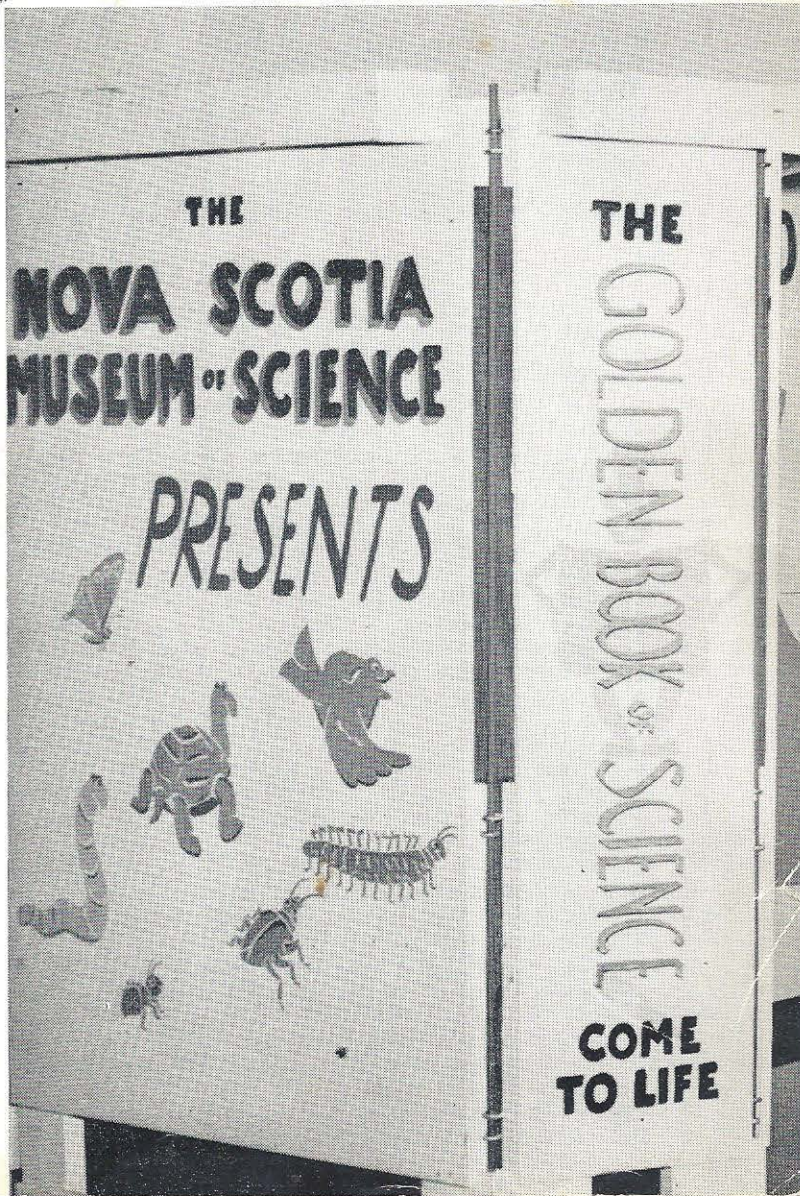




NOVA SCOTIA MUSEUM NEWSLETTER



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NOVA SCOTIA MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

HALIFAX, N. S.

Science Branch, Spring Garden Road — Historical Branch, Citadel Hill

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EDITORIAL

Just as the growth of a tree or a clam is recorded in rings of increasing size added to the growth of the past, so the development of an institution has its markers.

The year 1960 has left its mark already in the addition of the three Historic Houses: Haliburton, Uniacke and Perkins, to the Museum's concerns. The Museum, known as the Provincial Museum from 1868 and the Nova Scotia Museum of Science since 1947, will henceforth be known simply as The Nova Scotia Museum and will operate various branches which will retain names of their own.

This enlargement, both in scope and scale, of the Museum's activities is the local aspect of an increasing interest in museums that is world-wide. Old museums have taken on a new sense of purpose and quite new museums have sprung up, sometimes in surprising places and with even more surprising support. Reasons offered for all this have been given as increased wealth and leisure, travel, competition between East and West, and improved communications, especially television. Whatever the causes, we welcome the development.

Extension of the Museum's responsibilities will bring new problems. Museums are breaking new ground and assuming tasks which would surprise an old museum curator. This process will continue and it would be a brave museum director who would attempt to predict museum futures, except to say certainly, that more growth lies ahead.

*D. K. Crowdis,
Director, Nova Scotia Museum*

Cover: The photo shows the first panel of the Museum's "Golden Book of Science" mobile exhibit. Photographed by Bert Wetmore.

