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Dalhousie Libraries

Historic Nova Scotia recognizes the support of the Province of Nova Scotia. We are pleased to work in partnership with the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage to develop and promote our cultural resources for all Nova Scotians. Historic Nova Scotia is part of [Dalhousie Libraries Digital Initiatives](#).



Historic Nova Scotia: Bridging Gaps with Digital Storytelling

Heritage Interpretation in Atlantic Canada conference, September 14, 2019, Cape Breton University



RECENT STORIES



historiconovascotia.ca



Mona Parsons (1901-1976)

By Andria Hill-Lehr

Mona Parsons moved to Wolfville at the age of 10 – a move precipitated by the loss of her father’s business in a fire in their hometown of Middleton. Mona graduated from Wolfville’s Acadia Ladies’ Seminary in 1920, and furthered her studies.



Dr. Maria Louisa Angwin (1849-1898)

By the Nova Scotia Museum

Nineteenth-century Nova Scotia differed from today’s province in countless ways. One was in the field of medicine. Until Maria Louisa Angwin (1849-1898) came along to break a barrier, all doctors in the province were — and had always been —



Yarmouth Post Office and Postal Service



Greenville Baptist Church

By Yarmouth County Museum and Archives

The rich history of the Greenville Baptist Church began in 1853, when Father Richard Preston visited Greenville in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia – a village originally known as Salmon River. Father Preston was not only impressed with progress in the area.

way, and the following is a timeline of the



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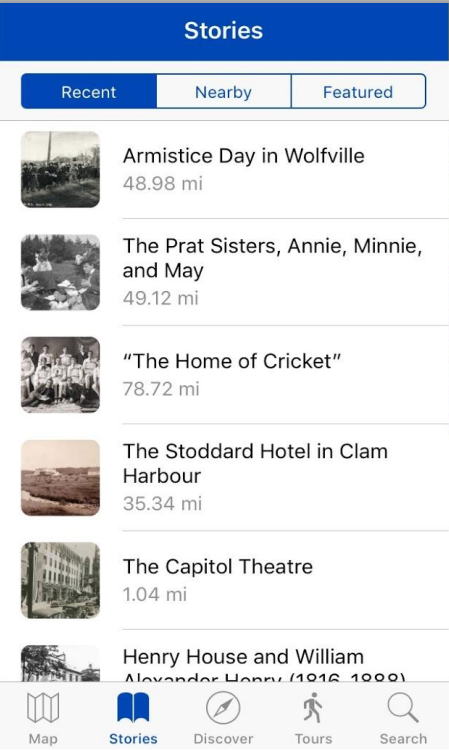
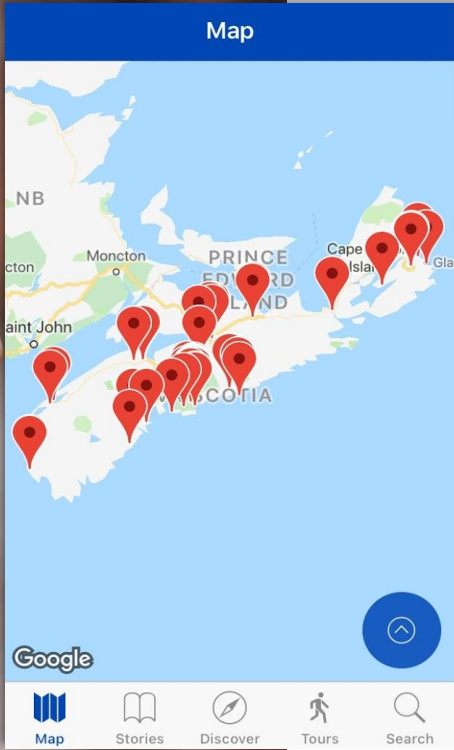


Photo by Michael Browning on Unsplash

Goals of the Historic Nova Scotia project

- Make Nova Scotia history *accessible*
- Showcase our many museums, archives, and heritage organizations
- Provide a platform for communities to share their stories
- Offer a diverse understanding of Nova Scotia's history and ways of interpreting the past
- Be a teaching tool – primary-source research skills, writing public history, local history knowledge



Project Overview and background

Based on a Curatescape platform (<https://curatescape.org>)

- **Phase 1: Pilot phase (2017-2018):** Initial story development, partnership development, advisory group formation
- **Phase 2 (2018-2019):** policy/content development and contributor engagement, communications planning
- **Phase 3 (2019-Present):** Further story development, diversifying content, growing partnerships, communications



Collaboration is key!

Partner organizations:

Beaton Institute

Centre Acadien, Université Sainte-Anne

Council of Nova Scotia Archives

Dalhousie University Libraries

Eastern Shore Archives

Halifax Municipal Archives

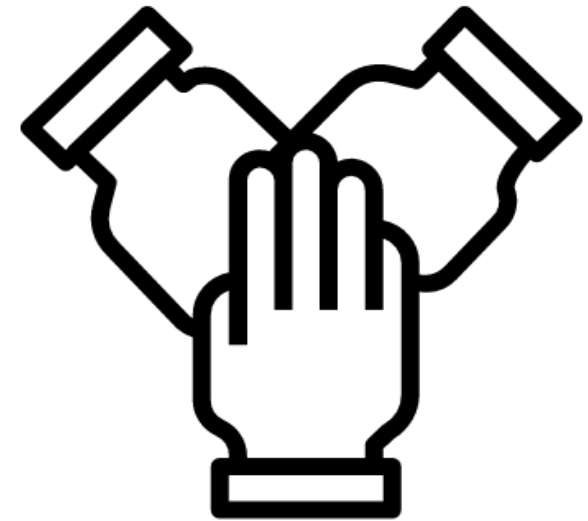
Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia

Nova Scotia Archives

Nova Scotia Museum

Royal Nova Scotia Historical Society

Plus many more contributors!



What is digital storytelling?

“...digital storytelling is characterized by interactivity, nonlinearity, flexible outcomes, user participation, even co-creation. Such affordances may be disruptive to traditional humanities scholars accustomed to working alone, with physical objects, and following established theoretical guidelines. However, they may be quite appealing to those seeking new opportunities for cross-disciplinary, iterative approaches to practice-based humanities scholarship and pedagogy.”

John F. Barber, “Digital storytelling: New opportunities for humanities scholarship and pedagogy,” *Cogent Arts & Humanities* (2016), 3: 1181037.
Licensed under CC-BY 4.0.

