



Donald MacLaren at Vancouver Airport, 1937 – Inaugural Flight COVARCHIVES - MAJOR MATTHEWS COLLECTION

The MacLaren-Uchida House

By Hugh McLean

The 1911 Craftsman style house at 2798 Yale Street, the first house built on Yale street in Vancouver, is an unusual Foursquare house with a low pitched roof, but of even more interest is its historical association with the first two owners, the MacLaren and Uchida families.

As the first house built on Yale Street in Vancouver, the MacLaren-Uchida House is one of a small number of early prominent houses in the neighbourhood, illustrative of the pre-war optimism of local owners at that time. The MacLaren-Uchida House is valued for its association with the early development of Hastings Townsite at the time of its amalgamation with the City of Vancouver. The earliest development of Hastings Townsite began in 1906 with the initial subdivision and public sale of the most northerly section and continued through

to 1911 when the Townsite was amalgamated with the City of Vancouver.

Robert and Jenny MacLaren (res. 1911-1919): Robert MacLaren and family relocated to Vancouver in 1911 after Robert's success in Calgary as an early real estate investor and developer, and work in the oil and gas fields as a geologist. His early wealth is illustrated by such a large house, along with financing and early ownership of the York Theatre on Commercial Drive in 1913. Their son Donald MacLaren enrolled at McGill University in Montreal in 1912, but returned a year later and remained in Vancouver. By 1917 he enlisted in the Royal Air Force. Between March and October 1918, he downed 48 aircraft and six balloons, ranking third among Canadian pilots (after Billy Bishop and Raymond Collishaw) and was awarded the Military Cross, D.F.C., D.S.O., French Legion of Honour, Croix de Guerre. In 1919, he was selected to establish the Royal Ca-



Ayako Uchida c.1960s FROM THE HEALTH SCIENCES ARCHIVES AT MCMASTER UNIVERSITY

nadian Air Force, and had Allied aircraft turned over to the Canadian government to form the nucleus of a national

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air force. He returned to Vancouver and established the first flying service on the west coast in 1924. He was later assigned to select a site for an air base, and chose Jericho Beach. He was also instrumental in the planning for, and opening of, Vancouver's first airport on Sea Island, and was selected as the first executive of Trans-Canada Airlines (1937), and established the Air Cadets while stationed in Winnipeg (1941).

Sentaro and Shizuko Uchida (née Takano) (res. 1919-1942): Sentaro Uchida was a successful merchant with two stores on Powell Street beginning in 1906. A prominent member of the Japanese-Canadian community, he served as director of the Japanese Language School and as President of the Canadian Japanese Association. His family's move to this house illustrates the success of his business. One of his four daughters, Irene (Ayako) Uchida, attended UBC and was an editor of the *New Canadian* newspaper. In 1942, the Uchida family was forcibly removed from the west coast as part of the internment of Japanese-Canadian families and disposal of their property. Following this hardship, Irene Uchida continued at the University of Toronto



Photo of front of house sometime in 2017. PHOTO BY HUGH MCLEAN

in the late 1940s. Upon completing her PhD, she rose to national fame in the medical community as Director of the Department of Medical Genetics at the Children's Hospital in Winnipeg, where she became the first scientist to link radiation exposure in women throughout their lives to Down syndrome in their children.

Following the sale of the house by the Federal Government in 1943, it was rented until 1958 when it was con-

verted to a private care facility known as the Eventide Rest Home. This operated until 1979, housing elderly people in the upstairs bedrooms. As a result, the second floor porch was widened to take advantage of expansive views of the mountains and harbour. This exemplifies the post-war use of many large houses in single-family neighbourhoods in the city, converted to institutional facilities or multiple family uses.

Field trip to the Vancouver Police Museum

WHEN: Saturday, May 4th, 2019
@11:00 am

WHERE: Vancouver Police Museum 240 E Cordova St, Vancouver. Meet by the front desk at the top of the stairs to check in.

Tours are free for VHS members, \$10 for non-members, payable at the start. Strictly limited to 20 people. First come, first served. Please pre-register before the tour date by emailing fieldtripsvhs@gmail.com or leaving a message with your name, phone number and/or email address at the VHS Information Line 604-827-3622. Please note that the Museum doesn't have an elevator and is not wheelchair accessible.



PHOTO COURTESY OF VANCOUVER POLICE MUSEUM

North America's oldest police museum, the Vancouver Police Museum is housed in the original Coroner's Court, city morgue and autopsy facility. With over 20,000 rare photographs, documents, and crime-related artefacts such as confiscated weapons and counterfeit currency, the mu-

seum also explores the history of the VPD Traffic Section, the oldest policing unit in the VPD. Learn about the history of Vancouver's policing, criminal activities and city riots. The tour also looks at the historic morgue and autopsy facilities, which were located in the building until 1980.