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Oral history lecture and workshop tap local authors and stories

Anyone lucky enough to have visited the Bow on Tong apothecary in Lethbridge's Chinatown took a step back in time. Closed in 2013, the apothecary allowed visitors a look at dozens of drawers that once contained traditional remedies like ginseng or powdered horns or fungi.

The Bow on Tong Co. was home to Albert Leong, whose father had operated the apothecary. Natalie Appleton, an award-winning author and former Lethbridge Herald reporter, was led to the Leong family's story through her research for *A Century in Ink*, a commemorative book celebrating Alberta's centennial in 2005. Her research and interview with Leong became the basis for her creative non-fiction work entitled *Fourth Son of Fourth Wife*, which was long-listed for the 2016 CBC Creative Non-Fiction Contest.

Southern Albertans can hear Appleton talk about Leong's story, and several of her other short works, during a free public lecture titled *Poetic Justice in Southern Alberta: An Evening with Award Winning Author Natalie Appleton*, scheduled for Thursday, May 25 at 7 p.m. at the Galt Museum. The lecture is sponsored by the University of Lethbridge's Centre for Oral History and Tradition (COHT) and the Galt Museum and Archives.

On Friday, May 26, Appleton will then team up with Dr. Jenna Bailey, a writer, historian, oral history consultant and post-doctoral fellow at COHT, for a workshop devoted to using oral histories to write creative non-fiction.

Bailey is the author of *Can Any Mother Help Me?* The book tells the story of women who replied to a letter that was published in a 1935 edition of *Nursery World* magazine. The letter revealed a young mother's frustration and loneliness and struck a chord with women all over Britain. Some of the women who replied to the letter began corresponding and a secret magazine — Cooperative Correspondence Club — was the eventual outcome. The women wrote about every aspect of their lives from childbirth to broken hearts and fading dreams.

Appleton and Bailey will discuss their writing and shed light on strategies that can be used in writing non-fiction texts. They'll explore the various ways they've used oral history interviews to create stories that bring the past to life. Participants will learn practical tools they can apply in

their own writing. A question-and-answer session will be moderated by Dr. Jay Gamble from the U of L's Department of English.

“Given the increasing interest in oral history in Alberta, we are extremely pleased to offer these two unique opportunities to learn more about the craft,” says Bailey. “We invite everyone interested in finding out more about how oral history and creative non-fiction can help bring history to life to attend.”

The workshop goes from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Galt Museum. The workshop fee of \$20 includes lunch. For more information, email coht@uleth.ca. To register for the workshop, phone the Galt Museum at 403-320-3954. Registration deadline is May 19.

To view online: [Oral history lecture and workshop tap local authors and stories](#)

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