

APRIL – JUNE 2021 • VOLUME 45, EDITION 2



# SPARKS

NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTERN DEVELOPMENT MUSEUM



WDM YORKTON

## CEO REPORT

Seeing success in a  
global pandemic

## FEATURE ARTICLE

Exploring the  
Chakravarti collection

## JOYFUL GIVING

Honouring the  
Marcotte's bequest

# MUSEUM GALLERY AND GIFT SHOP HOURS

All WDM locations are open Wednesday - Sunday from 11:00 am - 5:00 pm.

Wednesday - Friday 11:00 - 12:00 pm is reserved for seniors (65+) and COVID-19 vulnerable persons.

We are presently operating at reduced capacity at all locations. To avoid wait times please call ahead to check on current capacity levels before you visit.

**WDM Moose Jaw** 306-693-5989

**WDM Saskatoon** 306-931-1910

**WDM Yorkton** 306-783-8361

**WDM North Battleford** 306-445-8033

For more information visit: [wdm.ca/covid](https://wdm.ca/covid)

## BOOMTOWN CAFÉ

Boomtown Café in the WDM Saskatoon is open Wednesday - Sunday from 9:00 am - 3:00 pm.

The Boomtown Café features fresh and delicious homemade meals at reasonable prices. Items such as soups, pies, cookies and cinnamon buns are available for takeout to enjoy whenever you like.

For more information visit: [wdm.ca/saskatoon/visit/boomtown-café](https://wdm.ca/saskatoon/visit/boomtown-café).

To order call the Boomtown Café at 306-931-1910 EX. 326 or [boomtowncafe@wdm.ca](mailto:boomtowncafe@wdm.ca).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Due to continued concerns about COVID-19, in-person public events offered by the WDM are cancelled through April 30, 2021. We apologize for any inconvenience this causes.

### WDM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Nancy Martin, Chair – Regina

Gwen Beitel – Spring Valley

Susan Lamb – Saskatoon

Shauna Stanley-Seymour – Springside

## A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



### Seeing Success In A Global Pandemic

With spring on its way there is a renewed sense of optimism that by autumn we will be well on our way to emerging from the confines created by the pandemic. Despite the external challenges brought on by COVID-19, we have seen some real successes at the WDM over the past year.

First is the completion of the WDM's Collections Development Plan. This is a significant document that will guide the care and development of our collections for the next decade. I would like to congratulate the curatorial team for their thoughtful approach and excellent work in this area. You can read more about our Collections Development Plan at [wdm.ca/collections](http://wdm.ca/collections).

Second, we have launched four virtual programs. Three for schools – *Christmas Then and Now*, *Think Like a Historian*, and *Harvest in Saskatchewan* ([wdm.ca/for\\_teachers/harvest-virtual-program](http://wdm.ca/for_teachers/harvest-virtual-program)) and one for the general public – *Violet's Saskatchewan* ([wdm.ca/violet](http://wdm.ca/violet)). Throughout the pandemic, our Education staff have been working to ensure we continue to have programs and activities both online and in our Museums. Our virtual programming has been particularly successful as it has allowed us to engage with more Saskatchewan communities than ever before. They are now busy planning for summer activities. While we realize that our large summer shows will not be possible this year, having activities throughout the summer that can be safely shared with smaller groups is important. A huge congratulations to everyone in our Education department, not only for the programs they are creating, but also for demonstrating how to work collaboratively across all WDM locations.

I would also like to congratulate the exceptional work being done by Visitor Services, Custodial and Café staff. Every day, they make each WDM location a safe and welcoming place for visitors. This is something they have always done exceptionally well but maintaining such a high level of excellence despite the challenges caused by the pandemic is truly inspiring. Their work is one of the reasons the WDM continues to enjoy the support of so many people in our communities.

As the pandemic continues, many are turning to the WDM as a safe place to be with the people who are important to them. This is one of the most important services we are providing to our communities right now. Being that safe space where they can connect with those they love while exploring their connections to Saskatchewan's history.

I am very proud of the work and resilience everyone at the WDM has shown over the past year. Through all the disruption the pandemic has caused, the creativity and innovation being shown daily is inspiring. We have learnt a lot about what we are capable of as an organization and many of the new initiatives we have launched over the past year will serve us well, long into the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joan".

