Heritage NL

Craft at Risk List 2021

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Heritage NL

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Cover Photo: Storm door, William and Cecilia O'Neill House, Conche. Courtesy Joan Woodrow.

ENTRANCE TO THE CROCKER ROOT CELLAR, BRADLEY'S COVE.

Introduction

At one point, makers of birch brooms, woven baskets, or tea dolls were commonplace in Newfoundland and Labrador. Today, the practitioners of these heritage crafts seem to be fewer in number, with fewer people having the knowledge of how to make the tools, objects, and crafts of yesteryear.

Concerned about the loss of traditional know-how, Heritage NL is working to document crafts at risk and to develop ways to encourage the sharing of heritage skills. This document is a first step at identifying those crafts at risk in the province so we can plan for the future and track changes in levels of local knowledge.

Research Aims and Definitions

The Heritage NL Craft at Risk List 2021 is a joint project of the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador (Heritage NL) and the Craft Council of Newfoundland and Labrador, which aims to assess the current viability of traditional heritage crafts in Newfoundland and Labrador, and to identify those crafts which are most at risk of disappearing. The project also aims to create a list of heritage crafts in NL, accompanied by information about each craft and active practitioners.

Throughout 2017, the Craft Council of Newfoundland and Labrador led a strategic planning process with its partner organizations in industry, government and academic institutions to produce a new strategy to guide the industry's growth. Organizations with mandates supporting the province's craft industry formed the steering committee. The three primary strategic directions were identified as: (1) enhancing the profitability of craftspeople, (2) maximizing and expanding markets, (3) understanding economic and customer value.

In 2019, Heritage NL developed the Heritage Craft at Risk Survey to identify those crafts which are most at risk of disappearing and to assess the current viability of traditional heritage crafts in NL. The project was based on the UK Radcliffe Red List of Endangered Crafts, which was designed to serve as a starting point to encourage further interest and research expanding knowledge of the heritage crafts sector.

The UK Radcliffe List of Endangered Crafts defines a heritage craft as "a practice which employs manual dexterity and skills and an understanding of traditional materials, design and techniques, and which has been practised for two or more successive generations" (Bertram 2017:3).

To obtain data, a survey was devised to collect people's thoughts and concerns involving crafts at risk. Through the survey, organizers asked craft producers, makers, and builders to provide feedback on the current state of the heritage craft they were most familiar with. The survey covered topics such as the number of makers currently practising specific skills, and issues limiting the health of craft in the province.

To start a community conversation and spread the word about the craft at risk project, Heritage NL held three public sessions, at the Wesley Gosse Memorial Heritage Museum in Spaniard's Bay, the Anna Templeton Center in St. John's, and the Wooden Boat Museum in Winterton. From these sessions and surveys, we received valuable input from community members on what they felt are heritage crafts at risk and to what extent they are endangered.

HEBER HEFFERN RUNNING A BIRCH BROOM, SALVAGE.

KNITTED CUSHION ON CHAIR. COURTESY HEATHER BARRETT.

Issues Affecting the Viability of Heritage Crafts

The Heritage Craft at Risk Survey questioned practitioners, artisans, tradespeople, and craft producers about the issues surrounding their traditional practices. The following key concerns were identified:

TRAINING FOR PRACTITIONERS

Training and the general lack of training opportunities, both formal and informal is common. Training is not offered enough to interested practitioners. Recruiting skilled craftspeople to teach courses, workshops, etc. will provide the best level of learning. There seems to be interest around traditional crafts but difficulty in accessing the knowledge, and also issues in recruiting practitioners to teach the crafts.

- KNITTING - “While a lot of people of this province call themselves knitters, most are only familiar with patterns and methods passed on to them by their other family members and friends. Most aren’t familiar with new methods/patterns/etc.”
- DRY STONE WALLING - “Small base of people practicing the skill. There are many stone contractors who work with stone in other ways besides walling.”
- CLAY/POTTERY - “A heavily technical craft that requires a lot of knowledge starting.”

ACCESS TO MATERIALS

Materials needed to produce specialized crafts are becoming limited. Some materials and tools are too costly to obtain, while some supplies are just too rare and difficult to find. Particular issues include the rising cost of materials for smaller businesses that can result in their inability to buy in bulk, a shortage of raw materials, and a shortage in tools and equipment. Some crafts rely on very specific materials and tools, and the lack of supply may affect the future of these crafts.

WORKING ON A NEW DRY STONE WALL, RORKE STORES REGISTERED HERITAGE STRUCTURE, CARBONEAR.

- MAT HOOKING - “There are several variations on the tradition which artists have adapted. The traditional material used for hooked rugs is not what is used now and in this way the craft has changed. It has evolved into a product that reflects the materials available now.”
- TUFTING - “No access to dried caribou or moose hide, so no specialized materials are available to make the craft.”
- SPINNING - “Supplies are not available here so it is a big commitment to jump in without an adequate knowledge base.”

MARKETING

Poor marketing can result in a lack of awareness from potential customers. Getting information out about traditional crafts and potential training sessions may raise further interest.

- NEEDLEPOINT/EMBROIDERY - “Market limitations seriously affect the viability of needlepoint as a profession.”

