



# PROUD HERITAGE



*Basketball Champions 1922*

  
125 YEAR  
HISTORY



*Four Sisters 1886*

*BC Archives*



YM-YWCA  
*of*  
GREATER VICTORIA

by Patti Gully



*Basketball City Champions 1906/07*

YMCA **HIS HOME** YWCA  
**OVER THERE**



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125 YEAR  
HISTORY

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YM-YWCA  
*of*  
GREATER  
VICTORIA

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by Patti Gully

Published by YM-YWCA of Greater Victoria  
Victoria, British Columbia  
2000

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# Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iv
PREFACE .....	1
<b>1850's</b>	
VICTORIA YMCA .....	2
<b>1870's</b>	
VICTORIA YMCA .....	3
<b>1880's</b>	
VICTORIA YMCA .....	4
<b>1890's</b>	
VICTORIA YMCA .....	6
VICTORIA YWCA .....	8
<b>1900's</b>	
VICTORIA YMCA .....	10
VICTORIA YWCA .....	12
<b>1910's</b>	
VICTORIA YMCA .....	14
VICTORIA YWCA .....	16
<b>1920's</b>	
VICTORIA YMCA .....	18
VICTORIA YWCA .....	20
<b>1930's</b>	
VICTORIA YMCA .....	22
VICTORIA YWCA .....	24
<b>1940's</b>	
VICTORIA YMCA .....	26
VICTORIA YWCA .....	28
<b>1950's</b>	
VICTORIA YMCA .....	30
VICTORIA YWCA .....	32

<b>1960's</b>	
YM-YWCA of Greater Victoria .....	34
<b>1970's</b>	
YM-YWCA of Greater Victoria .....	37
<b>1980's</b>	
YM-YWCA of Greater Victoria .....	39
<b>1990's</b>	
YM-YWCA of Greater Victoria .....	41
<b>CONCLUSION</b> .....	43
 <b>APPENDICES</b>	
1. 1 <sup>st</sup> President of YMCA; 1 <sup>st</sup> President of YWCA; 1 <sup>st</sup> Friend of YMCA & YWCA .....	44
2. Presidents of Victoria YMCA, YWCA & YM-YWCA .....	45
3. General Secretaries / Executive Directors of YMCA, YWCA & YM-YWCA .....	46
4. Quarters of Victoria YMCA, YWCA, YM-YWCA .....	47
5. Victoria YMCA First Annual Road Race, 1 January 1907 (map) .....	48
6. Victoria Y Timeline .....	49
 <b>NOTES</b> .....	53
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	55

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Where there are few or no written records, people are very often the only source of information, and who better to consult than those who have lent the Y their support over a period of decades. I am indebted to the following persons, whose combined association with the YMCA, the YWCA and the YM-YWCA, as members, executive and staff, amounts to almost 250 years. Alison 'Babe' Warren, Shirley Main, Art Burgess and Jack Todd gave generously of their time and memories, taking seriously their roles as witnesses to history, in order to provide me with a vivid sense of the Y's problems and successes during their own lifetimes.

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## Preface

**T**he YM-YWCA of Greater Victoria, familiarly known as 'Victoria Y,' this year celebrates 125 years of operation. The present day association is a hybrid formed by the 1961 amalgamation of two previously separate organizations, the Victoria YMCA and the Victoria YWCA. The former was founded in 1875, and the latter in 1892. Their twin histories, both apart and together, have known controversy and financial disasters, causing their doors to close in the early days, sometimes for years. Ultimately, however, the community always clamoured for their reinstatements.

Until they combined forces, the two Y's operated independently in the city, and only contemplated the necessity of union when their separate headquarters, both aging, inadequate, and bursting with members, needed to be replaced. While the notion of their joining operations in a single building was, at the time, highly radical and hotly disputed, it seemed the least expensive and most practical solution to a thorny problem. Today, after almost forty years of achievements in an almost seamless relationship, the marriage is viewed as such a success that most Victorians could not imagine any other sort of arrangement.

**W**hy does this anniversary matter? It is important because the history of the city's YM-YWCA is the history of Victoria in microcosm. Economic depressions, land booms and busts, world wars and social problems that have gripped the city at different times have all encountered a compassionate and practical response from Victoria Y. The association has evolved continuously to meet the needs of its constituency, even while remaining true to the original Christo-centric, philanthropic vision of its founders. Its young people, who have received training in leadership and civic responsibility, have themselves gone on to become leaders in the community. Its famous 'Flying Y' athletes have thrilled city residents and made them proud at regional, national and international sporting meets. People of all ages, income groups, and racial and cultural denominations have found at the Y a warm welcome and friendly encouragement in their quests for personal development.

Victoria's material and spiritual health has always depended upon the enterprise, energy and humanitarianism of its citizens, and for 125 years, these same citizens have depended on the Y to provide a venue for voluntarism, fellowship, physical fitness and fun. This chronicle celebrates the achievements, leadership, and just plain dogged determination of generations of Victorians who have supported and embraced their Y, and who, in the process, have also made history. It is respectfully dedicated to their memories.

# 1850'S

## Victoria Young Men's Christian Association

The story of the Victoria Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) formally begins in 1875. In that year, a group of concerned citizens gathered to create an association that would provide young men and boys with a venue for learning, sporting activities, and Biblical instruction. A severe economic depression had created high unemployment. Aimless young men thrown out of work found solace in the bars and brothels of the city which were liberally located on almost every street corner. The complete absence of facilities for wholesome social interaction impelled the founding fathers to take action to provide a "home away from home" for young men. However, although these pioneers referred to the creation of this organization as the first of its kind in Victoria, a YMCA had already been launched – and abandoned – in the city several years before.

In 1859, a scant 15 years after George Williams had founded the association in Britain, a YMCA was established in the colony of Fort Victoria. Its creation was sparked by the BC gold rush of the late 1850's. The lure of wealth attracted thousands of prospectors from all over the world, and they used Victoria as a springboard to the goldfields. Some 25,000 hopefuls descended on the humble fort whose population, largely concerned with the fur trade, numbered only about 300. The problems of administration, accommodation and food supply that were triggered by the invasion were enormous. Thousands of people lived under canvas on Douglas Street. Capitalizing on the situation, bar-owners and prostitutes arrived from California and set up shop, providing the town's only venues of entertainment.

In 1859, YMCA membership fees were 6 shillings, or \$1.50 per quarter. Cheap brandy was selling in town for \$1 per quart.

Troubled by this development, and anxious to "secure a healthy check against dissipation," on 3 September 1859, leading citizens met at the Supreme Court and Legislative Assembly Building (one of the so-called "Birdcages" where the Parliament Buildings now stand) to organize a YMCA.<sup>1</sup> Enjoying the patronage of Governor James Douglas, and organized under the presidency of Colonel Moody, RE, the new association occupied its first quarters on Yates and Langley streets, above the Messrs Moore and Co. store. This facility comprised a reading room (the first in Victoria), an office from which the organization's secretary received new members, and a men's residence, which consisted of two tents set up on Douglas St.

In December 1859, the association's headquarters moved to a more central location in Dr Dickson's house on Government Street, just opposite the Bastion.

The facility's reading room was surprisingly well-stocked with more than 15 international publications,

However, shortly after it began, the association appears to have folded its tents and disappeared. In all likelihood, when gold rush fever had abated and the city was emptied of the bulge of its temporary population, there was no longer a burning need for the services of the YMCA. The community apparently lost all interest, and when, years later, it decided to revive the organization, no mention was ever made of its prior existence.

### First Officers of the Victoria YMCA, 1859

<i>Patron:</i>	Governor James Douglas
<i>President:</i>	Col RC Moody, RE
<i>Vice Presidents:</i>	Judge David Cameron Capt Prevost, RN
<i>Committeemen:</i>	Messrs AF Pemberton Pidwell Sparrow Burr Holt Damon Evans Cunningham
<i>Secretary:</i>	John Cooper

# 1870'S

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## Victoria Young Men's Christian Association

The 1870's began in British Columbia on an optimistic note. In July 1871, the province united with the rest of Canada, and Victoria, a city of 8000 people, was chosen as its capital city. However, the party atmosphere engendered by the celebrations was soon strangled by a severe economic depression of eight years duration, a nationwide catastrophe which reduced many Victorians to a state of dire poverty. Spirits did not improve when Vancouver was named as terminus of the new transcontinental railway, especially as this honour had been promised to the province's capital city. Unemployment soared, and so did abnormally heavy drinking. Alcoholism was blamed, not only on joblessness, but also, in this frontier city, on the absence of women whose civilizing influence might have contributed to domesticity and stability. Inevitably, loneliness and boredom drove young men into the many saloons and bordellos of Victoria.

Unable to abide the deterioration of morals in the city, citizens moved to enforce the "blue laws," and when New York revivalist, Reverend Edward Payson Hammond, arrived in Victoria on 5 August 1875, his proselytising zeal inspired residents to form a local YMCA. Almost immediately, 30 to 40 young men expressed an interest in joining the association, and on 30 August, its first officers were elected. The new president, architect Thomas Trounce, was in the chair on 6 September 1875 when the budding Victoria YMCA held its first meeting in Fardon's Hall at the corner of Langley and Yates streets. Ironically, this location was right across the street from Messrs Moore and Co. where the very first YMCA had been housed in 1859. At the end of November, the association moved yet again to the Omineca Building on Yates Street, kitty-corner to its previous quarters.

In the days before electricity and the attendant marvels of television and reading lights, evenings could be long and tedious. One of the Y's functions was to provide entertainments to combat ennui and bring people together. On these weekly occasions, members of the executive were sometimes cajoled into giving lectures. Many of these orations, such as the abstruse address by BW Pearse, entitled, "Natural Theology viewed in connection with Natural Philosophy," likely appealed only to a relatively narrow audience. On the other hand, singing, readings and recitations by association members regularly enjoyed a large and enthusiastic attendance, especially when the Ladies' Auxiliary was available to provide tea and cakes.

### **Y. M. C. Association Reading Room.**

**THE READING ROOM IN CONNECTION**  
with the above institution is now opened to the  
public from 10 a. m. till 10 p. m. Local and other  
newspapers. fe23

*British Daily Colonist, 23 February 1875*

While much of the Y's work catered to young men, boys were not forgotten. In July 1876, the YMCA hosted a day's excursion by steamer to Pedder Bay, a family outing that included picnicking, music, sports and games. This ambitious and popular event was probably the first day camp conducted by the Y in the province.

In view of the success of the organization, it is surprising to learn that once more it ceased to function in about 1879.

Possibly the city's population, which had dropped 25% by the end of the decade as a result of the depression, was not sufficient to support the workings of the organization. Nevertheless, its potential for good remained a persistent memory. In 1884, concern for the spiritual and temporal welfare of the Victoria's young men resulted in a meeting to agitate for the "re-organization" of the Victoria YMCA.



# 1880'S

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## Victoria Young Men's Christian Association

In the 1880's, Victoria began to recover from the effects of the depression, and the population swelled once more. However, the hundreds of young men who arrived yearly in the city inevitably sparked a thriving business in prostitution. In 1886, police chief Charles Bloomfield reported that fourteen brothels were operating in and around Broad and Broughton streets near the Driard Hotel. The city's saloons also were doing a roaring trade. Against this, other than the Cathedral Institute which catered to Catholic youth, there were no organizations that offered virtuous and undenominational entertainment for young people. The *Colonist* observed, "To go home to the unhomelike rooms at a lodging house and read night after night can only be expected of the extraordinarily good young man."<sup>2</sup> Another editorial heartily recommended the establishment of a YMCA.<sup>3</sup>

There are two versions of how the association was reorganized. In the first, Portland secretary, E. Frost, arrived in the city in 1883 to solicit interest in reviving the YMCA. Interviewing the bishop, the mayor, and assorted city fathers, he won their support, and recommended that local delegates be sent to the first general convention of Western Y's being held in Portland. As a result, a reorganized Victoria Y opened the following year. The other version has Benjamin W. Pearse calling a meeting of the mothers of the Reformed Episcopal Church School to gauge their reactions to the resurrection of the Y. It was the marked enthusiasm of the women that generated an organizational meeting. Undisputed, however, is the fact that both men and women actively worked towards making the new Y a success.

With the help of Seattle's general secretary, Clark Davis, a constitution was framed, and on 1 December 1884, the newly reorganized YMCA officially opened in quarters on Fort Street. Described as "a pleasant resort," the rooms were simple, bright and warm, with space for games and reading. Another amenity was the Boarding House Register maintained by the general secretary, a service provided free of charge to the many young men who were new to the city.

### 1884 Constitution of the Victoria YMCA

Its basis, strictly sectarian. Its object, to promote the social, mental & moral welfare of young men by friendly intercourse, lectures on suitable topics, and a free reading room, well supplied with the latest current literature, newspapers, magazines and books. To furnish in their rooms, as far as possible, a home for those who have none, and throw about them such wholesome influences as will promote their mental, moral and physical welfare and counteract the snares set for their ruin.

The nascent association was so successful that larger quarters were required almost immediately, and new rooms were found next month at Government and Bastion. Well-wishers attending the opening ceremony on 11 February 1885 each brought a book with which to furnish the reading room, and warmly supported speeches that outlined the primary aim of the Y in Victoria. President BW Pearse told the gathering that, above all, the organization hoped to fill a gap in the spiritual education of those young people otherwise not exposed to religious training by instilling in them an appreciation for Christian virtues.

The Y wasted no time in fulfilling its mandate.

Special work for boys was begun at once. Although the board had discarded the word "evangelical" from the constitution in favour of "Christian," it sponsored a series of evangelistic meetings. These gatherings were well-attended, apparently justifying the Y's drive to expose its membership to religious ideals.

The resulting popularity of the Y was responsible for yet another change of venue. In October 1886, the association moved to the upper flat of Spencer's "Arcade" on Broad Street, a central location with plenty of space.<sup>4</sup> A flat membership fee of \$5 a year provided young men and boys with educational classes, a library,

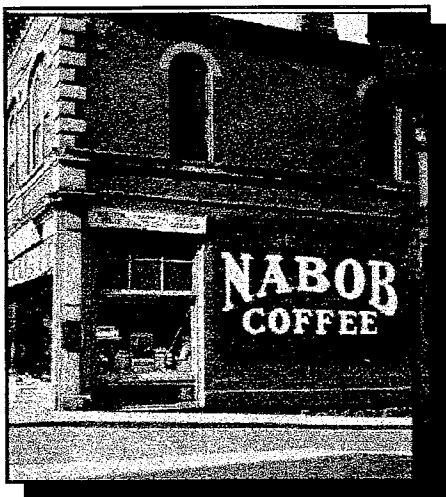
lecture courses, baths, and a games room (where the latest sensation, Crokinole, was available). Best of all, the Y's rooms boasted a beautiful gymnasium, reputed to be the most complete of its kind north of San Francisco, featuring ten pound (4.5 kg) weights, boxing gloves, dumb bells, chest expanders, flying rings, Indian clubs and a machine for exercising the wrists. All the rooms were brightly illuminated by an exciting new invention, the Edison incandescent electric light bulb.

At the annual meeting, President Noah Shakespeare proudly announced that 3000 young men had visited YMCA during the past year. However, hard times were just around the corner. The building's marvellous new lighting system proved to be a liability when an electrical short resulted in a disastrous fire on 16 July 1887. No one was injured, but the Y's facilities were heavily damaged. Even before the fire, expenditures had put the association in debt, and the four-month forced closure of the rooms for refurbishment only made matters worse. While the renovations were underway, JJ Daley, the popular general secretary, found work elsewhere, and with each setback, the public's love affair with the Y seemed to erode.

Nevertheless, the executive remained deeply committed, and under the presidency of AC Flumerfelt, the board members paid off the indebtedness from their own pockets, operating the facility themselves until a new secretary, Frank W. Teague, was hired in August 1888.

Thereafter, until the end of the decade, the fortunes of the YMCA rose and fell. In October 1888, membership stood at 122. The board reckoned that it should have been 300 for a town the size of Victoria. Y Travelling Secretary, NH Jacks, addressed the membership in March 1889, encouraging them to construct their own building, pointing out that this would not only raise the profile of the association in the city, but also swell its coffers. While this dream would not be achieved for another two decades, his inspiring speech was followed by a rousing autumn conference of the Pacific Northwest YMCA's held in Victoria.<sup>5</sup> Sagging spirits started to rise.

As the year drew to a close, the organization was filled with renewed optimism, and, for the fourth time in six years, made plans to move yet again to bigger and better quarters at Trounce Alley and Broad Street. This move would prove to be more auspicious than the others, and the Victoria YMCA would be identified with this new address intermittently for almost twenty years.



SW corner Government & Bastion  
Site of re-organized YMCA from 1885-  
1886 (1920's photo )  
BC Archives H-00095

# 1890'S

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## Victoria Young Men's Christian Association

In the 1890's, Victoria was no longer a frontier outpost, but home to a population of 17,000, many of them Britons who had made their fortunes in different parts of the Empire, and chose to retire, in refined circumstances, in the province's capital. In 1893, construction of the Parliament Buildings began, stimulating local industry and increasing employment. The city's port began to throb with mounting traffic from the Orient, and the newly installed tram lines reduced former notions of distance. However, against all this social and economic progress, alcoholism, accompanied by all its related woes, was still rampant and seemingly unstoppable.

Easterner Frank Teague told the story that, when he was offered the job of general secretary of the Victoria YMCA in 1888, the city's rough reputation prompted his mother to exclaim, "Of course you will not go." He replied that, on the contrary, he looked forward to doing "grand and mighty work" in the western port. Upon his arrival, when he observed 16 different saloons operating on one small street, he realized the extent of the task before him, but took strength from his knowledge of the Y's potential to ameliorate vice in urban areas.

On 7 March 1890, the YMCA officially opened its impressive new quarters in the upper storey of the AA Green Block at Trounce Alley and Broad Street.<sup>6</sup> During the previous month, the Y executive had specially requested the assistance of its womenfolk, and a Ladies' Auxiliary was formally organized with Mrs DJ Jenkins as president. Dedicating themselves to making the rooms attractive, the women were responsible for the elaborate furnishing of the quarters. The splendid, lace-curtained parlour featured, among other treasures, antique vases and "valuable specimens of Japanese art."<sup>7</sup> The windows in the lecture room were capped with stained glass.

It seemed that the Y had truly arrived. In 1890, it was incorporated, and took its place as a leading institution in the city. Chairing its executive was no less than the Hon. John Robson, premier of BC, who stoutly declared that, of all his titles, the one he held most dear was "President of the YMCA." The association became one of the most respected venues for athleticism in the city, its teams winning championships in every sport. In about 1895, it was also responsible for bringing the popular game of basketball to the city shortly after its invention at the Springfield, Massachusetts YMCA in 1891.<sup>8</sup>

However, the association's bank balance was continually in arrears, and by 1893, indebtedness had soared to an alarming \$3000. Analysing the situation, the worried executive decided that either the board was overspending, or the association lacked community support. As the board was composed of the city's most conservative businessmen, who carefully weighed each expenditure, it was felt that the trouble lay with the community. But the association's emphasis on Christianity was a sticking point with many in Victoria. As the board ruefully acknowledged, businessmen in the city perceived the Y as "a goody-goody sort of institution that is only worthy [of] the support of milksops and old women."<sup>9</sup>

The Y mounted a public relations campaign to demonstrate its worth to the community. To generate income, an outdoor swimming pool, called a "floating bath," was built on the Gorge near Point Ellice bridge, and was open to all for a nominal fee. Well-advertised entertainments were calculated to lure potential members; "Poet's Night" featured recitations by young ladies. A Boys' Brigade, under the patronage of the Governor-General, was organized to provide full military training and religious instruction for boys aged 12 to 17. The gym was refurbished and opened to fanfare. A convention of YMCA's of the Pacific Northwest was held in Victoria, garnering a great deal of positive publicity for the association.

Public support began to be forthcoming, even from unlikely sources. Twelve little girls of First

Presbyterian Church Sunday School held a concert in aid of the YMCA which cleared \$30. Local merchants donated goods to be sold at a fair held in the rooms. Unfortunately, it was too little, too late. On 23 December 1894, a terse announcement in the paper stated that the YMCA was closing without immediate prospect of re-opening.

**T**his shocking news finally roused the community. Two hundred persons offered to subscribe \$1 a month to jumpstart the association, and a new board of directors, under president Dr Lewis Hall, promised not to contract any new debt. The reorganized Y opened on 3 March 1895, but, despite bold plans and new optimism, its fortunes did not improve.

The institution continued to struggle for two more years, plagued by money problems and low membership. When gold was discovered in the Klondike and the Y's new general secretary, Herbert Roper, left for Dawson City along with everyone else, it was the last straw. The affairs of the Y tottered to an end and its doors closed in December 1898.<sup>10</sup> To meet some of its liabilities, the furniture was sold, including the piano which had been a gift of the late Hon. John Robson. The instrument fetched \$190, enough to pay the rent, but the remainder of the association's obligations could not be met. The YMCA was forced to close with the incubus of debt clouding its legacy.

**C**auses of the Y's repeated failures are difficult to pinpoint, but several factors seem to be involved. Adverse financial conditions were likely a component. Many Victorians were ruined in 1894 by the failure of the city's Green Worlock and Co. bank, the largest private bank in Canada. However, there is also some evidence that bad management may have played a part in the Y's undoing. Upon re-opening in 1894 (the same day that the bank crashed),<sup>11</sup> Bishop Perrin delicately advised the membership to be more "manly" and not to lean so heavily on "the other sex, trusting too much and expecting too much from the young women."<sup>12</sup> Perhaps the antique vases planted in the parlour by the Auxiliary were a symptom of over-interference on the part of the women.

