

An Industrial Museum in the Heart of Tartanism:  
The Creation of the Nova Scotia Museum of Industry

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#### **Abstract**

In the 1960s, Nova Scotia experienced a substantial increase in the number of museums across the province. Although most were cultural tourism sites, several were small industrial museums. The expansion of industrial museums peaked in the 1970s when the Nova Scotia Museum greenlighted the construction of the largest museum in Atlantic Canada – the Museum of Industry. A series of delays hindered the operations of the museum, and heated political debates led to the temporary closure of the Museum of Industry. This thesis details the origins of industrial heritage tourism in Nova Scotia and the extent to which it offers a romanticized narrative about the past. Further, it considers how and why the Museum of Industry became politically contentious in the 1990s. It also reflects on the place of the museum within the industrial community of Stellarton, and, more broadly, in Pictou County, the heart of Scottish tourism in Nova Scotia.

Susan Parker, 20 August 2018

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## Table of Contents

Introduction	1-21
Chapter 1: Historiography	22-37
Chapter 2: The Rise of the Industrial Heritage Sector in Nova Scotia	38-51
Chapter 3: Planning an Industrial Museum for Nova Scotia	52-77
Chapter 4: Managing Donnie Cameron’s Theme Park	78-97
Chapter 5: Industrial Tourism in the Age of Cultural Tourism	98-133
Conclusion: A Romantic Past, a Diverse Future?	134-139
Bibliography	140-150
Appendix A: The Nova Scotia Museum Complex	151-152

## Table of Images

Figure One: Map of Pictou County .....	13
Figure Two: Building concept designs included in the 1976 study .....	59
Figure Three: The Museum of Industry in Stellarton .....	60
Figure Four: Map of the upper and lower galleries of the Museum of Industry .....	101
Figure Five: The Miners Monument along Foord Street, Stellarton .....	103
Figure Six: Cut-out of a textile factory worker in the lower gallery of the museum .....	110

## Introduction

Margaret Laurence, in her 1976 book *Heart of Strangers*, suggests that by the mid-twentieth century the “tourist trade wants everything to be settled and nice. Nothing must ever make reference to reality, to real sores, to *now*.”<sup>1</sup> Although referring to the image of the Scottish Highlander, Laurence’s insight was applicable to governmental and private-sector driven tourism campaigns and tourism literature in Nova Scotia from the late-nineteenth century into the mid-to-late twentieth century. The focus has been on the pristine, idyllic beauty of the region, the quaint folk, and, above all else, the cultural superiority of the white race, especially in reference to the Gaels. The province placed an emphasis on a romantic view of the past in appealing to tourists, at first emphasizing the image of the fictional Acadian heroine Evangeline and the landscape of the Annapolis Valley and later through the story Scottish immigration and culture. While Evangeline relied on selling the pastoral scenes of the Acadian golden age to upper middle class and wealthy tourists, and the Scottish imagery fixated on stereotypical depictions of Highland Scots and the commercialization of iconic symbols (bagpipes, tartan, and Gaelic), both stereotypes focused on rural regions, scenery, and attracting wealthy consumers. At the same time, there was a focus on promoting the image of fishing villages and their people. The image relied on exploiting the concept of the simple fisherfolk, a process Ian McKay describes as “a spectacle to be appropriated and enjoyed within the objectifying gaze of

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<sup>1</sup> Margaret Laurence, *Heart of a Stranger* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976), 155. For more on her writing, see Ian McKay, “Tartanism Triumphant: Construction of Scottishness in Nova Scotia, 1933-1954,” *Acadiensis* 21, 2 (1992): 45.

tourism.”<sup>2</sup> Their day-to-day lives became an experience to sell to tourists, much in the same way that Acadian and Scottish culture became ‘authentic’ components of Nova Scotia’s tourism identity.

Moreover, tourism was about what it did not promote – current industries, the working class, and the arduous work of miners throughout the province. Industrial landscapes were dismissed as potential tourism sites. The existence of the working poor and the miserable conditions of company towns did not fit with the romantic versions of Nova Scotia. Mining towns, in particular, drew criticism from tourism literature writers, or were purposely ignored in order to promote the idyllic characteristics of the province. In 1942, writer Dorothy Duncan insisted that descendants of Highlanders who decided to work in the mines “have produced children smaller in size, duller of the eye, and slower of wit.”<sup>3</sup> Duncan insisted that the mine workers were not true representatives of the Highland Scots as they were unruly and heavy drinkers, traits linked, rather, to industrial workers. Meanwhile, images of proper Highlanders in small, rural villages were completely acceptable as focal points for tourism marketing campaigns.

These trends meant that by the mid-twentieth century there was little governmental interest in pursuing industrial tourism. Besides a handful of university collections and industrial and agricultural exhibitions, there were few physical sites dedicated to industrial-themed tourism within the province of Nova Scotia. However, there were numerous promotions, events, and institutions dedicated to cultural tourism, particularly Scottish culture. These included the piper at the Nova Scotia-New Brunswick

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<sup>2</sup> Ian McKay, *The Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), xv.

<sup>3</sup> McKay, “Tartanism Triumphant,” 25.

border, several Highland Games throughout the province, and the establishment of the Cape Breton Highlands National Park and the Gaelic College in St. Anns. Nova Scotia projected a sense of a shared cultural identity that romanticized the past while ignoring the present. Above all, the province emphasized the importance of cultural tourism over industrial tourism, an emphasis that was not entirely a true reflection what always interested the local population.

Industrial tourism within Nova Scotia began to grow in popularity in the 1950s. Prior to this date, there were a few sites open to the public, such as the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic (which presented exhibits on shipbuilding, albeit in a sometimes romanticized manner), and a small collection at the Halifax Citadel, as well as the Mechanic's Institute of Halifax's machinery collection.<sup>4</sup> However, the 1950s marked the beginning of a rapid revitalization and restoration period for industrial sites, especially those concerned with milling and mining processes. Local community groups and the provincial government (through the Nova Scotia Museum) bought closed or abandoned sites and converted them into museums. The Wile Carding Mill in Bridgewater, for example, was closed in 1968 before being bought by the province.<sup>5</sup> It was reopened in 1974 as a museum of the Nova Scotia Museum system. The poor economy helped motivate these efforts to convert industrial sites into museums. Many small communities were suddenly left without their largest industries and employers. With the threat of depopulation looming in towns like Springhill, communities shifted from an industry-

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<sup>4</sup> Clarence Roberts, Al Herron, and Vince Coady, "The new Nova Scotia Museum: \$1,500,000 complex to open to public Nov. 23," *The Mail Star* (Halifax), October 23, 1970.

<sup>5</sup> Nova Scotia Museum, *Interpretive Master Plan*, Nova Scotia Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage, (Halifax: March 2009): 31; Wile Carding Mill, "About Wile Carding Mill," *Nova Scotia Museum*, accessed May 15, 2018, <https://cardingmill.novascotia.ca/about-wile-carding-mill>; and Robert W. Frame, "Chronological Development of the Nova Scotia Museum Complex" (Halifax: April 1987), 5.



driven economy to an industrial-tourism driven economy. The desire of local citizens to preserve industrial sites and machinery also motivated the establishment of these museums. These factors combined with increased funding made available for museums through the 1967 Centennial funds and the Nova Scotia Museum's grant program.<sup>6</sup> The motivation behind conservation was also often driven by romantic views of the industrial past.<sup>7</sup>

Despite the rapid growth of industrial tourism sites by the end of the 1970s, little attention has been given to the sector in Atlantic Canada in terms of scholarly work. Instead, attention is often focused on cultural tourism related to Acadians and Scots. This thesis will examine industrial tourism's creation and growth in the region by focusing on the Museum of Industry, the crown jewel of industrial tourism sites in Atlantic Canada. The museum presents an excellent case study given that it is the largest and most ambitious museum in Atlantic Canada, as well as the only general industrial museum in Nova Scotia (meaning that it covers various industries). Additionally, its depiction of the industrial past raises questions about whether industrial heritage tourism is rooted in a romantic narrative comparable to that of cultural tourism. In exploring these issues, this thesis will address the scholarly gap by providing background on industrial heritage tourism in Atlantic Canada, examine the Museum of Industry's role as a tourism draw for the community, including its image in tourism literature of the province, consider the role

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<sup>6</sup> Nova Scotia Museum, "A Museum Development Policy for Nova Scotia," (Halifax: 1973), 1; and Meaghan Elizabeth Beaton, *The Centennial Cure: Commemoration, Identity, and Cultural Capital in Nova Scotia during Canada's 1967 Centennial Celebrations* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 37-39.

<sup>7</sup> Ian McKay, "History and the Tourist Gaze: The Politics of Commemoration in Nova Scotia, 1935-1964," *Acadiensis* 22, 2 (Spring 1993): 112.

of politics and community in shaping museums, and weigh the extent to which it depicts a selective, positive version of the industrial past.

### **Growth of Tourism in the Maritimes**

Early tourism efforts in the Maritimes largely focused on sportsmen, particularly hunters and fishers. Sportfishing, in particular, was popular in the region in the nineteenth century, and was mainly geared towards upper-class travellers.<sup>8</sup> Men would travel in fishing groups led by Indigenous guides who had knowledge of the rivers and lakes. While it provided good paying jobs to the Indigenous population, by the end of the century the tourism industry began to diversify into cultural tourism.

It was not until 1923 that the government of Nova Scotia established a provincial tourist association.<sup>9</sup> However, before this time there had already been decades of tourism promotion in the Annapolis Valley region, where the Dominion Atlantic Railway (DAR) had pushed the image of Evangeline, the fictional heroine of a Henry Wadsworth Longfellow poem.<sup>10</sup> The promotion of the Acadian homelands in a pre-deportation era marked one of the earliest cultural tourism efforts in the province. Cultural tourism refers to tourism focused on the “customs, traditions, the physical environment, the intellectual ideas and those places of architectural, historic, archaeological or other cultural

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<sup>8</sup> Bill Parenteau, “‘Care, Control and Supervision’: Native People in the Canadian Atlantic Salmon Fishery, 1867-1900,” *Canadian Historical Review* 79, 1 (March 1998): 22.

<sup>9</sup> Michael Boudreau, “A ‘Rare and Unusual Treat of Historical Significance’: The 1923 Hector Celebration and the Political Economy of the Past,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 28, 4 (Winter 1993/1994): 30.

<sup>10</sup> Monica MacDonald, “Railway Tourism in the ‘Land of Evangeline’, 1882-1946,” *Acadiensis* 35, 1 (Autumn 2005): 158-161.

significance which remain from earlier times.”<sup>11</sup> In other words, cultural tourism focuses on selling the images of certain cultures, including their landscapes, historic houses, and personal objects. In contrast, industrial tourism focuses on buildings, products, and the people linked through industries, as opposed to a cultural group. A subsidiary form of industrial tourism is industrial heritage tourism, which is an important term for understanding tourism in Atlantic Canada. Heritage as a tool can be used to strengthen the perceived importance of people or an event, as well as to shape history in a positive way to appease tourists. Robert Summerby-Murray notes this as a “selective reading of the past in order to find elements that are saleable to a consuming public.”<sup>12</sup> Industrial heritage often refers to inactive or former sites of industries and businesses, such as old mine shafts or grist mills, that have since been converted into museums or public education sites.<sup>13</sup> Industrial heritage tourism can further include public commemoration monuments that pay homage to industries. Examples include the Blacksmith Michaud statue in Saint-François de Madawaska, New Brunswick, the large potato at the Canadian Potato Museum in O’Leary, Prince Edward Island, and the steel workers memorial in Sydney, Nova Scotia.<sup>14</sup> These sites and monuments often reflect what the communities value and wish to commemorate. For the purpose of this thesis, the examination of

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<sup>11</sup> Dana Pop, “Cultural Tourism,” *SEA – Practical Application of Science* 4, 2 (2016): 220.

<sup>12</sup> Robert Summerby-Murray, “Interpreting Deindustrialized Landscapes of Atlantic Canada: Memory and Industrial Heritage in Sackville, New Brunswick,” *The Canadian Geographer*, 46, 1 (March 2002): 51.

<sup>13</sup> Alexander Otgaar, “Towards a Common Agenda for the Development of Industrial Tourism,” *Tourism Management Perspectives* 4 (2012): 86-87.

<sup>14</sup> David Frank and Nicole Lang, *Labour Landmarks in New Brunswick* (Edmonton: Athabasca University Press, 2010), 109; Dan MacDonald, “Steel-ing Cape Breton’s Labour History,” *Labour/Le Travail* 57 (Spring 2006): 268; and Tourism Prince Edward Island, “Canadian Potato Museum and Antique Farm Machinery Museum,” *Tourism Prince Edward Island*, accessed October 18, 2017, <https://www.tourismpei.com>.

industrial heritage tourism in Nova Scotia is relatively centred around the physical sites within the province, as opposed to the tourists themselves.

Although there are numerous museums, monuments, and heritage centres devoted to the industrial past today, industrial heritage was not always prominent in the Maritimes. Tourism efforts from the late-nineteenth century into the mid-twentieth century by businesses (especially the railroad companies, such as Canadian Pacific) and provincial governments focused on emphasizing the landscapes and “ancient” cultures of the region. In doing so, they tapped into anti-modernist sentiments. Antimodernism refers to the longing for the past (especially a romantic version of the past), particularly by society’s elites.<sup>15</sup> It was largely a response to the rapid industrialization of urban centres, which produced a yearning for simpler, slower lifestyles. In Nova Scotia, it was often linked to a perceived ‘Golden Age’ – a time where societies were largely rural and self-sufficient, and local economies were strong.<sup>16</sup> A common theme was that urban life and the societal structures brought on by urbanization, industrialization, and economic disparity left wealthy citizens searching for a way to escape. From this sentiment emerged a tourism market based on providing refuge for the elite class. Tourism promoters latched onto this sentiment and created experiences and landscapes that were rooted in the past. Ian McKay notes that these endeavours were “almost always a *commercial* antimodernism, structured by a very modern capitalism from which it seemed to provide a momentary and partial escape...”<sup>17</sup> The small New Brunswick town of St. Andrews, for instance, developed its tourism economy in the 1880s to appeal to elite travellers seeking

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<sup>15</sup> Andrew Sackett, “Inhaling the Salubrious Air: Health and Development in St. Andrews, N.B., 1880-1910,” *Acadiensis* 25, 1 (Autumn 1995): 68.

<sup>16</sup> McKay, “History and the Tourist Gaze,” 104.

<sup>17</sup> McKay, *The Quest of the Folk*, 35.

refuge from busy city lives. Local tourist agency groups advertised through newspapers in New England and Canada about the health benefits of the seaside town.<sup>18</sup> It was further helped by the Canadian Pacific Railroad, which owned a local hotel, through its regional tourism advertisements.

In Nova Scotia, another example of antimodernism tourism was the Acadian/Evangeline promotions by the Dominion Atlantic Railway (DAR). The DAR began exploiting the image of pre-deportation Acadians and their agricultural society.<sup>19</sup> Originally, the company simply offered a train that travelled through the Annapolis Valley that provided selective stops for photo opportunities. As the popularity of the train grew, the DAR supported the creation of the historic site of Grand-Pré. The site features a statue of Evangeline, an international garden, and a church constructed with a mixture of Quebec and Norman styles.<sup>20</sup> It later became an UNESCO world heritage site devoted more to tourism than accurate representations of Acadian history and culture.

The emphasis on tourism appealing to antimodernist sentiments continued into the twentieth century with one of the defining tourism movements in Nova Scotia's history. The 1923 *Hector* celebrations, which commemorated the landing of the immigrant ship in Pictou in 1773, marked an early effort by the Nova Scotian government to promote a Scottish image to tourists.<sup>21</sup> Celebrations lasted for a week and included traditional (and stereotypical) Scottish events including a highland games, highland dancing, and piping

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<sup>18</sup> Sackett, 56-58.

<sup>19</sup> Robin Bates and Ian McKay, *In the Province of History: The Making of the Public Past in Twentieth Century Nova Scotia* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010), 130; Monica MacDonald, 158-160; and McKay, "History and the Tourist Gaze," 105.

<sup>20</sup> Michael Gagné, "Memorial Constructions': Representations of Identity in the Design of the Grand-Pré National Historic Site, 1907-Present," *Acadiensis* 42, 1 (Winter/Spring 2013): 73-76.

<sup>21</sup> Boudreau, 28-30.

competitions, as well as teas, picnics, and a re-enactment of the *Hector*'s landing.<sup>22</sup> In the 1930s, Premier Angus L. MacDonald encouraged the perception that Nova Scotia was defined by its Scottishness.<sup>23</sup> This included the placement of a bagpiper at the border, the creation of the Cape Breton Highlands National Park, and eventually the adoption of the Nova Scotia tartan, which soon appeared on souvenirs of all sorts.<sup>24</sup> The imagery associated with the event, however, focused on a romantic version of Scottish culture, and emphasized Nova Scotia's rural villages and agrarian society. While the promotion of Nova Scotia as Scottish peaked in the 1950s, these efforts had a lasting impact on how Nova Scotia was portrayed in tourism literature.

At the same time, there was little involvement from the provincial government in industrial tourism. There was certainly an appreciation for industrial heritage throughout the late-nineteenth century at provincial industrial fairs. These exhibitions allowed Nova Scotians (and any out-of-province spectators) to view machinery, minerals, and products of current and former Nova Scotia industries.<sup>25</sup> Besides the exhibitions, there was also the early collection of industrial artifacts at the Mechanic's Institute of Halifax that was started in 1831. These were on display primarily for students, though it was also open for the public. The collection, mainly consisting of machinery, parts, and tools, was described as the earliest form of a museum in Canada by the Nova Scotia Museum in 1973.<sup>26</sup> When the Institute closed in 1863, the collection was given to the government of Nova Scotia.

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<sup>22</sup> "Outline Program (Ship Hector 150th)," HAGGIS: Hector Archiving Gateway and Genealogy Indexing System, McCulloch House Museum and Centre, accessed September 15, 2016, <http://haggis.mccullochcentre.ca/document/1192>; and McKay, "History and the Tourist Gaze," 105.

<sup>23</sup> T. Stephen Henderson, *Angus L. Macdonald: A Provincial Liberal* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 67-69.

<sup>24</sup> McKay, "Tartanism Triumphant," 5-12.

<sup>25</sup> David A. Sutherland, "Nova Scotia's Response to the Crystal Palace: The Provincial Industrial Exhibition of 1854," *Journal of the Royal Nova Scotia Historical Society* 3 (2000): 78-79.

<sup>26</sup> Nova Scotia Museum, "A Museum Development Policy for Nova Scotia," 1.

After suggestions that the Institute's collection be displayed, the provincial government founded the Provincial Museum in 1868.<sup>27</sup> Originally created as a general museum, meaning that it did not have a specific theme, two museum acts in 1947 and 1960 provided the museum with a mandate to collect, present, and research artifacts concerning natural science and culture.<sup>28</sup> Despite the Nova Scotia Museum taking over the Mechanic's Institute's collection by the late-1860s, there was no sustained interest in supporting industrial tourism or to maintain a museum dedicated to industrial heritage until the mid-twentieth century.

The growth of industrial heritage tourism sites peaked with the opening of the Museum of Industry in 1995. The largest museum in the Maritimes, the Museum of Industry is home to thousands of industrial artifacts, is composed of three halls lined with a general history of industry in Nova Scotia, and has a centre for conservation and storage of transportation objects. The museum is the focal point today of industrial heritage in the region, not only due to its size and collection, but also because of its mandate as a general industrial museum. This means that it presents several industries and products of Nova Scotia. By the 1970s, an economic downturn and the closure of several businesses prompted Pictou County businessmen William Sobey and Robert Tibbets to look elsewhere to steady the local economy. Coupled with a desire to obtain a permanent home for deteriorating industrial artifacts, they proposed the museum to the Nova Scotia Museum Board. The board approved the concept in 1974 and moved to construct the building in 1984.<sup>29</sup> It was to become the first provincial museum to focus on various

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<sup>27</sup> Susan Whiteside, "A Brief History of the Nova Scotia Museum" (Halifax: 1987), 1.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, 1-3.

<sup>29</sup> Nova Scotia Museum, *Study for a Museum of Transportation and Industry* (Halifax: 1974), 3-4.

industries, as opposed to just one business or region. After a political debate in the early 1990s stalled the opening of the museum for five years, it finally opened to the public officially in 1995.<sup>30</sup> Despite its importance and complicated past, the museum has been ignored in modern tourism studies, with the exception of one thesis from Memorial University that explores visitor reactions to the museums.<sup>31</sup>

The Museum of Industry has become *the* centre of industrial heritage in Atlantic Canada. Besides being the largest museum in the region, it showcases the history of various industries from the eighteenth century to the twenty-first century with in-depth depictions of the workers, their roles, and their livelihoods. The museum, however, has also been the centre of controversy within Nova Scotia. Partisan politics, budget cuts, personal agendas, and twenty years' worth of delays in its opening forced it to face scrutiny and possible closure. It was saved by the surrounding community of Stellarton and its business leaders when a local society took over the management of the site from 1994 to 1996.<sup>32</sup> The museum became vital to the community's economy. It brought jobs to Stellarton, but, perhaps more importantly, it became the focal point of the town. It represented the resilience of the people while becoming the centre of community events, discussions, public meetings, and consultations related to the Westray coal mine. It was not just a museum or a tourism boost for the community, but rather an extension of the values of the town of Stellarton. It offers an excellent case study regarding the handling of industrial heritage tourism in Nova Scotia, while also demonstrating the influence of

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<sup>30</sup> Sueann MacDonald, "Museum Makes it Official," *Evening News (New Glasgow)*, June 15, 1995.

<sup>31</sup> See Meghann E. Jack, 2010, "(Re)Visiting the Industrial Past: Representation and Meaning at Nova Scotia's Museum of Industry," Masters thesis, Memorial University.

<sup>32</sup> Friends of the Nova Scotia Museum of Industry Society, *Annual Report, 1994-1995* (Pictou, Nova Scotia: Advocate Printing and Publishing, 1995), 2-4.



politics and communities on the narratives told within museums. Industrial heritage tourism in Nova Scotia has relied on a romantic narrative rooted in a limited view of the past similar to that of cultural tourism. Sites dedicated to industrial heritage tourism are thus subjected to, and influenced by, the values of the community, and the whims and funding of governments.

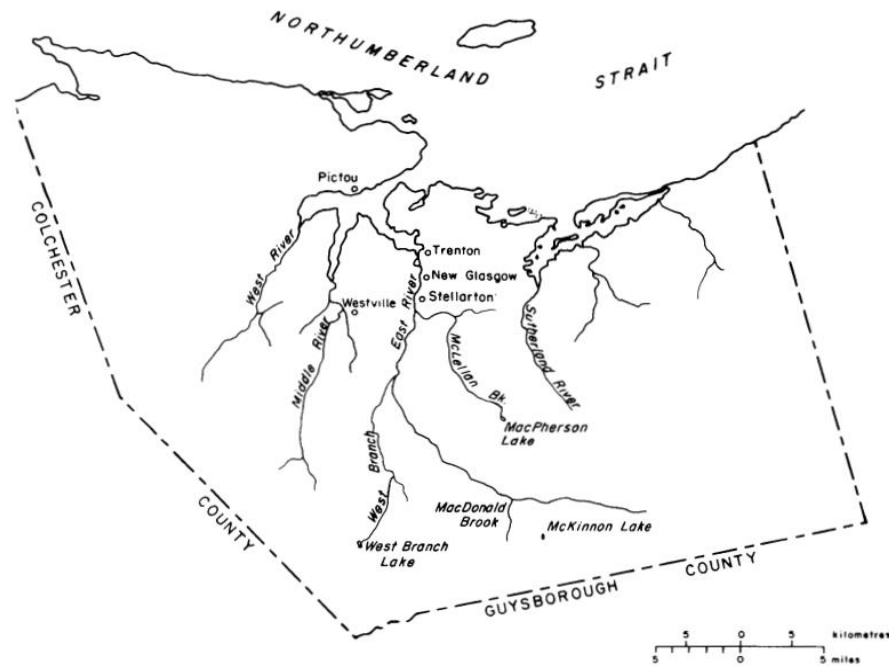
### **Context: Pictou County**

Given the relationship between the museum and community in which it is situated, it is important to have some understanding of the history of Pictou County. Pictou County, located along the Northumberland Strait, is the sixth most populous county in Nova Scotia. It consists of five towns: New Glasgow, Pictou, Stellarton, Westville, and Trenton. As of 2016, the county had a population of 43,748, and New Glasgow was the most populous town.<sup>33</sup> Within the region, there are numerous museums that cater to the tourism economy. These include the Carmichael House and the Pictou County Sports Hall of Fame in New Glasgow, the Pictou County Military Museum in Westville, the School House Museum in Barney's River (a small community east of New Glasgow), the McCulloch Centre, McCulloch House, Northumberland Fisheries Museum, the Hector Heritage Quay in Pictou, the Trenton Heritage Museum, and the Museum of Industry in Stellarton.

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<sup>33</sup> Statistics Canada, "Pictou County, 2016 Census of Canada," Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001, Ottawa (2017), accessed November 2, 2017, <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca>.

Figure 1: Map of Pictou County in Northern Nova Scotia, depicting the five major towns of Trenton, New Glasgow, Stellarton, Westville, and Pictou.



Source: John E. Gibb and Karen A. McMullin, *Regional Water Resources, Pictou County, Nova Scotia* (Halifax: Government of Nova Scotia, 1980), 48.

The county was originally inhabited by the Mi'kmaq, whose names for several of the local communities remain (such as Pictou). In the seventeenth-century, there was also a small Acadian population in the Pictou area.<sup>34</sup> In 1767, after most of the land that today makes up Pictou County was granted to the Philadelphia Company by the Crown, a ship from New England named the *Betsey* brought at least five families to the region.<sup>35</sup> They

<sup>34</sup> Rev. George Patterson, *A History of the County of Pictou, Nova Scotia* (Belleville, Ontario: Mika Studio, 1972), 37-39; and Judith Hoegg Ryan, *The Birthplace of New Scotland: An Illustrated History of Pictou County, Canada's Cradle of Industry* (Halifax: Formac, 1995), 7-8.

<sup>35</sup> Hoegg Ryan, *The Birthplace of New Scotland*, 9.

were followed by the 189 passengers aboard the *Hector*, which arrived in 1773 from Scotland. Pictou continued to grow into a town by the early nineteenth century, when local merchants Edward Mortimer and James Patterson established a successful lumber trade.<sup>36</sup> Scottish immigrant Thomas McCulloch furthered the growth of the County when he established the first non-denominational school in the province, Pictou Academy, which attracted students from across the British colonies. By the mid-nineteenth century, the region had emerged as a leader in ship building and exporting. James Carmichael, a prominent ship builder in New Glasgow, owned one of the largest shipyards in the County.<sup>37</sup>

The ship building industry was one of the main employers in the County by the end of the nineteenth century. However, it faced uncertainty in the later half of the nineteenth century. Rosemary Ommer notes that Pictou, in particular, experienced a rapid decline in registered ships after 1854.<sup>38</sup> This correlated with an international economic depression, which caused an overall decline in shipping between the late 1850s and the early 1860s.<sup>39</sup> While the ship building industry recovered slightly afterwards by diversifying its markets, shipyards in Pictou County struggled to reach the same levels of activity.<sup>40</sup> Its decline continued into the 1870s, as another economic depression hit the region. While other industries recovered, such as coal, the ship building industry, reliant on wooden ships, became obsolete as iron and steam ships took over the market.<sup>41</sup> By the

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 11-14.

<sup>37</sup> James M. Cameron, *Pictou County's History* (Kentville: Kentville Publishing Company, 1972), 74-76.

<sup>38</sup> Rosemary E. Ommer, "Anticipating the Trend: The Pictou Ship Register, 1840-1889," *Acadiensis* 10, 1 (Autumn 1980): 68.

<sup>39</sup> Ian Ross Robertson, "The 1850s: Maturity and Reform," in *The Atlantic Region to Confederation: A History*, eds. Phillip A. Buckner and John G. Reid (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 336.

<sup>40</sup> Ommer, 67-77.

<sup>41</sup> Phillip A. Buckner, "The 1870s: Political Integration," in *The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation*, eds. E.R. Forbes and D.A. Muise (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 59-61.

1880s, the industry began to die out, especially in the rural communities and in Pictou. James Kitchen, owner of Pictou's largest shipyard, declared bankruptcy.<sup>42</sup> This undermined any chance of a revival in wooden ship building in Pictou. However, Ferguson Industries began building iron ships in 1910 in Pictou.<sup>43</sup> The largest industries in the town of Pictou since the 1930s, however, have been the lobster fishery and tourism.

Meanwhile, Stellarton was experiencing an economic boom. The town, known as Albion Mines until 1870, was relatively land-locked, with only a small portion of the East River trickling on its edge. This meant that instead of focusing on ship building, the town looked towards other primary resources to bolster its economy – especially coal. Early settlers in the area from the ship *Hector* reportedly used coal in their homes from the 1790s, but commercial mining in the town did not begin until 1827.<sup>44</sup> At that time, Britain's General Mining Association (GMA) was granted rights to the mineral resources in the province, which provided it a virtual monopoly over coal mining in the region.<sup>45</sup> It operated mines in Stellarton until 1860 before selling its mines in the area to Acadia Coal. The end of the GMA's monopoly over coal helped to grow the mining industry across Nova Scotia. By 1866, over three thousand men were employed in mines in the province.<sup>46</sup> In Stellarton, the reliance on the coal mining industry for employment was evident in the 1866-1867 *Hutchinson's Nova Scotia Directory*.<sup>47</sup> Over two-thirds of the

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<sup>42</sup> Hoegg Ryan, *The Birthplace of New Scotland*, 41.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, 47.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, 15, and Marilyn Gerriets, "The Impact of the General Mining Association on the Nova Scotia Coal Industry, 1826-1850," *Acadiensis* 21:1 (1991): 65.

<sup>45</sup> Gerriets, 57-56.

<sup>46</sup> Phillip A. Buckner, "The 1860s: An End and a Beginning," in *The Atlantic Region to Confederation: A History*, eds. Phillip A. Buckner and John G. Reid (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 363; and D.A. Muise, "The 1860s: Forging the Bonds of Union," in *The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation*, eds. E.R. Forbes and D.A. Muise (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 23.

