



AT ISSUE

Preserving the Past

Based on what we have examined so far in this course, we can draw two conclusions. First, there is a lot of information to learn about the past. Second, the past shapes our current circumstances, as well as our sense of identity. Therefore, knowing about the past is important.

These two conclusions raise important questions. If you need to know about the past, but cannot know all of it, what do you focus on remembering and passing along to future generations?

While this textbook highlights some aspects of the history of our province, it cannot address everything from the past. Instead it focuses on events, ideas, and trends that may be useful to you as you explore the culture and heritage of our province today and consider current and future issues that may arise. Although it is important to learn facts and stories from our past, it is equally important to think about and question why these events have been selected to tell our history. This is called thinking critically about history.

As you will recall, social scientists frequently use the idea of significance to guide them as they research specific events in the past. Pulling out what is significant – that which has had deep consequences for many people over a period of time – enables us to create an

overall understanding of an event or time period that is otherwise too large to discuss in its entirety. For example, one important idea related to the migratory fishery is that it had a significant impact on First Nations and Inuit who lived here.

Significance is also useful when examining local and family history. What is significant about the history of your community or area? What should be preserved and passed along to future generations? These are the questions that the approximately 80 community museums and 150 local archives in our province must consider as they work to preserve the history of their community or area. However, with more than 900 communities in our province, there is a considerable amount of information that is not being preserved.

There are things we can all do to ensure our heritage is not lost. In this section, you will have a chance to examine your community for pieces of history that are worth preserving. Once you have done this, you may wish to assume an active role in the heritage stewardship of your community.

Community histories are sometimes referred to as "small histories."



2.79 Heart's Content Cable Station



2.80 Display at The Rooms Provincial Museum



2.81 Migratory fishery

Many would argue that the migratory fishery is a significant event in the history of Newfoundland and Labrador. But, is it an important part of the history of your community? What about your family's history? Shown here is an illustration from *Harper's Weekly*.



2.82 The Burton family
Hay Cove, Placentia Bay, c. 1920



2.83 Red Bay, Labrador is now under consideration for designation as a world heritage site.



2.84 Gros Morne National Park of Canada was designated a UNESCO world heritage site in 1987.



2.85 L'Anse aux Meadows
National Historic Site of Canada.

By helping to pass along your culture and heritage to future generations, you become a steward of your cultural heritage. Preserving heritage can be done at many levels.

- Some people dedicate themselves to preserving their family history through genealogical research or by simply talking to family members about their lives and memories.
- Others work at the community level to identify, protect, and present significant heritage resources in their locality. Examples of this include community archives, museums, and historical societies.
- The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador helps to preserve the province's history and heritage by maintaining institutions such as The Rooms and operating a system of provincial historic sites.
- Parks Canada is responsible for national historic sites in Newfoundland and Labrador, including Hawthorne Cottage in Brigus and the Red Bay site in Labrador.
- Newfoundland and Labrador is also home to two world heritage sites – Gros Morne National Park and L'Anse aux Meadows National Historic Site – both of which are managed by Parks Canada.

Heritage can be divided into two categories – tangible heritage and intangible heritage. Tangible heritage encompasses items that you can see, touch, and/or handle; it is sometimes referred to as material culture. Intangible heritage refers to practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, and skills passed on from previous generations.

2.86 Winterholme, the house that Sir Marmaduke Winter built in St. John's in 1905-1907



Tangible Heritage

Tangible heritage can be further divided into two categories – built heritage and moveable heritage. Built heritage includes buildings, structures, and engineering works (such as roads, bridges, and fences). In Newfoundland and Labrador, many of our heritage resources fall under this heading, including historic sites like Winterholme Heritage Inn at St. John's and the root cellars in Elliston.

Much of our tangible heritage is made up of the objects of daily life. Sometimes called moveable heritage, this category includes artifacts, artistic works, technological and industrial tools, textiles, fossils, and so on. Some examples of moveable heritage are easy to find, such as tools used in the fishery. Others are a little more difficult to locate, such as items found at archaeological excavations.

