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Framework for History and Commemoration

**National Historic
Sites System Plan**

2019



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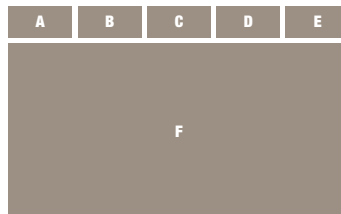
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Front cover images

- a. Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage Site, 2017.
- b. Bar U Ranch National Historic Site, 2016.
- c. S.S. *Keno* National Historic Site, 2015.
- d. Laurier House National Historic Site, 2018.
- e. Port-Royal National Historic Site, 2013.
- f. Cave and Basin National Historic Site, 2016.



Framework for History and Commemoration

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Sites System Plan**

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Minister's Message



As the Minister responsible for Parks Canada, I am proud of the work undertaken every day by staff across the country to help share Canada's treasured places with Canadians and the world. History and commemoration are at the heart of Parks Canada's heritage places, and I am pleased to present the *Framework for History and Commemoration: National Historic Sites System Plan 2019*. This plan will guide Parks Canada's work at heritage places for years to come.

Parks Canada's heritage places are steeped in the history of this country. Every year, millions of people visit these sites to discover Canada's rich cultural and natural heritage. These special places connect us with the past and help us better understand the present. The *Framework for History and Commemoration* provides direction for Parks Canada's future history and commemoration efforts. It replaces and builds on the earlier system plan to support meaningful engagement with visitors.

The Government of Canada is unwavering in its commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and to a renewed relationship based on the recognition of rights, respect, co-operation and partnership. In response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action 79, Parks Canada

has committed to making space for Indigenous peoples' histories, voices and perspectives at heritage places. These initiatives also support the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Through the *Framework for History and Commemoration*, the Agency will continue to further this important work. Parks Canada is uniquely positioned to advance reconciliation and to confront the legacy of colonialism.

I would like to thank Canadians for providing comments and contributing to the *Framework for History and Commemoration* during the public consultation process. This plan represents a new way of sharing history at Parks Canada's heritage places - one which includes diverse voices, presents multiple perspectives and inspires conversations about Canada's past, present and future. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada for its advice, guidance and incredible work in helping to commemorate nationally significant aspects of Canada's history.

I encourage all Canadians to visit Parks Canada's heritage places and explore and connect with the fascinating persons, places and events that have shaped the country's history.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C McKenna', written in a cursive style.

The Honourable Catherine McKenna, P.C., M.P.

Minister of Environment and Climate Change and Minister responsible for Parks Canada

Chief Executive Officer's Message



Parks Canada's heritage places represent the breadth and depth of Canadian history. We are privileged to protect and present these places for this and future generations. We are also privileged to manage the National Program for Historical Commemoration and support the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada in its important work to advise the Government of Canada on the commemoration of nationally significant aspects of Canada's history. The *Parks Canada Agency Act* requires that the Agency have long-term plans for its national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas. The *Framework for History and Commemoration* is the new system plan for national historic sites. Informed by public history and the concepts of historical thinking, this plan sets the stage for history and commemoration at Parks Canada. One of its goals is to engage and involve visitors and our other audiences more directly with the stories of Canada.

To better meet the interests of Canadians, the framework establishes four strategic priorities: History of Indigenous Peoples, Environmental History, Diversity and Canada and the World. These strategic priorities build upon the previous system plan's priorities. They offer innovative opportunities for expanded history presentation and the commemoration of persons, places and events of national historic significance.

Furthermore, the *Framework for History and Commemoration* offers guidelines for the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada's careful review of existing designations under the National Program of Historical Commemoration. The guidelines ensure that the Board's work in recommending designations and plaque texts is sensitive and responsive to challenging historical issues.

Many of Parks Canada's heritage places are working with Indigenous partners to bring Indigenous histories, voices and perspectives to sites. The framework's key practices for public history support these endeavours. These practices promote engagement, collaboration and co-development with Indigenous partners and others. As an agency, we are seeking to tell broader and more inclusive stories that represent the diversity and complexity of Canadian history.

Parks Canada's heritage places belong to all Canadians, and all Canadians find meaning at these sites. The Agency is proud to work with Canadians to bring forward stories that reflect the rich history of this land and to share those stories at heritage places found in every province and territory across Canada.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael Nadler". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Michael Nadler
Acting Chief Executive Officer, Parks Canada



Introduction

Canadians are experiencing a world where the pace of change is unprecedented. Change in our everyday lives comes from technology, globalization, the mobility of people and environmental upheaval. In the face of these changes, Canadians, as a very diverse population, each have their own understanding of history - whether it is their family history, community history, national history or the history of another place in the world. There are unlimited ways of approaching history and stories about the past. To connect with history, it is important to think about complexities, controversies, achievements, failures and tragedies of the past - and to convey how they are relevant today.

The public conversation about Canadian history has been robust, and at times controversial, with considerable attention given to milestone anniversaries, including Confederation, the First and Second World Wars and women winning the right to vote. The Government of Canada issued apologies for its role in historic wrongdoings, such as the administration of Indian Residential Schools and the *Komagata Maru* incident of 1914. At these moments, Canadians are aware of the impact of the past on the present and how history defines who we are and who we are not.

In 1885, when the Banff Hot Springs were set aside for future generations, the Government of Canada began charting a course to recognize and protect places of significance. For more than a hundred years, Parks



Canada has been acquiring, conserving, commemorating and interpreting heritage places. The 1917 acquisition of Fort Anne in Annapolis Royal marked the beginning of a network of national historic sites for Canada. The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC), established in 1919, provides the basis for the National Program of Historical Commemoration. The HSMBC is mandated through the *Historic Sites and Monuments Act*, and makes recommendations for persons, places and events of national historic significance to the Minister responsible for Parks Canada.

A New Plan

Parks Canada has a mandate to ensure that Canada's designated heritage places are protected and presented for this and future generations. Section 6(2) of the *Parks Canada Agency Act* requires that the Agency have "long-term plans in place for establishing systems of national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas." The *Framework for History and Commemoration* contributes to delivering on this mandate and fulfils the Agency's legislative requirement. It replaces Parks Canada's

- A. Fort Anne National Historic Site, 2010.
- B. Saoyú-?ehdacho National Historic Site, 2015.

Public history describes the many and diverse ways in which history is put to work in the world.

Source: National Council on Public History

previous system plan that was approved in 2000, and presents an opportunity for the Agency to adopt approaches that are at the forefront of public history.

The *Framework for History and Commemoration* is Parks Canada's vision for heritage presentation and commemoration. It will guide three key activities:

Designation of persons, places and events of national historic significance

The priorities in the framework, as well as the principles and key practices, will influence and inform subjects considered by the HSMBC for designation. It identifies areas where more designations are needed and reflects the way in which policies and practices of

the Board may need to be adapted in order to achieve the goal of a system of designations that reflects the breadth of Canada's past.

Management of Parks Canada's national historic sites

The strategic priorities support building a portfolio of national historic sites that reflect Canada's diverse histories. This plan frames key decisions about investment, management, partnership and collaboration at all of Parks Canada's heritage places.



An innovative approach to history presentation

New and expanded historical understandings combined with the key practices for public history will transform the history experience and how stories are communicated at heritage places. The priorities set an agenda for greater inclusion, and the key practices provide a roadmap for achieving results.

- A. Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site, 2016.
- B. Africville, Halifax, seen here in 1958, was designated a National Historic Site in 1997.



As a plan created with many users in mind, this document will have broad influence on how history is presented at Parks Canada's heritage places and the work of the HSMBC. For both the HSMBC and Parks Canada, this plan identifies fundamental history principles and key practices that underpin a shared approach to exploring the

breadth and depth of Canadian history. For the HSMBC, this plan identifies Canadian history priorities that are meaningful to the public in the twenty-first century, and will encourage exciting new public nominations for persons, places and events of national historic significance.