ARCHAEOLOGY IN NOVA SCOTIA

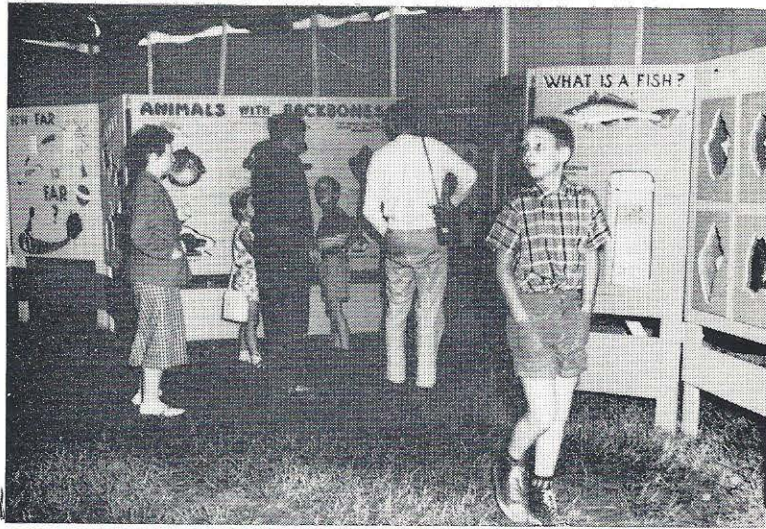
by J. S. Erskine

In the summers since 1957 the Museum has been doing a little work on the archaeology of the province. Our first intention was to make a general survey of all types of Indian sites throughout the province, but this turned out to be very difficult. To find sites it is necessary to know the pattern of camping, and this differed for every area and for every period. Our Indians have never been agricultural and found it necessary to move to new hunting areas every few weeks, so that only very favourable spots accumulated enough deposit to make them recognizable. Most of these camps seem to have been on open beaches, and the sea-level has risen forty feet since the first occupation of Nova Scotia. Early Settlers often built their houses on the ready-cleared campsites of the Indians and the larger fishing sites were usually on the alluvial banks of rivers where the plough early exposed and destroyed them.

Therefore in 1958 we turned to more thorough excavation of a few camps of different kinds, principally of a fairly large campsite near the mouth of Bear River and a complex of sites near Port Joli, Queens County. From these we have worked out a cultural sequence for the southwestern shell-heaps from about 800 to 1300 A.D. At this time, it appears, an older custom of spending winter along the shore was replaced by that of wintering inland. Our knowledge of these inland winter-sites is still fragmentary, since the bits of such sites that we have dug had always been in great part destroyed by power-dams or by the sea or by curio-hunters.

Thus far we have only scratched the prehistory of Nova Scotia. Tools in the Museum collection are good evidence that a very different Indian culture was widespread here a thousand years before the earliest site that we have found. Our knowledge of the shell-heap period is still confined to one area in the province and this is followed by the richest flowering of Micmac culture, of which we know little. After it there is the long gap of 1500-1715, from the coming of the first European fishermen to the fall of the French, for which we have not a single site. Then in the nineteenth century the Indians returned again to the old sites and left distinctive but less interesting remains.

Our plans for the future are to sample other areas in turn, hoping always to find stratified sites still unspoiled, so that we may build up an adequate picture of the prehistory of the province. Perhaps, by the time that this is finished, enough similar work will have been published for New Brunswick and Newfoundland to allow us to tie our findings into the general scheme of North American development.



THE GOLDEN BOOK OF SCIENCE

Featured on our cover is a photograph of another successful and very popular exhibit of the Museum—"The Golden Book of Science—brought to life," which has well earned its place on the cover of our Newsletter.

The portable panelled exhibit has been travelling around to various schools throughout the province, since its premiere last summer at the Festival of The Arts, held at Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia. It was originally designed for the Festival where it was displayed under canvas, with an exhibition of the Halifax Memorial Library, featuring books for children. It had gained such popularity that it was placed in the Memorial Library in Halifax for a week so that those who were unable to attend the Arts Festival, were able to see it.

The Golden Book of Science was designed and built by Edward Longard and Jane McNeill, with the help of other members of the staff. Miss McNeill is responsible for the layout, continuity and the lettering. Mr. Azor Vineau, of our summer staff is to be given the credit for all other art work on the display.

The panels, fourteen in all, representing magnified pages of the book are built of plywood and stand about six feet high. They are lighted by means of some fifty light bulbs fastened to a valance-like box on each panel. Some subjects are cut out and in many of the panels, the actual specimen is encased against a backboard giving an effect of depth. These specimens consist of such things as rocks, sea-shells, butterflies, plants, insects and reptiles.