More likely, however, is that, in its well-meaning efforts to inculcate spiritual values in the membership, the YMCA was guilty of forcing Christianity on the unwilling. When the Y closed, the *Colonist* suggested that, as any number of churches were available to cater to the spiritual needs of young men, the Y "should be more in the nature of a club." The editorial went on to observe, "We have not noticed any decrease in the number of resorts for youth which are not to be classed as Christian."<sup>13</sup> Years later, when the association was back in business, the *Colonist* rejoiced that, unlike bygone days, the YMCA no longer harboured "pious busybodies" prone to "dropping in on young boys at all hours no matter what they were doing with proposals to sing a hymn or say a prayer."<sup>14</sup>

As the century closed, Victoria had no YMCA, a civic embarrassment to a capital city of its size and stature. Undoubtably, mistakes had been made, and those who supported the institution would have plenty of time to consider where they had gone wrong. The Y would not re-open until 1903.

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**"He was bound to say from his experience that the moral tendency in this city and province was lower than in any other parts of the Dominion or in Great Britain...Coming here from England to this colony, to this new town, it surprised him to find the conditions that existed. In some way or other the authorities of this place allowed the saloons to occupy the position they did in the community. It was quite unintelligible to him..."**

Bishop of Columbia, William Wilcox Perrin, speaking in support of the YMCA at its grand re-opening, 1894. "Onward Christian Soldiers," *Daily Times*, 3 March 1894

# 1890'S

## Victoria Young Women's Christian Association

"The YWCA was just beginning in Victoria; my sisters were among its founders, and enthusiastic over the concern. As the society had, as yet, no headquarters, they used to come to our house to pray. I was always bursting in on them. The knocked-over-ones glowered, and, over their horizontal backs, my sister's eyes shot fire at me. She hung on to her prayer voice till afterwards - and then - !"

Emily Carr, *Growing Pains: An Autobiography*.

In 1892, a group of young women who met for weekly Bible study in the Reformed Episcopal Church of Our Lord were addressed by a visiting member of the British Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA). This woman suggested that their small group might form the nucleus of a YW association in their city. Excited by all they heard about the vision and purpose of the organization, the Bible class resolved to form a local branch in Victoria. The first official organizational meeting of the Victoria YWCA was held on 13 October 1893. On this occasion, 37-year-old Miss Edith Carr was elected president. The 15 other charter members ranged in age from early teens to mid-twenties. Initial meetings were to be held, either in church, or at the Carr family home on Carr (now Government) Street.

The first priority of the young women was to raise funds to support their endeavours, and, almost immediately, they hit upon a sound money-making scheme. In response to public concern for the sustenance of high school students enrolled at Central School, they resolved to offer light luncheons, at 10¢ apiece, to those youngsters who were unable to go home at midday. The women prepared the lunches in their own kitchens, and then trudged to the school with the food in their arms. On those days when Miss Edith Carr was available, they had the luxury of riding in her pony and trap. Their determination paid off. This first YWCA "cafeteria," operating in the attic of the school, was a financial success and helped to bankroll the members' acquisition of their first rented quarters, an upstairs room secured next to Skene Lowe's photographic studio on Government Street, in the heart of the business district.

The new quarters quickly gained a reputation with girls and young working women as a quiet and relaxing spot to enjoy a cup of tea or cocoa (at 7½ ¢ a cup), or a bowl of soup and a slice of Miss Carr's delicious cream cake. The girls were encouraged to bring their own bag lunches, and the regulars felt sufficiently at home to house their own jars of jam on the vast sideboard that dominated the dining area. Sixty years later, early member, Mrs Aaron Parfitt (née Laura Matthew), recalled that, "We thought the lunchroom was just about

### Charter Members of the Victoria YWCA, 1892

Miss Alice Carr  
Miss Edith Carr  
Miss Emily Carr  
Miss Nellie Cridge (Mrs TH Laundry)  
Miss Mabel Dickenson (Mrs Paterson, Fresno, CA)  
Miss Annie Jane Fawcett  
Miss Jessie Louisa Fawcett (Mrs A Calderwood)  
Miss Edith Mary Lawson (Mrs OR Parker)  
Miss Edith Jane Wilson (Mrs CPW Schwengers)  
Miss Maud Clara Schwengers (Mrs HA Youdall)  
Mrs M. Coles (later relocated to Britain)  
-names of five other charter members are unknown

perfect.”

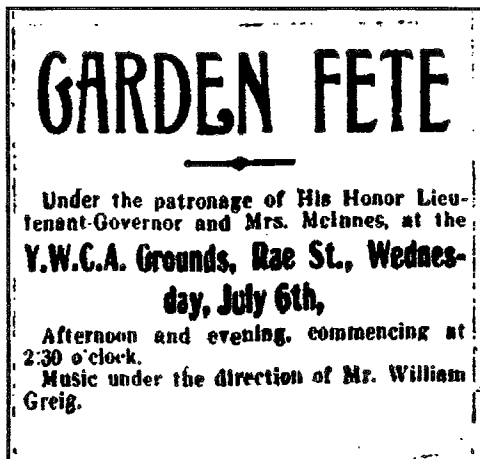
**B**uoyed by their success, the executive decided that the time had come to enlarge the scope of their work by providing board and lodging for young women living away from home, and temporary accommodation for women visiting the city. In August 1895, the YWCA moved to more spacious quarters above Thomas Shotbolt’s drug store on Johnson Street, just west of Government Street.

Heretofore, the association had been self-supporting through the monthly subscriptions of the membership, but furnishing the bedrooms and kitchen required additional capital. The necessary amount was raised through a garden fête held on 19 August 1895 at the home of the Misses Carr. This well-received festival was even graced by the regal presence of the Governor-General and his wife, Lord and Lady Aberdeen, who were pleased to stay on for two hours to enjoy the tennis and archery displays, and to feast on sandwiches and ice cream served within the lovely grounds, illuminated, as dusk fell, by Chinese lanterns.

In their new headquarters, the YW had the space it needed to provide new programs. Educational seminars were introduced, featuring topical lectures, such as the address delivered by Dr Mary McNeill on “physiology and hygiene,” a lecture that filled a need for information in an age that lacked instructional resources that are commonplace today. By the end of 1895, the executive was pleased to report that membership had soared from 57 to 230. However, this burgeoning success was a two-edged sword. It required that the association seek even larger quarters.

## MINIMALIST STYLE

When the board members of the Victoria YWCA convened for their first meeting in their first rented quarters on Government Street in 1894, the rooms’ furnishings consisted of a carpet on the floor and one chair.



*Colonist* 5 July 1898

**I**n 1898, the YWCA moved to the abandoned and relatively spacious Old Protestant Orphanage on Rae (now Courtney) Street, near Blanshard. Under the direction of entertainment committee chairman, Mrs Robert McMicking, an “Olde Englyshe Garden Fayre” was held on the grounds surrounding the headquarters, and the financial success of this endeavour helped to furnish the new rooms. Nine months after opening, the executive reported that 64 boarders had already enjoyed accommodation at the Y, their terms of residence ranging from one day to six months. The larger quarters also enabled the furnishing of a library for its members and the provision of cooking classes, usually taught by Miss Carr, for interested women.

In 1899, the association broadened its charitable work in the community by initiating the Women’s Exchange, a venue for the display and sale of the hand work, both fancy and plain, of indigent women who otherwise had no means of financial support. This civic-minded contribution to the welfare of Victoria citizens eventually evolved into the Women’s Workroom, an institution supported by a variety of local

organizations that was to endure for another fifty years. Also mindful of its inclusion within a global society, the association participated in the world-wide YW Week of Prayer, and hosted Y workers from other countries who spoke to the membership about their work in different lands.

By October 1899, the papers reported that the YWCA had already cleared the debt on its property and was considering expansion. To all outward signs, the association seemed thriving and well-poised to meet the new century head on. In truth, however, the budding association had money trouble, and its worried board wondered just how long it could stave off disaster.

## AIM OF THE YWCA:

“to develop all that is good, pure and noble in woman, to round out and bring to fuller perfection all the virtues that make her a better Christian, a better citizen, or indeed, a better sister, wife, or mother.”

“YWCA” *Colonist*, 12 October 1895

# 1900'S

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## Victoria Young Men's Christian Association

As the twentieth century began, a new maturity settled on Victoria. The Carnegie Library and Victoria College were built, and the city became comfortable in its position as a centre of government and tourism. In 1907, the city's opium factories were finally closed by law, and, in 1908, the Empress Hotel was opened. However, Victoria's population was now 20,000, an three-fold increase since 1880, and more than ever required the services of a civic-minded institution that would cater to the welfare of its citizenry. In the years since it had closed, the YMCA had been much missed, and its many amenities were recalled with fond regret.

In January 1903, an enthusiastic gathering of more than 50 young men met with leaders of the community to re-form the defunct organization. RW Clark was named as president. The past indebtedness was cleared with the help of Seattle Y's general secretary, George Carter, and the old quarters in the AA Green block, which had almost lain vacant since the Y's departure, were secured once more. The Ladies' Auxiliary was re-activated and the rooms were put in order. The YMCA was back in business, this time on a firm footing. It would never have to close its doors again.

The association rapidly proved to be "a godsend to young men in this city," and a check against "the temptations and dangerous allurements which are to be found in all large communities."<sup>15</sup> There were winter entertainments held in the rooms and at the Opera House, a program of exercise designed for everyone from youngsters to businessmen, a boarding house register kept for young men seeking accommodation, and educational instruction given in everything from bookkeeping to architectural drawing. Sunday's "Problem Club Bible Class" recommended how to live life to best advantage. Boys' work was re-commenced.<sup>16</sup>

The old bugaboo, indebtedness, returned, but it was argued that, as this liability of \$1500 was spent on refurbishment of the rooms (a one-time expense), it should be regarded as an investment. This notion was borne out by the membership figures which began to grow. Soon there was talk of instituting a summer camp, the first of which was held in 1905 when the Gorge Camp was founded by seven youths who were association members.<sup>17</sup> Thereafter, the camp was conducted under the auspices of Victoria Y, and was located on waterfront property then belonging to the Hudson's Bay Co, about 200 yards beyond Gorge Park.

1906 was a landmark year in many ways. Receipts from membership were up by 80% and the monies were used to pay down the debt. For the first time, the Y had a permanent physical instructor, HR Gregory. It was also publishing its own monthly paper, *Victoria Young Men*, with a circulation of 1000. Best of all, the Victoria YMCA was blessed by the arrival of a new general secretary, AJ Brace. Veteran of the Boer War and a man of the cloth, Brace was a man's man, who, at different times, had worked as a railroader, lumberjack, butcher and blacksmith. He was hearty, confident, and a born leader. Under his direction, association work flourished.<sup>18</sup>

.....  
**Y. M. C. A.**

**A Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all our friends  
KEEP NEW YEAR'S DAY OPEN!**

We shall be at home to our friends. Road race, starting from and finishing at the Y. M. C. A., and gymnastic exhibitions from 3 to 4:30 p.m. Refreshments from 4:30 to 6. Literary programme at 8 p.m. Free and informal! No charge of any kind! Ladies and gentlemen—all welcome.  
.....

In 1906, the professionalism of the Y's new staff had a huge impact, especially in the field of athletics. Victoria Y won 77 prizes in track and field, and bagged the intermediate basketball championship. The innovative HR Gregory introduced musical accompaniment for free dumbbell and wand exercises, and a

volleyball league for businessmen. The physical aspect of the association attracted many young members who otherwise would not have joined, enabling the association to evolve from active proselytization of members to showing them, by example, the "clean, manly life," an approach which had positive results.

In 1907, two longtime YMCA features were established: Christmas Dinner for men away from home, and a reception and Road Race on New Year's Day.<sup>19</sup> In short time, the Y was so popular that the executive dared once more consider its old illusive dream – a brand new building. Mayor Morley testified that he believed that Victoria needed a home for the YMCA more than anything else.

The Y's New Building Committee, initiated in 1906, was supported and encouraged by visits from CR Sayer, western regional secretary, and the legendary DA Budge, general secretary of Montreal YMCA. These men predicted that a new building with a dormitory would attract almost triple the present enrollment, and the resulting subscriptions and rentals would make the structure self-supporting. An appeal was made to city residents who were reminded that Victoria was the largest coast city without its own building, and that hundreds of boys were growing up without means of entertainment to make them good citizens. An investment in the Y would be a sort of social insurance to protect the leaders of tomorrow. The building campaign committee included such luminaries as Lindley Crease, WG Cameron, RL Drury, DR Ker, and Chris Spencer. In the midst of all this hoopla, however, the tide of debt was rising inexorably.

"The Y.M.C.A. Swimming club held its initial meeting last evening... The Olympic swimming try-outs, in which certain Eastern swimmers were chosen without competition while swimmers on the Pacific coast are not given a thought, was criticized. It was stated that Vancouver swimmers had telegraphed to the Olympic committee, but the locals decided it was best to write at length and state their grievance..."

"Y.M.C.A. Swimming Club Inaugurated," *Colonist*, 20 May 1908

By 1908, the Y owed \$2000. The directors assigned themselves the difficult task of retiring this debt before they asked the city for money, and, in 1909, were able to press forward with additional plans to initiate a building campaign. Their plan was to raise not less than \$100,000, a sum that included land, construction costs and equipment. A whirlwind, two-week campaign in April 1909 culminated in the tent which was erected as the campaign's headquarters. A huge clock ticked down the time until midnight when the drive would officially close. By dinner, \$80,000 had been subscribed, and by 10 pm, another \$10,000. High hopes were pinned on telegrams arriving from the east, pledging substantial sums. They were terribly dashed when the money did not materialize. Exuberance changed almost to nail-biting hysteria as time wore on. Generous contributors were urged to double their original donations. Campaign organizers dug yet more deeply into their own pockets. Suddenly, as the clock struck midnight, frenzied workers bounded in with the latest batch of donations. It was found that the total raised was \$100,192.50.

This mighty sum, the like of which had never before been collected in Victoria, had been amassed by 100 business men, 100 young men, and 50 women. It amounted to \$3 per head for every man woman and child in the city. On May 10, an appropriate building site, costing \$16,000, was chosen at the northeast corner of Blanshard and View, and HS Griffith was hired as architect. The brick and stone building that he proposed would include a swimming pool and a dormitory. It would cost an estimated \$70,000. At last, a new YMCA building, the dream of many decades, was within reach. It seemed too good to be true. It was. Fully \$30,000 of the money subscribed, extravagantly pledged during the frenzy of the drive, turned out to be non-collectable. The next decade would open with much concern over the Y's worrisome financial situation.



# 1900'S

## Victoria Young Women's Christian Association

In the 1890's, the YWCA had ambitiously provided the women of Victoria with a variety of resources and programs. However, it was plagued by a series of misfortunes and misunderstandings that were soon to close its doors. By August 1900, membership figures were sagging, and it was noted that the women's residence was accommodating too few boarders to sustain itself. President of the executive, Mrs Walker, called a public meeting to discover the roots of the community's apparent indifference to the association, and the growing disinclination of women to take rooms at the Y. The board members, who strongly believed in their mission, were mystified by the home's unpopularity. They felt that, by maintaining the residence, they were providing an essential service to the young women of Victoria who were the potential prey of "pernicious and bad agencies." In addition to providing a safe harbour, the residence was also a comfortable home at a very affordable price. The board decided that a public awareness campaign might serve to boost support.

### Young Women's Christian Association

32 RAE STREET.

Board and lodging at moderate terms, with special reduction for double bedded rooms.

Young women arriving by trains and steamers will be met, if due notice is given to the matron.

*Colonist*, 17 October 1900

It was also resolved that YWCA representatives would make personal visits to young women employed in the city to advise them of the existence of the residence, and to clear up any misconceptions they might have about the workings of the association. As well, plans were made to advertise the service more widely. However, the workings of fate unravelled the board's best efforts. A series of bereavements, illnesses and unavoidable absences among the executive and staff disrupted the efficient working of the association. Soon it was seriously in debt, but appeals for support fell upon deaf ears. By January 1901, the board was forced to close the residence.

The women's bewilderment at the indifference they had encountered turned to righteous indignation. Lashing out at those who had failed to support them, the executive thundered that "...the responsibility for closing this home must rest not with the committee of the Y.W.C.A., but with all that portion of the community which calls itself Christian."<sup>20</sup> The budding association was strangled in its infancy, but no one seemed to care.

Six years later, in 1907, Mrs AM Fraser, a Winnipeg clubwoman fleeing the prairie cold, wintered in Victoria and was surprised to find no YWCA in the city. With her friends, Mrs Cecilia Spofford and Mrs Andrews, she took active steps to effect the resurrection of the organization. Before leaving for home, she donated \$100 to ensure that the work continued. On 18 March 1907, an initial "at home," held by the new YWCA in its bright and airy quarters at Fort and Government Streets, enjoyed a gratifyingly large attendance that included many prominent members of the community. The YWCA had been missed in its absence, and the city did not intend to lose it again.

Many of Victoria's women were plagued by social ills, mostly induced by poverty. However, some problems were the result of unexpected affluence. Young women immigrants, accustomed to low wages and long working hours in the Old Country, found themselves earning more money in the new world, and enjoying more unsupervised leisure time. As Bishop Perrin

delicately observed, in this there was “a temptation to be careless in matters of conduct.” The community believed that the Y would effect a positive difference in these areas.

Because the association was modestly reborn, its initial facilities encompassed only a dining room and a reading room. Nevertheless, the new beginning of the YWCA had the generous support of the business community, making possible the introduction of many new programs. An innovative employment agency was launched, and it rapidly became popular with potential employers. It also received inquiries from women as far away as Scotland, seeking information on employment possibilities. The bureau was such a success, it soon began to field more requests for workers than it had women to fill the jobs. Also, a long-cherished dream was finally realized when the association was able to engage a physical culture instructor. In this, however, there was a slight difficulty. Unfortunately, the organization’s building had no gym. In addition, it was far too small to house a women’s residence. Within months, the new facility was obsolete.

Just one year after opening, the Y was on the move again, this time to the former Denny residence at 942 Pandora Street.<sup>21</sup> Although distant from the city centre, it was located on the direct street car line from the CPR wharf, and was easily accessible to women newly arriving in town. There is some evidence that the residence previously operated by the Y in the 1890's had failed largely because of the rigid disciplinary regime imposed upon its denizens, but that mistake was not made again. Judging by the many satisfied customers who returned to these new lodgings more than once, the Y had found the knack of making its young women feel at home.

A further contribution to the comfort and safety of travellers young and old was made with the introduction of the Travellers’ Aid secretary. It was this officer’s responsibility to meet every incoming train and steamer in order to provide what assistance and information she could to strangers arriving in the city. In her trim uniform, Miss Edith Scholfield became a familiar figure to the travelling public until her retirement in 1938.

With the enthusiastic support of the community, the professionalism of its staff, and the relevancy of its programs, the YWCA was finally launched on a sound footing. It would never have to close its doors again.

# 1910'S

## Victoria Young Men's Christian Association

The 1910's opened joyously for those associated with the YMCA as the beautiful new headquarters of the association finally began to be built. However, this happiness was mitigated by unexpected trouble encountered by the finance committee when they tried to foot the bill for the structure. Last minute changes and improvements to the building, such as the addition of a fourth storey, increased the total price of construction from \$100,000 to \$130,000. Worse still, many of those citizens who had pledged to assist with financing backed out of their commitments to the tune of \$30,000. Cost overruns and contribution defaults ultimately increased the Y's indebtedness to a scary \$70,000. The executive was obliged to seek financing for the building project, but their situation was so unpromising that the funds were only forthcoming when several board members each agreed to sign as personal guarantors.

### Money Wanted

Y. M. C. A.

All subscriptions to new building post due one month Money urgently needed to open building clear Subscriptions received and official receipts given by following directors at their offices: W. N. Mitchell, A. B. Fraser, A. B. McNeill, P. O. Hillis, C. A. Fields, R. B. McMicking, A. J. Brace and W. Scowcroft.

*Colonist*, 1 January 1911

While the executive obsessed about the association's money problems, the people of Victoria were delighted by the new building taking shape in their midst.<sup>22</sup> On 16 August 1911, while 2000 enthusiastic onlookers cheered, Premier McBride laid the cornerstone upon which was etched, "Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone." The structure's exterior was modest, chosen after an examination of other Y buildings in the American northwest, but the very plainness of the building was regarded as its highest recommendation. It was the inside that counted. The long-awaited swimming pool, at 21 x 50 feet (6.4 x 15.24 metres), was located in the low-ceilinged basement, and the ground floor gym was fitted with a concave running track on the mezzanine, featuring 30 laps to the mile. The second floor held classrooms and an auditorium with stage, and a gallery to seat 600. The third and fourth floors were furnished with 41 bedrooms and a handball court.

### Y. M. C. A. EVENING CLASSES

If you wish to prepare for THE PROVINCIAL CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION in July or if you wish to join a SINGING CLASS or learn SHOW CARD WRITING, see the Educational Director at once.

