



DARTMOUTH HERITAGE MUSEUM'S

THE GAZETTE

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



Top: Dartmouth Heritage Museum, in partnership with the Helen Creighton Folklore Society, hosted musician Lotus Wight for a concert in the garden at Evergreen House this June.

Bottom: Welcome to our Summer 2026 Heritage Interpreters! From left to right, Keegan, Rose, Hannah, Julia, and Alex. Make sure to say 'hi' when you visit Evergreen House and Quaker House this summer!

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COLLECTIONS CORNER

The Library of the James Family

BY SHANNON BAXTER, COLLECTIONS MANAGER

Back in our Spring Gazette of 2023, we paid homage to Evergreen House. It has now stood for 159 years at the end of Albert Street, and has seen many people call it home. In that article, I highlighted some of the artifacts that were left behind by those former residents of Evergreen.

One of the items that we had not looked deeply into; however, were books. These items can provide glimpses into their past owners' lives, either with signatures or long-forgotten bookmarks. It is always fascinating to see what books people treasured over a century ago. It can speak a lot to the character of the person who might have taken the book down to help pass the time on a rainy afternoon.

For this Collection's Corner, we will be looking at some books that were from the library of the original owner of Evergreen House: Judge Alexander James.



*Studio Portrait of Judge Alexander James, circa 1880.
DHM 1975.071.001*

Judge Alexander James was born in Halifax in 1816, though his family moved briefly to England soon afterwards and then returned to Nova Scotia, settling in Bridgetown. There was an anecdote passed down from the family that Alexander James was a sickly child, and overheard his father say that he would not bother educating his son, for he suspected that he would not reach adulthood. Further tensions in the family home spurred Alexander to run away and go back to Halifax. According to a recollection of his youngest daughter, Sarah "Saidie" Morrison, one of his first jobs was sweeping the floors in a lawyer's office, and it was here that he got his interest in studying law.

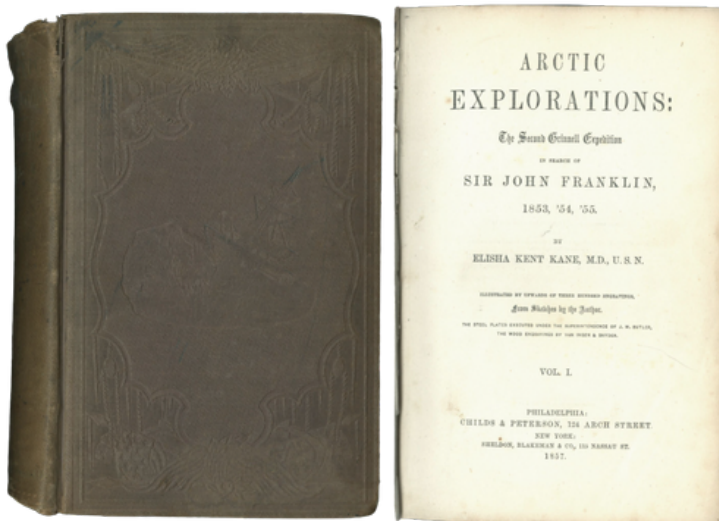
He went to Acadia University for a year, and taught in Dartmouth as a schoolmaster until 1841. Soon after, he studied law and became a lawyer in 1845, by 1877 he was a judge. He continued to be a strong supporter of education in Dartmouth. He was involved in the establishment of the Mechanic's Institute, which held both lectures and Night Schools for people who wished to get further education in various trades. He also donated land to ensure the building of a road that would connect the "Ward One" school to Portland Street and Prince Albert Road, both the street and the school would be named after his wife, Harriet Hawthorn.

Collections Corner: The Library of the James Family, *continued.*

Evergreen House was built to not only be a new home to raise Alexander and Harriet's family, but also his law office. It may be hard to believe now, but where the museum now has its gift shop was once the waiting room for those waiting to meet with Judge James. His office is where the museum now features the life and achievements of Dr. Helen Creighton, another famous resident of the house.