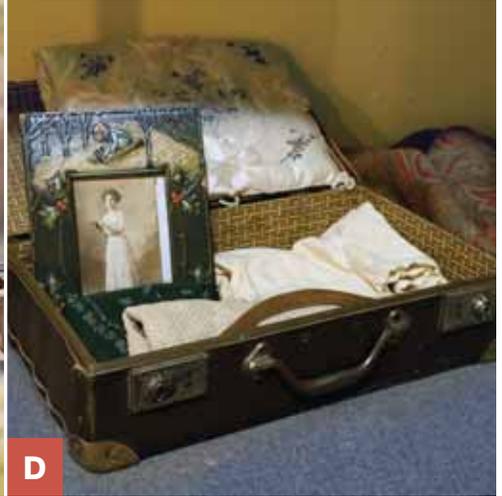
Joan Kanigan, CEO

# IN THE GALLERIES

**A** WDM Moose Jaw  
*100 Years of Saskatchewan History – Weather Module*  
WDM Exhibit



**B** WDM North Battleford  
Chevrolet Imperial Landau 4-door, 1929  
WDM Exhibit



**C** WDM Saskatoon  
*Saskatoon Railroad Modellers' Model Railway Diorama*  
WDM Exhibit

**D** WDM Yorkton  
An immigrant's suitcase  
WDM Exhibit

# FEATURE

Every Monday, our Facebook page features historic Saskatchewan memories. Feel free to share our post or comment with your own memory.

Find us on Facebook at [facebook.com/wdm.museum](https://www.facebook.com/wdm.museum).

This issue's Memory Monday feature highlights photos of cows from the Barton Photograph Collection, held at the George Shepherd Library located at the WDM Corporate Office in Saskatoon. The Barton Collection contains over 800 photographs taken by two generations of a farm family from the Floral-Grasswood area, south-east of Saskatoon, in the first 60 years of the 20th century.



THIS UNDATED PHOTO SHOWS A COUPLE STANDING WITH A COW ON A FARM  
WDM BARTON COLLECTION 07017



THIS UNDATED PHOTO SHOWS A WOMAN MILKING CHLOE THE COW  
WDM BARTON COLLECTION 11003



THIS 1909 PHOTOGRAPH FEATURES A MAN WATERING A COW  
WDM BARTON COLLECTION 10029



A BABY IN A CARRIAGE EXAMINES (AND IS BEING EXAMINED BY) SOME COWS, C. 1944  
WDM BARTON COLLECTION 07090



# The Chakravarti Collection:

## Exploring Saskatchewan's South Asian History

When the Chakravarti family arrived in Saskatoon in the early 1960s, they were one of only a handful of Indian families in the city. Dr. Aninda Chakravarti had been offered a job as Professor of Geography in the newly created Geography Department at the University of Saskatchewan. Though the family faced isolation from their cultural community due to the lack of Indian families in the city, they found ways to stay connected to their traditions.

Dr. Chakravarti and his two sisters were raised by their mother after their father died when Aninda was five years old. He was determined to support his mother and sisters and pursued his education to meet that goal. He earned his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Geography at the University of Allahabad. A Fullbright Scholarship brought Dr. Chakravarti, and later his wife Maya Mukerji and

daughter Anita, to the United States to complete his PhD in Geography. When moving from India to the US and then to Canada, the family brought many important possessions with them.

In Saskatoon, many of the cultural items the Chakravarti family needed such as clothing, foods and spices, and musical instruments, were unavailable. To get these items they would order them from India and have them shipped to Saskatoon. On a sabbatical in 1972-73, Dr. Chakravarti and his family returned to India. There, their then teenage daughter Anita studied music on the sitar. Upon returning to Canada, they brought her sitar with them and she continued to take lessons from a woman in Saskatoon who had played in India but did not have her own instrument in Canada.



ANITA CHAKRAVARTI'S BANGLE BOX  
WDM-2019-S-25

Anita Chakravarti went on to study at the University of Saskatchewan, earning her MD in 1982. In 1983, she married Dr. Parm Lalli, an orthodontist. The couple has returned to India many times over the years and brought many more items back with them.

