

May Ellingsen (1914–2012) was a collector of stories and the granddaughter of one of the first European settlers to call Cortes Island home. She spent much of her life amassing an impressive collection of photographs, letters and documents shared with her by early homesteading families. She would carry these photos and documents around in **her briefcase**, showing them off to anyone who expressed even the slightest interest in history. She had a dream that one day these pieces could form the basis of a museum that would tell stories about her beloved island.

In the early 1990s, attracted by May's enthusiasm, a group of history buffs started meeting regularly to figure out how to make the dream of a museum into reality. In 1994, **Cortes Island Museum and Archives** officially became a registered non-profit society, kicking off a journey that has already spanned two decades!