<sup>47</sup> Thomas Hutchinson, *Hutchinson's Nova Scotia Directory for 1866-67*, Our Roots, accessed January 3, 2017, <http://www.ourroots.ca/toc.aspx?id=11293&amp;qryID=4daa39cb-23c6-42dd-9f24-97efcafcc063>.

men listed in the directory were listed as either colliers or as working in a mine-related job (mine manager, for example).<sup>48</sup> The lasting impact of the GMA was evident in Stellarton, as remnants of the company's stores, schools, town hall, and houses are still visible today.

Since 1827, coal has been continuously mined from the Foord coal seam in Pictou County, with the exception of a few quiet years in the late 1980s.<sup>49</sup> The seam, which runs below present-day Westville and Stellarton, was one of the most mined seams in the province due to its thickness and low-ash levels.<sup>50</sup> However, the seam is extremely gaseous with high levels of methane gas released when mined, leading to numerous explosions. To date, there have been 270 miners killed in explosions in the Pictou County mines.<sup>51</sup> This includes a methane explosion at the Westray coal mine, just outside of Stellarton, in 1992, that killed all twenty-six miners underground at the time. As local historian Judith Hoegg Ryan notes, mining in Stellarton “established the long unhappy tradition of miners' blood buying [the] prosperity around them.”<sup>52</sup> The miners memorial on Foord Street (Stellarton's main road) commemorates all those who were lost, from the early Foord Pit and Allan mines to the 1992 Westray disaster.

The Stellarton economy did not wholly rely on coal mining in the twentieth century. J.W. Sobey, the descendent of a *Hector* passenger and a former employee at the

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Gerriets, 81-82; Christopher McCormick, “Preface to Disaster,” in *The Westray Chronicles: A Case Study in Corporate Crime*, ed. by Christopher McCormick (Halifax: Fernwood, 1994), 13; and Patrick Whiteway, “Engineering the Westray Disaster,” in *The Westray Chronicles: A Case Study in Corporate Crime*, ed. By Christopher McCormick (Halifax: Fernwood, 1994), 54.

<sup>50</sup> Harry Glasbeek and Eric Tucker, “Death by Consensus at Westray,” in *The Westray Chronicles: A Case Study in Corporate Crime*, ed. By Christopher McCormick (Halifax: Fernwood, 1994), 73.

<sup>51</sup> Shaun Comish, *The Westray Tragedy: A Miner's Story* (Halifax: Fernwood, 1993), 2.

<sup>52</sup> Hoegg Ryan, *The Birthplace of New Scotland*, 38.

Allan Mine in Stellarton, began a butcher shop on Foord Street in 1907.<sup>53</sup> It grew to become a key grocery store for miners, as Sobey offered a credit system that was maintained throughout the many strikes of the 1920s, and during the economic depression of the 1930s and the Second World War.<sup>54</sup> This business expanded over the next one hundred years to become the national (and, for a brief time, international) grocery chain Sobeys. During its expansion, Sobeys has operated various other businesses, including gas stations, movie theatres, a soda bottling company, wholesalers, and a car dealership.<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, the Sobey family has been influential in attracting other businesses to Pictou County. Frank Sobey, son of J.W., was also the president of Industrial Estates Limited, an organization aimed at attracting industries to Nova Scotia.<sup>56</sup> During his time there, he helped attract sixty businesses to the province, including Donato, Faini and Figli, Clairtone, and Michelin Tire in Pictou County.<sup>57</sup> While the majority of coal mines have shut down in Stellarton, Sobeys has continued to locate its national headquarters in the town.

Outside of Sobeys, other businesses often failed to prosper. One of the most celebrated is Clairtone, which was the subject of a recent temporary and travelling exhibit at the Museum of Industry. The company's multi-million-dollar facility, which built electronics such as stereos and television sets, lasted just six years in Stellarton when it closed due to financial reasons.<sup>58</sup> At about the same time, in 1972, Donato, Faini and Figli, a clothing company, closed its factory in town. While it seemed to be building a

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<sup>53</sup> Harry Bruce, *The Man and the Empire: Frank Sobey* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1985), 39.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 84-87.

<sup>55</sup> James Cameron, *The Pictonian Colliers* (Kentville: Kentville Publishing Company, 1974), 133.

<sup>56</sup> Aubrey Dorrington, *History of Stellarton* (Pictou: Pictou Advocate, 1976), 134.

<sup>57</sup> Bruce, 261-262; Cameron, *The Pictonian Colliers*, 126-127; and "Opportunities to Better Our Industrial Park," *Evening News*, July 3, 1976.

<sup>58</sup> Hoegg Ryan, *Birthplace of New Scotland*, 116.

success story, with the factory doubling in size after two years in operation, the death of the owner meant the end of the business in Stellarton.<sup>59</sup> The lack of a large employer and the closure of the Stellarton mines left residents demanding employment.

## **Methodology**

This thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter one presents the relevant historiography, focusing on cultural and industrial tourism. Chapter two addresses the emergence of tourism in the Maritimes, especially in Nova Scotia. The aim is to provide an overview of the history of cultural and industrial heritage tourism in the region. It covers tourism from the 1850s to the 1970s, exploring how the deindustrialization of the region and economic troubles contributed to the incorporation of industrial sites into the Nova Scotia Museum. Chapter three focuses on the creation of the Museum of Industry in Stellarton. It explores the origins of the museum, and the two studies that assessed its need and purpose. Chapter four provides an overview of the political debates regarding the museum and a consideration of key figures that pushed for the museum's creation and maintenance. The final chapter explores the contents of the Museum of Industry, and how the tourist literature promoted it to the public. It will, further, look at the connections between the local community and the museum.

In order to analyze the growth of the tourism industry in the Maritimes and the Museum of Industry, it is necessary to examine both primary and secondary sources that provide a historical and a theoretical understanding for these developments. Newspapers, especially, are vital to capture public opinion during the opening of the Museum of

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 115-117.

Industry in the 1990s. They also provide background information about the creation and construction of the museum. The main local papers, the *Pictou Advocate* and the *Evening News*, frequently discussed the museum between 1986 and 2000. Outside of Pictou County, the *Chronicle Herald* covered the political debates surrounding the Museum of Industry. Fortunately, the Museum has an extensive collection of articles and documents related to its history (covering from about 1988 until the present day). This collection, located in its library, includes reports from the Friends of the Museum of Industry Society (who helped manage the museum in the 1990s), advertisements from newspapers and tourist bureaus, brochures for the former Stellarton Miners' Museum, and copies of two studies used by the Nova Scotia Museum to assess the feasibility and logistics of the museum, along with various periodicals, Nova Scotia Museum publications, and newsletters.

The Hansard reports that concern the creation of the Museum of Industry are another key resource. These highlight the fierce debate surrounding the millions of dollars the government allocated to the project. The Hansard reports show the interconnections between tourism, economic development, and politics.

This thesis also relies on primary sources housed at the McCulloch Centre (formerly the Hector Exhibit Centre). The centre contains an archive that includes thousands of documents, photos, promotional materials, newspapers, and objects pertaining to local museums. One collection of interest is the Don MacIsaac Collection, which encompasses over eight thousand photos, thousands of newspaper clippings, and hundreds of memorabilia related to Pictou County and tourism.



Advertisements in tourism guides, as well as promotional materials prepared by the provincial governments, are also examined. They illustrate how other museums were treated throughout the province. These sources include a 1998 guide book by Adam Lynch funded by the Nova Scotian government.<sup>60</sup> Another important tourism source is the Nova Scotia *Doers and Dreamers* guide, which was a provincial publication generated by the tourism department annually for out-of-province visitors. Guides from the late 1980s into the 2010s shed light on how the province and the individual regions of Nova Scotia were presented to tourists. They further provide evidence of the Museum of Industry's importance to the community of Stellarton as an economic resource and a hub for visitors to the town. Other tourism guide sources include annual guides created by Destination Eastern and Northumberland Shores (DEANS), a local tourism agency that promoted businesses dedicated to tourism in Northern Nova Scotia, while also operating the visitor centre in Pictou formerly run by the provincial government.

Additional sources include various issues of the *Occasional*, a Nova Scotia Museum publication dedicated to updates on museums across the province. The periodical was published between 1973 and 1995, and features articles about individual museums, exhibits, general history, and the day-to-day activities of museums around Nova Scotia. Besides the *Occasional*, there are numerous publications from the Nova Scotia Museum's board members from the 1970s, including articles, conference papers, brochures, and advertisements related to both the complex's operations and to museums across the province.

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<sup>60</sup> Adam Lynch, *Discover Nova Scotia: Museums and Art Galleries* (Halifax: Province of Nova Scotia and Nimbus Publishing, 1998).

## **Conclusion**

For much of the twentieth century, tourism in Nova Scotia has been dominated by images of Acadian farmlands, Scottish Highlanders, and idyllic folk scenes. The antimodernist sentiment shaped the tourism industry throughout Atlantic Canada and elevated the region's status as an elite getaway. The scholarly emphasis placed on this development has deemphasized other types of tourism. In particular, industrial tourism has often been left out of the narrative. The 1950s and 1960s saw a surge in industrial heritage tourism sites in Nova Scotia. Unemployment, economic troubles, and a community desire to preserve degrading machinery and sites helped to convert several locations into museums. While the provincial government long helped promote an anti-modernist tourism image for Nova Scotia, this does not explain entirely why industrial themed sites were left out of the academic narrative, especially by the 1980s when they represented one-third of Nova Scotia Museum's various institutions. This thesis is concerned with illuminating the importance of industrial heritage and tourism in Nova Scotia and providing background information about its emergence within the province.

## Chapter One:

### Historiography

Any examination of heritage tourism in Nova Scotia must begin by considering Ian McKay's highly influential 1994 book *The Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia*.<sup>1</sup> It provides a critique of the early-twentieth-century commodification of history as a process reflective of antimodernism, racial hierarchies, and exploitation of the past. *The Quest of the Folk* sparked intense interest in the study of the cultural tourism of the region. While the literature emerging in the late-twentieth century was a catalyst for a new age of Atlantic Canadian tourism studies, it tended to ignore industrial heritage sites. This chapter will examine the rise of Atlantic Canadian tourism historiography, while also addressing the limited historiography of industrial tourism. Although there are a few articles that consider industrial tourism, there is a gap in the Atlantic Canadian literature on this subject.

A brief overview of the historiography concerning tourism in Atlantic Canada reveals that the majority of the works were written after 1990. McKay and Robin Bates, in *In the Province of History: The Making of the Public Past in Twentieth Century Nova Scotia*, provide a brief list of Canadianists who have written about tourism in the country, with publishing dates ranging from 1995 to 2006.<sup>2</sup> Some relevant work was published before the 1990s however. Daniel Francis, in his book *Selling Canada: Immigrants*,

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<sup>1</sup> Ian McKay, *The Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994).

<sup>2</sup> Robin Bates and Ian McKay, *In the Province of History: The Making of the Public Past in Twentieth Century Nova Scotia* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010), 385.

*Soldiers, Tourists, and the Building of Our Nation*, points to an early analysis of Canadian tourism in E.J. Hart's 1983 book *The Selling of Canada: The CPR and the Beginnings of Canadian Tourism*.<sup>3</sup> It is also important to note James Overton's work on the Newfoundland tourism industry from the 1980s. His essays on the province reference the same antimodernism sentiments found in McKay's work, often arguing that Newfoundland's tourism was routed in the commercialization of the past and nostalgia for the supposed simple life that was marketed as *the* authentic experience.<sup>4</sup> However, the main concentration of tourism literature in the Maritimes was published after 1990.

### **Dominance of Cultural Tourism**

It is evident within the opening paragraphs of *The Quest of the Folk* that McKay was analysing the creation of the "Folk" with a social and cultural history framework. The Folk in this case refers to a representation of pre-industrial people as simple and quaint citizens. In particular, it examines the lower class within rural fishing villages.<sup>5</sup> The image of the Folk was used in tourism promotions (such as postcards and guidebooks), drawing from and encouraging the idea that Nova Scotia offered a simple escape from modernity. This influenced what the tourism industry constructed and promoted as authentic Nova Scotian experiences to the public, or what McKay references as the "tourist gaze" – a conceptual tool used to describe how tourism is not only shaped

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<sup>3</sup> Daniel Francis, *Selling Canada: Immigrants, Soldiers, Tourists, and the Building of Our Nation* (Vancouver: Stanton Atkins and Dosis Publishers, 2012), 179.

<sup>4</sup> See James Overton, "Promoting 'The Real Newfoundland' Culture as Tourist Commodity," *Studies in Political Economy* 4, 1 (January 1980): 115-137, and James Overton, "Coming Home: Nostalgia and Tourism in Newfoundland," *Acadiensis* 14, 1 (Fall 1984): 84-97.

<sup>5</sup> McKay, *The Quest of the Folk*, xiii-xvii.

by what the tourist visited in the province, but also by what the potential tourist wanted to see.<sup>6</sup> This concept drove the tartanism image of Nova Scotia from the 1930s onwards. Tartanism represented the idea that the authentic essence of the province was rooted in Scottishness. It led to the reimagining of the region into a New Scotland of North America to attract tourists.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, it used an image of Scottishness that was perpetually stuck in the past and was reliant on tartans, clan systems, and rural, pre-industrial Highland communities. Antimodernism, the Folk, tourist gaze, and tartanism became key ideas for future discussions of tourism in the region and were worked into McKay's and Bates's 2010 book *In the Province of History*. At the same time, these themes also provided a barrier to the implementation and the study of industrial tourism. That is, with the heavy emphasis on pre-industrial societies, early tourism efforts by the province often ignored industrial sites as potential tourist attraction, which helped to create a gap amongst scholars studying the tourism of the region. The focus on antimodernism by scholars has also tended to draw attention to cultural tourism practices, experiences, and institutions, rather than encourage an analysis of industrial tourism sites when they began to emerge.

Tartanism as a means of encouraging tourism can be traced back to the 1923 celebrations in Pictou County celebrating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the landing of the ship *Hector* in 1773. The importance of the event is discussed in Michael Boudreau's "A 'Rare and Unusual Treat of Historical Significance': 1923 Hector Celebration and the

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<sup>6</sup> Ian McKay, "History and the Tourist Gaze: The Politics of Commemoration in Nova Scotia, 1935-1964," *Acadiensis* 22, 2 (Spring 1993): 104.

<sup>7</sup> Ian McKay, "Tartanism Triumphant: Construction of Scottishness in Nova Scotia, 1933-1954," *Acadiensis* 21, 2 (1992): 5-8

Political Economy of the Past,”<sup>8</sup> Ian McKay’s “Tartanism Triumphant: The Construction of Scottishness in Nova Scotia, 1933-1954,” and in *In the Province of History*. As Boudreau points out, the event was used by the provincial government to test the effectiveness of Scottish tourism in the province.<sup>9</sup> The celebration, then, was noteworthy for the role of the government in encouraging a particular image that it wanted to project – a white, antimodern society based in a romantic past. Boudreau notes that the event was meant to encompass Scottish heritage in Nova Scotia instead of just the history of the *Hector*.<sup>10</sup> This was only the start of Nova Scotia’s Scottish image makeover. By the 1930s and 1940s the provincial government fully endorsed Scottish-themed tourism. Instead of a relatively diverse province, Nova Scotia was portrayed as a homogenous, stereotypical Scottish society. Bagpipers were placed at the border, sites such as the Cape Breton Highlands, Keltic Lodge, and Gaelic College were founded, and by 1953 the province had its own tartan.<sup>11</sup> In *Selling Canada*, Daniel Francis equates this kind of imagery to “the invention of tradition,” or, in other words, the fabrication and reimagining of what it meant to be Nova Scotian and to experience that culture, put together into a neat package.<sup>12</sup> Analysis of tartanism, in this sense, was not necessarily denying the Scottish heritage of some percentage of the province (indeed, at the time Scots made up about twenty-eight per cent of the population according to McKay),<sup>13</sup> but instead it was about noting how other cultures in the province were dismissed.

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<sup>8</sup> Michael Boudreau, “A ‘Rare and Unusual Treat of Historical Significance’: The 1923 Hector Celebration and the Political Economy of the Past,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 28, 4 (Winter 1993/1994).

<sup>9</sup> Boudreau, 28.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 29-30.

<sup>11</sup> Bates and McKay, 282-283, and Francis, *Selling Canada*, 157.

<sup>12</sup> Francis, *Selling Canada*, 157, and Eric Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing Traditions,” in *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University of Press, 1983), 1-4.

<sup>13</sup> McKay, “Tartanism Triumphant,” 8.

Since the 1990s, scholars have built and expanded upon McKay's analysis. This can be seen in the scholarship by Monica MacDonald, Ronald Rudin, Daniel Francis, Meaghan Beaton, and Del Muise. Their works examine antimodernist promotions, the creation of heroes, and the political efforts to sell ethnic groups.

Monica MacDonald's "Railway Tourism in the 'Land of Evangeline', 1882-1946" focuses on the antimodernism evident in promotions involving the image of Evangeline, the Acadian fictional heroine, in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. The Dominion Atlantic Railway emphasized a pure, simplistic agricultural society of the past that lived harmoniously with the land. Visitors were enticed to experience a world that was seemingly perpetually stuck in the past. Evangeline came to represent a tourism effort centered on Acadian culture and antimodernism.<sup>14</sup> As Ronald Rudin suggests in *Settling and Unsettling Memories: Essays in Canadian Public History*, "heroes are made and not found."<sup>15</sup> Indeed, the image of the heroine Evangeline was used intentionally to promote tourism. Evangeline was employed to attract American tourists, as she was one of the more popular characters from the works of Henry W. Longfellow, a well-known American poet.<sup>16</sup> Tourism promoters used her image on various pamphlets advertising the region, and descriptions of the region relied on references to the Longfellow poem. Portrayals of Acadian history and of the Annapolis Valley were not always accurate however. Robert Viau argues that the portrayal of Evangeline deemphasized the story of real Acadians and oversimplified the story of the Acadian

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<sup>14</sup> Monica MacDonald, "Railway Tourism in the 'Land of Evangeline', 1882-1946," *Acadiensis* 35, 1 (Autumn 2005): 165-175.

<sup>15</sup> Ronald Rudin, "Dugua vs Champlain: The Construction of Heroes in Atlantic Canada, 1904-2004," in *Settling and Unsettling Memories: Essays in Canadian Public History*, ed. Peter Hodgins and Nicole Neatby (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 95.

<sup>16</sup> Bates and McKay, 73.

deportation.<sup>17</sup> Descriptions of the scenery were fabricated in guidebooks to help attract tourists by emphasizing that the landscape was unchanged from pre-deportation Acadia. Viau comments that what was written was fictionalized enough that it “pourraient embarrasser le jardin d'Éden,” implying that the guides were deceitful.<sup>18</sup> The labelling of the province as a simple, Acadian agricultural landscape was dictated by what the potential tourists wanted to see. The use of *Évangéline* as a Folk character helped to curate an image of a pastoral past.

This sentiment is echoed in Herb Wylie's analysis in *Anne of Tim Hortons: Globalization and the Reshaping of Atlantic-Canadian Literature*. Anne Shirley, the fictional heroine of *Anne of Green Gables* was used in promotional materials to create an image of Prince Edward Island as a simple, agricultural, pre-industrial society (although arguably, the *Anne of Green Gables* series surpasses the 'golden age' time frame promoted by the Prince Edward Island tourism advertisements).<sup>19</sup> Much like the version of Acadia promoted in Nova Scotia, the imagery associated with Anne was linked to agricultural communities in a relatively quiet, simple society. The emphasis on nature embodied in the Anne tourism schemes is noted by Edward MacDonald in his works on the island's tourism efforts, especially those related to selling nature as a form of relaxation to wealthy elites. In his article “A Landscape...with Figures: Tourism and Environment on Prince Edward Island,” MacDonald argues that Prince Edward Island embraced the notion that its authentic lifestyle was one of a peaceful, old fashioned

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<sup>17</sup> Robert Viau, *Grand-Pré: Lieu de Mémoire, Lieu d'Appartenance* (Longueuil, Quebec: Publications MNH, 2005), 71-72.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, 72. Roughly translates to “could embarrass the Garden of Eden.”

<sup>19</sup> Herb Wylie, *Anne of Tim Hortons: Globalization and the Reshaping of Atlantic-Canadian Literature* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2011), 1-4.



society surrounded by farmland and scenic views.<sup>20</sup> In doing so, the island attracted people who wished to escape busy, urban scenes. At the same time, it redefined the reality of the province, ignoring that the majority of the population did not live on farms.<sup>21</sup> This was another case of reshaping a region into what was marketable in the tourism industry. The focus on the Folk also occurred in Newfoundland, although its Folk were primarily fishermen living in fishing villages.<sup>22</sup> The attention, much like Prince Edward Island and the Annapolis Valley, was placed purposely to draw attention away from the urban centres and towards rural landscapes. This antimodernist imagery thus became common in tourism efforts throughout Atlantic Canada.

Meaghan Beaton and Del Muise note that the effort to portray Nova Scotia as an anti-modern society continued after World War Two in the context of industrial decline in Cape Breton. In their co-authored article “The Canso Causeway: Tartan Tourism, Industrial Development, and the Promise of Progress for Cape Breton,” they note that the appearance of Scottish elements in Nova Scotia, especially ancient Highlanders, has characterized the newer imagery associated with Cape Breton Island. In particular, at the end of tartansim’s own golden age, the imagery inspired by Scottish culture and pushed by Angus L. Macdonald’s government helped to reframe the identity of Cape Breton Island. In 1954, the Canso Causeway was opened with a celebration featuring pipers, traditional Scottish music, and Gaelic signs.<sup>23</sup> The event made Cape Breton, according to

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<sup>20</sup> Edward MacDonald, “A Landscape...with Figures: Tourism and Environment on Prince Edward Island,” *Acadiensis* 40, 1 (Winter/Spring 2011): 70-71.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 71-73.

<sup>22</sup> Overton, “Promoting ‘The Real Newfoundland,’” 115-118.

<sup>23</sup> Meaghan Beaton and Del Muise, “The Canso Causeway: Tartan Tourism, Industrial Development, and the Promise of Progress for Cape Breton,” *Acadiensis* 37, 2 (Summer/Autumn 2008): 15-20.

Beaton and Muise, a “...more easily accessible, Scottish haven.”<sup>24</sup> At the same time, the emphasis on the Scottish essence of the Island overshadowed a major reason why the provincial government was helping to invest in the region’s tourism – as a way to develop Cape Breton’s economy away from its declining coal and steel industries.<sup>25</sup> The Scottish-themed tourism industry was not just about advertising the small Highlander villages and the Folk of the rural landscape, but about finding a solution to shift the island away from an industrial economy. However, Beaton has gone on to show that by the 1960s Cape Breton began to emphasize its industrial heritage as part of a tourism-based economy. Former industries on Cape Breton were converted and rejuvenated into tourism sites. Beaton analyzes this in her book *The Centennial Cure: Commemoration, Identity, and Cultural Capital in Nova Scotia during Canada's 1967 Centennial Celebrations*, focusing on some of the industrial museums created with the assistance of Centennial funding. This funding allowed for a more diverse array of museums in Nova Scotia, and provided a platform for workers and their stories.<sup>26</sup> One of the more notable museums was the Miners Museum in Glace Bay, which was originally proposed in the late 1950s.<sup>27</sup> It later was approved as a centennial project in 1964, one of the few projects that focused on industry (the Stellarton Miners Museum was another centennial project).<sup>28</sup> While Cape Breton was promoted as the Scotland of the New World, industrial heritage tourism sites were on the rise, as seen by the creation of the Miners Museum and the new LeNoir Forge museum in Arichat.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 40.

<sup>26</sup> Beaton, 87-95.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 89.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 43.

## The Hidden Industrial Heritage Tourism

Industrial heritage tourism, like cultural tourism, tends to draw on a romantic sense of a golden age. However, the golden age of industrial heritage tourism was the heyday of heavy industry (such as mining and milling). Based largely in museums, industrial heritage promotion in the region relies on the romanticized idea of once great industries. That is, the image promoted by these institutions and communities relies on an optimistic view of past industries. This view is one of the major themes that emerge from the limited number of scholarly works on the industrial heritage of the region. Robert Summerby-Murray explores this idea in his article “Interpreting Personalized Industrial Heritage in the Mining Towns of Cumberland County, Nova Scotia.”<sup>29</sup> Examining the old mining towns of River Hebert and Springhill, Summerby-Murray asserts that the towns rely heavily on celebrating the prosperity of their coal mining past, portraying the job and workplace as an enduring testament to labour and community.<sup>30</sup> In other words, the towns celebrate a romantic view of their ‘golden age,’ with little memorialization of the negative aspects of coal mining. He argues that this portrayal is purposeful, in that it helps to cleanse the image of mining, leaving little remnants of its dangers, strife, and environmental damage in order to appeal to tourists. Summerby-Murray also emphasizes this re-imagining of the past in his article “Interpreting Deindustrialized Landscapes of Atlantic Canada: Memory and Industrial Heritage in Sackville, New Brunswick.”<sup>31</sup> The

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<sup>29</sup> See Robert Summerby-Murray, “Interpreting Personalized Industrial Heritage in the Mining Towns of Cumberland County, Nova Scotia: Landscape Examples from Springhill and River Hebert,” *Urban History Review* 35, 2 (Spring 2007): 51-59.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 53-55.

<sup>31</sup> See Robert Summerby-Murray, “Interpreting Deindustrialized Landscapes of Atlantic Canada: Memory and Industrial Heritage in Sackville, New Brunswick,” *The Canadian Geographer*, 46, 1 (March 2002): 48-62.

small border town presented artifacts from a local foundry to promote nostalgia and an idyllic view of the working class.<sup>32</sup> The common thread between the two articles is that Atlantic Canada, especially New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, have a tendency to dwell on a romanticized past in promoting industrial heritage tourism. Museums within the small, one-industry towns have acted as focal points for marketing a tourism-friendly image of industry.

The Museum of Industry has received little attention from scholars of industrial heritage. Summerby-Murray discussed the museum briefly in his article “Regenerating Cultural Identity through Industrial Heritage Tourism: Visitor Attitudes, Entertainment and the Search for Authenticity at Mills, Mines and Museum of Maritime Canada.”<sup>33</sup> In this article, Summerby-Murray examines the use of industrial heritage sites to foster cultural identities. In doing so, he provides a short general history of the museum and highlights a few comments made on visitor surveys.<sup>34</sup> Meghann Jack, in her 2010 Master’s thesis in Folklore at Memorial University, examines the framing of the industrial past in the museum’s galleries, and how the public perceives the exhibits of the Museum of Industry.<sup>35</sup> Jack states that her thesis “attempts to show, through a diversity of perspectives, how the museum represents and interprets Nova Scotia's industrial past, and in turn, how this influences museum visitors’ understandings of industry, technology, and labour in Nova Scotia.”<sup>36</sup> This led her to interview visitors to the museum.

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 51.

<sup>33</sup> Robert Summerby-Murray, “Regenerating Cultural Identity through Industrial Heritage Tourism: Visitor Attitudes, Entertainment and the Search for Authenticity at Mills, Mines and Museum of Maritime Canada,” *London Journal of Canadian Studies* 30 (2015): 71-97.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 82-83.

<sup>35</sup> Meghann E. Jack, 2010, “(Re)Visiting the Industrial Past: Representation and Meaning at Nova Scotia's Museum of Industry,” Masters thesis, Memorial University, 37-39.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 38.

This thesis differs from Jack's by focusing on the history of industrial heritage tourism in Nova Scotia, the museum's turbulent history, and by exploring the Museum of Industry beyond what is written on its exhibit panels. Jack briefly discusses the history of the museum but employs a smaller number of sources. Jack's thesis relies heavily on materials found within the museum to explain its past, which restricted what was available to her beyond what the museum decided to archive. I have employed a large number of newspapers, along with Hansard reports, Nova Scotia Museum documents, periodicals, and societal minutes that allow for a fuller understanding of the Museum of Industry's origins and those of industrial heritage tourism in general.

Some recent scholarship has examined the commemorations dedicated to industrial tragedies in the region. While not linked to museums, they have become integral parts of shaping industrial heritage in towns across the Maritimes. One of these towns, examined by Lachlan MacKinnon, is New Waterford in Cape Breton.<sup>37</sup> In this old coal mining town, miner memorials reflect and encourage a sense of community, uniting generations of residents together to commemorate those lost in industrial disasters of the 1920s.<sup>38</sup> Arguably, the community connections created by these monuments help create what Benedict Anderson has called "imagined communities."<sup>39</sup> That is, these memorials have acted as beacons of a supposed shared identity for the towns. Even as each new generation gets farther away from the coal mining past, they are still joined together in the idea that they are part of a coal mining community. MacKinnon's analysis of the

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<sup>37</sup> Lachlan MacKinnon, "Labour Landmarks in New Waterford: Collective Memory in a Cape Breton Coal Town," *Acadiensis* 42, 2 (Summer/Autumn 2013): 3-36.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-6.

<sup>39</sup> See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

memorials demonstrates that they are both reflections of a community and central to continuing narratives of death, dwindling economies, and corporate corruption.

This is reinforced in David Frank and Nicole Lang's *Labour Landmarks in New Brunswick*. They find that New Brunswick's monuments were focused on commemorations of disasters, memorials to former businesses, and workers. Frank and Lang argue that labour monuments can come in various forms and were created for various purposes. MacKinnon argues that miners' monuments in Cape Breton act as cornerstones of community identity.<sup>40</sup> While this is echoed by Frank and Lang, they also note that memorials are important for drawing tourists to communities. Several of the memorials in New Brunswick are located just outside of museums, such as the twenty-five-foot-tall Ti-Nel Lumberjack statue in Kedgwick, which is meant to be seen from the nearby highway.<sup>41</sup> While the memorials do not demonstrate the environmental impacts of industrial activity, they act as industrial heritage sites that stand for a community's heritage, and allow towns to communicate an outward image to attract tourists.

There is rarely any opposition to industrial heritage. Often, scholarship tends to focus on what is being done, what has been done, and how industrial tourism is connected to the communities. However, Dan MacDonald explores opposition to industrial heritage in his 2006 article "Steel-ing Cape Breton's Labour History."<sup>42</sup> MacDonald argues that public commemorations and museums dedicated to workers are often overlooked or avoided because of negative connotations associated with environmental damage.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Lachlan MacKinnon, 6-14.

<sup>41</sup> David Frank and Nicole Lang, *Labour Landmarks in New Brunswick* (Edmonton: Athabasca University Press, 2010), 84-85.

<sup>42</sup> Dan MacDonald, "Steel-ing Cape Breton's Labour History," *Labour* 57 (Spring 2006): 270.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, 267.