A Judge's Taste in Literature

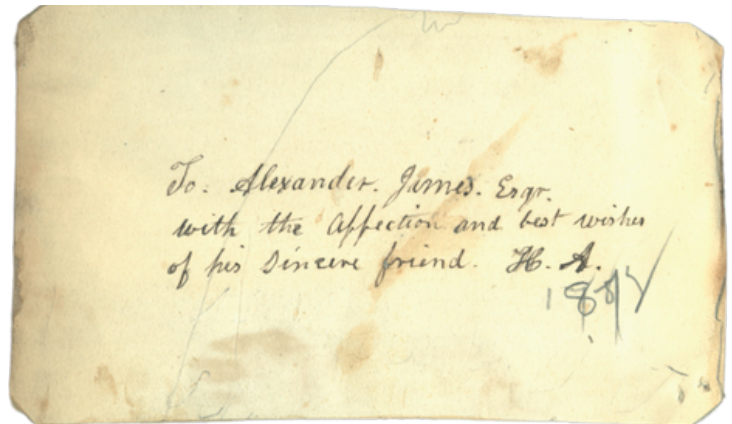
Whether these books would have been on display in the Judge's office, or secured in a more private side of the family home at Evergreen, is hard to say. Regardless, they are an insight into what the man was interested in reading whenever he wasn't focused on his judicial duties.



Arctic Explorations, Cover and Title Page for Volume 1

Two volumes of "Arctic Explorations: The Second Grinnell Expedition, in search of Sir John Franklin, 1853-1855" by Elisha Kent Kane, would have been a fascinating read. The expeditions were American-led explorers hoping to discover the fate of Sir John Franklin's ill-fated expedition through the Northwest Passage.

The books were originally gifted to Alexander James by "H.A." and include the pencilled date of 1874, possibly the year it had been gifted to the judge. The second volume bears a signature, possibly that of Alexander James.



Closeup image of the dedication included in Volume 1 of the Arctic Explorations books.

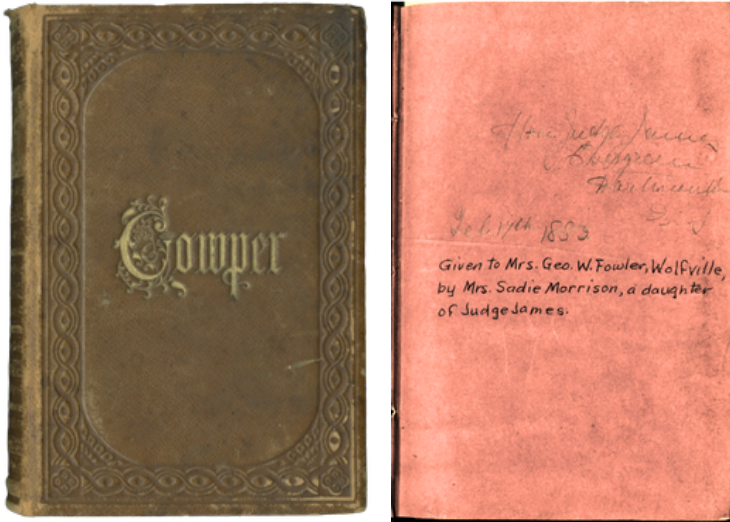
A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alexander James".

Possible Signature of Alexander James, written in Volume 2 of the Arctic Explorations books.

It is hard to imagine that the fate of the Sir John Franklin expedition, and the location of his ships the HMS Erebus and HMS Terror, would not be identified until 2014 and 2016, respectively.

Arctic exploration was not the only interest for Judge Alexander James—he was also interested in poetry. At least two collections of poetry, one of the work of Longfellow, and the other of Cowper, both bear writing of having been part of the Judge's library. However, at some point the books were passed down to his youngest daughter, Sarah "Saidie" James. Later in life, she then gifted the books to a friend named Margery Fowler (nee McKim). A love of reading poetry passed down from father to daughter, and then shared amongst friends.

Collections Corner: The Library of the James Family, *continued.*



Left: Cover of *The Poetical Works of William Cowper*, DHM 1981.035.003

Right: Pencil signature/note relating to Judge Alexander James, followed by a later note written in pen on how the book was eventually gifted to Mrs. Fowler. DHM 1981.035.003

These are only a small sample of the many books that are within the collection of the Dartmouth Heritage Museum, many of which give clues to the ones who previously owned them, and are an interesting look into the tastes of Dartmouthians within the last century. Evergreen House has both a Reference Library, and a “Special Collections” library that is available for the public to view whenever they visit.

The Wonderful Windsor, or, also known as, *How to Become Enamored with Old Wooden Chairs*

ALEXANDER JOHNSON, HERITAGE INTERPRETER

For most of my life, if I noticed wooden chairs at all, it was to turn my nose up at the hard seat.

