

2026 TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE

Welcome to the Cumberland Museum & Archives, situated on the unceded ancestral territory of the Pentlatch, leeksun, Sahtloot, and Sasitla people, also known as K'ómoks First Nation. Unceded means that the land was never surrendered through agreement or treaty: it was taken.

The Cumberland Museum and Archives' exhibitions and collection explore complex social, political, economic and environmental themes. This guide is intended to provide educators with

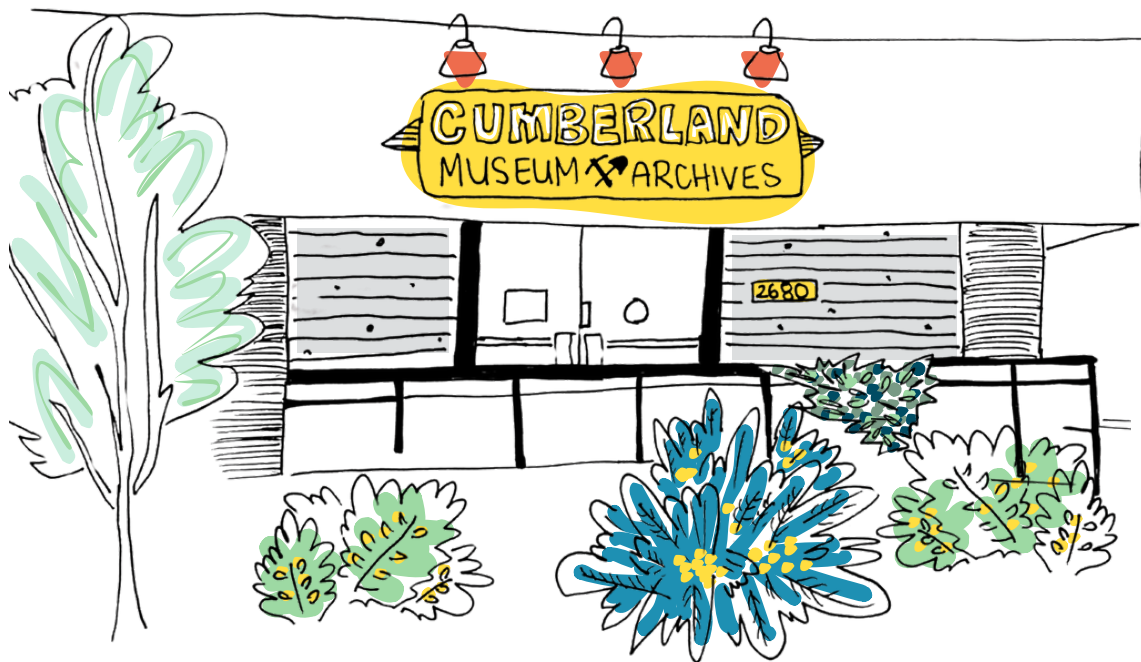
learning resources

background & content information

exhibition descriptions

logistical information

& activities



GETTING TO THE MUSEUM

The Cumberland Museum is located at **2680 Dunsmuir Avenue, Cumberland, BC.**

GETTING TO THE COAL CREEK HISTORIC SITE

The **Coal Creek Historic Site** was once a site of bustling businesses, music, farms, and community for Chinese Canadians and Japanese Canadians.

- Travel west on **Dunsmuir Ave** until you reach a four-way stop. Turn left onto **Sutton Rd**, which turns into **Comox Lake Rd**.
- Continue half a kilometre and you will see a pull-off/ parking area on the left. There is also a larger parking area, which is marked with signage.

For **combination tours**, please allow 25 minutes to walk from the site to the museum.



NEED A BREAK OR SNACK?

The Coal Creek Historic Chinatown site has a covered area with 4 large concrete picnic tables. No. 6 Mine Park has a playground and picnic tables for public use. No. 6 Mine Park is located on Derwent Avenue behind the Cumberland Recreation Centre.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

Our museum is a place for curiosity, conversation, exploration, and storytelling. Students do not have to be silent at the museum: we want to hear your ideas and input!