PUBLIC EDUCATION

There is a lack of awareness of the differences between a hand-made object and mass-manufactured, and the difference between high quality and poor quality craft products. Often, there is a lack of traditional crafts being demonstrated. Some craft trades are also not even being recognized, and certain practices are not being considered fine arts.

- BARK TANNING - “Very few people see the need for barking in the current day.”

COSTS/TAXATION

The rising cost of raw and allied materials needed has affected craft production. Practitioners are unable to make a livelihood from their craft due to the production costs. Due to high prices, less demand, and competition, many craft businesses are closing. New municipal taxes charged to home-based businesses also limit production. In general, extra costs are being attached to crafts.

- KNITTING - “People don’t want to pay what the work is worth.”
- CROCHET - “Cannot make main income from creating yarn crafts.”
- QUILTING - “Cost of fabric is just too expensive.”

GLOBALIZATION

Globalization and technology have limited the transmission of craft knowledge from generation to generation. Practitioners are learning skills from around the world, but not traditional Newfoundland and Labrador skills. As a result, local nuances that exist in the craft may be lost.

- NEEDLEPOINT/EMBROIDERY - “One consequence of weaker generation-to-generation transmission is that local embroidery practices have become diluted due to external influences.”
- KNITTING - “People used to learn from their mothers and grandmothers, now they learn from the internet.”

KITCHEN STOVE AND HOOKED MATT, PLACENTIA WEST ECONOMUSEE.

BOAT BUILDING WORKSHOP, WINTERTON. COURTESY WOODEN BOAT MUSEUM OF NL.

Recommendations

MENTOR/APPRENTICE PROGRAM

One of the recommendations that came out of the Heritage Craft at Risk Survey and subsequent research was the need for a Mentor/Apprentice program that allows deep learning of endangered skills. Seeing this need Heritage NL has developed a Mentor/Apprentice Program which provides funding of up to $10,000 to support the teaching of endangered crafts and skills. This one-on-on immersion program is focused on transferring skills and knowledge from an established mentor to an apprentice craftsperson or tradesperson. The funding is allotted for crafts or skills listed as **critically endangered** or **endangered** on the Heritage NL Craft at Risk List 2021.

NETWORKING

Lack of networks between craftspeople results in less information sharing. Networking events or online forums will benefit the spread of traditional skills and knowledge as well as a general awareness of the crafts and skills in the province.

DOCUMENTATION

Understanding methods of production can provide us with insight into the past, but little systematic documentation of crafts is underway in the province. Better documentation of crafts, craft skills, and traditions will allow for a better understanding of learning processes and craft needs in the future. The above-mentioned Mentor/Apprentice Program will include documentation by Heritage NL via audio/video recording and photographs for the purposes of encouraging and sustaining NL's living traditions. This documentation will also be archived in a publicly and freely accessible online archives.

ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Some of the issues discussed in the Heritage Craft at Risk Survey included marketing, and costs/taxation. One of the ways to address these issues is through the development of entrepreneurial skills. A series of seminars/workshops that cover a range of entrepreneurial and business skills would help strengthen the community of traditional practitioners, artisans, tradespeople, and craft producers in the province.

ACCESSIBLE WORKSHOPS/TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR BEGINNERS

Some heritage crafts such as pottery are highly technical and involve a lot of knowledge at the start. One of the recommendations for the transmission of traditional skills and knowledge is through accessible workshops and training opportunities. Providing financial support for training opportunities outside the province would also be a major benefit, as would bringing experts in training and certification to Newfoundland and Labrador.

HAIRY LEG SKIN BOOTS MADE BY MINNIE MERKURATSUK. COURTESY WOODY LETHBRIDGE (LEFT); CLAY WORKSHOP FOR KIDS, PHOTO COURTESY CRAFT COUNCIL CLAY STUDIO (RIGHT).

Critically Endangered Crafts

Crafts classified as 'critically endangered' are those at serious risk of no longer being practiced in NL. This may include crafts with a declining base of people, limited training opportunities, crafts with low financial viability, or crafts where there is no way to pass on skills and knowledge.

Bark Tanning
Birch Broom Making
Grasswork (Mats, Baskets)
Harnessmaking
Millinery
Shuttle Tatting
Spruce Root Baskets
Tinsmithing/Kettle/Tent Stove Making
Wriggle Fence Making
Wheelwrighting

BARK TANNING - CRITICALLY ENDANGERED

The tradition of bark tanning for the preservation of textiles has a long history in Newfoundland and Labrador. Indigenous groups across Newfoundland and Labrador used a mixture of bark and salt water to waterproof animal skins and colour the hides. Archaeological evidence shows bark tanning of sealskin was done by the Dorset people as early as 2200 BP.

In the 18th century, large groups of migrant fishermen began to arrive in the province, bringing with them their barking traditions for both leatherwork and for preservation of fishing nets and cod traps. Bark solutions were made of any tree bark, though the colour and texture of the resultant leather was different depending on which bark was used. Communal barking pots were the norm in every fishing community across the province. By the 1940s fishermen could buy pretreated fishing gear. Over time, cotton twine was replaced with monofilament which had a practically unlimited lifespan.

"As we were going along, we found more and more that the barking – at the beginning we had tote bags that were barked, and we weren't barking other products. But as we went along, we discovered that barking was a story that the visitors are really interested in and it's got a strong tie to the local women, because they, and fishermen, would use the barking technique to dye their nets and the women would use it to dye cossacks… They also used barking to tan seal skins for skin boots. So this was a technique that was being used in the local area."

