

Report on the 2021 Twillingate People, Places & Culture Workshop



Heritage NL

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Introduction

Heritage NL's program, "People, Places & Culture" helps communities identify their cultural assets and consider ways to protect and develop them. Heritage assets are some of the strongest elements a community has to define its unique character, enhance the quality of life for residents, instill local pride, and create new economic opportunities.

These notes summarize a People, Places & Culture workshop held in Twillingate on May 19, 2021 - which was attended by approximately 20-25 individuals from the community - and a follow-up session held on May 20, 2021.

The workshop comprised three parts: a brainstorming session that considered the community's tangible and intangible cultural assets; ranking of themes and clusters; and a session to explore opportunities for protecting, safeguarding and developing these assets. The anticipated benefits of this activity include:

- Contribute to growing heritage awareness within the community
- Contribute to heritage and culture related activities and events
- Contribute to drawing people into the community through sharing its local history and culture (tourism/interpretive planning)
- Support employment and businesses



*Image: Bark pot by Durrell Museum
Source: Heritage NL*

Themes/Clusters

Through the exercise, a number of themes were suggested by the community. The top three include: Sealing History; Local Artists and Makers; the Ashbourne Premises.

These top three themes are addressed first, the lower-ranked themes are included below.

Theme #1 – Sealing History



Image: Bessie Marie enroute to the seal fishery.

Source: Twillingate and the Isles History Group, Facebook

Names mentioned: Whites; Ashbournes; Churchills; Jimmy Lambert; Troake family (Jack, Peter, Gary).

Tangible assets: Ashbournes had a seal plant where oil was rendered and pelts were sent away to be tanned; archival records.

Intangible: the Spring smelled like seal fat; seal pelts were hung on stages; seal oil on top of the water; making of sealskin products (Thomas Stuckless made sealskin boots and sold them to Ashbournes).

Opportunities:

- Inventory, map, and photo record of existing places associated with the sealing industry.
- Inventory of people in the community with life knowledge of the sealing industry.
- Inventory of artists and makers using seal products or sealing motifs in their work.
- Potential to partner with Home from The Sea Sealers Interpretation Centre in Elliston.

<http://www.homefromthesea.ca>

- Potential to partner with the National Film Board for a community showing of *My Ancestors Were Rogues and Murderers* to shine a spotlight on the history of sealing and the impact it had on Twillingate. https://www.nfb.ca/film/my_ancestors_were_rogues_murderers
- Funding possibility to create a Digital Museums of Canada project to showcase sealing history. <https://www.digitalmuseums.ca>
- Compile oral history into a written collection. See *Railway Memories: Stories of the Newfoundland Railway* for an occupational oral history collection https://www.mun.ca/ich/CMBooklets_05_RailwayMemories_WEB.pdf.

Theme #2 – Local Artists and Makers



Image: Home knit mittens.

Source: Twillingate Museum and Craftshop Facebook page

Names mentioned: Georgina Stirling; Ted Drover; Ted Stuckless; Julian Earle; Dennis Minty; miniatures (yard art); rug hooking.

Tangible assets: artist/maker studios; businesses promoting local artists and makers; *Virtual Museum of Canada Community Stories - Nightingale of the North* - Georgina Stirling, Twillingate Museum and Crafts (2009) <https://tinyurl.com/k2e99su8>.

Intangible assets: local tradition and knowledge bearers.

Opportunities:

- Inventory of current artists and makers residing in and from Twillingate.
- Map of places where artists and makers have inventory available for sale.
- Compile a Traditional Knowledge Inventory of makers and skills in the Twillingate area. See *Baccalieu Trail Traditional Knowledge Inventory* <https://tinyurl.com/n9w3ka9s>.
- Highlight specific practices with booklets. See *Crafts in Cartwright: Bearpaws, Dickies, and Komatiks* for example https://www.mun.ca/ich/resources/OHR_booklet_009_WEB.pdf.

- Potential to partner with Unscripted Twillingate Digital Arts Festival to create a digital record of artists and makers.

