

Mahone Bay Founders Society  
**Manager's Report 2017-2018**

Submitted by: Lyne Allain, Manager and Curator, on June 6th, 2018

Below are highlights from April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018.

**April 2017**

- Received \$500 from a grant from United Way Lunenburg County for our children's programming! Thank you Anne P. for submitting the application.
- Received \$1200 from 150 Forward Fund grant for Canada's 150th to go ahead with our oral history interviews. The money was specifically to purchase a camera with video capabilities.
- Designed Visitors Guide Mahone Bay map ad and South Shore map ad.
- Interviewed potential summer students

**May 2017**

- Opened Saturday May 20 and had live fiddle music for an hour thanks to Gaile Maddigan to celebrate the new temporary fiddling exhibit.
- Received approval for our 2017-2018 winter archive grant
- Summer students hired (see Human Resources Committee Report for details)
  - Amy Rafuse – Children and Scholastic Programming Officer
  - Ben Phinney – Children and Scholastic Programming Officer
  - Sarah Eisnor – Community and Visitor Engagement Coordinator
  - Bronwyn - Collections Management Coordinator
  - Curtis Raymond - Junior Interpreter
- Gave tour to the Ambassatour tour guides as arranged by the Chamber
- New 2 sided brochures were created for the Ambassatours guides who visited thank to the town's Chamber. The Chamber also printed copies of our self-guided shipbuilding walking tour and gave them to the guides.
- Copies of the walking tour were also delivered to the two Visitor Information Centres in town by John Perry.
- New "Mahone Bay Museum" sign for stair risers was added to the "Open Everyday", "10am to 4pm", "Gift Shop Inside" signs already on fronts stairs

**June 2017**

- Amy and Ben developed new school programs for two different class trips totaling 50 students. The teachers' feedback was very positive and they were especially happy to hear that we do not charge for their visit. I explained that we receive funding from United Way and MODL for our supplies for the children's programming.

- Had a meeting with Sandra Racine, a Mi'kmaw basket weaver who lives in Blockhouse but is from NB, and Bernie Francis, a Mi'kmaw Linguist from Membertou who was a huge part of developing the written Mi'kmaw language in the 80s. I am attempting to put together a small committee of Mi'kmaw people and non-Mi'kmaw scholars who have been suggested by Mi'kmaw people to continue work on the Mi'kmaw exhibit.
- Bronwyn, our Collections Management Coordinator, worked on accumulating information on the Inglis/Quinlan artifacts
- Hired Caylee MacDonald, a grade 10 student who was previously volunteering with us with the plan to split one of our summer student positions into two. However, upon requesting more information from YCW on splitting positions, I received a call from YCW with an offer from them to use some of their "supplemental funding" to approve our previously rejected third position for Visitor Services Representative position for ten weeks at 35 hours a week.

Beyond giving tours, the students:

- Researched the Percy Inglis/Clara Quinlan collection that is on loan to us from the Nova Scotia Museum (since 1986). Reviewing maker's marks. Taking photos of maker's marks.
- Documented, researched, and partially accessioned the recent Lantz family donation, mostly of kitchen stuff, dolls, and photos.
- Added artifacts to our digital database
- Added UV filters on windows
- Edited and wrote exhibit text for the Rum-Running exhibit, the Oak Island exhibit, Keddy family text for Founding Families exhibit, and the Staffordshire Spaniels exhibit that is part of the exhibit in the Parlour
- Developed ideas for children's programming such as architecture I Spy (as part of the walking tour) and a Lego version of the town to be created by kids and placed in the empty space under the shipyard diorama and planned activities for Canada Day Weekend and Heritage Boat Yard Weekend
- Worked on our visitor statistics
- Researched Rum-Running for exhibit and researched information for new Mi'kmaq exhibit
- Began working on the three churches walking tour and on a French brochure for French visitors with basic information about the settlement of Mahone Bay
- Created a draft of a timeline for Mahone Bay historical moments in the past 150 years

## July 2017

- Canada Day Weekend went very well with our children's activities! We had a timeline of Canada's history over the past 150, a large puzzle of the map of Canada, and Canadian themed eye spy. We had 158 visitors on Canada Day Weekend.
- We developed an Architecture walking tour this month and also included an extra piece where families can take the tour as we made it into an eye spy for the kids.
- Participated in the Blockhouse Heritage Weekend on July 22nd with a table of photos and Gaile Maddigan brought the Simeon Joudrey violin.
- Heritage Boat Yard weekend is coming up August 5th and 6th. We are working with the Boat Yard Co-op to create a pamphlet to accompany their signs at the boat yard locations (which will replace our shipbuilding walking tour).
- Last student has started working, Curtis Raymond

## August 2017

- Our two Children's Program Officers have planned activities for the upcoming Scarecrow Festival and Father Christmas Festival.
- **Heritage Boat Yard Weekend** earlier this month was a success. One activity in particular was very popular with kids, teens, young adults as well as seniors. That is the nautical keychain. We decided to continue to offer this activity for the rest of the season. We printed off the new shipyard walking tour that we designed to accompany the new signs at the shipyard locations that the Heritage Boat Yard Co-op installed.
- We moved much of the Inglis Quinlan collection into an exhibit case that we are referring to as open storage. We removed the old shelves off one wall in the collection room and are preparing the boards of the new shelves.
- The **Oral History Project** is complete. We have them running on a computer in a display cabinet downstairs at the moment. We are waiting for final approval from all the participant's before we will release them once a week on our social media and then add them to our website as well. Special thanks to those that agreed to be interviewed by Amy:

Sandra Racine

Tom Ernst

Cecil Heisler

Jacquie Whynot

Cynthia McCarthy

Beverly Eisnor

Betty Eisenhauer

Carla Pentz

Irene Ungar & Anne Mason

- After another review of the stats and a discussion with Anne Palfreyman, Denise, and myself, we have decided to close on Thursdays and Fridays for September until we close for the winter on October 8th due to our visitor stats indicating these days were best in terms of receiving fewer visitors.