*Colonist*, 2 March 1912

The inaugural ceremonies, conducted by President RB McMicking on 26 September 1911, filled the building to overflowing. Suddenly optimistic, members of the board dared to hope that the City of Victoria's love affair with the Y's new home would help to guarantee its financial independence, but they could not have foreseen the series of disasters that would ensue. The first was the resignation of the much-loved general secretary, AJ Brace, who left to do missionary work in China. The next was the declaration of World War I, a calamity in itself which had the collateral effect of

almost sending the Y into receivership. When members and boarders in residence rushed off to join the armed forces, revenues from membership subscriptions and dorm rentals were suddenly slashed by 70%. Just as devastating was the loss of leadership when the majority of the Y's volunteers also flocked to the colours.

Without revenue to support the debt load, by November 1915, the eleven board members who had acted

**"The old idea of the young man of the Y.M.C.A. was that of a person dressed in black, doleful of appearance, with shallow chest and round shoulders, more dead than alive. Now they found that the young men of that institution were robust and muscular."**

Lindley Crease, KC, addressing the 1916 Victoria YMCA Men & Money Campaign

as bondsmen were in danger of being sued for \$5000 each. Fortunately, they were saved at the last minute through a successful appeal to the public, but this gnawing problem of indebtedness, which repeatedly threatened to close the doors of the institution, continued with more or less urgency for another ten years. The general secretary even moved into the building so that his rental payments would boost revenue. In the meantime, however, the Y had a war to fight.

In the absence of the city's menfolk, increased effort was made to cater to the needs of boys whose fathers were overseas. Despite lack of manpower and the tapering of many programs, the Y managed to increase boys' memberships and provide them with many special moments. Camping continued at the Gorge, and the first annual boys' exhibition of arts and crafts hosted thousands of exhibits. An impressive three days' Boys' Conference, the largest ever held in the city, attracted several well-known characters, including Charlie Chaplin. One of the presenters at this conference was a young member whose mother had bought him a Y membership on his 17<sup>th</sup> birthday two years before. He was Archie McKinnon, future physical director of Victoria Y, under whose instruction at least 50,000 city youngsters would learn to swim.

The YMCA also committed itself to providing comforts and services to the armed forces. For men stationed at Willows, Resthaven and Esquimalt camps, the Y hosted on-site military huts, comfortable facilities furnished with reading material, sheet music, and games where the soldiers could relax, have a cup of coffee or write letters to loved ones. 24-hour-a-day hospitality was also provided to servicemen at the downtown headquarters. Troops of the Canadian Expeditionary Force to Siberia, stationed at Willows Camp, regularly marched to the main building for a

recreational swim and shower.

The staff went above and beyond the call of duty. When measles broke out at Willows Camp, necessitating that all the men be quarantined, the YMCA military secretary, HG Estabrook, gathered up a variety of comforts for distribution and went directly to the camp, patiently installing himself with the sick until the quarantine was lifted. Gestures of this nature won the hearts of servicemen and Victorians alike. In fact, because Y war services received no government funding of any kind, a financial appeal made to city residents in 1918 by the National Red Triangle Fund raised \$23,500 without difficulty.<sup>23</sup>

When the men returned from overseas, the Y discovered that its reconstruction work would be more onerous than war work. In the uneasy peace that followed the conflict, world conditions grew ominously unsteady. Traditional notions of subservience to the class system were breaking down; the fall of the Romanovs in Russia and the Winnipeg General Strike were just two examples. Years of stressful living in the straightened circumstances engendered by the war were replaced by extravagance and orgies of dissipation. The YMCA knew that, in its promotion of rooted values and athleticism, it had a recipe to cope with unrest.

Initiating a four-fold program of recovery and rehabilitation for veterans (and youngsters traumatized by the conflict), the Y hired a whole new staff, engaging only those who had served in the forces. All boys aged 12 to 16 who had lost their fathers in the conflict were given free membership, and a boys' work secretary, a veteran, was appointed to counsel them. Social work and community outreach was given new emphasis. Victoria Y had a solid foundation from which to meet the Roaring 'Twenties, confident that it was providing a true healing service to its community.

## YOUNG MAN

If you want to find a

# HOME

Live in the modern, well-equipped city

## Y.M.C.A.

We'll be glad to show you around our building at any time.

Phone 2980 1209 Blanshard

## Victoria Young Women's Christian Association

As the new decade began, the lives of young women were beginning to undergo radical changes. Although the suffrage bill was defeated in the BC Legislature in 1913 (it was passed three years later), social progress was inevitable as new educational and employment opportunities suddenly became available for women. The opening of the Victoria Normal School and the construction of the new Hudson's Bay Store on Douglas Street created jobs and new independence for those whose lives heretofore had been circumscribed by poverty and social convention. Also, the opening of the Panama Canal and the completion of two transcontinental railways promised to increase tourism and immigration among women who were now travelling independently with greater freedom.



However, this new freedom also put women's welfare at peril, and as a Christian organization, the YWCA was galvanized to provide what service it could to mitigate any possible dangers. Many girls arrived in Victoria, terrified and bewildered by the vast distances of the West, with not enough money, and no one to meet them. The Travellers' Aid service became a godsend to these unprotected female travellers, many of whom had also been known to vanish without a trace, apparently falling into the clutches of white slavers. American statistics showed that, in 1910, 1700 women who booked passage from New York to Chicago never arrived at their destination, but by 1912, that figure had plummeted to 966, a drop which station masters credited entirely to the Travellers' Aid.

However, if the Victoria Y was to work for women more aggressively, it needed a larger building. It got one. Under the inspired leadership of the redoubtable Mrs Frank Adams, president of the board, in 1911 the association moved out of the old Denny home on Pandora and re-occupied the Old Protestant Orphanage at 756 Courtney Street, the same building from which it had been forced to vacate for want of support in 1901. Typifying this remarkable reversal of fortunes, the board was actually able to purchase the building outright for \$12,000 cash. The new quarters, which allowed for the accommodation of 25 guests (40 at a pinch), rapidly became a money-maker. The rental income helped finance Y programs, such as educational classes in cookery, elocution, first aid, dressmaking and French. Bible classes and religious instruction were carried on as usual, and even amplified. By 1912, the board was also able to secure a "charmingly situated" summer cottage on Esquimalt's Russell Street which hosted a total of 100 guests.

However, dark clouds were gathering in Europe, and the outbreak of World War I brought radical changes to the city and the YWCA. Y members threw themselves into war work, providing endless quantities of medical supplies and comforts to the Red Cross. They entertained the troops at socials, and volunteered at the Military Convalescent Hospital. The Y was also asked by the Provincial Government to undertake the registration, care and supervision of young female fruit harvesters, who were recruited to save the orchards' crops which were languishing through loss of male labour gobbled up by the armed forces. Province-wide, this amounted to taking responsibility for 2000 women.

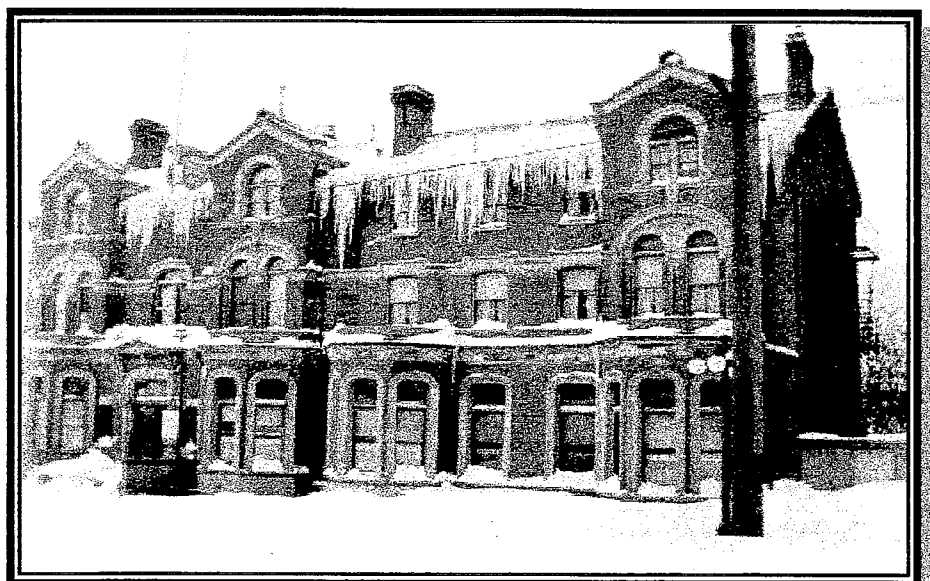
To cope with what it thought would be increased demands made on its space, in 1915, the YWCA moved its main headquarters to the old Union Club building on Douglas Street, next to St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, while retaining the Courtney Street address, now known as the Annex, as a home for indigents and seniors. The new HQ included a residence that catered to business

women, and it even boasted a tiny gym. Physical culture classes were now possible on site, and these activities included club swinging, wand exercises and folk dancing. The YWCA was praised for providing the young women of Victoria with a lovely home (“...there are few more pleasant rooms in the city than the large parlour where any member may meet her friends”<sup>24</sup>), and for professionally managing a well-appointed dining room, which also catered to male diners.

However, as the war progressed, the residence began to empty. Wage-earning girls began to return to the bosom of their families for the duration, especially those (and there were many in Victoria) who had once relocated to the city from England. It became financially difficult, and impractical, to operate such a large facility. Also, prices of food began to sky-rocket, sending the budget of the home department into a further tailspin.

In December 1918, the Y packed up and moved again, leaving the draughty Douglas Street address for the Stobart-Pease Block (later the Standard Furniture Building) at 745 Yates Street, where the association occupied the third and fourth floors. After the old Union Club, it was pleasingly compact, with modern heating and lighting arrangements. The board members painted and decorated the third floor bedroom suites themselves, and took turns serving the girls in the dining room located on the floor above. The facility boasted 20 bedrooms (providing accommodation for 33 girls) that were so comfortable, the residence was usually filled. The lunchroom sat 60 guests. As before, the Annex was retained for lodgers of limited means.

Although the Y could not afford to construct its own building, the Yates Street quarters were adequate for the time being, and, after the many moves, provided a much-needed impression of rooted stability. The Y was to occupy this location until 1927.



The old Union Club on Douglas Street during the “big snow” of 1916. Adjacent to St Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, it was home to the YWCA from 1915 to 1918.

BC Archives

# 1920'S

## Victoria Young Men's Christian Association

The war had helped win many friends to the YMCA. Troops stationed overseas could not forget the fearless Y workers who had circulated in the trenches, serving hot cocoa during bombardments so heavy that the soldiers had been ordered to "stand down." Accordingly, the postwar popularity of the Victoria association increased. The dorm's 104 beds began to enjoy a 75 to 90% occupancy rate (100% in summer), and membership soared to 943. These heartening figures helped to ease the association's precarious financial situation, allowing immediate obligations to be met. However, a \$35,000 debt on the building still remained, necessitating both postponements to repairs on the structure and the paring down of programs.

Nevertheless, Boys' Work remained very much a priority of Victoria YMCA. Since the end of the war, the annual summer camp had been held at Patricia Bay on land rented from BC Electric for \$20 a year, but plans to buy this pleasing property were nixed by the National which felt the site was not sufficiently remote from the city. Meanwhile, a campsite was set up on the west side of Beaver Lake. In 1920, Rotary, Kiwanis and Gyro clubmen built a lakeside pavilion for cooking and dining, and its modern amenities delighted the 181 boys who attended camp during Beaver Lake's first year of operation. The Gorge summer camp continued for employed young men who worked in the city by day, and took the tram to the site to live under canvas after hours.

An important development of the early '20's was the introduction of the Canadian Standard Efficiency Test, a program developed by the National YMCA, and overseen by local Boys' Work secretary, Harold Cross. The program embraced boys and young men of all ages, and aimed to provide them with an opportunity for all-round Christian development through a four-fold program that encompassed intellectual, physical, social, and religious spheres.

However, perhaps the most important landmark of this period was the staff appointment of Archie McKinnon. After a stint as Boys' Work secretary, the 26-year-old was hired as assistant physical director on 1 September 1921, and he brought to the job an enthusiasm for sports of all kinds, and an intuitive sense of the needs and capabilities of the youngsters under his charge.

During Archie's tenure, swimming grew to be an increasingly important feature of Y work, and as members of the 'Flying Y' athletic club, a disproportionate number of Canadian aquatic stars got their start in the diminutive Victoria YMCA pool. In a series of national telegraphic matches held with other Y's across the nation, Victoria made almost a clean sweep in all divisions. Girls were also admitted to the pool. Under expert Archie's tutelage, eight-year-old 'Babe' Warren (née Smith) learned

## For Boys

### 10 to 17 Years of Age

**Gymnasium Classes**  
 Group Games  
 Baseball, Basketball  
 Shower Baths  
 Swimming Pool  
 Games and Magazines  
 Snacks and Socials  
 Instructional Talks

With other recreative and character-building activities, at the popular

## Y. M. C. A.

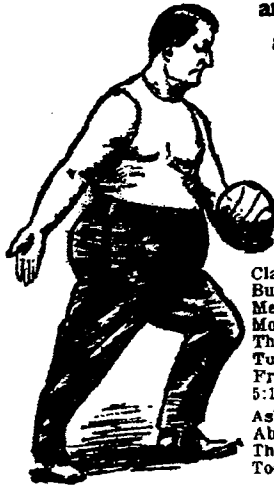
Annual Fees (about 1-2 actual cost):  
 Boys 10 to 14, \$5; boys 15 to 17, \$7. Locker  
 rent, \$1. Limited privileges for boys 10  
 and 11, \$3.

Season's Programme Is Just Starting  
 Now Is the Time to Enroll Your Boys

*Colonist, 5 October 1921*

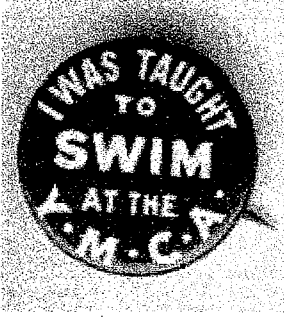
## EXERCISE

and play  
at the  
**Y.  
M.  
C.  
A.**



Classes for  
 Business  
 Men  
 Mon. and  
 Thurs.  
 Tues. and  
 Friday  
 5:15 p.m.  
 Ask  
 About  
 Them  
 Today

*Colonist, 3 October 1920*



to swim in just two lessons. By 1928, with the assistance of the *Daily Times*, free swimming lessons were offered to city school children, exposing many more youngsters to the sport, and nurturing still more champions. Under the enterprising banner, "Every Y member a swimmer," Archie McKinnon concentrated on providing swimming instruction to all comers, even while training teachers in advanced swimming and diving. By making aquatics a specialty of Victoria YMCA, he hoped to attract – and retain – good swimmers who, once they attained a degree of proficiency, tended to drift to other swim clubs.

Meanwhile, however, while the Y's programs were a flying success, the association's mounting debt problem grew like a monstrous carbuncle. Under the chairmanship of Lindley Crease, KC, the finance committee made a concerted effort to retire the debt on the building, which, by 1924, totalled \$87,000. Of this amount, \$50,000 was owed to Great West Life Assurance Co. When a whopping \$32,000 was raised through financial appeals to the community, the Y directors applied these monies to the debt and formally asked Great West to forgive the remainder of the loan, especially as, over the years, the Y had paid the company \$40,000 worth of interest payments. In June 1924, the executive was relieved to learn that their request had been granted.

But the association was still not out of the woods. The loan payments had been so onerous that the staff's wages were in arrears, back taxes had not been paid, and much-needed repairs to the building had been delayed. Tens of thousands were still owed to other financial backers. It seemed a real possibility that the Y might have to close its doors after all. However, at the last minute, a special drive for funds, aimed specifically at the business community, was launched. After a hard campaign, \$14,000 was raised, and the deficit was miraculously converted into a surplus.

Finally on a firmer financial footing, the YMCA was able, through its beefed-up programs, to consolidate its position as a leader in community boys' work. It was able to offer popular activities and programs such as life saving, public speaking, vocational counselling, hobby clubs, Older Boys' Parliament, and Father and Son banquets.<sup>25</sup>

There were activities for men as well. Internationally, Y's Men's Clubs had begun in about 1922, and by 1926, a local club was formed under president JD Robinson. However, despite a promising start, this group folded after only three years. It was not to reconvene again until 1947. Although it enjoyed an enthusiastic beginning, it fell victim to a financial disaster that was to claim many more casualties over the next decade – the Great Depression.

It was a blessing that the Y's mortgage had been retired. Had it not, the future of the Victoria association could not have been assured in the hard times to come. Heartened, but still in somewhat dodgy financial condition, the Y wobbled its way into the next decade, secure in the knowledge that soon its services would be needed as never before.

## THE Y.M.C.A. BUILDING

is situated at the corner of  
Blanshard and View Streets.  
The general office is open daily  
from 9 a.m. to 10:30 p.m.

The Secretaries are always  
pleased to meet young men  
who are strangers in the city  
and furnish such information  
as may be available.

Materials for letter writing,  
City Directory, city maps and  
other conveniences are at your  
disposal.

MEET YOUR FRIENDS AT  
THE "Y"

*Colonist*, 19 April 1922



# 1920'S

## Victoria Young Women's Christian Association

The Roaring 'Twenties, notable for the "flapper" phenomenon, was an era of boating, tennis and dancing in Victoria. The city was sports-mad, and clearly delighted by the newly-built Crystal Garden, the largest swimming pool in North America. Hundreds of thousands of tourists flocked to Victoria each year, and the YWCA residence at its headquarters on Yates (accepting paying guests at \$7 a week) was regularly booked to overflowing. The Annex on Courtney Street routinely operated at capacity. In order to serve its community effectively, the Y desperately needed a larger building, and the immediate goal of the executive was to secure one.

The success of YW programs had attracted fresh members. A newly-initiated teenage girls' work department promoted the popular Canadian Girls In Training (CGIT), and developed a sudden flowering of clubs (Joy, Go Forward, and Good Sports Clubs) that were enthusiastically received. Also, in order to expose young women to as many career choices as possible, classes were conducted in a variety of skills, such as dressmaking, millinery, china painting, French language, public speaking and first aid. This educational feature, initiated by the Y, became its special province, and it was not until many decades later that the school board assumed responsibility for providing this training through its continuing education programs.

However, it was always a sore point that the YWCA lacked adequate facilities for physical culture classes. In 1921, the board of directors was delighted when the YMCA generously offered the use of its gym and pool every Wednesday. Two hundred girls took immediate advantage of this invitation, and these initial numbers were joined by many thousands over the next forty years, as some of Victoria's best women swimmers earned their water wings in the men's pool. In the same year, the YM also made available its camp at Beaver Lake, and for nine glorious days in summer, the older girls enjoyed its sylvan facilities.

The YWCA became increasingly popular, but as a result, space for clubwork became so limited that many vital programs had to be abandoned.


### Vacancies at the YWCA, 745 Yates Street

Room and board from \$7 a week.  
Hot & cold water in every room.  
Public dining room for ladies and gentlemen.  
Breakfast, 30¢; full course dinner, 40¢;  
supper, 35¢.

*Colonist, 21 May 1924*

Feeling a keen responsibility to the girls and women of Victoria, the board of directors bent all its energies towards the realization of a new building to accommodate all the association's activities. In 1920, the Fair of Nations, held at the Bay Street Armoury and opened by the Duchess of Devonshire, helped to fill the organization's coffers, as did bequests and increased subscriptions achieved through successful membership drives. By 1922, thirty years after the association's original founding, it was able to purchase two lots at the corner of Blanshard and Courtney, right next to the Annex. In 1927,

by dint of hard work and extreme economy, the YWCA had managed to amass \$23,000, more than half of the



**745 Yates Street**  
**GIRLS!**  
**Register Now For Evening Class**  
Monday — Choral (young women and young men)  
Tuesday—Literary, Dressmaking.  
Wednesday — Elocution, Gymnasium, Swimming, Basketball.  
Thursday—Bible Study — French.  
**Dining Room Open to Public.**

*Colonist, 3 October 1920*

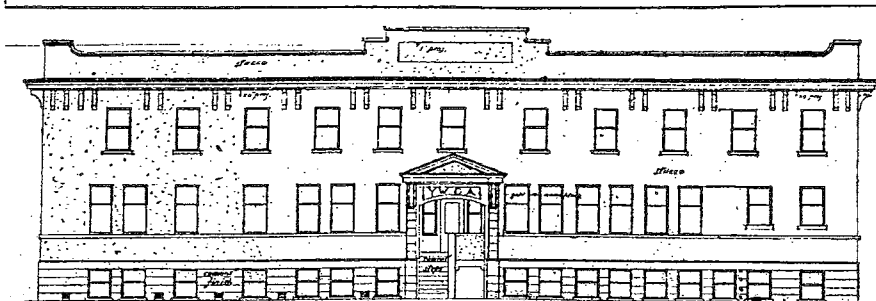
estimated \$43,000 that it required to construct a new headquarters.

The executive appealed to the community by launching a public drive for the remaining \$20,000. With its excellent reputation in the city, the YWCA was confident that its campaign would receive wide-spread support, especially when the math showed that, once it was up and running, the residence would not only pay for itself, but even turn a profit. Although it was not successful in raising the full amount, the board decided to go forward and construct the very best facility it could afford..