Theme #3 – Ashbourne Premises



Image: Ashbourne Premises.
Source: Heritage NL

The Ashbourne Longhouse, Office, and Shop are designated Registered Heritage Structures by Heritage NL. Constructed in the early 1800s, the Longhouse is one of the oldest private residences in Twillingate, and possibly in the province. The Office and the Shop were both built some time prior to 1883, before the property belonged to the Ashbournes. A series of owners were influential in the economic and political evolution of the province. The Ashbourne properties are important parts of Twillingate's cultural landscape. While privately owned, their preservation is seen as very important. Another Ashbourne property, Ashbourne's Lower Trade General Store, was moved next to the Twillingate Museum when it was in danger of being demolished, and has the potential to be put to good adaptive reuse. The sustainability of any heritage structure depends on its having viable uses and/or generating sufficient income to invest towards its ongoing maintenance.

Names mentioned: Ashbourne descendants.

Tangible assets: buildings associated with the Ashbourne business, archival collections.

Intangible assets: people with stories and memories associated with the Ashbourne business.

Opportunities:

- Detailed architectural inventory of Ashbourne properties in Twillingate.
- Collect oral histories of past and present community residents with memories and stories of the Ashbourne premises.
- Written collection of Ashbourne premises oral history. See *Everything was Wrapped in Brown Paper: The Old Shops of Port Blandford* for a collection of retail oral history
https://www.mun.ca/ich/OHR_booklet_003_WEB.pdf.

- Digital scanning of all remaining Ashbourne buildings to produce 3-D digital models as part of the architectural record. Potential to partner with the College of the North Atlantic's Geomatics/Surveying Engineering Technology program.
- Potential to access professional advice and funding as three of the properties are provincial Registered Heritage Structures.
- In consultation with the owners, explore options and develop a plan for adaptive reuse.

Medium Level Priorities

#1 - Durrell Museum

Names mentioned: Armed Lads Brigade; current museum committee.

Tangible assets: museum building built in 1910; artifacts and archival records contained within the museum building; space within the museum building; space surrounding the museum; high visibility location; *Virtual Museum of Canada Community Stories - The Arm Lads Brigade, Durrell Museum* (2009) <https://tinyurl.com/572h7nsx>

Intangible assets: stories and memories associated with the building.

Opportunities:

- Potential to partner with local community groups that share commonalities with the Armed Lads Brigade to raise awareness of the tradition of community service in the area (former ALB members, fire brigade, Sea Cadets, Royal Canadian Legion, Girl Guides, etc).
- Potential to use interior and exterior spaces to host community events both during the summer season and other times of the year (service group activities, socials, sales of work, film screenings, etc). Some of these events could help raise funds for the museum.
- Heritage NL can offer professional advice on the proper and continued maintenance of the building.
- Community oral history project on the Armed Lads Brigade could be developed into a booklet to raise funds. See *We Waltzed and We Jived: The Jukeboxes of Cape Broyle* for a tradition-specific oral history collection



Image: Hockeyville contest.

Source: Durrell Museum Facebook page

https://www.mun.ca/ich/resources/OHR_booklet_008_WEB.pdf.

#2 - Local Placenames

Some examples include: Down Arm; Up Harbour; Over on Backside; The Pond; Main Tickle; Southside; Northside; Yate's Hill; Down Around the Rail; Old Maid sliding hill in Durrell; Tom Tumbler Hill for sliding and berry picking; trap berths and landmarks (Salmon Rock, The Well or Whale, Nanny's Hole, Horny Head, Lower Cove); rocks (Round Rock, Red Rock, Aunt Jenny's Rock, Naked Man Rock); "The Garden" in Hart's Cove where soil used as ballast in boats from England was used to make vegetable gardens. Also nicknames associated with residents of certain areas (example: Arm Crackies).

Opportunities:

- Potential to involve community members through social media and community mug-ups to conduct a mapping activity to have places identified and recorded.
- Further placename research and incorporation into official community maps, guides and signage.

