

LYTTON MUSEUM & ARCHIVES

420 Fraser St., P.O. Box 640
Lytton, B.C. V0K 1Z0

2019 Issue #2



Unlocking Lytton's Past

HELLO LYTTON !

Every summer Lytton Museum & Archives welcomes visitors often from more than 24 different countries. From their verbal and written comments we know they love our town and museum. And that's wonderful to know.

But... the museum exists for you, the people of this area. Learn more about your museum, and why it exists, in this special newsletter edition.

Read the 'snippet' in the banner at the top of each page to see a very small sample of the kind of things in Lytton Museum & Archives.





Today is Tomorrow's History.

Sometimes we all need a reminder that today's happenings are tomorrow's history. Reprinted here, with permission, is a page from the BC Historical Federation Magazine.

Recent History

It is interesting to me that the recent history is harder to find. For this issue, I scoured the local archives looking for an image of the Nalley's plant to no avail. I also poked around looking for images of Nalley's pickle jars in local collections and had no luck. One archivist I contacted who shall remain nameless said she had a photo "somewhere (that being the optimum word) at home from Knight Street bridge which shows the huge open tanks where they brined their pickles." Likely there are other images in other people's basements and closets that would be perfect for this issue of the magazine.

It speaks to me that we need to be encouraging people to donate their photos and objects from the 1960s, 1970s, and from yesterday. I know many people do not feel that those photos and objects are old enough, or historical enough or interesting enough. Some people do not want to donate their personal photos and objects preferring to keep them within the family.

I am a great believer that it is the stories of the everyday people that make up the fabric of the larger story of our province. It is the stories of the market gardeners, the first women to win office in a municipal election, the high school hockey players, the racist travelogue author, the teachers, and the historically minded ship captains, who together tell the complex, and sometimes

uncomfortable, history of British Columbia.

However, if we do not donate those items from the everyday people to museums and archives they will not be there for future historians.

Of course, that leads to the other challenge of space. Museums and archives are often housed in heritage buildings instead of purpose-built facilities with an understanding the collection will grow over time. John MacFarlane's article in this issue discusses the challenges around storing and displaying large artifacts. The challenge of space has also been highlighted recently by the BC Museums Association with a series of workshops titled "Caring for your Collections: The Long Road to Deaccessioning" and the Princeton and District Museum and Archives' recent announcement that they are in the process of deaccessioning.

Consider the items in your attic and the stories that they hold. Write about an object with a story and send it to me for the "Cabinets of Curiosity" column and then donate that item to the appropriate museum.

Until next time,
Andrea Lister
EDITOR



CHUCK RUSSELL



Why Do Museums Exist ?

It becomes nearly impossible to exit a museum without having gained any information or insight during your visit.

Objects give us a special kind of access to the past. We see something that was used by people, and thus get a physical feel for their lives. We can learn about past societies' values from what they kept, and what materials they made things from - or about daily life from such simple things as cooking utensils and furniture.

A single visit to a museum can expose visitors to in-depth information on a subject, and the nature of the museum environment is one in which you can spend as much or as little time as you like exploring exhibits. You can form your own unique experiences and take away information that interests you.

As wonderful as the digital age is, a picture of an item can never substitute for the seeing the real thing. You can't walk around it, or touch it, or see how light plays upon its surface. Or appreciate the scale of something – whether it's incredibly delicate or whether it dominates the room.

The excitement on a young child's face when he or she discovers a photo of (or an item made by) a family member says it all!



Our Mission Statement

The Lytton Museum & Archives, owned and operated by the Village of Lytton, has been established to collect, preserve, research, exhibit and interpret objects of cultural, artistic, and historical value to the Lytton area, with the understanding that ownership is held in trust for future generations by the Village of Lytton. Public education programs will be created to foster an awareness of the culture and lifestyle of the area, to encourage research into the past, and to provide a community focus for celebrating Lytton's rich heritage for residents and visitors alike.

Family Trees, Please

Every year the Museum gets requests from people living outside our area to visit the Museum to research their possible Lytton ancestors. For example, in the last year there have been 3 individuals visit looking to prove they are descendants of Chief Spintlum.

Have you researched your family tree? Perhaps you have a family bible that lists family members? We'd love a copy for our files.