Prominent architect CE Watkins (Victoria High School, Royal Jubilee Hospital) was chosen to create a no-frills building in Edwardian Classical style that would incorporate the next-door Annex as a wing. On 25 October 1927, hundreds attended the opening of the handsome, three-storeyed structure, and cheered when the Lieutenant-Governor, in his ribbon-cutting address, congratulated the efforts of the women in the face of innumerable obstacles "that would have daunted even men."<sup>26</sup>

VICTORIA DAILY TIMES, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9, 1927

FRONT ELEVATION OF PROPOSED NEW Y.W.C.A. BUILDING



This shows the drawing by the architect, C. Elwood Watkins, of the new Y.W.C.A. building to be erected at the corner of Blanshard and Courtney Streets. The members of the board of directors have raised all but \$20,000 of the cost involved, and they are now launching a campaign to secure the balance in order that they may proceed with its erection.

However, the building, which was to be home to the YWCA for the next 38 years, sadly lacked the very amenities that the board had hoped to provide. Plans for a pool and a full-sized gym had to be abandoned due to lack of funds. The executive insisted that its ambitions for these facilities had not been abandoned, but were merely deferred. Blueprints were actually drawn up for a

west wing to be constructed when finances permitted, and the executive was confident that this time would not be far off. Indeed, the new building proved to be such a success that, months after occupying its new quarters, the YWCA declared itself to be debt-free. In its next annual report, the financial statement reported a net profit of \$3000, and construction of the new wing seemed a certainty.

But it all came to nothing. It was 1929, the beginning of the great economic Depression, the effects of which were to linger for another ten years. The association saw its dreams of expansion crumble. In fact, during the financial hardships it was to endure in the decade to come, the YWCA would need to fight for its very survival.

A highlight of Victoria YWCA's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, held on June 7-8, 1922, was the 4-tiered birthday cake:

Height:	11 feet (3.4 metres)
Circumference	13 feet (4 metres)
Diameter:	48 inches (1.2 metres)
Illumination:	30 tiny electric globes

A replica of Princess Mary's wedding cake, it was baked by YW women Mrs Colpman, Mrs Buckle, Mrs Hugh MacDonald, Mrs Finch, Mrs JWD York, Miss Hinton & Miss Watson. It was reported to be delicious.

# 1930'S

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## Victoria Young Men's Christian Association

Although the YMCA entered the Dirty 'Thirties with its finances in the black, the far-reaching effect of the stock market slump wrought an almost immediate drain on the association's coffers. Longtime members were unable to maintain their annual subscriptions for themselves or for their sons. While the residence enjoyed almost total occupancy, annual dorm revenues dropped by \$1000 in 1931. Roomers found themselves strapped financially and unable to buy food, let alone raise money for rent. But no one in need was ever turned away from the Y, and understanding staff members were known to slip occasional food vouchers, redeemable at the cafeteria, to hungry boarders in need of a meal.

Without adequate revenue, the Y's three full-time professionals and five office staff got paid only what monies could be spared. Sometimes they received no pay at all. Surprisingly, however, this period of universal want represented a time of growth for the Y, and one which brought many triumphs, especially the victory that kicked off the decade. In 1930, a munificent gift made by William and Ernest Todd in memory of their mother helped wipe out the association's final loans on the building, and at that year's annual meeting, the last note of indebtedness was ceremoniously burned by Lt-Gov. Mackenzie.

However, this supreme moment was not the only auspicious event to mark the 'Thirties. Another was the Y's acquisition of a superb new campsite. The Elk Lake watershed (which included the Beaver Lake camping ground that the Y began to occupy in 1920) had always been closed to the general public, but in 1929, it was opened up as a community recreation ground. It quickly grew to be a popular weekend destination. As a result, the overrun Y campsite rapidly lost its remote quality, and was vandalized repeatedly by trespassers. The association decided it had no choice but to close its operations at Beaver Lake, and to concentrate on providing summer day camps within the City of Victoria at Beacon Hill, Central and Victoria West park playgrounds until an appropriate campsite could be found.

A note from Archie McKinnon on his way to the Berlin Olympic Games in 1936:

To Chuck Cunningham, Elk Lake (Log Cabin), Victoria, BC  
Dear Chuck:

I am really sailing down the St Lawrence on the big boat and it is hard to believe. Wish all the B.C. boys were on the team. Drop me a note to the Olympic Village.

Sincerely, Archie

*Victoria Times-Colonist, 14 January 2000*

In 1933, Victoria Y was lucky enough to acquire property surrounding Glinz Lake in the forested Metchosin hills, a beautiful 360-acre site that would be known as Camp Thunderbird. Many volunteers were involved in its acquisition and development. The lake site was first brought to the attention of the YMCA by City Health Officer, Dr Felton and his wife, who, as a hobby, spent their weekends searching for out-of-the-way regional lakes. Impressed association directors negotiated at once to buy the property from Swiss brothers Leonard and Arnold Glinz for \$2000. With no money in the bank, the full amount had to be

mortgaged, a hair-raising prospect considering the tenor of the times, but the site was just too good to lose. This gamble had a happy ending. In celebration of the 1939 Royal Visit, the loan was redeemed in full by an anonymous friend of the YMCA.

With Viv Shoemaker conducting the camps, enrollment figures soared, recalling the high registrations of the 1920's. He also had stellar assistance. New York Ranger hockey player and long-time Victoria Y member, Lynn Patrick, served several years as section director of Senior Boys' camp. Other leaders were outstanding athlete, Doug Peden, swimming sensation, Don Davidson, and track star, Lorne McGregor, all "graduates" of the YMCA athletics department.

Sports continued to thrive during these hard times, and few clubs blossomed as heartily as the Victoria YMCA, which sent crack representatives to the 1932 Los Angeles Olympic Games. Archie McKinnon was chosen to coach Canada's diving team, and cycling sensation, William "Torchy" Peden, accompanied him as assistant track coach. Art Stott was on the diving team, and Denny Walter was entered as backstroke specialist. Four years later, Archie McKinnon also went to the 1936 Berlin Olympics as Canadian track and field coach. Y track prodigy, Bruce Humber, accompanied him as sprinter. (Running second in the 4 x100 final, Humber just missed out on a silver medal because of a dropped baton on the final exchange.) Linda (Adams) Hunt also went to Berlin as part of the diving team.

The Y's track and field athletes were outstanding. Especially notable were Joe Addison (shot down over Germany in World War II) and Bill Dale (gold medalist in the in mile relay at the 1938 British Empire Games in Sydney, Australia, and bronze medalist in the 880). By the 'Thirties, girls and women had begun to receive coaching at Victoria YMCA, and were active in almost all sports.

**T**he special needs of the Depression years required a general secretary with fund-raising savvy, and the man who answered this description was Frank Paulding, general secretary of the New Westminster YMCA, who was wooed to the Victoria association in 1932. He set to work immediately, instituting Victoria's annual Apple Day drive and other projects that helped to extend the Y's finances. By 1935, his leadership traits and renown as a fund-raiser had grown to such an extent that he was chosen to direct many financial campaigns in the city, including the Community Chest (a united appeal now known as the United Way), which he helped to inaugurate in 1937.<sup>27</sup>

By 1939, there were kudos all around. Archie McKinnon was acclaimed for his numerous improvements and additions to Y activities. Boys' Work secretary, Viv Shoemaker, won rave reviews for his untiring efforts in creating the most dynamic boys' department since its inception. Frank Paulding was lionized as being the best possible man to fill the post of general secretary in difficult times. Former banker and insurance executive, HB Witter, president of the board from 1931 to 1943, was praised for staying at his post beyond the usual term of office, thus providing the association with stability and continuity.

Victoria YMCA had turned the corner. Years of hardship and indebtedness were over, and when World War II was declared in September 1939, the formidable team at the association's helm was in an admirable position to provide the best possible leadership for its community and the nation in the coming emergency.

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**"As the sun dropped behind the hills and the shadows began to fall, a beating of tomtoms sounded from the camp headquarters and from all sections of the camp came wild Indian whooping sounds ... The [camp] fire was lit and the ceremony opened... Mr Clack, boys' work committee chairman...handed the mortgage over to Mr Witter who, lit from the camp fire, held it high for all to see, then threw it in the middle of the flames..."**

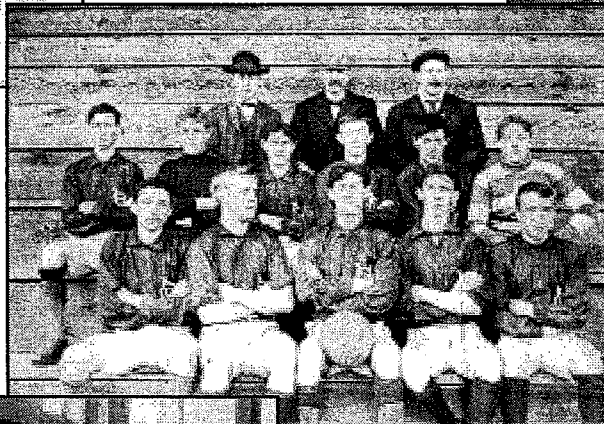
"Boys Cheer As Mortgage Burns," *Daily Times*, 4 August 1939



Carr sisters  
Emily Carr at the lower  
right at age 16 or 17  
Courtesy of the BC  
Archives



YMCA 1892  
34 Broad Street



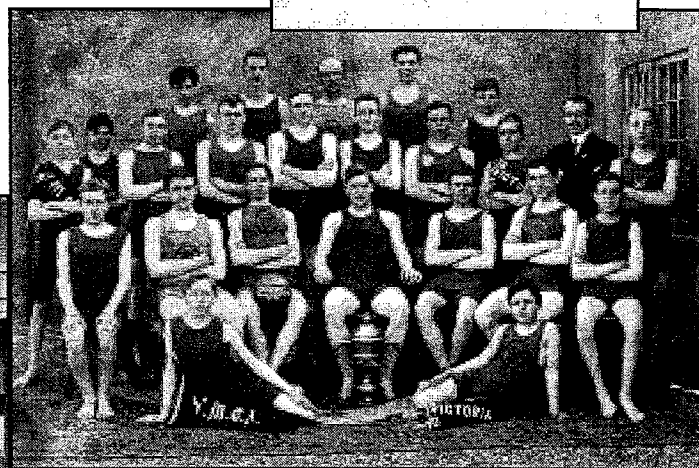
1900 YMCA Soccer Team



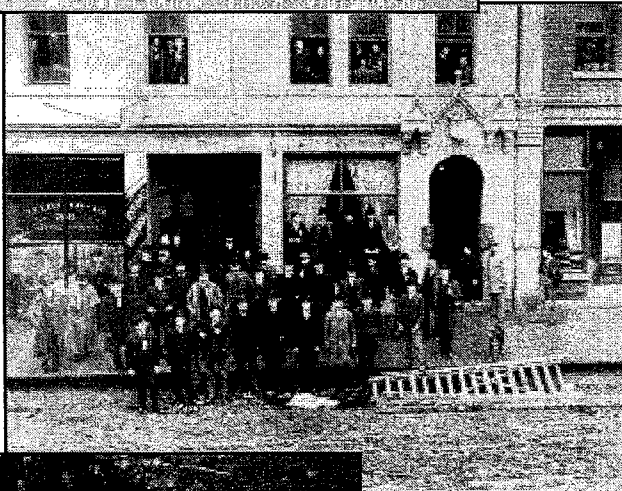
W.A. Alldritt  
Physical Director  
1919-20



Cozy room  
in the  
YMCA  
Circa 1920



Boy's Swim Club 1913



Group in front  
of the YMCA  
1911

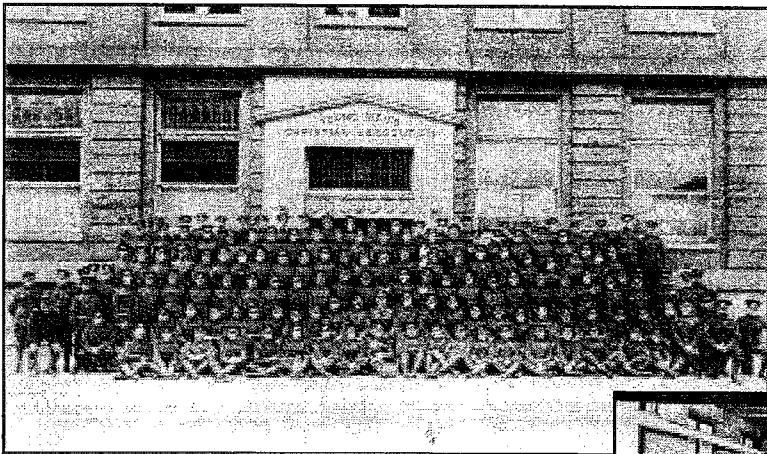


1912 YMCA  
Campers

Basketball Champs  
1910



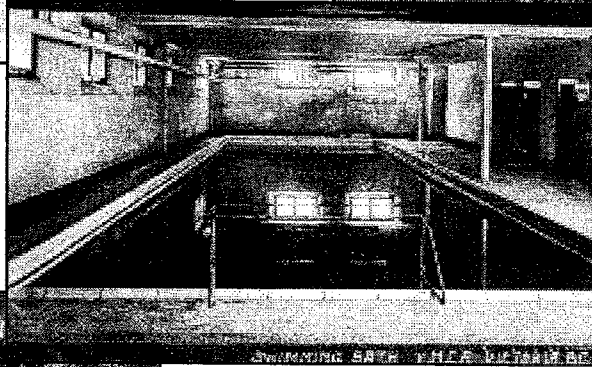




Siberian Expeditionary Force 1915-18



Men's Waterpolo Team  
1920



YMCA pool



Father & Son Banquet  
1916

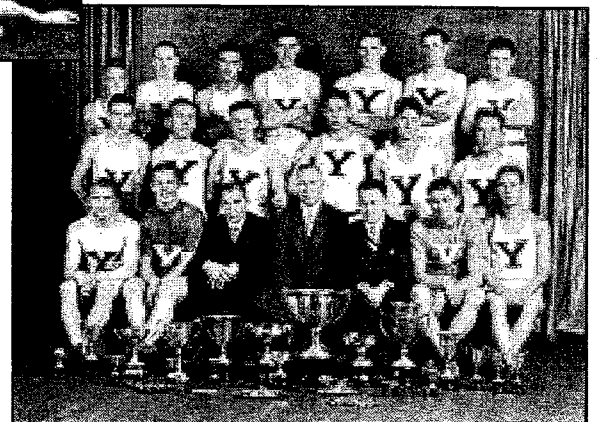
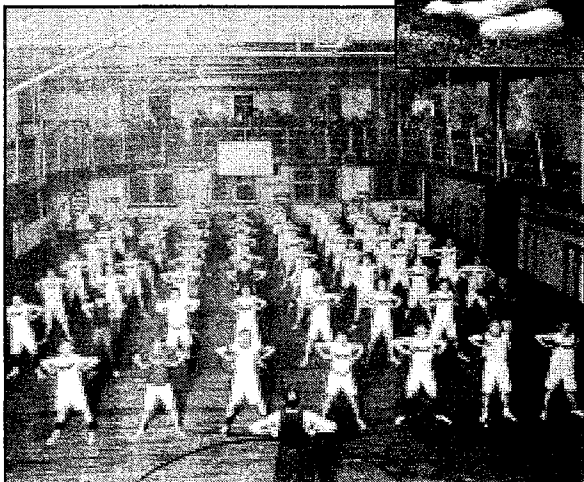


Women's Swim Club 1923



Men's Swim Club 1920

Old Gym circa 1920



Track & Field Team 1924



YWCA Annex 1930



Swimmers on the Causeway 1929



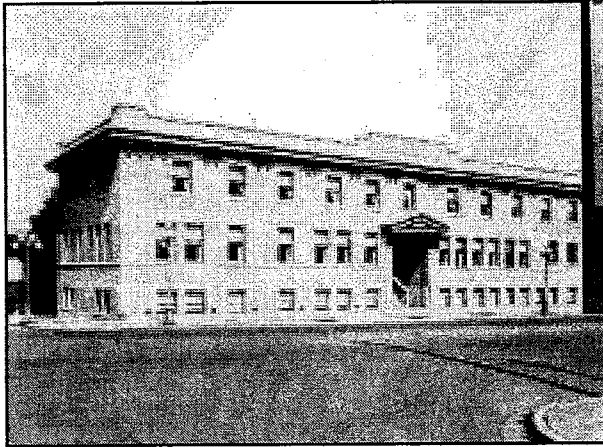
1935 Camp Thunderbird at Glinz Lake



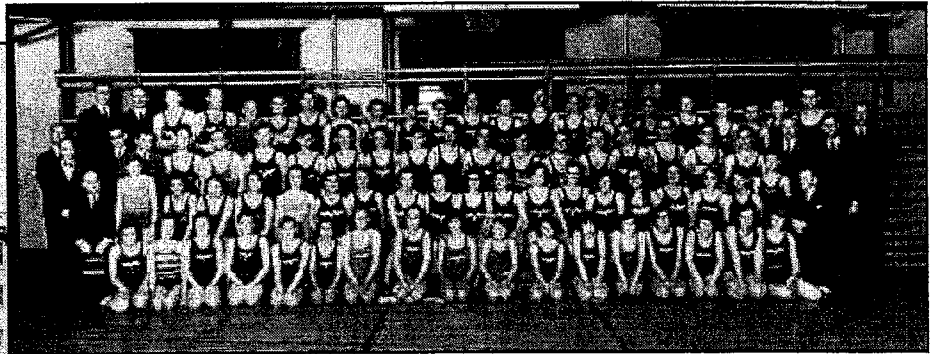
Junior Leaders 1934



Softball Champs 1926



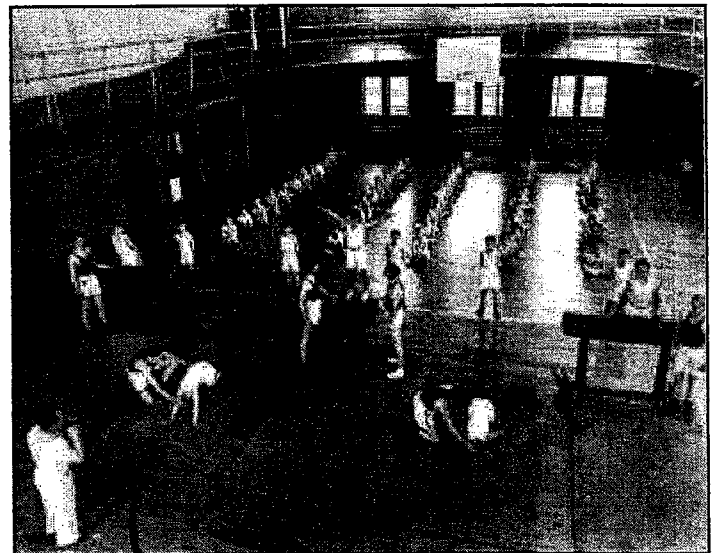
1940 YWCA on Blanshard Street



1932 Swimming Teams



1943 Powderroom at the YWCA



1937 Old gymnasium



1947 Boys going to camp



1947 Women's cooking class



1942 boys at the YMCA



1968 Teen Dance



Laying the cornerstone of the present downtown YM-YWCA, June 26, 1964  
Left to right: Viv Shoemaker, Frank Paulding & Archie McKinnon



1955 Y Girls



1964 Kids leaving for Camp Thunderbird



Shirley Main's dance class in the 1970's



Girl's Gymnastics



## Victoria Young Women's Christian Association

In common with all Canadian communities, Victoria was hard-hit by the Depression. Almost half of its citizens were thrown out of work, and unemployment fostered all the attendant ills of poverty, including mental depression, marital breakdowns and malnutrition. Under cover of darkness, the very planks of the city's sidewalks were ripped up to be used for fuel. Women, whose job prospects were limited at the best of times, were perhaps particularly affected by the Dirty 'Thirties, many of whom were left as sole support of their families. Never before had the services of the YWCA been so vital to the well-being of the community, and yet, never before did it have so few financial resources with which to cope with the demands placed upon it.

Thankful at least that its new building was debt-free, the association rolled up its sleeves and dedicated itself to caring for the material needs and the spiritual well-being of the city's young womanhood. Its usual activities continued unabated, and new ones were added.

The Glee Club, Tri-Y-Welcome Club, Fireside Group and the Hiking Club all provided fun and fellowship for older girls, while splash parties, Saturday Morning Story Hour and gym exercises held the interest of younger members. Hi-Y, Live Y-er, Business Clubs, Versatile, and Y-Owenca had groups for both junior and senior members, and, under the leadership of beloved girls' work secretary, Margaret Ryan, their activities included "bike hikes," beach parties and various excursions.<sup>28</sup> Alison 'Babe' Warren (née Smith) recalls that trips on Captain Beaumont's yacht were the best treat of all. In addition, recreational classes included instruction in hobbycrafts. One of the most popular gave lessons on how to remodel last year's hats and dresses to make them look current.

There was provision made for support of those young women lucky enough to have jobs, but who had to endure difficult working conditions. A seminar entitled, "The Employed Girl Surveys Herself," hosted at the Cordova Bay home of Dr and Mrs Westwood, provoked a lively discussion that explored the hardships and long hours endured by some working women.

For many unemployed, the YWCA residence became their home. No one was ever turned away due to lack of funds. In fact, although the rates of board and room were reduced to meet lowered salaries, those who could not afford to pay anything at all were allowed to stay on until their situations improved. Staff worked hard to boost the morale of indigent girls, and agonized at how long they would, or should, be willing to "carry" those who were unemployed, without making them less self-reliant.

Although by this time the Y's Employment Bureau was no longer operational, many jobs were found for those who had none. The Women's Workroom, which had begun life as the Women's Exchange in the 1890's, was installed in the Y's tiny gym, and provided employment for the hundreds who registered themselves as being ready and available to do sewing and mending.

