

CD Hoy Exhibit

CHOW DONG HOY was born in China in 1883. He began his education at the late age of eight, and completed three years of schooling until his parents ran out of money. With his family's low income, he had to start working to support himself and his parents. He began working in an opium den and later completed a three-year apprenticeship in a silk factory. His wages were extremely low and he decided to immigrate to Canada to pursue greater opportunities.

He left China in 1902 and was on his way aboard The Empress of China to Vancouver City. His father borrowed \$300 to pay for the voyage and Hoy paid the \$100 dollar head tax for his arrival. When he disembarked, he found a home with a Chinatown shopkeeper and found a job working as a houseboy. After a year in Vancouver learning English and saving money, he set off for the Cariboo. He had heard about the prospects of gold in Barkerville and was eager to see if good fortune was in his future.

He discovered a vivid passion for photography and began to take pictures of the inhabitants of Quesnel and Barkerville. He took photographs of people of many different backgrounds including Native peoples, Chinese, and Caucasian. He was one of the first photographers of his time to take pictures of ordinary people of diverse ethnic backgrounds.

His family arranged a marriage for him, and he returned to China to meet his bride. He brought her back to Quesnel with him. He then bought a log house and a farm from a Chinese rancher and started his career as a shopkeeper. He began to start a family. He and his wife, Lim Foon Hai, had twelve children together and began to prosper as a family and as a business. During his lifetime, he took 1,500 pictures and also grew as an entrepreneur; he became the owner of the Wells Light and Power Company as well as the Lode Theatre in Wells. To further his success, he remained as one of Quesnel's primary gold dealers until his death in 1973.

“Hoy became a northern pioneer of photography and left us a valuable record of the past that we can now appreciate.”

He travelled up the province and finally arrived in Quesnel. He lived in the town for a year and a half, and then decided to head to Fort St. James to work as a Hudson's Bay camp cook. While working in this setting, he picked up on the Central Carrier dialect which motivated him to start his own trading company. He was successful in his business venture, though decided he needed change.

He returned to Quesnel and found comfort in the humble town of Barkerville in 1909. By the time he got there, the gold rush was over. He worked various different jobs and eventually acquired

HOY BECAME A NORTHERN PIONEER OF PHOTOGRAPHY AND LEFT US A VALUABLE RECORD OF THE PAST THAT WE CAN NOW APPRECIATE. HE IS REMEMBERED FOR HIS SUCCESSES AND CONTRIBUTIONS BY MANY AND HAS AN EXHIBIT DEVOTED TO HIS WORK AT THE QUESNEL MUSEUM. TO SEE ANY OF HIS PHOTOGRAPHS AND A PICTURE OF THE MAN HIMSELF, A VISIT TO THE QUESNEL MUSEUM WILL CERTAINLY BE A VALUABLE USE OF YOUR TIME AND WILL DEFINITELY FULFILL YOUR CRAVING FOR HISTORY AT ITS BEST. ■