Ethnologies

Heritage Conservation, UNESCO and Intangible Cultural Heritage in Eastern Canada

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Citer cet article

Résumé de l'article

Depuis que le Canada a signé la *Convention concernant la protection du patrimoine mondial, culturel et naturel* de l'UNESCO en 1972, dix-huit sites d'intérêt culturel et naturel du pays ont été sélectionnés pour être inscrits sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial, ces sites représentant des réserves et des merveilles naturelles importantes, des éléments architecturaux significatifs pour l'histoire canadienne, des sites représentant la culture autochtone canadienne et des trésors archéologiques de renommée mondiale. Ces sites d'envergure internationale ont conféré au Canada une visibilité sur la scène mondiale, à la fois dans le domaine de la conservation du patrimoine et dans le domaine du tourisme national et international. Les éléments que le Canada a décidé d'inscrire sur cette liste ont eu un impact majeur au niveau local, régional, national et international. L'auteur de cet article discute de quelques-unes des chartes et conventions secondaires qui ont imposé des directives depuis la mise en oeuvre de la *Convention sur le patrimoine mondial* qui nous ont amenés là où nous en sommes aujourd'hui dans le domaine de la sauvegarde du patrimoine au Canada. Il émet quelques prédictions au sujet des directions que prendra la sauvegarde du patrimoine dans le pays dans un avenir proche, et il avance que le Canada pourrait de la même façon voir sa riche culture immatérielle jouer un rôle de premier plan si le gouvernement canadien signait la *Convention de l'UNESCO pour la sauvegarde du patrimoine culturel immatériel* de 2003. En dernier lieu, il expose quelques-uns des développements récents en matière de patrimoine culturel immatériel, de conservation et de maintien des traditions dans l'Est du Canada.

Heritage Conservation, UNESCO and Intangible Cultural Heritage in Eastern Canada

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Being that 2014 marks the 42nd anniversary of the UNESCO Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage 1972**,** it is perhaps an interesting time to reflect on what has been achieved in heritage conservation in Canada since then but also to gaze into the future to see where Heritage Conservation is going. A UNESCO World Heritage Site is either a "natural or cultural place of sufficient importance to be the responsibility of the international community as a whole." (Parks Canada, World Heritage Sites in Canada). To that end, UNESCO has nominated 830 sites of cultural and natural heritage to the World Heritage List. Canada has responded positively to the 1972 *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* with the designation of 17 world heritage sites, including the Historic District of Old Quebec (1985), L'Anse aux Meadows Viking Settlement (1978) and Gros Morne National Park in Newfoundland (1987), and the Old Town of Lunenburg, Nova Scotia (1995). It is fair to say that Canada has selected seventeen Canadian world heritage sites that represent internationally significant nature reserves and natural wonders, significant Canadian architectural history, important sites representing Canadian aboriginal culture and geological treasures of worldwide importance. The Rideau Canal, the 14th Canadian nomination (2007), is the only Canadian one that focuses primarily on the world of the industrial revolution; it is the best preserved example of "a slackwater canal in North America demonstrating the use of European slackwater technology in North America on a large scale." (Parks Canada, World Heritage Sites in Canada). This site, of course, also includes the Fort Henry and Kingston fortifications. As Christina Cameron states: "Since its adoption in 1972, the Convention has mobilized a global movement for the protection of the shared heritage of humanity. It has encouraged intercultural dialogue and unprecedented levels of international co-operation." (Cameron, 2009: 10).

These internationally significant sites have put Canada on the world stage in both the heritage conservation field and in the national and international tourism sector. What Canada has decided to add to this list has had a major impact in the local, regional, national and international arenas. In this paper I will reflect for a moment on some of the ancillary guiding charters and conventions since the World Heritage Convention was implemented that have led to where we are today in the field of heritage conservation in North America and I will dare to predict some areas where I think heritage conservation is going in Canada in the near future. Last, I'll discuss some of the recent developments in Eastern Canada in intangible cultural heritage, conservation and the sustaining of traditions.

