

A brief walk around Newcastle Island brings you to the site of Saysetsen Village, where recovered native artifacts bear silent witness to the life of a Snuneymuxw First Nation village that was deserted some time before coal was discovered in Nanaimo in 1849. For centuries the Snuneymuxw First Nation had occupied this village between the months of September and April, leaving every spring in order to fish for cod and gather clams and tubers on Gabriola Island. Although the Snuneymuxw First Nation were among the island's first coal miners, they were soon "supplemented" by boatloads of British; these men christened the island after the famous coal town in northern England and diligently worked the mines until 1883. Newcastle Island's supplies of sandstone lasted longer than did the coal: this attractive building material, used in many constructions along the west coast, was quarried from 1869 until 1932.



"Newcastle Island"

Newcastle Island also played a role in the fishing industry of the province. By 1910 the Japanese, who dominated the west coast fisheries, had established a small settlement just north of Shaft Point on the east side of the island. Here they operated a saltery and shipyard until 1941 when all the Japanese-Canadians who lived along the coast were sent to internment camps in the Interior in the interests of national security.

In 1931 the Canadian Pacific Steamship Company purchased the island and operated it as a pleasure resort, building a dance pavilion (now the Park visitor centre), teahouse, picnic areas, change houses, soccer field and a wading pool. The island became very popular for company picnics and Sunday outings, with ships from Vancouver bringing as many as 1,500 people at a time. The advent of the Second World War caused a decrease in the number of ships available for pleasure excursions and Newcastle Island suffered a consequent decline in popularity. Newcastle Island became a Provincial Marine Park in 1961, when the City of Nanaimo granted it to the Province of British Columbia after having acquired the island from the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1955. Today the Island is a popular camping destination for both Nanaimo residents and tourists. (Text courtesy of BC Parks)

The Nanaimo Yacht Club likely existed as early as 1898. By 1903 a charter for the yacht club had been created and a site for the club was legally secured in 1909, but the history of the present Nanaimo Yacht Club begins in 1931.

Young men interested in speed developed by the newly introduced outboard motor organized into a group for racing. Soon, joined by others with inboard motor launches, a club was formed. The 1909 site was available so with volunteer labour and donated materials, simple docks and a clubhouse were built. The yacht club soon became a community fixture with many social occasions occurring in the club building.



"Yacht Club"

1969, Courtesy of Nanaimo Yacht Club.

As time progressed, larger power boats were acquired and some members entered predicted log races. This interest had the Nanaimo Yacht Club hosting the finish of predicted log races from various U.S. ports through the San Jaun and Gulf Islands to Nanaimo. Attendance was so large the docks had to be extended and a breakwater added to provide protection from the southeast winds. Again volunteers and the community met the challenge and the club grew. The races became a major feature in the Pacific Northwest and the club remains a stopover for powerboat racing to Alaska. Today, the Yacht Club offers the same successful combination of moorage, races, and social events. (Text courtesy of Nanaimo Yacht Club)

Brochure Produced By:

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Culture & Heritage
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For more information about the buildings featured in this brochure, request a copy of the City's Heritage Register. If you have questions about the City's Heritage Register or Heritage Conservation Program, please contact the Community and Cultural Planning Section.