What is a Historic Nova Scotia story?

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Parsons Ocean Power Plant

Harnessing Wave Power in Herring Cove

By [Iris V. Shea](#) with research support from the [Mainland South Heritage](#)

Parsons Ocean Power Plant at Tribune Head, Herring Cove, was a forerunner in Clean Energy technologies. Built in 1921, the Parsons plant generated electricity from the power of the waves. But this source of energy proved to be a bit of a failure. Parsons' invention...

"Clean Energy" is a term often used to describe wind power. In 1921, another method of "Clean Energy" called "wave power" was talked about in Halifax. Newspapers reported that a man named Parsons, had invented a method to harness electric power from the waves of the ocean, and he was planning to construct



"Love Rhoda"

Letters from the Sanatorium

By [Kings County Museum Archives](#)

Rhoda Messenger was a tuberculosis patient at the Kings County Sanatorium in Kentville. When Rhoda was 14 years old, this is Rhoda's story, told through letters from the hospital to her family in Mavillette, Digby.

Introduction by Curator, Bria Stokes



Anti-Chinese Riots in Halifax, 1919

By [Halifax Municipal Archives](#) with research support from [Halifax Public Libraries](#) and the [Chronicle Herald Library](#)

On the evening of February 18, 1919, violence erupted at the Crown Cafe on Gottingen Street. The event sparked two nights of xenophobic riots, which targeted Halifax businesses owned by Chinese immigrants in the



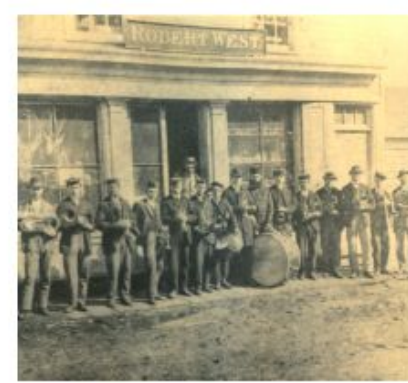
A story's core elements:

- 300-700-word essay about a place, person, or event in Nova Scotia's history
- Written for a broad audience (~grade 10 reading level)
- Can be pinned to a single location on the map
- Includes 3-10 images typically from the holdings archives, museums, or heritage organizations

Who contributes stories?



Cultural heritage organizations: Archives, Museums, Historical Societies, Libraries



And the Band Played On...

By **DesBrisay Museum**

According to the October 1918 issue of *Busy East*, the "Bridgewater Band" was organized in 1868 and was led by bandmaster Charles Jeffries. A photograph dated c. 1865 of a band in front of Robert West's store, its members with mutton chop whiskers...



Acadia Mines

By **Ashley Sutherland**

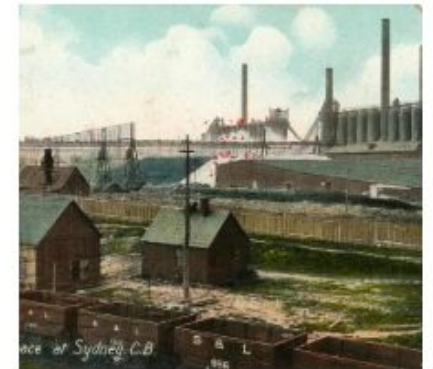
In 1844, two loggers discovered iron ore seams near their mill on the Great Village River. The site was visited by world-famous geologists who determined it would be economically viable to mine. A report in the British Parliament on 9 November 1847.



Thomas Isaac Spidell II (1873-1963)

By **Parkdale-Maplewood Community Museum**

Thomas Isaac Spidell II was born September 4th, 1873 in Maplewood, Lunenburg County, to Thomas Isaac Spidell I and Sarah Abigail Berghaus. He loved to read and often wrote for the *Bridgewater Bulletin*. Thomas left home

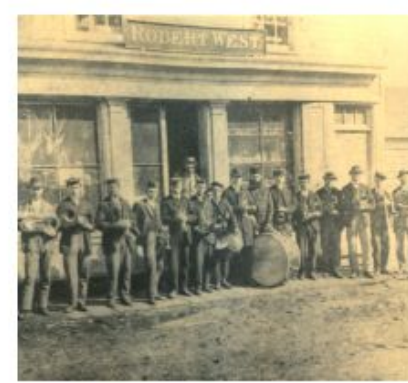


The Sydney Steel Strike of 1923

By **Matthew Jessome & the Beaton Institute Archives, Cape Breton University**

The steel plant in Sydney, Cape Breton, opened in 1901. It promised to be a modern facility with state-of-the-art Coke Ovens and an advanced steel making process. After the First World War, the steel industry experienced a recession,

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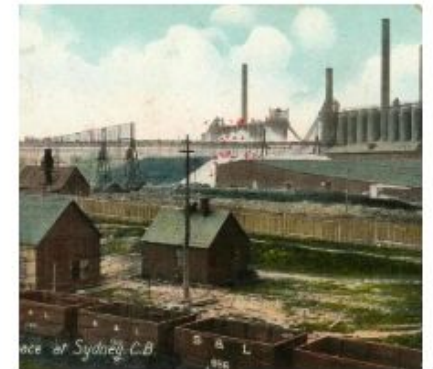
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Staff or Volunteers at Cultural Heritage Organizations



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Local Historians



“The Home of Cricket”