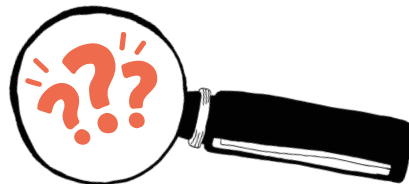
We thank you and your class in advance for being considerate of other visitors exploring the Museum. We want to ensure that their experience is not disrupted by **inappropriate behaviour like yelling, foul language, or demeaning remarks.**

We thank you and your students in advance for **not touching the objects on display or the walls**, as even our clean hands can transfer oils that damage delicate objects. Touch is an important element of discovery, and we want to ensure that this is done thoughtfully and sustainably through supplied educational materials.

Please **thank your students in advance for not running or cartwheeling in the space.** It is hard to remember this when students get excited! While it is our job to care for the objects on display, our priority is your group's safety, and the museum is not built to be a gymnasium.

We ask that **water bottles and snacks be left in the front lobby in a bin with your backpacks.** Should a student need a sip or a snack, this can be done in the lobby on a case-by-case basis with an adult.

CATALYZING CURIOSITY



Through the lens of the **Big 6 Historical Concepts** (Historical Significance, Evidence, Cause and Consequence, Continuity and Change, Historical Perspective and the Ethical Dimension), **Object-Based Learning**, **Visual Thinking Strategies** and **See/ Think/ Wonder** pedagogies, our educational programs centre dialogical inquiry, hands-on activities and independent exploration of our exhibitions.

Our exhibitions offer insight into 20th-century British Columbia, including natural material extraction, industrialization, labour history, Canadian immigration, Japanese Canadian incarceration, and Chinese Canadian exclusion.

As a social history museum, we discuss these themes at an age-appropriate level through stories of resistance, resilience, belonging, isolation, and colonisation, to explore the relevance of these themes/histories in our lives today.

CURRENT EXHIBITIONS

Our permanent exhibition is located downstairs, which is accessible via elevator or staircase. It features 4 small galleries / sections.



Resistance and Resilience Hall

Discover the resilience of the K'ómoks First Nation and their efforts to revitalize culture across generations, alongside labour action in Cumberland, where working-class resistance shaped community identity and started/influenced multigenerational nation-wide movements.

People on the Land

Since time immemorial, the ancestors of the people today called K'ómoks have been the caretakers of this land, which was called the "Land of Plenty." Follow the path of water from the mountains to the wetlands in this experiential journey that explores the many overlapping and complex values bestowed upon this land.

Coal Town

Step back in time to the thriving coal town of Cumberland in the early 1900s. Explore the hotels and bars where miners and loggers grabbed a beer and a bath after a hard day's work digging for coal or felling timber. Experience a day in the life of a coal miner in the museum's replica mine, designed by Tsable River miners!

Community Hall

People connect in many ways—through food and drink, arts and culture, events and celebrations, and hobbies and recreation. Explore objects that highlight Cumberland's diverse communities and cultures, then and now.

*** Please note that at this time our Tsable River Coal Mine is not accessible to those using wheelchairs or motorised accessibility supports. Thank you for your patience as we work towards accessibility for all.**

FEATURED EXHIBITION: STOLEN BASES



Japanese Canadian families have built communities and livelihoods in the Comox Valley since the early 1890s.

Facing racist governmental legislation leading to incarceration, seizure of property, forced dispersal, and loss of basic human rights, local Japanese Canadians “planted seeds of healing connection” through play, work, placemaking, and care for each other.

Through film, oral histories, poetry, letters, photography, artwork, and objects from the Cumberland Museum’s collection and archives, Stolen Bases shares local Japanese Canadian stories of building and nurturing home bases and the intergenerational echoes of being treated as an enemy at home.

* Please note

This exhibition includes a small room that shares a story about a Japanese Canadian who took her own life after forced relocation. We have a content note just outside of the space making this clear. The content is not descriptive or graphic, however it is important that educators consider any students or adults joining you that might find this particularly triggering or distressing.

