

From Lebanon to British Columbia



The Lebanese Emigrant - 127 years of contribution

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INTRODUCTION:

The BC Council of the World Lebanese Cultural Union is proud to submit to the Victoria City Council this proposal for a permanent site for “The Lebanese Emigrant” statue. Commemorating the 127th year anniversary of the arrival of the first Lebanese emigrants to British Columbia, this bronze statue concretizes the link between the peoples of Canada and the Lebanese who immigrated to their shores.

BACKGROUND:

The World Lebanese Cultural Union (Canadian Registered charitable organization # 82537 1149.RR) is part of a world-wide association, which serves as an umbrella for several groups active in British Columbia, including The Lebanese Canadian Society of BC, The Christian Canadian Lebanese Association - Victoria, and the BC Youth Chapter. Numerous members of these groups are descendants of the first Lebanese settlers who arrived in Montreal in 1882 to escape economic hardship and religious and political persecution under the Ottoman Empire. *The first Lebanese in the province were two brothers, Abraham and Farris Ray, who began their careers in Victoria as itinerant peddlers in 1888, their brothers Richard joined them in 1889.* By the end of the 1880s the first Lebanese families began to arrive in Vancouver, and establish their homes in the Lower Mainland. Among the Lebanese pioneers on the west coast, the names of Rahi (became Ray), Shumas, Saba, Naoom, Mussallem, Haddad, Gillette, Brady and Kalley stand out. Some of them went to Vancouver Island to work in the forestry industry, and some settled in Victoria as peddlers.

To cement the ties that bind the Lebanese Diaspora to life in western Canada, the WLCU, encouraged by a verbal approval from Mayor Alan Lowe (1999-2008), had arranged for the shipment of the statue “The Lebanese Emigrant” for placement in Victoria. Designed and executed by Mr. Ramiz Barquet, a sculptor and Mexican national of Lebanese decent, this statue is one of few identical pieces standing prominently in various cities around the world: Mexico City, Beirut, Brisbane, Melbourne, Accra, and soon we hope, Victoria. “The Lebanese Emigrant” represents the world-wide spread of Lebanese culture as well as the love, honor and respect Lebanese emigrants feel for the nations that so generously received them.



MAKING OF THE STATUE:

