

NEW WESTMINSTER MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES

777 Columbia Street New Westminister, BC V3L 1H7

TEL: 604-527-4640 www.newwestcity.ca FAX: 604-549-0776**For immediate release**

July 24, 2015

Irving House turns 150

New Westminister, BC – This year marks Irving House’s 150th birthday and everyone is invited to join the family-friendly festivities on Saturday, August 8 and Sunday, August 9 from 11am-5pm.

Built in 1865 by riverboat captain William Irving, Irving House is one of the oldest community heritage sites in BC and is the oldest intact home in the Lower Mainland. Three generations of the Irving and Briggs family lived in the house until it was acquired by the City of New Westminister in 1950.

The celebration will feature old-fashioned lawn games, family-friendly crafts, live music, a historic costume photo booth, and of course, a birthday cake on August 8th, the day the Irvings moved into the house 150 years ago. Irving House’s 150th Birthday is a special project for two of the Museum’s longest-serving interpreters. “Irving House is the jewel in the crown of the Royal City. The 150th birthday is more than just a party, it’s a celebration of history - the history of a great city” explains Tracy Golling, who has introduced visitors to the house and family for the past 24 years.

Two new tours focusing on social engagements and conservation efforts will be unveiled during the day, one of which is written by Lorraine Irving, museum interpreter for 23 years. “The family was well-known and prominent in New Westminister – they appear in the paper a lot and you can find a lot about them. I’ve done so much research over the years and I always want to know about the people who lived in the house. Every event took place in the house – people lived, died, and got married” Irving said.

In preparation for the anniversary, the Museum planted a heritage kitchen garden earlier this year to acknowledge that the Irvings, like many New Westminister residents of the time, grew some of their own vegetables. Tended by Kindergarten and Grade 1 students from Qayqayt Elementary School and Museum staff, part of this garden will be freshly harvested and available for the public to sample during the day.

If you can’t make it to the birthday celebrations, public visitors can tour the house 5 days a week with professional interpretive guides to learn about the family’s history, view a collection of period furniture and a number of original artefacts from the Irving Family. Private tours, school programs, and public programs are also available to book.

Irving House is located at 302 Royal Avenue, New Westminister. The House is open Wednesdays - Sundays, 12 pm - 5 pm. Admission is by donation. For more information, call 604.527.4640 or go to http://www.newwestpcr.ca/culture/museum_and_archives.php.

The New Westminster Museum and Archives are operated by the City of New Westminster and are financially assisted by the Government of British Columbia through the British Columbia Arts Council.

Interviews and photos available upon request.

Contact: Michelle Taylor, Heritage Programmer
604-515-3829 or mtaylor@newwestcity.ca

