



The Newsletter of  
Fort Langley  
National Historic Site

# The bastion

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## Did you know?

### Raining on the Parade!

*On the day the Colony of British Columbia was proclaimed, November 19th 1858, at Fort Langley's Big House, it was so wet that the Victoria Gazette newspaper wrote "the birthday of British Columbia was ushered in by a steady rain, which continued perseveringly throughout the whole day...the flag of Britain was floating, or to speak the truth, dripping over the principal entrance. Owing to the unpropitious state of the weather, the meeting which was intended to have been held in the open air, was convened in the large room at the principal building"!*

## How to find us

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## Message from the Superintendent

I am pleased to present our Newsletter to the community of Fort Langley. I hope that by informing our neighbours of what we are doing at Fort Langley National Historic Site we can all be proud of the important role Fort Langley has played in the development of our country, province and township.

We have visitors from all over our country and the world and we hear comments over and over again about our wonderful community. We should be all proud of our community and all it offers.

I would like to invite you, your family and friends to Fort Langley National Historic Site for a first-time visit or, if you have visited before, to come back and see many recent changes. For those of you who have family and friends visiting throughout the year, we offer an Ambassador Pass that gives free



admission to the site after your initial paid visit. We also offer day and annual passes. Enquire at the Visitor Centre for details.

We have new winter hours and special events for Douglas Day (Nov. 19) and the Christmas season. Stop by the fort for details or phone the Visitor Centre at 513-4777. Come and enjoy a day in Fort Langley at Fort Langley National Historic Site!

*John Aldag  
Superintendent*



Parks Canada  
Parcs Canada

Canada



## Brigade Days 2005 – a hit

by: Ann Corner

Fort Langley NHS offers a wide variety of daily programs and activities year round and a menu of memorable events such as Candlelight tour, Old Fashioned Musical Christmas and Canada Day celebrations. Brigade Days, a long-standing favourite on the BC Day long weekend was especially magical this year.

During Brigade Days we encourage everyone to paddle back to the days when boats, beavers and the Hudson's Bay Company made Fort Langley vital for worldwide trade. This year a good sized crowd crammed the banks of the Fraser River to watch the brigades arrive. Then it was the visitors' turn to try fun games with a fur trade twist, to watch the blast of black powder

fired from flintlock and percussion cap muskets, to listen to the bagpipes and to enjoy the stories and demonstrations in the voyageur encampment. The weekend ended on the evening of BC Day with a concert featuring "The Wheat and the Barley."

A three-day event is no easy feat, and wouldn't be possible without the active support of many organizations and individuals. Our heartfelt thanks go to everyone who helped, including the Friends of the Fort, the Fort Langley Canoe Club, the Fort Langley Improvement Society, the Township of Langley, the City of Langley, Selah Outdoor Explorations, Fort Langley tourist info centre and all the volunteers who put on a fantastic weekend. Great job, everyone!

**Congratulations to our community of Fort Langley  
for a well-attended, successfully organized,  
fun-for-the-senses Cranberry Festival 2005!**

## Christmas at Fort Langley

by: Ann Corner

Christmas is a great time to showcase your national historic site to visiting friends and family. Use your seasonal pass to visit more than once, or your ambassador card to return free with paying guests.

On December 3rd and 4th the Friends of the Fort are holding their second Artisan Craft Fair. This year it is bigger than ever with tables of Christmas and gift items in three buildings. Take in the fair for free or buy a family entry to the site so that adult family members can take turns exploring the site with the kids, while others enjoy a relaxed shopping experience.

Old-Fashioned Musical Christmas returns a week earlier this year, on the evening of Thursday December 8th so that it is less likely to conflict with school performances. Bring a flashlight, something for the food bank if you like and bundle up for an evening of music and Christmas cheer. This is your chance to sing around the bonfire and to warm up with a cup of hot chocolate. The evening starts at 7 pm so there is lots of time to get home from the office, have dinner, and get homework finished before heading out. This evening is our Christmas gift to you. No admission charge.

Join us for an afternoon of relaxing cheer during our Christmas Program: Saturdays in December and Tuesday through Saturday from December 19th until January 7th. Discover how Christmas was celebrated in the fur trade era on a tour with a costumed interpreter, warm your hands at the fire in the cooperage, enjoy a cup of hot chocolate and work on a family craft activity together.

And don't forget, season's passes are on sale from December 1, 2005 until May 18, 2006, just in time to stuff into a Christmas stocking.



## Happy Birthday, Friends!

by: Ann Corner

On Saturday, October 1st, the Friends of Fort Langley National Historic Site Cooperating Association celebrated twenty years of organization history with an open house at the fort.

The event was well attended by both lifetime and new members. It was an opportunity for Friends and site staff to reacquaint with some faces from the past, to reminisce about the association's many successes and to learn about some new directions and initiatives the Friends are involved in.

Current chairperson Marianne Iberg welcomed guests who were

enjoying an afternoon of refreshments, site tours and entertainment, and then passed the floor to Bays Blackhall. Bays, a founding member of the Friends of the Fort, shared with the audience her very special past to present perspective on the group. Fort Langley manager, John Aldag, added his welcome and anniversary wishes.