Within Sydney, for instance, the steel industry is remembered because of the tar ponds. Such negative connotations mean that Celtic culture in Cape Breton is often more prominent than industrial heritage in the island's tourism campaigns.<sup>44</sup> For example, Sydney's giant fiddle represents the community with its obvious references to Scottish/Celtic culture, while industrial heritage is often forgotten.

The substantial number of industrial heritage sites established in Atlantic Canada deserve more scholarly attention. In examining the Museum of Industry, this thesis also draws on the insights of national and international literature examining efforts to commemorate such industrial heritage. The number of industrial museums grew in Britain and the rest of Europe beginning in the 1980s.<sup>45</sup> In Europe, industrial tourism tended to focus largely on active factories.<sup>46</sup> In Britain, however, industrial museums were seen as a means to strengthen the economy in deindustrialized towns.<sup>47</sup> This was true in America as well, where scholarly work has focused on individual sites and how industrial tourism is about profits.<sup>48</sup> In France, myths surrounding the greatness of industries and factories and a sense of nostalgia for this past led to an increase in industrial tourism.<sup>49</sup> Elsewhere in Canada, the focus has often been on celebrating workers through commemorations rather

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> John Moorhouse, "Museums and Industry," in *Working with Museums*, ed. Timonhy Ambrose (Edinburgh: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1988), 19; Otgaar, 86-91; and Herb MacDonald, *Cape Breton Railways: An Illustrated History* (Sydney, NS: Cape Breton University Press, 2012), 210.

<sup>46</sup> Alexander Otgaar, "Towards a Common Agenda for the Development of Industrial Tourism," *Tourism Management Perspectives* 4 (2012): 86-87, and Elspeth Ann Frew, 2000, "Industrial Tourism: A Conceptual and Empirical Analysis," PhD thesis, Victoria University (Melbourne, Australia), 1-7.

<sup>47</sup> Michel Rautenberg, "Industrial heritage, regeneration of cities and public policies in the 1990s: elements of a French/British comparison," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 18, 5 (September 2012): 513.

<sup>48</sup> Michelle Andreadakis Rudd and James A. Davis, "Industrial Heritage Tourism at the Bingham Canyon Copper Mine," *Journal of Travel Research* 36 (Winter 1998): 85.

<sup>49</sup> Jackie Clarke, "Closing Time: Deindustrialization and Nostalgia in Contemporary France," *History Workshop Journal* 79 (2015): 108.

than directly through industrial tourism sites.<sup>50</sup> There is thus still much work to be done in examining industrial tourism in Canada since, with few exception, the majority of what is said about industrial heritage tourism is presented as background information or as a side note when discussing cultural tourism, or within other disciplines, especially geography.

One example of this is Herb MacDonald's *Cape Breton Railways: An Illustrated History*. The book details the old rail lines and stations in Cape Breton with visual aids. In doing so, it contains brief histories of several industrial museums, monuments, and societies, such as the Orangedale Station Museum (which was converted from a train station into a museum in 1986).<sup>51</sup> Histories such as MacDonald's provide a sense of industrial heritage, and more specifically the history and community identities connected to industry, but do not focus on industrial heritage tourism.

One must also note that this examination of industrial heritage is only possible because of the *Acadiensis* generation's work recording the industrial past. This group of historians, which included, among others, E.R. Forbes, P.A. Buckner, A.G. Bailey, and T.W. Acheson, reconstructed the industrial history of the Maritimes. They demonstrated the efforts of business leaders to establish new industries and traced the growth of an industrial society throughout the region. The revival of the *Acadiensis* journal in 1971 came about partially to address the failure of academics to trace this history.<sup>52</sup> Scholars such as Daniel Samson, L.D. McCann, and Marilyn Gerriets have also provided

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<sup>50</sup> See David Frank, "The Labour Stamp: The Image of the Worker on Canadian Postage Stamps," *Labour* 39 (Spring 1997): 179-194; Rosemary Donegan, "Images of Industrial Life and Organizing," *Labour* 23 (April 1989): 195-219; and Rosemary Donegan, "The Iconography of Labour: An Overview of Canadian Materials," *Archivaria* (Summer 1989), 35-56.

<sup>51</sup> See Herb MacDonald, 210-219.

<sup>52</sup> P.A. Buckner, "Acadiensis II," *Acadiensis* 1, 1 (Autumn 1971), 6.



background information needed to comprehend the economic history that grounds efforts to promote industrial heritage in many communities. Their examinations of the economies, industries, and social aspects of industrial towns help to debunk heritage myths while providing the positive and negative effects of industries.<sup>53</sup> These works illustrate that there is information available to piece together the narrative of industrial heritage in Nova Scotia and Atlantic Canada as a whole, despite the lack of scholarly articles examining industrial heritage.

## Conclusion

Cultural tourism has long dominated the study of the history of tourism within the Atlantic region. Even outside the region, there is an overt preference for cultural tourism studies over that of industrial tourism. This is even more evident when discussing industrial heritage, a sub-category of industrial tourism. Even then, the focus of scholars is limited and largely focused on the history of particular industrial towns, or on industrial tourism in larger cities.<sup>54</sup> As a result, the importance and growth of industrial tourism sites have been vastly overshadowed by cultural tourism by scholars, despite its prominence in numerous small towns, and its key place in the Nova Scotia Museum. This thesis will help to alleviate that gap by providing background about the rise of industrial

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<sup>53</sup> See Daniel Samson, *The Spirit of Industry and Improvement: Liberal Government and Rural-Industrial Society, Nova Scotia, 1790-1862* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University of Press, 2008); Ernest R. Forbes, "Consolidating Disparity: The Maritimes and the Industrialization of Canada during the Second World War," *Acadiensis* 15, 2 (Spring 1986): 3-27; Gerriets; and L.D. McCann, "'Living a Double Life': Town and Country in the Industrialization of the Maritimes," in *Geographical Perspectives on the Maritime Provinces*, ed. Douglas Day (Halifax: Saint Mary's University, 1988): 93-113.

<sup>54</sup> Summerby-Murray, "Interpreting Personalized Industrial Heritage," 51.

heritage tourism sites in Nova Scotia, and analysing the largest industrial museum in Atlantic Canada – the Nova Scotia Museum of Industry.

## **Chapter Two:**

### **The Rise of the Industrial Heritage Sector in Nova Scotia**

Tourism within Nova Scotia has predominantly centred on cultural identities since the late-nineteenth century. Images of Acadian villages, fisherfolk, and tartan-clad Highlanders have been central to promotional brochures and campaigns lead by the provincial government and the private sector. As noted in the last chapter, scholarly work tends to focus on cultural tourism. However, industrial heritage tourism has been a vital part of Nova Scotia's tourism economy since the 1950s, when the province experienced a rapid growth in new museums, including several converted industrial sites. This was the result of popular appreciation for industrial heritage, built up by industrial exhibition fairs and collections kept and displayed at the Mechanic's Institute of Halifax. This chapter will examine the rise of industrial heritage tourism sites and their rapid growth between the 1950s and 1970s, which created the foundation necessary for the Museum of Industry in Stellarton.

#### **The Origins of Industrial Heritage Tourism in Nova Scotia**

Industrial heritage tourism's origins in Nova Scotia are found within two specific organizations - the Nova Scotia Industrial Exhibition and the Mechanic's Institute of Halifax. While these were about fostering appreciation for industrial objects and businesses, they later shaped the collections at the Nova Scotia Museum. In a larger

context, the Nova Scotia Museum, the provincial government entity that manages nearly thirty decentralized museums in the province, traces its roots to the Mechanic's Institute's collections.<sup>1</sup> The Mechanic's Institute began a collection of mechanical instruments soon after the establishment of its Halifax chapter in 1831.<sup>2</sup> These artifacts were displayed in the halls of the institute, as well as exhibited around the province.<sup>3</sup> In the 1860s, when the Halifax-based institute ceased to exist, it transferred its collection to Dalhousie University, and by 1868 the collection was added to a provincial storage of collections from the world's fair exhibitions.<sup>4</sup> Eventually, this was integrated into the Nova Scotia Museum, giving the collection a permanent home. Besides being recognized by the Nova Scotia Museum as a key part of its early artifacts, the Institute's collection has been called the first museum in Canada.<sup>5</sup>

The collection of machines was originally meant for educational purposes for those training at the Mechanic's Institute, but eventually helped industrial heritage tourism in Nova Scotia. The Nova Scotia Museum was created in 1868 in response to citizens who "felt the collections of the...Mechanics' Institute should be used as the nucleus of a public museum."<sup>6</sup> By the 1970s, the Nova Scotia Museum collection included several

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<sup>1</sup> Nova Scotia Museum, "A Museum Development Policy for Nova Scotia" (Halifax, 1973), 1; Robert W. Frame, "Chronological Development of the Nova Scotia Museum Complex" (Halifax: April 1987), 1; Susan Whiteside, "A Brief History of the Nova Scotia Museum" (Halifax: 1987), 1; and Eileen D. Mak, "Ward of the Government, Child of the Institute: The Provincial Museums of Nova Scotia (1868-1951)," in *Studies in History and Museums*, ed. Peter E. Rider (Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1994), 7.

<sup>2</sup> Canada, Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters, and Sciences, *Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, 1949-1951* (Ottawa: Privy Council Office, 1951), 92, and "Mechanics Institute," *Pictou Advocate*, February 28, 1973.

<sup>3</sup> Barry Lord and Gail Dexter Lord, *Nova Scotia's Museum of Industry: A Plan for Implementation* (Halifax: 1984), 3-4.

<sup>4</sup> Clarence Roberts, Al Herron, and Vince Coady, "The new Nova Scotia Museum: \$1,500,000 complex to open to public Nov. 23," *The Mail Star* (Halifax), October 23, 1970

<sup>5</sup> Mak, 7; Whiteside, 1; and Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, 1949-1951*, 92-93.

<sup>6</sup> Whiteside, 1.

objects obtained from across the province, such as cast-iron stoves, gas engines, and blacksmith tools.<sup>7</sup> Often such artifacts were cast away, mainly sold as scrap metal or melted down, leaving few remnants of the industrial past. By collecting these objects, the Museum set a precedent for what was considered valuable.

The interest in industrial objects was even more vibrant at the provincial industrial exhibition, which proved to be a catalyst for fostering heritage appreciation amongst the local population. The exhibition's grounds provided space for machinery, handicrafts, and manufactured goods from across the region, as well as presenting a history and narrative for their audiences about industry.<sup>8</sup> The first provincial exhibition in Nova Scotia occurred in October 1854. The 1851 London World's Fair, and the New Brunswick Provincial Exhibition in Saint John in 1854, greatly influenced the creation of a Nova Scotia exhibition.<sup>9</sup> By the end of 1851, Alexander Forrester, a Presbyterian minister, was put in charge of organizing a provincial exhibition for Nova Scotia that could compete with the one in Saint John. Although Forrester had only arrived in Nova Scotia from Scotland in 1848, he joined with the Mechanic's Institute of Halifax to plan the fair.<sup>10</sup> Forrester's team was able to secure a financial contribution from the Mechanic's Institute and the provincial government. Meanwhile, the expanding railroad system meant that residents in rural communities and towns were able to better access the industrial exhibition and send exhibits to be displayed at the fair's grounds. Forty communities

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<sup>7</sup> Nova Scotia Museum, *Study for a Museum of Transportation and Industry* (Halifax: 1974), 27-28; and Whiteside, 1-2.

<sup>8</sup> David A. Sutherland, "Nova Scotia's Response to the Crystal Palace: The Provincial Industrial Exhibition of 1854," *Journal of the Royal Nova Scotia Historical Society* 3 (2000): 77-79.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>10</sup> Donald Whyte, *A Dictionary of Scottish Emigrants to Canada Before Confederation* (London, Ontario: Hearn/Kelly Printing Company, 1986), 98.

outside of Halifax created their own committees to organize local entries for the exhibition, as well as aid in arranging transportation for the items to Halifax.<sup>11</sup> These committees were responsible for seeking out exhibitors, as well as advertising the exhibition in their local areas. Although most groups used the improved rail service, some towns, like New Glasgow, arranged for ships to transport their exhibits to the exhibition.<sup>12</sup> At the conclusion of the fair, organizations in Pictou, Colchester, Hants, Kings, and Annapolis accounted for the largest portion of exhibits at the provincial exhibition, outside of those entered by Halifax County residents. In all, the majority of the over three thousand objects displayed at the ten-day event were from Halifax County, and out of the twenty-five thousand estimated visitors to the exhibition, it is believed that Haligonians made up a majority of guests.<sup>13</sup> The first exhibition, however, was largely a success, having drawn in thousands to the city and bringing in business to nearby hotels.

Besides being a hub of education and appreciation, the provincial exhibition demonstrated an interest in presenting industry as an attraction. The 1854 exhibition showcased handicrafts, mineral ores, textiles, forged metal, leather goods, furniture, ship models, Mi'kmaq canoes, and a bird's eye maple piano. It also included American rail cars and boat races in the Halifax Harbour. A final note from Premier William Young touched on the idea that Nova Scotia was a slowly progressing country, and that the exhibition had brought together Nova Scotians into a festival of progress.<sup>14</sup> The 1854 exhibition provided a platform necessary to establish interest in the industrial workings of

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<sup>11</sup> Sutherland, 76.

<sup>12</sup> A.C. MacDonald, "Industrial Exhibition," *Eastern Chronicle* (New Glasgow), September 14, 1854.

<sup>13</sup> Sutherland, 77-79

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, 78-80.

the province. There was a sense of pride emerging amongst the citizens of Nova Scotia in terms of the goods that were manufactured, produced, and created within their province, which led to hope for industrial growth in the future.

Following the 1854 exhibition, various industrial exhibitions occurred in the province over the next sixty years. Although provincial exhibits occurred sporadically between 1854 and 1890, there was a formal organization of an annual fair by 1896.<sup>15</sup> By the end of the century, a permanent exhibition building was built in Halifax for the annual event.<sup>16</sup> However, it was destroyed in the 1917 Halifax Explosion and a rink was built on the site in the 1920s.<sup>17</sup> The loss of the building led to the almost complete shutdown of the exhibition. It was not until the late 1920s that it re-emerged, and by the 1930s it had moved permanently out of Halifax and into Truro.<sup>18</sup> At that point, the industrial portion of the event was limited mainly to agricultural machinery, with more emphasis placed on livestock and produce. This was dictated by the entries received by the fair.<sup>19</sup>

The Institute's early example of a small Maritime museum and exhibit was geared towards education and preservation rather than tourism. A shift towards tourism endeavours occurred in the twentieth century, when there was more emphasis on the conservation of artifacts deemed as vital to community histories.<sup>20</sup> The shift can also be

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<sup>15</sup> M. Hall, "Nova Scotia Exhibition," *Pictou Advocate*, August 26, 1916; and Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition Commission (Halifax), "Account Book, 1879-1881," Manuscript, MG 20 v. 737 #1, Nova Scotia Archives, *Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition Commission Fonds*.

<sup>16</sup> Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition Commission (Halifax), "Record of New Building, 1897," Manuscript, MG 20 738 #22, Nova Scotia Archives, *Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition Commission Fonds*.

<sup>17</sup> "Main Building of the Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition (6 December 1917)," Photograph, R8239-0-9-E, Library and Archives Canada, *Historical Photographs of Individuals and Groups, Events and Activities from Across Canada Collection*.

<sup>18</sup> Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition Commission (Halifax), "Exhibit Books, 1938-1940," Manuscript, MG 20 vol. 738 #34, Nova Scotia Archives, *Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition Commission Fonds*.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Nova Scotia Museum, "A Museum Development Policy for Nova Scotia," 1-2.

seen as a response to the conversion from industrial jobs to tourism jobs, as a way of replacing dying industries. Coal mining was in decline across Nova Scotia. The decreasing price for coal, along with strikes in the mines, stunted coal mining in Stellarton.<sup>21</sup> By the early 1950s, the majority of coal mines in Stellarton had been closed. The town's last mine, the MacGregor, was closed in February 1957, after it was feared the mine would explode again (it had previously exploded in 1952).<sup>22</sup> A shift from coal to oil for fuel at the Canadian National Railway, one of the primary buyers of coal, further prompted the closure.<sup>23</sup> The closure resulted in the loss of three hundred jobs.

The gap left by coal mining prompted several communities to expand their tourism economy. Cape Breton quickly rebranded itself as a Scottish tourism haven.<sup>24</sup> The opening of the Canso causeway helped to curate this image, as it was “represented both as [a] modern engineering marvel that would help modernize the Cape Breton economy and as a gateway to a quaint, idyllic Scottish isle and a richly textured Highland culture.”<sup>25</sup> Cape Breton was diversifying its economy in anticipation of the decline in coal mining. The Scottish imagery, however, was not the island's sole tourism endeavour. By the 1950s, there was a growing movement to celebrate industrial sites and artifacts, as well as convert former sites into museums. The LeNoir Forge in Arichat is one example. The

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<sup>21</sup> Judith Hoegg Ryan, *The Birthplace of New Scotland: An Illustrated History of Pictou County, Canada's Cradle of Industry* (Halifax: Formac, 1995), 82-86; L.D. McCann, “‘Living a Double Life’: Town and Country in the Industrialization of the Maritimes,” in *Geographical Perspectives on the Maritime Provinces*, ed. Douglas Day (Halifax: Saint Mary's University, 1988), 107; and Margaret Conrad, “The 1950's: The Decade of Development,” in *The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation*, eds. E.R. Forbes and D.A. Muise (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 386.

<sup>22</sup> Aubrey Dorrington, *History of Stellarton* (Pictou: Pictou Advocate, 1976), 9-11.

<sup>23</sup> Judith Hoegg Ryan, *Coal in Our Blood: 200 Years of Coal Mining History in Nova Scotia's Pictou County* (Halifax: Formac Publishing, 1993), 81.

<sup>24</sup> Meaghan Beaton and Del Muise, “The Canso Causeway: Tartan Tourism, Industrial Development, and the Promise of Progress for Cape Breton,” *Acadiensis* 37, 2 (Summer/Autumn 2008): 56-57.

<sup>25</sup> Colin D. Howell, “Development, Deconstruction and Region: A Personal Memoir,” *Acadiensis* 30, 1 (Autumn 2000): 24.



former blacksmith forge was converted into a museum in 1967 with the help of centennial funding.<sup>26</sup> The conversion of the sites, and the reimagining of industries into heritage museums and landmarks, helped to carry on the enthusiasm for the industrial past. It helped communities preserve their heritage while supporting local economies. There was much interest in promoting historical tourism in Cape Breton in general. The restoration of the Fortress of Louisbourg was proposed in the *Report of Royal Commission on Coal* in 1960 as a means to stimulate the economy and provide work to former coal miners.<sup>27</sup> Judge Ivan Rand, who led the Royal Commission, stated that Cape Breton's "dependency upon coal mining was the reason for the region's unique socio-financial problems."<sup>28</sup> Although the fortress is not an industrial tourism site, it does represent an increased interest in shifting from a coal-based economy to a tourism-based economy in Nova Scotia, as well as the role of government in stimulating the creation of museums.

### **Growth of Museums**

Why was there a push for industrial sites to be converted into tourism sites in the 1950s? The 1950s marked the beginning of a general increase in the number of museums in the province. In 1950, there were less than ten museums in the entire province.<sup>29</sup> By 1960, this grew to about fifteen museums, and by 1970 the number had more than doubled to nearly forty museums. The Nova Scotia Museum offered three explanations

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<sup>26</sup> Lorna Inness, "Centennial Heritage," *Chronicle Herald*, May 20, 1968.

<sup>27</sup> Eric Krause, "The Fortress of Louisbourg Archives: The First Twenty-Five Years," *Archivaria* 26 (Summer 1988): 137; and Carol Corbin, "Symbols of Separation: The Town of Louisbourg and the Fortress of Louisbourg," *Environments* 24, 2 (1996): 17.

<sup>28</sup> Quoted in Krause, 137.

<sup>29</sup> Nova Scotia Museum, "A Museum Development Policy for Nova Scotia," 1.

for this growth. The first was an overall increase in interest in heritage and history. A second factor was a concern over potential artifacts being lost or sold, especially those deemed valuable by the local community. The last factor involved what the Nova Scotia Museum deemed as a ‘petty regionalism of thought’ – that is, a belief that each community needed an institution, most often a museum or exhibit centre, that could house artifacts.<sup>30</sup> These institutions were seen as a way to further attract tourists to the communities, despite museums occasionally being in remote, rural locations. The desire to preserve artifacts was not completely new to the region, and reflected that of the Institute over a hundred years before. But, it was the increase in the shared belief that objects needed to be saved to preserve community histories that was new. In 1934, for instance, an article pertaining to the Greenhill Pioneer’s Museum from the *Halifax Chronicle* praised the museum for doing the unordinary task of preserving basic, everyday objects from the Scottish settlers, claiming that other counties should mimic the actions of the museum “for these things are so easily lost and once lost can hardly be replaced.”<sup>31</sup> However, the efforts by preservation groups were not entirely focused on the history of industry, but rather its heritage. McKay notes that they were “often more focused on saving the memory of better, premodern times.”<sup>32</sup> Pre-modern, in this case, referred to a golden economic age. Indeed, the efforts were often based in a romantic view of the past rooted in this supposed ‘golden age.’ This set a precedent that industrial tourism sites were about heritage, not history. Aspects of the industrial past were preserved, but often the more controversial and negative topics were left out of the

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 1-2.

<sup>31</sup> “Green Hill Museum,” *Halifax Chronicle*, October 2, 1934.

<sup>32</sup> Ian McKay, “History and the Tourist Gaze: The Politics of Commemoration in Nova Scotia, 1935-1964,” *Acadiensis* 22, 2 (Spring 1993): 112.

narrative. Summerby-Murray notes that in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia there was a tendency for industrial tourism to rely on “an even more mythic proto-industrialism with links to a rural idyll and a more consumer-driven view of heritage.”<sup>33</sup> Heritage, in a basic sense, demonstrates what a society or group of people value, while also serving as a way to express and support an image or perception of the past. In Sackville, New Brunswick, for example, a proposed commemoration for the local foundry focused largely on its operations and objects, which ignored the foundry’s history of pollution and its toll on workers.<sup>34</sup> Heritage, in this case, emphasized the positive aspects of the foundry as a means to celebrate local accomplishments rather than showcase the consequences of toxic work. The trouble with heritage is that it is not completely accurate – it relies on exploiting a certain narrative by purposely excluding history that disproves its position. Heritage interpretations can be inclusive and present a condensed version of history, however, the tendency to rely on romantic versions of the past has often tainted the presentation of the industrial past in the Atlantic region.

The Nova Scotia Museum was vital in the movement to convert industrial sites into museums. Originally, the museum’s collection was composed of mechanic’s tools and machinery, along with geological specimens from exhibitions.<sup>35</sup> The museum was initially considered to be a general museum. This meant that its collections were not limited to any set theme or category, but rather it collected various artifacts that had Nova

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<sup>33</sup> Robert Summerby-Murray, “Interpreting Personalized Industrial Heritage in the Mining Towns of Cumberland County, Nova Scotia: Landscape Examples from Springhill and River Hebert,” *Urban History Review* 35, 2 (Spring 2007): 53.

<sup>34</sup> Robert Summerby-Murray, “Interpreting Deindustrialized Landscapes of Atlantic Canada: Memory and Industrial Heritage in Sackville, New Brunswick,” *The Canadian Geographer*, 46, 1 (March 2002): 57.

<sup>35</sup> Whiteside, 1.

Scotian connections.<sup>36</sup> In 1947, however, the mandate for the museum was changed by the provincial government to solely collect artifacts connected to natural sciences. In 1951, a historical branch was added to its mandate.<sup>37</sup> Artifacts collected for the historical branch were housed in Halifax. In 1960, the Nova Scotia Museum was expanded into a decentralized museum system after the province acquired the Haliburton, Perkins, and Uniacke houses and converted them into provincially-run museums.<sup>38</sup> The next site added to the Nova Scotia Museum complex was the Balmoral Grist Mill in Colchester County. The mill had been built in 1874 but had closed some time in the 1950s.<sup>39</sup> The Sunrise Trail Museum Limited, a local heritage group, had bought the mill in 1964 with the intention to open it as a museum. However, it was not until the province acquired the site in 1966 that a restoration process was instituted, which resulted in the repair of the dam and machinery.<sup>40</sup> The mill opened as a museum in 1970. By 1980, the Nova Scotia Museum had completed several conversions of industrial sites, normally in cooperation with community-based heritage groups. These sites included the Barrington Woolen Mill (opened 1968), Wile Carding Mill (opened in 1974), and the Sutherland Steam Mill (opened in 1970).<sup>41</sup> Besides these projects, the museum worked with the provincial Department of Trade to restore and open Sherbrooke Village “in response to representations from citizens of the area during the 1960s.”<sup>42</sup> The village, which opened in 1970, is a mixture of cultural and industrial tourism. While it caters to the lifestyle and homes of a nineteenth century community, it also includes a sawmill, print shop, and

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Frame, "Chronological Development of the Nova Scotia Museum Complex," 1; and Whiteside, 2.

<sup>39</sup> Frame, "Chronological Development of the Nova Scotia Museum Complex," 2.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 2-5.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 3.

woodworking shop. The inclusion of the site along with converted mills in the Nova Scotia Museum complex demonstrated the heritage value of industrial sites. More importantly, however, the involvement of community groups at each of the above-mentioned sites highlighted a public appreciation for industrial heritage, conservation, and the ability for museums to support local economies. The province also saw an increase in the work of historical societies, especially along the south shore of Nova Scotia.<sup>43</sup>

Two events at a national level further prompted the growth of museums: the publication of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters, and Sciences (known as the Massey Commission) in 1951 and the 1967 Centennial. Both created a sense that more museums were needed and helped provide the funds necessary to take action. The Massey Commission elevated the importance of arts funding. The Commission supported an increase in funding from the federal government to subsidize the expansion of museums, urging it to concentrate on the creation of a national museum that could support smaller museums across the country as a national liaison.<sup>44</sup>

At a national level, the Canadian Museum of Science and Technology is an example of how the commission and the centennial funds helped to foster a growth in museums. The museum was originally proposed in the Massey Commission, which urged a museum to showcase Canada's innovations, as well as an institution to educate the public about industrial collections.<sup>45</sup> Despite the recommendation, it was not until

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<sup>43</sup> McKay, "History and the Tourist Gaze," 113-115.

<sup>44</sup> Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, 1949-1951*, 97.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, 91.

Centennial project money was available that the museum was fully brought to life.<sup>46</sup> The centennial celebrations included funding from the federal government that was dispersed to each province. The provinces then gave it to selected projects chosen by provincial committees. In Nova Scotia, the Centennial project funds were vital in the creation of industrial museums, including the Glace Bay Miners Museum, the Stellarton Miners Museum, and the LeNoir Forge in Arichat.<sup>47</sup> The projects were not solely about creating museums to house artifacts. They were also about bringing communities into the tourism market and helping to minimize the economic disparity between communities in Nova Scotia.<sup>48</sup> Stellarton and Glace Bay, in particular, had been founded as one industry towns, reliant on coal mining. By the 1960s, however, many coal mines had closed.<sup>49</sup> These museums were expected to boost the economy of the towns, while also preserving artifacts.

The increased number of museums due to the allocation of Centennial funds led the Nova Scotia Museum to redesign its grant system in order to help fund more smaller museums across the province, further allowing both independent and province-owned museums to continue to operate.<sup>50</sup> This led to further industrial heritage sites that had similar goals to those erected during the Centennial year. Small communities across Nova Scotia that were losing their major industries turned towards museums in order to

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<sup>46</sup> Sharon Babaian, *Making Do: The Early Years of the Canada Science and Technology Museum* (Ottawa: Government of Canada, n.d.), 60-64.

<sup>47</sup> Jane Watts, Roland Morgan, John Fortier, and Chris Severance, "Focus on Cape Breton Museums," *Occasional 1, 2* (Fall 1973): 17-18.

<sup>48</sup> Meaghan Elizabeth Beaton, *The Centennial Cure: Commemoration, Identity, and Cultural Capital in Nova Scotia during Canada's 1967 Centennial Celebrations* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 17.

<sup>49</sup> Hoegg Ryan, *Coal in Our Blood*, 124.

<sup>50</sup> Nova Scotia Museum, "A Museum Development Policy for Nova Scotia," 2.

preserve the industrial sites and to bolster economies. Several of these sites were bought by the Nova Scotia Museum, including the Sutherland Steam Mill.<sup>51</sup> Unlike the Miners Museums, these converted museums were meant to repurpose the site instead of creating a whole new building to house artifacts. The repurposed sites helped to retain a fraction of the old economy, while adding to the industrial heritage sector of Nova Scotia.

## **Conclusion**

What occurred in the 1950s onwards was not necessarily a sudden revolution. Rather, it was the result of over a century of industrial heritage interest throughout the province, combined with faltering industrial economies, a rise in conservation efforts, and an overall growth of museums in the province encouraged by the Nova Scotia Museum system. The origins of industrial heritage tourism in Nova Scotia are deeply rooted in the efforts of the Mechanic's Institute of Halifax. Their early collections helped lead to appreciation for and preservation of industrial artifacts. It preserved objects that would otherwise had been sold for scrap. The collection continued to be instrumental in the foundations of museums in Nova Scotia. Besides the importance of the artifacts in the founding collection of the Nova Scotia Museum, the Institute often worked with the community to support industrial appreciation events. An important event sponsored by the Institute was the Nova Scotia Industrial Exhibition. The exhibition fostered pride in

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<sup>51</sup> "Around the Province," *Occasional* 3, 2 (Fall/Winter 1975): 42.

Nova Scotia's industrial past and present, while allowing people across the province to showcase their own products and machinery.

The emphasis placed on industry helped to nurture the conservation of machinery and products that launched the surge of industrial museums in the 1950s. A sense of urgency to open museums to preserve community heritage, along with the Massey Commission and the Centennial funds, resulted in the quickest and largest flourishing of new museums in the province in its history. The downside, however, was that heritage interpretations of the industrial past often fueled limited histories that were romantic and celebratory. This meant that the consequences of industry and its controversies (such as racial segregation or environmental damage) were often ignored by museums and societies. The slow build of industrial heritage tourism sites in the province, however, eventually lead to the opening of one of the most ambitious, spacious, and controversial museums in the province.



