

The Bowness Beacon

Established December 6, 1952. Donald W. Davies, Founder

A Publication of the Bowness Historical Society

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Membership fee in the Bowness Historical Society is \$10 per year. New members are welcomed. Send your name, address and fee (please no cash by mail) to the address above. All members receive the Bowness Beacon newsletter. Your fees will support the activities of the Society in recording and celebrating the history of Bowness. **Please let us record your family history or photos so that nobody is forgotten.** For more information, please call (403) 288-1737 or 288-2055.

REMINDER –RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2018 TO THE BOWNESS HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND THE BOWNESS BEACON. SEE ORDER FORM ON PAGE 8.

LIFE-TIME MEMBERSHIPS - NOW AVAILABLE FOR \$50.00 ONE-TIME CHARGE

THIS ISSUE FEATURING:

- **The Dan Wong Story – Family history presented by Fred Wong**
- **Les Hamilton’s Note on the Bowness Coal Depot or Siding**
- **Announcements about Bowness Servicemen, Family Heritage Festival and Jane’s Walk**
- **Newly discovered Bowness streetcar photo**
- **Passing of Bowness Residents and Pioneers**

PARKWAY STORE - DAN WONG AND FAMILY

For close to 40 years, the Wong family owned and operated Parkway Store, a community staple in Bowness. By the time Dan Wong moved to Bowness to manage Parkway Store in 1963, he had already worked in and operated small businesses for 41 years in Canada. Dan would go on to operate Parkway Store, for another 34 years. Unfortunately, in 1997 at the age of 93, a debilitating stroke left him in extended care at Bowview Manor until his passing 3 years later.

Dan Wong was born on April 12, 1904, in a small village in Taishan county, in China’s Guangdong province. He emigrated to Canada in June 1922, arriving in Vancouver on the Empress of Asia ocean liner. When he reached Canada, Dan was required to pay a \$500 head tax that was imposed on Chinese immigrants entering the country at that time.

Although Dan was 18 years of age when he arrived, his documentation identified him as 15 years old. Dan arrived in Canada with another young man whose documentation indicated that he was Dan’s 13-year old younger brother. However, this young man was not an actual brother but a distant relative or family friend. Travelling together meant a degree of security for the young travellers and allowed two families to benefit from having sons in Canada. Dan was fortunate to arrive when he did, because on July 1, 1923, Canada instituted the Chinese Exclusion Act banning Chinese immigration in Canada, with the exception of merchants, diplomats and foreign students.

After Dan was processed through immigration in Vancouver, he headed to the Brooks, Alberta area to work with an uncle who cooked in a CPR work camp. From there, Dan worked in restaurants in Tompkins, Saskatchewan, and The Pas, Manitoba. In 1927 he settled in the southeastern Alberta hamlet, Queenstown, where he opened a café.

Dan became a very proficient cook. A long-time friend commented on how Dan had perfected his skill for making apple pies and pancakes during his café years. Dan often sold his pies while enjoying his love of community baseball in Queenstown. Dan eventually converted his café into a general store.

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In 1933, Dan returned to China and was married to Mah See. With the Chinese Exclusion Act in place, Dan returned home to Queenstown on his own. When he left China, Mah See was pregnant with their first child. She remained in China, living with Dan's mother and extended family. When Dan returned to Canada, he had no idea how long it would be before they could be reunited. Shortly after his return to Canada, Dan and Mah See's first son, Gene, was born.

Through the years, Dan continued to operate his well-stocked general store and became a fixture in the Queenstown community. After World War II, the Chinese revolution, and with the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1947, Mah See and Gene were able to emigrate to Canada in the fall of 1949. After being on his own through the 1930s and 40s, Dan was now able to be with his wife and finally meet his 15-year old son. Between 1951 and 1955, Dan and Mah See had four more children – Lily, Ken, Art and Fred.

Life continued for the Wong family in Queenstown. However, like many small communities in southern Alberta, Queenstown's population, along with its economic and business activity, had dropped significantly. By 1960, around 30 people remained in the hamlet. Dan decided that a move to the Calgary area would be better for the family. A search for business opportunities led to the purchase of Parkway Store from Cameron and Annie Craig in September 1961.

Dan's oldest son, Gene, had moved to Calgary for school and remained living in the city after attending Mt. Royal College and SAIT. Gene was now married to his wife Sue, and with the purchase of Parkway Store, it was decided that he would manage the store until the rest of the family moved to Calgary. In early 1963, the Parkway Store building was renovated to add a second floor to the building to create living quarters for both Dan and Gene's families. On November 14, 1963, once the renovations were complete, Dan, Mah See, and their younger children moved to Bowness.