- location: Service & Resource Centre, 411 Dunsmuir Street
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- phone: 250-755-4483
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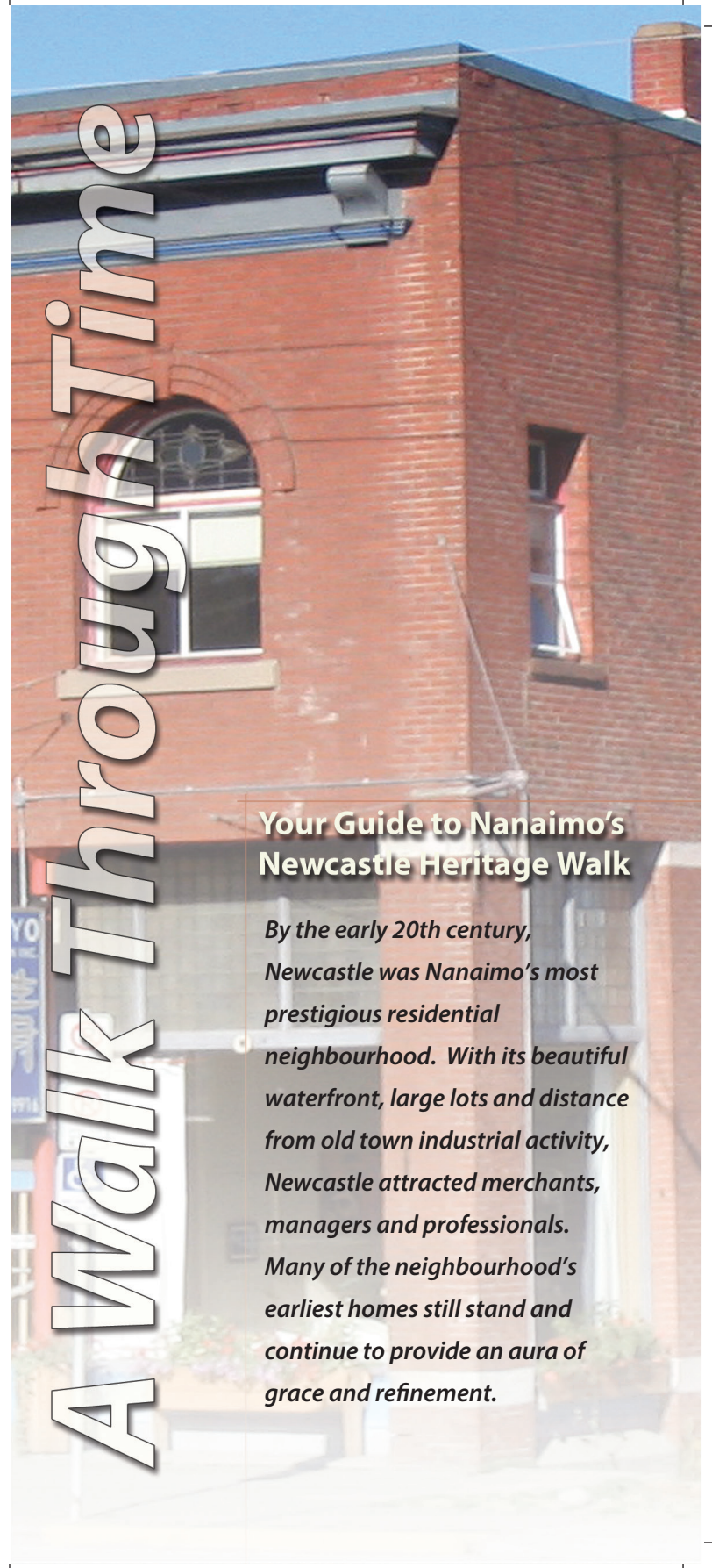


Continue your visit to Nanaimo's past at the:

NANAIMO MUSEUM
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All historical photos courtesy Nanaimo Community Archives



A Walk Through Time

Your Guide to Nanaimo's Newcastle Heritage Walk

By the early 20th century, Newcastle was Nanaimo's most prestigious residential neighbourhood. With its beautiful waterfront, large lots and distance from old town industrial activity, Newcastle attracted merchants, managers and professionals. Many of the neighbourhood's earliest homes still stand and continue to provide an aura of grace and refinement.

1 | Hoggan's Store, 404 Stewart Avenue



Built in 1914, Hoggan's Store was considered one of the most modern and best equipped business blocks in Nanaimo. The store featured a wharf at which fishermen could dock and load up on supplies. In 1926, Hoggan's business was taken over by J.T. Williams and William Herdman and became Nanaimo's first Red & White Store. The building is a neighbourhood landmark.

"Eldovilla"

After making the second largest recorded fortune of the Klondike Gold Rush, William Sloan returned to Nanaimo in 1900, purchased all of Block 5 in Newcastle and built "Eldovilla". A Queen Anne style mansion, the house was demolished in 1930. Today, all that remains of this once grand mansion are these gateposts.



2 | Westwood / Giovando Residence, 225 Newcastle Avenue



Built in 1940, this modern house faces a spectacular harbour view. It has been lived in by Earle Westwood, a Nanaimo mayor and MLA, as well as Dr. Larry Giovando, a highly regarded community leader and local politician.

3 | Johnston Residence, 36 Stewart Avenue



This house was built in 1912 for Zillah Johnston, the widow of A.R. Johnston, a pioneer grocer in Nanaimo. A superior example of the Craftsman style, it displays many sophisticated features including a complex gable roof, a corner entry and an unusual round projecting bay at the southwest corner.