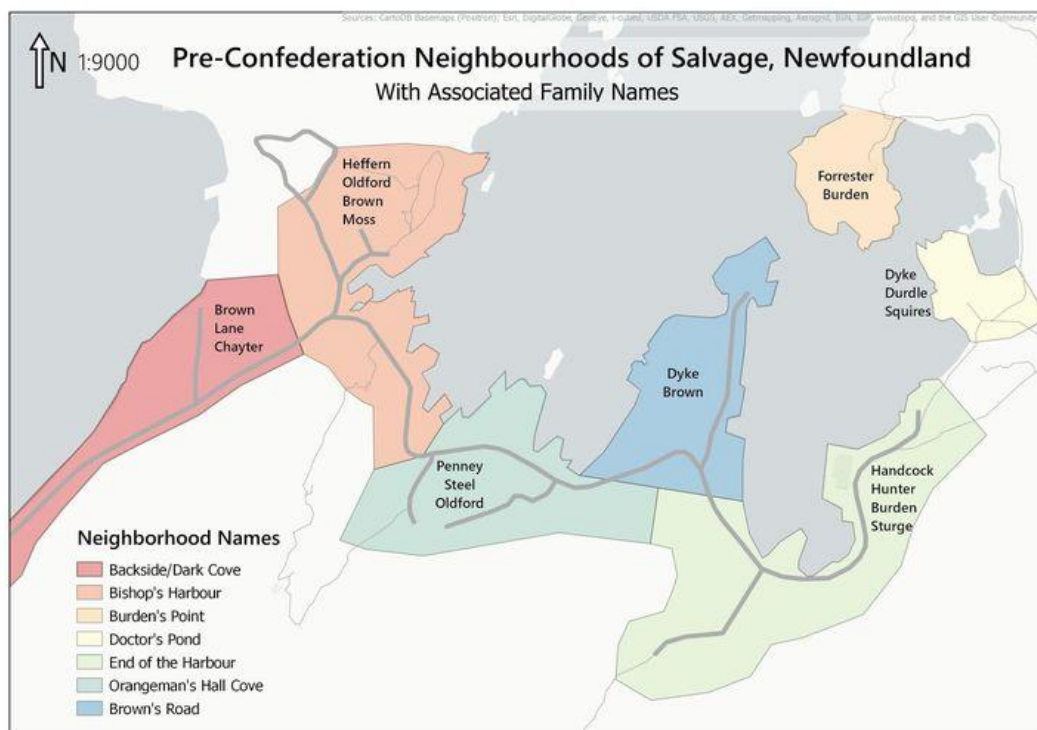


Image: Neighbourhoods of Salvage
Source: Heritage NL

#3 - SUF Building (Victoria Hall)

Historically, this building was used not only by the SUF but also by other organizations. It was built as a storehouse by the merchant firm of Messrs. Waterman & Company. In 1868-69 the local North Star Division #15 of the Sons of Temperance purchased the property. It was named Victoria Hall in honour of the reigning monarch. By 1875 the Society of United Fishermen was also headquartered at the site. That same year, the building also began to serve as a lodge for the local Crosby Lodge of the Loyal Orange Association, until they moved across the street to Alexandra Hall. The Sons of Temperance and the LOL sold their shares to the SUF, which maintained ownership until 2003.



Image: Ladies setting up tea in SUF, 1931.

Source: Heritage NL files

Over the course of more than a century, the building provided a venue for a range of meetings, lectures and celebrations – including women’s auxiliary events, organizational anniversaries, wedding receptions, teas, dances, concerts, movies and politicking – establishing it as a significant place in community life and memory.

Opportunities:

- Public mug-up and photo scanning session to record and collect memories associated with the building’s past uses.
- Compile oral history into a written collection. See *One Big, Happy Family: Memories of Bonne Bay Cottage Hospital* for a site-specific oral history collection https://www.mun.ca/ich/resources/OHR_booklet_007_WEB2.pdf.
- Community event to share information collected.
- Potential to access professional advice and funding as the building is a provincial Registered Heritage Structure.