The WDM recently acquired many treasured items that once belonged to the Chakravarti and Lalli families. Dr. Anita Chakravarti's sitar, her mother Maya's tabla drums and harmonium, a wood bangle box purchased for Anita's wedding by her mother, Dr. Aninda Chakravarti's hookah, and a



MAYA MUKERJI'S TABLA DRUMS  
WDM-2019-S-21



ANITA CHAKRAVARTI'S SITAR  
WDM-2019-S-20



MAYA MUKERJI'S SHAWL, GIVEN TO HER AS A WEDDING GIFT FROM ANINDA CHAKRAVARTI  
WDM-2019-S-26

hand-embroidered shawl from Kashmir, which Aninda gave to Maya for their wedding. Two formal clothing ensembles, purchased by Dr. Anita Chakravarti and Dr. Lalli on a trip to India in the 1990s, are also in the WDM collection. These ensembles are in muted cream colours instead of the brighter colours that would be more traditional, as the couple wished to blend in more with the formal clothing worn by their friends and colleagues in Canada.

Food was often brought back. Yogurt was hard to find in Saskatchewan when the Chakravarti family first arrived. At one point, a community member sneaked a small amount of yogurt culture into Canada from India and for many years most families in the Indian community made their own yogurt from that same culture.

These artifacts and the history of the Chakravarti family represent a story of immigration to Canada from South Asia in the mid-20th century. Since then, South Asian communities have grown and flourished across Saskatchewan. Once rare foods like yogurt can now be found on the shelves of most grocery stores, alongside other commonly used spices and ingredients. The Chakravarti and Lalli artifacts tell a rich story of moving from one place to another and the kinds of things that were special enough to bring here from abroad. They represent the lengths newcomers often went to acquire the goods needed to maintain their cultural traditions in mid 20th century Saskatchewan.



PARM LALLI'S FORMAL ENSEMBLE  
WDM-2019-S-23



ANINDA CHAKRAVARTI'S HOOKAH  
WDM-2019-S-22



ANITA CHAKRAVARTI'S FORMAL ENSEMBLE  
WDM-2019-S-24

# ABOUT US

## Virtual School Programs Offer New Opportunities for Learning

Over 110 school classes and homeschool groups, including over 1,700 students, from across Saskatchewan have registered in WDM virtual school programs so far this school year. Each virtual program is filled with videos, activities, reflective discussion questions, student projects and additional resources for teachers. Here is a peak into two of our programs.

### Harvest in Saskatchewan

Agriculture is a big part of Saskatchewan history. In this program students explore several aspects of agriculture, past and present, from growing garden produce, to raising animals, to growing grain. One highlight is a 30-minute video showcasing grain harvesting machines from the WDM collection in action, including a steam traction engine and threshing machine from the early 20th century and a combine from more recent times.

For more information visit:  
[wdm.ca/for\\_teachers/harvest-virtual-program](http://wdm.ca/for_teachers/harvest-virtual-program)



### Think Like a Historian

What is history? How do we know what really happened in the past? What questions should be asked to determine whether a source is credible or not? These are some of the questions students explore as they learn about and compare how Saskatchewan people experienced the Spanish flu pandemic of 1918 with their experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic. This program includes material from the Saskatchewan History and Folklore Society, historian Bill Waiser, as well as other historians and cultural organizations.

For more information visit:  
[wdm.ca/for\\_teachers/think-like-a-historian](http://wdm.ca/for_teachers/think-like-a-historian)



“

**AMAZING, AMAZING, AMAZING resources!**

Thank you so much for your hard work and offering these [Harvest in Saskatchewan] resources in such an organized manner!

TEACHER, GREYSTONE HEIGHTS SCHOOL, 2021

”

# FEATURE

## Celebrating WDM Volunteers

Every year the WDM celebrates and honours our generous volunteers during National Volunteer Week (April 18 - 24, 2021). Even though so much has changed this last year, our appreciation for the support that volunteers provide to the WDM has not.

**From the bottom of our hearts, we sincerely thank each WDM volunteer.**

### DID YOU KNOW?

In the last five years WDM volunteers have given over 200,000 hours.

