

March 4, 2014

**Royal BC Museum acquires Col. Moody picture album
featuring images of colonial British Columbia**

Victoria, BC — The Royal BC Museum has acquired a nineteenth century album that contains some of the earliest photographs taken of First Nations in British Columbia.

The album of photographs and pictures features mementoes of the work and travels of Col. Richard Moody, a prominent figure in colonial BC. Moody, a career soldier and civil servant, commanded the Columbia detachment of the British Royal Engineers in the colony of British Columbia and was Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works from 1858 to 1863.

The album includes more than 90 photographs, including four directly relating to British Columbia that are believed to have been taken in 1859. The album also includes a pencil sketch of Moody's home in what is now New Westminster.

"The album's historical value is unquestionable, as these five images expand our knowledge of what life looked like in colonial British Columbia," says Don Bourdon, Royal BC Museum Curator of Images and Paintings. "But even as it answers some questions, the album also poses others."

For example, two of the photos feature a First Nations man, but his identity is unknown and it is unclear what relationship he had to Moody. As well, the identity of a Royal Engineer seated beside Moody in another photo is also unknown at this point.

Archivists and curators at the Royal BC Museum are approaching these mysteries as opportunities to learn more. The process of determining identities and relationships may be assisted by members of the public as much as by historians and experts in photographic history.

With that in mind, the album will be displayed in Clifford Carl Hall at the Royal BC Museum from the afternoon of Tuesday, March 4, 2014 until Monday, March 10, 2014. After March 10, it will be brought into the Archives. Once conserved and described, the album will be available to researchers for viewing by appointment.

"Acquiring the album was a strategic and thematic priority for the museum and archives," says Royal BC Museum CEO Professor Jack Lohman, CBE, "as a collection of letters by Mary Moody, Col. Moody's wife, is already a part of our archival collection."

"The Colonel Moody album offers a rare visual glimpse into the life and times of colonial British Columbia," says Coralee Oakes, Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development. "The Royal BC Museum deserves congratulations for acquiring such rare archival material. The Friends of the BC Archives deserve recognition and thanks for the great work they do to help preserve BC's history. The album can now take its place as part of the unique story of British Columbia."

In the 1970s, descendants of the Moody family donated the letters to the BC Archives. The recently-acquired picture album forms an important part of a family archive, as it documents the places and people referred to in letters home by Mary Moody, as well as family travels and Col. Moody's career.

The album was purchased at Bonhams, an English auction house, on December 4, 2013. The acquisition was made possible through the assistance of the non-profit organization Friends of the BC Archives, which contributed \$10,000 towards the successful purchase price of £12,000 (just over \$26,000 CDN), with the remainder provided by the Royal BC Museum Foundation's Collection Acquisition Fund and the Royal BC Museum's own fund for new acquisitions.

Ultimately, the Royal BC Museum will scan all the images and make them available for viewing online, as part of its plan to digitize its collections.

About the Royal BC Museum

As the provincial museum and archives, 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. Through collections, research, presentations and partnerships, the museum and archives tell the stories of BC in ways that enlighten, stimulate and inspire. Its two-hectare cultural precinct in Victoria includes a number of historically significant buildings and First Nations sites.

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