

**COLLECTIONS POLICY SUGGESTIONS FOR PEI COMMUNITY MUSEUMS BASED ON THE
COMMUNITY MUSEUM ASSOCIATION OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND'S "WHAT DOES CANADA
150 MEAN TO YOU?" PROJECT**

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ABSTRACT

It is important that collection policies be kept up-to-date. New objects will become historic artefacts, making it imperative that a new mindset is encouraged amongst community museum board members and executives. There is a need to implement new strategies concerning what museums will collect in the future, while maintaining the cultural infrastructure that is crucial to the Prince Edward Island lifestyle. Drawing on suggestions gathered from the public during the “What Does Canada 150 Mean to You?” project, this paper examines the possible routes that collection policies may take in the future. This review indicates that a collaboration between individual museum’s missions and objects that may impact the museum’s audience can be achieved through a re-evaluation of current collections to make room for contemporary artefacts.



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INTRODUCTION: COMMUNITY MUSEUM ASSOCIATION OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

The Community Museum Association of Prince Edward Island (CMA-PEI) is a not-for-profit organization, created in 1983, to provide stronger support services for our community museums. The Association's goal is to work alongside PEI community museums to make maximum use of valuable time and resources. The Association's vision statement states that "The Community Museums Association of Prince Edward Island will, through the use of leadership in training, innovation, and empowerment, contribute to the enhancement, promotion and protection of Prince Edward Islands heritage." The Association meets these goals through activities like workshops, seminars, study materials, and initiates special projects.

The mandate of the Association is that of fostering and supporting historical societies and community museums across the province of PEI, as well as facilitating communication between the various museums, governments, and other relevant organizations. The Association's primary audience is the museum and heritage community. It has been very successful in bringing this community closer together through CMA-PEI's activities in the area of professional development and communication promotes both awareness and high standards in the Island museum community. Island museums and museum services help instill in the public a greater understanding and enjoyment of our rich Island and National Heritage. The Association's programs help to ensure that future generations of Canadians have access to a rich legacy of collections reflecting their national and local heritage. Even though the Association has been operating for over thirty years now, the need for professional development opportunities and projects that encourage community events continues to be of great importance.

"WHAT DOES CANADA 150 MEAN TO YOU?" PROJECT

During the summer of 2017, CMA-PEI facilitated a special project entitled "What Does Canada 150 Mean to You?" The project was the Association's way of providing a low-cost celebration for Canada's Sesquicentennial to the CMA-PEI's members. In addition to this report, the project consisted of two parts. The first being an exhibit displaying five artefacts that reflected Canadian history. Each museum selected the artefacts from their own individual collections. Visitors to 19 community museums around Prince Edward Island would write their own perspectives in binders about what the significance of each artefact was. Each artefact was selected based on the themes of the Canada 150 celebrations: Diversity, Reconciliation, Environment, and Youth.

In the second portion of our project, visitors were asked "What Artefacts Would You Collect to Tell Canada's History in 100 Years?" or, what objects museums should be collecting in 100 years to tell the story of our current year or generation. It is notable to mention that there were no limits to who could answer these questions. Everyone from any background, nationality, and ethnicity were encouraged to answer these questions regardless of if they were locals to the community or not. In total, 235 answers were collected from the 19 participating museums. Symposiums were held in the format of a history circle in order to promote the importance of heritage and culture throughout the Island's community museums as well as to

engage a general awareness throughout the public of museums, stories and the significance of artefacts.

Currently, each museum has their own collection policy that caters to their diverse collections. **The purpose of this Collection Policy Suggestion report is to examine the themes of today's society in retrospect of the need to update PEI collection policies to further impact the Island's audience.** This policy is a suggestion, and does not require that museums follow its suggestions.