But through happenstance, I’ve had my eyes opened. I now see beyond the hard seat to the refined geometry, the subtle bend, the exquisite curves. I’ve become a chair appreciator. An evangelical for its humble beauty. I am chair-pilled.

Dear reader, allow me to “chair” my madness with you. You might want to take a seat.

Our awakening begins with one of the most iconic designs out there, one which some argue is the father of roughly half of all chairs in the world.

Behold!



George Gammon built this handsome Windsor in the latter half of the 1800s, today pictured at Evergreen House. DHM.2000.010.007

A mid-19th Century Windsor chair. One form among many of a design that since the 1700s has held the love, and buttocks, of both nobles and commoners alike.

Notice the triangles formed between the splayed maple legs and the back posts, all held together by the pine seat. Notice their under-stated turnings. Notice the light, airy nature of this hardworking chair, built with fresh wood riven apart to preserve the continuous grain and give it an embrace that bends but does not break.

The origins of this design and its name are somewhat mysterious. One story goes that while on a gander about the English countryside, King George III took shelter from a storm in a peasant’s home. There, he was given a chair he found to be so comfortable that he commissioned a batch to be made for Windsor Castle.

However, this story is rather unlikely given that the name “Windsor chair” predates His Majesty by at least a decade. As for the design, it’s likely an evolution of folk stick chairs that were refined by English wheelwrights.

The Wonderful Windsor, *continued.*

And if evolve it did, then the 18th and 19th Centuries were positively Cambrian — craftsmen took this basic form and pushed it in all sorts of directions.

Here in Nova Scotia, historian George MacLaren posited that the majority of chairs made were Windsors. And here at the Dartmouth Heritage Museum, we have a window into the style of the mid-1800s thanks to a pair of identical chairs made by George Gammon.



Above: We can luckily identify Mr. Gammon's work from the branding he left on the bottom

Left: Mr. Gammon also produced this near-identical chair, which is also found in the museum's collection. DHM 1968.037.001.

Mr. Gammon, born in 1838, ran a shop on the road to Lawrencetown where, in addition to chairs, he made tables and spool beds.

These chairs are painted, as was the fashion, to hide the mismatch of wood species and give the chair a cohesive look. Black was the paint of choice, with a red undercoat meant to create a distinguished woody glow as the topcoat wore away. We can also see the influence of the popular mass-produced Hitchcock chairs, which had stenciled designs and may have inspired the artwork on these Gammon chairs.

Now it is your turn, dear reader. Look about you with an eye for repose and see if you can spot an elusive Windsor resting unremarked in your living rooms, dining rooms or spaces writ large and contemplate the eternal nature of beauty and a good chair.

Buchanan, C. (2014). *The Why of the Windsor*. Fine Woodworking. <https://www.finewoodworking.com/project-guides/chairs-benches-and-stools/the-why-of-windsor-chairs?srltid=AfmBOoqJfxbqIF5RL6MtpVI5-SC3HY9dwuDtHIkY-AdmDohTMzqqrC-R>

MacLaren, G. (1961). *Antique Furniture by Nova Scotia Craftsmen*.
Schwartz, C. (2025). *The Stick Chair Book*. Lost Art Press. <https://blog.lostartpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/The-Stick-Chair-Book-2nd-revised-NOV-2025.pdf>

Iconic Faces of the HRM

JULIA CUTHBERTSON, HERITAGE INTERPRETER

Nova Scotia has a tendency to put faces on inanimate objects, so let's break down some of HRM's most iconic faces. Theodore Tugboat was a constant figure in the Harbour until his betrayal in June of 2021. Andrew Cochran created Theodore TOO as a bedtime story for his son. He ultimately evolved it into the iconic CBC series "Theodore Tugboat," which became so popular that Cochran Entertainment commissioned a 65-foot replica tugboat. Theodore TOO was built at Snyder's Shipyard in Dayspring, Nova Scotia and officially came into the Halifax Harbour on May 5th, 2000. After 21 years, Theodore left the Halifax harbour permanently to journey to Hamilton, Ontario. While Hamilton news articles stated Theodore Tugboat as a nightmare, true Nova Scotians see his beauty.



Theodore Tugboat at Murphy's Cable Wharf, Halifax, c.2012. Photo by Dennis G. Jarvis, Wikimedia Commons.

