Nanaimo Historical Society
News and Views

NANAIMO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Summer 2024

September 12: Stories from the BC Forest Discovery Centre

At our Society's September 12 meeting, Mike Bonkowski will present his investigative research into many of the items and displays at the BCFDC in Duncan (formerly the BC Forest Museum) Bonkowski will also tell of its founder, Gerry Wellburn, and how his private collection evolved into a public open air museum.

Thursday, September 12 at Bowen Park Complex, Activity Room #1, 500 Bowen Road. Doors open at 6:30 pm, meeting begins at 7:00 pm. All are welcome. Refreshments will follow the presentation.

May 25 Nanaimo River Walk Tour

On Saturday May 25, over 40 people attended the Nanaimo River Walk Tour, led by Dave Bodaly. The group viewed the giant wheel, a Petroglyph made in the year 2000, old house foundations from the mining era, a Culturally Modified Tree, and the location of an air shaft which once went down to the mine shafts below. Some attendees then met at Smitty's for a light lunch.

Questions or comments? Email us at nanaimohistoricalsociety@shaw.ca

Leynard Legacy Heritage Grants

Nanaimo Historical Society's Leynard Legacy Heritage Grants support projects that will improve our community's awareness, knowledge and understanding of the natural and cultural history of the Nanaimo area. These grants are made possible by a bequest to our society from the late Liselotte Leynard, widow of Arthur Leynard. Arthur Leynard (1921 - 2008) was a prominent member of our society, and former City of Nanaimo engineer.

Grants awarded by the NHS Board for 2024:

Nanaimo Community Archives: $5,000 to assist their ongoing historical support.

Nanaimo Family History Society: $10,000 to create a 1921 map of Nanaimo with information on property and residents (see the update on this project below)

Parksville Museum: $5,000 to support museum programs by becoming a Champion Sponsor

Protection Island Cultural Historical Society: $5,000 to support organizing their archives

Update on The Nanaimo Family History Society's 1921 Map Project

With the active participation of 12 volunteers, we've been making great progress on our project to create an online map of the City of Nanaimo, where each residential property will be labelled with the name of the occupant as given in the 1921 census. The work so far includes:

- 25 Fire Insurance maps drawn in 1909, revised to 1916, have been digitized and printed. The city is divided into 24 maps to allow for more detail to be shown.
- The 50-page Tax Roll ledger for 1921 has been photographed.
- more than 1600 names and addresses have been transcribed from the 1921 census.
- Proofreading of the census transcriptions is well underway.
- An index linking street addresses to map numbers has been compiled.
- A first pass at a website displaying the maps has been developed.

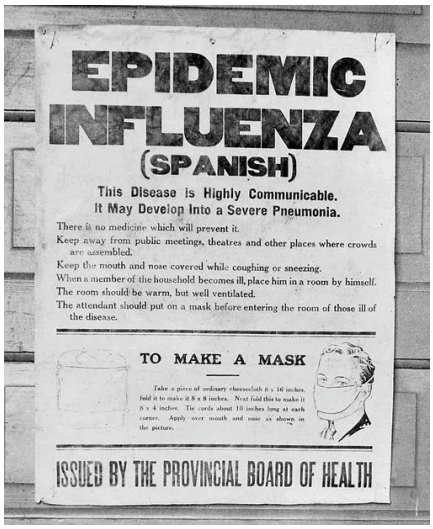
Project team members are enjoying getting a closer look at Nanaimo in 1921 and becoming familiar with the names of families who lived here then. Thanks for giving us the opportunity to undertake this project. *Susan Bates, Education Director, The Nanaimo Family History Society (August 19, 2024)*

The Leynard Legacy Heritage Grants Application Process

Individuals, societies and community groups based in the Nanaimo area are eligible to apply. The program provides a one-time only cash award to an individual or community group that encourages creative community engagement in our heritage. The project's objective must include creating awareness and understanding of persons, events (natural and human), structures or activities that occurred within the Nanaimo area. The value of a grant is subject to available funds. For grant guidelines, parameters for activities and application process, please visit https://www.nanaimohistoricalsociety.ca/about/leynard-legacy-grant-program

These grants for history project are in keeping with our charitable purposes, which are listed on our web site. If you are a member in good standing of the Nanaimo Historical Society, we are seeking your input on how you think your Board of Directors should manage the Leynard bequest going forward. Should the Society maintain most of our Capital and use interest and donations to support our Grants, or should we plan on reducing our Capital over time to support worthy grants and projects? Please contact grants@nanaimohistoricalsociety.ca

October 10: The Spanish Flu Epidemic in Nanaimo



At our Thursday October 10 general meeting in the Bowen Complex Clubhouse, Katherine Rollwagen, from the VIU HIstory Department, will be our guest speaker, discussing the Spanish Flu epidemic in Nanaimo 1918-1920.