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

The collections across community museums on Prince Edward Island consists of specimens from the natural, cultural, and social history of Prince Edward Island. Development of the collections depends on objectives from both individual museum's curatorial staff/volunteers as well as the themes that each museum focuses on. Collection development will meet both short and long-term goals of the individual museums as well as address strengths and weakness of current collections to consider the future collections of the museums in question. However, it is suggested that **when developing these policies, board members and executives should focus on:**

- **Artefacts produced in Prince Edward Island**
- **Artefacts used in Prince Edward Island but made elsewhere**
- **Specimens (animals, plants, rocks, minerals, fossils, etc.) that occur on Prince Edward Island**

ACQUISITION

Community Museums across Prince Edward Island obtain artefacts in various ways. These ways may include:

- Field collecting
- Gift or bequest
- Purchase
- Exchange
- Transfer
- Inhouse
- Found in collection

If artefacts are acquired through gift or the like, community museums should make it clear (with proper documentation) that the change in ownership requires no limitations that would limit the community museum's use of the object.

Artefact selection should be based on the following criteria:

- **Relevance to each museum's mandate and collection development objects**
- **Significance to a historic person, place, event, or period**
- **Representation of individual museum themes**

- **Availability and financial resources to acquire, document, preserve, store, and exhibit artefact**
- **Physical condition**
- **Cultural sensitivity**
- **Absence of threats to user or other aspects of the collection**
- **Compliance with applicable legislation and regulations**

THEMES AND SUGGESTIONS BASED ON ANSWERS FROM THE “WHAT ARTEFACTS WOULD YOU COLLECT TO TELL THE STORY OF CANADA IN 100 YEARS?” QUESTION

It would be odd for two museums to have the exact same collections policy since every museum is unique. However, there is the chance that some policies followed the same template and may be similar. The themes gathered from the project are simply suggestions and a guide for starting to think about the future of collections policies. The people best suited for setting up a collections policy are those most directly involved with the operation of the individual museums.

Throughout the summer, 235 answers were gathered from the 19 participating museums that engaged in the “What Does Canada 150 Mean to You?” Project. The answers collected can be found in Appendix A.

Three major themes arose during the examination of what the public suggested museums should collect: **Technology**, **Photographs**, and **Written text**. The definition of technology includes all of the technological items we use today in the form of communication primarily cell phones, laptops, iPads, cameras and other technological advancements. The photograph section includes primarily print photos due to the assumption that online photos will take over print. Likewise, written text covers items from cursive writing, letters, journals, documents etc. and artefacts like pens, pencils, and stamps were considered under this category as well.

I would then suggest that **artefacts that could be selected for the future should focus on both the themes of the museum as well as the development of objects already in the collection**. For example, if the museum was fishing based, perhaps beginning with the earlier navigational technology in the museum to what technology is popular today. Likewise, with cell phones, music players, and the like it may be beneficial to see the difference from early models to current models. Artefacts are a way to powerfully connect with the human past but to also maintain our own generation’s story. It needs to be a primary goal that our museums are used to tell these complex stories of our history and everchanging needs of our communities. As material goods are being produced at such a rapid rate, we need to focus on what artefacts are crucial to the story and what artefacts may be mere fads. Interestingly, a lot of the answers that we had gotten from the public, primarily youth were focused on fads that would last for several weeks or months but would soon fade out (ex. Fidget spinners and other toys). Another interesting suggestion to collect was money, however, I believe this is due to the assumption that soon all transactions will be run through debit or credit cards rather than actual cash which brings to light the technological focus of our society.

A main discussion was brought up concerning **how there is a need for Indigenous history to consist of more accurate information rather than focusing on stereotypes.** This is necessary to show respect to the Mi'kmaq way of life. This should be implemented by having a professional in Indigenous history visit each museum where aboriginal artefacts may be located and display them in a manner that accurately represents the culture and history, as well as redesigning the current aboriginal culture centers to have a stronger focus on its local audience than its current focus on tourists.

