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Navigating 250 years of triumph and tragedy is the focus in the harbour this summer

Halifax immersed in history

The blockbuster movie *Titanic* has made an exhibit about the doomed vessel into its own blockbuster at Halifax's Maritime Museum of the Atlantic.

Halifax played a pivotal role in the *Titanic* saga. As the North American city that lay closest to the site of the sinking, vessels were dispatched from the Nova Scotia capital to search for bodies. Many victims were later laid to rest in the city, making it home to the largest number of *Titanic* graves in the world.

The *Titanic* exhibit in the harbourside museum, which saw attendance jump by 150% last year thanks to James Cameron's movie, features authentic documents, photographs and numerous wooden artifacts recovered at the scene of the disaster, including one of the few intact *Titanic* deck chairs.

New this summer, a virtual visit to the wreck is sure to spark great interest among museum visitors. The first-ever Canadian run of *Titanic 3-D*, a 15-minute film that is the only 3-D video about the ship in the world, will be at the museum from June 1 to Oct. 31.

And it won't be the only way visitors to Halifax can immerse themselves in history this summer. By the sounds of it, the whole city will be looking fondly to the past, with much of the action taking place around the harbour.

June festivals

This year marks the 250th anniversary of the city's founding. The party begins with a family festival on the waterfront on June 12-13, and an official Founding Of Halifax ceremony on June 21, but swings into high gear from June 25-27.

That's when a replica of *HMS Rose*, the 18th-century ship manned by city founder Gov. Edward Cornwallis, sails into the harbour escorted by the *Blue-nose II* and other wooden sailing ships. The landing of the founding families will also be re-enacted.

A full-scale recreation of a 1700s military camp on the Halifax Common is to follow. Actors depicting British soldiers, their families and tradesmen will bring the past alive with a sham battle, a Governor's Ball hosting guests in period costume and a parade of troops through city streets.

The settlers who arrived on the *Rose* were the earliest in a long and ongoing line of immigrants whose first glimpse of their new country was the Halifax harbour. In fact, one of the biggest events of the summer is expected to be the opening of a new museum on the site of what's billed as "Canada's Ellis Island," Pier 21 on the Halifax waterfront.

The last standing immigration shed in Halifax, and indeed



Felicity
MUNN



THE PORT TO BE ... History happens at 250-year-old Halifax Harbour this summer with the opening of a new National Historic Site, dedicated to Canada's immigrants, and an exclusive showing of *Titanic 3-D* at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic.

in Canada, Pier 21 is where more than 1.5 million immigrants, refugees, war brides and British evacuee children first set foot on Canadian soil between 1928 and 1971.

Thousands of Canadian troops also passed through the shed on their way to battle in Europe, and again upon their return at the end of the World War II. It's estimated that one in five Canadians can trace some relationship to Pier 21.

When CBC Television got involved in the project a few months back, agreeing to produce programs focusing on the immigrant experience, it turned out that Hana Gartner of *The National Magazine* and *Royal Canadian Air Farce* star Luba Goy had all arrived in Canada via Pier 21.

Actor Al Waxman, author Peter C. Newman and the Bronfmans of Seagram's fame were also Pier 21 immigrants.

The shed was derelict for years, until a determined group of heritage-minded Haligonians organized a national fundraising drive to restore the pier and turn it into a permanent national testament to honour the contributions of immigrant Canadians.

Designated a National Historic Site and opening on July 1, Pier 21's high-tech, interactive exhibits are designed so that visitors can experience not just the bureaucratic process of going through immigration at the start of a new life in a new country, but a keen sense of the feelings, as well.

A news release says it "will recapture the essential dimensions of that experience as felt by children and adults: The difficult journey from home to the unknown; the anticipation of life in a new land, mingled with fond remembrance of the old; the anxiety and discomfort of arrival; the journey to new beginnings; and the ultimate impact of the new arrivals on the face of Canada."

Military Tattoo

Aside from the special events, the city will be the scene of the usual annual festivals, including the Nova Scotia Military Tattoo, the world's largest indoor show (June 30-July 7), and the Halifax International Busker Festival (Aug. 5-15).

New this year is Fiddlers of the World (July 11-15), billed as the first-ever international conference for traditional fiddlers.

For more info, Halifax Tourism is at (902) 490-5948 and the Nova Scotia tourist information line is at 1-800-565-0000, or log in to www.region.halifax.ns.ca.

Lighthouse Route a beacon for tourists

HALIFAX, N.S. (CP) — Lighthouses continue as beacons of guidance but today they guide visitors, not mariners.

Nova Scotia, which leads with 160 of the country's 583 lighthouses, has the scenic Lighthouse Route with more than 20 of the beacons.

The route follows the South Shore and includes Yarmouth's towering Cape Forchu light and the much-photographed lighthouse at Peggy's Cove. During the summer it hosts a post office and letters mailed there get a unique cancellation.

The province has the oldest operating lighthouse in North America, built in 1758-59, on Sambro Island in Halifax harbour.

There's also Fort Point Lighthouse Park in Liverpool and the N.S. Lighthouse Interpretive Centre at Port Bickerton.

Among Newfoundland's 72 lights is the restored Cape Bonavista lighthouse and museum, a stone structure marking the entrance to Trinity and Bonavista bays.

Cape Spear lighthouse, east of St. John's at the most easterly point in North America, is the centrepiece of a national historic park opened by Prince Charles and the Princess of Wales, in 1983.

Labrador's Point Amour lighthouse, second tallest in Canada at 33.2 metres, began shining in 1858.

P.E.I. has 56 structures including the

West Point light where visitors can spend the night. The 1876 lighthouse is in Cedar Dunes Provincial Park and now has a museum and restaurant, and nine-room inn.

New Brunswick has 78 lights and Quebec claims one of Canada's highest lighthouses, Cap-des-Rosiers at the Gasep Peninsula at 34.13 m.

Ontario has 104 lights, including Georgian Bay's Cove Island, part of Fathom Five National Marine Park at Tobermory.

On the rugged west coast are 52 lights including British Columbia's oldest from 1860 — the granite Race Rocks lighthouse that guides ships through the Strait of Juan de Fuca.