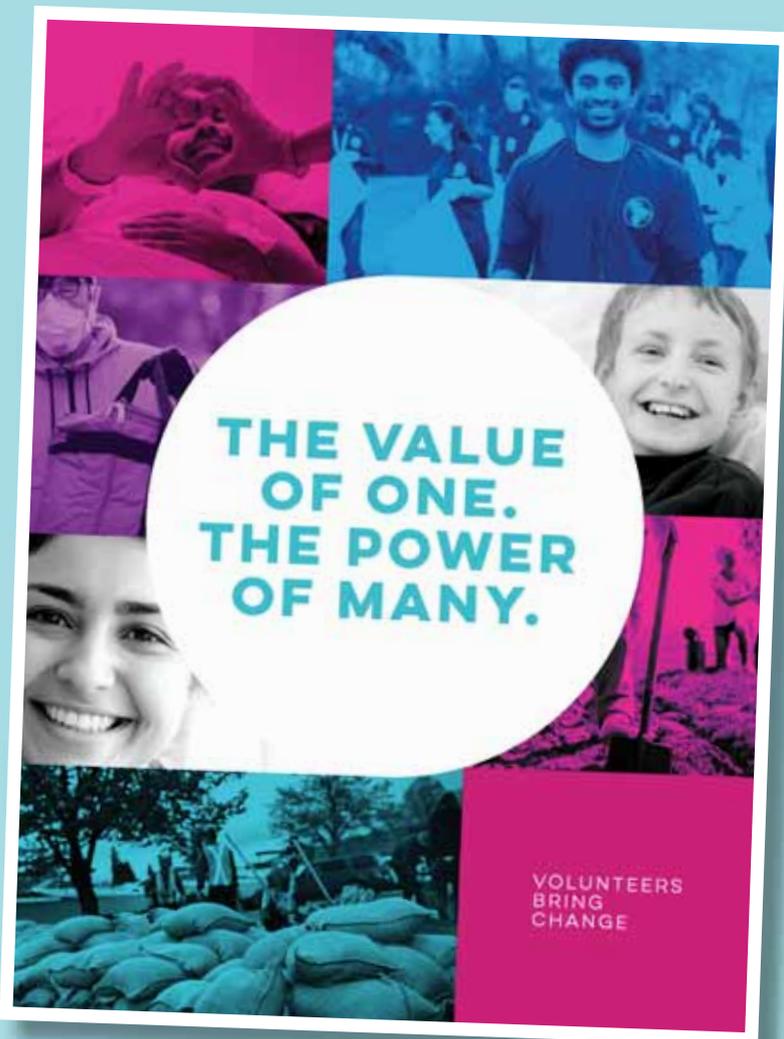


IMAGE CREDIT: VOLUNTEER CANADA

# BRAINBUSTERS

## Word Puzzles

Each of the pictures below represents the name, or nickname, of a Saskatchewan place.

Can you puzzle them out?

1

R

2



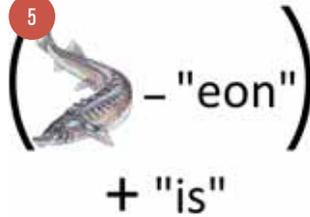
3



4



5



6



## Search for the Saskatchewan Symbol

Hidden somewhere in this issue of Sparks is a Western Red Lily like this one. This lily is Saskatchewan's official flower.

Can you find it?

Which of the 5 "facts" about Saskatchewan are true and which are made-up?

1. In 1906, Moose Jaw was the largest city in the province.	true	false
2. The top speed of the ST-115 Tutor aircrafts flown by the Canadian Forces Snowbirds 431 Air Demonstration Squadron is 509 km/hr.	true	false
3. The world's largest crocus bloom is in Ernfold, along Highway 1.	true	false
4. Saskatchewan-made bricks have been used in building NASA rocket launch pads.	true	false
5. Danceland in Manitou Beach has a world-famous dance floor built on a cushion of cow hair.	true	false

Answers on page 12

## Spot the Differences

Ukrainian settlers brought many traditional cultural beliefs with them when they immigrated to Canada. On display in this exhibit at WDM Yorkton is wheat which symbolized the spirits of fields and soil, embroidery work and pysanka (decorated eggs).

Look closely to spot 5 differences between the two rooms.



Want more activities like this? Visit [wdm.ca/at-home-activities](http://wdm.ca/at-home-activities).