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CANADA'S EAST COAST AQUARIUM

Over a period of many years, the Museum has developed what appears to be a unique type of aquarium. A succession of models has resulted in a tank which is essentially a plywood box lined with polyester resin and supported by angle iron framing. Up to this point, it resembles tanks developed independently by others as new materials became available. Because of building restrictions, it was not possible to depend on quantities of water in reservoirs below the floor and particular care had to be taken, especially when the tanks were used with salt water, that contamination was absent and aeration sufficient. A closed siphon system was adopted and all parts were made of plastic or rubber, with no metal touching the water. The success of the idea is demonstrated by one tank which has held the same salt water for two years and still supports a healthy community. The most difficult part of the non-metallic system came with the construction of the cooling system, which depends on refrigerating a container which in turn cools coils through which the tank water passes.

Once the tank type was proved, it was adopted for travel or at least for setting up in places away from the Museum. Standard sections were built which can be set together and made water tight with a plastic seal, resulting in a tank of standard depth and width, but of any length. Aiming for a circular array of tanks, each section is set at an angle to the next. Allowing for doorway space, eighteen sections will make the desired circle and seven of these have been built. Shown at the Halifax Forum at service club fairs, at Truro at the Provincial Exhibition and at Lunenburg during the

Fisheries Exhibition, the equipment has been satisfactory for the keeping of fresh and salt water fish and for salt water invertebrates.

Many of the problems of keeping full scale aquarium have been solved in novel ways and some that are related to the disadvantages of our building and to the need for mobility in the travelling aquarium have been overcome. It is thought that when a properly constructed aquarium building may have made possible the keeping in one place of a wide range of forms, the mobile aquarium will still find its way to the exhibitions through the province.

MUSEUM NEWS AND EVENTS

AUDUBON SCREEN TOURS

March 16th brought to a close another very enjoyable season of Audubon Screen Tours. The series consisted of five carefully selected films with their respective lecturers giving the narration. The first presentation was entitled "The Long Flight Back" by Kenneth Morrison; the second was "Coastal Carolina" by Alexander Sprunt; followed by "Jungle Trek in India" by John Moyer; "Designs For Survival" by William Anderson and the last "The Right To Live" by Chester P. Lyons.

These Tours were held in the Queen Elizabeth High School Auditorium and were well attended. We are looking forward to the coming season especially, to see the Robert C. Hermes film which was made here in Nova Scotia over the past two summers. It is entitled "Nova Scotia Land of The Sea" and will have its maritime premiere in this city.

Two members of the Museum staff accompanied Mr. Hermes during some of the filming. Another four films have been selected to complete the series of five for the coming season and we are looking forward to another Screen Tour year.

HALIFAX 1980 CONFERENCE

On Wednesday, March 30th the Museum was host to the Tourist Committee of the Halifax 1980 Conference. The members of the Committee visited the planetarium, were shown the methods of work with school children, saw behind the scenes in the aquarium and examined the scientific collections. The importance of good museums in the growing tourist business of the province was stressed and the members of the Committee stated that the matter of a building for the Museum would stand high on the list of their recommendations.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONFERENCE

Eighteen delegates, known to be vitally interested in Nova Scotian archaeology, attended the Conference sponsored

by the Museum, which was held at the Citadel last fall.

In the morning, a summary of the present state of archaeological research in Nova Scotia was presented in detail by Mr. John Erskine. This was supplemented by a short report by Miss Jane McNeill on the present condition of the Museum's archaeological and ethnological collections. Dr. T. Russell Harper described how archaeological investigation often overlapped with his field of historical archaeology. Dr. Douglas Byers, of the Robert S. Peabody Foundation at Andover, Massachusetts, described and illustrated with slides, the many artifacts excavated from different sites in New England and where possible correlated them with specimens from Nova Scotia.

The panel discussion held in the afternoon had as its Chairman, Mr. Donald K. Crowdis with Dr. Byers, Mr. Erskine and Mr. Harper as panel members discussing future plans for archaeology in Nova Scotia. Many valuable suggestions were proposed by the panel members and those in attendance regarding a field program, suggested legislation to protect archaeological sites and the publication of papers on archaeology.

The conference concluded with a dinner and short address by Dr. Byers on "*The Contributions of Local Archaeologists and Amateurs*" and a resolve to have another such gathering in a year's time.

THE R.A.S.C. HALIFAX CENTRE

The Halifax Centre branch of the Royal Astronomical Society has been holding its regular meetings in the Planetarium room of the Museum, on the last Wednesday of each month. There has been an increase in membership this year and it is hoped to get lens-grinding classes under way soon. Several of the members are very anxious to start grinding their mirrors.

