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A Museum History Adventure

There are lots of ways to learn about history, but one cool place to start is with artifacts because they are pieces of history. Let's work together to discover some of the artifacts we have here on the museum grounds and then see what they can tell us about the history of our museum! I will give you clues and challenges that will lead you on an adventure to find these artifacts. Once you find them, flip to the "Answer Key" to figure out what each artifact can tell us about the past!

(Note: Pages 1-2 contain clues/challenges, pages 3-5 contain Answer Key)

Adventure Challenges!

1. Start your adventure by looking at the very front of the museum. What do you see? Doors? Okay, then take one big step back (But be careful not to go into the road!). Now look way up at the top of the building. Do you see a big sign that says, "Town Hall 1872"? Wait a second! I thought that this was a museum!
2. Now we know that this building was the original Town Hall. But how did it become a museum? Let's see if we can work together to figure out what happened next... Our next artifact will be a big sign that has three black and white photos of kids on it. It shouldn't be too far away from you, can you find it?
3. If you are with a grownup, they might want to look at that sign a bit more, but we are going to do more detective work while we wait. (But they can join us if they want to!) When kids went to this school they had to walk, even if it was really cold out. Let's imagine what that would have been like! Show me how you would walk to the Victoria School if it was a very cold day? What if it was very hot? Oh my goodness, you look just like a Victoria School student! Now, let's find the next artifact! Walk past the front door until you see metal gates that lead to a garden.
4. Now it's time to enter the garden. Then look around you. How many different kinds of plants do you see? Do you know what any of them are called? This garden was created by the Carleton Place and District Horticultural Society and they take care of all of these plants. Now, look around you again and see if you can find a tree that has green and white leaves.
5. The next artifact is a type of house for something that is important for any garden. To find it, first look for a wooden fence behind some flower beds. Now, walk beside that and look for a little cylinder sticking out of the side of the fencing.

6. To discover the next artifact, turn so that your back is facing the beehive and the museum is behind you. Then look past the flowers and bushes... do you see a fence behind them?
7. Next, think of your favourite game to play on the playground at school. Then, imagine that you are a student at the Victoria School again and you are playing that game as recess. (If you can't think of a game you could try playing Simon Says or even Eye-spy!) Once you finish playing your game, walk or skip over to a flower bed that has a pine tree in it. Now see if you can find something that looks like a bunch of black hooks in the shape of a big number 7.
8. The next artifact can be found in the middle of the garden where there is lots of grass. It is big, made of metal, and might have flowers or dirt inside of it. Do you see it?
9. Time to find the next artifact, but we have to ride our imaginary horses to get there! They just finished having a break at the horse trough and are ready to go. Gallop around the horse trough three times, then lead your horse onto the pavement behind the museum and take a look at the back wall. Do you notice anything different about this wall? What is it?
10. Nice detective work! Our next artifact is very small... look closely on the wall near the back door for something that looks like a little wooden circle stuck between two stones.
11. This next artifact is our very last one. Walk over to the labyrinth. Once you get there, look for something that you can sit on that is made of stone. Once you find that, check to see if there is anything carved into it.

Congratulations, You Did It!

You have finished your adventure, amazing work! You found all of the artifacts and learned so much. This land that you just explored has been here for a very long time and was loved and used by many people (including kids like you!) for lots of purposes.

But Wait! How Did the School Become A Museum?

What a good question. Well, in 1969 the school closed, and all the kids went to other newer schools. After that, the building was used as a few other things until one day in 1982 when the Carleton Place and Beckwith Historical society came and decided to open a Victoria School Museum. Later, they changed the name to The Carleton Place and Beckwith Heritage Museum so they could start sharing even more about the history of Carleton Place and Beckwith with people just like you!

Answer Key

1 - The “Town Hall 1872” Inscription:

Location: The top of the front of the building

If you thought that this was a museum, you are absolutely right! But it wasn't always that way. When Carleton Place first became a village in the year 1870 they needed to build their very own town hall. So they bought some land from one of the original settlers in Carleton Place, William Morphy, and had the town hall built there. And you know where that was? Right where you are standing today! While they were building it, they wrote the words “Town Hall” and the year they were building it in, “1872” right there at the top. But the village didn't actually start using the building until 1873, a whole year later!

