

The Legacy of Reg Atkinson



Reg Atkinson and part of his extensive collection.

The Atkinson name is connected with the Penticton Museum for one very good reason; it grew out of the vision of one man, Reg Atkinson. A dream inspired by a boyhood collection and a young man's vision, which grew into the amazing collection which exists today.

In 1910, Reg's family moved from Vancouver to Penticton. Reg and his brothers spent their days roaming the countryside. He took an interest in the history of the area, collecting fossils, coloured stones and aboriginal arrowheads and tools. Reg's friends were the children of settlers and local First Peoples families.

In 1914, the First World War began and Reg joined the military, serving with the Rocky Mountain Rangers. He was seriously wounded at Vimy Ridge and while in hospital, added to

his collection of military articles by bartering for cap badges, shoulder flashes and items. After the war, he added his collection of militaria to the growing trove of local history housed in his home, much to the chagrin of his wife, Catherine Daisy Gillam.

In 1954, the City of Penticton gave Reg permission to display his collection in the SS Sicamous, the fabled paddle wheeler that was purchased by the city in 1951. The Penticton Museum was born. Reg was very proud and Daisy was thrilled. Visitors flooded in and donations from the community swelled the collection.

In 1965, the City opened the current museum and library building on 785 Main Street, with Reg as curator. Eventually, failing health compelled him to step aside, but he stayed busy writing historical articles. He contributed to the Okanagan Historical Society's Yearly Reports and many other publications. Penticton Pioneers in Story and Picture, published in 1967, was his best-known work.

A devoted family man, his fascinated grandchildren recall him simultaneously writing two documents for articles donated or loaned to the museum. Reg was completely ambidextrous and his technique was great for "saving time".

Reg Atkinson put a significant part of his life's work into posterity. He built a future for the community by collecting and preserving the tangible artifacts of its past, the better to face the future. Reginald Noel Atkinson died on November 10th, 1973, but his collection still delights and informs thousands every year.

Dennis Oomen

Manager/Curator, Penticton Museum & Archives.



Got time on your hands?

penticton
museum
& archives

- Explore our unique exhibits & programs
- Volunteer in our museum & archives



785 Main St., Penticton | 250-490-2451 | www.pentictonmuseum.com