Although the weather had been a bit uncooperative all winter, they were able to hold a few observation sessions. During the Lunas Eclipse, on March 13, about ten members of the Society's observing group clothed themselves warmly and proceeded to take stations on the roof of the Museum. A wide variety of telescopes and binoculars were used to record the event.

The group assembled at about 1:00 a.m. as scheduled and had all the equipment set up by 2:00 a.m. A moderate, somewhat raw north-east wind made it necessary to place everything in the lee of the penthouse parapet. Observances of the eclipse were not continuous, but were timed to coincide with the more significant events. Observances were made of

the first noticeable penumbral shadow; the umbral contact and umbral border; the initial totality and the totality near the mid-point.

Between these events and activities, the members warmed up in the Museum tea-room, where hot refreshments were continuously available and being served. Snow flurries and high diffuse clouds put an end to the night's seeing at 4:30 a.m.

Through the efforts of Dr. J. P. McGuigan, the Halifax Centre of the R.A.S.C. has been granted a lease by the Provincial Government, on certain land at the southern end of Long Pond, on the Herring Cove Road, for the purpose of building a viewing platform and clubroom. Development of the site is expected to get under way this summer.

NOVA SCOTIA MINERAL AND GEM SOCIETY

The Nova Scotia Mineral and Gem Society held its annual meeting at the Museum of Science. All executive officers were re-elected. In the afternoon a highly successful workshop and exhibition was conducted at the Nova Scotia College of Art. This was open to the public and there was a good attendance. Finished work and mineral collections, including prize-winning entries in the first annual competition were shown. Members gave a working demonstration of various phases of gem-cutting, polishing and setting. A steady growth in membership over the year was reported.

NOVA SCOTIA BIRD SOCIETY

The coming of eider drakes and the squawks of herons formed an appropriate chorus for the opening of the Eastern Shore Bird Sanctuary. This new unit in Nova Scotia's wild-life set-up was organized by the Nova Scotia Bird Society. For this purpose the Department of Lands and Forests has leased to the Society the Bird Islands, the Hallibut Islands and Gold Island, situated off Harrigan Cove and Necum Teuch on the Eastern Shore.

Seabirds that are known to nest in the new sanctuary include eider ducks, petrels, black guillemots, black-backed gulls, Arctic terns and cormorants. Other water and shore birds such as the great blue herons and spotted sand pipers, also nest there in small numbers. Several fox sparrows were seen on the islands and these birds are not known to nest in any other part of the Province. Anyone who is interested in seeing seabirds at home are invited to visit this island sanctuary. No fee is charged and local guardians in the district are willing to direct you if you need help.

SATURDAY MORNING AT THE MUSEUM

For the second year the Museum conducted a series of Saturday morning nature classes. Grade five students from

every school in Halifax city were invited to join. This invitation resulted in an enthusiastic group of boys and girls who were willing to battle even the wildest Halifax snowstorms to reach the Museum.

Natural science was presented to the class with as little obvious teaching as possible. The sessions were designed to teach through projects, games and movies.

The classes continued for two months and included two special sessions: a nature hike in Point Pleasant Park and a movie to which members brought their friends. There was an attendance of over a hundred children.

SPECIAL SCHOOL PROGRAMS

By arrangement with the Superintendent of Schools for the City of Halifax, the Museum has been giving morning lectures and Planetarium showings to all the grades five and seven. This is combined with the visits to the Halifax Memorial Library. The lectures have been on the following four topics: Rocks of Nova Scotia; Age Determination in Plants and Animals; Speed Versus Protective Armor (Native Nova Scotian Animals); and Primitive Fresh Water Animals. The classes consist of thirty-five to forty children and the lectures total about one hour and fifteen minutes.

STAFF NEWS

Our Director Mr. Crowdis is completing a television series of children's programs on science, entitled "Let's Look". The series consisted of thirty-nine fifteen minute talks on such topics as fossils, planets, rocks, birds, animal tracks, eggs, weather, time and many other subjects. It has been a very popular series with the children and has helped to answer the many "hows and whys" in the minds of children so interested in science and nature today.

Mr. Harry Roberts who spent a year with us as Planetarium lecturer has recently returned to the local television studios where he had been previously employed. During his short stay with us he installed a sound system in the Planetarium, enabling special sound effects to be added to the Planetarium showings. He also added lights to the Halifax skyline and installed wall exhibits of planets and nebulae.

Mrs. Dortha Morrison, stenographer-bookkeeper of the Museum staff passed away suddenly following a very brief illness. During the two years she was with us she became one of the most popular members of the staff and will be greatly missed by all.

