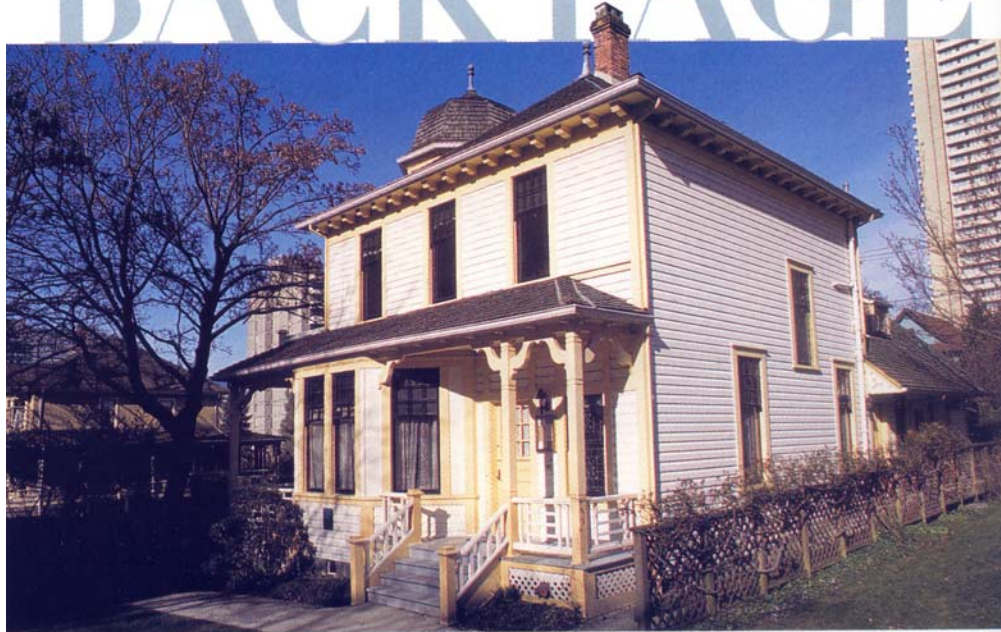


BACK PAGE



ROEDDE TRIP

A heritage home offers peeks into the past

By Sheri Radford

ELEGANT ABODE:
ROEDDE HOUSE
CHARMS WITH AMPLE
ANTIQUES AND QUEEN
ANNE REVIVAL STYLE

Chic Victorian ladies knew how to keep their freshly washed leather gloves from sticking together: they used glove stretchers—handy devices that doubled as hair-curling tongs. Such mementoes of days-gone-by are right at

home in the Roedde House Museum.

The West End was covered in trees just over a century ago. Into this wilderness came German immigrant Gustav Roedde, Vancouver's first bookbinder, along with wife Matilda and their children. Their home was designed by family friend Francis M. Rattenbury, the architect later known for BC's Parliament buildings and the Vancouver Art Gallery. The 1893 Roedde House epitomizes Queen Anne Revival style, with its veranda, cupola and asymmetrical design.

After the family sold it in 1925, Roedde House weathered some rough-and-tumble

decades as a rooming house. One former tenant recalls painful evenings spent hunching his 6'4" frame over the low kitchen sink custom-built for Matilda, who at 4'11" used to pray nightly for her children to grow up tall. The restored house is now part of Barclay Heritage Square, a genteel cluster of nine historic houses tucked amidst nondescript towers.

Meticulously decorated rooms offer glimpses of daily life at the turn of the last century. Period objects invite examination: a hand-pump vacuum cleaner, a wooden dough-rising box, a men's collar curler, a leather strop for sharpening straight razors. Volunteer guides cheerfully explain these gadgets and point out items requiring no elucidation, such as the ubiquitous chamber pots.

Makes you glad to learn about this time period, rather than live in it. (For tour details, see page A10.)

PHOTO BY ANDY MONS