

# Let's Explore Artifacts!

Museums collect artifacts. At PAMA, the roots of our collection of art, artifacts and archival documents date back to 1968 with the founding of the Peel County Museum and Art Gallery. PAMA's collection includes over 15,000 objects, over 5,000 works of art and over 400,000 photographs and millions of pages of text.

An **artifact** is an object made by humans. Artifacts tell stories and can answer questions about history.

It is useful to ask questions when looking at artifacts to help identify them. We can learn more about what they are, why they are important and their place in history.

When was it made?

Where is it from?

Who made it?

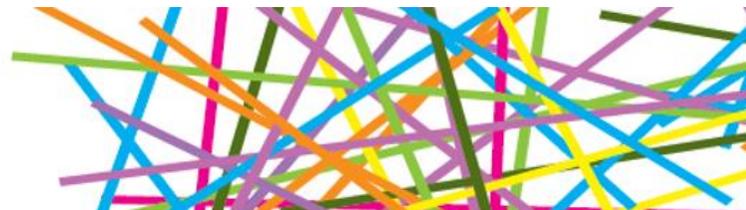
What is it made of?

How was it used?

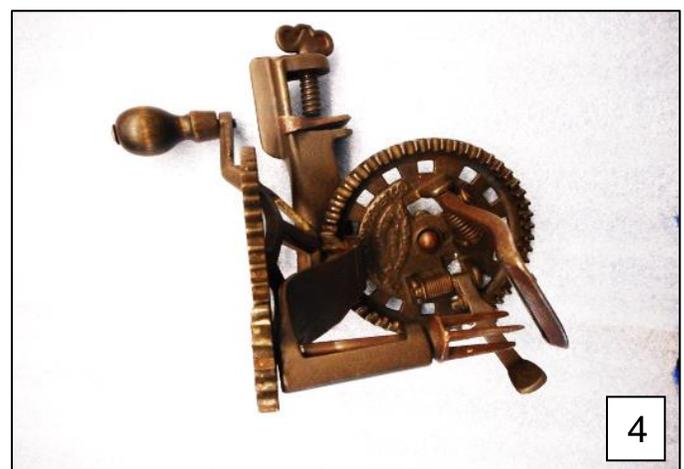
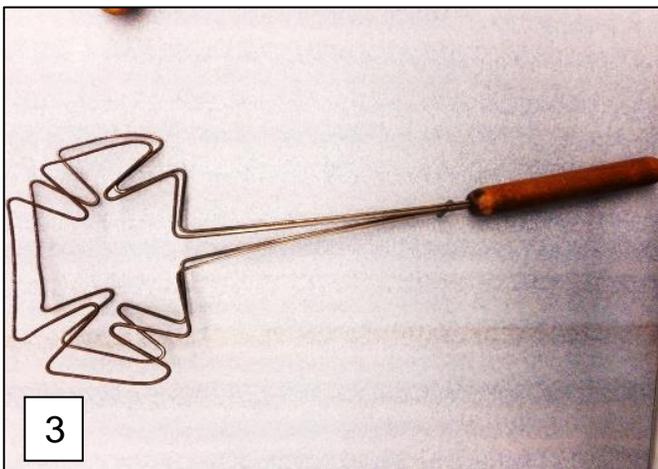
What is it?



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Try and identify these artifacts before moving to the next page.  
\*hint\* they are all from the 19<sup>th</sup> century (1800s).



What questions can you think about to help learn from these artifacts?  
Here are some to get you started:

- Think about what the artifacts are made from.
- Do any of the objects look familiar? Are there modern versions of these objects?
- Does the shape give any clues?
- Do the objects look like they move?
- Do they look handmade?
- What does it do?
- Why does it have a handle?

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## Answers

### 1. Honeycomb Knife

Honeycomb knives were used to help harvest honey. A honeycomb is built by bees to store honey and pollen. Beekeepers would harvest honey with the honeycomb knife. The knife would be heated and used to slice the wax from the honeycomb to free the honey.

### 2. Ice Tongs

Before the invention of the refrigerator, large blocks of ice were used to keep food cold. Ice tongs were used to deliver the ice.

### 3. Toaster

Before electricity, stoves were powered by fire. Bread was toasted over the fire.

### 4. Apple Peeler

An apple would be turned with a crank and would be peeled with a blade using this type of peeler. Modern versions of the apple peeler still exist.

## Continue the Learning

Ask, research and answer these questions:

- What can these objects tell us about the past?
- What do these objects have in common?
- Which of these objects are simple machines? What type(s) of simple machines?
- Why is it important for museums to collect artifacts?
- Choose an object from your own home, this is your own personal artifact. Imagine your artifact is found 100 years from now. Write about the discovery and what future historians can learn about your artifact.



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