The History of a Pictou County Sport

By **John Reid**



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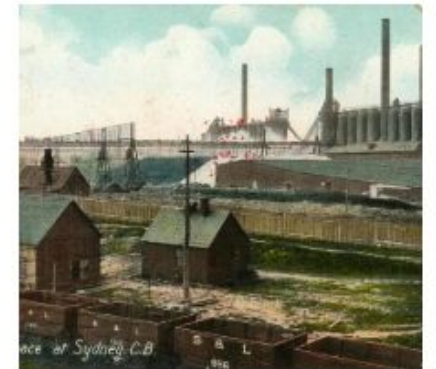
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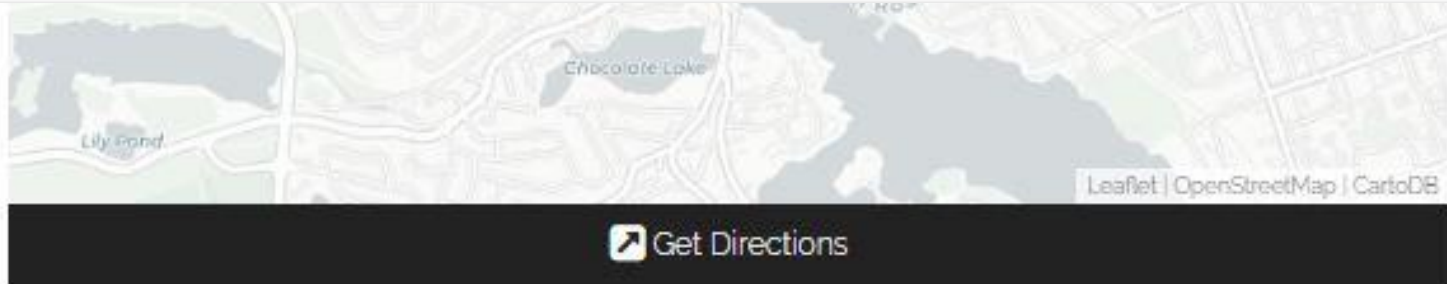


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University Students



6960 Mumford Rd, Halifax, Nova Scotia

This story was written as part of Mount Saint Vincent University course, *Inventing the Past: Public History in Atlantic Canada* (HIST 3328/4481), taught by Corey Slumkoski.

This story was written as part of Cape Breton University course, *History Workshop* (HIST 2701), taught by Lachlan MacKinnon and Jane Arnold

Cite

Sara

<https://historiconvascotia.ca/items/show/86>.

Tags



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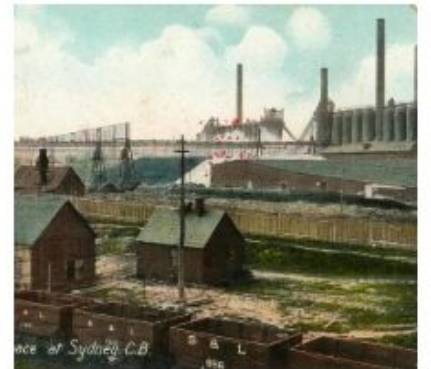
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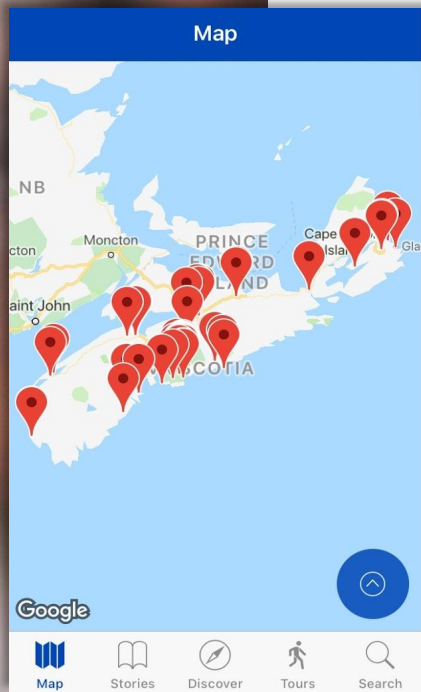
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Benefits of contributing for heritage organizations



Photo: [Roman Kraft](#) on [Unsplash](#)

HISTORIC NOVA



- Recent
- Nearby
- Featured
- Armistice Day in Wolfville
48.98 mi
- The Prat Sisters, Annie, Minnie, and May
49.12 mi
- "The Home of Cricket"
78.72 mi
- The Stoddard Hotel in Clam Harbour
35.34 mi
- The Capitol Theatre
1.04 mi
- Henry House and William Alexander Henry (1816-1888)

Back Story

FISH, FARM, AND FAMILY

The story of an inshore fishing family, the Myers

Since the 1800s, many Nova Scotian families, like the Myers, have supported themselves by working in the inshore fishery and maintaining a subsistence farm.

Marian, Rita, Audrey, Margaret, Ida Myers

NOVA SCOTIA MUSEUM

3 of the 13 girls

Five of the thirteen Myers daughters

Pictured outside of their house | Nova Scotia Museum, 82.83.3



Fish, Farm, and Family

The story of an inshore fishing family, the Myers

By Fisherman's Life Museum, part of the Nova Scotia Museum

Since the 1800s, many Nova Scotian families, like the Myers, have supported themselves by working in the inshore fishery and maintaining a subsistence farm. The story of Ervin and Ethelda Myers and their three daughters is a typical example of this challenging but rewarding life in the early 1900s. Their story is preserved at Fisherman's Life Museum in Jeddore Oyster Pond, part of the Nova Scotia Museum.

IMAGES



In 1915, the Myers house and eight acres of property in Oyster Pond (now Jeddore Oyster Ponds) were passed from James H. and Hannah Myers to their son Ervin Myers and his wife Ethelda. Their home was ideal for a fisherman's family with a house, large gardens, a barn, and easy access to

"Love Rhoda"

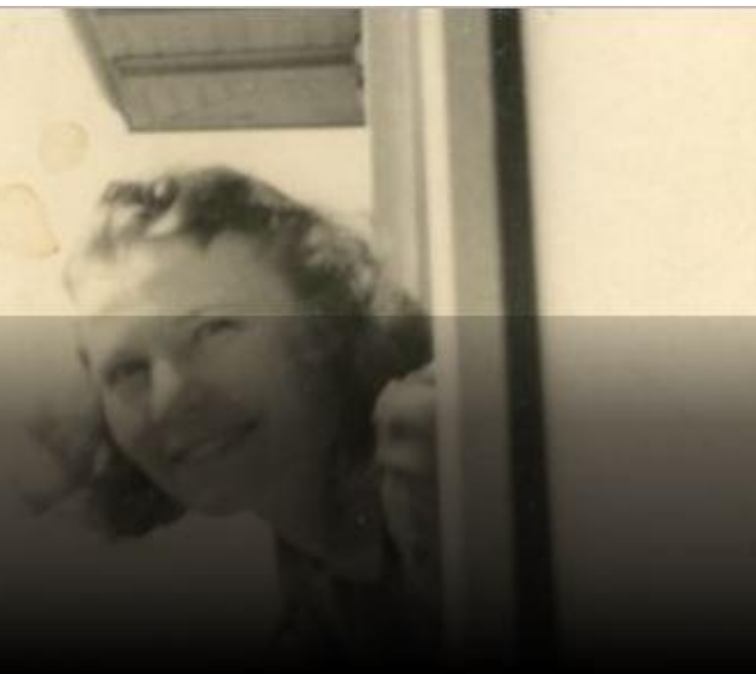
Letters from the Sanatorium

By Kings County Museum Archives

Rhoda Messenger was a tuberculosis patient at the Nova Scotia Sanatorium in Kentville. When Rhoda was first admitted in 1941, she was 14 years old. This is Rhoda's story, told through letters she wrote from the hospital to her family in Mavilette, Digby County.