## **Chapter 3:**

### **Planning an Industrial Museum for Nova Scotia**

The growth of industrial heritage tourism in Nova Scotia peaked with the creation of the Museum of Industry in Stellarton. The museum presents an excellent case study for both industrial heritage and the use of museums as political tools. It is centrally located beside the Trans-Canada Highway, making it one of the first buildings visible to most visitors to Stellarton, and is a primary attraction for the town. The museum contains a mass of artifacts related to the vast industrial history of the province, spanning from early artisans in the eighteenth century, to technological inventions of the late twentieth century. It began in a manner similar to many of the museums in the 1960s, with an emphasis on preserving and saving industrial artifacts from around Pictou County. However, the museum eventually contained artifacts and stories from across the province, instead of focusing solely on one county or industry. Its artifacts range from small objects such as glass bottles and a butter press, to larger machinery including numerous locomotives and a diesel engine shovel. However, before the museum was constructed the Nova Scotia Museum board requested that two major studies be completed to determine whether such a museum was feasible. These studies, discussed below, demonstrated a need for an industrial museum. Despite the growth of museums in the province in the 1960s, there was no museum dedicated to the broader history of Nova Scotia's industrial past. This chapter will examine the planning stage of the Museum of Industry through the use of the two studies. These studies were vital in establishing the museum's purpose and design for the Nova Scotia Museum board.

## Early Musings of an Industrial Museum

By 1974, Nova Scotia had several museums that included industrial heritage. Ross Farm in New Ross,<sup>1</sup> Sutherland Steam Mill in Denmark, and the Miners Museum in Glace Bay were industrial-based museums in the province before the proposal for a large-scale, industrial-themed exhibit centre was brought to the attention of the Nova Scotia Museum board. The proposal emerged when Pictou County's private sector organized a strategy to preserve the county's industrial artifacts as a response to machinery decaying, the threat of converting artifacts into scrap metal, and a lack of a proper display area for most of the region's mining tools and equipment. Key industrial artifacts in the county were deteriorating or were not being used to their full potential.<sup>2</sup> These artifacts included the *Samson* and the *Albion*, both of which were steam locomotives that hauled coal from Stellarton on the Albion Railroad, and the Cornish Pumphouse, which was part of the Foord Pit mine in the same town. All three had been left outside with little to address their significance (they lacked plaques or panels), and were left 'as is', meaning that they were not restored and were left in rusted or crumbling states. While the public was able to view the locomotives and the pumphouse, these artifacts were not cared for. The locomotives were two of the earliest steam engines in Canada, the *Samson* having been brought to Pictou County by the General Mining Association in the 1830s. Later, in the 1850s, the *Albion* began to work on the same railway. They had been showcased across North America, starting with the 1893 World's Fair, and then at the Baltimore and Ohio

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<sup>1</sup> Ross Farm is mainly focused on agriculture and farming lifestyles, as opposed to industrial heritage. However, it includes buildings dedicated to artisans (such as coopers), and agriculture is one of the themes included at the Museum of Industry.

<sup>2</sup> Nova Scotia Museum, *Study for a Museum of Transportation and Industry* (Halifax: 1974), 3; and James Cameron, *The Pictonian Colliers* (Kentville: Kentville Publishing Company, 1974), 274.

Railway Museum until 1927 when they were returned to Nova Scotia.<sup>3</sup> By 1974, they were housed in separate outdoor exhibits in Pictou County. The *Samson* was kept beside the New Glasgow library inside a glass case, while the *Albion* was on display in Stellarton.

The Cornish pumphouse, meanwhile, had remained on the former site of the Foord Pit, where it was left to decay for almost a century. It became an important symbol of the industrial museum as both an outdoor artifact visible from the highway (a beacon, in some sense), and as the last above ground remnants of the Foord Pit mine. In the late-1980s, community members rallied to try to restore the pumphouse and to save it from destruction as the land it occupied was slated to become part of a Trans-Canada Highway expansion.<sup>4</sup> C.A. Balesdent, a resident of Stellarton, wrote to the editor of the *Evening News*. He pleaded to have the pumphouse recognized as a national monument.<sup>5</sup> Balesdent was particularly upset with how local town councils ignored industrial heritage, especially after the town of Westville had decided to raze the former site of the Drummond Mine. They insisted that “[Pictou County residents] should put a bulldozer on a concrete phylon [sic.] with the inscription that this epitomizes all the heritage of Pictou County.”<sup>6</sup> The pumphouse became a symbol of the mining past, especially the once prosperous Foord Pit. After criticism from residents, the pumphouse was saved from destruction and moved to grounds outside of the Museum of Industry site.<sup>7</sup> However, due to budget cuts from the

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<sup>3</sup> Barry Lord and Gail Dexter Lord, *Nova Scotia's Museum of Industry: A Plan for Implementation* (Halifax: 1984), 174-175.

<sup>4</sup> “Pumphouse, monument industrial heritage,” *Evening News*, November 2, 1987.

<sup>5</sup> C. A. Balesdent, “Historic pumphouse deserves better fate,” *Evening News*, October 1, 1987.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> “Cornish Pumphouse: will not be restored to original appearance,” *Evening News*, June 18, 1988.

provincial government, the pumphouse was not restored fully to its original shape, but rather reassembled with existing stones and used as an outdoor artifact for the museum.

The Cornish Pumphouse became an important artifact for the museum. It was the last structure that remained from the former Foord Pit, the site on which the museum would eventually be built.<sup>8</sup> The mine shaft, railroad, and offices had been destroyed or removed from the area, and smaller objects, such as nails and coins, had been buried (although several artifacts have been unearthed during public archeological digs on site in 1989, 1992, 2016, and 2017).<sup>9</sup> Besides the pumphouse and the locomotives, Robert Tibbetts of Tibbetts Paints in Trenton also had an impressive collection of engines from the early twentieth century, which he kept on display at his store.<sup>10</sup> He promised to donate the engines to a new museum as a way to better display the collection, and was one of the main supporters of a new industrial and transportation museum in Nova Scotia. Together, the engines and pumphouse presented a small collection viable enough to entice other members of Pictou County's private sector to seek out a mandate for an industrial museum.

The plan was formed largely by William Sobey and Tibbetts, and was brought to the Nova Scotia Museum board as a proposal for a Pictou County Museum of Transportation and Industry in the fall of 1974.<sup>11</sup> Sobey was instrumental in persuading the board to adopt an industrial museum idea, which grew into a movement for a

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<sup>8</sup> "Museum – ready, set, go," *Evening News*, May 2, 1988.

<sup>9</sup> Anjali Patil, "Stellarton archeological dig unearths industrial past," *CBC News*, September 10, 2017, accessed May 21, 2018, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/stellarton-archeological-dig-unearths-industrial-past-1.4283180>; Museum of Industry, "Archaeology," Nova Scotia Museum, accessed November 15, 2017, <https://museumofindustry.novascotia.ca/archaeology>; and "History surfaces at Stellarton archeology site," *The Chronicle Herald*, August 24, 2016.

<sup>10</sup> Nova Scotia Museum, *Study for a Museum of Transportation and Industry*, 8.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

provincial industrial museum. In the study for the proposed museum, it was noted that Sobey “was very much aware that several very significant railway and coal mining artifacts in the Stellarton-New Glasgow area were in jeopardy.”<sup>12</sup> The board approved the idea of constructing such a museum, and Sobey offered a parcel of land he owned that was formerly part of the Foord Pit. Prior to the proposal, the Sobey family had been instrumental in attracting businesses to the area, as well pursuing the return of industrial artifacts. William Sobey’s father, Frank, worked to relocate the *Samson* and *Albion* when he was mayor of Stellarton, alongside New Glasgow’s mayor Michael Dwyer.<sup>13</sup> After the engines were moved to Halifax’s Canadian National Railway station in 1928, the two mayors had the engines relocated to Pictou County in 1950. Centennial funding allowed for the trains to be moved from indoor storage to displays outside of the towns’ libraries.<sup>14</sup> During his time as the president of Industrial Estates Limited, Frank Sobey helped bring several industries to Pictou County. These included the Michelin Tire Plant and the local pulp mill.<sup>15</sup> While William Sobey’s intentions for the creation of the museum are not known, besides the fear that artifacts would deteriorate, his involvement in the founding of the Museum of Industry was another example of the Sobey family’s history of attracting businesses to Pictou County.

The approval for the museum was based on more than the lack of a provincial industrial museum. The proposal came at a time when the Nova Scotia Museum system was experiencing troubles with its expanding collection of artifacts. A large number of

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Cameron, *The Pictonian Colliers*, 274.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid; and Lorna Inness, “Centennial Heritage,” *Chronicle Herald*, May 20, 1968.

<sup>15</sup> James M. Cameron, *Pictou County's History* (Kentville: Kentville Publishing Company, 1972), 126-127; and Della Stanley, “The 1960s: The Illusions and Realities of Progress,” in *The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation*, eds. E.R. Forbes and D.A. Muise (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 434-435.

transportation objects (cars and locomotives) as well as machinery (such as printing presses and cast-iron stoves) were occupying a sizeable portion of the valuable and limited storage space that the museum system had available.<sup>16</sup> This presented a problem with future acquisitions. Meanwhile, the system had few museums that were able to house and display industrial and transportation objects, mainly due to the narrow themes of the museums and the size of the objects. When Sobey presented the idea of a Pictou County museum, he provided an opportunity for the Nova Scotia Museum to expand its system in terms of storage and subject matter, while also providing an indoor space to store and preserve Pictou County's collection of artifacts.

By the end of 1974, a committee was formed to determine the feasibility of such a museum. Gary M. Pollock (president of the Scotian Railroad society) chaired the committee, which also consisted of C. Richard Wilcox (Nova Scotia Museum staff), Dr. S.F. Bedwell (Dalhousie professor of medicine), Chesley Fraser (Nova Scotia Museum staff), William Sobey, and Dr. C.B. Weld (professor of medicine).<sup>17</sup> It was tasked with researching the history of industry in Nova Scotia, locating artifacts that could be collected from across the province, and assessing the site that Sobey was willing to donate for the museum.<sup>18</sup> The members of the committee were largely part of the Nova Scotia Museum board or involved with the museum in some way and were based out of Halifax, with the exception of Sobey.<sup>19</sup> Although it is not mentioned why they decided to include Sobey, it is likely that he was on the committee because it was his proposal, he

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<sup>16</sup> Nova Scotia Museum, *Study for a Museum of Transportation and Industry*, 3.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 1; Dalhousie University Archives, "Charles Beecher Weld Fonds," Dalhousie University, accessed January 8, 2018, <https://findingaids.library.dal.ca/charles-beecher-weld-fonds>; and "Medical Society of Nova Scotia," *Nova Scotia Medical Bulletin* 56, 5 (1977): 144.

<sup>18</sup> Nova Scotia Museum, *Study for a Museum of Transportation and Industry*, 3.

<sup>19</sup> Richard Wilcox, "Fun with Figures," *The Occasional* 2, 1 (Summer 1974): 3-5.

had knowledge of the local area, and was willing to donate land. The proposed site was located on the former location of the Foord Pit. Besides its historical significance, the site was beside the Trans-Canada Highway, which made it “very accessible to the travelling public” and gave it “a high degree of exposure to the tourist travelling to and from Cape Breton and Prince Edward Island.”<sup>20</sup> The study also examined building design concepts, logistics of the museum, and the potential operating costs. It offered a relatively positive outlook for the proposed Nova Scotia Museum of Transportation and Industry.

### **The Study of 1976**

Before construction of the Museum of Industry began in the late 1980s, there were two studies completed to assess its feasibility and logistics. After Sobey’s initial proposal for the museum was approved by the Nova Scotia Museum, a study was launched to evaluate why the museum was necessary and what a new industrial museum would entail. While the Nova Scotia Museum board agreed to build the museum, the project was delayed until the early 1980s.<sup>21</sup> In 1983, a planning committee was established to conduct a study of the possible implementation of the Museum of Industry.<sup>22</sup> This second study, released the following year, was more detailed than the 1976 study and included a deeper analysis of industrial museums in Canada, potential visitors to the museum, and ideal programs and exhibits. These studies were necessary steps in planning a museum, and helped to determine the parameters of Nova Scotia history that were relevant to a provincial industrial museum.

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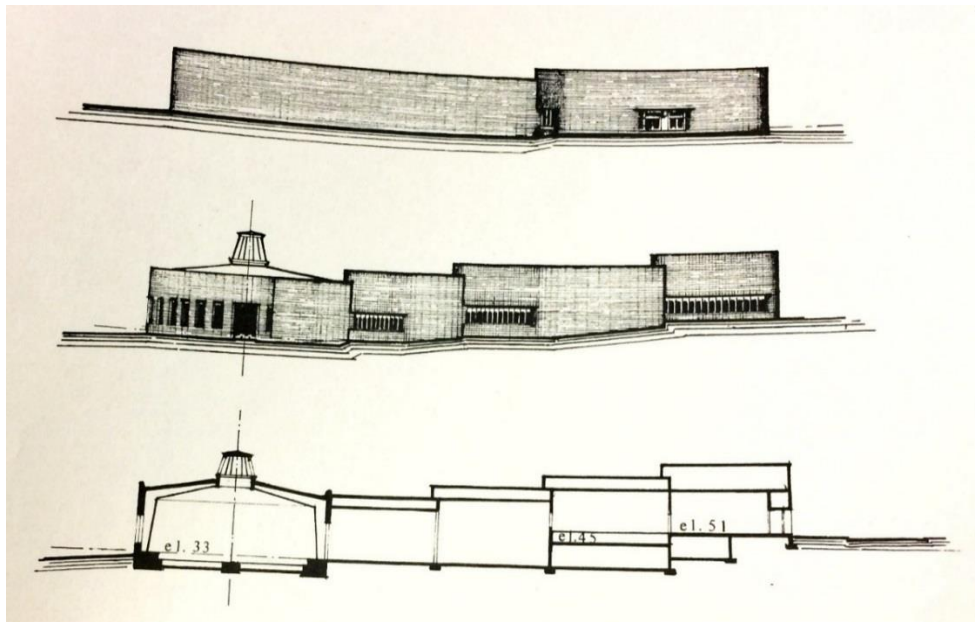
<sup>20</sup> Nova Scotia Museum, *Study for a Museum of Transportation and Industry*, 13.

<sup>21</sup> Dan Gawthrop, “Museum to move in a different direction,” *The Monitor*, April 8, 1988.

<sup>22</sup> Lord and Lord, 4.

The final study produced by the committee was presented to the Nova Scotia Museum board in 1976 and included a summary of the committee's findings, along with two appendixes. The summary included a relevant history of industry in Pictou County, information about the proposed museum site, themes to be covered by the museum (as well as topics and themes already covered by other museums), potential artifacts, and possible designs of the building (see figure 2 below).

Figure 2: Building concept designs included in 1976 study



Source: Nova Scotia Museum, *Study for a Museum of Transportation and Industry* (Halifax: 1974), 20.



Figure 3: The Museum of Industry in Stellarton



Source: Photo by author

Although the study examined a wide range of topics necessary with a new museum, such as staffing and children's programs, an underlying message was woven through much of the text. In particular, the examination of relevant history, the justification for the location of the museum, and the artifact lists attached in Appendix A were biased towards the history of Pictou County. These sections essentially pushed for a Pictou County-centric museum. The history section, for instance, began by stating that "Pictou county [sic.] was the birthplace of industry in British North America."<sup>23</sup> The history then included details on Pictou County industries, including the Hope Iron Works, the GMA mines, and the Nova Scotia Steel and Coal Company.<sup>24</sup> In addition to the selective history, the committee gave no consideration to alternative museum locations other than Stellarton. The museum site in Pictou County was justified by the area's "close association with the

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<sup>23</sup> Nova Scotia Museum, *Study for a Museum of Transportation and Industry*, 5.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, 5-6.

story of transportation and industry.”<sup>25</sup> It helped that the site was also home to the former Foord Pit, where the *Samson* and *Albion* had operated.

The committee’s version of the relevant history was focused on why Pictou County was the center of the province's industrial age. Instead of presenting a unified history of the whole province, it attempted to justify why the museum needed to be located in the county. The history presented started in 1827 when the General Mining Association (GMA) began operations in Stellarton (then known as Albion Mines).<sup>26</sup> Despite mining operations across the province having a history before GMA's monopoly, the history section ignored any industry or transportation system outside of Pictou County. In Cape Breton, for example, coal was mined since the seventeenth century.<sup>27</sup> By limiting what constituted relevant industrial history, the committee created a narrative that supported only one reasonable location for the Museum of Transportation and Industry. This ignored several towns and industries outside of the county. The committee did this by depicting the rest of the province’s industries as inferior. It is necessary to note that Cape Breton, despite having a similar historical background in terms of mining and iron works operations, was only mentioned once in the study, when the Glace Bay Miners Museum was listed as a pre-existing museum. There was also a map included that highlighted industries in the province which included Sydney and Glace Bay, but ignored the rest of Cape Breton.<sup>28</sup> Towns such as Sydney Mines, New Waterford, and Louisbourg were not included on the map, despite having a mining history.<sup>29</sup> Additionally, there were

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>27</sup> Herb MacDonald, *Cape Breton Railways: An Illustrated History* (Sydney, NS: Cape Breton University Press, 2012), 14.

<sup>28</sup> Nova Scotia Museum, *Study for a Museum of Transportation and Industry*, 6.

<sup>29</sup> Herb MacDonald, 210-215; and Lachlan MacKinnon, “Labour Landmarks in New Waterford: Collective Memory in a Cape Breton Coal Town,” *Acadiensis* 42, 2 (Summer/Autumn 2013): 3-6.

notes to highlight important industries on mainland Nova Scotia, but there was no indication of any industries in Cape Breton. Compared to the rest of the province, the map and the history section portrayed Cape Breton as seemingly offering nothing in terms of industrial heritage.

Besides the selective history, the committee relied on 'firsts' to justify Pictou County's history as particularly important to Nova Scotia's industrial past. 'Firsts' refer to objects or events that can be categorized into a historical feat for a certain region – such as the *Samson* being the first locomotive in Canada. McKay has noted that firsts are often used to justify the significance of an artifact or a region. He insists that the overuse of firsts has led to a historical landscape in Nova Scotia that resembled “a massive *Ripley's Believe-It-Or-Not* museum.”<sup>30</sup> At the most extreme, any event can be deemed as one of utmost importance by creating strict, artificial parameters. The *Samson*, for example, can further be celebrated as the first locomotive to transport coal and run on iron rails in all of North America, instead of just the first locomotive in Canada.<sup>31</sup> By adding a narrower definition of a 'first,' such as defining the type of rails on which the locomotive travelled, it can expand both the geographical importance and presumed significance of an object or event. The study included six references to 'firsts' that were meant to strengthen the argument that Pictou County was *the* place to have an industrial museum. The *Samson* was emphasized twice as a historical first, the study noting that in “1838, Nova Scotia's first steam railway commenced operation with three brand new steam locomotives, the

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<sup>30</sup> Ian McKay, “History and the Tourist Gaze: The Politics of Commemoration in Nova Scotia, 1935-1964,” *Acadiensis* 22, 2 (Spring 1993): 129.

<sup>31</sup> Dan Soucoup, *Maritime Firsts: Historic Events, Inventions and Achievements* (Lawrencetown Beach, NS: Pottersfield Press, 1996), 70.

‘Samson,’ ‘Hercules,’ and ‘John Buddle.’”<sup>32</sup> Other firsts mentioned included steel manufacturing at the Hope Iron Works, a company that “manufactured the first domestic steel in Canada,”<sup>33</sup> and the first iron rails in North America produced at the Stellarton mines. The firsts were highlighted as major events for the province’s, and North America’s, industrial age, and emphasized the role Pictou County played on a larger scale outside of Nova Scotia.

The discussion of the location of the museum presented a stronger justification for the museum to be in Stellarton. The section focused on the Foord Pit site, with no consideration for any other location or County as possible candidates. The study stated that “the proposed site offers a number of advantages not least of which is the fact that it is located alongside the Trans-Canada Highway...the site is also conveniently situated in the center of one of the more heavily populated areas of Nova Scotia...”<sup>34</sup> The proposed site for the museum was easily accessible, and was visible from the highway. In comparison, the Trans-Canada Highway did not run through Sydney, Glace Bay, Springhill, or Windsor, all areas with industrial pasts (textiles, mining, and iron works).<sup>35</sup> While these were relatively densely populated towns, the donation of a prime site beside a highway and within a region saturated with five towns (Pictou, Stellarton, New Glasgow, Trenton, and Westville), whose residents could provide local support was appealing. In addition, the committee believed the location would be attractive for programs and

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<sup>32</sup> Nova Scotia Museum, *Study for a Museum of Transportation and Industry*, 5.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, 7.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, 13.

<sup>35</sup> The Trans-Canada highway in Nova Scotia currently runs from Amherst to St. Peter’s (Highway 104), Port Hastings to North Sydney (Highway 105), and from Caribou (outside Pictou) to New Glasgow (Highway 106). While provincial highways link the rest of the province to the Trans-Canada, the Trans-Canada does not travel south of Truro within the province. See Daniel Francis, *A Road for Canada: The Illustrated Story of the Trans-Canada Highway* (Vancouver: Stanton, Atkins & Dossil, 2006).

community events. The location offered a sharp contrast to the sites of two other museum acquired by the Nova Scotia Museum in the 1970s: the Sutherland Steam Mill and the Balmoral Grist Mill. The mills are located along quiet collector highways in eastern Colchester County, far from any major highway or town and hidden from the majority of passing tourists. Although the 1976 study did little in terms of discussing the tourist potential of the proposed museum, there was a subtle tone that cashing in on potential tourists was a goal for the museum, as the study described the site as providing “a high degree of exposure to the tourist travelling to and from Cape Breton and Prince Edward Island. Added to this are the excellent motel facilities in the vicinity.”<sup>36</sup> Regardless of the location and reasonable arguments for building the museum in Stellarton, the lack of any mention of Cape Breton in the section was stark. In doing so, the committee tried to end any debate and prevented any influence from the island

As will be shown later, the effort to show that there was no other location with an industrial past worthy of a museum was not successful. A debate lasted for years about whether the Museum of Industry was Pictou County-centric at the expense of, primarily, Cape Breton's industrious past. This was brought out in a 1984 study on the implementation of the museum, and through the 1990s and early 2000s in debates at the Nova Scotia legislature.

The 1976 study also included a section devoted to examining what museums already existed that had industry or transportation in their mandates. Transportation, in this case, referred solely to land transportation, such as trains, buses, and cars. The study explained that “when talking of transportation our first boundary must immediately tie us

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<sup>36</sup> Nova Scotia Museum, *Study for a Museum of Transportation and Industry*, 13.

to the land.” This meant that railroad artifacts would feature prominently.<sup>37</sup> The study noted that primary and secondary industries were covered by other museums, such as the Ross Farm Museum and Sherbrooke Village.<sup>38</sup> Primary industry refers to harvesting and extracting resources, such as lumber, agriculture produce, or coal. Secondary industry refers to processing resources, such as milling industries (grist and lumber mills, for example). The study noted that the “history of each of these is treated, from a technological, as well as a social and economic viewpoint, at a major museum development in the province.”<sup>39</sup> In turn, the committee looked to find what narratives had not been told or were not effectively showcased at other institutions. This was mainly to make the Museum of Transportation and Industry seem unique.

With this in mind, the committee dismissed the coverage of iron industries within the province, suggesting that “the production of iron and steel receives little more than [a] mention at any museum in the province.”<sup>40</sup> However, the LeNoir Forge museum, which was opened as a centennial project, was not mentioned in the study even though this Cape Breton museum had an active blacksmith shop.<sup>41</sup> While it was not an ironworks, it was still nonetheless dedicated to the history of iron foundries, and was not mentioned in any list of industrial museums in the 1976 study (but was included in the later 1984 study). In terms of transportation, the study concluded that there were no adequate representations within the province, noting that it “sees no museum presentation of a range of vehicles representing various modes of land transportation used in Nova Scotia...some local

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>41</sup> Tourism Nova Scotia, “LeNoir Forge Museum,” *Tourism Nova Scotia*, accessed March 18, 2018, <https://www.novascotia.com/see-do/attractions/lenoir-forge-museum/1586>.

museums and societies deal with aspects of this history, but lack the resources to care for their collections.”<sup>42</sup> It is interesting to note, however, that there was no mention of the museums already opened in the province dedicated to railroads. The Musquodobit Railway Museum had operated for at least two years by the time the study was published.<sup>43</sup> The Sydney and Louisburg Railway Society had been in operation since the early 1970s, and ran its own train on the Sydney and Louisbourg railroad from 1973 to 1979.<sup>44</sup> In addition, the Scotian Railroad Museum opened in Halifax in 1974. It is interesting to note that Gary Pollock, chair of the 1976 study’s committee, was the president of the society that operated the Scotian Railroad Museum at the time.<sup>45</sup> The Scotian Railroad Society was included in the early discussions of the Museum of Industry when it was evident that railroads would form part of the proposed museum’s collection.<sup>46</sup> Its inclusion is also important because the museum’s collection was offered to the Museum of Industry, as mentioned later in the study.<sup>47</sup> Despite the presence of railroad museums in the province at the time, and the knowledge of at least the Scotian Railroad Museum, the study was quick to dismiss the efforts of these museums in the province. The study noted that “it becomes quite apparent that the story of transportation in Nova Scotia...has yet to be told in a comprehensive manner.”<sup>48</sup> Compared to industrial museums, there seemed to be a greater need for a Nova Scotian transportation museum, given the lack of any museum that dealt with railroads according to the study.

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<sup>42</sup> Nova Scotia Museum, *Study for a Museum of Transportation and Industry*, 9.

<sup>43</sup> “Give & Take,” *The Occasional* 2, 3 (Spring 1975): 3; and “Focus on Museums in Central Nova Scotia,” *The Occasional* 3, 2 (Fall/Winter 1975): 27.

<sup>44</sup> Wilcox, 4.

<sup>45</sup> “Around the Province’s Museum,” *The Occasional* 2, 1 (Summer 1974): 33.

<sup>46</sup> Nova Scotia Museum, *Study for a Museum of Transportation and Industry*, 3.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, 11.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*, 9.

The report provided additional evidence of the appropriateness of locating the museum in Stellarton by pointing to other artifacts (besides the locomotives) that the committee was able to locate throughout the province. Industrial artifacts, regardless of availability, were listed in the study's appendix, along with several Nova Scotian factories. Artifacts considered for the museum were either used by these factories or made by a Nova Scotian industry (such as glass bottles).<sup>49</sup> The majority of industries researched and contacted were in Pictou County, followed by ones in Halifax and Cumberland counties. No businesses were researched or consulted in Antigonish and Guysborough Counties, nor in any of the counties on Cape Breton Island.<sup>50</sup> Even the mining artifacts concentrated heavily on Pictou County mines, and did not consider Cape Breton's numerous mines, or those in Cumberland County. This seems odd, considering that the committee contacted both active and inactive companies and created a list of various companies they had yet to contact, which did not include any in Cape Breton. This may have been due to the presence of the Miners Museum in Glace Bay and caution over duplicate artifacts, and even caution towards "competition with existing institutions."<sup>51</sup> While the committee was able to find some local coal mining gear from the Westville mines, there were few artifacts from other mines in the province. Several communities had either local historians who had collected artifacts, or had small museums or displays to pay homage to the miners. This was the case in Glace Bay, where the Miners Museum was just one of several museums in the area that showcased mining history. Elsewhere, Stellarton's Miners' Museum, the Sydney Mines Heritage Museum, and the Springhill

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 22-49.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 15.



Miners' Museum had opened by the mid-1970s.<sup>52</sup> The committee discussed whether it was better for artifacts to be located in a local community museum, where there were people who knew the miners who owned the equipment or worked in the mines, or whether their significance was relevant for a provincial museum in which objects such as lunch boxes and helmets emphasized the toils of the working class more generally.<sup>53</sup> The study also noted industries or mines requiring further research, which were a mixture of businesses that were still operating and some that had closed prior to 1976. There were no plans to examine mines, foundries, iron works, or other factories in Cape Breton.<sup>54</sup> It seems extremely careless to have missed the island completely, especially considering that the steel works in Sydney were still running and that there were several mines throughout Inverness County that had artifacts and photographs (later turned into a small local museum) accessible to the public and the committee.

There were several factories and businesses consulted by the committee that did not have artifacts available due to either selling equipment, or extensive damage caused by fires. The I. Matheson and Company of New Glasgow, for example, experienced a fire in their old factory in 1954.<sup>55</sup> The company manufactured steam boilers and fuel tanks, however, due to the fire the majority of its machinery was lost. The study noted that there were "old business records, office equipment, blueprints and a number of old printing

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<sup>52</sup> Herb MacDonald, 211-219; Aubrey Dorrington, *History of Stellarton* (Pictou: Pictou Advocate, 1976), 115; Ernest J. Miller, *Stellarton Miner's Museum* (Stellarton: Stellarton Miner's Museum, n.d.); and Tourism Nova Scotia, "Tour a Mine, Springhill Miners' Museum," *Tourism Nova Scotia*, accessed May 23, 2018, <https://www.novascotia.com/see-do/attractions/tour-a-mine-springhill-miners-museum/1317>.

<sup>53</sup> Nova Scotia Museum, *Study for a Museum of Transportation and Industry*, 9; Lord and Lord, 41; and "Museum makes pitch for mining artifacts," *Evening News*, July 29, 1993. This argument was used often to refer to local mining artifacts, especially those at the Stellarton Miners Museum, which ended up at the Museum of Industry.

<sup>54</sup> Nova Scotia Museum, *Study for a Museum of Transportation and Industry*, 22-49.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, 25.

blocks” left that were ‘available’ for the museum.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, it was not clear what the committee meant when it listed artifacts as being ‘available.’ That is, it was not explained whether ‘available’ meant that the machinery was no longer in use and therefore could potentially be used for museum purposes, or if the owner had already agreed to permanently loan the objects to the museum, therefore it was available in the sense of being fully secured for display purposes. This was an important distinction that was not addressed, leaving in question whether the possible museum would be able to secure any additional artifacts other than the locomotives and what the Nova Scotia Museum had in storage. Another issue was whether these objects would be destined for the Museum of Transportation and Industry when it is opened, or if they would be given to other museums in the local communities that were within the Nova Scotia Museum system. The Balmoral Grist Mill and the Sutherland Steam Mill, for example, were both taken over by Nova Scotia Museum in the 1970s and restored into working industrial sites with additional exhibits.<sup>57</sup> There were several engines, millstones, and furnaces with Pictou County origins at these mills that had potential as artifacts for the industry museum. However, these artifacts were not removed from the original mill sites, and the Stellarton museum, in 1995, had only a few millstones in its milling section. Limited artifacts for some industries meant that there was competition for the objects, especially between active museums that needed certain artifacts (engines, stoves, etc.) to keep their sites running (such as a mill), versus a general industrial museum that offered a more passive narrative of industry.

