

Township of
Langley



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NEWS RELEASE

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VOLUNTEER TRANSCRIPTION OPPORTUNITIES BRING LANGLEY'S HISTORY ALIVE

The Langley Centennial Museum is missing its volunteers, as COVID-19 and the need for social distancing has seen the Fort Langley facility temporarily closed for everyone's safety.

While volunteers cannot report for duty as normal, they can make a difference from afar by helping to document interesting information from the community's past.

Earlier this summer, Cultural Services Manager John Aldag suggested finding tasks to keep volunteers active and engaged with the museum during its closure. It was decided that many documents, such as hand-written letters and other hard copies in the museum's archival collections, would benefit from being transcribed digitally and their contents and descriptions entered into the museum's system.

"Transcribing these documents electronically, logging key words, and tracking the information they contain will allow us to search for terms and give researchers and staff access to information more quickly and easily," said museum Curator Kobi Christian.

The project began on a smaller scale, with summer student Natalie Reddy sorting through the museum's collections, scanning documents of interest so they could be transcribed. The museum's current volunteers started the process to work out any bumps, and the opportunity is now being opened up to new volunteers. Those interested can email Christian at curator@tol.ca.

"It's not what they're used to doing, but that is what makes it interesting," Christian said of the museum's existing volunteers, adding that some are finding other ways to help, such as providing proofreading services.

Some of the documents currently being transcribed include correspondence from the Kirby family, detailing moments from their lives in south Langley in the late 19th century. Letters from Hannah Kirby to her sister Agnes illustrate how different life was back then, and in some ways, how similar.

In a letter dated July 18, 1889, Hannah notes that “the men here rarely see any ladies at all,” and laments that “the stage [coach] does not run conveniently.” She adds, “The mosquitoes are biting my feet badly.”

In February of 1892, Hannah writes about their brother Murdoch’s painstaking progress to build a fence along the boundary of his property, clearing the road and blasting and burning trees in the process.

Hannah, who also tells her sister, “I have washed and baked today and now am feeling rather lazy,” notes that “Murdoch is rather thin and hollow-cheeked looking but he seems quite well. It is a very trying winter out on this coast and there is a great deal of influenza.”

To experience virtual exhibit tours and stay connected to arts, culture, and heritage, visit Langley Centennial Museum at museum.tol.ca.

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Media Inquiries:

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