Parkway Store was typically open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily – 363 days a year and only closed on Christmas and New Year's Day. Through the years, Dan kept Parkway Store stocked with groceries and a wide variety of other goods including clothes, houseware, toys and hardware. This made Parkway a reliable place to shop in the west end of Bowness, where families could find most things on their grocery lists, and occasionally a unique or hard-to-find item. In the days before the large supermarkets were open daily, and particularly as people headed to Bowness Park during the summer, Parkway could be incredibly busy, especially on Sundays.

Parkway Store, often fondly referred to "Danny's", was operated for close to 40 years by the Wong family, with Dan primarily at the helm. The store's operation was truly a family affair with various family members helping in the store at different times. It was originally a partnership between Dan and his oldest son Gene, until Gene moved on to other business activities. Dan's son Ken looked after the store following Dan's stroke in 1997, until Dan passed away in 2000.

Dan's early years of working on his own in Queenstown, the uncertainty of being in Canada and living through the depression or the "hungry 30s" as he remembered it, shaped his approach to finances and business. In addition, Dan often needed to provide credit to customers in the small farming community, and sometimes these debts were slowly paid back or not at all. As a result, Dan was frugal and conservative in nature, often refusing to "keep the change" from customers. He was careful and lived by the old adage – a penny saved is a penny earned.

Dan is fondly remembered by children from the Bowness neighbourhood, including those who attended Belvedere-Parkway School. At noon hour and after school, Dan's patience could be tested with the throngs of kids coming in to buy candy. He instituted a rule where only a few kids could come into the store at a time. Dan could be very patient with those who were polite and quiet. There would be times when he was exasperated with a group, and Dan would say to some, "You stay" and to others "You go."

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In 1989, Dan, who was 85 at the time, will be remembered for fighting off an attempted robbery on a Saturday night in November. Dan fought off the young man with a hockey stick. In the process, he was “poked” in the chest by the knife the young man was wielding. He didn’t realize his injury until he took off his shirt to reveal a blood-stained undershirt. Dan was taken to Foothills hospital for treatment of the wound. However, the injury didn’t prevent him from opening the store as usual Sunday morning.

Over the years, Dan did talk about retirement, particularly after his wife, Mah See, passed away in 1993. Though Dan was encouraged to retire by family, keeping busy and his love for interaction with his regular customers kept him going. In the latter years, when Parkway Store was not as busy as it once was, you would often find Dan chatting and laughing with a customer, with a hockey game on the store’s TV in the background.

The Wong family has mostly remained in Calgary. Dan’s four sons, Gene (now 83 years old), Ken, Art and Fred all live in NW Calgary. Gene has lived with daughter, Judy, and family following the passing of his wife, Sue, in 2013. Gene also has two sons, Warren and Cam, who attended schools in Bowness. Fred and his wife have two children. Dan’s daughter, Lily, lives in Christchurch, New Zealand and has a daughter.

According to the Bowness Historical Society’s book “Bowness Past and Present 1911-2011,” Parkway Store (8604-46 Avenue NW) was originally built in 1945 and operated by Tony Schmaltz and Andy O’Toole. In 1948, Cameron Craig purchased the store. Dan and the Wong family operated Parkway Store from 1961 until the sale of the building in 2000. Unfortunately, this Bowness landmark was destroyed by fire in 2004. After the Parkway Store site sat vacant for many years, a dental office complex (Bowness Park Dental) has now been constructed at this location.



Dan Wong, with his granddaughter (Judy) and great granddaughter, in the Parkway Store, 1995 (courtesy of Ken Wong).



Parkway Store, seen from across Bowness Road, November 1958 (courtesy of Fred Wong).



Parkway Store in 1995 (courtesy of Ken Wong).

A NOTE ON LIFE IN EARLY BOWNESS BY LES HAMILTON: THE COAL DEPOT

Prior to the delivery of natural gas by pipeline around 1945, Bowness residents heated their homes with coal and wood. We dealt with Mr. Hesleton who trucked it out from Calgary but no idea where. There was also a “coal siding” in Bowness, where the train dropped off coal for a Dave Watson, who trucked it to his customers in Bowness. (Les is updating the Bowness Historical Society website, at www.bownesshistoricalsociety.com, and invites your input. Les can be contacted by phone at (403) 589-7645 or by email at “lesandbea@shaw.ca”.)