4 | Daniel Galbraith Residence, 185 Stewart Avenue



Originally built around 1890 and extensively remodelled in a vernacular English Cottage style in the 1930s, the Daniel Galbraith Residence is a good example of the stylistic evolution of a building over time. The residence is the earliest known surviving residence in the Newcastle neighbourhood. Records indicate that Daniel Galbraith, the foreman at the Nanaimo (Haslam's) Sawmill, lived at this site in the early 1890s.

5 | Isaacson Residence, 255 Stewart Avenue



Built in 1931, this house is a good example of an English Cottage style bungalow. Typical design features of this style include asymmetrical floor plans, jerkin-headed roofs, rough stucco siding and rolled eave roof treatments. The house was built after an earlier house (Eldovilla), centred in the middle of the block, was demolished. S.V. Isaacson was the Secretary-Treasurer of Canadian Collieries (Dunsmuir) Ltd.

6 | Galbraith Residence, 164 Mount Benson St.



This Craftsman Bungalow was designed with an open front verandah, multi-paned windows and half-timbering in the gable ends. It was built in 1923 for James and Mary Aileen Galbraith. James Galbraith was the Manager of the Bank of Montreal.

7 | Van Houten Residence, 184 Mount Benson St.



Another Craftsman bungalow, this 1924 home was built for A.C. and Mary Van Houten. A.C. Van Houten was a druggist and the U.S. Consular Agent. Typical architectural treatments of this era include a generous open front verandah accented by a projecting gable, supported on twinned columns.

8 | Schetky Residence, 225 Vancouver Avenue



This house was built circa 1898 for G.L. Schetky, an insurance agent and U.S. Consul. In 1906, it was acquired by David Stephenson, the Chief Provincial Constable and the man for whom Stephenson Point was named. It was later acquired by Fred Jepson, a prominent local businessman. The house's long, low proportions mark a change in style at the end of the Victorian era when tall, asymmetrical houses with highly decorated surfaces and complex roof lines went out of fashion. The ornamentation is limited to scroll-cut eave brackets, banded and corbelled chimneys and a rear window flashed with coloured glass. The mature Monkey Puzzle tree on the site is a Heritage Tree.

9 | Sharp Residence, 261 Vancouver Avenue



A Craftsman influenced bungalow, this house was built in 1923 for Hannah Lowe. In 1925, Frank and Marjorie Sharp became the first known resident owners. Frank Sharp was the City Engineer. The use of brick is uncommon and there is a unique checkerboard treatment, rendered in rough-cast brick, in the gable ends.

10 | Ekins Residence, 441 Vancouver Avenue



This house, built in 1927 for Dr. William Edward James Ekins, reflects the period revival styles popular in the years between the two World Wars. Designed in an English Arts & Crafts style, it features a steep hip roof, stucco cladding and multi-paned casement windows. Visual interest is provided by a gable projection over the front entry, a hip dormer and a larger jerkin-headed dormer facing to the front.

11 | Bird House, 461 Vancouver Avenue



Built in 1914, the Bird House is a good example of a Craftsman style home. The house features many design elements typical of this style including half timbering in the gable ends, triangular eave brackets and an open front verandah supported by flared piers. Although the original wood siding has been covered by stucco and most of the original windows replaced or modified, the building is otherwise substantially intact. The Bird House is significant as a residence for a succession of Bank of Commerce managers until at least the late 1940s.

12 | Granby Mine Residence, 523 Vancouver Avenue



Built around 1918, the Granby Mine Residence is an interesting example of the stylistic evolution of a building precipitated by its relocation from Granby, a model mining community south of Nanaimo. Originally a Craftsman Bungalow, some English Cottage style elements, including the front dormer, jerkin-headed gable ends and mock-timbering on the front façade, were added when the building was relocated around 1936, when the English Cottage style was very popular in this neighbourhood.

The Granby Mine Residence is significant for its association with Alfred J.T. Taylor, a prominent engineering contractor and entrepreneur. Taylor Engineering had interests in Granby Mine and designed and built the original buildings. Taylor's firm was also responsible for building the Lion's Gate Bridge in Vancouver, and the British Properties and Capilano Estates in North Vancouver.

13 | Wardill Residence, 755 Terminal Ave. North



Built around 1945, the Wardill Residence is one of the best provincial examples of the Streamline Moderne style. This historic style shows the influence of the new discipline of Industrial Design. The horizontal lines and detailing of this building echo the streamlining bands found on most manufactured objects during the 1930s, including radio cabinets, cars, trains and ocean liners.

"Eldovilla". A Queen Anne style mansion, demolished in 1930