Introduction by Curator, Bria Stokesbury

In the nineteenth century, tuberculosis - also known as "The White Plague" - was one of the leading causes of death in North America. The Nova Scotia Sanatorium was built in 1904 to treat patients suffering from the infectious lung disease. According to historian Mabel Nichols, between 1905 and 1938, approximately 5,000 patients were treated at the



Ms. Sanatorium

Kentville N.S.

July 6 1941

I

Dear Mother —

It is real hot today and are you having hot weather down here?

I saw Felle's Saturday and she said she was going to come down here I imagine she is down here by now, and I sent a boys comb for Blanchard, and for Blanche and Catherine some bows to put on their hair one pair of blue and white and pink they were, dark, dark, ^{pink} and a cellophane pair that I got for Christmas and please wash them all out and put hot water over the cellophane ones, and hope the girls like them, and I sent Catherine her little coat and I really hope she liked it. And I sent the two red shirts down though some of the girls would wear them in the winter.

I will be so glad if you come up to see me

I have had ^{to remember} few times so far and one of my big friends gave me a box.

How you had money yet this year.

I weight 97 lbs now, only three more lbs, and I will be a hundred and I will be proud when I get there.

of lump sugar beat fine stir
it together and put it in a
cask which must be full, when
it is done working or making
a noise stop it close for three

Rosina (Black) Uniacke (c. 1807- 1858)

A Woman's Life with Recipes

By Sharon Murray with research support from Uniacke Estate House Museum, part of the Nova Scotia Museum and Nova Scotia Archives

Rosina (Black) Uniacke (c. 1807-1858) was the daughter of a wealthy merchant, John Black, and wife to James Boyle Uniacke, barrister and politician. The lives of these two men have been well recorded, but little information remains about Rosina. What has survived are a few of her belongings and a book of handwritten "receipts" (recipes) presumed to be

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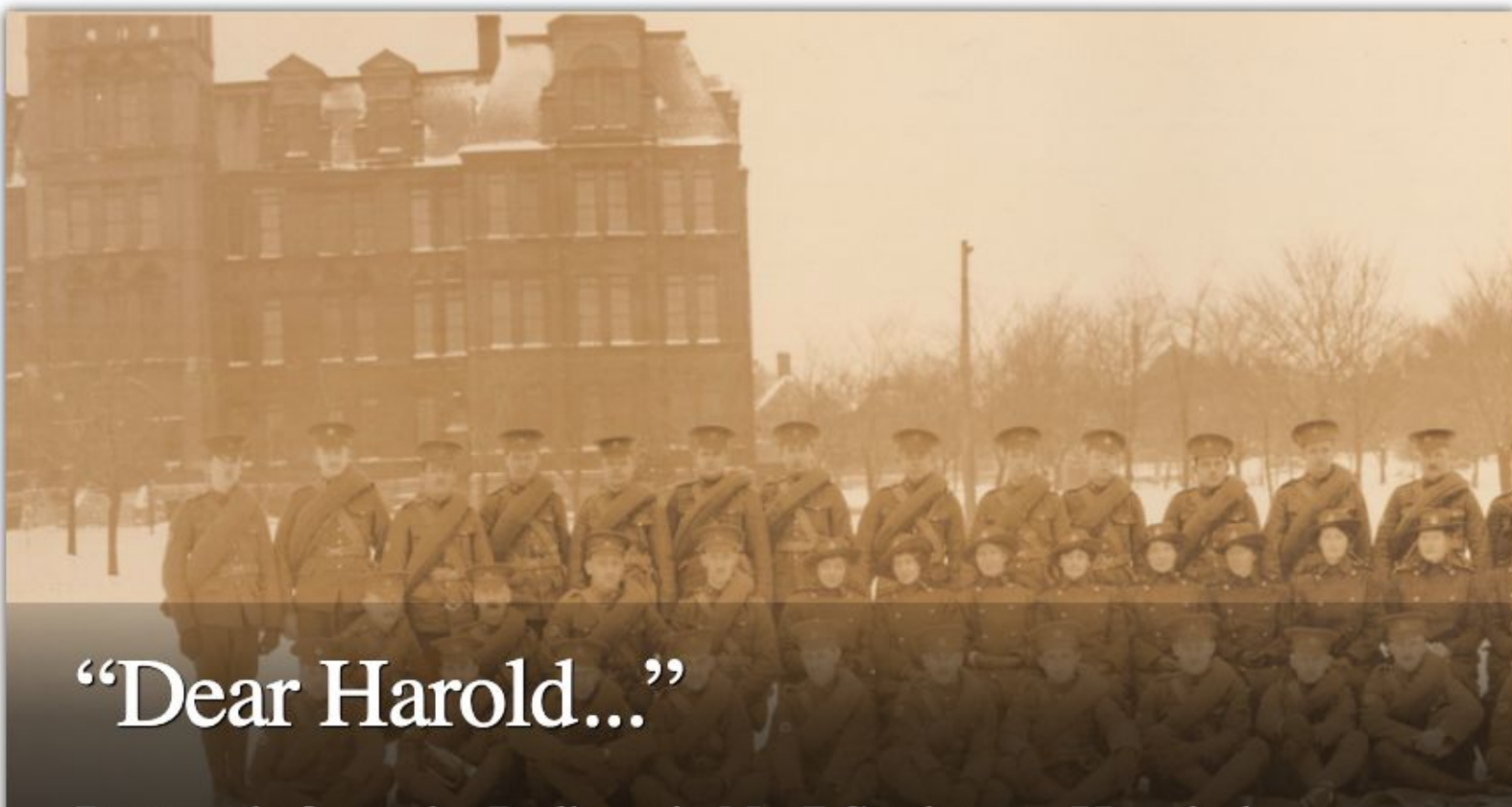
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“Dear Harold...”