Mrs. Florence West, for many years on the Museum staff passed away in late April after a lengthy illness. Mrs. West was with the Government of Nova Scotia at Province House before coming with the Museum. A faithful and careful

worker, Mrs. West took a particular pride in the appearance of the Museum. She is survived by a daughter Helen and a son William, both of whom carry on their mother's work at the Museum.

Mr. J. S. Erskine, teacher at Wolfville High School, will be working with us again this summer. He plans to excavate Indian sites in the Tatamagouche and Halifax areas. Miss McNeill of our permanent staff will assist him.

Dr. J. S. Bleakney, Professor at Acadia University, Wolfville, returns to our summer staff this year to continue his work on a zoological survey of the Province.

Mr. Azor Vineau, student at the Nova Scotia College of Art, Halifax, also returns to our summer staff at the Historical Museum on Citadel Hill.

George MacLaren, John Cook, Douglas Ferguson and David Coldwell of the Museum staff attended the American Museums Association Conference held in Boston, Mass., May 24th to May 27th.

The Director of the Museum, D. K. Crowdis, attended the meetings of the Canadian Museums Association in Montreal in May. Mr. Crowdis was elected to serve a term of three year on the Council of the Association. He also attended some of the sessions of the American Museums Association Conference in Boston.

CITADEL HILL NEWS

Many changes have been made at the Historical Museum on Citadel Hill, getting ready for the tourist season. A new room has been furnished with large panel displays featuring early Nova Scotian architecture. It covers the early churches, stone houses, weather vanes and the New England influence on Nova Scotian architecture. Two of the panels are devoted entirely to the well-known Gorsebrook and Martock houses of Halifax and Hants counties. In the centre of the room there is a large diorama featuring a miniature Nova Scotian town of Pictou in the 1830's.

A full-size model replica of Giant MacAskill, the famous Cape Breton giant is being constructed by Azor Vineau, under the direction of the curator Mr. George MacLaren. Giant Angus MacAskill, to give you a bit of his life history, was born in the Outer Hebrides, off the coast of Scotland in 1825. He came to live at St. Ann's, Cape Breton, at an early age. When he was thirteen years old he had reached his full height of seven feet nine inches and weight of four hundred and twenty-five pounds. He wore size fourteen and a half shoes. In his early teens he took to the sea and served as a cabin-boy on Capt. Livingstone's schooner. He died at the age of thirty-eight when he fatally injured himself heaving a heavy ship's anchor over his head at the Boston docks.

NATURE TRAIL

The Museum has just finished putting a Nature Trail in Point Pleasant Park for the children who visit there during the summer season. The Trail was put in the Park for the first time last summer and proved most successful. Many adults also are attracted to the Trail. A large hewn log, six feet in length, is near the Park entrance to both welcome and direct you through the wooded paths. Placed along the Trail are illustrated sign-posts carrying information about the plants, trees, birds and insects that make their homes in the woods. Some of the sign-posts contain nature games to be played along the way and these are lots of fun. The Trail is about a quarter-mile long and much to the delight of all, there is a pond in the middle of it where one can play about, look at pond life, or just relax and rest before continuing to the end of the Trail.

THE GOLDEN BOOK OF SCIENCE

(continued from page 4)

The panels are portable, being linked together by rods put through screw-eyes on each panel, making it easily assembled or dismantled. The display stands firmly when the panels are staggered and it is able to cope with space problems. Credits are given to the editors and publishers of the book and the actual edition is displayed in the first panel. It has attracted the attention of many adults as well as children and has met with very favourable comment wherever it has been. More travelling displays of this type are being planned by the Museum for the coming season.

CITADEL HILL NEWS

(continued from page 10)

During the spring season, Mr. MacLaren and his assistant have been busy in the preparation of new displays of an historical nature, to be exhibited at the annual Tatamagouche Festival of the Arts again this season.

The children's mammoth jig-saw puzzle which proved such a boon to mothers at the Festival last summer will be in use at the Truro Bi-centennial celebrations during the week of July 31st to August 6th.

Mr. MacLaren has made arrangements with the National Film Board, to be supplied with a number of films to be shown twice daily at the Citadel, during the summer months.

Museum Hours

Science exhibits, office and library, Spring Garden Road, Halifax, N. S.

MONDAY to SATURDAY, inclusive9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
THURSDAY EVENINGS7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
SUNDAY2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
OFFICE HOURS9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Historical Exhibits, Citadel Hill Branch

EVERY DAY, including Saturday and Sunday...9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Copies of each number of the Newsletter are available at the
Museum at 10c each.