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Robert W. Frame, “Chronological Development of the Nova Scotia Museum Complex” (Halifax: April 1987), 2-5.

Nonetheless, most of the items seemed to be possibly available. Some were contained at other museums which the committee believed were attainable. One such object was an old stationary engine used and manufactured by Acadia Gas Engines of Bridgewater. The engine still at the factory was “probably not [available] but the [Nova Scotia Museum] has a similar engine at Ross Farm,” implying that it would be made available for the Museum of Industry.<sup>58</sup> Unlike the industrial artifacts, the report noted few transportation artifacts, with the exception of those already secured by Sobey and those within the Nova Scotia Museum’s collection.<sup>59</sup> There was no mention whether or not the committee planned to consult any other societies or museums that contained transportation artifacts. Although at the time of the study they were calling the complex the Museum of Transportation and Industry, there was little attention paid to transportation other than the artifacts already promised for permanent loans. The Tibbetts Collection, *Samson*, and *Albion* were the main components of the transportation section, and were initially the only reasons why the museum had incorporated ‘transportation’ into its name. Other than these engines, there was barely any mention of transportation artifacts, or little evidence of research completed as to where to obtain any additional objects. By the time the 1984 study was launched, the Nova Scotia Museum had already decided to drop transportation from the name, instead referring to the site as the Museum of Industry.

After the submission of the 1976 study, the Nova Scotia Museum board approved the Museum of Transportation and Industry as its next museum project. However, due to its commitment to construct and operate the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, the board

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<sup>58</sup> Nova Scotia Museum, *Study for a Museum of Transportation and Industry*, 37.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, 8.

decided to place the plans for the Pictou County museum on hold.<sup>60</sup> This meant that while there was a plan to eventually open the museum, there was no intention of doing so in the immediate future. It was not until after 1982, when the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic was able to relocate to a permanent building in Halifax, that work continued on the Museum of Transportation and Industry. In response, a new study was called for by the Board to assess and update information from the 1976 study. The purpose of the 1984 study was to “review the feasibility of the proposal on the basis of present conditions, to bring costs up-to-date, to account for changes in the Nova Scotia Museum's institutional priorities and to provide data to show what the project's impact would likely to be.”<sup>61</sup> This was deemed necessary because within the span of six years there had been major changes in terms of collections, museums, and people involved in the project. One of the main private sector supporters of the museum, Robert Tibbetts, had passed away in 1979, weakening local support for the museum.<sup>62</sup> Besides this, there were also acquisitions made by the Nova Scotia Museum that included several industrial sites, including the mills in Colchester County and the Wile Carding Mill in Bridgewater, which were industry-based and had overlapping themes with those proposed for the Museum of Industry.<sup>63</sup> Additionally, there were changes to the artifacts available, including artifacts that needed to be relocated from the Stellarton Miners’ Museum.<sup>64</sup> A new study was thus needed to reassess what was already collected, and to determine new information for the

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<sup>60</sup> Museum of Industry, “Our History,” Nova Scotia Museum, accessed January 15, 2017, <https://museumofindustry.novascotia.ca/about/our-history>.

<sup>61</sup> Lord and Lord, 4; and Dan Gawthrop, “Museum to move in a different direction.”

<sup>62</sup> “Robert C. Tibbetts,” *Pictou Advocate*, October 29, 1986; and “Robert C. Tibbetts,” *Evening News*, October 29, 1986.

<sup>63</sup> Frame, “Chronological Development of the Nova Scotia Museum Complex,” 2-6.

<sup>64</sup> Lord and Lord, 161-162; and “Cornish Pumphouse: will not be restored to original appearance.”

implementation of the museum, especially the costs of the museum (construction, maintenance, and staffing), potential revenue, and the logistics of day-to-day operations.

### **1984 Report**

In 1983, a planning committee was formed consisting of board members Elizabeth MacDonald, Dr. Ray MacLean, and Dr. C.B. Weld, Nova Scotia Museum director Candace Stevenson, and assistant director Robert Frame.<sup>65</sup> Weld was the only returning member from the 1976 study. Their task was to review the study when it was completed and implement the recommendations. The study itself was conducted and written by Barry Lord and Gail Dexter Lord, experts in museum management. Lord and Lord had published a report on the national museums of Canada in 1977, and had worked as researchers for the Hamilton Museum of Steam and Technology in 1982.<sup>66</sup> Their study for the Museum of Industry re-examined relevant museums and institutions from across the world, logistics of the museum (staff, visitors, costs, etc.), offered a brief history of industry in the province, and provided another look at the artifacts at hand. Furthermore, there was a section concerning the Nova Scotia Museum system itself.

The addition of Lord and Lord provided an external view of the proposal. While the first study was fairly biased towards Pictou County, Lord and Lord were outsiders to the project and they offered, to some extent, a more balanced view of the idea. There still seemed to be an aversion towards Cape Breton, however, especially when the island's museums overlapped with the themes at the proposed Museum of Industry. Similar to the 1976 study, the overlap presented a challenge to artifact collection, as there was a

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<sup>65</sup> Lord and Lord, 3.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 5.

competition of sorts over limited artifacts, and challenges to the uniqueness of the Museum of Industry. This was notable when Lord and Lord discussed the Miners Museum in Glace Bay, which at the time held the status as the provincial mining museum. Lord and Lord insisted that the "institution has been slowed in its ability to assume that mandate effectively over the past few years."<sup>67</sup> Additionally, its collections were too geared towards Cape Breton mines rather than provincial coal mines.<sup>68</sup> The discussion of the Miners Museum was divisive, suggesting a distrust of the capabilities of the Miners Museum. By criticizing the Miners Museum, Lord and Lord made an argument that the Museum of Industry needed to be the only provincial industry museum, that it should include coal mining, and that mining artifacts related to this theme should first be considered for the new museum's collection.

The section in the study devoted to artifacts stated that objects at the Stellarton Miner's Museum were already being divided up between the Museum of Industry and the Miners Museum in Glace Bay, despite the Stellarton museum still being in operation.<sup>69</sup> The Stellarton Miners Museum, at the time, was located in the basement of the town's library. The area was fairly damp and unsuitable for the mining equipment stored there as equipment was often exposed to water and mildew.<sup>70</sup> The equipment included draegerman gear, breathing apparatuses, lamps, coal boxes, and trophies won by miners' sports teams.<sup>71</sup> Additionally, the museum was being closed due to its limited space and the fact that the library was in the process of relocating to Foord Street. Its collection was

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid, 42.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 41-42.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 161-162.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid; and Dorrington, 115.

<sup>71</sup> Miller, *Stellarton Miner's Museum*.

to be presented to the Nova Scotia Museum for display purposes, and was not explicitly reserved for either the Miners Museum in Glace Bay or the Museum of Industry. This led to a competition for artifacts, as the Glace Bay Miners Museum was meant to house an array of mining artifacts from across the province. However, the Museum of Industry equally wanted the artifacts due to the local connection to the items and because of its own provincial museum status. Lord and Lord asserted that “it is evident that many of these artefacts are most meaningful to the Stellarton community” and thus “the primary collection...should be maintained at the new museum in Stellarton.”<sup>72</sup> They recommended that the collection was first and foremost the property of the new museum, while some duplicates might be given to the Glace Bay museum. The debate in the study over these artifacts highlighted a power struggle between the two museums in terms of which one would control the provincial mandate on the history of coal mining.

The discussion of artifacts also revealed a sense of hierarchy amongst the museums of the province. While there were more artifacts recorded in this study than the 1976 study, there was a greater urge for the centralization of the Nova Scotia Museum’s artifacts, as well as gathering artifacts from societies and private collections. For example, Lord and Lord recommended moving newly acquired textile collections to the new Stellarton museum instead of the existing woolen mills museums, or to the storage buildings in Halifax.<sup>73</sup> There were several recommendations for Nova Scotia Museum’s own collections that pertained to industry and transport to all be moved to the museum. The study recommended that “the bulk of all collections falling within the scope of the

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<sup>72</sup> Lord and Lord, 162.

<sup>73</sup> Lord and Lord, 172.

new museum...be transferred to Stellarton for the new museum when it is in a position to provide facilities for them.”<sup>74</sup>

Transferring artifacts to the new museum would relieve the storage facilities in Halifax. Besides the proposed overhaul of industrial artifacts, there was an unbalanced amount of Pictou County-based artifacts. This included sixty glass bottles, a fourth engine from the Tibbetts Collection donated by the mayor of Trenton, and several stoves originating from New Glasgow.<sup>75</sup> The dominance of Pictou County artifacts, and the competition over both mining and provincial artifacts suggests that there was a struggle to find enough artifacts across the province outside of the local population, especially ones that were not already in museums. A hint of this can be seen in the 1976 study, which suggested there were few industries outside of Pictou, Colchester, and Halifax counties that had potential artifacts for the museum. However, this does not directly suggest that there were insufficient artifacts for an industrial museum, but rather that the history of the objects they had been able to secure was orientated towards one county over the rest.

There were some additional sections in the report devoted to tourism, particularly what to expect in terms of potential tourists. Lord and Lord predicted the museum would receive about 79,000 visitors annually, including about 30,000 local residents.<sup>76</sup> They included a larger focus on the tourism aspect of the museum than had the authors of the 1976 study. This could be due to a greater interest by the committee and Lord and Lord to creating a viable and marketable museum instead of just a complex to display artifacts for educational purposes.

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid, 146.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 160-169.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 101-107.



Overall, the 1984 study had a fair amount of overlap with the previous study, though it was much more detailed. It was comprised of over three-hundred pages of graphs, research, and discussion for the implementation of the new museum. Lord and Lord more carefully defined the basis of the museum, including its purpose, which was “to inform Nova Scotians and their visitors of the province's industrial past, to foster a keener appreciation of present-day industry, and to stimulate an awareness of the industrial potential of the future.”<sup>77</sup> Lord and Lord stressed that the museum was meant to represent the social history of the region, and that it should concentrate on “industrial development and its effects on the relation of Nova Scotians to their environment.”<sup>78</sup> Lord and Lord did not see the museum as a heritage project to showcase the positives of industries, but rather a museum to properly address and identify the full history of the province’s industrial past. Despite this sentiment, however, the museum today has largely adapted a heritage perspective of Nova Scotia’s industrial past, as is discussed in chapter five.

After the submission of the 1984 report, another decade passed before the Museum of Industry had a soft opening in 1994. The delay was largely due to issues with construction, delays in researching and collecting objects, delays in obtaining permanent exhibits, and governmental interference that led to the partial defunding of the museum.

## **Conclusion**

The early conceptualization of the Museum of Industry focused on preserving and displaying industrial artifacts from across the province. It was motivated by a fear that

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid, 68.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

important local artifacts such as the *Samson* and the *Albion* were being destroyed or left to corrode. This resulted in a push for a proper location to showcase these objects.

Additionally, the Nova Scotia Museum had accumulated dozens of large artifacts related to industry, such as cast-iron stoves, engines, and cars, that needed a new storage facility in order to alleviate space for new acquisitions. While the studies of 1976 and 1984 clearly determined that there was a need for a general industrial museum, they also revealed a tension between Cape Breton and Pictou County that carried on into the 1990s. This tension resulted in years of political debate that threatened to permanently close the Museum of Industry.

## **Chapter 4:**

### **Managing Donnie Cameron's Theme Park**

After the 1984 study, the provincial government set plans in motion to construct the Museum of Industry. It was believed at that point that the museum would open by 1989. However, it was plagued by delays, budget issues, and politically-driven discontent between its conceptualization in 1974 and its grand opening in 1995. Issues with construction and an underestimation of the complexity of the needed research caused the initial setbacks for the museum. The worst delay stemmed from political interference when, in 1993, the provincial government, led by Liberal premier John Savage, cut funding to the museum. These issues will be discussed below, as this chapters seeks to explore the creation of the museum during a twenty-year period of construction, delay, and realization. The establishment of the Museum of Industry was frequently surrounded by controversy. Like many new museums, it became a site of struggle that raised issues of public funding, especially at a time when the provincial deficit was growing.

#### **Constructing a New Museum**

In the six years following the 1984 study, the Nova Scotia Museum worked on hiring staff for research and conservation efforts, gathering collections, and building the museum itself.<sup>1</sup> The first major task for the museum was hiring a curator. This occurred in 1986, when Peter Latta was hired to research, collect, and manage artifacts.<sup>2</sup> The task was fairly strenuous for one person, considering he was meant to research thousands of

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<sup>1</sup> "Museum chopped," *Daily News*, September 15, 1993.

<sup>2</sup> Dan Gawthrop, "Museum to move in a different direction," *The Monitor*, April 8, 1988.

artifacts, as well as seek out permanent loans on artifacts, such as acquiring a MacKay car from the 1920s that was previously part of the Mount Uniacke Estate (part of Nova Scotia Museum).<sup>3</sup> However, the car was never restored or displayed at the estate, and by 1991, the Pictou County Antique Auto Club gained ownership of the vehicle.<sup>4</sup> The museum was initially projected to open in 1989, although construction did not start on the building until late in 1987. Architects Fowler, Bauld, and Mitchell of Halifax received the contract to complete the building, which was to be finished within a year.<sup>5</sup> Three years later, in 1990, the main building was completed. The delay was blamed on the inability to obtain construction materials due to planning and funding issues.<sup>6</sup> This in turn deferred the date museum staff could relocate to the building and begin assembling exhibits. While the delay was disruptive for museum staff, there was some support for the interruption. Frank Arsenault of Westville wrote to the *Evening News* to express his opposition to the museum. He argued that the \$9.6 million allocated to the project was better spent on hospitals and reducing emergency room wait times.<sup>7</sup> The cost of the museum increased to \$11 million by 1990 due to inflation and operational expenses. Arsenault's concern with the institution's cost proved a frequent refrain of critics of the museum.

By 1990, it was expected that the museum would be opened in 1992. The change in date reflected the research the staff felt was needed for the objects, as well as the time it would take to assemble the permanent exhibits.<sup>8</sup> The museum housed two galleries for

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<sup>3</sup> Barb Sweet, "Three years in the making – McKay car restoration nears completion," *Evening News*, June 8, 1991.

<sup>4</sup> Bill Jarvie, "Help sought for McKay restoration," *Old Autos* 5 (January 1991): 1.

<sup>5</sup> Museum of Industry, "Our History," Nova Scotia Museum, accessed January 15, 2017, <https://museumofindustry.novascotia.ca/about/our-history>; and "Museum taking shape," *Evening News*, January 19, 1987.

<sup>6</sup> "Museum opening delayed until 1991," *Evening News*, January 19, 1989.

<sup>7</sup> Frank Arsenault, "Money better spent on our hospitals," *Evening News*, September 17, 1987.

<sup>8</sup> Crystal MacKinnon, "Open house held at industry museum," *Pictou Advocate*, November 4, 1992.

permanent exhibits, a travelling/temporary exhibit hall, cafeteria, gift shop, a (then uncompleted) small gallery on the second floor, and about one half of the museum dedicated to a library, offices, storage, and preservation rooms. The museum totaled almost 80,000 square feet.<sup>9</sup> In 1991, the museum further acquired the VIA Rail Stellarton/New Glasgow train station, which had only been built a year before on the western edge of the museum's property.<sup>10</sup> This allowed the museum to expand its storage and archival area, despite the main building being the largest museum in Atlantic Canada.

The long process of building the museum limited staff's ability to acquire, maintain, and preserve artifacts. This contributed to years of delays in opening the museum. The original projected opening date of 1989 was moved forward at least five times to a soft opening in mid-1994, and a grand opening in 1995. Some blamed the delay on inefficient use of time by staff.<sup>11</sup> In reality, the timeline for the realization of the museum, the number of staff hired, and government interference all contributed to the numerous delays. Until the museum's construction was completed in 1990, artifacts could not be placed in the complex, nor could exhibits be built for the museum.<sup>12</sup> By 1993, however, there was barely any progress in terms of establishing permanent exhibits. In an invitation to the open house the museum hosted in October 1993, the Friends of the Nova Scotia Museum Society volunteered to showcase the artifacts in storage, instead of any type of display. The invitation offered to show visitors the "extensive collection of

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<sup>9</sup> Steve Harder, "Getting down to work, at last," *Chronicle Herald*, June 10, 1995.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Olsen, "For sale or rent: Via Rail Station," *Evening News*, February 3, 1990; and "Via advertising sale of Stellarton station," *Evening News*, July 14, 1990.

<sup>11</sup> Nova Scotia, *Nova Scotia House of Assembly Debates and Proceedings*, 27 April 1992 (Bernard Boudreau), accessed March 25, 2017, <http://0-nsleg-edeposit.gov.ns.ca.legcat.gov.ns.ca/deposit/HansardDeposit/55-02/19920427.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> Jackie MacArthur, "Museum staff preparing for early-October move," *Evening News*, August 1990.

artifacts prior to the completion of displays.”<sup>13</sup> While the previous seven years were used for research and restoration processes, there had been little progress made in preparing the final exhibits for the museum. A Toronto company was not contracted until 1993 to create the display panels for the permanent exhibits.

Meanwhile, the museum was spending upwards of half of a million dollars per year on office furniture, research, operational costs, staffing, and conservation efforts.<sup>14</sup> This seemed odd to several provincial Liberal MLAs, who voiced their concerns in the Legislature, as detailed in the next section, that the museum was in need of extra funds when it had not yet opened and there was no indication of being near completion. In general, the politicians questioned why the museum had not opened, and wondered if it would ever open after the numerous delays and increasing costs. At the time, the Progressive Conservative government of Donald Cameron was in power.<sup>15</sup> Cameron was the MLA for Pictou East, and became premier in 1991 after long-time Progressive Conservative premier John Buchannan stepped down in 1990.<sup>16</sup> Prior to his leadership role, Cameron was the Minister of Industry in the 1980s and had been influential in securing the Westray Mine in his riding. After the Progressive Conservatives lost the 1993 election to the Liberal Party, John Savage became premier.<sup>17</sup> His government was determined to control the province’s deficit, which was approximately \$600 million, through intense reforms in education, health, and transportation.<sup>18</sup> At the time, the Nova

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<sup>13</sup> “Nova Scotia Museum of Industry Pre-view and Open House,” *Pictou Advocate*, October 15, 1993.

<sup>14</sup> *Nova Scotia*, 27 April 1992 (Bernard Boudreau).

<sup>15</sup> Peter Clancy, James Bickerton, Rodney Haddow, and Ian Stewart, *The Savage Years: The Perils of Reinventing Government in Nova Scotia* (Halifax: Formac Publishing, 2000), 25.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, 15.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 2-3.

<sup>18</sup> Peter Clancy, “Fiscal Policy and Budgeting: Restraint and Reform,” in *The Savage Years: The Perils of Reinventing Government in Nova Scotia*, eds. Peter Clancy, James Bickerton, Rodney Haddow, and Ian Stewart (Halifax: Formac Publishing, 2000), 63-66.

Scotia Museum complex was part of the Department of Education. This department, in particular, felt immense restraints to its budget – by 1996, \$70 million had been cut annually.<sup>19</sup> This program of austerity would affect the Museum of Industry.

### **Political Discontent**

The realization of the Museum of Industry was a long process and was not without its critics. The project spanned two decades, and was faced with numerous delays that prompted MLAs to question the sustainability of the museum, and the choices the government made in terms of the allocation of funds within the Department of Education. Opposition and support for the museum was spilt not only between political parties, but also by region. Those in support were normally Progressive Conservative MLAs from Pictou County, which included premier Donald Cameron and MLA John Hamm (a future premier of Nova Scotia). Those opposed were mostly all Cape Breton Liberal MLAs, including John MacEachern, Bernard Boudreau, Daniel Graham, and Russel MacKinnon. All were vocal opponents of the increased government spending for the museum. The few exceptions were the education ministers under Cameron, Ronald Giffin and Guy LeBlanc, who were more-or-less supporting Cameron's decisions rather than the project, Pictou East Liberal MLA Wayne Fraser who was elected in 1993 and attempted to fight against his government's decision to withhold support from the project, and premier John Savage, who officially opened the museum but was premier when funding was cut to the institution. The debates in the Legislature intensified in the early 1990s, after the

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<sup>19</sup> Peter Clancy, "Public and Post-Secondary Education: Structural Change and Embedded Clienteles," in *The Savage Years: The Perils of Reinventing Government in Nova Scotia*, eds. Peter Clancy, James Bickerton, Rodney Haddow, and Ian Stewart (Halifax: Formac Publishing, 2000), 140.

Conservative government of Donald Cameron decided to allocate an additional \$1.5 million to the Museum of Industry, on top of the \$11 million it had already received from the provincial and federal governments.<sup>20</sup> The shift of power to the Liberals in the 1993 election risked the abandonment of the Museum of Industry.<sup>21</sup>

Several key themes emerged during this debate over the museum. The first major concern of the MLAs was the cost of the museum. At the time, there were major budget cuts to every department, especially to the Department of Education.<sup>22</sup> School boards were allocated a smaller fund, which in turn meant fewer resources, programs, and staff. However, the Museum of Industry, which was under the department, received a \$1.5 million increase in 1991.<sup>23</sup> The Liberal MLAs charged that the museum was being treated as more important than the education of the Nova Scotia's youth. Another area of concern was what the Museum of Industry was spending its money on, including expensive office furniture.<sup>24</sup> Several MLAs blamed the employees for the costs, not understanding that although the museum was not physically opened, staff was still researching the vast array of artifacts stored at the museum. This in turn brought about discussions as to when the museum would open, if ever, as there had already been several delays. Finally, a few of the Liberal MLAs questioned how the Museum of Industry factored into Cameron's own

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<sup>20</sup> Nova Scotia, *Nova Scotia House of Assembly Debates and Proceedings*, 29 May 1991 (Mr. John MacEachern), accessed 1 Oct 2016, <http://0-nsleg-edeposit.gov.ns.ca.legcat.gov.ns.ca/deposit/HansardDeposit/55-02/19910529.pdf>; and Wilkie Taylor, "Industrial museum on chopping block," *Chronicle Herald*, September 2, 1993.

<sup>21</sup> Taylor, "Industrial museum on chopping block"; and "Museum chopped."

<sup>22</sup> Peter Clancy, "Fiscal Policy and Budgeting," 63.

<sup>23</sup> Nova Scotia, *Nova Scotia House of Assembly Debates and Proceedings*, 19 June 1991 (Mr. John MacEachern), accessed 26 March 2016, <http://0-nsleg-edeposit.gov.ns.ca.legcat.gov.ns.ca/deposit/HansardDeposit/55-02/19910619.pdf>.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*



personal agenda, and whether he was purposely promoting a stronger Pictou County economy over the rest of the province, especially Cape Breton.

The heated period of debate in the legislature started in May 1991. John MacEachern questioned why the provincial government decided to raise its commitment to the Museum of Industry by \$1.5 million.<sup>25</sup> The money was largely allocated to the museum for operational costs, including staffing and artifact restoration. Extra fundraising from the private sector that had been called for in a 1987 Order in Council was never acted upon by the government. The education minister, Ronald Giffin, argued that he felt the fundraising was unnecessary.<sup>26</sup> Giffin stated that he “was of the view that that was not a practical thing to do. With all the money that was going into that facility from both the federal government and the provincial government, it would not be practical to attempt to raise money in the private sector.”<sup>27</sup> This government had originally provided \$5.5 million. It had split initial costs fifty-fifty with the federal government.<sup>28</sup> The new increase, however, included no additional funding from the Canadian government. Giffin’s response barely defended the decision, especially considering that the government was significantly increasing its spending on the museum without clear justification as to why. It was troublesome since the museum was receiving extra funding at the same time as other projects and departments were told to reduce their budgets. By restricting growth in the majority of sectors, but allowing the spending on the Museum of Industry to increase without private sector support, the government set the tone for how it chose to govern.

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<sup>25</sup> Nova Scotia, 29 May 1991 (Mr. John MacEachern).

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

The action called into question why the museum was deemed more important by Cameron's Conservatives than children's education and pay equity in the province. Critics alleged that overspending was related directly to Cameron's own interest. MacEachern insisted that the premier was attempting to please his own riding by providing it with jobs and a beacon for tourism. MacEachern asked "[how] can [Cameron] justify to the House and to the people of Nova Scotia providing \$1.5 million and proceeding with this Donnie Cameron theme park?"<sup>29</sup> MacEachern's branding of the museum as the 'Donnie Cameron theme park' was repeated several debates by Liberal MLAs afterwards, and inspired headlines across the province. New Glasgow's *Evening News* used the quotation as a section heading for its May 30, 1991 article on the event.<sup>30</sup> The *Evening News* provided a clearer sense as to why there was increased spending. According to the article, Giffin suggested that the increased spending was meant for more staff, research, conservation, and building construction.<sup>31</sup> Staff were to increase from five to eight members to assist the research meant to produce the final exhibits and the labeling of the thousands of artifacts at the museum. However, as noted in the previous section, there is little physical evidence that there was any work done for the permanent displays besides labelling and conserving the artifacts. Unfortunately, the minister in charge had difficulty explaining what was happening at the museum.

A week after MacEachern's questioning, Bernard Boudreau asked why the government was spending upwards of \$150,000 a year to employ five people at the museum since 1988, when the museum, once again referred to as the Cameron Theme

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Betsy Chambers, "Donald Cameron's 'theme park': Museum comes under fire in legislature," *Evening News*, May 30, 1991.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

Park, was not expected to open until 1994.<sup>32</sup> Giffin offered little in terms of explanation, but suggested that the permanent displays that the staff were researching would be finished within the next year. This is interesting, considering that in 1992 there were no permanent displays according to an open house held at the museum, and the contract for the building of the displays was not awarded until 1993.<sup>33</sup> While there was a need for staff at the museum both for maintenance of the artifacts and for research, it appears that either Giffin was unsure what was happening at the museum, was too optimistic, or the museum was not fully communicating its intentions and reasons for delays with the provincial government. Boudreau had, in expectation of Giffin's response, researched the budgets of the museum and the previous order in council. "We had no budget for capital, no budget for acquisition of exhibits, nothing of that nature. As a matter of fact, the Order in Council to authorize the thing was not even approved and we had [five] people working there."<sup>34</sup> Boudreau's statement reflected his sense that Giffin was not completely aware of the work going on at the museum, and, despite a supposed need for an increased budget, there was not a readily available source that explained how the extra funds were to be used by the museum.

How the museum used the funds was not the only abnormality concerning the extra funding. The overall cost to operate the museum had dramatically increased, from a quarter of a million per year, to almost one million per year by 1991.<sup>35</sup> It was unclear why the cost increased. The construction of the complex had finished in 1990, so there did not

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<sup>32</sup> Nova Scotia, *Nova Scotia House of Assembly Debates and Proceedings*, 5 June 1991 (Bernard Boudreau), accessed March 25, 2017, <http://0-nsleg-edeposit.gov.ns.ca.legcat.gov.ns.ca/deposit/HansardDeposit/55-02/19910605.pdf>.

<sup>33</sup> Friends of the Nova Scotia Museum of Industry Society, *Annual Report, 1994-1995* (Pictou, Nova Scotia: Advocate Printing and Publishing, 1995), 5.

<sup>34</sup> Nova Scotia, 5 June 1991 (Bernard Boudreau).

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

seem to be any progress on constructing the permanent exhibits, and the staff had been kept relatively small. While there were expenses associated with the conservation process of several of the artifacts (including the *Samson*), this did not seem to necessarily warrant a 300 per cent increase. Once again, Giffin gave a vague answer, blaming the increased costs on capital expenditures, and justifying the spending by suggesting that the museum, when opened, would become a premiere tourist destination for the Nova Scotia Museum.<sup>36</sup> Over the course of a few months, it became clear that Giffin was not equipped with the proper knowledge or interest in the museum necessary to defend Cameron's decisions in the Assembly. His responses were normally the same repeated answers and offered little in terms of reasoning for the museum's spending patterns or the funding augmentations. By 1992, a cabinet shuffle had removed him from the position and replaced him with Guy LeBlanc, who then participated in another string of debates with the opposition.

In April 1992, the discussion continued with Boudreau bringing into question Cameron's personal interest in funding the museum. He insisted that “[while] pretending to be tight-fisted with money, Premier Donald Cameron has operated with an opened cheque-book policy to certain pet projects in Pictou County.”<sup>37</sup> Cameron's decisions towards the allocation of government funds directly impacted his own riding, creating jobs and revenue for Pictou County while the rest of the province saw cutbacks. This came in the form of the Museum of Industry and the Westray Mine in Plymouth, just outside of Stellarton. Both major multi-million-dollar projects were heavily supported by

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Nova Scotia, *Nova Scotia House of Assembly Debates and Proceedings*, 28 April 1992 (Bernard Boudreau), accessed March 25, 2017, <http://0-nsleg-edeposit.gov.ns.ca.legcat.gov.ns.ca/deposit/HansardDeposit/55-02/19920428.pdf>.

Cameron, and were key pieces of his election campaign in 1988.<sup>38</sup> When Cameron gained power as premier, he focused his efforts on making sure the projects were realized by increasing spending for the Museum of Industry and pushing ahead with the Westray Mine regardless of safety procedures. Even before 1991, Cameron had used his position as Minister of Industry to approve the Westray Mine, and had used the Museum of Industry as a campaign tool. During 1988 Nova Scotia election, Cameron stressed that the museum existed because of him and fellow Conservative MLAs Don McInnes and Jack MacIsaac.<sup>39</sup> He noted that the museum “will provide employment for our people...and tourists attracted to our Museum will shop, buy meals and stay overnight in Pictou County.”<sup>40</sup> The museum became an important tool for him to emphasize his connection to the local populace, and a method to advertise how he had helped the local economy.

Boudreau’s complaints about Cameron’s personal agenda came just weeks before a fatal explosion at the mine killed twenty-six miners, the deadliest explosion in the County since 1918.<sup>41</sup> The soaring costs of the museum highlighted the extent to which he wanted and needed the museum to succeed. In 1992, the costs of operating the museum increased to \$1.3 million per year despite no increase to school boards’ funding.<sup>42</sup> As a result, several teachers and programs had been cut across various boards in the province. Guy LeBlanc, the new education minister, responded in a similar way to Giffin by again stating that the increase in costs was necessary in order to have the museum open in the

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<sup>38</sup> Shaun Comish, *The Westray Tragedy: A Miner's Story* (Halifax: Fernwood, 1993), 50.