The HSMBC's approach to the careful review of earlier designations is outlined in the Annex to this document. It explains why and under what circumstances an earlier designation would be reviewed, as well as the public's role in this process. This section also details the considerations that inform

the review process. Ultimately, this is a new approach to history and commemoration for both the HSMBC and Parks Canada.

As a new vision for Canada's heritage places, Parks Canada's *Framework for History and Commemoration* establishes principles that are the basis of the Agency's approach to history. It provides strategic priorities for continuing to establish places, persons and events of national historic significance to encompass the breadth of Canadian history. It provides direction to support more meaningful audience engagement with history at heritage places, drawing on established public history practices and concepts of historical thinking. These places, whether they are natural or cultural, are conduits for the country's history and identity, encompassing both tangible and intangible aspects of Canada's heritage.

Fortress of Louisbourg National Historic Site, 2016.



Parks Canada works with more than 300 Indigenous communities across Canada in conserving, restoring and presenting Canada's natural and cultural heritage and is committed to supporting Indigenous peoples' connections to lands and waters within their traditional territories. Many Parks Canada places are managed through cooperative management bodies or advisory relationships with local Indigenous communities. The Government of Canada endorses the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, without qualification, and is committed to its full implementation. The *Framework for History and Commemoration* allows Parks Canada to further this important work, especially pertaining to article 31 on the right of Indigenous peoples to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions.

All of Parks Canada's heritage places can draw from the strategic priorities, key practices and concepts of historical thinking to reach audiences and improve historical understanding. These practices and concepts can be applied to all history projects, including public interpretation, exhibits and history programming.

A Broader Approach to the Past

This plan encourages history interpretation to go beyond thinking about why a heritage place was designated or established. Using this plan's various methods to explore other stories and to enhance public understanding of the reasons why a place was designated or established, Parks Canada can reach more audiences. The goal is to be transformative by broadening the approach to the past and using engaging ways to present history.

- A. Forges du Saint Maurice National Historic Site, 2009.
- B. Rideau Canal National Historic Site, 2014.





- A. The Forks National Historic Site, 2017.
- B. This 1821 watercolour by artist Peter Rindisbacher shows a scene of winter fishing at the forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers in Winnipeg. This location has been a centre for transportation, trade, gathering, and recreation for millennia.

Every heritage place has a set of reasons or an explanation for why it is significant or distinctive. The reasons why a national historic site is important are established by the HSMBC, and are laid out in a Statement of Commemorative Intent. The site and related interpretation are

managed in keeping with that statement. This framework will support both the expansion of the reasons for designation or commemorative intent for some existing designations. It also encourages new designations in the strategic priorities identified in this document.

Similarly, each national park was established for a set of reasons, one of which was to create a system of parks representing all of Canada's distinct natural regions. These reasons for designation or establishment reflect certain approaches to history and conservation, and are products of their time. Human history is an integral part of all these places, and it is important to consider their cultural dimensions. The reasons for designation will remain a cornerstone of messaging at any site, while the framework provides practices that will allow those reasons to be told in more engaging ways. In addition, the framework supports a broadening

of the stories that are told in protected places administered by Parks Canada, opening our doors to include narratives, perspectives and voices of those who may not previously have been heard.

In our role as guardians, guides, partners and storytellers, Parks Canada strives to build appreciation and understanding of history and heritage places. We connect Canadians with their history and foster an ethos of stewardship and conservation. The ongoing involvement of citizens, Indigenous peoples, the private and public sectors, partners and stakeholders is essential to this work. This plan builds on these relationships and encourages new partnerships between Parks Canada and others with a shared commitment to understanding and presenting Canada's history.



Parks Canada and Heritage Places

Parks Canada's heritage places are incredibly diverse and their scope spans thousands of years of human activity in what is now Canada.

The Agency operates:

- National Historic Sites
- National Parks and National Park Reserves
- National Marine Conservation Areas
- One National Landmark
- One National Urban Park

Parks Canada has responsibilities associated with:

- Heritage Lighthouses
- Heritage Railway Stations
- Federal Heritage Buildings
- Canadian Heritage Rivers
- Grave Sites of Canada's Prime Ministers
- World Heritage Sites

Heritage Places administered by Parks Canada

Program	Number (as of 2019)
National Historic Sites	171
National Parks and National Park Reserves	47
National Marine Conservation Areas	4
National Landmark	1
National Urban Park	1

Parks Canada has responsibilities associated with the following programs

Program	Number (as of 2019)
Heritage Lighthouses	99
Federal Heritage Buildings	1295
Heritage Railway Stations	163
Canadian Heritage Rivers	39
Grave Sites of Canada's Prime Ministers	15
World Heritage Sites	19

Parks Canada administers a wide range of heritage programs that have evolved over time. Each has its own objectives for commemoration or protection, or both.

Canada's National Program of Historical Commemoration

supports the work of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC) which is legislated under the *Historic Sites and Monuments Act*. The HSMBC provides advice to the Minister responsible for the designation of places, persons and events of national historic significance. Any aspect of Canada's human history

may be considered for ministerial designation if it has had a nationally significant impact on, or illustrates a nationally important aspect of, Canadian history. Nominations to the HSMBC come from members of the public.

National Historic Sites are found in every province and territory of Canada. They represent a variety of historic places, encompassing sites as diverse as sacred places, battlefields, archaeological sites, cultural

landscapes, ships and shipwrecks, structures and districts. Many are still used for work, religious practices, commerce and industry, education and leisure. National Historic Sites also encompass nine historic canals and waterways

that are used actively. National Historic Persons are individuals who have made a significant and lasting contribution to Canadian history. National Historic Events are designated if they represent a defining

- A. Discovery Claim National Historic Site, 2012.
- B. HMCS *Haida* National Historic Site, 2015.
- C. Point Pelee National Park, 1955.



action, episode, movement or experience in Canadian history. Usually designations are marked by bronze plaques summarizing their historic significance.

The Parks Establishment Program administers the creation of a range of different types of parks, in keeping with the National Parks System Plan and other guiding documents. This includes national marine conservation areas, national marine conservation area reserves, national parks, national park reserves, one national landmark and one national urban park.

While parks protect and preserve environments representative of Canada's natural heritage, many have long human histories and are home to Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. There is amazing potential to tell these stories and expand our thinking about parks as cultural landscapes.

The Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office, which is the responsibility of Parks Canada, identifies and manages the heritage character of federally owned buildings in keeping with Treasury Board policy. The federal government owns approximately

37,000 buildings located across Canada. More than 1,200 of these buildings are managed for their heritage character to ensure they are safeguarded for the future.

The Heritage Lighthouse Program implements the *Heritage Lighthouse Protection Act* which identifies and protects many lighthouses across Canada.

The Heritage Railway Stations Program carries out the requirements of the *Heritage Railway Stations Protection Act* which protects Canada's historic railway stations.

The Canadian Heritage Rivers Program recognizes the country's outstanding rivers and encourages their long-term management to promote and conserve their natural, cultural and recreational values. It is a federal-provincial-territorial program that works with community-level river stewardship groups.

- a. HSMBC plaque unveiling for David Thompson's exploration of the Columbia River, 1964.
- b. The Supreme Court of Canada Building, shown here in 2016, is a Classified Federal Heritage Building.
- c. Rouge National Urban Park, 2016.
- d. Fathom Five National Marine Park, 2017.
- e. Pingo Canadian Landmark, 2015.



The *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* (2010) defines a cultural landscape as any geographical area that has been modified, influenced or given special cultural meaning by people, and that has been formally recognized for its heritage value. Cultural landscapes are often dynamic, living entities that continually change because of natural and human-influenced social, economic and cultural processes.



Battle Harbour, designated a national historic site in 1997, is a traditional outport community and cultural landscape that played a major role in the Labrador fishery.