Documents, books, and other archival materials also fall under the heading of moveable heritage. These may include letters written by a soldier in the Royal Newfoundland Regiment during the First World War or ledger books used by merchants more than 100 years ago.

Many families preserve their tangible heritage by handing down photographs, letters, and other personal objects from one generation to the next. Similarly, our national historic sites, provincial archives, museums, and galleries (such as The Rooms), and community museums all preserve artifacts, artistic works, and other tangible reminders of our collective past which we can see and experience in person.



2.87 Root cellars in Elliston, some of which are still in use.



2.88 Examples of moveable heritage in Port au Port



2.89 The Rooms, St. John's

2.91 Mary March Museum, Grand Falls-Windsor



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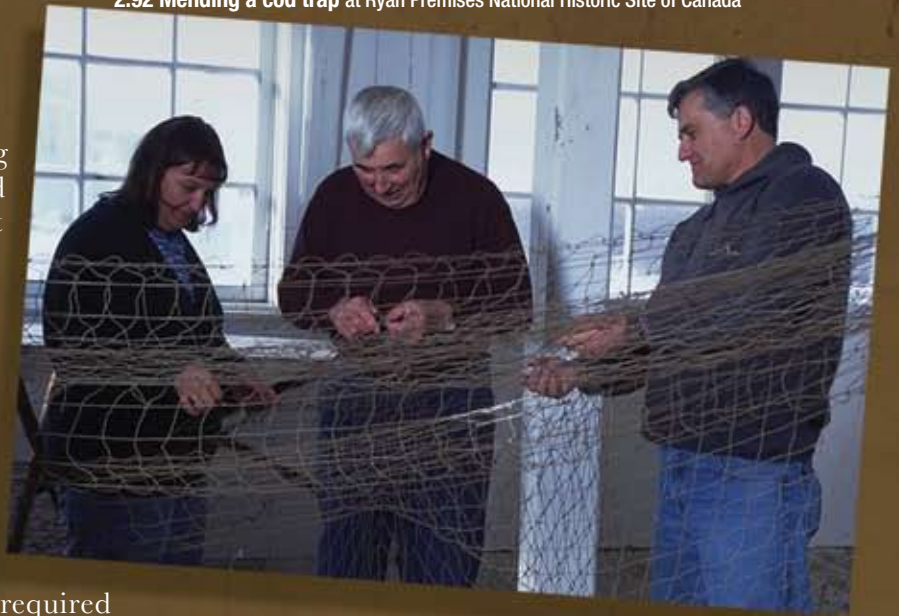
Mr. Gordon 52	Heater 69
Sullivan Jan 14	Harker J & C 10
Wether J & C 14	Harrison Tho 5
Green Wm H 16	Henderson G 65
Hoiberg Abraham 14	
John Sam 78	Lane Jas 85
Harker Jan 104	Speffinger L & H 89
Harker John 104	Grummel B.H. 106
Halls Clara Wm 118	Haight Jan 121
Hall J W 132	Brown Jas 137
Hand Thomas 133	Evans John 77
Hess Nathan 148	
Haight H 161	

Intangible Heritage

Intangible heritage is sometimes called “living heritage” because it is very much alive and always changing. According to UNESCO, it includes our “living expressions and traditions” inherited and transmitted from generation to generation. Our traditional songs, stories, dances, dialects, words and expressions, knowledge, skills, customs, practices, and folklore are all considered intangible heritage.

Some examples of our intangible heritage are relatively easy to recognize, such as a traditional song like “Tse the B’y”. Other examples might not be so obvious. The knowledge and skills required to properly mend a **cod-trap** using a net needle, or to split a codfish using cut-throat and splitting knives, for example, are parts of our intangible cultural heritage.

In order to preserve intangible cultural heritage, it must be transmitted or passed on from one generation to the next.

