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### History Cold Cases Gripping Internet Sleuths

Everybody loves a mystery and it almost seems as if the colder the case, the wider the interest. The 12 [Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History](#) have been drawing as many as 2,200 Internet sleuths a day over the summer and as students return to school and teachers use them to teach everything from architecture to religion, usage will likely double. Students from Salmon Arm to Singapore and Saskatoon to Strasbourg, in fact students from over 45 countries, have been analyzing the documents, maps and 3-D crime scene reconstructions available on the popular Canadian website.

Created by a team of historians, archaeologists, educators and other specialists from across Canada, and based at the University of Victoria, the project is popular in both school and university classrooms. Canadian students are commonly introduced to the site while taking courses in history, social studies and geography, but also in law, second language instruction, economics, literature, ethnomusicology, religion, citizenship, language arts, criminology, African-Canadian studies, multiculturalism, anthropology, etc. Professor Annmarie Adams, an architectural historian and one of the research directors for the Redpath Mansion Mystery, is using this case to teach a Research Methods for Architects course at McGill University in Montreal.

In China users include students learning English at the Huamei-Bond International High School, while 12-year-olds in Limerick, Ireland are learning history with the site. A professor at the University of Bologna, Italy uses it to teach history and computer science and one in Erie, Pennsylvania uses the site to teach Criminological Theories at Gannon University. A teacher in Houston is teaching world history to high school students with the website, while another in North Carolina uses the mysteries to teach Searching for Clues: Logic, Law, and Literature to advanced college students. In France high school students in Toulouse learn about battered children, using the resources on the mystery "Aurore! The Mystery of the Martyred Child." Some universities in Japan are using the site in a preparatory course for students who will spend one year at the University of British Columbia. The list is endless – a research course in the Dominican Republic, a conversation course taught in Prague, E-learning tools for History at the University of Florence in Italy... All material on the website is available in English and French, and the project is used in many francophone schools and universities in Canada as well as abroad.

“We’ve obviously struck a chord with mystery lovers everywhere,” said project co-director John Lutz of the University of Victoria. “History is too important to be boring, and these mysteries are too intriguing to be left to historians alone.”

The mysteries in the project are also featured in conferences for school teachers, university professors, and academics around the world. In late August archaeologist Birgitta Wallace, research director for the popular “Where is Vinland?” presented the project as part of the opening lecture at the Viking Congress in Iceland. She spoke about divergent views of L’Anse aux Meadows in Newfoundland, the historical site which figures prominently on the Vinland mystery website where Internet sleuths can now examine evidence about legendary Vinland of the Vikings. Students as well as experienced scholars now have easy access to a multitude of clues to determining the location of Vinland. To place Vinland into context the website explores Viking society, language and script, and follows their expansion westward to the British Isles, Iceland, Greenland and beyond. The mystery site is highlighted with graphic three-dimensional reconstructions and rotating three-dimensional photographs of some of the most significant artifacts from L’Anse aux Meadows.

The Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History Project was made possible with the support of the Department of Canadian Heritage through the Canadian Culture Online Strategy. There are a dozen mysteries on the [canadianmysteries.ca](http://canadianmysteries.ca) website, and over 30 shorter “Mysteryquests” for middle and high school students on [mysteryquest.ca](http://mysteryquest.ca). The project received the 2008 Pierre Berton Award.

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High resolution images and additional contacts:

<http://staff.canadianmysteries.org/press.html>