

For Immediate Release

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Pemberton Holmes Donates Business Archives Rich in BC History

Victoria, BC – Long-time Victoria real estate company Pemberton Holmes Ltd. has donated its extensive historical business archives, dating back to the 1880s, to the Royal BC Museum.

The Pemberton Holmes Ltd. Collection contains thousands of documents of provincial significance, including more than 2400 individual client files, 300 photographs, 40 maps and plans, and approximately 180 bound volumes of correspondence. The collection will be held in the BC Archives and is one of the largest and most significant single business holdings to be donated to the Royal BC Museum.

“The Royal BC Museum and the BC Archives is our collective memory bank. By choosing to donate their business archives to the provincial archives, the principals of Pemberton Holmes Ltd. are demonstrating that they care about preserving BC history,” said Gary Mitchell, Provincial Archivist and Director, Collections, Research and Access Services, Royal BC Museum.

This transfer of these significant records to the BC Archives opens up important new historical sources about the early development of BC and the City of Victoria which will now be accessible to the public and to historians.

Pemberton Holmes Ltd. is the oldest real estate company still in operation in North America and remains the largest on Vancouver Island. The company is celebrating its 125th anniversary this year.

“Our family has an enduring connection to our city and our province and it has long been our wish to find the best home for these records. We know from our many visits to the Royal BC Museum and their care and love for our province that these archives are now in good hands,” said Michael Holmes, President of Pemberton & Holmes Ltd., and Richard Holmes, President of Pemberton & Son Ltd.

“We are discovering new things in this collection every day, it’s a little like the ‘Indiana Jones’ feeling for archivists. We anticipate that there will be a lot of interest in this material,” said archivist Mitchell.

Mitchell added that increasing the amount of business information in the BC Archives collection is a priority for the Royal BC Museum. “I hope that this donation by Pemberton Holmes will inspire other prominent BC businesses to consider placing their archives here,” he said.

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Funds from a \$500,000 bequest to the BC Archives Trust by the estate of Geoffrey Taylor, a BC historian and author who regularly visited the BC Archives for his research, enabled contracting project archivists to do the painstaking work of cataloguing and organizing the Pemberton Holmes Ltd. Collection to make it accessible to the public.

About Pemberton Holmes Ltd.

Pemberton Holmes is the oldest real estate company in North America and the largest on Vancouver Island with 250 real estate agents and 30 employees. The company, originally known as Pemberton & Son Ltd., was founded in 1887 by Joseph Despard Pemberton and his son, Frederick Barnard Pemberton. In 1937, under the leadership of H. Cuthbert Holmes, the company merged into Pemberton Holmes Ltd. and continues to thrive, today celebrating its 125th anniversary.

About the Royal BC Museum

As the provincial museum and archives, the Royal BC Museum preserves and shares the stories of British Columbia – on-site, off-site and online – through its research, collections, exhibitions, publications and educational programs. Its two-hectare cultural precinct in Victoria also includes a number of historically significant buildings and First Nations sites.

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