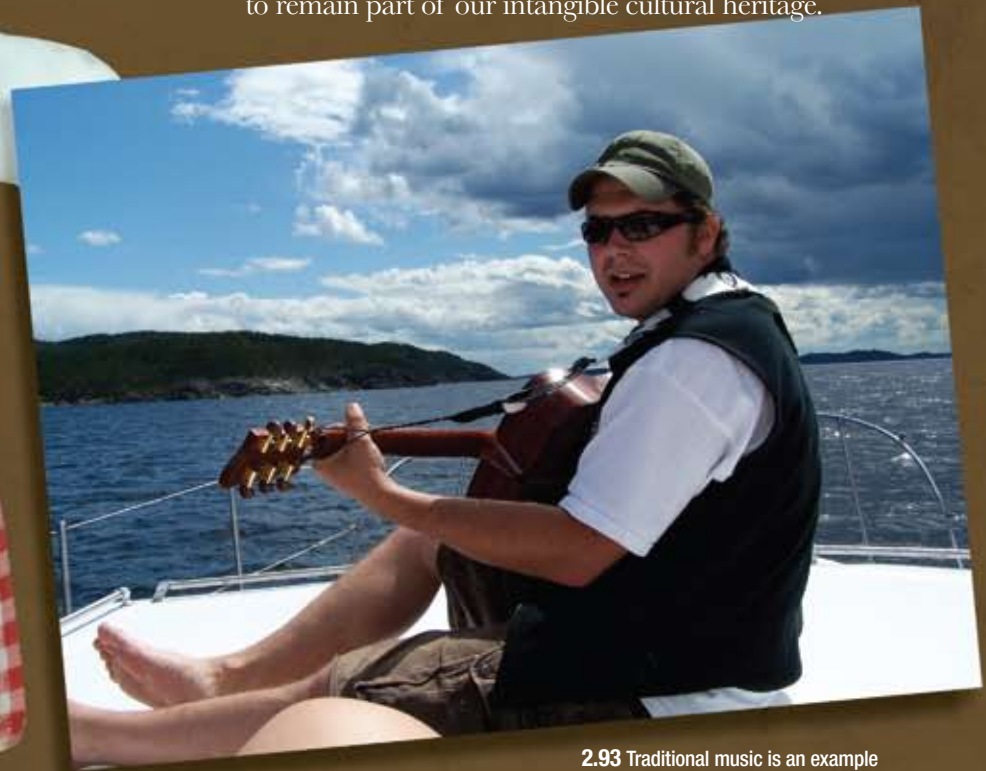


Traditionally, songs, stories, skills, and knowledge were passed on orally in Newfoundland and Labrador. In fact, some songs and stories that existed for centuries were rarely, if ever, written down until university researchers began recording and transcribing them in the 1950s.

However, while recordings, videos, photographs, and transcriptions may preserve specific examples of our intangible heritage from a specific place and time, they do not keep it alive. Intangible heritage is fluid, dynamic, and always changing with each generation – just as a song or story is always a little different depending on who is performing it and when it is being performed. Our cultural expressions, customs, knowledge, and skills must be passed on from person to person and practised from generation to generation to remain part of our intangible cultural heritage.



2.94 Although an Innu tea doll is a piece of tangible heritage, the skills required to make it are part of intangible heritage.



2.93 Traditional music is an example of intangible heritage.

Identifying Significant Local Heritage

Every community in Newfoundland and Labrador has a unique history. Preserving that history is important. But how can you do this? The following exercise describes one way that you and your classmates can engage in heritage stewardship.

1. As a class, list examples of tangible heritage in your area that you believe should be preserved. (Your teacher may add to your list.)
2. Working alone or in a small group, select an item from your list that interests you. Research your item to establish its significance.
3. Use the information you have gathered to create an argument explaining why this item should be preserved.
4. Present your argument to your class. Use photographs and stories in your presentation.
5. As a class, identify the three most significant heritage resources that should be preserved from your community.
6. As an extension, your class could make a presentation to your town or local heritage organization explaining why it is important to preserve these resources for future generations.

DOING HISTORICAL RESEARCH

When historians conduct research, they often formulate a central question to focus their work. This helps to narrow their research from a broad topic (such as: “How did contact with Europeans change life for Aboriginal groups in Newfoundland and Labrador?”) to something specific (such as: “How did the establishment of a French trading post at North West River in 1743 affect Inuit economy and society?”).