There have been numerous charters, documents and formal conventions since the implementation of the World Heritage Convention that have expanded, widened, shaped and informed our current definitions of heritage conservation. For example, the Burra Charter of ICOMOS Australia, 1999 provides a concise definition of conservation to be "all the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance. It includes maintenance and may according to circumstance include preservation, restoration, reconstruction and adaptation and will be commonly a combination of more than one of those" (ICOMOS, 1999a: 29). The ICOMOS Nara document on authenticity, 1994, for example, outlines and advocates the case for more cultural and heritage diversity in heritage conservation definitions stating: "The protection and enhancement of cultural and heritage diversity in our world should be actively promoted as an essential aspect of human development" (ICOMOS, 1994: 46). Further, the document states: "All cultures and societies are rooted in the particular forms and means of tangible and intangible expression which constitute their heritage, and these should be respected" (ICOMOS, 1994: 46). The Appendix includes suggestions for follow-up proposed by Herb Stovel that expertise from a variety of disciplines should indeed be part of the decision-making process: "efforts to ensure assessment of authenticity involve multidisciplinary collaboration and the appropriate utilization of all available expertise and knowledge" (ICOMOS, 1994: 47).

This charter, in a sense, was a precursor to the ideas found in the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage and the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (UNESCO, 2003: 2005).

Likewise, The ICOMOS charter on the Built Vernacular Heritage, 1999, focused its gaze on ordinary architecture instead of merely on the

built heritage of society's political and business elites. As the charter states: "The built vernacular heritage is important; it is the fundamental expression of the culture of a community, of its relationship with its territory and, at the same time, the expression of the world's cultural diversity" (ICOMOS, 1999b: 1). This charter is based on the premise that around the world vernacular architecture is threatened by "the forces of economic, cultural and architectural homogenization" (ICOMOS, 1999b: 1). As the charter mentions, "How these forces can be met is a fundamental problem that must be addressed by communities and also by governments, planners, architects, conservationists and by a multidisciplinary group of specialists" (ICOMOS, 1999b: 1). As does the Nara charter, this document outlines the inextricable relationship between the tangible and intangible elements of culture: "The vernacular embraces not only the physical form and fabric of buildings, structures and spaces, but the ways in which they are used and understood, and the traditions and the intangible associations which attach to them" (ICOMOS, 1999b: 1). This charter asks us to turn our attention to common heritage rather than what has traditionally been protected and conserved.

This follows a similar trend in the academic study of Canadian history that, from the 1960s on, began to develop more democratic histories with emerging areas of study including regional history, labour history, social history, women's history and oral history (Cross and Kealey: 1984). Likewise, the ICOMOS Charter for the Preservation of Historic Timber Structures recognizes the importance of timber structures from all periods as part of the cultural heritage of the world (ICOMOS: 1999c). This is extremely important for Canada as the majority of Canadian historic vernacular buildings are timber -frame structures. The Gaelic settlers of Nova Scotia, for example, called the new land "Thir Nan Craobh," the land of the trees; consequently the greater part of their architecture and that of other Canadian ethnic groups was timber frame.

The 2004 ICOMOS UK (Cultural landscapes) Charter advocates the widening of the definition of conservation to include cultural landscapes. These include gardens, sacred places and buildings of all kinds and types. As UNESCO states, these landscapes "testify to the creative genius, social development and the imaginative and spiritual vitality of humanity. They are part of our collective identity. As of 2014, 85 properties on the World Heritage List have been included as cultural landscapes including the 2012 Landscape of Grand Pré, Nova Scotia, a 1300 hectare landscape developed by the Acadian settlers of Nova Scotia in the 17th century. UNESCO

(UNESCO 2014; ICOMOS 2004). As the ICOMOS charter points out, "The process of defining qualities may need professional expertise and should be multidisciplinary in nature, so that all potential qualities are considered and evaluated." The cultural qualities of landscape may be found in such items as "Testimony to a distinctive culture, its way of life or its artifacts, which may be archaic or modern – through evidence that may be visible or invisible." Further, "Exemplification of skill and scale in the design and construction of landscape elements, through for instance a reflection of technologies or particular social organization. An expression of aesthetic ideas/ideals/design skills. An association with works of art, literary, pictorial or musical, that enhance appreciation and understanding of the landscape." Lastly, they add, "associations with myth, folklore, historical events or traditions" (UNESCO 2004).