Third Level Priorities

A number of themes emerged which were ranked lowest in terms of strategic importance. These could form the basis for future projects, including photo scanning parties, oral history mug-ups, museum displays, community interpretation, etc. See Heritage NL’s Intangible Cultural Heritage publications for examples <https://heritagefoundation.ca/discover/publications-ich>.



Transportation

- Ferry service from Indian Cove on New World Island to Twillingate. Causeway built in 1970s.
- Coastal Boats stopped in the early 1960s.
- Central Taxi served the town. Drivers included Dave White, George Weir, Reg Earle, Eli Gillard, Carl Pelley, Pleman Grimes, Ben Legge.

Folk knowledge

- Sailing knowledge and skills (knot tying; sail making; splicing).
- Death omens (seeing a fetch of yourself or someone else; a bird in the house meaning death or big change).
- charmers/healing power (7th son of a 7th son could “put warts away” or charm toothaches).
- Harry Pardy boatbuilder.

Calendar Customs

- Christmas traditions (mummers – starting Boxing Night, children or families early, adults later, guess identity then offered a drink, Alan Young the “mummer man”; visiting houses to see the Christmas tree; wearing Christmas outfit; Christmas tree put up Christmas Eve and taken down January 7th; stockings had oranges, apples, nuts, candy).
- Shooting guns (New Year’s Eve; weddings).
- Motorcades/Parades (Candlemas Day; Orangeman’s Day; Easter; LOL events; Temperance events; Folk Festival; still happen to mark events like weddings, graduations, Hockeyville, any sports “win”).
- Bonfire Night/Guy Fawkes Night (held on top of hills or on the potato garden; start collecting material after Labour Day; would save up boxes, barrels, outhouses, tires; would “buck” from other piles; bucking tires; bucking barrels; motorboat “borrowed”; bucking blubber barrel and putting it on a longer; potatoes put in the fire at the end to roast).
- Filleting contests.
- Twillingate Day.
- berry picking (would close schools so kids could go berry picking).

Death and Dying

- visitation in homes; visitation in churches; carrying caskets from home to church; LOL parades for members and throwing broken gaff in grave; Masonic parade for members and flag on coffin; people moved off the road as hearse went by; taking off hats when hearse went by; pulling down blinds in house when someone died; flags at half mast; family

members dug graves; horse-drawn hearse with people walking behind; coffin makers; laying out body; coffins brought in and out of houses through windows.

Buildings of note

- Baird's Forge; John Hodder Forge; old hospital; Ashbournes Lower Trade; Ralph Smith's ice cream shop; Uncle John Smith's store by denture clinic; Linfield's Grocery; Facey's Tinsmith Shop (memories of buying popcorn there); Handy Andy's; Harry Pelley, Wince Young, Art Meaney (boarding house, restaurant, jukebox); Pleasantview Lounge "Pig and Whistle"; Old Ford Hotel; SUF Hall; Orange Lodge; Masonic Temple; Women's Institute Building; Root cellars.

People of note

- Dr. Olds; Lloyd Colbourne; Dr. Ravalia (arrived as student doctor in 1984); lightkeeper Skipper Jack Roberts at Long Point Lighthouse; John Manuel first mayor in 1960s; Ashbournes; Pierce family; Harry Pardy (Little Harbour); Alf and Fred Manuel (caskets and boats); travelling salesmen; midwives; Alan Young (storyteller); Sea Cadets; Sons of Temperance, Fishermen's Union, SUF members, LOL members; Masons; Women's auxiliaries.

Untold History

- Beothuk history (archaeological dig sites; own the story; tell all sides; Peytons).
- Women's history.
- Filipino history.

Recommendations for the community of Twillingate

1. Establishment of a dedicated heritage committee.

While several cultural and tourism committees exist in the community - along with ad-hoc groups on social media platforms - there is no organized group dedicated to heritage awareness. Membership could include representatives from local museums, the Town of Twillingate, recreation committee, local library, the 50+ Club, the Women's Institute, youth groups, artists and makers, and tourism/leisure related businesses and organizations - to name a few. It is recommended to include representatives from all age groups and people with varying interests and skill sets. Once established, a heritage committee could focus on a select list of small, doable projects to begin promoting interest in community heritage initiatives.