<sup>39</sup> “Don Cameron PC Candidate for Pictou East,” *Evening News*, August 29, 1988.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> Comish, 2 and 35-36.

<sup>42</sup> Nova Scotia, *Nova Scotia House of Assembly Debates and Proceedings*, 10 May 1995 (John MacEachern), accessed March 25, 2017, [http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/proceedings/hansard/c60/56\\_3\\_28/](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/proceedings/hansard/c60/56_3_28/); and Nova Scotia, 28 April 1992 (Bernard Boudreau).

near future. Boudreau retorted by accusing the government of showing what it valued more in the department, even when the museum had overspent its budget. The furniture and equipment for the museum budget was set at \$550,000 for two years by the provincial government. However, staff overspent the budget, with total costs amounting to \$1.1 million dollars.<sup>43</sup> There was no mention of repercussions for the overspending, and the museum was actually received more funding than before.

Boudreau questioned the motives of the government in increasing funds to the museum following such negligence with its budgets. He argued that:

Mr. Speaker, this particular institution has been on the books, we have been budgeting for it since 1988 which, by the way, was an election year in Pictou County. It is not scheduled to open until 1994 at the earliest. We budgeted \$1.075 million this year on that institution. If past history means anything, we will probably spend three times that much on it. My question is this, for the minister. Since we have told the school boards across the province they will get 0 per cent increase, which means an actual decrease for their programs, will the minister consider, since this thing has been on the go since 1988, it has never opened its doors, will the minister consider postponing the opening for another year and spending that money on the education system across this province this year?<sup>44</sup>

Boudreau directly brought out the underlying message that he and MacEachern had insinuated for two years – that the reason the museum was given increased funding and allowed to go over budget was because it was an important ploy, along with the Westray Mine, for the Conservatives to guarantee election wins in Pictou County. LeBlanc argued that without the high level of funding, the museum would be shut-down, which would leave an already constructed building empty in a time of economic downturn.<sup>45</sup> The museum, arguably, had the potential to generate income for the province and the local

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<sup>43</sup> Nova Scotia, 28 April 1992 (Bernard Boudreau).

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

population. In the 1984 study, Lord and Lord had projected visitation numbers of about 79,000 people per year, an estimate that was three times that of Ross Farm.<sup>46</sup> By 1994, the estimate was between 100,000 and 120,000.<sup>47</sup> The estimates were largely based on visitors to Nova Scotia Museum sites and the Alexander Graham Bell Museum (because of its industrial component). This volume would make the museum one of the busiest in the Nova Scotia Museum system. The numbers seemed extremely optimistic, especially for a museum that was outside of Halifax and had yet to open.

The question of whether the museum would ever open re-emerged in June 1992. Daniel Graham questioned why the department of education was funneling more money into the museum while schools were being closed across the province. He expressed doubt that the museum would open, and suspected that the museum would not be as economically viable as suggested by the Cameron government and the 1984 study.<sup>48</sup> The figures for 1994-1995 when the museum was under the control of the Friends of the Museum of Industry Society show that there was \$53,022 in revenue, and nowhere close to the estimated number of visitors, with somewhere between six to eight thousand paying customers.<sup>49</sup> While this was three years later, it shows that Graham was right to doubt the potential visitation numbers. Additionally, the museum had yet to open, despite promises for the museum to be opened on six tentative dates between 1989 and 1995. It was the

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<sup>46</sup> Barry Lord and Gail Dexter Lord, *Nova Scotia's Museum of Industry: A Plan for Implementation* (Halifax: 1984), 100-107.

<sup>47</sup> Crystal MacKinnon, "Last chance at yesterday: The Story of the Museum of Industry and the Friends who may save her," *Pictou Advocate*, February 23, 1994.

<sup>48</sup> Nova Scotia, *Nova Scotia House of Assembly Debates and Proceedings*, 9 June 1992 (Daniel Graham), accessed March 25, 2017, <http://0-nsleg-edeposit.gov.ns.ca.legcat.gov.ns.ca/deposit/HansardDeposit/55-02/19920609.pdf>.

<sup>49</sup> Friends of the Nova Scotia Museum of Industry Society, 6.

series of broken promises mixed with rising costs that cast doubt that the Museum of Industry would ever open its doors to the public.

The political battle over the museum peaked when John Savage's Liberals won the general election in 1993. This caused a shift in the direction of how the provincial government handled the Museum of Industry. Almost immediately, the Liberals decided to no longer fund the museum, with Premier Savage telling John Hamm that the government was “not prepared to spend a lot of money on that building at this particular time.”<sup>50</sup> An article in the *Chronicle Herald* added that the nine employees at the museum were laid-off, and that the government was not prepared to spend \$1.3 million per year on the museum.<sup>51</sup> The article suggested that residents were upset, and feared that the museum was to “become the Nova Scotia Museum’s largest artifact.”<sup>52</sup> In the legislature, John Hamm argued that by cutting funding, the museum was faced with closure.<sup>53</sup> He added that the Museum of Industry should be viewed “not only as a museum but as an educational facility, having very positive benefit for our tourism locally and provincially.”<sup>54</sup> This sentiment and fear of closure were echoed in the opinion sections of newspapers (particularly the *Chronicle Herald*, *Pictou Advocate*, and the *Evening News*), with one *Chronicle Herald* reader shaming the government for not realizing the academic resource of the complex’s collection, with over seven thousand artifacts, a library filled with studies, reports, and books dedicated to industry, and countless hours of research

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<sup>50</sup> Nova Scotia, *Nova Scotia House of Assembly Debates and Proceedings*, 16 September 1993 (John Hamm), accessed March 25, 2017, <http://0-nsleg-edeposit.gov.ns.ca.legcat.gov.ns.ca/deposit/HansardDeposit/56-01/19930916.pdf>.

<sup>51</sup> Taylor, “Industrial museum on chopping block.”

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> Nova Scotia, 16 September 1993 (John Hamm).

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*



done by staff to highlight every object.<sup>55</sup> Another reader, Tracey Jardine from New Glasgow, expressed disdain over the wasted research and conservation done by the museum. She noted that the museum needed to be open as a tourist attraction to help spur the local economy and create spinoff businesses in the area.<sup>56</sup> This sentiment was repeated by James Hood, the chairman of the Stellarton Homecoming Committee (an annual festival in Stellarton), who projected that the museum would be able to generate \$1.3 million per year for the local community and the Nova Scotia Museum.<sup>57</sup> Their letters to the editor reflected the belief of community members in the potential of the museum for educational and tourism purpose. The town of Stellarton debated asking the federal government to operate the museum, since it was already built and had the majority of the artifacts restored for museum purposes.<sup>58</sup> The backlash from the community made national news, with the *Globe and Mail* reporting that "the outcry [in the] Pictou County community was deafening."<sup>59</sup> Despite the pleas and backlash, Boudreau officially announced that by the end of September 1993 the museum would not be funded as a provincial institution. Instead, the government would seek out another way to run the facility.

By 1994, there was still doubt over whether or not the museum would open. The Friends of the Museum of Industry Society, formed in 1993, wanted to ensure that the complex could operate, and helped to secure volunteers and funds to support the process. It was comprised primarily of private sector elites from Atlantic Canada, as well as local

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<sup>55</sup> Judith Hoegg Ryan, "Industrial Heritage," *Chronicle Herald*, September 23, 1993.

<sup>56</sup> Tracey Jardine, "Museum 'savaged,'" *Chronicle Herald*, October 4, 1993.

<sup>57</sup> James Hood, "Appeals to province to save local museum," *Evening News*, October 18, 1993.

<sup>58</sup> "Stellarton joins battle over museum," *Evening News*, September 14, 1993.

<sup>59</sup> "N.S. industry museum alive," *The Globe and Mail*, June 20, 1994.

mayors and citizens. Members included Donald Sobey, Saint Mary's University president Dr. Kenneth L. Ozmon, James Proudfoot of Proudfoot Equity Company, Louis R. Comeau of Nova Scotia Power Incorporated, Dr. Ted Rhodes, Joseph Shannon of the Atlantic Corporation, Ivan Duvar of Maritime Telegraph and Telephone, Frank C. Sobey, New Glasgow mayor Anne MacLean, Stellarton mayor Clarence Porter, James MacConnell of Scotsburn Dairy, and Harry Steele of Newfoundland Capital Corporation.<sup>60</sup> Besides the private sector, local citizens joined the group. By the beginning of 1994, there were over four hundred members.<sup>61</sup> The community had rallied behind the museum, and the *Pictou Advocate* even dedicated an issue solely to promoting the museum in 1994. The special issue included articles about the museum, interviews that expressed local support, and a series of advertisements from businesses and local organizations that supported the opening of the Museum of Industry (such as Scotsburn Dairy, the deCoste Entertainment Centre, local branches of the Royal Canadian Legion, and the towns of Stellarton, Pictou, and New Glasgow). The support was vibrant across the County, as evident in the interviews included in the issue. Clarence Porter, mayor of Stellarton, suggested that while there was a high cost to run the Museum of Industry, the "value of the museum to the town is immeasurable."<sup>62</sup> Mike O'Sullivan, a social studies teacher, noted that the museum was an important education tool. He added that "when my grade eight students were talking about the [Canadian Pacific Railway], I told them about the old train engines...that are at the museum. They are right here in the county, and the kids are interested...the museum is another source of information."<sup>63</sup> There was a

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<sup>60</sup> Friends of the Nova Scotia Museum of Industry Society, 2.

<sup>61</sup> Crystal MacKinnon, "Last chance at yesterday."

<sup>62</sup> Monica Graham, "We want the museum to open," *Pictou Advocate*, February 23, 1994.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

common appreciation amongst the public for industrial artifacts and for the value of the museum. The artifacts contributed to local history and provided a base for discussions about Nova Scotia's industrial past. Additionally, the interest in preserving the artifacts and saving the museum demonstrated that there was interest within Pictou County for tourism outside of the dominant Scottish theme.

The museum's tourism potential was another strong point. Ruth Morrison, manager of the local Comfort Inn stated that the hotel "had a lot of requests from tourists about the museum...the demand is there."<sup>64</sup> Debra Clarke, director of the Pictou County Tourist Association, reiterated the museum's tourism potential and asserted that "it would promote Pictou County, and Nova Scotia, as a tourist destination, along with Steel Town Park, the Hector Quay, and the development along the New Glasgow riverfront."<sup>65</sup> Pictou County was in the midst of a large-scale tourism development, and the Museum of Industry was at the centre.

By the early 1990s, several towns in Pictou County were developing tourism areas. Pictou, similar to Stellarton, was also adding a museum. However, the museum was geared towards cultural tourism, in particular Scottish culture, rather than industry.<sup>66</sup> The town's museum, the Hector Heritage Quay, began construction in 1990 as part of the Pictou Waterfront Development. The development, first proposed in 1979, was meant to revamp Pictou's wharves into a tourist destination that included a boardwalk, retail shops, a new marina, and a replica of the ship *Hector*.<sup>67</sup> The idea for the replica ship was not

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Donald MacKay, *Scotland Farewell: The People of the Hector* (Toronto: Natural Heritage, 2006), 222.

<sup>67</sup> Pictou Area Development Committee, *Pictou Development Report* (Pictou: 1979), 9; and Don MacIsaac, "Construction on the Waterfront," HAGGIS: Hector Archiving Gateway and Genealogy Indexing System, McCulloch House Museum and Centre, accessed August 10, 2017, <http://haggis.mccullochcentre.ca/document/4649>.

proposed until the late 1980s, but was quickly approved by Pictou's town council. By 1992, the museum portion of the site had opened to the public, and became a major tourism destination for the region.<sup>68</sup> John Hault, then director of the Museum of Industry, described the Hector Heritage Quay as a pillar of tourism in Pictou County, along with the Museum of Industry.<sup>69</sup> The growth of Pictou County as a tourism destination became reliant on the two museums, although the Pictou museum was realized faster than the Museum of Industry. The support from across the County for the latter, however, showed the importance of expanding tourism in the region, with reporter Crystal MacKinnon stating that "if the destiny of the Nova Scotia Museum of Industry is ill-fated, Pictou County will not only watch as its history slowly decays but its future as well."<sup>70</sup>

The private sector took over management of the Museum of Industry in 1994 when the provincial government decided to no longer operate the facility. In April 1994, the Friends of the Museum of Industry Society expressed interest in taking over management of the museum. The Society was able to secure grants from both the federal and provincial levels of government to help offset operational costs, and had grant-funded students and volunteers to act as guides to help lower costs.<sup>71</sup> The society achieved its funding goal with nearly \$500,000 worth of ACOA funding, which became one of its main sources of income. In May 1995, just one month before the official grand opening of the museum, MacEachern was pleased to announce that, as education minister, he was

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<sup>68</sup> Donald MacKay, 224-231.

<sup>69</sup> Crystal MacKinnon, "Last chance at yesterday."

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> "Ottawa gives \$458,000 to museum," *Evening News*, June 22, 1994; and "Industry museum gets ACOA funds," *Pictou Advocate*, June 29, 1994.

able to reduce payments to the Museum of Industry by \$1.1 million per year.<sup>72</sup> He assured the House of Assembly that the community would look after running the museum. In June 1995, the museum was officially opened at a gala event. Doris Sobey unveiled a portrait of her late husband, William Sobey.<sup>73</sup> She reflected that her husband “had a dream to create a Nova Scotia museum, he made that dream a reality.”<sup>74</sup> MacEachern was also in attendance at the event and took part in the ceremonial ribbon cutting. While he joined in the festivities and mentioned that the opening of the museum “is what community development is about,” an *Evening News* article by Sueann MacDonald about the event hastily noted that MacEachern was the minister in charge of announcing the funding cuts to the museum two years prior to the gala.<sup>75</sup> While the government was quick to celebrate the opening of the Nova Scotia Museum site, it was evident that the community had not forgotten the threat of closure of the museum in 1993. By the end of 1995, the society was able to successfully open and run the museum, ending with a surplus of almost \$80,000. However, despite the surplus, it was not enough for the society to maintain such a large and demanding facility, especially when it relied on conditional external funding to sustain its operations. Museum director John Hault also left the museum suddenly in August 1995.<sup>76</sup> News of his departure was not disclosed to anyone outside of the society until the day of his departure, although the decision was made mutually between Hault and the society. These factors helped dictate the relinquishment of the society’s control of the museum back to the province in 1996.

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<sup>72</sup> Nova Scotia, *Nova Scotia House of Assembly Debates and Proceedings*, 10 May 1995 (John MacEachern), accessed March 25, 2017, [http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/proceedings/hansard/c60/56\\_3\\_28/](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/proceedings/hansard/c60/56_3_28/).

<sup>73</sup> Sueann MacDonald, “Museum Makes it Official,” *Evening News (New Glasgow)*, June 15, 1995.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> Steve Harder, “Museum’s director no longer has job,” *Chronicle Herald*, August 9, 1995.

## Conclusion

The Museum of Industry had a turbulent path to realization. Various delays over twenty years caused it to receive negative attention from the MLAs in the legislature, which delayed the project even more when the Liberal government of John Savage slashed its funding completely. However, the efforts of the Friends of the Museum of Industry Society helped to save the museum, allowing it to officially open in 1995. Since then, the museum has often been the subject of praise in tourism guides for its celebration of workers, and has become an important part of the Nova Scotia Museum. The halls of the museum are dotted with the artifacts collected through the efforts of Sobey and the 1976 committee, including the *Samson*. Visiting the site today reveals little of the political turmoil surrounding the museum. In contrast to other museums in the province, a survey of Hansard reports between 1960 and 1995 reveals that only the Museum of Industry faced strong opposition in the legislature, despite the opening of several museums, especially cultural museums, during this time. Despite the earlier opposition, the opening of the museum was a positive celebration. The only remnants of provincial politics from the 1990s at the museum is the plaque at the front entrance dedicated at its official opening. The name of then premier John Savage is printed largely in the centre.

## Chapter 5:

### Industrial Tourism in the Age of Cultural Tourism

This exhibition is the story of Nova Scotians working together, of the tools they used and of the products they made. It is a story of the growth of industry, which has changed how Nova Scotians have worked and lived over the last two hundred years. But most of all, as you can see in the faces of these workers and their families, the story is one of pride in a job well done.<sup>1</sup>

The above quotation greets visitors as they enter the main galleries of the Museum of Industry. It serves to introduce the purpose of the museum, which is to present the history of industry of Nova Scotia, and its effect on the people of the province.<sup>2</sup> The Museum of Industry attempts to construct a sense of history entwined with a deep, personal, and human connection to the content in the museum. This is part of its mandate, which states that it is to “focus on the human story.”<sup>3</sup> This raises two important questions: Does the Museum of Industry accomplish this? And, if yes, how does it effectively demonstrate the human story?

Museums tell a variety of stories, capturing the past, present, and future of a community in various ways. The Museum of Industry is no exception. Its mission is to showcase the industrial past while emphasizing the accomplishments of workers. One of the more obvious ways it does this is through its exhibits, the displays, artifacts, wall text, and cardboard cut-outs that line its three permanent galleries that reference businesses and

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<sup>1</sup> Wall text, *Nova Scotia At Work*, upper gallery, Museum of Industry, Stellarton, Nova Scotia.

<sup>2</sup> Nova Scotia Museum, *Interpretive Master Plan*, Nova Scotia Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage, (Halifax: March 2009), 191.

<sup>3</sup> Museum of Industry, “Purpose,” Nova Scotia Museum, accessed March 28, 2017, <https://museumofindustry.novascotia.ca/about/purpose>.

workers. It further shows a connection to the local community, especially expressed in its third gallery, “Coal and Grits,” which deals exclusively with Pictou County mines. It provides a space for the community’s story to be told, appreciated, and acknowledged. The Museum’s involvement with the community goes beyond the limits of the exhibits however. The Museum of Industry is a de facto centre of the town, a communal meeting place, a representation of the community to visitors, and an enforcer of shared values. It is not merely an institution, but rather an important part of the community around it.

The human connection is also emphasized through the Museum of Industry’s advertisements in tourism guides and material. Since the mid-1990s, the Museum has been a key feature of the Nova Scotia Museum complex and for the town of Stellarton in provincial guides. Advertisements have continuously stressed the importance of workers, while also indicating the museum’s interactive features. It has acted as an ambassador for the town of Stellarton within these guides, in some cases being the reason Stellarton is included at all when discussing the region.

Despite the Museum of Industry’s push for human connections, it has tended to place a positive spin on the industrial past of the province. It primarily focuses on celebrating every industry, instead of creating a dialogue to discuss failed businesses, struggles, disasters, strife, and environmental damage. Environmental damage, for example, is often glossed over despite there being numerous examples of destruction caused by industries highlighted by the museum. Steel plants, in particular, were harmful to nearby bodies of water, such as the Sydney tar ponds.<sup>4</sup> Pulp and paper mills have

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<sup>4</sup> Dan MacDonald, “Steel-ing Cape Breton’s Labour History,” *Labour/Le Travail* 57 (Spring 2006): 267; Bethany Haalboom, Susan J. Elliott, John Eyles, and Henry Muggah, “The risk society at work in the Sydney ‘Tar Ponds,’” *Canadian Geographer* 50, 2 (2006): 228-232.



further harmed the province's environment. The Northern Pulp mill in Granton (a village along Pictou Harbour), for example, has pumped effluent waste into nearby Boat Harbour for over fifty years. This has led to the death of the harbour's marine life.<sup>5</sup> Besides water pollution, the mill actively clear-cuts large sections of old growth forests across Nova Scotia.<sup>6</sup> Arguably, the Museum wants visitors to respect industries in a way that evokes awe concerning the power they had in shaping communities. However, this can lead to an inaccurate portrayal of the past, by appealing to a curated image of history. This chapter will explore the extent to which the Museum has been able to represent and emphasize the people behind industries, while dealing with problematic issues with these representations. While the Museum of Industry has celebrated the working class, the stories it tells are not always accurate representations, despite its strong connection with its community of workers.

### **The Halls of the Museum**

When the Museum of Industry was first proposed in 1974, its main objective was to showcase industrial artifacts. However, by the late 1980s, this concept evolved into showcasing the relationship between the objects and Nova Scotia's history. For example, the Caterpillar '20' pull grader in the museum's collection was more than just a machine as it was used for the creation of the public roads in the 1920s. In 1988, then director Peter Latta explained that the machine "will be discussed primarily for its relationship to

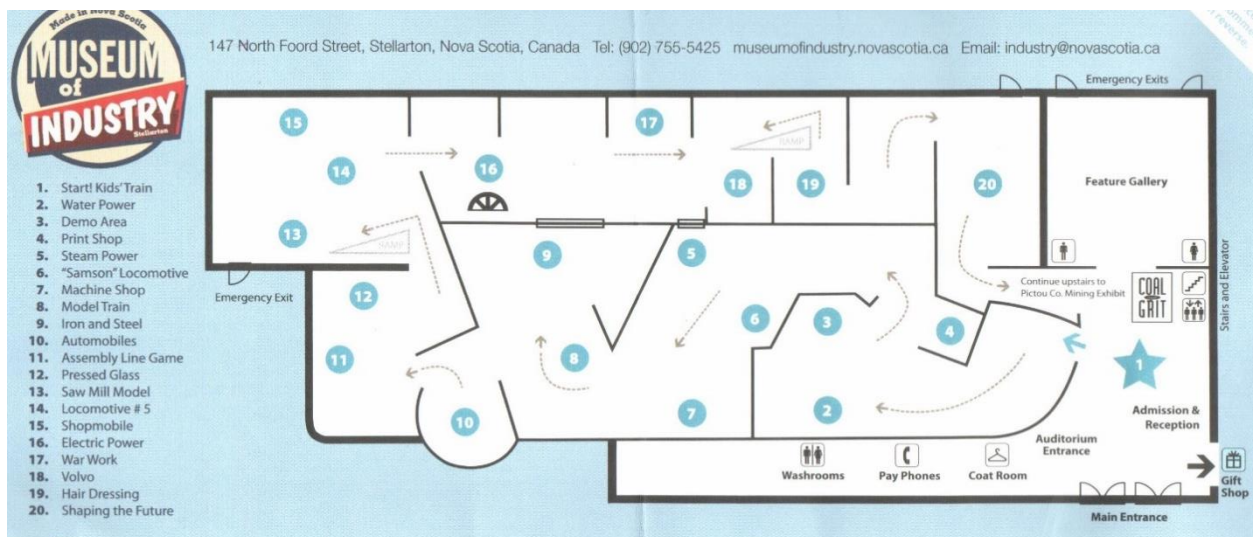
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<sup>5</sup> Linda Pannozzo, "Dirty Dealing," *Halifax Examiner*, November 22, 2017; and Miles Howe, "The Strange Case of Pictou County, Nova Scotia – A Community Supported by Toxic Mills," *Vice*, July 21, 2014, accessed March 29, 2017, [https://www.vice.com/en\\_ca/article/the-strange-case-of-pictou-county-nova-scotiaa-community-supported-by-toxic-mills-432](https://www.vice.com/en_ca/article/the-strange-case-of-pictou-county-nova-scotiaa-community-supported-by-toxic-mills-432).

<sup>6</sup> Jamie Simpson, *Journeys Through Eastern Old-Growth Forests: A Narrative Guide* (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, 2014), 90-94.

the tourism industry,” as opposed to the museum simply displaying the machine.<sup>7</sup> By the opening of the museum in 1995, the machines and objects on display also told the stories of workers. The exhibits were meant to focus “on the effects of industry on people's lives.”<sup>8</sup> The halls of the museum are focused on demonstrating the importance of Nova Scotia’s industrial heritage.

Figure 4: Map of the upper and lower galleries of the Museum of Industry, which is handed to visitors at the admissions desk



Source: Museum of Industry, “Map/Visitor Survey,” Stellarton, March 2010.

Before entering the Museum, the exterior is draped in industrial imagery. From a locomotive sitting adjacent to the front doors, to the remnants of the Cornish pumphouse in the middle of the parking lot and the old Via Rail station below, there is no doubt that it is a place dedicated to an industrial past. It additionally blends into the industrial

<sup>7</sup> Dan Gawthrop, “Museum to move in a different direction,” *The Monitor*, April 8, 1988.

<sup>8</sup> Steve Harder, “Getting down to work, at last,” *Chronicle Herald*, June 10, 1995.

landscape of the town in which it resides. Stellarton has historically been one of Nova Scotia's busiest coal producing hubs, the largest outside of Cape Breton Island.<sup>9</sup> It was not until the late 1820s, however, that it went from a small village to a rapidly growing town due to the General Mining Association (GMA).<sup>10</sup> As described by Judith Hoegg Ryan, the GMA and its successors "did not just provide jobs, they built communities providing housing, recreation, schools and churches."<sup>11</sup> Mining shaped the town, influencing all aspects of residents' lives – from education, commerce, and employment to residents' social and religious lives. The reliance on one employer and one industry meant that generations of residents of Stellarton were connected to coal mining in some fashion.

The GMA introduced commercialized mining to the region. Dozens of mines were sunk over a hundred years. These mines employed thousands of workers and supported generations of coal mining families.<sup>12</sup> The mines also shaped the physical landscape, and became symbols of workplace tragedy. Stellarton is lined with some of the deadliest mines in Atlantic Canada due to the high methane gas content within the coal seams.<sup>13</sup> Two hundred and seventy miners have been killed in Pictou County mine explosions since 1838, the most recent fatal explosion occurring in 1992 at the Westray mine.<sup>14</sup> The

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<sup>9</sup> Marilyn Gerriets, "The Impact of the General Mining Association on the Nova Scotia Coal Industry, 1826-1850," *Acadiensis* 21:1 (1991): 62-68.

<sup>10</sup> Hoegg Ryan, Judith Hoegg Ryan, *The Birthplace of New Scotland: An Illustrated History of Pictou County, Canada's Cradle of Industry* (Halifax: Formac, 1995), 21-25; Gerriets 60-61; and Phillip A. Buckner, "The 1860s: An End and a Beginning," in *The Atlantic Region to Confederation: A History*, eds. Phillip A. Buckner and John G. Reid (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 363.

<sup>11</sup> Judith Hoegg Ryan, *Coal in Our Blood: 200 Years of Coal Mining History in Nova Scotia's Pictou County* (Halifax: Formac Publishing, 1993), 8.

<sup>12</sup> Hoegg Ryan, *The Birthplace of New Scotland*, 22-31; and Christopher McCormick, "Preface to Disaster," in *The Westray Chronicles: A Case Study in Corporate Crime*, ed. by Christopher McCormick (Halifax: Fernwood, 1994), 14-15.

<sup>13</sup> Michael Earle, "Coal in the History of Nova Scotia," in *Industry and Society in Nova Scotia: An Illustrated History*, ed. by James E. Candow (Halifax: Fernwood, 2001), 74.

<sup>14</sup> Shaun Comish, *The Westray Tragedy: A Miner's Story* (Halifax: Fernwood, 1993), 2.

parks, trails, and monuments erected throughout the town pay homage to these miners, and the mining past. One of the more visible memorials is located on Stellarton's main street at the edge of the old miners' homes. The monument features a miner on top of a large column on which the names of every miner who perished are engraved. A plaque beside the entrance to the monument explains that it was originally erected in 1921 after a mine explosion at the Allan Shaft. The area around the monument is also recognized as a cemetery, as remains from a previous explosion in 1880 were found underneath in the 1920s. Since 1925, there has been an annual ceremony to commemorate all miners lost in Pictou County explosions.<sup>15</sup> The miners' monument is also the start of the Albion Trail, which was named after the former mine.

Figure 5: The Miners Monument along Foord Street, Stellarton.



Source: Photo by author.

<sup>15</sup> Jeff Fulton, "Remember the blood, the sweat, the toil..." *Evening News*, June 13, 1995.

The monument is surrounded by dozens of miners' homes. Often these homes formed smaller neighbourhoods such as Coxon Row, Cricket Row, Red Row, Pleasant Row, and Mulgrave Row, just to name a few, that were easily recognized as being mining communities.<sup>16</sup> These represented little communities within Stellarton associated with the mining families who worked, shopped, and socialized at the same places. The homes were grouped together in a way that allowed the mining companies to "build a mining community to breed and raise coal miners."<sup>17</sup> The separation of the rows also inspired a sense of belonging.<sup>18</sup> Some rows would have their own sports teams, or the children would identify with fellow Red Row residences or Pleasant Row families. Author and teacher Leo MacKay, who lived in Red Row, expressed this sentiment in a 1995 article he wrote for the *Evening News*. It was a call for Red Row residents to return to Stellarton for the annual Homecoming celebration. MacKay emphasized a sense of shared values, built on shared location and memories, in order to convince people to return to the town.<sup>19</sup> The homes, besides being reminders of the industrial past, further connect the town to other mining towns. The designs of the duplexes can be seen in most mining towns, such as Glace Bay and New Waterford.<sup>20</sup> They act as symbols, creating another level of an imagined community connecting the mining pasts. Stellarton's design thus reflects its

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<sup>16</sup> Aubrey Dorrington, *History of Stellarton* (Pictou: Pictou Advocate, 1976), 127-128.

<sup>17</sup> Hoegg Ryan, *Coal in Our Blood*, 124.

<sup>18</sup> Andrew Molloy and Tom Urbaniak, "Preface," in *Company Houses, Company Towns: Heritage and Conservation*, eds. Andrew Molloy and Tom Urbaniak (Sydney, NS: Cape Breton University Press, 2016), 1.

<sup>19</sup> Leo MacKay, "Red Row - A Coal Mining Community," *Evening News*, July 1, 1995.

<sup>20</sup> Richard MacKinnon, "A Typology of Cape Breton Company Housing," in *Company Houses, Company Towns: Heritage and Conservation*, eds. Andrew Molloy and Tom Urbaniak (Sydney, NS: Cape Breton University Press, 2016), 11.

industrial heritage. The Museum of Industry amplifies this image through its exterior design and the three galleries.

The halls of the Museum of Industry tell a story of labour, workers, and Nova Scotian products over roughly two hundred years. Three galleries house hundreds of artifacts, beginning with the upper and lower galleries on the main floor, and finishing with the Coal and Grits Gallery on the top floor. The upper and lower galleries were the first to be completed and opened in the 1990s. The exhibits are placed in a rough chronological order, beginning in the late-eighteenth century with pioneer industries (general labourers, blacksmiths, etc.), and weaving through two centuries worth of coal mining, milling, glass and steel works, and factories to reach the late-twentieth century and modern technological advances, including cellphones, portable computers, and online newspapers. The third gallery (Coal and Grits), however, is solely focused on Pictou County mines from the 1800s up to present day. It is the newest gallery, having only opened in 2008.

