

Curator's Corner — Cady Berardi

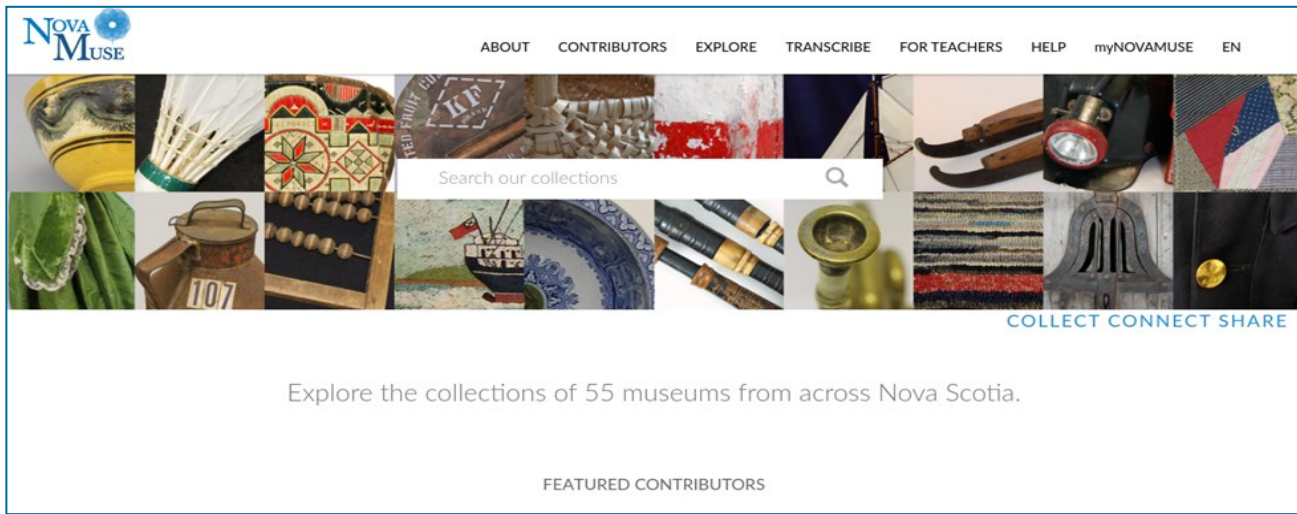


Usually in my Curator's Corner articles, I tell you about our summer student projects or the grant work that we have carried out in the previous year. We had a fairly quiet summer here in the collections, though, without any students or grant projects going on. So instead, I'd like to use this space to write about how you can view and interact with our collections all year round from the comfort of your home on NovaMuse.

NovaMuse

In the fall 2022 newsletter, I wrote about the importance of having 'intellectual control' over our collections and the history of artefact recordkeeping. I was focussed on why it is important for us internally, to know what we have and where it is. But creating and improving digital records for our objects also has another massive benefit: it lets us make our collections available to the public even when they are not on display.

Over 5,900 objects in our collection are currently available to browse and search on [NovaMuse.ca](https://novamuse.ca).



NovaMuse homepage and search bar

NovaMuse is the user-facing side of our collections database and it is administered by the Association of Nova Scotia Museums. On NovaMuse, you can search across the collections of 55 museums located all across Nova Scotia by typing your keyword (a surname of interest, for example) into the search bar on the homepage.