Out of gratitude for its public-spirited work, Mayor Leeming praised the Y as an organization of "practical Christianity." City aldermen congratulated the association for its efficient and economical administration of the city's welfare. A grateful (but impoverished) provincial government awarded modest grants to the Y, and city council offered tax rebates on its building. However, despite these boons and others (including a life-saving \$5000 donation from the Todd family), by 1933, the Y suffered an operating deficit of \$500. Three years later, this liability had rocketed to \$3500. The association scrambled to stem the haemorrhage of its capital.

Emergency meetings of the board re-assessed policies and re-examined expenditures, item by item. It was observed that the residence, which no longer paid for itself, was beginning to suffer from reduced occupancy. This added to the YW's financial woes. Realizing that providing lodging was no longer at the core of the association's work, the board made the hard decision to maintain the main residence, and demolish the Annex, by now decrepit and nearly empty. The Y's main focus now shifted from the residence to producing programs for girls and women. Invariably, these programs taught the importance of team work and leadership, with the extrapolation of these values to the individual's responsibility to the community.

Ever mindful of its own responsibility, Victoria Y implemented a Household Workers course that provided unemployed women with professional training in domestic science. The graduates received diplomas and, best of all, ready employment. The program became so successful that it was copied across Canada. It was later operated under the aegis of the Department of Education, as were the dressmaking and salesmanship courses that the Y also offered to unemployed women. Maintaining morale was important, too, so the Y gave Christmas Cheer dinners and hampers to hundreds of needy women and girls, and made available typewriters for out-of-work stenographers so they could keep up their speed until they found work again.

By the end of the Dirty 'Thirties, the Victoria YWCA was relieved to discover that, not only was it still afloat, but it had emerged with its reputation enhanced. The desperate years of the Depression had engendered a sort of communal spirit by which the organization had been able to profit. Through its demonstration of genuine Christian compassion for those in need, and by providing positive contributions to the pressing problems of employment, the Y had proved its worth and established itself as a true community centre. While incurring debt, it nevertheless had managed to survive by constantly assessing its effectiveness, and by acting swiftly to conform to the needs of Victoria's citizenry.

However, the organization had no time to savour its accomplishments, or even to draw breath. The declaration of World War II in September 1939 officially ended the Depression, but plunged the planet into a different crisis of global proportions. The work of the YWCA was about to enter yet another evolution.

148 Boys and girls were taught to swim.

388 Boys, men, girls and women were taught to improve their swimming.

480 Boys participated in gym classes.

67 Boys attended Summer camp.

1,247 Free nights' sleeping accommodation were provided for young men.

496 Free showers and swims were given to unemployed young men.

29,075 Total participation in showers and swimming pool.

1,530 Young people met Sunday nights in the Winter months to sing hymns and enjoy good music.

90 Young men met every week in educational classes.

200 Boys and girls competed in a number of galas promoted and conducted by three "Y" Swimming Clubs.

55 Leaders, Junior and Senior, were trained for gymnasium and swimming pool supervision, and leadership in boys' clubs.

14 Boys' clubs meet regularly under leadership, in character-building activities.

109 Personal interviews with boys on personal problems.


1,400 Visitors saw the 3rd Annual Victoria Hobby Fair, conducted by the "Y" Boys' Division, with 200 entries.

20,617 Participated in 972 sessions of organized physical activity, covering all ages of men and boys, girls and women, including calisthenics, apparatus work, group games, athletics, boxing, wrestling, badminton, bowling, swimming, volleyball, track and field, softball, etc.

162 Young men participated in gym classes.

## Pointing the Way

Statistics that prove, better than statement, that the way to settle the problem of leisure is to provide a programme that appeals to youth.



"Delinquency" recently stated a well-known judge "is a spare-time activity." In addition to building character and personality, the "Y" saves the community the high cost of delinquency. One boy or girl that goes wrong may easily cost the public more than the entire "Y" objective. Prevention is better than cure.

792 Meetings were held in the Y.W.C.A., with an attendance of 23,105.

100 Girls and young women enrolled in clubs, attending four meetings per month (mostly unemployed).

10 Girls given intensive Six Weeks' Training Course in Household Work.

724 People were assisted by the Travellers' Aid.

70 Girls and young women lived in the residence last year.

1,125 Transients enjoyed the comforts of the "Y."

125 Free beds were provided.

150 Free meals provided to girls and women.

50 Girls enjoyed Health and Home Relations lectures.

30 Girls are enjoying regular gym classes.

730 Girls and women have applied to the Y.W.C.A. for positions. Each had a personal-interview and has been placed where possible.

1,547 Boats were met by Travellers' Aid.

212 Trains and buses met by Travellers' Aid.

320 Women have enjoyed the comforts of the Annex in the past year.

500 Girls and women are enrolled as members and in the activities of the Association.

These statistics show only part of the "Y" programmes that keep nearly 1,500 young people happy and constructively employed this year. For sixty years this work has been going on generously supported by many friends. Seventy-five per cent of the budget is paid in by participants, leaving only 25% to cover the excellent work done among those who cannot pay. Give generously—give today.

### Y.M.C.A. - Y.W.C.A.

## Financial Appeal

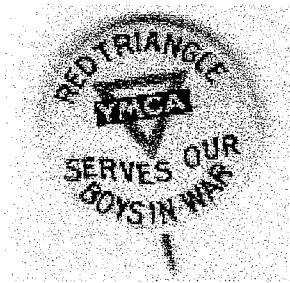
MARCH 11-18, 1935

# 1940'S

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## Victoria Young Men's Christian Association

To those Victorians who had lived through the Great War, World War II seemed to follow all too quickly on the heels of its predecessor, but like an old war horse that hears the bugle call, Victoria YMCA charged into the fray as it had twenty-five years before. It immediately declared itself ready to assist the nation in whatever capacity would be deemed appropriate. The Y had already won the respect of an entire community for its wartime services in the last conflict; its conspicuous contributions in the coming fight would be well above and beyond the call of duty.



W T Straith, MLA, was appointed chairman of the association's war services committee, and his immediate act was to throw open the doors of Victoria Y, making its facilities and equipment available to His Majesty's Forces. For two bits, a soldier could get a bed for the night, a morning wake-up call, and use of the pool. Unlike World War I, when the YMCA had no official wartime status (or funding), World War II saw the Y appointed as one of three service organizations overseas, and one of five in Canada, to be known as the Auxiliary Services, a body of philanthropic organizations formally nominated to create and manage club and canteen facilities that would cater to the morale of the fighting man.

Early in 1940, the Y established a Red Triangle "hut" at Macaulay Point, furnishing it with reading and writing rooms, a radio, a lounge with easy chairs, a rec room, and a canteen. Other huts soon followed at the RCAF and RAF stations that were involved with the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP). Special war secretaries manning these huts arranged for movies, dances and concerts for the men, and even organized teams for hockey, baseball, boxing, rugby and soccer. Naval men were not forgotten. Sports equipment and other supplies were donated to several units of the Royal Canadian Navy.

One of the most important responsibilities of the Y was maintenance of the psychological health of servicemen, both here and abroad. In its role as intermediary, the association arranged hospitality for servicemen in the homes of Victorian citizens, an essential morale-booster for men far from home, and an opportunity for local residents to repay the kindness being shown their own sons and daughters overseas. Nationally, the YMCA also ensured that, through its work in conjunction with the Red Cross, the high spirits of Canadian prisoners of war were maintained through shipments of reading material and sports equipment. Articles of the Geneva Convention allowed Y secretaries to enter war camps and cater to the educational and recreational needs of the men, a provision that the generous residents of Victoria were happy to support financially with donations to the Red Triangle Fund.



Right from the outset, Victoria Y vowed that, for the duration, it would do all it could to ensure its regular programs would not receive short shrift. Unlike other Canadian Y's that had to shelve their usual activities due to pressures of war, the association was proud to note that, by 1946, it had achieved its goal. Boys' Work had received special attention. From the outset, the sons of men in the forces were offered the recreational services of the Y, and hundreds of boys registered to take advantage. "Gee, it's swell!" was the typical comment of youngsters from broken homes, whose dads were overseas while their moms worked full-time in war plants. Leadership was instilled in rudderless youths, and counselling

given to those teetering on the edge of trouble. These services helped ease the juvenile delinquency phenomenon that began to explode among unsupervised youngsters towards the end of the war and after.

**“Our object is to build better boys so that when this war is over, those better boys will be able to build a better world.”**

SJD Clack, Chairman of Boys' Division, Victoria YMCA

So-Ed was another program instituted by the Y that ended up sweeping the continent. Developed in 1936 at the Portland, Oregon YMCA, it was imported to Victoria by Viv Shoemaker in 1939. Consisting of a series of courses on a variety of topics (marriage, photography, public speaking, etc.), it was designed to help people live successfully in modern times. Similar programs had tried, and failed, to maintain student interest, but So-Ed had the right combination of education, recreation and entertainment. This program also marked the beginning of women's membership in the YMCA. Heretofore, they had been involved in sports under the aegis of the men's association, but were forbidden membership. So-Ed was one of the forerunners of adult continuing education programs currently offered by the university and school board.

By war's end, Victoria YMCA's magnificent contributions had won new admirers. The association succeeded in wartime because it had continuously evaluated its place in the community, introduced new programs and carried them out with dispatch. One of its best contributions had been the transformation of its downtown building into a Red Triangle Club for servicemen. It was maintained by over 100 volunteers, many of them members of the Ladies' Auxiliary, who tirelessly made beds and manned the canteen at all hours.

In the process, however, the wear and tear on the building (now over 30 years old) had been tremendous. As a pap, the Y was offered \$947 compensation by the government, but the amount was laughable. A survey by the Y Architectural Bureau established that the building was not even worth reconstructing. A new structure was vitally needed, the erection of which could serve as a memorial to the fallen. By all accounts, the cost of such a project would run to \$400,000. Unfortunately, this was an enormous sum that simply could not be found, especially since the Y had committed itself to important new post-war programming.

**“I think of all the fine gang who left here and ask for a silent prayer for many of the fine boys who left this association and will not return.”**

Archie McKinnon, at Victoria's World YMCA 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, 7 June 1945

The association had enjoyed such positive attention during the war that it was now swamped by the registrations of ex-servicemen, eager to take advantage of the six-month's free membership offered to veterans. They were also anxious to partake of rehabilitation programs that the Y devised to enhance their expeditious return to peacetime life. These men, who had sacrificed everything, deserved – and received – priority from the Y. This total commitment to the men and boys of its community put Victoria Y's finances in a deficit position by 1948.

That same year, it was joyously able to escape the pressing demands of reality when Archie McKinnon and a team of 'Flying Y' athletes journeyed to the first post-war Olympic Games, but afterwards, Victoria Y could not shake the omnipresent fact that it was broke and operating a modern institution in an outmoded building. On the plus side, however, the association had a broad base of community support. It was also blessed with an impressive and optimistic staff and executive to carry it into the next decade. These attributes would help provide an imaginative solution to the building problem early in the next year – and would cause quite a ruckus.

# 1940'S

## Victoria Young Women's Christian Association

World War II brought changes to Victoria more sweeping than those wrought by the Great War. The air force base at Patricia Bay became a centre for the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP), an enormous scheme whereby British, Canadian, Australian and New Zealand aircrews were trained in Canada for service overseas in Europe. The streets of Victoria were soon awash in uniformed men and women from all over the world. Housing became almost impossible to find. Meanwhile, local women did their best to preserve normalcy on the home front. In the absence of their menfolk, they ran their homes, supplied comforts for the troops, and – trousered and temporarily emancipated – laboured in factories and on farms to maintain the high production levels that would win the war. Like its brother association, the YWCA declared itself ready to serve in whatever way it could.

From the beginning, the YW board and staff agreed that, although adjustments would be necessary, normal activities and recreations for members must be carried on as usual for the duration. This goal became more challenging when the association was snowed under by additional responsibilities. The National YWCA had been assigned three branches of war work by the Dominion Government, and these duties were to be carried out by the individual organizations. The tasks were: to provide hostess houses for the recreation of men in the services; to create a registry of rooms that could locate and inspect potential accommodation for military men and their families; and to make provision for the hospitality of servicemen in private homes. In short, the Y was assigned the job of maintaining the morale of the military, a gigantic undertaking of vital importance to the war effort.



President of the Victoria YWCA, Dr Olga Jardine, was named liaison officer for war services in British Columbia between the National YWCA and the active services. Under her direction, in January 1941, the Y opened a Hostess House in the Sidney Anglican Church Hall for airmen stationed at Patricia Bay. It was designed to be a comfortable “home away from home” for off-duty servicemen – a venue for social activities, a place to relax with a newspaper and a cup of coffee, and temporary overnight accommodation for visiting wives and relatives.

MISS ANNIE FAWCETT, CHARTER MEMBER OF THE YWCA WHO, BY HER OWN ACCOUNT, HAS FILLED EVERY POSITION WITH THE ASSOCIATION BUT THAT OF COOK, IS ASKED TO CUT THE CAKE ON THE OCCASION OF THE Y'S 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY IN FEBRUARY 1942. NOT ONLY IS SHE THE OLDEST MEMBER, BUT HAS MISSED ONLY ONE MEETING THROUGH ILLNESS SINCE THE Y'S INCEPTION HALF A CENTURY AGO

After women were admitted to the services, similar provision was made for them with the opening of Peter House at Work Point Barracks in Esquimalt. However, because the YWCA specialized in providing residences for women, it was given the special task of providing living accommodation for servicewomen on leave in Victoria. The YWCA acquired and refurbished the empty Balmoral Hotel on Douglas Street between Fort and View, and the resulting Blue Triangle Leave Centre was

regularly filled to capacity with 120 women.

IN 1946, VICTORIA YWCA'S TRAVELLERS' AID HELPED 13,659 INDIVIDUALS, OF WHICH 32 WERE PROVIDED WITH FREE LODGING, 75 WITH FREE MEALS, 23 WITH TRANSPORTATION DIFFICULTIES REGARDING FARES, AND 2,063 WERE PLACED IN ROOMS. IN ALL, 779 BOATS WERE MET BY COUNSELLORS.

The rooms registry service assigned to the Y grew naturally out of its Travellers' Aid department which, for decades, had been accustomed to referring young women to safe, clean accommodation in Victoria. The service was now amplified to cope with the many hundreds of families of servicemen who arrived daily in the city, seeking light housekeeping rooms or inexpensive apartments. Finding space for mothers with children was almost impossible.

An easier task was finding families who would open their homes to military personnel stationed in the city. Victorians responded to the Y's request with alacrity. The women of the city were also quick to act as hostesses at well-attended, Y-sponsored dances held bi-monthly at the Shrine Hall and the Red Triangle Club, and volunteered their time to man the canteens at the Hostess Houses.

With no end to the war in sight, Victoria YWCA moved into high gear, providing the families of servicemen with free informational services on health and emergency facilities, including pre-natal care, and acted to ensure that the healthiest babies possible were born in Victoria. It hosted a baby clinic that included physical examinations, lectures on nutrition and baby care, and milk supplies. This pioneering innovation was copied nationally. It also hosted an array of new clubs, such as the Jill Tars, for the lonely wives of servicemen, and the War Brides Club, for the many women who arrived from overseas.

As in World War I, the YW was asked to undertake the supervision and housing of the girls and women who registered as land army workers to bring in the harvest while the men were overseas. The Y's involvement here was crucial. Food production quotas had to be met if the Allies were to win the war, but many worried parents would not have allowed their daughters to enlist as farmerettes had not their fears been allayed by the YWCA's guarantee to supervise their children's well-being.

As the global conflict geared down, it meant no lessening of the sort of work carried out by the Y during the height of the war. The struggle had engendered a bureaucracy of such gigantic proportions that it was to be many years before all the activities associated with its operations would conclude. After the National War Services ceased to operate, the Y carried on its work under the Department of Defence. Its value as an essential member of the community was now indisputable, and trading on its excellent reputation, the association was anxious to increase its contributions to the welfare of women.

Sadly, the association was not able to work at maximum effectiveness because its building was clearly inadequate. The board had never abandoned its notion of constructing a new wing, and to this fantasy was now added the idea of building an additional storey onto the existing structure. However, these dreams took second place to the very real needs of people living in countries ravaged by war. Although Victoria experienced a deep economic depression in the immediate post-war period, its financial woes were molehills compared to the mountainous problems facing bombed-out nations. As a result of the war, the Y's outlook became more international, and funding Europe's reconstruction became one of its priorities. The YWCA's own building program would have to wait.

# 1950'S

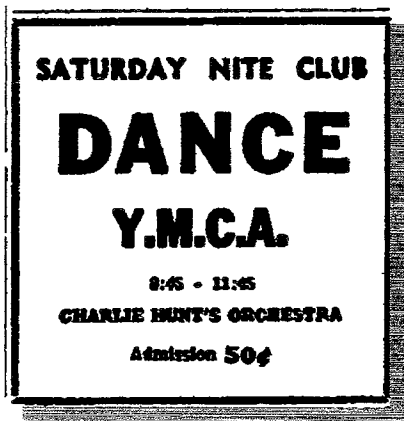
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## Victoria Young Men's Christian Association

World War II, and the technology it spawned, had the effect of making its participants think in a global fashion. The end of the war brought peace and a gradual return to normalcy, but much work needed to be done in Europe, where centuries of progress had been undone in six painful years. Like its sister association, Victoria YMCA was active in raising funds for this reconstruction. However, the threat of yet another conflict was omnipresent. Communism was sweeping the globe, representing a real threat to the capitalist way of life. Any exacerbation of tensions might lead to a devastating cataclysm that would surely involve the annihilating power of nuclear weapons.

However, for the World YMCA, the rise of Communism was a deeply saddening phenomenon on a different level. Fully half of the world's population was hungry, and one third was illiterate. The YM was disappointed that Communist, and not Christian forces, had initiated massive changes in these statistics. It felt that, while Communism eradicated hunger and ignorance in the short term, it replaced these ills with a totalitarian system that afforded little sustenance for the soul. But the World organization found opportunity in this fast-changing situation. It challenged its associations to extend a spirit of friendliness and open understanding to other nations, and to help them to raise their standards of living. Beginning in the 1950's, through the World Youth Fund and others, Victoria Y's young people were made more aware of their neighbours in other lands.

In a tangible way, the world also came to Victoria's doorstep. Post-war immigration to Canada from ravaged Europe reached record levels, and the Y was a lodestar for those displaced persons who appreciated finding a friendly base from which they could get their bearings before launching themselves in their new homeland. With the assistance of the Community Chest, the Y provided English language classes and support groups for these newcomers.



Colonist, 3 February 1951

Camp Thunderbird began to suffer from neglect. Managing a campsite in a rain forest required ongoing and expensive upkeep. The Y's Men's Club, which had re-activated in January 1947, lived up to its motto ("To acknowledge the duty that accompanies every right") and laboured annually to renovate the camp. However, by 1955, it was acknowledged that a major rebuilding effort would be less costly in the long run. The expensive construction costs were financed by a sale of timber from a small portion of land on the property at some distance from the lake. Approximately \$70,000 was raised from the harvested timber, and a Camp Thunderbird Society was formed to protect both the campsite and its assets from being absorbed into the Y's regular budget. Improvements to the camp included a new kitchen and dining-rec hall, infirmary, cabins, and a float for the trout-stocked lake.

At the instigation of assistant physical director and gymnast, Louis Vulliez, the Y's Men were also responsible for the purchase of a trampoline, the first in Western Canada. This popular amenity was a magnet for youngsters during "Gymnastics in the Park" displays.

Meanwhile, the tattered YMCA building was patched and repatched as far as possible. The antediluvian wood-burning furnace was replaced with an oil unit, and electrical outlets were finally installed in the dorms,

providing residents with reading lamps, an amenity that, until then, previous guests had foregone. The badly depleted linen supply was augmented through the unceasing efforts of the Ladies' Auxiliary. The Y was bursting at its seams and, in an effort to remove pressure from the main building, it considered extending its activities to neighbouring municipalities. As a result, in 1955, more than 700 new boys joined the Y, but it meant that the association needed a building twice the size of the one it had.

In 1957, the Y was given title to the lot at the north-west corner of Quadra and Courtney by local philanthropist, TS McPherson, on the understanding that it would be used for a new building. The Y also purchased two lots directly west of this site, giving it clear title to 120 x 240 feet (35 x 75 metres) of land. Despite this promising start, the costs involved in erecting a new structure were found to be prohibitive. Desperate to find a solution to the problem, the Y executive cast about for new ideas. One almost unthinkable concept that seemed to hold the greatest chance of success was a proposed union with the YWCA. It was mooted that, by combining the forces of the two associations, both of which needed new facilities and were perennially plagued by cash flow difficulties, their greatest difficulties would be surmounted. Further analysis of the situation confirmed this notion. Before the war, amalgamated facilities had been rare birds in Canada, but by the 'Fifties, many associations discovered that their antiquated facilities simply were not suited to post-war programs, and more organizations were resorting to the idea.

Tentative investigations estimated that a new joint building would cost \$1 million, far less than the cost of two separate structures. It was also felt that the residents of Victoria might lend willing financial support to the construction of one facility, but would draw the line at footing the bill for both. In February 1958, both the YM and the YW decided to study intensively all aspects of complete amalgamation. Two sub-committees were set up to examine facilities, programs, purpose and constitutions. National Council executives of both associations were consulted, and their advice was closely noted. Having amassed the information, both sides retreated to consider their options.