Parks Canada's National Cost-Sharing Program for Heritage Places contributes to the preservation of non-federally owned or administered national historic places through financial contributions. This program supports preparatory aid projects and conservation projects, as well as the development of heritage presentation for owners and eligible lessees of national historic sites, heritage lighthouses and heritage railway stations. It fosters the public's understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of these places in ways that ensure their commemorative integrity or other heritage values are protected and preserved for present and future generations.

Parks Canada leads Canada's implementation of the World Heritage Convention which is an international treaty of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization



(UNESCO). The World Heritage Convention encourages the identification, protection and preservation of natural and cultural heritage places considered to be part of the common heritage of humankind, possessing Outstanding Universal Value. Parks Canada has full or shared responsibilities for 12 of Canada's 19 World Heritage Sites inscribed on the World Heritage List.

- a. Kejimikujik National Park and National Historic Site, 2017.
- b. The Île aux Perroquets Lighthouse, a heritage lighthouse located in Mingan Archipelago National Park Reserve, 2015.
- c. The Alsek River, a Canadian heritage river running through Kluane National Park and Reserve, 2009.



Building on our Success

The *Parks Canada Agency Act* stipulates that the Agency must ensure that a long-term plan is in place for establishing a system of national historic sites. Over the years, Parks Canada has produced system plans. Each plan reflects history as it was understood at the time. The *Framework for History and Commemoration* presents a more inclusive, accessible and engaging approach to public history which reflects Canada of the twenty-first century. It is part of an ongoing planning process that contributes to a vision for heritage places.

This 2014 mural at Fort Langley National Historic Site, by artist Maria Gabankova, shows the diversity of people at this fur trade post in the 1850s.

National Historic Sites of Canada System Plan (2000)

The National Historic Sites of Canada system plan was last updated in 2000. That plan introduced a thematic framework as a way of addressing previously underrepresented topics in the National Program of Historical Commemoration. The 1981 system plan similarly identified areas of underrepresentation in Canadian history. Each of these plans had a key objective of increasing designations related to the themes identified, striving to build a more inclusive system of national historic designations.

The 2000 plan identified three strategic priorities—Aboriginal History, Women’s History and Ethnocultural Communities’

History—to address gaps in designations. Parks Canada pursued new designations in these areas of Canadian history. Workshops and meetings were held to listen to individuals, communities, stakeholders and experts, and to identify topics in these three strategic priorities. Through this process Canadians proposed persons, places and events of interest to their communities. This outreach and engagement led to an increase in designations in all three priorities.

New Framework for History and Commemoration

Since the 2000 system plan, the context for engaging with Canada’s history has changed. Demographic changes have generated new

audiences, and the rise of digital communications has transformed the way we tell stories and absorb information. The growing field of environmental history and the desire to understand the history of Indigenous peoples have broadened understandings of history in Canada. Moreover, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada has increased public awareness about the legacy of residential schools and colonialism in Canada. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s Call to Action #79 calls for “a reconciliation framework for Canadian heritage and commemoration.” This new plan supports addressing this call to action through greater

inclusion of Indigenous peoples’ history, voices and perspectives at Parks Canada’s places.

Linking together designation, commemoration and public history, this plan encourages taking on a broader range of stories at Parks Canada’s heritage places. It draws from established public history approaches and methods. At the same time, it builds on the goals of the 2000 system plan, seeking to produce a more inclusive system by renewing the strategic priorities for persons, places and events of national historic significance, and setting direction for history presentation at all heritage places.

Strategic Priority of 2000 System Plan	1999 Designations	2015 Designations	Increase in Designations as of 2015	% of Total Designations as of 2015
Aboriginal History	191	251	↑ 31%	12%
Women’s History	90	163	↑ 81%	7.9%
Ethnocultural Communities’ History	66	140	↑ 112%	6.7%



A

- a. The Preston Rivulettes hockey team pushed the boundaries of sport in the 1930s, and their storied career was declared a National Historic Event in 2014.
- b. Kensington Market, designated a National Historic Site in 2006, and pictured here between 1939 and 1951, recalls the history of the Canadian urban immigrant experience in the twentieth century.
- c. The Coast Salish Knitters and the Cowichan Sweater were designated a National Historic Event in 2011. In this 1956 photo, Mrs. Pat Charlie knits a Cowichan sweater.



B



C

The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada and the Challenge of Earlier Designations

Since 1919, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC) has worked with Canadians to identify persons, places and events that have left indelible marks on the history of this country.

In the early years, the HSMBC focused its efforts on Canada's constitutional and political developments, military history and the achievements of notable leaders. Later, the emphasis shifted to the experiences of everyday people and forces driving change such as industrialization and immigration. More recently, the HSMBC has considered persons, places and events associated with the priorities in the 2000 system plan. At present, there are more than 2,100 existing designations of national historic

significance, established over the span of a century and reflecting changing views held by different generations of Canadians. The designations themselves are part of Canada's history.

Notwithstanding the value of history in promoting inclusion and understanding among Canadians, recent events have demonstrated that views of history can be divisive and exclusionary. Debates about removing statues and renaming bridges and buildings underscore that history can be disputed.

For the HSMBC, this translates into concerns about the content of plaque texts, the reasons for designation, the names of historic sites and even the merit of some designations. Just as this plan outlines a new approach to history at heritage places, its Annex

outlines the HSMBC's approach to address conflict and controversy stemming from designations. This approach has the potential to provide support to other governments and institutions addressing controversial aspects of Canadian history.

History Matters

Canadians value their history and recognize that it is important to know about the country's past. Historical understanding creates engaged citizens, promotes critical thinking, encourages civic responsibility and produces a more inclusive society. History can be a bridge to connect personal stories to larger narratives and can give places, peoples and individuals a sense of identity. Historical understanding can help us make sense of contemporary issues, in the context of a

changing world, and generate insight on differing perspectives. For communities, it can be a source of pride and can be seen to provide economic opportunities through culture and tourism. For these reasons, and others, history has value to individuals, communities and countries, and contributes to building better societies and futures. History is also a way to remember the past and acknowledge significant persons, places and events in a country's evolution.

History at Heritage Places



History is the study of the past. It uses and analyzes sources to create stories about the past. Sources are found in many places and take many forms, including:

- Written records such as publications, newspapers, censuses, church records, diaries, personal papers, and government, business and scientific records
- Visual materials, including photographs, maps, drawings and artwork
- Audiovisual and digital materials, including radio broadcasts, television and film footage, recorded music, web content and items that are born digital

- Material culture, which refers to historical and archaeological objects, including objects of everyday life
- Archaeological data from sites and collections
- Oral histories
- Traditional knowledge
- Intangible heritage, including rituals and other social and cultural practices
- Terrestrial and underwater landscapes and built environments



- A. Oral tradition and stories passed down through the generations are sources of historical knowledge. Ivvavik National Park, 2014.
- B. Archaeological objects tell us about the past. Beaubassin National Historic Site, 2008.

History at Heritage Places *(continued)*

Parks Canada has some collections of oral histories in its care. These must be used and stored in a way that is sensitive, culturally appropriate, responsive to Indigenous values and in keeping with a community's accepted standards. Stories collected can be a form of intellectual property. Oral histories collected in Indigenous languages represent important parts of Indigenous cultures and require special attention.

Historians, archaeologists and knowledge holders are constantly asking new questions of sources and building historical knowledge. New sources, new evidence and new questions can change, challenge or expand previously established conclusions. History experts are constantly seeking new ways to use sources to embrace, engage and collaborate with the public in discussions about history.

Presenting history to audiences in accessible ways can include using dates and timelines. Some



A



B

historians define history as the study of change over time, and use time as a method for organizing the past. For instance, calendrical time shows how a story unfolds through the days, years and centuries to build a narrative. A longer view of time allows for more expansive approaches to, and different perspectives on, exploring time, such as thinking

in terms of archaeological or geological periods. As useful as calendrical time is, there are also other ways of measuring time, such as Indigenous perspectives that include, for example, cyclical or seasonal approaches. Time should be explored from diverse viewpoints.