Another face comes from a too-often forgotten trolley car. Electric trolleys in Halifax became popular in the early 1900's, but due to the damage these cars sustained in the Halifax Explosion, they were replaced with 24 Birney Streetcars. Birney cars were small, lightweight, inexpensive, and required only one person to operate, making them ideal. The original colour of the Birney cars was green, but because it was hard to see in the dark and fog, they changed it to a bright orange. Unfortunately, more people deemed the orange too ugly, so they had to change the colour once again to a canary yellow (Vicky 2021). By the end of the 1930s, Halifax's population had grown from around 60,000 to 120,000. While the Birneys could easily shuffle 9 million passengers a year, they could not maintain service to carry 31 million people, even with additional cars (Vicky 2021). With that, 86 Birney cars were scrapped, and on the 26th of March 1949, the Birney cars ran for the last time with a message. Car 177 was decorated with a face and a tear for their last goodbye, with this poem written on its side panels,

"Good-bye my friends, good-bye! Good-bye, my friends, this is the end; I've travelled miles and miles And watched your faces through the years, show anger, tears and smiles; Although you've criticized my looks And said I was too slow, I got you there and brought you back, Through rain and sleet and snow. Farewell to all you motorists, Today my journey ends! So let's forget past arguments, Shake hands and part as friends. You've followed me around the streets And many times you swore Because I beat you to the stop And dared you to pass my door!"



Birney Street Car no.177, c.1949, PDM.

Iconic Faces of the HRM, *cont.*

You can not talk about iconic faces without bringing up Woody the Talking Christmas Tree. Whether you love Woody or believe that he is a physical manifestation of your nightmares, there is no doubt that he is a local legend. Woody was first introduced at Mic Mac Mall in 1983 to bring a unique experience to shoppers and returned every Christmas until 2006. Despite being a beloved tradition, Woody retired due to structural deterioration and safety concerns. However, in 2021, the beloved tree returned, this time with a facelift. Woody's return sparked local attention and worldwide interest, and it was even featured on The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon. While some believe Woody is cursed, most Dartmouthians are glad he is back.



Black-and-white photograph of Woody the Christmas Tree at Mic Mac Mall. DHM 2010.024.043.

Small Box, Big Story

HANNAH ZAMISKA, HERITAGE INTERPRETER

Quillwork is an art form that has been practiced by the Mi'kmaq, notably Mi'kmaq women in Punamu'kwati'jk, since time immemorial. This quill box from the DHM collection demonstrates the beauty as well as the evolution of quillwork as an art form as settlers began to arrive in the Sipekne'katik area. Quillwork boxes like these begin as birch bark, which is traditionally harvested from the trees, and carefully formed into the desired shape. Then, porcupine quills are harvested, sorted by size, dyed if desired, and then flattened (Langille, 2023). Once all this is done, the artist will then poke holes into the box with a tool called an Awl, carefully planning out a desired pattern. There are many stitch types used in quillwork, such as zigzag, single-line, sawtooth, and more. These stitches are used to create intricate patterns along the birch bark. Traditional Mi'kmaw patterns are often geometrical, with shapes representing different things, such as the sun (represented by the eight-pointed star) and the four sacred directions, as shown on the box below (Langille, 2023).

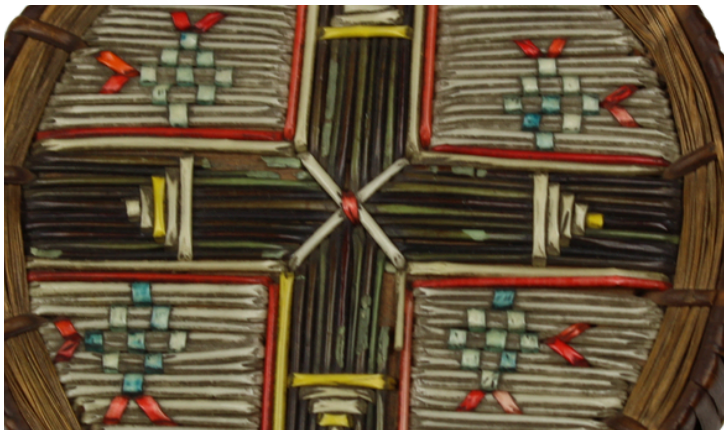


Handmade 'trinket box,' by an unknown Mi'kmaq quillwork artist. DHM 1991.019.001a-b.