Meanwhile, by 1959, the YMCA (in its 48-year-old building) was breaking records. It continued to win cross-Canada athletic contests, and it enjoyed all-around growth, with 85,000 citizens having used the building in a one-year period. A booming membership of 1,641 demonstrated that the Y was filling a very real need in the community. While President Art Stott was as eager as any to see the association in a new headquarters, he put the whole situation in perspective when he observed, "The YMCA depends upon people rather than the buildings which house them."<sup>29</sup>

The 1959 reunion of 23 original Gorge Campers seemed to bear out this statement. In the golden, pre-World War I days when these old-timers had spent all summer living out of doors, cooking their meals, swimming, canoeing, and playing soccer under the open sky, the only roof they had was canvas, but this experience held a lifetime of meaning for them all. "It was honest-to-goodness Christian fellowship and vigorous living," recalled Robert (Ernie) Crompton, "and I think most of us benefited from it in later life." The YMCA had provided generations of boys and men with special memories and the spiritual and social skills they needed to conduct their lives. There was a dreadful chance that amalgamation might change all that, and bring an end to all that the association had achieved in its 85 years of service in Victoria, but something radical had to be done. The decade to come would either make or break the Victoria YMCA.

#### **"Y" SWIM TEAM CAPTURES TITLE**

A TEAM FROM THE VICTORIA YMCA CAPTURED THE BRITISH COLUMBIA SYNCHRONIZED SWIMMING CHAMPIONSHIP AT THE CRYSTAL POOL IN VANCOUVER ON SATURDAY. VANCOUVER AMATEUR SWIMMING CLUB WAS SECOND AND THE UBC TEAM FINISHED THIRD. THE "Y" TEAM WAS CAPTAINED BY RITA NORBURY AND INCLUDED JEAN MILLS, LOIS POMEROY, ESTHER MENSEN, BEVERLEY ROSS, LYNN BALCOLM AND MARY WILSON.

COLONIST, 27 FEBRUARY 1951.



# 1950'S

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## Victoria Young Women's Christian Association

Victorians were anxious for the war to end so that life could return to normal, but of course, life never did return to pre-war conditions. The young men and women who had fought the war embraced peacetime activities with a passion, and the resulting post-war baby boom created an enormous need for specialized services in the fields of education and recreation. Impoverished immigrants from countries devastated by war flocked to the city, many of them overwhelmed, lonely and without English. Technological advances created a commercial airline industry, and this astonishingly swift form of travel superseded the old methods of rail and steamer, shrinking the world and creating a new tourist industry with different demands. Again, despite its cramped facilities, the YWCA evolved to cope.

The YW had property on which to build a new structure, but it lacked the money to do so. It received financial assistance from the provincial government, city council and the Community Chest, amounting, in 1952, to about \$18,000 of its total revenue of \$23,000. It was out of these meagre funds that the Y supported a program that welcomed young women from Displaced Persons Camps in Europe. Through providing English language classes for the immigrants, as well as counselling and follow-up care, Victoria Y became nationally renowned for its work in this area. It also became a place where young mothers, new to the community, could gain a foothold and meet others with similar problems.

Perhaps as a natural outgrowth of wartime, when people had become accustomed to a spirit of communalism, clubs became wildly popular. Women and girls gathered together for fun and fellowship in groups that catered to almost every interest. A typical weekly schedule for March 1951 demonstrates the wide variety of activities carried out by Y members: Junior Y Teens' swimming party at the Crystal Pool, 60-Up Club, keep-fit classes, dressmaking and designing, Sub-Deb Club, leatherwork, Overseas Wives Club, Chatelaine Club, dramatics, Thursday Niter Club for ESL students, square dancing, 760 Y Teens, Hi-Y CO-Ed Dance, Debettes Club, Sub-Deb dance, Change-About-Night (boys bring the food).

One of the most noticeable trends was the sudden interest in crafts. The YWCA rushed to provide workshops on activities such as copper work or ceramics, courses that much later would be taught by community centres. Coincidentally, the crafts craze, which almost crushed the Y's ability to cope with demands made upon its facilities, was countered by the reduced popularity of its residence. In the late 1930's, statistics had already demonstrated a drop in the number of persons using the home, and while the exigencies of wartime had boosted demand, by 1957 there was another noticeable slump. By this time, alternate accommodations were becoming available to capitalize on the increased tourism fostered by the growth of the commercial airline industry.

Other changes accrued as a result. The Travellers' Aid department, which had been an essential service during the war, remained busy in the early years of the 'Fifties. In 1952, it assisted 4584 persons at the docks. However, by the end of the decade, leisurely ocean voyages were rendered obsolete by speedy air travel, and increasingly cosmopolitan tourists rarely availed themselves of the assistance afforded by Travellers' Aid. In 1957, its services were curtailed. Another phenomenon of the jet age was the number of seniors from the prairies who chose to retire in Victoria, comforted by the knowledge that their families in the east were just a short plane ride away. By the mid-'Fifties, 17% of the city's population was over 65. Paying heed to these demographics, the Y adjusted its programming to provide companionship, assistance and special clubs (especially the very popular Armchair Travellers) for this age group.

Meanwhile, the board did its best to perpetuate the life of the aging YWCA building. The executive conscientiously maintained the structure's integrity with a new roof in 1951 (necessitating a slight rise in membership rates to offset costs), and the next year was able to install a new furnace and oil heater with the proceeds of a legacy. However, while remodelling and painting worked wonders, their effects were only cosmetic. The building was completely inadequate to cope with the challenges of a growing membership which, in 1956, reached an all-time high of 1,082. With a lack of funds, and demand for services increasing exponentially, it was time to consider the unthinkable – amalgamation with the YMCA.

In January 1958, YMCA president Denis Humphries announced the result of an exploratory investigation that examined the notion of union. Both the YM and the YW buildings were overwhelmed by members. A new joint structure was estimated to cost \$1 million, too expensive for either association, but perhaps affordable for both. Once united, the two associations could live as cheaply as one. Mrs Agnes Roy, national executive director of the YWCA, noted that amalgamations had been deemed a success in four other Canadian cities, and might prove to be suitable for Victoria. However, many YW staff and board members were bitterly alienated by the proposal, feeling that a merger would result in scant attention being paid to the singular needs of women and girls.

Up to this juncture, the YWCA's canny ability to institute necessary changes when the need arose had ensured both its survival and the maximum benefit to the community. As the decade closed, it had to make the most important decision in its history.

# 1960'S

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## YM-YWCA of Greater Victoria

The 'Sixties were a decade of reckless social evolution symbolized by the rise of the Beatles, the hippie phenomenon, and the arrival in the province of a new type of immigrant – the Viet Nam War draft dodger. Not surprisingly, this spirit of change also infected the workings of the Victoria YMCA and the Victoria YWCA.

The two associations shared many commonalities. They both taught and espoused physical, social and mental health, Christian ethics and values, and were dedicated to responding to the needs of the community. However, in many other ways, their separate agendas were like two parallel lines that proceeded in the same direction, but rarely, if ever, intersected.

The women's organization concentrated on providing services to girls and young women, traditionally vulnerable in any society. The association's residence filled a real need by providing safe housing for young women living away from home, a service that was not adequately discharged by any other agency in Victoria. Accommodation at the YW was also affordable, an especial consideration during this period when equality in the workplace was as yet unthinkable, and wages for women workers were conspicuously insignificant. The YWCA headquarters, constructed in 1927, was an old-fashioned structure, but one which was well-maintained and quite lovely, enhanced by beautiful panelling and an elegantly bannistered staircase that swept visitors to the upper floors. However, the building was too small for its membership, and had no gymnasium and no pool, serious drawbacks for an organization whose insistence on balanced living included a daily fitness program.

The YMCA also provided programs for balanced living, but its pride and joy was the physical department and its 'Flying Y' athletic teams. After physical director Archie McKinnon's semi-retirement in 1960, the aim of the board was to reproduce the success of his work, and, if possible, to make it even bigger and better. To achieve this goal, it needed a modern facility. The association's antiquated building, however, was crumbling. As well, the men's residence, once a vital feature of the YMCA, was almost proving to be a liability. While the YW's residence for women claimed an exclusive niche in the market, inexpensive accommodation for men was becoming increasingly available all over the city, and the YM's occupancy rate was down. Also, young men, more than women, resented supervised accommodation.

Both organizations tentatively began to lean toward the notion of amalgamation. At the YWCA annual meeting in February 1960, president Mrs F. Bliss pointed out that patterns were changing, and cross-overs between the organizations had been increasingly noted. Membership was soaring (the post-war baby boom was making itself felt), and for the first time, the YW had 22 young men as associate members. As a corollary, figures on female participation in the men's association were up as well. Canada-wide, 25% of YMCA membership consisted of girls and women. Another commonality shared by both organizations was the realization of the need to embrace the community by means of extension programs. A YW fitness class in Langford started out with 17 members and had grown rapidly to 49. The YM was conducting similar outreach programs and enjoying similar success.

On 12 May 1960, the general membership of the Victoria YWCA voted in favour of amalgamation with the YMCA, thus removing the last obstacle to a unified organization within a new, joint building. While the majority approved the vote, there were many women who opposed it, feeling that the needs of women would receive short shrift in the long run. Several prominent supporters quit the association in high dudgeon. Some traditional stalwarts of the YMCA were also disenchanted and withdrew

their support. Others were wary, but opted to give the union a chance to work.

In January 1961, the two associations officially amalgamated under a joint constitution and board, and – ladies first – Mrs AH Sheard was elected president of the new executive.<sup>30</sup> At the initial annual meeting of the joint board held in March, details were unveiled for the financial appeal to be launched in April 1962. Plans called for construction of the new building, estimated to cost \$1,138,000, to start in the fall of that year and to be completed early in 1964. Ultimately, these plans were optimistic. By the time tenders were opened, it was discovered that costs had escalated. Construction would involve expenditures of \$1,427,000, and the building, which would not open until September 1965, would be burdened by debt until 1974.

**“O Lord God, when Thou givest to Thy servants  
to endeavour in any great matter, grant us also to  
know that it is not the beginning but the continuing  
of the same until it be thoroughly finished which  
yieldeth the true glory.”**

**Drake's Prayer**

**A**t the Courtney Street entrance to the Victoria YM-YWCA, there is a plaque that was hung when the building opened in 1965. Its surface is etched with Drake's Prayer, the words of the eminent English sea captain, Sir Francis Drake. It was this prayer that sustained the men and women who raised the money to complete the building. Chairman Hugh Stevens headed a committee that included Mrs Carron Jameson and David Groos as vice-chairmen, and Stuart Keate and George Wheaton as committee heads. Right at the beginning, the campaign was given a jumpstart with an amazing contribution that ensured its ultimate success. In December 1962, Thomas Shanks McPherson, the philanthropist who had already presented the association with the site for its new building, died and bequeathed \$200,000 to the Y's fund-raiser, an enormous sum that amounted to almost 20% of the drive's objective.

Mightily encouraged, in February 1963, Stevens and his colleagues flew east to Winnipeg, Toronto and Montreal (at their own expense) to canvas leaders of business. They returned home triumphant with pledges worth \$200,000.<sup>31</sup> At home, the provincial government (under WAC Bennett), the City of Victoria (under Mayor Richard B. Wilson), and the municipalities ultimately combined to contribute almost \$300,000. While no appeal was made to the individual citizens of Victoria, a group of Archie McKinnon fans donated \$10,000 with the proviso that the pool in the new building be named for their old swimming teacher and mentor. By the end of 1963, \$1,250,000 had been pledged or raised, \$100,000 in excess of the original objective. Donations ranged from \$25,000 (the gift of a large corporation) to 8 cents, contributed by a young boy. It had been the largest fund-raising effort in Victoria's history.

Unfortunately, rejoicing was dashed by the federal government's introduction of an 11% tax on building materials, skyrocketing the cost of production and leaving the association with a deficit of \$180,000. However, Drake's Prayer inspired the committee to give the go-ahead for construction to begin. On 25 June 1964, in an atmosphere of reverence and jubilation, Lieutenant-Governor GR Pearkes laid the cornerstone. On 10 September 1965, Premier WAC Bennett officiated at the opening ceremony, and, confessing to a soft spot in his heart for the work of the Y, he announced to a standing ovation that his government was doubling its original contribution to \$100,000.<sup>32</sup> Then architect John Wade, having received the key to the building from contractor GH Wheaton, handed it to president SJ Cunliffe. The building was declared officially open.<sup>33</sup>

The new Victoria YM-YWCA began life with the goodwill of the community and a run of new members. In these years before the introduction of city rec centres, the modern building filled the giant role of being Victoria's community centre. This function had begun with the Y's participation in the operation of programs at the Crystal Garden Pool, and had been extended by Archie McKinnon's close work with Victoria High School's sports teams. Citizens were delighted to avail themselves of the new structure's facilities, including the 5-lane, 25-metre swimming pool, the roof-top track, gymnasium, lounges, games and meeting rooms, and the 40-bed residence (for women only, and furnished with the assistance of the ever-faithful Ladies' Auxiliary). Behind the glossy exterior, however, men and women of the association struggled with the nuts and bolts of working together under one roof.

As in any union, there were problems. Retired Associate Executive Director, Shirley Main, recalls the initial years as a period of adjustment dominated by the needs of boys and men. Until the end of the decade, there was little recognition of the admirable work being done, and contributions being made, by women within the organization. She also notes that there was scant appreciation of the increasing demands being placed upon the building by the growing numbers of women members.

Adding to the rising tensions, this interval also coincided with the rise of feminism. Male members of the staff and executive felt threatened by the new aggressiveness of their female colleagues, and wondered if their jobs were at stake. Women on staff were aghast to note the discrepancies between their scanty pay packets and the fleshier ones of their male co-workers. However, there was a genuine willingness on the part of both sexes to make the union a success, and both sides learned valuable lessons in cooperation. Retired physical director, Dr Art Burgess, recalls the experience of amalgamation as the beginning of his heightened awareness of women's issues as he and other male staff were challenged to read the works of feminist writers Betty Friedan and Germaine Greer.

After the initial period of growing pains, by the end of the 'Sixties, the joint organization had settled into a comfortable working relationship. The board and staff members alike discovered that co-mingling had many positive attributes, and lent a new vitality to program ideas and initiatives. However, the modern building was a victim of its own success. It was built for a membership of 5000, but less than a year after opening, the Y already had 5800 active members on the roster. The facility had taken five years to reach the building stage, and, by the time it opened, was already obsolete. While worried by the deficit, which would ultimately reach \$180,000, the executive began to lay plans for expansion.

To lessen the pressure on the building, and to continue its extension work, the YM-YWCA established satellite programs in various parts of the city, including James Bay, the Gorge, and Victoria West. Pilot extension projects at Cordova Bay School and Mt Newton Junior High offered gym games and tumbling fun to boys and girls who lived at a distance from the downtown headquarters. A youth outreach plan was initiated to provide support for youngsters experiencing problems of adjustment. In all, more than 8000 people became involved in program services. The Y also beefed up its youth leadership training program.<sup>34</sup> It was a priority. Without the help of its one hundred youth leaders, the association could not have coped with its rapidly expanding membership. The new Victoria YM-YWCA was a success beyond anyone's imagining.

When the 53-year-old YMCA building was vacated in 1965, the cornerstone was found to contain newspapers, YM membership lists, coins and the Bible of general secretary, AJ Brace (1906-1912). These artifacts were resealed into the cornerstone of the present building.

# 1970'S

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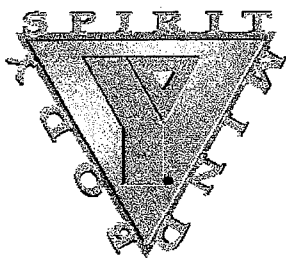
## YM-YWCA of Greater Victoria

In the 'Seventies, psychedelia and the hippie movement were roughly elbowed aside by devotees of the Disco phenomenon (representative of which was the Village People's raucous anthem "YMCA"), and good economic times were replaced by a recession. Premier WAC Bennett's Social Credit government had held power in BC for two decades, but when the province's resource economy faltered, creating unemployment, and when world oil prices were affected through the OPEC Cartel, the resulting unrest drove the long-ruling So-Creds out of office in 1972. This change in command had a tremendous impact on the City of Victoria. Massive lay-offs caused hundreds of civil servants to leave town, both men and women, many of whom had been regulars at the Y.

The resulting drop in membership sent the Y scrambling to minimize the damage to its budget. In 1972, the executive braced for an operating deficit of \$12,000. The actual figure was more than double – \$26,000 – and was blamed on the huge drop in attendance and on the poor showing of the cafeteria. The Y was also paying out \$12,000 a year in interest payments on its building loan. The confidence of jittery financiers was only assuaged by an almost complete turnover in staff and by the introduction of new programs. Successful, on-going activities were allowed to continue.

Ahead of many other communities in Canada, the Y began to extend a helping hand to street kids in the late 'Sixties. Its good work was officially recognized in 1972 by a grant of \$12,000 from a federal government initiatives program. This enabled the youth department to maintain a downtown referral and program centre. When Victoria West young people complained that they had no positive way to fill their spare time, a permanent drop-in centre was created that met their needs and was an immediate success. By 1978, the Victoria West YM-YWCA was opened to serve this area.

Camping opportunities were also expanded for younger children with Camp Hummingbird and the Summer Excitement day camps. In another development, in 1975, Camp Thunderbird went co-ed for the first time for youngsters aged 8 to 15.



In the realm of sports, the 'Flying Y' teams continued to be among the best in Canada, but the fitness needs of older Y-goers were not neglected. The physical department's Art Burgess encouraged business men to substitute the typical two-martini lunch with a regular program of noontime exercise. He also promoted the benefits of jogging, an activity that was regarded as fairly unorthodox in the early 'Seventies. Yoga, dance and gymnastics began to enjoy a genuine popularity that required the assistance of an army of volunteers. A fitness instructors' course, developed and instituted by Shirley Main, graduated more than 80 instructors at its peak, and was adapted for national use by Fitness Canada.

The Y sought to improve membership by demonstrating that it was not just a health club, but also had concerns for the emotional and social fitness of the individual. It focussed on the needs of women who wanted to broaden their horizons beyond family and home. Many of the courses previously offered by the Y, like hat-making, had been taken over by the school board. New activities, like Ladies' Day Out (that included a vital service -- babysitting) provided women with a varied program of exercise and group discussion, and gave opportunities for leadership and social action. The Y also held workshops on alcoholism and social responsibility, marriage preparation and weight counselling. English classes were taught to immigrants, and a 10-week course, offered to kids with sensory motor and learning disabilities, reported terrific gains in the

children's confidence and self-image. "Prime Time," operated in conjunction with the University of Victoria, provided support to women in their middle years with regard to health and employment.

In 1970, the Y initiated an innovative legal aid and medical clinic at First United Church Hall, the first service of its kind in the city. Established with grants from the federal government and the National Y, it operated once a week and offered, free of charge, the services of nine doctors, five nurses and four lawyers.

The Victoria Y also gave a boost to the National Y's World Service by opening a campaign to raise \$4000 for the development of projects in New Guinea. An Indian curry dinner, arranged by Y supporters, Mr and Mrs Raj Pagely, and served in the Y lounge, was an exotic and unforgettable event in 1970's Victoria.

In the spring of 1974, after a generous donation from the Ford estate, the outstanding balance on the building was paid off. The mortgage was burned by Hugh Stevens, head of the building's financial campaign committee. The executive was finally free to gear up its plans for expansion, and it wasted no time. In June 1975, president Shirley Baker announced commencement of a campaign to raise \$1,350,000 to expand the 10-year-old building. However, its results were disappointing. By the end of 1976, the drive had generated only \$870,000, far short of the objective. Undaunted, an urgent request was made to the provincial government's Community Recreational Facilities Fund for a grant of \$330,000. To general dismay, this application was rejected, but, feeling a real obligation to the 2000 people who had already donated money, the board downscaled its building plans and proceeded with construction in 1977.

The new building addition included three racquetball courts, two squash courts, a training pool adjacent to the Archie McKinnon pool, a co-ed weight room, dance studio, baby-sitting room, and women's health club. In 1978, 187,000 people passed through the doors of the newly expanded Victoria YM-YWCA facility, a ringing endorsement that fully justified the decision of the executive, who, guided like their predecessors by Drake's Prayer, decided on "the continuing of the same until it be thoroughly finished."



**Skinner**

### McConnell Retires

## *Skinner Heads Y*

Bill Skinner of Toronto has been appointed executive director of Victoria YM-YWCA as of Aug. 1 to succeed Jim McConnell who is retiring.

Announcement of the appointment was made Friday by Grant Mackenzie, president of the association.

Skinner joined the Winnipeg Y in 1950 and has since been on staff in Vancouver and St. John's, Nfld. His present position is associate general secretary of the National Council of YMCAs.

McConnell, who assumed his present position in September, 1968, has been with the Y for 42 years.

Victoria Colonist, 27 May 1972



# 1980'S

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## YM-YWCA of Greater Victoria

The full force of the recession hit BC in the early 'Eighties, creating work stoppages and financial uncertainty. As usual, Victoria Y was there to help its citizens cope with their problems, which, in this decade, included the scourge of unemployment. As the Y entered the new decade, 1300 people a day were passing through its doors, an indication of its value to city residents and visitors alike.

