

Project Report

Preliminary Report on the Baccalieu Trail Traditional Knowledge Inventory

*To safeguard traditional skills and knowledge by
linking tradition bearers with the tourism industry.*

Prepared for:

The Harris Centre
Memorial University of Newfoundland

Prepared by:

Dr. Holly Everett
Katie Crane
Dale Jarvis

Overview of project

Newfoundland and Labrador has long been building cultural businesses based on aspects of our intangible cultural heritage (ICH). Traditional crafts such as hooked mats, tea dolls, carvings, knitted goods, and boots and slippers made from animal skins are on display in heritage and craft shops all over the province. Traditional music is the backbone of the province's music industry. Heritage theatre presentations and "Times" interpreting our history and incorporating traditional forms of music and dance abound.

At the same time, there is both a decrease in the transmission of some traditional skills and knowledge, and a recognized need to grow traditional knowledge and people-based businesses to increase regional sustainability. The Traditional Knowledge Inventory is intended as a pilot project to: (1) identify existing knowledge holders (craft producers, storytellers, musicians, interpretive guides, and artisans); and (2) create a series of case studies of those knowledge holders already working in some way in the creative economy.

This project focuses on the Baccalieu Trail region of Newfoundland and Labrador, an area covering the Northwest portion of the Avalon peninsula. It involves tourism professionals and local tradition bearers/intangible cultural heritage practitioners as identified by the communities.

The main goal of the project is to create a list of tradition-bearers from the region, as well as a series of case studies profiling selected participants and how they use tradition or traditional knowledge to create local business opportunities, as a way of inspiring other tradition bearers to attempt similar work.

Memorial University faculty lead for the project is Dr. Holly Everett, Department of Folklore, with research conducted by M.A. Public Folklore Co-op intern Katie Crane, supervised by Dale Gilbert Jarvis, Adjunct Faculty in the Department of Folklore and Intangible Cultural Heritage Development Officer with Heritage NL.

This report outlines how the team is working to identify possible partnerships, and to create a publicly accessible spreadsheet of tradition bearers in the region, as well as a small number of case studies illustrating people/organizations already doing good work in the sector (ie Wooden Boat Museum of NL packaging skills-learning vacations).

The long term goals of the project are to improve the quality, quantity, and value of tourism offerings along the trail, building stronger communities through sustainable cultural tourism.

Research continues, with a projected final project end date of January 2021.

Methodology

The identification of tradition bearers started by sending recruitment letters to the participants of previous Harris Centre's Thriving Regions workshops in the Baccalieu Trail region, as well as regional town councils, and distributing through social media (HeritageNL's twitter and facebook page). A media release was distributed (see Appendix 1) and resulted in interviews on CBC Radio and VOCM. As well, an online Facebook live launch was held to introduce the region to the project, and a social media campaign (Fig. 1) on Facebook and Twitter followed.

These efforts directed potential participants to an online survey made with Google Forms at www.heritagecraft.ca. This was distributed along with the recruitment letter to identify people who were willing to participate. A facebook group, Baccalieu Trail Heritage and Memories, was created to allow for easy distribution of information obtained through interviews, as well as to direct potential respondents to the survey. The group has 99 members as of July 2020.



(Fig 1. Example of social media graphic by Katie Crane)

This project will create a publicly accessible inventory spreadsheet to record the local talent and unique characters from the region readily available to partner with traditional tourism operators to enrich the visitor experience. The inventory will be accessible through the HeritageNL website (www.heritagenl.ca). Therefore, in order to be included in the study, participants were required to consent to have their name, community, contact information, and traditional skills represented included in a publicly-accessible inventory. Contacts who did not consent to have this information made public were not included in the study. Participants were able to suggest other participants through a snowball sampling method.

Survey results

As of the end of July 2020, 18 participants have been identified for inclusion in the project. Followup research in the form of emails, phone calls, submission of photographs, and recorded interviews were conducted. As of July 2020, eight blog

posts were shared through the Heritage NL blog at www.ichblog.ca and distributed on various social media platforms using the #MakerMonday hashtag. These posts provided detailed information and photos on individual participants along with audio clips.

