



March 2014

Volume 39 No. 1 ISSN 0384 7335

The Griffin

A Quarterly Publication of Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia



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The Griffin

A quarterly newsletter
published by
**Heritage Trust of
Nova Scotia**

Unless otherwise indicated,
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We welcome submissions but
reserve the right to edit for
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print and web editions.

*Deadline for the next issue:
May 10, 2014*

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is a charitable organization.
All donations are tax creditable.

President's Report



Linda Forbes

Congratulations to the Awards Committee for arranging another lovely Built Heritage Awards ceremony in the Red Room of Province House during Heritage Week! Later this month, Places of Worship Committee members, Lori Nason and Gregory MacNeil, will speak in Church Point and Yarmouth about windows. Both events expose the Trust's work to the public eye.

Yarmouth Council voted in December to deregister Zion United Baptist Church,

reversing its earlier decision not to deregister the church. Designed by Harry Mott, a contemporary of J.C.P. Dumaresq, Zion was the site of the formal association of United Baptist congregations early in the 20th century. In an effort to save it, the Trust approached Zion trustees about leasing the building, paying for liability insurance and engineering studies so that potential owners could be identified. However, by mid-January the Trustees had begun to remove stained glass windows, the curved pews, and possibly other interior fittings. An arts group, ACTS, has agreed to take temporary ownership, as required by the trustees; our lawyer is making one last attempt to buy time for the building by negotiating an agreement between the trustees, the Trust, and ACTS.

The George, Hollis, Duke, and Granville block in Halifax is at risk.

This block faces Province House across George Street. It is the subject of a redevelopment proposal which would result in the demolition of one registered heritage building and the gutting of three others. Only one, the old Bank of Commerce or Merrill Lynch building, would be retained (<http://22ndcommercesquare.ca>).

The Trust pointed out the many ways in which the treatment of the registered properties on the block contravened HRM's own rules. While the Heritage Advisory Committee voted against the motions to allow substantial alteration or demolition of the buildings, the Design Review Committee later approved the proposal. This, despite a lawyer's letter which demonstrated that "the Staff Report dated January 24, 2014, is inadequate and fatally flawed. It does not address a number of criteria that, legally, must govern the Committee's decision-making," including the advice of the HAC. Appeals to Council may be made until March 7, but only by owners of downtown property. The Trust will ensure that eligible owners are aware of their right to appeal.

The Church of England Institute Building, Barrington Street, is being closed temporarily and the Trust is moving from the Khyber Building, as it is popularly known, at the request of HRM. A few of the samples taken by consultants contain low levels of asbestos; until provincial standards were changed last Fall, only one sample had an unacceptable level and that was outside the building. The Municipality sees this as a reason to terminate its tenants' leases while it considers what to do with the building. The Trust has a strong interest in protecting the building from insensitive alteration and will keep watch over it.

If you have any concerns, please feel free to contact me at 423-4807 or president@htns.ca.

Cover image: Sambro Wharf Road, by Nicole Power, 30" x 40", acrylic on canvas (courtesy of Art Sales and Rental Gallery), \$1500

ARTIST

Nicole Power

Nicole Power is a university student who has been exposed to art from a young age. She is self-taught and has pursued painting as a hobby since the age of twelve. Nicole participates in annual art fundraisers, such as Lunenburg's Paint Sea on Site and Annapolis Royal's Paint the Town. She has sold many pieces through these fundraisers and through Rockingham United Church sales, and has donated her work to the Mental Health Association of Nova Scotia. Her preferred subject matter includes musicians, actors, and surfers. She also enjoys painting local seascapes and other outdoor scenes, including streetscapes as seen in the examples on this page. Nicole plans to continue her development as an artist while pursuing a career in environment and animal rights advocacy.

Nicole's work can be seen at the Art Sales and Rental Gallery, co-located with the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, 1723 Hollis Street, Halifax, 902-424-3087, asar@gov.ns.ca.



Peggy's Cove Re-imagined, by Nicole Power, 18" x 22", acrylic on canvas (courtesy of Art Sales and Rental Gallery), \$475



Hotter than July, by Nicole Power, 36" x 24", acrylic on canvas (courtesy of Art Sales and Rental Gallery), \$750



Gus and Fred, by Nicole Power, 30" x 30", acrylic on canvas (courtesy of Art Sales and Rental Gallery), \$1150

Coastal Heritage

Our cover this issue highlights the modest vernacular heritage of a coastal province. Some might say a cliché of Nova Scotia, the target of countless tourist snapshots, monument to a failed economy, the small wharf in the back yard harks back to countless small-scale shipyards where sea-going wooden ships were built and sent forth into the global economy over many decades in the nineteenth century. Little remains of these yards today, as the last of their timbers rot quietly away in coastal backwaters. Shifting technology, which ended the era of wooden shipbuilding in Nova Scotia, now threatens our lighthouses, as satellite navigation and radar reduce the need for visual beacons. Large numbers of these community treasures have been declared surplus, depending for their survival on the initiative of local volunteers to repurpose and maintain them. Next to lighthouses, wharves are icons of the Maritimes. They are critical infrastructure

for the inshore fishing fleet, essential to the supply and marketing of lobsters for celebrations at home and abroad, and to a range of other fisheries and tourist activities. These wharves are community focal points, communication centres, fishing platforms, and visual cues. When the large wharf at Noel burned in 1969, the village lost its most defining element, including the lighthouse at its outer end. Walton lost its wharf to arson in 2012. Vandalism, neglect, withdrawal of government funding, and economic reality combined with natural forces (rising sea levels, extreme storms, ice pressure) all pose threats to the survival of small wharf structures in Nova Scotia. We should not take for granted the long-term sustainability of the scene in our cover painting. If this awakens us to a greater appreciation of familiar views, perhaps it will aid in the conservation of our coastal landscape heritage.