# JOYFUL GIVING

## Honouring Louis and Marion Marcotte



Louis worked as a heavy-duty mechanic for the railroad. Marion was a teacher and a government worker. They were best friends, both extroverts and joyfully married for 63 years. They loved lake life - fishing, the cottages, camping and snowmobiles. Marion was an energetic and cheerful volunteer at the WDM Saskatoon. She particularly enjoyed lunches at the Boomtown Café because that meant she didn't have to cook.

Louis and Marion believed it was their duty to give back to charity. During Marion's teaching career she would bring her students to WDM school programs. Their generous gift, an estate bequest included in their Will, made to the Western Development Museum, will be used for education programming.

To discuss your own joyful giving to the WDM, please contact Susan Scharf, director of philanthropy, at 306-934-1409 EX. 236 or [sscharf@wdm.ca](mailto:sscharf@wdm.ca).

- 1. True.
- 2. False. During a performance, the Snowbirds often reach speeds as high as 600 km/hr. The top speed of the CT-14 Tutor is 763 km/hr.
- 3. False.
- 4. True. Fire bricks made at the Claybank Brick Plant were used in Cape Canaveral, Florida.
- 5. False. The floor is cushioned with horse hair.



Spot the Differences

### Saskatchewan True or False

The Western Red Lily is on page 5.



### Search for the Saskatchewan Symbol

- 1. Biggar
- 2. Buffalo Pound
- 3. Moose Jaw
- 4. Porcupine Plain
- 5. Sturgis
- 6. Yellow Grass

### Word Puzzles

### BRAINBUSTER ANSWERS

## ABOUT US

### New to the WDM:

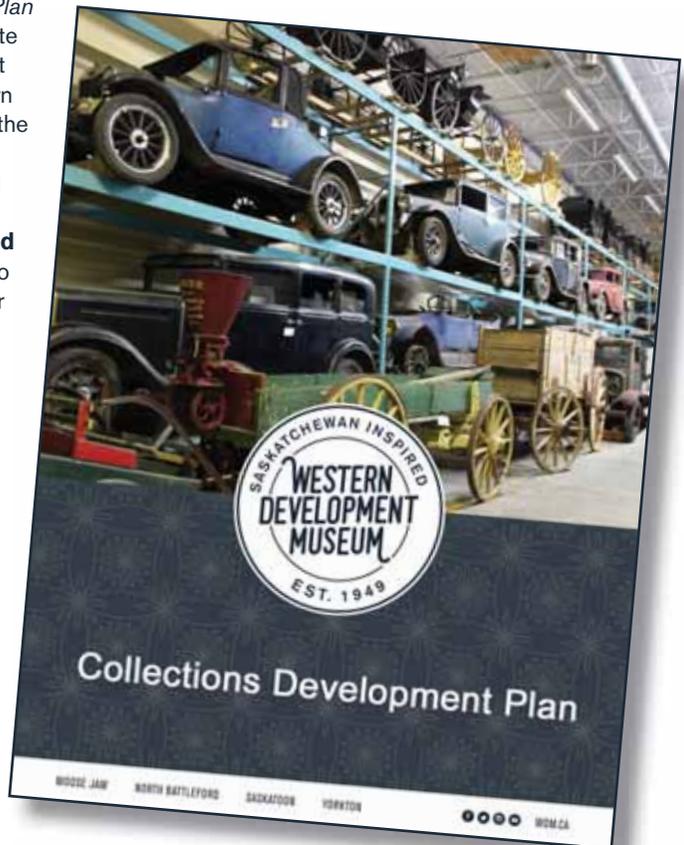
# Collections Development Plan

The WDM collections represent the cultural, agricultural and industrial history of Western Canada, with strong emphasis on Saskatchewan, from the settlement period (c.1870s) to the present day. These collections are held in trust for the people of Saskatchewan. The WDM holds over 75,000 artifacts and over 500,000 archival, photographic and library materials. Generally, the WDM does not collect fine arts, natural history or archaeological artifacts, although some of these types of artifacts remain in the Permanent Collection from earlier collecting priorities.

The new *Collections Development Plan* guides decision making by defining the criteria for accepting artifacts into the WDM's accessioned collections, the criteria for removing artifacts from the WDM's accessioned collections, and how limited resources will be allocated in the overall care and maintenance of the WDM's accessioned collections.

