



Museum Muse



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Christmas at Shawnigan Lake

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“A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots.”

~ Marcus Garvey

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Christmas has always been a special occasion for the residents of Shawnigan Lake. In 1900, the Koenig Hotel on the village waterfront hosted the first Community Christmas Tree event. In 1910, the celebration moved to the brand new Shawnigan Lake Athletic Association building and the tradition continued for another 66 years. Every Christmas, supper, entertainment and games were provided for the children. There was a giant Christmas tree to delight the children and, of course, a visit from Santa Claus. For many years, every child, from infancy to 14 years old, received a present. In the fall, a committee of women from the village would canvass the area for donations and then draw up a shopping list of presents for each child. They would shop locally first and then make a trip to Victoria for the remainder of the list. Occasionally, an overnight stay in Victoria was required to complete the shopping. Sometime in the 1940s, the tradition of gifts was dropped from the festivities, and thereafter, the children received an orange and a bag of candy. After Christmas, in 1976, it was decided that the village had outgrown the event. The number of children, which had swelled to 500-600, was beyond the regulation capacity of the hall. With the expanding population in the area, it was decided that the Community Christmas Tree event was more suited to a village and no longer applied to the larger community. Over the last thirty years, a community Christmas event has taken place in most years but sponsored by different groups and held in different places. For many of those years an outdoor Christmas tree on the corner of Shawnigan and Shawnigan-Mill Bay Roads was the focus for the Christmas celebration. Here, the community gathered to sing carols and to visit with Santa. Later, the celebration moved to Mason's Store, again with a special tree and a visit from the jolly old elf. In addition, every year, our Shawnigan firefighters provide the community with the much-anticipated Santa Run that brings Santa and his sleigh out to local neighbourhoods on the top of a fire truck. For the past several years, the "Village Light Up", sponsored by the S.L. Business Association, held early in December, has brought a community Christmas celebration back to the village. Food, music, a beautiful tree with lights and, of course, a visit with Santa makes this a special occasion to gather in the village with neighbours and friends.

Holiday Open House

The Shawnigan Lake Museum will be hosting a holiday open house on Saturday, December 15th from 11:30 am to 4:00pm. Mulled apple cider and other Christmas treats will be available as well as an opportunity for some last minute holiday shopping in the museum gift shop. Everyone is welcome and we look forward to seeing you!

*Happy Holidays from the Shawnigan Lake
Museum staff and volunteers!*



This Month in Canadian History...

On December 12th, 1858, the first Canadian coins (1 cent, 5 cent, 10 cent, and 20 cent) were circulated.



Fun Stuff Online at www.shawniganlakemuseum.com



Have you been to the Shawnigan Lake Museum's new website yet? The new site is full of fun activities such as puzzles and quizzes, news articles and past newsletters, an updated photo gallery, and is the gateway to information about many local historic sites and figures such as the Kinsol Trestle, the Last Spike Cairn, and EJ Hughes. Take a look!
www.shawniganlakemuseum.com

Christmas Shopping at the Museum!

Are you looking for the perfect gift for your family historian, or any friend or relative for that matter? Come by the Shawnigan Lake Museum to browse our wide variety of items available for sale in our gift shop! Items available for purchase include history books, notecards, Shawnigan Lake log cabin ornaments, 2013 calendars, lanyards, maps, t-shirts, mugs, puzzles, and much more! For a full list of gift shop items, visit our website: www.shawniganlakemuseum.com and click on "Gift Shop".



Membership!

Are you a museum member? If you are, have you renewed yet? If you aren't, drop by and see us as we would love to organize a membership for you. Membership to the museum is only \$10 for an individual or \$15 for a family **and** you receive a 2013 museum calendar, free! Membership could also be a great holiday gift for any friend or family member!



Did You Know?



Mary Hawking, who grew up at Shawnigan, spent her first Christmas dinner at Shawnigan at the Shawnigan Lake Lumber Company cookhouse. For dessert, the cook produced doughnuts as a treat and they disappeared quickly. One of the workers came looking for his doughnut and suggested that the fairies may have saved one for him. Mary did not believe in fairies! That was until the worker dropped a doughnut in the lake and it produced rings of iridescent colour-reds, orange and lovely blues-radiating in magic circles all around the doughnut. As an adult Mary reminisced that, "When I was a little girl, that old cookhouse was my idea of heaven and living."



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Support Your Museum With a Thrifty's Smile Card This Holiday Season!



As you prepare for your yummy holiday feasts, the Shawnigan Lake Museum would like to remind you about the Thrifty Foods Smile Card Program that supports the museum with absolutely no cost to you! Simply come by the museum to pick up a Smile Card (this is very important as if you pick up a Smile Card at Thrifty's it will NOT sponsor the museum), "load" it at any Thrifty's store, and use it to buy your turkey, pie, stuffing, and other delicious treats in place of a credit card or cash. Money raised through the Smile Card Program will go toward an outdoor art installation along the side of the museum building. Thank you to everyone who has continued to use their Smile Cards and Happy Holidays from the staff and volunteers at the Shawnigan Lake Museum!