— Donald Forbes



The wharf at Noel (date and photographer unknown, 1905 or later). Note scaffolding on lighthouse, O'Brien & Co. shed at left, and several vessels alongside. This wharf no longer exists (detail from small snapshot, O'Brien family collection, Don Forbes)

Exterior work underway on Morris House



Scaffolding surrounds the Morris House as exterior work goes ahead (photo by Don Forbes)



Timber frame structure with brick nogging (sheathing removed) (photo by Don Forbes)

The historic Morris House, dating from 1764, which was moved successfully last year to the corner of Creighton and Charles streets in the Old North Suburb of Halifax, is revealing its past as work begins on the exterior walls and roof. Removal of shingles on the north wall facing Charles Street exposed bevelled, wide-board sheathing with remnants of stitched canvas overtop and the original window placements on both floors. The timber frame structure and brick nogging (infill) were uncovered when some of the sheathing was removed. The nogging added enormously to the weight (about 80 tons), posing a real challenge for the movers a year ago. The partnership between the Trust, the Ecology Action Centre, Metro Non-Profit Housing, and St. Paul's Home, owners of the lot, will provide safe, affordable housing to five young adults, while conserving the fourth oldest building in Halifax and the energy embodied in its structure.

HERITAGE FOR SALE

27 Church Road, Peggy's Cove

Perched on glacially scoured granite overlooking Peggy's Cove, this 1876 sq. ft. 200-year-old home has been lovingly restored and maintained by the present owners for over 30 years. It is a provincially registered heritage property and therefore an important part of the cultural heritage of Nova Scotia. The following is taken from notes prepared by the owners as well as information from the agent.

One of the oldest houses in Peggy's Cove, it appears on an 1817 map in the Nova Scotia Archives. The house is founded on large timbers (said to have been brought by sea from New England) which rest directly on the rock. Originally, the wind was given free access to the underside of the house; in winter, the outside was protected at ground level by bales of hay and vegetation. During the 1980s, the present owners built a stone and cement barrier, leaving screened openings for cross ventilation.

The whole lower floor is original. The upper storey was removed in the early 1900s (reason unknown) and restored by the present owners in 1983, exactly as it appeared on an old photograph. On the lower floor, the floorboards of the kitchen, hallway, parlour, bedroom, and bathroom are all original, uneven in width, with hand-forged nails. In the kitchen, the wear and tear of generations has worn down the surface. The kitchen stove is the heart of the kitchen, old but functional. It may have replaced an original fireplace, but the chimney was partly collapsed. When the second storey was rebuilt, the chimney was reconstructed and built into the space in the parlour where the old mantel indicated its former location. The chimney has two flues, one for the kitchen stove and one for the parlour fireplace. All the old cabinets in the parlour and the kitchen remain the way the owners found them, and may date from the 1930s or 1940s.

The parlour has exquisite origi-



nal woodwork and a chair rail. These indicate that the house was not built as a simple fisherman's home, but most likely was occupied by a merchant in the fish trade. The bedroom downstairs was originally two small rooms, as evidenced by the two old doors and the pattern of the floor boards. All the door latches in the house are old. There was once another window on the water side of the bedroom, as seen by the carpenters when the house was being reshingled.

According to the owners' account, "where the bathroom is today, there used to be a very little room with bunk beds; it was used by our daughters with

the greatest of pleasure!" There was no water in the house when the present owners acquired it, so they dug two wells, one of which is currently in use. A septic system was laid out behind the house and a rainwater cistern was installed. Rainwater is collected via pipes and filtered before it enters the cistern. The pipes can be diverted if there is no water to be collected in the winter or at other times. On the roof there is an anti-seagull device, consisting of a plastic ridge with teeth, attached to 2 cedar boards securing it to the ridge. A black tube running from the below the roof rafters to a fan can deliver warm air to the kitchen when desired.

The view from the deck is outstanding. A small garden with fruit-bearing gooseberries and black currants is enclosed by a protective wall of granite blocks found on the property. A little cotoneaster bush struggles to make it on the rocky soil and manages to keep growing along the ground.

We hope that new owners will appreciate and continue to maintain the historic qualities of this heritage property in trust for the future.



This property with 6 acres of ocean frontage is listed at \$359,900, MLS 40038192. Contact Donna Harding of Harding Premiere Realty, 6309 Chebucto Road, Halifax, NS B3L 1K9 at 902-422-5552.