These charters have served to widen our definition of heritage conservation over the last 40 years. In this same period, a diversity of disciplines in addition to architects, architectural historians and planners have become interested and significantly involved in matters relating to heritage conservation. Geographers such as Yi Fu Tuan, Donald Meinig, Edward Relph and J.B. Jackson, for example, have eloquently discussed how human beings transform spaces into meaningful places (Tuan, 1974, 1979, 2004; Jackson, 1970, 1980, 1984, 1994; Jackson and Zube, 1970; Meinig and Jackson, 1979; Relph, 1976, 2000). The study of cultural landscape is what these scholars are interested in and they include under their purview nature, the forest and the various ways human beings transform land and waterscapes, the naming of landscape features and the spiritual nature of land and seascapes. The built environment is also a major feature for their interest.

Folklore is another emergent discipline concerned with the study of traditional culture in all its manifestations that has grown and developed in Canada since the advent of the World Heritage Convention. Currently there are Masters and PhD programs at Laval University and Memorial University of Newfoundland and undergraduate programs at a number of Canadian universities in Nova Scotia, Ontario and Alberta and in many universities throughout the United States (Buchan, 1981; Halpert and Rosenberg, 1974; Pocius, 2000b: 258-261). There are courses offered in these institutions focusing on topics such as Folklife Studies; Art, Architecture and Medieval Life; Collections Management; Artifacts of Colonial America; Museums and Historic Sites; Material Culture; Cultural Resource Management; Spaces and Places; Oral History and Vernacular

Architecture. Leading folklorists have been advocates for various forms of heritage conservation and sustainability throughout the world. Henry Glassie has explored cultural conservation issues in areas as diverse as Ireland, Afghanistan and Turkey (Glassie, 1969, 1972, 1975, 1982, 1999, 2000). Other folklorists such Bernie Herman, Bob St. George, Del Upton, Tom Carter and Elizabeth Cromley have conducted detailed ethnographic studies of built environments throughout the United States that have led us to new understandings of the colonial past, heritage conservation and vernacular architecture (Herman, 1992, 1999, 2005; St. George, 1988; Upton, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1991, 1995, 1997, 1998; Upton and Vlach, 1986; Carter, 1988, 1997; Carter and Cromley, 2005). In Canada, Gerald Pocius' book, *A Place to Belong* is one of the only Canadian studies that has recorded and analyzed the buildings and traditions of a Newfoundland fishing outport prior to the demise of the East Coast fishery. The cultural landscape patterns and buildings that he records represent at least a 400-year-old history that has ceased to exist in the last 40 years. Unique vernacular building types, such as fishing stages and flakes are no longer found in the landscape and much traditional environmental knowledge that has disappeared can be found in Pocius' book, in his tape-recorded interviews, maps and plans, photographs and in field notes (Pocius, 2000a). These folklorists, I contend, bring a different perspective to heritage conservation. They are trained in the field of ethnography: interviewing, observing and recording what they see in an attempt to elucidate cultural meaning. Further, their training asks them to be sensitive to the impact they have on groups and communities and in many cases, the research is very much community-based.

Generally, there have been numerous measures taken in North America in the last fifty years to shape new understandings and definitions of heritage conservation. In the US, these include, to name but a few, the US National Foundation for Arts and Humanities Act (1965), The National Historic Preservation Act (1966) and perhaps the most innovative one from my perspective, the American Folklife Preservation Act, 1976. This development of the American Folklife Preservation Act led to the development of Folk Arts Conservation programs throughout the United States and also to the establishment of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. Archie Green, a folklorist who pioneered the study of labor lore in the United States, led the way, lobbying the US federal government and making arguments why these kinds of programs should be developed to help sustain and conserve American culture at the

grassroots community and state levels. His work and that of others helped widen the definition of heritage conservation in the United States to include many more aspects of culture than the built environment including customs, music, foodways and art, as well as the various patterns of work. It is interesting to look at The American Folklife Center's definition of folklife. This includes:

> The everyday and intimate creativity that all of us share and pass on to the next generation: The **traditional songs** we sing, listen and dance to, Fairy tales, stories, ghost tales and **personal histories**, Riddles, proverbs, figures of speech, jokes and **special ways of speaking.** Our **childhood games** and rhymes, The **way we celebrate life** – from birthing our babies to honoring our dead, The entire range of our **personal and collective beliefs** – religious, medical, magical, and social. **Our handed-down recipes** and everyday mealtime traditions.

> The **way we decorate our world** – from patchwork patterns on our quilts to plastic flamingoes in our yards, to tattoos on our bodies. The **crafts we create by hand** – crocheted afghans, wooden spoons, cane bottoms on chairs. **Patterns and traditions of work** – from factory to office cubicle. The many **creative ways we express ourselves** as members of our family, our community, our geographical region, our ethnic group, our religious congregation, or our occupational group.