However, one vital service offered to the community suffered a massive setback. The Y operated a special program whereby Ministry of Human Resources social workers could refer families in serious crisis to the association. Specialized aides worked with these families, who sometimes required up to 35 hours of help per week, especially in cases of sexual abuse, parenting problems, mental retardation, and socio-economic difficulties. As a result of the recession, the Ministry announced in January 1982 that, in an effort to conserve \$8 million in its budget, it would slash the amount of time available to families in crisis from 7000 hours a month to 2000. The Y complained that cutbacks in essential services were false economy, particularly during hard times, predicting that people in need would suffer, but to no avail.

By way of compensation, the Y offered a 'Need A Break' plan that helped many unemployed persons through tough times. At no charge, and with the support of the United Way, the Y provided fitness classes, recreational sports, swimming and a social period for those out of work. Initiated in 1983, it provided hope and fostered a positive attitude in people of all ages, both men and women. The success of the program drew inquiries from other Y's across Canada.



The association also offered a support program for single mothers, assisting them in their efforts to become stronger and more resourceful so they could help themselves break the cycle of poverty. Demand for the program greatly exceeded the number of moms that could be accommodated.

The needs of older children during this difficult economic time were not neglected. In 1985, a popular Youth Outreach counselling program was so successful, it had to turn away as many youngsters as it assisted. 'Streetproofing' workshops, initiated to help young people to develop confidence in themselves, also taught them how to avoid becoming victims. About 150 youngsters attended the workshops over a two year period.

Summer programming for children remained popular, and the usual eclectic mix of activities included computer and bicycle camps. Camp Thunderbird offered wilderness experience for those aged 13 to 16, including rock climbing, orienteering, survival skills, and, as always, leadership training.

However, Camp Thunderbird was showing its age, and a fund-raising campaign was launched which appealed for \$900,000 to be used toward improvements. When the provincial Social Credit government presented the camp with a grant of \$300,000 in the fall of 1986, construction began and the facility was expanded. The building plans included provision for new cabins, a new dining hall, a first aid building, and a forestry and outdoor education centre. By 1989, the camp embarked on a second stage of redevelopment, and asked Victoria, Esquimalt, Oak Bay, Saanich and surrounding municipalities to duplicate their prior combined contributions of \$180,000. These monies would allow for the construction of an infirmary, staff quarters and winterized cabins to boost winter capacity to 80 persons.

Back at headquarters, fitness programs continued to thrive. The "Iyenegar Approach to Yoga" and

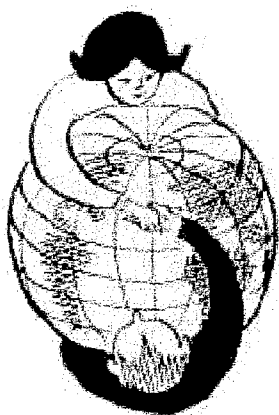
classes in Tai Chi won many adherents. The popularity of racquetball was waning, but aerobics was taking off. Shirley Main's record, *The Joy of Fitness*, which was set to music, and her book, *Fit All Over*, featuring a selection of tried and true exercises, persuaded many layabouts to care for their bodies. Associate program director, Sally Elliott, was chosen to lead a series of workshops, entitled "Fitness and Pregnancy," across Canada wherein instructors were trained to teach safe and informative fitness classes to pre- and post-natal women. Setting a healthy example, in 1987 the Victoria Y building went smoke-free due to popular demand.

Two venerable Y institutions celebrated notable anniversaries. In 1984, the Ladies' Auxiliary observed its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. Strictly speaking, this group of women had served the needs of the association for over a century, beginning in 1875 when they were very much a part of the early YMCA's activities in Victoria. Dedicating themselves to the refurbishment of the residences and providing otherwise unaffordable items for the buildings, they continued their good offices even after amalgamation. They were also very active in sponsoring children's attendance at camp.

In 1987, the Y's Men observed the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their founding and their decades of helping adults and children at home and abroad. In 1983, the Club had become officially co-ed, and changed its name to the Y Service Club of Victoria, but women had always been affiliated with the men's group. As the Menettes, the wives of the Y's Men were active for many years in sponsoring children to Camp T, providing Christmas hampers to the needy, and raising funds for worthy causes.

While the attention of the world was focussed on Ethiopia during its famine in 1984, neighbouring Gambia was suffering as well. Through its African aid program, Victoria Y joined in partnership with its counterpart association in the Gambian capital of Banjul to help build a multi-purpose centre where carpentry and sewing skills could be taught. Other projects in other areas saw the development of a village garden, sanitary wells, a farm, a store and a nursery school. Money raised for the Gambian project was matched three-to-one by the federal government.

The Y had done its utmost to support the citizens of Victoria through the recessionary years of the 'Eighties. In the process, it had not neglected its responsibilities to neighbours on the other side of the globe. For its philanthropy and provision of services, it entered the 'Nineties with the continued support of the community.



# 1990'S

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## YM-YWCA of Greater Victoria

The 'Nineties brought an amelioration of the financial difficulties engendered by the 'Eighties. It also provided a cause for celebration as the City of Victoria geared up to host the Commonwealth Games in 1994, the first major international multi-sport event in which disabled athletes participated as full members of their national teams. Hundreds of city residents volunteered their services to ensure the Games' success. Many of them already had a great deal of experience in working to help others. They were seasoned volunteer Y-workers.

As ever, voluntarism continued to be at heart of Y operations in the 'Nineties, attracting anywhere from 400 to 500 individuals who were willing to do everything and anything for their favourite charity. In 1990, the Victoria YM-YW staffed and sponsored a drop-in centre in Saanich with a warm and friendly atmosphere designed to appeal to youth-at-risk. The plight of homeless young people struck a chord in many workers who volunteered with the Youth Outreach program, enabling it to continue its stellar work with street kids. The YM-YWCA medical mobile unit, popularly known as the "food van," circulated on the city's streets at night, a familiar and comforting sight to the 20 to 60 young people to whom it supplied medical care and sandwiches on a regular basis. In partnership with the Christmas Bureau of Greater Victoria, Y youth workers hand-delivered "stockings" stuffed with soap, toothbrushes, condoms and cookies to kids without homes.



In an effort to provide young people with the skills needed to secure employment, Victoria Y, with the assistance of the federal government, sponsored a voluntary Youth Internship program that provided work and life skills training for youth aged 15 to 19 who had not completed high school. The hard work and commitment required of each intern helped to encourage self-sufficiency and confidence in these trainees, enhancing the chances of their finding – and keeping – self-meaningful employment.

The Y also became a good place to hold a great party for kids. Arrangements for celebrations were tailored to include an appropriate meal or snack, and games or swimming, all at moderate prices, with lots of fun thrown in for free. A variety of Day Camps won new converts to the Y, aged 3 to 14. A wide variety of activities helped them to make constructive use of their summer holidays, while providing them with opportunities to meet new friends and enjoy new activities. Youth Adventure Day Trips for kids aged 10 to 14 included dynamic activities such as sailing at Royal Roads Y, tubing down the Cowichan River, rock-climbing at Camp Thunderbird, and kayaking at the Gorge.

The Y's Service Club, formerly the Y's Men, celebrated its fifty years of involvement with Camp Thunderbird by donating \$35,000 to ensure that any child who wished to go to camp, regardless of material circumstances, might be able to do so.

Fitness programs evolved to meet changing interests and trends. All-out aerobics exercises were abandoned in favour of less percussive, cardio-friendly fitness routines. Acknowledging the biking craze, workshops for mountain bikers and male racers were made available through the Y's partnership with the Commonwealth Centre for Sport Development (CCSD) and the Victoria International Bicycle Race Society. "Women on Wheels" (WOW) group cycling classes, which offered supervised training in road-riding skills, were



also taught at the Y. Recognizing the needs of Victoria's aging population, the Senior's Strength Training Class was initiated in July 1999. Its approximately 35 participants were delighted both by the positive results in their physical health, and by the support and fellowship they received from their classmates and instructors.

Victoria YM-YWCA also celebrated the inception of two important landmarks that vastly increased the association's visibility in the community. The first was the introduction in 1995 of the tremendously popular Women of Distinction Awards program, and the other was the opening of a beautiful health, fitness and recreation centre at Royal Roads University, a facility that was designed to meet the needs of the West Shore community.

In 1999, the YM-YWCA entered into the first six month phase of a three-year strategic plan that targeted six priority areas for growth and development in the approaching millennium. The goals included improving the quality and access of Y facilities, the expansion of recreation at Camp Thunderbird, the enhancement of adult and senior health and fitness, greater involvement in the care and leadership of children and youth by amplifying the connection with youth at risk, and the support of diversity within the local community. Through this plan, the Y laid the foundation for its next 125 years of positive involvement in the life of the City of Victoria.



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## Conclusion

The amalgamation of the YMCA and the YWCA was probably been the most important incident in the lives of the two associations, and while, at the time, many of its executive, staff, and members were full of foreboding, the union must be judged a success. Former associate executive director, Shirley Main, notes that the Victoria YM-YWCA, one of 13 amalgamated Y's in Canada, has earned the respect of the National YM and YW Councils, the federal government, and the University of Victoria for its having set an example in social services, fitness, and voluntarism. She credits this to the association's support of personal initiative. While most institutions require their staff to work within rigid parameters, Victoria Y wins kudos for allowing its personnel to experiment with new ideas in areas of perceived need. This has resulted in the creation of a fertile output of services and programs that have been adopted nationally. Also, as most undertakings are improved by collaboration and group effort, Victoria Y enjoys the advantage of operating with the collusion of both sexes.

As the millennium opens, 16,000 people in Victoria use the city's four Y locations (Downtown, Victoria West Community Y, Royal Roads University Y and Camp Thunderbird). Time has not withered the community's affection for one of Victoria's oldest charities. What is the key to its perennial popularity? Jack Todd, OC, a sixty-five year member of Victoria Y, explains that it caters to people from every age of life, and at every stage of life, providing services from play camps for toddlers to workshops for seniors on illness and aging. Its promotion of the balance of mind, body and spirit is a recipe for personal success.

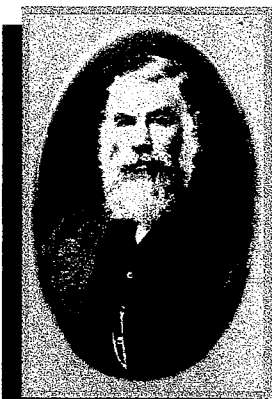
Victoria Y also has a knack for identifying needs in the community, and responding to them. Former physical director, Dr Art Burgess, recalls that, in the early 1940's, the Y recognized a phenomenon that others did not. The streets were full of young pre-teen boys (he was one of them) who peddled newspapers and other items after school. Even though World War II was at its peak, and the building was bursting with servicemen, the Y initiated a "Junior Employed" club, targeted specifically at these youngsters, and taught them athletic skills and self-discipline. Just as remarkable, the Y managed to provide outstanding assistance to the men in the military, even while it retained its tradition of service to the community.

Why are its community services important? Alison 'Babe' Warren, who learned to swim at the YMCA in the mid-1920's, believes strongly that youngsters need to be involved with the Y. She observes that a lot of young people, who might never go to church, will go the Y where they can learn the rudiments of a solid, non-denominational ethical system that will help them mature into first class human beings. One of the Y's greatest attributes is its flair for urging people of all ages to reach for the stars. At 54-years of age, 'Babe' set a personal goal of earning a 25-mile swim medal from the Lieutenant-Governor. At first, she didn't think she could do it. Old mentor, Archie McKinnon persuaded her, "Babe, you CAN do it." She did.

Strong kids, strong families, strong communities; each variable extrapolates to the next. In its first 125 years of life, Victoria Y has felt like home to countless thousands. The future holds promise of the same.

## Appendix 1

### FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE VICTORIA YMCA



Thomas Trounce 1888

BC ARCHIVES

**Thomas Trounce (c. 1813-1900)**

President, Victoria YMCA, 1875- ?

Trounce arrived Victoria in 1858 during the gold rush. For want of accommodation, he lived with wife in a tent on Douglas Street, a galling situation for an architect. He rectified this embarrassment by building the first stone house in Victoria. Trounce was made first president of the YMCA when it was organized in 1875, the year that is regarded as the official founding of the organization in Victoria. The Green Block, which served as one of the Y's more permanent headquarters (1890- 1911), bordered on Trounce Alley, a private lane built on Trounce's own business property. He and his wife were famous gardeners and pillars of Metropolitan Methodist church.

### FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE VICTORIA YWCA

**Edith Carr (1867-1919)**

President, Victoria YWCA, 1892-1894, 1896 - ?

As artist Emily Carr pointed out, her big sister Edith had a kind heart. Eldest of a family of seven, Edith was left in charge of her widowed father's property on Carr (now Government) Street when he died in 1888. In 1892, she was instrumental in the organization of the Victoria YWCA, whose first meetings were held in her home. She was made the association's first president and served as its honorary secretary and as its instructor in domestic science. A deeply pious woman, Miss Carr was dedicated to doing good works, and also had a reputation as an excellent cook. Her cream cakes were a popular item at the YW lunchroom.



Edith Carr [1892?]

BC Archives

### FIRST FRIEND OF THE VICTORIA YMCA & YWCA



Bishop E. Cridge [19-?]

BC ARCHIVES

**Rev. Bishop Edward Cridge (1817-1913)**

Rev. Cridge was instrumental in the formation of both the YMCA and the YWCA, and was their constant supporter. He was the first to urge the YM's formation in the colony in 1858, and on 3 September 1859, it was his pleasure to move the resolution that initiated the movement. At the re-organizational meeting held in 1884, Bishop Cridge was chosen to pray for divine blessings on the deliberations of the first committee members. In 1892, the women of his congregation (Reformed Episcopal Church of Our Lord) formed a YWCA under his supervision. By 1911, when the new YMCA building was officially opened at Blanshard and View, the reverend old gentleman was aged 93 and blind, but sent his hearty best wishes in a letter which was read to the assembled guests. He died two years later.

## Appendix 2: Presidents of the Victoria YMCA, YWCA & YM-YWCA

Presidents of the Victoria YMCA		Presidents of the Victoria YWCA		Presidents of the Victoria YM-YWCA	
1859- ?	Moody, Col. RC, RE	1892-1894	Miss Edith Carr	1961-1962	Sheard, Mrs. AH
<i>YMCA closes</i>		1894-1896	Mrs WD McKilligan	1962-1964	Abbott, Mr DK
1875-1879?	Trounce, Thomas	1896- ?	Miss Edith Carr	1964-1965	Wright, Mrs KO
<i>YMCA closes</i>		? -1900	Mrs Walker	1965-1967	Cunliffe, Mr SJ
1884-1886	Pearse, Benjamin W.	<i>YWCA closes, Jan 1901 to Mar 1907</i>		1967-1968	Edmison, Mrs JN
1886-1887	Shakespeare, Noah	1907-1909	Mrs HS Forman	1968-1970	Rainsford, Mr Frank G
1887-1888	Flumerfelt, AC	1909-1911	Miss AJ Fawcett	1970-1971	Hall, Mrs LD
1888-1892	Robson, John	1911-1911	Mrs CC Michener	1971-1972	Clearihue, Dr Joyce
1892-1893	Henderson, TM	1911-1917	Mrs Frank Adams	1972-1974	Mackenzie, Mr Grant B
1893-1893	Hall, Dr Ernest	1917-1920	Mrs JL Beckwith	1972-1974	Hutchison, Mr Robert
1894-1895	Hall, Dr Lewis	1920-1923	Mrs Charles Bishop	1974-1976	Baker, Mrs Shirley
1895-1898	Bone, WH	1923-1924	Mrs George Piercy	1976-1977	Norgaard, Mr Henning
<i>YMCA closes, Dec 1899 to Jan 1903</i>		1924-1926	Miss Mary Hall	1977-1979	Wallace, Mr RF
1903-1905	Clark, RW	1926-1927	Mrs HH Smith	1979-1981	Simmons, Mrs Mary
1905-1906	Bolton, Dr Albert E.	1927-1928	Mrs Justin Gilbert	1981-1983	McNeely, Dr Michael
1906-1906	Nelson, John	1928-1930	Mrs William Russell	1983-	Heaslip, Mrs Penny
1906-1907	Knott, Horace J.	1930-1933	Mrs Arthur Walsh	1983-1985	Hansen, Mr Paul
1907-1907	Johns, Samuel	1933-1936	Mrs Roy Angus	1985-1987	Seabrook, Mr Richard
1907-1908	McCurdy, AW	1936-1937	Mrs HM Cassidy	1987-1989	Ashford, Dr Mary W.
1908-1909	Clark, RW	1937-1939	Mrs BS Heisterman	1989-1991	Pringle, Mr JR
1909-1909	Staneland, WE	1940-1942	Dr Olga Jardine	1991-1993	Wong, May Q
1909-1911	McMicking, RB	1942-1943	Mrs JD Hunter	1993-1995	Briggs, John E
?	Mitchell, WN	1943-1943	Mrs John Baxter	1995-1998	Morahan, Connie
1913-1918	Bell, George, MPP	1943-1946	Mrs BS Heisterman	1995-2000	Herrera, Cory
1918-1922	McGregor, George	1946-1949	Dr Olga Jardine		
1922-1927	Thomas, Dr MW	1949-1950	Mrs WG Hamilton		
1927-1929	Graham, Mark W	1950-1954	Mrs RE Foster		
1929-1931	Tomlin, Edwin	1954-1956	Mrs HJ Sceats		
1931-1943	Witter, HB	1956-1958	Mrs HC Small		
1943-1945	Straith, WT, KC, MLA	1958-1960	Mrs F Bliss		
1946-1949	Rowebottom, EG	1960-1961	Mrs KO Wright		
1949-1952	Johnson, JV				
1952-1954	Macfarlane, AB				
1954-1956	Whitaker, George EG				
1956-1958	Humphries, DGJ				
1958-1960	Stott, Arthur H				
1960-1961	McGill, Dr Alan F				



**Appendix 3 : General Secretaries / Executive Directors  
of the YMCA, YWCA, YM-YWCA**

**General Secretaries  
Victoria YMCA**

1859 - ?	Cooper, John
1884-1887	Daley, James J.
1888-1894	Teague, Frank W.
1894-1894	Davcy, FW
1895-1896	Carter, George W
1896-1897	Roper, Herbert
1897-?	Jessop?
<i>YMCA closes, December 1899 to January 1903</i>	
1903-	Fisher, William Benjamin
1905-1906	Northcott, HW
1906-1911	Brace, AJ
1911-1912	Thomasson, Edwin M.
1913-1913	Bell, George?
1913-1915	Witham, Fred G.
1916-1923	Graham, JM
1923-1926	Cross, Harold
1926-1931	Maguire, Walter S.
1932-1946	Paulding, Frank
1946-1949	Ramer, Arnold S.
1949-	McKinnon, Archie (Acting GS)
1949-1963	Shoemaker, FV 'Viv'

(Note: the title 'General Secretary' changes to  
'Executive Director' in 1952)

**General Secretaries  
Victoria YWCA**

1893-1895	Miss Armstrong
1895	Miss Edith Carr, Hon. Secretary
1898	Miss Dickinson
1899	Mrs J. Schroeder
1900	Miss Stuart
<i>YWCA closes, January 1901 to March 1907</i>	
1907	Miss Laura Thompson
1907-1909	Miss Phebe P. Gilbert
1909-1912	Miss Scholefield
1912-1915	Miss Elizabeth Bradshaw
1915-1915	Miss Annie Fawcett, Acting Sect'y
1916-1918	Miss Wenonah Marlatt
1919-1920	Miss Jane Budd
1920-1920	Miss Gilchrist
1920-1922	Miss De Wolfe
1923-1924	Miss Hunsberger
1924-1927	Miss Bishop
1927-1927	Mrs Ingram
1927-1931	Miss Elizabeth Bradshaw
1931-1933	Miss Gene McLeod
1933-1935	Miss Mabel Blackley
1935-1937	Mrs May B. Cushing
1937-1939	Miss Helen Campbell Kirkwood
1939-1940	Miss Doris Jones
1940-1944	Mrs May B. Cushing
1944-1947	Miss Margaret Wightman
1947-1953	Miss Christine Gardiner
1954-1955	Miss Mae Brown
1956-1958	Mrs Elsie Purcell
1958-1961	Mrs Phyllis Gravely

(Note: the title 'General Secretary' changes to  
'Executive Director' in 1952)

**Executive Directors  
Victoria YM-YWCA**

1963-1972	McConnell, Jim
1972-1987	Skinner, Bill
1987-1990	Brimacomb, Doug
1990-	Bill Taylor

#### Appendix 4: Quarters of Victoria YMCA, YWCA, YM-YWCA

##### Victoria YMCA Quarters, 1859-1965

Se-Oc 1859	Messrs. Moore & Co., Yates Street, upper room
No-De 1859	Dr Dickson's house, Government Street, opposite the Bastion
<i>YMCA closes</i>	
1875 - 1875	Fardon's Building, Langley & SW corner Yates Streets
1875 - 1879	Omineca Building, Yates Street
<i>YMCA closes</i>	
1884 - 1885	former T. Adler store, Fort Street; by 1903, occupied by Henry Clay & Co.
1885 - 1886	former Harris & Hargreaves quarters, SW corner Government & Bastion; by 1903, occupied by Army & Navy Cigar Store
1886 - 1889	Spencer's Arcade, Broad Street, upper storey
1890 - 1898	AA Green Block, NW corner Trounce Alley & Broad Street, upper storey
<i>YMCA closes</i>	
1903 - 1911	AA Green Block, NW corner Trounce Alley & Broad Street, upper storey
1911 - 1965	YMCA Building, NE Blanshard & View Streets