2013 Built Heritage Awards

Elizabeth Burke

The annual presentation of the Trust's Built Heritage Awards took place on February 21, 2014, in the ornate Red Room at Province House. A full crowd was present and it was a splendid way to celebrate Heritage Week. This was the second year that the Trust's awards were announced in this historic room. And remarkably, this year, two of the award winners were directly across the street!

The Awards

Awards were announced in three categories.

In the Commercial category The Bank of Nova Scotia (Halifax Main Branch and Head Office) was the winner in recognition of the sensitively designed 2013 interior renovation in the main banking hall and the Bank's long-term commitment to the conservation and good stewardship of this important downtown Halifax landmark and iconic Canadian structure.

The Art Gallery of Nova Scotia was the recipient of the Institutional award for the conservation of The Painted House of Maud Lewis. A lot of faith and the work of talented conservators went into making this challenging conservation project a reality. Although not a recently completed project and no longer part of a streetscape, the conservation of this artist's home succeeded against daunting odds and its importance to the cultural mosaic of Nova Scotia merits recognition by the Trust.

The Mary Schaefer Places of Worship award was presented to the Church Community of Sainte-Marie, Church Point, for its outstanding commitment to the preservation of Église Sainte-Marie. The awe-inspiring church was built and maintained by the community for over 100 years and has served as an important link to their faith, language, and Acadian culture.



Stephen Groves, Manager of the Halifax Main Branch, Bank of Nova Scotia, presents an overview of the winning project in the Red Room, Province House (photo by Don Forbes)



Guests and award winners mingle after the ceremony (photo by Don Forbes)

The Presentations

Guests were treated to fascinating presentations by the Award winners. All three presenters engaged the audience with their rich knowledge of and passion for their winning projects, illustrated with stunning photos.

The presentation for the Bank of Nova Scotia was made by Stephen Groves, FICB, MBA, Branch Manager. Having been with the Main Branch for over three years now, he has become keenly interested in and knowledgeable about the Bank's Halifax history and the

building it has occupied since 1931. Mr. Groves introduced the audience to the many decorative elements that were part of the architect's original design. He described the new window treatment that brings more natural light into the banking hall while highlighting the decorative windows, previously hidden by heavy curtains. He also spoke to the challenges of a renovation project including major electrical and network wiring that did not compromise the heritage conservation objectives.

The presentation for the Art Gal-



Province House, Halifax (photo by Don Forbes)

lery of Nova Scotia was made by Laurie Hamilton, BA, MAC, Senior Conservator, and author of *The Painted House of Maud Lewis: Conserving a Folk Art Treasure*. Ms. Hamilton saw this project through from the initial on-site visit in Marshalltown to the public opening in the new gallery in Halifax. She showed the extraordinary state of deterioration of the house when the project began, described some of the painstaking conservation processes, and acknowledged the others who helped along the way to the final installation in the new gallery. She also recounted the strong impression this “painted house” makes on gallery visitors, including one who said it was the most moving experience in a gallery for many years.

The presentation for the Church Point community was made by André Valotaire. Mr. Valotaire has been the President of the Église Sainte-Marie Museum Committee for the past 9 years and for the past 5 years has seen to the administration of the parish as Parish Coordinator. With great enthusiasm, he described the origins of the enormous wooden Église Sainte-Marie, which replaced a comparatively diminutive “Big Church”. The audience was amazed at the scale of wooden scaffolding erected to paint the ceiling and to both build

and repair the façade including turrets and spire.

The Reception and Follow-up

A reception in the beautifully appointed Veterans’ and Nova Scotia rooms followed the presentations, providing an opportunity for guests to speak with the winners.

The Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia is very appreciative of the Province House administration for once again opening its doors to our Awards event. One cannot think of a more suitable venue for built-heritage awards in Nova Scotia than this stunning Provincial Heritage property, the oldest provincial legislature in Canada.

And, as always, the annual awards event opened the Official Call for 2014 Built Heritage Award nominations.

Articles on each of the 2013 Built Heritage Award winning projects will appear in *The Griffin*, beginning with this issue. Winning projects for this and past years can be found on the Trust’s website at <http://www.htns.ca/aboutAwards.html>

Elizabeth Burke is a member of the Board of HTNS and Chair of the Awards Committee.

Heritage Trust
of Nova Scotia

Illustrated Public Lecture Series

MARCH 20th
**Allan Marble:
Destined for
Demolition: Hospital
Buildings Constructed
in Nova Scotia,
1867-1950**

APRIL 17th
Joint lecture with Industrial
Heritage Nova Scotia

**Justin Helm:
Victorian Ornamental
Hardware in the
Maritimes: 1860-1910**

MAY 15th
**Allen Penney:
The Architectural
History of Clifton**

JUNE 19th
**Bill Hockey:
Green Investment
in Built Heritage**

All talks take place at 7:30 pm

Museum of Natural History
Auditorium

1747 Summer Street, Halifax

Information 423-4807

2013 Built Heritage Award Goes to the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia for Preservation and Restoration of the Maud Lewis House

Janet Morris

The humble Painted House of Maud Lewis is a major attraction in the sophisticated buildings housing the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.