> **They conclude that Folklife is part of everyone's life.** It is as constant as a ballad, as changeable as fashion trends. It is as intimate as a lullaby, and as public as a parade... (American Folklife Center).

To study and understand folklife requires training in ethnographic skills, conducting oral history interviews, archival research, measuring buildings, drawing floor plans and recording minute architectural features. Trained folklorists with PhDs began working with state-organized programs to aid communities, ethnic groups and the like to foster and sustain their traditions. In these program Folklorists are collaborators, aiding communities and groups in the stewardship of their own traditions. Many projects of national significance have been carried out by the American Folklife Center but I'll mention only one – the Veteran's project. Begun in 2000, the Veterans History Project of the American Folklife Center, "collects, preserves, and makes accessible the personal accounts of American war veterans so that future generations may hear directly from veterans and better understand the realities of war" (American Folklife Center, Library of Congress). Stories are told through personal narratives – video and audio interviews with veterans, as well as the collecting of memoirs. Furthermore, correspondence, letters, diaries, photos, drawings and scrapbooks are gathered from conflicts

as early as World War I and as recent as the Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts. There is no current Canadian equivalent to the American Folklife Center. This is a roundabout way of helping to explain why I think Canada is not a signatory to the UNESCO ICH Convention of 2003—the discipline of Folklore Studies is not well developed throughout Canada, particularly in the corridors of power in central Canada.

North American folklorists were at the forefront when UNESCO began discussions on the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, ratified in 2003. Even though Canada has not signed this convention, it has had a major impact in this country and, I contend, has helped to widen our definition of heritage conservation. [1]Echoing the American definition of folklife, the UNESCO Convention ICH refers to the body of cultural and social expressions that characterize communities, groups and individuals and is usually based on the idea of 'living traditions' (see UNESCO 2003, Article 2). In English Canada, the term that is most commonly used for these manners of cultural expression is 'folklore'. Moreover, in Quebec, '*culture traditionnelle et populaire*', or '*ethnologie*', serves to categorize these cultural elements. Other terms used within the North American context include 'folk culture', 'traditional culture', 'traditional knowledge', '*patrimoine culturel immatériel*', 'oral heritage', 'tradition', or 'our heritage of ideas, values and language' (Pocius 2000b: 1).

Seven years ago, the 2007 Montreal Heritage Round Table focused on both the UNESCO World Heritage Convention and the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. As Christina Cameron states: "The 2007 Round Table was intended to engender discussion that would lead to a better understanding of the relationship between tangible and intangible heritage, insofar as these two Conventions are concerned" (Cameron and Boucher, 2007). Six sessions at that meeting focused on theories and case studies relating to tangible and intangible heritage. Many of the speakers recognized that both conventions deal extensively with both tangible and intangible cultural heritage. It would have been interesting to have Newfoundland represented at that round table as the province of Newfoundland and Labrador seems to be one of the few Canadian provinces outside of Quebec to have embraced the ICH Convention and have actually redefined some of their provincial heritage policies with

1. There is an ever-increasing body of scholarship on the 2003 ICH Convention; however, not many Canadian scholars are engaged in this discussion. See, for example, the collection of international articles on this topic in: Michelle L Stefano, Peter Davis and Gerard Corsane, ed. *Heritage Matters: Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage* (Woodbridge, England: The Boydell Press, 2012).

the ICH Convention in mind. In his presentation, *"Documentation of ICH as a tool for community's safeguarding activities"* at the First Intensive Researchers Meeting on Communities and the 2003 Convention 3-4 March 2012, Tokyo, Japan, Jarvis points out that it is the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland that houses the Newfoundland and Labrador ICH office (Jarvis, 2012). The Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador was established in 1984 to promote, preserve and protect the built heritage of the province but politicians and academics alike saw this as the appropriate office to initiate ICH projects throughout the province. As Dale Jarvis points out:

> Much of this traditional knowledge and local folklore continues to be shared within communities at a very informal level, passed on by word of mouth, and by example. It carries with it a great deal of practical information, as well as more abstract concepts of history, heritage and identity. Yet while ICH remains a vigorous and integral part of the life of communities, ICH is greatly affected by the economic decline of rural settlements throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. The resulting movement of young people, either to urban areas or out of the province, means that cultural traditions are not transmitted from generation to generation in the same way or to the extent to which they have been passed down in the past (Jarvis, 2012).

