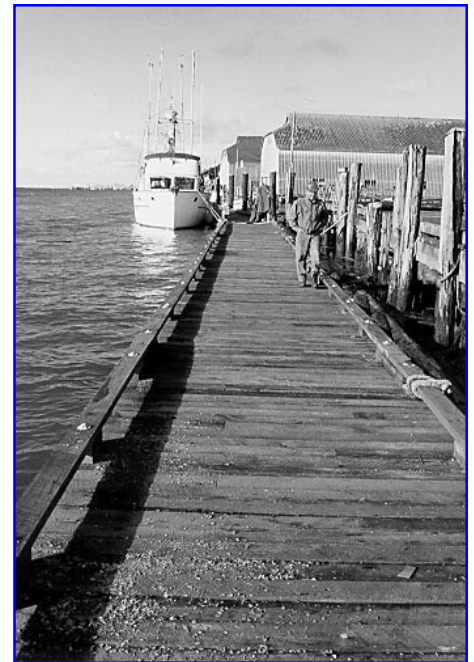
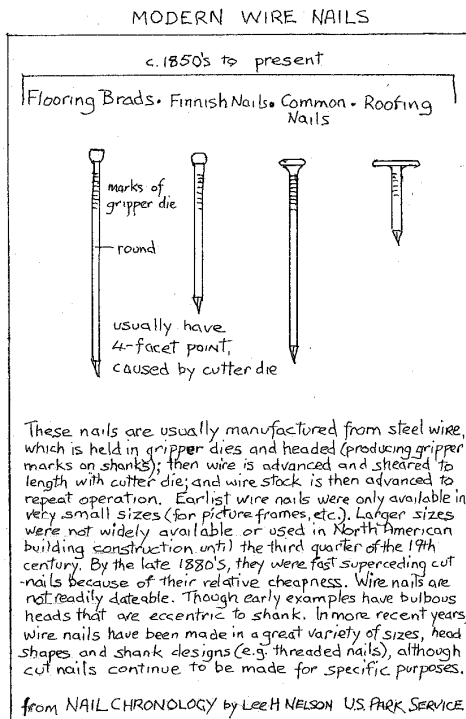
Round wire nails were first used in England, France and Germany and

were first manufactured on this continent at New York in 1850. The earliest round nails were first used for boxes and frames and it was not till 1880 that they started to be the nail of choice for construction, for both convenience and cost.

So it was certainly possible that the granary was built in 1892.

While it is not the perfect way to date

a building, the fact that different nails were produced can be one of the items which can help to date a building. The following is a very brief chronology of nail manufacture; Hand Wrought Nails: 17th, 18th, 19th Century. Machine-cut Nails with Handmade Heads: 1790 – 1820. Early Machine-headed Cut Nails: 1815 – 1830. Modern Machine-headed



New Britannia Floating dock with Joe Wideski, Super Indendent of Construction
Cut Nails: 1830 to present.
Modern Wire Nails: 1850 to present.
The paper with this information and much, much, more is Technical Leaflet 48, NAIL CHRONOLOGY, as an aid to dating old buildings., by Lee H. Nelson, Architect, U.S. Parks Service, 1963.

As mentioned at the beginning of this article the barn wood was salvaged, see photograph of the new floating docks which were constructed for Britannia Heritage Shipyard.



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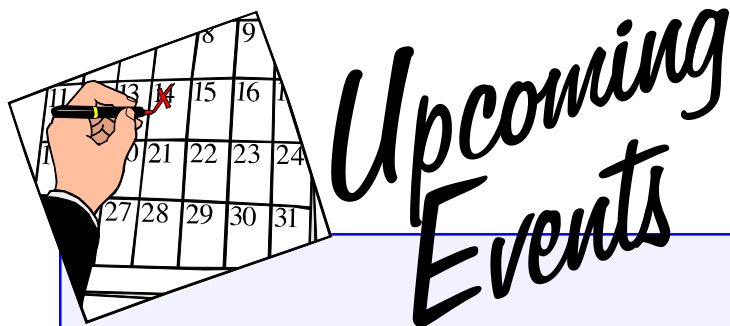
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Heritage Umbrella Group (Richmond)

Come see the Heritage Week display at:

The Richmond Centre Mall

Friday, Feb 18th - **9:30a.m. - 9:00p.m.**

Saturday Feb 19th - **9:30a.m. - 5:30p.m.**

Heritage Week 2000

by André Cardinal

Heritage Week 2000 will be displayed February 18-19, 1999. The display will be located at Richmond Centre Mall on an East-West alignment from The Bank of Montreal/White Spot to the Famous Players Theatres. All the old time Societies will be participating along with a few newcomers. We welcome one and all.

More than two dozen Societies shall be showing what they are about, why they were conceived and explaining all about themselves. They will all continue to have visitors participate in a hands-on fashion.