There are many on line resources if you want to research. Some are free, others are by paid subscription. But just recently the Thompson Nicola Regional Library announced a free subscription to Ancestry, which you can access at the local Library.



YOU Can Make a Difference!



Lytton Museum has a collection of more than 2000 photographs. Many are views of the town and surrounding areas. A large proportion, however, show individuals and group gatherings and there are quite a number of school class photos. As with most donated photographs, the names of the people in the photo have not been identified on the back of the photo.

This leaves the Museum with a lot of unanswered questions:

- who were these people?
- are they related?
- are they even from Lytton?

The volunteers who are keeping the Museum going were not born and raised here, so our knowledge and recognition of local people and family connections is limited.

You are the people with the answers - come have a look at some of the photographs and tell us who these people are, and what their relationship is with local history.

You can make a difference!

I went to the Museum one day, but it was closed. How come?

While we would love to have the Museum open everyday to have visitors, there's a reason it may not have been open when you tried to visit.

The Museum is a Commission of the Village of Lytton. While the Village is very supportive, providing utilities and lawn mowing, the operation of the Museum is carried out by a dedicated group of volunteers. The only time there is paid staff is during the summer months. The rest of the year it is open by request (by email), or when volunteers are in the building working on a project.

While membership dues are very important for office supplies, display materials, and furniture, money doesn't help if there are no 'hands on' volunteers to help keep the Museum in good repair and open to visitors.

At present there are only 5 regular working volunteers who organize summer staffing, paint, set up displays and lighting, enter computer data, research local area history, arrange opening for special events and researchers, doing general housekeeping, weeding the yard, monitoring and answering museum emails, composing and distributing the newsletter and accepting donated items.

Volunteer!

Your help can make a difference.



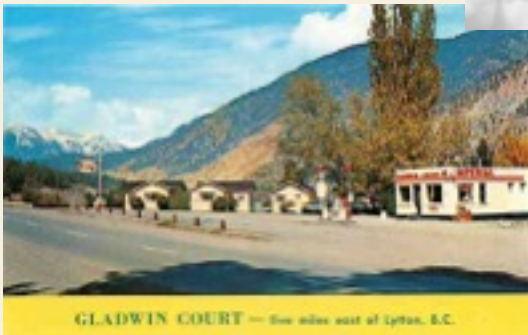
From the

Museum's



photograph

collection





What was happening ‘way back when’?

Early newspapers are a wealth of information about people, and their lives in our past.

MERRIT HERALD 1912-04-05

VACHON TO LYTTON

Provincial Constable Edgar Vachon, of this city, received telegraphic instructions yesterday to proceed at once to Lytton. He left on the noon train. It was reported here on Tuesday night there had been a free fight in the morning in Lytton, one hundred and fifty men being engaged in the fracas. The government will do its utmost to prevent

MERRIT HERALD 1910-02-18

LYTTON

Dances are the order of the day in Lytton and many pleasant evenings are being spent by the young folk

A number from here attended the masquerade ball in Ashcroft.

Road Superintendent Sutherland is planning a big season. The government appropriations for the year promise to be larger than ever. A number of roads in the district will be improved.

It is reported on good authority that a bridge will be thrown across the Fraser near Earl's landing this year. It will open up a big tract of good fruit lands.

COLONIST

1860-04-10

FROM LYTTON CITY. — We have conversed with a gentleman recently from the Forks of Thompson and Fraser Rivers, who says that the traders at Lytton City were quite busy furnishing parties bound for Quesnelle River with outfits. Pack-trains were leaving town daily bound for the New El Dorado. These trains contemplated taking the new route via Hat River. The river from the Forks down is represented to be almost entirely in the possession of Chinamen, the white miners having either deserted or sold their claims and moved further up.

COLONIST

1860-04-21

PRICES OF EATABLES AT LYTTON CITY

We have received from a reliable source a list of prices at which the leading articles of consumption are rating at the Forks and Thompson and Fraser rivers : - Flour, \$17 per cwt. ; Beans, bays, (no sale for white)17c per lb. ; Bacon, prime, 33c. ; Lard, 45c.; Coffee, green, 50c per lb. ; Sugar, China No. 1, 37 1-2c. ; Boston Syrup, \$32 5c,per gal. At this time last year, if our recollection serves us, the following were the rates at which the same articles were held at the Forks ; - Flour, \$23 per cwt. ;Beans, 23c per lb. ; Bacon,45 - 50c. ; Lard, 60c. ; Coffee, 75c ; China Sugar,50c. ; Syrup, \$4.50 to \$5 per gal. The contrast is quit an agreeable one, and we should not wonder if next year a still greater change for the better takes place.