– CINDY COLOSIMO ROBBINS, LABRADOR ARTISANS CO-OPERATIVE

Leatherworkers and textile artists Clare Fowler and Susan Furneaux are working to safeguard the knowledge of barking animal skins. Clare Fowler works primarily with sealskin and uses birch bark in her barking solution, crediting the birch bark for making supple hides for making boots. The Labrador Artisans Cooperative uses barking to colour cotton duck in their line of products which tell the story of Labrador traditions and heritage skills.

"The ultimate goal for that would have it be logged and documented in the MUN archives somewhere so that it was never lost, to have sort of a document that was accessible, and accessible on a number of levels. Like, one, people could get their hands on it, but also then they could understand what was happening and be able to reproduce it, you know, years down the road, so they wouldn't have such a hard time trying to find somebody who could still do this."

– CLARE FOWLER

ISSUES FACING THE CRAFT

As noted in our Heritage Craft at Risk Survey very few people see the need for bark tanning today. One way the tradition is being revitalized is by the Labrador Artisans Co-Operative who are incorporating old techniques into their contemporary products. As mentioned by Clare Fowler, documentation is another option of preserving the craft for future generations. Perhaps the best method to make sure the craft remains viable would be offering accessible workshops. Workshops would increase the number of practitioners with a goal of continuing the tradition through the transmission of the skills and knowledge needed to bark tan materials.

GRASSWORK - CRITICALLY ENDANGERED

Some of the earliest recorded mentions of grass baskets in Newfoundland and Labrador come from the Moravian Missionaries and their accounts of life in Labrador in the 1800s; however the tradition has much older roots. Coiled grass baskets were made by the Inuit

BARK TANNED COSSACK, LABRADOR. COURTESY CINDY COLOSIMO ROBBINS (LEFT)' WRIGGLING FENCE DETAIL, NEW PERLICAN (RIGHT).

of Labrador to store women's sewing equipment or tinder for starting fires. Moravian Missionaries encouraged their congregations to produce grass baskets as a saleable craft in Europe which provided valuable cash income for women.

The baskets are made from sewing dried salt water grass called *ivik* into tight coils. The grass must be harvested after the first frost to ensure it has the proper bleaching, and takes about a week to dry. Once it is dry, it can be kept for years. Sometimes the grass is coloured using commercial or natural dyes which are most often a mixture of partridgeberries and water. The finished basket is waterproof and hardy.

"You pick it when it starts to fade in October and bring it home to dry on a fishing line. You would dry enough for the winter and then, when it's all dried, you start sewing. You pick only the green grasses and perhaps a scattered grass the color of red berries, but there's not much of that and the colour only goes part way to the stem. We don't get the long strands here and if we needed different colors we got it sent ready-dyed. The grass has to be kept wet. You can only have one strand and you strip the grass down and use the outside only for sewing. You got to put the stitches right close all the time and keep the thickness of the grass coil the same. You sew round and round and build up the basket and use the middle of the grass for the rim."

– SARAH BLAKE OF TESALIUK BAY,
QUOTED IN DECK AWASH

There are only a few grasswork makers in Labrador today. Practitioners like Garmel Rich are still making the grass baskets they learned how to sew as teenagers. Others are working to keep the tradition alive by teaching new craft producers. Craft Labrador has published how-to instructions on their website to help safeguard this skill.

ISSUES FACING THE CRAFT

As mentioned, this craft is tedious and time consuming, and buyers do not understand the value and intricacies involved in the work. Aside from the length of time to produce a piece of grasswork several other issues face the craft including a lack of marketing or promotion of grasswork as an art, the cost to produce a piece, and an insufficient transmission of the skills needed to complete the craft. Currently, there are only a few families involved in grasswork.

VA 114-29; A SUMMER HOME AT RAGGED ISLANDS. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ROOMS. WOMAN WEAVING GRASS BASKET IN FRONT OF HOUSE; SMALL GIRL (RIGHT) AND 2 HUSKIE PUPS.

A COILED GRASS BASKET WITH MULTI-COLOUR DESIGNS. MADE BY GARMEL RICH, LABRADOR. CONSTRUCTED c1980.

"It's interesting to do because you can make anything you put your mind to but you either love doing it or you hate it. It takes a lot of concentration, planning, and patience because it takes a long time to make, and I like to say that it is the slowest craft there ever was. For example, a cereal bowl sized piece can take about a week to do, bigger pieces up to a month. But that's because I have been doing it for so long and I have the time now to dedicate to it; if you were just starting and could only do an hour or two a day it would take much longer."

– GARMEL RICH OF BUFF HEAD,
QUOTED IN TRADITION+TRANSITION

The community of Rigolet is particularly well known for its grasswork and has several artists who specialize in the craft. One of the younger grasswork artists is 15 year old Ella Jacque who has been sewing since the age of nine. Grasswork in the community has traditionally included grass mats and baskets but artists have expanded into sewing earrings, broaches, and other jewelry. The Nunatsiavut government recognizes the importance of the tradition and hosts grasswork workshops that focus on the harvest, storage, and sewing of sea grass for Rigolet residents throughout the year.