Postcards from the Dalhousie No.7 Stationary Hospital

By Joanne McCarthy O'Leary with research support from Dalhousie University Archives

During his time overseas in World War One, Private Harold Benjamin Watts wrote two postcards to his friend, Harold Homans, of Port Mouton, Nova Scotia. One-hundred years later, the postcards turned up at a yard sale on the South Shore and helped bring this soldier's story to life.



Canadian Comfort Quilts

Brought More than Warmth to Britons in WWII

By [Sharon M. H. MacDonald](#) with research support from the [Halifax Women's History Society](#)

During the Second World War, women across Canada gathered to sew quilts for bombed-out families in Britain. Nova Scotia was one of the largest producers of Comfort Quilts, with women in Digby making both the first and the 1000th quilt that was sent overseas.

HISTORIC

NOVA SCOTIA

Canadian

Brought More than

By Sharon M. H. MacDonald

During the Second World War, women in Yarmouth County made quilts for bombed-out soldiers. Yarmouth County is one of the largest producers of quilts in the world. The first and the 100th anniversary of the Yarmouth County Quilt Festival is being celebrated in 2024.



Greenville Baptist Church

By Yarmouth County Museum and Archives

The Greenville African United Baptist Church is a little Vernacular style church that persevered through tough times and remains a symbol of hope and faith in the community.

NOVA
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Canadian

Brought More than

By Sharon M. H. MacDonald

During the Second World War, Canadian women made quilts for bombed-out cities. They were the largest producers of quilts in the world, making the first and the 100th.



Greenville

By Yarmouth County Museum

The Greenville Anglican church that persevered through the war, a symbol of hope and faith in a dark time.



Starr Manufacturing Company

Makers of World-Famous Ice Skates

By Shannon Baxter & Dartmouth Heritage Museum

In 1866, Dartmouth's Starr Manufacturing Company invented a revolutionary type of ice skate, which helped popularize ice skating and hockey all over the world.



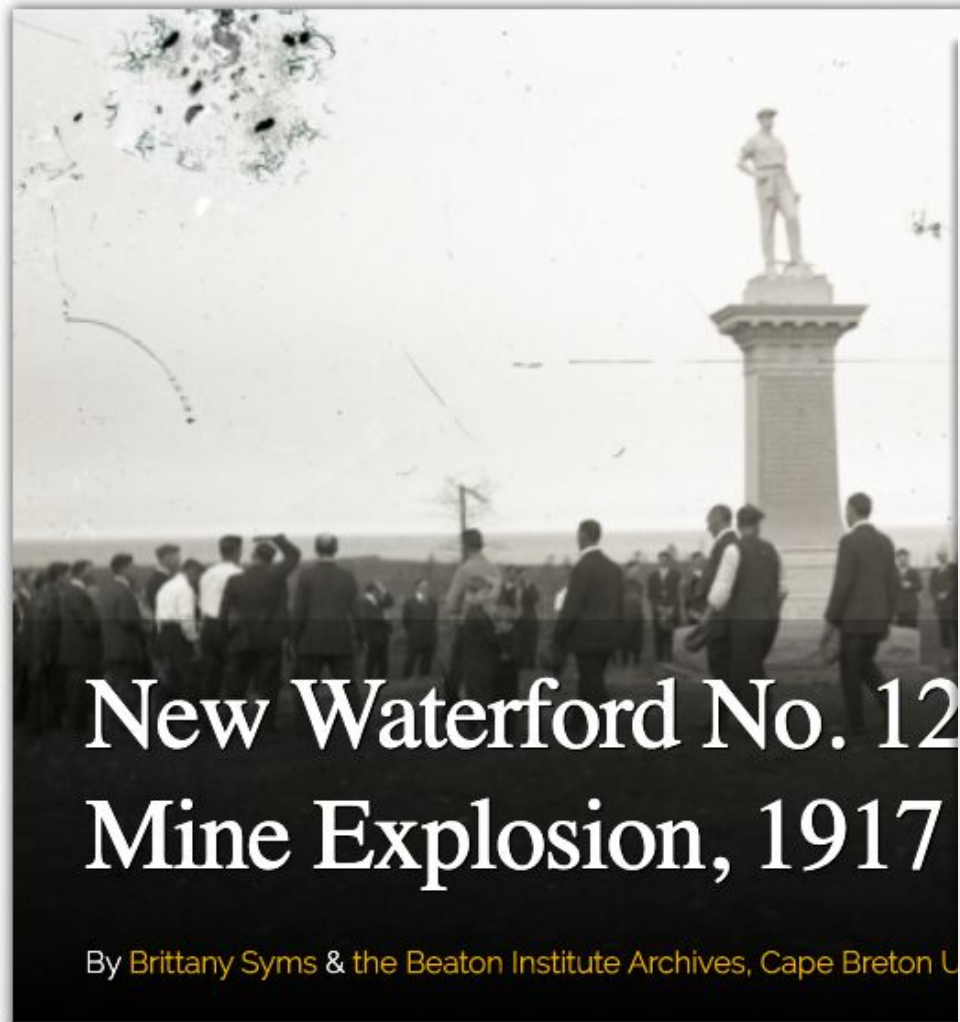
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New Waterford No. 12 Colliery Mine Explosion, 1917

By [Brittany Syms](#) & the [Beaton Institute Archives](#), Cape Breton University

