



The Lamplighter

November 14, 2017

Big Changes Starting From the Ground Up!

Have you been past the Museum lately? If so, you may have noticed some pretty major changes. The lawn is gone, our sign is down, and there are piles of rocks and dirt all over the place. No, we aren't digging for buried historical treasure (although we did find a very old septic tank); we're getting ready for the installation of the new Heritage Garden.

The lawn is being replaced with native plants, trees, shrubs, and flowers, reducing the amount of water needed for irrigation and allowing us to include more interpretive signage. In addition, we're making our outdoor exhibits (including the Fairview Jail) wheelchair accessible, and we're building a new space for delivering educational programs.

Of course, it wouldn't be a proper project without a



The new sidewalks throughout the garden and outdoor exhibits will allow better access for those with mobility challenges.



A flying kangaroo - The kind folks at Interior Ready-Mix Ltd. generously gave our Kangaroo hydraulic picking platform a lift to its new exhibit space. We'd like to thank them for their assistance!

few hiccups and surprises — first, we discovered that our sewer line had settled, creating a minor drainage problem, and we also discovered a long-forgotten septic tank. The good news is that the RDOS and the Town of Oliver helped us to cover the cost of repairing the sewer line before it became a problem.

This project has been financially supported by the Province of BC's Rural Dividend Fund, and should be completed in the spring of 2018, coinciding with the unveiling of our new exhibit "Deep Roots."

...read more →

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Come visit the Museum or Archives, or renew your membership online!

Staff Update: Meet our Collections Intern!



Naomi Rath, intern

I am originally from Ottawa, and have recently graduated from the Cultural Heritage Conservation and Management graduate program at Fleming College, in Peterborough, Ontario. Prior to this I completed a B.Sc. in Archaeology at Trent University, which is also in Peterborough. During university I worked as a disability support worker, and volunteered at the Hutchison House Living History Museum. Before coming to Oliver I worked on the Wellington St. Wall restoration in Ottawa as a Laser Cleaner Operator.

I've been really enjoying my time at the Oliver Museum. It's been particularly rewarding working at the offsite storage and seeing it all come together. I look forward to learning more about Oliver's history as I continue with my work!

Tackling Backlog at the Offsite Storage Building

As the Archives backlog organization finished, Museum staff were embarking on another large backlog organization project- this one at the Society's offsite storage building. Inside the warehouse formerly used for fruit packing are thousands of large and small artifacts. The building was originally for items that were too large to fit inside the Museum building. However, over the years it became a storage spot for everything from books to kitchenware. It also houses clutter such as old display cases, unprocessed artifact donations, and kids' program items. More challenging is the fact that numerous objects stored there have no numbers or documentation.

Collections Manager Julianna Weisgarber and Intern Naomi Rath are tackling the challenge head-on by using the collections database to search for artifacts, then poring over donor files and old paperwork to identify objects. Artifacts lost over the last 30 years are being rediscovered, numbered, and added to our database. Staff are also recording the location of each item for the future. Thanks to a recent volunteer



Signs from local businesses, buckets, and automobile wheels are all found in the offsite storage building.

work party, display cases and other non-artifact materials were organized or removed. Volunteers also built metal shelving to keep small objects off the floor, and staff lined the shelves with artifact-safe polyfoam. This ensures that our small objects are both better organized and better preserved. As a final step, staff are weeding out objects that don't fit the Society's collecting mission and finding new homes for these items- a process called *deaccessioning*. Since the warehouse is already overcrowded, this final step is an important one. Some artifacts were transferred to other museums. Other objects were retained to be used for school programs or touchable displays.

The coming winter is another challenge since the building is unheated, but during this time staff will continue cataloguing undocumented artifacts and bagging books and clothing for low temperature treatment. Treated items will be moved into storage at the Museum and Archives. Eventually, everything left in the warehouse will be in the searchable collections database, which will prevent any further lost artifacts. Keep an eye out for more news on this ongoing project!



Plenty of space has been cleared through removing broken display cases and organizing artifacts.

Visit us at www.oliverheritage.ca for the latest news, updates, and heritage resources!

Update: Deep Roots

In addition to the changes to the Museum yard and the construction of the Heritage Garden, we will also make some major changes to the building's interior in the winter months. This year we were fortunate enough to receive a Canada 150 grant to create a permanent Museum exhibit about Oliver and its surrounding area. Since then, we've been busy researching and putting together artifacts, archival documents, photos, and personal histories that will be featured in the displays.

We will use results from the survey conducted this summer to fine-tune the scope and content covered in "Deep Roots." The survey responses came from dozens of people, mostly long-time residents, but also tourists and visitors, former residents, temporary residents, and newcomers.