Its presence raises great questions: What is Art? What is Architecture? How do they interact? Are interiors integral to architecture, such that they should be preserved with the same attention as exteriors? Why are art and architecture important and part of human expression since the beginning of time? What is the significance of context for architecture? The Maud Lewis house was located in Marshalltown, Digby County, but the house was actually dragged there from another location. And before arriving at its final resting place in the Art Gallery, it was stored in an airplane hangar and displayed in a mall to exhibit conservation processes.

The home's modest scale is a pleasant expression of domestic architecture, devoid of engineering and technical innovations. The house has been modified – for example the stairway was salvaged by Everett Lewis and accommodated by cutting a hole into the ceiling, thereby accessing living space under the eaves. This minimalist abode reflects an architectural vernacular tradition, as well as being an important medium of artistic expression that could easily be overlooked in our increasingly complex world.

“This minimalist abode reflects an architectural vernacular tradition, as well as being an important medium of artistic expression.”

The house sat in a rural roadside setting in a small meadow. The restoration process changed this context entirely; indeed its temporary location in the Sunnyside Mall while being restored was surely the antithesis of its celebrated



The restored Maud Lewis Painted House in the Scotiabank Maud Lewis Gallery (courtesy Art Gallery of Nova Scotia)

context, yet the sojourn in the mall was a surreal opportunity for an urban audience to stumble upon and come to appreciate art conservation. What does the present setting say about context for art and architecture? It certainly does much for the preservation of both.

The restored house is a celebration of painted interiors: walls as canvas, structural elements as canvas, even domestic utilitarian objects as canvas for artistic expression. It is an object bursting with life – more vibrant thanks to the restoration process, which has breathed new life into the paintings. These had been coated with wood stove smoke and cooking residues, and were fading fast from exposure to the elements and the ravages of time. The painted interior of this house is what makes it worthy of preserving, takes it off the page, so

to speak. Yet without the Art Gallery's efforts, the house would likely not meet standards that would merit its preservation under our heritage registration process.

The house is an artifact of the life of Maud Lewis, telling us much about her situation and how she created her work. The house and the Maud Lewis story exemplify the human spirit's capacity to thrive amid simplicity and scarcity. Like nature itself, riotous artistic expression can embellish every nook, cranny, and crevice.

Tour this permanent exhibition of the AGNS and reflect on all it represents. The conservation of the building and its artwork acknowledges the value and integrity of vernacular artistic tradition. Such respect is seldom shown for humble architecture and simple, pure,



The restored interior of the Maud Lewis Painted House (courtesy Art Gallery of Nova Scotia)

Painted artistic expression. Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia has awarded its 2013 Institutional Award to the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia for provoking this conversation. We owe particular thanks to Laurie Hamilton, Senior Conservator and author of *The Painted House of Maud Lewis*, where the story of its preservation is told. She was integral to and remains responsible for this installation.

“The restored house is a celebration of painted interiors: walls as canvas, structural elements as canvas, even domestic utilitarian objects as canvas for artistic expression.”

Visit the former site of the house, the Maud Lewis Memorial in Marshalltown, to connect the art to its environment and to better understand the artist’s life (http://www.artgalleryofnovascotia.ca/en/AGNS_Halifax/AboutUs/collection/aboutmaudlewis/marshalltown/default.aspx).



The Maud Lewis home in Marshalltown after the deaths of Maud and Everett, as it looked when the Art Gallery took responsibility for its preservation (courtesy Art Gallery of Nova Scotia)

Janet Morris is a former HTNS Board member, a member of the Awards Committee, and sits on the Heritage Advisory Committee of the Halifax Regional Municipality.

An African Nova Scotian Community in Richmond

Garry D. Shutlak

Sometime around 1850, the Brown brothers, William Brown Sr., John Thomas, and William Arnold removed from Hammonds Plains and settled the north tip of the Halifax Peninsula on the south side of Bedford Basin. William Brown and William Arnold purchased land there. The same William Brown, in a petition to the House of Assembly dated March 31, 1860, named the community Africville, the first known instance of the name. He was asking for compensation for land expropriated by the Nova Scotia Railway and by the government for the main post road from Halifax to Bedford. Also in 1860, the community petitioned for assistance for a school house, having already laid the foundation and contracted for the building frame. There were twenty-five children eligible to attend and the petitioners were William Brown Sr., William Brown Jr., Allan Dixon, Isaac Grant, Emray Brown, Eppy Carvery, Charles Dickson (father of celebrated boxer George Dixon), Henry Bailey, and Robert Best.



Children climbing a path in Africville with Bedford Basin behind - photographer: Bob Brooks, black and white negative, contact print, ca. 1965 (courtesy of Nova Scotia Archives, accession no. 1989-468 vol. 16/ negative sheet 8a, image 20)

A growing community

We find the community first listed on Campbell Road in Luke Hutchinson's *Nova Scotia Directory 1866/67*. William Brown Sr., aged 62, one of the founders

of the community, died on April 1, 1868 at the Campbell Road Settlement. By 1871, both the Byers and Howe families had moved to the community.