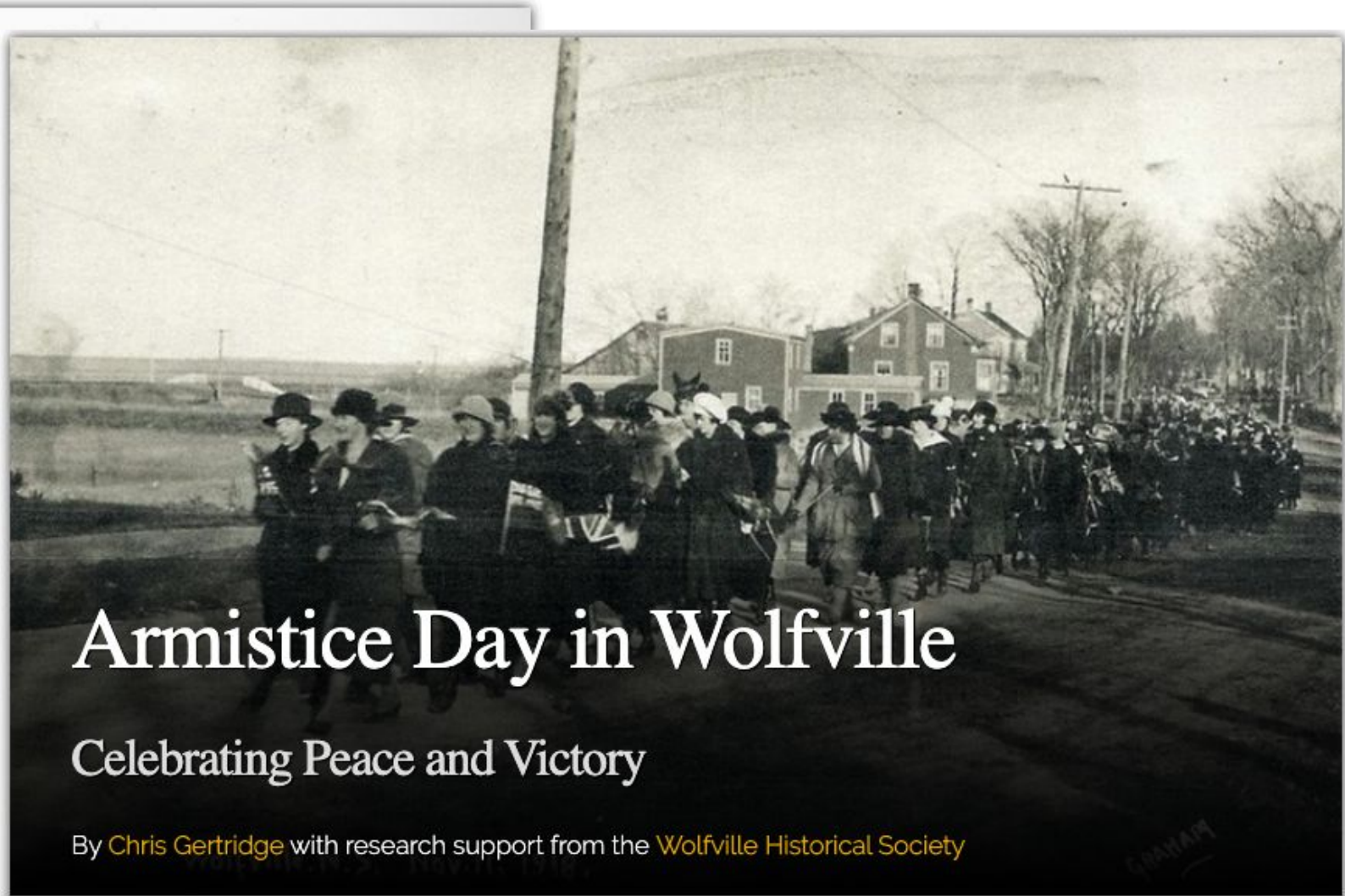
The 1917 explosion in the New Waterford No. 12 mine was the worst mining disaster in Cape Breton history. Despite multiple inquiries that found the Dominion Coal Company to blame, the company was never held held accountable for the explosion that killed 65 miners.



New Waterford No. 12 Mine Explosion, 1917

By [Brittany Syms](#) & the [Beaton Institute Archives](#), Cape Breton U

The 1917 explosion in the New Waterford No. 12 mining disaster in Cape Breton history. Despite found the Dominion Coal Company to blame, held held accountable for the explosion that



Armistice Day in Wolfville

Celebrating Peace and Victory

By [Chris Gertridge](#) with research support from the [Wolfville Historical Society](#)

When WWI ended, the town of Wolfville took to the streets to celebrate.

It was early on a Monday morning on the 11th day of November in 1918 when the telegrams started to arrive. They gave official notice that the Germans had signed the Armistice, surrendering unconditional to the Al-



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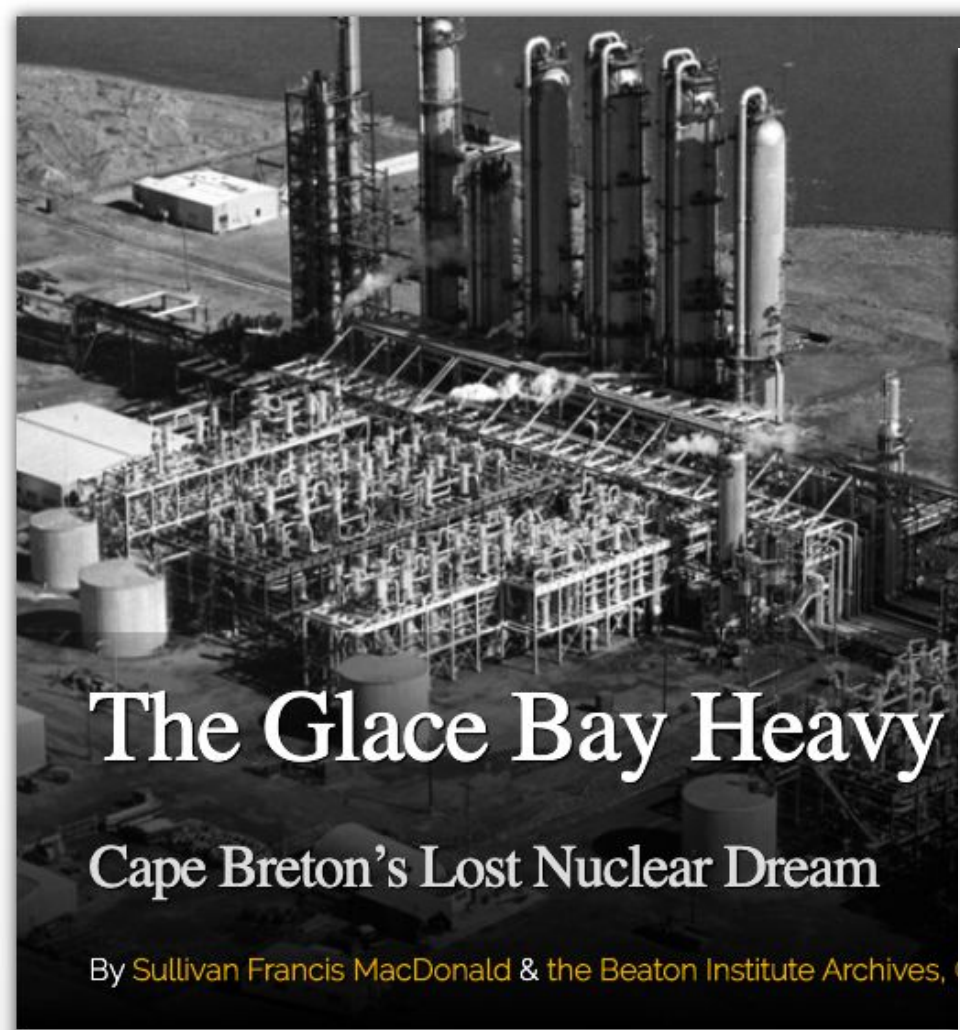
NOVA
SCOTIA

