

First of all I would like to thank everyone for coming this afternoon to the grand opening of our permanent Elizabeth Bishop Exhibit and Art Gallery.

In 2014 the St. James Church Preservation Society provided the EBSNS with a temporary space in the sanctuary of the church, to set up an exhibit about Elizabeth Bishop. The EBSNS put together a simple but effective display, which was seen by the many visitors and attendees of various events, including the Elizabeth Bishop Arts Festival in August 2015.

In 2016 St. James Preservation Society took over full responsibility for the church, and we would very much like to thank them for giving us a new space to set up a permanent exhibit.

Creating a proper museum quality exhibit was the EBSNS's main project for 2017. We worked through the fall and winter to produce what you see today. The focus of this exhibit is "Elizabeth Bishop's Beginnings" (that is, her maternal family) and it complements the panels about EB that are displayed on the pergola.

Because so many Nova Scotia artists have been inspired by Bishop, we decided to have a space for a small art gallery called "Echoes of EB," which will present rotating exhibits. I would like to thank the following artists for being part of our first exhibit, Joy Laking, Christine Sandeson, Bruce Gray, Catherine MacLean, Janice Guinan, Andrew Meredith, Deverne Rushton and myself.

The exhibit space required upgrading including the installation of proper track lighting and so we would like to thank Carl Smith for completing this task quickly and efficiently. Thank you to Cameron Gunn for picking up the supplies for Carl and for helping with the heavy lifting. We also had custom-made display cabinets made by the very talented Garry Shears with his wife Linda's support. You can see Garry's superb workmanship today and the artefacts have an elegant and safe home. We also want to thank Rick Penny from New Minas for his photographic reproductions and Acadia University for its long-term care of the Bulmer Bowers Hutchinson Sutherland family material and for the loan of many of the artefacts. A special thank you also to Ontario artist, Alfred Villeneuve for donating one of his painting to help raise funds by having a raffle which will take place a little later. Thank you to all the EB board members who gave up their time to complete this project.

Because the cost of this project was such that the society needed to raise additional funds and we did this by asking folks to become patrons. Are there any patrons present?

We would like to thank all our patrons for their interest and generosity. You can see the list of our Patrons on wall. If you are interested in being a Patron, ask Sandra or Patti or myself.

Also I would like to thank Sandra for all her expertise, enthusiasm and hard work. There are information booklets to go with the numbered artifacts and the write ups for each artifact and photo. These are the words of Sandra Barry, our own Elizabeth Bishop expert of all things EB.

I would like to invite you all to have a quick look of the display and art work before we introduce our guest speaker Alexander McLeod.