



NANAIMO MUSEUM

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Nanaimo Museum

Nanaimo Museum Feature Exhibit Extension, BC: Divided in Solidarity

Nanaimo - A historic community on the outskirts of the city is the feature of a new exhibit at the Nanaimo Museum. Extension was home to coal miners, farmers, strike riots and communists. Extension, BC: Divided in Solidarity runs from Friday, February 9 until May 4.

The exhibit explores community life in Extension including its culturally diverse population. "In the early 1900s there was a Chinatown and people from all over Europe, the United States and New Zealand lived there," says Aimee Greenaway, Curator at the Nanaimo Museum. "Despite cultural differences, the community came together at times of adversity such as mining disasters." At its peak, Extension had a post office, school, churches, cultural halls, hotels and other businesses.

An array of artifacts, maps, archival records and art works from private collections, archives, museums and an art gallery are on loan for the exhibit. The Royal BC Museum is loaning a child's crib belonging to the Torkkos, a Finnish family that lived in Extension. The Art Gallery of Greater Victoria is loaning two works by well-known BC painter, E.J. Hughes, for the exhibit. E.J. Hughes and his prominent art career have a surprising connection to Extension. "The collections of over a dozen heritage organizations and families are represented in this exhibit," says Greenaway. "Support has been so strong that we've been able to expand the exhibit." On public exhibit for the first time is significant private collection of slides that document Extension residents in the 1940s-1970s.

Lesser known history about the community is featured in Extension, BC: Divided in Solidarity including the surprising number of proud communists that lived there in the early to mid-1900s. Of national importance is a trade union song inspired by events during the Great Vancouver Island Coal Strike, 1912-14. The exhibit also explores how the community has adapted and grown despite major changes in its history such as the 1931 closure of the coal mines and, more recently, the close of its elementary school in 2001.

The Nanaimo Museum is hosting a presentation for this exhibit on Thursday, February 15 from 1:30-2:15. Pre-registration is required and the cost is \$5 per person. At the presentation, visitors will join exhibit curator, Aimee Greenaway, to hear highlights from the exhibit.

The museum is open Monday-Saturday 10am-5pm. The Nanaimo Museum is located in the Vancouver Island Conference Centre, beside Serious Coffee. For more information please visit www.nanaimomuseum.ca or call 250 753-1821.

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