The main permanent exhibits begin in the upper gallery with an exhibit on early labourers. Focused on artisans and housewives, the artifacts included range from chisels, mallets, and tongs to a butter press and potato masher. The exhibit suggests that pioneer workers set the tone for the beginning of the province's industrial history. The panels often address the history of the industries, and then highlight the workers and their tasks. The 'pioneer' artisanal activities are followed by various mills and waterworks. Displays show the mechanics and products of grist, saw, and carding mills along with foundries and tanneries. Although there are fewer artifacts in this section, there are binders at each exhibit that include illustrations, advertisements, and general information about these mills throughout the province. Across from the waterworks is a room set up to showcase

quilting and handicrafts. The room features a handful of large artifacts, including a pump organ, sewing machine, weasel, and spindle.

The next area deals with the industrial revolution, beginning with a focus on coal mining. It is one of the more creative sections of the museum, as it is shaped to look like a real mine, with faux coal seam walls and cut-outs of miners working away at the seam. It emphasizes the importance of the GMA and solidifies the relationship between the coal mining town of Stellarton and the Museum of Industry. One of the first panels of the exhibit alludes to this, stating that “in 1827, on this spot, the future came to Nova Scotia.”<sup>21</sup> The GMA, in this sense, became an industry leader and is hailed as a hero in Nova Scotia’s industrial past. This is despite the toll its operations took on miners’ lives, the low wages, restrictive one-industry towns, and its aggressive behavior towards small businesses which (legally) began small-scale mining operations in Nova Scotia.<sup>22</sup> Besides the positive spin on the GMA, the exhibit involves several personal tools and objects from miners, such as a hat and an oil lamp, and panels to highlight the conditions of the miners' work and the dangers of the mine. The mock mine is followed by a steam power and foundries section, which includes the *Samson*, an iconic staple of the museum. In front of the *Samson* is a portable steam engine from the Robb Engineering Company of Amherst, and another one from Brantford, Ontario. There is also a caged off section that showcases a series of steam powered, belt-driven machines from the Drummond mine in Westville. These machines include a planer, threader, lathe, drill press, and grinder. These

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<sup>21</sup> Wall Text, *The General Mining Association*, upper gallery, Museum of Industry, Stellarton, Nova Scotia.

<sup>22</sup> Gerriets, 57; William Davey and Richard MacKinnon, “Nicknaming Patterns and Traditions among Cape Breton Coal Miners,” *Acadiensis* 30:2 (2001): 71; and Daniel Samson, *The Spirit of Industry and Improvement: Liberal Government and Rural-Industrial Society, Nova Scotia, 1790-1862* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University of Press, 2008), 239.

objects were secured from the mine in the 1970s by Sobey before the mine closed down, and were later donated to the museum.

Around the corner is a large model train set and large ingots, which were hauled along the rails in Cape Breton. Beside them is a series of objects made of iron that showcase how the museum has a wider range of source locations, including cast-iron stoves from Windsor and North Sydney, desks from Halifax, a gasoline engine from Bridgewater, a hinge from Guysborough, shelf bracket from Brule, and a rubber stamp from Pictou. There is also a shop featuring a cut-out of a pattern-maker and several patterns.

Just past the iron section is a small space for a couple of the museum's vehicles. The "Victorian" horseless carriage, built by John MacArthur of Hopewell in 1899, shares the area along with the McKay automobile, which was built by the Nova Scotia Carriage and Motor Company in 1912. The latter was reconstructed by the Pictou County Antique Auto club for the museum. It is followed by a series on factories at the end of the nineteenth century, especially those dealing with glass. There is a large section devoted to Pictou County-made glass bottles, including the makers of Francis Drake sodas. There is also a sizeable collection of ginger beer bottles from across the province, including from Yarmouth, Truro, Halifax, and New Glasgow. Besides the glass bottles, there is an interactive game that mimics boxing handcrafted chocolates. After the assembly belt, there is collection of pressed glass works. The display, which showcases various pieces including pitchers, plates, and cups, is accompanied by illustrations of the Nova Scotia Glass Company Limited that was based in New Glasgow. The display is across from a mock kitchen and a display of Oddfellows memorabilia, which mark the end of the upper gallery.



Upon entering the lower gallery, the ramp that descends between the two levels also has a few displays along the wall of Nova Scotia-made products such as chocolates, a brick, gunpowder, and a rawhide suitcase. The main floor of the lower gallery begins with an array of objects, such as a large excavator with a neon sign for Maritime Steel & Foundries of New Glasgow, the Shopmobile (an old bus that houses a collection of saws, files, bandsaws, drills, and hammers), a model sawmill built in Shubenacadie, and an engine from 1917 built in Philadelphia (although it was used in nearby Trenton). While not as cohesively sorted as other displays, the objects serve to introduce the audience to the twentieth century.

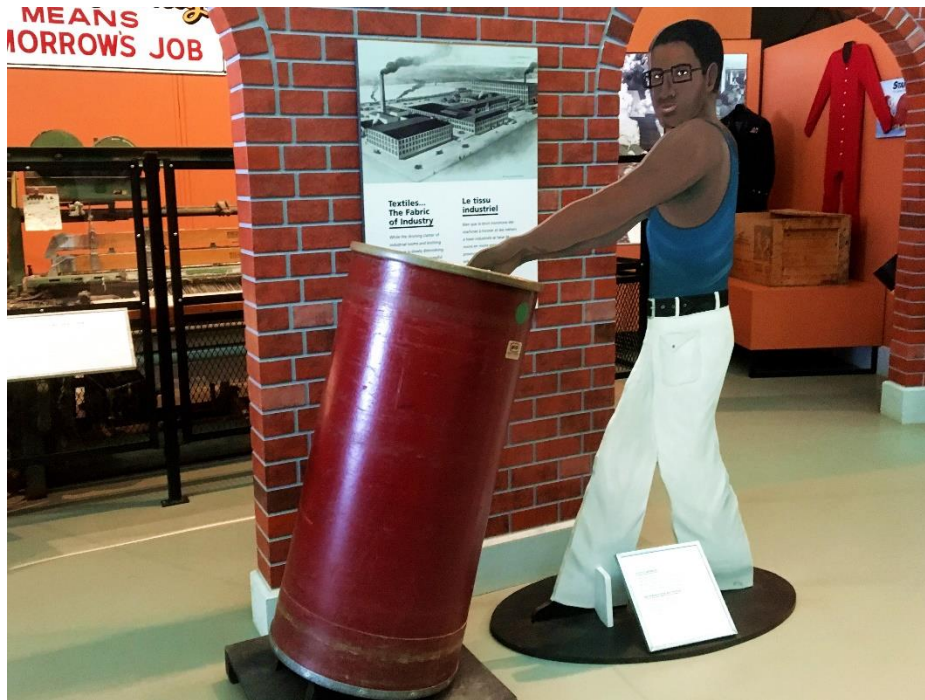
The next set of displays focus on electricity in Nova Scotia. The section is broken into two areas – one devoted to household objects and one devoted to generating power. The latter of the two features cut-outs of a lineman and a maintenance man, while also exhibiting a Brown-Boveri generator (made in Switzerland in 1927), electric street lights, and control panels used for monitoring the electricity production. The household section features a cut-out of a housewife holding a cord, surrounded by devices such as a radio, a fridge, a washing machine, and a streetcar handle.

Following the electricity section is one devoted to primary resources. It is dominated by the Robb Flywheel, made in Amherst. The Flywheel was used by Dominion Iron & Steel in Sydney as part of a steam engine. Behind the wheel is an array of products from the province, including Oxford blueberries, Lismore canned lobster, and Annapolis Valley apples. It then shifts from food to wood products and a display about pulp and paper mills. It continues to focus on large industries and factories, beginning with oil, natural gas, and shipping industries. A small panel about unions transitions the display towards displays about Clairtone, Michelin, and Volvo. Michelin's area

showcases two tires from its factories, and Volvo's section highlights the B 18 Canadian, which was the first Volvo made in Canada. Across from the car is a small display of Nova Scotia-made products, including Amos Pewter ornaments from Mahone Bay, Nova Scotia Crystal glasses, and ElastyLite from Bridgewater. Interestingly, despite the majority of these businesses closing fairly quickly after opening, they are celebrated as successful stories of Nova Scotia's industrial spirit. The emphasis is placed on the fact that these businesses even opened, rather than their short-lived time in the province.

There is a display about textile factories that mainly shows products and tools from these factories. A textile worker, who is also the first and only cut-out of an African-Nova Scotian in the museum, is seen pushing a draw can. It is troubling that it was not until near the end of the lower gallery that there is even a sign of any minority worker, despite there being hundreds of images, cut-outs, worker descriptions, and videos showcased in the exhibits. A prominent feature of the museum employed to highlight the workers' presence in industries are the cut-outs scattered throughout the upper and lower gallery. The wooden cut-outs depict various workers and jobs and include little panels that describe their tasks. There are about thirty-nine cut-outs that are visible, thirty of which depict white males, eight which depict white women, and one that depicts an African-Nova Scotian textile factory worker. The jobs vary, with the white males

Figure 6: Cut-out of a textile factory worker in the lower gallery of the museum



Source: Photo by author.

depicted as welders, coopers, blacksmiths, stokers, miners, surveyors, and glass blowers. At least one cut-out is in storage on top of the *Albion*, and depicts a white male working aboard the engine. Women are most often depicted as housewives (three times), although they are also shown as a lathe operator, apple sorter, filing clerk, printer, and a typist. The choice of cut-outs failed to capture the fairly diversified work force of Nova Scotia, erasing the important roles of industrial workers and business people such as Maurice Ruddick, Viola Desmond, and Dr. Carrie Best. Ruddick was one of the miners who survived the Springhill mining disaster of 1958. After the disaster, the survivors gained celebrity status, including Ruddick who was named the citizen of the year in a Toronto newspaper poll.<sup>23</sup> However, the reception was not entirely positive. Ruddick was the only

<sup>23</sup> John Demont, "Remembering the singing miner of Springhill," *Chronicle Herald*, February 8, 2015.

African-Nova Scotian miner in the group, and was discriminated against by the governor of Georgia. When the survivors visited the state, “the white survivors stayed at a new luxury resort. Ruddick, his wife and four of his kids bunked in trailers in a nearby black community.”<sup>24</sup> Similarly, Viola Desmond had faced segregation and discrimination when attending the Roseland Theatre in New Glasgow. Desmond was a beautician in Halifax, and managed her own salon.<sup>25</sup> In 1946, she was charged and convicted with failing to pay the proper tax for her theatre ticket after she had sat in the whites-only section that carried a one-cent tax difference from the ticket she bought.<sup>26</sup> While she had unsuccessfully contested the conviction, Desmond's actions “sparked a protest that led to the end of segregation in public facilities in Nova Scotia.”<sup>27</sup> She was pardoned years after her death, in 2010, by the provincial government. Best, a prominent journalist from New Glasgow, had helped to organize donations for Desmond’s case.<sup>28</sup> Best had fought a court case against the Roseland Theatre for its implementation of segregated seating in 1942.<sup>29</sup> Four years later, after the case was dismissed, Best began publication of the *Clarion* newspaper.<sup>30</sup> The platform allowed her to publish stories concerned with racial injustice in Nova Scotia. This included extensive coverage of Desmond’s case.<sup>31</sup> In 1974, Best was appointed to the Order of Canada.<sup>32</sup> Best, Desmond, and Ruddick represent industries highlighted by the museum, and while the cut-outs often show generic white workers,

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Constance Backhouse, “‘I Was Unable to Identify with Topsy’: Carrie M. Best's Struggle Against Racial Segregation in Nova Scotia, 1942,” *Atlantis 2* (Spring/Summer 1998): 16.

<sup>26</sup> Evelyn C. White, “Viola Desmond's Fight for Civil Rights,” *Herizons 28*, 4 (Spring 2015): 37.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid; and “Desmond Case Heard; Decision is Reserved,” *Halifax Chronicle*, January 11, 1947.

<sup>28</sup> Backhouse, 23.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 18-19.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 22.

<sup>31</sup> “Takes Action,” *The Clarion*, December 1946.

<sup>32</sup> Backhouse, 23.

there are plenty of real-life examples that prove that the industries were not as racially uniform as the cut-outs suggest.

There have been some efforts to include more diverse temporary exhibits and panels. In the autumn of 2017, for example, there was a series of banners displayed in the lobby before the main galleries from the Black Cultural Society of Nova Scotia. The panels gave the history of African-Nova Scotian communities, Black Loyalists, the Jamaica Maroons, and the War of 1812 Refugees. It further provides biographies of Dr. Carrie Best and William Hall. In 2015, the museum had an exhibit called “The Secret Codes” that showcased quilts largely from the African-Nova Scotian community around Pictou County.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, Nova Scotia Museum has acknowledged that there is more that can be done to expand the diversity of the museum. In 2009, a system-wide study was done to examine the state of all its museums and what should be done in the future in terms of what to collect, what to research, and what to expand. For the Museum of Industry, the study noted that it planned to work towards introducing new content on the Black experience.<sup>34</sup> It did not detail, however, how other minorities might be included in the story of the working class. There has been some effort to include minorities within the temporary exhibit hall, although it is still discouraging that the main halls lack representation.

Beside the textiles section, there is a section on industrial activity during wartime. Dominated by a lathe and a cut-out of a female lathe operator, the exhibit also showcases photos of the Trenton factories and some of the products made. The lower gallery

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<sup>33</sup> Museum of Industry, “Secret Codes,” Nova Scotia Museum, accessed January 21, 2018, <https://museumofindustry.novascotia.ca/what-see-do/feature-exhibit/secret-codes>.

<sup>34</sup> Nova Scotia Museum, *Interpretive Master Plan*, 191.

continues with a series of displays concerning service industries. The first of the series examines clerical work, with ledgers and documents spewed over a desk. Beside the office is a beauty salon, which showcases various tools (scissors, hair dryers, and chairs) used in the salons. A section on tourism follows, with a compilation of Margaret Perry's travel films playing on a loop, along with some of her film equipment on display. The end of the area begins to introduce advancing technology and computers, starting with a LGP-30 (an early version of a home computer), that was originally used in the Saint Mary's University's chemistry department. Adjacent to the computer system are early versions of a Macintosh Computer, tape recorders, and a cellphone.

Finally, the last section of the lower gallery, sponsored by the Maritime Telegraph and Telephone Company (now part of Bell Aliant), looks at the future, although in an out-dated, mid-1990s fashion. The area contains several computers that are loaded with a presentation on the use of technology today and in the future. While it does well to present a variety of themes on communications and newspapers, it dates itself when talking about the 'new' and increasingly popular concepts of palm pilots and online newspapers. It is difficult given the increasing rate of technological change in the last twenty years to have an exhibit that risks becoming so outdated that it no longer presents accurate information. One example of the exhibit dating itself is its attitude towards online newspapers. The presentation outright dismisses the growth of the medium and its ability to ever challenge the popularity of print newspapers. The 'future' is hard to base an exhibit around when the exhibit remains static and unchanged over the last twenty years, while the world around it continues to evolve.

Leaving the lower gallery, visitors emerge by the temporary exhibit area, which in recent years has housed exhibits such as "Hope and Survival: The Halifax Explosion

Memorial Quilt Project”, and “Glamour + Labour: Clairtone in Nova Scotia”.<sup>35</sup> Upstairs, the Coal and Grit gallery presents a series of photos, testimonials, and artifacts concerning Pictou County's coal mining history. Before entering the newest gallery, windows between the gallery's entrance and the storage rooms provide guests with a view of the stored artifacts, including the *Albion* engine. It is important to note that prior to the 2010s, the *Albion* was one of the key artifacts promoted in tourism guides by the museum. However, a change in image by 2013 (further discussed in the tourism section below), has left one of the museum's earliest engines in storage indefinitely.

The Coal and Grit gallery was guest curated by Judith Hoegg Ryan, a local historian and writer. It was shaped largely by the Stellarton Miners' Museum artifacts, along with additional artifacts and stories collected between 1995 and 2007. Originally a temporary exhibit, it has since been opened as a permanent gallery devoted to Pictou County's coal mining history. The gallery is lined with panels devoted to stories and quotations from former miners and artifacts that range from photos, lamps, and lunchboxes, to a pit tub, draegerman equipment, and letters from students for the families and friends impacted by the devastating explosion at Westray in 1992. The highlight of the gallery, however, is its personal focus on the workers. From the description at the entrance about the involvement of mining families in the exhibit, to the student letters on the last wall, the exhibit is devoted to those impacted by mining and their legacies. The quotations on the wall tie together the sense of community inspired by industry. One quotation highlights the ambitions of children in mining families, saying that “my father

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<sup>35</sup> Museum of Industry, “Glamour and Labour: clairtone in Nova Scotia,” Nova Scotia Museum, accessed January 18, 2018, <https://museumofindustry.novascotia.ca/what-see-do/past-exhibits/glamour-labour-clairtone-nova-scotia>.

took me down the Albion when I was a small boy, and I could hardly wait to get old enough to work there. I knew nearly all about it, as my father talked about the pit so much, and the neighbours – that’s the only language they spoke.”<sup>36</sup> This brings out what the museum was trying to highlight in its main galleries - that the story of industry is not just the machinery, the companies, or the products, but also the people behind the scenes who fuelled two hundred years worth of history.

What sets the Coal and Grits exhibit apart from the upper and lower galleries, however, is that it effectively demonstrates the relation between industry and workers, while giving an elevated platform for the workers. They were not treated as simple cartoon cut-outs with descriptions about their work, but instead their real stories were highlighted. The Coal and Grits gallery, unlike the upper and lower galleries, is built *around* the workers. While there is an emphasis on discussing the workers in the main galleries, it does not compare to how the Coal and Grits gallery has managed to present the real stories of workers.

As opposed to the lower and upper galleries, the Coal and Grits gallery also includes more balance between the positive and negative aspects of the coal industry. The halls are dotted with testimonials, artifacts, and photos of former miners, and photos of the mine and artifacts from their operations. It mixes both the success of coal mines with the dangers of Pictou County’s coal seams. As the area had higher levels of methane gas, it was more prone to explosions, especially if mines were not up to code, such as at Westray.<sup>37</sup> The tragedies that followed are well documented in the gallery. The Westray

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<sup>36</sup> Wall text, *The Mining Life*, Coal and Grits Gallery, Museum of Industry, Stellarton, Nova Scotia.

<sup>37</sup> McCormick, 13-14.



explosion, in particular, is well covered, with details of both the mine operations and the aftermath.

The museum's exhibits cover most areas of the province. However, history, for the museum, begins in 1800, which reflects the time period of many of its early objects. The timeframe ignores pre-colonial and pre-British Nova Scotia, which both have themes and examples of industrious activities (Acadian farming and dikes, for example) that mesh with the early 'pioneer' displays at the museum. It is worth noting, however, that the museum has had temporary exhibits that explored earlier periods than what is presented in the permanent exhibits, often dubbed as 'pioneer' activities, and had resource boxes available with early Mi'kmaq artifacts and books available for teachers.<sup>38</sup> However, the halls tell a story that positions the province's history through a selective, and, at times, colonial, lens. That is, emphasis is placed on post-1700s North America and concentrates on elevating the importance of European lifestyles.

The narrative presented by the Museum of Industry is shaped by the selection of what merits attention. To some extent, the Museum of Industry selected its own history to move through industries that reflect its artifact collections. Meanwhile, there are sometimes attempts to evoke personal connections with workers and their stories within the Coal and Grits section. However, the museum often offers a positive view of the industrial past. In an article about the proposed museum in 1988, then Dalhousie professor Ian McKay stated that "local historians can easily fall into the 'tourism trap,' of glamorizing Nova Scotia's past for the sake of the tourist dollar."<sup>39</sup> The museum wanted

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<sup>38</sup> Museum of Industry, "Museum Resource Boxes," Nova Scotia Museum, accessed January 18, 2018, <https://museumofindustry.novascotia.ca/educators/museum-resource-boxes/first-peoples>.

<sup>39</sup> Gawthrop, "Museum to move in a different direction."

to promote a sense of success and pride in both the province's workers and products. In doing so, the museum has, to some extent, offered a romantic portrait of industry in Nova Scotia. The panels throughout the upper and lower galleries tend to focus on three themes: hope, prosperity, and pride. There is no balance between the positives and negatives, but rather an intense focus on showcasing the strength of industry in Nova Scotia. The narrative is concentrated on proving the province's industrial past was noteworthy and successful, with only a few mentions of the failures. These include a sentence about the sinking of the *Ocean Ranger* off the coast of Newfoundland and the closing of the Deuterium of Canada plant in Glace Bay, and a small panel in the mining section. The latter has a few sentences on an explosion at the Foord Pit in 1880, before noting that "early on, the GMA established rules to minimize the dangers. Nevertheless, during the 1800s there were many underground floods, explosions, and fires in the mines of the GMA and its successors."<sup>40</sup> This is one of the few panels that addresses the dangers of the mines in the main galleries. Most panels are dedicated to telling generic blurbs about industries, workers, and products, and encouraging an optimistic view of both the past and future of the province. The main panel that introduces the lower gallery briefly states that "the prosperity of the intense industrialization could no longer be sustained," however the "advancements in the use of electrical power, improved transportation and communication, and more recently, the adoption of computer and information technologies, have helped Nova Scotia in its efforts to remain competitive."<sup>41</sup> The text,

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<sup>40</sup> Wall text, *Dangers*, upper gallery, Museum of Industry, Stellarton, Nova Scotia.

<sup>41</sup> Wall text, *A Century of Change: Nova Scotians Rise to the Challenge*, Museum of Industry, lower gallery, Stellarton, Nova Scotia.

which briefly mentions a sense of a decline, is thus quickly cushioned by an assurance for a prosperous future. The positive spin favours stories of growth, improvements, and pride.

This portrayal of industry in Nova Scotia invites reflection on the negative aspects of focusing on heritage instead of history. In a simple sense, all heritage is history but not all history is heritage. The selective nature of heritage allows the Museum of Industry to create a narrative that helps to sell the industrial past (and future). While it is not unusual for a museum to emphasise some themes more than others, one should note carefully what is left out of the story. Daniel Francis argues that this kind of idealization of the past helps to promote certain values, and that it represents a “glance behind to a better time when the world seemed to make sense.”<sup>42</sup> Often, the beginning starts at or after British colonization, making the selective story emphasize the importance of colonization and nation building. This is evident at the Museum of Industry, where ‘pioneer’ industry is seen solely through the eyes of the colonizer, and continuing with a selective history that is white, British, and male-dominated. The positive spin on industry and the colonizing rhetoric at the Museum are at times troubling. While the Museum of Industry has acknowledged that it needs to include more on African-Nova Scotians, there is more that can be done to address other gaps (such as environmental damage caused by effluent).<sup>43</sup>

### **Commemorating the Community**

Despite the selective history presented, the Museum of Industry fosters a local sense of community, especially within its Coal and Grits gallery. While the upper and

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<sup>42</sup> Daniel Francis, *National Dreams: Myth, Memory, and Canadian History* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1997), 12 and 176.

<sup>43</sup> Nova Scotia Museum, *Interpretive Master Plan*, 192.

lower galleries raise issues about how to present an accurate picture of the history of the province, the Coal and Grits gallery has become its own memorial of sorts, reflective of generations of miners and mining families. This is likely thanks to the work of the guest curator Judith Hoegg Ryan, who herself grew up in a coal mining family.<sup>44</sup> The majority of the research was completed by Ryan for her book *Coal in Our Blood*, in which she combines the history of coal mining along with interviews she conducted with various coal miners in Pictou County. The personal connections she had with the miners helped in the construction of the gallery, and added a sense of a shared community experience.

The sense of community is strengthened by the use of the Museum of Industry as a common space, an area for community events, and a forum for sharing the story of the community to the outside world through its exhibits (both temporary and permanent). It provides an example of how museums are not just about tourists, but also about the communities around them.<sup>45</sup> The Museum of Industry has become a communal meeting place, where dozens of different events are scheduled throughout the year. The Red Row reunion, for example, that Leo MacKay wrote about in his previously mentioned article took place at the Museum.<sup>46</sup> Book launches are popular, including events for David Rollinson's *Nova Scotia's Industrial Heritage: A Guide*, which was launched at the museum in November 2017, and later that month, for journalist Joan Baxter's book *The Mill: Fifty Years of Pulp and Protest* about the local pulp mill.<sup>47</sup> The museum has also had its share of more tragic events, most notably the meetings between the community

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<sup>44</sup> Hoegg Ryan, *Coal in Our Blood*, ix.

<sup>45</sup> Lester Bourley, "Museums and Tourism," in *Working with Museums*, ed. Timonhy Ambrose (Edinburgh: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1988), 12.

<sup>46</sup> Leo MacKay, "Red Row."

<sup>47</sup> Museum of Industry, "Book Launch," Nova Scotia Museum, accessed January 20, 2018, <https://museumofindustry.novascotia.ca/event/book-launch>; and "Museum of Industry to Host North Shore Launch of Joan Baxter's New Book," *Pictou Advocate*, November 21, 2017.

and the government during the Westray explosion inquiry.<sup>48</sup> While the community was still grieving, the museum opened its doors in order to accommodate the necessary next step in the inquiry. On the twenty-fifth anniversary of the explosion, the museum hosted a temporary exhibit dedicated to the memory of the twenty-six men lost in the blast.<sup>49</sup> It further commemorated the anniversary with a performance by the Men of the Deeps, a choral group from Cape Breton consisting of coal miners, following the commemorative ceremonies at the May their Light Always Shine memorial for the Westray victims. Since its founding, the Museum of Industry has thus grown to be part of its community beyond a display space for artifacts. Instead, it has become a meeting place, a place the community can count on to house events.

The relationship between the town of Stellarton and the Museum of Industry goes beyond supporting the community. The museum helps to reinforce and project the ideals valued by the community. Stellarton is an industrial town, and its sense of community is rooted in the coal mining tradition. Although coal has become less important to the town's economy (as there is only one open pit mine left in the town), the concept of Stellarton as a coal mining community continues to define the area. While the Museum of Industry helps to protect this identity, dozens of coal mining homes and public commemorations reinforce this image daily. Memorials, in particular, help to buttress this identity. They act to preserve the memory of the past, while signalling to residents what is meant to be held of the highest importance.<sup>50</sup> The Miners Monument was specifically

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<sup>48</sup> "Museum of Industry remembers Westray tragedy," *The News (New Glasgow)*, May 5, 2017, accessed August 16, 2017, <http://www.ngnews.ca/news/local/museum-of-industry-remembers-westray-tragedy-82283>.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Cecilia Morgan, *Commemorating Canada: History, Heritage, and Memory 1850s-1990s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 3.

placed besides Foord Street, the main street of Stellarton, between the town's busiest intersections. The Miners Monument ensures that the industrial past is not forgotten, while the Museum of Industry helps to echo this message.

The community and the museum are co-dependent on one another. It was the community that saved the museum in the 1990s, and it was community members who helped shape what the museum holds as valuable items. The Museum of Industry, in turn, has helped to preserve the stories the community believes to be pillars of shared values, while providing it a socio-economic hub. Vikki McCall and Clive Gray describe this as reflective of the 'new' museology, suggesting that by creating a space with the local community in mind, a museum provides an "active role for the public as both visitors and controllers of the curatorial function."<sup>51</sup> The community acts as both a catalyst for the narrative, while also influencing the narrative.

Advertisements for the Museum of Industry also project Stellarton's image outwards. The museum is the major tourist attraction in the town. As such, it acts as visitors' first interaction with what Stellarton values. It is the primary liaison between community and tourists, reflected in both the exhibits in the galleries and its focus on local artists, writers, and businesses in its giftshop. The advertisements for the museum within tourism guides help to promote the town, and emphasize the Museum of Industry's prominence within the Nova Scotia Museum system. This allows it to become a focal point not only of Stellarton, but of all the provincial museums in Nova Scotia. The advertisements also tend to reflect the values of industry espoused by the people of Stellarton in the effort to appeal to potential tourists.

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<sup>51</sup> Vikki McCall and Clive Gray, "Museums and the 'New Museology': Theory, Practice and Organisational Change," *Museum Management and Curatorship* 29, 1 (2014): 20.

## Industrial Heritage in the Scottish Shadow

While the museum can control what is included in the galleries, it also has some role in shaping its public image. That is, museums can shape the perspective of the potential visitor through advertising ventures, including in tourist guides, tourism literature, newspapers advertisements, brochures, and Nova Scotia Museum advertisements. While the Nova Scotia Museum controls the overall presentation of its advertisements, the individual museums chose their own descriptions for the directory section. In recent years, social media has also become influential, although this thesis will focus on print media, as it was the most prominent method when the museum first opened in the mid-1990s. This section also provides examples of other museums in the region and how they were presented to the public. Themes that emerged from the advertisements for the Museum of Industry centred on human connections, children-orientated experiences, and the promotion of industrial heritage in a region often flooded with Scottish imagery.

Tourist literature is an important source for this analysis, and for other scholarship on the history of tourism. Ian McKay, for example, used works by Will R. Bird and Thomas Raddall for his article “History and the Tourist Gaze.”<sup>52</sup> Within Nova Scotia, the provincial department responsible for tourism published tourism guides periodically for decades.<sup>53</sup> Since the late 1990s, the guides have been titled *Doer and Dreamers*, and have

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<sup>52</sup> Ian McKay, “History and the Tourist Gaze: The Politics of Commemoration in Nova Scotia, 1935-1964,” *Acadiensis* 22, 2 (Spring 1993): 116-124.

