

**COMMUNITY HERITAGE COMMISSION**

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR  
AND COUNCILLORS*

**SUBJECT: UPDATE - CITY OF BURNABY ARCHIVES ORAL HISTORY  
PROGRAM AND HERITAGE BC AWARD**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. THAT Council receive this report for information.

**REPORT**

The Community Heritage Commission, at its meeting held on 2012 September 06, received and adopted the attached report providing an update on the Oral History Program and Heritage BC Award.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor C. Jordan  
Chair

Councillor N. Volkow  
Vice Chair

Councillor R. Chang  
Member

Copied to:	City Manager Deputy City Manager (C. Turpin) City Archivist Director Parks, Recr. & Cult. Services Chief Librarian Director Planning and Building
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**TO:** CHAIR AND MEMBERS  
COMMUNITY HERITAGE COMMISSION

**DATE:** 2012 August 17

**FROM:** CITY ARCHIVIST

**FILE:** 5220-20  
*Reference: Oral History Program*

**SUBJECT: UPDATE – CITY OF BURNABY ARCHIVES ORAL HISTORY  
PROGRAM AND HERITAGE BC AWARD**

**PURPOSE:** To update the Community Heritage Commission on the Oral History Program and  
Heritage BC Award

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. **THAT** this report be received for information.

**REPORT****INTRODUCTION**

In late 2010, the City of Burnaby Archives, under the direction of the Community Heritage Commission, launched the Oral History Program. This program included two phases: the digitization of our existing oral history analog tapes and the creation of new oral history interviews with long-time Burnaby residents. The following report outlines the successful completion of Phase One and plans for Phase Two work to begin this Fall.

**PHASE ONE DIGITIZATION AND HERITAGE BC AWARD**

The City Archives holds approximately 100 hours of oral history recordings that consist of interviews of Burnaby pioneers done in the 1970s and 1980s. These interviews were completed by SFU students as well as by members of the Burnaby Historical Society and include former Burnaby Reeve William Pritchard, prominent residents like Florence Hart Godwin, Drs. Blythe and Violet Eagles and many others who describe their lives and experiences in early Burnaby.

On 4 October 2010, Council approved the Commission's recommendation to undertake a digitization project to see these tapes converted to an accessible format and made publicly available through the Heritage Burnaby website. Subsequently, the City Archives was awarded a \$10,000.00 grant from the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre BC History Digitization Program to complete this project. The project was completed and the website launched in October 2011.

To: Community Heritage Commission  
From: City Archivist  
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HISTORY PROGRAM AND HERITAGE BC AWARD  
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In March, the new oral history site was nominated for a Heritage BC Award in the category of “Advocacy, Awareness and Planning.” We were pleased to learn in July that our nomination had been successful and the Community Heritage Commission will be awarded an Award of Honour for the effort, care and commitment demonstrated in the completion of this important project. The 2012 Heritage BC Awards presentation ceremony will take place on Friday evening, October 19, at the Shadbolt Centre for the Arts.

## **PHASE TWO NEW INTERVIEWS**

As noted above, the last comprehensive series of oral history interviews completed with Burnaby residents was in the late 1970s and early 1980s. These interviews focused predominantly on Burnaby in the 1930s with particular emphasis on the Depression, the days of Provincial Commission rule in the Municipality and the state of the community in the years leading up to the Second World War. In 2006, the City, in cooperation with Simon Fraser University, produced a documentary film focused on the lives of Burnaby Freeman Alan Emmott, James Lorimer, Donald Brown, George McLean and David Herd. This film, among other things, created hours of interview footage detailing the lives of Burnaby citizens during the war years. Taken together, these records have created a history of the City spanning the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s. With these records now available for public use and research at the City Archives, a lasting legacy has been created chronicling Burnaby’s early years through the voices of those who lived it.

It is now proposed that this repository be expanded to continue our unique – yet collective – community story. To do this, the City of Burnaby Archives and the Burnaby Village Museum have partnered to undertake a new phase of oral history interviews. In the coming months, the Burnaby Heritage Partners will solicit long-time Burnaby residents to share their stories of growing up in Burnaby during the late 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. These years marked the most dramatic economic boom in the City’s history: with its abundance of undeveloped land adjacent to the metropolis of Vancouver, Burnaby was a favoured site of post-war housing subdivisions, drive-in theatres, commercial retail and service centres and industrial parks. The resulting influx of new residents saw the population of Burnaby more than triple in a span of less than twenty years and it is hoped that the new oral history program will capture the stories of these residents who helped transform Burnaby into the modern city we know today. We hope to record interviews with 20 – 30 individuals over the next three months and have their stories added to our online collection early in 2013. The funds for this project are available in the existing oral history program account.

Respectfully submitted,

*To: Community Heritage Commission*  
*From: City Archivist*  
*Re: UPDATE – CITY OF BURNABY ARCHIVES ORAL*  
*HISTORY PROGRAM AND HERITAGE BC AWARD*  
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Arilea Sill  
CITY ARCHIVIST

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cc: Deputy City Manager (C. Turpin)  
City Clerk  
Director Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services  
Chief Librarian  
Director of Planning and Building