

ROSS FARM MUSEUM

MANDATE AND MISSION

- » To present a “living history” family farm, representative of a small upland farm in rural Nova Scotia in the 19th century, 1820s – 1870s.
- » To introduce George Ross and his family, the site and the land grant system that resulted from the peace that followed the end of the War of 1812 and the Napoleonic Wars.
- » To explain the operations of an early farm, the pattern of the work, the tools and equipment and the crops, and how the nature and scope of the work evolved during the century with changing technology and changing practices.
- » To look at the farm in relationship to the surrounding community and the use made of shared services such as craftsmen and mills.
- » To encourage an understanding of the nature of domestic life in rural Nova Scotia during the 19th century, and how it differed from urban life in the towns and cities.
- » To present and interpret the evolution of farm equipment and the inventions and improvements that were best suited for upland farm use.

- » To provide information and create links between heritage farming and contemporary issues/topics (e.g., heritage breeding program, sustainable farming) being undertaken by Ross Farm Museum.
- » To interpret the natural history of the area through panel exhibits along the lakeside trail.

PROPOSED CONTENT

*Note: Topics are drawn from the NS Interpretive Master Plan Content Framework.

I. CONTENT TO MAINTAIN

C. EXPLOITING

- C.1 Energy**
 - Animal/Human Power
 - Steam Power
- C.2 Resource Development**
 - Agriculture: Rhythm of the different seasons; season-specific tasks.
- C.5 Transportation**
 - Roads/Vehicles
- C.6 Environmental Values**
 - Endangered Environments/Species

D. RELATING

- D.2 Governance and Politics**
 - British Colonial Government: Nature of governments and land grant system.

E. LIVING

- E.1 Life at Home and Work**
 - Childhood Experiences: Family life and helping on the farm.
 - People in the Workplace: How early settlers worked their farms; community reliance.

II. CONTENT TO ENHANCE

B. EVOLVING

- B.1 Vegetation**
 - Diversity of Plant Life: Trees and plants on property.
- B.2 Birds, Fish, and Animals**
 - Bird and Fish Environments & Habitats
 - Diversity of Birds and Fish: Inland, Coast, Sea
 - Mammal Environments & Habitats
 - Diversity of Mammals
- B.6 Agents of Change**
 - New Technology: Effects/Experience: How technology improved the farmer’s work.

C. EXPLOITING

- C.1 Energy**
 - Water Power: Stave Mill is an example of water-powered mills.

C.4 Commerce

- Nova Scotia/New England Trade
- Internal Nova Scotia Commerce: Ross Store has good documentation of its inventory and activity. How did Ross Farm fit into the local and regional economy?

C.6 Environmental Values

- Environmental Impact (Then & Now): Sustainable farming in the 1800s; how sustainable was it? How did things change in the 20th century?

D. RELATING

D.1 Peoples of Nova Scotia

- Asian/Middle Eastern: Lebanese peddlers (peddler wagon; research completed). How homogeneous were rural populations?

E. LIVING

E.1 Life at Home and Work

- Gender Roles and Home Life: Women and farming; story of Mary Ross as a representative of many rural women of the early to mid 19th century. What was life like in Rosebank Cottage? How did it change with different seasons?
- Food on the Table

E.4 Cultural Expression

- Folklore and Celebrations: What were the

special days and how did the family and community celebrate?

- Cuisine as Cultural Expression
- Clothing and Costume: What was made and what was bought (and where)?

III. NEW CONTENT TO DEVELOP

A. FORMING

A.2 Making Landscapes

- Glaciers, Deposits, and Erosion
- Soil Development

A.5 Biodiversity

- Life Forms and Ecosystems

B. EVOLVING

B.3 Exploring & Settling the Unknown

- European/Mi'kmaq Contact: How did the Mi'kmaq help the Ross family through difficult winters?

B.4 Migration, Outmigration, Exodus

- Early 19th Century Immigration

B.5 Response to Place

- Mining Towns, Farming Towns, Logging Towns

B.6 Agents of Change

- Human Activity and the Environment
- Rural Depopulation since 1945

D. RELATING

D.1 Peoples of Nova Scotia

- Indigenous

D.3 War and Defence

- The Militia Tradition

D.7 Social Equality

- Capital and Labour (incl. indentured)

E. LIVING

E.2 Communities

- Inland Towns/Villages

E.3 Recreation

- Organized Sports
- Leisure-time Activities

E.5 Social Development and Organizations

- Community Security: Protection, Prevention, Response

CONCLUSIONS

Information and opportunities exist to widen the scope of the interpretation of family, farm and community activities. Make more use of the lakeside trail system to deliver natural history content. Continue to bridge heritage farm values with contemporary issues/topics.