Many museums may ignore the issue of collecting contemporary artefacts due to the high rate that objects are being created. **I would suggest having smaller, more focused collections which could possibly be achieved through larger board meetings and calculating the costs, needs, and impact that artefacts have.** While this may be time consuming, it will be beneficial to weed out the collections that are gathering dust and not supporting each museum's mission. Instead of all museums on the island sharing like artefacts, determining which items that could be shown at one museum and be open for sharing pieces would also help organize collections. In order to really focus on new collections policies, each museum must elaborate their individual missions and primary goals – ex. The story they are trying to share and the impact they want to place on individuals.

CONCLUSION

While it is easy to pick artefacts that everyone uses that may be deemed important, it is crucial to determine what each museum is focused on sharing and what impact they want to make to their chosen audiences. The themes are clear – we are in a modern, technology focused environment today. **The increased demand of material goods and goal for preserving every historic artefact needs to be replaced with a goal-oriented policy that focuses on telling individual museum's story and creating an impact.** This can be achieved by beginning the process of examining each museum's mission, examining current collections to see what can be deaccessioned, and beginning to filter contemporary artefact that have relevance to each museum's chosen mission.

APPENDIX A

- Hockey Cards
- Post cards
- Stories
- Paintings
- Inuksuk
- Tim Horton's coffee cup
- Black berry cell phone
- A picture of the Island's people smiling
- Store flyers
- Receipts
- Photos
- Letters
- Pens and pencils
- People's stories (my mothers, fathers, aunts and uncles)
- Pictures
- Farming implements (rake, hoe, etc.)
- Stamps for postage (mail service is going out of style)
- Guardian/Journal Pioneer articles of all graduating students
- Yearbooks
- The Buzz (shows theatre, culture, etc.)
- Cash (pennies, \$1 \$2 bills)
- Print photos
- Personal documents (house records, labour, employment)
- List of 'fads' that last about 3 months at times (instant gratification society)
- Memes
- Music and the different forms of listening to them
- Flaky commercial pastry
- Records of speech to observe changes over time
- More stories about the contributions women made: sewing, teaching, inventing, fashion, farm work, catering, volunteering, land ships, and so much more!
- Old stoves
- Furniture
- Pottery
- Local art
- Water bottles
- Restaurant menus
- Baseballs
- Garages
- Cargo ships
- Shoes
- Chalk boards
- Cursive writing
- Music recording items (8 track, cassette, cd, DVD, VCR, movie projectors)

- Wayne Wright cartoons (originals if possible)
- Smartphone
- TV
- Car
- Toys
- Photos of hairstyles
- Newspapers
- Dishes
- Photos of fashion
- Petrol cars
- Push chairs (wheel chairs)
- Google earth images of their neighborhood areas, etc.
- Skeletons of pets and livestock
- Tattoos
- Flaky commercial pastry
- Fidget spinners
- Justin Bieber CD
- iPad
- “stub” beer bottle
- A bible
- Titanic
- Dinky cars
- Tractors
- Gold and silver and diamonds and other pretty things
- Michael Smith’s recipe book
- Friendship bracelets (to show how friends acted over the years)
- Weapons
- Uniforms
- Things soldiers brought to war
- Journals
- Tanks
- Working with Atlantic Vet College on Equine medicine and WWI including vet service badges worn by vets serving in military
- WWI and medicines, treatment, treatment tools, story of horses in WWI
- Food
- Canned water
- Tools
- First aid kit
- Type writer
- Pictures and audio records transcribed to written journals/newspapers
- Uniforms/civilian clothing examples
- Homemade/handcrafted/artisan products
- Maps and records
- Stamps
- Canadian flag
- Photos