<sup>53</sup> The name for the department has changed numerous times over the past twenty years. In 1998 it was known as the Department of Economic Development and Tourism. In 2004, it was called the Department of Tourism, Culture, and Heritage. By 2011, it was known as the Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism. There were other name changes that were similar to those three as well, including an economic development agency that published the tourism guide in 1995 that was a branch of the tourism department at the time.

shifted from descriptive guides with a few maps, to colourful guides dominated by photographs and graphics by the 2000s. The editions from the late 1980s into the late 1990s featured maps, advertisements, regional histories, and directories for every region of the province. The guides were broken down into sections, starting with an introduction to the province, which largely set the tone for the outward image of Nova Scotia. The introduction typically highlighted some key tourism sites (beaches, museums, vineyards, etc.), major events, and some general information about travelling in Nova Scotia (how to get around, customs, border security). In the 1990s, there was also a series of Nova Scotia Museum advertisements highlighting its museums. Normally this included photos of the larger attractions (Museum of Natural History, Museum of Industry, Maritime Museum of the Atlantic) with a list of the smaller museums (such as McCulloch House, or Prescott House). This was followed with regional sections, originally sorted by road trails. Northern Nova Scotia, for example, was sectioned off into the Sunrise Trail, spanning from Amherst to Canso. The Lighthouse Route covered the South Shore region, from Peggy's Cove to Clark's Bay and Shelburne. There was more of an emphasis on regions rather than trails by the 2000s. The Sunrise Trail became the Northumberland Shore, while the Lighthouse Route became the South Shore. Each section begins with a short introduction to the region, which often characterizes the region and shapes what the guide wants tourists to visit by highlighting key attractions. The introduction is followed by descriptions of the towns and villages that make up the region, including historical facts, major roads in the area, maps for more populous areas, and key attractions. The description of each town and village was included up until the mid-2000s, when it was replaced with a more generalized but shorter section that highlighted key events, attractions, and food of the region. The rest of the section was made up of a directory,



which often featured accommodations, attractions, campgrounds, parks, and, eventually, eateries, and a few pages devoted to advertisements. Guides from the late 1980s up until the 2013, and a few copies between 2015 and 2018, were examined for this thesis. These sources largely reflect the time period during which the Museum of Industry was opened, along with a few years prior in order to analyze changes over time. The 2013 issue was the most recent issue available at the Nova Scotia Archives. Any guides past that date represent ones from my personal collection.

The imagery and text in the advertisements show a shift in how the museum was depicted to families. The language of the advertisements additionally signals what artifacts in the museum were valued. The advertisements further illustrate the museum's importance to Stellarton as one of the few attractions in the town. Prior to its opening, Stellarton was rarely mentioned as a site for tourism. Instead, the cultural tourism sector dominated the imagery projected by the region. However, this was not always the case, as any references to Pictou County in the 1980s made sure to focus on the region's rich industrial past. Much like how the Museum of Industry brought attention to industrial heritage tourism and Stellarton, the opening of the Hector Heritage Quay in 1992 shaped the image of Pictou County within tourism guides. While the Scottish image was promoted mainly by Pictou and to a lesser extent New Glasgow, the image was adopted to represent the entire region – including industrial towns such as Stellarton. Instead of focusing in the industrial past, the region was portrayed as a 'Scottish' centre for tourism. Highland Games, Scottish genealogy, and Celtic music dominated the County's descriptions, while the image of the ship *Hector* became the most recognizable image associated with the region.

In terms of the Museum of Industry, its advertisements begin to appear in the *Doers and Dreamers* guides annually in 1994. It normally had two advertisements in the guide, including one directory advertisement in the regional section (Sunrise Trail/Northumberland Shore, depending on the issue), and a joint advertisement with the Nova Scotia Museum. Its advertisements tended to focus on a few artifacts, the interactive experiences for the visitor, and the connection with workers. In 1995, for example, one advertisement noted that visitors could “experience the fascinating human story of industry in Nova Scotia.”<sup>54</sup> The advertisement went on to highlight the *Samson* and the “stories of real people”<sup>55</sup> at the museum. The overall purpose of these advertisements was to draw attention to the workers, rather than showcase the artifacts.

In contrast to the Nova Scotia Museum advertisements, the short blurbs from the Museum of Industry in the regional directory often referenced artifacts only, occasionally adding a sentence about industry in Stellarton or its interactive displays. In 1994, the directory focused on the artifacts, noting the presence of “a huge collection of industrial machinery from Pictou County and other parts of Nova Scotia. The *Samson* (c. 1838) was the first locomotive in British North America, operated at the Albion Mines in Stellarton.”<sup>56</sup> Interestingly, this was the first year that the Museum of Industry was listed in the directory, and it was described as an attraction in New Glasgow. Stellarton was effectively ignored except for a little blurb in the regional history about it being a centre of coal mining.<sup>57</sup> Similarly, the map for the region did not include the Museum of

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<sup>54</sup> Nova Scotia Tourism, *Nova Scotia: Doers and Dreamers' Complete Guide* (Halifax: 1995), 46.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> Nova Scotia Tourism, *Nova Scotia: Doers and Dreamer's Complete Guide* (Halifax: 1994), 137.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

Industry nor Stellarton until 1996.<sup>58</sup> In some way, the Museum of Industry put Stellarton on the map as it grew as an attraction.

Eventually the advertisements tried to incorporate more of the human stories present at the museum into the short directory descriptions. In 1998, for example, the advertisement focused mainly on industry and artifacts, with a small reference to workers and interactive displays:

Atlantic Canada's largest museum, on the former site of the Foord coal mine, chronicles the impact of Industrialization on the people, economy and landscape of NS with "hands-on" exhibits and interpretive programs. Also featured are Canada's oldest steam locomotives, *Samson* and *Albion*, and historic model railway layout, a belt-drive working machine shop, and a collection of unique Trenton glass.<sup>59</sup>

This advertisement was used every year afterwards almost word-for-word, except for when the museum decided to place more emphasis on attracting families. The full-colour Nova Scotia Museum advertisements went from showcasing images of trains, cars, and carriages to images of children visiting the museum and interacting with the newer playsets installed for them. These playsets included a playground shaped like a train and a few cabins and a little children's train beside the *Samson* that now houses a tablet that plays cartoons. The little engine, in particular, resulted in a major change for the *Albion*, as it lost its central place in the Museum of Industry's image. Despite being one of its first artifacts, it was moved out of the section on engines and into storage. While it is still visible through the windows on the stairwell that leads to the Coal and Grits gallery, the museum had decided to remove it from its core image. The directory advertisements reflected this change immediately. Instead of including the *Albion* (which the museum

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<sup>58</sup> Nova Scotia Tourism, *Nova Scotia: Doers and Dreamer's Complete Guide* (Halifax: 1996), 103.

<sup>59</sup> Nova Scotia Tourism, *Nova Scotia: Doers and Dreamers Complete Guide* (Halifax, 1998), 135.

had done since 1994), it was completely left out of all advertisements by 2012.<sup>60</sup> The removal of the *Albion* from photos of the museum in advertisements, as well as no longer singling it out as a prime artifact, effectively showed the change of focus of the Museum of Industry to attracting families by emphasizing children's activities rather than objects.

The largest change, however, was the shift in how the northern shore of Nova Scotia portrayed itself within the guide books. The northern shore is the region from the New Brunswick border to the Canso Strait along the Northumberland Strait. The majority of the population (and attractions) are located in Pictou County, which is treated as the main hub for the region. The area is known for its beaches and seafood, and has focused on promoting its Scottish image. However, despite being home to the Antigonish Highland Games for over one hundred years, the region had for decades defined itself as a mixture of Scottish traditions, seaside views, and a strong industrial past. In the 1992 guide, industries were highlighted throughout the text. Pictou County was defined as a place that “supports industry, forestry, fishing and agriculture. Extensive coalfields resulted in a large mining industry.”<sup>61</sup> There is no mention of anything remotely Scottish except for a short sentence about the ship *Hector* having brought Scottish immigrants to Pictou in 1773. The next year, however, it completely shifted after the Hector Heritage Quay officially opened in Pictou.

Similar to the Museum of Industry, the Hector Heritage Quay was proposed by local business leaders.<sup>62</sup> The owners of the local theatre and an inn had approached the town council in Pictou in the late 1980s to propose the building of a replica ship *Hector*, a

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<sup>60</sup> Nova Scotia Tourism, *2012 Guide for Doers and Dreamers* (Halifax, 2012), 205.

<sup>61</sup> Nova Scotia Tourism, *Nova Scotia: The Doers and Dreamers Complete Guide* (Halifax, 1992), 111.

<sup>62</sup> Donald MacKay, *Scotland Farewell: The People of the Hector* (Toronto: Natural Heritage, 2006), 222.

museum to showcase its story, and an annual festival to mark its arrival. The project was approved, and by the summer of 1992 the museum portion had opened for the public along the newly developed waterfront.<sup>63</sup> Following its opening, Scottish heritage became a key selling point of the region in provincial guides. In 1995, the description for the region emphasised that “surf, sand, and Scottish clans are the signatures that mark the Sunrise Trail.”<sup>64</sup> The guide continued to buttress the Scottish identity of the region, asserting that the “Scottish connection is strong here, and every summer the hills and dales echo with the sounds of bagpipes, drums, and fiddles.”<sup>65</sup> While it briefly mentions the historic mills, it was rare for the guide to stress the industrial aspects of the Northumberland Shore/Sunrise Trail rather than the beaches and Scottish heritage.

The celebration of Scottish identity intensified once the *Hector* was launched in 2000. The launch made international news, and upwards of 15,000 people attended the event in Pictou Harbour.<sup>66</sup> The ship has been referenced as Canada’s *Mayflower*, which has helped it to gain distinction.<sup>67</sup> The replica itself was based on a general idea of an immigrant ship, as the original design of the *Hector* was unknown.<sup>68</sup> The project was

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<sup>63</sup> Don MacIsaac, “Construction on the Waterfront,” HAGGIS: Hector Archiving Gateway and Genealogy Indexing System, McCulloch House Museum and Centre, accessed August 10, 2017, <http://haggis.mccullochcentre.ca/document/4649>.

<sup>64</sup> Nova Scotia Tourism, *Nova Scotia (1995)*, 126.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Kevin Adshade, “What a Splash!” *Evening News (New Glasgow)*, September 18, 2000.

<sup>67</sup> See “Hector Bicentennial Commission: The Coming of the Hector – September 16, 1773,” *The Occasional* 1, 1 (Spring/Summer 1973): 13-14; Robin Bates and Ian McKay, *In the Province of History: The Making of the Public Past in Twentieth Century Nova Scotia* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2010), 270; Donald MacKay, xii-xiii; “Canada had its Mayflower – the tubby good ship Hector,” *Pictou Advocate*, July 4, 1973; and Aly Thompson, “‘This is our Mayflower’: Ship Hector recounts voyage of Nova Scotia’s first big wave of Scottish settlers,” *National Post*, May 13, 2016, accessed September 1, 2016, <http://nationalpost.com/travel/this-is-our-mayflower-ship-hector-recounts-voyage-of-nova-scotias-first-big-wave-of-scottish-settlers>.

<sup>68</sup> J.B. McGuire Marine Associates Ltd., *Ship Hector Research for Pictou Waterfront Development Corporation* (Pictou: n.d.), 4-6.

about commemoration and commodification of the past, meaning that while it celebrated Scottish heritage, it also sought to capitalize on Scottish-themed tourism.

Tourism based in history often manipulates the past to benefit business.<sup>69</sup> While the *Hector* celebrates the Scottish heritage of the town, its depiction is a romanticized version of the ship's history. This evokes some of the earlier manifestations of Scottish tourism in the province and tartanism. The signs and symbols of a Scottish essence are vibrant throughout the town, from the images of Highlanders and Gaelic words on highway signs, to clan seals displayed on street signs along the waterfront.<sup>70</sup> Pictou has historically been a centre for Scottish tourism since at least 1923, when it hosted celebrations for the anniversary of the landing of the *Hector*.<sup>71</sup> Similar to the 1923 celebration, the modern museum takes the story of the immigrant ship and uses it to foster a stereotypical Scottish haven, where Pictou is defined as being 'Scottish.' Bates and McKay have argued that the assertion of a uniform, Scottish heritage is harmful as it ignores the Indigenous past, as well as the controversy around colonization and land grants, and promotes a white image.<sup>72</sup> Indeed, the *Hector* and its museum is similar to the Museum of Industry in terms of lacking diversity. The new *Hector* was not about representing an accurate history of the ship, but rather offering a heritage site designed to appeal to tourists. As Summerby-Murray described, "heritage discourse is constructed through the creation of memory and the processes of commodification and

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<sup>69</sup> Ian McKay, "Tartanism Triumphant: Construction of Scottishness in Nova Scotia, 1933-1954," *Acadiensis* 21, 2 (1992): 6.

<sup>70</sup> Bates and McKay, 19; and Peter Unger, "Lamp posts showing Scottish clan names, Pictou," Getty Images, accessed May 24, 2018, <https://www.gettyimages.ca/detail/photo/lamp-posts-showing-scottish-clan-names-high-res-stock-photography/614112813>.

<sup>71</sup> Bates and McKay, 272; and Michael Boudreau, "A 'Rare and Unusual Treat of Historical Significance': The 1923 Hector Celebration and the Political Economy of the Past," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 28, 4 (Winter 1993/1994): 28.

<sup>72</sup> Bates and McKay, 258-259.

consumption.”<sup>73</sup> While there is no doubt that the Hector Heritage Quay pays tribute to the passengers of the *Hector*, it also capitalizes on the Scottish image. These elements, such as a *Hector* tartan and Gaelic street names, have branded the town as defined by Scottish heritage, and further exploits the image of the folk and rural Highlanders.

The replica ship became *the* prominent image of both the region and of Scottish tourism in Nova Scotia. It was featured in the provincial focus pages (the few pages at the beginning of each guide that summarized what Nova Scotia had to offer) on at least two occasions between 2000 to 2010,<sup>74</sup> more than any other attraction from the Northumberland Shore. The regional pages also heavily featured the ship, most often as the main attraction and regional image. The regional tourism agency DEANS (Destination Eastern and Northumberland Shores) often featured the *Hector* over the Museum of Industry in its Northumberland Shore tourism guides, sometime using the ship as its cover.<sup>75</sup> The agency has largely focused on the cultural heritage of the region, calling Pictou County the “Tartan Coast: The Birthplace of New Scotland,”<sup>76</sup> and blanketing it with a Scottish essence. Almost identical to the provincial tourism guides, the DEANS guides insist that the region honours various cultures, stating that the “community owes its rich multicultural mosaic to the influence of our First Nations, English, Irish, French, African, Asian and Mediterranean ancestors.”<sup>77</sup> However, they continue to highlight only the Scottish culture, insisting that the Scots, especially those

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<sup>73</sup> Robert Summerby-Murray, “Interpreting Deindustrialized Landscapes of Atlantic Canada: Memory and Industrial Heritage in Sackville, New Brunswick,” *The Canadian Geographer*, 46, 1 (March 2002): 48.

<sup>74</sup> Nova Scotia Tourism, *2003 Doers and Dreamers’ Guide* (Halifax: 2003), 12-13, and Nova Scotia Tourism, *Doers and Dreamers’ 2008 Guide* (Halifax: 2008), 12-13.

<sup>75</sup> Destination Eastern and Northumberland Shores, *Do and Dream Nova Scotia: Northumberland Shore 2013 Travel Guide* (Halifax: Metro Guide Publishing, 2013), 1-7.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, 29.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid*

from the *Hector*, founded the county's towns, and that their traditions are celebrated in the landscape, arts, language, music and traditions of the area. It also paints Stellarton as a Scottish town, which seems contrary to both the town's appearance and promotional information used by the other local and provincial guides.<sup>78</sup> Pictou County is called a place where "the pipes will beckon you to step back in time and experience the journey of the first Scottish settlers to Nova Scotia."<sup>79</sup> Promoting industrial heritage does not mesh with the image of an old Scottish world loaded with images of Highlanders, clans, tartan, and Highland games, all centred around an eighteenth-century immigration ship.

Not all tourism literature focused overtly on the Scottish culture (particularly the *Hector*). In 1998, Adam Lynch released a guide to museums in the province, partially funded by the Nova Scotian government. In sharp contrast to tourist agency guides, the booklet pays little attention to the *Hector*. Instead, Lynch praised the Museum of Industry. According to Lynch, by the time he was writing the guide there were two-hundred and seventy-two museums and galleries in Nova Scotia, most of which he featured in the guide.<sup>80</sup> The guide gave each museum about a page with a photo and description and some general information. Interestingly, while the majority of the museums received one page each, Lynch chose to combine Pictou's three main attractions onto one page. The page allowed only short descriptions for the Hector Heritage Quay, McCulloch House, and the McCulloch Centre (then known as the Hector Exhibit Centre). The descriptions were not the most accurate, for example, the Hector Heritage Quay

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<sup>78</sup> See Pictou County Tourist Association, *Pictou County: 2007 Visitors Guide* (New Glasgow: Pictou County Tourist Association, 2007),

<sup>79</sup> Destination Eastern and Northumberland Shores, *Do and Dream Nova Scotia: Northumberland Shore 2013 Travel Guide* (Halifax: Metro Guide Publishing, 2013), 15.

<sup>80</sup> Adam Lynch, *Discover Nova Scotia: Museums and Art Galleries* (Halifax: Province of Nova Scotia and Nimbus Publishing, 1998), v.



description vaguely talked about Scottish immigration and asserted that the Quay is about numerous immigrations that occurred between 1763 to 1777, instead of that of the *Hector* in 1773.<sup>81</sup> Descriptions of other museums, such as the Sutherland Steam Mill, included a mixture of history and what was exhibited at the museum, or were given multiple pages to fully address their exhibits. In contrast, the Museum of Industry received two pages to itself, one of only a handful that were given more than one page (the others included the Museum of Natural History, the Halifax Citadel, and the Aviation Museum). The Museum of Industry was highly praised by Lynch. He singled out its attention to the stories of the workers, stating it shows “how hard work contributes to invention.”<sup>82</sup> The description detailed the exhibits, especially those concerning coal mining, and the cut-outs at the museum. Similarly, Springhill’s museum was described in detail and Lynch chose to focus on the coal mining industry.<sup>83</sup> Lynch came from a working-class family, which may explain the detailed entries for industrial museums and working-class stories compared to some of the cultural sites. The booklet had a preference for industrial heritage, and strayed away from the overtly Scottish image found within tourism guides.

## **Conclusion**

The Museum of Industry has cultivated an image that attracts potential visitors by emphasising its interactive attractions, while continuing to uphold the industrial values of its surrounding community. It has become a beacon of workers through its use of human stories, while maintaining its goal of preserving and conserving the industrial past of

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 33.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 35.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 23.

Nova Scotia. However, the halls of the museum offer a selective history that leaves minorities largely absent from the stories of the workers, while also managing to cleanse its portrayal of business failures and disasters from its main permanent galleries. While it is redeemed slightly with the balanced representation in the Coal and Grits gallery, the upper and lower galleries mostly offer a troubling and limited image of industrial heritage.

Tourism guides, however, tend to emphasize the human experience in the Museum of Industry. The guides stress workers' stories and experiences and the interactive activities offered by the museum. The museum has helped Stellarton to become a tourist destination, while acting as an ambassador for the town. However, despite its dominant presence in the Nova Scotia Museum advertisements, the Museum of Industry was greatly overshadowed by cultural tourism and the power of the *Hector* and Hector Heritage Quay in the marketing of northern Nova Scotia. Scottish tourism has, for almost a century, grown to define much of Nova Scotia in a homogenous way. Its strength in attracting tourists has been central to provincial and regional schemes for decades. While the Museum of Industry has excelled in portraying itself as a champion of the working class and the spirit of industry in Nova Scotia, it has often been left in the shadow of cultural tourism, as represented by the *Hector*, and Pictou's push for a Scottish identity.

## Conclusion:

### A Romantic Past, a Diverse Future?

In 2008, the Nova Scotia Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage published a report on culture and heritage in the province. Titled *A Treasured Past, A Precious Future*, the report's goal was to "ensure that heritage remains a vital part of Nova Scotia's future, enriching both citizens and society."<sup>1</sup> The report helped structure the future of heritage interpretation in Nova Scotia, and helped raise major issues within the current Nova Scotia Museum. It can nevertheless be summed up in one question: what does heritage mean for the province in the twenty-first century?

The research for the report originated from a Heritage Task Force. The task force, organized in 2005 by the Tourism, Culture and Heritage department, held meetings across the province with various heritage organizations and the public.<sup>2</sup> The task force's recommendations were released in 2006, and were the basis for the 2008 provincial report. The study recommended that the government work with heritage organizations (such as the Nova Scotia Museum) to develop and better promote the province's heritage and diversity, along with improvements to staff training and coordination between the government and the heritage organizations.<sup>3</sup> Diversity, in this case, referred to a need for increased representations of Mi'kmaw, Gaelic, Acadian, and African-Nova Scotian

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<sup>1</sup> Nova Scotia Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage, *A Treasured Past, A Precious Future: A Heritage Strategy for Nova Scotia 2008-2013* (Halifax: 2008), 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, 7-8.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, 5-11.

heritage across the province.<sup>4</sup> In response to the 2008 report, the Nova Scotia Museum examined its museums and created the *Interpretive Master Plan* to implement change system-wide. The purpose was to “identify significant stories and values inherent in the province’s cultural and natural heritage,” and to set out “practices, goals, and objectives, as well as strategies and recommendations.”<sup>5</sup> Its goals for the report included recommendations to diversify heritage interpretations, increase promotion, create self-sustaining programs at museums, increase involvement of local communities, and strengthen the knowledge of staff through training.<sup>6</sup> One of the main concerns was the lack of diversity. While there was plenty of Loyalist heritage on display, minorities were often underrepresented within the Nova Scotia Museum complex.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, it was noted that the museums rarely addressed “uncomfortable or controversial ideas,” as they often focused on positive or romantic narratives.<sup>8</sup> In essence, the state of some of the museums’ heritage interpretations relied heavily on a selective history.

The Museum of Industry was one of several museums that lacked diversity (other examples included the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic and Perkins House). A system-wide content survey noted that the Museum of Industry needed exhibits dedicated to minorities, especially Mi’kmaq and African-Nova Scotians.<sup>9</sup> While the museum indicated that it planned to develop exhibits concerning minorities, it is not clear whether the intention is to expand the permanent exhibits, or to include these topics through

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>5</sup> Nova Scotia Museum, *Interpretive Master Plan*, Nova Scotia Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage, (Halifax: March 2009), i.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, iii-vi.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 32.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 139-141.

temporary exhibits.<sup>10</sup> It has been nearly a decade since the publication of the *Interpretive Master Plan*, and the inclusion of minorities is not yet noticeable. The museum revolves around a fairly selective, white, male, colonial narrative. This version of history is prevalent in the province.<sup>11</sup> A limited version of history offered by the Museum of Industry also restricts discussions about the environmental impacts of industry. Again, this is another topic that the museum wishes to address.<sup>12</sup> The Museum of Natural History in Halifax includes air pollution, for example, in its exhibits, but the *Interpretive Master Plan* noted that there was a need for more analysis of this subject.<sup>13</sup> While a few temporary exhibits have attempted to address diversity and the environment, there is still a noticeable gap within the permanent exhibit. Does the Museum of Industry – or any industrial museum, in general – truly demonstrate the history of the working class if it does not address controversial and uncomfortable topics?

As Ian McKay noted in 1993, “constructing a narrative entails making ideological choices.”<sup>14</sup> The present interpretation within industrial museums in the province offers a romanticized heritage based on a positive celebration of the industrial past.<sup>15</sup> What is left out of the narrative is sometimes troubling. Industrial heritage tourism in Atlantic Canada has relied on a romantic narrative as a base, similar to cultural tourism. Histories selected for tourism sites are edited to suit particular narratives. The increased interest in

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 191-192.

<sup>11</sup> Robin Bates and Ian McKay, *In the Province of History: The Making of the Public Past in Twentieth Century Nova Scotia* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010), , 9-12, and Ian McKay, “History and the Tourist Gaze: The Politics of Commemoration in Nova Scotia, 1935-1964,” *Acadiensis* 22, 2 (Spring 1993): 121-122.

<sup>12</sup> Nova Scotia Museum, *Interpretive Master Plan*, 192.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 140.

<sup>14</sup> McKay, “History and the Tourist Gaze,” 121.

<sup>15</sup> Robert Summerby-Murray, “Interpreting Personalized Industrial Heritage in the Mining Towns of Cumberland County, Nova Scotia: Landscape Examples from Springhill and River Hebert,” *Urban History Review* 35, 2 (Spring 2007): 53.

capitalizing on the tourism market through local museums since the 1960s has helped to spread these romanticised stories.<sup>16</sup> The issue, however, is that often the history presented at local museums or in tourism guides is either romanticized to justify the importance of a community's history, or as a way to propagate an ideological version of the past. Certain aspects of history are celebrated in the guise of commemorating the past. Summerby-Murray notes that this can cleanse the history of the industrial past by ignoring "hazardous working conditions, problematic labour relations, and negative long-term effects on worker health."<sup>17</sup> The erasure of hardship is also evident within cultural tourism. The Hector Heritage Quay, for example, examines the voyage of the ship *Hector* and its passengers, but fails to address tension between the settlers and the land grant company, and the settlers' armed raid on a nearby supplies store.<sup>18</sup> Instead, it concentrates on celebrating their survival on their journey across the Atlantic Ocean. Likewise, industrial heritage often forgets certain aspects of industrial history to celebrate or commemorate certain stories or events.

Industrial heritage tourism has flourished in Nova Scotia since the 1960s by drawing on romanticised pasts. Celebrations of industry, its people, and the products of their labour became focal points for the Nova Scotia Museum's tourism advertisements by the 1990s. It often highlighted the Museum of Industry and its artifacts (including the *Albion* and the old Drummond Mine equipment) as a key attraction.<sup>19</sup> Despite the

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<sup>16</sup> McKay, "History and the Tourist Gaze," 110; and Nova Scotia Museum, "A Museum Development Policy for Nova Scotia," (Halifax: 1973), 1-2.

<sup>17</sup> Summerby-Murray, "Interpreting Personalized Industrial Heritage," 55.

<sup>18</sup> Lucille H. Campey, *After the Hector: The Scottish Pioneers of Nova Scotia and Cape Breton, 1775-1852* (Toronto: Natural Heritage Books, 2004), 23-28.

<sup>19</sup> Nova Scotia Tourism, *Nova Scotia: Doers and Dreamers' Complete Guide* (Halifax: 1995), 46; and Nova Scotia Tourism, *Nova Scotia: Doers and Dreamers Complete Guide* (Halifax, 1998), 9.

increased visibility of industrial heritage tourism, cultural tourism continued to dominate tourism literature. Within Pictou County, for example, this resulted in the region being branded as a Scottish tourism destination. Local tourism guides promoted the *Hector*, while provincial guides branded the county as a Scottish haven for Highland games, bagpipes, and Celtic music.<sup>20</sup> The elevation of cultural tourism is also evident amongst scholarship. McKay's *The Quest of the Folk* set the tone for examinations of the region's cultural tourism. Works that emerged primarily focused on fisherfolk, white settlers, and tourist literature, which largely ignored the industrial tourism that was also present within the tourism industry.

Industrial heritage has grown from small, refurbished mills to the creation of the Museum of Industry, the only general industrial museum in the province. Industrial heritage sites, in particular, managed to flourish since the 1950s because of several factors: available funding from the provincial and federal governments, an overall increase in museums, the closure of several industries, and a growing conservation movement. The Museum of Industry marked the height of expansion for industrial museums in Nova Scotia. Its struggle to survive through an economic recession also provides a case study of the role of political power shifts and community support in establishing institutions in the region. Governments and communities can shape museums, despite being outside of the day-to-day operations of a museum.<sup>21</sup> The Museum of Industry, for example, was subjected to austerity reforms by the Savage government. While its efforts for preservation and presentation were not necessarily

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<sup>20</sup> Nova Scotia Tourism, *Nova Scotia: Doers and Dreamer's Complete Guide* (Halifax: 1996), 102; and Destination Eastern and Northumberland Shores, *Do and Dream Nova Scotia: Northumberland Shore 2013 Travel Guide* (Halifax: Metro Guide Publishing, 2013), 1-7.

<sup>21</sup> Clive Gray, *The Politics of Museums* (United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 104.

controlled by the legislature, it nonetheless became the subject of controversy and a scapegoat of budget cuts. Its closure in 1993 rallied the local community together to support the museum and help finance its opening through the Friends of the Museum of Industry Society.

The Museum of Industry highlights the extent to which industrial heritage tourism, in particular, has been influenced by nearby communities and the provincial government. While several other industrial museums opened between 1970 and 1990, only the Museum of Industry sparked fierce debate in the legislature. The local response to the funding crisis illustrated the strength of the interest in industrial heritage in the community. Community-based societies, including the Friends of the Museum of Industry Society, drove industrial heritage tourism in the region. Despite the community support, however, the tourism landscape is dotted by photos of beachside activities and cultural tourism sites. This is especially true for the Northumberland Shore, where the image of the ship *Hector* has dominated the region's tourism since the museum opened in 1992. The area may have a vast array of industrial heritage tourism sites and a strong industrial past, but its image is rooted in a supposed shared Scottish heritage. While heritage narratives help to shape a rosy story of Nova Scotia's industrial 'golden age' at industrial museums across the province, their reliance on limited histories has encouraged depictions of the province as a uniform, sea-faring, and often Scottish tourist destination. With this in mind, it is apt to finish with the following quotation from Bates and McKay: "We have domesticated history. Tourism has helped us do it."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Bates and McKay, 371.



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**Appendix A:**  
**The Nova Scotia Museum Complex**

The Nova Scotia Museum complex is made up several sites across the province, creating a large decentralized network. At the time of the Museum of Industry's opening, there were twenty-five museums within the complex. As of 2018, however, there are twenty-eight museums. The sites are managed either by Nova Scotia Museum, or by local societies. McCulloch House in Pictou, for example, is locally managed by the Pictou County Genealogy and Heritage Society.

The following is a list of museums within the network in 1995, along with their respected location and date of opening as part of the Nova Scotia Museum (some museums were owned or operated by local societies prior to their acquisition by the province).

- Museum of Natural History, Halifax, 1868 (originally known as the Provincial Museum/Nova Scotia Museum, it was made into its own museum after 1970)
- Haliburton House, Windsor, 1960
- Perkins House, Liverpool, 1960
- Uniacke House, Mount Uniacke, 1960
- Balmoral Grist Mill, Balmoral Mills, 1966
- Barrington Woolen Mill, Barrington, 1966
- Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, Halifax, 1967
- Lawrence House, Maitland, 1967

- Ross Farm Museum, New Ross, 1970
- Ross Thomson House, Shelburne, 1971
- Prescott House, Port Williams, 1971
- Sherbrooke Village, Sherbrooke, 1971
- McCulloch House, Pictou, 1972
- Firefighters' Museum of Nova Scotia, Yarmouth, 1973
- Wile Carding Mile, Bridgewater, 1974
- North Hills Museum, Granville Ferry, 1974
- Sutherland Steam Mill, Denmark, 1975
- Cossit House, Sydney, 1975
- Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic, Lunenburg, 1976
- Fishermen's Life Museum, Head of Jeddore, 1977
- Old Meeting House, Barrington, 1979
- Dory Shop, Shelburne, 1980
- Shand House, Windsor, 1983
- Fundy Geological Museum, Parrsboro, 1993
- Museum of Industry, Stellarton, 1995