Endangered Crafts

Crafts classified as ‘endangered’ are those which currently have craftspeople to transmit the skills to the next generation, but are of serious concern regarding their ongoing viability. This may include crafts with a declining market, declining number of practitioners, or an ageing demographic.

Bead Work
Blacksmithing
Boatbuilding
Bronze Casting
Canoe Making
Coopering
Dickie Making
Drum Making- Indigenous
Drystone Walling
Duffle Work
Foodways
Instrument Making
Inuksuit/Cairn Making
Killick Making
Komatik/Catamaran/Slide Making
Lead Casting
Letterpress printing
Masonry/Stonecutting/Carving
Mats - Braided
Moccasin Making
Net Making/Mending
Regalia Making
Sealskin Work
Snowshoe/Racket Making
Spinning
Tea Doll Making
Trappers Tent Making
Tufting
Vernacular Building Construction
Weaving
Wooden Toy Making
Wooden Window Making

BLACKSMITHING - ENDANGERED

The heyday for blacksmithing in Newfoundland and Labrador began with the earliest perma-

IMAGE COURTESY OF GREEN FAMILY FORGE AND THE TRINITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY. WW-S1-P150

BLACKSMITH WADE IVANY AT WORK, GREEN FAMILY FORGE, TRINITY, NL. 2019

“Every year we get more and more people, especially young people saying “Oh jeez, I’d like to get into this..”There’s a lot of people making their own backyard forges and just starting to set up things. They want to be taught. There’s always someone wanting some teaching or information on how to do this or how to make tools. So, it is becoming more popular.”

– DEVIN HOOKEY, APPRENTICE BLACKSMITH, GREEN FAMILY FORGE

nent settlements though there is evidence of forges and smithys in Newfoundland and Labrador dating back to the Norse settlement in L’anse Aux Meadows. During excavations in the early 1960s, archaeologists Helge and Anne Ingstand uncovered a smithy and stone anvil, as well as bits of slag, iron, and bog iron. Archaeological and archival evidence show there was a forge in operation in Ferryland at the Colony of Avalon in 1622. It was likely built by Captain Edward Wynne and 11 other colonists and was in operation soon after, producing important agricultural and fishing gear for the colony.

Newfoundland and Labrador blacksmiths did

> "We did buy a gas forge which I have never hooked up and I have never used. It sits up in my garage. I guess where I am more interested in the history and learning the basics and keeping that alive, that's why I really like working with the coal. Now there has never been a coal mine in Newfoundland as far as I know, so it is not easy to come by any more. I have people call me quite often and say I have some old coal from a home and I will go by and collect it. In the beginning I was going down in basements and grabbing garbage bags full of coal and going up old coal shutes and such. It is not easy to come by but I would just rather work with the coal... There is a real art to the coal."
>
> – IAN GILLIES, NEWFOUNDLAND BLACKSMITH

IAN GILLIES AT WORK. COURTESY IAN GILLIES, PHOTO BY BRIAN CAREY

it all. They were required to shoe horses, make and repair agricultural tools, as well as make and repair parts for boats and valuable fishing gear. There is also some evidence that the early settler blacksmiths were also coppersmiths, locksmiths, and gunsmiths. Once, blacksmiths were fiercely secretive about their trades citing the competition as every community had at least one blacksmith, sometimes more. However, with the rise of mechanization following the Great War, and the introduction of cars to the province during the 1950s, communities had little need for blacksmiths and many forges closed their doors.

There are some artisan blacksmiths operating today. The Green Family forge in Trinity has operated since the 1700s, and the current forge building was built around the turn of the century, but closed its doors in 1955. The Pinkston forge in Brigus began operations in the late 1800s, and closed after the last blacksmith retired in 1976. Both these forges represent contemporary efforts to revitalize blacksmithing in Newfoundland and Labrador. The Green Family forge resumed operations in 1999 and is now a member of the Craft Council of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Pinkston forge reopened in 2017 as part of an initiative of the Brigus Historical and Conservation Society.

ISSUES FACING THE CRAFT

As noted by both Devin Hookey and Ian Gillies there is an increased interest in blacksmithing in Newfoundland and Labrador. Ian mentioned that he hears from people who are looking for information or support. He notes that it would be a shame to lose this history and says of small communities, "You could've existed without the church but you couldn't have existed without the forge."

Ian offers up his time and assistance to those interested in setting up forges. When Ian started the tradition he travelled to Nova Scotia and Italy to attend blacksmithing courses. Due to the small number of practitioners today a similar course in the province would allow for those interested in the craft to learn practical techniques and transmit the skills to newer generations.

LEARNING THE BASICS OF WOODEN WINDOW REPAIR IN ST. JOHN'S.

WOODEN WINDOW - ENDANGERED

Historically wood windows were made using hand tools and fastened with wood wedges and pegs. Construction remains largely the same, though today's craftspeople employ power tools and, often, wood glues.

Wood sash windows are a building tradition brought to Newfoundland and Labrador by early European settlers. Local windows were typically fixed, single hung, or double hung with rare examples of casement (swing) windows. The earliest windows had small panes or lights, each fixed in a wood sash using metal pins or points, and sealed with glazing putty. Small panes were arranged in a grid, divided by wood muntins, to create larger windows. Early windows often had six or more divisions per sash while later windows had fewer, bigger panes as larger glass became available.