C

- A. Conservators treat and preserve historical and archaeological objects at Parks Canada's conservation labs.
- B. A Parks Canada staff member examines the bell from HMS *Erebus*, pictured here in 2014.
- C. Visitors interact with historical sources like beads and a ledger book at Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site, 2016.

Principles

Parks Canada has a mandate to present Canada's history. Canadians rate historic sites and museums as the two most trustworthy sources of historical information. As a federal cultural institution that is a trusted authority, Parks Canada has an obligation to share and present well-researched history, including traditional knowledge and oral traditions, at its heritage places. Parks Canada's commitment to presenting history relies on three principles which influence all projects:

Integrity

The principle of integrity is essential to public history at Parks Canada. Integrity means that history projects will be ethically undertaken and based on carefully planned historical research. This includes respecting the knowledge that individuals and groups choose to share through oral history and traditional knowledge. The relationships that we develop, both through the way we work and with our partners, are based on a foundation of honesty and respect.

Inclusiveness

Canadians are diverse and so are their histories. Inclusiveness means presenting different voices, perspectives and experiences. It also means cultivating relationships with diverse groups to ensure that history presentation reflects the spectrum of Canada's history.

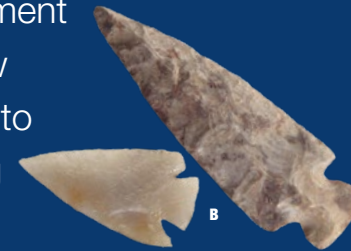
Relevance

History needs to be meaningful to audiences. Relevance means making connections between the past and the present to build understanding about the world we live in today. It means making connections between the past and the places we interpret through the stories we tell. Making history relevant can also illuminate how a local story connects with national and world history.

Strategic Priorities



The history of Indigenous peoples, environmental history, diversity and Canada and the world are priorities for history at Parks Canada. The Agency has selected these priorities in response to the government's commitment to reconciliation, exciting new scholarship and approaches to research, Canada's changing demographics and the importance of history in informing public dialogue.



- A.** Mikak, who was designated a National Historic Person in 2011, is pictured here with her son Tutauk in a painting by John Russell. She was captured by the British in Labrador in 1767 and sent to England the next year. Throughout her life she exemplified Inuit self-determination and political skill.
- B.** Mi'kmaw stone points (ca 500 to 1500 CE), Kejimikujik National Park and National Historic Site.

Strategic Priorities *(continued)*

These four priorities encompass all periods in Canada's history, and they each address and confront some aspect of Canada's colonial legacy. They encourage weaving together the history of Indigenous peoples and stories of nature and culture, delving into all aspects of the country's past and seeing Canada in the context of global history. The *Framework for History and Commemoration* will guide Parks Canada and the HSMBC for years and inform any future decisions regarding historic sites administered by Parks Canada. Strategic priorities evolve with each system plan to align with shifts in focus areas and changes in Canadian society.

History of Indigenous Peoples

The history of Indigenous peoples (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) is a priority for Parks Canada, and includes the totality of Indigenous experiences since time immemorial. It also comprises Indigenous peoples' interactions

with non-Indigenous peoples and the state and society, such as treaty relationships, the fur trade and residential schools. In the context of the federal government's commitment to truth telling and reconciliation, more needs to be done to acknowledge the centrality of Indigenous peoples in history and to foster dialogue. Indigenous histories, Indigenous connections to the land and the complexity and diversity of Indigenous cultures must command greater attention at heritage places.



Through traditional knowledge, oral histories, archaeology and archival research, we know that many different peoples lived for millennia in every region of what became Canada. Indigenous peoples continue to pass on, record and share their



histories. Confronting the legacy of colonialism and its impact on Indigenous peoples is a necessary and important part of reconciliation. Further, it is also important to consider all aspects of Indigenous peoples' history, rather than just their interactions with the state and settlers. Making the history of Indigenous peoples a priority through active engagement and consultation, and encouraging collaboration and relationship-building, supports reconciliation and a future that we can all forge together.

- A. Batoche National Historic Site, 2011.
- B. Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump National Historic Site, 2006.

Strategic Priorities *(continued)*

Environmental History

Environmental history explores how humans affect the environment and how the environment affects us, seeing humans as a part of nature, not separate from it. This history has unfolded across Canada's varied terrestrial regions and its waterways, including under water. Environmental history includes the evolution of urban and rural areas, and the human transformation of these landscapes. As a field of history, it emerged out of the environmental movement of the 1960s and 1970s. It is a growing field of scholarship in Canada, as well as internationally. For Parks Canada,

many heritage places can relate to this priority as natural resources and cultural landscapes are intrinsic aspects of environmental history. Heritage places offer opportunities to discuss changing historical perspectives Canadians have held about concepts such as ecology, wilderness, cultural and natural resources, conservation, sustainability, development and Indigenous stewardship of the land. Together, these provide opportunities to understand our past and ongoing relationships with the environment. In the current context of dramatic environmental change, this is a timely and relevant priority.

A. Environmental history explores the relationship between humans and the environment, including our uses of natural resources, such as in this image of sockeye salmon fishing in British Columbia in 1958. The Fishing Industry on the West Coast was designated a National Historic Event in 1976.

B. Eva Lake Cabin in Mount Revelstoke National Park, built in 1928 and pictured here in 2014, is associated with efforts by park wardens to preserve wildlife and forest resources, monitor forest fires and protect animals from poachers. Parks Canada's own history speaks to many themes in environmental history.



C. The Toronto skyline is seen from Beare Hill in Rouge National Urban Park, 2015. Environmental history considers the role humans play in transforming the landscape.



Strategic Priorities *(continued)*

Diversity

Diverse peoples made Canada what it is today, and their contributions to the country's history need greater recognition. This priority expands on the previous plan's priorities for ethnocultural communities' history and women's history. Stories that include diversity provide opportunities for all Canadians to see themselves, whoever and wherever they are, at heritage places. This priority recognizes that diversity existed in the past – diversity of race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, language and religion, for example



– and that heritage places should make space for these histories in all their complexities and intersections. Some heritage places interpret Canada's long history of immigration, a theme which may resonate with the experiences of people arriving in Canada today.

While Canadians have many shared experiences, understanding heritage places through a more inclusive lens allows us to better appreciate experiences that differ from our own.

Intersections explore how different categories define identities, and overlap and influence one another. For example, the Gulf of Georgia Cannery tells the story of the West Coast fishing industry from the 1870s to the 1970s through the lives of fish plant workers who came from different backgrounds. This National Historic Site illustrates intersections of gender, class and race through the experiences of the people who once worked at the cannery, and speaks to the history of Canada's diversity.

A. This photo, circa 1960, depicts women hand-filling cans of salmon at the Gulf of Georgia Cannery, where women of Japanese descent were often employed on the canning line. The Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site tells diverse histories related to immigration, labour and gender.

B. Vancouver's Chinatown, pictured here circa 1929, is one of the oldest and largest Chinatowns in Canada. Its evolution, fabric and vitality reflect the contributions and struggles of Chinese Canadians over the years. Vancouver's Chinatown was designated a National Historic Site in 2011.

C. After the American Revolution at least 3,500 free Black Americans loyal to the Crown settled in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, forming the first substantial African communities on Canadian soil. This watercolour by Robert Petley, circa 1835, depicts a Black Loyalist family pulling a cart with Nova Scotia's Bedford Basin in the background. The Black Loyalist Experience was designated a National Historic Event in 1994.



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Canada and the World

Canada and the world connects places, people and events in Canadian history with international contexts. This priority examines the parallels and divergences between what has happened here and abroad. It asks the question: are Canadian experiences exceptional, or can they be better understood through reference to global ideas and forces? Canada and the world includes topics like the ebbs and flows of migration, trade and business patterns, participation in military operations, imperialism and colonialism, international relations and how Indigenous territories challenge global borders. Historical scholarship is increasingly transnational in focus, and audiences are interested in learning about historical global connections, and the movement of ideas and beliefs across borders. Understanding Canada's place in the world can reframe how we see the country's past.

