

“Cow Bay’s Ocean Playground:” The Shifting Landscape of Silver Sands Beach,
1860s - Present.

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Abstract

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Silver Sands Beach, in Cow Bay, Nova Scotia, has been subject to a polarized history. Beginning in the mid-1800s, it enjoyed local and non-local fame, alike, as an immensely popular summer destination. However, in the mid-twentieth century, the famous recreation and leisure site succumbed to the adverse effects of commercial sand and gravel mining. The practice had been taking place there throughout the 1940s until the early 1970s - prior to the beach’s protection under the province’s first Beaches Preservation and Protection Act (1967), in 1971, and even by provincial permit up until 1972. The negative impacts of extraction were vast – and the beach is still recovering today, under its current jurisdiction as municipal parkland.

Observing this particular landscape thus brings past tensions to the forefront – most significantly, the competition between nineteenth and twentieth century notions of recreation and leisure, versus the environmental pressures of the resource extraction industry in Nova Scotia during the mid-twentieth century. Along with analyzing these trends and events, this thesis also examines the present significance of Silver Sands, as both a coveted coastal access point and as a heritage landmark. It does so by making use of a wide range of materials, within the realm of social and environmental history, geography, beach morphology, cultural studies and landscape studies. It also makes use of oral history, and includes an appendix of photographs and figures.

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INTRODUCTION – SILVER SANDS: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY HISTORY

“I remember waking up to the sound of the surf, excited to go swimming for the day. And I remember how much sand there was at the beach and walking along it for what seemed like miles. I remember a day that the tide went out especially far, and I found lots of jellyfish and made play cakes with them. I also remember the canteen and how magnificent the dancehall was, with a beautiful jukebox and a balcony that went out over the lake, and its white linoleum floor that was shiny in the sun.”

– Susanne Hudak, Cow Bay¹

Silver Sands Beach, in Cow Bay, Nova Scotia, has been an integral landmark for many generations for locals and non-locals alike. Known as Cow Bay Beach until the early 1920s when it assumed its present name,² Silver Sands was once touted as one of the Halifax area’s most popular beaches. A “long stretch of fine white sand,” it was flanked by a tree-lined picnic area, situated against a lake.³ It boasted various sundry amenities - including an open concept pavilion, in the early decades of the twentieth century,⁴ and by midcentury, it was equipped with modern style beach canteens and a dancehall.⁵

In 1893, local history essayist, Mary Jane Katzmann, praised the small rural community of Cow Bay as “a spot where Nature with her fairest and

¹ Interview with Susanne Hudak. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

² C.B Ferguson and Public Archives of Nova Scotia, *Place Names and Places of Nova Scotia* (Halifax: Public Archives of Nova Scotia, 1967), 147.

³ Nicole D. Myers, “The once-grand Silver Sands Beach,” *The Dartmouth-Cole Harbour Weekly News*, December 23, 2005, 12.

⁴ Interview with Jean Hudak. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

⁵ Myers, “The once-grand Silver Sands Beach,” 12.

sweetest attractions [was] always to be found,” further illustrating its prestige as a favourite summer resort, “not only for picnic parties, but also for those who [enjoyed] a few days or weeks by the sea.”⁶ Lying approximately fifteen kilometers east of Dartmouth, many would make the journey there via horse and wagon⁷ – or even via steamboat in the late nineteenth century⁸ - before the days of the automobile, in order to escape the “dinginess of a garrisoned city.”⁹ The beach was then known far and wide for its unparalleled beauty, figuring not only in local materials, but within publications in New England, as well. Silver Sands sustained this resort fame for nearly one hundred years - from about 1866¹⁰ until the mid 1960s.¹¹

⁶ Mary Jane Katzmann, *History of the Townships of Dartmouth, Preston, Lawrencetown, Halifax County, N.S.* (Halifax: Morton & Co, 1893), 89-90.

⁷ John Martin, *The Story of Dartmouth* (Dartmouth: 1951), 505.

⁸ “The steamer *Goliath* ran trips from Halifax to Cow Bay where passengers were landed on the beach in small boats.” See Martin, *The Story of Dartmouth*, 402-3.

⁹ Randall, “The Nantasket of Halifax,” *Acadian Recorder*, September 8, 1882, 2.

¹⁰ According to H.W Hewitt, in 1901, the history of Cow Bay as a beachside destination began ‘about thirty-five years’ before his time of writing, by Colonel Dawson and Colonel Sinclair, marking the year of its ‘founding,’ as such, to be approximately 1866. Hewitt writes: “The history of Cow Bay as a summer resort began about 35 or 40 years ago. Some of the first to go to Cow Bay for pleasure were Colonel Dawson and his son-in-law, Colonel [Sinclair]. They used to have rooms in the house of Daniel Moser, Sr. Colonel Barnaby also rented rooms a few years after. From that time on more and more persons began to come regularly to Cow Bay, so I will say nothing of any except the first two mentioned. Colonel Dawson was a very tall and corpulent man. He served for a short time in the Crimean war. He was very wealthy, and on his return from the Crimea he left England and cam[e] to Dartmouth. [...] His son-in-law, Colonel [Sinclair] , of the 42nd Regiment, known commonly as the Black Watch Regiment, did not care to leave his wife; so, when the war broke out he sold his commission and came to Dartmouth [...] Colonel Dawson and [Sinclair]. Colonel Dawson took a fancy to Cow Bay. He thought that the island in Cow Bay Lake, being completely surrounded by water, belonged to nobody. He camped on the island, and thought it his own. He had a folding canvas canoe and a sailboat, which he used frequently on the lake and outside the beach. He used to put an awning over the boat and sleep in her. To make a long story short both Dawson and [Sinclair] left Dartmouth and Cow Bay about 35 years ago.” See H.W Hewitt, “Hewitt History No.14 [15]: How the Mosers Came into Possession of the Beach – Story of a Wreck,” *Dartmouth Patriot* (August 10, 1901) <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nshalifa/Ch15.html> (accessed 9 October, 2013).

¹¹ See Hugh Conrod, “Bather’s Turned Away,” *The Mail Star*, August 5, 1966.

However, from as early as the 1940s, the beach was also the site of commercial resource extraction.¹² Because of this, by 1966, it had ceased to operate as a fully functional recreational site.¹³ Rapid and dramatic changes to its geomorphological formation, due to the large-scale removal of its sand and gravel, saw the gradual reduction of Silver Sands' once 'silvery' crest, into a predominantly rocky shoal.¹⁴ Particularly between the latter half of the 1950s and the mid 1960s, but all the way until 1971, its material was being used for various government construction projects around the Halifax Regional Municipality.¹⁵

Upon being sold to businessman George Trynor, owner of both the Silver Sands Company and the Trynor Construction Company,¹⁶ in 1954,¹⁷ by "late Halifax merchant tailor" Robert Stanford,¹⁸ Silver Sands became caught between two competing economic demands. From the mid-1950s until the mid-1960s, Trynor operated Silver Sands both as a recreational beach, and as a

¹² See R.B Taylor, D. Frobel and E. Patton, draft of "Cow Bay Beach (Silver Sands) Halifax County," (Halifax: Bedford Institute of Oceanography, 2008), 39.

¹³ "A 'positively no trespassing' sign this summer bars public access to Silver Sands – one of the Dartmouth area colourful beach, camping and recreation areas. Literally thousands of disappointed bathers – including many hundreds of tourists hauling trailers and tents with plans for overnight camping have been turned away from access to the horse-shoe shaped beach area by a fence and chained gate across the beach's main entrance roadway." See Conrod, "Bather's Turned Away," August 5, 1966.

¹⁴ Taylor, Frobel and Patton, "Cow Bay Beach (Silver Sands) Halifax County," 2-3.

¹⁵ Anonymous, "Protect this Priceless Asset," *The Mail Star*, February 7, 1956, 4.

See also Taylor, Frobel and Patton, "Cow Bay Beach (Silver Sands) Halifax County."

As Andries writes: "Sand and gravel removal from Nova Scotia beaches has occurred for decades, as long as the beaches have been accessible to developing communities and cities." This is because beach sediment is an "inexpensive and convenient alternative to crushing stone." See also Darlene Marie Andries, "The Impact of Beach Protection on Beach Sand and Gravel Extraction in Nova Scotia, 1968-1983," (M.A thesis, Saint Mary's University, 1984), 3-4.

¹⁶ Both of these firms were under the ownership of George Trynor. While the Trynor Construction Company was focused on the resource extraction industry at Silver Sands, the recreation and leisure industry at the beach operated under the venture known as the Silver Sands Company.

¹⁷ Taylor, Frobel and Patton, "Cow Bay Beach (Silver Sands) Halifax County," 39.

¹⁸ Robert Stanford had been the former owner of Silver Sands, prior to 1954, for nearly half a century. See "Protect this Priceless Asset," February 7, 1956, 4. Interview with Jean Hudak. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

mass industrial extraction site. However, as time went on, these two industries would prove unable to exist in tandem. Silver Sands' legacy as a summer paradise was threatened, and eventually dissolved, by its shifting physical landscape and altered aesthetic appearance, brought on by the environmental damage of extraction. In turn, the dancehall, canteen and other buildings were either torn down or destroyed by wave action pushing the beach landward, causing it to lose much of its original foreshore and backshore expanse.¹⁹

Many Cow Bay residents now recall the mid-1960s as the era when they "lost their beach."²⁰ Indeed, beyond the parking lot area, Silver Sands has never again been dotted with beach facilities, ornamental structures and manicured grounds. Despite nostalgia for 'the way it used to be,' however, Silver Sands remains a site imbued with meaning, to local residents, and to non-local citizens, alike. Several decades after its designation as a protected beach under Nova Scotia's first Beaches Preservation and Protection Act, in 1971,²¹ today's beach is, furthermore, the interest of several ecological and heritage-focused conservation efforts,²² as well as an essential coastal access point for the user public. Now formally known as Silver Sands Beach Park, it has been under the

¹⁹ Taylor, Frobels and Patton, "Cow Bay Beach (Silver Sands) Halifax County," 2-3.

²⁰ Interview with Donald Hudak. Cow Bay, October 20, 2013.

²¹ The first Beaches Preservation and Protection Act was founded in 1967. Silver Sands Beach became a protected beach under this Act in 1971. However, it was later re-instated under a revised B.P.A, in 1975, which states that "all land below mean high water is protected and all land above mean high water is protected when so designated by the Minister. Under such status, beach sand and gravel removal is prohibited unless specifically authorized." See Andries, "The Impact of Beach Protection on Beach Sand and Gravel Extraction in Nova Scotia," 2.

²² See Silver Sands Conservation Society, "Silver Sands Beach Park, Cow Bay, Nova Scotia: Proposal for Funding," (Cow Bay: November 2005), 3.

jurisdiction of municipal parkland since 2003. It is commonly used today as a site for walking, birdwatching, surfing and gazing.²³

Due to its both rich and traumatic history, brought on by shifting types of human activity taking place upon its shores, Silver Sands Beach presents itself as a community landmark that must be further explored and, moreover, understood. By engaging with ideas and tools from various disciplines, this thesis will attempt to achieve these ends by examining the multitude of phenomena experienced by the beach and its users, both individually, as well as comprehensively. It will ultimately seek to weave together a cohesive account of its history, while also investigating its present importance, by treating the evolution of this landscape, its meanings and its uses, in an interdisciplinary manner. Insights from the fields of social and environmental history, geography, beach morphology, cultural and landscape studies, will be consulted and combined, in order to represent the multidimensional nature of this site.

As historians Genevieve Massard-Guildbaud and Stephen Mosley write, “[people] live in a world that has been divided between nature and culture,”²⁴ yet, “leisure practices often bring people into close contact with the natural world, and involve complex human-nature relationships.”²⁵ Such a notion suggests that

²³ See Silver Sands Conservation Society, “Silver Sands Beach Park, Cow Bay, Nova Scotia: Proposal for Funding,” (Cow Bay: November 2005), 3.

²⁴ Genevieve Massard-Guildbaud and Stephen Mosley, “Chapter 1: Breaking Down Borders: Integrating the Social and Environmental in History, Leisure and Environment,” in *Common Ground: Integrating the Social and Environmental in History*, eds., Genevieve Massard-Guildbaud and Stephen Mosley, (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011), 2.

²⁵ Massard-Guildbaud and Mosley, “Leisure and Environment,” 5.

Silver Sands, and the beach landscape in general, is able to demonstrate just how intertwined the natural world and civilization truly are, and thus Silver Sands should be studied, both socially and environmentally. Indeed, in their attempt to remedy the unilateral Western approach to landmarks and localities, Massard-Guildbaud and Mosley, strive for what they call a “common ground,” between social and environmental history, in the study of *any* natural landscape, influenced by human activity. They further express the importance of examining landmarks and events through both cultural tools and the natural sciences.²⁶

Extending the analyses of Massard-Guildbaud and Mosley, Kent Ryden calls for a combining of the studies of nature and culture when examining landscapes. Revealing how the mid nineteenth century reflections of nature writer Henry Thoreau allude to a wider tradition in Western society that is concerned with placing “nature and culture on opposite sides of a physical and ideological dichotomy,”²⁷ Ryden demands an understanding of “the ways in

²⁶ Massard-Guildbaud and Mosley, “Leisure and Environment,” 3.

²⁷ Ryden reflects on the way in which Thoreau’s 1848 essay, “Ktaadn,” “draws a firm line” between the landscapes of the pristine New England wilderness versus those that have been redefined by human activity – especially agricultural sites. See Kent C. Ryden, “The Handselled Globe: Natural Systems, Cultural Process, and the Formation of the New England Landscape,” in *A Landscape History of New England*, ed., Blake Harrison and Richard W. Judd, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2013), 37.

Additionally, the author has observed that, in his 1854 novel, *Walden; or, Life in the Woods*, Thoreau also demonstrates his need to separate the day-to-day narratives of nature and man. Moving into a cabin at the edge of a forest, Thoreau believes immersing himself in the woods as the only means to distance himself from the clutches and concerns of society in a spiritual sense; to become more mentally aware. Town and wilderness are viewed as opponents, as two wholly distinct experiences that do not draw from one another, and do not transgress their respective boundaries, therefore, they are not a product of a relationship of interchange. See Thoreau, Henry, *Walden; or, Life in the Woods* (Mineola: Dover Publications Ltd., 1997). Nonetheless, this is a view that has been challenged in recent decades. For example, these observations stand in stark contrast to the musings of geography reformer, William Cronon, who delivers an intertwined image of the natural and the social, within his work *Nature’s Metropolis*. Here he writes: “Americans [Westerner’s] have long tended to see city and country as separate places, more isolated from each other than connected. We carefully partition our national landscape into urban places, rural places, and wilderness. Although we often cross the symbolic boundaries between them – seeking escape or

which human minds and hands have worked in tandem,” within nature and its physical landscape.²⁸

Furthermore, Alan MacEachern reminds his readers, in his historical analysis of Atlantic Canada’s national parks, that the cultural and the natural are firmly bound within these specifically designated areas, just as they are everywhere else. He confirms their binary relationship by demonstrating how parks are products of cultural decisions, which are chosen by people for various “aesthetic, economic and political reasons.”²⁹ In the treatment of parks, he claims, “attitudes and actions are never about nature alone,” but also include “messy human aspirations for social, spiritual, and financial betterment.”³⁰

As a privately owned property, until it was acquired as municipal parkland, Silver Sands, too, deserves to be interpreted in relation to MacEachern’s account of national parks. Albeit not a *national* park, much like any of these sites, it has been, and continues to be, promoted as an outdoor retreat, designed for public consumption. As such, it has endured many of the same overarching procedures, tensions and trends as those experienced, during the former half of the twentieth century, by Atlantic Canada’s national parks.

excitement, recreation or renewal – we rarely reflect on how tightly bound together they really are.” See William Cronon, introduction to *Nature’s Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W.W Norton & Company, Inc. 1991), xvi.

²⁸ Ryden, “The Handselled Globe,” 37.

²⁹ Alan MacEachern, *Natural Selections: National Parks in Atlantic Canada, 1935-1970*, (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2001), 5.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 240.

The first national parks in the region, for example, were adorned with bowling greens and tennis courts, not to mention with upscale hotels and cabins, because these were the entertainments believed to appeal to their primary consumers; often upper-class tourists. In their earlier days, the Parks Branch tried to entice wealthier persons by providing amenities within the parks that would be attractive to them, thus catering to shifting public tastes of what was fashionable, instead of promoting the “initial appeal of parks as natural antidotes to civilization.”³¹ Similarly, in its heyday, Silver Sands was embellished with an array of facilities and amenities, in order to appeal to its user public, instead of garnering its increasing popularity merely due to its natural beauty, alone.

Indeed, at the time, social activity was thought to be the priority of tourism, and many national park accommodations and amenities of the 1950s, were built in a way that encouraged interacting and socializing with others. By result, such sites were not simply devoted to the preservation of nature, but were largely shaped by aesthetic and economic factors, as well.³² At Silver Sands, activities such as picnic parties, baseball games, and nighttime dances, also enabled interaction between individuals.

For many years, in fact, the attraction of Silver Sands largely lay in the promotion of its social and cultural seaside experience. Historically speaking, aspirations within the privately owned beach park notably included several ‘big

³¹ MacEachern, *Natural Selections*, 162.

³² *Ibid.*, 160.

business' schemes. First, in the 1900s, there was a plan to develop the beach into one of North America's finest "watering places," complete with a "large summer hotel, tramway [between Cow Bay and Dartmouth], bathing houses, amusement hall, and electric lights,"³³ that never materialized. However, later, the more famous idea to convert the beach into a "local Disneyland," in the 1959,³⁴ was partially realized. As MacEachern writes, "because so much of [...] society's activity is regulated by capitalism, it is not surprising that [national] parks, like all others, are to some degree parks for profit."³⁵

Not unlike the national sites in MacEachern's study, Silver Sands can reveal how "aesthetic judgments" affect the use and manipulation of nature. Moreover, it can show "how the treatment of nature changes over time, in part because of changing aesthetic preferences."³⁶ Initially an environment enjoyed in its unaltered form, as its popularity grew, Silver Sands quickly transformed into an arena in which other entertainments and utilities became desired, even necessary, for sustaining its allure amongst its ever widening user public.

Today, though, notions of what to expect from the seaside have changed once again. No longer converted into an 'ocean playground' of manicured campgrounds, amusement areas, sanitary and culinary facilities, Silver Sands is now appreciated in lieu of its natural attributes, by many of its users. Completing

³³ Anonymous, "Watering Places: Great Improvements to be Made at Cow Bay Beach: A Beautiful Park, Large Summer Hotel, Tramway, Bathing Houses, Amusement Hall, Electric Lights," (Newspaper article, anon.)

³⁴ Anonymous, "Silver Sands To Be a Local Disneyland," *The Dartmouth Free Press*, March 19, 1959, 1.

³⁵ MacEachern, *Natural Selections*, 158.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

a notable rotation in its land use and consumption, it is again valued, in and of itself, as a passive park space.³⁷ Does this echo a similar trend that saw increasing numbers of people accessing and appreciating Atlantic Canada's national parks, in order to experience *nature* itself, around the mid-twentieth century?³⁸ MacEachern notes a rising environmental consciousness at these sites in the later 1950s, which heightened throughout the 1960s, and saw more people heading to the parks to interact with the wilderness, rather than to strictly engage with others within the resort setting, as originally anticipated by the Parks Branch.³⁹

Although occurring much later, Silver Sands, too, experienced such a change in its use and consumption. In recent decades at the site there has been an increasing desire, amongst its users, to interact with nature, itself, in its unadulterated form - seemingly reminiscent of the shift MacEachern notes to have burgeoned during the mid-twentieth century. Indeed, generally speaking, environmental awareness and the notion of a conservation consciousness were to steadily increase beyond the decades of the mid-twentieth century, to extend into the present.

³⁷ A passive park typically pertains to a small green area, rather than to a park with full functioning facilities and regular activities that engage the user public on a routine basis. Interview with Donald Hudak. Cow Bay, October 20, 2013.

³⁸ MacEachern, *Natural Selections*, 220-224.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 224.

Despite one development plan that sought to convert the Silver Sands site into a golf course during the early 2000s,⁴⁰ Silver Sands has remained undeveloped since the period of resource extraction. During this time, concerned community stewards formed the Silver Sands Conservation Society,⁴¹ and later on, members of Nova Scotia's surfing community, concerned with preserving public access to the site, founded the Coastal Access Committee.⁴² These groups presented a myriad of ecological and social concerns, surrounding potential development at the site, at community-based meetings with municipal planners. In the end, the golf course project, and subsequent cottage and housing plan, was scrapped, not solely due to the monetary issues of the developer alone, but furthermore due to zoning issues, brought up in court cases waged between Sherwood Acres Ltd., and the Silver Sands Conservation Society.⁴³ Shortly afterward, the Halifax Regional Municipality purchased a tract of the Silver Sands property to ensure continued public access to the beach.⁴⁴ This scenario, too, then, can attest to the heightening sense of environmental

⁴⁰ See, for example, Stephen Bornais, "Taking a swing at his dream," *The Daily News*, May 6, 2001, 41.

⁴¹ See Silver Sands Conservation Society, "Silver Sands Beach Park, Cow Bay, Nova Scotia: Proposal for Funding."

⁴² "The CAC History," Coastal Access Committee Blog, entry posted July 26, 2008, <http://coastalaccessns.blogspot.ca/> (accessed 17 February, 2014).

⁴³ See, for example, Brian Flinn, "Golf course proposal worries residents, despite moose reprieve: Critics say development may eliminate wildlife near Silver Sands beach," *The Daily News*, Tuesday, October 3, 2000, 5.

⁴⁴ "On August 30, 2003 after years of negotiations with at least two property owners; HRM acquired Silver Sands Beach (approximately 9.5 acres) and a 30,000 square foot parcel of the headland. The SSCS was the driving force behind this purchase. As part of the negotiations, the SSCS obtained a legal opinion from Stewart McKelvey Stirling Scales on the ownership of the wetlands behind the beach. [Approximate] value of this opinion was \$4,000." See Nova Scotia Health Promotion, Sport and Recreation: Recreation Facility Development Program, "Silver Sands Beach Park – Cow Bay, Executive Summary," (Cow Bay: February 2006), 5.

consciousness that began to promote the preservation of nature, rather than its utility and malleability, as a means to generate profit.

Like all parks, Silver Sands has served, and continues to serve, as a barometer of how society has felt and behaved towards nature, as well as of how individuals have behaved towards each other, over the course of time.⁴⁵ An analysis of Silver Sands conveys the multidimensional nature of the park, as well as the variety of shifting human preferences upon which its acceptance, as such, depends. Viewing the beach as a consumable environment, laden with various social and cultural phenomena, Silver Sands indeed requires consideration through an interdisciplinary lens.

In his study of parks within Boston's Emerald Necklace chain, Birge-Liberman uses what he calls a "discursive-materialist" approach, which allows for both the tangible and the intangible to represent space; analyzing the material culture of built environments, along with their ideological meanings and cultural significance.⁴⁶ Silver Sands Beach can also benefit from this kind of examination. Particularly, in addition to written research, photographs found in the Appendix to this thesis, help to reveal how the beach has been used and perceived over time, both through picturing its evolving landscape and material culture.

⁴⁵ MacEachern, *Natural Selections*, 240.

⁴⁶ Phil Birge-Liberman, "Public Parks as Environmental Amenities in Nineteenth-Century Boston," in *A Landscape History of New England*, eds., Blake Harrison and Richard W. Judd (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2011), 336.

A multitude of images taken during the beach's heyday, for example, attest to its history as a desirable recreational spot, during an overall period of growth in Nova Scotia's tourism sector that was priding the province's "primitive and serene beauty."⁴⁷ Additionally, photographs of archeological matter, originating from this period, and still being found upon the beach today, are included.

Images taken during and after extraction at the beach, provide further proof of how the morphological setting of Silver Sands was drastically altered by extraction, moreover visually expressing how the general ideal of Western progress in the decades following the Second World War - involving more concrete infrastructure and more manufactured, uniform landscapes - popularized the notion of the beach as an extractable resource, rather than as a stationary one. Photos and diagrams from the contemporary Silver Sands Beach Park portray how the beach has been redefined today as a community asset and key coastal access point - highly valued in and of itself. Despite the fact that these visual materials are not the main focus within this research, they bolster its arguments through cross-cultural perspective.

Another alternative medium used to garner subjective data, here, is oral history. Interspersed throughout the whole of this thesis, it has been obtained through interviews conducted by the author with Cow Bay locals and non-local

⁴⁷ James Morrison, "American Tourism in Nova Scotia, 1871-1940," *Nova Scotia Historical Review* 2.2 (1982), 40-51.
<http://www.novascotia.ca/nsarm/virtual/tourism/american.asp?Language=English>, (accessed 9 Oct. 2013).

citizens, alike. This phenomenological element allows for the landscape to be further interpreted and understood through people's feelings and attitudes, as they are what have largely shaped how the beach has evolved, over time.

The participants vary in age – the oldest individual interviewed is eighty-nine years old, while the youngest is in their early thirties. Some of the individuals have lived in Cow Bay their whole lives, while others are newer to the area and to the beach. A number of the participants volunteered to share their memorable experiences at Silver Sands, while others discussed how they currently make use of the site. Some of the participants are also members of one or more of the committees, which work to conserve and protect the beach and its surrounding parkland area today, as well.⁴⁸ In lieu of these attachments, excerpts from all of these interviews appear interspersed throughout the thesis, wherever relevant.

Regardless of the possible risks occasionally associated with oral history, its inclusion here better illuminates the relationship of locals, as well as non-locals, alike, with Silver Sands Beach. It attests to the fact that subjective qualitative data is essential to properly understanding the attachments, thoughts and feelings of individuals.⁴⁹ Some of the most valuable insights have come from

⁴⁸ An application to the Saint Mary's University Research Ethics Board was put forward by the author and approved by the Board, to enable a total of sixteen individuals to be interviewed for this thesis. All participants signed an informed consent form, composed by the author, and also approved by the Saint Mary's University Research Ethics Board. Approval was granted on September 3, 2013. Refer to "SMU REB File #13-159," Saint Mary's University.

⁴⁹ As Kenneth Kirby posits, each telling and every retelling of an experience is mutable – depending on many variables, such as time, location, health and mood of both the interviewer and the interviewee. Furthermore, changes in interpretation of an event or place occur over time, since an individual's view of their experiences evolves as they continually reevaluate their life and this is what Kirby refers to as 'time consciousness.' This being said, it is sometimes assumed that oral history, as subjective research, is less

speaking with people about their uses and interpretations of the beach, affirming the words of Valerie Raleigh Yow that "...history – or society – does not exist outside human consciousness [and] [h]istory is what the people who lived it make of it."⁵⁰

The experiences and memories of these persons elicit a far clearer understanding of the overall cultural meanings and functions of the beach. This comes as no surprise, as attitudes and perceptions of a site are highly instrumental, if not totally responsible, for the acquisition of its value in society. After all, what would the beach be apart from human thoughts, ideas and memories? Human geographer Tim Creswell determines the definition of a "place" to be a "meaningful location."⁵¹ Of course, in order for a place to have meaning, there must be an element of human engagement. In reflecting upon the research of political geographer John Agnew, Creswell further adds that, "as well as being located and having a material visual form, places must have some relationship to humans and the human capacity to produce and consume meaning." This being said, sense of place is actually the "subjective and emotional attachment people have to place."⁵² In order to fully grasp a sense of place at Silver Sands, comprehending the participation of individuals, within the space, is key.

credible, since it can suffer due to biases, generalizations and even complete mistruths due to imperfections in human expression and memory. See Kenneth R. Kirby, "Phenomenology and the Problems of Oral History," *Oral History Review*, 35:1 (2008): 25.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁵¹ Tim Creswell, *Place: A Short Introduction* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2004), 7.

⁵² Creswell, *Place*, 7.

The thesis first describes the changing physical landscape of Silver Sands, before turning to analyze its significance through the scope of the social sciences. Chapter 2 discusses the morphology of the beach, from the early 1900s to the present, illustrating the numerous environmental impacts of the former recreational and extraction activities upon the beach. It traces the beach's transformation from a wider, sand and cobblestone tombolo beach at the beginning of the twentieth century,⁵³ into a narrower, lower gravel barrier beach, by the latter twentieth century.⁵⁴ It also addresses and interprets the archeological materials that remain from the beach's peak years as a leisure destination.

The section makes use of several studies that outline the morphology of the beach from the early decades of the 1900s, namely D.S MacIntosh's *A Study of the Cow Bay Beaches*, D.W Johnson's *Studies of American Physiography: The New England Acadian Shoreline*, and J.W Goldthwait's *Physiography of Nova Scotia*.⁵⁵ It also consults more recent research, conducted by Taylor, Frobels and Patton of the Bedford Institute of Oceanography,⁵⁶ conducted after aggregate extraction. Interview data from a meeting with Bob Taylor, of the

⁵³ See D.S McIntosh, "A Study of the Cow Bay Beaches," *Nova Scotia Institute of Science Proceedings and Transactions*, 14:2, 109-19, (paper presented at Dalhousie University, April 10, 1916).

See also D.W Johnson, *Studies of American Physiography: The New England Acadian Shoreline*, originally published in 1925. D.W Johnson, *Studies of American Physiography: The New England Acadian Shoreline* (New York: Hafner Publishing Co., 1967).

⁵⁴ Taylor, Frobels and Patton, "Cow Bay Beach (Silver Sands) Halifax County," 2-3.

⁵⁵ See J.W Goldthwait, *Physiography of Nova Scotia [Department of Mines Canada, Geological Survey]* (Ottawa: F.A Acland, 1924).

See also Johnson, *Studies of American Physiography*.

See also McIntosh, "A Study of the Cow Bay Beaches."

⁵⁶ Taylor, Frobels and Patton, "Cow Bay Beach (Silver Sands) Halifax County."

Institute, additionally facilitates understanding within this more scientifically-based section.

Indeed, Taylor, who has studied the morphology and sedimentology of this location for years, is a tremendous asset for learning more about the geomorphological changes faced by Silver Sands, over the course of one and a half centuries. In his interview, and within written materials, Taylor explains the ways in which barrier beaches shift in shape and appearance due to a number of factors, including wave exposure, sediment supply and human activities - investigating these considerations in relation to the evolution of Silver Sands Beach. As the natural sciences are not the forte of the author, careful inclusion of Taylor's explanations ensure that an adequate contextual account of beach morphology is a part of this research - providing basic, but necessary, geological, and furthermore environmental, perspective.

Following this overview of the changing physical landscape and topography of Silver Sands, the remainder of the thesis is devoted to the ways in which this landmark has been both used, and enjoyed, by human beings. Chapter 3 examines the socio-cultural history of the beach. It analyzes the activities and meanings associated with the landscape during its recreation and leisure era. After all, the "once-grand Silver Sands beach," was more than *just* a beach to those who spent time frolicking upon its shores. As Nicole D. Myers has stated: "the popular haunt had more to offer than just the cool water of the

Atlantic and plush sand to lay on. Bordered by trees and reachable from the road, a small canteen provided refreshments and snacks and shade from the blistering sun.” Furthermore, there was “a dance hall where a good many heels were kicked up in merriment [and] several small statues of animals scattered in various locations [...] near a modest pond.”⁵⁷

Chapter 3 examines the architecture, design, activities and events of this period through a variety of sources. Spanning from the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century, it reveals the ways in which recreation evolved at Silver Sands following its popularization as a tourist destination by two military men, Colonel Dawson and Colonel Sinclair in the mid-1800s,⁵⁸ into an attraction that was often featured in editions of Nova Scotia’s official tourism brochure, *Canada’s Ocean Playground*, throughout the 1920s and beyond.⁵⁹ It contemplates the phenomena of recreation and leisure, locally and universally, viewing the beach, itself, as an environment originally enjoyed for its natural attributes, in the latter 1800s, to later becoming a site that was continually being manipulated and enhanced, in both infrastructure and design, to cater to its ever growing number of pleasure seekers by the turn of the twentieth century.

⁵⁷ Myers, “The once-grand Silver Sands Beach,” December 23, 2005, 12.

⁵⁸ H.W Hewitt, “Hewitt History No.14 [15]: History of Cow Bay – How the Mosers Came into Possession of the Beach” – Story of a Wreck,” *Dartmouth Patriot* (August 10, 1901): <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nshalifa/Ch15.html> (accessed 9 October, 2013).

⁵⁹ See, for example, photo and caption of “Cow Bay Beach,” which appears in Nova Scotia’s 1929 provincial tourism guide. The same photo, which appears here, appears throughout many editions of Nova Scotia’s tourism guide, published throughout the 1920s, as well. See *Nova Scotia: The Ocean Playground* (Halifax: Nova Scotia Department of Tourism, 1929), 44.

In tracing the golden era of Silver Sands in both a macro and micro sense, it first illustrates the rise and establishment of Western nature and beach tourism at this time, in general, by including accounts of British seaside history, as well as well as by incorporating American and Canadian literature on leisure and recreation. Works such as Fred Gray's *Designing the Seaside: Architecture, Society and Nature* on the architecture and development of British seaside culture, and Cindy S. Aron's *Working at Play: A History of Vacations in the United States*, deliver universal context to help frame the evolution of ideas, attitudes, and traditions surrounding leisure culture at Silver Sands as a part of a wider Western vacation and recreation movement.⁶⁰ A variety of sources dealing with Nova Scotia's tourism industry are also used, including "American Tourism in Nova Scotia, 1870-1970," by James Morrison, and "Nova Scotia's Early Tourism Industry, 1870-1940," by Jay White.⁶¹ Such works compliment various other materials from the municipality which deal with the beach directly - among them John Martin's well-known *History of Dartmouth*, published in 1950.⁶² Local church histories, newspaper articles, and memoirs also figure, here, along with interview data gathered from individuals who spent time at the beach, between the 1920s and the 1960s.

⁶⁰ See Fred Gray, *Designing the Seaside: Architecture, Society and Nature* (London: Reaktion Books, 2009). See also Cindy S. Aron, *Working at Play: A History of Vacations in the United States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

⁶¹ James H. Morrison, "American Tourism in Nova Scotia, 1871-1940," in *Nova Scotia Historical Review*, 2:2, 1982, 40-51. Reprinted by with permission by the Nova Scotia Archives. <http://www.novascotia.ca/nsarm/virtual/tourism/american.asp?Language=English> (accessed 6 April, 2014). See also Jay White, "A Vista of Infinite Development!': Surveying Nova Scotia's Early Tourism Industry," *Collections* 6 (2003), Abr. ed., "Nova Scotia's Early Tourism Industry, 1870-1940," <http://www.novascotia.ca/nsarm/virtual/tourism/early.asp?Language=English> (accessed 9 October, 2013).

⁶² See Martin, *The Story of Dartmouth*.

As Chapter 4 illustrates, however, Silver Sands' time as a favoured beach resort did not last beyond the mid-1960s. This chapter examines the history of sand and gravel extraction from Silver Sands, particularly through the activities of the Trynor Construction Company, which was responsible for the majority of aggregate removal from its shores. It also discusses the earlier commercial aggregate removal businesses at the beach during the 1940s, but pays special attention to the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s, before the practice was banned at Silver Sands, without a permit, in 1971 - under the Beaches Preservation and Protection Act (1967) - and completely halted, due the Trynor Construction Company's inability to secure further permits from the Department of Lands and Forests, in 1972.⁶³ It also briefly considers the history of extraction in the province and in North America, as a whole.

Using newspaper articles on the well-documented event - controversial even in 1956, when the *Halifax Mail Star* published an article expressing fears that the beach was "in danger of losing much of its attractiveness," due to mining⁶⁴ - this chapter also particularly relies on the data of Darlene Marie Andries. In her 1983 thesis, *The Impact of Beach Protection on Beach Sand and Gravel Extraction in Nova Scotia, 1968-1983*, Andries' outlines the process through which the Beaches Preservation and Protection Act was formed, and discusses how Silver Sands gained its eventual protection under the Act. She

⁶³ Anonymous, "Compensate Beach Loss," *The Mail Star*, November 16, 1977, 1.

⁶⁴ Anonymous, "Protect this Priceless Asset," February 7, 1956, 4.

also reviews the legal case, which followed, resulting in the Trynor firms receiving \$169, 270, in compensation, for losses incurred, due to the newly instated ban against the extraction of beach material.⁶⁵ On a wider scale, this chapter alludes to the Western shift from an industrially driven post-war society, to a post-industrial society with an environmental consciousness.

Chapter 5 turns to contemporary perceptions of Silver Sands. It traces the beach's transformation from a devalued and neglected space in the 1970s and 1980s, following the decades of resource extraction, into a landscape that is now appreciated on its own terms. Relying heavily on newspaper data, and community interviews, this section furthermore details the plan to turn the Silver Sands site into a golf course and resort in the early 2000s, and demonstrates how this idea came into conflict with a growing environmental consciousness within the surrounding community of Cow Bay, as well as with the historical importance that had since become attached to the Silver Sands site.

It considers the efforts of the Silver Sands Conservation Society, in particular, towards promoting environmental awareness at the site, and moreover, observes their battle, along with the Surfrider's Association of Nova Scotia's subsidiary Coastal Access Committee, in order to lobby for retained, public coastal access at Silver Sands, during this period. Additionally, it outlines the issues faced in the eventual procurement of Silver Sands by the Halifax

⁶⁵ Andries, "The Impact of Beach Protection on Beach Sand and Gravel Extraction," 27-9.

Regional Municipality, in 2003, from the hands of the potential golf course developer, Sherwood Acres Limited, for a coastal access park.⁶⁶ On top of this, Chapter 5 tells the story of the Save the Moose Committee, which existed in the late 1990s and early 2000s, working towards the maintenance of the only remaining animal statue at Silver Sands – The Moose - built near the parking lot of the beach in 1959, by sculptor Winston Bronnum.⁶⁷ In sum, by analyzing the roles, goals and accomplishments of all of these community organizations, in their work towards the continued preservation and appreciation of Silver Sands, this section speaks to the ever-evolving importance that the beach holds within Cow Bay today.

Referring back to MacEachern’s notion of parks, Chapter 5 also reveals that Silver Sands, albeit affected by a new array of “aesthetic, economic and political considerations,” is yet the product of cultural decisions.⁶⁸ By fully outlining the site’s eventual transformation into the Silver Sands Beach Park, it pays specific attention to the role that aesthetics continues to play within the shaping, and perception, of the contemporary park.

⁶⁶ See Nova Scotia Health Promotion, Sport and Recreation: Recreation Facility Development Program, “Silver Sands Beach Park – Cow Bay, Executive Summary,” 5.
Interview with Donald Hudak. Cow Bay, October 20, 2013.

See also, for example, Brian Flinn, “Golf course proposal worries, despite moose reprieve: Critics say development may eliminate wildlife near Silver Sands beach,” *The Daily News*, Tuesday, October 3, 2000, 5.

⁶⁷ See, for example, Brian Flinn, “Cow Bay rallies for Moose: Residents raise funds to repair landmark, turn attention to adjacent beach,” February 11, 2000, 3.

See also, Silver Sands Conservation Society, “Silver Sands Beach Park, Cow Bay, Nova Scotia: Proposal for Funding,” 2-3.

⁶⁸ MacEachern, *Natural Selections*, 4.

Chapter 6 further elaborates on the 'here and now' of the site, addressing the ways in which the community and outsiders, alike, perceive and make use of the beach park, today. In the words of Allen Pred, "places are never finished but are always the result of processes and practices."⁶⁹ As Creswell explains, "a layered location replete with human histories and memories, place has width as well as depth. It is about connections, what surrounds it, what formed it, what happened there, [and] what will happen there."⁷⁰ It is in this way that Silver Sands is constantly evolving due to human interactions and, therefore, so is its meaning.

Additionally Creswell points out that "places are produced by the people that constitute 'society' yet, at the same time, they are key to the production of relations between people. Place, in other words, is right at the center of humanity."⁷¹ The concluding section employs a phenomenological element, in order to gauge the thoughts, feelings and attitudes of the people who interact within the contemporary Silver Sands Beach Park.

Overall, by making use of a wide variety of disciplines and modalities, in several distinct, yet chronologically organized chapters, this thesis attempts to weave together a cohesive, yet linear, socio-cultural account of the beach, enabling the reader to trace the physical and social evolution of this landscape, over time. Interpreting the treatment of Silver Sands Beach through both

⁶⁹ Creswell, *Place*, 37.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁷¹ Creswell, *Place*, 123.

individual persons, as well as through the shifting preferences of society, at large, this research addresses the unique experiences and significance of this site, while also addressing overarching trends that have left their imprints upon its shores.

In the words of Massard-Guildbaud and Mosley, this thesis adopts a “common ground” approach. Meshing various insights, from the natural sciences to studies of society and culture, it helps to promote a heightened awareness about the layered landscape of Silver Sands. It further illuminates how this allows for “the complex interplay between people’s day-to-day activities and ecological change,” to become exposed and how this, by result, aids in garnering a “better understand[ing] [of human] relationships with nature over time.” Massard-Guildbaud and Mosley further posit that, in order to “move towards a more sustainable future [...] greater attention must be paid to how people’s lives [have been] connected to their environments in the past.”⁷²

Indeed, this observation of Silver Sands Beach can also present key lessons. Both its past and present landscape provide testament of the environmental dangers, as well as of the social consequences of sand and gravel mining while, in recent years, the beach stands as a model, demonstrating various successful beach protection and public coastal access initiatives. Without question, Silver Sands is a definitive example of a site where, how, as Raymond

⁷² Massard-Guildbaud and Mosley, “Leisure and Environment,” 5.

