

Upstairs at Wah Lee's: Portraits from the C.S. Wing Studio

- Exhibition runs from Sept. 26, 2008 to Jan. 4, 2009 at the Royal BC Museum in Victoria, BC.
- Collection features 30 photographs of Quesnel, BC residents circa 1907-1920.
- The photographs in the exhibit are contemporary prints made from the glass plate negatives of Chinese photographer Chow Shong Wing.
- Wing was the first professional photographer in Quesnel. His photographic studio and darkroom were housed on the upper floor of his family's business, the Wah Lee Store.
- The images in the exhibition have been selected from a larger glass plate negative collection housed at the Quesnel and District Museum and Archives. The photographs in the exhibit are representative of Wing's photographic conventions and the people who sat for portraits.
- Wing's portraits document the multicultural makeup of Quesnel in the early 1900s. Many of his subjects are of First Nations and Chinese heritage.
- The props and clothing seen in Wing's photographs are witness to the blending of cultures and the influence of European customs on the Chinese and First Nations populations.
- Although Wing's photography practice was mostly in the realm of portraiture, he also made postcards from images of general townscapes, steamships and the interiors and exteriors of local businesses.
- The negatives have degraded over the years. The images produced in this exhibit have remained largely untouched, acknowledging the inevitable passing of time and evoking feelings of nostalgia.
- The Wah Lee Store went bankrupt during the Great Depression. Wing moved his family to Wells and Soda Creek and finally settled in Vancouver during the Second World War.
- The exhibit is curated by Faith Moosang and organized by the Quesnel and District Museum and Archives.
- The exhibition premiered at the Quesnel and District Museum and Archives in April, 2008, and will tour British Columbia until 2012.