A. The Expulsion of the Acadians, designated as a National Historic Event in 1955, and pictured here in a mural by artist Claude Picard, can be understood as part of an international story of warfare and forced migration in the eighteenth century. Canada and the World places events from Canadian history in a transnational context.

B. Participation in military operations, the events leading up to them, and their repercussions both domestically and abroad, are components of Canada and the World. This 1945 photo depicts Canadian soldiers of the Second World War at the Vimy monument in France, on the 28th anniversary of that First World War battle. It speaks to Canadian involvement in both world wars and

the links between those two conflicts. Vimy Ridge was designated a National Historic Site in 1997.

C. During the First World War, Indigenous people enlisted to fight and die for a country in which they were denied the right to vote. In the military, they were met with acceptance and respect that contradicted the racism and discrimination of the home front. On their return, many Indigenous veterans advocated for more rights and better conditions for their communities. In this photo, soldiers from the File Hills Indian Colony pose with family members in Regina before departing overseas. Aboriginal Military Service in the First World War was designated a National Historic Event in 2011.

Key Practices for Public History at Heritage Places

The following ten key practices for public history at Parks Canada provide high level direction for engaging and connecting with audiences, capturing their imagination and sparking their curiosity. These key practices can be used to interpret both tangible and intangible heritage.

This encompasses the physical resources of a site, as well as those intangible aspects such as traditional knowledge and skills, social practices and oral traditions. Some of these key practices will be more relevant than others depending on the heritage place. When beneficial and advantageous, new and innovative technologies can enhance connecting with the public, and extend the potential reach of Parks Canada's work. An important outcome of these practices is that, where the opportunity exists, Parks Canada and partners will work collaboratively to co-develop history projects, setting the stage for a better understanding and appreciation of Canadian history.



Key Practices for Public History at Heritage Places *(continued)*



1. Craft big stories

Taking into account the larger historical picture situates heritage places within local, regional, national and international contexts. Many heritage places can only be fully understood through their ties to other places, through ideas imported from elsewhere, or by their connections to events that happened outside of Canada.

2. Address conflict and controversy

Confronting difficult issues means addressing uncomfortable elements of the past, including

the history of violence, oppression and inequality. In addition, people disagree about the meaning of the past and controversial events as well as how they are commemorated. Grappling with historical conflicts and controversies can lead to a greater understanding of Canadian society today. Controversies can prompt the need to explore historical perspective, because the values of the past may not be the values of today.

3. Seek opportunities for Indigenous peoples to share and communicate their history, on their own terms

Parks Canada will continue to build strong relationships with Indigenous peoples. The Agency will seek out opportunities for co-development of historical research, interpretation and programming. This includes ensuring that Indigenous histories, in the voices of Indigenous peoples, are better shared with, and communicated to, visitors at heritage places.

- A.** William Lyon Mackenzie King, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill at the 1943 Quebec Conferences. These meetings held during the Second World War were designated a National Historic Event in 1946.
- B.** During the Second World War, the Canadian state forcibly dispersed and interned 22,000 innocent people of Japanese ancestry, and confiscated and sold their property without consent. This 1943 photo depicts an internment camp in Greenwood, British Columbia. Japanese Canadian Internment was designated a National Historic Event in 1984.
- C.** Elders and visitors berry picking at Saoyú-?ehdacho National Historic Site, 2015.

Key Practices for Public History at Heritage Places *(continued)*



A



B



C

4. Realize that history is written from a worldview

Everyone has embedded assumptions and learned values about the world. In Canadian history, colonialism, patriarchy and racism are examples of ideologies and structures that have profound legacies. There is a need to be cognizant of, and to confront, these legacies. This contributes to the ongoing process of truth telling and reconciliation.

5. Share authority

There are many people who can contribute to understanding history, and who can shed light on different aspects of the past. Exchanging knowledge about the past happens through collaborations and relationships. Shared authority involves working together to build knowledge. It also encourages engaging with the public about what the past means to them. It can also mean the co-development of projects, including those drawing upon oral history and traditional knowledge.

6. Emphasize a full range of voices, perspectives and experiences

Different voices, perspectives and experiences illuminate a more comprehensive and inclusive understanding of history. Stories about groups whose histories have been marginalized expand what we know and challenge how we conceptualize the past. To better grasp perspectives from other eras, it is important to explore people's circumstances as fully as possible, including how they lived, what they believed and how those ways of life are viewed today.

- a. History is written from a worldview. Fort Anne National Historic Site, 2010.
- b. A ceremony marking the opening of a new cabin in 2015 during a Knowledge Camp at Saoyú-?ehdacho National Historic Site, a site that is cooperatively managed by the Déljñę Land Corporation and the Déljñę Renewable Resources Council, together with Parks Canada.
- c. Animators at Skmaqñ-Port-la-Joye-Fort Amherst National Historic Site portraying Acadian and Mi'kmaw experiences, 2016.

Key Practices for Public History at Heritage Places *(continued)*



7. Acknowledge that humans have touched all heritage places, including parks and natural areas

Heritage places viewed as natural, such as national parks and national marine conservation areas, have long human histories. Many different people have influenced these landscapes, and continue to do so. In many cases, communities are inextricably linked to heritage places. Further, taking a long view of human presence on this continent includes recognizing that Indigenous peoples have lived here and known this place since time immemorial.

8. Recognize that power dynamics affect understandings of heritage places

Decision makers have power and their decisions shape the way that heritage places are understood. Some decisions made in the past do not reflect today's values or understandings of history. Decisions are informed by power dynamics. The history of the treatment of Indigenous peoples shows the effects of an unequal power relationship, as does the expropriation of Indigenous

peoples and local residents for the establishment of a national park. Other decisions made in the past continue to be valued, including the creation of Canada's national parks and national historic sites, and the evolving commitment to conservation of heritage places. It is important to be up-front about the people, practices and processes behind decisions that have shaped heritage places and the choices we are making today, while encouraging a dialogue with those who were or are affected.

- a.** Human contact has shaped all parks and natural areas. National Park wardens climbing in the Rockies, 1958.
- b.** Heritage places are shaped by power dynamics. Protests of expropriation at Kouchibouguac National Park, 1970s.
- c.** During the First World War, there was widespread suspicion that immigrants from enemy countries might be disloyal. Many were labelled as "enemy aliens" and placed in internment camps in national parks. Internees' labour built infrastructure in the parks, demonstrating the power dynamics which shape our understandings of heritage places. Otter Internment Camp, Yoho National Park, 1916.

Key Practices for Public History at Heritage Places *(continued)*



9. Explore the spectrum of powerful memories and meanings attached to heritage places

Heritage places can evoke powerful memories. Some sites relate to resistance, tragedy, important or controversial figures, and are sites of memory or testaments to those histories. Sites can also connect to personal or local memories, and shape a community's understanding of a heritage place. Sometimes the meanings

communities and individuals assign to heritage places go beyond the official reasons for why a place is recognized. Sites should be valued for the full range of memories people bring to them.

10. Appreciate that interpretations of the past are constantly evolving

Changing perspectives and questions lead to research and knowledge that constantly produce new understandings of what the past means. History can always

be interrogated and no one ever has the last word. In the future, today's interpretations may well seem out of touch or quaint. At the same time that our questions are changing, historic places are experiencing change. They are affected by a myriad of factors, including conservation efforts, climate change and the passage of time. These changes may unearth new information about a place.

- a.** Memorials demonstrate the shifting meanings communities and individuals assign to heritage places. Obelisk at Battle of the Châteauguay National Historic Site, 2011.
- b.** Heritage places connect to personal and local memories and shape a community's understanding of history. Confederation Square, location of the National War Memorial, seen here under construction in 1939, was designated a National Historic Site in 1984.
- c.** Interpretations of the past are constantly evolving. Fur trade histories once focussed on the British-French rivalry, but now include the power and agency of Indigenous peoples and women. Fort Langley National Historic Site, 2012.