The Glace Bay Heavy Water Plant

Cape Breton's Lost Nuclear Dream

By Sullivan Francis MacDonald & the Beaton Institute Archives, Cape Breton University

The Glace Bay Heavy Water Plant was constructed in the 1960s with substantial support from the provincial government. Many believed it would usher in a new era of growth for Cape Breton and Nova Scotia, but the plant was fraught with problems from the start.



The Glace Bay Heavy Cape Breton's Lost Nuclear Dream

By [Sullivan Francis MacDonald](#) & the [Beaton Institute Archives](#),

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Parsons Ocean Power Plant Harnessing Wave Power in Herring Cove

By [Iris V. Shea](#) with research support from the [Mainland South Heritage Society](#)

Parsons Ocean Power Plant at Tribune Head, Herring Cove, was a forerunner in Clean Energy technologies. Built in 1922 by Osborne H. Parsons, the plant generated electricity from the power of the ocean's waves. But this source of energy proved to be a bit too powerful for Parsons' invention

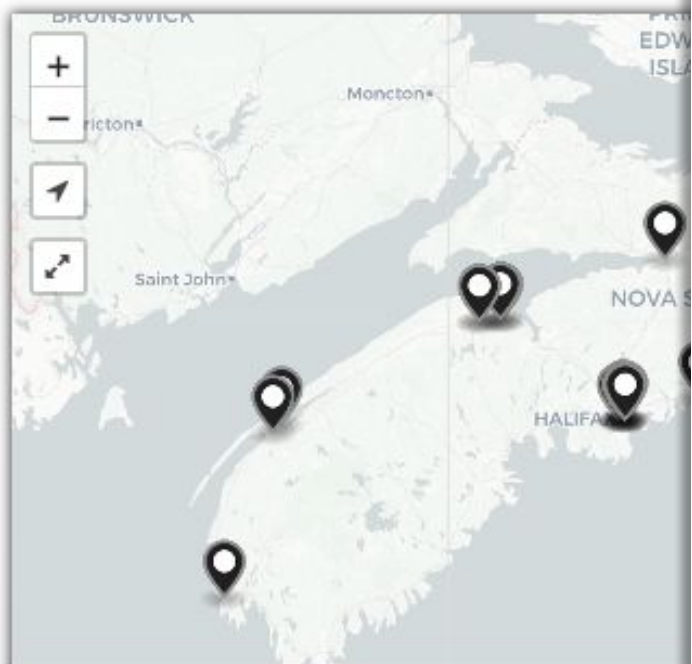


Women of Nova Scotia

Curated by The Historic Nova Scotia Team

Historically, women's experiences have not been as well recorded as men's. This tour attempts to redress that imbalance by showcasing stories about women in Nova Scotia – women young and old, from a variety of cultural groups, socio-economic circumstances, and regions in Nova Scotia. Each woman's story is unique. Each deserves to be told.

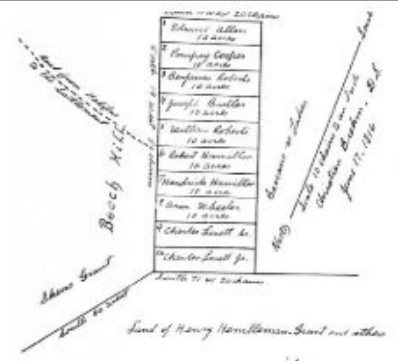




Women of N

Curated by The Histor

Historically, women's experiences have not been equal. In our tour attempts to redress that imbalance, we highlight the stories of Nova Scotia - women young and old, from various economic circumstances, and regions in the province. Each deserves to be told.



Beechville Settlement

By Lisa Pasolli

Today, Beechville is a small rural community just outside of Halifax; many Halifaxians probably know it as the place where the popular Beechville Lakeside Timberlea (BLT) recreational trail originates. Less well known, however, is the fact that...



George Dixon (1870-1908)

By the Nova Scotia Museum

Born in Africville, George Dixon (1870-1908) accomplished something no person of African descent - anywhere in North America - had ever done. Dixon became a world champion in boxing, not once but twice. George turned to boxing when he was...



Portia White (1911-1968)

By the Nova Scotia Museum

In her later years, Portia May White (1911-1968) offered this explanation for her life: "First you dream, then you put on your walking shoes." In the era in which Portia grew up, few would have imagined that the sixth child of Izie and Rev. William...

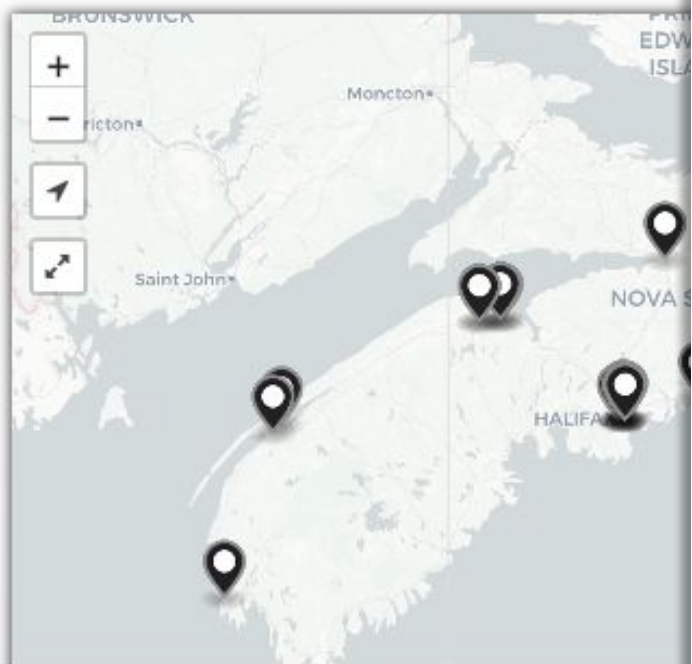


Viola Desmond (1914-1965) & Dr. Carrie Best (1903-2001)

By the Nova Scotia Museum

The Nova Scotia into which Carrie Best (née Prevoe) and Viola Desmond (née Davis) were born was a society with engrained prejudices about people of colour. There were restrictions about where Blacks could live or work and where...