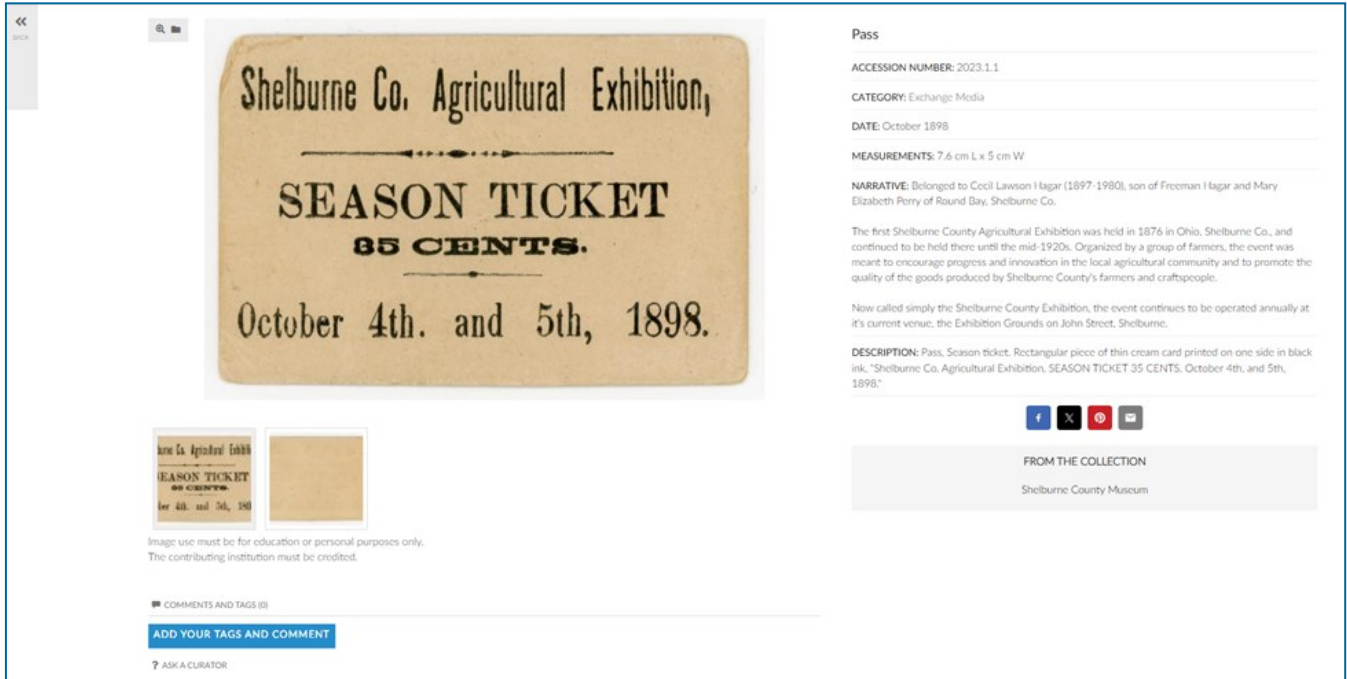
If you only want to search within a specific museum's collection, you can click on the Contributors tab along the top of the page and then select the museum you want from the map, or click Browse under the Explore tab and filter by Institution. For our collection, the direct link is <https://novamuse.ca/Detail/entities/6332>.

In each artefact's record, you can see images (if the museum has taken any), read a description and learn what the museum knows about the piece. You can also share the record to various social media platforms. If you have a question about that object, you can click "Ask a Curator" and the ANSM team will forward your inquiry on to me.

You can do even more if you create a myNovaMuse account, discussed below.

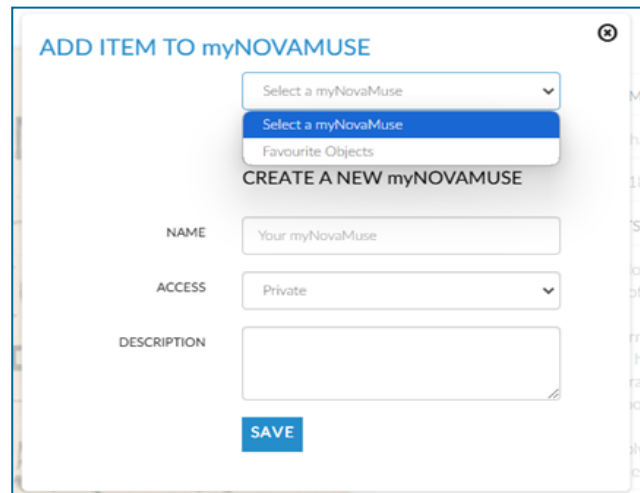
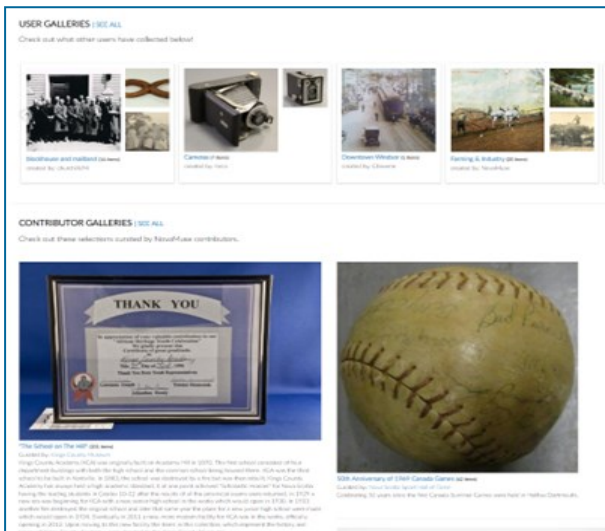
myNovaMuse

Do you know more about an object than what is in its record? That's great! You can send that information through the Ask a Curator contact form, but you can also add your information right into the record if you create a myNovaMuse account. You can add tags to the object record to help other people find it in their searches, or add a comment to share your knowledge with others (these are screened before they go live to prevent virtual vandalism).



