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Royal BC Museum returns war-time books to Nanjing Museum

NANJING, CHINA—Yesterday, Royal BC Museum CEO Prof. Jack Lohman returned a selection of books collected in war-time China by a globe-trotting BC newspaperman who lived and worked in Nanjing from 1937 until 1942.

The Nanjing Library (南京图书馆) has accepted the repatriation of these books, published in Manchukuo by the Japanese-owned South Manchuria Railway Company.

In 1986, the Royal BC Museum acquired much of the estate of David Taylor (1904-1986), long-time owner and publisher of the *Princeton Star*. But staff at the Royal BC Museum believed that his library of 328 individual books, maps and journals, all collected in and related to China, had more relevance and historical meaning for a Chinese museum.

“This precious library is a time capsule with unique evidence of China’s past,” said Royal BC Museum CEO Prof. Jack Lohman. “Canada played a role in its preservation and now it can have a more useful life for scholars and researchers at the Nanjing Museum.”

Taylor led a colourful and adventurous life. Born in Scotland, he moved to Canada in 1909, ultimately settling in New Wellington, BC. After working at the *Vancouver Province* as a student at UBC, he moved to Princeton, where he purchased the *Princeton Star*. Around 1937, seeking excitement, he decamped on a freighter to China.

Taylor worked in Nanjing during the Japanese occupation. While he reported for various news organizations, he also collected, **sending various “Oriental curios”** back to BC, including his library of books.

When he returned to Canada, via Britain, in 1947, Taylor resumed his career at the *Princeton Star*, publishing irregularly until his death in 1986.

As owner of *Princeton Star*, Taylor **also owned the publication’s building, the contents of which were larger in volume than the local museum.** After his death, the BC Provincial Museum (later to become the Royal BC Museum) was invited to assess **and acquire the building’s contents.**

While the majority of the China-related books will be returned to Nanjing, some of the materials from the Taylor estate, such as his printing press machinery and First and Second World War recruitment posters, have been added to the Royal BC Museum modern history collection.

The Royal BC Museum has a strong history of partnerships, cultural export, professional exchanges and exhibitions in China, particularly in the Nanjing region. In 2015 and 2016, Royal BC Museum staff members worked at the Nanjing Museum (南京博物院).

About the Royal BC Museum

The Royal BC Museum explores the province’s human history and natural history, advances new knowledge and understanding of BC, and provides a dynamic forum for



discussion and a place for reflection. The museum and archives celebrate culture and history, telling the stories of BC in ways that enlighten, stimulate and inspire. Looking to the future, the Royal BC Museum will be a refreshed, modern museum, extending its reach far beyond Victoria as a world-class cultural venue and repository of digital treasures.

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