Williams puts it, “[human beings] have mixed [their] labour with the earth, [their] forces with its forces too deeply to be able to draw back and separate either out.”⁷³

In closing this introductory chapter it is important to consider: even though notions of *why* beaches are valuable to Nova Scotians have shifted and transformed over time, throughout the history of their human use, they have nevertheless *always* been viewed as environments integral to the wellbeing of this province and its citizens. Even when their evolving land uses and meanings are controversial and contested, they still hold outstanding social relevance. Despite competing values that create various aesthetic, environmental, political, and economic tensions, Nova Scotian beaches, like Silver Sands, have sustained their significance over the course of time. In lieu of this, they require further academic attention in relation to such social phenomena. Articulating the steps by which to do so, here, Silver Sands is at the centre of this academically integrated thesis, exposed as both a landmark to be celebrated and as a landmark from which much can be learned.

⁷³ Massard-Guildbaud and Mosley, “Leisure and Environment,” 5.

CHAPTER 2 – “THE EVOLVING BEACH:” TOPOGRAPHICAL AND GEOMORPHOLOGICAL CHANGES AT SILVER SANDS, 1900s – PRESENT

“A beach, I would learn, behaves in much the same way as a living creature. It changes, moves and adapts; it can be starved or nourished; it advances and retreats according to its circumstances. So why do we consider it inanimate? And if we considered it to be a living creature, would we treat it differently?”

– Silver Donald Cameron ⁷⁴

In the past nearly one hundred and fifty years, many morphological changes have taken place at Silver Sands Beach. Like all beaches,⁷⁵ Silver Sands has been constantly evolving, due to both natural ecological fluxes and its industrial and commercial pasts, alike. Capitalist utilitarianism, in both the forms of tourism and resource extraction, has not only transformed the social and cultural meanings surrounding the beach, but has also been instrumental in bringing about significant ecological and geological change at the site. Scanning the geological literature that exists on Silver Sands, as well as addressing its material culture, this chapter will show how human activity has shaped the beach during the twentieth century. By painting this portrait of the shifting topography of

⁷⁴ Silver Donald Cameron, introduction to *The Living Beach* (Toronto: MacMillan Canada, 1998), xvi.

⁷⁵ It is important to note that the term “beach” does not merely refer to a shoreline expanse, but furthermore refers to a wider definition, which includes the surrounding ecosystems of the coastal zone. As Silver Donald Cameron writes: “When most [people] talk about “the beach,” [they] mean the strip of dry sand on which [they] spread of towels and blankets, set up [their] sun umbrellas, unpack [their] picnic coolers. Technically, that is the backshore, and it is only one small part of the beach. The beach is a whole ecological and geological system that stretches from the edge of the land – the forest, the cliff, the farmer’s field – to the greatest depth at which the water can move sand, silt or other sediments.” See Cameron, *The Living Beach*, 5.

Silver Sands, its social and cultural uses and meanings can, in subsequent chapters, be better understood.

After all, even though human beings “are used to conceiving of [the] natural as external to society,” as something that is “pristine and pre-human,” Marxist geographer Neil Smith argues that capital, “in its constant drive to accumulate larger and larger quantities of social wealth under its control,” has changed the shape of the “entire world.”⁷⁶ He further asserts that “no God-given stone [has been] left unturned [and] no original relation with nature [has been left] unaltered.”⁷⁷ Marx himself claimed, in his time of writing, that no natural spaces pre-dating human inference were still in existence.⁷⁸ In this way, the beach, too, must be observed as a site that is continually developing in tandem with human beings and their activities. As William Cronon reminds his readers, no geographic location is as natural or as unnatural as it appears.⁷⁹

Before considering the topographical significance of the beach in relation to its modern history, however, it should be acknowledged that the first people to interact with the shores of Silver Sands were, in fact, the Mi'kmaq. Although further study of their presence here is beyond the scope of this thesis, it should

⁷⁶ Neil Smith, introduction to *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital and the Production of Space* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), xvi.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁷⁹ William Cronon posits that human beings have a tendency to overlook the dialectical relationship that exists between nature and the human-made world, often viewing the two as distinctly separate. “Such beliefs are deeply embedded in Western thought,” he writes. “We learned our city-country dichotomy from the nineteenth-century Romantics, who learned it in turn from the pastoral poets stretching back to Virgil.” However, he argues against this tradition, urging that the natural and the unnatural are not in isolation from each other, and thus must be regarded as interrelated entities. See Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*, xvi.

be noted that, long before the popularization of the Western vacation, they would have made use of this shoreline and its wetlands for their summer fishing encampments. Located near the Cow Bay River, which empties into the lagoon behind the beach, it likely would have been a location that was rich in food supply. According to H.W Hewitt, the river was a “favourite resort” of the Mi’kmaq up until fifteen years before his time of writing, in 1901.⁸⁰

Additionally, oyster shells dating from 2200 years BP, that is, from approximately 180 AD, have been found at the beach – their age having been identified by radiocarbon analysis. Bedford Institute of Oceanography geographer Bob Taylor and his colleagues suspect that the oysters were traded amongst the Mi’kmaq at Cow Bay, as oysters and shellfish were commonly traded amongst First Nations groups of the Northumberland Strait and those of the Atlantic Coast.⁸¹

By the turn of the twentieth century, however, the surrounding community of Cow Bay had since been established as a small rural farming and fishing

⁸⁰ Hewitt, “Hewitt History No.14[15]” *Dartmouth Patriot* (1901).

⁸¹ Although the “exact source [of the oysters] near Cow Bay Beach remains a mystery,” it is believed that they may have originated from a midden that existed on the older part of Cow Bay Beach that is currently being exposed by wave action. Alternatively, they may have thrived in estuaries and protected bays that once existed near the beach, where water temperatures were greater than 20 degrees centigrade in early summer – the temperature required for oyster populations to spawn and flourish. See R.B Taylor, D. Frobel and E. Patton, “Historical Changes in Cow Bay Beach, Halifax Regional Municipality, Nova Scotia,” *Natural Resources Canada*, 2008. [Mounted plaque at Silver Sands Beach Park]. See also, “Comments From Rene Lavoie” (Retired scientist from Bedford Institute of Oceanography) addressed to Bob Taylor, January 26, 2009. Interview with Bob Taylor. Dartmouth, September 4, 2013.

community for nearly a century and a half.⁸² Cow Bay Beach, as it was then known, was in the hands of the Moser family,⁸³ who would bring their cows and sheep to graze in the fields behind the beach, bordering the lagoon.⁸⁴ A Maritime forest then fringed the back of the beach, before it later became separated from the shoreline by the lagoon.⁸⁵ In 1901, H.W Hewitt idyllically illustrated this landscape:

We pass up the road, and when we turn into the road which leads to Cow Bay beach, we have before us another beautiful scene. On the right are well cultivated fields; on the left, also, the green fields lie in their emerald beauty. Below the fields is the lake with a beautiful wooded island in its midst. The beach and the opposite mainland add to effect. Ahead of us

⁸² In his work, H.W Hewitt quotes Thomas Chandler Haliburton who reported that “in the year 1829 or thereabouts 110 persons lived at Cow Bay.” He further elaborates that “they had under cultivation 148 acres of land on which was raised 89 bushels of wheat, 294 bushels of other grain, 1900 bushels potatoes, [and] 121 tons hay. The stock consisted of 44 horses, 97 horned cattle, 183 sheep, and 50 pigs.” See H.W Hewitt, “Hewitt History No.14: History of Cow Bay – Some Interesting Facts About the Early Settlers – Buried Treasure,” *Dartmouth Patriot* (August 3, 1901): <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nshalifa/Ch14.html> (accessed 9 October, 2013).

⁸³ In 1901, H.W Hewitt recorded the ownership history of the beach as follows: “Cow Bay, as I explained in Article No. 13, received its name from Robert Cowie, to whom was granted, in 1773, the lake known as Cow Bay Lake, the island in it, the beach and the land owned by the Mosers, together with 250 acres of land sold by Frederick Major to Louis Himmelman. Cowie, I think, was the owner also of that island known now as Melville Island, but known about 120 years ago as Cowie’s Island. In December, 1783, Cowie offered for sale that island. The land granted to Cowie at Cow Bay was escheated in 1785. This ends Cowie’s connection with Cow Bay, his name only being left to show his original ownership. On April 1st, 1785, but a short time after the land had been escheated, a grant of the land was given to Enoch Bean, who also had the grant mentioned in my previous paper. His grant, of course, included the beach, lake and island.

On February 6, 1790, Enoch Bean deeded to John Albro the property granted to him. Several changes occurred in the ownership of the land till it was deeded in March, 1793, to Frederick Major. Major, as I have said, deeded in February, 1813, a portion of the grant consisting of 250 acres, to Louis Himmelman. The property bordered on the land side of Cow Bay Lake, and was situated near the river. In 1842 the property still owned by Major passed into the hands of Peter Moser, with the exception of a portion which he kept for himself. This portion was bought a short time ago by Daniel Moser, whose children now own the property.” See H.W Hewitt, “Hewitt History No.14 [15]: How the Mosers Came into Possession of the Beach – Story of a Wreck,” *Dartmouth Patriot* (August 10, 1901) <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nshalifa/Ch15.html> (accessed 9 October, 2013).

⁸⁴ “When Daniel Mosher bought the beach and divided the property amongst his children, it was common to all the farms along it, and they all had rightaways. At that time, it was also used for grazing. Each family was allowed to have something like one flock of sheep, one cow, and some fish shacks along the beach. They could also haul stuff from it for their own use.” Interview with Steven Mosher. Cow Bay, September 3, 2013.

⁸⁵ “Maritime forests arise behind the primary dune line and persist toward the back of the barrier beach. In a sense, they are inverted forests, strangely flat and even across the top.” See Cameron, *The Living Beach*, 88.

lies the broad bosom of the Atlantic Ocean, with vessels and steamers almost constantly sailing on its face in sight of land [...] When we get to the beach itself the scenery already witnessed is eclipsed by that around us. The beach extends for a mile with scarcely a stone in the sand. A white fringe of stones borders it. Above that a dark line of trees extends back to the shore of the lake.⁸⁶

However, Hewitt was likely unaware of the myriad of natural phenomena which were taking place upon this landscape, not visible to the untrained eye.

It was not until 1916 that the first geomorphological examination, outlining the physical composition of Cow Bay Beach, beyond its aesthetic appearance, was conducted. Located just east of the opening to Halifax Harbour, and situated between the headland of Osborne Head (Cow Bay) and the rapidly eroding bluffs of Hartlen Point (Eastern Passage), it was one of the first beaches to be studied in the region.⁸⁷ D.S McIntosh, a professor in the Department of Geology at Dalhousie University, saw the beach as exemplary of several similar beaches along the Atlantic seaboard of the province, which were composed of islands and estuaries. In fact, according to geographer Bob Taylor, McIntosh's study of Silver Sands was probably one of the earliest beach morphology accounts to appear in an academic journal.⁸⁸ In an article titled "A Study of the Cow Bay Beaches," presented as a lecture, McIntosh states:

⁸⁶ Hewitt, "Hewitt History No.14[15]," *Dartmouth Patriot* (August 10, 1901).

⁸⁷ Interview with Bob Taylor. Dartmouth, September 4, 2013.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

The most striking characteristic of this coast is the irregularity of the shore line with its numerous islands – the result of relative coastal subsidence.⁸⁹ The channels made by the streams in the quartzite's and slates of the area when the land stood higher are now invaded by the sea, and their lower courses are estuaries. In these estuaries, beaches have formed, ponding back fresh or brackish water. Cow Bay is neither the largest nor the smallest of these beaches, but has been selected for study on account of the presence back of the present shore-line of a series of beaches older than the modern beach. The purpose of this paper is to account for the present form of this beach – the modern storm beach with the older beaches lying behind.⁹⁰

He further describes the beach as both sandy and pebbly, with “sheltering groves of spruce within a stone’s-throw of the sea,” determining the rock of the surrounding area to be slate, and the surrounding drumlins to consist of quartzite and granite.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Like other scholars studying the evolutionary process of ‘old beaches’ on the northeastern coast of North America in the early decades of the twentieth century, McIntosh viewed Silver Sands as an example of coastal subsidence, holding that as sea level was rising, the islands, as well as the coastlines beyond them, were moving landward. Furthermore, he posited that, as the beach moved up the continental shelf, it was changing its position, but not its shape. However, in the end, he concluded that the varying ridges of old beaches at Silver Sands were not a reliable indicator of sea level changes. Instead, he determined that the variations in elevation along the beach ridges at this location were merely the result of wave action upon a “stationary coast.” See Taylor, Frobel and Patton, “Cow Bay Beach (Silver Sands) Halifax County,” 9.

⁹⁰ McIntosh, “A Study of the Cow Bay Beaches,” 110.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 109.

Lewis et al. have since specified that the sea-cliff exposures of the drumlins in the greater Halifax and Dartmouth areas are composed of two types of till deposits. These are now known as the Hartlen Till and the Lawrencetown Till. Whereas the basal Hartlen Till is “grayish, silty and very compact,” the overlying Lawrencetown Till is reddish, contains a higher percentage of clay, and is less compact. (It is often “overlain by a thin (1-4 m) hybrid till facies” containing about 30% gravel, 50% sand and 20% mud, which consists of silt and clay). The Lawrencetown Till is often covered by thinner hybrid deposits that are browner and sandier than its foundational layer, containing more Meguma pebbles and foreign glacial matter. See Michael C.F Lewis et al, “Earth Science and Engineering: Urban Development in the Metropolitan Halifax Region,” in *Urban Geology of Canadian Cities*, ed., P.F Karrow, and O.L White (University of Waterloo: Geological Association of Canada, 1998), 426-7.

The Meguma Terrane is characteristic to the entire southern portion of Nova Scotia (while the northern portion is dominated by Avalon Terrane). It is dominated by two lithotectonic units, known as the “Cambro-Ordovician Meguma Group metasedimentary rocks” and “380 Ma peraluminous South Mountain Batholith and related intrusions,” and consists of “a lower, sandstone-dominated unit and an overlying siltstone dominated unit.” See D.J Kontak and G.A O’Reilly, “Gold in the Meguma Terrane, Southern Nova Scotia: Is There a Continuum between Mesothermal Lode Gold and Intrusion-related Gold Systems?” (paper presented at Geological Association of Canada-Mineralogical Association of Canada, Annual Meeting. Brock

Although he did not use the term, McIntosh was the first to identify Cow Bay Beach as a complex tombolo.⁹² A tombolo is a bar of sand, or rather a connective beach, which unites islands, or mounds, to the mainland, and is made up of sediment from the nearby surrounding hills, known as drumlins.⁹³ As these drumlins, made up of glacial matter, erode over time, they supply the beach with sediment by distributing various types of material in different directions⁹⁴ – a process known as sortation.⁹⁵

Approximately a decade later, Douglas W. Johnson, of Columbia University, visited the beach and made observations similar to those of McIntosh. Considered a “pioneer in the understanding of beaches,” Johnson was instrumental in establishing their modern scientific study.⁹⁶ In his work describing the New England “Acadian Shoreline,” he also used the beach at Cow Bay as an example of a complex tombolo that had “developed in connection with drumlins, some of which [had] been consumed by waves.” He further related its topography

University). https://www.novascotia.ca/NATR/MEB/DATA/pubs/04re01/04re01_Abtract10.pdf, (accessed 25 November, 2013).

⁹² Making use of McIntosh’s study, in 1924, D.W Johnson identified Cow Bay Beach, in his research, as an “interesting complex tombolo [...] developed in connection with drumlins, some of which have been consumed by waves.” See Johnson, *Studies of American Physiography*, 446-7.

⁹³ Cameron further illustrates: “Drumlins are smooth heaps of glacial detritus, four or five hundred yards across, weathered by wind and rain, over-grown with grasses and trees. They are warehouses of sediments, ranging from boulders the size of cars and sofas to particles of silt so fine they show only as a discoloration in the surf. Drumlins are found all along the New England and Maritime coastlines.” See Cameron, *The Living Beach*, 50.

⁹⁴ In the case of Silver Sands, then, the presence of quartzite and granite in the overlying till, previously noted by McIntosh, appears to be what accounted for its once predominantly ‘silvery’ sands, prior to sand and gravel extraction.

⁹⁵ “After a drumlin cliff has collapsed, the waves wash through the pile of debris, carrying different types of sediment in different directions, a process known as *sortation*. [...] Sortation may change with the seasons; the strong winds and waves of winter drag even more fine sand seaward, flattening the overall profile of the shore. Cobbles are much better than sand at absorbing the energy of the waves.” See Cameron, *The Living Beach*, 51.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 49.

to the mounded hills and connective beaches of Nantasket, Massachusetts.⁹⁷

Indeed, beaches of this type are common to both the Canadian Maritime coastline, as well as to the shorelines of New England.

McIntosh and Johnson believed that the beach was not only being supplied by shore drift from the hills at both of its ends, but was furthermore receiving its local supply of gravel, in certain areas, from previous shoals or drumlins that had once been distributed throughout the beach, and had since been broken down by wave action. After all, the crest of the beach contained more matter in some areas than others, during the early 1900s, and the storm ridge varied by several feet in height at certain points. In 1924, geologist J.W Goldthwait also noted that in some places the modern storm beach was built above earlier beaches, while in others it was set below.⁹⁸ In his time of writing, “the crest of the modern storm beach at Cow Bay range[d] from 6 to 12 feet above normal high water-mark.”⁹⁹ According to Taylor, Frobel and Patton the average width of the beach in the early 1900s was approximately 400 feet (122 meters).¹⁰⁰

Additionally McIntosh and Goldthwait examined the presence of ancient shorelines, or ‘old beaches,’ which had previously been in the same formation as the contemporary beach at the site. McIntosh illustrates and provides diagrams

⁹⁷ Johnson, *Studies of American Physiography*, 446-7.

⁹⁸ Goldthwait, *Physiography of Nova Scotia*, 167-9.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 169.

¹⁰⁰ Taylor, Frobel and Patton, “Cow Bay Beach (Silver Sands) Halifax County,” 9.

that suggest that a number of small drumlin headlands had once existed along the main storm beach, bordering previous beach formations at this location. By the time of his study, however, only coarse shoals remained in their place. Today there is still evidence of three of them, in the form of rock lag deposits.¹⁰¹

McIntosh determined that the oldest of these beaches was that land upon which the Maritime Forest of Silver Sands was situated upon in his time of writing, in 1916. He writes:

The oldest beaches reached their present position when, or soon after, the world of consuming the drumlins was completed. For several year[s] they were, doubtless, like the ordinary beach without vegetation. Now they are fringed with spruce trees. A stump of one of the largest of these trees about two feet in diameter shows one hundred and twenty annual growth rings. The younger old beaches are also bordered with trees but of a smaller size. The low old beaches have, in places, their margin covered with from six inches to a foot of firm marsh-grown peat which must have taken many years to accumulate. The minimum age of the oldest beach may be fixed at about a hundred and fifty years.¹⁰²

Along with examining the characteristics of 'old beaches' at Cow Bay, though, the morphological discoveries of McIntosh and his contemporaries also reveal much about the beach's visual landscape during the early twentieth century. According to their descriptions, the beach then primarily consisted of several intertidal shoals, as well as of high cobble beach ridges along the back of the beach,¹⁰³ overgrown by lichen and trees of up to 120 years of age, thus

¹⁰¹ Taylor, Frobels and Patton, "Cow Bay Beach (Silver Sands) Halifax County," 9.

¹⁰² McIntosh, "A Study of the Cow Bay Beaches," 117.

¹⁰³ Photos taken by Goldthwait of the central beach ridge "composed of well-rounded cobble," indicate that the rock material had been in the littoral system – that is, along the shore-line, for a long time. See Taylor, Frobels and Patton, "Cow Bay Beach (Silver Sands) Halifax County," 9.

confirming “the stability of the [beach] ridge.” Moreover, they detail “intervening sand patches with low dunes” and “a fan-shaped series of beach ridges” on the western portion of the beach.¹⁰⁴ These sand dunes were building against the low spruce groves at the eastern end, too, but were in the process of dissolving in wave overwash during their time of writing.¹⁰⁵ McIntosh describes a storm that occurred around 1901, which closed off a former outlet to the lagoon, at the west end of the beach, and caused water to burst through at another spot - 100 yards from the former outlet – in turn depositing salt water into the lagoon.¹⁰⁶ A breakwater and a boat harbour were then established there so that local fisherman, from the Eastern Passage side of the beach (the separated western portion of the beach), as well as those from Cow Bay, could access the sea easily from this location without having “to go straight into the waves.”¹⁰⁷ According to Cow Bay resident Jean Hudak, this breakwater remained in place until midcentury, when then beach owner George Trynor “extended a road out there [for sand and gravel excavation of the western end of the beach] and all of its large rocks were smashed.”¹⁰⁸

Observations made by McIntosh, Johnson and Goldthwait have supplied key foundational data, which proves valuable within contemporary studies of

See also Goldthwait, *Physiography of Nova Scotia*, 167-9.

¹⁰⁴ Taylor, Frobel, and Patton, “Cow Bay Beach (Silver Sands) Halifax County,” 9.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁰⁶ Cameron explains that inlets often fill up with sediment and close. He writes, “tides and rivers are [always] delivering the same quantity of water to the lagoon, and all that water still has to find its way to the sea [...] when one inlet closes, therefore, another must open” with the same water carrying capacity. See Cameron, *The Living Beach*, 70.

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Jean Hudak. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

Silver Sands, as well. Although examination of the beach went into remission for a number of decades - throughout the beach's recreational and extractive heights - it once again became the subject of scientific study during the late 1970s. Bob Taylor points out that, since the beach has witnessed such a diverse geographical history and because it is close to the metropolitan area, it is now considered an important spot for monitoring shoreline change within the Halifax Regional Municipality.¹⁰⁹ Considerable amount of data from the early decades of the twentieth century offers long-term information about the beach, upon which to assess the role of sand and gravel mining in its shifting morphology.¹¹⁰

While the actual practice of sand and gravel mining will be fully developed elsewhere in the thesis, it is important to note, here, that industrial extraction had dramatic impacts upon the beach's morphological composition. Contemporary studies show that, following the removal of nearly two million tons of sand and gravel between 1956 and 1972, accumulatively, Silver Sands underwent significant morphological changes at an accelerated pace. This phenomenon was further exacerbated by volatile storm periods, which caused tumultuous wave exposure to further affect sediment distribution upon its shores.¹¹¹ Taylor, Frobels and Patton write that this wave action caused the beach to switch from a "progradational barrier with multiple gravel beach ridges to a low gravel barrier

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Bob Taylor. Dartmouth, September 4, 2013.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

with a single ridge.”¹¹² A barrier beach refers to a sand or gravel bar, long and rather linear in shape, which divides bodies of water.¹¹³ It typically creates a buffer between the ocean and a lagoon, punctuated by one or more inlets transferring water from the sea into the lagoon.¹¹⁴ The present beach at Silver Sands is a 1.2 kilometer barrier bar,¹¹⁵ rather than a complex tombolo interspersed with drumlins, as detailed and diagrammed by McIntosh. The beach is now backed by a pebble cobble storm ridge,¹¹⁶ susceptible to wave overwash during major storms,¹¹⁷ as well as during smaller storms that occur in conjunction with high tides.¹¹⁸ There are, however, seasonally sandy areas along the shoreline, particularly in the summer months.¹¹⁹

¹¹² Taylor, Frobeld and Patton, “Cow Bay Beach (Silver Sands) Halifax County,” 3.

¹¹³ As Silver Donald Cameron explains, “they are called barriers because they seem to present a barrier to the sea, preventing the waves from making a direct assault on the mainland.” See Cameron, *The Living Beach*, 66.

¹¹⁴ Not all beaches have lagoons, but they are common behind barrier beaches. Lagoons are fed by brooks and rivers, as well as by water carried in from inlets extending from the sea. Their water is not as salty as that of the ocean and, because of this, they offer a unique set of plants and animals a home that could not live elsewhere, either in the ocean or within freshwater. Inlets often fill up with sediment and close. However, as Cameron writes, “tides and rivers are [always] delivering the same quantity of water to the lagoon, and all that water still has to find its way to the sea [...] when one inlet closes, therefore, another must open” with the same water carrying capacity. See Cameron, *The Living Beach*, 83.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹¹⁶ Silver Sands is a typical example of low gravel barrier beaches, which are always less than 4 meters in elevation. See Natural Resources Canada, “Silver Sands (Cow Bay) Beach, Nova Scotia.” <http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/earth-sciences/natural-hazard/other-natural-hazards/storm-impact/juan/7358>, (accessed 30 November, 2013).

¹¹⁷ “Two main types of storms affect Atlantic Canada: the tropical cyclone and the extratropical cyclone. Tropical cyclones develop in southern latitudes in the warmer months of June to November. These storms can track northward along the eastern North American seaboard where they usually weaken, but from time to time they affect Atlantic Canada as hurricanes, tropical storms or post-tropical storms. [...] Extratropical cyclones (ET’s) develop in mid-northern latitudes and are most frequent and intense between October and March.” See Natural Resources Canada, “Impacts of Storms,” <http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/earth-sciences/natural-hazard/other-natural-hazards/storm-impact/8591>, (accessed November 30, 2013).

¹¹⁸ Cameron provides a thorough description of this phenomenon. He explains that “when storm winds strike a barrier beach, they push water into the bay or lagoon and pin it there at a higher level than the sea. Storm waves crash into the beach, washing right over it – sometimes only in a few locations, sometimes over its entire length – and carrying tons of sand into the lagoon. As always, the greater the energy, the more sediment the water can move and the bigger the particles. So the waves pick up vast amounts of sand as they cascade across the island, but by the time they reach the lagoon they have expended their energy, and

Prior to extraction, when sediment gains had been exceeding sediment losses, eroding drumlin headlands had been shedding ample quantities of material that were, in turn, continually building the beach up farther seaward over time.¹²⁰ In the aftermath of extraction, though, there was insufficient sediment for the beach to replenish itself at the rate of extraction. As the beach began losing more sand and gravel than it was collecting, its storm ridge became lower and flattened out, as a whole.¹²¹ Since 1991, the beach has also been migrating landward.¹²² As Taylor, Frobels and Patton explain:

Rates of landward migration are a function of the presence of anchor points and their spacing as well as the presence of flood tidal/wave washover deposits or deep channels in the lake. When drumlin headlands form the anchor points, they become initial points of beach growth, as the headland erodes and supplies sediment to adjacent shores. The anchor points also hold the barrier beaches and spits in place which becomes easier the more closely-spaced the anchor points are located. As the shores migrate landward, more of the eroded anchor point becomes submerged forming a shoal which in turn impacts inshore wave dynamics. Waves become refracted and focused onshore to both sides of the shoal which can lead to washover channels and eventually breaches cut through the beach.¹²³

The most dramatic changes at Silver Sands, however, occurred between the 1950s and the 1970s. The western barrier beach was the first area from

they drop the sand on the lagoon floor, often in vast delta-shaped deposits called *overwash fans*." See Cameron, *The Living Beach*, 83.

¹¹⁹ According to Taylor, Frobels and Patton "[The] 1.4 m thick buffer of sand and pebble sediment on the shoreface in the 1980s became a cobble boulder frame after 2003, with only pockets of seasonal sand accumulation." See Taylor, Frobels and Patton, "Cow Bay Beach (Silver Sands) Halifax County," 9.

¹²⁰ This is a process known in sedimentary geology as *progradation*. Whereas a prograding barrier migrates towards the sea, one that moving towards the mainland is said to be retrograding.

¹²¹ Interview with Bob Taylor. Dartmouth, September 4, 2013.

¹²² Taylor, Frobels and Patton, "Cow Bay Beach (Silver Sands) Halifax County," 20.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 45-6.

which materials were hauled and this portion of the beach, by result, saw the most ecological damage. By 1954 this bar was flatted below high tide level, and by 1966 there was essentially no trace left of the former portion known as the 'western beach,' aside from a "relict shoal," by the bluffs of Hartlen Point. Over all, approximately 1.7 million tons of aggregate, was removed from the disappearing western end. At the same time, the main portion of the beach was experiencing more over-wash of waves and increased blowouts along its dunes, while the lagoon was filling up with sand and gravel. The beach width decreased 3.4 meters between 1945 and 1954, by 44 meters between 1954 and 1964, and by 7 meters between 1964 and 1966.¹²⁴ In sum, maximum beach width was reduced from 201 meters in 1954, to 28 meters in 2006, with greatest width loss occurring between 1974 and 2006.¹²⁵

The now rocky barrier shoal¹²⁶ borders a small pond, as well as the Cow Bay Lake, which is less than 2 meters deep and reaches 1.6 kilometers inland. Two rivers supply Cow Bay Lake with freshwater from a large "drainage basin" which includes Morris Lake and Bissett Lake, both in Cole Harbour.¹²⁷ Additionally, an inlet that traverses the barrier beach supplies the lake with ocean water, causing the water to be brackish.¹²⁸ In the middle of the lake lies Moses

¹²⁴ Taylor, Frobel and Patton, "Cow Bay Beach (Silver Sands) Halifax County," 12.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 16.

¹²⁶ Taylor, Frobel and Patton note that Silver Sands is similar to other large cobble barrier beaches along the Atlantic coast of Nova Scotia, providing Ingonish Beach, Cape Breton, as an example. See Taylor, Frobel, and Patton, "Cow Bay Beach (Silver Sands) Halifax County," 9.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 1.

¹²⁸ "Within an estuary or a lagoon the brackishness of the water varies greatly. The nearer to the sea, the more salty the water." See Cameron, *The Living Beach*, 85.

Island.¹²⁹ Sediment is mainly transported from the east end of the beach to the west end of the beach and material also comes from the relict drumlin deposits of the former beach structures, which have since become shoals. Further sediment originates from the separate, smaller barrier that existed at the western end of the beach, on the Eastern Passage side of the former breakwater, which collapsed prior to 1980.¹³⁰ In the 1960s, much of the remaining sand that had fringed the beach was swept into the tidal inlet, making its way into the lagoon along with flood tidal deposits.¹³¹ Over time, sediment accumulation has caused the beach's tidal inlets to switch position alongshore; as one closes off, another one opens.¹³²

According to Taylor, Frobel and Patton, Silver Sands Beach has maintained itself as a single beach crest that has varied between 1.8 and 3.9 meters in elevation between 1981 and 2006.¹³³ Their cross-shore surveys have also shown that the beach's landward migration, which began in 1991, was greatly exacerbated by Hurricane Hortense in 1996.¹³⁴ During this surge, the beach was washed over and in turn had to rebuild its entire barrier crest.¹³⁵ In 2003, Hurricane Juan attacked the beach, pushing it even further landward. The barrier crest migrated between 2.2 meters to 23.6 meters landward, so that the

¹²⁹ Taylor, Frobel and Patton, "Cow Bay Beach (Silver Sands) Halifax County," 1.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 6, 12.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 13-6.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 18-23.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 22.

beach crest nearly extended to the previous backbarrier shore.¹³⁶ Taylor, Frobels and Patton state that between 1981 and 2003, the beach underwent a complete rollover, meaning that its position “flipped backward” to occupy the space that used to be directly landward of its lagoon shore, while maintaining the same barrier beach morphology.¹³⁷

In sum, Taylor, Frobels and Patton posit that beach destabilization at Silver Sands has been the result of several factors, aggravated by aggregate extraction. Most significantly, there has not been sufficient aggregate for beach replenishment¹³⁸ - neither from drumlin deposits nor from the subtidal and intertidal zones¹³⁹ - which could ideally provide buffers of sediment against wave forces upon the upper beach. Destabilization has further been caused by increasingly frequent beach rollovers, which occur when waves overwash the barrier, resulting in a “less consolidated beach core.” Finally, the elevation of the beach’s crest has been lowered below 3 meters, and its width has also narrowed by wave overwash, lessening its ability to withstand future storms. An increased frequency of storms during the 1990s and the early 2000s, as well as the continued transfer of sand into the lagoon in recent years, has further prevented the rebuilding process.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ Taylor, Frobels and Patton, “Cow Bay Beach (Silver Sands) Halifax County,” 31.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 46.

¹³⁹ The intertidal zone is another term referring to the foreshore and the seashore, also sometimes called the littoral zone. It is that area that lies above water at low tide, and is covered by water at high tide. The subtidal zone is the area that is below water most of the time, only being exposed at full or new moons.

¹⁴⁰ Taylor, Frobels and Patton, “Cow Bay Beach (Silver Sands) Halifax County,” 45-6.

Additionally, the presence of shoals in the subtidal zone (below the shoreline) has triggered increased wave force upon the barrier bar itself, and the anchoring headlands have largely lost their once rich supply of sediment. Bob Taylor further elucidates the conditions affecting Silver Sands in an interview. He relates:

Essentially, a beach is a collection of materials and it takes a long time for nature to build up a reserve of sediment to accumulate as a beach. So a lot of the material at Cow Bay and other areas is from eroding drumlins and headlands and stored on the beach off-shore or backshore, so when there is a change, generally there is a sediment balance and sediment that erodes goes somewhere into the lagoon or to the shoreline, for example. When one part of a beach gets weak it takes sediment from other areas. But, when humans take away the sediment this actually depletes this reservoir of sediment, which affects the beach's ability to respond or rebuild. It is being depleted completely. It's not a natural process. If [people] take a little bit each year this still may be insufficient to actually cause a problem - it may well be that the beach has enough material around it to rebuild it so you don't see the effect. However, in the case of Cow Bay, such huge commercial activity basically trucked away over two million tons of material so the reserve was such that the beach had to make a major change to readjust from the activity. Material [was not] just removed from the surface of the beach, but from underneath it, too. On top of this, the problem was accelerated by a very stormy time that further aggravated the situation. If it had been a 'quiet time' maybe the beach [would not] have undergone quite so much damage.¹⁴¹

In their study, Taylor, Frobels and Patton also note that the roads and bridges that were constructed to lead to the beach for extraction purposes had an impact on beach stability, too. A causeway that led down to the beach from the east end resulted in the division of the lagoon into a small pond on one side, with the remainder of the saltwater lake on the other. Moreover, though consistent

¹⁴¹ Interview with Bob Taylor. Dartmouth, September 4, 2013.

driving across this causeway and the parking of vehicles on the backshore, as well as the implementation of fill, in fact, “strengthened” the backshore, Taylor, Frobel and Patton report that, in some areas, these developments led to “the disturbance and loss of coarse substrate,” which, in turn, reduced the “core” and “inherent strength” of the beach to withstand wave attacks.¹⁴² It can be said, then, that sand and gravel mining activities, gravely affected the beach beyond the direct impacts of extraction itself. Necessary infrastructure for the project altered the distribution of the beach’s base and ‘anchor points,’ causing the beach to respond to waves in different ways than it would have otherwise.

Today the beach has continued to migrate landward, narrowing the lagoon between the barrier crest and Moses Island. Taylor claims that the beach will continue this process of “pushing backward,” further exacerbated by sea level rise, as waves attempt to rebuild the barrier over and over again.¹⁴³ However, because the beach is a low gravel barrier, it has insufficient elevation to stop waves from overwashing it and transporting its sediment into the lagoon. If a series of storms occur within a short time period it is possible that the beach will be smeared into a wide shoal below high tide level and its landward migration to the next headland will thus be slowed.¹⁴⁴ While Taylor believes that it is possible that the beach could eventually migrate to Moses Island (in which case it would have an adequate anchorage and supply of sediment, forming a “wonderful

¹⁴² Taylor, Frobel and Patton, “Cow Bay Beach (Silver Sands) Halifax County,” 43.

¹⁴³ Interview with Bob Taylor. Dartmouth, September 4, 2013.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

beach”), he also addresses the possibility that the barrier could be broken apart by several channels.¹⁴⁵

Taylor’s main prognosis for 2016, though, is that there will be a new tidal inlet opening, and probably a beach against Moses Island and the nearby western headland. He is quite certain that there will eventually be another beach because there is plenty of sediment currently beneath the lagoon and backshore area. However, he notes that it is hard to tell exactly what it will look like, and where it will be pierced by inlets. He elaborates: “Glacial tills are needed for anchors – and the next spot would be Moses Island, but it may be that the beach simply becomes a shoal and does not make it that far. The sediment could become drowned, while only parts of it might make it to the Island. There is a lot of sediment at the west end of the beach, though, which could provide the foundation for a new beach.” Depending on the patterns of waves and storm surges, the ‘future Silver Sands’ will either be sandy or mainly composed of cobble.¹⁴⁶ He further explains:

At present, the beach is mostly pebble cobble with a little sand. Most of the sand went to the backside, but as the cobble moves landward it will bury the sand and the sand will subsequently become exposed at the seaward base of the beach. If the cobble migrates further and further back, it could form a cobble beach. But if sand continues to be exposed and accumulates along the seaward side of the migrating beach, sand could be blown over top of the cobble producing backshore dunes. The dunes could build up and it could look like Lawrencetown [Beach]. As the

¹⁴⁵ Interview with Bob Taylor. Dartmouth, September 4, 2013.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

beach changes, though, so will the habitat. Depending on what happens [to its sedimentology], there will be changes in its bird and plant life, too.¹⁴⁷

Either way, as the beach continues to evolve morphologically, so will the ways in which it is consumed. For example, as Taylor points out, if it continues to get sandier again, its aesthetic and recreational value may increase. On the other hand, if it simply smears out into a series of 'low tide flats,' without a sandy surface, it will probably see a decline in human activity. Depending upon which particular birds and plant life make the beach their home in the coming years may also impact the ways in which it is used and viewed.¹⁴⁸ In any case, the beach will continually be deemed more or less valuable based upon its shifting ecological profile. All that is known for certain is that "the beach will continue to change in composition and whatever biological species are using the beach will change with it, too."¹⁴⁹

Indeed, how people have come to use and perceive the beach over approximately the past century and a half has already led to tremendous morphological change. Notably, as has just been observed, sand and gravel mining has greatly altered the geomorphological formation of Silver Sands. Yet, even beyond resource extraction, evidence of the beach's other former uses remain etched into its present landscape. On top of those changes imposed by the extraction industry, Silver Sands still bears the relics, as well as the scars, of

¹⁴⁷ Interview with Bob Taylor. Dartmouth, September 4, 2013.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

its tourism and recreation era.¹⁵⁰ This period has left behind a miscellany of remnants strewn throughout the intertidal and subtidal zones and these items and relict pieces of infrastructure are still being witnessed and unearthed today. Perhaps most noticeably, metal rebar and blocks of concrete from the foundations of the former canteen, dancehall and other facilities that once stood there during the mid-twentieth century, lie across the shore face of the beach, occasionally submerged by high tides, but particularly visible during low tide. They punctuate the landscape, reminding the keen observer that Silver Sands is not a place that is truly 'natural' – but a place that has also been marked by human history.

Although the beach has not been scoured by professional archeologists, plates, bottles, jars, cups, forks, knives, spoons, and a variety of other dishes and storage mechanisms, can also be found in the intertidal mud and peat flats that have become exposed as the beach migrates landward - exposing material which formerly lay within the backshore, tree-lined picnic area. These objects vary in age and the author suspects that, while the oldest is probably around one hundred and fifty years old, the newest object is likely about fifty years old. All of

¹⁵⁰ It is worth considering John K. Walton's general claim, here, that the tourism industry can present environmental consequences that are just as drastic as other intensive coastal industries. He writes that, on a global scale, "coastal tourism has engendered as much conflict and environmental disruption as any other industry, with the complication and (sometimes) the limitation that a pristine coastal environment and attractive coastal scenery might seem essential to business success, at least at the level of the entire settlement, in an increasingly (and internationally) competitive market place, thereby reducing tolerance of pollution and other disamenities as compared with more conventional industrial activity." See John K. Walton, "Chapter 3: Seaside Tourism and Environmental History," in *Common Ground: Integrating the Social and Environmental in History*, eds., Genevieve Massard-Guildbaud and Stephen Mosley, (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011), 2. 73.

these items are thus taken as physical testimony of the beach's popularity as a picnicking and leisure destination throughout the 1860s until the 1960s.

Glass bottles are the items that turn up the most, sometimes fully intact, though many are found in broken and piecemeal forms. Those from the 1800s and early 1900s are readily distinguished by their typically aqua or dark black glass, as well as by either their cork tops,¹⁵¹ lightning stoppers,¹⁵² Hutchinson stoppers,¹⁵³ wooden stoppers,¹⁵⁴ or crown tops.¹⁵⁵ Some have rounded bottoms, while some are rectangular shaped. Others fit more conventional spherical molds. Along with what appear to be non-embossed wine, champagne, whiskey and ale bottles, a number of soda water and ginger beer bottles, manufactured by Nova Scotian companies James Roue Jr., Felix J. Quinn, Whelan & Ferguson, W.H Donovan and Havelock Bottling Co.¹⁵⁶ as well as several others

¹⁵¹ "A plain ordinary cork was the first type [of closure] used on bottles which had a heavy blob-like lip," amongst other types of bottles. See Azor Vienneau, *The Bottle Collector* (Halifax: Petheric Press, 1969), 39.

¹⁵² Vienneau explains that "[the] two most commonly used closures were the lightning stopper and the crown stopper. The lightning stopper was invented between 1875 and 1880, and was used in Nova Scotia until about 1900. This stopper was invented mainly for use on beer and ale bottles, but in Nova Scotia it was extensively used on crockery pop bottles." See Vienneau, *The Bottle Collector*, 39.

¹⁵³ "The other type of closure used on glass pop bottles was the Hutchinson stopper. This and the crown stopper were the two most widely used closures on glass bottles. The [Hutchinson] stopper was invented in 1879 by Charles [Hutchinson] of Chicago. Bottles used with these stoppers were made with a very short neck, to accommodate the stopper. Many of these bottles were made at Trenton, N.S. and they were widely used by all the main bottlers of that period." See Vienneau, *The Bottle Collector*, 41.