Small Box, Big Story, *continued.*

Although quillwork is an ancient practice, during the colonial era it became a way for Mi'kmaq communities to earn money and trade goods with European settlers. This box, although we do not know when it is from, is indicative of the Victorian era, when “Whimsies” became popular. Whimsies were decorative, non-utilitarian items that would often be collected as souvenirs by Victorian travellers (Langille, 2023). So, Mi'kmaq artists adapted their craft, creating these tiny little boxes to serve an ever-growing demand. Unfortunately, because these boxes became a popular souvenir item among the settler European class, the artistry of quillwork was often ignored; it was not seen by many as a fine art, but rather simply as something to be put on a souvenir (Langille, 2023). In reality, this box is not simply a souvenir or a “whimsy”; it is a piece of fine art crafted by an expert.

Because of these colonial-centric perceptions, it is important to note that although quillwork has ancient origins, it remains a modern practice, with many Artists across Mi'kma'ki not only continuing the practice, passing it down from generation to generation, but also finding new and creative ways to use the medium. For example, contemporary Mi'kmaw artist Jordan Bennett, whose art has been featured in the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, uses quillwork and colourful geometric patterns to call into question the notion that quillwork is just something to be found on a souvenir (Diviney, 2018). Bennett does this most directly in his exhibition titled Souvenir (OCAD, 2025).



A close-up of the box, to highlight the intricate and colourful quillwork pattern. DHM 1991.019.001a-b.

Although this box might be tiny, the story it tells is so big. It tells the story of a people who have continuously adapted and persisted through centuries of change. This small box reflects a living tradition, one that is deeply rooted in history yet actively evolving in the hands of contemporary artists like Jordan Bennett, who find new meaning and new audiences for an art form that has always been central to Mi'kmaq identity and cultural expression.

Diviney, D. (2018, January 7). *Jordan Bennett: Ketu'elmitajik - agns*: Art Gallery of Nova Scotia. AGNS. <https://agns.ca/exhibition/jordan-bennett-ketuelmitajik/>

Jordan Bennett X2. OCAD University. (2025). <https://www.ocadu.ca/events-and-exhibitions/jordan-bennett-x2>

Langille, S. (2023). If looks could quill. *The iJournal: Student Journal of the Faculty of Information*, 9(1), 35–48. <https://doi.org/10.33137/ijournal.v9i1.42234>

Rhubarb Wine

From page 64 of “The Chebucto Cook Book,” DHM 1992.054.001.



To six pounds of crushed rhubarb, add six quarts boiling water, let stand twenty-four hours, strain and add one pound sugar to every quart of juice, three lemons, one-half ounce isinglass, one half pint yeast; let stand three days, strain and put in jars, let stand three months, then bottle. Don't cork the jars tight.

Did you know?

“isinglass” is a form of collagen obtained from fish, and was often an ingredient in beer and some wines to assist with filtration and reducing bitterness. This step in wine-making is called Fining.

You can also use other vegan or plant-based alternatives for Fining.



SUMMER EVENTS

BY DARTMOUTH HERITAGE MUSEUM



Pride Tea



Date: Saturday, June 20th
Time: 1:00pm - 3:00pm
Location: Evergreen House
Cost: free, donations appreciated!

Join us in celebrating Pride with an afternoon of pride-themed tea, snacks, decorations and crafts. Free rainbow cookies and rainbow marshmallow pops from Karyn's Cookies and Treats. This event is free, open to all ages, and no registration is required.

Guided Walking Tour of Downtown



Date: Saturday, July 11th
Time: 10:00am
Location: Evergreen House
Cost: free

Take part in this year's Historic Places Days by participating in the Dartmouth Walking Tour, created by the Dartmouth Heritage Museum. Join us at Evergreen House on July 11th for a live, guided version of the Dartmouth Walking Tour, hosted by the Dartmouth Heritage Museum's interpretive staff. This year's theme for Historic Places Days is Communication through Place and Time. Join us for this fun, free, and educational event in the Downtown core.

3rd Annual Emancipation Day Social



Date: Sunday, August 2nd
Time: 2:00pm - 4:00pm
Location: Evergreen House
Cost: free, donations appreciated!

Join us on August 2nd at Evergreen House for our third annual Emancipation Day Social in collaboration with Senator Wanda Bernard. We will have free locally-sourced treats and drinks, an address from Senator Wanda Bernard, kids activities, and a pop-up exhibit featuring items and stories related to the first licensed black physician to practice in Nova Scotia, Dr. Clement Ligoure.

Tea & Textiles



Date: Friday, August 14th
Time: 2:00pm - 4:00pm
Location: Evergreen House
Cost: Admission by donation

Join us on Friday, August 14th from 2 to 4pm, for an afternoon of tea, snacks, and textiles! Bring along your knitting, crochet, embroidery, or other textile-related projects to work on while enjoying light refreshments and lively conversation. Admission is by donation.

