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.

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

What is a Historic Nova Scotia story?

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. Parsons was a forerunner in Clean Energy technologies. Built in 1921, the plant generated electricity from the power of ocean waves. But this source of energy proved to be a bit too much for Parsons’ invention...

“Clean Energy” is a term often used to describe wind, solar, and hydro 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 the power of the ocean waves in a clean way.

Rhoda Messenger was a tuberculosis patient at the Tuberculosis Sanatorium in Kentville. When Rhoda was 14 years old, this is Rhoda’s story, told by her hospital to her family in Maville, DI.

“Love Rhoda”

Letters from the Sanatorium

By Kings County Museum Archives

Introduction by Curator, Bria Stokes

Anti-Chinese Riots in Halifax, 1919

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

By Halifax Municipal Archives with research support from Halifax Public Libraries and the Chronicle Herald Library
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

The Stoddard Hotel in Clam Harbour
By Lake Charlotte Area Heritage Society with research support from the Eastern Shore Archives

And the Band Played On...
By Dobson Bay Museum
According to the October 1931 issue of Busy East, the "Bridgewater Band" was organized in 1868 and was led by bandmaster Charles Jaffers. A photograph dated c.1869 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 3 November 1847...

Thomas Isaac Spidell II (1873-1963)
By Parkdale-Maquierwood Community Museum
Thomas Isaac Spidell II was born September 4th, 1873 in Maplewood, Lunenburg County, to Thomas Isaac Spidell I and Sarah A. Doug. He loved to read and often wrote for the Bridgewater Bulletin. Thomas left home...

The Sydney Steel Strike of 1923
By Matthew Jesudon & the Easton Institute Archives, Cape Breton University
The steel plant in Sydney, Cape Breton, opened in 1920. 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,
Cultural heritage organizations:
Archives, Museums, Historical
Societies, Libraries

La tradition théâtrale

By Université Sainte-Anne & Centre acadien

And the Band Played On…
By Dobbsferry 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. 1869 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 Abagail
Bergmead. He loved to read and often wrote for
the Bridgewater Bulletin. Thomas left home

The Sydney Steel Strike of 1923
By Matthews Labrador & the Boston Institute
Archives, Cape Breton University
The steel plant in Sydney, Cape Breton, opened
in 1908. 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.
Staff or Volunteers at Cultural Heritage Organizations

The Science Building

By Ashley Sutherland with research support from Colchester Historeum

And the Band Played On…

By Doublintay Museum

According to the October 1918 issue of Busy East, the "Bridgewater Band" was organized in 1888 and was led by bandmaster Charles Jaffary. A photograph dated c. 1869 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 3 November 1847...

Thomas Isaac Spiddell II (1873-1963)

By Parkdale-Maplenood Community Museum

Thomas Isaac Spiddell II was born September 4th, 1873 in Maplenood, Lunenburg County, to Thomas Isaac Spiddell I and Sarah Abagay. Bergnau. He loved to read and often wrote for the Bridgewater Bulletin. Thomas left home...

The Sydney Steel Strike of 1923

By Matthew Jasomone & the Boston Institute Archives, Cape Breton University

The steel plant in Sydney, Cape Breton, opened in 1900, 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,
Local Historians

And the Band Played On...

By David Ross, 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 1875 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 1867...

The Sydney Steel Strike of 1923

By Matthew Jascione & the Boston Institute Archives, Cape Breton University

The steel plant in Sydney, Cape Breton, opened in 1906. 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...

“The Home of Cricket”
The History of a Pictou County Sport

By John Reid

Thomas Isaac Spiddel II (1873-1963)

By Parkdale-Maplenood Community Museum

Thomas Isaac Spiddel II was born September 4th, 1873, in Maplenood, Lunenburg County, to Thomas Isaac Spiddel I and Sarah Abag. Bergm an. He loved to read and often wrote for the Bridgewater Bulletin. Thomas left home...
Local Historians

The Pinegrove Hotel
A Spryfield Landmark for 65 Years

By Iris V. Shea with research support from the Mainland South Heritage Society

And the Band Played On...
By Boardinghouse Museum

According to the October 1971 issue of Busy East, the “Bridgewater Band” was organized in 1861 and was led by bandmaster Charles Jeffries. A photograph dated c. 1860 of a band in front of Robert West’s store, its members with mutton shop whiskers...

Acadia Mines
By Ashley Sutherland

In 1864, 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 11 November 1867...

Thomas Isaac Spidell II (1873–1963)
By Princeville-Malvern Community Museum

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

The Sydney Steel Strike of 1923
By Matthew Joscimo & the Boston Institute Archives, Cape Breton University

The steel plant in Sydney, Cape Breton, opened in 1906. It promised to be a modern facility with state-of-the-art coke ovens and an advanced steelmaking process. After the First World War, the steel industry experienced a recession...
University Students

And the Band Played On…

By Destinsay Museum

According to the October 1918 issue of Busy Bee, the "Bridgewater Band" was organized in 1908 and was led by bandmaster Charles Jaffers. A photograph dated 1896 of a band in front of Robert West's store, its members with mutton chop whiskers…

Acadia Mines

By Ashley Sutherland

In 1846, 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.