Doors open at 6:30 pm and the presentation begins at 7 pm. All are welcome to attend. Light refreshments will be available following the meeting.

November 14: the Commonwealth War Graves Project

At our Thursday November 14 general meeting at Bowen Complex in Activity Room 1, guest speaker Kevin Hills will discuss the Commonwealth War Graves Project.

Doors open at 6:30 pm and the presentation begins at 7 pm. All are welcome to attend. Light refreshments will be available following the meeting.

In Memoriam: Norma Le Page

Elizabeth Norma Le Page February 28, 1929 – August 1, 2024

It is with heavy hearts we announce the passing of Norma Le Page on August 1, 2024 in Nanaimo, BC. Norma was born February 28, 1929 in Vancouver BC.
Predeceased by her beloved husband Derek, in 1998. Survived by many cherished and loving friends, cousins, and nephews and nieces particularly Patricia Eburne (Angele, Rachelle, Karine) Arlene Davidson, Beverly Thomson, Cathy Van Biert as well as her beloved cat Baylee.

Norma was a graduate of the University of Toronto. She was employed for many years as secretary to the Chief Justice of Ontario and later as Librarian for the Ontario Law Reform Commission in Toronto. Norma loved animals and was active in several animal welfare groups. No service by request. A Celebration of Life will be held later. In lieu of flowers donations in memory can be made to Elder Dogs Canada.
Nanaimo News Bulletin Wednesday August 7, 2024 **Norma was a long time member of NHS**

Watch Our Past Meetings and Tours Online

Did you know you can watch online presentations and field trips of the Nanaimo Historical Society on our YouTube channel **@nanaimohistoricalsociety1953** ? Here is the lineup:

~ October 2020 - Christine Meutzner “Wellington Cemetery tour”
~ January 2021 - Annual Show and Share meeting and Tony Orchard “History of the Colliery dams”
~ April 2021 - Dave Bodaly on Sayshutsun (Newcastle) Island and family history
~ June 2021 - Virtual field trip to Mt. Benson site of October 1951 crash of Queen Charlotte Airlines Canso aircraft
~ September 2021 - Hayley Healy “More Stories of Trailblazing Women of Vancouver Island”
~ October 2021 - Greg Fraser “Joseph McKay biography “
~ November 2021 - Brian McFadden “Dam Busters, Nanaimo connection”
~ January 2022 - Annual Show and Share Meeting
~ February 2022 - Catherine Marie Gilbert “The history of Strathcona Provincial Park ”
~ March 2022 - Susan Garcia “Murder on Mayne Island“
~ April 2022 - Sean Enns “Charlie Abbott, the Chemainus Hermit”
~ June 2022 - Liam Hall “Morden Mine Restoration” and Welcome Back picnic
~ September 2022 - Dave Flawse “Nanaimo’s last hanging & Jack the Flying Dutchman”
~ October 2022 - Ted Lord and Dave Bodaly “Departure Bay Historical Stroll”
~ November 2022 - The E&N Railroad: Obstacles & Challenges Still Visible Today
~ January 2023 - Nanaimo Historical Society Annual Show and Share
~ March 2023 - Dalys Barney *Message on a Bottle: Nanaimo’s Soda History*
~ April 2023 - Cowichan’s Old Hillcrest Chinese Cemetery onsite interview with Neil Dirom
~ May 2023 - Walking Tour of Buttertubs Marsh with Bill Merrilees
~ September 2023 - Japanese history in Nanaimo with Tami Hirawasa
~ October 2023 - Stroll through Maffeo-Sutton Park with Dave Bodaly and Ted Lord
~ November 2023 - Passenger Ships and Ferries that Served Nanaimo from 1881-1961
~ February 2024 - “The History That We Share” with Robert Janning
~ March 2024 - The History of Westwood Lake Park with Tony Orchard
~ March 2024 - Darrell Ohs receives Distinguished Service Award
~ April 2024 - The Art and Adventures of Doug Harrison
~ May 2024 Nanaimo River Walk Tour

