

BCHF Annual Conference Comes to Williams Lake, May 1-4

February 17, 2025 – The British Columbia Historical Federation (BCHF) is excited to announce that its annual conference will be held in Williams Lake from May 1-4, 2025. This event is organized in partnership with the Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin and the BC Cowboy Hall of Fame Society.

The three-day conference will feature a keynote presentation by Phyllis Webstad, founder of the Orange Shirt Society. Attendees can also look forward to a pre-conference collections workshop, historical presentations on Cariboo and BC history, the BCHF annual meeting, a film screening of *Sugarcane*, an evening reception at the Museum, and a guided cultural road trip to the 153 Mile Store. The event will conclude with an awards dinner, where individuals working in the public history sector will be recognized, and the winner of the Lieutenant Governor's Medal for Historical Writing will be announced.

This year's conference aims to bring together up to 80 history enthusiasts, public and academic historians, knowledge keepers, and heritage practitioners from across the province. A theme of truth and reconciliation is a central focus, with multiple histories and heritages being explored.

Some highlights of the conference include:

- **Shane Dodderidge and Loretta Jeff Combs** from the T̓silhqot'in National Government will discuss the importance of repatriation and the impact of returning T̓silhqot'in belongings from other cultural institutions, such as the Museum of Vancouver.
- **Maurice Guibord** from the Société historique francophone de la Colombie-Britannique will share stories of francophone ranchers in the Cariboo, uncovered through a virtual exhibit funded by Digital Museums Canada.

- **Sarah Ling** from the Chinese Canadian Museum will host a conversation about the contributions of Chinese Canadians in the Cariboo, inviting others to share more stories from the area.
- The **Williams Lake First Nation (WLFN)** will present the findings of its investigation into the St. Joseph's Mission Indian Residential School and Onward Ranch, followed by a guided tour of the site.

Members of the public are welcome to register for the conference. Event details and registration information are available on the BCHF website:

www.bchistory.ca/conference.

The conference is sponsored by Johnson Belair Direct Insurance and supported through community grants from the City of Williams Lake and the Cariboo Regional District.

The British Columbia Historical Federation represents over 100 member organizations and 24,000 individuals in the provincial not-for-profit historical and heritage sector. The Federation supports its mission through publishing *British Columbia History* magazine, hosting annual gatherings, delivering recognition programs, supporting small BC history projects, and highlighting the work of its members.

For more information, please contact: **Shannon Bettles, Conference Chair.**

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