The Sydney Steel Strike of 1923

By Matthew Jessome & the Boston Institute Archives, Cape Breton University

The steel plant in Sydney, Cape Breton, opened in 1905. 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.

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.
Benefits of contributing for heritage organizations
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.
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 Jeddoire Oyster Pond, part of the Nova Scotia Museum.

In 1915, the Myers house and eight acres of property in Oyster Pond (now Jeddoire 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 the water. The Myers family is a testament to the resilience and hard work required to thrive in Nova Scotia's coastal communities.
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, Eria 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 sanatorium.
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 hers. From these, Rosina’s life and her recipes are pieced together.
Rosina (Black) Uniacke (c. 1807-1858) was the daughter of a merchant, John Black, and wife to James Black Uniacke, a politician. The lives of these two men have been well documented, but information remains about Rosina. What has survived are a few possessions and a book of handwritten 'receipts' given by her mother. This project intends to bring Rosina back to life.

"Dear Harold..."

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.
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.
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.
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 accountable for the explosion that killed 65 miners.
The 1917 explosion in the New Waterford No. 12 Miners’ Memorial is a mining disaster in Cape Breton history. Despite an inquiry, the Dominion Coal Company was not held accountable for the explosion that killed 19 miners.

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 Allies.
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 Water Plant was constructed with substantial support from the provincial government, which would usher in a new era of growth for Cape Breton. However, the plant was fraught with problems from the start.

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 Nova Scotia

Curated by The Historic Properties

Historically, women's experiences have not been adequately documented. An effort is underway to redress that imbalance by offering a glimpse into the lives of the many women throughout Nova Scotia – women young and old, from various backgrounds, economic circumstances, and regions. Each woman has a unique story to tell. Each deserves to be told.

**Beechville Settlement**

By Lisa Portelli

Today, Beechville is a small rural community just outside of Halifax. Many Haligonians probably recognize Beechville as the place where the popular Beechville Lakeside Territorials (BLT) recreational trail originates. Less well known, however, is the fact that...

**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 draw, then you put on your walking shoes.” In the era in which Portia grew up, few would have imagined that the sixth child of Ice and Rev. William...

**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...

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

By the Nova Scotia Museum

The Nova Scotia into which Carrie Best (née Provost) and Viola Desmond (née David) were born was a society with entrenched prejudices about people of colour. There were restrictions on where Blacks could live, work, and where...
Women of Nova Scotia

Curated by The Historic Nova Scotia

Historically, women’s experiences have not always been given their due. Our stories attempt to redress that imbalance. From the early 1800s to the 20th century, the history of Nova Scotia – women young and old, from Cape Breton to the Annapolis Valley, from diverse economic circumstances, and regions in between – is unique. Each deserves to be told.

Beechville Settlement
By Lisa Peren

Today, Beechville is a small rural community just outside of Halifax, many Haligonians probably know it as the place where the popular Beechville Lakeside Timber - Blitz recreational trail originates. Less well-known, however, is the fact that...

Rita Joe (1932-2007)
By the Nova Scotia Museum

Rita Joe’s childhood was arduous. Her family could barely make ends meet. Yet hardships and suffering never broke her spirit. Rita always sought to overcome what stood in her way by living with kindness, strength and courage.

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, unpublished ways, this Millersville Elder lived a life filled with kindness.

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 trained in boxing when he was...

James Glode (1831-1936)
By the Nova Scotia Museum

If you come 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 woods 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 the Minyamk in Nova Scotia. The federal governments of the era were particularly dismissive of the bands of the Mi'kmaw.
Women of Nova Scotia

Curated by The Historian

Historically, women’s experiences have not been given proper recognition. This tour attempts to redress that imbalance by highlighting the stories of women from Nova Scotia – women young and old, from diverse backgrounds, economic circumstances, and regions in the province. Each deserves to be told.

Beaverville Settlement

By Lisa Pessell

Today, Beaverville is a small rural community just outside of Halifax. Many Acadians probably know it as the place where the popular Beaverville Lakes Timberlea (BLT) recreational trail originates. Less well-known, however, is the fact that.

Rita Joe (1932-2007)

By the Nova Scotia Museum

Rita Joe’s childhood was not as hard as it could be; and her life as an adult was not 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.

Victory Day over Japan, 1945

By Albert Lee

On August 19th, 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.

Anti-Chinese Riots in Halifax, 1919

By Halifax Municipal Archives

On the evening of Tuesday, February 11th, 1919, a return soldier dining at the Cream Cafe on Quinpool 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...
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
Questions?
info@historicnovascotia.ca
@HistoricNS