There's no time like the past

In 2013 Elspeth Kursh, Collections and Facilities Manager at the Sewall-Belmont House & Museum in Washington, D.C., wrote an article entitled *Does a museum want your inherited clutter?* Here are some of the points and explanations she gave about donating 'things' to a museum.

"You've found a trunk full of 'stuff' in your great-grandmother's attic. Now you're asking the Museum if they want it. Sadly, the answer is probably "no."

I'm sure your materials are beautiful. I'm not being sarcastic, either. Some of the most marvellous things I've ever seen have come from someone's attic. But, just like your attic, museums, historical societies, and other repositories of our shared experiences are bursting with stuff. When we accept something into our permanent collection — a process called accessioning — we are making a promise to care for that object for as long we can and as long as our mission supports education. And, because of the commitment involved to the objects we do accept, it likely means we're not acquiring something else instead.

We can't allow things into our permanent collections without a great deal of thought, discussion, and careful measurement of how much storage space and resources we have. (Think of the process you use to decide what objects come in and out of your home.) Just because something is beautiful and old doesn't mean it's important. Junk, saved long enough, does not necessarily become important!"

So what kinds of things does the Museum want?

Items in the museum were donated by people like you. We do not buy items.

We have great interest in acquiring objects that will help us promote our mission (page 3). If you have an item that you believe would enhance the collections, and you would like to donate it to the museum, please read the following:

We collect items, letters, diaries, photographs and other records which document the history, culture and people of Lytton & area's past. We collect historical records of average families, of small social organizations, and businesses.

The value of an object is increased when more is known about it. How did it come to be in your possession? Who made it? How was it used? The answers to these types of questions are important in our decisions to accept objects. We also look at the condition of the object, and whether or not we already have similar artifacts. Therefore, please understand that we cannot accept all offers. The museum should be a treasure house, not a storage locker.

Objects without information are the orphans of museum collections. The more stories you can provide connected to the objects and the people who owned, used or worked them the better. An old shovel leaning against the wall is just that, an old shovel and doesn't rate a second glance.. Until there's a label stating



Used by Joe Jones to dig 169 graves in the local cemetery during the Gold Rush era.

It now has meaning and relevance to our local history.

If you have any related material to the object, please bring it along, too, e.g. you would like to donate your mother's handwoven sunhat - if you have a photo of your mother wearing it, please bring it along. We can scan the photograph if you don't want to donate it. The more information with an object the more interesting it will be for future generations.

An item does not need to be an antique for it to be valuable to our collection. Items of recent vintage that may someday have an historic context could be of great importance to the future.

Some of the things we particularly look for:

- Photographs of local activities and family life (Identify location, who took the photo, names of people in the photo, and the date.)
- Business records
- Bills and receipts
- Local restaurant menus
- Service organization's memorabilia
- Handbills, flyers, printed programs, church bulletins, etc.
- School yearbooks and photos
- Club records
- Common outdated household items
- Farm ledgers
- Postcards of local scenes, or those received by a local person
- Toys, homemade or used locally
- Family trees and every bit of material with genealogical content, including the family Bible.

Donate to perpetuate memories !

Museum Business Meetings are held on the last Tuesday of Jan., Apr., Sept & Nov. 7:00 p.m. in the Museum.

\$10 Membership includes a copy of each of our newsletters.

Receive your newsletters by e-mail in pdf format saving you paper clutter and saving the Museum mailing costs.

Send a request to

museum@lyttonmuseum.ca

Museum memberships are due every January 1.

To support the Museum please submit your \$10.00 per person to Box 604 , Lytton, V0K 1Z0.

If you have already paid for 2019, thank you for your support and please disregard this message.



Unlocking Lytton's Past

LYTTON MUSEUM & ARCHIVES

(a Village of Lytton Commission) is a member of:



& the BC Historical Federation