The ICH office of the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador has produced booklets about Safeguarding ICH, offered training programs and community workshops on topics such as cultural documentation, audio recording, interviewing techniques, oral history and folklife festival planning (Jarvis, 2012). In 2008 "HFNL began to organize an ongoing province-wide ICH inventory, by establishing a central digital archive database and website" (Jarvis, 2012). They have partnered with the Digital Archives Initiative at Memorial University of Newfoundland and the Queen Elizabeth II Library at MUN and the Folklore department at MUN in developing these Digital Archives and Inventory.

When we look at Nova Scotia, Canada, we have a Heritage Property Act (1989) and a Special Places Protection Act (1989) to 'Provide for the Preservation, Regulation and Study of Archaeological and Historical Remains and Paleontological and Ecological Sites'. The province currently provides heritage services and programs throughout the province by operating 27 provincial museums and by maintaining a provincial collection of artifacts and specimens. However, there is no one particular government department with a focus precisely on intangible cultural heritage. Instead, the province has established four government departments interested in

Heritage Conservation issues: the Office of Gaelic Affairs, The Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs, the Office of Acadian Affairs and the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage that houses among other things, The Heritage Property Advisory Board.

Each of these departments encourages and promotes heritage conservation at various levels but they have not initiated any specific ICH projects per se. Despite the fact that Canada has yet to subscribe to UNESCO's guidelines on recognizing, promoting, and potentially safeguarding ICH, it is clear that its aims are still applicable. It is also apparent that the concept of 'ICH' – however it is termed – is one that is also valued, particularly in Nova Scotia (MacKinnon, 2012: 157-161). Most notably, the Living Human Treasures project, instituted by UNESCO in the early 1990s, resonates with initiatives that focus on supporting the livelihood of certain artists in Nova Scotia (see Kurin, 2004; Aikawa, 2004). For example, the Portia White Prize is given each year to an established artist, either born in Nova Scotia or a resident in the province for the previous four years. The prize amounts to $18,000 and includes the opportunity to name an emerging Nova Scotian artist or cultural organization to receive a protégé prize of $7,000. In 2007, Jolleen Gordon who has devoted her life to traditional basket making was the recipient of this award. In 2010 the performer/singer and preserver of Gaelic songs, Mary Jane Lamond was the recipient of this award. The most recent winner in 2012 was Thom Fitzgerald, a Halifax filmmaker known for films such as the Hanging Garden and Beefcake. Furthermore, the Prix Grand Pré is an annual award of $2,000 for Acadian Nova Scotian artists. It recognizes creative or interpretive artists in any medium whose work reflects Acadian cultural values while demonstrating excellence and originality. They have also developed awards to recognize communities (Nova Scotia Communities, Culture and Heritage 2009). As with other provinces they provide funding such as Assistance to Book Publishers, the Cultural and Youth Activities Program, the Emerging Music Business Program, the Export Development program for Music, the Gaelic Language in the Community Program, the Industry Growth program and Operating Assistance to Cultural organizations but do not provide any funding focused precisely on Safeguarding ICH.

UNESCO's 2003 ICH Convention has created a Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage just as the World Heritage Convention of 1972 created lists of representative world built and natural heritage. In Atlantic Canada, for example, we have world heritage sites, such as

the Viking Settlement L'anse aux Meadows, Newfoundland, the Old Town of Lunenburg and the Joggins Fossil Cliffs. The Bras d'Or Lakes on Cape Breton Island are now a recently sanctioned UNESCO Biosphere Reserve . However, as Canada is not a signatory to the ICH Safeguarding convention, none of our intangible cultural traditions have been nominated to the representative list. UNESCO also maintains a list of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding; these are traditions that concerned community groupsand participating countries view as requiring urgent measures to keep them alive. As UNESCO states, "Inscriptions on this List help to mobilize international cooperation and assistance for stakeholders to undertake appropriate safeguarding measures." (UNESCO, s.d.) In 2009, the Committee inscribed 12 traditions and four more in 2010 including wooden movable-type printing of China, the Ca trù singing tradition of Viet Nam and Mongolian traditional music. At the UNESCO web site one can see slideshows and video clips of these traditional practices, why they are on the Urgent Safeguarding list and the varied attempts at safeguarding made by countries and community groups. With the fast pace of development and the transformation occurring in China today, six of the elements on the ICH in Need of Urgent Safeguarding List come from this part of the world.

