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The Royal BC Museum purchases painting by
19th century African American artist Grafton Tyler Brown

VICTORIA, BC—The Royal BC Museum has acquired an important landscape painting, a work of artistic and historical significance to British Columbians.

With the recent purchase of *Giant's Castle Mountain: A. L. Fortune Farm, Enderby, BC Oct 6, 1882*, the Royal BC Museum now holds the greatest number and most significant of Grafton Tyler Brown's Canadian works in the world.

"We hope that the painting's subject matter and history will lead to significant, perhaps challenging, conversations about the history of settlers in BC—including immigrants like Brown," said, Prof. Jack Lohman, CEO of the Royal BC Museum. "It's a focal point for discussing ethnicity and identity, and also allows us to probe the relationship between landscape paintings, nature and the presence of humans."

Grafton Tyler Brown (1841-1918) was a painter, lithographer and cartographer, the first African American artist to create works depicting the Pacific Northwest, California and British Columbia.

In 1883, he made 22 paintings of BC in his Victoria studio, based on drawings made during a geological survey into the southern interior of the province. *Giant's Castle Mountain* is one such product of the expedition.

The painting depicts Fortune's farmstead on the edge of a forest, the agrarian foreground dwarfed by a looming mountain.

Dr. John Lutz of the University of Victoria, a Brown authority, has deemed this work the most important of Brown's BC paintings. Lutz provides historical context for Fortune's ranch, noting that Fortune was "a major historical figure in the Okanagan as well as one of the Overlanders in 1862." The Overlanders were a group of adventurers who walked from the Prairies—over the Rocky Mountains—to the Cariboo goldfields.

Fortune was one of the first Caucasian settlers in the North Okanagan region to pre-empt land near what became Enderby. ("Pre-emption" was a method of acquiring provincial Crown land for settlement and agriculture; the BC Archives holds a research guide about BC pre-emption records:

https://royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/assets/Pre-emptions_homesteads_quick_guide.pdf.)

The BC Archives already holds in its collection Brown's BC catalogue and a rare portrait. Only 10 of Brown's other Canadian works are accounted for in public and private collections.



The Royal BC Museum purchased the painting in March, 2018, for \$44,000 from Uno Langmann Fine Art Ltd., with funds from the Royal BC Museum Foundation and additional financial support from the Friends of the BC Archives.

About the Royal BC Museum

The Royal BC Museum explores the province’s human history and natural history, advances new knowledge and understanding of BC, and provides a dynamic forum for discussion and a place for reflection. The museum and archives celebrate culture and history, telling the stories of BC in ways that enlighten, stimulate and inspire. Located in Victoria on the traditional territory of the Lekwungen (Songhees and Xwsepsum Nations), we are a hub of community connections in BC—onsite, offsite and online—taking pride in our collective histories.

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