

## C. NSM Site Mandates and Topics

### ROSS-THOMSON HOUSE AND STORE MUSEUM

#### MANDATE AND MISSION

- » To present the story of the Ross Brothers (George and Robert), their Scottish heritage and their home and store in Shelburne during the Loyalist boom period.
- » To interpret the operations of a general store in the late 18th century, its stock, employees and patrons.
- » To introduce the remarkable story of Dorcas Thomson (and her husband Robert Thomson), homemaker, mother (6 children) and successful businesswoman.
- » To provide information about the role and history of militias in Loyalist Nova Scotia, and the contribution of Robert Ross.

#### PROPOSED CONTENT

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

#### I. CONTENT TO MAINTAIN

##### B. EVOLVING

- B.1 Vegetation**
  - Diversity of Plant Life: Garden programming.
- B.4 Migration, Outmigration, Exodus**
  - Loyalist Arrivals, 1780s: The Loyalist experience in Shelburne.
- B.5 Response to Place**
  - Coastal Communities: Reference exhibits in the historical museum.
- B.6 Agents of Change**
  - Outmigration Social/Econ. Effects: Rise and fall of Shelburne; a settlement that was once going to be the capital of Nova Scotia.

##### E. LIVING

- E.4 Cultural Expression**
  - Clothing and Costume
  - Heritage Preservation: Architecture of house, in context of other Shelburne houses.

#### II. CONTENT TO ENHANCE

##### B. EVOLVING

- B.4 Migration, Outmigration, Exodus**
  - Black Experience: Arrival of Black Loyalists; reference to Birchtown.

#### C. EXPLOITING

- C.4 Commerce**
  - Colonial Business and Trade
  - Nova Scotia/New England Trade
  - Internal Nova Scotia Commerce: Local trading in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

#### D. RELATING

- D.1 Peoples of Nova Scotia**
  - African: Acknowledge the Black Loyalists and connect visitors to Birchtown site.
- D.3 War and Defence**
  - The Militia Tradition: What was the militia? What role did it play in the community?

#### E. LIVING

- E.1 Life at Home and Work**
  - Gender Roles and Home Life
  - People in the Workplace: Stories from the store; role of Dorcas Thomson.
  - Places of Community Interaction: Role of the general store.
  - Food on the Table
- E.2 Communities**
  - Coastal Towns/Villages: History of Shelburne.

#### E.4 Cultural Expression

- Architecture: Design and construction of the house; New England influences.
- Landscapes/Gardens

### III. NEW CONTENT TO DEVELOP

#### D. RELATING

##### D.1 Peoples of Nova Scotia

- American (United States)

##### D.3 War and Defence

- U.S./B.N.A Tensions

##### D.7 Social Equality

- Slavery: Indentured servants. While there is no evidence of captive slaves in Ross-Thomson House, the topic of slavery and indentured servants should be addressed.
- Social Conflict: The first race riot in Canada.
- Privilege and Social Circles: Social lives of the Ross brothers; position of a general store owner in a small town and impact of Dorcas Thomson.
- Capital and Labour (incl. indentured)

#### E. LIVING

##### E.3 Recreation

- Informal Play

##### E.4 Cultural Expression

- Cuisine as Cultural Expression

### CONCLUSIONS

The site is an important architecturally significant home and commercial business. Explain the nature of a late 18th century business, its stock, where it came from, the patrons, and payment/credit. The role of Dorcas Thomson is very important. Discuss the Black Loyalists.