Wood windows are made up of horizontal rails and vertical stiles. Rails are typically given tenons to fit through-mortises in the stiles, though the exact joint varies by period and maker. Joints are typically wedged at the through-tenon and/or pegged through the face. Muntins are likewise joined to the sash and each other. Window components framing glass were typically given a decorative profile on the interior which expressed style and minimized their impact on views and light through the window. Windows with many divisions, unique patterns, or shapes (e.g. Gothic arches) require a substantial amount of planning and skill to build.

Entire sashes were imported to Newfoundland and Labrador, though most communities or regions had joiners and sashmakers capable of building windows and doors. Entire sashes were made from spruce or fir which was believed to be hardier and better suited to local weather conditions than imported species. Glass has always been imported.

"Basically you start with your glass size, right. That determines the size of your entire window because all your dimensions for your top and side rails and bottoms, they're all the same for all your sashes no matter what the size, right. So you mark out your glass and you find where your mortising is going to go… and then you'll just mark with all your bottoms, right. And then that would go there and you cut out your mortises and you do your tenons. With the old growth too, with the fir, you can just tell by the smell of the tree as you're cutting it, right, you can just tell it's going to be a good log… a stronger resin smell."

– ERIC COLERIDGE

Today there are two production window and door makers in the province: Bonavista Creative Workshop (Bonavista) and Heritage Windows and Doors (Trinity, TB). Several other tradespeople and woodworkers are also capable of making reproduction wood windows and doors. Today new wood windows are primarily used for the restoration of historic structures. Reproduction windows are required for provincially designated Registered Heritage Structures where replacement is necessary and may also be encouraged by municipalities in heritage districts or areas.

ISSUES FACING THE CRAFT

Eric Coleridge is the proprietor of Heritage Windows and Doors in Trinity, TB. He is a third generation carpenter, having learned the trade from his father who learned in turn from his own grandfather. Perhaps uniquely, Eric continues to harvest and season his own lumber and mill it onsite near his sashmaking shop, though he laments that suitable trees are becoming harder to find. He continues to employ traditional knowledge passed down to him on the proper selection of wood, as well as intuition based on a lifetime of work. In addition to fine wood windows and doors, Eric offers general carpentry services and has built a number of houses in the area in accurate heritage styles.

"My dad learned the carpentry trade from his grandfather and his grandfather was apprenticed from a Grant in Trinity back in the late 1890s… Dad worked here all of his life and it sort of skipped a generation. My dad's father was a machinist and a mechanic and he couldn't cut a piece of board off straight. But his grandfather was the carpenter and he had done a lot of work in town. I mean he worked his whole life in town. …There's such a big huge disconnect in the labour now, right. I mean one time the materials was the expense in the job and the labour was nothing. That's why it probably took Dad five hours to make a piece of moulding, it didn't matter, right."

– ERIC COLERIDGE

WOODEN CRIB, SALVAGE FISHERMAN'S MUSEUM.

Currently Viable Crafts

Crafts classified as ‘currently viable’ are those which are in a healthy state and have sufficient craftspeople to transmit the skill to the next generation. This may include crafts with a large market, widely popular crafts, or crafts with a local presence.

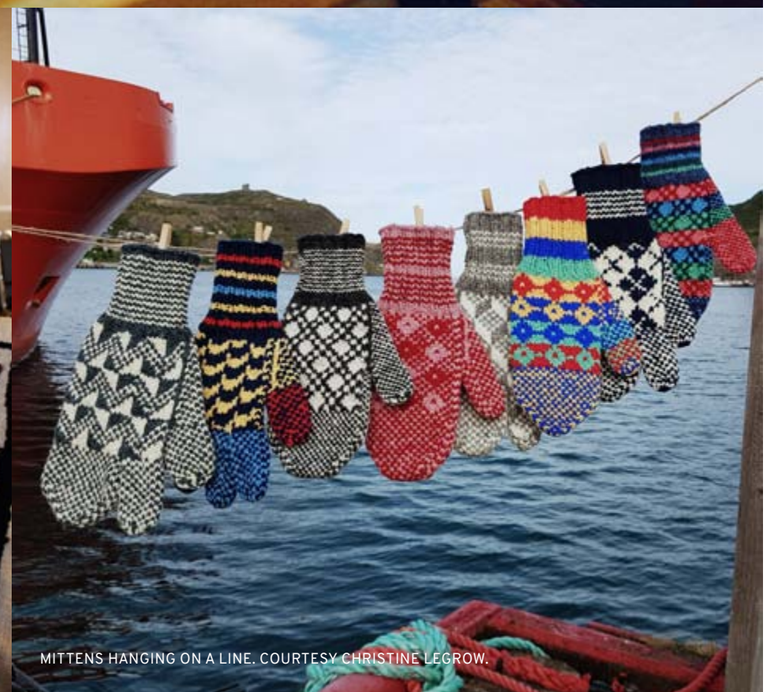
Bladesmithing
Ceramics/Pottery Making
Crochet
Fly Tying
Furniture Making
Knitting
Mats - Hooking
Needlepoint/Embroidery
Printmaking
Quilting
Stained Glass
Stone/Bone/Antler Carving

CERAMICS - CURRENTLY VIABLE

One of the people involved in the first wave of ceramic work in the province was potter and ceramic artist Isabella St. John. Isabella now produces porcelain, stoneware, and raku pottery in her Blue Moon Pottery studio overlooking the Narrows in the St. John’s Battery. She and other passionate craftspeople also set up what is known today as the Craft Council of Newfound-

JESSICA MCDONALD AT HER LOOM.