¹⁵⁴ "In 1902, bottles with inside threads in the neck were used with a wooden threaded stopper. They were only used for one year." See Vienneau, *The Bottle Collector*, 39.

¹⁵⁵ "In 1891, WM. Painter of Baltimore invented the universal beverage bottle cap or crown cap which is still being used today on pop and many other types of bottles." See Vienneau, *The Bottle Collector*, 39.

¹⁵⁶ Vienneau lists the following companies as manufacturers and bottlers during the years specified: James Roue Jr. was manufacturing and bottling soda water and ginger beer in Halifax, beginning in 1864 to an unknown date. Felix J. Quinn was manufacturing and bottling soda water and ginger beer in Halifax between 1888 and 1914, Whelan & Ferguson was manufacturing and bottling soda water and ginger beer in Halifax between 1896 and 1911, W.H Donovan was manufacturing and bottling soda water and ginger beer in Halifax between 1895 and 1914, and Havelock Bottling Co. was manufacturing beverages in Sydney after 1914. See Vienneau, *The Bottle Collector*, 36.

manufactured by Irish importer of soda water, Ross' of Belfast,¹⁵⁷ have been found. A rare Superior Lemonade¹⁵⁸ bottle of unknown origins is also among the author's collection, as well as a number of other bottles, without embossing or original print labeling. There are also a number of milk and cream bottles of unknown age. In addition to these glassware items, the personal collection includes crock bottles. Five Felix J. Quinn crock ginger beer bottles have been found, as well as a tall, large crock gin jug with the inscription Blanken Heym's Zeer Oude Genever.¹⁵⁹

A number of newer glass bottles have also been retrieved, identifiable by their modern crown cap tops, produced by an automatic bottle machine.¹⁶⁰ They are mostly clear, bright green or brown in shade. Many are soda pop bottles, some with Applied Colour Labeling – known as ACL,¹⁶¹ while others have embossed logos.¹⁶² Based upon these criteria, and upon the author's extensive collector's research, the pop bottles found at Silver Sands are suspected to

¹⁵⁷ Rounded bottom and 'torpedo' shaped aqua-coloured Ross' of Belfast bottles have been found and, according to the author's research, likely date from the mid to late 19th century.

¹⁵⁸ A thick, aqua-coloured blob top bottle, embossed with the name 'Superior Lemonade' has been found and, according to the author's research, likely dates from the mid to late 19th century.

¹⁵⁹ According to the author's research, the gin jug likely dates from the mid-1800s to the early 1900s.

¹⁶⁰ Azor Vienneau writes that "[In] 1913, the automatic bottle machine was introduced in Nova Scotia ending the era of handmade bottles." See Vienneau, *The Bottle Collector*, 41.

¹⁶¹ While embossing or printed labels were used to identify bottles well into the twentieth century, ACL would prevail in the twentieth century. Invented in 1936, bottles with ACL can be confirmed to date beyond that year. Dr. J.H Toulouse describes the ACL method in an article which appeared in the *First Annual Blue Book of the National Carborator and Bottler*, in February 1939. He reports: "ONE OF THE developments of the last few years has been that of permanent fused on labels on glass bottles. These labels are virtually non-removable, because they are made of glass, fused on the main body of glass by intense heat. The use of this material has enabled decorative methods hitherto impossible in character." J.H Toulouse, "Bottles Applied Color Labels," *First Annual Blue Book of the National Carborator and Bottler* (February 1939), http://www.bottlebooks.com/acl%201937/bottles_applied_color_labels.htm

¹⁶² Embossing was used throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to identify glassware. Bottles would be placed in a mold with a stamp, and their labeling would thus be of the same glass as the bottle itself. Bottles with embossing hone from an earlier period than those with ACL.

range from approximately the 1920s until the 1960s. There are a plethora of Coca Cola, Kist, Crush, Sussex Ginger Ale, and 7UP bottles, as well as a number of bottles from now extinct Canadian soda pop brands, such as Morris' Beverages of Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, those of Evangeline sodas, a division of Monran Beverages, believed by the author to be imported from St. Catherine's, Ontario, and those of Wishing Well sodas from the National Dry Limited of Ontario.

Besides bottles, other artifacts have been found, as well. Decomposing food waste and other naturally based materials have been dug out, relatively well preserved, from the beds of peat and thick, dark mud in today's tidal zones. Notably, chicken, beef and pork bones have been found, as well as peach cores and coconut rinds. Further archeological research would be necessary to provide a complete anthropological analysis of the age and preservation process of these artifacts, but this cannot be carried out here. Nevertheless, brief overview of these items still reveals a great deal about the former activities and events, which took place upon the beach. To further bolster this argument, some images of the author's artifacts, as well as historic photographs of picnics and events, have been included in the appendix to this thesis.

Moreover, the discovery of past food and beverage waste upon the beach today is consistent with the accounts of large gatherings and picnics given by interview participants in later chapters. Synonymous with indulgence and 'good

living,' Silver Sands has been favourably remembered and described as a place where special occasions and outings were hosted, such as church picnics and company parties. The unearthing of exotic food materials, such as coconut rinds, further attests to the nature of these parties. For instance, as a rare and expensive food item well into mid twentieth century in Cow Bay,¹⁶³ the presence of coconut suggests that these picnics were often celebratory affairs. At the same time, more typical food waste, such as chicken bones, serve as indication that a trip Cow Bay Beach was not out of reach for the average Victorian, Edwardian, or modern citizen.

In addition to food waste, beverage bottles also imply that there was a sense of celebration and excitement to be found at Silver Sands. From the presence of soda pop bottles, a relatively rare treat for citizens of the area during the interwar years,¹⁶⁴ it might be further inferred that the beach was a setting in which people would experience culinary delights that were outside of their daily norm. In the Victorian and Edwardian periods, soda water, ginger beer and lemonade likely would have been similarly viewed as 'treats.' Furthermore, the finding of alcoholic beverage bottles presents the idea that the beach was an environment in which one could 'let loose.' In sum, the consumption of such products at Silver Sands provides a glimpse into the sense of 'otherness' and excitement that was to be experienced during a day at the beach.

¹⁶³ Interview with Jean Hudak. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

Beyond food and beverage miscellany, other former waste items and artifacts provide insight into the former atmosphere at Silver Sands, as well. Items, such as chair legs and leather shoes have appeared amongst what is left of the tangles of tree stumps and branches of the former spruce grove, pressed into the now decomposing peat. Nails, pencils, tires, elastic bands, and children's plastic toys, occasionally turn up, as well – all pointing towards the variety of activities that once took place upon the grounds of the beach. Along with written and oral accounts, which will be observed later, these findings demonstrate that Silver Sands was a popular place for both leisure and play, enjoyed by all ages.

The question now likely arises, however, as to why these items are still being found upon the beach today. To this end, it must be understood that there were no garbage cans on the beach until 1957.¹⁶⁵ People tended to throw their waste into pits along the tree line of the beach and bury them, assuming that this would solve the issue of their unwanted materials. Jean Hudak recalls that, throughout the 1920s until the 1940s - possibly into the 1950s - "way down by 'The Run' [the inlet at the western end of the beach] people had a huge pile of waste where they would keep throwing their garbage." Today, though, there is also a large quantity of waste being unearthed at the eastern portion of the beach too, suggesting that a number of other such pits may have existed elsewhere along the grounds, over the years, as well.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ "Outlook For Silver Sands Beach Is Rapidly Growing Brighter," *The Mail Star*, August 20, 1957, 1.

¹⁶⁶ Interview with Jean Hudak. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

However, by the time that Jean and her husband, John Hudak, began working at the canteen and taking care of the park amenities - for several summers, during the late 1950s and early 1960s - she claims that people were no longer throwing their waste into the westernmost pit location. "We did away with that, by that time," she reports. "We tried to clean up all cigarette boxes, diapers, bottles and cans and it would take up a good part of the day. We never closed the beach until it was clean, and we made the men who delivered the pop bottles and cans take them back to be refilled, [or] take them to the bottle depot where they would receive two cents per bottle. Sometimes people took their bottles and cans home with them."¹⁶⁷ This testimony stands somewhat in contrast with the amount of bottles from this era still being unearthed today, though, suggesting that although most of the waste may have been cleared, some of it had nevertheless found its way into pits or into the backshore lagoon.

Either way, while on the one hand, the removal of waste from the landscape, during this time, may be viewed as the burgeoning of an environmental consciousness, from another point of view this may not have been indicative of such a trend at all. Perhaps cleaning up waste was merely done in order to maintain the aesthetic profile of the beach¹⁶⁸ - as a means of upholding visual standards of cleanliness and 'pristine-ness,' crucial for its continued

¹⁶⁷ Interview with Jean Hudak. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

¹⁶⁸ As John K. Walton explains: the recreational beach was, and often still is, expected to be a place that also provides "entertainment for seaside sociability and fun," as well as offering an environment "controlled and managed to suit the tastes of particular segments of the visiting public," further requiring the 'embellishment' of "'natural' attractions." It is to provide "access to pure air and clean water" in a setting that at least has the "appearance of an unpolluted and sensually attractive coastal environment." See Walton, "Seaside Tourism and Environmental History," 69-71.

commercial success.¹⁶⁹ It is unclear just how much ecological concern weighed against aesthetic considerations, here, in this period.

Don Warwick, who worked at the beach for several summers as the facilities operator and caretaker during the late 1950s, explains that he and others would often pick up garbage off the beach during summer evenings, only to burn it in gallon barrels in the forest, behind the beach, afterward. “We could burn it at any time, really, it [did not] matter in them days,” he states. “[We did this because] garbage trucks [did not] come down this way until the 1960s, and even then, their service did not extend as far Silver Sands.”¹⁷⁰ The absence of garbage collection may further suggest that the removal of trash from the shoreline was carried out less for the benefit of the beach ecosystem itself, but more so in order to rid the beach of its offending presence. Indeed, the technique of burning was a quick way to eradicate trash, but it was also a toxic one - implying that even if environmental awareness did exist by this point, it was still not evolved enough to cease this practice of waste management that was also ecologically harmful. Burning was not an innovative way to ‘safely’ dispose of waste, but rather a ‘tried

¹⁶⁹ Paradoxically, the tourism and recreation industry at Silver Sands had standards to uphold regarding the beach’s cleanliness, but at the same time it was guilty of harming the very environment it was seeking to keep pristine. After all, as John K. Walton notes, “the coastal resort was, and is, an industrial centre in its own right, with its own distinctive propensities to pollute and transform its local environment.” See Walton, “Seaside Tourism and Environmental History,” 70.

¹⁷⁰ Interview with Don Warwick. Cow Bay, October 6, 2013.

and true' solution – it had been done throughout the early decades of the twentieth century, as well, along with burying trash in pits.¹⁷¹

Overall, evidence of a great deal of ecological abuse, associated with both the recreational and extractive industries, can be found at today's Silver Sands. Both of these activities have unquestionably left their enduring imprints upon its physical landscape. While sand and gravel removal has enormously affected the constitution of the beach, many years of mass tourism at the site has also exhibited lasting consequences. For instance, along with waste items, pieces of concrete from the former facility buildings remain along the shoreline, in turn affecting the direction of wave impact upon the beach. As Bob Taylor notes, "chunks of dancehall and canteen concrete do cause waves to change locally, [albeit] not that much, but they still do."¹⁷²

Even though these relict structures, as well as old waste materials, are slowly breaking down, they are becoming a 'part of the beach' and will remain within its constitution for generations. Indeed, today, glass and concrete are woven through the very sand particles of the beach. Moreover, although bottles, dishes and other miscellaneous items will appear less and less as the beach migrates, Bob Taylor believes that it is quite possible that some of these items could get buried and reappear approximately a century later, or so, when the

¹⁷¹ Bottles and other materials, varying from about one hundred and fifty to fifty years old, found in melted forms or encrusted with other melted materials, confirm such incidences.

¹⁷² Interview with Bob Taylor. Dartmouth, September 4, 2013.

beach has significantly changed its position, once again.¹⁷³ Thus, centuries from now, the morphology of the beach, and its features, will continue evolving as a result of past human events; physical changes that the beach currently undergoes, and will continue to undergo, will be traceable back to its industry-intensive eras. No matter what form the landscape takes on in the future, then, it cannot be understood without also considering the activities of its past.

Both nature and human beings have operated together in creating the landscape that presently exists at Silver Sands. While the beach's physical attributes have led to its consumption in particular ways, these modes of consumption have, in turn, impacted its topography. As John Wylie states, "landscape can be thought of as both something seen and a particular way of seeing the world – both land and the gaze upon it."¹⁷⁴ Not only is there much to be learned about the physical footprints of former beach uses, from Silver Sands, but furthermore, there is much to be learned about the attitudes surrounding them. Now that a morphological and topographical portrait of the landscape has been provided, the ensuing chapters will embark on a chronological journey that further illustrates the history of human industry and activity at Silver Sands, while also investigating associated social and cultural meanings.

¹⁷³ Interview with Bob Taylor. Dartmouth, September 4, 2013.

¹⁷⁴ John Wylie, *Landscape*, (London: Routledge, 2007), 55.

CHAPTER 3 – “A VERITABLE PARADISE:” A CENTURY OF RECREATION AND LEISURE AT SILVER SANDS, 1866 – 1966

“Here, truly, is grandeur, power and beauty beyond description. The ceaseless rolling in and breaking of the huge waves have a fascination for all lovers of the restless dissatisfied ocean, and an afternoon spent in thus enjoying life at Cow Bay beach is decidedly a profitable investment of leisure time.”

– *The Critic*, August 21, 1891¹⁷⁵

With a heyday that spanned from approximately 1866 to 1966,¹⁷⁶ Silver Sands Beach has experienced, and in turn has exhibited, a variety of universal trends characteristic of recreation and leisure history. Its fame debuting in the midst of the Victorian period, Cow Bay Beach,¹⁷⁷ as it was then known, established its reputation as a leisure haven during an era that was beginning to embrace a “genteel longing for sedate social rituals and [the] escape to the serenity of nature and sites of nostalgic community.”¹⁷⁸ This period bred a group of middling, and even working class people, with a thirst for learning more about the nature that lay beyond “the toil, heat and dust of the city.”¹⁷⁹

Across the Western world, this phenomenon stimulated intellectual growth through interaction with nature, popularizing a new set of activities, such as

¹⁷⁵ Anonymous, *The Critic* (August 21, 1891), 18.

¹⁷⁶ Hewitt, “Hewitt History No.14 [15]: How the Mosers Came into Possession of the Beach – Story of a Wreck,” <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nshalifa/Ch15.html> (accessed 9 October, 2013).

¹⁷⁷ Ferguson and Public Archives of Nova Scotia, *Place Names and Places of Nova Scotia*, 147.

¹⁷⁸ Gary Cross and John K. Walton, *The Playful Crowd: Pleasure Places in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 118-9.

¹⁷⁹ Anonymous, *The Critic* (August 21, 1891), 18.

hiking and picnicking.¹⁸⁰ Serenity and contemplation, especially when away from the city, were believed to be key to physical health, as well as to mental and spiritual rejuvenation, which gave the seaside a newfound significance. As Fred Gray writes, since the late eighteenth century “...there [had been] a growing acceptance that the seaside should be appreciated for its beauty, for the visual delights it offered, for the nature it revealed, for the exercise and relaxation it could provide, and for the quality and purity of its air.”¹⁸¹

Along with this burgeoning notion of the seaside as a tranquil and restorative refuge, as well as an increasing Victorian appetite for outdoor recreation, sea bathing, too, was becoming more popular in the West. Doctors were often recommending that their patients travel to the sea, due to the increasing belief that the climate and the air there, along with full body immersion into saltwater, could alleviate a plethora of symptoms.¹⁸² Health guides and manuals, published in both the United States and Britain, were also touting the values of seawater and salt air for everyone. In the late 1800s, a guide called *Sea-Air and Sea-Bathing*, published in both of these countries, claimed that the effect of breathing salt air was “tonic and invigorating, producing an immediate sense of exhilaration, improving the appetite, and promoting digestion.” It further

¹⁸⁰ Cross and Walton, *The Playful Crowd*, 115-9.

¹⁸¹ Gray, *Designing the Seaside*, 23.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 27.

stated that, “in like manner, the bathing in salt-water [could stimulate] the skin, and [render] the circulation more active.”¹⁸³

Later, during the interwar period, the cult of sunbathing also arose. By then the leisure industry had since been conventionalized, and “tanned, brown bodies [had become] a symbol of health rather than a disfigurement brought on by outdoor labour.”¹⁸⁴ An image of prosperity and happiness further became associated with a bronzed body – signifying the person’s ability and means to participate in leisure and recreational activity.¹⁸⁵ People were increasingly flocking to the seaside not only to cure ills and ailments, but furthermore to partake in various indulgences.

Beach recreation in the Victorian era and even beyond, was not merely viewed as a superficial or carefree past time, but was decidedly intellectualized upon the moral grounds of health and wellbeing. Interestingly, while the ocean inspired both fear and awe amongst Victorian individuals - often represented as a “symbol of untamable wilderness,” in the popular culture and literature of this period - ¹⁸⁶ it was also building an appeal in light of its perceived volatility.¹⁸⁷ Amidst a landscape that was quickly becoming transformed by industrialization, the seaside yet possessed a soothing quality, depicting “indisputable nature which was more than just scenery, and which remained unaffected by

¹⁸³ Gray, *Designing the Seaside*, 29.

¹⁸⁴ John Walton, *The British Seaside: Holidays and Resorts in the Twentieth Century* (Manchester: University Press, 2000), 100.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 104.

¹⁸⁶ Cameron, *The Living Beach*, 128.

¹⁸⁷ Aron, *Working at Play*, 20.

falsehood.” In fact, as Henry Corbin explains, the sea became “a refuge and a source of hope because it inspired fear.” People began “to enjoy the sea and experience the terror it inspired, while overcoming [their] personal perils,” there. Assuaging the fatigued urban-dwelling individual in such a way, “the sea was expected to cure the evil of urban civilization and [to] correct the ill effects of easy living.”¹⁸⁸

This perception and consumption of the seaside was shaped by the changing socio-economic landscape. The rise of leisure time and better transportation, in Nova Scotia and elsewhere in Canada,¹⁸⁹ likely facilitated the ability of individuals to access and enjoy nature. Not unlike points expressed by Cindy Aron, in her research on the history of vacationing in the United States, Canada’s transformation into an industrial society from an agricultural one – which, in turn, expanded its transportation networks, and led to the expansion of its middle class – undoubtedly allowed vacationing and leisure activities to take hold amongst the masses.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸ Gray, *Designing the Seaside*, 21.

¹⁸⁹ “In the latter half of the nineteenth century industrial capitalism transformed the lives of Canadians. The 1850s and 1860s marked a transition away from the older dominance of the fur and timber trades as factories employing hundreds, even thousands, began to appear. The city began to climb to prominence that would, by the early twentieth century, see most Canadians living, not on farms and in small villages, but in urban centres. [...] Technological developments introduced machinery into traditional crafts such as shoemaking and tailoring, but it was railways, with their steam-powered locomotives, that became the revolutionizing symbol of a new age.” See Bryan D. Palmer and Joan Sangster, introduction to “Industrializing Canada: Waged Work, Everyday Life, and Class Mobilization, 1860-1900,” in *Labouring Canada: Class, Gender, and Race in Canadian Working Class History*, eds., Bryan D. Palmer and Joan Sangster (Don Mills: Oxford University Press Canada, 2008), 67.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

In Nova Scotia, particularly, 1923 has been said to be the year when modern tourism was truly founded, with the onset of indirect government investment into what was already known as the informal “tourist trade” or “tourist industry.” In 1926, the creation of an official annual brochure, titled *Nova Scotia, Canada’s Ocean Playground*, promoted the image of Nova Scotia as an ideal nature getaway, with the inclusion of photographs boasting serene pastoral and rugged coastal landscapes.¹⁹¹ Although small-scale decentralized tourism initiatives had published materials about the province before,¹⁹² the switch to the official brochure shifted emphasis from Nova Scotia as the “Land of Evangeline,” or a sport hunting and fishing haven, to the land of beaches, scenic harbours and rocky coastline.¹⁹³ In fact, a photograph of Silver Sands Beach featured in many early editions of the brochure, during the 1920s and 1930s, bearing the following caption: “Silver Sands, a popular beach near Dartmouth on Halifax Harbour, one of the numerous bathing beaches of Nova Scotia, where visitors may enjoy refreshing breezes and mellow sunshine.”¹⁹⁴ Nova Scotia’s government funded tourism industry thus seemed to have caught wind of the anti-modernist views

¹⁹¹ “The modern history of tourism in Nova Scotia began in 1923 with indirect government investment in what was already being described as the tourist trade or tourist industry. Growing out of the post-First World War recession, which had severely affected coalmining and steel-making, as well as agriculture and the fisheries, tourism was a new industry. It was also a new kind of industry — a service industry. Distant vacation travel for the purpose of rest and recreation was by no means a new phenomenon, but government promotion of it was. Also new was the idea that tourism could significantly benefit the economy.” See Nova Scotia Archives, “Government Gets Involved in Tourism, 1923-1970,” *The Tourism Industry of Nova Scotia, 1870 – 1970* (2008), <http://www.novascotia.ca/nsarm/virtual/tourism/government.asp?Language=> (accessed 5 October, 2013).

¹⁹² Among these, for example, is the Yarmouth Steamship Company’s *Beautiful Nova Scotia* series, which ran from 1892 until 1901. See Jay White, “Nova Scotia’s Early Tourism Industry, 1870-1940.”

¹⁹³ Shaunna Mowatt-Densmore, “Sustainable Tourism for Small Towns in the Maritimes,” (M.A thesis, Saint Mary’s University, 2001), 17.

¹⁹⁴ *Nova Scotia: The Ocean Playground* (Halifax: Nova Scotia Department of Tourism, 1929), 44.

that were becoming even more widespread throughout the 1920s and beyond. As Heather MacLeod suggests, in a time of wars, economic depression and general societal stress, the preference for “cultivated and human-dominated” landscapes was being toppled, and instead, there was a growing appreciation for the “rustic.” In light of this, the province’s “rugged land,” once thought to be vast, empty or inhospitable by the outside traveler especially,¹⁹⁵ was now beginning to be “considered interesting.”¹⁹⁶

However, there is some indication that this kind of appreciation for the province’s rural and coastal expanse appeared earlier amongst Nova Scotia natives. Even shy of the mid nineteenth century, Joseph Howe wrote that, “in order to enjoy the sunny smiles of summer,” many citizens of Halifax would move to the Dartmouth coast during the summer months, while others would cross the harbour, “literally in droves,” to “inhale that sweet air, which in the heart of the City, [could not] be enjoyed.”¹⁹⁷ It is even possible that Joseph Howe, himself, would have made his way to Cow Bay and Cow Bay Beach. In July 1840 he published an account of a trip he made to the nearby village of Eastern Passage in his newspaper, *The Nova Scotian*, and, after building his estate at Fairfield in Dartmouth, it is written that he would often take “a ride down to the Passage

¹⁹⁵ As Robert R. McLeod rather comically remarks: “There is a prevailing belief among Americans that Nova Scotia is within the Arctic Circle, either literally or figuratively, and the result is continuous cold, fog, and almost constant snow.” See Robert R. McLeod, *Markland, or Nova Scotia: It’s History, Natural Resources and Native Beauties* (Halifax: Markland Publishing Company, 1903), 255.

¹⁹⁶ Heather L. MacLeod, “Past Nature: Public Accounts of Nova Scotia’s Landscape, 1600-1900,” (M.A thesis, Saint Mary’s University, 1995), 14.

¹⁹⁷ Martin, *The Story of Dartmouth*, 295.

[Eastern Passage]” on Sundays.¹⁹⁸ Located nearby, a “ramble to Cow Bay” does not seem unlikely.

Returning to out-of-province tourism, however, it seems that Nova Scotia became initially enticing in the late 1800s, and ever attractive in the early 1900s. Suddenly, tourism initiatives were advertising the province’s natural assets to the average traveler and the Nova Scotian wilderness no longer exclusively held an appeal for those seeking sport hunting and fishing. Along with government-funded brochures, various independent travel writers helped to promote the view that the province’s natural beauty was accessible to everyone. In 1903, Robert McLeod promised his readers that “no matter what town in this Province that a tired, overheated refugee from an American city [might happen] to reach, he would be deliciously cooled and tenderly ministered to by [the] natural agencies around him.”¹⁹⁹ Like most travel literature at the time, McLeod’s work was especially directed at American tourists from the Eastern Seaboard states, who were then the main consumers of Nova Scotia’s tourism industry. Encouraging these persons to see the serene homeland of their descendants - Loyalists or otherwise – was a key advertising technique designed by the Nova Scotia tourism bureau.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁸ Reverend E.C Ellis, *The Sacred and The Profane being History Notes for Church People* (Eastern Passage, 1978), 60.

¹⁹⁹ MacLeod, “Past Nature: Public Accounts of Nova Scotia’s Landscape,” 248.

²⁰⁰ Nova Scotia Archives, “Government Gets Involved in Tourism, 1923-1970.”

Indeed, Silver Sands, itself, was quite popular amongst American tourists as early as the late Victorian era.²⁰¹ An article from the August 21, 1891 edition of *The Critic* reported that "...many Americans compare Cow Bay beach most favorably with the noted watering places of Massachusetts..."²⁰² while an article from the September 8, 1882 edition of the *Acadian Recorder* titled and dubbed the beach "The Nantasket of Halifax."²⁰³ This article features the reflections of a Boston tourist who visited Cow Bay, cheerfully illustrating: "Between the beach and an Island lake of fresh water, dotted with water lilies, is a growth of spruce trees and here the Halifax paterfamilias who is wiser than his fellows spreads his luncheon and regales his 'pretty chickens,' while the ocean booms musically and grandly along the beach."²⁰⁴ He also elaborates on the beauty of its natural landscape, explicitly pointing out that "there are no [...] restaurants, booths or merry-go-rounds" to distract one's thoughts from the "fine beauty" of the beach, but that when "there is a heavy swell on the sea, and a land breeze blowing [...] Cow Bay Beach is at its best."

Yet newspapers and travel writing were not the only mediums promoting the beach amongst the 'come-from-aways.' Postcards from the early 1900s also

²⁰¹ "Tourism in Eastern Canada, more specifically the maritime provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, can be divided into three chronological periods. The first, that of the military tourist, began in the early nineteenth century and lasted until 1871, drawing its clientele almost exclusively from the officer class stationed in the various provincial urban centres. [...] The second stage covered a period of some seventy years from 1871 to 1940, and can be generally be considered to be the "elite sport tourist" period; unlike the first stage, which consisted for the most part of British "tourists," this second period included mostly Americans." See James H. Morrison, "American Tourism in Nova Scotia, 1871-1940," in *Nova Scotia Historical Review*, 2:2, 1982, 40-51. Reprinted by with permission by the Nova Scotia Archives. <http://www.novascotia.ca/nsarm/virtual/tourism/american.asp?Language=English> (accessed 6 April, 2014).

²⁰² Anonymous, *The Critic* (August 21, 1891), 18.

²⁰³ "Nantasket" here, refers to the famous Nantasket beach district of Massachusetts' Plymouth County.

²⁰⁴ Randall, "The Nantasket of Halifax," *Acadian Recorder*, September 8, 1882, 2.

boasted about the many glories to be found at Cow Bay. The back of one postcard, probably from around 1902, states: “An Ideal spot To Spend An Outing COW BAY BEACH 10 miles from town over the BEST ROAD in Nova Scotia. Stop at the Beach House. Table provided with fresh farm produce,” while another grandiosely describes the beach as “one of the largest Beaches in America.”²⁰⁵ It is unknown how many of these privately printed postcards were, in fact, printed, but what is interesting is that they all date from the Edwardian era, several decades before the beach was revamped with amenities and formal landscaping.

Though still lacking traditional seaside infrastructure at turn of the twentieth century, Silver Sands was nevertheless praised – far and wide – as a rustic escape. Crude shelters or tents were possibly constructed along the tree line, and parties and other gatherings probably would have taken place on surrounding picnic tables. An excerpt from a 1891 edition of *The Critic*, chronicles a day spent at one such event:

Each year these grounds are growing more popular, and this summer quite often as many as four hundred persons have visited the beach on one day. A very pleasant, pretty drive from Dartmouth brings us to the shore, and here we find under tall shady trees several tables erected for the convenience of picnic parties. Each party makes its own fire, and the kettle hung on a pole over the crackling blaze soon begins to sound business-like; then while the young people wander off on the sands, the chaperons, with a few assistants, prepare dinner, which is far from being unwelcome after the bracing drive, and “the all softening, overpowering knell, the tocsin of the soul, the dinner bell,” is eagerly responded to by all. After satisfying the inner man, which, be the scenery never so magnificent, seems to demand first attention of picnickers, we feel with the poet that

²⁰⁵ Taylor, Frobels and Patton, “Cow Bay Beach (Silver Sands) Halifax County,” 9.

“fate cannot harm us, we have dined today,” and turn our minds to striving to take in the beauties of the broad Atlantic beating on the pretty sandy beach.²⁰⁶

A feasible day trip from Halifax and Dartmouth, even before the era of automobiles, Silver Sands quickly gained popularity amongst Haligonians and Dartmouthians seeking a close by, tranquil escape. It was not uncommon for groups of people to leave the city early in the morning, first by horse and wagon, and later by automobile, to arrive at the beach for the afternoon, before leaving Cow Bay at evening time to make their way back to the city.²⁰⁷ Additionally, for some time, at least during the late nineteenth century, there was access to the beach via steamboat. John Martin writes that the *Goliath* steamship ran trips between Halifax and Cow Bay in the summer, where passengers were sent to shore in smaller boats.²⁰⁸ It is unclear when, and for how long, this service was provided.

Although automobiles appeared in the Halifax-Dartmouth area in 1909, at first their everyday use was prohibited. Seen as a “nuisance” to horses and pedestrians, originally they were only allowed on the roads on Tuesdays and Thursdays.²⁰⁹ This being said, it was likely not until at least several years later that automobiles began to make their way to Silver Sands and, thus, of all the

²⁰⁶ Anonymous, *The Critic* (August 21, 1891), 18.

²⁰⁷ Martin, *The Story of Dartmouth*, 505.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 402-3.

²⁰⁹ Following the appearance of automobiles in 1909 the County of Halifax passed the following By-Law: “No automobile shall be allowed to run on any road in the Municipality of the County of Halifax, except on Tuesdays and Thursdays in each weeks.” For use after midnight, one could be fined. See Ellis, *The Sacred and The Profane being History Notes for Church People*, 64.

modes of transportation, horse and wagon remained the most common well into the twentieth century. As Martin states: “Sunday bathers at Cow Bay kept increasing greatly after the turn of the century. The numerous wagons and four-horse teams returning to Halifax in the evening, created clouds of dust which literally coated [the] houses on downtown Portland Street.”²¹⁰ Often times, Cow Bay locals would accommodate these horses and wagons in their barns for a daily fee.²¹¹ Jean Hudak recalls that Daniel Mosher owned a huge barn near the beach “where he [would] put the four horse wagons during the day.” She also remembers that, in the Interwar period, her grandfather would “mow all [of] the lawns on the property and put hay in the barn for the horses to eat during day.”²¹²

Despite the beach’s proximity to the city, though, sometimes individuals or groups would opt to stay for one night, or more, in Cow Bay. Although lodging in the area was informal – no records of registered accommodations exist – older Cow Bay residents have mentioned that in the “days before everyone had automobiles,” tourists were able to receive room and board within local homes.

Jean Hudak recalls:

The people from the city stayed for nights sometimes [in Cow Bay] [...] Over at my grandmother’s and at Art Mosher’s. A lot of houses I used to know would have living rooms and extra bedrooms and people would come from the city, because it was so coal smoky there, and relax. Mothers and children would come to stay a week or a few in country homes and they were fed by housewives and then they spent their days on the beach. There were never any formal hotels, just country homes.

²¹⁰ Martin, *The Story of Dartmouth*, 505.

²¹¹ Interview with Jean Hudak. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

²¹² *Ibid.*

These houses might have also had two extra bedrooms off of the house, or something, and people may have brought their own quilts. The farmers from Cow Bay would advertise these lodgings by word of mouth when they went to market in the city. This stopped after the Depression, maybe. After the automobile, there was no need for inns.²¹³

Several decades earlier, in 1893, Mary Jane Katzmann also remarked that “some good farm-houses in the neighbourhood of [the] bay, [had] accommodation for visitors.”²¹⁴ Interestingly, in the 1882 *Acadian Recorder* article, the Boston tourist makes note of an “unpretentious hotel” which “[looked] down the bay from a hill.”²¹⁵

Even though such amicable, informal lodgings existed, however, the August 21, 1891 edition of *The Critic* expressed hopes that “some one with enough enterprise” would “erect a summer hotel [and] bathing houses” at the beach.²¹⁶ This never materialized, but a single anonymous newspaper article, either from the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, delivered a lofty proposal for such a plan. Descriptively titled, “Watering Places: Great Improvements to be Made at Cow Bay Beach – A Beautiful Park, Large Summer Hotel, Tramway, Bathing Houses, Amusement Hall and Electric Lights,” the article claims that “necessary capital” to transform the beach into an “up-to-date watering place,” was forthcoming. Below is an excerpt from the proposal:

²¹³ Interview with Jean Hudak. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

²¹⁴ Katzmann, *History of the Townships of Dartmouth, Preston and Lawrencetown*, 89-90.

²¹⁵ Randall, “The Nantasket of Halifax,” *Acadian Recorder*, September 8, 1882, 2.

²¹⁶ Anonymous, *The Critic* (August 21, 1891), 18.

Among the improvements contemplated, and for which it is said the necessary capital is forthcoming, is a large modern summer hotel on the bluff overlooking the beach. The hotel will be equal in every respect to the best which are found at American watering places. It will accommodate a large number of guests and meals will be served to suit all classes at from twenty-five cents to ten dollars. Wooded Island will be converted into a beautiful park intersected with well made walks and drives. Two handsome bridges will be built to connect with the island and the road to the beach will pass through the park. A large number of bathing houses will be erected together with band stands, amusement halls, tilts, merry-go-rounds etc. An electric tramway will be constructed from Dartmouth and a large sum of money will be expended in improving the road and making a bicycle track. The beach will be brilliantly lighted by electric lights and when all is completed Cow Bay as it has so long been known will have entirely disappeared.²¹⁷

The development scheme even predicted that it would draw people away from American ‘watering places,’ bringing them to Cow Bay instead, further proclaiming the beach at Cow Bay to be “one of the finest on the Atlantic Coast.”²¹⁸ Such a notion attests to the vital role of New England travelers within the early Nova Scotian tourism industry. Either way, the article concludes rather vaguely, stating that some thought that the plan was “only talk,” while, “others who [had] a pretty good idea, [said] the scheme [would] be carried through.”²¹⁹

In the end, though tramlines never connected Dartmouth and Cow Bay, and no grand hotel on a “bluff overlooking the beach,”²²⁰ ever appeared, future development plans at the site incorporated elements of this design in the decades to come. This article thus points to a crucial shift that was about to take

²¹⁷ Anonymous, “Watering Places: Great Improvements to be Made at Cow Bay Beach – A Beautiful Park, Large Summer Hotel, Tramway, Bathing Houses, Amusement Hall, Electric Lights.”

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Ibid.

place: as the beach was growing more and more popular, there was an increasing demand for its premises to mirror a conventionally tailored seaside landscape.

Ideas about what nature was, and how it should be consumed, in general, were changing with the onset of the twentieth century.²²¹ As more and more people began making use of outdoor sites, their use was becoming more and more sculpted by aesthetic, economic and political considerations.²²² Competing notions of whether natural retreats should be molded by human hands, and if so, how, came into play. Nature was seen both as “an attractant and a repellent,”²²³ the prevailing view being that, in order to be appreciated for recreation and leisure, a natural spot had to be properly manicured and embellished with amenities.²²⁴ What had had initial appeal in its “rustic escapism,” was to become increasingly shaped by infrastructure and design.²²⁵ In terms of the seaside, what had once been seen as the “untamable wilderness,”²²⁶ was to become a series of carefully crafted landscapes; human activity was beginning to infringe upon that which had once been its antithesis, and moreover its salvation, from itself.

²²¹ Gray, *Designing the Seaside*, 36.

²²² MacEachern, *Natural Selections*, 4.

²²³ MacLeod, “Past Nature: Public Accounts of Nova Scotia’s Landscape,” 5.

²²⁴ As MacEachern explains, in relation to Atlantic Canada’s national parks, until 1950, these parks had succeeded in being attractive “because they provided the best of natural scenery alongside affordable, modern amenities.” See MacEachern, *Natural Selections*, 162.

²²⁵ John K. Walton, *The British Seaside: Holidays and resorts in the twentieth century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press), 39.

²²⁶ Cameron, *The Living Beach*, 128.

In Britain, for example, a “‘garden city’ atmosphere” had already taken hold of the seaside by the latter half of the nineteenth century. A great deal of investment in parks, fairgrounds, promenades and piers, had come to surround the nation’s growing number of beachside resorts, seeking to cater to a diversifying array of social classes and tastes. Leisure and recreation had become increasingly accessible to the masses.²²⁷ In the United States, too, at Salisbury Beach, near Massachusetts, an increasing number of working class individuals began frequenting the seashore, resulting in the conversion of fishing huts into cottages, as well as in the erection of a dance hall, merry-go-round and bumper cars at the site, during the early decades of the twentieth century.²²⁸ Architecture and planning schemes of the Western seaside²²⁹ further began to embrace intricate gardens and landscaping, encouraging the “vogue of fresh air, exercise and outdoor fun.”²³⁰ Out of these shifting landscapes, blossomed a new perception of what to expect at, and from, the beach.²³¹

As Cross and Walton observe, when a “pristine or exclusive” pleasure spot begins to draw crowds, the original, genteel values of its earlier visitors

²²⁷ Walton, *The British Seaside*, 41.

²²⁸ Aron, *Working at Play*, 211.

²²⁹ As Gray elaborates: “Seaside architecture is broadly and liberally defined to include not only buildings such as piers and pavilions but also the minutiae of beach huts and promenade railings and shelters, as well as the larger scale of holiday camps, seaside parks and open spaces and complete resorts designed as a single entity.” Gray, *Designing the Seaside*, 8.

²³⁰ Aron, *Working at Play*, 102.

²³¹ As Gray explains, the implementation of seaside specific architecture, in keeping with the “tides of social, economic and technological change,” was “[creating], [structuring] and [defining] holidays by the sea,” giving way to new conceptions of the beach and its sense of meaning. See Gray, *Designing the Seaside*, 7. Moreover, this “growing interest in marine aesthetics,” coupled with a developing importance of the sea in the visual imagination, prioritizing views, panoramas, and perspectives of the sea and coast, was radically [changing] the design of the seaside.” See Gray, *Designing the Seaside*, 23.

become compromised.²³²The implementation of commerce and entertainment leads to the emergence of new activities and experiences, in turn creating a new dynamic within a particular landscape.²³³ Likewise, MacEachern demonstrates that all natural parks are equally cultural products, shaped by the shifting tastes of their consumers.²³⁴

In the case of Silver Sands, the early decades of the twentieth century saw its expansion, figuratively and literally, as it began to cater to the evolving preferences of an increasingly wider user public. The plan to develop Silver Sands, outlined earlier, further points to the heightened desire and urgency to alter the natural state of the beach, characteristic within this era. The article states that upon the beach's development, "Cow Bay as it [was] so long [...] known [would] [...] entirely [disappear],"²³⁵ echoing modernity's unbridled desire to manipulate and impose upon the natural world, in order to make it more palatable and enjoyable.

Marking the rise of this trend, in approximately 1910, merchant Robert Stanford purchased the beach and began capitalizing from the property.²³⁶ While previously the land had been in the hands of the Mosher family, for several

²³² Cross and Walton, *The Playful Crowd*, 23.

²³³ *Ibid.*

²³⁴ MacEachern, *Natural Selections*, 4.

²³⁵ Anonymous, "Watering Places: Great Improvements to be Made at Cow Bay Beach – A Beautiful Park, Large Summer Hotel, Tramway, Bathing Houses, Amusement Hall, Electric Lights."

²³⁶ Jean Hudak recalls Robert Stanford purchasing the beach from her uncle, Daniel Mosher [Moser], in 1910. She recollects that Stanford was a tailor who "married into Clayton's stores in Halifax, and that's how he got the money to buy the beach." Interview with Jean Hudak. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013. However, in an oral history in the early 2000s, Jim Mosher is recorded as saying that Stanford's purchase of the beach took place between 1910 and 1915. See Taylor, Frobels and Patton, "Cow Bay Beach (Silver Sands) Halifax County," 37.

generations, and “used by all,” this was about to change. Stanford built a gatehouse and an ice shed on a drumlin near the road overlooking the beach, and began to charge a fee from people accessing the premises. There is some discrepancy over exactly how much he charged, but several locals recall being told that admission was ten cents per person.²³⁷ Around this time, the tree-lined picnic areas were exceedingly well-kept and, photographs showing a carousel suggest that fair rides would sometimes dot the grounds during special events. Stephen Mosher remembers his father, Jim Mosher, saying that Silver Sands sometimes would be used as a filming location - “probably to create footage for silent pictures.”²³⁸ However, nothing more is known about this activity.