We're going to be entering the next phase of exhibit design over the next few months, writing up information panels and planning the layout. We're very excited to say we've commissioned a fabricator to build custom display cases that adhere to Museum standards of UV filtering and use

artifact-safe materials. There will likely be a disruption in service early in 2018 as we move out the old exhibit and build the new one, but don't worry, we'll try to be available as much as possible.

Our members will be among the first to know when the whole project is complete and ready, so keep an eye out this spring for your invitation to the exhibit opening!



The Museum's current exhibit "Collections Conundrums"

What do Museums collect, and *why*?

Museums collect valuable and rare antiques in order to display them, right? Not exactly. Museums actually collect for a whole variety of reasons, none of which depend on the artifact's monetary value. Museums usually have a collections policy, which defines what objects they will accept into their collection. Sometimes a museum's collection is from a particular *time period* (ie. 1800s), or about a specific *subject* (ie. trains), or a specific *area* (ie. the Okanagan Valley). Most of the time, it's a combination of all of the above. A good example is the Vancouver Police Museum, which collects items relating to law enforcement & crime in Vancouver from 1886 to today.

Why put limitations on your collection? There are many reasons. One very practical one is that there's always more stuff than space in museums; actively collecting organizations will quickly run out of room if they don't limit incoming items. It

happens to every single museum eventually. If you've ever overfilled a storage closet, you know that trying to fit everything into too little space is likely to cause a lot of damage to the items, and retrieving them when you need them later becomes much, much harder.

Museums and archives also have very limited resources, both in terms of time and money. We spend both on every item in our collection, so we have to ensure that the items we accept add value. Museum staff don't appraise value based on monetary worth, though—museums appraise an item's value by *how well it fits into their collections policy*. We also look at provenance—its story. For example, at the Oliver Museum we might accept a Boy Scout scarf from a former Oliver Scout, but we would not accept a mid-1800s Japanese silk kimono, no matter how beautiful or valuable it might be. It just wouldn't make sense in our collection, and it would take a lot of resources to keep it preserved and stored properly. We reserve our efforts for the objects that contribute to Oliver's historical record.

So what happens when people donate things that don't fit the collections policy? Glad you asked.

First, we try not to accept those donations to begin with, which is why you should *always* call before you bring in an object to donate (the number is 778-439-3100). Sometimes people leave donations on our doorstep. We *strongly* recommend you don't; for one thing, we miss out on important background information and stories about those objects, reducing the likelihood of them being kept and put on display. Secondly, abandoned objects are on shaky footing in terms of proving ownership. All donations must have a signed gift form confirming a transfer of ownership from the donor to the Museum.

Do you know what it is? Hint: It's 5.2 cm x 3 cm x 2.3 cm and made of copper and wood.



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If an item doesn't fit our collection, we try to find it a better home in another museum or similar institution, like a university. This is the first step in a process called deaccessioning. For example, we may find that photos brought in as part of a donation show a mine in Greenwood, so we try to transfer those particular photos to Greenwood's archives. This makes both institutions' collections better, and just makes sense: a researcher seeking a photo of a mine in Greenwood would not likely stop in at the Oliver Archives to look there. Likewise, we also receive transfers from other museums when they end up with artifacts from the Oliver area.

If you'd like to know more about museum collections and how items are treated in a museum's care, we recommend that you come and see our exhibit "Collections Conundrums," which will be on display until the end of January 2018. After that, it will be gone!

Gift Shop Stock on Sale

Just in time for holiday shopping, the Museum gift shop is priced for clearance. We have special sales on many items such as Oliver postcards, collectors' pins, Fairview Hotel spoons, SOSS architectural art prints, notecard sets, and Oliver, B.C. souvenir coins. Plus find wood crafts, books, and greeting cards made by local artists, authors, and photographers. All of these items make great gifts for history buffs or SOSS graduates. They are also unique stocking-stuffers and easy to mail!

Be sure to look for our table at the upcoming Crafts Plus Show, Nov. 25th at the air cadet hanger.

www.oliverheritage.ca

Museum



Location: 474 School Avenue

Mail: PO Box 847 Oliver BC

Email: info@oliverheritage.ca

Phone: (778) 439-3100

Winter hours : Tues-Fri 1pm-4pm

MEMBERSHIPS

You can become a member of the Oliver and District Heritage Society by purchasing an annual membership (\$10 per person) conveniently on our website (www.oliverheritage.ca) or in person at either the Museum or the Archives.

Members will be added to our mailing list, which will keep you updated on important local and regional heritage information. Members also enjoy discounts for archival services, copying, and special pricing in our gift shop.

Archives



Location: 430 Fairview Road

Mail: PO Box 847 Oliver BC

Email: info@oliverheritage.ca

Phone: (250) 498-4027

Hours year-round: Tues-Fri 10am-1pm

Looking for a MUSEUM TOUR or ARCHIVAL SERVICES? Please call ahead so we can serve you better!

Support for the Oliver and District Heritage Society generously provided by:



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