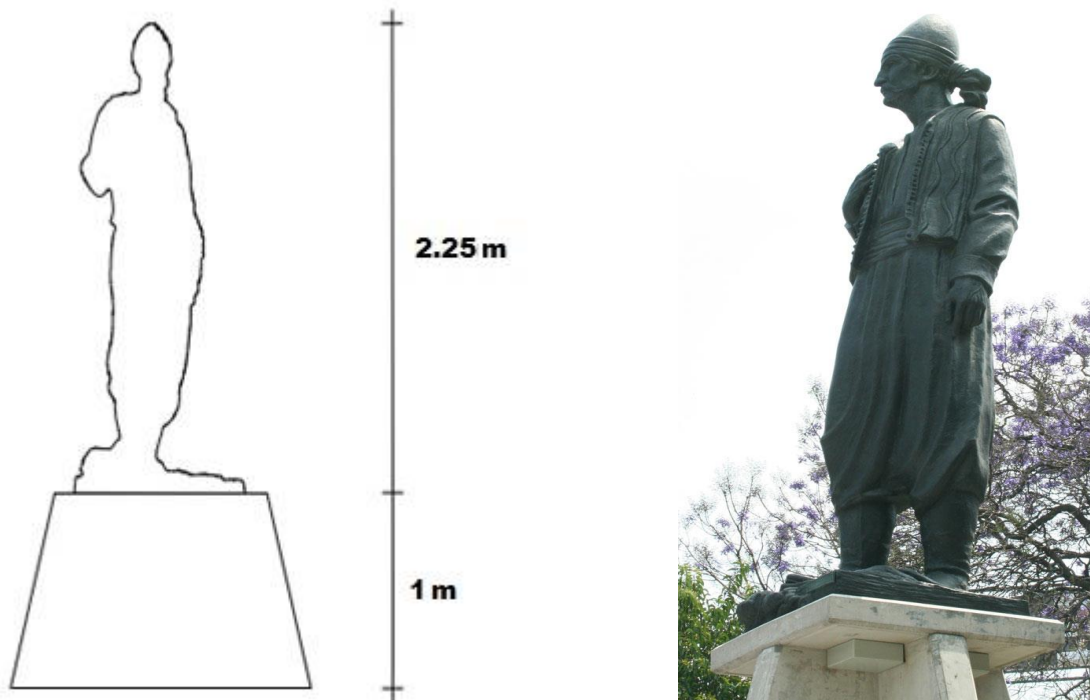


The statue was manufactured in Mexico and brought to Victoria by boat. It is currently standing in a private location at Douglas Street, at the corner of the Traveler's Inn Hotel. *The Lebanese Canadian community is ready to fund the cost of moving and mounting the statue to a new and permanent location.*

DONATION TO THE CITY:

The WLCU hopes the City of Victoria will accept our gift of "The Lebanese Emigrant" statue as a token of appreciation to the province that welcomed our ancestors for the last 127 years with open arms and provided them freedom, opportunity and a bright future.

STATUE SPECIFICATIONS: “The Lebanese Emigrant” is made of high quality bronze, 2.25 metres high and weighs 600kg. The statue could sits atop a stone base with a 2 x 2 m footprint and measuring 1 m high.



THE ARTIST, Ramiz Barquet: A Mexican national of Lebanese decent, Ramiz is the creator of several monumental sculptures on permanent public display in Puerto Vallarta and worldwide



El-Emigrante Libanes (The Lebanese Emigrant) 2010
Brisbane, Queensland, AUSTRALIA



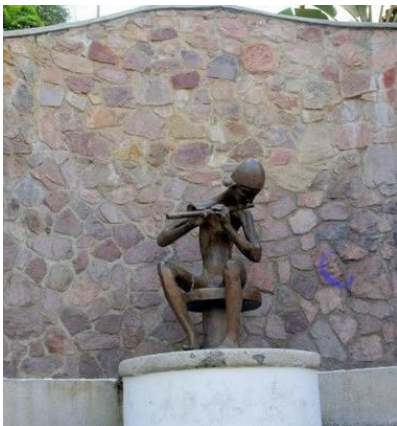
El-Emigrante Libanes (The Lebanese Emigrant) 1979
Mexico City, MEXICO



La Nostalgia (Nostalgia) 1984
Puerto Vallarta, MEX



El Pescador (The Fisherman) 1996
Puerto Vallarta, MEX



La Rinconada del Juglar (The Minstrel Corner) 1999
Puerto Vallarta, MEX



Un Niño, Un Libro, Un Futuro (A Boy, A Book, A Future) 2000
Puerto Vallarta, MEX



San Pascual Bailón (Patron Saint of Cooks) 2008
Puerto Vallarta, MEX



Tiburón en Espiral (Shark Spiral) 1996
Puerto Vallarta, MEX

To learn more about Ramiz Barquet:

<http://ulcm.org/news/2014/03/11/remembering-ramiz-barquet-the-father-of-the-lebanese-emigrant-'-statue-on-the-international-day-of-the-lebanese-emigrant->

PROPOSED SITE:

We request a placement in the Downtown of Victoria. The waterfront area being a focal point for the Lebanese since their arrival to Victoria, might be the best area to erect “The Lebanese Emigrant.” The next best option would be the space in the centre of a large roundabout; the business district with many streets and plazas features a suitable metropolitan setting. We look forward to working with you to find a suitable placement for this statue to commemorate the Lebanese emigrant experience in BC.

CONCLUSION:

The World Lebanese Cultural Union – BC council and the Culture & Heritage Affairs committee of the World Lebanese Cultural Union (NGO) would like to express its utmost gratitude for the support of the Victoria City Council and its officers in their involvement with this project, helping to provide a space to erect a statue that symbolises and commemorates 127 years of contribution by the Lebanese community to British Columbia.

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