Furthermore, a brand new pavilion, sporting a large verandah, was built with “a kitchen at one end, and a canteen at the other.” According to Jean Hudak, it was “well-built with green shingles. It had four large rooms inside, and was used for many years – until the late 1940s.” Inside were tables and benches for dining, as well as a large fireplace,²³⁹ which was made from beach stones.²⁴⁰ Often rented for private parties and gatherings, like all of the buildings on the beach, it was functional during the summer months only, from “Dominion Day weekend”²⁴¹ onward, though sometimes earlier, until the end of August. A crude picnic shelter on the opposite end of the beach supplied a quieter retreat for

²³⁷ Taylor, Froebel and Patton, “Cow Bay Beach (Silver Sands) Halifax County,” 37.

²³⁸ Interview with Steven Mosher. Cow Bay, September 3, 2013.

²³⁹ John Boileau, *Historic Eastern Passage* (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, 2007), 28.

²⁴⁰ Interview with Jean Hudak. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

²⁴¹ Marking Confederation on July 1st, 1867, Dominion Day was renamed Canada Day in 1982.

those who wished to be away from the main crowds.²⁴² In 1918, a baseball field was designed at the western end of the beach, in an open area of gravel and grass.²⁴³ Arguably the most popular sport in Nova Scotia during the former half of the 1900s,²⁴⁴ baseball games would be taking place at the beach “all day, all the time, on warm summer Sundays.”²⁴⁵

With the onset of the 1920s and 1930s, sunshine further “seized the popular imagination and dominated what people wanted of the seaside.”²⁴⁶ The beach was renamed Silver Sands in the early 1920s,²⁴⁷ and continued into a phase characterized by recreation and its accompanying infrastructure. One summer, a mini golf course was set up adjacent to the large pavilion and was run by a man named Spud Beasley.²⁴⁸ As Jean Hudak elaborates:

The whole beach was rented out to people by Stanford, then, sometimes so that they could run it for the whole summer. When I was six years old, the beach was rented out to a man [Spud Beasley]. There was a miniature golf place at the beach and his daughter took me golfing for the first time. There were bathhouses, too, for the people to change their clothing and they had keys that they would take with them when they went swimming. There were also outhouses, or ‘water closets’ as they used to call them, but the real toilets didn’t come until the 1950s.²⁴⁹

²⁴² Interview with Jean Hudak. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 37.

²⁴⁴ See Colin Howell, *Northern Sandlots: A Social History of Maritime Baseball* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995).

²⁴⁵ Interview with Jean Hudak. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

²⁴⁶ Gray, *Designing the Seaside*, 18.

²⁴⁷ C.B Ferguson and Public Archives of Nova Scotia, *Place Names and Places of Nova Scotia*, 147.

²⁴⁸ Taylor, Frobel and Patton, “Cow Bay Beach (Silver Sands) Halifax County,” 37.

²⁴⁹ Interview with Jean Hudak. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

As the twentieth century progressed, there was also an increase in the types of events taking place upon the beach. The rising popularity of Sunday School and company picnics, amongst Dartmouth churches and local employers, combined with the now dominating opinion that leisure should be accessible to the masses, caused the demographic of beach goers at Cow Bay to expand.

Such trends reflect those observations made by Aron, when she writes that “the early decades of the twentieth century [...] saw the comfortable classes beginning to lose their near monopoly over the privilege of vacations,” further claiming that by the end of the 1930s, “vacationing was well on its way to becoming a mass phenomenon.”²⁵⁰ Aron also notes that, although vacations especially designed for businessmen had been encouraged throughout the Victorian era in New England²⁵¹ - along with “ocean parties” for poor children and their parents held by social reformers in New York²⁵² - less attention had been paid to the benefits of vacationing for those in labour intensive industries.²⁵³ However, this was about to change.

The view that worker productivity could be improved upon by providing paid vacation time to employees, along with opportunities to attend organized

²⁵⁰ Aron, *Working at Play*, 182.

²⁵¹ Cindy Aron draws attention to an 1855 *New York Times* editorial titled “Vacations for Businessmen,” which states that “incessant work” would result in a life “sans health, sans stomach, sans capacity for all better and higher things.” Middle and upper class men were thus encouraged to partake in recreation and leisure. See Aron, *Working at Play*, 33.

²⁵² For example, Cindy Aron makes reference to the “New York Association for Improving the Poor” which allowed an “estimated total of ten thousand ‘parents and children’ to attend ‘well-managed and deservedly-popular ocean parties,’” during the summer of 1890. She further writes that reformers and religious groups would help to “move poor mothers and their children out of the hot city for a short period during the summer.” See Aron, *Working at Play*, 186-7.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 194.

company, and family field trips, was on the rise.²⁵⁴ In a rather bureaucratic, but generally well-received²⁵⁵ attempt to ensure that the working class were ‘making the most’ of their days off – partaking in activities that were deemed moral and enriching – employers arranged outdoor activity days for workers and their families.²⁵⁶ Industrial fatigue studies, conducted during First World War, had shown that “periodic rest could have a “distinctly favorable effect on production,” and, after all, productivity was at the heart of the rapidly progressive modern era.²⁵⁷ Mental and spiritual rejuvenation thus became key in an overall effort to increase morale, not only within the upper classes, but amongst the labouring classes, as well - ultimately believed to lead to better economic output. For their part, company-organized events, promoting a sense of team spirit and unity, were a sound business strategy.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁴ As Joan Sangster writes, “the twentieth century supposedly inaugurated a ‘professionalism’ of paternalism,” in many working class environments. “Drawing on previous forms of deference within the church, the community, or especially the household, the owner [of a company] attempted to incorporate these social relations into the factory regime...Paternalism was intended to avoid labour unrest, to preserve managerial authority, and to satisfy a patrician sense of philanthropy. See Joan Sangster, “The Softball Solution,” 247.

Later, she also writes that “company rituals [...] such as picnics,” were geared to sustain paternalism. “Sports were [also] meant to create a sense of company loyalty, suggesting competition with the outside, but team effort on the inside; they were [further] supposed to create a loyal disciplined, and committed work-force that strove to give its best performance on and off the job.” See Sangster, “The Softball Solution,” 255-6.

²⁵⁵ Sangster, “The Softball Solution,” 254-6.

²⁵⁶ For example, Joan Sangster, examines the rise of company field trips and gatherings amongst Canadian factory women during the 1930s and 1940s, at the Westclox alarm clocks and watches factory in Peterborough, Ontario. See Joan Sangster, “The Softball Solution: Female Workers, Male Managers, and the Operation of Paternalism at Westclox, 1923-1960,” in *Labouring Canada: Class, Gender, and Race in Canadian Working Class History*, eds. Bryan D. Palmer and Joan Sangster (Don Mills: Oxford University Press Canada, 2008), 254-5.

See also, Aron, *Working at Play*, 201.

²⁵⁷ Aron, *Working at Play*, 197-8.

²⁵⁸ Sangster, “The Softball Solution,” 247.

The response of these attitudes, seen at Silver Sands, was an influx of company picnics, particularly from the Imperoyal Oil plant in nearby Woodside – the major industrial employer of the surrounding area. These gatherings took place year after year for several decades, and many locals remember the ‘Imperoyal Picnic’ as the largest and most exciting affair of the summer. The day of the event the beach would be strictly reserved for employees and their families. Doris Warwick recalls that the event was an integral family tradition. “When my father worked at Imperoyal, they had their picnics once a year and [we would] go down to the beach,” she says. “My mother would take salads, cookies, homemade bread and all that stuff, where she would prepare them in the pavilion for the day’s meals. There were picnic tables outside, and lots of trees and ball-fields. [We would] go swimming and Imperoyal would bring ice-cream dips and stuff.”²⁵⁹ Jean Hudak remembers that the Imperoyal parties would set up bingo tables, pony rides and horseshoe throws.

In addition to these famed Imperoyal events, locals also particularly recall the outings held by the Nova Scotia Hospital for patients and staff, as well as the YMCA gatherings. Jean Hudak notes that the patients from the Nova Scotia Hospital were brought in two separate groups. “One week the male patients would come,” she says, “and the next week the female patients would have their outing.” These hospital trips stopped around the wartime, though, and never

²⁵⁹ Interview with Doris Warwick. Cow Bay, October 6, 2013.

happened again.²⁶⁰ Sometimes Jean Hudak and Doris Warwick's grandparents, local residents of Cow Bay, would provide a catering service to these, and other, picnic groups. Jean Hudak relates:

My grandfather was a farmer and Stanford would hire him and my grandmother to cook for certain picnics. If they wanted cooked food, it was prepared at their houses and taken down to the beach in huge pots, where our family members were also hired to serve the crowds. My mother would serve there, and if the food needed to be reheated she would do so over the wood stove in the pavilion.²⁶¹

The events at Silver Sands that have most commonly appeared within written documents, since, however, have been the annual Christian Sunday School picnics. These were hosted by a number of churches, mainly from the greater Dartmouth area. Jean Hudak believes that the summer gatherings of the city's Jewish community took place at the beach, as well, but this has not been recorded elsewhere.²⁶² Multiple accounts of the Sunday School outings exist, though, within church histories and newspaper memoirs, further illustrating their significance to local parishioners, and attesting to their fond memories of days spent in Cow Bay. Several submissions, found in the 1987 compilation, *The Story of Emmanuel Church*, descriptively pay homage to these occasions at Silver Sands. The following is one such passage, written by an anonymous church member:

²⁶⁰ Interview with Jean Hudak. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Ibid.

For those of us attending Sunday School in the '20s and '30s this was the high point of the whole summer! It was the only out-of-town trip most of us had all summer long and was looked forward to with great excitement and anticipation. The beach was long and sandy and was strewn with shells. Some of these shells we called "Silver Dollars" and we loved to step on them and find, to our delight, that they always broke evenly into little pie-shaped pieces. In those days there were lots of trees and grassy places near the beach where family groups could eat their picnic lunches. One year we were able to pick enough wild strawberries to make jam the following day. And oh, the fun of the races and the peanut scramble! One year there was a young divinity student who livened up the whole day for us youngsters when he appeared at the picnic with his pet monkey draped around his neck.

The author ends their submission in colourful nostalgia, recalling: "There never have been since those days such golden sands – such warm sunshine – such sparkling seas – such huge waves – such thrilling breakers – such delicious sandwiches – such good friends – such tired children – as there were during those days of the Sunday School picnics – so long ago!"²⁶³ Such recollections suggest that Silver Sands Beach played a formative role in the production of local memory and meaning – becoming associated with feelings of happiness, contentment and ease.

In a 1979 article titled, "A Flashback: The Vanishing Silver Sands," famed local author Joan Payzant provides further details about these outings. She writes that "two or three Bell Buses" were hired for the occasion, transporting women and children to the beach for the picnics, which were usually held on Wednesdays – Dartmouth's weekly "half holiday." After 12:30 pm. when the men

²⁶³ Edith Rowlings, *The Story of Emmanuel Church: Dartmouth, N.S. 1871-1987* (Dartmouth: Emmanuel Church, 1987), 92-3.

of the congregation were finished work for the day, they would join the gathering for the afternoon and the evening. While women would “fire up” the wood stoves in the kitchen to cook meals, children would play in the sea and buy treats from the canteen, set up by the men. Payzant recalls “[five] cent slices of watermelon, generous ice cream cones, bananas, chocolate bars, gum, pop, and even penny candies – garden fruit suckers, honey moons, jaw breakers, black balls, and the like,”²⁶⁴ alluding to the sense of ‘otherness’ that prevailed at the seaside. The “consumption of unusual food,”²⁶⁵ along with rare entertainments, made the beach a magical place – a haven disconnected from the everyday world. As Gray writes, “for most visitors the seaside resort was an anticipated escape from the everyday, humdrum, ordinary and, perhaps, [even] the present day.” Summer destinations, like Silver Sands, “proffered an utopian world,”²⁶⁶ leading to the continued awe and praise surrounding its memories.

Payzant’s description of the beach from the 1920s and 1930s, too, presents such an idyllic atmosphere. She paints the beach itself as a source of wonderment, while also giving a descriptive account of the landscaping and amenities found at the site. Attention to these elements implies that they were instrumental in shaping people’s expectations, and furthermore experiences, of the seaside. Payzant depicts an environment molded not only by nature, but also designed in accordance with popular culture:

²⁶⁴ Joan Payzant, “A Flashback: The Vanishing Silver Sands,” *The Dartmouth Free Press*, Wednesday, May 23, 1979, 5.

²⁶⁵ Walton, *The British Seaside*, 95.

²⁶⁶ Gray, *Designing the Seaside*, 46.

...The beach stretched out for a couple of miles in a crescent, backed by tall spruces and pines. Behind the trees ran a rough road, cobble-stoned by nature. As you drove along the road, to the right and left were little parking and picnic spots, with tables, and crude stone fireplaces. There were at least two good-sized fields for softball enthusiasts. For some distance on the right hand side of the road there was a lagoon, brackish with the mixture of water [from] the incoming tide, and fresh water carried down from a nearby stream. Some of the most beautiful sunsets I have ever seen have been reflected in the still waters of this lagoon, with its tall sentinel evergreens, and the surf roaring on the opposite side of the cobbled road. The owners of the property adjacent to the beach had built a commodious pavilion, equipped with a kitchen at one end, and canteen at the other.²⁶⁷

Whether or not she does so consciously, Payzant draws contrast between the natural facets and the human constructed elements of the site. She bounces back and forth, illustrating the beauties of the land and the sea, as well as addressing the baseball fields, recreation facilities and modern conveniences. In turn, she positions the beach as a place with a diverse appeal, due to its ability to transgress, and in turn meld, the boundaries of nature and the 'outside world,' alike. A unique blend of the uncommon and the familiar, one part wild, and one part tame - containing both natural attractions, and cultural amusements - Silver Sands stood as an example of the ideal beach retreat, approaching the mid twentieth century.

As Gray posits "seaside resorts, particularly through their architecture," were designed to "provide novel, and what were at the time utterly amazing,

²⁶⁷ Payzant, "A Flashback: The Vanishing Silver Sands," May 23, 1979, 5.

objects of the tourist gaze”— producing a surreal quality.²⁶⁸ The idea that the seaside should encourage the consumption of nature within a controlled atmosphere, drawing heavily upon the tastes and whims of popular culture, in addition to promoting the sea’s natural beauty, was to continue into the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. In a postwar era promoting progress, modernity and technology – wonderment through built environments, rather than fascination via nature, was further taking over. Urbanity, or at least elements of it, was being streamlined into the wilderness, aiding in the transformation of “valueless,” and rugged landscapes, into “landscapes of leisure.”²⁶⁹

Indeed, in the 1940s, Silver Sands underwent more developments, mirroring such phenomena. A new pavilion was constructed, which operated along with the old, green-shingled pavilion for some years, before the latter was eventually torn down. According to Jean Hudak, Stanford hired a man from Cape Breton to construct the combined pavilion and dancehall.²⁷⁰ This may or may not have been the man known as Mr. Gillis, to Jim Mosher, who has said that Gillis built the canteen, while running the beach for one summer.²⁷¹

Several years later, Jean Hudak, and her husband John Hudak, began taking care of the canteen, during the summers.²⁷² Husband and wife Don and Doris Warwick also held the job for several seasons. Along with selling

²⁶⁸ Gray, *Designing the Seaside*, 36.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 39.

²⁷⁰ Interview with Jean Hudak. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

²⁷¹ Taylor, Frobel and Patton, “Cow Bay Beach (Silver Sands) Halifax County,” 39.

²⁷² Interview with Jean Hudak. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

concessions, the couple remembers arranging and booking dances, as well as company picnics. “It was hot working in that canteen,” Don Warwick recalls. “Two summers we made big lobster dinners for Canadian Airlines, and we also hosted other large picnics. [...] The dancehall was very full those two summers and there were about one hundred and fifty people at every event. [...] One year, a dance was held every Saturday night and I had to book the bands in advance.”²⁷³

A quintessential part of resort architecture, perhaps most notably during the earlier British “seaside craze” of the 1920s and 1930s,²⁷⁴ the dancehall at Silver Sands was a big hit, especially in the mid to late 1950s. Throughout Cow Bay, and throughout the Halifax-Dartmouth area in general, the dancehall was yet an enticing novelty to have at the beach. “Young ladies and men from all around town,” would come to Silver Sands for the Saturday night summer dances, and “musicians from Halifax and Dartmouth would come to perform.”²⁷⁵ Even though she was too young to attend at the time, Susanne Hudak remembers the palpable sense of excitement surrounding these events. “I was so amazed,” she reflects, “people came in beautiful dresses and crinelins and everyone was decked out to the nines, arriving in big cars – Fords and Mercurys. The boys had nice white shoes.”²⁷⁶ In the wake of the dancehall, the beach was becoming a further *mélange* of socio-cultural exhibits and activities transplanted within a natural setting. Silver Sands was a place promoting socialization

²⁷³ Interview with Don Warwick. Cow Bay, October 6, 2013.

²⁷⁴ Walton, *The British Seaside*, 108.

²⁷⁵ Interview with Steven Mosher. Cow Bay, September 3, 2013.

²⁷⁶ Interview with Susanne Hudak. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

between many groups of people, through a variety of attractions, appropriated from the 'outside world.'

In the grand scheme, the drive behind providing such amenities was largely economic. As Gray writes, "resorts were and are peculiar businesses, not least as enterprises that directly or indirectly attempt to profit from nature." In further 'dressing up' the beach to appeal to the tastes of the public, "resorts and their architecture [thus] became an important mechanism for society to consume and commodify seaside nature" – making it as widely attractive as possible.²⁷⁷

When businessman George Trynor purchased the beach from Robert Stanford for \$50, 000, in 1954, he, too, had such goals in mind. Silver Sands would be the "next Coney Island," he said,²⁷⁸ or, as the local press predicted, in 1959, it was to become a "local Disneyland."²⁷⁹ Under his firm incorporated as the Silver Sands Company, Trynor purchased the beach in the hopes of both expanding its recreational potential, as well as in order to haul sand and gravel, mostly for government contracts, with his affiliate enterprise, known as the Trynor Construction Company.²⁸⁰ With this dual dream in mind, Trynor's plans for the site were prioritizing utility and profit, while also marketing leisure, through the grandiose and the dream-like.

²⁷⁷ Gray, *Designing the Seaside*, 45.

²⁷⁸ Taylor, Frobels and Patton, "Cow Bay Beach (Silver Sands) Halifax County," 39.

²⁷⁹ Anonymous, "Silver Sands To Be a Local Disneyland," *The Dartmouth Free Press*, Thursday, March 19, 1959, 1.

²⁸⁰ Anonymous, "Compensate beach loss," *The Mail Star*, November 16, 1977, 1-2.

This is not surprising, given that the mid-twentieth century, as a whole, was experiencing a booming development amongst what Herwig and Holzherr have deemed “dream worlds” – bizarre and astonishing oasis’ outside of the mundane and the vernacular, valuing fantasy over reality. In a broader sense, such places include Disney World and Coney Island, along with other themed amusement and entertainment venues.²⁸¹ “Banal, decorative, and gaily abandoned,” architecture at these sites helped to accentuate the notion of “life as a never-ending land of milk and honey”²⁸² and, as the contemporary resort experience embraced “synthetic attractions,” the architecture of the seaside was increasingly designed not only to be visually stunning, but also to be experientially stimulating.²⁸³ In Britain, seafront parks and gardens were ever more popular at mid-century, boasting grass lawns and paths “perhaps made of crazy paving,” and following particular themes.²⁸⁴ According to MacEachern, the emphasis upon finely manicured lawns with amusements was also apparent in Atlantic Canada’s national parks, as well. Such infrastructure and landscaping was designed so as to bring together holidaymakers in common surroundings and experiences, creating a sense of shared excitement and pleasure.²⁸⁵

²⁸¹ As Herwig and Holzherr explain: “A walk through Disney World is like a guided tour through a sociological laboratory, where all the wishes and needs of the visitors are considered in advance and translated into an architectural dressing.” See Oliver Herwig and Florian Holzherr, *Dream Worlds: Architecture and Entertainment* (London: Prestel Publishing, 2006), 90.

²⁸² Herwig and Holzherr, *Dream Worlds*, 22.

²⁸³ Gray, *Designing the Seaside*, 38.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 133.

²⁸⁵ MacEachern, *Natural Selections*, 162.

Particularly during the later years of the 1950s, Trynor worked to create a fantastically enticing palette of amusements at Silver Sands – combining “a set of invented [beachside] traditions” with more “mainstream amusements” for beach users.²⁸⁶ Promoting a unique landscape, one that was desirable to increasing quadrants of the population, was likely key to its, albeit short-lived, success. In 1959, sculptor Winston Bronnum, of Sussex, New Brunswick, was hired to oversee the transformation of Silver Sands into a ‘local Disneyland.’ Under his direction, the beach grounds were to showcase a ‘natural’ Nova Scotian forest complete with moose, deer, bears, and all the wild life known [to the province] sculptured from cement.”²⁸⁷ This plan echoed the characteristic desire, within this era, for human beings to not only synthesize but, furthermore, reproduce nature in their own right.

As the press wrote: “It [had] long been Mr. Bronnum’s ambition to create an Animal Park in the Maritimes and now he [was being] given the green light by his financial backers.” Silver Sands was anticipated to become “a true Disneyland of local flavor,” while Bronnum claimed that everything that he was doing was meant to develop the “*natural beauty*” of the site.²⁸⁸ In the words of Cicero, “[human beings] seek with [their] human hands to create a second nature

²⁸⁶ Walton, *The British Seaside*, 94.

²⁸⁷ Interestingly, in 1989 and 1990, Disney World (Florida) was still following a theme of animal mega-structures. These years saw the construction of the famous giant dolphin and giant whale sculptures by Gian Lorenzo Bernini. See Herwig and Holzherr, *Dream Worlds*, 91.

²⁸⁸ Anonymous, “Silver Sands to Be a Local Disneyland,” March 19, 1959, 1.

in the natural world.”²⁸⁹ In regards to Bronnum’s new architectural design at Silver Sands, such a proclamation rings true. Its vision mirrored the belief that everything should be altered, replicated, manipulated and enhanced by human hands. Furthermore, consistent with the common “post-war approach,” that saw the “Disney-style theme park” as key to attracting leisure seekers and holidaymakers,²⁹⁰ what Bronnum was about to create at Silver Sands was a miniature “dream world.”²⁹¹ With “theming” proving to be an “astonishingly successful” business technique,²⁹² and the beach possessing “the primary virtues of the seaside,” particularly “the newly appreciated ones of light and air” - that provided “maximum opportunity” for the architect to “[achieve] a characteristic modern expression” - Silver Sands was viewed as the perfect place to carry out such a plan.²⁹³

Individuals who shared their stories of Bronnum’s ‘animal land’ indeed speak of the Silver Sands of their childhood as a place of total “wonderment.”²⁹⁴ There is some discrepancy as to exactly how many sculptures were built and

²⁸⁹ From Cicero’s *De Natura Deorum*: “For our own purposes we exploit the keen senses of the elephant and sagacity of the dog. From the depths of the earth we extract iron, so necessary for the tilling of the soil. We search out deeply buried veins of copper, silver and gold, for both use and ornament. We cut up trees and make use of all sorts of wild and cultivated plants, to make fires to warm our bodies and to cook our food, and also for building, so that we may have a roof over our heads to keep out the heat and cold. We use these materials also to build ships, which sail in all directions to bring us all the needs of life. We alone can tame and control the most violent forces of nature, the sea and the winds, through our knowledge of navigation, and so we enjoy the benefit of all the riches of the sea. We have also taken possession of all the fruits of the earth. Ours to enjoy are the mountains and the plains. Ours are the rivers and lakes. We sow corn and plant trees. We fertilize the soil by irrigation. We dam the rivers, to guide them where we will. One may say that we seek with our human hands to create a second nature in the natural world.” See Smith, *Uneven Development*, 46.

²⁹⁰ Cross and Walton, *The Playful Crowd*, 205.

²⁹¹ Herwig and Holzherr, *Dream Worlds*, 22.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, 34.

²⁹³ Gray, *Designing the Seaside*, 61.

²⁹⁴ Interview with Susanne Hudak. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

precisely how many animals were represented - especially since no photographs showing the entirety of this architectural landscape have been found - however, what remains wholly indisputable is that these structures figure within a multitude of fond memories. Donald Hudak, who was a small child of four or five years old in the early 1960s, remembers playing on a large whale and upon a huge seal, each of which had long slides down their backs, accessible by steel ladders on the side of the sculptures.²⁹⁵ Susanne Hudak, a pre-teen at that time, recalls two slides down the back of the whale – one on either side. She also remembers a “baby whale,” as well as a “baby seal and a mother seal,” along with turtles, an alligator, and “coloured toadstools for people to sit on.”²⁹⁶

Steven Mosher, on the other hand - who is a few years younger than Susanne - remembers “a turtle, a crocodile, a porpoise and a whale.” He believes that the whale had a slide, and that underneath it was a hollow dome in which “kids could play.” He furthermore says that “the porpoise stood up on [its] fins, and that the turtle had little holes in [its] shell so [that] kids climb up [its] back.” Mosher recalls a little white building on the bluff overlooking the beach, where Bronnum would build the frameworks for these sculptures, “out of rebar,” before transferring them to the beach grounds, where he would cover them with concrete and complete the paintwork.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁵ Interview with Donald Hudak. Cow Bay, October 20, 2013.

²⁹⁶ Interview with Susanne Hudak. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

²⁹⁷ Interview with Steven Mosher. Cow Bay, September 3, 2013.

Memories of another interviewee, Leighton MacDonald, include being a small child “around seven or eight” and spending time near the turtle sculpture. MacDonald reflects: “They all looked big to me - the animals. We would crawl all over them. There were about five or six of them down there. Some of my friends say there was a porpoise, and possibly some other marine animals.”²⁹⁸

As can be gathered from the recollections of these individuals, competing memories exist as to the exact arrangement and quantity of Bronnum’s animal figures at Silver Sands. One key sculpture that everyone remembers, however, is The Moose. Long since the others have been destroyed, this statue of a life-sized brown buck moose still remains perched upon the eastern bluff, overlooking the beach. Now known as the Cow Bay Moose, it was the last figure to be erected by Bronnum at Silver Sands, in 1959, and has since become an important community landmark, while providing testimony to Bronnum’s former artwork there. Though more attention will be paid to The Moose in subsequent chapters, for now it suffices to say that, whichever sculptures existed, in whatever forms upon the grounds, they were undeniably a valuable part of Silver Sands’ lively, themed environment, enrapturing adults and children alike.

In fact, Susanne Hudak claims that “people came from miles around to see Silver Sands,”²⁹⁹ as she herself, along with Jean Hudak, Donald Hudak and

²⁹⁸ Interview with Leighton MacDonald. Eastern Passage, September 5, 2013.

²⁹⁹ Interview with Susanne Hudak. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

Steven Mosher,³⁰⁰ all remember counting the numerous cars that would be “lined all the way, up and down the roads,” of Cow Bay, on hot summer days during the 1950s and early 1960s. After all, by midcentury, personal household vehicles had greatly increased in the province, as they had throughout all of North America, and the number of people who came to access the beach daily, during the summer months, rose dramatically. This caused quite the stir within a community that, according to 1956 statistics, had a population of merely 183 people.³⁰¹

“Sometimes the cars would be lined up to the [Cow Bay] river. They were coming from so many places and I remember [the] hippies in their vans and stuff. There were a lot of license plates from Massachusetts, and even some from California and Florida. They would come in anything from big Cadillacs to aluminum campers,” Susanne Hudak reflects.³⁰² Donald Hudak similarly notes that many of the license plates seemed to be from “out of town,” – mostly from the “Eastern Seaboard states.” However, he adds that “many locals and people from the city were using the beach, too.”³⁰³ At this time, admission to the beach was one dollar per car and one dollar per night to camp at the campsites that were, by this time, located at the grounds.³⁰⁴

³⁰⁰ Interview with Susanne Hudak. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

Interview with Jean Hudak. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

Interview with Donald Hudak. Cow Bay, October 20, 2013.

Interview with Steven Mosher. Cow Bay, September 3, 2013.

³⁰¹ Ellis, *The Sacred and The Profane being History Notes for Church People*, 40.

³⁰² *Ibid.*

³⁰³ Interview with Donald Hudak. Cow Bay, October 20, 2013.

³⁰⁴ Anonymous, “Silver Sands to be a Local Disneyland,” March 19, 1959, 1.

Bronnum's world of sculptured animals and sea creatures was not the only attraction piquing people's interests and drawing visitors to the beach, which had since been grandiosely dubbed "The Most Beautiful Beach North of Florida,"³⁰⁵ at this time. An excerpt from the *Dartmouth Free Press*, in March 1959, provides further detail of some of the collaborative developments, either planned or enacted upon by Trynor and Bronnum. It states:

Silver Sands, already rated high on the list of Atlantic seaboard show places, has been slated for a further "face-lifting" calculated to make it one of the finest tourist attractions in Eastern Canada [...] Expenditures during the first year of re-vamping will run to \$25,000 and more will be spent during the years to come. [...] Announced at the same time of the expansion appointment as manager of Winston Bronum, Fredericton, N.B., reputed to enjoy an international reputation in wood carving and animal sculpturing in cement. [...] This is Mr. Bronum's announced program: wading and swimming pools; self service canteens, restaurant, dance hall, trailer park, tenting grounds and cabins.³⁰⁶

Other plans to convert Silver Sands into a famed summer paradise included an idea to have a showboat, with paddlewheels, in order to "take visitors on a tour of the lake and stop at the island so that the life-size animals [could] be viewed close up." However, neither the boat, nor the animal structures on the island, ever materialized. Likewise, Bronnum's idea to create wood carving exhibits of Nova Scotia's wild life, so that the season could be extended into the fall "for the

³⁰⁵ Interview with Jean Hudak. Cow Bay, October 6, 2013.

³⁰⁶ Anonymous, "Silver Sands to Be a Local Disneyland," March 19, 1959, 1.

benefit of school children,” never came into fruition. Neither did an even bigger pipe dream of later constructing ski slopes³⁰⁷ near the beach.³⁰⁸

Amongst other unrealized ventures, found on a map believed to be printed in 1959, as well as described within the *Dartmouth Free Press* article, was a speed boating and water skiing area in the lake behind the beach, along with a designated freshwater fishing area, a boat launch with flat-bottomed boats for rent, and an area reserved for swimming lessons under the instruction of Physical Education assistant Dianna Smith from the University of New Brunswick. Furthermore, a separate gift shop and a main lodge, near the entrance of the park, was to be built, in conjunction with the proposed cabins and trailer park, complete with “special water and electrical connections.”³⁰⁹

On top of all of this, a parking lot with a four thousand car capacity figures on the hand-drawn map. Speaking with interview participants, however, reveals that, although Silver Sands was extremely busy, such a number of vehicles may have been an exaggeration. Nevertheless, if a newspaper article from February 1956 was correct in its report that stated that “as many as five thousand people [could] be found on a single Summer Sunday enjoying the almost mile-long

³⁰⁷ Anonymous, “Silver Sands to Be a Local Disneyland,” March 19, 1959, 1.

³⁰⁸ Regardless of how lofty these ideas were, though, it is important to note that they quite likely had a greater motive, as well, beyond merely imitating a ‘dream world.’ After all, during a time when vacations to year-round sunnier and hotter destinations via airline travel were becoming accessible to a growing middle, and increasingly privileged, working class, many seasonal seaside attractions were beginning to see the loss of some of their summer tourist base to foreign beaches throughout the year. Thus, many Western seaside areas with seasonal climates were striving to provide unique amusements and entertainments that could “extend the [tourist] season” and help them to maintain their visitor base. Gray discusses this phenomenon in his work. See Gray, *Designing the Seaside*.

³⁰⁹ Anonymous, “Silver Sands to Be a Local Disneyland,” March 19, 1959, 1.

expanse of beach [at Silver Sands], [and] its invigorating water and cool breezes,” such a notion might not be so far-fetched.³¹⁰ Additionally attesting to this possibility are the memories of Don and Doris Warwick. Doris claims that one year when her and Don were overseeing operations at the beach, there was “one Sunday when there were five thousand people at the beach” and she “ran out of everything, even pop and water.”³¹¹ This being said, it is hard to say exactly how many people were to be found at the beach on a sunny “Summer Sunday,” during the 1950s, and there are no concrete records to dispel such information. Either way, it is clear that the beach’s popularity was perpetually on the rise.

After all, though many of the Trynor-Bronnum proposals were never finalized, several ventures were actually realized. In 1959, came the construction of a new state of the art canteen, along with new washrooms and change facilities. Numerous campsites were cleared, and two cabins for those working at the grounds were constructed. During his appointment at Silver Sands, Bronnum and his family lived in one of them, as did Doris and Don Warwick, one summer, when they were working the admission gate and canteen duties.³¹²

At the same time, the dance hall within the former late 1940s pavilion was enlarged, and a balcony that extended over the waters of the lake was added.³¹³

³¹⁰ Anonymous, “Protect this Priceless Asset,” *The Mail Star*, February 7, 1956, 4.

³¹¹ Interview with Doris Warwick. Cow Bay, October 6, 2013.

Interview with Don Warwick. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

³¹² *Ibid.*

³¹³ These amenities were anticipated in the *Dartmouth Free Press*’ article. See Anonymous, “Silver Sands to Be a Local Disneyland,” March 19, 1959, 1.

All of these amenities were further equipped with electricity and plumbing, and even telephone lines extended down to the beach grounds.³¹⁴ While in the past, when an event was held at the dancehall, lanterns were hung for light, now there was modern lighting, inside and out.³¹⁵ Whereas, the canteen had once used vats of dry ice to store frozen goods, and could only supply basic foods – mostly uncooked items, such as sandwiches and chocolate bars, aside from hot dogs which were boiled on a woodstove – the new canteen could supply a wide array of culinary delights due to the installation of deep-fryers and other brand new electrical appliances.³¹⁶

Donald Hudak remembers eating fish and chips with vinegar on cardboard plates at this “new canteen,” during the early 1960s, recalling that it was a “big treat” for him as a child.³¹⁷ This famous seaside meal, which had made its debut at the British seaside at the turn of the twentieth century,³¹⁸ had finally made its way to Silver Sands by mid-century. Along with the increasing availability of this, and other ‘fast-foods’ and treats, the beach was likely further promoted as a place of decadence and ‘otherness.’ Similar to Joan Payzant, in her reflections, observed earlier, Susanne Hudak remembers her childhood excitement about the candies and ice cream for sale at the beach. She fondly recalls stopping by

Jean Hudak confirms that these plans indeed materialized. Interview with Jean Hudak. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

³¹⁴ Interview with Jean Hudak. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

³¹⁶ Interview with Doris Warwick. Cow Bay, October 6, 2013.

Interview with Don Warwick. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

Interview with Jean Hudak. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

³¹⁷ Interview with Donald Hudak. Cow Bay, October 20, 2013.

³¹⁸ Walton, *The British Seaside*, 118.

the “little white building,” near the gatekeeper’s entrance, where she could buy her favourite “coconut candies,” and various other “penny candies,” as a young girl.³¹⁹ This memory attests to the notion that, in more ways than one, the beach was a place of amusements and rarities, capitalized as commodities. Adults and children, alike, were offered the fascinating and the unique at Silver Sands but, of course, attached to all of this was a cost. As Jean Hudak succinctly puts it: “[Silver Sands] was a business because it was something beautiful that people usually [did not] have.”

True to the Western seaside and leisure history of its time, the Silver Sands of the twentieth century was a wonderland with a price-tag. In an interesting twist, the electric lights that had been proposed for the site, so many decades before, during the Edwardian era, had finally arrived by mid-century, along with numerous other luxuries. While the “hotel on the bluff overlooking the beach”³²⁰ never appeared, Silver Sands had nevertheless become a well-known seaside resort. Beyond its natural landscape, it had become appreciated for the synthetic – for its carousels, baseball fields, animal sculptures, dances, and even culinary experiences. It had become more than just a beach, then, but furthermore, a series of “experientially stimulating”³²¹ social and cultural activities.

³¹⁹ Interview with Susanne Hudak. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

³²⁰ Anonymous, “Watering Places: Great Improvements to be Made at Cow Bay Beach – A Beautiful Park, Large Summer Hotel, Tramway, Bathing Houses, Amusement Hall, Electric Lights.”

³²¹ Gray, *Designing the Seaside*, 38.

Experiencing enormous aesthetic shifts and developments since its early days as a choice picnic spot and rustic getaway from the qualms of the city, at its height Silver Sands could have been called a miniature “dream world.”³²² However, as the next chapter will relay, the Trynor-Bronnum vision to maintain the beach as a “veritable paradise”³²³ was not to last beyond the mid-1960s. As the natural landscape of the beach gradually became compromised by the aggregate extraction of the Trynor Construction Company, from the mid-1950s onwards, the ventures of the Silver Sands Company were quickly undermined. In the face of more a profitable business in exploiting the beach’s natural resources, there was a consequent lack of initiative in the resort scheme. Shortly after the beach’s enormous “revamping,”³²⁴ both its infrastructure and its ecosystem were in a state of serious decline - marking the end of the ‘glory era’ at Silver Sands.

³²² Herwig and Holzherr, *Dream Worlds*, 22.

³²³ Anonymous, “Silver Sands to Be a Local Disneyland,” March 19, 1959, 1.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER 4 – “AN EXPLOITED BEACH:” THE ERA OF COMMERCIAL RESOURCE EXTRACTION AT SILVER SANDS, 1940s – 1970s

“So that is why the office towers of Halifax make me feel sad – and angry. The sands of Cow Bay Beach have run out, and the ocean has taken the trees, the cobbled road, and the little picnic spots. Our children and grandchildren will not have even the wonderful memories we enjoy of one of the most attractive recreation spots of Halifax County.”

– Joan Payzant, May 23, 1979 ³²⁵

In the summer of 1966, “literally thousands of disappointed bathers – including many hundreds of tourists hauling trailers and tents with plans for overnight camping,” were denied access to Silver Sands Beach. The entrance to what had once been “Dartmouth’s most popular resort,” had been barred with a gate, as well as with a “positively no trespassing” sign. In a newspaper article, a representative from the Trynor Construction Company – joint with the Silver Sands Company³²⁶ - claimed that the firm had been unable to secure a lease with someone who could operate the beach as a “commercial venture” for the summer.³²⁷ In turn, the elaborate canteen, dancehall and other amenities, which had all only been built several years before, in 1959, were shut down.

By this time, though, disinterest in the lease of the beach was not unsurprising. Over the years, aggregate extraction had been gaining increasing

³²⁵ Payzant, “A Flashback: The Vanishing Silver Sands,” 5.

³²⁶ Both of these firms were under the ownership of George Trynor. While the Trynor Construction Company was focused on the resource extraction industry at Silver Sands, the recreation and leisure industry at the beach operated under the venture known as the Silver Sands Company.

³²⁷ With his business now primarily focused on resource extraction, Trynor sought to lease the beach to someone who would look after, and maintain, the recreation and leisure business at the site. See Conrod, “Bather’s Turned Away,” August 5, 1966.

priority as the major source of profit at Silver Sands and, as a result, the beach was already exhibiting signs of mass sediment depletion throughout the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s.³²⁸ Despite the beach's ability to retain much of its appeal up until this point - due to its well-known history as a leisure destination and in lieu of its coveted amusements – the year of 1966 can be said to officially mark its decline as a major attraction. By then, the aesthetic and recreational value of the beach had been gravely compromised by the disappearance of much of its once “massive sand area,” which had bordered the expanse of its “horse-shoe shaped” crest, exposing rocks in its place.³²⁹ From the closure of the beach onward, it was only to be a matter of time before both the park's buildings and infrastructure, and most of its remaining valuable aggregate, was either hauled away for construction purposes or worn away by the sea.

Before delving into a history of resource extraction at Silver Sands, however, it is important to note that sand and gravel removal from many other Nova Scotian beaches had been taking place for decades. A core building material throughout Atlantic Canada,³³⁰ beach sediment supplied many

³²⁸ Anonymous, “Silver Sands Is Threatened By Airstrip Requirements,” *The Mail Star*, February 8, 1956, 8. See also Anonymous, “Popular Beach Disappearing,” *The Mail Star*, October 16, 1956, 1.

³²⁹ Conrod, “Bather's Turned Away,” August 5, 1966.

³³⁰ As Andries writes: “The problem of beach sand and gravel extraction [was] not confined to Nova Scotia but rather [existed] throughout the Atlantic Region.” See Andries, “The Impact of Beach Protection on Beach Sand and Gravel Extraction,” 2. Andries further describes the history of the practice, at length, in each of the four Atlantic Provinces. See Andries, “The Impact of Beach Protection on Beach Sand and Gravel Extraction,” full publication.

However, it is worth pointing out that Prince Edward Island was the only province still carrying out sand and gravel mining on a large-scale, by 1980. As E.H Owens explained at the 1980 Canadian Coastal Conference: “The removal of shore-zone sediments for commercial use has been the subject of concern in recent years. In the Maritime Provinces of Canada the practice of sand removal from beaches has been common for many decades, but at present is permitted only on Prince Edward Island. Sand removal on the

construction and property needs. As Darlene Marie Andries writes: “Sand and gravel removal from Nova Scotia beaches [...] occurred for decades, as long as the beaches [were] accessible to developing communities and cities.”³³¹

At the same time, beaches all over North America were experiencing similar exploitation through the mass removal of their aggregate during the mid-twentieth century. In the United States, as a whole, for example, “the annual per capita consumption of sand and gravel [...] increased from about [three fourths] of a ton in 1920 to about [five] tons in 1970.” Although this figure stands in relation to all sources of sand and gravel in the country, it includes a sizeable amount of aggregate from seaside environments.³³²

Like many North American beaches, Nova Scotian beaches in close proximity to cities and sources of industry were typically exploited first.³³³ Indeed, it is speculated that much early construction of the buildings and infrastructure, within the greater Halifax-Dartmouth area, made use of sand and gravel, leading to the destruction of shorelines that have long since been unknown to current

island provides sufficient aggregate to satisfy the requirements of local concrete manufacturers; an average of 65, 000 cubic yards [...] is mined each year for this practice.” See Owens, E.H., “Sediment Removal from the Beaches of Prince Edward Island,” in *Canadian Coastal Conference, 1980: Proceedings*, presented April 22-24, 1980, Burlington, Ontario, 367.