Editor’s Note:

Les has receipts of coal sales from the Hunter Coal Co. of Calgary (916 – 10th Avenue West) to the Hamilton home in Critchley on Bowness Road (now the Car Wash location), for the period 1941 to 1944. Deliveries by Prairie Cartage were typically 2000 and 4000 pounds at any one time.

John Hesleton (1893-1960) was one of many coal merchants in the Calgary area around 1940,

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when listings in the Henderson's Directory showed about 10 wholesale coal dealers, 12 coal and wood dealers, and 6 mining and coal shipping companies based in Calgary. We have found limited records of John, but we know he was with the firm of Naylor & Hesleton, which handled the output of the mine at Wayne and of the Capitol Mine at Drumheller around 1925. John's son apparently resides in Calgary. The Bowness Historical Society welcomes any information from its supporters about John Hesleton, Dave Watson, the coal siding, and the coal delivery and heating days of Bowness.

According to Jay Russell, Curator of the Atlas Coal Mine National Historic Site in East Coulee, "By 1916, the Drumheller Valley already had over a dozen mines operating and 12,000 people seeking work or opportunity. Drumheller soon became Canada's supplier of domestic coal. The largest urban market for Drumheller coal was Calgary and area (after 1912/13 when the CNR between Saskatoon, Drumheller and Calgary was completed). Other major markets were Edmonton, Saskatoon, Regina, Vancouver, and Winnipeg. By the 1940s, Drumheller coal was shipped by rail as far as Toronto and Ottawa.

"I imagine getting coal to Bowness would be virtually the same as elsewhere. There would have been fuel supply outlets such as CN, CP, hardware stores, Wheat Pool, UFA, Co-ops, and private fuel supply merchants. Big suppliers were located along rail tracks as the coal typically arrived by boxcar. Some places simply sold coal out of the boxcar on a rail siding. More common, however, was emptying the coal in a large coal shed where the coal was loaded onto trucks for pick up or home delivery." Thermal coal is still an important part of Alberta's electrical power generation.

Newly discovered photo: Bowness Streetcar (Car 54), parked off the Calgary Municipal Railway route near Ogden Road, 1940



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ceremony

A ceremony was held on Friday, March 16 at the Bowness Legion to honor Ft. Sgt. Jack Leonard Hartley Phillips of Bowness who was killed in action in World War 2. A plaque in his memory was created by the Canadian Fallen Heroes Foundation, and purchased by MLA Deb Drever and given to the Bowness Historical Society to place in the Bowness Legion.

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It was an honor to have Jeff Phillips from Victoria, the brother of Jack Phillips, take part in the ceremony. Board members attending the ceremony were Carole Carpenter, Anne Campbell and Les Hamilton. Several members of the Society were also in attendance.

Bowness War Veterans

In the past issues of our newsletter, we have profiled some of the young men of Bowness who fought in WW2. Following is another account.

Longtime Bowness resident and WW2 veteran Leonard Corbett was a member of the 1st Special Service Force, better known as the Devil's Brigade. He and Bernard Cooper, Calgary's last two living Devil's Brigade veterans, were saluted by Calgary City Council. Len was also presented with the Congressional Gold Medal, at a ceremony in Washington, D.C. The unit is hailed as the trailblazer for modern special forces. Len now lives in a Seniors Resident in Arbour Lake, but still keeps in touch with his valued friends in Bowness.

Family Heritage Festival

The Society has been invited to participate in the Family Heritage Festival on Saturday, July 28, from 12 to 3 p.m. The event will take place at the new YMCA at Rocky Ridge. A table with our books and displays will be set up. The main goal of the festival is to expose children to our history and heritage. We expect a lot of people for this, as it is one of the events during Historic Calgary Week.

Bowness Historical Society Heritage Walking Tour of Bowness Park

Watch for our announcements about this year's Heritage Walking Tour of Bowness Park, which will be held as part of Historic Calgary Week on Tuesday, July 31, starting at 10:30 am. The Tour will be led by Dr. Judith Barge and Inga Pollhaus, Directors of the Society. Interpretive brochures will be provided.

Jane's Walk

As part of Jane's Walk, the Bowness Historical Society hosted the Bowness Main Street Tour on May 5th. Board member Les Hamilton did an excellent job as our tour guide indicating the locations and history of the businesses dating from the early '30s. We had a great turnout of 25+ people and a lot of interest and questions about our history.