In 1883 the community petitioned the city council and the provincial government for a new school house. Those involved included Peter E. Mckerrow, the Rev. Mr. Maurice Brooks, Mr. Mckeagney, Thomas Scotland, and William Brown. The new school opened its doors on December 17, 1883. In July of that year, McAlpine's *Halifax City Directory 1883/84* for the first time listed the community of Africville. Not only were the Bailey, Brown, Byers, Carvery, and Dixon families listed, but also the Mantley, Roome, Thomas, Roan, McDonald, Johnston, Alexander, Paris, and Legion families had joined or married into the community. Occupations included labourers, coopers, truckmen, porters, and packers; we also find masons, tanners, teamsters, butchers, and grocers.

In 1907, the city appraised the properties of the seventeen families living in Africville at \$8,825. The least



One of several wells that were the only sources of fresh water in Africville - the community did not receive the water and sewer services provided to other neighbourhoods in Halifax - photographer: Bob Brooks, black and white negative, contact print, ca. 1965 (courtesy of Nova Scotia Archives, accession no. 1989-468 vol. 16/ negative sheet 6, image 31)



Bird's-eye view of Africville, showing its location on the shores of Bedford Basin, with north-end Halifax and the Narrows in the background – photographer: Bob Brooks, colour transparency, ca. 1965 (courtesy of Nova Scotia Archives, accession no. 1989-468 vol. 16)

expensive, John T. Bulmer's, was valued at \$200; Thomas Brown's was appraised at \$1,000.

“William Brown, in a petition to the House of Assembly dated 31 March 1860, named the community Africville.”

Two years later, an automobile accident and other causes destroyed the community water supply and the families petitioned city council for a sufficient supply of water for cooking, drinking and ablutionary purposes. In September of that year, the council expended \$75 to deepen the old well

near the old school house. In 1916, the community built a new church on land provided by the city.

Halifax Explosion

On the eve of the Halifax Explosion, there were sixty working adults in Africville. Of those who died, three adults and one child were residents of the village. They were: James B. Allison, aged 40; Aldora Andrews, 8; Esther Roan, 52; and Charles H. Simonds, 20. Mr. Allison was a native of Hammonds Plains. Aldora Andrews was the youngest of four children of Charles and Laura Andrews. Mr. Andrews was a stevedore and earned \$20 a week. Their house was

made uninhabitable by the Explosion and they received food relief from January to March 1918, and were provided with clothing, a mattress, bed linens and blankets, a stove, dishes, and a table and four chairs. Mrs. Andrews had broken her arm and Mr. Andrews stayed at home, caring for the family and repairing their home. Esther Roan and her late husband John had lived in the community for many years; she worked as a domestic and a midwife. We know little to nothing about Charles H. Simonds (Symons). With the exception of Esther Roan, none of the victims or their families was listed in McAlpine's *Halifax City Directory 1917*.

Fires

Of greater damage to the fabric of the community was a summer fire in 1922, which destroyed the homes of John Cassidy, Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Winnifred Carvery, Alfred Carvery, and Mrs. Isaac Mantley. The fire started in the Cassidys' basement among a pile of lobster traps and all five homes were engulfed in flames before the fire department arrived. Another fire in November of 1937 did considerable damage to the community, destroying five houses situated along what was known as Carvery's Lane. A chimney fire began in Fred Carvery's two storey house in the centre of the settlement. It was destroyed along with John Brown's home occupied by Clarence Carvery, the house and barn of Herbert Carvery, and the homes of Miss Rachel Roan and Wilfred Carvery. Loss of life was restricted to hens and pigs belonging to Herbert Carvery, but twenty-eight people, including eighteen children, were left homeless. In both cases the fire department was hampered in dousing the flames by the lack of an adequate water supply.

A threatened community

Africville occupied a beautiful site overlooking Bedford Basin. Blueberries grew on the slopes above the village. But over the years the community suffered from industrial encroachment, including the railway lines that divided the community. The opening of the Nova Scotia Fertilizer plant, the Abattoir, and the City Dump near Africville led to pollution of the soil and the water supply.

"Africville occupied a beautiful site overlooking Bedford Basin ... but over the years the community suffered from industrial encroachment, [which] ... led to pollution of the soil and water supply."

The school, which for over ninety years was an integral part of the village, was closed in 1953. The following year, the city first proposed the removal of the ninety buildings, and the 125 adults



Young blueberry pickers on the hill, with Africville and Bedford Basin in the background - photographer: Bob Brooks, black and white negative, contact print, ca. 1965 (courtesy of Nova Scotia Archives, accession no. 1989-468 vol. 16/ negative sheet 6, image 11)

and 200 children who called Africville home. Over the next fifteen years, the families were slowly resettled. The last to leave was Aaron "Pa" Carvery in January of 1970.