In the small room described above there is an oral history on headphones in which Kaz Iwaasa describes the segregation and racism that he faced daily. As an act of reclamation, he chooses to use the racist term by which the No. 1 Townsite was once known. At the request of his family, this word has not been removed from this interview. The word is not visible in the space; however, there is a content note outlining this.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: LOCAL ACTIVISTS

Andy Everson was born in Comox, BC in 1972 and named Nagedzi after his grandfather, the late Chief Andy Frank of the K'ómoks First Nation. Andy has had the honour of being seated with the 'Námgis Tsítsał'walagame' name of Kwámxalagális l'nis. Influenced heavily by his grandmother, he has always been driven to uphold the traditions of both the **K'ómoks and Kwakwaka'wakw First Nations**. In this regard, Andy has pursued avenues where he can sing traditional songs and perform ceremonial dances at potlatches and in a number of different dance groups, most notably the Le-La-La Dancers, the Gwa'wina Dancers, and the K'umugwe Dancers.



Andy Everson, *Resistance*, 2016

“Today, our culture is a well-worn, battered set of armour that surrounds and protects us. It shows the marks from all of the preceding generations. Dented and scarred, it stands as a testament to the old peoples' resilience. Our culture is a gift from our ancestors. It has withstood suffering, death, attack, malice, racism and attempted genocide and, yet, it still guides us to this day. Our culture is resilience personified.”

Andy Everson transforms pop cultural characters, like Stormtroopers or the Mandalorian, by adding symbols and elements from his cultural heritage. He uses Northwest Coast Indigenous design elements from his **K'ómoks and Kwakwaka'wakw** ancestral knowledge and combines them with popular characters that he associates with resilience and resistance.

Northwest Coast and Coast Salish Design elements, Qwalsius - Shaun Peterson

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: LOCAL ACTIVISTS



Photo of Wong Foon Sien at writing desk 2017.038.011

Wong Foon Sien (1901 - 1971)

Since the 1880s, the Canadian government enacted racist laws against Chinese Canadians, like the 1885 Chinese Head Tax and the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1923. These laws separated families and restricted the rights of Chinese Canadians, even if they were born in Canada! Wong Foon Sien, who was raised in Cumberland Chinatown and graduated from Cumberland High School, was instrumental in the fight for reunification of Chinese families and lobbied for equal opportunities and rights for Chinese Canadians.

Reverend Yoshio Ono (1904-1984)

Yoshio Ono was born in Tokyo, but came to Canada to attend theological college in BC. He joined the Cumberland Japanese Mission of the United Church of Canada. He arrived at Hastings Park on April 15, 1942 with community members from Cumberland, Royston, Courtenay and Union Bay.

He volunteered to become the Director of the Boys' Dormitory and worked as a representative for the United Church of Canada and the Red Cross. He communicated with the Japanese Liaison Committee and actively petitioned for better conditions within Hastings Park and for ethical considerations towards the community, especially for keeping families intact.

Ginger Goodwin (1887 - 1918)

Albert "Ginger" Goodwin was born in Treeton, Yorkshire, U.K. As a boy, he joined his father working in the British coal mines, and at the age of 19, Albert immigrated to Canada in 1906 to work the Canadian mines. His journey led him to Halifax in 1906. Shortly thereafter, he ventured further west and settled in Cumberland during the fall of 1910. During his time in Cumberland, Goodwin lived at 2725 Penrith Ave.

In 1914, Ginger, alongside Joe Naylor and several other key union activists, was blacklisted by the Canadian Collieries Co. for his role in the Big Strike, and was forced to leave Cumberland in search of work. He worked in mines across the mainland before returning to Cumberland. In 1918, after being initially found not fit for duty and following a controversial health re-evaluation, Albert was conscripted. A conscientious objector, Albert and the union attempted to have him exempted but were unsuccessful. Albert fled. On July 27th, 1918, Constable Dan Campbell, tasked with tracking down conscientious objectors, shot and killed Albert at Comox Lake.

