

MUSEUM MUSINGS FOR SEPTEMBER 09

Our summer draws to a close and so we must place our museums on a winter schedule. The Blubber Bay museum will close on Labour Day, 7 September. The Van Anda museum will also close on that date but will be open on a casual basis every Wednesday morning thereafter assuming some of us are there which is almost always the case. Museum work never ends so we again put out a call for more volunteers to come and be involved in the preservation of our island history.

We don't know the final total but the number of visitors to the museums this summer has been very good. Bus tours, of which there were three, are a relatively new phenomenon and we hope that this trend continues. One special group of visitors consisted of a family of Chinese Canadians who were touring those areas in BC where Chinese men and women lived and worked in the past. They were very pleased to see our small collection of artifacts and photographs. They were particularly interested in seeing where Chinese workers had lived and worked including the original pit at Blubber Bay and the area along the trail to the Cornell Mine which was at one time a Chinese community.

Chinese workers made a significant contribution to the development of the mining industry on Texada working in both the limestone industry and in the many copper and gold mines that existed at the turn of the twentieth century. The jobs they did included sorting gold and copper ore, cutting and hauling cordwood for the lime kilns, building maintaining and tending lime kilns and breaking and loading limestone ore. Generally they were not treated nor paid as well as the other workers. In 1909 at the Marble Bay Mine Chinese sorters were paid 1.75 per day while the white miners were paid 3.50 per day. Our photo today shows a number of Chinese workers sorting ore, possibly at the Marble Bay Mine.

Until next time please take care of each other and remember to think and act green.

Norm MacLean

