



## Treasured community newspapers being saved through joint project

They provide a glimpse of a community's history, a record of life ranging from the politics of the time to the price of butter. They are community newspapers and many of Nova Scotia's historic gems are being saved through the Historic Newspaper Project.

People will be able to access some of these newspapers online thanks to the project which will be launched across the province on Friday, April 23.

Community newspapers from Shelburne and Freeport are part of the project and the April 23 launches will take place at the McKay Memorial Library in Shelburne and the Islands Museum in Tiverton beginning at 2 p.m.

"The project is important to the average person because newspapers, especially community newspapers, are the record of the lives of everyday Nova Scotians," says Western Counties Regional Library Director Trudy Amirault. The regional library is part of the project team which includes Libraries Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management, Beaton Institute, Cape Breton University, C@P Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia Provincial Library and the Legislative Library.

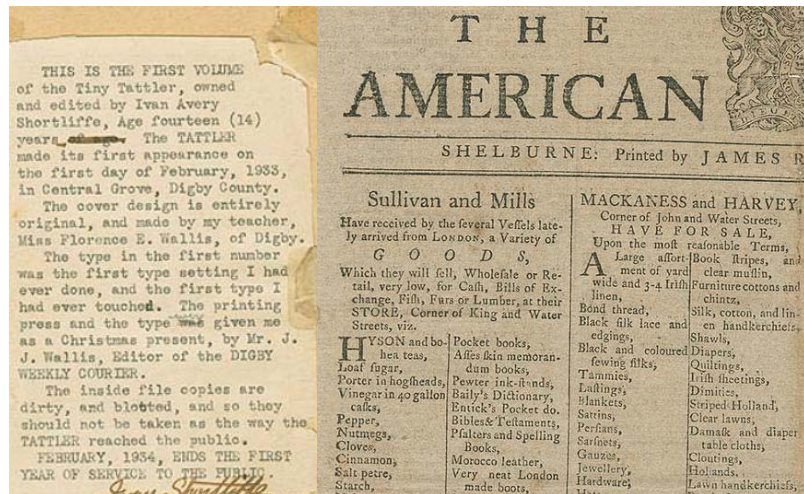
"Newspapers are important for people searching for genealogical information and also for historians wanting to research life in Nova Scotian communities," Amirault adds.

A big part of the project is the preservation of the newspapers, transforming them from a deteriorating paper format to a digital version.

"Newspapers deteriorate physically over time and there was a growing concern that this important aspect of our heritage would be lost forever if we did not begin to work on their preservation," says Amirault.

The project grew out of a March 2009 provincial forum on heritage newspapers. Representatives of institutions with an interest in newspapers met to determine what could be done cooperatively to preserve and improve access to historic newspapers in the Nova Scotia.

"One of the suggestions coming out of that consultation was that we use the technological capacity already in place in a few institutions in Nova Scotia such as the public archives, Beaton Institute and several universities, and that we find funding to hire workers to use the technology to digitize newspapers," says Amirault. The Community Access Program in Nova Scotia had funding to hire youth to work on technology-related projects so the project could begin.



Left, a clipping from the first volume of Freeport's *The Tiny Tattler*, Jan. 1, 1934. Right, a clipping from the July 27, 1886 edition of *The Nova-Scotia Packet: and General Advertiser*. (Scans provided by Nova Scotia Archives & Records Management)

The project makes these pieces of Canadiana available to anyone with a computer and Internet connection, she says. The website, which will become active on April 23, is located at [www.nsnewspapers.ca](http://www.nsnewspapers.ca).

The following newspapers have been digitized:

- Shelburne Papers (The Port-Roseway Gazetteer and The Shelburne Advertiser, The Nova-Scotia Packet: and General Advertiser, The Royal American Gazette): 1785-1787, 230 pages
- Pictou Bee: 1835-1838, 1266 pages
- Nova Scotia Chronicle and Weekly Advertiser (Halifax): 1769-1770, 702 pages
- 4<sup>th</sup> Estate (Halifax): 1969-1978, 7970 pages
- Tiny Tattler (Freeport), 622 pages
- Billa Na Queg (A New Day), 1964, 8 pages
- Micmac News, 1965-1992, 8, 174 pages
- The Thermometer (Sydney), 1899-1900, 16 pages
- Semi-Weekly Express (Sydney), 1879, 12 pages
- Glace Bay Enterprise, 1896, 8 pages
- The Sydney Booster, 1935, 8 pages
- Cape Breton Digest, 1935, 8 pages
- The Daily Times (Sydney), 1878, 2 pages
- The Daily Advocate (Sydney), 1878, 8 pages
- The Cape Breton Advocate, 1899, 2 pages

It is hoped that the April 23 launch is only the beginning of the effort to preserve Nova Scotia's newspapers.

“This project was a pilot to see if it was possible to go forward with this work using existing facilities and expertise combined with fairly small amounts of money for staff,” says Amirault. “The pilot has been an unqualified success and we hope to do a new project of a similar scope in 2010.”