



COBOURG MUSEUM  
FOUNDATION

# ARTIFACTUALLY SPEAKING

## WHAT IS OUR HISTORY MADE OF?

Mostly it's made of memories, stories passed on from generation to generation. Many thousands of years ago myths were shared with family members around the campfire then, later, written down in pictures and words.

**But those words can be forgotten, and words can be misleading.** The more permanent and truthful things of history are what we call "artifacts".

**An artifact** is a man-made object that has some kind of cultural significance. If you find a 12th-century vase, it's an artifact of that time. Don't drop it! Artifact is a combination of two Latin words, arte, meaning "by skill" and factum which means "to make."  
([www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/artifact](http://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/artifact))

The challenge with artifacts is that they do not tell their stories directly. They need to be interpreted, and so we are back to those tricky words! So, in this exhibit, "Artifactually Speaking", we try to uncover some of the stories hidden in a selection of artifacts from our collection and items on loan.

The Cobourg Museum Foundation has not typically gone looking for items to add to its collection. Rather, people come to us wondering whether this or that treasure is something we would like to have. Probably we don't say "No thanks" often enough. Ideally an artifact will have **some clear connection to the not too recent past of this area**, but often it is just so interesting, and who knows when it might help us tell a story?

An example of a clearly relevant artifact is the wooden skeleton of an ore car made in Cobourg, but preserved in the Trent River for 99 years. **One that is just interesting** is the "walking" spinning wheel, provenance unknown but very much a symbol of our past.

Each of the artifacts has its own story which we have tried to discover and share.

## CAN YOU HEAR THE ARTIFACTS SPEAKING? WHAT ARE THEY SAYING?



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