



Committee Report

To: Warden Janice Jackson
Members of the Museum Committee

From: Cathy McGirr
Director, Museum & Cultural Services

Date: April 1, 2021

Re: Ontario Marine Heritage Committee Proposal Report

Staff Recommendation:

That the Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre accept the inclusive marine collection of the late Arthur Amos, upon receipt of a signed deed of gift; and

Support the creation of an Ontario Marine History and Underwater Research Centre within the Bruce County Archives.

Background:

For over forty years the Ontario Marine Heritage Committee (OMHC) has been at the forefront of efforts to protect and preserve the province's marine heritage of which Bruce County places a significant role.

The OMHC's common goals have centered around the preservation, research and interpretation of marine history and underwater archaeology. Currently there is no institution or archival repository in the province dedicated to this subject matter. Many similar collections of marine heritage records, research notes and archaeological materials also exist, generally held by individuals. Unfortunately, much material has already been lost or destroyed.

With the recent passing of Arthur Amos, charter member of the OMHC, long-time Tobermory resident, business owner and avocational marine archaeologist and historian, his substantial collection of archival materials regarding Ontario's marine heritage (including Bruce County) now needs a permanent home.

Housing these materials at the Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre already supports the Archives' mandate for Bruce County and further advances the goal of being a premier destination for research and history.

Support of this proposal (see attached) from several industry and heritage organizations including the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, Ontario Marine Heritage Committee, Save Ontario Shipwrecks, Southampton Marine Heritage Society further identify the significance of this collection and the value of ensuring collective heritage is conserved and made accessible to a wider audience of researchers, students, Indigenous communities and the visiting public.

Over the past few years, the Bruce County Archives have become the home to several significant archival donations such as: Peter Schmaltz Collection (Indigenous), Women's Institute Collection (Community & Women's Institute Histories), Krug Collection (Krug Bros. Co. and County history) and John Weichel Collection (Marine & Southampton history). These collections not only enhance the archival collection, but also support further development in the areas of research on a variety of topics, genealogy, and our understanding of local history.

Expanding the scope of our marine heritage to include provincial marine-related archival matters would have significant benefits.

Institutional Context

This collection supports and advances the 2017 Feasibility Study in the following areas:

- The proposed collection would be part of the newly planned archival expansion
- Fits with the provincial culture strategy (Ontario Museums 2025 Study for Museums: more research and more emphasis on knowledge transfer is necessary to broaden the development of cultural industries and their employment opportunities, particularly in smaller population centres.)
- Enhances possibility of post-secondary institution involvement both as users and partners, advancing the County Strategic Plan
- Enhances County economic development ("Knowledge Seekers")
- Opportunity to engage students (and others), in their own histories, their family histories, their community histories
- Enhances the BCM&CC Strategic Plan by continuing to forge partnerships and creating County-wide awareness.
- Adds another dimension to attracting donors
- Enhances County Planning development (Archaeological Management Plan)

Geographical Context

With over 850 km of shoreline with links to human use of the Great Lakes going back centuries to prehistoric trade routes, the location is ideal. The BCM&CC is within a five-hour drive to over 5 million residents and 25 plus post-secondary institutions. Other related features of interest include the Fathom Five National Marine Park, Tobermory Wireless Station and the many lighthouse dating back to 1858.

Research Context

The potential for research at all levels abounds for children, families, educators, authors, professional historians and archaeologists. Resources and source material could include but are not limited to records and research notes reflecting the shipping industry, shipbuilding and the development of ships; charts and maps; newspaper articles; shipwreck and archaeology-related papers; photographs; and published books.

By having a dedicated archival repository for marine heritage, within the Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre, Bruce County would be ensuring that valuable relevant collections are not lost or destroyed, offering an invaluable service as a one-stop-shop for researchers, historians, students and families, as well as engagement and partnership opportunities for other stakeholder and interest groups.

Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Considerations:

There are no financial, legal or IT considerations associated with this report. Staffing considerations are related to the processing of the collection.

Interdepartmental Consultation:

The has been interdepartmental with the Corporate Strategic Initiatives Specialist, Office of the CAO and the Director, Planning & Development.

Link to Strategic Goals and Elements:

Goal #3 - Find creative new ways to engage our public

Element C - Make the County fully accessible to the people through access to information

Goal #4 - Find creative new ways to involve all our staff in our future

Element C - Invest in expanding the knowledge and skills of our staff

Goal #8 - Actively seek out a post-secondary campus for Bruce County

Element B - Capitalize on knowledge/skill/experience of our residents

Link to Museum Strategic Plan:

Pillar 1 - Expanding BCM&CC's role as a Community Hub for the entire County

Objective 1.2 - Continue nurturing joint programming action plans with partner organizations across the County

Objective 1.3 - Develop programming that aligns with special tourism events or interest groups

Pillar 2 - Building affinity across the County

Objective 2.1 - Engage underserved audiences

C - revise the collecting mandate to include "recent history" and "hidden history"

Objective 2.2 - Deepen relationships with communities across the County

D - Activate the Archive to drive audiences from across the County

Approved for Submission:

Sandra Datars Bere

Chief Administrative Officer