- Money
- Small practical objects
- Jewelry
- Uniforms
- Cards
- Weapons
- Entertainment objects
- Diplomas
- Musical instruments
- Artwork, paintings, including drawing books
- Kitchen tools/ equipment
- Clothing, jewellery and accessories
- Games (ex. Playing cards, board games, etc.)
- Journals
- Games
- Letters
- Emails with families
- Weapons
- Strategy solutions
- Canadian made car (no gas in 100 years)
- Armed forces soldiers tactical uniform (hopefully we will be more peaceful by then)
- A book of different sayings by province or region (CFA Come from away, etc. because often regions aren't familiar with them)
- Maple syrup making supplies
- Music CD's of Canadian Music
- DVD's of Canadian movies
- Blueberry harvesters
- School books of history
- A guitar hand made by Denis Laroche of Real Instruments Charlottetown
- Sewing Machine
- iPad
- Vacuum cleaner
- Traffic lights (because of self driving cars already invented)
- A lobster boat's navigational gear
- A potato harvester
- Bicycle and photos of the trails (confederation trail, etc.)
- Election voting ballot
- RCMP Badge
- Two-hole outhouse
- Sat irons
- Spinning wheel
- Hand pump (for water)
- Wool long underwear
- Headwear, hats, bonnets
- Maple syrup
- Igloo

- Fur
- Polar bear
- British flag
- 1967 Leaf's Jersey
- 1st generation blackberry
- Pair of Justin Trudeaus Jeans
- RUSH 2112 Vinyl Album
- Gord Downie's Hat
- Terry Foxes prosthetic leg
- WWI helmet and food coins
- Alexander Graham Bells 1st Phone
- Tragically Hip band members t-shirts
- Pacific Railway track (5 meters in original condition)
- Example of all polymer Canadian bills
- Flags representing various organizations ex. Pride, French flags from all provinces
- Justin Trudeaus socks collection
- Menus from top restaurants across the country
- Political reports (status of aboriginals, women, children and minorities) in 2017
- iPad
- Model airplane (Air Canada, West Jet)
- Money (Canadian coins, bills)
- Canadian hockey, NHL team's jerseys
- Fidget spinners
- Razor blade for shaving legs
- Coffee percolator (coffee is so important to us)
- Cell phone (camera, phone, diary)
- Crocs
- Tilley hat
- Nespresso and other caplet based machines (ease of use vs. ecologically unfavorable)
- Doggy raincoat and boots
- Home exercise equipment (always in perfect condition)
- Stilettos and moon boots
- Remote controls (tv, cd players, etc.)
- Segway
- Hair dryer/straighter/curler
- Photography drone
- Texting guide
- Letter writing diaries
- #Bellletstalk (more openness with mental health issues)
- Vintage makeup to show how beauty was/now portrayed and how it will change
- War memorabilia
- Insulin because there could be a cure in 100 years with all medical advancements
- Tablet
- Laptop
- Dry shampoo
- Blue bags

- Compost bin
- Smart board
- Electric hair rollers
- Dr. Seuss book
- Beatles Album and ways to listen to music (from turn table to Bluetooth headphones)
- Xbox or PlayStation
- Yoga/yoga mat
- Lego
- Current diapers for babies
- Penny
- Glass pop bottle
- Rainbow flag
- A pen and lined paper (perhaps people will only use key boards in 100 years)
- Old wall phones
- Gasoline Cars
- Flags
- Pictures
- Manual can opener
- Photo album
- Fidget spinner
- 8 track tapes
- Watch
- Cell phones
- Vehicles
- Clothes
- Books
- Plastic
- Tools
- Any technology
- Map
- Guitar
- Skopkins
- Pedal bikes
- Books
- Phones
- Map
- Vehicles
- Pens
- Watches
- railways
- Stomin' Tom's hat/stomping board
- Pipe
- Goose wing to sweep
- Inkwell to dip quill in
- Kitchen utensils, pots, etc.
- Hair tools

- Cell phones (early cell phones, flip phones, etc.)
- Ways to listen to music
- Cameras
- Air conditioning
- Guns
- Drivers licenses
- Cell phones
- Emails
- Time capsules
- Oral history
- Functional art work that is being done in the [aboriginal] community (baskets, drums, earrings, quill work, etc.)
- See the communities real histories and all relevant documentation kept in a central location for all to have access to
- See the real [Mi'kmaq] language and explanation of it as well as audio/visual recordings
- All [Mi'Kmaq] ceremonial artefacts and clothing from today