



EXHIBITS
September 7, 2011

MEDIA BACKGROUND
INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE AT
www.galtmuseum.com/exhibits-nikkeitapestry



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Story of Japanese Canadians to be told in virtual exhibit

Lethbridge - The Galt Museum & Archives is developing the multi-lingual "Nikkei Tapestry: Japanese Canadians in Southern Alberta" virtual exhibit in partnership with the **Virtual Museum of Canada (VMC)** at virtualmuseum.ca - an initiative of the Department of Canadian Heritage - as well as the **Nikkei Cultural Society of Lethbridge and Area [NCS]**, the University of Lethbridge Departments of Music and New Media, and École Agnes Davidson School.

According to **Wendy Aitkens**, Curator at the Galt Museum and a project lead, "Travelling exhibits have become hugely expensive for both originating and receiving institutions. We've decided to go virtual instead. Having the site available in English, French and Japanese will open it up to a much wider audience."

Building on the Galt's 2003 *Nikkei Tapestry* exhibit, the website and accompanying education material will tell the story of four generations of Japanese Canadians that have called southern Alberta home: the *Issei*, pioneering immigrants from the turn of the 20th century; the *Nisei*, their Canadian-born children; the *Sansei*, predominantly post-war children; and the *Yonsei* and *Hapa* (those of mixed blood), today's young generation.

The story of the *Idosha*, those who were relocated to southern Alberta to work the sugar beet farms during the Second World War, is also told, along with their struggle to obtain redress from the Canadian Government for those wartime wrongs.

"Japanese Canadians have called this area home since the late 19th Century, even before Alberta became a province," says **David Tanaka**, President of the NCS which is providing research, storyline development and other support to the project. "We applaud the Galt's decision to include multiple generations in the scope of the project, because such a scope is necessary for an accurate narrative."

The virtual exhibit will showcase archival documents, photographs and film, personal narratives and artifacts from the Galt collections and the local Japanese Canadian community. Also included will be a clip from "One Big Hapa Family" by Canadian filmmaker **Jeff Chiba Stearns** as well as a southern-Alberta specific, 3-minute animation by Vancouver/New Delhi based animator **Kunal Sen**.

Ian Burleigh at the U of L Department of Music and **Leanne Elias** at the Department of New Media will create course projects involving sound production and editing; while École Agnes Davidson School will assist in curriculum, lesson and activity development and testing.

"The subject touches on one of the key goals of the Alberta Social Studies program in general," says **Louise M. Cormier**, French Immersion Teacher at Agnes Davidson, "which is to foster the building of a society that is 'pluralistic, bilingual, multicultural, inclusive and democratic'."

The project got underway late this summer and is projected to be finished in the fall of 2012. For more information about the Galt Museum & Archives, visit www.galtmuseum.com, call 403.320-3954, or email info@galtmuseum.com.

The Virtual Museum of Canada (VMC), an initiative of the Department of Canadian Heritage, was established in partnership with over 1,500 Canadian heritage institutions. www.virtualmuseum.ca is a unique portal to the countless stories and treasures held in trust by Canada's museums, and lies at the core of the Government of Canada's strategy to nurture and promote Canada's culture online.

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Galt Museum & Archives is located at the west end of 5 Avenue South, off Scenic Drive, Lethbridge, Alberta
Parking lot located at the north end of the building | enter through the sliding north doors

tel 403.320-3898 | info: 320-GALT | fax: 403.329-4958 | www.galtmuseum.com

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HOURS SEP 1-MAY 14: *mon-sat* 10:00 am - 4:30 pm | *sun + hol* 1:00 - 4:30 pm | closed DEC 25-26, JAN 01, Easter Sunday