ACTIVITIES & ACTIONS: RESISTANCE AND RESILIENCE

Support your students in meaning-making! Connect the objects that they encounter at the museum with their own lived experiences. Prepare for deeper engagements during your visit and extend your thinking in the classroom and beyond afterwards.

ACTIVITY: COMPARE AND CONTRAST



Karver Everson, *Kumugwe*, 2015



Andy Everson, *Resistance*, 2016

What do *Kumugwe*, a mask carved in 2015 by Karver Everson and the artwork *Resistance* (2016) by Andy Everson have in common?

ACTIVITY: DRAW & DESIGN

What images or symbols represent strength or courage for you?

1

Draw or print out an image of your favourite hero from **Pop Culture**.

2

Transform them using symbols, images or colours that represent you or part of your family's culture.

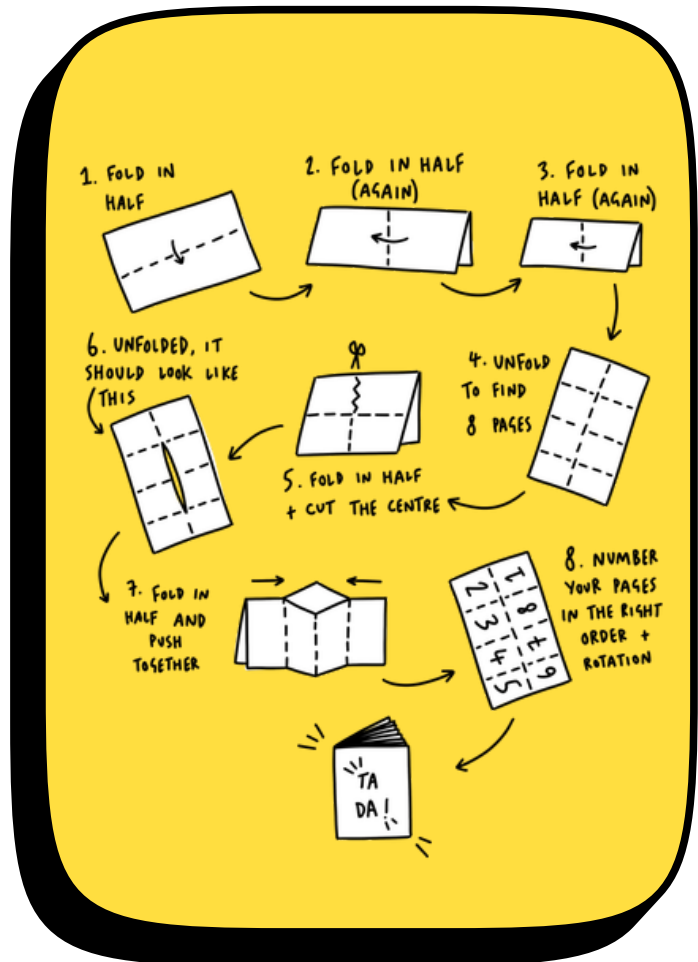
ACTIVITY: HOW TO MAKE A ZINE

Stand up for human rights by sharing a message that is important to you!

Wong Foon Sien, Reverend Yoshio Ono, and Sute Kaga wrote telegraphs and letters to government representatives to resist unfair laws and care for their communities. Ginger Goodwin shared his messages of the power of collective action through his writing.

Zines (zeens) are mini magazines or self published booklets that are often used by activists to share a message as widely as possible. Zines are made of one piece of paper that can be easily photocopied and folded in a special way to create 6 pages of a book.

- 1** Think of a story or message you want to share with the world.
- 2** Create a zine to express your voice that uses words and images to create impact and capture people's attention.
- 3** Follow the step by step instructions.



