

PAST MEETS PRESENT ON CITY'S NORTH SIDE

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Event | Transportation focus of heritage week

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History buffs and heritage lovers scanned old pictures, discussed dozens of local artifacts and told stories with friends at the Fredericton North Heritage Association's weekend gathering.

Organizers dubbed the Saturday event, Have a Heart for our Heritage, and many exhibitors incorporated the spirit of Valentine's Day into their displays.

The event also coincided with the end of Heritage Week 2009, as designated by the provincial government. This year's theme was Be Transported, and many exhibits featured a variety of items that reflected back on the ways local residents used to get around.

Association spokesman Ernest MacFadzen said these regular heritage events help preserve the region's storied past.

MacFadzen said the provincial heritage theme gave many exhibitors the chance to bring along items that showed how local transportation has changed through the years.

"What we're trying to do is to promote our heritage," he said.

"The theme this year is Be Transported, and so what we're doing is featuring some of those items. The railroads fit that, the airplanes fit that, the waters and rivers and so on also fit that.

"Some of the other things are truckers and equipment and so on, and the Department of Transportation is here with a look at our bridges."

He said looking back through old photographs and examining years of public records shows how things have changed a lot in a short time.

"There's been quite a change, even from my time to (now)," he said.

The Department of Transportation set up a booth that featured pictures of the province's covered bridges. A projector showed historical photographs in a slideshow presentation.

Andrew Holland, the department's director of communications, said many local history buffs took the opportunity to check out the archival images.

"It's a wonderful opportunity to showcase the history of our province, whether it's the snow-clearing, or graders that operated to clear brush on the sides of the road," he said.

"It's a snapshot of what's happened through the years. We had over 400 covered bridges at one time and it's declined since then, and right now we have 63 in our province."

Holland said it's also fun for him to try to help people find the answers they're looking for about a certain bridge or road.

"People like to see history and they have an attachment to where they're from," he said.

"We've had people asking about certain bridges that were built in the '40s and '50s and it's fun for them to find out when they were built and what year they were torn down, etc."

Ron Clement said he came to the event to spend time with his elderly mother, but found many interesting artifacts when he got there.

"I wasn't that interested in sifting through old boxes of stuff, but there's lots of cool things here," he said.

"I saw some old copies of the Gleaner here and it's fun to look back at what was making news in those days, and there were some pictures of the street I grew up on in Devon."