Sample Blog Post: Boatbuilder Edwin Bishop

Edwin Bishop of Heart's Delight-Islington learned how to build wooden boats from watching his father. Boat building skills were passed down through generations, and he has been building wooden boats since he was a teenager. He estimates he has built around 36 boats to date. Last year, he launched what he swore would be his last boat but he is already building another one for his granddaughter. As he says, "Sometimes I think I'm just crazy about boats."

The hardest part about building boats, Edwin says, is choosing the design. Each boat serves a different purpose, so depending on what you want to use your boat for it will influence which design you choose. Edwin loves to build boats that can accommodate sails. He and his wife have taken many sailing trips in boats Edwin has built. Listen to Edwin's advice on what makes a good boat below!

I think what makes a good boat is the design. The shape of it and the design is what makes a good boat for me, right? I got a phrase that I use from my father that you probably heard before, too, "A beautiful boat is a cranky boat." Now, most people don't to have anything to do with a cranky boat because they figure they're not safe and so on, but for me, and I learned from my father, if you're going to build a boat make sure she can wear a set of sails, and make sure she's a little bit cranky because she'll be better as a sailboat. You know, the curves and the lines...I build all kinds of boats, but a round bottom boat for me is a real boat. The round bottom, a nice sheer curve on top, and when you look at her on the water she's round, and she's curved, and she's pretty.

Edwin credits the [Wooden Boat Museum of Newfoundland and Labrador](#) for working tirelessly to preserve and pass on boat building knowledge, including his own. He said

he has learned a lot from them, and is glad of the work they do bringing education about wooden boats to the younger generation.

He also makes traditional wooden snowshoes, steaming and bending the wood by hand and tying intricate knots. He began learning this skill because he needed to repair the snowshoes he owned. Once he got started, he found it was something he enjoyed. He does say that it is a complicated process, especially tying the knots. He recalls the first pair of snowshoes he made and how he woke up his wife and his visiting sister with his celebratory shouts when he successfully figured out how to tie the knots after working on them until the wee hours of the morning.

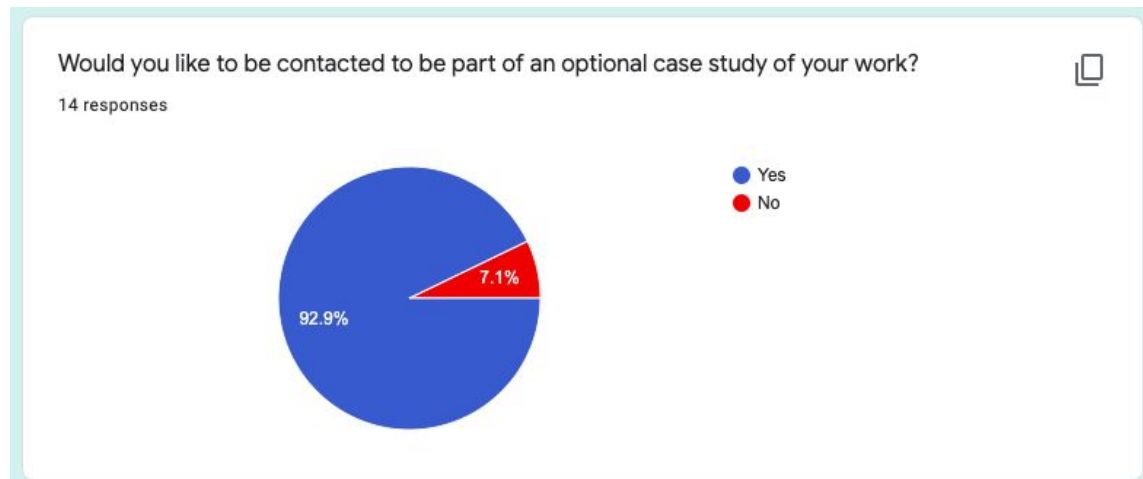
Edwin describes knowing how to build boats and make snowshoes as almost a spiritual experience. He says when he when he sees stuff coming out from his hands, it is like being given a gift, one that he is lucky to have. He also appreciates the way that these skills connect him, and also his grandchildren, to people who were living almost 100 years ago. He says being able to do the same thing that his father, and his grandfather did, is very important to him, and he hopes that others will continue to do the work to celebrate these skills and help future generations connect with them like he has.