Here are some possible questions you could ask while conducting your own historical research:

1. What experience from the past do I want to know more about?
2. What is the central question that will guide my inquiry? What are some other specific questions I need to ask in my research?
3. Where can I get information to help answer my questions? Who can help me find answers to my questions? Which books, images, and other documents can I use? How reliable are these sources?
4. What conclusions and knowledge have I drawn from my research? How can I summarize this in a written report?
5. How can I share my research with others? Who is my audience? What are the most important points to emphasize?

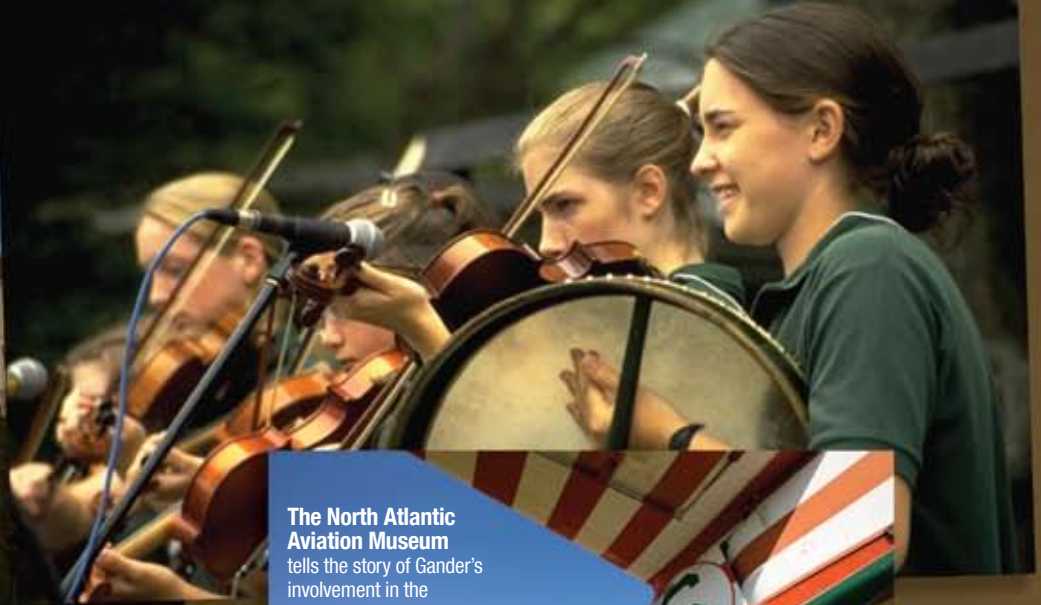
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Lester-Garland Premises in Trinity has been restored and is now a Provincial Historic Site.

Traditional music is an example of intangible heritage. What do you think is worth preserving in your community?



The North Atlantic Aviation Museum tells the story of Gander's involvement in the development of aviation over the North Atlantic.



For Discussion:

1. Pretend you are writing your family's history. Identify three or four significant events to describe. What makes these events more significant than others? Do you think other members of your family would identify the same events? Why or why not?
2. Pretend you are writing a history of your community. Together with your class, write a list of questions you need to answer. Here are some examples: When was your community settled? How did people earn a living? Who were some important figures in your community's settlement and development?
4. How have our present lifestyles evolved from the development of the migratory fishery? What has changed since then? What has remained the same? How is your way of life different from your grandparents' way of life when they were your age? How are your lifestyles the same?

Questions:

1. Use your skills in photography and storytelling to create a storyboard called "Exploring Place".
 - a. Find an old photograph of a particular location in your community.
 - b. Take a photograph of the same place today.
 - c. Create a 150 word summary that describes what has changed and why it changed.
2. Based on your exploration of heritage resources in this section:
 - a. What are two of your community's most significant tangible heritage resources? Explain.
 - b. What are two of your community's most significant intangible heritage resources? Explain.