Legacy

Thus ended the village of Africville, but this was not the end. In 1972, a memorial service attended by twelve hundred former residents, descendants, and friends of Africville was held near the former location of the church. From part of the community, the city created Seaview Park. The Africville Genealogical Society was founded in 1981; beginning the following year, annual reunions were held at the park. In 1989, an exhibition, *Africville: A Spirit That Lives On*, travelled across the country. Based on research for the exhibition, the Africville Genealogical Society published *The Spirit Lives On* in 1992. A decade later saw the erection of a National Historic Monument plaque. In 2010, the then mayor of the Halifax Regional Municipality, Peter Kelly, for-

mally apologized to the former residents of Africville. Monies were set aside and a replica of the 1916 church was constructed; it now serves as a museum to the history, memory, and perseverance of the families who founded the community nearly one hundred and seventy years ago.

Readers may wish to visit the virtual exhibit on the Nova Scotia Archives website, *Gone but Never Forgotten: Bob Brooks' Photographic Portrait of Africville in the 1960s*, from which the photographs accompanying this article are taken: <http://www.novascotia.ca/nsarm/virtual/africville/default.asp>

Garry Shutlak is an archivist with Nova Scotia Archives and a frequent contributor to The Griffin.

A Photo Finish for a Southampton Home

Bruce MacNab

For upwards of two centuries, a modest house stood overlooking the Maccan River in Southampton, Nova Scotia. Its walls hosted births, wakes, and family gatherings. Its floorboards echoed with footsteps of young men heading to faraway wars.

Once vacated, the home ultimately succumbed to a harsh and unforgiving Nova Scotia climate. Its narrow clapboards began to slip away from their nails. Ceilings collapsed on the piano that once provided accompaniment for Christmas carols. Demolition was completed during the summer of 2013.

"... the house offered a revealing look at how our pioneers built sturdy homes with materials harvested from Nova Scotia's woods, earth, and stone."

The remains of this house have been completely cleared away. The site is once again a gentle but barren hillside in Cumberland County. During its final months, the house offered a revealing look at how our pioneers built sturdy homes with materials harvested from Nova Scotia's woods, earth, and stone.

Perhaps someday the frame of a Nova Scotia house like this one could be disassembled and reconstructed at a museum or in the lobby of a public building. For now, these photos offer a record of a vanished Southampton riverside home and the departed Cumberland County tradesmen who built it.

Bruce MacNab is a Red Seal journeyman carpenter and a member of the Provincial Advisory Council on Heritage Property.



The home during demolition (all photos courtesy of the author)



Plaster lathes were split, not sawn



Walls were filled with a mud and straw mixture



Carpenters' scratches for stud locations are still visible today. Triple hatchet marks matched the proper studs with their locations



The open gable end

Bruce MacNab: The magical mystery tour - little-known tour of Harry Houdini through Nova Scotia, 1896

Janet Morris

Entitled *In Harry Houdini's footsteps: a look back at twenty Nova Scotia structures visited by the Handcuff King*, Bruce MacNab's illustrated talk on January 16th was a wonderful romp through the main streets of Nova Scotia towns in the summer of 1896.

The Maritimes tour was not a highlight of Houdini's career, and he was not (initially) the headline act for the tour. His professional partner at the time [Houdini was then 22] was Edward James Dooley, a Hartford, Connecticut, organist and orchestra conductor, whose hobby was magic. Dooley can be credited for recognizing the genius of Erik Weicz, a native Hungarian, who had arrived in America with his family in 1878 at age 4. By the time he was 22, he had devoted himself to magic and adopted the name Harry Houdini. Two years earlier, Houdini had bewitched and married Bessie Rahner, his brother's girlfriend. Harry and Bessie were both part of the Marco Magic Company under the direction of Dooley in 1896, when the company visited Nova Scotia.

The Maritime tour began in Yarmouth and the first performance was an organ concert by Dooley on the newly installed organ at the Zion Baptist Church on Parade Street, which church was to be officially consecrated the following week.¹ Meanwhile, Houdini was doing a promotional side-show at Scott's Bazaar, a general store on Main Street, where tickets were being sold for the main event. The promotional show included a handcuff escape performance, causing admiration when Houdini escaped seconds after the local police chief snapped a pair of irons on.

The main Yarmouth event took place on June 1, 1896, at the Boston Marine Hall. This was an impressive building at the corner of Main & Cliff Streets. It stood until 1982 when it was demol-

ished to make room for the new YMCA.

The show in Yarmouth was a resounding success, the main act being the "Metamorphosis", an escape from a locked trunk. The tour next went to New Brunswick, where Houdini visited, among other places, the Provincial Lunatic Asylum in Saint John. There he learned about straitjackets, which were to figure prominently in later acts.

The Marco Magic Company arrived in Halifax on June 22, Houdini's and Bessie's second wedding anniversary, and also Halifax Natal Day, a holiday Monday. The following day was the 1896 federal election, the day when Nova Scotia's Sir Charles Tupper's Conservatives lost to Wilfrid Laurier and the Liberals.