2 - The “First Town Hall” Heritage Plaque:

Location: To the left of the museum entrance

Who are all those kids? Well, when the town hall first opened it was made up of a room called a council chambers, an apartment for the person who would take care of the building, a lock up (which is like a small jail where they kept people accused of crimes), and a public hall that could be rented by people in the village for just two or three dollars! But then, just a few years later in 1879, the town hall was turned into a school for kids in the village. The rooms were turned into classrooms and an office for the principal. The lock up wasn't changed though, the village kept using that until the new town hall opened in 1897. That means that for a little while this was kind of like a school and a little jail at the same time.

3 - The Garden Gates:

Location: To the right of the front of the museum if you are looking at the door
Amazing work! These iron gates weren't here when this building was first built. These gates used to belong to the old post office on Bridge Street. That's a big red brick building with a green clock on top downtown. The gates were removed from the Post office in 1974 and were brought here to be used as entrance gates in 1991.

4 - Harlequin Maple Tree:

Location: To the left of the garden gate.

That is a Harlequin Maple Tree! This is a special kind of maple tree that can't grow from a seed because it is a mutation of another kind of maple tree. The leaves are the same shape as a normal maple tree, but they have a very light-coloured trim. If a harlequin maple grows any fully green leaves then the person who owns it has to cut them off. If they don't do this the whole tree will eventually become green like that.

5 - The Pollinator House:

Location: To the right of the Museum basement door.

Nice work! That one can be tricky to find! That is a pollinator house. This is a home for bees that don't make honey. Bees that don't make honey are called solitary bees. Solitary bees don't have a queen or live in hives, but they do need a nice place to live and make a nest. This pollinator house has little spaces in it called cavities where bees can live when they are not out pollinating our plants. But don't worry! Solitary Bees are very nice. The male bees do not even have a stinger and the female bees only sting if they are handled roughly or stepped on.

6 - The Old Playground Fence:

Location: Along the south property line. Behind the bushes and trees near the garden gates or the back of the garden.

Nice job! This garden was made where the Victoria School playground used to be. For about 90 years kids like you would play right over here, and that is part of their old school fence. There were swings, spinners, and a baseball diamond and all of the kids would play lots of games like Red Rover, Mother May I, and 1,2,3 Red Light.

7 - The Barn Cleaner Chain Sculpture:

Location: In the flower bed in roughly the middle of the southern property line. If you are looking at the correct flower bed, your back should be in line with a fire escape across the garden.

That is a sculpture made out of part of a Barn Cleaner. A barn cleaner is a device that uses paddles to scrape manure (Yep, that's right! Cow poo!) out of gutters and into a big pile outside of the barn. The pile of manure can then be used as fertilizer. Chains like the ones in the sculpture are the part of the barn cleaner that makes the whole thing work. They automatically pull the paddles so that they can clean out the manure without the farmers having to do it all by hand. This sculpture wouldn't work to collect manure anymore, but it is a cool artifact here in the garden.

8 - The Horse Trough:

Location: On the grass near the back of the garden.

You found it! This may look like a flower bed right now, but it is actually a horse trough. Before people had cars to drive around in, lots of people used horses as a form of transportation. But, kind of like cars, horses needed to be filled up so that they could keep going. Horses don't run on gas of course, but they do enjoy a nice drink of water! Horse troughs like this one would be on certain streets and filled with water so that horses could have a drink. This once used to be on the corner of Bridge Street and Charlotte Street right across from a carriage maker and a blacksmith, but since we use cars instead of horses now it was moved here.

10 - The Murals:

Location: On the back wall of the building.

That's right, it has paintings on it! The paintings are murals that show the different things that this building has been used for in the past. Do any of the paintings remind you of things we have discovered so far?

(Possible talking points for gradians if your child does not have any ideas: "I can see one that looks like kids at school" or "That one looks like a police officer and reminds me of how they used to keep criminals in the lock up." Or anything else you notice!)

11 - Wooden Anchoring Plug:

Location: To the left of the back door.

This is an early anchoring device. These helped keep something attached to a building. They worked by having a bolt screwed into the middle of the piece of wood until it expanded and became tight. Once the piece of wood was tight, it could hold the thing you were attaching to the wall.

12 - The Finger Labyrinth:

Location: Carved into a stone bench to the right of the labyrinth entrance.

This is a finger labyrinth. When this was still a school, this is where the baseball diamond would have been. But now it is a beautiful labyrinth. The labyrinth is a winding grass path that people walk along while they relax, think about things, ask questions, or meditate. But some people might find it harder to use the labyrinth for lots of different reasons, but they would still like to meditate or relax. So instead, they can use the finger labyrinth by sitting on the bench and tracing the labyrinth with their finger. Give it a try!

Return to the adventure challenges page once you are ready

