

March 22, 2016

The Royal BC Museum puts more than 90,000 pages of colonial correspondence online

VICTORIA, BC – More than 150 years ago, former Sergeant Wilmer from the Victoria Police Department wrote a polite, pleading letter to Vancouver Island Governor A. E. Kennedy about corruption on the force. Illegal gambling was rife in Victoria watering holes, and saloon-owners were bribing cops to turn a blind eye.

The Superintendent of Police was the ringleader, he charged. Wilmer asked the government to take action **regarding this “wholesale extortion”**.

Now the Royal BC Museum has scanned, digitized and uploaded his letter – and a massive 90,000 more pages of similar documents – **to the BC Archives’ online** catalogue. The records are the paper correspondence of the Government of Vancouver Island (1849-1866), the Government of the Colony of British Columbia (1858-1871) and united Colony of British Columbia (1866-1871).

“The Colonial Correspondence series is the largest collection of textual records we have ever placed online,” says Royal BC Museum CEO Prof. Jack Lohman. **“The correspondence is a significant treasure trove of accessible information for historians, researchers and scholars – in fact, anyone who is curious about the colonial history of British Columbia.”**

Those interested can find the Colonial Correspondence through the BC Archives catalogue (search-bcarchives.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/), **searching for “GR-1372”** – the name created by the Provincial Archives of British Columbia for the file in the 1920s and 1930s.

The digitization of the Colonial Correspondence was made possible by an annual grant from the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre at the University of British Columbia through their British Columbia History Digitization Program. The grant was for \$7,000 and Microcom, a Vancouver firm, digitized the documents from the original microfilm negatives.

The records are foundational documents for the province of British Columbia, offering a unique perspective on the creation and history of the province. They will be an important resource for a number of groups, including public servants, elected officials, researchers, students, First Nations and litigators.

By uploading this massive amount of information online, the Royal BC Museum continues to make the natural history and human history of the province accessible to anyone, anywhere, with internet access. Other recent digital initiatives include the launch of the Learning Portal (learning.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/) and the rotating online exhibition *One Hundred Objects of Interest* (royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/100/).



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.

- 30 -

Media contact:

Royal BC Museum Media Inquiries

250-387-5051

news@royalbcmuseum.bc.ca

 [@RoyalBCMuseum](https://twitter.com/RoyalBCMuseum)