The afternoon not only gave members a chance to look over past accomplishments and involvements; for many, it created a renewed sense of interest in the future. Happy Birthday, Friends of Fort Langley.

## Visitor survey

If you visited the site in August you may have met a student with a clipboard asking a series of questions and handing out questionnaires. Every five years the site conducts a visitor survey to help us determine information about our visitors and what programs and services are important to their visit. We use this information to help us provide the

highest quality of services and programs and to check on how well we are doing. We expect to have a preliminary report in November. If you were one of the many people who completed the surveys, please accept our thanks for your willingness to help us improve our services. For more information on the survey contact Ann Corner at 604 513-4784.

## Native Sons' Collection

by: Don Lott

In the summer of 2005, the Langley Centennial Museum and Fort Langley National Historic Site undertook a project to update our inventories regarding the Native Sons' Collection (1930-1956). The Native Sons were a fraternal organization established in 1899 to foster awareness of British Columbia pioneers and the history of the province.

The Native Sons' Post #9 converted the Trades Store (the only surviving building from the original fort site) into a museum which they filled with a range of items including pieces directly related to the fort and other items from individuals living in British Columbia. When the Federal and Provincial governments decided to develop the Fort site with new buildings and to create a new local museum in Fort Langley it was decided to split the Native Sons' Collection between these two facilities.

To update the electronic records for the two facilities staff from the Centennial Museum and the Fort went through the original accession ledgers from 1958 as well as the inventory records from the past four decades. Don Lott from Parks Canada and Lisa Codd, Elizabeth Park and Kobi Howard from the Langley Centennial Museum had an interesting time going through records from the last 47 years to update locations and the physical well being of the Native Sons' artifacts. It has enabled the museum and historic site to share information regarding the history of the Native Sons' Collection as well as the history of the founding of the Langley Centennial Museum and the National Historic Site.

## Coming soon to Fort Langley National Historic Site!

*Saturday, November 5th*

### **New Mural – Meet the Artists!**

A striking new mural in the Big House celebrates the official proclamation of British Columbia as a colony in 1858. From 1 to 3pm, the artists will be with us to celebrate.

*Saturday, November 19th*

### **Douglas Day**

Marking the beginning of British Columbia as a colony.

Following the 12:30 guided tour, join us for a dramatization (1:15) and statue unveiling (2:00).

*Saturday and Sunday,*

### **December 3rd and 4th Artisans Craft Fair**

A unique setting, great ambiance and quality vendors provide a fun filled shopping opportunity in buildings inside the fort. There is no charge for the craft fair, but regular admission charges apply to guided tours. For more information contact the Friends of the Fort at 604 888-3943.

*Thursday, December 8th*

### **Old Fashioned Musical Christmas**

Choirs and musical groups from the region help you get in the spirit for the season. Dress for the weather. In the evening, from 7 to 9pm. There is no charge for this event.

Regular admission fees apply except where noted.

For more information, please phone 604-513-4777.

# Sir James Douglas statue to be unveiled at Douglas Day ceremony

by: Ann Corner

The newly crafted, life-size statue of Sir James Douglas, Chief Factor for the Hudson's Bay Company on Canada's West Coast and first Governor of the colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia, will be unveiled in a ceremony on the day designated to recognize the establishment of British Columbia as a Crown Colony – November 19th.

Designed and crafted by artist Lois Hannah for the Fort Langley Legacy Foundation, this gift to Fort Langley National Historic Site of Canada and the people of Fort Langley will serve as a lasting reminder of the role Douglas played in the building of the colony, and eventually the province, of British Columbia.

Fort Langley was established by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1827 by James MacMillan, to serve as a depot for furs and resources being shipped to other markets and European-made objects destined for the trade shops of the Company's stores.

In 1843, James Douglas was charged with the duty of building Fort Victoria and establishing a viable trade and farming operation on Vancouver's Island. With the success

of the farms and the poor fur returns, Fort Victoria soon became a bustling, urban community. Its citizens requested formal government, and in 1849 the Colony of Vancouver's Island was established.

In the 1850s gold was discovered on the Fraser River and thousands of miners, mostly from California, made their way to the gravel bars of the river. Fort Langley was the last great depot for supplies and quickly sold out of the needed goods. With the miners came problems, and eventually formalized government was required.

On November 19th, 1858, James Douglas, judge Mathew Baillie Begbie, and several other dignitaries met in the Big House at Fort Langley to read the proclamation from Queen Victoria establishing the Colony of British Columbia. James Douglas was appointed as its first governor, and reigned for eight years.

The bronze statue will be installed at the top end of Mavis Avenue and will face the village that sprang up around the trading post.

Fort Langley National Historic Site of Canada is one of the nearly 150 historic sites across the country operated by Parks Canada to present the story of Canada's past.

### **Winter Hours of Operation:**

From November 1 until March 14, we will be open from Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 am - 4:00 pm. Experience this peaceful & cozy season while joining one of our dynamic costumed interpreters for a personal tour of this Hudson's Bay Company trading post, starting at 11 am, 1 pm, or 3 pm.

The site will be closed on November 11, December 25-26, and January 1-2, 2006.