### **September and October 2017**

- Attended the Association of Nova Scotia Museums Annual General Meeting and conference/symposium.
- Special thanks to Anne P. for organizing all the volunteer hosts who greeted visitors
- Welcomed Gaile Maddigan into a **new volunteer position** as Administrative Assistant to help keep my administrative hours as low as possible this winter while I work on the archives.

### **Scarecrow Fest**

- Students had helped me plan the activities for Scarecrow Fest before they left and volunteers helped prepare the supplies.
- Scarecrow Festival 2016 brought in 500 visitors and this year we had 645 visitors on the Saturday and Sunday of the Scarecrow Fest.

### **Total Visitors**

- As of our last day of the regular season (Oct 8th), including Scarecrow Festival, we reached 6,170 visitors!  
In comparison, we had
  - Just over 4,000 visitors for the 2016 season
  - 4339 visitors in 2015
  - 3949 visitors in 2014
  - 2680 visitors in 2013
  - 2630 visitors in 2012
- Requests to open by appointment after we closed October 8th
  - We have received a total of 4 calls/emails asking if we are open and one arranged for us to be open by appointment. Thanks to Anne who came in to greet them.
  - Opening by appointment is a good way for us to be potentially eligible for grants that only year-round organizations can apply for.

### **Big thank you to Gary for working on the Founding Families Cabinet doors!**

- After speaking to Joan Russo while she visited last summer, I mentioned that exhibiting her Keddy bible that she gave us would be a lot easier if the

cabinet doors had one piece of glass without edging disrupting the view. She agreed and offered to pay for the renovation. Joan has been updated on the process so far with photos of the doors Gary has finished.

Our Gift Shop's Top 5 best sellers this season:

- Books, which make up 31% of our sales
- Anne Palfreyman's Marmalade item with 23% of our sales
- Anne Palfreyman's postcards with 17% of our sales
- Christian Herridge's Photo cards with 7% of our sales
- Our Museum and 3 Churches hats with 7% of our sales

### **Upcoming Father Christmas Festival**

We will be open for two weekends for Father Christmas Festival on Saturday and Sunday November 25th and 26th and again on December 2nd and 3rd.

- Created a small exhibit about dolls
- We will also have a small exhibit with winter themed photos and scans from a 1961 Eaton's Catalog of winter related items

### **Overall Thoughts on 2017 Season**

Overall, this season went very well. I feel like a lot of great projects were completed and improvements were made to the exhibits, children's programming, etc. Visitor numbers were up with 6,691 visitors! However, it's really the quality of the visit that matters most. Having free admission means we get lots of visitors who just come in, do not want a tour, and walk through on their own without reading much and leave. However, I think we did see an increase in the number of visitors that asked questions, that wanted a tour, that are interested in learning about the town's history, and that read and interacted with our exhibits. I think this increase is mostly related to the staff members who were downstairs greeting visitors and learning how to educate them in an interesting way. We'll always have these two main categories of visitors, those that come in only because it's free and those that come in because they're interested in learning about the history of the area.

Learning to interact with both of these types of visitors and ensuring they all enjoy their visit is a priority that I discuss and make clear to our summer students.

Having staff at the front desk that are passionate about history is what I think made a big difference in the effectiveness of the tours we did offer and gave that resulted in higher donations from visitors on their way out. Having staff that have the necessary skills working on projects upstairs like the education program and work with the collection resulted in brand new, high quality school programs and amazing progress with our collections. This balance of passionate, social, history lovers giving tours to visitors and qualified, skill oriented staff members behind the scenes worked very well for us and this will be the goal I have when hiring staff in the future.

### **Switching to Archive Work**

We had 38 research requests made on-site in the Museum during 2017, about 10 emailed research request, and about 15 research requests via our Facebook page. We made some great strides with our archival backlog. From November 6th, 2017 until March 31, 2018, I switched to working full-time on the archival work with our part-time Archival Consultant John Bell, that is paid by the grant from Government of Canada and Library and Archives Canada. During this time, the grant restricted me to working only with the archives. Therefore, I tracked any amount of time spent on administrative work separate from the archive grant work. The majority of this extra administrative time was used to work on writing the summer student grants for our 2018 season. To see a full list of the archival collections we accessioned during this archival work, please see the Accessions Report.

As I wrap up this report on the 2017 season, we have been open for 17 days and have had 378 visitors, so our 2018 season is looking good! We have lots of work planned for this summer and have another great team of summer students working with us. If you haven't stopped by lately, please do! We're always interested in hearing feedback from our community. If anyone would like to meet with me to discuss anything in regards to the Museum, I'm happy to do so. Please call the Museum or email us to book a time to sit down and chat!