Please RSVP by phone or email to reserve your seat - 902-464-2300 or info@dartmouthmuseum.ca.

We also host recurring monthly events throughout the year, with the Helen Creighton Folklore Society and Storyteller's Circle of Halifax. Check out our Facebook or our Instagram to find out more.



EVERGREEN RENTALS



Helen's Garden



Reference Library



Red Parlour



Sun Porch



Green Parlour

Did you know the Dartmouth Heritage Museum has room rentals for small events and gatherings? Are you looking for a charming space, full of historic character AND a fantastic view of the harbour? Evergreen may be the space for you! This glorious mid-Victorian manor was a family residence before being restored and converted into a museum. Since then, the house has played host to several movies and television shows, including The Lizzie Borden Chronicles and Chapelwaite, a Stephen King inspired series. Currently, for private functions, we rent out rooms in the museum for small events, as the Victorian charm also comes with limited space. In the warmer months, there are also the Gardens. Directly behind the house, the sloping green hill rolls down to a lovely garden complete with stone borders and a gorgeously blooming rhododendron. Reach out to us directly or head over to our website under "facility rental".

Standard Pricing:

	During Business Hours	Outside Business Hours
Private Booking	\$25.00/hr	\$50.00/hr
Non-Profit Booking	\$20.00/hr	\$40.00/hr
Corporate Booking	\$30.00/hr	\$60.00/hr



DHMS MEMBERSHIP



Why become a member?

Members support the Dartmouth Heritage Museum’s mission of stewarding and sharing the heritage of Dartmouth with our local community and visitors. The Museum is a not-for-profit organization operated by the Dartmouth Heritage Museum Society on behalf of the Halifax Regional Municipality. This means we put every penny made back into our running costs. As a member, your contribution helps support successful exhibitions, events, and programs. Membership also gives you a voice in determining the future direction of the Museum through participating and voting at the Society’s Annual General Meeting.

Membership Opportunities and Benefits:

- **10% off** on all museum gift shop purchases
- Exclusive **early bird tickets** for events and programs
- **Five free digital images** from the Museum collection for personal use
- **One free half-day room rental** at Evergreen House
- **Voting rights at Society AGM + more!**

We have 3 categories of membership:

- **Individual Membership** is for one (1) person
 - Price: \$20
- **Family Membership** is for a family unit, consisting of at least one (1) adult and one child under the age of eighteen (18)
 - Price: \$30
- **Group Membership** is for societies, museums, universities, libraries, corporations, firms, partnerships, foundations and governmental departments.
 - Price: Please Contact

DHMS Membership Form

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Membership Type:	Annual Fee	# of Years	Total
Individual	\$20.00		
Family	\$30.00		
Donation (tax receipts are issued for donations)			

Cheques should be made out to: Dartmouth Heritage Museum Society, 26 Newcastle St, Dartmouth, NS B2Y 3M5

E-transfers can be sent to info@dartmouthmuseum.ca

May we have your permission to add your email to our mailing list? This mailing list is used to send updates about our news and upcoming events, as well as send out our quarterly newsletter). Yes _____ No _____

May we use your name in public recognition of our donors? Yes _____ No _____

THE DARTMOUTH HERITAGE MUSEUM

"We commit to engagement, education, and storytelling."



Evergreen House

26 Newcastle Street | Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

Open Year-round | Spring/Summer
Hours | Tues - Sun | 10am - 5pm

Quaker House

57 Ochterloney Street | Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

Open Seasonally | June - August
Wed - Sun | 10am - 5pm



The Dartmouth Heritage Museum wishes to recognize that we exist and operate on Mi'kma'ki, as the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People. The Mi'kmaq have long been the traditional custodians of this land, and the Dartmouth Heritage Museum Society would like to pay our respects to the elders both past and present of the Mi'kmaq Nation.

*This territory is covered by the "Treaties of Peace and Friendship" which the Mi'kmaq, Wəlastəkwiyik (Maliseet), and Passamaquoddy Peoples first signed with the British Crown in 1726. The treaties did not deal with surrender of lands and resources but in fact recognized Mi'kmaq and Wəlastəkwiyik (Maliseet) title and established the rules for what was to be an ongoing relationship between nations. This relationship continues today. **We are all treaty people.***



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Dartmouth Heritage Museum -
Evergreen House & Quaker House



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