

The Her-itage: A Quantitative Analysis of Women's History in Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada Designations from 2010-2024

Evelyn Ullyott-Hayes

Abstract

Over the course of its existence, women have undeniably made many noteworthy contributions to the history of Canada. This research investigates how these contributions are represented in governmental recognition of historical importance. Since their founding, historical regulatory bodies in Canada have used designations like National Historic status to create and perpetuate official narratives and ideals of Canada's history as a settler colonial project. "Her-itage: a quantitative analysis of women's history in Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada designations from 2010-2024" is an examination of how Parks Canada reflects this historical tendency, and whether women's history has been considered of heritage significance by the federal government. It takes a mathematical approach to assessing how many officially recognized heritage resources (persons, sites and events) are relevant to women's history and what percentage of designations as a whole they represent. In particular, it assesses these statistics for designations awarded after 2009 which is the last year for such information has been studied. The data show that the percentage of designations related to women's history since 2009 is 0.6% lower than the percentage for 2000-2009 and thus that there has been no increase in this millennium. Furthermore, women are significantly more likely to be recognized as historic persons than sites or events in women's history are to be designated. These results indicate that women's history and contributions to Canadian history are still underrepresented at least in official assessments of heritage value.

Keywords: history, women's history, heritage resources, Parks Canada, historic sites, heritage designations

Poster

Her-itage: Women's history in HSMBC designations, 2010-2024

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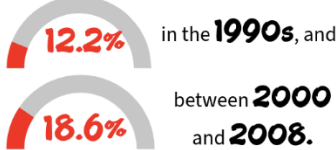
Prior to 2009

It is clear that for a long period of history the representation of women was quite low. In the summer of 2009 **Dianne Dodd** conducted an analysis of HSMBC designations throughout its entire history and how they reflected women's history. She found that there were:

1,942 between 1919 and 2009. Of these, **126** were related to women's history.



Dodd did observe a trend of increase in more recent years, after a series of women's history workshops at Parks Canada in the 1990s. The numbers rose to:



What is the HSMBC?

The **Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC)** is a Parks Canada committee that awards the federal government's highest recognition of historic importance. It confers National Historic status in **3 categories**:



Women's history, 2010-2024

I conducted a quantitative analysis of HSMBC designations between 2010-2024. I counted **how many** of the designations given each year were awarded to individual women, or events and places related to women.

Overall, there were:

255

designations, of which:



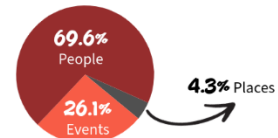
This represents:



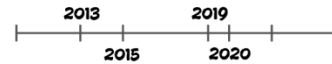
or slightly less than **1 in 5**.

... so what?

Interestingly, there is a clear pattern in how women's history is represented across the **3 categories of designation**. All the post-2010 designations break down as:



In the following years, there were **0 designations** related to women's history:



The current overall percentage is a **0.6% decrease** compared to the first decade of the 21st century.

All these data indicate that women's history is **still underrepresented** in HSMBC designations of National Historic importance.

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For bibliography PDF, scan the QR code or enter the URL as follows:



<https://wp.me/pf8Jjq-1d>

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Evelyn Ullyott-Hayes is a student in the Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies program. She also works for the Canadian Museum of Nature in Ottawa as a collections technician working with the Government of Nunavut's archaeology collection. Her research interests include museology, material culture and history. She is invested in studying what objects reveal about the past and what modern heritage practice reveals about the present.