³³¹ Andries, “The Impact of Beach Protection on Beach Sand and Gravel Extraction,” 3.

³³² Commission on Natural Resources, National Research Council, *Surface Mining of Non-Coal Materials: Appendix I: Sand and Gravel Mining, and Quarrying and Blasting for Crushed Stone and Other Construction Materials*, (Washington, D.C: National Academy of Sciences, 1980), 12-3.

³³³ Andries, “The Impact of Beach Protection on Beach Sand and Gravel Extraction,” 80.

The American Commission on Natural Resources 1980 study reports that most of the demand for sand and gravel, during this time, was in urban areas. It also identifies a direct link between the consumption of sand and gravel and a region’s affluence. It states that the total per capita annual consumption of mineral aggregates, at the time, was “roughly related to the affluence of the population.” See Commission on Natural Resources, National Research Council, *Surface Mining of Non-Coal Materials: Appendix I: Sand and Gravel Mining, and Quarrying and Blasting for Crushed Stone and Other Construction Materials*, 13.

memory.³³⁴ While coarser material was often used for fill, finer material was an essential component for mixing concrete.³³⁵ Up until the 1970s, several common, personal uses for beach materials included its use in concrete for home foundations and septic tanks, as well as for the concrete of driveways. Finer sand was also used for cultivating gardens.³³⁶

An “inexpensive and convenient alternative to crushing stone,”³³⁷ individuals could access the beach with their own horse and cart, or later with their own utility vehicle, in order to obtain the quantity and quality of sediment that they wanted for their private uses. As Jean Hudak recalls: “In my time, people went all along the [Cow Bay] causeway to get sand and gravel for gardens and driveways. If you wanted early vegetables, you put sand in the garden. Horses and carts were used for hauling. I remember people doing this throughout my life.”³³⁸

Considerable naiveté about the consequences of sediment removal, as well as lack of awareness about beach ecology, meant that gathering such materials from the beach was not seen as questionable but, in fact, seemed

³³⁴ Interview with Donald Hudak. Cow Bay, October 20, 2013.

³³⁵ David J. W. Piper and Anthony J. Bowen, *Beach Maintenance and Removal of Sand and Gravel in Yarmouth-Digby and Guysborough Counties, Nova Scotia* (Halifax: Dalhousie University, 1976), 60.

³³⁶ Andries also makes note of several large-scale projects, which made use of beach materials for construction. She writes that “the Dominion Coal Company in the 1890s’s was removing sand for concrete rails and other mine uses with crews of men and carts and 10-15 horses,” and that, furthermore, “sand removal from Melmerby Beach in Pictou County began in the nineteenth century when local residents removed sand for use at the coal mines in Stellarton.” Lastly, she states that the “buildings at St. Francis Xavier University were made with beach sand from Pomquet Beach in Antigonish County and [that] the Scott and Michelin factories [...] used beach material from Kings Head Beach in Pictou County.” See Andries, “The Impact of Beach Protection on Beach Sand and Gravel Extraction,” 3-4.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, 80.

³³⁸ Interview with Jean Hudak. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

extremely logical. At the time, seeking alternate sources of aggregate would have seemed absurd, as such material from inland sources was not sorted by natural wave action making it very difficult to crush, especially prior to modern technology. Furthermore, inland sites were often far away from the sites of construction.³³⁹ It is not surprising, then, that the personal extraction of beach aggregate eventually mushroomed into a commercial industry. As time went on, particularly during the former half of the twentieth century, considerable demand for such material spurred the development of modest, private enterprises selling sand and gravel within the surrounding areas of coastal communities.³⁴⁰

In the case of Silver Sands, several individuals began crushing and hauling sediment for sale, from there, during the early 1940s. The onset of the Second World War had resulted in the development of significant military infrastructure around the vicinity, namely the Hartlen Point battery and the Shearwater airport and military base, consequentially creating an increased demand for sand and gravel.³⁴¹ What had once been a 'backyard practice,' was now 'going commercial.' As William Cronon elucidates: "When people exchange things in their immediate vicinity for things that can only be obtained elsewhere, they impose a new set of meanings on the local landscape and connect it to the wider world. These increase the chance that the local environment will begin to

³³⁹ Andries, "The Impact of Beach Protection on Beach Sand and Gravel Extraction," 86. Piper and Bowen, *Beach Maintenance and Removal of Sand and Gravel*, 67.

³⁴⁰ Andries, "The Impact of Beach Protection on Beach Sand and Gravel Extraction," 80.

³⁴¹ Taylor, Frobels and Patton, "Cow Bay Beach (Silver Sands) Halifax County," 39.

change in response to outside forces, so that trade becomes a powerful new source of ecological change.”³⁴²

Indeed, mechanical tractors and tools were suddenly penetrating Silver Sands, while its material was finding itself within the concrete of the greater Halifax-Dartmouth area. The beach was suddenly active in a cause that was at once far removed from its shores, but which, at the same time, relied upon them. Lying only twenty-five kilometers outside of Halifax, on the eastern side of the world’s third largest natural harbour, the beach was being affected by a war that had brought with it a great deal of technological and developmental change - playing a seemingly small, but vital role, in its manifestation. Civilization and the natural world were not as separate as they appeared, here, but, in fact, were impacting each other. The formation of the beach was being manipulated, while the built landscape of the surrounding communities was also evolving.

From 1940 to 1941, Oswald Hubley leased the beach from Robert Stanford in order to extract sediment for use at the Shearwater airbase. Using a “tractor with a scoop behind it,” Hubley would “excavate the pebbles [and] cobbles in winter when the sand had moved offshore. When the scoop was filled, the trap would shut and he would take it to the top of the beach for stock piling. He had up to 30 men shoveling the material into trucks.” In order to access the west end of Silver Sands and Hartlen Point, he constructed a bridge over the

³⁴² Cronon, *Nature’s Metropolis*, xvi.

inlet known as 'The Run,' which separated the main portion of the beach, at Cow Bay, from a western crest, near Eastern Passage. A firm known as Acadian Construction, under the operation of then owner of Hartlen Point, Fred Heath, was also extracting sediment from this area for the construction needs of either the Hartlen Point battery, or for Shearwater. An agreement had been made between Heath and Hubley, which allowed Hubley to mine eastward, while Heath could mine westward, towards Hartlen Point. In interview with Bob Taylor, Jim Mosher has said that another gentleman, who had "crushing operations all over the area," Mr. O.P Mosher, had also set up a gravel crusher at the western portion of Silver Sands for a few years during the 1940s. However, Mosher said that "it was not very successful because the gravel was too hard to crush."³⁴³

Although the exact amount of sediment hauled from the beach during this time is unknown, considering all of these operations combined, Silver Sands Beach was providing a significant amount of construction material for the surrounding military infrastructure. Nonetheless, as Jim Mosher has claimed, Hubley's excavations probably had less of an effect on the beach than those carried out by Trynor later on, due to his "selective removal during the winter."³⁴⁴ He has further noted that Hubley's removal was less noticeable because there was still ample sediment to fill in his mining pockets, over the following summer.³⁴⁵ Of course, the quantities mined during these decades were not even

³⁴³ Taylor, Frobel and Patton, "Cow Bay Beach (Silver Sands) Halifax County," 39.

³⁴⁴ Whereas, Trynor removed sediment during the summer and fall months.

³⁴⁵ Taylor, Frobel and Patton, "Cow Bay Beach (Silver Sands) Halifax County," 39.

close to comparable with the cumulative nearly two million tons of material that would eventually be extracted by the Trynor Construction Company. Yet, albeit on a smaller scale, changes to the morphology of the beach had already begun. As Stephen Mosher relates: “There was a lot of damage done before my time too [prior to the 1950s]. There was lots of demand for sand and gravel from Cow Bay and Eastern Passage. They would pull a lot of gravel from the sea floor and crush the stone.” He maintains, though, that earlier traditional beach hauling was not as harmful to the ecology of the beach as that which was later carried out by more advanced technologies:

The earlier people with hand shovels didn’t hurt the beaches. They would go down there to haul kelp at four in the morning, too. For their gardens and things. According to the [Moser]³⁴⁶ deed, they could haul stuff from the beach for their own use. But, as technology changed, there was big development boom and fancier equipment allowed people to haul ten times the amount. With dredgers and trucks, things just changed overnight.³⁴⁷

Such a view recalls that of historian Graeme Wynn who reacts to the rise of modern technology in the province, as a whole. He writes that “the ways in which people in this region and elsewhere lived with the natural world were radically changed by new brute-force technologies.” Furthermore, these changes

³⁴⁶ Former spelling of the German name “Mosher.” Steven Mosher, in discussion with the author.

³⁴⁷ Interview with Steven Mosher. Cow Bay, September 3, 2013.

were exacerbated, he says, in their enforcement by “newly revered scientists and engineers,” and their finance through “new corporate entities.”³⁴⁸

Both the words of Mosher and Wynn suggest that the expansion of technology allowed individuals to assume increasing control over their environments. Indeed “utilitarian discourse” had long since replaced “the term nature with the term natural resources” and an obsession with productivity and technical knowledge was influencing the consumption of “those aspects of nature that [could] be appropriated for human use.”³⁴⁹ The industrial growth experienced by the greater Halifax-Dartmouth area, during the 1940s, was just part of an ever utility-driven attitude towards land use, that was to continue reverberating throughout the province. Within the ensuing decades, Nova Scotian beaches were to face more and more ecological pressures as their sediment was sought in order to construct buildings, and other infrastructure. As Piper and Bowen elucidate: “The demand for removal of sand and gravel from beaches tends to reflect the general economic situation. When the local construction industry is active, the beaches are a very convenient source of material, easy to access, easy to remove, and requiring little or no washing or grading. In times of recession, however, the demand is greatly reduced.”³⁵⁰

³⁴⁸ Wynn, Graeme, “Reflections on the Environmental History of Atlantic Canada,” in *Land and Sea: Environmental History in Atlantic Canada*, eds., Claire Campbell and Robert Summerby-Murray (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 2013), 250.

³⁴⁹ Scott, *Seeing Like A State*, 13.

³⁵⁰ Piper and Bowen, *Beach Maintenance and Removal of Sand and Gravel* 29.

They further note that, by their time of writing in 1976, “excessive removal of beach material,” had since led to the erosion and destruction of various recreational beaches throughout both the mainland’s western-most county of Yarmouth, as well as throughout its eastern-most county of Guysborough.³⁵¹ “Economic pressures” had even penetrated this latter, more remote region, where “almost everywhere a road led to a beach,” there was “evidence of removal, in the form of pits or heaps.”³⁵² Such geographically widespread damage indicates that, even far outside the urban limits of Halifax-Dartmouth, the province was undergoing considerable industrial and economic expansion.

As for the beaches surrounding the Halifax Regional Municipality, these hardly stood a chance against at least some degree of extraction throughout the 1950s, 1960s, and even into the 1970s, due to their convenience in their proximity to the city. While Silver Sands was a main choice for this activity, due to large government contracts secured by Trynor’s firm, nearby beaches, including Story’s Head Beach,³⁵³ Martinique Beach, Lawrencetown Beach and Conrod’s

³⁵¹ Piper and Bowen, *Beach Maintenance and Removal of Sand and Gravel*, 2.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, 48.

³⁵³ The October 15, 1956 *Mail Star* makes reference to “a large beach located at Chezzetcook which [was] virtually ruined for public use due to the excavation of sand and gravel for manufacture of concrete products,” further stating that the beach in Chezzetcook “seen little or no public use for [...] three years” due to this activity. (As Bob Taylor voiced in an interview, this beach is actually known as Story’s Head Beach. It is often compared to Silver Sands Beach for morphological purposes, having experienced a similar history of contested land use between recreation and sediment extraction). The article predicted a similar outcome for Silver Sands. See Anonymous, “Permanent Harm By Excavations Is Feared At Beach,” *The Mail Star*, October 15, 1956, 1.

Taylor also discussed the aggregate removal at Chezzetcook, in interview. Bob Taylor, in discussion with the author.

Beach,³⁵⁴ were also subject to sand and gravel extraction for post-war development projects. These included the further enhancement or construction of military infrastructure, as well as the construction of commercial and public infrastructure. Notably, the office towers of downtown Halifax are said to have made use of thousands of tons of material from such locations,³⁵⁵ while extraction firms exhumed generous profits.³⁵⁶

The above being said, a main driver behind Trynor's decision to purchase Silver Sands Beach from Robert Stanford in 1954, was his procurement of a large-scale \$2, 500, 000 contract³⁵⁷ to haul sand and gravel for CFB Shearwater.³⁵⁸ Despite the hauling of materials from the beach during the Second World War, it was not yet complete, and its airbase, built over swampy grounds, was still in need of great quantities of sediment – including as much as twenty feet of fill in some places³⁵⁹ – along with crushing stone for the laying of a “new 9, 200 foot landing strip.”³⁶⁰ An enormous project, it would ensure a hefty profit – much more than the ownership of the attractions at the beach could secure, and it was to last over several years. According to Ross Weeks, a past employee of the Trynor Construction Company, it is believed that Trynor, who

³⁵⁴ Bruce Argue, “Classification of Sandy Beaches Along the Eastern Shore of Nova Scotia,” (M.A. thesis, Saint Mary's University, 1998), 63.

³⁵⁵ Payzant, *The Vanishing Silver Sands*, May 23, 1979, 6.

³⁵⁶ Cyclically, this further stimulated the Nova Scotian economy, which is, and has always been, natural resources based. See Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, *Atlantic Canada: Facing the Challenge of Change: A Study of the Atlantic Economy* (Moncton: Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, 1994), 1-1.

³⁵⁷ Anonymous, “Excavating Work Continues on Silver Sands Beach: Taking Million Tons Sand, Gravel,” *The Mail Star*. October 13, 1956, 1.

³⁵⁸ Anonymous, “Taking Million Tons Off Beach,” *The Mail Star*, October 13, 1956, 10.

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

³⁶⁰ Anonymous, “Silver Sands Is Threatened By Airstrip Requirements,” February 8, 1956, 8.

had the right of first refusal to the contract, would not have bought the beach otherwise.³⁶¹ He believes that the additional expansion of the beach as a commercial attraction was only a minor part of Trynor's plans to generate revenue from Silver Sands; supplying material for Shearwater was the priority.

By this time, two competing notions regarding the exploitation of nature were in existence within Atlantic Canada. As MacEachern posits, by observing the region's national parks, the 1950s were yet characterized by a general trust in park managers, that they would properly take care of the nature within park premises, and do what was best for these environments. In fact, some individuals likely had the same kind of trust in Trynor's activity at Silver Sands. On the other hand, however, MacEachern also pins the years of the late 1950s as the time during which the "meaning of ecology began to be reinterpreted by North Americans," causing people to develop "a new-found attachment to nature," and "grow anxious about its fate under human 'management.'"³⁶² In terms of sand and gravel mining, however, although increasingly controversial amongst certain groups around this time, it was not yet fully understood in an era when science and technology still maintained a great deal of authority. Despite the blossoming ecology movement, extraction was to continue in vast proportions, at Silver Sands and elsewhere, well into the ensuing decades.

³⁶¹ Weeks is careful to specify that, though it was technically known as the hauling of sand and gravel, gravel was, in fact, the material that the firm was after. "Trynor really bought the beach for its gravel, actually, not for its sand. He needed crushed rock for making concrete," Weeks says. Ross Weeks, in discussion with the author. Cole Harbour, March 1, 2013.

³⁶² MacEachern, *Natural Selections*, 220.

In fact, the latter half of the 1950s no longer only saw leisure seekers making their way to Silver Sands during the warmer months, but also witnessed the presence of Trynor's extracting devices and dump trucks at the site. Aggregate was always removed in the summer and the early fall, before winter storm systems arrived. Steven Mosher recalls that, even on very busy days at the beach, there would always be "big five ton trucks, going back and forth, hauling steady."³⁶³ His account is matched with that of the October 13, 1956 *Mail Star* which reported that "twenty five heavy trucks [were] working round the clock hauling sand and gravel" from the beach, working to remove more than 1, 000, 000 tons of sand and gravel by the end of that year.³⁶⁴ Although the company would work at the far western end of the beach at first, away from most of the beach goers, in later years there was a scale house down the road from the beach, so "the trucks would have to drive past all the tourists on the beach, right past the canteen."³⁶⁵

Even though sediment removal was commonplace during this era, this occurrence still caused many community members, and outsiders alike, to express their worries regarding the consequences of large-scale extraction at Silver Sands. In 1956, investigations into the procedure were already slated, and local newspapers monitored the events closely throughout the following year. As Jean Hudak confirms: "People were upset about the mining and there were many

³⁶³ Interview with Steven Mosher. Cow Bay, September 3, 2013.

³⁶⁴ Anonymous, "Excavating Work Continues on Silver Sands Beach: Taking Million Tons Sand, Gravel," October 13, 1956, 1.

³⁶⁵ Interview with Steven Mosher. Cow Bay, September 3, 2013.

stories in the newspaper to prove it. But the province [did not] stop it. The government officials and reporters would come and look at the beach, but nothing was done.”³⁶⁶ In February 1956, photos and articles detailing the extraction at Silver Sands, as well as the concerns surrounding its impacts, began appearing. On February 7 of that year, a particularly cautionary article, titled “Protect This Priceless Asset,” urged authorities to take action against Trynor’s contract with Shearwater. In a grave instance of foreshadowing the article predicted: “One of the most popular of our beaches – and that which lies nearer to the growing Halifax-Dartmouth metropolis than any other – is now in danger of losing much of its attractiveness, if not being destroyed completely as a resort.” The article further encouraged government action by referring to instances of sand and gravel mining destruction elsewhere in the area:

This company has a right to do what it wishes with the property it has acquired. But surely there is a right of even greater importance held by the general public. This is where the responsible government should step in with necessary action to preserve an asset that means so much to so many urban dwellers. If it doesn’t there likely will occur the same loss that developed from beach excavations in nearby areas over the last few years. At East Chezzetcook a sand strip one third of a mile long was ruined for bathing purposes by such an operation and at Cole Harbor Dyke the sea swept in to eat away a section of natural causeway after removal of sand and gravel on one portion of it. Clam digging flats also were destroyed.³⁶⁷

By October 15 1956, increasing alarm struck that there would be “permanent damage” at Silver Sands, motivating “Halifax County Council

³⁶⁶ Interview with Jean Hudak. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

³⁶⁷ Anonymous, “Protect This Priceless Asset!” *The Mail Star*, February 7, 1956, 4.

officials” to plan a “full scale investigation into the excavation of sand and gravel from this summer time haven for thousands.” An article from this date interviewed chairman of the County Planning Board and local Cow Bay resident, Ira Settle, about his role in the investigation, during which he and others met with Trynor, regarding the removal of sediment from sections of the beach beyond its western-most boundaries, which he previously had said would be left untouched. It was vaguely stated that the delegation was going to find out “how much further the work would go.” Rather surprisingly, in a time when many provincial beaches were privately owned and extraction was not unusual, the article even alludes to the “possibility of [the council] expropriating the beach and preserving it for future public use.”³⁶⁸ As time would tell, though, such action would not end up being taken during this period.

Another article, from October 24, 1956, recounts the findings of the investigation. Along with Ira Settle, the delegation was comprised of County Councillor Joseph Davis, chairman of the Parks and Public Lands committee, Councillor Charles Myers of Eastern Passage, and ‘County engineer,’ Don Bird. The four men inspected the beach and determined that the work had “proceeded far past the stage where the original beach could be preserved.” They were all of the opinion that “the only remaining hope for the salvaging of Silver Sands beach was that the action of the sea would rebuild the beach surface in a year or so.” Councillor Joseph Davis was further worried that the beach might wash straight

³⁶⁸ Anonymous, “Permanent Harm By Excavations Is Feared at Beach,” *The Mail Star*, October 15, 1956, 1.

through the narrow sandbar of Silver Sands into the lagoon behind its shores.³⁶⁹

But, despite these findings, no restrictions were imposed upon the Trynor Construction Company.

Trynor himself was adamant that the beach would completely rebuild itself through natural wave action, each winter, and told the press that there was “really no cause for worry.” He claimed that “on a beach of this type,” extraction could never take the sand away, and that it would “always come in again” during the winter,” further arguing that “sand and gravel companies in Saint John and other places [were] doing the same thing to beaches in their areas for many years and [...] found [that] the supply of sand and gravel which the sea washed on shore [was] almost inexhaustible.”³⁷⁰ A common misconception regarding sediment mining at the time, this idea that the beach would fix itself while extraction continued on, even held hope for the members of the investigation, who eventually left the situation up to the fate of an ecosystem that was, in reality, not rebuilding itself at the rate of extraction at all. In fact, it was quickly becoming more and more fragile. As Bob Taylor explains: “People were used to seeing the sand come back, but [it was] only because of the shape of the beach. Sand returns to pits and so on, so people mistakenly [thought] that Silver Sands [was] replenish[ing] itself. But even if a beach looks the same, it will eventually migrate landward if it [can not] regather enough material through large-scale

³⁶⁹ Anonymous, “Officials View Scene of Project,” *The Mail Star*, October 24, 1956, 3.

³⁷⁰ Anonymous, “Taking Millions Tons Off Beach,” October 13, 1956, 10.

erosion of drumlins or from being physically replaced and this is what was happening.”³⁷¹

Trynor, however, told the press that the beach would be “better than ever” the following summer, with a “larger proportion of fine sand than ever before.”³⁷² An October 13, 1956 article claimed that the firm had experimented with a 300-foot section of the beach the previous winter, where everything was removed down to the waterline and beyond. The company claimed that this had turned out to be the “best section” of the beach in the summer of 1956.³⁷³ As Taylor’s words reveal, though, if this were actually true, it would have only been because material had filled into the hollows that extraction was leaving behind.

Perhaps in a further attempt to assuage the concerns of those worried about sand and gravel mining, Trynor also told the press that the seemingly conflicting interests of his extraction and recreation firms were not only capable of coexisting in tandem but, furthermore, could operate in complimentary ways. A newspaper article written shortly before the delegation’s investigation reports: “Despite the hungry bite of power shovels and drag cranes [...] Mr. Trynor [has] said that his firm intends to cooperate with the Silver Sands Co., another firm which operates the beach, in clearing up the beach and providing added facilities for next year’s visitors.” It further states that “the wooded area in the rear of the

³⁷¹ Interview with Bob Taylor. Dartmouth, September 4, 2013.

³⁷² Anonymous, “Excavating Work Continues on Silver Sands Beach: Taking Million Tons Sand, Gravel,” October 13, 1956, 1.

³⁷³ Anonymous, “Taking Million Tons Off Beach,” October 13, 1956, 10.

beach [was to be] cleaned up [...] and [that] the public [would] be supplied with several stone fireplaces and many more picnic tables and benches.”³⁷⁴ Trynor told the press that the changes he was planning were designed to “make the beach safer and more convenient for the thousands of people who [would] make use of the beach each summer;”³⁷⁵ ‘safe and convenient,’ here, meaning the further imposition of human order and design upon the natural landscape.

Boasting of such ‘improvements’ reveals a consciousness rooted in the mindset of modernity. Nature once again, was being put forth as something that could be improved upon via technology and human hands, manipulated to perfection, while supplying profits. Either way, such proposals could have bestowed an attractive edge upon the Trynor Construction Company, during an era that still sought to enjoy nature in ordered and controlled environments.

Interestingly, by August 20, 1957, the press was no longer regularly predicting the ‘end of Silver Sands.’ Instead, it was ecstatic about the results of Trynor’s proclaimed improvements – and even praised the construction company’s removal of the “rocky surface” that had built up along its shores. There had been a total turn-around in the way that the beach and the extraction firm were figuring in the media. The August 20, 1957 article titled, “Outlook for Silver Sands Beach Is Rapidly Growing Brighter” exalted:

³⁷⁴ Anonymous, “Excavating Work Continues on Silver Sands Beach: Taking Million Tons Sand, Gravel,” October 13, 1956, 1.

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

Plans to convert Halifax County's famed "Silver Sands" into one of the Halifax-Dartmouth areas main seaside recreation centres are rapidly materializing. [...] Trynor Construction Company officials revealed today that the major excavation work along the beach area itself had been concluded and that other fill still being hauled from the area to complete the construction of a two mile long air strip at HMCS Shearwater would be taken from the rocky tip at the far southern end of the beach area where it would not interfere with the beach itself. [...] The firm said that they had hauled about 800, 000 tons of rock and sandy fill from the Silver Sands sector in their two year construction program at Shearwater and before the end of this year they expect to push this figure up to a million tons. [...] The Silver Sands beach now stretches an estimated mile in length, almost double to previous length of the sandy surface. Construction company officials said that their drags and shovels had removed all of the rocky surface which had built up over the years along most of the beach and the action of the sea had replaced this material with the fine sand which now makes this beach equal to the famed Clam Harbour beach.³⁷⁶

In the above article, the growing attractiveness of the beach is attributed to the work of the Trynor Construction Company, thus producing the image that the beach was imperfect prior to the efforts of the firm. It is represented as something that both required and benefitted from human intervention, something that could only be remedied by Trynor's trucks and drags. In declaring that they were 'fixing up' the beach, the Trynor Construction Company seemed to gain favour amongst at least some of the user public who, as MacEachern shows, at this time, could still be persuaded to place full trust in science and technology, taking for granted that it would do what was best for the environment, whether or not it appeared harmful or drastic.³⁷⁷ For his part, as a modern businessman, Trynor was putting forth the notion that he could fix and improve virtually every aspect of the beach,

³⁷⁶ Anonymous, "Outlook For Silver Sands Beach Is Rapidly Growing Brighter," *The Mail Star*, August 20, 1957, 1.

³⁷⁷ MacEachern, *Natural Selections*, 220.

and, in turn, market it to ever increasing quadrants of the population as a “safe and convenient,” sanitized and sculpted, desirable leisure landscape. The article further elaborates:

A company spokesman said that over the years the action of the Atlantic had built up numerous piles of rocks along the beach surface thus spoiling it for recreation purposes. He said the sand that did wash in was being lost between the piles of rocks on the shore. [...] Meanwhile the beach development firm was hard at work giving nature a helping hand in making the beach even more useful to picnickers visiting the area. Workmen have cleared out stacks of dead underbrush and rubbish in the wooden area at the back of the beach, between the highway and the nearby lake. This cleared area is being fitted with picnic tables and benches which are now under construction. Plans for the erection of a number of barbecue pits and open fire places have also been laid and work will commence on these almost immediately. [...] Garbage cans will be placed along the beach to eliminate possible littering of the beach surface. Toilet facilities are also going to be provided for the convenience of those working in the area.³⁷⁸

“Giving nature a helping hand”³⁷⁹ was perhaps a gentle way to describe the robust forces of technology that were interacting within this natural environment. But, furthermore, the phrase signifies a prevalent attitude of the period, holding that nature was not tame, but wild, and thus did not belong, without management, in an orderly and civilized world. Structure and maintenance were necessary for making nature palatable and usable, and it was this sort of notion that was able to draw favour to the idea that the manipulation of the beach environment, by the extraction firm, was acceptable. When the removal of gravel was being presented as something that was enhancing the

³⁷⁸ Anonymous, “Outlook For Silver Sands Beach Is Rapidly Growing Brighter,” August 20, 1957, 1.

³⁷⁹ Ibid.

physical beauty of the beach, it could, in fact, be seen as a 'good thing.' The public, it seems, had little problem with the company removing and potentially damaging that which was visually and experientially unappealing, suggesting that appreciation for the beach environment, at this time, was still largely an aesthetic preoccupation, rather than an ecological one. Even Halifax City Council session minutes from June 1957 reported that "Silver sands would be in better condition than in previous years," moreover attributing the improvement to the construction company. "Prior to the operations of a Construction firm, the road [was] in poor shape but now a new road [has] been created," the minutes read.³⁸⁰

By 1959, Trynor began to greatly expand the recreational and aesthetic appeal of the beach under the Silver Sands Company, as the press excitedly awaited the "transformation of Silver Sands" into a "local Disneyland."³⁸¹ The extraction taking place alongside of this process either became even more digestible or, perhaps, it was simply ignored. Only as the mid 1960s approached, would this begin to change. For the time being, however, the impacts of sand and gravel excavation would at least be forgiven, if not totally forgotten. In retrospect, this seems shocking, especially considering the damage that the beach had undergone, just a few years earlier, and would continue to undergo in the years to come.

³⁸⁰ Council Session Minutes (Halifax County Council: June 1957), 3.

³⁸¹ Anonymous, "Silver Sands to Be a Local Disneyland," March 19, 1959, 1.

In 1957, despite representatives of the Trynor Construction Company claiming that they had “no further plans for excavation along the beach area unless it was needed to remove accumulations of rock brought in by the ocean” - and that if “fill was needed in the future it would likely be removed from the heavily rocked point at the southern tip of the beach,”³⁸² - excavation went ahead well beyond this, with drastic consequences. “Between 1954 and 1963 (inclusive) nearly 1.7 million tons of sediment was removed mainly from the western end of the beach [and] between 1964 and 1971 a further 332, 231 tons of material were removed.” This meant that, by 1964, the beach had lost 56% of its 1954 width and an additional 42% by 1971. It was not until after extraction was banned that the beach stopped shrinking at such an alarming pace, slowing down to a rate of less than 5% reduction after 1971.³⁸³

Certainly, such activity was increasingly changing the way in which people were interacting with the beach landscape. Susanne Hudak already noticed the signs of extraction when she was a child in the late 1950s and early 1960s. “All of these horrible holes from excavation would fill up with water and we would swim in them,” she says. “But I don’t think the community really noticed how the beach could be destructed like it was, then. It came as a big surprise. It wasn’t until the

³⁸² Anonymous, “Outlook for Silver Sands Beach Is Rapidly Growing Brighter,” August 20, 1957, 1.

³⁸³ See Chapter 2 for additional details. See also, Taylor, Frobel and Patton, “Cow Bay Beach (Silver Sands) Halifax County,” 12. (Taylor specifies that much of this data was derived from the 1976 Huntley court case surrounding the removal of sand and gravel from the beach. Interview with Bob Taylor. Dartmouth. September 4, 2013.)

canteen was torn down that everyone finally realized.”³⁸⁴ This testament relays the notion that the ill effects of extraction went unnoticeable until the human made elements of the beach were in peril, in turn suggesting that the beach, as an ecosystem, was often overlooked in the face of its various cultural amenities and amusements. Such a notion further calls into question just how much nature was actually a part of the seaside experience during this period, and how much of it was rather based upon its infrastructure and amenities. On the other hand, however, it also acknowledges that, eventually, even the beach as a cultural experience was to be compromised, due to extraction. As the changing natural landscape began impacting social and cultural activities, it became clear that recreation and sediment mining could not be kept separate from one another. After all, even child’s play had been affected by the practice.

Further speaking to this point, Donald Hudak says that, in the late 1960s, he would play on top of a huge pyramid of sand. “It was massive and we would run up it and roll and slide down it,” he recalls. “Seems like the beach was changing rapidly year by year, by then. The drumlins and the trees were quickly washing away [and the] road became washed over with rocks. Then there was no road, really, and no trees. It just kind of seemed like the beach disappeared over night.”³⁸⁵

³⁸⁴ Interview with Susanne Hudak. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

³⁸⁵ Interview with Donald Hudak. Cow Bay, October 20, 2013.

By this time, indeed, the Silver Sands experience had changed dramatically. The amenities and amusements were no longer functioning, and according to Ross Weeks, the Trynor Construction Company had run into financial difficulties. He says that “Trynor had companies in Newfoundland so much of his efforts were transferred there,” during the late 1960s. Furthermore Weeks, who worked for Trynor in the early to mid 1960s, believes that “extraction was tapering off around [the mid-1960s], and [that] the beach was wearing away on its own, by then.”³⁸⁶ Nonetheless, according to the figures cited by Taylor, above, a considerable amount of sediment, albeit much less than before, continued to be removed from the beach until 1972, further hindering its ability to rebuild.³⁸⁷ As these realizations gradually came to light during the 1960s and 1970s, the public and the press, alike, were beginning to lose hope that the beach would ever regain its former glory.

In August 1966, the *Dartmouth Free Press* stated that “whether the removal of materials [had] encouraged [the] deterioration of the beach area, or whether it was a result of changing ocean currents [was] difficult to determine.” Either way, though, it was no longer ignoring the deterioration of the aesthetical and recreational value of Silver Sands. The newspaper included a photo of an Ontario tourist looking “wistfully over the barricade at the beach entrance, towards the rolling surf,” no doubt disappointed for having made their way to the

³⁸⁶ Interview with Ross Weeks. Cole Harbour, March 1, 2014.

³⁸⁷ Taylor, Frobels and Patton, “Cow Bay Beach (Silver Sands) Halifax County,” 12.

famed Silver Sands only to be confronted by a gate. The caption notes that “a few visitors [...] ignored the sign and barricade for a quick swim but [that the] once packed Silver Sands [was] a lonesome spot [that] summer.”³⁸⁸

Nevertheless, some people were still making their way to the beach for some time during its commercial decline. After all, a map of Nova Scotia in the 1965 *Canada's Ocean Playground* guidebook³⁸⁹ yet featured Cow Bay, alongside of symbols of recreation. However, as time went on its inclusion in such promotional materials was likely attributed to its former reputation rather than to its current status. In a time when information between tourism centres and individuals, alike, took far longer to exchange, it took some years for the tourism bureaus in other parts of the province, country and even beyond, to acknowledge that Silver Sands was no longer a fully functional recreational site. Individuals were still being directed towards the beautiful ‘silver sands’ of Cow Bay into the 1970s, expecting the legendary beach of years past.³⁹⁰ Memories of the beach ran deep, throughout many generations in many different places, and people who continued to arrive ‘from away’ were surely shocked to arrive at the beach and discover that “nothing was there.”³⁹¹ However, “by around 1972 and 1973 there [were not] many people coming anymore,” Donald Hudak notes.

³⁸⁸ Conrod, “Bather’s Turned Away,” August 5, 1966.

³⁸⁹ Refer Nova Scotia’s 1965 provincial tourism guidebook map insert. See *Canada's Ocean Playground* (Halifax: Nova Scotia Department of Tourism, 1965).

³⁹⁰ Anonymous, “Silver Sands to Be a Local Disneyland,” March 19, 1959, 1.

³⁹¹ Interview with Susanne Hudak. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

With each passing year, though, these numbers dwindled, just as the once state-of-the-art buildings were disappearing piecemeal. The Trynor Construction Company, as well as community residents, were taking apart the former structures for building supplies, leaving behind concrete remnants to be worn down by the impeding surf, which would now flow over the barrier beach during storms. According to Donald Hudak, “each winter storm was pushing the beach back, and taking more of the trees away.”³⁹² Earlier, in 1968 or 1969, he remembers the canteen and the dancehall being dismantled for construction materials:

As kids, we would play in the canteen in the winter, and one day a guy came down in a car and took some cedar doors from the dancehall to his home in Cole Harbour. People were driving down there whenever, to take what they wanted. [...] I also remember the canteen being taken down. A man from Caldwell Road bought it from Trynor and he had a couple of young guys dismantle the canteen and take the nails out, so that they could build a house with the lumber. The canteen became a house, but now this house is gone, too.³⁹³

Not only was the landscape of the beach changing drastically during this time, but so was the physical landscape of the surrounding areas. Residential development was on the rise in the greater Halifax-Dartmouth area and, ironically, the beach was playing a small role in this trend, beyond supplying sand and gravel. Elements of its former landscape were being transplanted into another, proof that everything can be reshaped, reproduced and reutilized,

³⁹² Interview with Donald Hudak. Cow Bay, October 20, 2013.

³⁹³ Ibid.

extending its influence beyond typical borders and boundaries. The above events thus stand as an example of how the manmade world can be consumed and re-consumed, over and over again, taking on many different forms. Indeed, “movements [of materials] in and out of place,” here, in turn “[produced] both new material landscapes, new sets of social relations and new relations between people and nature.”³⁹⁴

Standing contrary to this notion of recycled materials and landscapes, however, was the sense of abandonment that became associated with the beach, once its crowds began to dissipate. Some members of the local population began to develop a lack of regard for the site, as they approached the once revered space with a sense of carelessness. Ross Weeks recalls “kids smashing into the bathrooms and stealing copper piping,” during the latter half of the 1960s,³⁹⁵ while Donald Hudak remembers “teenagers who were older than [him] breaking into the canteen, [and taking] all kinds of plates and frisbeeing them into the lake,” behind the dancehall.³⁹⁶

This vandalism was not actually directed toward the beach itself, but was mostly concentrated on the remaining buildings, suggesting that the beach, as a natural space, was still largely overlooked, as its infrastructure was yet that which drew attention to the site. Either way, what had once been signs of beachside ‘luxury,’ had now been rendered redundant and, as such, were longer respected

³⁹⁴ Tim Cresswell’s reflections on Cronon’s *Nature’s Metropolis*. See Cresswell, *Place*, 41.

³⁹⁵ Interview with Ross Weeks. Cole Harbour, March 1, 2014.

³⁹⁶ Interview with Donald Hudak. Cow Bay, October 20, 2013.

within the space. A shifting attitude as to what belonged and what did not belong at the beach developed; revealing that once the site ceased to accommodate recreational use, individuals felt that it needed to be cleared of its former presence. Taken down for use elsewhere, or smashed piece by piece, the seaside architecture once key to the human consumption of Silver Sands for recreation and leisure, was suddenly out of place. Stripped of their use, these buildings were furthermore stripped of their value – no longer holding the same meaning where they stood. Without purpose, these structures no longer held grounds upon which to warrant their existence, causing people to dismantle them instead.

As the former landscape of the beach was destroyed, sand and gravel removal continued onward. This spurred further changes within the small community of Cow Bay. As Jean Hudak reflects: “One thing Trynor did do was make paved roads in Cow Bay. We only had gravel roads before. In order to haul sand and gravel to Shearwater he needed good roads.”³⁹⁷ Leighton MacDonald, whose father worked as a truck driver for Trynor, further explains: “Trynor told the government that they [Trynor Construction Company] would build a proper road, as long as they [the government] agreed not to place load restrictions on it, so that they could use it for their equipment.”³⁹⁸

³⁹⁷ Interview with Jean Hudak. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

³⁹⁸ Interview with Leighton MacDonald. Eastern Passage, September 5, 2013.

Additionally, the company provided employment opportunities. While hiring people from the community to work both extraction and transportation jobs, Trynor also hired men from outside of the area, as well. They would board at Jean Hudak's grandmother's house, or in different houses in Cow Bay. Small shanty-like homes were also built near the beach for the workers.³⁹⁹ In various capacities, new jobs had been created, at least for some time, as the industry permeated this rural landscape.

In light of this, there were mixed emotions surrounding the presence of the Trynor Construction Company at Silver Sands during these decades. While locals and non-locals, alike, economically benefitted from the employment and skill set development that the company was able to offer - through positions such as extracting and filtering sediment, crushing gravel or driving transport trucks - there was also a growing concern that the beach was not restoring itself. "I remember my grandfather and my mother complaining that too much sand was being taken and that Trynor would ruin the beach," Donald Hudak says, "but I also know people who were happy, at the time, because they learned trades through Trynor's - like how to drive dozers and dump trucks. They didn't always understand that what they were doing was wrecking the beach. It was employment for them, and they didn't look beyond that into the future."⁴⁰⁰

³⁹⁹ Interview with Jean Hudak. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

⁴⁰⁰ Interview with Donald Hudak. Cow Bay, October 20, 2013.

It is important to allow the situation due consideration for the period: Trynor was simply responding to the demands of a greater public, in return for economic gain, at a time when beaches were yet commonly viewed as an attractive investment for construction materials, as well as commercial entities for tourism. A businessman of his era, he was merely trying to capitalize on both of these fronts at once - catering to society's heightened desire for unique leisure and recreation experiences, as well as satisfying its need for sand and gravel materials. As Steven Mosher explains, "It was different times and people thought differently. It [was not] the way, in those days, to be environmentally aware, so I [do not] really blame [Trynor]."⁴⁰¹ In a time when industry and economic growth, at virtually any cost, were generally viewed positively, Trynor was not acting outside of the norm. In fact, he was engaging in a perfectly legal business that was believed to be essential to the growth and development of the surrounding communities. Still, though, Mosher remains critical of the firm's treatment of the beach. "All the time [that] Trynor was hauling [the beach] away, he was still making money from both ends – from hauling the beach away and from tourism. He had no foresight and just wanted to make as much money as possible, which he did, and the beach was ruined."⁴⁰²

Yet while Silver Sands was already 'ruined' to a great extent, the use of beach materials was vastly losing favour in the province by the early 1970s.

⁴⁰¹ Interview with Steven Mosher. Cow Bay, September 3, 2013.

⁴⁰² Ibid.