Case Studies

Of those who filled in the online survey, over 90% said they would be interested in being interviewed for a case study (Fig. 2). Participants who wished to be included in a case study were followed-up with a recorded phone or video chat conversations utilizing a 10 question oral history questionnaire (see Appendix 3).

Fig.2



The case studies may consist of photographs, biographical information about the featured tradition bearer, quotes taken from oral history interviews conducted with that individual, and a description of how they are using traditions, cultural practices, or local folklore to create income.

Finished case studies will be made available in print form, with digital copies available online at HeritageNL's website (www.heritagenl.ca), and digital copies of completed case studies housed online on Memorial University's Digital Archives Initiative. Audio copies of recorded phone interviews will be housed online on Memorial University's Digital Archive Initiative. A draft version of one of these case studies can be seen at Appendix 4.

Preliminary Baccalieu Trail Traditional Knowledge Inventory

Information collected to date for inclusion in the public inventory, by community.

Blaketown

Wendy Mills-Sheppard

709-536-8495

wemish10@gmail.com

painter, printmaking

There is no better feeling than being able to make things with your own hands. Wendy enjoys the process as much as the result. Trained in the art of printmaking, Wendy works in this medium (mainly linocuts) as well as painting, drawing and photography. Wendy has been an Art teacher in a grade 7-12 school for 17 years.

www.wendymillssheppard.com



Carbonear

Greta LeShane

gretaleshane@gmail.com

vegetable gardening

Greta is a home vegetable gardener with a YouTube channel 'Greta's Garden' which offers advice and tips to those looking to start their own gardens. Her picturesque property is secluded and overlooks the historical Carbonear Island. She aims to eventually turn her vegetable garden into a destination tourist stop.

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_k3OnEI6UyrneeQCgm84kw



Ernie Pynn
709-589-4839

traditional music

Ernie Pynn of Carbonear started playing guitar with a band when he was in high school. He credits seeing Ryan's Fancy in concert at the stadium in Harbour Grace with inspiring him to play traditional music. He plays with his friends as the group *Long Drung* at senior's homes and fundraisers along the Baccalieu Trail.



Freshwater

Gerry Strong
gerrystrong@gmail.com

wooden flute and tin whistle player

Gerry is a whistle and wooden flute player who co-founded the award winning group Tickle Harbour and has since been a member of *A Crowd of Bold Sharemen*, *What Odds* and most recently *Cotillion* with Dave Panting and Hugh Scott. With the first two groups he recorded four albums and toured across Canada, Ireland, England and Australia and has just released *Cotillion's* first CD, *Tinker's Wagon*. Gerry has appeared as a guest musician on a multitude of recordings including that of Irish uilleann piper Paddy Keenan's *Na Keen Affair*, on which he teamed up with Paddy to play his composition the Killdevil Air. In 2008 he recorded his own CD entitled *Velvet in the Wind*, which features many of the top traditional players in Newfoundland and Labrador today. In 2017 he was awarded the Slaight Family Unsung Hero Award at the Canadian Folk Music Awards in Ottawa for his contributions to the Canadian folk music scene.



Gull Island

Edward Delaney
709-584-3245

carving, knife making

Edward is a true outdoorsman, and has been practicing and perfecting his wood carving for the past 20 years. He makes his own knives for hunting and for carving. He is a skilled hunter and believes in promoting sustainable traditional skills.



Harbour Grace South

Ed Spurrell
709-596-3646

Berry Picking, Splitting Fish, Filleting fish, Salting fish, Storytelling (Local Oral History), Wood Working, Vegetable Gardening, Smoking Capelin, Card player (120s)

Ed Spurrell is an avid fisherman, hunter, card and dart player, and enjoys telling stories about local oral history. He likes to keep busy with berry picking, splitting, filleting and salting fish, vegetable gardening, and smoking capelin.

Heart's Content

Laurie Pitcher

709-683-4971

sealskintreasures@live.com

sealskin products

Laurie has always had a passion for sewing after her grandmother taught her to sew when she was 12 years old. Her love of working with sealskin came about after her husband asked her to make him a sealskin jacket. Now she makes purses, hats, mitts, jackets and a variety of other products. Her products are sold online and at craft fairs across the province.