Historical Thinking: Engaging Canadians with History

Working in tandem with the key practices listed above, historical thinking concepts encourage reflection about how we learn and think about the past. They can inspire visitors to connect and engage with history at heritage places.



There are six foundational concepts of historical thinking used across disciplines such as history and archaeology. These provide a groundwork for history education and inquiry. Parks Canada has adopted these concepts because they are effective tools for engaging critically with history and prompting curiosity about the country's past, a goal of Parks Canada's heritage places. These six concepts can, at times, overlap. They complement the key practices, encouraging thorough and thoughtful history.

Historical significance is about finding meaning in the past and considering what is of historical value. Fort Chambly National Historic Site, 2011.

Historical Significance

The concept of "Historical Significance" is about establishing meaning in the past and thinking about what is of historical value. It includes considering who is making the decision about what is significant. This concept means asking:

- What is important in history and why?
- Do we all agree about what matters in history? Why or why not?
- Why are certain topics researched and taught, and not others? Who decides?
- What determines the importance of an archaeological find or historical document?



Evidence

The concept of “Evidence” is about historical sources used in determining how and what we know about the past. The limitations of sources must be carefully considered. Even with access to many sources, it is impossible to



fully know about the past. Some questions can never be answered. This concept means asking:

- How do we know about the past? How do we fill in the silences when information is not revealed through sources?
- How do we respond when sources do not agree?
- Is all evidence to be weighted equally? How do people weigh different kinds of conflicting evidence?

Continuity and Change

The concept of “Continuity and Change” considers ways of life that endured for long periods, and

moments when there are dramatic breaks or changes. Thinking about continuity and change allows for comparisons between different periods in history. This concept means asking:

- What has changed and what has stayed the same? Are there similarities or are there differences?
- How do we make connections between the past and the present?
- Do people view and experience change the same way? Why or why not?



- These depictions of Fort George National Historic Site over the years demonstrate continuity and change. Musket demonstration by interpreters in period costume, 2010.
- An 1813 print by Edward Walsh depicts Fort George as seen from the American Fort Niagara.
- Visitors at Fort George National Historic Site, 1951.
- This photo of Inuit men posing with a camera in 1929 encourages the viewer to ask questions about evidence, including where sources come from and the conditions under which they are produced.

Historical Thinking: Engaging Canadians with History *(continued)*

Cause and Consequence

The concept of “Cause and Consequence” explores why something happened and its impacts or effects. This includes asking “why,” and exploring the causes behind events. This requires exploring historical context in depth. This concept means asking:

- Who or what influenced history, and what were the repercussions?
- What factors shape history?
- Are there connections between local, regional, national and international events?

Historical Perspective

The concept of “Historical Perspective” is the effort to place actors and events within their historical or archaeological contexts. This entails making sense of the value systems of different eras. This concept means asking:

- How can we understand the worldviews of another time?
- How do we make sense of historical actors and events in



their own time so that we don't view their actions only through contemporary lenses?

- Why is it important to understand historical people and events?

Ethical Dimension

The concept of “Ethical Dimension” considers how values and beliefs influence perspectives on the past, prompting questions about how we judge the past. This concept means asking:

- Is it right or fair to judge the past, and how can we do so thoughtfully?
- How do moral convictions and ideologies affect our understanding of the past?
- How do we understand the differences between today's values and beliefs, and those in the past?



- “Historical Perspective” allows us to consider the actions of Igor Gouzenko, who in 1945 exposed a Soviet spy ring in Canada. The Gouzenko Affair brought the realities of the Cold War to the public's attention and was designated a National Historic Event in 2002.
- “Ethical Dimension” considers how values and beliefs affect our understanding of historical actors, such as Louis Riel, designated a National Historic Person in 1956, and seen here during his 1885 trial for treason.
- “Cause and Consequence” delves into the many causes behind events, such as the 1917 Halifax Explosion, which was designated a National Historic Event in 2016.





Conclusion

Parks Canada brings history and Canadians together. By playing a key role in preserving and presenting Canada's history and heritage places, the Agency is a leader in sharing stories that have shaped the country. Through the *Framework for History and Commemoration*, the Agency aspires to go even further and exceed visitors' expectations for engaging with history at heritage places. Canadians clearly have a broad interest in, and appetite for, history. Parks Canada's heritage places offer great opportunities to satisfy this curiosity.

Parks Canada has been engaged in historical research about Canada's heritage places since the 1930s and, as a trusted authority, has a responsibility to share information about the country's history, fulfilling an important role in Canadian society.

Efforts to improve history presentation are already underway, as are initiatives to collaborate and co-develop history projects with Indigenous partners. This work responds to, and is in keeping with, Call to Action #79 of the Truth and Reconciliation

Commission of Canada, which directs governments and the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada to recognize the contributions of Indigenous peoples to history. The importance of the history of Indigenous peoples, in all time periods and since time immemorial, is central to an understanding of this place which is now known as Canada.

This plan encourages a bold approach to Canada's history that does not steer away from controversial topics. Using the principles, strategic priorities, key

practices and historical thinking concepts presented in this plan, the goal is the transformation of the history experience at heritage places. This means that a heritage place can go beyond the official reasons of why that place matters – whether it is cultural or natural, or both. This document represents a first step in transforming the approach to history at Parks Canada, and additional key practices may be identified in the future.

Parks Canada invites all Canadians and visitors to share and discover this new approach. There are myriad ways to illuminate the past, and connect people with history. Parks Canada must seize every opportunity to include new voices in telling these stories, and a new generation of Canadians is invited to listen and contribute.



A



B



C

- A. Fort Anne National Historic Site, 2013.
- B. Sault Ste. Marie Canal National Historic Site, 2014.
- C. Batoche National Historic Site, 2003.

Conflict and Controversy: The Careful Review of Existing Designations

The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC or the Board) recommends to the Minister responsible for Parks Canada the designation of persons, places and events of national historic significance. These designations reflect the breadth and depth of Canadian history, and encompass both positive and negative aspects of Canadian history. This is particularly relevant in the context of Canada's relationship with Indigenous peoples and the federal government's commitment to truth telling and reconciliation.

Commemoration is not celebration in the context of the HSMBC's work. An ongoing challenge for the HSMBC has been the public perception that designations and commemorative plaques are positive and honourific celebrations of persons, places and events. At times, public perception has conflated the purpose of HSMBC plaques with that of commemorative statues or the names of buildings which honour someone for their achievement and legacy. Unlike those other types of historical recognition,

HSMBC plaque unveiling for Jean Paul Mascarene, lieutenant governor of the town and fort of Annapolis Royal, Fort Anne National Historic Site, 1921.



Conflict and Controversy: The Careful Review of Existing Designations *(continued)*

HSMBC plaques explain significant aspects in Canadian history. The Board's approach to commemoration includes recognizing tragic, controversial and shameful dimensions of Canada's history. For example, the *Komagata Maru* Incident of 1914 (National Historic Event, 2014), the Nikkei Internment Memorial

Centre in New Denver, British Columbia (National Historic Site, 2007) and the Halifax Explosion (National Historic Event, 2016) are designations that illustrate such events in Canada's history.

When considering national historic significance, the Board deliberates in a context where historical scholarship is constantly

evolving. Researchers have adopted approaches that are increasingly interdisciplinary, and give more attention to the global and transnational forces at play. Furthermore, historical scholarship today makes more of an effort to address race, gender and class, while challenging, for example, embedded structures of power such as colonialism and patriarchy.

More than 2,100 designations of national historic significance have been made since 1919 when the HSMBC was established. The Board recognizes the enormous shifts in historical understandings and perspectives that have occurred since that time, and acknowledges that it needs to be attentive and responsive to these shifts.