The *Collections Development Plan* is aligned to the WDM's mandate as legislated by the Government of Saskatchewan in The Western Development Museum Act and the Board of Directors' Ends Policy. The Plan responds to the WDM vision of **A Saskatchewan Where Everyone Belongs and Histories Matter**, in its goals to develop the collections to better represent all Saskatchewan people, particularly those who have been unrepresented, underrepresented, misrepresented or erased in the Museum's collections and narratives since its founding in 1949.

Read the *Collections Development Plan* today at [wdm.ca/collections](http://wdm.ca/collections) and help us build the collection for future generations.



# FEATURE

## Civil Defence Kit

WDM-2018-S-45

During the Cold War, the possibility of devastating nuclear war loomed over much of the world. Individuals sometimes built underground bomb shelters in their yards, stocked with food and other supplies to help them survive should their region fall under attack. Air raid sirens were built to alert citizens of incoming attacks, and radar domes (such as the one near Alsask on Highway 7) were built to detect and warn of any nuclear missiles that may be launched over the arctic by the USSR (modern day Russia).

Municipal governments also prepared for the worst. In Regina, a mass casualty trailer, managed by the Regina Police Service, was stocked with medical supplies and other items that may help in the event of an attack. Bags like this one were filled with dressings, bandages and ointments. This bag also held four Civil Defence armbands to be worn by designated personnel who would help distribute the supplies and treat the wounded.

This bag is from 1953-57, with some supplies being updated as late as 1963. Of course, the dreaded attacks never came, and in 1991 the Cold War came to an end. This Civil Defence kit is now held at the WDM to preserve the story of how Saskatchewan coped with this period in world history.



OVERVIEW OF THE FIRST AID KIT



PACKAGES OF TRIANGULAR BANDAGES



STRETCHER BEARER SCISSORS AND LANYARD



IDENTIFICATION ARMBAND



INSIDE THE KIT AS VIEWED FROM THE TOP



KIT AND ITS COMPLETE CONTENTS

## FEATURE

### Collections Records Renewal

# Spotlight on Eastern European Artifacts in the WDM Collection



WDM-1973-NB-12050

ICONOGRAPHY SHOWING GREEK, OLD CHURCH SLAVONIC AND SYMBOLOLOGY

There are many artifacts in the WDM collections that feature languages other than English. Saskatchewan has a rich history of non-Anglo immigration. Many of these immigrants brought items with them when they moved to Saskatchewan related to their cultures and religions. Likewise, sometimes these items were acquired in Canada once settlement increased. Thousands of Saskatchewanians have family and ancestral links to Eastern Europe. At the WDM, these histories are largely represented by artifacts from what is modern day Ukraine or items featuring Ukrainian and Russian languages.

Understanding text on an artifact is important in establishing a complete understanding of the object's history. Being able to "read" what is written can unlock information that would otherwise remain a mystery. But for our WDM



WDM-1973-NB-12063

A VINOK HEADRESS

collections records, language remediation is more than just translating text. A good grasp on an artifact's textual elements helps better understand its historical, cultural and regional context and ultimately its significance to the collection. Research is required to update language that is incorrect or out of date. It is playing detective with geographic locations, as European borders have undergone many changes over the past 150 years. Finally, it is making connections with the community to help complete the picture.

There are over 50 languages that use Cyrillic script but all with slight variations. For example, Russian has letters that Ukrainian does not. Some words that need translating are shared among the Cyrillic based languages. Occasionally the words translate to completely different meanings, which generally makes it easy to identify the correct language based on the context of the artifact. Geography can also help identify the language. Many western Ukrainians, for example, use Ukrainian, while Russian is more common in southern and eastern Ukraine.

Continued on page 16

## MOOSE JAW

### Iron Lung

WDM-1973-S-3018

This respirator, more commonly known as an iron lung, is on display in the WDM Moose Jaw. It was used extensively in Saskatoon's St. Paul's Hospital during the polio epidemic of 1948-52. An iron lung works by changing the pressure inside the canister to stimulate breathing. The polio clinic at St. Paul's was closed in 1960.



## Spotlight on Eastern European Artifacts in the WDM Collection

Continued from page 15 ...