Several decades of heavy activity had made clear that the sand and gravel upon many beaches was not replenishing itself at the rate of extraction. As deterioration became visually apparent, citizens gradually became far more aware of extraction impacts. These realizations, combined with the onset of a more universally environmentally conscious age,⁴⁰³ meant that removal was becoming increasingly thought of as unsafe to seaside ecosystems and, therefore, unacceptable. Despite the fact that this burgeoning awareness was still competing with previous utilitarian notions under which the removal of beach material was viewed as a vital economic industry, such environmental concern eventually gave way to the province's first Beach's Preservation and Protection Act, in 1967. Principally aimed at halting the unregulated removal of beach aggregate, the Act was a step towards what would become a more 'ecologically friendly' attitude towards Nova Scotia's coastline.

However, the Act was yet lagging. In order to be protected from sand and gravel mining, a beach had to be specifically designated as 'protected' by the Department of Lands and Forests.⁴⁰⁴ Even then, removal could still take place, as long as the individual or firm applied to the Department for permit and was given permission. Loosely granted without "knowing specifically what the consequences would be," these permits meant that removal was often only banned when physical damage to the beach had become apparent to the wider

⁴⁰³ MacEachern, *Natural Selections*, 202.

⁴⁰⁴ Now known as the Department of Natural Resources.

public. This was often long after serious damage had been done. Furthermore, if permission was not granted, compensation had to be provided to the applicant under the Expropriation Act, under the notion that they would have had a “lawful right” to the material, had the beach in question not been designated under the B.P.A. This created a number of problems, as outlined by Andries: “Not only were there disputes over the entitlement to compensation and amounts of awards, but there was nothing to limit the number of times that a person could apply for compensation. The payment of money, often in exorbitant amounts, accomplished very little for the provincial government as the ownership of the beach was not affected.”⁴⁰⁵

Along with the potential abuses and inflated expenses of the compensation allowances, the B.P.A, had several other major downfalls. Notably, it did not secure the protection of many privately owned beaches, and removal at these sites was allowed to continue unless “specifically prohibited.” This meant that protection of privately owned beaches “rested on [the] complaints of sand and gravel removal from the public,” so if none were brought forth, extraction was able to continue without regulation.⁴⁰⁶ As there was no monitoring or reporting on the impacts of removal at these locations, they became increasingly vulnerable to heightened extraction activity, while other private beaches and Crown land beaches became protected. As Andries writes, “the degree to which people

⁴⁰⁵ Andries, “The Impact of Beach Protection on Beach Sand and Gravel Extraction,” 27.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 24.

[were] exposed to sand and gravel extraction on beaches, [...] determine[d] the demand for beach protection which in turn determine[d] the priority that the provincial government place[d] on individual beach protection.” Beaches accessible to higher density coastal communities, possessing “high quality” sediment, were traditionally exploited first for both their materials and for leisure, usually meaning that these were the beaches to be reported, and consequentially designated before others.⁴⁰⁷ Although this was beneficial to the public, it allowed for the distinction of ‘protected’ beaches to be largely dictated by the social and cultural preferences of society, rather than in lieu of actual environmental considerations. Consumers were very much in charge of distinguishing which natural ecosystems were important to preserve, in turn selecting sites mostly based upon popular taste.

Nonetheless, despite these flaws, the B.P.A of 1967 represented a distinct shift in the province’s attitude towards beaches, fighting against their exploitation and, moreover, speaking to a heightened awareness and a new kind of appreciation for coastal environments. Between 1968 and March 1975, forty beaches became protected under this B.P.A,⁴⁰⁸ Silver Sands becoming one of them on August 31, 1971.⁴⁰⁹ However, while this period saw significantly less sand and gravel being hauled from the site, there was still a permit for the

⁴⁰⁷ Andries, “The Impact of Beach Protection on Beach Sand and Gravel Extraction,” 79-80.

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁴⁰⁹ Anonymous, “Compensate Beach Loss,” *The Mail Star*, November 16, 1977.

removal of 9, 000 tons of material for a contract Trynor had procured with the Provincial Highways Department,⁴¹⁰ between 1971 and 1972.⁴¹¹

It was not until 1973, that Trynor's firm was denied permission to haul sand and gravel from the beach. In 1974, a permit was denied once again. In each of these years, the firm had requested to remove 100, 000 tons of material from Silver Sands, and thus sought compensation, based on this amount, for their inability to do so.⁴¹² As a result, a court case was spurred, eventually causing the B.P.A of 1967 to be scrapped. It, along with several other smaller cases seeking compensation, would be instrumental in prompting a revised version of the B.P.A, in 1975. Under the new Act, compensation would no longer be available. As the Deputy Minister of the Department of Lands and Forests stated: "One individual should not be permitted to destroy a natural resource that belongs to the whole province, and, therefore, need not be paid not to destroy this community resource."⁴¹³

However, since it was put forth prior to the 1975 Act, Trynor's case, which did not reach its conclusion until October 1977, was one of the last to receive compensation under the old Act. At the court hearing, the evidence waged for a compensation amount was based on the predicted ability of the beach to renew itself with sediment each year. Andries explains:

⁴¹⁰ Now known as the Department of Transportation.

⁴¹¹ Anonymous, "Compensate Beach Loss," November 16, 1977.

⁴¹² Andries, "The Impact of Beach Protection on Beach Sand and Gravel Extraction," 27.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, 29.

Much of the evidence at the hearing was directed to the capacity of the beach to renew itself with sand and gravel from year to year. A consulting engineer estimated that at least 100, 000 tons of sand and gravel could be taken from the beach each year for up to twenty years. An oceanographer estimated that the beach could only replenish itself at a rate of 25, 000 tons per annum. This figure was based upon beach profiling which indicated that if the beach had been replenishing itself at 100, 000 tons then it would be the same width as it had been in 1954. In reality, since the designation of the beach in 1971, the oceanographer found that the beach had not recovered its original width and in 1974, it was only 42 percent of its original width.

The company also argued that, after Silver Sands Beach was designated, they had to seek other sources of sediment inland, to satisfy their contracts and sales, and had found these materials to be unsatisfactory. They pointed out that the material, not sorted by wave action, was more difficult to crush, requiring more advanced equipment and a larger work force on site.⁴¹⁴

In lieu of these reports, Mr. Justice Malachi Jones of the trial division of the Nova Scotia Supreme Court found that the two companies were able to recover \$42, 500 and costs in compensation for 1973 and 1974, based on the 25, 000 ton annual removal rate. However, later, Mr. Justice Cooper of the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal, would eventually rule that the two companies could receive \$169, 270, with a six per cent interest rate per annum, on \$78, 785, for the period of January 1 until December 31, 1975, until payment. This was based upon the 100, 000 ton removal rate for 1973 and 1974.⁴¹⁵

⁴¹⁴ Andries, "The Impact of Beach Protection on Beach Sand and Gravel Extraction," 28.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid.

See also, Anonymous, "Compensate Beach Loss," November 16, 1977.

Upon instatement of the B.P.A of 1975, Silver Sands, as well as all of the beaches, which had been protected under the B.P.A of 1967, saw redesignation under the new Act. This Act included the added benefit of protecting all beach areas below the mean high water mark, as well as certain beaches with designated protection above that level, further expanding shoreline protection of Nova Scotia's beaches, as a whole.⁴¹⁶ But, this did not mean an end to the permit system. Anyone who wished to remove sand and gravel from a protected beach to which they had "lawful rights" could still apply for permission from the Minister of Lands and Forests.⁴¹⁷ Despite this shortcoming, it was found that, by 1984, the B.P.A of 1975 had reduced sand and gravel mining on protected beaches⁴¹⁸ by 88 percent throughout the province.⁴¹⁹

Still, although much headway was being made towards preserving and protecting beaches, the mid-1970s remained a period that lacked provincial awareness surrounding the *appropriate* treatment of its beaches and their ecosystems. The focus of the B.P.A of 1975 was mainly on extraction and, albeit the biggest environmental threat to beaches at the time, there was also a myriad

⁴¹⁶ Andries, "The Impact of Beach Protection on Beach Sand and Gravel Extraction," 25.

⁴¹⁷ In fact, individuals can still apply for permits today under the current, and recently amended, Beaches Preservation and Protection Act of 1989. However, volume restrictions are significantly lower and beach sediment as a desirable source of material is becoming exceedingly rare. See Province of Nova Scotia, *Beach Regulations made under Section 13 of the Beaches Act*, <http://www.novascotia.ca/just/regulations/regs/beachreg.htm> (accessed 17 November, 2013).

⁴¹⁸ In 1984 terms, "the term 'protected beach,' in Nova Scotia refers to the entire coastline below the mean high water mark [as well as to] those beaches designated above that level as determined by the Minister of Lands and Forests." See Andries, "The Impact of Beach Protection on Beach Sand and Gravel Extraction," 31.

Under the B.P.A of 1975, there were 76 beaches protected above mean high water mark by 1984. See Andries, "The Impact of Beach Protection on Beach Sand and Gravel Extraction," 2.

⁴¹⁹ Andries, introduction to "The Impact of Beach Protection on Beach Sand and Gravel Extraction," i.

of other concerns which failed to be addressed, here. As Bowen and Piper expressed: “The Department of Lands, responsible for administering the Act, actually uses the legislation only to restrict sand and gravel extraction. The public, however, are beginning to demand that it be used to provide comprehensive beach regulation.”⁴²⁰ Citizens were increasingly beginning to realize that various other everyday activities, taking place upon beaches, were also extremely harmful to its environment. People were still driving cars onto shorelines and salt marshes, for example, as well as through sand dunes. There was also a great deal of littering.⁴²¹

In 1975, Bowen and Piper urged for more “public awareness of the environmental problems” affecting beaches, furthermore calling for more educational facilities within the parks system.⁴²² In turn, the Department of Lands and Forests finally made an effort to educate the public on the importance of protecting and maintaining beach environments through interpretive signage and tools - encouraging their regulation and protection. By latter half of the 1970s, a conservationist approach towards beaches was well underway throughout the province, gradually integrating itself into everyday beach use and culture.

Of course, by then, Silver Sands had already lost much of its former ‘silver sand,’ and had since been reduced to a rocky shoal. The foundations of the canteen and the dancehall, as well as of the other amenities, were quickly

⁴²⁰ Piper and Bowen, *Beach Maintenance and Removal of Sand and Gravel*, 16.

⁴²¹ See Piper and Bowen, *Beach Maintenance and Removal of Sand and Gravel*, full report.

⁴²² *Ibid.*, 12.

wearing away to concrete ruins, while memories of the beach's heyday remained strong amongst mourning locals and non-locals, alike. In reflecting upon the landscape of Halifax, in 1979, Joan Payzant wrote the following:

Oh the view is still impressive – the container pier, the two graceful bridges, the skyscrapers, and the oil rigs. But where is the smooth green curve of Citadel Hill? Where has the Old Town Clock gone? More disturbing than the disappearance of these two landmarks are the buffs and greys of the office towers and hotels – a constant reminder of the source of their construction material – SAND. It's not that I don't **like** sand, but it looked much better down on the beach at Cow Bay, (more glamorously referred to as Silver Sands) than in a 20 storey building over in Halifax. It is still with a forcible shock that we who are "over the hill" realize what we have lost. Remember the glorious Sunday School picnics, high points of many a Dartmouth child's summers?"⁴²³

The damage to Silver Sands in social, as well as in environmental terms, was great. What the above passage reveals is that, although extraction had been banned, the ills of sand and gravel removal were not reversible, nor quickly remediable - neither within the physical landscape of the beach, nor within its cultural memory. Disenchantment with modernity and development, due to the abuses of coveted natural landscapes throughout the past several decades, were profoundly changing the ways in which Payzant, and others, were coming to view, and understand, the built landscapes around them.

Not only did resource extraction at Silver Sands affect those who had known the beach in its heyday, however, but furthermore, the scars of its

⁴²³ The word "like" is bolded in the original. See Payzant, "A Flashback: The Vanishing Silver Sands," May 23, 1979, 5.

industry-driven past still permeate the present; altering the ways in which future generations have to come to perceive, as well as interact with, this site. Though knowledge of the turbulent history of aggregate removal, has finally given way to a heightened ecological awareness surrounding the beach, for many, this does not rectify the aesthetic, recreational and environmental change that this once famous seaside retreat has undergone. Gravely and undeniably compromised by the impacts of resource extraction, Silver Sands remains a fragile shoreline, struggling to rebuild itself.

CHAPTER 5 – “A COMMUNITY ASSET:” REEVALUATING SILVER SANDS THROUGH SOCIAL AND AESTHETIC CHANGE, 1970s – PRESENT

“I think that the history of this property is fascinating. It has always been there, bridging the past and the present, the locals with the come-from-aways. It is the anchor of our community, and The Moose is kind of like a novelty. The statue is the focal point within today’s park.”

– **Todd King, Cow Bay** ⁴²⁴

Since the cessation of aggregate mining at Silver Sands Beach, its shoreline and environs have come to be viewed and appreciated in a variety of new ways. No longer a site situated between the competing interests of tourism and recreation versus industrial resource extraction, today’s Silver Sands has been refurbished as a community space, known as Silver Sands Beach Park, providing the public with facilitated coastal access. Yet despite retaining social and cultural significance through this new modality of consumption, it remains a landscape replete with contested uses and meanings. Differing views put forth by various stakeholders, concerning how this community asset should be utilized and valued, have given rise to a new set of tensions which will be explored throughout this chapter. At the same time, the site serves as an enduring landmark, for the community of Cow Bay, as well as for the public at large. As will be elucidated, polarized perspectives surrounding its usage and appreciation do not undermine its overall importance.

⁴²⁴ Interview with Todd King. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

Birge-Liberman writes that a place⁴²⁵ is constructed via an array of economic, political, cultural and spatial processes.⁴²⁶ Indeed, beyond the impacts of its former industries, Silver Sands continues to develop as a *place* on a daily basis.⁴²⁷ Conceptually speaking, the beach and its surrounding environs are perpetually being shaped by the individuals who interact within its dimensions. Understanding the site as an evolutionary process, this chapter will begin by tracing the major events and interactions that have occurred at Silver Sands beyond its era of industry. It will thus determine the factors that have led to its current aesthetic and social representations.

The first stage in Silver Sands' post-industrial history - the decades of the 1970s and 1980s - is a complicated one, fraught with contradictions. While a heightened environmental awareness was underway throughout the province, at this time, the beach, itself, was still being plagued by ecological abuse. Before turning to the contemporary rejuvenation of the site into Silver Sands Beach Park, this chapter will first examine the decades of mistreatment following provincial protection of the beach against aggregate mining. As has been learned

⁴²⁵ Place denotes "a meaningful location." See Cresswell, *Place*, 7.

⁴²⁶ Phil Birge-Liberman dissects the theories of French philosopher Henri Lefebvre, in relation to urban spaces. Such theories, however, can also be viewed as relevant to the Silver Sands site. Birge-Liberman writes: "To Lefebvre, urban space represented much more than an empty container in which social action took place; it was a complex social product produced through a variety of economic, political, cultural, and spatial processes. "Space is not a thing," Lefebvre argued, "but rather a set of relations between things." What Lefebvre's work reminds us, then, is that space [...] is a product of social relations as well as an active median through which those relations occur." See Phil Birge-Liberman, "Landscape and Class: Public Parks as Environmental Amenities in Nineteenth-Century Boston," *A Landscape History of New England*, eds. Blake Harrison and Richard W. Judd (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2013), 324.

⁴²⁷ This is known as the structuration theory of human geography. Additionally, it is associated with Allan Pred, who maintains that "places are never finished but always the result of processes and practices." It is also characteristic of Nigel Thift who holds that "places are constructed by people doing things and in this sense are never 'finished' but are constantly being performed." See Cresswell, *Place*, 37.

from the previous chapter, sand and gravel extraction at Silver Sands was temporarily halted in 1971, when it became designated as a protected beach under the province's first Beaches Preservation and Protection Act of 1967. However, smaller amounts of material continued being hauled by permit between 1971 and 1972,⁴²⁸ before the Trynor Construction Company was finally denied permission for its removal in 1973 and, again, in 1974. The beach then fell under the protection of the new and revised B.P.A, in 1975, ceasing extraction at Silver Sands entirely.⁴²⁹

The B.P.A thus seemed to indicate that a heightened conservationist approach was beginning to permeate the provincial government's stance regarding Nova Scotia's environment. After all, a reaction against the overuse and exploitation of natural resources was taking place both within the province,⁴³⁰ and throughout much of the Western world.⁴³¹ This was manifesting itself both unofficially, through social protests, and officially, through newly enforced legislative practices.⁴³² In the midst of this shift, beach sand and gravel were no longer being viewed as renewable resources in Nova Scotia, but were finally recognized as non-renewable materials. Once popularly used to satisfy a wide range of construction needs, they were no longer to be used for such projects. A new emphasis on preserving beaches for recreational use was beginning to

⁴²⁸ Anonymous, "Compensate Beach Loss," November 16, 1977.

⁴²⁹ Andries, "The Impact of Beach Protection on Beach Sand and Gravel Extraction," 27-9.

⁴³⁰ MacEachern, *Natural Selections*, 227.

⁴³¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁴³² Massard-Guilbaud and Mosley, "Leisure and Environment," 3.

emerge. The issue now, though, was that some of the beaches within the province, including Silver Sands, had already been decimated.

Indeed, by the mid-1970s, the shores of Silver Sands had faced sufficient damage to be deemed 'unsightly' by members of the surrounding community of Cow Bay. Locals and outsiders alike were no longer flocking to Silver Sands in droves, and even on hot summer days "the beach was essentially empty," in contrast to its lively and crowded past.⁴³³ No longer offering the amenities and amusements it had in the past, many simply felt that the beach had nothing to offer them anymore. For example, Leighton MacDonald, who had enjoyed playing on the sculptures at the beach, as a child in the early 1960s, has said that he lost his interest in going to the beach during his teenage years. "I never really bothered going to the beach anymore," he states, "but I did feel a sense of loss...thinking about the joy I got from the beach and from the sculptures as a kid."

It seems that the newfound preservation consciousness had various nuances. Specific aesthetic and recreational standards still had to be in place in order for a beach to be deemed desirable, and furthermore, valuable. In terms of outdoor experiences, individuals were certainly seeking landscapes that seemed more "remote," "unspoiled," and generally undeveloped, as a result of the evolving movement.⁴³⁴ Yet, their choices were still largely rooted in the aesthetic

⁴³³ Interview with Erin Mosher. Cow Bay, March 1, 2014.

⁴³⁴ Walton, "Seaside Tourism and Environmental History," 68.

ideals held by previous generations of beach users, and were not merely based upon ecological considerations.

Walton explains that the essence of coastal development and tourism, in general, was still concerned about “access to pure air and clean water in a physically attractive, if not always or necessarily picturesque, setting.” He further points out that the demands for pure air and clean water at the seaside remained rather superficial in the post-Second World War decades, stemming from a desire for the beach to be visually pleasing, rather than arising from genuine concern for the environment. The image of the truly desirable beach “followed on from the therapeutic origins of the ‘modern’ coastal resort, which often merely required a visually and sensually attractive coastal environment.” Walton reiterates that “such perceptions ran parallel with the eighteenth-century revolution in the Western world, in attitudes to the sea [...] which converted it into a desirable object of the emergent tourist gaze, valuing coastal and maritime scenery under the canons of the picturesque and the sublime, promoting art that celebrated coastal landscapes, and romanticizing coastal inhabitants.”⁴³⁵ The demand for the minimally developed and pristine seaside destination was not simply a response to the newfound environmental movement, but was still firmly entrenched within aesthetics reminiscent of the historic seaside experience. The public continued to largely judge the value of a beach upon its *appearance*,

⁴³⁵ Walton, “Seaside Tourism and Environmental History,” 69.

rather than assessing its ecological significance. Users were also careful to avoid those areas bearing the scars of human activity.

This emphasis on the ‘unspoiled’ aesthetic was not only apparent in the case of beaches, but also existed in relation to other outdoor recreational sites, as well. MacEachern discusses an overall shift away from what he calls an interventionist approach, within the national parks in Atlantic Canada, as early as the late 1950s.⁴³⁶ He also observes that, during this time, a multitude of alterations still had to be made to the natural landscape, in order for parks to appear visually pleasing. While park authorities were now realizing that more and more people were visiting the national parks to interact with ‘nature,’ rather than to meet with other human beings in luxurious and meticulously landscaped resorts,⁴³⁷ the sites nonetheless required many adjustments in order to make their premises palatable and accommodating for tourists. Even in this “era of decreased intervention,” campsites were expected to be adequately cleared, which required the removal of trees, brush and stones.⁴³⁸ At Prince Edward Island National Park, a tree planting program was considered in order to hide the ribbon development of private tourism beyond the park premises, so that the site

⁴³⁶ “[In] the late 1950s, the meaning of ecology began to be reinterpreted by North Americans. People were developing a new-found attachment to nature, and were growing anxious about its fate under human “management.” [...] The National Parks Branch, as the foremost Canadian agency dealing with humans’ relationship to nature, served as the harbinger of this new thinking. Within the space of just a few years in the late 1950s and the early 1960s, the national park system underwent a swift ideological conversion. From actively promoting recreational facilities for the masses, the Parks Branch turned to advocating a far less interventionist philosophy. In doing so, however, it did not give up the science of ecology for the ecology movement; it continued to defend its policies in scientific terms.” See MacEachern, *Natural Selections*, 220.

⁴³⁷ MacEachern, *Natural Selections*, 224.

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*, 227.

appeared more natural.⁴³⁹ Such instances indicate that despite an increasing demand to experience nature in its ‘pure form,’ many other aesthetic ‘tweaks’ were still necessary to satisfy park users. Creating an *illusion* of the ‘natural,’ within desirable natural spaces, became a trend in the ensuing decades.

Silver Sands, however, no longer stood a chance as a universally attractive seaside retreat by the 1970s. Only several years after nearly a cumulative two million tons of aggregate had been removed from its shores, it visually exhibited the traumas of human use and exploitation. It could not even succeed in *appearing* ecologically stable. Even though it had been protected under the B.P.A, many amongst the user public no longer saw the site as ‘useable.’ The legislation enabling its protection had come too late and its shoreline was already viewed as ‘damaged goods.’ Long after dozers and trucks had ceased to penetrate the foreshores and backshores of the beach, tracks were still imprinted over the man-made causeway, which had been designed for these vehicles to reach the beach. Tire imprints were also still etched into the forested grounds beyond the shoreline and ruins dotted the rocky backshore.

Perhaps due to an enduring belief that the sea was “an inexhaustible reservoir of purification” that could rid the shoreline of all waste,⁴⁴⁰ or perhaps

⁴³⁹ MacEachern, *Natural Selections*, 226-7.

⁴⁴⁰ John K. Walton further discusses this problematic view, regarding the treatment of shoreline waste. He writes: “The universal environmental problem of the beach and foreshore has, however, been the question of sewage and other waste disposal, given the widespread and enduring tendency to regard the sea as an inexhaustible reservoir of purification, with infinite capacity to absorb whatever is deposited in it. This has both aesthetic and public health dimensions, and it affects beach as well as water quality wherever solids

merely due to the eventual financial difficulties of the Trynor Construction Company, the remnants of the former “veritable paradise,”⁴⁴¹ at Silver Sands, were never fully removed. The canteen, dancehall and other facilities, having since been locked up, run down and scavenged for building supplies, merely remained as large chunks of concrete and rebar. Due to its instability, the beach was also rapidly migrating landward, causing gaping foundations to expose themselves along the now mostly cobble beach. Bronnum’s concrete animal structures were left to the same fate of either being taken away or crumbling and washing away amidst wave action, aside from his last creation at the location - the concrete moose which still remains, high atop the eroding bluff, overlooking the beach.

Thus, as a landscape that was left abandoned, the Silver Sands of the 1970s and the 1980s quickly became subject to a variety of conflicting treatments. Vandals carried out the destruction of the remaining portions of its former buildings, and while its recreational use had declined on the whole, during the warmer months the beach drew nighttime partying and littering around the foundations, and upon the shoreline, as well.⁴⁴² In spite of its designation as a protected beach, the site was becoming subject to new forms of abuse, at the hands of locals and outsiders alike.

and sediments are deposited by the receding tide.” See John K. Walton “Seaside Tourism and Environmental History,” 78.

⁴⁴¹ Anonymous, “Silver Sands to Be a Local Disneyland,” March 19, 1959, 1.

⁴⁴² Interview with Donald Hudak. Cow Bay, October 20, 2013.

Interview with Lise Kwindt. Cow Bay, October 1, 2013.

Interview with Henk Kwindt. Cow Bay, October 1, 2013.

Once a maintained recreational space, the beach had become a vague territory, where rules and regulations, concerning daily activities and behaviour, were no longer enforced. Gatekeepers, such as Jean Hudak and Don and Doris Warwick, were no longer on duty to look out for misconduct or property abuse. The beach was no longer filled with the prying eyes of tourists and leisure seekers. All of a sudden, “nobody was watching anybody” anymore and, for some, this meant that they could do as they pleased.⁴⁴³ Such activities, of course, often included those types of pastimes that were deemed uncouth, or which were perhaps prohibited from taking place elsewhere. Wild parties, bonfires, drinking, and dumping garbage were just some of the events that replaced earlier socially ‘appropriate’ activities, such as picnicking, sports games and swimming.

What is interesting, however, is that, during the 1970s and 1980s, this type of deviant, or at least rowdy, behavior, was not only taking place at Silver Sands. It was also occurring at Crystal Crescent Beach, located just west of Halifax. A 1983 report on the site stated that vandalism and rowdyism⁴⁴⁴ had become more prevalent since the beach had been rendered no longer profitable for its private owner and was thus sold to the province. The Department of Lands and Forests purchased the beach in 1968 and found that, instead of minimizing vandalism, this change in management led Crystal Crescent into further decline

⁴⁴³ Interview with Donald Hudak. October 20, 2013.

⁴⁴⁴ “Vandalism refers to wilfull destruction, while rowdyism here means rough, loud and disorderly department of people.” See Susan Guppy, “Crystal Crescent Beach: Management and Recreation” (Halifax: Institute for Resource and Environmental Studies, Dalhousie University, July 1983), 13.

for a number of years.⁴⁴⁵ While privately owned, the beach had operated as a “thriving recreational facility” that was consistently and meticulously maintained.⁴⁴⁶ But, following its purchase by the province, supervision and maintenance at the beach was greatly compromised.

As a fairly remote site, without direct access to and from the main road, Crystal Crescent did not rank particularly high on the province’s list of priority recreational beach sites in the Halifax area. This, in conjunction with a “shortage of professional, full-time enforcement personnel,” available to take care of provincial beaches, meant that it was now largely unmonitored. In turn, it became an easier target for the “motorcycle gangs and others” who would, according to the report, go to the beach and deliberately blow up the small buildings on the site with dynamite, start fires, tear down gates and signs, or dismantle public picnic tables.⁴⁴⁷

Silver Sands, still privately owned by the Trynor Construction Company, did not even qualify for monitoring by provincial enforcement personnel, and the company itself did not monitor there any longer, either. Although the police may have occasionally ventured to the site, for the most part, recalls Donald Hudak, “when we were growing up people could do anything they wanted down there.” In lieu of its lack of surveillance and maintenance “people thought [that] the land was free for all, even though legally it was privately owned.”

⁴⁴⁵ Guppy, “Crystal Crescent Beach: Management and Recreation,” 13-5.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 9-10.

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 14.

Perhaps the most disturbing form of misconduct and mistreatment to take place at Silver Sands during this era was illegal dumping. This activity presented itself as a grave problem, which carried on, albeit perhaps more sporadically, well into the 1990s. It was not uncommon for individuals to drive their trash across the man-made causeway to the clearing where the recreation grounds used to be. Here, they would dispose of these materials. Alternatively, they would dump them directly onto the shore of the beach. "Silver Sands was very neglected at this time," remarks Erin Mosher. "People would dump in the clearing all [of] the time."⁴⁴⁸ Donald Hudak remembers "fridges, stoves, and other large appliances," as well as bags of common household trash, being dumped into the lake behind the beach for several decades. "[For some people] their philosophy was: 'that stuff will sink, don't worry, no one will know.'"⁴⁴⁹

Hudak also recalls a gentleman who would "have big, black smoke fires on the beach" in order to burn the rubberized jackets off of telephone wires, so he could salvage the copper inside. "Of course," he says, "everyone would know when this would go on," as the smoke could be seen billowing "all the way down the road." But, toxic runoff and poor air quality were not yet mainstream concerns within the small community of Cow Bay. "No one thought much about burning garbage or burning for scrap metal, in those days [...] it was still commonplace and the thing to do if you had trash and you missed garbage collection day,

⁴⁴⁸ Interview with Erin Mosher. Cow Bay, March 1, 2014.

⁴⁴⁹ Interview with Donald Hudak. Cow Bay, October 20, 2013.

especially in the 1970s.”⁴⁵⁰ Interestingly, though, the physical materials of dumping itself were already being seen “as a much bigger problem,”⁴⁵¹ further suggesting that concern surrounding those activities which affected the *aesthetic* appearance of nature, yet outweighed the concern given to other types of ecological issues.

In any case, such destructive activities and attitudes, occurring at both Silver Sands and Crystal Crescent, seem to suggest that, initially, in the periods following their respective heydays, there was an overall sense that both of these spaces had been neglected. This gave way to maltreatment, as some individuals determined a lack of supervision and maintenance to imply that these sites were no longer publically, or at least locally, valuable. Perhaps this notion is not particularly shocking given that these beaches, along with many others in the province, had been previously promoted as commercially operated recreational and tourist havens for a number of generations. As such, they were traditionally viewed as characteristically designed and well-monitored areas, exhibiting a certain order, albeit playful, and perhaps even evoking a sense of grandeur and luxury. While privately owned, these beaches had thus been recognized and valued as commodities.⁴⁵² Now, however, they were no longer equated with economic value, and suddenly their sense of importance was unclear. While the

⁴⁵⁰ Interview with Donald Hudak. Cow Bay, October 20, 2013.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid.

⁴⁵² Neil Smith explains the transition of nature into commodities. He writes “With production for exchange, the relation with nature is no longer exclusively a use-value relation; use-values are not produced for direct use but for exchange. As specific use-values are exchanged against each other in specific quantities, they become socially transformed into commodities.” See Smith, *Uneven Development*, 59.

beaches had once been visualized as extensions of ‘civilized society;’ tamed and molded by industry,⁴⁵³ they were now increasingly viewed as spaces that were returning to the wilderness. As this shift occurred, appreciation and respect for these sites was dwindling.

The belief that land had to be tamed, as well as serve a productive function within society in order to be deemed valuable, was the result of a long-standing Western tradition. From the onset of colonization, Western culture has viewed the wilderness as dangerous and frightening. Only when it was conquered by human force and technology was nature believed to take on a “less threatening appearance.”⁴⁵⁴ Through the “hacking and hewing [...]” of the land, “fascination” could finally replace “fear.”⁴⁵⁵

In Nova Scotia, since the times of Joseph Howe and even beforehand, the cultivation and softening of nature into the pastoral ideal was celebrated, while its true form was bemoaned.⁴⁵⁶ The province’s very concept of society was infused with the notion that “the cleared patch, [and] the cultivated ground neatly fenced off” stood as a “symbol of order and civilization.” Transcending into virtually all

⁴⁵³ As Marxist doctrine elucidates, so long as nature serves as means to ends, it is considered integral to the workings of society. By his or her industry, “the producer ‘changes the forms of the materials furnished by nature, in such a way as to make them useful to him.’” See Smith, *Uneven Development*, 35.

⁴⁵⁴ “[Although] the language was refined, the imagination less active, and the emphasis was on the conquest more than the conquered, the nineteenth-century literature of conquest reflects the same antipathy to wild nature. The wilderness is the antithesis of civilization; it is barren, terrible; even sinister, not just the home of the savage but his *natural* home. The wilderness and the savage were as one; they were obstacles to be overcome in the march of progress and civilization.” See Smith, *Uneven Development*, 9.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁶ As MacLeod describes: “When Joseph Howe spoke of settlers transforming the still unfilled forests of Nova Scotia into an “unbroken prospect of smiling and peaceful cultivation,” the symbol of a virtuous mission was strongly encoded in the message of triumphant settlement.” See MacLeod, *Past Nature: Public Accounts of Nova Scotia’s Landscape*, 10.

relationships between human beings and natural space, this attitude resulted in the environmental and social manipulation of the province's most valued natural areas, either for utilitarian or hedonistic purposes.

As the notion of the recreational beach rose in popularity throughout this era, interventional measures, such as landscaping and design, were taken to make the seashore more appealing to the masses. While offering a leisurely escape from daily life, the beach was simultaneously expected to encourage the demands and desires of dominant culture.⁴⁵⁷ Lying ideally somewhere between society and its margins, its role was twofold: it was not only viewed as a natural retreat, but was also sought to provide a cultural experience. Gray elaborates:

Nature is not simply watched or observed, but experienced in a variety of ways. Sunbathing, building sandcastles or rock-pooling, playing in breakers and swimming, surfing and other sporting activities in the sea and along the seashore all involve alternative ways of consuming and sensing nature. And the contemporary resort experience includes other synthetic attractions, from funfairs to clubs assailing the senses. Indeed, most of the architecture of the seaside past and present has been designed not simply with the visual sense in mind – although at best it also provides a spectacular visual feast – but to generate heightened and often extreme experiences across all the senses.⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵⁷ John T. Cumbler provides an example of this binary notion when expressing the irony of the society versus nature tension present at popular seaside areas in Cape Cod, Maine, during the mid to late twentieth century. He notes that, beachgoers and holidaymakers, “on the one hand – like their nineteenth-century predecessors – saw the Cape as a refuge from the crowds and complications of modern urban society.” However, he also points out that, on the other hand, these individuals “expected many of the services and conveniences of the modern urban society that they hoped to escape,” further noting that “these accoutrements carried [with them] an environmental cost.” See John T. Cumbler, “Building a Tourist Landscape in a Fragile Ecosystem,” in *A Landscape History of New England*, eds., Blake Harrison and Richard W. Judd (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2013), 225.

⁴⁵⁸ Gray, *Designing the Seaside*, 38.

The recreational beach became a space that was continuously being “commodified, replicated and themed,” as its physical landscape was altered to provide cultural stimulation.⁴⁵⁹ This being said, once this kind of approach was abandoned at Silver Sands in the 1970s, the appreciation and respect it had formerly elicited amongst its users was jeopardized.

The idea that the beach had been neglected, and therefore was a devalued space, was evident following its tourism heyday, but was furthermore exacerbated following the later cessation of aggregate mining. No longer frequented by the Trynor Construction Company, the beach became even more disconnected from vernacular society⁴⁶⁰ – it was now isolated from the purposes of both leisure and productivity. Neither an attraction, nor the site of industry, it was stripped of its former economic uses; and this void was replaced by an existential uncertainty. What purpose did the beach serve if it was not being exploited in these ways? What value did it hold, beyond these modalities? The new uses, and furthermore, meanings attached to Silver Sands, were yet undetermined.

Neil Smith explains that “geographical space is viewed as a social product; [and that] in this conception a geographical space which is abstracted

⁴⁵⁹ Gray, *Designing the Seaside*, 36.

⁴⁶⁰ William Cronon explains the effects that the exchange of resources has upon sense of place, stating that “when people exchange things in their immediate vicinity for things that can only be obtained elsewhere, they impose a new set of meanings on the local landscape and connect it to the wider world.” See Cronon, *Nature’s Metropolis*, 37.

from society is a philosophical amputee.”⁴⁶¹ Covered with ruins and virtually unmonitored, the beach became a socially ambiguous zone, causing its significance to be called into question. If it was no longer being utilized by society, was it returning to the wilderness? Perhaps this type of dilemma is what provoked the anarchical activity faced by Silver Sands during the 1970s and 1980s. Without the societal structures and modern conveniences that had existed there in the past, people simply did not know how to treat the site. How was the beach to be understood in the absence of such infrastructure? The beach as an ‘abandoned’ site produced confusion; its new sense of space was elusive and enigmatic. Despite the fact that the ecology movement, as a concept, had been gaining momentum for some time, the reality was that many people yet had little clue as to how to interact with the beach space in the absence of human structure and activity.

However, although the beach was commonly targeted by vandalism, rowdiness and dumping during these decades, this is not to say that it was not appreciated or enjoyed at all. Some people continued to use the beach for recreation and leisure purposes, albeit they tended to be mostly ‘local people’ – who were, perhaps, sheepishly happy to have the once widely revered site all to themselves. Erin Mosher, who grew up going to Silver Sands in the 1970s and 1980s has fond memories of attending the destitute beach with her father as a young girl. “When I was a child you could still see the foundations of the canteen

⁴⁶¹ Smith, *Uneven Development*, 77.

and dancehall. My parents and uncles used to talk about what it used to be like [down there], but it was so hard to imagine for me because [by then] it was so rocky...I just knew from their stories that they had had an entirely different beach growing up, and I wished it was still like that.” Nonetheless, reflecting upon the beach today, Mosher admits that she likes how “quiet” the beach has been throughout her lifetime. “Although [I would] have liked to have seen what it was like in the past, I feel [that] I like it as a quiet place,” she muses. “I feel like the beach is my home when I look at it. So many generations of my family have been on this beach, and [that is] where I continue to go and take my son, and [it is] where I hope [he will] take his [children]. Silver Sands is my past and my family’s history.”⁴⁶²

In his work, MacEachern points to a phenomenon of entitlement within the communities that became the sites of Atlantic Canada’s national parks. He notes that locals often felt, and continue to feel, as if these parks belong to them.⁴⁶³ Indeed, a similar relationship between the community of Cow Bay and Silver Sands exists. Some locals speak of the beach in proprietary terms, referring to it by titles, such as “our beach,” or “our special spot.”⁴⁶⁴ This attitude may largely be characterized positively since it creates a sense of bonding and camaraderie within the community – allowing the citizens of Cow Bay to feel as if they possess

⁴⁶² Interview with Erin Mosher. Cow Bay, March 1, 2014.

⁴⁶³ MacEachern, *Natural Selections*, 227.

⁴⁶⁴ Interview with Erin Mosher. Cow Bay, March 1, 2014.
Interview with Donald Hudak. Cow Bay, October 20, 2013.
Interview with Susanne Hudak. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

an exclusive asset; and as if, in lieu of this, that they are a part of a unique group sharing an unique experience.

However, it is also worth considering that this insular notion of ownership may have had some negative implications upon the beach, over the years, as well. When no longer looked after by a commercial owner, some individuals believed that the property was, for better or worse, whether officially or unofficially, under their control, to use as they pleased. As has already been examined, occasionally dumping last week's trash at the beach was perceived as a kind of common right amongst certain community citizens in decades past,⁴⁶⁵ suggesting that a sense of community entitlement could have led to the abuse of the very property viewed as a community asset.

By the onset of the 1990s, though, this irony was quickly dissolving, and a new attitude fully embracing ecological awareness, as well as the conservation of community heritage, was taking hold at Silver Sands. Waves of the earlier universal ecological movement were finally being felt upon its shores, and suddenly the protection of the beach's natural resources was seen as a key priority for locals and outsiders alike. More and more individuals were beginning to see themselves as stewards of the beach, rather than merely as passive bystanders in its evolution. Even slightly before ecological conservation was gaining importance at the site, increased effort was being placed upon the

⁴⁶⁵ Interview with Donald Hudak. Cow Bay, October 20, 2013.

preservation of its cultural meaning and memory. In both regards, the vital role played by individuals within the restoration and reclamation process had by now been recognized. This consciousness would continue to be characteristic of the attitudes exhibited towards Silver Sands throughout the following decades.

In 1992, Bronnum's life size moose statue, situated on the headland at the entrance to Silver Sands, underwent major restoration for the first time since its construction.⁴⁶⁶ It received a new paint job and some of its concrete molding work was repaired, carried out by a community resident.⁴⁶⁷ After years of looking over the once famous beach, The Moose had been in "rough shape."⁴⁶⁸ It had been subject to everything from blatant vandalism, to people climbing over its limbs and onto its back for fun, to community outsiders and locals alike, allegedly shooting bullets at it for target practice.⁴⁶⁹

At the time of its restoration, a stone plaque was erected near the structure, stating the following: "The Cow Bay 'Moose.' Erected by Winston Bronnum in the Spring of 1959, this famous landmark stands guard over Cow Bay and Silver Sands Beach. The Moose was restored in the Summer of 1992, in celebration of Canada's 125. Friends of the Moose." Speaking with area resident

⁴⁶⁶ Anonymous, "Cow Bay Rallies for Moose: Residents raise funds to repair landmark, turn attention to adjacent beach," *The Daily News*, February 11, 2000, 3.

⁴⁶⁷ Interview with Carolyn Scott. Cow Bay, March 1, 2014.

⁴⁶⁸ Interview with Donald Hudak. Cow Bay, October 20, 2013.

⁴⁶⁹ "The beach is a notorious "lover's lane", and the unfortunate moose has become somewhat dented from being used as target practice by local hunters over the years. Legend has it that an appreciable percentage of the "baby boom" generation of Eastern Passage / Cow Bay / Cole Harbour were conceived beneath the knowing gaze of the Moose. Local references to the Moose are usually accompanied by the admonition; "If that moose could talk, it could sure tell a story or two!" See webpage of Eastern Passage artist, Clyde T. Henneberry, Copyright 1996-2006. <http://www.clydehenneberry.com/2006/cowbay.asp> (accessed 16 February, 2014).