<https://www.sealskintreasures.com/>



Heart's Delight-Islington

Edwin Bishop

709-588-2516

bished@gmail.com

wooden boat builder, traditional wooden snowshoes

Edwin Bishop learned how to build boats by watching his father, and has been building boats himself since he was a teenager. He has built 36 boats to date. He also makes traditional wooden snowshoes, steaming the wood into shape and tying the knots. He hopes that by sharing these traditional skills he can help inspire younger generations to carry on these traditions.



Barb Parsons-Sooley
barbparsons1@gmail.com

stories and history of hiking trails

Barb Parsons-Sooley is an avid hiker on the Baccalieu Trail and grew up in Bay Roberts and Port de Grave. Her family roots are here and she has always loved to listen to the stories that get passed on by others. She operates a guiding company to take people on the trails and share the history and stories with them.



Holyrood

Burl Tooshkenig
burtoosh@gmail.com

Indigenous basket making, quill worker, bead worker

Burlington Tooshkenig is a traditional sweetgrass basket maker. The lids of the baskets are elaborately decorated with beading or embroidery. This knowledge is a dying art but Burl tries to teach it as often as he can.



New Perlican

Kevin Andrews
709-583-2909

wriggle fence making

Kevin Andrews learned how to build traditional wriggle fences by helping his father and uncle. Concerned this knowledge would be lost, he constructed one on his own property to pass the skills on to his children.

Michael Laduke
mladuke@live.ca

stained glass

Michael Laduke is a self-taught stained glass maker who has been working with stained glass for almost 50 years. He operates his studio out of his bed and breakfast in New Perlican. He prefers to create stained glass suncatchers based on Newfoundland and Labrador scenery and focuses on nautical themes.



Northern Bay

Nora Mullaley Delaney
709 584-3482

bread baking

Whiteway

Shana Brown
709-683-2102

Rug hooking, baking, crocheting, button accordion

Shana may be young, but she is an old soul at heart. She is very energetic and always wants to try new things. Her grandmother, a Grenfell rug hooker, has taught her how to hook rugs and how to crochet. She is an accomplished button accordion musician and enjoys playing traditional Newfoundland music.



Clifford George
709-325-0226

painter, storyteller, Newfoundland Ponies

Clifford George is an artist and storyteller living in Whiteway, Newfoundland and Labrador. While he's primarily self-taught, Clifford also received a formal art education at the College of Trades and Technology in St. John's. He has painted and studied with well-known Newfoundland artists like Gerald Squires, Frank LaPointe and Don Wright. Clifford also worked as a medical artist at the Health Sciences Centre at Memorial University. You can find Clifford's work at the Christina Parker Gallery in St. John's.



Jasmine Paul

jnp385@mun.ca

Textiles, folk craft, fishery

Jasmine Paul is a textile artist, apprentice fish harvester, writer, academic, and otherwise a Jill-of-all-trades. She grew up in Whiteway and has been selling her crafts since she was three years old. She has a diploma in textiles, craft, and apparel design and is working on a BA with a major in Folklore and minor in Gender Studies. She is passionate about intangible cultural heritage, material culture, and Newfoundland and Labrador's heritage fishery.



Appendix 1 - Media release

Media Release: Hidden Gems of the Baccalieu Trail - Traditional Skills Inventory Launch

For immediate release - Friday, 15 May 2020

Do you know an expert berry-picker? The best local net mender or sheep shearer? Who in your community hooks mats or makes furniture? Heritage NL wants to know!

Heritage NL is looking to identify people in the Baccalieu Trail region who are the 'hidden gems' of Newfoundland traditions: storytellers, musicians, berry-pickers, hooked mat makers, carvers, knitters, guides, craft producers, and people who know traditional recipes, dances, or other local knowledge.

The purpose of the project is to build a publicly accessible inventory of tradition bearers which will serve as a local resource to match people who have valuable traditional skills with tourism operators in the region. The inventory project is part of Memorial University's Thriving Regions Partnership Process, which supports research partnerships that help promote thriving social and economic regions.

"We are eager to learn more about a variety of traditional skills in the area," says Heritage NL folklorist Dale Jarvis. "We are curious about net making and mending, pottery making, furniture making, tinsmithing, crocheting, tatting, and running birch brooms, but all kinds of skills or crafts are of interest."

Heritage NL will be launching the project on Wednesday, May 20th at 10am NDT with a Facebook Live event on the Heritage NL facebook page:

www.facebook.com/hfnlca/live. Join Jarvis as he talks about the importance of the project and how to get involved.