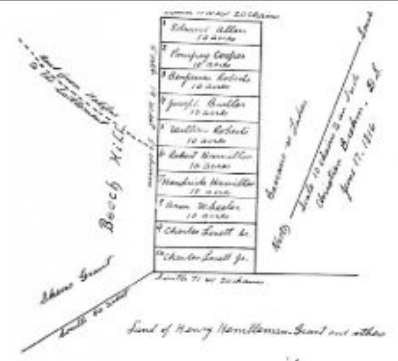




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Curated by The History of Women in Nova Scotia

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George Dixon (1870-1908)

By the Nova Scotia Museum

Born in Africville, George Dixon (1870-1908) accomplished something no person of African descent – anywhere in North America – had ever done. Dixon became a world champion in boxing, not once but twice. George turned to boxing when he was...



Rita Joe (1932-2007)

By the Nova Scotia Museum

Rita Joe's childhood was about as hard as it could be, and her life as an adult was rarely easy. Yet hardships and suffering never broke her spirit. Rita always sought to overcome what stood in her way by living with kindness, strength and...



Mary Ellen Robinson (1927-2012)

By the Nova Scotia Museum

There are more than a few Nova Scotians who do not make headlines, yet still make important contributions. (Mary) Ellen Robinson (1927-2012) is a wonderful example. In countless, unpublicized ways, this Mi'kmaw Elder lived a life filled with kindness...



James Glode (1831-1936)

By the Nova Scotia Museum

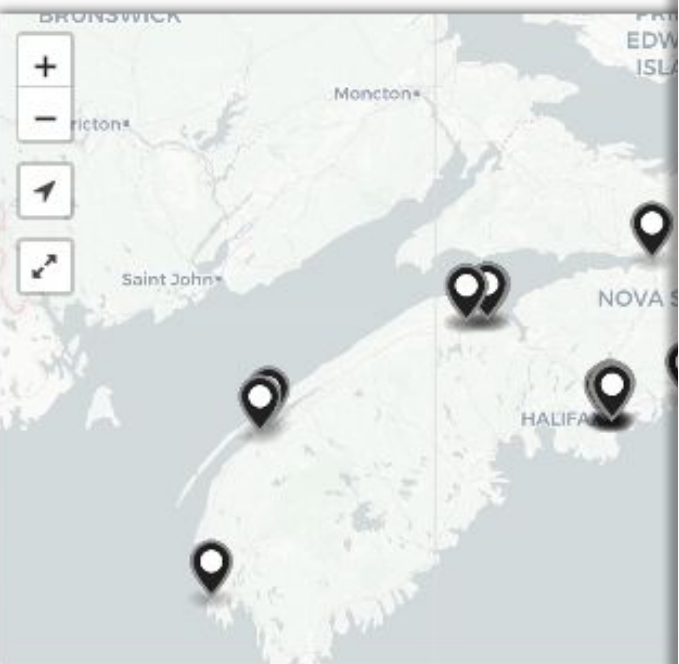
If you came to Nova Scotia in the 19th century to hunt or fish – and there were quite a few who did – you hired a guide. You wanted someone who knew the woodlands and wetlands like the back of their hands. Nine times out of ten that meant a...



Chief Stephen J. Knockwood (1902-1986)

By the Nova Scotia Museum

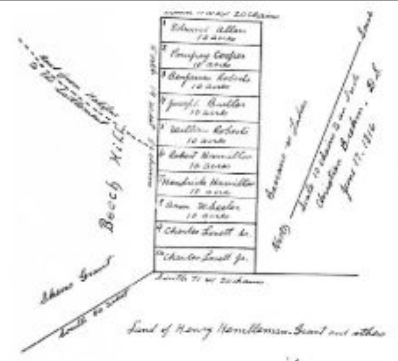
The first half of the 20th century was a challenging time for indigenous peoples across Canada, including for the Mi'kmaw in Nova Scotia. The federal governments of the era were generally disregarding the treaties of the 18th...



Women of Nova Scotia

Curated by The History of Nova Scotia Society

Historically, women's experiences have not been the same. This tour attempts to redress that imbalance by highlighting the stories of Nova Scotia - women young and old, from different backgrounds, economic circumstances, and regions in the province. Each deserves to be told.



Beechville Settlement

By Lisa Pasolli

Today, Beechville is a small rural community just outside of Halifax; many Halifaxians probably know it as the place where the popular Beechville Lakeside Timberlea (BLT) recreational trail originates. Less well known, however, is the fact that...



George Dixon (1870-1908)

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Victory Day over Japan, 1945

By Albert Lee

On August 15th, 1945, the Halifax Chinese community gathered on Grafton Street for a group photograph, marking Victory Day over Japan during the Second World War. The group is pictured in front of what was, at the time, the Chinese Benevolent...



Melville Island

By Lisa Pasolli

Melville Island, as its name suggests, was once an island. Today, it's a small peninsula that juts into the Northwest Arm, and home to the Armdale Yacht Club. Its story - and that of the small peninsula to the east, known as Deadman's Island...



Anti-Chinese Riots in Halifax, 1919

By Halifax Municipal Archives

On the evening of Tuesday, February 18, 1919, a returned soldier dining at the Crown Cafe on Gottingen Street refused to pay his bill. According to the February 19 issue of The Evening Mail, the soldier then "abused the Chinese proprietor." When he...



Kolonia

By Lisa Pasolli

On the northern boundary of Sydney, adjacent to the steel plant property, is Whitney Pier, a community that has traditionally been home to plant workers. Whitney Pier is known for being a remarkably diverse community, the product of an early-20th...

Future directions for the Historic Nova Scotia project

- Publish stories from more archives, museums, and heritage organizations with an emphasis on small institutions
- Make Historic Nova Scotia bilingual!
- More African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaw stories
- With university partners, develop HNS “hubs” in different regions of the province



Photo by [Jamie Street](#) on [Unsplash](#)



Questions?

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  @HistoricNS



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