Carolyn Scott, who was involved in this restoration process, as well as in the revival of community engagement and activity at the Moose site, further explains the significance of the plaque. “We had decided to start celebrating Canada Day at The Moose [site] during those years,” she says. “[Restoration] was a matter of a group of us informally coming together, and raising money within the community [...] we thought it would be a good idea.”⁴⁷⁰

Scott and others hosted several community-led events to maintain The Moose throughout the early to mid-1990s, overseeing arrangements to repaint The Moose after more vandals struck on various occasions, as well as organizing community cleanups around the property. “One time, some young people spray-painted The Moose blue,” Scott recalls. “I [do not] think there was any real malice behind their actions but, certainly we had to repaint it after that.”⁴⁷¹

Although the landmark had officially been under the care of the Cow Bay Women’s Institute between 1970 and 1990,⁴⁷² the refurbishment efforts of the 1990s thus marked the beginning of a significant shift towards community-based stewardship and action at Silver Sands over the coming years. As the defining attribute of the modern Silver Sands property, signifying the area’s connection

⁴⁷⁰ Interview with Carolyn Scott. Cow Bay, March 1, 2014.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid.

⁴⁷² Silver Sands Conservation Society, “Silver Sands Beach Park, Cow Bay, Nova Scotia: Proposal for Funding,” 2.

with a famed history in an earlier era, The Moose became the initial focus of the community's preservation agenda at Silver Sands.⁴⁷³

In 1998 an official society known as the Save the Moose Committee was formed.⁴⁷⁴ Members of the committee, united in the belief that "the statue [was] a part of their heritage,"⁴⁷⁵ had decided to register and operate their cause as a formal organizational structure. They began to organize regular fundraising activities in the spring of 1999 in order to "restore the structure's crumbling façade and preserve The Moose, to its former glory."⁴⁷⁶ More vandalism, as well as the corroding effects of the environment and time, had since taken their toll upon the structure.

In addition to the Save the Moose Committee, a 'subsidiary committee,' known as the Mooseketeers, was formed by local children Magen Hudak, Stefanie Slaunwhite, Katherine Hudak and Fallon Hudak. As the self-proclaimed mascots of the Save the Moose cause, the four youngsters, between the ages of four and ten years old, aided their parent committee to organize fundraising events, because, they too, wished to be a part of the "rescue effort."⁴⁷⁷

⁴⁷³ "The well-known moose statue that stands on the headland is a local landmark and reminder of the property's long and colourful history and the reason that, many residents refer to the area simply as 'The Moose.'" See Silver Sands Conservation Society, "Silver Sands Beach Park, Cow Bay, Nova Scotia: Proposal for Funding," 2.

⁴⁷⁴ Silver Sands Conservation Society, "Silver Sands Beach Park, Cow Bay, Nova Scotia: Proposal for Funding," 2.

⁴⁷⁵ Kim Garrity, "Kids work to get Mr. Moose off endangered list," *The Chronicle Herald*, July 4, 2000, A5.

⁴⁷⁶ Silver Sands Conservation Society, "Silver Sands Beach Park, Cow Bay, Nova Scotia: Proposal for Funding," 2.

⁴⁷⁷ "[Stefanie] and some of her cousins who wanted to be a part of the rescue effort formed their own group called the Mooseketeers. "I thought that kids should have a part in this too," she said. See Garrity, "Kids work to get Mr. Moose off endangered list," July 4, 2000, A5.

The children participated by entering a float in the Cow Bay-Eastern Passage community parade two summers,⁴⁷⁸ as well as by helping to host special events – notably including the “Great Moose Bike-a-Thon,” which was held along with a fundraising picnic and festival at Fisherman’s Cove, Eastern Passage in August of 1999.⁴⁷⁹ They also took turns helping to sell concessions at Cow Bay community auctions, which took place each Saturday, from which all proceeds went to the joint Save the Moose Committee.⁴⁸⁰ In lieu of their efforts, the children were interviewed about their cause on local radio station, Seaside FM.⁴⁸¹

As a nostalgia for what the site used to be like was increasingly inspiring members of earlier generations to preserve Silver Sands and its last remaining relic,⁴⁸² their newfound enthusiasm and desire to preserve local history and heritage was being passed on to younger generations, as well.⁴⁸³ More and more parents and elders were emphasizing these concepts to local children.⁴⁸⁴ “It

⁴⁷⁸ Interview with Donald Hudak. Cow Bay, October 20, 2013.

⁴⁷⁹ Anonymous, “Cyclists Ride to Save Cow Bay Moose,” *The Chronicle Herald*, August 27, 1999, A3.

⁴⁸⁰ Garrity, “Kids work to get Mr. Moose off endangered list,” July 4, 2000, A5.

Interview with Donald Hudak. Cow Bay, October 20, 2013.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid.

⁴⁸² “We want to restore the moose first,” area resident Donald Hudak said yesterday. “It was there 40 years. Why let it fall and not be there any longer.” [...] “It was the spot to come to,” Hudak said. “If you wanted to go to beach, you went to Silver Sands.” See Flinn, “Cow Bay rallies for Moose: Residents raise funds to repair landmark, turn attention to adjacent beach,” February 11, 2000, 3.

⁴⁸³ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁴ “I was born in Cow Bay, near the Moose site, in 1959,” [says] Donald Hudak, president of the Silver Sands Conservation Society. “I grew up playing around the Moose property and Silver Sands Beach with my family and friends. Although the beach was privately owned, it was always considered a public beach by the residents of Cow Bay and surrounding areas. I would like to see landmarks like the Moose site maintained so that future generations may also enjoy it.” See Joanne Oostveen, “Preserving the moose,” *The Weekly News*, November 2, 2007, 3.

seems as if it's been there forever," Stefanie Slaunwhite said, referring to The Moose in a newspaper interview. "I would feel really sad if he fell down."⁴⁸⁵

The idea that the beach was a neglected and derelict site, without value or meaning, was, on the whole, becoming a colloquial notion. In exchange, the belief that The Moose, and furthermore the beach, were valuable community assets, was beginning to be inherited. The Save the Moose cause was not only garnering the involvement, but also wide spread support of Cow Bay residents - both young and old – that were passionate about keeping the concrete moose standing in good condition, carefully painted and fully in tact. Councillor Harry McInroy, of the former Eastern Passage-Cole Harbour South district, proclaimed The Moose to be an important Cow Bay landmark, and "a part of the character and history of the area."⁴⁸⁶

Additionally, The Moose was, and continues to be, a well-known fixture to people outside of the community of Cow Bay. Many people from around the Halifax Regional Municipality and beyond drive to the area, specifically to see the structure, or to have their photograph taken there.⁴⁸⁷ Even wedding photography has taken place on, or near, the site.⁴⁸⁸ As the *Chronicle Herald* pointed out, "a drive through Cow Bay without [The Moose] just wouldn't be the same."⁴⁸⁹

⁴⁸⁵ Garrity, "Kids work to get Mr. Moose off endangered list," July 4, 2000, A5.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁷ Interview with Todd King. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

⁴⁸⁸ Interview with Donald Hudak. Cow Bay, October 20, 2013.

⁴⁸⁹ Anonymous, "Hits & Misses," *The Sunday Herald*, July 9, 2000, C1.

On the whole, the efforts of the Save the Moose Committee were successful in planting the seeds of awareness surrounding the statue and its encompassing property. This, in turn, gave way to the formation of another society with a much wider agenda. On February 9, 2000, members of the Save the Moose Committee, as well as additional members, incorporated the Silver Sands Conservation Society as a non-profit organization. Eventually the Save the Moose Committee was absorbed into the new society, which became known for short as the SSCS. This extended society was dedicated to the protection and preservation of the entire beach and surrounding property, including The Moose and eastern headland, and remains a registered organization today.

At the same time, the subsidiary Save the Moose Committee raised \$4,600 to professionally restore The Moose's cracks, missing ear, and loose antlers by July 2000. Unfortunately, shortly after The Moose received these much-needed repairs, it was once again the target of vandalism, suffering from an estimated \$800 in damages, requiring the structure to undergo additional restoration work.⁴⁹⁰ Such a scenario speaks to the fact that, although many people interpreted the statue as a valued landmark, there were, and are, still others who do not view The Moose this way. Despite its widely perceived significance, then, it is still the subject of complicated and varying treatments, which tends to be the case surrounding numerous heritage sites and monuments - no matter how integral they may be to overall community identity. It is worth

⁴⁹⁰ Garrity, "Kids work to get Mr. Moose off endangered list," July 4, 2000, A5.

noting, however, that vandalism affecting The Moose has declined in recent years, since the property has become municipal parkland.

Returning to the Silver Sands Conservation Society, on the whole, it is important to recognize that it was founded during a crucial and challenging time in the property's history. It helped to mitigate and resolve community concerns and tensions that were soon to arise following its transfer to new private ownership later that year, while continuing to play a significant role in the reconciliation of more recent environmental and social matters. The society's official objectives, as stated in November 2005, are as follows: "[Firstly] to provide a unified voice for area residents concerned with the use and the development of the environmentally sensitive Silver Sands Beach Area and headland [and] [secondly] to properly maintain the site of the historic Cow Bay Moose statue as a scenic gathering place for local residents and visitors to the area and as the primary entry point to the Silver Sands Beach area."⁴⁹¹ Key issues at the site, over the past decade, have principally revolved around potential and actual development projects, securing coastal access, and general environmental concerns.

Along with the SSCS, the Surfriders Association of Nova Scotia (SANS), eventually forming a subsidiary group known as the Coastal Access Committee (CAC), also fought for such causes at the site in the mid-2000s. Focused, in

⁴⁹¹ Silver Sands Conservation Society, "Silver Sands Beach Park, Cow Bay, Nova Scotia: Proposal for Funding," 2.

particular, on preserving access to popular surf breaks within the Halifax Regional Municipality, the Coastal Access Committee, was later born as a result of Silver Sands Beach being sold to a private developer in the fall of 2000.⁴⁹² Members of the Surfriders Association of Nova Scotia had grown concerned that the new owner's development plans, would obliterate surfing access to what they had begun to view as "a focal point for the local surfing community," over the past several decades.⁴⁹³ In turn, they eventually combined forces with the community-based SSCS to voice their relatively like-minded concerns surrounding the site.⁴⁹⁴

Several founding members of CAC were also members of the SSCS, such as Cow Bay resident Todd King. "I joined [the] SSCS when I realized that the new developer's plan for a golf course could jeopardize our access to the beach," he says. "I joined as a representative of the surfer society, because I was passionate [about surfing] but, I also recognized the beauty of the property and its history. [...] Later on, [my friend] Justin Huston [former Provincial Co-Chair of Fisheries and Aquaculture Services, Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and

⁴⁹² Interview with Todd King. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

Interview with Iaian Archibald. Halifax, October 20, 2013.

Interview with Justin Huston. Halifax, September 3, 2013.

⁴⁹³ See "The CAC History," Coastal Access Committee Blog, entry posted July 26, 2008, <http://coastalaccessns.blogspot.ca/> (accessed 17 February, 2014).

⁴⁹⁴ "CAC is still functioning strongly, [now under the directorship of Iaian Archibald] and has secured access, [for surfing and otherwise,] at several other Cow Bay sites," since its founding in the fight to retain access to the Silver Sands surf break in the early 2000s. See Coastal Access Committee Blog, "The CAC History," July 26, 2008.

Interview with Todd King. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

Interview with Iaian Archibald. Halifax, October 20, 2013.

Interview with Justin Huston. Halifax, September 3, 2013.

Fisheries] and I formed CAC.”⁴⁹⁵ The creation of CAC furthermore elicited involvement from individuals beyond the Cow Bay area. This attests to the fact that, during this time, the site was gaining awareness and support amongst a diversified selection of stakeholders.

In October 2000, the Silver Sands property – consisting of its southern-most extension including the beach up until the shoreline’s high water mark, as well as the area *surrounding* the backshore of Cow Bay Lake and Moses Island, plus the eastern headland and The Moose – was sold to Arthur Rhyno and his brother,⁴⁹⁶ for \$650, 000⁴⁹⁷ under the developer name Sherwood Acres Limited.⁴⁹⁸ Prior to this, the wide expanse of land had been privately owned, switching hands various times between stakeholders and executors within the former Trynor Construction Company. Not much else is known about its ownership beyond the 1970s until the early 2000s, but, in any case, such details are not necessary within the scope of this discussion. It suffices to say that,

⁴⁹⁵ Interview with Todd King. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

⁴⁹⁶ Details of the land holding are explained in the *Silver Sands Realty Ltd. Versus Nova Scotia (Attorney General) 2007 NSSC 291* case. [3] Immediately north of the beach is another body of water, Cow Bay Pond or Cow Bay Lake, which has an island in the centre called Moses Island. The large pond or small lake is within the lines described in the Bean grant. Roughly speaking, the western boundary of the Bean grant follows the east lines, where they meet the pond, of grants that stretch from the shore of Eastern Passage to the bank of Cow Bay Pond; the eastern boundary follows the west line of grants that start at the shore of Cole Harbour, and; the dry lands of the Bean grant are at the north where the pond ends. [...] [6] Mr. Arthur Rhyno and his brother bought the remains of the Bean grant, through their company, in October 2000. The first plan was to construct a golf course. This progressed through studies, and dealings with the municipality for a development agreement, and early attempts to attract investors. See *Silver Sands Realty Ltd. Versus Nova Scotia (Attorney General)*, [NSSC-291], October 19, 2007. <http://caselaw.canada.globe24h.com/0/0/nova-scotia/supreme-court-of-nova-scotia/2007/10/19/silver-sands-realty-ltd-v-nova-scotia-attorney-general-2007-nssc-291.shtml> (accessed 12 February, 2014).

⁴⁹⁷ Chris Lambie, “City Stirs Cow Bay Moose Dispute: Golf course developer, municipality lock legal horns over development agreement,” *The Daily News*, September 18, 2002, 10.

⁴⁹⁸ Flinn, “Golf course proposal worries residents, despite moose reprieve: Critics say development may eliminate wildlife near Silver Sands beach,” *The Daily News*, October 3, 2000, 5.

following extraction, this land was mostly unused, although several wooden buildings at its far northern-most boundaries, significantly beyond the former recreational site, remained. They had formerly been the company's equipment garage and, later, were the site of mixed auctions.

Upon purchasing the property, the initial plan of Sherwood Acres Limited was to build a golf club and resort on the premises. Along with a golf course, Arthur Rhyno was seeking a development agreement that would allow for a restaurant and tourist cottages to be built behind the beach, as well. The details of this project vary within various sources. A *Daily News* article from May 2001 describes "Silver Sands Beach and Golf Club" as a \$6-million dollar project, which would include "33 cottages, each selling for \$180, 000, and an inn/clubhouse with another 20 rooms" upon a mere "52 hectares woods and water strung out along Cow Bay Road."⁴⁹⁹ A later article from January 2002 reports plans for an "18-hole waterfront course and summer cottages," whereupon four of the holes were to be constructed on Moses Island, with a "floating dock or temporary pedway that could be stored in winter."⁵⁰⁰

Once again, the Silver Sands property had attracted a developer with big dreams of creating a 'veritable paradise.' The irony was that by now the land no longer boasted its iconic silvery sand and ideal picnic field beyond – stripped of these glories by its former owner, it only remained as a rocky shoal, with a

⁴⁹⁹ Stephen Bornais, "Taking a swing at his dream," *The Daily News*, May 6, 2001, 41.

⁵⁰⁰ Michael Lightstone, "Golf course projects gets municipal OK; Cow Bay development must still have provincial, federal approvals," *The Chronicle Herald*, January 12, 2002, A5.

sparse forest at its fringes, dotted with several illegal dumpsites. Either way, Rhyno hoped to find “100 investors, each willing to kick in \$60, 000,” and gain municipal, provincial and federal approvals.⁵⁰¹

By 2005, though, all dreams of securing these funds and constructing the golf course were gone.⁵⁰² Instead, Rhyno had plans “to divide his land into single lots, including 25 on Cow Bay Road and about 10 by the lake.”⁵⁰³ This never happened, however, as the SSCS and other members of the community, mounted a campaign against the development, which would result in twenty-five, one acre (ten hectare) lots, that were based on measurements consisting of large portions of the lake, behind the actual land.⁵⁰⁴ Not only did they believe that this was ecologically unsound - for water and sewage purposes - but in Supreme Court they argued that the lots would violate the fact that the lake was Crown Land, which cannot be privately partitioned.⁵⁰⁵ Today, the land in front of the Cow

⁵⁰¹ Bornais, “Taking a swing at his dream,” May 6, 2001, 41.

⁵⁰² “Rhyno said he lost potential investors in the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in U.S. “The bottom fell out, and people were just a little apprehensive about investing anywhere,” he said. See Shaune MacKinlay, “Developer bails on golf course and resort,” *Local News*, June 30, 2005, 8.

⁵⁰³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁴ Refer to *Silver Sands Realty Ltd. Versus Nova Scotia (Attorney General) 2007 NSSC 291* case. [4] The central issue in this case is the ownership of Cow Bay Pond. Excepting numerous transfers of subdivided pieces and the recent conveyance of the beach to the Halifax Regional Municipality, Silver Sands Realty Ltd. claims the Bean grant including the pond. The province also claims ownership of the pond. [5] Ownership of the pond is important to Silver Sands because, if the same person owns the dry land and the pond, the lands can be subdivided into strips of dry land and water. On its own, the dry land is too small to be legally subdivided into many lots. See *Silver Sands Realty Ltd. Versus Nova Scotia (Attorney General)*, [NSSC-291], October 19, 2007. <http://caselaw.canada.globe24h.com/0/0/nova-scotia/supreme-court-of-nova-scotia/2007/10/19/silver-sands-realty-ltd-v-nova-scotia-attorney-general-2007-nssc-291.shtml> (accessed 12 February, 2014).

⁵⁰⁵ Ownership of the lake had been a contentious issue between the developer and the community since his purchase of the property. In fact, the SSCS had already sought a legal opinion from Stewart McKelvey Stirling Scales, by September of 2001, proving that the lake was, in fact, Crown Land and therefore the body of water, and its inclusive wildlife, could not be utilized or obstructed as a part of the potential development. The firm found the following conclusive evidence:

Bay Lake lies for sale, while only two houses have been built and sold by Rhyno on a piece of property lying across the road.

In any case, although it had some supporters within the community, the proposed golf course plan worried others. Having since determined Silver Sands to be a fragile ecosystem, yet recovering from past environmental damages, many SSCS members and locals alike, along with municipal planners, were extremely weary about what they saw as a 'lofty' proposal. They were highly vocal about their concerns, resulting in several years of strife between the developer and the community.⁵⁰⁶

Particularly, the issues brought to attention were that zoning on part of the property would not allow for a golf course. The SSCS warned that the narrow strip of land beyond the beach would only have room for such development if the city dispensed of the regulation requiring a "60-metre development setback from the shoreline." Lise Kwindt also pointed out that the golf course would likely cause toxic run-off into the lake, threatening habitat, such as osprey, herons,

As per the *Water Act* within the *Environment Act*, S.N.S., 1994-5, c.1., section 103 states: "Notwithstanding any enactment, or any grant, deed, or transfer made on before May 16, 1919, whether by Her Majesty or otherwise, or any possession, occupation, use or obstruction of any water course, or any use of any water by any person for any time whatever, but subject to section 3 (2) of the *Water Act*, every water course and the sole and exclusive right to use, divert and appropriate any and all water at any time in any water course is vested forever in Her Majesty in Right of the Province and is deemed conclusively to have been so vested since May 16, 1919, and is fully freed, discharged and released of and from every fishery, right to take fish, easement, profit à prendre and of and from every estate, interest, claim, right and privilege, whether or not the kind hereinbefore enumerated, and is deemed conclusively to have been so fully freed, discharged and released since May 16, 1919." Section 3 of the *Environment Act* defines a "water course" as follows: i.) the bed and shore of every river, stream, lake, creek, pond, spring, lagoon or other natural body of water, and the water therein, within the jurisdiction of the Province, whether it contains water or not, and (ii) all ground water." See Rick Southcott (Stewart McKelvey Stirling Scales), "Re: Sherwood Acres Limited and Cow Bay Lake (NS30692-1)," September 7, 2001.

⁵⁰⁶ Interview with Lise Kwindt. Cow Bay, October 1, 2013.

mink and foxes. “If you build close to the shore, the wildlife is going to go,” Kwindt stated to the press.⁵⁰⁷

Beyond these concerns, retaining access to The Moose property and the beach itself was the cause of much anxiety for members of the SSCS and SANS, as well as for members of the community at large. Although no official access to the beach through the eastern headland had been granted over the past several decades, it had informally served as a traditional right-of-way to the beach for decades.⁵⁰⁸ It was popularly viewed as land that was common to all and people were used to accessing the beach, as well as using and enjoying The Moose property, when and how they pleased.⁵⁰⁹ It is not surprising, then, that a variety of tensions were sparked between the community, the surfing community and the developer when access was threatened. Rhino professed that he was “fed up with having to clean up after people who [used] his five-acre property as a public park and [were leaving] garbage and other debris behind,”⁵¹⁰ while community

⁵⁰⁷ Lightstone, “Golf course projects gets municipal OK,” January 12, 2002, A5.

⁵⁰⁸ “Public coastal access is about people’s ability to view, reach, and move along the shoreline of both the mainland and nearby islands. In Nova Scotia, access to the coast provides valued recreational space for residents and visitors. It also supports local economic development, particularly for the tourism industry. The public has expressed concern about changes in land ownership and increased development in coastal areas. This is particularly true for those areas that have had more pressure from population growth and higher levels of development.” See Province of Nova Scotia, *Public Coastal Access: The 2009 State of Nova Scotia’s Coast Report*, 2009. http://www.novascotia.ca/coast/documents/state-of-the-coast/WEB_PCA.pdf (accessed 17 February, 2014).

For additional information on public coastal access in the province see, for example, Joshua Kelly MacKintosh, “Public Coastal Access in Nova Scotia’s Coastal Strategy” (M.A. Thesis, University of Akureyri/University Centre of Westfjords. 2011).

⁵⁰⁹ Richard Dooley, “Cow Bay moose not par for planned golf course: Developer takes flak at public meeting,” *The Daily News*, December 1, 2000, 11.

Interview with Lise Kwindt. Cow Bay, October 1, 2013.

Interview with Henk Kwindt, Cow Bay, October 1, 2013.

Interview with Donald Hudak. Cow Bay, October 20, 2013.

⁵¹⁰ Moar, Kim, “Cow Bay moose may get boot,” *The Daily News*, September 12, 2002, 3.

members and other beach lovers worried that the new ownership could deprive them of their former liberty to access and use the site as they pleased.

Despite zoning issues, Rhyno's proposal was conditionally accepted by the municipality, in January 2002.⁵¹¹ In order to fully secure municipal approval, however, Rhyno had to sign a development agreement with the municipality, holding him contractually responsible to turn over a small portion of his property,⁵¹² "as part of a required five per cent public parkland designation." This parcel was to consist of the beloved moose statue, as well as the nearby trail leading to the shoreline.⁵¹³ Prior to this, in 2000, he had attempted to sell The Moose property to the city for \$250, 000, warning that, otherwise, he could not guarantee that The Moose and the beach would remain available for public use. However, the municipality was only able to offer \$93, 000.⁵¹⁴ The municipality and the community were thus hopeful that this agreement would finally strike a deal amongst all stakeholders.

It was not to be so. By September of that year, Rhyno was again asking the city to pay for the property – and he was looking for \$328, 000, more than

⁵¹¹ "Mr. McInroy said the Rhynos still need the blessing of such government agencies as the provincial Natural Resources Department and federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans. He said Environment Departments from both levels of government will also be involved. "The development agreement sets out conditions that must be met before any (building) permits are issued," Mr. McInroy said." He said such conditions include the developers being able to supply drinkable water, dispose of sewage and manage wildlife." See Lightstone, "Golf course projects gets municipal OK," January 12, 2002, A5.

⁵¹² Lightstone, "Golf course projects gets municipal OK," January 12, 2002, A5.

⁵¹³ Moar, "Cow Bay moose may get boot," September 12, 2002, 3.

⁵¹⁴ Ged Stonehouse, a spokesman for Sherwood Acres Ltd., claimed that the land was an "oceanfront business opportunity" for the developer, while numerous locals felt that they were being "[held] ransom to some degree." SSCS member Terry MacLaughlin told reporters that "the issue [was] more complex [...] and [was also] wrapped up with the community's concern for the environment." He further urged that the developer's "full plan for the property [...] be made public for the community to judge." See Dooley, "Cow Bay moose not par for planned golf course," December 1, 2000, 11.

double of what he had paid for the entire property.⁵¹⁵ Due to a change in his development plans, he felt that he no longer had to hand over the land to the city. The developer claimed that if he did not receive his asking price, he would have The Moose removed from the site. One article reports that it would be given to Cow Bay residents to put elsewhere,⁵¹⁶ while another states that Rhyno himself would place The Moose in “an undisclosed location.”⁵¹⁷ In yet another, Rhyno threatened to “fence-in” The Moose.⁵¹⁸ Since deciding against subdividing a portion of his property for seasonal cottages, he believed that he was no longer bound to the agreement requiring him to give up the parcel of land. “I need to raise money to get this golf course built, and one way I can do that is [by selling] that valuable piece of property I’m sitting on,” he said.⁵¹⁹

Councillor McInroy, community members and even individuals from the public at large found the situation to be unreasonable, and outrageous. A journalist for the *Daily News*, perhaps using some humour while capturing the distress, proclaimed: “Here’s a promise: my vote in the next election goes to the first political party that promises a new law banning moose-threatening. This moose has made people smile for decades, and is part of our joint cultural wealth.”⁵²⁰

⁵¹⁵ Lambie, “City stirs Cow Bay moose dispute,” September 18, 2002.

⁵¹⁶ Moar, “Cow Bay moose may get boot,” September 12, 2002, 3.

⁵¹⁷ David Swick, “Don’t let moose get loose: Cow Bay fibreglass animal a pawn in dispute with city,” *The Daily News*, September 25, 2002, 2.

⁵¹⁸ Anonymous, “Developer plans to cage Cow Bay moose,” *The Daily News*, October 26, 2002, 3.

⁵¹⁹ Moar, “Cow Bay moose may get boot,” September 12, 2002, 3.

⁵²⁰ Swick, “Don’t let moose get loose,” September 25, 2002, 2.

When no deal had been struck a week later, Rhyno decided to put forth a new proposal to subdivide a portion of the eastern headland for two separate single-family homes, instead, to earn some much needed funds to go forth with his golf course. The *Daily News* reported:

[When] the city refused to buy the moose property, Rhyno proposed subdividing a 1.6-hectare chunk of nearby land for two single-family homes that he would then sell to help pay for his fledgling 50 hectare golf-course development. In return for permission for that project, he offered to give the city the moose and a sliver of land to place it on. But the land is too small for two houses because a bylaw states homes must be 60 metres from the ocean and a nearby pond. So the city [would] only let Rhyno build one house there.⁵²¹

By August 2003, the eastern headland was to be divided into two separate properties, as per a deal that was finally struck between the municipality and Sherwood Acres Ltd. Rhyno planned to sell the farthestmost point for the development of a single home, while the portion containing “a tract of land, a path to Silver Sands Beach, and some of the beach itself”⁵²² - approximately “a 30, 000 square foot parcel of the headland,” and 9.5 acres beyond⁵²³ - was bought by the municipality for \$56, 000.⁵²⁴ This was less land than Rhyno had agreed to turn over within his original contract, meaning that, in the end, the city

⁵²¹ Lambie, “Developer plans to cage Cow Bay moose,” October 26, 2002, 3.

⁵²² Beverley Ware, “Moose on the move; But will Cow Bay landmark survive its hoist to new home?” *The Chronicle Herald*, September 26, 2003, A1.

⁵²³ “On August 30, 2003 after years of negotiations with at least two property owners; HRM acquired Silver Sands Beach (approximately 9.5 acres) and a 30, 000 square foot parcel of the headland. The SSCS was the driving force behind this purchase. As part of the negotiations, the SSCS obtained a legal opinion from Stewart McKelvey Stirling Scales on the ownership of the wetlands behind the beach. [Approximate] value of this opinion was \$4,000.” See Nova Scotia Health Promotion, Sport and Recreation: Recreation Facility Development Program, “Silver Sands Beach Park – Cow Bay, Executive Summary,” February 2006, 5.

⁵²⁴ Ware, “Moose on the move,” September 26, 2003, A1.

acquired less than half of The Moose headland. The Moose, itself, however, was 'donated' to the community by Sherwood Acres Ltd.⁵²⁵

Concerned members of the community and beyond were relieved, but were confronted by a further challenge. The new boundary meant that The Moose was "just on Mr. Rhyno's side of the property line," and would have to be "lifted by crane to a new steel-reinforced platform just on HRM's side of the line." The SSCS thus sought out approximately \$20, 000 in donated services for the relocation of The Moose, as well as for a new concrete footing and other necessary refurbishments.⁵²⁶ On November 19, 2003,⁵²⁷ the four metre high, 7, 400 pound Moose⁵²⁸ survived being "wrapped in a sling and [being] swung into position," 10 meters away⁵²⁹ from where it was originally built and just shy of the newly acquired parkland property line. It remains there today.⁵³⁰

The monumental task was carried out by locally-founded construction company, Silco Contracting Ltd., further representing an extensive network of people and companies who were offering their skills and expertise, in order to fight for the continued existence and preservation of the Cow Bay Moose for future generations to enjoy.⁵³¹ A variety of other businesses, from outside of the

⁵²⁵ Beth Ross-Johnston, "Cow Bay moose makes move," *The Daily News*, November 20, 2003.

⁵²⁶ Nova Scotia Health Promotion, Sport and Recreation, "Silver Sands Beach Park – Cow Bay," February, 2006, 5.

⁵²⁷ Anonymous, "Moose on the move," *The Daily Gleaner*, November 20, 2003, A2.

⁵²⁸ Ross-Johnston, "Cow Bay moose makes move," November 20, 2003.

⁵²⁹ MacKinlay, "Developer bails on golf courses and resort," June 30, 2005, 8.

⁵³⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵³¹ "As a young man, Silco Construction owner Gerry Silver watched New Brunswick artist Winston [Bronnum] build the moose. His fond memories prompted him to volunteer his company's services. "We've

greater Cow Bay-Eastern Passage area, donated equipment and services for the event, as well.⁵³²

Several years later a fence and a home were built behind The Moose, effectively splitting the eastern headland in two. The high, solid wooden fence, which was cost-shared between the resident and the municipality, was not faced with total compliance. In December of 2005, soon after it was erected, a large portion of it was mysteriously knocked down, raising the question of whether blatant vandalism was to blame, or if, in fact, the damage was carried out by “someone who [did not] like the fence blocking a previously undisturbed view of [the parallel] Osborne Head.” Speaking to the press, Todd King said that some people may have felt that “the fence [was] block[ing] access to public land.” However, he pointed out that it did not, since the land on the opposite side of the fence was, of course, by then, privately owned. “Our group respects the wishes and rights attached to private property,” he further stated.⁵³³

Nevertheless, it is quite possible that, after having been traditionally used to access and gaze over the eastern headland from the Silver Sands parking lot for as long as could be remembered, some individuals may have felt that the fence’s construction was infringing upon their rights – whether or not they were

got to take care of that moose,” he said. “I am hoping he’ll be here for another 50 years.” See Ross-Johnston, “Cow Bay moose makes move,” November 20, 2003.

⁵³² A comprehensive list of the businesses who donated equipment and services for the relocation is, as follows: *Silco Contracting Ltd, Irving Equipment, Neil & Gunter Ltd, Quality Concrete, Conrad Brothers, Cherubini Metal Works, Rending Fabricators, and Irving Eastern Passage*. See Nova Scotia Health Promotion, Sport and Recreation, “Silver Sands Beach Park – Cow Bay,” February, 2006, 5.

⁵³³ Michael Lightstone, “Vandals damage contentious fence; Barrier at popular seaside spot blocks access to private land,” *The Sunday Herald*, December 4, 2005, A5.

aware or unaware of its legitimacy. As MacEachern writes, when the Atlantic Canadian national parks were established “many locals felt that the [parks] belonged to them, either because they personally had lost land at the [their] creation or because their community had given the park territory.” They furthermore felt that they “deserved special consideration in return,” and thus could do what they pleased surrounding the property.⁵³⁴ Perhaps, then, the division of The Moose headland for both public and private properties, boasting newly defined boundaries, evoked a similar reaction amongst some individuals who felt that they should not have to sacrifice any of their former activities, or freedoms, regarding the use and access of the site as a whole.

In any case, such a conflict of access was not unique to Silver Sands, but was furthermore reflective of a rising trend, and ongoing battle within the province, at large. In 2005 terms, 95% of the coastline was privately owned⁵³⁵ while, at the same time, traditional right-of-ways to the coast were vastly dwindling, for various reasons, such as changing and foreign ownership.⁵³⁶ Moreover, this was, and continues to occur, at a time when seaside recreation

⁵³⁴ MacEachern, *Natural Selections*, 229.

⁵³⁵ Justin Huston, “Nova Scotia’s Proposed Coastal Management Framework,” (powerpoint presentation at ACZISC ICOM Working Group, Halifax, September 19, 2007). http://coinatlantic.ca/documents/aczisc_meeting_presentations/52NSCMF.pdf (accessed 16 February, 2014).

In 2009 terms, according to Nova Scotia’s *2009 State of the Coast Report*, approximately 13% of Nova Scotia’s public coastal land was publicly owned. See also Province of Nova Scotia, *Public Coastal Access: The 2009 State of Nova Scotia’s Coast Report*, 2009. http://www.novascotia.ca/coast/documents/state-of-the-coast/WEB_PCA.pdf (accessed 17 February 17, 2014), 2.

⁵³⁶ For more information, see, for example, Frank Fawson, “Losing the ‘Right to Roam,’ Nova Scotia Land: Another global commodity,” (Bridgewater: April 13, 2004). See also Corey Toews, “Coastal Area Management in Nova Scotia: Building Awareness at the Municipal Level,” (Dalhousie University: Coastal Communities Network/Dalhousie University/Atlantic Health Promotion Research Centre, 2005), 16-9.

and use, overall, was, and is, on the rise within the Halifax Regional Municipality⁵³⁷ - especially through more recently popularized activities, such as surfing⁵³⁸ and birdwatching.⁵³⁹ In turn, rifts between private buyers and owners of coastal properties and the greater user public were, and are, relatively common events.⁵⁴⁰

On the other hand, a positive consequence of the selective, but increased want and appreciation for public coastal access, presented itself through individuals who were growing more and more eager to maintain, protect and beautify the coastal access zones which were, and are, available to the public. In 2006, a proposal for funding was put forth by the SSCS to the Halifax Regional Municipality, with additional support from SANS, in order to “provide an enhanced accessible site” at the headland of Silver Sands. This was so that the public could more readily and thoroughly “enjoy a beautiful section of Nova Scotia’s coastline, as well as pay tribute to the area’s long and colourful

⁵³⁷ Albeit based on provincial park data, it can be drawn from the *2009 State of Nova Scotia’s Coast* technical report, that coastal access and use has been on the rise within the Halifax Regional Municipality in recent years. It states that “[although] trends related to public coastal access through provincially-owned land vary depending on the location [...] [and] despite trends that show declining use when all user numbers are considered together, there are certain coastal provincial parks with beaches that have had consistent or increased use. The coastal parks with the greatest use are within relatively close proximity to HRM and include Crystal Crescent Beach, Rainbow Haven Beach, Lawrencetown Beach, Martinique Beach and Rissers Beach.” (All of these beaches are relatively near Silver Sands, with Rainbow Haven Beach being a mere six kilometers away, suggesting that Silver Sands, as well as other nearby shorelines, have also experienced an increase in access). See Province of Nova Scotia, *Public Coastal Access: The 2009 State of Nova Scotia’s Coast*, <http://www.novascotia.ca/coast/documents/report/Coastal-Tech-Report-Chapter6.pdf> (accessed 6 April, 2014).

⁵³⁸ Interview with Justin Huston. Halifax, September 3, 2013.

Interview with Todd King. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

⁵³⁹ Interview with Lise Kwindt. Cow Bay, October 1, 2013.

⁵⁴⁰ For more information, see, for example, Fawson, “Losing the ‘Right to Roam,’ or Toews, “Coastal Area Management in Nova Scotia,” 16-9.

history.”⁵⁴¹ Basic park amenities, such as picnic tables and benches were to be installed, while fresh crushing gravel and shrubbery were to make the premises themselves more aesthetically and recreationally pleasing. As the proposal boasted, the revitalization of Silver Sands would include: “Construction of a wheelchair accessible look-off area and pathway to the beach from the headland, general enhancement of the area with landscaping, benches and a stone plaza surrounding the moose statue as well as shoreline stabilization and restoration of eroded areas.”⁵⁴²

In 2006, the city began shoreline stabilization work at the site, while additionally, a major beach sweep was arranged by the Ecology Action Centre and SANS (CAC) at Silver Sands.⁵⁴³ By November 2007, Nova Scotia Health Promotion and Protection, had agreed to implement the new picnic park plans the following spring.⁵⁴⁴ In September of 2008, interpretive signage containing information about the flora, fauna and birdlife, as well as about the social and environmental history of Silver Sands beach - based on research conducted by the Bedford Institute of Oceanography - were designed and erected by the SSCS and the municipality.⁵⁴⁵

⁵⁴¹ Nova Scotia Health Promotion, Sport and Recreation, “Silver Sands Beach Park – Cow Bay,” 1.

⁵⁴² *Ibid.*

⁵⁴³ Anonymous, “Beach tidied up,” *Local News*, September 21, 2006, 9.

⁵⁴⁴ Joanne Oostveen, “Preserving the Moose,” November 2, 2007, 3.

⁵⁴⁵ Interview with Donald Hudak. Cow Bay, October 20, 2013.

Interview with Lise Kwindt. Cow Bay, October 1, 2013.

Interview with Bob Taylor. Dartmouth, September 4, 2013.

In sum, the SSCS and SANS, with the support of community councillors, politicians⁵⁴⁶ and the municipality, finally succeeded in transforming the formerly ‘run-down’ entry area into a fully functioning park. Appreciation of the spot has grown in recent years, and it appears that the site has come full circle in the course of a century and a half – from being highly celebrated, to at once largely neglected, to once again becoming a universally appreciated space.

What is interesting, though, is that the retransformation of Silver Sands into a park does not stem from its natural assets, or even from the presence of The Moose, alone. As has been extensively reviewed earlier, in the absence of much human landscaping and intervention in the 1970s and 1980s, the site had lain fairly dormant and unused. As The Moose and other facets of the site were ‘improved’ upon by the implementation of park design and amenities over time, however, more and more people began to frequent the site once again. Whether or not these trends are a result of shifting societal preferences and attitudes, or merely the result of a population increase in Cow Bay and surrounding areas over the years, it is hypothesized, here, that changing aesthetics has also played a major role in the increased traffic and use of Silver Sands Beach Park in recent years.

⁵⁴⁶ The 2006 proposal included Letters of Supports from: Becky Kent (Councillor District 8, Woodside-Eastern Passage) Councillor Harry McInroy (District 4, Cole Harbour) MLA Kevin Deveaux (Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage) and MP Peter Stoffer (Sackville-Eastern Shore). See Nova Scotia Health Promotion, Sport and Recreation, “Silver Sands Beach Park – Cow Bay,” Appendix D.

There is no denying that shifting preferences now favour a more untouched and so-called 'natural' coastline, rather than a developed recreational beach, at Silver Sands. After all, the site was designed as a "passive park"⁵⁴⁷ and, indeed, today preservation has a far more significant role in the overall appreciation of the beach. Conversely, in the past, its resort fame was garnered in light of "aesthetical rather than ethical values."⁵⁴⁸ Yet, as MacEachern writes, "the naturalness" of a park itself is "a product of cultural decisions."⁵⁴⁹ Aesthetic beauty remains a significant consideration in the formation and management of Silver Sands Beach Park and it must be recognized that some amount of aesthetic manipulation has been necessary in order for the user public to feel that the space has been adequately 'enhanced' and beautified.⁵⁵⁰ Just as half a century before the public did not recognize the beach to be recreationally valuable, in the absence of its previous facilities and amenities, people did not view the new parkland to be optimally functional until it was ornamented with some degree of landscaping and utilities.

⁵⁴⁷ A passive park typically pertains to a small green area, rather than to a park with full functioning facilities and regular activities that engage the user public on a routine basis. Interview with Donald Hudak. Cow Bay, October 20, 2013.

⁵⁴⁸ As American environmental philosopher J. Baird Callicott explains, "One of the main reasons we have set aside certain natural areas as national, state, and county parks is because they are considered beautiful. In the conservation and resource management arena, natural aesthetics has, indeed, been much more important historically than environmental ethics. Many more of our conservation and management decisions have been motivated by aesthetical rather than ethical values, by beauty instead of duty. What kinds of country we consider to be exceptionally beautiful makes a huge difference when we come to decide which places to save, which to restore or enhance, and which to allocate to other uses." See J. Baird Callicott, "The Land Aesthetic," in *Ecological Prospects: Scientific, Religious and Aesthetic Perspectives*, ed., C.K. Chapple (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 169-183.

⁵⁴⁹ MacEachern, *Natural Selections*, 4.

⁵⁵⁰ See Nova Scotia Health Promotion, Sport and Recreation "Silver Sands Beach Park – Cow Bay," February 2006.