Heritage NL has created a brief four-minute online survey to help identify these hidden gems. Anyone interested in the project is invited to fill out the online survey at www.heritagecraft.ca or contact Heritage NL at research@heritagenl.ca.

Appendix 2 - Text version of survey form

Baccalieu Trail Traditional Knowledge Inventory

Heritage NL is looking to identify people in the Baccalieu Trail region who are the 'hidden gems' of Newfoundland traditions: storytellers, musicians, berry-pickers, hooked mat makers, carvers, farmers, knitters, guides, craft producers, and people who know traditional recipes, dances, or other local knowledge.

The purpose of the study is to build a publicly accessible inventory of tradition bearers. This inventory will serve as a local resource to match people who have valuable traditional skills with tourism operators in the region.

Are you someone with traditional skills who wants to share your skills with others? Do you wish to be listed on a public inventory designed to connect you with tourism promoters on the Baccalieu Trail?

Yes

No, but I have suggestions!

Who should we talk to?

Do you have ideas or suggestions about people in your region we should contact?

Yes

No

For Tradition Bearers:

The information you provide will become part of a publicly accessible inventory of tradition bearers on the Baccalieu Trail. By checking this box you agree to share your information with tourism operators in your region.

I consent to have my name, community, contact information, and skills added to a publicly accessible inventory.

I do not wish to be added to this inventory.

Full Name

Community

What skills would you like to share?

Contact information (phone number/email address)

Would you like to be contacted to be part of an optional case study of your work?

Yes/No

Short bio (50 words)

Who should we talk to?

What is their name?

What do they do?

Where are they from?

How can we get in touch?

Thank you for participating in our project!

If you have any questions you can contact us at:

research@heritagenl.ca

Appendix 3 - Oral History Questionnaire for Case studies

1. How did you first get started with this particular tradition/skill?
2. What was the learning process like?
3. What is the most challenging or difficult aspect of the tradition to learn?
4. What opportunities has this tradition offered you?
5. Could you describe the process from start to finish?
6. Who do you create this for?
7. What makes a good (thing they do, e.g. boat or hooked mat)?
8. What do you value most about what you do? Why?
 - a. What do you think it is most important that people know about this tradition?
9. What new things have you (seen) incorporated into this tradition?
10. What needs to be in place so that future generations can also learn this tradition?

Appendix 4 - Sample Case Study



Heritage NL

Building On Traditional Knowledge:
Wooden Boat Museum of
Newfoundland & Labrador

Living Heritage Economy

CASE STUDY 004 • HERITAGE NL • JUNE 2020

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1-888-739-1892

www.heritagefoundation.ca

Building On Traditional Knowledge: **Wooden Boat Museum of Newfoundland & Labrador**



The Wooden Boat Museum of Newfoundland and Labrador was established as a provincial museum in 2008 with its headquarters in Winterton. Its mandate is to connect wooden boat builders and wooden boat enthusiasts across the province and to encourage sharing the knowledge and skills associated with traditional wooden boat building.

Over a period of centuries, the fishery has created a bond between those who live along the rocky shores of Newfoundland and Labrador and the sea. Generations of fishermen have relied upon traditionally-made wooden boats to provide for their families and ensure their survival at sea.

These wooden boats were the workhorses of the fishing industry and the designs were often regionally distinct from one outport community to another. The transmission of boat-building knowledge has declined in the past half-century, but in Winterton, one organization is working to safeguard this knowledge and pass it on to future generations.

A small fishing community in Trinity Bay, Winterton has a long tradition of boat building. In the 1970s and 80s folklorist David Taylor conducted

fieldwork as a graduate student in Folklore at Memorial University in the community, taking extensive photographs and notes on the construction and design of the unique boats built in this community.

It was this information that inspired the Winterton Heritage Advisory Board to create what they thought would be a temporary exhibit for Come Home Year in 1997. The display proved to be so popular that it was converted to a permanent exhibit, and eventually expanded to celebrate wooden boats not just in Winterton, but across the province.