ACTIVITY: WATCH SLEEPING TIGERS

https://www.nfb.ca/film/sleeping_tigers_the_asahi_baseball_story

The exhibition *Stolen Bases* features a 1920 film of Japanese Canadian families playing and learning in Royston, created by Kanosuke Kaminishi. Mr. Kaminishi was one of the founders of the Royston Sawmill, which went on to employ over 100 Japanese Canadians at a time when unfair laws would not allow people of Asian ancestry to work in other areas of the logging industry.

Mr. Kaminishi's son, Koichi (Kaye) Kaminishi went on to become the oldest living Vancouver Asahi baseball player. The Vancouver Asahi were a famous baseball team in Vancouver from 1914 - 1942 who won the Pacific Northwest Championship 5 years in a row!

The team visited Cumberland in the 1920s and recruited local ball player Kenichi Doi, who won the 1926 Championship with the Asahi. Kenichi Doi's granddaughter, Lorene Oikawa, worked with the Cumberland Museum to share their family stories.



Kellen Hatanaka, *Field of Dreams*, 2023



© 2002 National Film Board of Canada

1

How did Japanese Canadians build communities in British Columbia?

2

What are some of the impacts of the racist War Measures Act that forcibly uprooted Japanese Canadians?

3

How can learning about Canada's historical wrongs empower us to stand up for human rights today?

FOOD AND FRIENDSHIP

During World War II, 91 Japanese Canadian families were forcibly removed from the Comox Valley as part of the incarceration of Japanese Canadians. This event was part of a larger effort by the Canadian government, which uprooted over 22,000 Japanese Canadians from the West Coast, dispossessing them of their homes, businesses, and belongings. The incarceration had a lasting impact on the community and is a significant chapter in Canada's history of racial injustices.

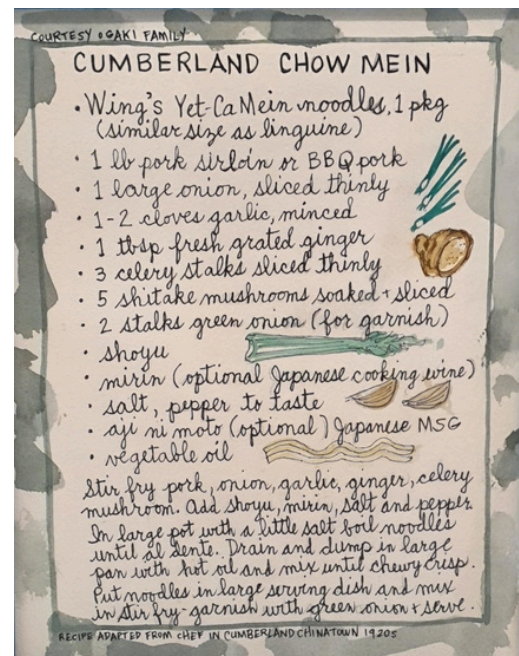
“At some point, a man from Cumberland’s Chinatown taught the Cumberland Japanese Women’s Association, or Fujinkai, how to cook chow mein noodles and other dishes using the available ingredients. These lessons were rumoured to have been at one of the restaurants in No. 1 Japanese Town (named due to its location next to the No. 1 Coal Mine) or at one of the churches. That chow mein would connect generations of Japanese Canadians across Canada at many a picnic, family gathering, and celebration to come.

- Russell Sakauye, *A Place Called Cumberland*, 2023 p. 106

ACTIVITY: THE ART OF FAMILY RECIPES

Cumberland Chow Mein brought comfort, care and sustenance to Japanese Canadians who were forced to leave their homes.

- 1** What is a recipe or food that gives you comfort or reminds you of home?
- 2** Draw the ingredients of your recipe.
- 3** Exchange your recipe drawing with a friend so that they can share it!



Cumberland Chow Mein
Reproduction, courtesy of the Ogaki family

ORAL & WRITTEN STORYTELLING

Stories are best shared by those who experienced or are impacted by the story.