Many examples of Gaelic cultural traditions in Nova Scotia, such as Milling Frolics, Gaelic singing, ceilidh culture, storytelling, belief, custom, nickname usage, traditional knowledge of the forest and water could potentially be listed as traditions needing urgent safeguarding in Canada. Community groups, government departments, museum and university-based researchers interested in Nova Scotia Gaelic culture could benefit greatly from being involved in the UNESCO debate and discussion surrounding ICH. To date, there has been little attention paid to the ICH Convention by Nova Scotia academics, government officials and the museum and heritage community. There has been much more attention given to this Convention, however, in the provinces of Newfoundland and Quebec. One of the requirements of UNESCO for a signatory country is the commencement of a national inventory. Various meetings have been held around the world on some of the best practices in doing such an inventory but Canada has not played a significant role in any of this international discussion on ICH Inventories. Inventories are currently underway in Quebec and various safeguarding projects have commenced in both Quebec and Newfoundland.

Other countries that have not signed the Convention have been more aware and involved with the implementation of the Convention than

Canada. While not being a signatory, Scotland, for example, has developed an inventory supported by Museums Galleries Scotland and the Scottish Arts Council and funded by the Scotland Committee of the UK National Commission for UNESCO. Based at Napier University and led by Allison McClearly, Allister McCleary, Linda Gunn and David Hill, the inventory is based on "living data collected from practitioners." As they say: "The most effective route of access runs through Local Authorities. As well as already having holdings of information relevant to ICH, local authorities have unparalleled knowledge of their area's cultural landscape (and the contacts that complement this knowledge) " (Intangible Cultural Heritage in Scotland: The Way Forward).

In 2005, Cape Breton University established a Canada Research Chair in Intangible Cultural Heritage. As part of the Chair, the institution developed a Centre for Cape Breton Studies to encourage and support research about Cape Breton Island. This Centre houses a state-of-the-art Digitization Lab and a Music Performance Analysis facility. In essence, the Centre for Cape Breton Studies is a multidisciplinary forum for faculty, undergraduate, graduate and post-doctoral students, as well as visiting researchers from other institutions, including government agencies. The Centre sponsors visiting lecturers, academic conferences, and public workshops on topics of relevance to intangible cultural heritage. Furthermore, the Centre produces a scholarly journal, *Material Culture Review/Revue de la culture matérielle*, that circulates to more than 20 countries around the world. The journal is currently working on a special issue devoted to intangible cultural heritage that will be published in 2014 with articles from scholars from all over the world.

The Centre for Cape Breton Studies has been involved with a number of Gaelic ICH Safeguarding Projects. One was the publication of *Guthan Prìseil: Precious Voices and Songs of the Cape Breton Gael*, in 2009. North Carolina-based Anne Landin, began gathering these songs in 1999, visiting families and digitizing older recordings of Gaelic singers. The Digitization Lab and Rotary Music Room at Cape Breton University mastered the accompanying CD, and our Centre published the book with biographies of singers and the lyrics of the tunes in Gaelic and in English. Our aim is to allow Gaelic learners and others to access this previously inaccessible material to aid in the sustaining of Gaelic song tradition.

Another example is the work we have done with the Breton Cove Gaelic Singers Hall. Originally a one-room schoolhouse, members of the community turned the building into a community hall, a place

for the community to come together, share meals and local news. The group received funding to employ four people to keep the Centre open Monday through Friday for tourists and locals during the tourist season in the summer. They hosted more than 200 tourists and locals who were greeted in Gaelic when entering the hall. Visitors could then see photographs of Cape Breton Gaelic speakers from across the island, taken by local North Shore photographer and piper Ryan MacDonald. A tour of the hall would begin at the locally made 100-year-old original milling table, where they would learn a chorus of a song and get to experience a milling frolic with a locally composed song. They would learn about the Gaels of the North Shore and surrounding areas and their older Precenting or psalm singing traditions. Visitors were then shown three videos, one about Precenting in Scotland, a PowerPoint of a Cape Breton Island milling frolic that occurred about 40 years ago, and the locally filmed *The Wake of Calum MacLeod*. The Centre for Cape Breton Studies did training with its staff on how to conduct field video interviews, lighting and the operation of digital audio and video cameras. The group was permitted to borrow our high-end video and audio cameras. They recorded 33 interviews involving 36 people (ages ranging from 22 years to 94 years) along with much background footage of the entire north shore region that includes from St. Anne's to the foot of Smokey. They produced 2 videos and a short Youtube video of a Gaidhlig Aig Baile class[2]. The Breton Cove Gaelic Singers' Hall continues to do Milling Frolics, Gaelic Songwriting workshops, a Gaelic Film Festival, TIP classes, Guitar and Piping lessons. The Centre has also organized a Gaelic Singers' Chorus for Celtic Colours International Festival and collected donations of audio tapes, videotapes, books, photographs and some artifacts. The Centre for Cape Breton Studies had a small but important part to play in assisting this group whose main aim is to safeguard important community-based traditions.

