

of a Christmas tree to the people of Boston and Massachusetts as an expression of thanks for all the help that they provided in the days following the disaster. Similarly, crowds still gather at Fort Needham in the north end of Halifax on 6 December to hear the bells given by Barbara Orr in memory of the entire family that she lost (both parents and four siblings).

Fortunately, there is now another reminder from NSARM to help Halifaxians mark the date and to solemnly remind us of the huge price that Halifax paid in 1917 and the years which followed. The scars of the Halifax Explosion will always remain and with the memorial of this exhibit they shall not be soon forgotten.

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Lunenburg by the Sea: 250 Years of Challenge and Change.

URL: <<http://www.gov.ns.ca/nsarm/virtual/lunenburg/>>

Last summer, Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management (NSARM) launched a new virtual exhibit to commemorate the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the founding of Lunenburg. It is a captivating use of images, documents, and artifacts.

Lunenburg is a unique community in Nova Scotia and Canada because it was settled by non-English speaking Europeans at the behest of the British who were trying to ensure a stronger presence in what is today Nova Scotia. The group, collectively known as the “Foreign Protestants,” was enticed to come to North America from areas of what are now Germany, Holland, Switzerland and the Montbeliard region of northeastern France.¹

The settlers initially came to Halifax during 1751–1752 and were required to provide labour to assist the fledgling port, founded in 1749, before receiving their grants of land. They were far from a homogenous group being divided by different languages and traditions, but all were surely hoping for a better life in their new homeland.

On 7 June 1753 the first inhabitants of what has become Lunenburg arrived, used a deck of playing cards to draw lots for their properties, and began the process of establishing a community under watchful British eyes. The online exhibit’s first chapter (Lunenburg before 1800) provides images of those very cards and continues the settlement story.

The ensuing narrative confirms that within two generations, Lunenburgers had turned their attention away from the generally poor soil to the bounty of

¹ Winthrop Bell, *The “Foreign Protestants” and the Settlement of Nova Scotia* (Toronto, 1961).

the ocean. They began to build schooners and dories, sew sails, forge anchors, and gain a reputation for their hauls of fish. The exhibit chapters commencing with the title "Along the Waterfront" chronicle this reality through the images of a busy harbour that was once so crowded with vessels that you could reputedly walk aboard boats from one side of the harbour to the other.

The prosperity brought by the fisheries can be seen in the subsequent chapters on "Built Heritage." The homes and public buildings were often constructed using traditional European techniques and featured architectural details that were native to the homelands of the original settlers. This coupled with the competitive nature of many of the skippers and crewmen ensured structures that were unique, different from one another, and in many cases unique from other structures in North America.

The NSARM exhibit concludes by demonstrating how all of these factors influenced the community, especially the artists, encouraged the pride of Lunenburgers in their traditions, and shaped their leisure activities and enjoyment. It also shows how they celebrated who they were through events like the annual fishermen's picnic and reunion that featured parades and competitions such as fish filleting, dory racing, and net mending.

In recent years, like most East Coast ports, the fishing industry in Lunenburg has seen better days. This is pointed to in one of the descriptions which tells us that the Highliner fishing fleet was sold in April 2003. Lunenburg had been the homeport of that fleet during the twentieth century: it will not be the case in the twenty-first century.

Despite these setbacks the community continues to thrive and to reinvent itself. In 1995 the town was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site as "the best planned British colonial settlement in North America."² Increasingly, the town relies on this designation to sustain the community, through the influx of tourists, and the resultant growth in seasonal service jobs.

It is important to recognize that underlying many of the pictures in this exhibit are sub-texts that would be obvious to town natives but not so readily identifiable to others. For example, the pictures of women working at the fish plant pays homage to a more recent role that women have played in the community. However, their role has been unique since the town was founded. The narrative alludes to this by referencing the very early matrilineal inheritance structure of the original settlers. In turn, this is also echoed in the lives of generations of women who took care of their day-to-day responsibilities but were also required to do much more while their husbands were away for long months at sea.

References were missing to the Prohibition era rum runners that made many Lunenburgers very wealthy in the early part of the twentieth century and to the

2 Retrieved from <<http://whc.unesco.org/nwhc/pages/sites/main.htm>>.

influence and experience of the wars on the community; specifically, the Norwegian Naval camp which was reputedly located at Lunenburg to ensure the allegiance of those with German ancestry. However, these are minor omissions even though they might bring a more human balance by focussing on elements of the area's past that were not entirely positive.

Perhaps the biggest challenge for NSARM in creating this site was to gauge the audience. How do you make a site interesting and informative for native Lunenburgers as well as viewers from elsewhere in the country and around the world? The community truly has drawing power out of all proportion with its size (approximately 2600 people). Since it is also the homeport of the famous schooner, Bluenose, and recently in the *New York Times Magazine* shared top billing with Beijing, Costa Rica, and Seville, it clearly has a global audience.

Truth be told, NSARM did a terrific job. They consulted with the curator of the local Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic, Mr. Ralph Getson, and prepared a very detailed bibliography for online users. However, a number of the pictures of houses and public buildings had me scratching my head. [Was this because they were poorly identified?] I kept trying to figure out where the structures were located or why they did not look familiar to me. Ultimately, I have decided that change is a constant even in tradition-steeped Lunenburg.

The exhibit's title of "Challenge and Change" is effectively represented in the content and NSARM effectively has recounted the story of the town that has long purported to be the "fishing capital of Canada." The exhibit's title fits "some good you"³ as the old time Lunenburgers would say.

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Open Hearts – Closed Doors. CANADIAN HERITAGE INFORMATION NETWORK VIRTUAL MUSEUM WEB SITE.

<<http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/orphans/english/index.html>>, ongoing.

The viewer who chooses to navigate the many avenues of "Open Hearts – Closed Doors" will be richly rewarded for the time spent doing so. This is an exhibit that instructs on many levels, using a wide variety of approaches to the subject matter, and employing a roster of sophisticated Web design techniques.

The goal of the exhibit is to tell the story of the immigration to Canada of over 1000 orphaned Jewish survivor youths immediately after the Second

3 Lewis J. Poteet, *The South Shore Phrase Book* (Hantsport, N.S., 1983).