On Thursday of the same week, Houdini strolled from his lodgings at The Carleton House to Halifax City Hall, which then housed the police station and lock-up. Houdini performed some quite challenging handcuff escapes as well as card tricks and clairvoyance tricks for the benefit of the police and attending reporters. He also had Police Chief O'Sullivan handcuff him and lock him up in one of the brick cells, locking his clothing in another cell. A while later the police received a call from the Queen Hotel advising that their prisoner had escaped and was requesting return of his clothes! The main show was to open the following Monday at the Academy of Music, an 1877 building located on Barrington Street (then known as Pleasant Street) at Spring Garden Road. This beautiful building, which could seat 1250 people, burned down in 1929 and was replaced by the Majestic (later the Capitol) Theatre. The latter was demolished to build the Maritime Centre and the only remnant is the drop curtain, which has been restored and hangs in the Bicentennial Theatre in Middle Musquodoboit.

Unfortunately the Marco Magic Company's opening on Monday coin-

cided with the opening of the Nautical Fair at the Halifax Exhibition Building on Tower Road. Also conspiring against the Halifax opening was the announcement released just hours before show-time that the world's greatest magician, Herrmann the Great (who had inspired Houdini), was coming to Halifax in one week's time. One last twist of events – Dooley, the head of the Marco Magic Company, was recognized as a native Haligonian who once lived on Tower Road and attended St. Mary's School – not exotic at all.

The second night, the performance was altered to include guest appearances by a local police sergeant, and the chef from the Halifax Hotel, but again the Marco Company was performing to a sea of empty seats. The third day of the show was July 1, Dominion Day, with additional competing entertainments, as well as excursions out of the city. Part way through the show, creditors stepped on stage and began seizing the company's assets.

The Houdinis decided to fulfill Marco's booking in Dartmouth at St. Peter's Hall, 40 Ochterloney Street – their first solo performance without Dooley. Mr. MacNab could find but one partially obscured picture featuring St. Peter's Hall – where it once stood, a parking lot exists today. Doors from the building were salvaged by HTNS president Linda Forbes and her husband, and enjoy pride of place in their Dartmouth home. The Houdinis were accompanied by an assistant, John Kenney. In need of stage hands, Houdini hired some local boys, including Tim Martin, brother of John Martin, who would later become Dartmouth's pre-eminent historian.² On July 6, their act opened to a packed house, which attendance was repeated the next night, and at a matinee performance, and an extra show! Several local businessmen contributed to a fund to pay for the Houdinis' return passage to



HERITAGE TRUST OF NOVA SCOTIA

Public Lecture

Bruce MacNab

In Harry Houdini's Footsteps: A look back at twenty Nova Scotia structures visited by the Handcuff King



- Thursday, January 16th
7:30 pm
- Museum of Natural History
1747 Summer Street, Halifax
- Admission is free
Everyone welcome

For more information call 423-4807 or visit our website

Boston Marine Hall

www.htns.ca

the United States.

But the Houdinis instead booked further shows in Nova Scotia: two nights at Gunn's Opera House in Truro, a 700 seat theatre completed only two years before on the top floor of Daniel Gunn's building at the Esplanade on Inglis Street.

In Springhill, the main entertainment venue, Fraser's Hall, was booked, so the Houdinis booked Pioneer Hall. The competing act at Fraser Hall stole the reviews. From there, the Houdinis visited Parrsboro, a town of 2000, where they performed at St. George's Anglican Church Hall. Simon Gibbons,

the renowned "Eskimo priest" was still ministering in Parrsboro at the time and possibly attended the show (he died in Parrsboro later that year).

Moving on from Parrsboro, Houdini performed in Amherst at the 600 seat Academy of Music building, a recent repurposing of a 40 year old church. Some thought that the likes of magic shows should not take place in former churches and the building and shows staged there were jinxed. The theatre was to burn down in 1908. The performance received accolades, but the audience was small.

The tour continued, possibly to Mac-

can, then to the village of Joggins Mines, a seaside community with a population of 1000, booming with coal mining activity,³ with migrant workers speaking twelve languages, including Houdini's native Hungarian. The only theatre was Melanson's Hall, above the Main Street general store. This building, together with newspaper records of the visit, was destroyed in a 1928 fire that wiped out most of the main street.

There are other Nova Scotian connections to Houdini's life, or more precisely, to Houdini's life and death – you will have to read Bruce MacNab's book to learn more. Entitled *Metamorphosis: The Apprenticeship of Harry Houdini*, it was published in 2012 by Goose Lane Editions (ISBN 978-0-86492-677-7).

Four years after his Maritime tour, Houdini was to travel to England and Germany, where he was a major draw, and the rest, as they say, is history. In the coming decades, Houdini would perform before a crowd of 80,000 people in the streets of Providence, Rhode Island. It seems incredible that he was virtually ignored in Halifax and other Nova Scotia towns (with the notable exception of Dartmouth). It also seems incredible that many of the wonderful performance halls have been demolished and replaced by utilitarian buildings, or in some cases, by parking lots. In learning the stories related to these buildings, we learn more reasons why they should be saved – they are a tangible part of our history; when we lose them we lose our connection with stories of our past.

Bruce MacNab's lecture, featuring his ground-breaking research on Houdini and his Maritime tour, was captured by Eastlink TV and has played on their Podium TV.

1 This church was recently deregistered as a heritage property and its future is threatened – see President's Report – Ed.