This community hall on Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia is very much like a community-based safeguarding project in Lismore, Loch Linnhe on the West Coast of Scotland. The Lismore Ceilidh Weekend within the local heritage center illustrates how existing ICH can be used for community development without artificializing or commodifying the traditional materials. The Lismore Historical Society, established in 1991, did not merely want a building to display existing artifacts; they wanted a

2.   http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_OslJE6H4JI

center to integrate their ICH with the tangible knowledge of local history. The new heritage Center opened on March 17, 2007[3].

Another example of our Centre's work, again, collaborative in nature, was the work we did with Fèis an Eilein: Fichead Bliadhna who are celebrating 20 Years of Comunn Fèis an Eilein on Christmas Island. A registered charity, the aim of Féis an Eilein is to promote and preserve the Gaelic language and culture in Cape Breton. Like the Scottish Lismore group, Féis an Ellein is an example of how culture, sustainability and community economic development go hand in hand. UNESCO is now very much interested in promoting this concept around the world. The Feis was started in 1991 by a group of local Gaelic speakers and enthusiasts and has grown into a festival that hosts events, concerts, language and music workshops throughout the summer that attracts visitors from all over the world.

To commemorate 20 years of the Féis and highlight what the Féis does, a Gaelic language documentary about the Féis has been produced. Collette Thomas, who worked with BBC Gaelic programming in Scotland, was the videographer and editor for the project. The Centre for Cape Breton Studies provided the high-end video equipment and provided the digital video and audio editing suite that allowed this project to be completed. The DVD has been distributed to schools that teach Gaelic in the province as a learning tool and has been available for sale; the proceeds go to the Fèis to continue the development and preservation of the language.

Other community Gaelic projects the CCBS has participated in include partnering with the Celtic Music Interpretive Centre in Judique on its video recording project of Inverness County musicians, production of a DVD on composer Donald Angus Beaton and the release and distribution of an audio CD *Failte*. Again, we provided equipment, training and the use of our Music Room and Lab for production. The CCBS worked with the family of the late Gaelic singer Lauchie Gillis of Grand Mira to release a CD of his previously released LP, with the addition of ten previously unreleased tracks taken from home recordings (*Gaelic Songs from the Mira Vol. 2*, 2009). We have also produced our own compilation CDs of the music of our students and faculty (*Prefer Performance*, 2008; *Cape Breton University Soundtracks*, 2010; *Cape Breton University Soundtracks II*, 2012).

Yet another project of the Centre was the Cape Breton Island Protest song project (*Cape Breton Island Protest Songs*, 2011). Cape Breton's

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3. http://www.isleoflismore.com/news/2008/Gaelic%20weekend/gaelic_weekend_and_ceilidh.shtml

industrial communities have developed distinctive local identities. The struggle for survival and the intensely fought labor conflicts of the 19th and 20th centuries have inextricably shaped identity formation in these communities. Although the coal mines and steel plant were shut down in the early 2000s, some aspects of these working-class identities remain visible. In the last two years I invited young Cape Breton songwriters, many of whom had relatives who had worked in the coal mines or steel mill, to take part in the "Protest Song Project" at Cape Breton University. This project includes a form of conscious cultural intervention; I re-introduced Cape Breton songs from the 1920s to contemporary musicians. I worked collaboratively with local singer/songwriter Victor Tomiczek of the Tom Fun Orchestra to select 18 song texts from the 150-song corpus originally identified and asked local musicians to compose music for the lyrics. We brought the musicians to Cape Breton University's Rotary Music Performance Room to record their songs and released them on a CD with an accompanying web site providing more historical context (www. protestsongs.ca). Some of these Cape Breton musicians, many of whom tour nationally and internationally, now play these songs regularly in their own sets, bringing to new audiences these older songs of protest. The musicians learned much about Cape Breton's labor past through writing the music for these songs.