Church artifact records are some of the most time consuming and difficult to remediate. There are often at least two languages, sometimes three, and there is symbology that needs to be explained. Most of these artifacts use a mixture of Old Church Slavonic and Greek. The Greek is largely tied to the symbology. So, it frequently reoccurs in a consistent manner. Old Church Slavonic is more complicated and looks like a hybrid of Greek and Cyrillic. There are letters that are used by no modern alphabet and they do not directly correspond with letters in a Slavic Language. Old Church Slavonic is also an endangered language and is rarely used outside academic or religious fields – even then, it is uncommon, especially in Canada.

Sometimes trying to discern language is a guessing game. Non-Anglo names sometimes have no easy translation. There are letter sounds and combinations in Cyrillic that do not exist in English. This often applies to personal names and geographic names. Names can be Anglicized but that raises ethical questions around erasing an individual's identity. Names can also be Latinized or Romanized, which is phonetically changing the name into the Latin script. This is common with last names and place names. It is always important to keep the original name in its original language to not erase someone's identity or distort meaning.

Thoughtfully updating language within museum collections records is equally as important as understanding the artifact. Terms such as "The Ukraine" are outdated as the roots are from when Ukraine was part of the USSR. Naming items with the correct names also helps remove the many layers of colonialism found within museum collections. Many ceremonial/regional outfits have specific names that relate back to the culture such as a floral headdress is known as вінок [vinok] in Ukrainian. Meaning can be lost if attempts are made to translate or equate these objects to similar ones in English.

Robust collections research, rooted in culturally appropriate language, allows the artifacts' histories to shine a little brighter and teach everyone who encounters them.

## **NORTH BATTLEFORD**

### **Centiped Log Hauler**

WDM-1973-NB-60

The Phoenix Centiped steam log hauler in the WDM North Battleford was purchased by the Ladder Lake Logging Co. in 1912 and used in the Big River area. In 1921 another company bought it and used it near Carrot River until 1935. These log haulers were designed to pull loads of 32 sleds of logs, with each sled being equivalent to a railway flatcar. There are under ten Phoenix log haulers known to remain in the world.



## **SASKATOON**

### **Locomotive 2166**

WDM-1973-NB-343

The 2166 locomotive on display in the WDM Saskatoon was built by Canadian Pacific Railway Angus Shops in Montreal in 1905. It was used in Ontario and Manitoba until 1949, when it was sold to the Manitoba and Saskatchewan Coal Company for use in southeast Saskatchewan, running between Bienfait and Coalfields until the mid-1960s. After it was retired it was donated to the WDM.

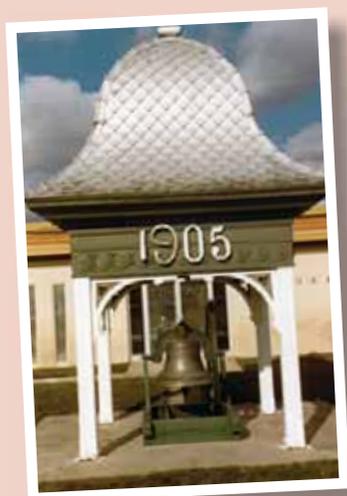


## **YORKTON**

### **Yorkton Town Hall Bell Tower**

WDM-1973-Y-8973

The bell tower standing outside the WDM Yorkton was originally part of the Yorkton town hall, built in 1905, shortly before Saskatchewan became a province in September of the same year. The bell came to the WDM in 1952 after the town hall building was deemed unsafe due to deterioration. The building was demolished in 1962. The bell is the third bell used in the tower, installed in 1908 after the first two bells cracked.



## FEATURE

# Time Changes Everything: Telephones

Since the earliest days of settlement, isolation has been a common problem for rural people in Saskatchewan. When most people lived on farms, in-person visits or letters sent through an often-unreliable mail system were the only ways of communicating with neighbours, friends and family. Many early settlers expressed extreme loneliness in letters and diaries. The brutal Saskatchewan winters also contributed to the isolation, as the harsh weather often prohibited travel to a nearby neighbour's home.

Though this isolation led to well-known Saskatchewan hospitality, it also led to a desperation to have the chance to hear another person's voice. The telephone revolutionized rural life in Saskatchewan. It allowed isolated farmers to contact friends and family from a long distance and connected them to the city in cases of emergency.