Heritage Week 2000 is an excellent method of informing the public about the various heritage societies and the best way of dispersing information to the public with a good possibility of acquiring the always current need for members.

If you have any questions, please contact either:

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Nature Comes To Light

by André Cardinal

What is new about nature coming to light? This phenomena occurs every morning with the rising sun. Ah yes, this phenomenon does occur on a daily basis I agree. However, at Christmas the meaning takes on a very different perspective.

On a couple of occasions throughout the month of December I visited the Richmond Nature Park and marveled in their glorious display. This was the Nature Park's 1st Annual Light Display and what a beautiful sight it was to behold. The inner trail was lit with thousands of lights, some animated and some static. One felt very close to the true meaning of Christmas as we meandered along the brightly lit trail. Music was played throughout and a section had a storyteller reciting the favourite Christmas story 'T' was the Night Before Christmas' for children of all ages to enjoy.

The display was organized and brought to fruition by the efforts of volunteers from The Kinsmen Club of Richmond, The Richmond Fire Fighters Society, The City of Richmond and the Richmond Nature Park. Admission was by donation with the proceeds benefiting the community. If you did not have an opportunity to come out and visit the Park during the festive season please make a note not to miss the 2nd Annual Nature Comes to Light next Christmas.

Finn Slough Heritage and Wetlands Society

Finn Slough is one of the last tidal communities on the West Coast. It was established by Finnish fishers over a hundred years ago.

The purposes of the Society are:

- To preserve and protect the natural environment and habitat of the Slough and surrounding area;
- To preserve and maintain the heritage values of Finn Slough;
- To protect Finn Slough and surrounding wetlands from further development; and
- To research, plan and implement alternative methods of treatment and disposal of the community's waste.

For information call 271-5140

Taking Inventory

Do you want to contribute to the update of the Heritage Inventory?

Some avenues worth pursuing in the search for valuable landmarks:

1. Ask people with a special interest or skills in this area: architects, historians, residents involved in heritage activities.
2. Reconnaissance: simply go through the community noting things (buildings, signs, objects, landscapes) that stand out, catch attention or raise questions.
3. Develop devices to prompt memory. Most people can make real connections between places and experiences and these connections often uncover stories of importance. For example, the very different first impressions of Richmond residents who arrived here 75, 50, 25 and 5 years ago form the basis of understanding how Richmond has evolved. Or draw a map of the neighbourhood you remember best: what has changed
4. Examine personal documents, like family snapshots, looking for the clues found in the background. Think of the most important events in your lifetime—are they associated with some special place?

Volunteers to Manage the Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site

by Anne Ikeda & Audrey Matheson

This year the Gulf of Georgia Cannery Society will be signing a contract with Parks Canada to fully operate

the National Historic Site in Steveston. The Society is a group of volunteers who lobbied the Federal Government to purchase the site, have the Cannery designated a National Historic Site, and worked with Parks Canada to create a Museum commemorating the West Coast Fishing Industry. While the Cannery is often seen as a Federal Project, this dedicated group of volunteers supplied the expertise of the Fishing Industry to make the museum accurate and realistic.

On April 1st, 2000 the Society will sign a long term contract with Parks Canada which will still own the site and be responsible for major maintenance and any additional construction. While this has been in the planning for some time however, what exactly does it mean?

It means that the membership has a lot to be proud of. In the 1970's a group of heritage enthusiasts gathered together to express their concern for the hundred year old cannery which was falling into the Fraser River. Their vision was that "the old cannery" would become a world class museum commemorating the West Coast Fishing Industry. In 1986 they formed the Gulf of Georgia Cannery Society and worked out a joint agreement with Parks Canada to stabilize the structure and open the building to the public on its 100th anniversary in 1994. This partnership was so successful the society became one of the first in Canada to be so actively involved in the operation of a site that it served as a model for future similar agreements with Parks Canada.

The society is often called on to advise other community groups how



to create partnerships. Not only has new ground been broken it was accomplished at record speed. The vision for the cannery site was for it to be completed in 15 years down from the projected 20 years.

This was accomplished by breaking down the overall vision into achievable phases. Now, the next phase is coming up in April when the society takes over complete operation of the site. Parks Canada will provide funding which, when combined with admission fees, will allow the society to fully operate and maintain the site. It has become a large operation, but rest assured that it will remain a community driven business. Volunteers will continue to be as active as ever since it could not be done without them. The capital development of the permanent exhibits will be finished in 2001 but that is not the end. With the assistance of volunteers the society will continue to mount temporary exhibits and host special events that will keep visitors coming back every season. The society continues to require qualified volunteers for a strong board of Directors and active committees in order to respond to local ideas so that local residents will still think of the Gulf of Georgia as "their Cannery".

Members of the society, representing the community, will keep the vision of the original group alive.