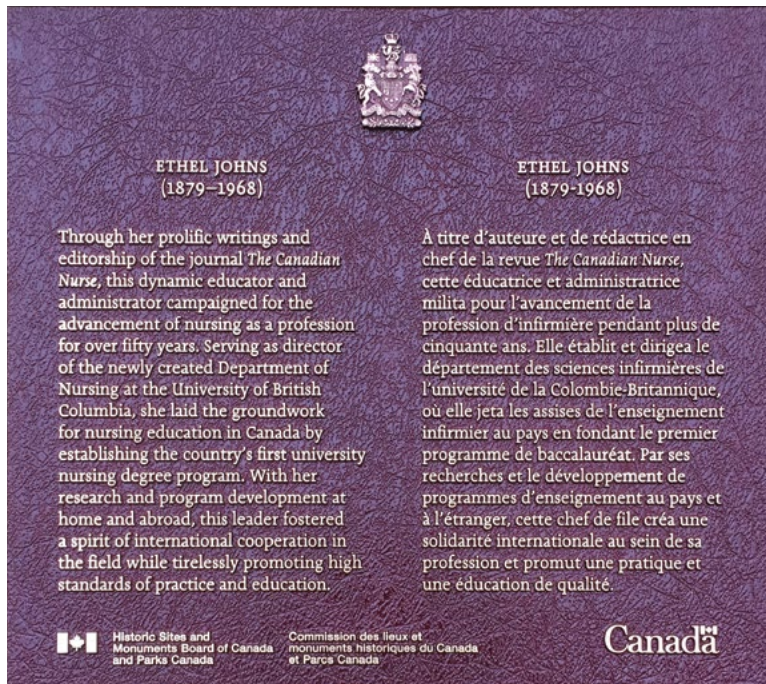
HSMBC designations are usually commemorated with a bronze plaque, like the one pictured here for educator Ethel Johns, who was designated a National Historic Person in 2009.

Designation refers to the Minister's official recognition of a person, place or event of national historic significance. **Commemoration**, in contrast, is the form of marking or remembrance. HSMBC commemorations usually take the form of a bronze plaque.

The HSMBC and the Principles and Key Practices for Public History

At the request of the Minister, this Annex outlines the HSMBC's approach for the careful review of existing designations and their plaque texts. A review may result in changing the reasons for designation, the name of a designation or a plaque text. In the past, reviews have often been at the request of the HSMBC.

The three sections below draw from the framework's relevant principles and key practices for public history. Each section



Conflict and Controversy: The Careful Review of Existing Designations *(continued)*

addresses how the Board will undertake the review, and concludes with the approach for implementing these ideas. While this approach was developed specifically to support the HSMBC and its work associated with the National Program of Historical Commemoration, this approach may provide guidance to other governments and institutions addressing controversial aspects of Canadian history. In addition, the Minister may seek advice from the HSMBC on the appropriateness of forms of commemoration (statues, naming of buildings, other types of monuments etc.) proposed by authorities other than the National Program of Historical Commemoration where they relate to persons, events and places of national historic significance. Such advice would consider whether the form of commemoration is consistent with the national historic significance of the designation. The choice of form of commemoration should take into consideration the degree

to which that chosen form of commemoration not only recalls historic fact but also implicitly celebrates the values represented by the person, place or event.

1. Historical interpretations of the past are constantly evolving, and should reflect changes in society and our knowledge of the past. (Key Practice for Public History #10 and Principle of Relevance)

Historical interpretation is always changing, and the HSMBC understands the need to revisit existing designations in light of new evidence or perspectives.

Knowledge about Canada's past continues to grow, and as Canadian society has changed, so too have perspectives and approaches to thinking about the country's history. History is an ongoing process, where new questions lead to changed understandings of the past and its links to the present. While the present can be difficult to interpret, the past poses

an ongoing and distinct set of challenges, including the availability of sources. The HSMBC's recommendations will continue to draw on scholarship and other relevant sources, including oral history.

Given this context, sometimes designations from earlier periods will need to be reviewed. This is a growing and necessary part of the Board's work. A review will be initiated where there is controversy surrounding a designation. This review could also be launched by new research findings that broaden, change or add a new layer to what is known. If a member of the public asks for a review of an older designation it should be considered. Nothing can be immune from review: every designation can be re-evaluated. The result is that the Board will reconsider the reasons for why something is historically significant, and, where appropriate, will adopt revised reasons.

2. Historical interpretations should emphasize a full range of voices, perspectives and experiences, and the work of the HSMBC must be inclusive and involve members of the public. (Key Practice for Public History #6, and the Principles of Integrity and Inclusiveness)

Public history should reflect the range of voices, perspectives and experiences found in Canadian society. There is not a single definitive version of history. By privileging one or only some perspectives, other views are excluded, and it is important that the HSMBC reflect the country's diversity. The Board will consider a wide range of views in its work.

Since the 1990s, members of the public have been key in setting the Board's agenda. The public proposes new potential designations through an open nomination process. To support the Board in its deliberations, Parks Canada's historians prepare a background report for each eligible nomination, which is often

Conflict and Controversy: The Careful Review of Existing Designations *(continued)*

reviewed by an external expert. Public involvement continues when a draft plaque text is prepared for a designation. Subject matter experts, stakeholders and communities are consulted and provide feedback on the text. Sometimes these individuals do not agree on what should be emphasized, or raise concerns that the short plaque text is too

restrictive. All comments are taken into account and this public input improves the text before it is approved and cast in bronze. To further support public understanding, a backgrounder describing the designation is released at the time of unveiling. While plaque texts are only three to four sentences in length, the Board, Parks Canada staff

and the public vetting process work together to ensure that the final plaque text is based on a foundation of integrity.

The HSMBC will also, on an ongoing basis, review its existing plaques to ensure that they reflect current scholarship. This review process can be brought about by a public request, a public

discussion or controversy related to a designation, or initiated by the Board. Much like the nomination and designation process, the review will involve consultation and engagement with members of the public and a range of experts. Public consultation and engagement are at the core of the HSMBC's activities.



A recent example of the evolution of an existing designation is Skmaqn-Port-la-Joye-Fort Amherst National Historic Site in Prince Edward Island. The site was

Skmaqn-Port-la-Joye-Fort Amherst National Historic Site, 2018.

designated in 1958 and the name Fort Amherst National Historic Park was adopted. Fort Amherst is one of the historical names of the site because the location served as a seat of government for the British from 1758 to 1768. Fort Amherst is also associated with the Deportation of the Acadians in 1758. In 1985, the name of the site was changed to Fort Amherst/Port la Joye to reflect Acadian history. In 2008, the reasons for designation were changed following a review that investigated

Mi'kmaw and French activities at the site. Following significant controversy about the name of Fort Amherst and its association with British

Agency is the power held by individuals to determine the course of their lives.

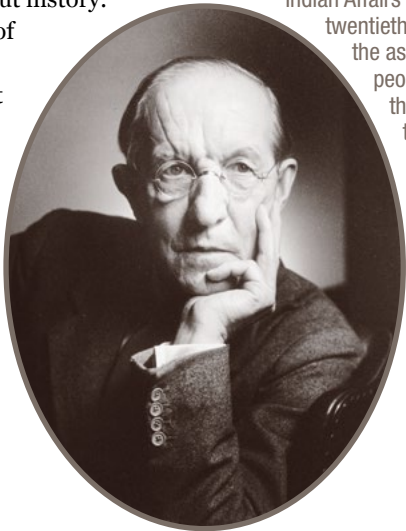
military figure Jeffrey Amherst, as well as advocacy for a name that reflected Mi'kmaw history at the site, the Mi'kmaw name of Skmaqn (which means "waiting place") was officially added in 2018. Mi'kmaw, British and French elements of

the site's history are now included in the site's name and recognized in the reasons for designation. Through each phase of review, the input of the relevant present-day communities was sought and included. This example reflects how an existing designation illustrated an earlier view of history and did not address Indigenous history, presence or agency. It also had limited emphasis on Acadian history. Such designations can be addressed through careful review that includes engagement with relevant Indigenous groups and other communities.