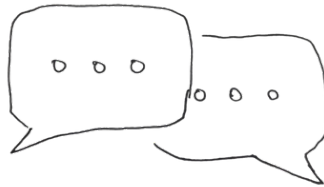
In 1941, under the *War Measures Act*, everyone of Japanese ancestry, even those born in Canada, were forced to carry identification cards. Miyoshi Kimoto's Identification cards are shared in the exhibition *Stolen Bases*.

Miyoshi Kimoto visited the Cumberland Museum in 2012 and shared what it was like to be Japanese Canadian and live in Cumberland's No. 1 Townsite in the 1930s.

Reverend Yoshio Ono supported Japanese Canadian families when they were forced to live at Hastings Park, Vancouver. Reverend Ono kept a fascinating diary of his daily work and life at Hastings Park from June 17 – August 18, 1942. His dedication and compassion towards the community are apparent throughout the diary.

ACTIVITY: INTERVIEW

What can you learn from a person who has lived in your community longer than you have?



1

What do you want to learn about your community?
Write down 5-7 questions.

2

Find someone who has lived in your community for a while to interview.

3

Use an audio recording device (tablets or phones should work well) to record your interview.

4

What are the most interesting or surprising things that you have learned?
Why do these stories stand out to you?

GLOSSARY

Strike: A strike happens when a group of workers protest unfair work environments or policies by refusing to work until conditions are improved.

Union: A union is organized when two or more people come together to form one voice. This can be a group of people or organizations working together to achieve the same goal. Unions ensure that workers are treated fairly, and they support workers when they go on strike to create change in work environments or policies.

Activism: Activism means taking action to make a change in the world, or to stop a change from happening.

Archive: An archive is a special place where important records and documents are kept safe. It's like a memory bank for history! These records are collected over time by people, groups, or even governments. They are chosen to be kept for a very long time, sometimes forever.

Resistance: The refusal to accept or agree to something. Resistance is an attempt to use action or argument to prevent something from happening.

Resilience: The ability to handle or recover from something very difficult.

Incarceration: being in a prison or jail.

Exclusion: To deny someone access to a place, group, or privilege.

Natural Material Extraction: the process of withdrawing natural materials like oil, gas, minerals, timber, or water, from the environment for human use. Some refer to this as 'resource' extraction.

Labour : The effort or work involved in a task.

Immigration: the action of moving to live permanently in a different country than the one where you were born.

Canadian Collieries: Canadian Collieries (Dunsmuir) Ltd. operated coal mines on Vancouver Island, including the Wellington Mines near Nanaimo and the Comox Mines at Cumberland.

Cultural object: A cultural object is something, often created by people, that shares a meaning or significance within a culture or group of people.

Indigenous: The first people to live on and care for a land.

Colonisation: The action of settling in an area and taking control over Indigenous people.

Settler: A person who is non-Indigenous, whose ancestors moved from one place to another and built homes and communities there.

E&N Land Grant: An 1884 Settlement Act that granted the E&N (Esquimalt & Nanaimo) Railway Company nearly two million acres of unceded First Nations territories, \$750,000.00, and a virtual monopoly over resource extraction on the island in exchange for the construction of 113 kilometres of rail.

Potlatch: An Indigenous ceremony for telling stories and sharing social changes such as birth, marriage, name giving, celebrating a new Chief, and death is called a Potlatch.

Pop Culture: Pop is short for 'popular' and culture refers to the things we eat, read, watch, listen to and see every day. Pop culture refers to all of the things that people share through published books, movies, songs, and other media.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER LEARNING

Chinese Immigration in Canada

<https://www.chinesecanadianmuseum.ca/exhibitions/paper-trail-1923-chinese-exclusion-act>

Labour History Activism

<https://cumberlandhistory.ca/story/the-big-strike/>

Japanese Canadian History

<http://hastingspark1942.ca/>

[Japanese Canadian Internment story - Youth Media Project](#)

Kumugwe Cultural Society

<https://kumugwe.ca/>

BC Black History resources

<https://bcblackhistory.ca/>

Cumberland Museum & Archives Digital Museum

Cumberlandhistory.ca