Other ICH projects in the former Cape Breton Island industrial communities include, for example, *One God, One Aim , One Destiny* a book project exploring the history of the Cape Breton island Black community of Glace Bay. In 2006, the African Nova Scotian community in Glace Bay decided to restore its Universal Negro Improvement Association Hall, a vital part of the social life of their community in the early part of the 20th century. They created a museum to recognize and celebrate the history of blacks in Cape Breton. The Centre for Cape Breton Studies partnered with this organization to publish this book and accompanying DVD of oral history interviews with community members (Weeks, 2007).

The Centre has also sponsored post doctoral fellows who have completed projects in both Ukrainian and Mi'kmaq communities. For example, Dr. Marcia Ostashewski worked with the Centre and the Ukrainian community to produce '*A Cape Breton Story of Ukrainian Dance: From Village to Stage*' at the Cape Breton University Art Gallery in Sydney, Nova Scotia in 2009. The exhibit looked at the history of dance and music in the vibrant Ukrainian community of Cape Breton Island and included a varied collection of treasured artifacts devoted to Ukrainian local history. This coincided with the republishing of *Strangers in the Land: The Ukrainian*

Presence in Cape Breton by the Centre for Cape Breton Studies in 2010. First published in 1986, this is a carefully researched telling of stories of Cape Breton's Ukrainians, written by a son of the community, John Huk. Working tirelessly in the archives, he spent countless hours combing through municipal and steel company records, collecting press clippings and other relevant papers as well as memorabilia, interviewing community members about their family histories and working with his family to put together a story of a century of Ukrainian life in Cape Breton (Huk, 2011). The re-printed edition has a new introduction by Dr. Marcia Ostashewski.

Despite the great strides that have been made by establishing a Canada Research Chair in Intangible Cultural Heritage at Cape Breton University, there has been little discussion within government, to date, of intangible cultural heritage in Nova Scotia, notwithstanding its importance for the cultural groups and citizens who live in this province. One reason Canada has not supported this international Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention is because the federal government is waiting to see if there is any interest at the provincial level concerning this issue. The Canadian federal government sees cultural policy as a provincial issue, so it may be waiting for provincial input and consideration.

Where is heritage conservation going?

Over the last forty years there has been a widening of the term "heritage conservation" to include many more items than architecture and the natural landscape. Tangible and intangible heritage needs to be looked at together, not in separate realms. Aboriginal groups in Canada are asking for a redefining of heritage conservation in this direction. Aboriginal groups are not so much interested in preserving buildings, landscapes or artifacts but would like to focus on ways to preserve, sustain and pass on their traditional environmental knowledge, intangible heritage, languages and other traditions for generations to come. They would like to see culture centers rather than the western idea of stand-alone museums or built heritage sites – where traditions can be sustained and passed on, meetings can be held and teaching and learning can occur. Groups will decide for themselves what to conserve and what is most important for their futures and their identity. In Membertou, Cape Breton Island, for example, the Mi'kmaq have built a Heritage Park rather than a museum[4]. This is a five-acre site that presents the living history of their community. They want a space and place where they can meet, pass on and sustain their traditions. What they are doing is more in line with what the *UNESCO*

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4. http://www.membertouheritagepark.com/

Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage advocates than what the *World Heritage Convention* outlines. The conclusion to the 2007 Montreal Round Table called for more discussion and more communication concerning how the World Convention and the ICH Convention can work together for heritage conservation. That is still needed as we ponder the future of Heritage Conservation in Canada. The former Director General of UNESCO, Koichiro Matsuura, stated in 2010: "I was surprised, upon my arrival in UNESCO, to note the relatively low priority given to living heritage compared to the strong focus on the tangible part of the world's cultures […] Over the past ten years, far-reaching and noble achievements have been attained" (UNESCO 2009).

By widening the definition of heritage conservation in Canada to acknowledge, understand and celebrate intangible traditions and practices alongside the tangible, we will grow in our understanding of how individuals, groups and communities form identities and become rooted as citizens of localized areas, regions and nations.

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