JOAN SMITH WITH HOOKED MATT, HEART’S CONTENT.



MITTENS HANGING ON A LINE. COURTESY CHRISTINE LEGROW.

HAND-CARVED MAPLE PRINTING BLOCK BY WOODCUT PRINTMAKER GRAHAM BLAIR.

GLAZING MATERIALS AT THE CRAFT COUNCIL CLAY STUDIO.

"You can never stop learning from it. I think that's my love with clay. As well, it's done all over the world: I can travel anywhere on this planet, and slip into this community wherever I go, and in any city people are working with the same love of this material. It's incredible."

– WENDY SHIRRAN

land and Labrador. Isabella remembers walking through the old Devon House on Water Street with potter Margo Meyer's daughter Sophie, dreaming about a community clay studio.

"I remember walking through the empty space with Sophie when we did acquire ownership of the building, and trying to plot it out," says Isabella. "We did a layout for the studio, and so on. And that was it, the beginning of the clay studio."

Growing up in Bonavista, ceramic artist Wendy Shirran always had an interest in the arts, but clay and pottery were something she knew very little about. As a student, she moved to St. John's to go to Memorial University, where she studied English and theatre. When she graduated, she travelled about as far away from Newfoundland as one can, moving to Japan. It was there, thousands of miles from Bonavista, that her interest in clay was sparked.

"I had a student there who, every day after her pottery class in Naruto, used to bring her pottery to my class for our one-on-one session," Wendy remembers. "I said, that's it, when I go back to Newfoundland, I have to get my hands in some clay."

Upon her return, Wendy took her first class at the Devon House Clay Studio in St. John's under the tutelage of Laura Sheppard. Another journey followed: Wendy moved to Halifax to attend the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, graduating with a BEd Art Specialist degree in 2003. She moved back to St. John's in 2011, and recently returned to her roots in Bonavista to start her own business, Brim Pottery Studio + Boutique.

Ceramics in the province continues on its own path, moving from its earliest functional, production pottery styles and branching out into more sculptural and experimental artistic work.

"There's a million possibilities," says Wendy. "I'll do it until the day I die."

ISSUES FACING THE CRAFT

While there are a million possibilities with clay there are also some issues facing the ceramics craft in the province. There are currently few resources or training opportunities available for such a technical craft. There is only one program available on the west coast of the island, and ceramic businesses are struggling to find a serious apprentice. In addition to the costs and knowledge required to start up a studio, the materials and particularly the cost of shipping materials can be prohibitive.

There are a few initiatives that are looking to change this with the Craft Council Clay Studio, CUP, Clay Cafe, and Fogo Clay Studio offering workshops ranging from wheel nights and ceramic painting to pit firing and the chemistry of glazing.

WENDY'S PAIL, ENTITLED "I SWEAT" - BASED ON A FAIRY STORY TOLD BY WILSON HAYWARD OF BONAVISTA. PHOTO BY WENDY SHIRRAN.


BEACH POTTERY FIRING ORGANIZED BY THE CRAFT COUNCIL OF NL CLAY STUDIO, MIDDLE COVE BEACH.

BOAT BUILDING ROOM, WOODEN BOAT MUSEUM, WINTERTON. COURTESY WOODEN BOAT MUSEUM OF NL.