2. Event to boost heritage awareness that incorporates the top three priorities.

The three top themes could be easily incorporated into one event to launch a broader heritage awareness campaign. Sealing History, Local Artists and Makers, and the Ashbourne Premises were

ranked highest priority by workshop participants. A possible event to combine all three would be a screening of the film *My Ancestors Were Rogues and Murderers* on the grounds of the Ashbourne premises. Potential to partner with Unscripted Twillingate Digital Arts Festival. The audience would bring their own outdoor chairs and an exterior façade of one of the buildings could be used as a surface to project the film. A similar venture in downtown St. John's has been very successful since its inception almost a decade ago. If this event proves popular, similar events could be held featuring Twillingate topics.

See Reel Downtown in St. John's <https://www.downtownstjohns.com/play/reel-downtown>.

3. Collect Oral Histories

Oral histories can add a rich layer to our understanding of the past by providing firsthand accounts and a variety of different perspectives and voices. These can help fill in gaps and personalize a community's history beyond mere facts and dates. Oral history projects are most effective when they are well-planned and focused (i.e., dealing with specific topics). Involving youth in the collecting of oral histories can be a good way of creating intergenerational sharing. Seniors get validation through sharing their knowledge with young people and youth learn about their community's past. As outlined below, there are many ways of collecting oral histories and sharing the results.

- Formal oral history projects involving researchers/interviewers and the audio or visual recording of targeted residents (e.g., of older people engaged in a specific economic activity or way of life). See our online handbook at <http://www.ichblog.ca/p/oral-history.html>.
- Oral history "Memory Mug-ups" where seniors are invited to a session to share their stories. These can often be followed up by individual oral history sessions. See our guide at https://www.mun.ca/ich/resources/MUG_UP.pdf.
- Hosting a "Photo Scanning Party" and followup events is a good way to get locals to share vintage photos from the community. Scanning stations are set up at a public space and people bring photos to be scanned on site. At a later date, an old picture night can be held, showing the photos and collecting more information on photos.
- Digital Storytelling Videos incorporating collected audio and photos is a way to share local stories through social media/town website. See: <https://youtu.be/BMJKcrgMePc>.

4. Compile an Artists and Makers Inventory

The skill of local residents is one of the greatest resources a community has. Knowing and promoting local artists and makers can have a trickle-down effect for the overall health of the local economy. An inventory of artists and makers can be used by tourism operators, local businesses, and by local cultural, social, and educational organizations. Knowing what products are available in your community could be the basis of a buy local campaign. Knowing what skills are available

could be the impetus for hands-on workshops that allow the transfer of skills from practitioner to learner. It can also serve as a starting point for the transmission of skills across generations.

See *Baccalieu Trail Traditional Knowledge Inventory* <https://tinyurl.com/n9w3ka9s>

5. Updated Built Heritage Inventory of Twillingate.

In 1998, a survey of the built heritage of Twillingate and surrounding area was compiled. Entitled *Heritage Inventory of the Twillingate Islands: A Preliminary inventory report of selected pre-1920 structures in the Twillingate Islands, Newfoundland*, it was noted that some of the buildings recorded are no longer standing and that some important buildings were not included. Also, the cutoff date for inclusion was 1920, which meant that some important newer buildings were not included.

An updated built heritage inventory would provide a more complete record of the present heritage building stock and could form the basis for any future strategies or actions to preserve the town's built heritage. Heritage NL can offer built heritage inventory templates along with training. See *Heritage Inventory of the Twillingate Islands: A Preliminary inventory report of selected pre-1920 structures in the Twillingate Islands, Newfoundland* here https://collections.mun.ca/digital/collection/ich_other/id/26.

Other built heritage recommendations:

- Development of heritage bylaws to protect and guide development of heritage sites.
- Plaquing of municipally designated heritage sites.
- Heritage committee to advise on municipal heritage designations.
- Storyboards for non-designated properties of historical significance.
- Walking tour of heritage buildings.
- Digital inventory of local cemeteries, possibly using the www.billiongraves.com mobile app.



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