Recent refurbishments at the site did not include a canteen or a dancehall, but they did embrace elements of traditional pastoralism and Olmsted's landscape aesthetic⁵⁵¹ – reinforcing the notion that the manipulation of 'natural' areas is still very much required for their success as municipal parks. As Canadian landscape designer Alexander Wilson observed in 1991: "Versions of the English park persist right through the Romantic, Victorian, and Modernist landscape work of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and an impoverished version of it – lawn-and-trees – is still the mainstay of contemporary municipal park work [today]."⁵⁵²

Silver Sands Beach Park is decorated by a sprawling mixed seed lawn,⁵⁵³ which compliments the shrubbery flanking its picnic zone; promoting a controlled

⁵⁵¹ "After construction began on New York's Central Park in 1857, the name Frederick Law Olmsted became synonymous with urban parks and a new landscape aesthetic. Three perspectives guided Olmsted's approach to park design. First, he focused his design on naturalistic scenery that enhanced the local features of a site by reflecting regional vegetation, hydrology, and topography. Second, Olmsted tried to create a choreography of landscape views within a park by manipulating and arranging scenery to produce an idealized natural experience. All design elements were subordinate to the particular pastoral and picturesque scenes that he strove to achieve. Olmsted produced a dialectical landscape in which the naturalistic scenery of the park stood in stark contrast to the industrial image of the city.

Third, Olmsted utilized this contrast to enhance a park's restorative value for residents. Naturalistic landscape parks had a "soothing charm," he felt, that improved the mental and physical health of city residents by providing spaces for passive recreation – contemplation, relaxation, nature viewing. Taken together, these three approaches formed the basis of Olmsted's landscape aesthetic, which he implemented in Boston as well as other New England cities, including Hartford, Bridgeport, Worcester, Springfield, and New Bedford.

[...]To Olmsted, parks were more than ornamental; they were part of a broader attempt to improve the living conditions of the city and literally to sanitize the urban environment." See Birge-Liberman, "Public Parks as Environmental Amenities in Nineteenth-Century Boston," 330.

⁵⁵² Alexander Wilson, "Nature At Home: A Social Ecology of Postwar Landscape Design," in *The Culture of Nature: North American Landscape from Disney to the Exxon Valdez* (Toronto: Between The Lines, 1991), 94.

⁵⁵³ "In its caricatured form, the most prominent feature of the modern suburban aesthetic is the lawn, in which three or four species of exotic grasses are grown together as a monoculture. Native grasses and broadleaf plants are eradicated from the lawn with herbicides, and the whole is kept neatly cropped to further discourage "invasion" by other species, a natural component of plant succession." See Wilson, "Nature At Home," 93.

version of nature - one that has been adulterated in such a way so as to make it seem clean, neat and organized. Crushed stone denotes where cars may drive and park; the divide between gravel and grass stands as a synonym for the perceived dichotomy between civilization and 'nature.' A stone platform surrounding the feet of the concrete moose separates inanimate, man-made art from the living grass. The fence beyond separates the modern ideologies of "private property and the nuclear family,"⁵⁵⁴ from the 'common for all' ideology surrounding the space of the park. Various maintained trashcans are not only a reminder that a more environmentally conscious society has emerged, but furthermore caution that while certain elements of the unnatural world are embraced within the park structure, other articles and materials are highly unwelcome.

The site now has all of the elements in place that associate it with socially 'appropriate' activities once again. It is a space that allows people to access nature, and in a more specific sense, the coast, in a certain way, and which also guides them to view The Moose in a particular manner - its stone platform furthermore stands as an innuendo denoting that man-made objects ought to be approached from a distance; faced with awe and treated with care and respect, while on the other hand, the earth and the grass may be trampled upon. The new landscaping and design of the park demands 'civilized' treatment, and for the most part, being presented in such a way, it indeed evokes an increased

⁵⁵⁴ Wilson, "Nature at Home," 92.

reverence amongst the user public. The attitude surrounding the site has changed significantly over the course of the past several decades, further suggesting that natural spaces must yet be molded by particular visions and instances of human intervention in order to be deemed valuable.

Instead of facing the abuses of the past, today the park has seen an increase in the following activities, which are listed as community benefits and impacts in its 2006 proposal for funding, including “surfing, swimming, hiking [and] beach combing,” as well as “gazing,” and “paying tribute to a local landmark.”⁵⁵⁵ These past times are seen as universally wholesome and enriching within society, furthermore enabling a “healthy lifestyle” amongst citizens.⁵⁵⁶ Just as urban parks were designed “as a means for spreading notions of social responsibility across a greater percentage of the population” in the mid-nineteenth century,⁵⁵⁷ today’s Silver Sands Beach Park promotes certain activities, values and attitudes, as well. General rules and regulations are associated with the use of the park, and its landscaped parameters deliver particular messages to its users. Such ideals, like all widespread habits and beliefs, are not innate, but are developed through a variety of social processes; they are products of cultural evolutions taking place within the society surrounding the site. Parks, like Silver Sands, thus serve as conduits, enlivening

⁵⁵⁵ Nova Scotia Health Promotion, Sport and Recreation, “Silver Sands Beach Park – Cow Bay,” February, 2006, 3.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁷ Birge-Liberman, “Public Parks as Environmental Amenities in Nineteenth-Century Boston,” 327.

various societal trends and ideologies by offering opportunities for the public to engage in those activities associated with ‘the good life.’

Nonetheless, occasionally citizens deviate from the rules, regulations, and expectations of the park’s parameters. As Birge-Liberman asserts “as strong as that bond between landscape and power may be, it does not necessarily go uncontested by all those it affects.”⁵⁵⁸ He reminds his reader that landscapes “may reflect dominant cultural values, but they remain sites of contestation, as well.” In his study of New England urban parks in the nineteenth century, Birge-Liberman notes that visitors “regularly ignored the rules and walked on the grass; vandalized benches; got drunk, littered, held picnics on Sundays; and sold fruit, tea, cakes, and the like without licenses” within these newly-designed green spaces.⁵⁵⁹

A comparison may be made here with users who occasionally violate the park area at Silver Sands today, partaking in what might be considered rowdy, loud or uncouth behavior. Though explicit vandalism has decreased, littering remains somewhat of a concern, as well as persons loitering and rendezvousing in the parking lot at night to drink and smoke, activities which are perhaps spiked by loud talking or blasting music.⁵⁶⁰ Despite these complaints from nearby neighbours and various community stewards, though, the structures around the

⁵⁵⁸ Birge-Liberman, “Public Parks as Environmental Amenities in Nineteenth-Century Boston,” 328.

⁵⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶⁰ Interview with Justin Huston. Halifax, September 3, 2013.

park remain intact and The Moose is no longer the victim of such major abuses like ‘target practice.’⁵⁶¹

In light of these observations, there is much to be said about the ways in which societal attitudes towards the space have shifted over time. However, there is also much to be said about how physical and aesthetic changes continue to reflect the dominant values of society, themselves. The relationship between culture and aesthetics, here, is twofold – while the aesthetic design of the park reveals the ways in which cultural attitudes have evolved over time, these evolving ideologies are exactly that which have been responsible for the park emulating certain aesthetic decisions in the first place. On the other hand, Silver Sands Beach Park not only reflects the *popular* attitudes and beliefs of society at large, but is also subject to its various nuances. To this very day, the site faces a multitude of treatments – it is the subject of contestation and consternation, community bonding and community celebration.

Not unlike other parks, Silver Sands demonstrates “how aesthetic judgments about different kinds of nature can affect the treatment of that nature,” and, moreover, shows “how the treatment of nature changes over time, in part because of changing aesthetic preferences.”⁵⁶² Yet it also presents a clear example of the fact that the ‘natural park’ is so much more than a ‘natural space.’

⁵⁶¹ Interview with Donald Hudak. Cow Bay, October 20, 2013.
Interview with Lise Kwindt. Cow Bay, October 1, 2013.
Interview with Henk Kwindt. Cow Bay, October 1, 2013.

⁵⁶² MacEachern, *Natural Selections*, 5.

The park is foremost an area formulated by social, cultural and political factors, with its fate highly dependent upon aesthetics.

Silver Sands Beach Park, philosophically speaking, is a multidimensional space. In its active form, it is a place for the public to access the coast, as well as a place to view a piece of the history and the heritage of Cow Bay. Subjectively, it stands as a collection of community and universal values, metaphorically shaped and molded into the park's very landscaping and design.

CONCLUSION – SILVER SANDS: A MULTI-LAYERED LANDSCAPE

“Place is latitudinal and longitudinal within the map of a person’s life. It is temporal and spatial, personal and political. A layered location replete with human histories and memories, place has width as well as depth. It is about connections, what surrounds it, what formed it, what happened there, what will happen there.”

–Lucy Lippard ⁵⁶³

In order to fully understand the enduring significance of Silver Sands Beach, it is important to conclude by further assessing the attitudes and experiences of the people who interact with this site today. Human engagement with the landscape is that which has produced and defined the meaning of the beach in the past and the present. To reiterate the words of Creswell, “places⁵⁶⁴ are produced by the people that constitute ‘society.’” However, “at the same time they are key to the production of relations between people.”⁵⁶⁵ In closing this socio-cultural analysis of Silver Sands, then, it is essential to take a phenomenological stance which honours the dialectical relationship which continues to exist between Silver Sands and the community of Cow Bay – between the people and the place – to this day.

As Ryden elucidates, “both humans and nature build landscapes at the same time, often at different rates and with varying degrees of interference,

⁵⁶³ Lucy Lippard, *The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multicentered Society* (New York: New Press, 1997), 7.

⁵⁶⁴ Creswell defines place as a “meaningful location.” See Creswell, *Place*, 7.

⁵⁶⁵ Creswell, *Place*, 123.

sometimes together and sometimes at a cross-purposes.”⁵⁶⁶ In the case of Silver Sands, human beings have been centrally responsible for the events that have taken place there, but furthermore, the beach itself, through its shifting topography, has caused individuals to respond and treat its environment in certain ways throughout time, as well. By culturally infusing the land through their activities, people have drastically influenced the beach’s landscape, yet, they have also been affected by the changing landscape itself, in turn making decisions and creating future exchanges with the land based on the results of previous interactions. While people’s sentiments, along with their activities, must be considered a part of the evolution of the site itself, the changing nature of the beach must also be considered responsible for attitudes and ideas that have arisen in the community, and at large, towards the beach environment. The beach and its users are constantly, and dynamically, intertwined.

Throughout the course of this chronological observation, subjective qualitative data has served to demonstrate this dynamic relationship at play at Silver Sands, yet it has also shed light on the contested nature of the site. In conclusion, here, it similarly yields insights into ongoing tensions and triumphs. Before delving into this inquiry, though, it is first necessary to outline the present routine uses of the beach park. These are instrumental in its production of meaning, as they are what objectively position it as a contemporary community

⁵⁶⁶ Ryden, “The Handselled Globe,” 38.

asset today. In the words of the 2006 proposal for park funding, Silver Sands Beach Park is now “buzzing” with the following activities:

Walking/beachcombing – Nature lovers often stroll along the beach to experience the unique beauty of the sea and the abundance of wildlife it supports. [...] *Bird watching* – The wetlands behind the beach provide habitat for many species of birds. Bald eagles and osprey are a common sight, even the occasional piping plover. The property is also a well-documented stopover for various migratory birds. [...] *Surfing* – Silver Sands Beach is a world-class surf break, which has appeared in several international surfing videos and has hosted many international surfing contests. [...] *Gazing* – Very few locations exist where you can watch the rolling surf from the comfort of your automobile. Those seeking to get a closer look at the open Atlantic create a regular stream of visitors to the area.⁵⁶⁷

As can be gauged from these activities and the values they include, greater environmental understanding and a heightened preservation consciousness have come to dominate the dialogue and activity surrounding Silver Sands from the 1990s onwards. Furthermore, as has been observed, from this period and beyond, there has been an increased degree of local activism. Since this time, citizens have come to realize that they are the integral factors behind the beach regaining a sense of significance, and that they alone are responsible for ensuring that it does not relapse into its post-industrial status as a socially ambiguous zone, or once again become the subject of ecological abuse.

Accountability and awareness now dictate the attitudes and decisions exhibited towards this natural space, and a marked desire for the shoreline and

⁵⁶⁷ Silver Sands Conservation Society, “Silver Sands Beach Park, Cow Bay, Nova Scotia: Proposal for Funding,” 3.

the wetlands to remain “untouched,”⁵⁶⁸ amongst most stakeholders today, has replaced the gusto for “turning rough wilderness into a gigantic playground,”⁵⁶⁹ or into an industrial site, for that matter. The ideological phenomena which motivated the choices amongst earlier generations at Silver Sands, have been replaced by a new set of priorities valuing heritage conservation, wide-ranging public coastal access, and environmental integrity. “People need to go places where they see and experience nature, or they disconnect with nature,” Todd King states. “We need to promote this kind of relationship at Silver Sands.”⁵⁷⁰

In turn, the beach has witnessed an entirely reversed ‘market value.’ While once a source of private revenue, the beach is now the recipient of municipal funding, reflecting the new significance surrounding the site. Its social and environmental benefits are now perceived to outweigh its potential economic value – reflecting a changing attitude towards nature that no longer views the beach as a means to profits, but rather, environmentally, as an end in itself, and socially, as a participatory element in the strengthening of community well-being.

However, although the beach is very much appreciated in these new ways, its past is still fondly, and sometimes longingly, remembered. Many members of the community not only envision and understand the site in relation

⁵⁶⁸ Interview with Lise Kwindt. Cow Bay, October 1, 2013.

Interview with Henk Kwindt. Cow Bay, October 1, 2013.

⁵⁶⁹ MacEachern, *Natural Selections*, 122.

⁵⁷⁰ Interview with Todd King. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

to its present, or in regards to its future, but harbour judgments and perceptions about the beach which stem from days gone by. As Cresswell explains:

Place and memory are, it seems, inevitably intertwined. Memory appears to be a personal thing – we remember some things and forget others. But memory is also social. Some memories are allowed to fade – and not given any kind of support. Other memories are promoted as standing for this and that. One of the primary ways in which memories are constituted is through the production of places. Monuments, museums, the preservation of particular buildings (and not others), plaques, inscriptions and the promotion of whole urban neighborhoods as ‘heritage zones’ are all examples of the placing of memory. The very materiality of a place means that memory is not abandoned to the vagaries of mental processes and is instead inscribed in the landscape – as public memory.⁵⁷¹

This being said, interviews reveal that public memory surrounding Silver Sands is not uniform. While some of elements of its history are invited to permeate the present – such as The Moose – there are other events that some people would rather forget. “To me, The Moose will always be seen as a landmark [...] I know that people [do not] always understand it, but [The Moose] was always on t-shirts and mugs and it was on a plate my grandmother owned when I was kid,” Erin Mosher explains. On the other hand, she also speaks to the point that memories of extraction at Silver Sands often evoke a plethora of conflicting emotions – especially amongst long-time residents of the community, who remember the landscape entirely differently. “My father [did not] want to talk too much about [resource] extraction [at Silver Sands],” she says. “He used to talk about how much sand there used to be, and [about] all of his good

⁵⁷¹ Cresswell, *Place*, 85.

memories. [...] I think the older generations would rather remember the good things.”⁵⁷²

Certainly, there are many more individuals who have a hard time reconciling what happened to the once popular spot. “It just breaks your heart to see the beach now because [there is] nothing there. We go down there to see The Moose with our grandkids, but we [can not] walk down to the beach now because it is all rocks,” Doris Warwick laments.⁵⁷³ Similarly, Susanne Hudak calls what happened to the Silver Sands of her childhood “devastating.” It was “really paradise for me,” she reflects, “it was the best place on earth to be, [there was] nothing finer or any better than running down to the beach for the day [...] I will always love going to the beach, but I will always miss the way it was, too.”⁵⁷⁴ Furthermore, Leighton MacDonald finds the 2003 subdivision of The Moose headland frustrating. “I was very upset that The Moose was held hostage and had to be moved. [Now] the space is much more limited and cramped [...] it [does not] feel like the same community asset anymore,” he vents.⁵⁷⁵

There are some mixed feelings amongst younger generations, surrounding this property, as well. “I think for the most part surfers are happy with the guaranteed access, but I think [that] there are some members of the community who certainly wished they had secured a larger park property,” Todd

⁵⁷² Interview with Erin Mosher. Cow Bay, March 1, 2014.

⁵⁷³ Interview with Doris Warwick. Cow Bay, October 6, 2013.

⁵⁷⁴ Interview with Susanne Hudak. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

⁵⁷⁵ Interview with Leighton MacDonald. Cow Bay, September 5, 2013.

King admits. “Even though I am happy and thankful [when I access the site] I cringe when I think of the fact that the headland does not look like Clyde T. Henneberry’s famous painting anymore.”⁵⁷⁶ Similarly, Erin Mosher reveals that The Moose headland, having since become surrounded by private properties on either side, can sometimes produce feelings of sadness. “It is a reminder that everything is for sale; that everything is a commodity,” she says. “The houses change that landscape so much for me [...] I wonder if I am resisting change [...] I [do not] want to seem ‘backwoods,’ and the people [living near the beach] are very nice people [...] [it is] just hard for me that it [does not] look the same as when I was young [in the 1970s and 1980s].”⁵⁷⁷

From another point of view, despite the many changes that have taken place on and near the landscape since he moved to Cow Bay with his wife Lise in the 1970s, Henk Kwindt considers himself lucky to have helped to secure the beach park property. “We come from a densely populated country [Holland] and we [do not] want to experience the same loss of natural space, here,” states Kwindt. “We were glad to have the opportunity to guarantee public access.”⁵⁷⁸ Surfer Justin Houston has similar feelings. “Coming from Maine [where there is not much public coastal access] having local councillors and park planners who

⁵⁷⁶ Todd King refers to a painting of The Moose and the eastern headland by local artist Clyde T. Henneberry, circa late 1980s or early 1990s. See webpage of local artist Clyde T. Henneberry. Copyright 1996-2006. <http://www.clydehenneberry.com/2006/artgallery.asp> (accessed 17 February, 2014). Interview with Todd King. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

⁵⁷⁷ Interview with Erin Mosher. Cow Bay, March 1, 2014.

⁵⁷⁸ Interview with Henk Kwindt. Cow Bay, October 1, 2013.

were eager to help work with the [Cow Bay] locals and the surfing community to design the park was a fantastic experience,” he says.⁵⁷⁹

Still, many stakeholders agree that there is “more work to be done” at today’s Silver Sands Beach Park. “I would like to see it paved,” reflects Iaian Archibald, current president of the Surfriders Association of Nova Scotia, and the Coastal Access Committee. “And I think we are going to see that in the near future, [along with] more aesthetic changes.”⁵⁸⁰ Indeed, the Silver Sands Conservation Society, recently revived with new board members in January of 2014, will be working along with members of CAC, municipal planners, and the park’s adjacent neighbours to revamp the park this coming spring. Changerooms for surfers, as well as for the wider user public, will be installed upon the eastern headland, and new flower boxes, rose hedges and nighttime lighting are slated to skirt the proposed paved parking lot.⁵⁸¹

Such adjustments will seek to mitigate the minor tensions that currently exist between the private landowners and the park’s user public – revolving around issues such as lack of cleanliness and incidents of disturbance faced by the nearby homeowners. New landscaping projects, like these, are expected to strike a “happy balance”: they are intended to “clean up the area” and “make it [both] more presentable for the public,” while making it “an easier spot to live next

⁵⁷⁹ Interview with Justin Huston. Halifax, September 3, 2013.

⁵⁸⁰ Interview with Iaian Archibald. Halifax, October 20, 2013.

⁵⁸¹ Interview with Donald Hudak. Cow Bay, October 20, 2013.

to” for its neighbours.⁵⁸² In this situation, aesthetics is once again a crucial tool, a medium through which to elicit the desired outcomes and responses towards the park from its various stakeholders. This further points to the fact that constant upkeep of the site is necessary in order for it to be habitually utilized and respected in the ways in which the community, as a whole, expects. As long as it remains an important community site, the maintenance of Silver Sands Beach Park will be an ongoing process as the park continues to evolve.

According to concerned community stewards, there are also continual responsibilities to uphold, beyond the eastern headland park, as well. Though the beach itself is now viewed as a predominantly ‘natural’ environment, it still requires routine monitoring. “I think there should be more laws against the use of All-Terrain vehicles, which still seem to use the beach, at times, as a racing track,” says Donald Hudak.⁵⁸³ Henk Kwindt further agrees, stating that “the illegal use of ATVs is damaging to the plant and bird populations of the wetlands” and continues to be “a concern.”⁵⁸⁴ Authorized by the Halifax Regional Municipality, Henk Kwindt and Donald Hudak have erected and continue to maintain signage all along the beach prohibiting the use of All-Terrain vehicles over the shoreline and throughout the wetlands. Moreover, Henk and his wife Lise were in charge of monitoring the bird population at Silver Sands for several years, while they continue to “take pictures of the beach and report any changes that [they] notice,”

⁵⁸² Interview with Donald Hudak. Cow Bay, October 20, 2013.

⁵⁸³ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁴ Interview with Henk Kwindt. Cow Bay, October 1, 2013.

from their home window overlooking the area, for the Bedford Institute of Oceanography.⁵⁸⁵

Thus, though the beach itself has now been left in the ‘hands of nature’, it still requires human intervention to protect it from further ecological abuse. The irony is that, in order to ensure that it remains ‘as natural as possible,’ certain rules and regulations are necessary. In conjunction with aesthetics, then, these constructs play a major role in determining which types of conduct take place at the site today and which ones either do not, or are sanctioned, if so.

In any case, an increase in the people who regularly access both the eastern headland park and the beach has also been successful in helping to reduce abuse at the site. “Just the fact that you get more people there now, requires more rules, regulations and more policing of existing rules,” Henk Kwindt explains.⁵⁸⁶ Iaian Archibald furthers this point. “I think that there is less damage being done there now, also because there are more surfers around [...] vandals know that they would be caught. If [us] [surfers] happened to see someone vandalizing the park in any way, we would approach them.”⁵⁸⁷ Additionally, Kwindt believes “that respect for the beach [overall] will continue to improve,” as

⁵⁸⁵ Interview with Henk Kwindt. Cow Bay, October 1, 2013.

Interview with Lise Kwindt. Cow Bay, October 1, 2013.

Interview with Bob Taylor. Cow Bay, September 4, 2013.

⁵⁸⁶ Interview with Henk Kwindt. Cow Bay, October 1, 2013.

⁵⁸⁷ Interview with Iaian Archibald. Halifax, October 20, 2013.

environmentally conscious attitudes continue to spread amongst current, and future users of the area.⁵⁸⁸

For the most part, though, besides the occasional All-Terrain vehicle, or litterer, which albeit become more frequent occurrences during the summer, the beach itself is now accessed and used in environmentally friendly ways. Apart from those walking, beachcombing, surfing or gazing at the beach year around, on hot summer days the shoreline is dotted with a few locals, and even a few outsiders, seeking a leisurely, if not isolated, refuge. “Probably the only people using the beach today are locals or people who like the quietness, and are trying to escape [nearby] Rainbow Haven [Provincial Beach Park],” Erin Mosher laughs, pointing out that most people still require facilities and infrastructure, along with ‘natural’ aesthetic requirements - such as lots of evenly distributed sand - in order to properly appreciate a beach environment. She attributes Silver Sands’ lack of amenities and more sparsely spread sand as the reason why “some people [today] do not even know Silver Sands exists” anymore.⁵⁸⁹

Yet, while she points out that it is “sad” that “a lot people do not even think to go to Silver Sands,” she also admits that today’s locals enjoy “having the beach to themselves on nice summer days.”⁵⁹⁰ Likewise, Todd King relishes the “quietness” of the beach. “[It is] like our little secret,” he says, “When I see three

⁵⁸⁸ Interview with Henk Kwindt. Cow Bay, October 1, 2013.

⁵⁸⁹ Interview with Erin Mosher. Cow Bay, March 1, 2014.

⁵⁹⁰ Ibid.

or four families [down there], [it is] comforting.”⁵⁹¹ Even Donald Hudak, who remembers the beach during its heyday, revels in the atmosphere of today’s Silver Sands. “I loved the beach as a child, but I still love the beach very much today...even the way it is now. If it were as busy and popular as it was when I was a child, that would be okay, too, but then [my family] would not be having the [same kinds of] family memories there now,” he elaborates, referring to family picnics - complete with clam digging, canoeing, beach campfires and hot dog roasts.⁵⁹²

At first consideration, these testimonials might seem indicative of a community insularity. But, in fact, the attitudes and experiences expressed, here, rather seem to suggest that today’s beach users are incredibly adaptive. Especially in the course of the past fifty years, uses and perceptions of the beach have shifted enormously and yet, while at times fluctuating, overall, the site as a whole has retained a strong sense of community value. People have adapted to the less trodden, quieter version of this changed environment, and have now learned to appreciate it in its new form. Instead of seeking to drastically alter the beach, or to return it to the ‘way it used be,’ those who use the site choose rather to celebrate what today’s landscape has to offer. This does not mean that they are rejoicing in the downfall of the beach’s crowded tourism period – they are merely finding new reasons to appreciate the beach in the present.

⁵⁹¹ Interview with Todd King. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

⁵⁹² Interview with Donald Hudak. Cow Bay, October 20, 2013.

For example, Silver Sands has become associated with new “favourite” traditions for Donald Hudak. These traditions do not involve consumer culture, such as buying “French fries and penny candy,” but include activities that engage with nature in ways that, typically, more popular beaches do not allow.⁵⁹³ These experiences, in turn, create a new dynamic with the beach - an interplay brought about by a heightened relationship with its ‘natural setting,’ in and of itself - not only for Hudak, but for others who interact with it in such ways, as well. Now commercially and industrially ‘untouched,’ the site challenges its users to consume the landscape differently – proof that, as the beach evolves alongside of the changing attitudes of human beings, new activities and events arise, encouraging the appreciation of its parameters in new ways. As Silver Sands and its users continue to develop in tandem, they lace together its current significance as a “meaningful location.”⁵⁹⁴

Yet what interview data has also shown is that there is no one way that people perceive and experience the landscape of Silver Sands. As Creswell states, “the connection between place and memory” is *always* contested.⁵⁹⁵ It is thus important to recognize how Silver Sands, specifically, has garnered its title as a community asset today. Here, this has been achieved by addressing both the tensions and the triumphs that have been a part of this process. Nuances have also been discussed in honest reflection of subjective data throughout the

⁵⁹³ Interview with Donald Hudak. Cow Bay, October 20, 2013.

⁵⁹⁴ Creswell defines place as a “meaningful location.” See Creswell, *Place*, 7.

⁵⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 91.

whole of this study. In turn, it has been learned that while some people continue to appreciate Silver Sands in the same capacity, others do not. Some people no longer use or value the area as much as they once did in the past, while others, young or old, continue to value it equally, if not even more, today. Furthermore, many individuals face conflicting emotions as they longingly remember what the beach used to be like, in their attempts to make sense of it in the present.

It is no surprise that there are many variables and variances impacting the attitudes and experiences of those who interact with Silver Sands today. In particular, its journey through a utilitarian modernity, and into a conservationist post-modernity, has been the source of much current existential interpretation and re-interpretation. What is key to realize, however, is that despite these contradictions, and despite the fact that its meanings and uses have shifted over time, today's dominant perception of Silver Sands positions it as an indisputable community landmark. Yet, albeit valuable, it is not stationary. Along with its topography, its meanings are constantly being re-evaluated and reformulated. The beach continues to evolve not only physically, through wave action and storms, but culturally, as well, through the influence of social and aesthetic constructs and exchanges. Although it is a spot where people "believe that they have made nature paramount,"⁵⁹⁶ it is furthermore an extension of civilization itself and very much "a product of cultural decisions."⁵⁹⁷

⁵⁹⁶ In his discussion of national parks Alan MacEachern makes the following assertion, also relevant here: "In national parks, the cultural and the natural merge, as they do everywhere else. But parks are particularly

While Henri Lefebvre held that space is “a product of social relations as well as an active median through which those relations occur,”⁵⁹⁸ MacEachern similarly asserts that parks help to “show how nature has been viewed by people.”⁵⁹⁹ The study of both people and place, then, cannot be separated in the rigorous observation of a community site. In this way, this both multimodal and interdisciplinary examination of Silver Sands has benefitted from a “common ground” approach, which has incorporated both its social and environmental history; subjective and objective data,⁶⁰⁰ in order to determine its significance as *place*.⁶⁰¹

Contested and celebrated, Silver Sands has been brought forth as a historical exposition of how attitudes towards the beach have changed over the past century and a half in Cow Bay - furthermore unveiling a variety of underlying social phenomena. The trickle-down effects of dominant overarching societal trends have been at the helm of its topographical change, as they have been passed down to the people who have interacted with the beach, and who have thus transformed its shores and its surroundings, throughout the years. Yet, the constantly evolving environment of the beach itself has, at the same time,

interesting because they are places where humans believe they have made nature paramount. As such, parks can help us see how nature has been viewed by people.” See MacEachern, *Natural Selections*, 5.

⁵⁹⁷ MacEachern, *Natural Selections*, 4.

⁵⁹⁸ Phil Birge-Liberman states this in his discussion of Henri Lefebvre’s concept of space. See Birge-Liberman, “Landscape and Class: Public Parks as Environmental Amenities in Nineteenth-Century Boston,” 324.

⁵⁹⁹ MacEachern, *Natural Selections*, 5.

⁶⁰⁰ As explained in the introductory chapter, historians Genevieve Massard-Guildbaud and Stephen Mosley, suggest adopting a “common ground” approach that synthesizes both environmental and social history - while incorporating cultural tools and the natural sciences - when studying community landmarks. See Massard-Guildbaud and Mosley, “Leisure and Environment,” 3.

⁶⁰¹ Under Cresswell’s definition of place as a “meaningful location.” See Cresswell, *Place*, 7.

provoked changing attitudes amongst its users, perpetually shifting the ways in which they chose to perceive and treat the landscape. The relationship between the beach and individuals has been, and continues to be, a truly dialectical one.

In the grand scheme, then, this chronological exploration of Silver Sands Beach may be exemplary of the person and place relationship that exists between other beaches and communities elsewhere in Nova Scotia, further leading the way to their deeper socio-cultural analysis in the future. It suggests that, while notions of *why* beaches are important shift over time - depending upon their varying meanings and usages - they nevertheless remain at the forefront of human interactions in coastal communities. It considers them not merely as 'natural' environments but, moreover, as portraiture of particular human beliefs, values and goals. In sum, this study of Silver Sands has envisioned the beach as a multi-dimensional space – not only revealing much about the natural world, but also telling stories about the synthetic world that both affects, yet lies beyond, its shores.

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Interview with Iaian Archibald. Halifax, October 20, 2013.

Interview with Donald Hudak. Cow Bay, October 20, 2013.

Interview with Jean Hudak. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

Interview with Susanne Hudak. Cow Bay, October 5, 2013.

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Interview with Henk Kwindt. Cow Bay, October 1, 2013.

Interview with Lise Kwindt. Cow Bay, October 1, 2013.

Interview with Leighton MacDonald. Eastern Passage, September 5, 2013.

Interview with Erin Mosher. Cow Bay, March 1, 2014.

Interview with Stephen Mosher. Cow Bay, September 3, 2013.

Interview with Carolyn Scott. Cow Bay, March 1, 2014.

Interview with Bob Taylor. Dartmouth, September 4, 2013.

Interview with Don Warwick. Cow Bay, October 6, 2013.

Interview with Doris Warwick. Cow Bay, October 6, 2013.

Interview with Ross Weeks. Cole Harbour, March 1, 2014.

APPENDIX - PHOTOGRAPHS AND FIGURES

1.



“Surf at Cow Bay Beach,” circa 1916. Courtesy of the Dartmouth Heritage Museum.

2.



Picnic at Cow Bay Beach, circa early 20th century. Courtesy of the Dartmouth Heritage Museum.

3.



Silver Sands Beach, circa early 20th century. Courtesy of the Dartmouth Heritage Museum.

4.



Merry-go-round at Cow Bay Beach, circa early 20th century. Courtesy of the Cole Harbour Heritage Museum.

5.



Silver Sands Beach, circa early 20th century. Courtesy of the Cole Harbour Heritage Museum.

6.



"Silver Sands, Halifax Co., Nova Scotia. July 9, 1930, by C.F Bell. Courtesy of the Dartmouth Heritage Museum.

7.



“All at Sea.” L. Sterns Esq. and Family. “Cow Bay or Silver Sands.” Courtesy of the Dartmouth Heritage Museum.

8.



“Alpha Social Club at Cow Bay, N.S, July 1, 1932, by C.F Bell.” Courtesy of the Dartmouth Heritage Museum.

9.



Early to mid 20th Century at Silver Sands Beach. Courtesy of the Dartmouth Heritage Museum.

10.



Jean Hudak at Silver Sands Beach, circa 1940s. Courtesy of Jean Hudak.

11.



Picnic at Silver Sands Beach, circa 1940s. Courtesy of Jean Hudak.

12.



Picnic at Silver Sands Beach, circa 1940s. Courtesy of Jean Hudak.

13.



Silver Sands Beach, Cow Bay, NS, Nova Scotia Information Service, photographer, ca. 1950; NSA, NSIS Photo no. 5417. Courtesy of the Nova Scotia Archives.

14.



Silver Sands Beach, Nova Scotia Information Service, photographer, ca. 1959; NSA, NSIS Photo no. 13162. Courtesy of the Nova Scotia Archives.

15.



Canteen at entrance to Silver Sands Beach, circa 1950s. Courtesy of Jean Hudak.

16.



Entrance to Silver Sands Beach, circa 1950s. Courtesy of Jean Hudak.

17.

Completely removed from the City's
confusion but handy enough.

SILVER SANDS BEACH

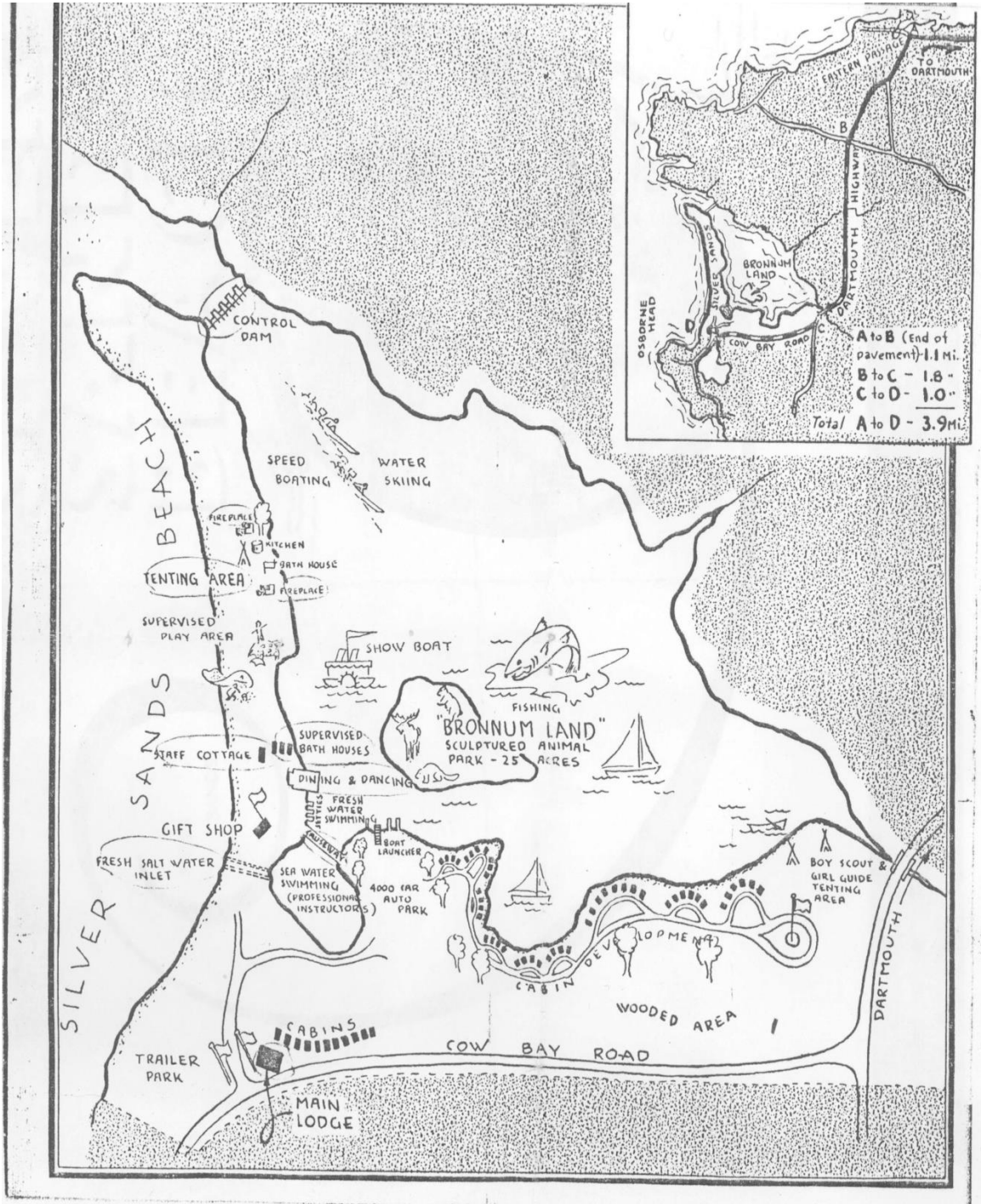
SILVER SANDS

VISIT "BRONNUM LAND" A UNIQUE ZOO OF
SCULPTURED ANIMALS IN NATURAL SETTINGS

TRAILER PARK SHOW BOAT TENTING
CABINS SWIMMING DANCING BOATING

Promotional ad for Silver Sands Beach, circa 1959. Courtesy of Silver Sands Conservation Society.

18.



Proposed plan for the Silver Sands Company's "Bronnum Land" at Silver Sands, circa 1959. Courtesy of the Silver Sands Conservation Society.

19.



Trynor Construction Company extracting sand and gravel from Silver Sands Beach at mid 20th century. Courtesy of The Chronicle Herald.

20.



Silver Sands Beach, July 3, 1981. Courtesy of Bob Taylor, Geological Survey of Canada.

21.



Silver Sands Beach, July 3, 1981. Courtesy of Bob Taylor, Geological Survey of Canada

22.



“Mooseketeers” Katherine Hudak, Fallon Hudak, Magen Hudak and Stefanie Slaunwhite, circa 2000. Author photo.

23.



Save the Moose Committee/"Mooseketeers" with Councillor Harry McInroy in local newspaper *The Beacon*, circa 1999.

24.



Save the Moose Committee fundraising barbeque at Silver Sands, circa 2000. Courtesy of the Silver Sands Conservation Society.

25.



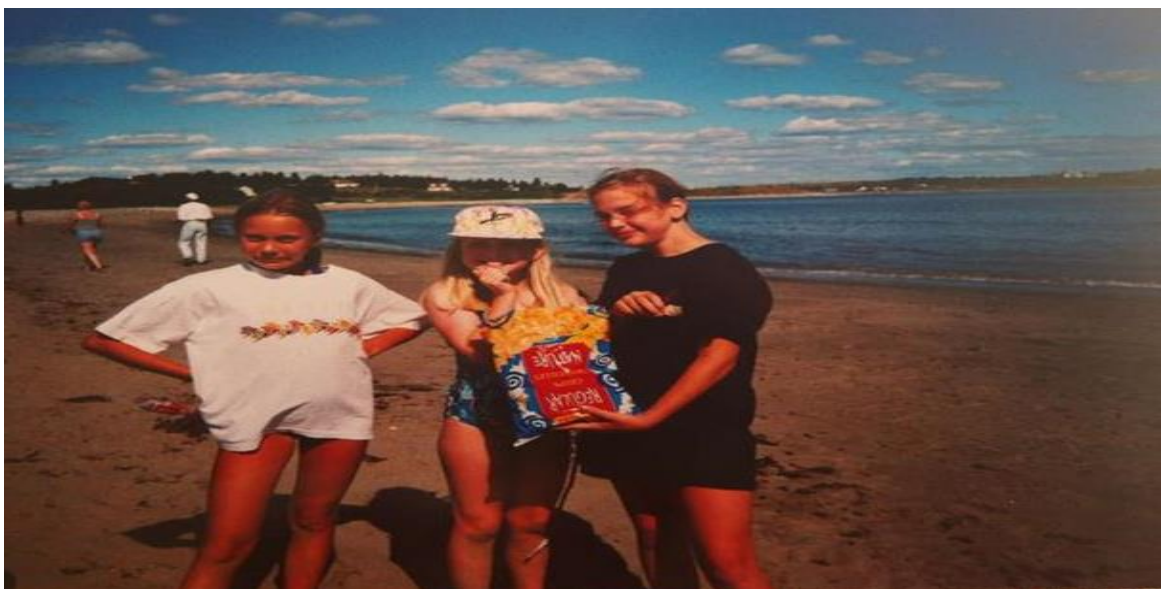
"Mooseketeers" and the Save the Moose Committee in the Cow Bay-Eastern Passage summer carnival, circa August 2000. Courtesy of the Silver Sands Conservation Society.

26.



Author at Cow Bay Moose restoration, circa summer 2000. Author photo.

27.



Magen Hudak, Stefanie Slaunwhite and Maia Hudak at Silver Sands Beach, circa. 2001. Author photo.

28.



People enjoying Silver Sands Beach, circa 2001. [Standing in foreground L-R: Genevieve Hudak, Barb Hudak, Peter Hudak and Donald Hudak]. Author photo.

29.



Tentative Silver Sands Beach Park proposal plan, circa 2004. Courtesy of the Silver Sands Conservation Society.

30.



Silver Sands Beach, circa September 2012. Author photo.

31.



The Cow Bay Moose within the revitalized Silver Sands Beach Park, circa September 2012. Author photo.

32.



Archeological matter being unearthed at Silver Sands, circa March 2014. Author photo.

33.



Archeological matter being unearthed at Silver Sands, circa March 2014. Author photo.

34 & 35.



(Above and Below) Some archeological materials from Silver Sands Beach, circa November 2013. Author's collection and photos.





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