Artefact record for 2023.1.1, showing options for logged-in myNovaMuse users.

myNovaMuse is also the name for virtual galleries on the website. By clicking “Featured Galleries” under the myNovaMuse tab, you can browse public galleries created by other users, as well as virtual exhibits put together by contributing museums and ANSM staff on a variety of subjects.

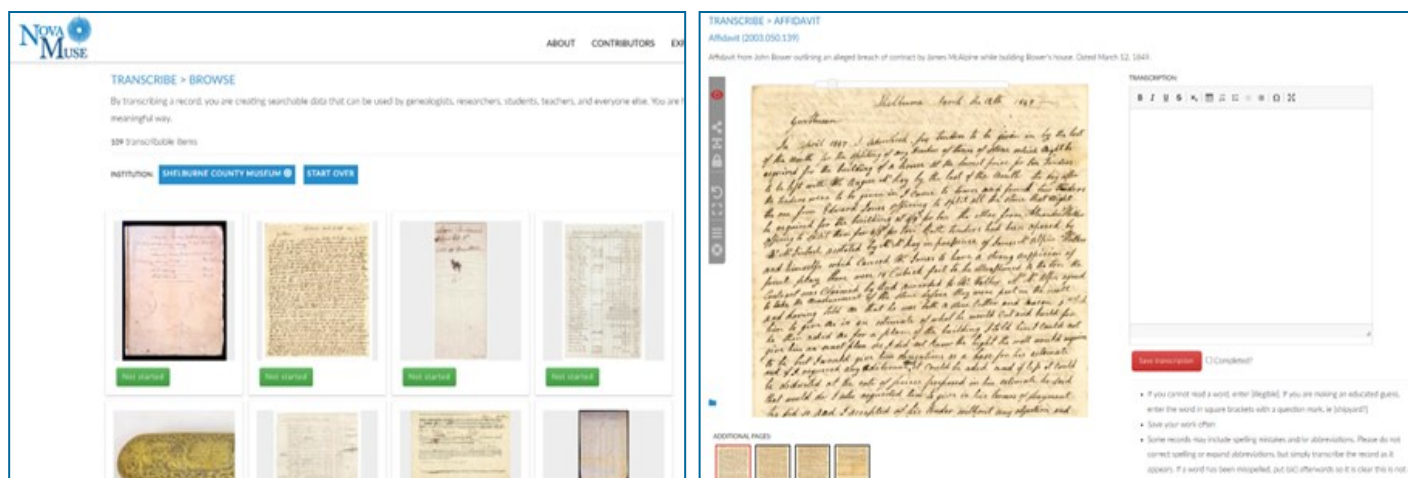


Left: Public collections and virtual exhibits in “Featured Galleries”. Right: Adding a record to a myNovaMuse gallery.

With an account, you can create your own virtual galleries. These can be public, like the ones above, or just for your own use. You can make as many galleries as you'd like! To add an artefact to your gallery, go to its record, hover over the image and then click the little file folder icon that appears. You can then add the record to any of your existing galleries or create a new gallery. Only artefact records with images can be added to myNovaMuse galleries. You can find your user galleries, public and private, under myNovaMuse in the myNovaMuse tab.

Transcribe

I think one of the most fun aspects of NovaMuse is being able to read and transcribe documents in museum collections under the Transcribe tab. When we upload artefact images, we can choose to make them available to transcribe, and visitors can choose to help us make these documents more accessible by typing what they can read in the image.



Left: Artefacts we have made available to transcribe, found [here](#).

*Right: The annotation tool. This affidavit by John Bower in 1849 alleges a breach of contract regarding quarry stones cut for the foundation of his house, the now-demolished building best known by locals as *The Millstones B&B*.*

The annotation tool allows you to zoom in and rotate the image to make the text more readable. If a document has many pages, like the example above, they will be visible as thumbnails below the image. Each page is transcribed separately. If you are interested in jumping in, ANSM has a [short instructional video](#) on transcribing in NovaMuse that will get you started.

We have over 100 documents ready to transcribe, and have many more to add. Who knows what you will discover by giving them a read!