Heritage NL Craft at Risk List 2021

CRAFT NAME	DEFINITION	LEVEL OF RISK
Rope Making	The process where a group of yarns, fibers, or strands are twisted or braided together to fabricate rope.	Extinct
Bark Tanning	A traditional method used for tanning hides into leather, or colouring materials.	Critically Endangered
Birch Broom Making	The process of “running” a broom from one continuous piece of birch.	Critically Endangered
Grasswork (Mats, Baskets)	Grasswork is made from sewing salt water grass into tight coils, which are then formed into baskets or other shapes.	Critically Endangered
Harnessmaking	The process of creating leather harnesses, collars, leads, or traces for work animals	Critically Endangered
Millinery	The art of designing, making, or trimming hats.	Critically Endangered
Shuttle Tatting	Tatting is a technique for handcrafting a particularly durable lace from a series of knots and loops.	Critically Endangered
Spruce Root Basketry	The process of harvesting and creating a basket out of spruce roots.	Critically Endangered
Tinsmithing/Kettle/Tent Stove Making	The process of making and repairing things made of tin or other light metals.	Critically Endangered
Wriggle Fence Making	Erecting traditional NL wriggle rod/wriggin’/riddle fences, a woven upright wooden fence type.	Critically Endangered
Wheelwrighting	The construction and repair of wooden wheels.	Critically Endangered
Bead Work	Decorative work made of beads.	Endangered
Blacksmithing	The process of creating objects from wrought iron or steel by forging the metal, using tools to hammer, bend, and cut.	Endangered
Boatbuilding	The process of sourcing materials, designing, and constructing traditional wooden boats.	Endangered
Bronze Casting	Bronze casting is the process of creating a mold to form a metal object.	Endangered
Canoe Making	The process of creating a narrow, keelless boat with pointed ends, propelled by paddles.	Endangered
Coopering	Barrel making.	Endangered
Dickie Making	Also known as an amuatik, cossack, or silapâk. A wind tight tight garment used to protect from the wind and snow, usually made of cotton duck fabric with fur trim on the hood, sometimes with decoration around the hem edges.	Endangered
Drum Making-Indigenous	Drum making is the process of creating a percussion instrument, typically cylindrical, barrel shaped, or bowl shaped.	Endangered
Drystone Walling	A building method by which structures are constructed from stones without any mortar to bind them together.	Endangered
Duffle Work	Duffle is a pure wool fabric that was originally used for blankets and coats. It has also been used to make baby buntings, hats, slippers, mittens, and household craft items. Duffle is usually embellished with embroidery, beadwork or fur.	Endangered
Foodways	Techniques related to the production of traditional foods and recipes, particularly bush/wild foods, gathering/foraging, and preservation skills.	Endangered
Instrument Making	Instrument making is the act of creating instruments.	Endangered
Inuksuit/Cairn Making	A stone landmark used for wayfinding or navigation.	Endangered
Killick Making	A heavy stone in a wood frame, used by craft as an anchor.	Endangered
Komatik/Catamaran/ Slide Making	The process of creating a winter sled with runners.	Endangered
Lead Casting	Lead castings are made by allowing molten metal to solidify in a mold, to create net weights or jiggers.	Endangered
Letterpress Printing	A printing technique where a surface with raised letters is inked and pressed to the surface of the printing substrate to reproduce an image in reverse.	Endangered
Masonry/Stonecutting/ Carving	Traditional skills related to the cutting, processing, and carving of stone for architectural and monumental use.	Endangered
Mats - Braided	Braided mats are made of a braid of three or more strips of cloth sewed or laced into an oval, round, or rectangle.	Endangered

Moccasin Making	Moccasin making is the process of making a soft leather slipper or shoe.	Endangered
Net Making/Mending	Net making/fixing the process of creating a net and fixing it.	Endangered
Regalia Making	Regalia is what an Indigenous dancer wears during traditional dances. Therefore, Regalia making would be to make the outfit and accessories.	Endangered
Sealskin Work	Sealskin work is to create items out of seal skin, such as mittens or boots.	Endangered
Snowshoe/Racket Making	Snowshoe/racket making is the process of creating a flat device resembling a racket, which is attached to the sole of a boot and used for walking on snow.	Endangered
Spinning	Spinning is an ancient textile art in which plant, animal or synthetic fibres are drawn out and twisted together to form yarn.	Endangered
Tea Doll Making	Tea doll making is the process of creating a doll stuffed with loose tea, with clothing made from broadcloth and other fabrics, and hair made of yarn.	Endangered
Trappers Tent Making	Trappers tent making is the process of creating a traditional Labrador canvas tent.	Endangered
Tufting	Tufting produces three-dimensional images by stitching and trimming bundles of selected moose or caribou hair onto a backing material through the use of loops of thread and knotted on the back. Designs are trimmed with scissors.	Endangered
Vernacular Building Construction	Making of outbuildings such as stages, stores, root cellars, lofts, hay barracks.	Endangered - some building types may be either Critically Endangered or Viable
Weaving	Weaving is the craft or action of forming fabric by interlacing threads.	Endangered
Wooden Toy Making	Wooden toy making is the process of creating childrens' toys out of wood.	Endangered
Wooden Window and Door Making	The process of making traditional-style doors and windows from wood.	Endangered
Bladesmithing	Bladesmithing is the art of making knives, swords, daggers and other blades using a forge, hammer, anvil, and other smithing tools, or turning already tempered metal into blades.	Currently Viable

Ceramics/Pottery Making	Ceramics/Pottery making is the process of creating pots, dishes, and other items of earthenware or baked clay.	Currently Viable
Crochet	Crochet is a form of needlework consisting of the interlocking of looped stitches formed with a single thread and a hooked needle.	Currently Viable
Fly Tying	Fly tying is the process of producing an artificial fly used by anglers to catch fish.	Currently Viable
Furniture Making	The process of creating various furniture pieces using traditional designs, techniques, and materials.	Currently Viable
Knitting	Knitting is the process of making a fabric, garment, or net by intertwining yarn or thread in a series of connected loops either by hand, with knitting needles, or on a machine.	Currently Viable
Mats- Hooking	Hooking is the process of creating loops of yarn or fabric through a stiff woven base such as burlap, linen, or rug warp. The loops are pulled through the backing material by using a crochet-type hook mounted in a handle for leverage.	Currently Viable
Needlepoint/Embroidery	Needlepoint or canvas work is a form of counted thread embroidery in which yarn is stitched through a stiff open weave canvas.	Currently Viable
Printmaking	The activity or occupation of making pictures or designs by printing them from specially prepared plates or blocks.	Currently Viable
Quilting	Quilting is the process of sewing two or more layers of fabric together to make a thicker padded material, usually to create a quilt or quilted garment.	Currently Viable
Stained Glass	Stained glass is the process of colouring glass made as material or to works created from it.	Currently Viable
Stone/Bone/Antler Carving	Carving is the act of using tools to shape something from a material by scraping away portions of that material.	Currently Viable

IS SOMETHING MISSING FROM THIS LIST?
DO YOU HAVE A SUCCESS STORY TO SHARE ABOUT YOUR CRAFT WORK?
EMAIL US AT ICH@HERITAGENL.CA

WHAT ARE HERITAGE NL AND THE CRAFT COUNCIL OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR DOING?