Additional Historical Presentations Online

In addition to online presentations of NHS meetings and events on our website (and on YouTube - see above), you can also browse a section that features other articles and presentations of interest https://www.nanaimohistoricalsociety.ca/articles Here is what we have added recently:

History of the Electrical System in Nanaimo

Nanaimo’s Welsh Community 1860-1914, an online presentation by Dr. Gethin Matthews which was hosted by the Glamorgan Family HIstory Society in Wales on December 14, 2023

May 3, 1887 Mine Explosion, an article by NHS member Wanita Malkiewicz

The Story of Stovely 1862-1990, an article by NHS member Richard Prior

Provenance of the Poppy, an article by NHS member Darrell Ohs

Nanaimo’s Soda Bottling History, an article by NHS member Dalys Barney

Member Opportunities

Since 1953, the Nanaimo Historical Society has been researching and developing projects that record and celebrate the long and diverse history of the Nanaimo area. We are a volunteer-run society, and as we prepare for new programs and events, we are seeking individuals with an interest in local history to join us at the board or committee level. This is an opportunity to meet people who share an interest in history and is an opportunity to share your skills or develop new ones. We offer seven to eight public meetings and tours each year on a variety of historical topics. You can check out our activities at nanaimohistoricalsociety.ca

Board of Directors: Qualifications: we welcome the addition of people with adult learning, financial, governance, project planning and communications experience and interest. There is a requirement to attend monthly board meetings and general meetings, and to be involved in at least one of our committees. Our committees are below. We especially need more board members for the first two *****.

* **Governance Committee:** advises the board on policies and procedures

* **Programme Committee:** organizing meeting topics and guest speakers, speaker support, developing learning programs

Communications Committee: website, Facebook, YouTube, newsletter, media promotion

Leynard Legacy Heritage Grant Program: administering our community grant program

Finance: overseeing and reporting on the society's finances

Other: We are seeking volunteers to organize refreshments at our meetings and a member to coordinate taxi rides to our meetings for other members. If you are interested in volunteering, email communications@nanaimohistoricalsociety.ca or call Sue Creba at 250-753-3371.

Historical Recordings Transcribed to Digital Files

Audio files and transcripts of NHS recordings are available at Vancouver Island University. This work is ongoing and here are links to the most recent additions:

Nanaimo in the 1920s & 1930s / Jan Peterson https://viurrspace.ca/handle/10613/23406

Making of a coal town: Nanaimo, 1852-1858 / Richard Mackie https://viurrspace.ca/handle/10613/16373

Nanaimo community heritage register update / Christine Meutzner https://viurrspace.ca/handle/10613/21882

History of the Newcastle townsite / Christine Meutzner https://viurrspace.ca/handle/10613/20291

History of the Nanaimo Fish and Game Club / Ted Barsby https://viurrspace.ca/handle/10613/23400

Kanaka: The untold story of Hawaiian pioneers in British Columbia and the Pacific Northwest / Tom Koppel https://viurrspace.ca/handle/10613/23413

Submitted by Dalys Barney, NHS member and Digital Collections Assistant, VIU Library

About the Nanaimo Historical Society

Founded in 1953, the Nanaimo Historical Society has been an influential partner in advocating for the awareness, understanding and appreciation of our community's diverse heritage.

Nanaimo Historical Society Board

President / Vice President:	**rotating**	**Directors at large:**	**Darrell Ohs**
Treasurer:	**Tony Orchard**		**Ted Lord**
Secretary:	**Gordon Miller**		**Clive Hadfield**

Find Us At:

nanaimohistoricalsociety@shaw.ca

https://www.nanaimohistoricalsociety.ca

facebook.com/NanaimoHistory/

YouTube @nanaimohistoricalsociety1953

Mailing address: Box 933, Nanaimo, BC V9R 5N2

NANAIMO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Nanaimo Historical Society membership fees are:

- **personal membership - $10**
- **family membership (2 or more members at same address) - $15**
- **group membership (business or other organization) - $15**
- **student membership - $5**

Renewals are due in January of each year.
Please contact Gordon Miller at nanaimohistoricalsociety@shaw.ca to renew your membership, apply or renew at any in-person meeting, or sign up on our website.

Visit Our Website and Facebook

Our Nanaimo Historical Society website features upcoming and past events, news and resources and much more! We invite you to visit https://www.nanaimohistoricalsociety.ca
If you follow Facebook, visit facebook.com/NanaimoHistory to learn about events and news about local history.

We acknowledge that we meet on the traditional territory of the Snuneymuxw people from whom Nanaimo takes its name.