Though telegraph was a more reliable method of communication until the end of the Second World War, the appeal of being able to communicate verbally over a telephone, and the lower cost associated with telephone calls compared to sending

telegrams, led to many preferring the telephone.

The first telephone exchange in what is now Saskatchewan opened in Regina in 1887. By 1905, when Saskatchewan's population was around 257,000 people, 2,000 telephones were being used in the province.

The telephone revolutionized communication in Saskatchewan, Canada and around the world. Here is a look into some of the evolutions of the telephone from the late 19th century right up to the cell phone era.



CANDLESTICK-STYLE TELEPHONE, C. 1894-1915  
WDM-2013-S-24

The candlestick-style telephone was one of the earliest styles of desk telephone, introduced in 1892. It had an earpiece and a mouthpiece connected by a cord. When not in use, the earpiece hung on the side

of the mouthpiece. To begin a call, a user would lift the earpiece which would trigger a connection to the telephone line. Prior to the development of automatic telephone exchanges, callers would have to speak first to an operator to connect them to the person they wished to call.



WOODEN BOX TELEPHONE, C. 1913-1920  
WDM-1973-NB-4561

The first commercially available telephones were wall-mounted, wooden box (or "coffin") style telephones. These phones operated in a similar manner to the candlestick telephone. Older models would have a crank that callers would turn to initiate a call. Later models would connect callers to operators when the earpiece was lifted from its holder.



C. 1960 TELEPHONE  
WDM-2013-S-21

Though the first patent for a rotary dial phone was issued in 1892 they were not commercially available until the late 1910s or early 1920s. The lack of automatic phone exchanges meant the rotary dial phone took a few decades to catch on. By the 1950s they were becoming more commonly used as automatic telephone exchanges became more widespread.

Saskatchewan was a relatively early adopter of automatic telephone exchanges, with the first being opened in Saskatoon in 1907, followed by Regina in 1908. Some rural areas of the province did not have access to automatic exchanges until 1974.

With the completion of the conversion to automatic telephone exchanges in 1974, Saskatchewan became the first province in Canada to have every phone line connected to an automatic exchange. Push-button telephones were introduced in Saskatchewan in 1967,



ROTARY TELEPHONE, C. 1975  
WDM-2013-S-18

but rotary phones remained popular into the 1980s and 1990s.

The first cell phone ever developed was made in 1973. It weighed around 1 kg (just over 2 lbs) and required a ten-hour charge for a 30 minute phone call. The first



1988 CELLULAR PHONE  
WDM-2000-S-156

commercially available cell phone was introduced in 1983, but they were still large and heavy. This 1988 cell phone (above) came with its own carrying case due to its bulk.

The first widespread pocket-sized cell phones came onto



2007 CELLULAR "FLIP PHONE"  
WDM-2008-S-527

the market in the early 2000s as Nokia introduced small cell phones that were also affordable to the general population. Flip phones, like the one above from 2007, were compact and cheap, appealing to a broad market.

Though the first text message ever transmitted was sent in 1992, texting did not become widespread until the early 2000s when text messages could be sent between phones operating on different phone networks. Phones which only had a number pad rather than a full keyboard, relied on T9 ("Text on 9 keys") technology. Each key corresponded to three or four letters (1 was A, B and C; 2 was D, E and F, etc.) and users would press each key the appropriate number of times to get the right letter. For example, writing "Hi" would require pressing the number 4 (G, H and I) twice to get an H and then three times to get an I.

Western Development Museum – Corporate Office  
2935 Lorne Avenue  
Saskatoon, SK S7J 0S5



### WDM Corporate Office

For SPARKS and membership questions  
please contact us at:

Phone: 306-934-1400  
Toll Free: 1-800-363-6345  
Email: [info@wdm.ca](mailto:info@wdm.ca)

### WDM Corporate Office Business Hours

8:30 am – 4:30 pm Monday – Friday  
Closed statutory holidays

SPARKS Editor: Kerry Lubchenko  
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#SaskInspired

SASKATCHEWAN TRANSPORTATION COMPANY BUS STOP SIGN, C. 1945-80  
WDM-2017-S-143