History Day

The Bowness Historical Society was invited, as special guests, to participate in History Days at Belvedere-Parkway School on May 8 for Grades 5 and 6 students. Inga Pollhaus and Carole Carpenter gave short talks on the archaeological landscape of Bowness and the history of Bowness Park. We were pleased to see many photos of Bowness displayed on the walls at the school. The students asked many questions about the history of Bowness. The Grandparents Program of the school served tea and pastries afterwards for students and guests.

Update on Paskapoo's Big Rock Sign Project

Bill Carpenter has been in contact with the City's Landscape Architect, regarding approval of the educational sign for the Paskapoo Slopes Park. The Bowness Historical Society has been advised that we can proceed with the design and placement of the sign. Bill will contact the city Sign Shop, as well as Outdoor Museum, for quotes to build the sign. Stand by for updates.

REGULAR MEETING OF BOWNESS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Meeting of Bowness Historical Society members, last Saturday of every month, 1:00 p.m. at the Bowness Seniors Centre, 6422 - 35 Ave. N.W. Call Carole at 288-1737 for more information. Members and non-members are welcome to attend and share their memories, photos, and news.

SOCIETY'S SECOND BOOK: "100 YEARS OF BOWNESS: PAST AND PRESENT"
SOCIETY'S FIRST BOOK: "BOWNESS: OUR VILLAGE IN THE VALLEY"

Both are priced at \$60. See order form below or contact Carole at 288-1737 or Inga at 288-2055.

PASSED THIS WAY

Arthur Davey (1938-2018). Arthur was born in Regina. He was a long-time resident of Bowness at the Bow Centre. He and his mother lived there for many years and both were members of Bowness Seniors Centre. Arthur was predeceased by his mother in 2008 (see obituary below). He is survived by his sisters Shirley, Maggie and Dorothy and his son AJ.

Katie Tibbits (d. 2008). Katie was survived by her sons Arthur and Lorne Davey, daughters Shirley (Don) Eagle, Maggie Franklin and Dorothy (Bob) Tibbits-Gray, eleven grandchildren; and ten great-grandchildren. She was also survived by her two brothers John and Sam and numerous nieces and nephews. Katie was predeceased by her husband Guy (1991).

John Douglas Bannerman (1931-2018). Doug was born in Bowden, Alberta. He is survived by his wife Del (Adela Quate); daughters Brenda (Joe), Wendy, Paula (Gord) and families; 5 grandchildren; 6 great-grandchildren; one great-great-granddaughter; and his sister Gertie Clark and family. He was predeceased by sons John and Pat in 1982. Doug was a family man and was one of the patriarchs of the Bannerman/Clark Christmas Day dinner for 30 years. He lived and worked in Bowness and other locations as a roofer. Doug attended Mount Royal at 50 and then began working with mentally handicapped people. He was a Christian and humanitarian including service for the Mustard Seed, and in India, Central America and Haiti, helping to ship tons of clothes and medical supplies to Haiti and Brazil out of his garage.

Carol Jones (1944-2018). Carol was born in London, England. She emigrated from England in 1946 on the Queen Mary. She grew up in East Coulee and worked at CIBC in Drumheller. In 1967, Carol moved to Calgary and continued to work for CIBC for another 30 years, retiring in 1993. She enjoyed reading, gardening and watching sports. Carol is survived by her son Russell of Calgary and daughter Rhonda (Tony) Hansen of Red Deer, grandchildren Ty and Courtney Hansen, and other friends and family. Carol was predeceased by her mother Phyllis and father William (Bill) McQuillan of Drumheller.

Inger Christiansen (1926 - 2018). Inger was born in Denmark. She married Henry in 1944. They immigrated to Canada in 1953 with children Pete and Lissa. The family moved to Bowness in 1957 and bought their home on 72 Street (then Ash Road). Henry worked in construction and helped out with Sea Scouts in Bowness. Inger stayed home to raise the family of five, now with the addition of Dianne, Jan and Susan. Henry passed away in 2004 just a few months before they would have celebrated their 50 anniversary. Inger is survived by 18 grandchildren, 17 great-grandchildren and 7 great-great grandchildren.

Ethel "Val" Burrill (formerly Olenick, née Dixon) (1925-2018). Ethel was born in Souris, Manitoba. Ethel and her first husband, Nicholas (Nick) Olenick, settled in Calgary in 1948 and later Bowness where they raised a family of five girls. Ethel was active in Bowness community affairs and served as president of the Bowcroft Home and School Association, leader of Explorers and CGIT at the Bowness United Church. Ethel and Nick were divorced in 1971. Ethel briefly married Al Burrill and became property manager for Spartacus Holdings until she retired. Val is survived by her five daughters Dianne, Julie, Lorna, Dixie and Sharell, six grandsons, seven great-grandchildren,

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three great-great-granddaughters, two nieces, and one nephew. Val, as she chose to be called, enjoyed travelling and was a member of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Calgary #264 Legion for 42 years.