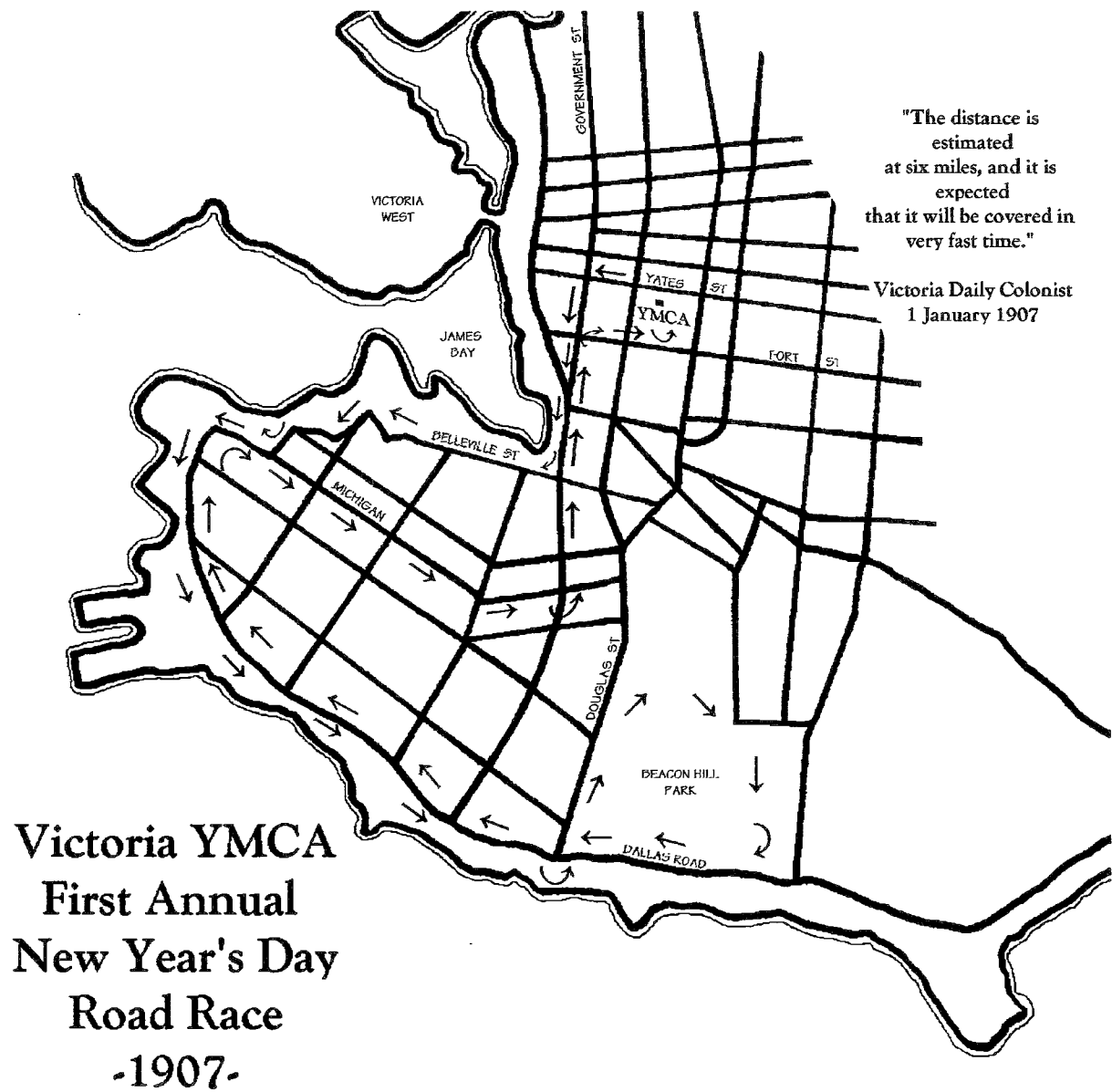
##### Victoria YWCA Quarters, 1892-1965

1892 - 1893	Reformed Episcopal Church (Church of Our Lord), & Carr House, 44 Carr Street (now 207 Government Street)
1893 - 1895	next door to Skene Lowe's Photographic Studio, 63 Government Street, north of Fort Street
1895 - 1897	Shotbolt's Drug Store, 57 ½ Johnson Street, upper rooms - women's residence first introduced at this location
1898 - 1901	Old Protestant Orphanage, the Annex, 32 Rae Street (later 756 Courtney St)
<i>YWCA closes</i>	
1907 - 1908	#20, Fort & Government Streets
1908 - 1911	Denny House, 942 Pandora Street
1911 - 1939	Old Protestant Orphanage, 756 Courtney - acquired as women's residence only
1912 - ?	Quadra & Caledonia Streets - lot is acquired as possible site for new building, & houses on the lot are used for the YWCA education & employment bureaux
1914 - 1915	Douglas & Humbolt Streets
1915 - 1918	Old Union Club, 912 Douglas & Courtney Streets
1918 - 1927	Stobart-Pease Block, 745 Yates Street, 3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> flrs (Standard Furniture Bldg)
1927 - 1965	YWCA Building, Courtney & Blanshard Streets

##### Victoria YM-YWCA Quarters, 1965-2000

1965 - present	YM-YWCA Building, 880 Courtney Street
1978 - present	Victoria West Community Y, 521 Craigflower Road
1998 - present	Royal Roads University Branch, 2005 Sooke Road
1933 - present	Camp Thunderbird, Glinz Lake Road, Metchosin

Appendix 5: Victoria YMCA First Annual Road Race, 1 January 1907



## Appendix 6: Victoria Y Timeline

### Timeline

- 1859** YMCA – is formed with Col. RC Moody, R.E. as 1<sup>st</sup> president, but it dies out not long after.
- 1875** YMCA – is organized in Victoria with Thomas Trounce as 1<sup>st</sup> president  
The 1<sup>st</sup> regular weekly meeting takes place on September 6 at Fardon's Bldg, Langley and Yates
- 1879** YMCA – closes its doors due to lack of support.
- 1884** YMCA – is organized in November. BW Pearse is elected president
- 1887** YMCA – moves to the upper floor of Spencer's Arcade, Broad Street, but months later, its rooms are destroyed by fire. The Association struggles with rebuilding and debt, re-opening in the fall.
- 1889** YMCA – moves to upper rooms of the new Green-Worlock building at the NW corner of Trounce & Broad, its home for the next several years.
- 1892** YWCA – is formed by young women of the Reformed Episcopal Church, with Edith Carr, president.
- 1893** YWCA – raises money by preparing lunches for school children at Central School.  
YMCA – is \$3000 in debt and closes by Christmas.
- 1894** YMCA – is reopened by supporters and enjoys renewed success.  
YWCA – rents its first quarters, with lunchroom, on Government St.
- 1895** YWCA – relocates to rooms on Johnson Street & has its first residence.
- 1898** YWCA – has new HQ at old Protestant Orphans' home on 32 Rae Street (now Courtney).  
YMCA – indebtedness forces closure of the rooms.
- 1899** YWCA – creates a Women's Exchange where destitute women can earn money through handicrafts.
- 1900** YWCA – memberships are only 25 cents a year, but with no community support, finances suffer.
- 1901** YWCA – board cannot afford to maintain the women's residence. The YWCA is closed.
- 1903** YMCA – re-opens in its old Broad Street rooms.
- 1905** YMCA – holds its first summer camp at the Gorge.
- 1906** YMCA – hires the 1<sup>st</sup> permanent Phys Dir, H.R. Gregory. Larger quarters are needed.
- 1907** YMCA – stages the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual 6-mile Road Race on New Year's Day. YM badly needs its own building.  
YWCA – finally wins Victoria's favour, reopening on Fort Street & featuring an Employment

Bureau.

- 1908** YWCA – moves into the old Denny House at 942 Pandora which holds more boarders.
- 1909** YWCA – hires Mrs Dever, its first Travellers' Aid secretary.
- YMCA – raises \$100,000 for a new building, but \$30,000 is never received.
- 1911** YWCA – buys the old Protestant Orphans' home for \$12,000 cash. It will be the new residence.
- 1912** YMCA – new building opens at the NE corner of Blanshard and View with pool & residence.
- 1914** YMCA – suffers an empty residence & loss of members with WWI, & owes \$70,000 on building loans.
- 1915** YWCA – retains Courtney St. Annex for indigents & moves HQ to old Union Club on Douglas St.
- YMCA – provides recreation huts for military at the Willows, Esquimalt and Resthaven.
- 1916** YMCA – introduces special programs for boys whose fathers are stationed overseas.
- 1918** YWCA – war work includes the accommodation of soldiers' families, Red Cross projects and registration of land army girls. The Y relocates to the Stobart Building, 745 Yates Street.
- 1919** YMCA – financial woes improve as the troops return. Kudos are won for its war efforts
- 1920** YMCA – establishes a Junior Camp at Beaver Lake that attracts 181 boys.
- YWCA – begins club work. Physical fitness is taught at night in high school gyms.
- 1921** YWCA – is allowed use of YMCA pool each Wednesday & nine days of camp at Beaver Lake.
- YMCA – Archie McKinnon is hired as Assistant Physical Director.
- 1922** YMCA – introduces the Hi-Y movement to Victoria high schools.
- 1924** YMCA – raises \$30,000 & the remainder is forgiven by the mortgagee. The building is debt-free.
- 1927** YWCA – opens its first building at Courtney and Blanshard.
- 1930** YMCA – permanently closes the camp at Beaver Lake & holds summer day camps in the city.
- 1931** YMCA – dorm revenues are down by \$1000 as homeless men live rent-free.
- 1933** YWCA – allows indigent young women to live in residence at no cost.
- 1934** YMCA – members of the track and field team bring glory to Victoria at home and abroad.
- YWCA – launches a Household Workers course which is copied nationally.
- 1935** YMCA – buys Glinz Lake, to be known as Camp Thunderbird. It comes with a \$2000 mortgage.
- 1937** YWCA – gives instruction in dressmaking & salesmanship for out-of-work women.

- 1938** YMCA – athlete Bill Dale wins gold in mile relay & bronze in ½ mile.
- 1939** YMCA – has mortgage paid off on Camp Thunderbird by anonymous donor.
- 1940** YWCA – is lauded by City Council for its range of war services, including its Info Bureau.  
YMCA – opens a Red Triangle “hut” is built at Macaulay Point with help of Ladies’ Auxiliary.
- 1941** YMCA – welcomes all servicemen, and turns main building into 24-hr-a-day Red Triangle Club.  
YWCA – opens a Hostess House in Sidney for airmen.  
YMCA – welcomes women’s into So-Ed, marking the beginning of their formal membership in YM..
- 1942** YWCA – responsibilities include Hostess Houses, hospitality & entertainment for servicemen.
- 1943** YWCA – finds housing for servicemen’s families in the city, & maintains camps for land army.
- 1945** YMCA – gives veterans free memberships and rehab therapy, winning record numbers of supporters.  
YWCA – provides classes & counselling for juvenile delinquents and war brides.
- 1946** YMCA – ‘Flying Y’ athletes win honours at home & abroad.
- 1947** YMCA – membership drive exceeds the objective of 1000, swamping the inadequate facilities.
- 1949** YMCA – offers English classes to new Canadians.
- 1950** YMCA – athlete Bill Parnell is the golden miler at the British Empire Games with a winning time of 4:11.0.  
YMCA – Y’s Men’s Club is formed. The members’ projects include renovation of Camp T.
- 1955** YWCA – Executive Director Mae Brown reports that no girl is ever turned away for any reason.
- 1956** YWCA – is swamped by baby boomers taking courses in crafts, the latest rage.
- 1957** YWCA – discontinues Travellers’ Aid service & the annual Christmas dinner for seniors.  
YMCA – is donated a corner lot on Quadra & Courtney by TS McPherson.
- 1958** YMCA – proposes complete amalgamation of the YM & YW, but onions differ widely.
- 1959** YMCA – Archie McKinnon is injured in a clown accident at Crystal Gardens, but recovers.  
YWCA – sees amalgamation as the only way to deal with a crowded building.
- 1960** YWCA – Art Burgess succeeds retiring Archie McKinnon as Physical Director.
- 1961** The two Y’s amalgamate with a joint constitution and board. Mrs AH Sheard is 1<sup>st</sup> president.

- 1962** Philanthropist TS McPherson dies, bequeathing \$200,000 toward the new building fund.
- 1963** The largest fund-raising effort in Victoria's history officially kicks off with Hugh Stevens as chairman of the building drive. A total of \$1,250,000 is raised, \$100,000 over the objective.
- 1964** Building cost estimates skyrocket to \$1,427,000, leaving a deficit of \$180,000. Buoyed by faith in the project, the directors decide to start construction anyway.
- 1965** The new building opens at 880 Courtney Street with a dorm for women but not men
- 1966** Membership soars to 5,800, and the new building is obsolete. Extension programs help to lighten the strain.
- 1967** Satellite programmes focus on youth, with Leadership training courses for boys & girls 12 to 17.
- 1968** Y World Service raises thousands with the motto "Help others help themselves."
- 1969** "Fitness 69" offers a silver teaspoon to those who compete against themselves in sports.  
  
The Outreach program for youths is inaugurated.
- 1970** Basking in one of its most successful years ever, the Y still owes \$150,000 on its new building.  
  
"Ladies' Day Out" provides daycare and a program of activities for moms. Victoria Free Clinic provides free medical and legal advice.
- 1971** Shirley Main is instrumental in the implementation of the national "ParticipACTION" program.
- 1972** A deficit of \$26,000 is blamed on a drop in young members and the poor showing of the cafe.  
  
The youth department is granted \$12,000 for a downtown referral and program centre project.
- 1973** Marta Klinovsky and Peter Kopac teach the "Flying Y" gymnastics team, including Tracy Beer.
- 1974** The mortgage is burned following a generous donation from the Ford estate.  
  
"Summer Excitement" provides vacation fun for city kids aged 6- 8.
- 1975** The directors announce a campaign to raise \$1,350,000 to expand the facility.  
  
Program director, Ken Currey, organizer of the first extension program at Cordova Bay, broadens the base of Y activities in the community by enhancing leadership skills in young people.
- 1976** Camp Thunderbird goes co-ed for campers aged 8 to 15.
- 1977** \$870,000 donated to the building expansion campaign falls short of the objective, but construction begins.
- 1978** Co-sponsored by BC Social Workers and the Y, "Prime Time" supports women in middle years.  
  
Vic West Community Y facility opens.
- 1982** The Building and Equipment Reserve pays for a new, \$15,000 resilient floor in the auditorium.



- 1983** Y's Men's Club goes co-ed and changes its name to Y Service Club of Victoria.
- The Ladies' Auxiliary, originally attached to the YMCA, celebrates 100 years of service.
- 1985** Summer fun for Y kids includes computer camps, BMX cycle racing and "Streetproofing."
- "Youth Outreach" in Sooke, Saanich, Langford and Parkside, offers counselling to kids.
- 1986** The Socreds announce a grant of \$300,000 to Camp Thunderbird.
- 1988** Victoria Y's African Aid program helps Gambia Y through drought & starvation.
- 1995** The Women of Distinction Awards program is introduced.
- Y youth workers hand-deliver Christmas stockings to street kids.
- Approximately 400 volunteers enhance Y programs.
- 1998** The Y's health, fitness and recreation facility opens at Royal Roads University.
- YM-YWCA's medical mobile unit is known simply as the "food van" to youth on the street.
- 1999** The Federal Government sponsors a Young Intern program which encourages employment.
- Seniors' Strength Training Class provides fun and fitness for its enthusiastic participants.
- The Y's Service Club celebrates 50 years by donating \$35,000 to Camp T.
- 2000** Victoria YM-YWCA celebrates 125 years of positive involvement in the life of the city!

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## Notes

1. The *Colonist* reported on 15 July 1858 that the churches had asked Douglas for land on which to build a YMCA, but evidently no action was taken at this time.
2. "The Y.M.C.A.," *Victoria Daily British Colonist*, 14 November 1884.
3. "Our Young Men," *Colonist*, 13 September 1884.
4. David Spencer and his family members were keen supporters of both the Victoria YMCA and YWCA.
5. The mountains and vast distances were responsible for YMCA's in British Columbia being cut off from their brother associations in Canada. Victoria Y tended to meet and compete within the body of the Pacific North West company of YMCA's in the states of Washington and Oregon, as well as with its BC affiliates.
6. This building still exists and has been sensitively restored by architect, John Keay.
7. "In Their New Home," *Colonist*, 8 March 1890.
8. The early game, that initially involved tossing soccer balls into peach baskets, bore little resemblance to today's version. It was not until 1900 that rules established by the Amateur Athletic Union and American YMCA permitted the holding of the ball and also the use of a screen behind the goal net.
9. "More Money Is Needed," *Colonist*, 19 July 1893.
10. The YMCA football team carried on until the end of the season in March when it lost the *Times* Cup to the Boys' Brigade.
11. Messrs Green and Worlock were supporters of the Y, as well as its landlords. AA Green had died in 1891, but was survived by Mr Worlock who, on the dreadful day that his bank failed, nevertheless waived the Y's accumulated rent so the institution could get back on its feet.
12. "Onward Christian Soldiers," *Colonist*, 3 March 1894.
13. "The Closing of the Y.M.C.A.," *Colonist*, 20 November 1898.
14. "The Y.M.C.A.," *Colonist*, 9 April 1907.
15. "Victoria's Y.M.C.A. Making Progress," *Colonist*, 6 August 1903.
16. In 1908, Victoria YM Boys were advised by world-renowned author and poet, Rudyard Kipling (*Kim*, *Once and Future King*, etc.), to go out into the countryside and write accounts of all they observed.
17. These first Gorge campers were Frank and Robert (Ernie) Crompton, Reg and Louis Beckwith, Fred Harling, Fred Carne, and Oswald Margison.
18. By the end of his career with the Y, Brace had served overseas with the association in the Boer War, WWI, & WWII.
19. "...The chief event on New Year's Day was won by Baylis after a very pretty race, the winner leading his opponents by nearly half a mile..." *Colonist*, 3 January 1907. The YMCA 6-mile New Year's Day Road Race, which debuted on 1 January 1907, was the first road race to be held in the city in many years, and became a popular institution. It gradually petered out in

the 1920's or 1930's, and was completely forgotten, but was re-introduced by physical director Art Burgess in the 1960's.

20. "Must Close The Home," *Colonist*, 20 January 1901.

21. William Denny was a successful Victoria businessman who, in the 1870's, was a partner in retail marketing with David Spencer before the latter opened David Spencer Ltd. department stores in 1878. Denny's wife and daughter were strong supporters of the YWCA, as were David Spencer's daughters, Sara and Agnes Spencer.

22. The architect was HS Griffith whose other works still extant include the Sweeney McConnel Building at 1010 Langley Street (1910), the Strathcona Hotel at 919 Douglas (1911), and the Fairfield Block at 1601 Douglas Street (1912). Martin Segger & Douglas Franklin, *Exploring Victoria's Architecture* (Victoria, BC: Sono Nis Press, 1996).

23. In World War II, the YMCA, along with the Canadian Legion, the Salvation Army, the IODE, the Knights of Columbus and the YWCA, received financial assistance from the government so that it could provide canteens, entertainments, comforts, recreational facilities, and educational courses for the troops.

24. *Colonist*, 8 March 1916.

25. Future artist, Jack Shadbolt, represented Victoria Y at the Older Boys Parliament and was named its provincial secretary.

26. *Victoria Daily Times*, "Hundreds Attend Opening Ceremony of New YWCA," 26 October 1927.

27. The Community Chest had a rocky beginning, and the Y was disappointed that, in relying on its assistance, it received much less funds than it expected. However, as the rationale behind the Chest's appeal became understood by the public, its revenue increased. Today, the YM-YWCA of Greater Victoria receives 3.3% of its income from the United Way (1999 figures).

28. 'Babe' Warren recalls the beloved Margaret Ryan as a sterling leader for whom the girls were willing to do anything. The Christmas edition of *Y-Ways* notes that "Miss Ryan can't do without the Y in her name, and the Y can't do without Miss Ryan." *Y-Ways*, vol. 2, # 1. Miss Ryan's future career took her to Vancouver where she became director of Grandview Y in 1941, and then to Ontario, where she was promoted to be supervisor of the Y's wartime Farm Services Force. After her marriage in the early 1940's, and unable to do "without the Y in her name," she was known as Margaret Ryan Robertson.

29. "'Y' Sets A Record..." *Colonist*, 31 January 1959.

30. For the rest of the decade, the office of president was occupied alternately by women and men until this formality came to be considered a non-issue.

31. Hugh Stevens was joined on the road by Stuart Keate, DJ Lawson, Captain David Groos and Newell Morrison

32. Bennett acknowledged that his Labour-Education Minister, Leslie Peterson, and Resources Minister, Ray Williston, asked him to make the gift from the government's \$65 million surplus (!) Both of these Ministers were Y members.

33. Local developer Tage Borge Larsen had plans to convert the old YMCA building, which was declared to be "solid as a rock," into a hotel, but in November 1967, it was sold at public auction to Parul Arsens of Paul's Restaurants for \$52,500. Within a month, the building was demolished to free the site for other purposes. The bricks were salvaged and found new life in the construction of modern apartment buildings in the city.

34. Leadership trainers were Art Burgess, Shirley Main, Irene Walker, Gordon Gannon, and Cynthia Slater.

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