People in Winterton, including the sons and daughters of many of the boat builders I interviewed remembered my research and writing when, in the late 1990s, they started thinking

about establishing a museum dedicated to local history. Would I mind if my research was used as the basis for the exhibitions? Of course, I said I would be delighted. It would be a way for me to thank the community that had been so generous.
– Dr. David Taylor

Boat builders working today combine traditional skills passed down through the generations with contemporary materials, showing that the tech-

niques used are not just products of the past, but can be adapted to current needs. One of the Winterton boat builders Taylor studied was Marcus French. His plans and guides can be found in the Wooden Boat Museum exhibits. His knowledge lives on through his son, Frank French, who learned his boat building skills through workshops with the Wooden Boat Museum and utilizing the plans of his father's boats documented in Taylor's research.



The story continues with Marcus' son, Frank French, who has built the same rodney using the same lines as his father. He has honored the shapes and traditional way of thinking, but uses contemporary methods and materials, like glues, epoxies and lamination. Talk about adapting heritage.

– JEREMY HARNUM, Former Museum Manager

Through a mix of hands-on workshops and on-going exhibits, the Wooden Boat Museum of Newfoundland and Labrador is working to both safeguard and transmit the knowledge and history of wooden boats in Newfoundland and Labrador. Boat builder Jerome Canning leads several different wooden boat workshops for adults who are interested in learning these traditional skills.

We offer workshops so you can come and learn how to build a boat and it's actually really fun! Our boat builder, Jerome Canning, is really entertaining and he makes it a really good experience. We have workshops where you come for the afternoon for a couple hours, you can come spend a whole day on

Saturday, or if you're really committed, you can come spend a whole week and learn how to build a punt or a dory from start to finish. – Crystal Braye, museum folklorist.

The museum has also partnered with communities to sell the boats they build in their workshops. Over the past several years, the museum has partnered with towns and organizations such as Portugal Cove-St. Phillip's, Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador, and the youth community support and development program Thrive. Their boats have been purchased by towns like Portugal Cove-St. Phillip's, as well as private tourism operators across the province.

We want to develop a tourism package around workshops. It's one of the plans for this summer, or spring, to develop that package. We've also thought about trying to attract groups or families, or a bunch of guys who've got cabins together, who'd like to come and build their own boat. There's all kinds of different people out in the market for that.

– BEV KING



When we get a call now, we look at that more than we have in the past. In the past we weren't advertising that we were building boats for sale. But in the future, I think that that's one of the things that we'll have to do. – Bev King, Project Manager

While the workshops have been geared towards learning some of the skills of boat building, the Wooden Boat Museum is also looking for ways to design packages which would allow groups of boat enthusiasts to work together and build wooden boats which they can take home with them.

The workshops offered through the Wooden Boat Museum help the museum continue their program of transmitting the knowledge of boat building to tourists and locals across the province. Their partnerships with other museums and organizations province-wide allows them to offer continued employment for their boat builder and protect this heritage skill.

We look to that revenue to support Jerome's salary. The fees that we collect for his one-day workshops and five-day workshops he does here in Winterton, and of course, the workshops that we do at MUN – it gives us the opportunity to extend his employment and also pay for it. – Bev King

For the Wooden Boat Museum, it's not just about recording the knowledge of boat building, it's



about transmitting the knowledge to future generations. Folklorist Crystal Braye interviews boat builders across the province about their craft, and this information is incorporated into exhibits and workshops. By offering hands-on and informative workshops for children and youth, the museum is ensuring that these skills will continue into the future.

They really appreciate it because they learned how to build boats from watching their uncles and fathers and grandfathers and stuff, but there's no one watching them anymore. They have no one to pass it on to. There have been a couple of times where I'll show up and they're delighted to have someone asking them questions because they never had that chance to pass it on. – Crystal Braye



How to find the Wooden Boat Museum of Newfoundland and Labrador:

**273 Main Road, Winterton, NL
709-583-2044
www.woodenboatmuseum.com**



/WBMNL



@woodenboatnl



@woodenboatnl



Prepared by Dale Gilbert Jarvis and Katie Crane of Heritage NL, as part of a series of case studies examining the links between living heritage, traditionality, entrepreneurship, and community economic development in Newfoundland and Labrador.

For more information, email ich@heritagenl.ca or phone 1-888-739-1892.

Living Heritage Economy Case Study 004. All photos courtesy Wooden Boat Museum of Newfoundland and Labrador except where noted.