

## **Collections Manager Report**

**March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

### **Annual General Meeting, Cole Harbour Rural Heritage Society**

#### **Archives – Rosemary Eaton Fonds**

Over the course of Winter 2022/2023, we were joined by a term Archival Assistant, Brooke, to work on the Rosemary Eaton fonds. This project, supported by the Provincial Archival Development Program, saw Brooke go through the oral history recordings that Rosemary collected through the 1970s, 80s, and 90s. They feature interviews with various Cole Harbour residents, talking about their lives and memories of Cole Harbour. Brooke's goal was a complete finding aid for these oral histories, and with great effort, she did it! The Finding Aid is still only available by appointment at the Farm's Archives, but we hope to be able to upload it MemoryNS, the online repository of finding aids in Nova Scotia, in the near future.

But that's not all. The second half of Brooke's project tackled another section of the fonds - the textual records. Spanning over 30 bankers boxes worth of documents, these records have been picked away at over the years by summer students and volunteers. I myself worked on three boxes in summer 2015. Approximately half of the boxes had been listed, with some of these lists being handwritten. Brooke created finding aids for the rest of these boxes, and transcribed the older box lists and edited them so they would all match. She also rehoused about half of the documents into bright, shiny, new archival boxes and folders.

Thanks to Brooke's efforts, we have a much more complete understanding of Rosemary's fond, and we're ready to move forward to make it more accessible for all!

#### **Artifacts – Re-Organization Project**

If you've been following the collections management story of the Farm, you'll be familiar with the Reorganization Project which was begun in the winter of 2019/2020. We started with the Giles House basement - cleaning, organizing, analyzing the collection contained within, and generally making it easier to access the artifacts in the basement. Next, we moved on to the storage room on the upper floor.

Here, we followed the same process as before, which was guided by a document released by ICCROM (the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property) and CCI (the Canadian Conservation Institute) - Re-Org: A Method to Reorganize Museum Storage. We looked at what was in the room, including objects, records, furniture, and the physical space. Objects were counted and inventoried, and non-collections items were removed. Artifacts were rearranged to improve both their long term preservation, and their accessibility.

In addition, farm volunteer Wayne built brand new shelves for the upstairs bedroom, which we were able to use to store baskets and smaller artifacts. The reorganization project has also tied into updating and improving the Collections database, which makes it much easier to find artifacts. There is, as always, more work to do, but we have come a long way from where we started!

### **Interpretation – The Settle Barn**

We have been very lucky to have a wonderful student Exhibits Technician work with us for the past two years - Matt! Matt has taken to exhibit development and creation with aplomb, as has worked on refreshing our permanent exhibits.

In the Fall, Matt and I worked in the Lower Settle Barn (also known as the Animal Barn) to rearrange the poultry exhibits. The goal was to make the exhibits more cohesive, and give the artifacts better homes. To achieve this, Matt constructed a table and a shelf to display larger items, and rearranged the exhibits to interpret various themes including the care of young chicks, egg production and processing and poultry husbandry.

As it became too cold to spend days in the barn, Matt took to creating new panels for the refreshed exhibits. He has also been replacing older panels in the Upper Settle Barn. Look out for his work when you visit in summer 2024!

### **Interpretation – The Giles House**

In other Interpretation News, a new and exciting project has been underway since January in the Giles House. Hermione Davis, who some may remember as working at the Farm as the Collections Assistant a few years back, now a professional performing artist, has been contracted for the creation of a series of interpretive videos. These videos will be available to be viewed in the Giles House itself, providing deeper understanding of the artifacts and built heritage within.

This work would not get done without the support, guidance, and general cheerleading of my director, Janice, and my coworkers (past and present!), Paige, Magali, Makayla, and Emma, so I want to shout out my thanks to all of them, as well as to Matt, Brooke, and Hermione, whose efforts have been a great boon to the Farm and the society as a whole. And, of course, thank you to the board, volunteers, members, and visitors who support all of us!

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Adams