In 2020, Heritage NL and the Craft Council of Newfoundland and Labrador hosted a series of three craft at risk public sessions with the goal of spreading the word about the craft at risk project. One of the other goals of the sessions was to start a community conversation about the health of heritage crafts and skills.

A central goal of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Office, which is a key part of Heritage NL, is to celebrate, record, disseminate and promote living heritage in the province. Part of this work involves facilitating workshops to educate and promote living heritage as well as traditional knowledge and skills. In 2021, Heritage NL ramped up the workshops offered by partnering with tradition bearers to offer both in person and online workshops on traditional skills. These skills include wriggle fence making, headstone cleaning and repairs, cemetery documentation and mapping, heritage masonry, window window repairs and restoration, dry stone wall building, and bread making.

The Craft Council of Newfoundland and Labrador is a member based organization whose crucial focus is as a development association. The Council supports and promotes a high standard of excellence in craft production and service to members and the general public. This work is completed through their own work as well as their support for partner organizations such as the Anna Templeton Centre for Craft, Art and Design, and the Quidi Vidi Plantation. The Anna Templeton Centre focuses on offering both professional and recreation instruction in a wide range of technical and creative program areas while the Quidi Vidi Plantation offers ten studios to artists as both places to do and sell their work. The Plantation also offers a series of workshops and training opportunities to develop their business skills and advance their creative techniques.

WHAT CAN POLICYMAKERS DO?

Heritage NL recommends that further research be conducted into the critically endangered crafts through direct contact with practitioners. There is a role for policy makers and other institutions to develop or fund programs that will help to understand the issues affecting skills at risk and to identify the specific requirements of each. Actions must then be taken to remove them from the critically endangered list, requiring different actions for each craft. Support the creation and expansion of training centres for heritage crafts.

WHAT CAN THE PUBLIC DO?

- Buy local! When it's possible for you, consider heritage crafts for your next purchase or gift.
- Support a craftsperson by taking part in a workshop or class.
- Follow, like, and share on social media to raise the profile and visibility of craftspeople.
- Repair items rather than replace to support people with technical skills.
- Encourage young people in your life to embrace a heritage craft!

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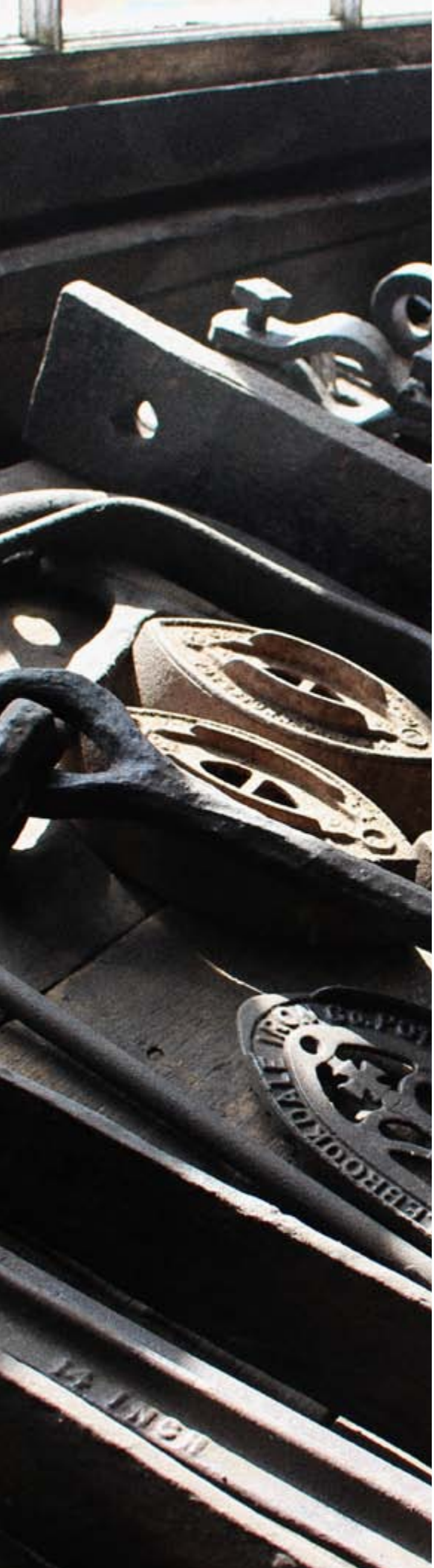

Heritage NL

ABOUT HERITAGE FOUNDATION OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

The Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador is a nonprofit organization which was established in 1984 to stimulate an understanding of and an appreciation for the architectural heritage of the province. The Foundation, an invaluable source of information for historic restoration, supports and contributes to the preservation and restoration of buildings of architectural or historical significance. The Heritage Foundation is also involved in work designed to safeguard and sustain the intangible cultural heritage of Newfoundland and Labrador for present and future generations everywhere, as a vital part of the identities of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, and as a valuable collection of unique knowledge and customs. This is achieved through policies that celebrate, record, disseminate, and promote our living heritage.

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