Nicholas Olenick (1924-2012). Nick hailed from Manitoba and was a member of the Souris Junior B team that won the 1942 Manitoba hockey provincial title. In 1942, he joined the Air Force, and also married his childhood sweetheart, Ethel (Val) Dixon. In 1948, the family moved to Calgary, then to the Soldiers' Settlement in Bowness. Nick worked for the Federal government as Materials Purchasing Officer. After retiring, Nick worked in real estate with his son-in-law, Paul Trajan. Nick was predeceased by his parents, five brothers, one sister, ex-wife Peggy and wife Gloria. He was survived by his sister Anne, ex-wife Ethel (Val), their five daughters Dianne, Julie, Lorna, Dixie, and Sharell, six grandsons, seven great-grandchildren, and numerous nieces, nephews and cousins. Nick was president of the Bowness Community Association where he organized many projects, including community skating rink, Bowness Sports Day, Winter Carnivals, a Bowness band and Stampede floats.

Elisabeth Rigmor Sebbelov (1932-2018). Elisabeth was born in Osted, Denmark. In 1954, Elisabeth and her husband Preben and 18-month old son Michael left Denmark to a job on a farm south of Calgary. Preben looked after the chickens, turkeys and cows and Elisabeth cooked for the crew of men. Preben and Elisabeth became Canadian citizens in 1971. For 9 years, Elisabeth had a booth at the Millarville Market selling her baked goods and jams and jellies. Preben passed away in 1997 and Elisabeth moved to Bowness. In 1998 she became a member of Bowness Seniors Centre where she was active in many activities. Elisabeth is survived by her children Michael (Cindy), Ann, Patricia "Pete" (Sam), and Mark (Sheri); her grandchildren Leeann and Zach, Kayla and Kraig, Dusti, Justin and Anaka, Kyle and Ashley; and her great-grandchildren Quaide, Kai, Easten, Avalean, Anasten, Lawson, and Jayton. She was predeceased by her husband Preben and her son-in-law Dale Lieske.

Larry Cromwell (1939-2018). Larry was born and raised in Dodge City, Kansas. After completing his Master's degree at the University of Northern Colorado, Larry began a teaching career in junior high art in Boise, Idaho. Upon completion of a PhD degree at the University of Oregon, he accepted a teaching position at the University of Calgary, where he taught for nearly 30 years. During his tenure there, he served as Head of the Department of Art from 1979 until 1982. Larry enjoyed working with students. He is survived by his wife of 57 years, Rowena; son Mark (Patti) Cromwell; daughter Jennifer Cromwell and her partner Brad; and three grandchildren, Samuel, Caleigh, and Raeghan Cromwell. Larry and Rowena lived on Bow Crescent.

MEMBERSHIP and BOOK ORDER FORM – CLIP AND MAIL
BOOK ORDERS: (MEMBERSHIP NOT REQUIRED – BUT WELCOMED!)

I WISH TO PLACE AN ORDER FOR THE SOCIETY'S:

- **NEW BOOK "100 YEARS OF BOWNESS: PAST AND PRESENT" and/or**
- **REPRINT OF THE FIRST BOOK "BOWNESS: OUR VILLAGE IN THE VALLEY"**

Order for the New Book, "100 Years of Bowness: Past and Present" – (\$60 per book)

No. of Books Ordered: _____ @ \$60 per book = \$_____. Payment enclosed

Order for 3rd Edition of Society's first book, "Bowness: Our Village in the Valley"

No. of Books Ordered: _____ @ \$60 per book = \$_____. Payment enclosed

Out-of-town shipping costs are not included. Check ahead for shipping costs to your address - Phone (403) 288-1737.

2018 MEMBERSHIP (New or Renewal) – BOWNESS HISTORICAL SOCIETY:

Annual Membership, @ \$10.00 per year (2018). Total payment enclosed: _____

NEW OPTION: Life-Time Membership @ \$50.00. Total payment enclosed: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

Prov.: _____ Postal Code: _____ Email address, if you wish to receive newsletter by email: _____

Mail to: Bowness Historical Society, 8907 – 33 Avenue N.W., Calgary, Alberta T3B 1M2. Membership includes the quarterly Beacon newsletter.

Inquiries or Information: Phone numbers above or check our website at www.bownesshistoricalsociety.com.