Conflict and Controversy: The Careful Review of Existing Designations *(continued)*

3. *History is written from a worldview. Earlier designations reflect the time and context when they were designated and should not be erased. How we interpret significance today needs to evolve. (Key Practice for Public History #4)*

HSMBC designations are an important record of Canadian history. Even when there is consensus that a designation is controversial or that the reasons for designation are outdated or missing key points, erasing designations would serve only to hide what should be an open discussion about history. The decisions of earlier Boards provide insight into what mattered to Canadians in the past



and people's ways of thinking about history at that time. When a designation becomes controversial, a range of options exist to address the issue, from reviewing the plaque text to revising the reasons for designation. Under extraordinary circumstances, the Board may recommend to the Minister that a designation be removed, taking into consideration factors such as the historical importance and impact of

Duncan Campbell Scott, designated a National Historic Person in 1948, is an example of someone whose legacy is controversial. A poet and writer, Scott was deputy superintendent general of the Indian Affairs department in the early twentieth century. Scott advocated the assimilation of Indigenous peoples into settler society through the destruction of their cultures.

the additional information, the reliability of the sources, and the historical context. These considerations and a system to record such changes will be more fully elaborated in HSMBC guidelines.

Worldviews and assumptions that underpin historical understanding associated with earlier designations are another issue for the Board. For example, a common theme in much writing about the eighteenth century has been the British-French rivalry for North America. Earlier historical writing has focused on these two empires as central players, with Indigenous actors relegated to the background, if present at all. This narrative recounts the inevitable progress of these two empires in establishing themselves in North America, and embodies colonial assumptions and approaches to history. What is viewed as significant in a



Dr. Helen MacMurphy, designated a National Historic Person in 1997, was a leading advocate of public health reforms in Canada. Schoolteacher, physician, and from 1920 to 1934, Chief of the federal Department of Health's Child Welfare Division, MacMurphy's advocacy for social issues included support of eugenicist policies such as segregation and sterilization of people labelled as "unfit."

given time, by particular people, reflects the fact that history is written from a worldview. While a review of earlier designations can change how significance is interpreted today, this is a challenging intellectual endeavour. Not everyone agrees on what the past means or what parts of the past should be valued, and current worldviews will always be embedded in today's historical writing.

The HSMBC is open to reconsidering subjects that were turned down by earlier Boards. Members of the public can request a re-evaluation of a subject if there is significant new information or

Conflict and Controversy: The Careful Review of Existing Designations *(continued)*

if 15 years have passed since the last decision. A minimum of 15 years has been selected because it allows for a nomination to return to the Board while providing enough time to pass for a shift in historical perspective.

Approach

A broad range of existing designations are potentially controversial, have outdated reasons for national historic significance, and do not reflect contemporary knowledge and scholarship. These designations

require review. There are, for example, national historic persons whose legacies are now controversial. This includes people who are known to have held anti-Semitic and racist attitudes, who believed in eugenics or who proposed and carried out colonial policies and actions against Indigenous peoples. This group of designations also includes national historic events such as specific religious orders implicated in the running of Indian Residential Schools, or organizations that engaged in and

promoted racist practices. At Parks Canada, a review is underway to identify priorities and develop a sustainable schedule for the review of existing designations and their plaque texts. Building on the three themes explored above, the HSMBC will review existing designations and their plaque texts, in keeping with the following guidelines:

Historical interpretations of the past are constantly evolving and should reflect changes in society and our knowledge of the past.

A review of the reasons for designation or a plaque text could be initiated under any of the following conditions:

1. significant new research and scholarship;
2. a public request;
3. public discussion or controversy related to the designation;

The 2019 unveiling of the HSMBC plaque commemorating Black Militia Units of Upper Canada, 1812-1850.

4. the absence of an integral part of the history or historical perspective associated with the designation, such as the history of Indigenous peoples;
5. an internal review process, or at the request of the Board.

Historical interpretations should emphasize a full range of voices, perspectives and experiences, and the work of the HSMBC must be inclusive and involve members of the public.

The Canadian public plays an integral role in the Board's work, ensuring a diversity of voices, perspectives and experiences. This involvement includes:

1. an open public process for new nominations and review of existing designations;
2. a broad external review seeking input from experts and members of the public for each plaque text, whether for new or existing designations;



Conflict and Controversy: The Careful Review of Existing Designations *(continued)*

3. seeking out Indigenous or other pertinent community perspectives, where relevant, throughout the designation process, as well as during the review of existing designations.

History is written from a worldview. Earlier designations reflect the time and context when they were designated and should not be erased. How we interpret significance today needs to evolve.

The review process is informed by the following considerations:

1. barring extraordinary circumstances, the Board will not recommend revoking existing designations, but is committed to reviewing the national historic significance of existing designations and updating them to reflect current scholarship and public understanding;
2. upon receiving a public request, the Board will review nominations that previously received a negative

recommendation, recognizing that the perspective on what is significant changes over time. One of the two following conditions must be met:

- a. if considerable new scholarship or information shifts the understanding of that topic;
- b. when 15 years have passed since the negative recommendation;

3. for every designation which has undergone review and has new or expanded reasons for designation, a new plaque text will be prepared for approval.

Commemoration: Looking Forward

The Board has used bronze plaques as its mode of commemoration since the 1920s. Over the last century, plaques have evolved: they became bilingual and, in some cases, multilingual, and new formats have been adopted. The plaques



are the Board's distinctive brand. They are appreciated by people who wish to have some aspect of Canadian history recognized, and by those who stop to read them, wherever they are found across the country and abroad. Yet plaques have their limitations as a mode of commemoration. Furthermore, there are subjects in Canadian history where a location for a plaque is difficult to identify. New forms of commemoration such as ceremonies, virtual commemorations, artworks and healing practices provide opportunities to expand the reach

The 2018 unveiling of the HSMBC plaque commemorating the Cypress Hills Massacre National Historic Event. This plaque has text in Nakoda, English and French, making the text more accessible to a wider audience.

of designations and the ways in which history is remembered and shared. In addition to acknowledging that the history on plaque texts needs to be addressed, the Board is committed to exploring and making better use of forms of commemoration other than plaques.

Acknowledgments

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historical thinking concepts in this plan. Other sources of note were *Canadians and their Pasts*, the Historical Thinking Project, the History Relevance campaign and the Canadian Historical Association's "Statement on Research Ethics." In addition to many internal reviewers, Parks Canada also thanks external reviewers, including historians, archaeologists, public history experts, Indigenous cultural experts and representatives of cultural institutions, who generously provided invaluable feedback which has substantially improved this framework. Parks Canada also acknowledges the feedback received through a national public engagement process.

Useful Links

Canada's Historic Places. *The Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*.
<https://www.historicplaces.ca/media/18072/81468-parks-s+g-eng-web2.pdf>

Canadian Heritage Rivers System.
<http://chrs.ca/>

The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada.
<https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/culture/clmhc-hsmbc>

Parks Canada. Cultural Resource Management Policy.
<https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/docs/pc/poli/grc-crm>

Parks Canada. Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office.
<https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/culture/beefp-fnbro>

Parks Canada. Heritage Lighthouses of Canada.
<https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/lhn-nhs/pp-hl>

Parks Canada. Heritage Railway Stations Protection Act.
<https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/culture/clmhc-hsmbc/pat-her>

Parks Canada. National Cost-Sharing Program for Heritage Places.
<https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/culture/clmhc-hsmbc/ppf-csp>

Parks Canada. National Program for the Grave Sites of Canadian Prime Ministers.
<https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/culture/clmhc-hsmbc/sep-gra>

Parks Canada. National Parks System Plan.
<https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/pn-np/plan>

Credits

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