

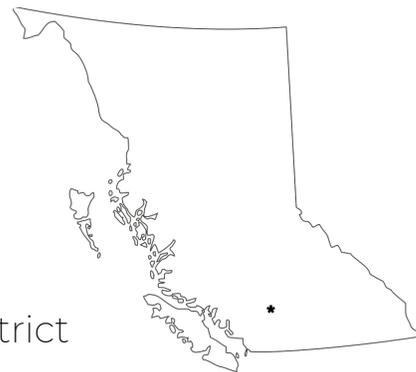


利顿华人历史博物馆

LYTTON CHINESE HISTORY MUSEUM

*Privately-owned museum telling the histories of local
Chinese Canadians*

Location: Lytton, Thompson-Nicola Regional District



Bringing awareness to the region's cultural history

In 1980, Lorna and Bernie Fandrich purchased an empty parcel of land in Lytton, BC. They soon learned that the site was formerly home to a Chinese Joss House, or temple, in the 1880s. This was the first spark in Lorna's journey to create a place to honor and recognize the culture, sacrifices, and contributions of Chinese who came to Canada to mine for gold, work on the railroads, and build a life.

Lytton has a rich history as a shipping and trading centre. A Nlaka'pamux foot trade route from Lytton to Pemberton connected the Interior with the Coast for thousands of years. In the 1800s, the area saw an influx of settlers as mining, the gold rush, and the Canadian Pacific Railway developed.

Lytton is now a small community with two blocks of businesses and a centre for river rafting tourism in Canada.

The Lytton Chinese History Museum seeks to collect, preserve, and display artifacts, photos, and stories to bring awareness to the contributions and experiences of thousands of Chinese miners, railway workers, merchants, and farmers.



The journey: Purpose built, from the ground up

In 2014, Lorna began a self-funded project to design, build, and open the Lytton Chinese History Museum. Based on a sketch and building rendition, preparation of the building site was started. The Lytton Chinese History Museum was opened in May 2017 on the recognized heritage site that once housed the Lytton Joss House from 1881 to 1928.

This purpose-built museum houses one of the largest collections of Chinese history artifacts in North America. Display cases are arranged by themes, with rotating artefacts from the collection, telling stories of how people lived, worked, and prayed. It includes a railway room, archival research area, and a lounge for browsing and reading.

The entire collection is digitized and available online, with images and descriptions. Virtual accessibility of the collection means researchers are able to access information from anywhere. This has led to increased interest in the collection and a growing number of visiting researchers.

The museum works with local school groups to promote awareness of culture and history. It is also connected with the Lions Gate Buddhist Priory, a local order that prays in the space and holds drop-in meditation sessions, connecting the history of the place to contemporary practices.

Exploring economic impact

Tourism is an essential part of the economy in the village of Lytton. River rafting, outdoor recreation in the Stein Valley, and a summer music festival employ people and draw visitors to the area in the warmer months. The Lytton First Nation is another significant employer in the area.

Lytton is home to two museums: the Lytton Chinese History Museum and the Lytton Museum and Archives. Visitors often come for the local tourism and explore the area, its history and the museums once they arrive. The Lytton Chinese History Museum is also becoming better known among Asian communities in the Lower Mainland and draws visitors to the area. Visitors are a combination of people coming specifically to see the museum for research or interest and people coming to the area for other reasons.

The tourism sector of this small community works together to inform visitors of other attractions or businesses. Lytton is located near the quiet Fraser Canyon portion of the Trans Canada Highway, so tourists usually visit for one purpose and then learn about other things to do once they arrive. This reciprocal relationship benefits all the organizations in town. Lorna maintains social media accounts and an online presence to attract visitors to the Museum, but in doing so she's often attracting visitors to neighbouring shops, attractions, and the other museum. By not seeing the others as competition, but instead as partners working toward a shared goal, the cultural organizations in Lytton help support the entire community.

Sharing insights



Scale Up:

- Open to change and learning through creating a detailed online record of the collection, leading to increased recognition and visitors
- Recognizes the value of social media for agile, engaging communications



Increase Diversity:

- Diversity is integrated into the mission and goals of the museum
- Works with local Buddhist groups to strengthen the connection of past to present



Focus:

- Focuses only on the history and story of Chinese miners, railway workers, merchants and farmers of the area and has amassed one of the largest collections, excelled in making that public and available, and is working on building strong connections to Chinese communities in B.C. and Canada



Train:

- Works with school groups to share the museum's stories through various learning opportunities