2 J.P. Martin. 1957. *The Story of Dartmouth*. Privately printed for the author, 562 p.

3 Now a UNESCO World Heritage Site to recognize the world-famous fossil forest and early reptile remains in the sea cliffs.

St. Paul's Anglican Church, Northfield, Hants County



St. Paul's, Northfield, in its rural setting with distant views, west façade (courtesy of the author)

Holly Hanes

Some would say the middle of nowhere; others would call it home. This little area was settled back in the 1840s by descendants of Christian Hennigar and George Miller, veterans of the 84th Regiment. It has been referred to as North Kennetcook, North Woods Kennetcook, North Woods, Hennigar, and Northfield. The Northfield area was a rural farming community, which initially lacked a place of worship. Until the residents built their own church in 1890, they had to travel to other locations, such as Saint Peter's, Upper Kennetcook, the closest

of the original churches in the Parish of Maitland.

Saint Paul's Anglican Church, Northfield, is the youngest of the four churches in the parish. Many community members recall Sunday morning services at this lovely church standing in a field in a beautiful country setting. Though small in size, the church is rich in family history, with a cemetery containing the graves of former residents. Saint Paul's brought many people together, as it still does to this day. Some descendants of the founders, such as John Earle Sheehy and Richard Fenton, went on to careers in the Anglican Church. Today, with the

younger generation leaving the area and a large Mennonite community now established in Northfield, the congregation of Saint Paul's has diminished to ten families.

The twenty three families that would call this church theirs began the fundraising effort in the winter of 1889. Christian Hennigar Miller donated land described as 'one acre and five rods'. No funds were raised outside the parish and no grants were given from any society – this church was built by the efforts of the people who would use it. The wood-frame structure of the church was built in three months by Thomas Higgs



Stained glass window by Spence & Sons, Montreal, in the east wall over the altar, depicting dove with outspread wings (courtesy of the author)

of Oxford. The chancel measures 18' x 24' and the Gothic nave measures 24' x 48'. Nelson Scott built the walls, and the painting was done by Alfred Miller. The stained glass windows were made by Spence & Sons of Montreal. They include four side windows depicting the Crucifixion (crown of thorns, the hammer and nails, the sponge, and the ladder and spar) and the east window over the altar displaying a dove with outspread wings.

"Until the residents built their own church in 1890, they had to travel to other locations, such as Saint Peter's, Upper Kennetcook."

On November 30, 1890, the first service was held, led by the Reverend G.R. Martell. The new Doherty organ was played by Miss Mina Ettinger (later Mrs. Alfred Tomlinson) and a large choir was in attendance. Rev. Martell performed the first christenings and the first marriage. The first baptisms were Sarah Agnes Spares, born on August 23, 1890, to William and Lydia Spares, and James Obrey Laffin, born on July 25, 1890, to Edward and Mary Sophia Laffin. The first marriage united William Higgs of River Phillip and Agnes Miller of Northfield on

December 26, 1892. The first burial in the cemetery was of Clementine Olson.

Electric lights were dedicated on May 22, 1950. Shortly after, on July 13,



1952, Louis Hamilton completed a new altar. Over the years the stained glass windows were restored, because of age and twice because of vandalism. In 1989, the heating system was changed from the wood stove in the nave to an oil furnace. Special services were held in May 1990 for St. Paul's 100th anniversary, in September 1993 when the church was designated a Municipal Heritage Property, and in 1995 for the parish bicentennial celebration. Each year the church hosts a 'Come Home Sunday', when past clergy and parishioners are invited to return and worship. Like all small rural churches with small congregations struggling to survive, we owe a debt of gratitude to those former members who support and help us to keep St. Paul's a tribute to the glory of God.

Holly Hanes is a resident of Upper Kennetcook, a member of the St. Paul's congregation, a heritage enthusiast, and a Grade 12 student at Hants North Rural High in Kennetcook. She plans to attend Dalhousie University in the B.Sc. program next year.



Stained glass windows showing crown of thorns and tools (courtesy of the author)

Corners are Important *Halifax Infants' Home and Other Important Corners in the Halifax Region*

Alan Ruffman

I invite you to think about the use of corners in our communities on both sides of the Harbour. Saint Mary's University has three corners that can speak to the public and to its own constituency. The southeast corner of the campus was lost when the rather lofty residential tower was constructed: the corner only provides for automobiles and access to the tower. The recently resurfaced sunken parking lot at the northwest corner of the campus (Robie and Inglis) has not yet seen its final shape and use. However the *Campus Master Plan* shows little projected imagination and innovation at this corner (two office slabs at right angles).

This makes the northeast corner (Tower Road and Inglis Street) an important corner for the University and its relationship to the community. This corner is important not only for the significant traffic and transit flow in all directions – Haligonians on their way to Point Pleasant Park, to walk the dog, commuters on their way downtown, exercise buffs on their way to The Tower, students walking to lectures, staff and professors coming to work – but also as the face of the university to the downtown. The gentle bend in Tower Road to the south, meaning that the view of the campus opens up as one approaches the corner, is something that Saint Mary's can enhance and use to advantage in the future. The university has already recognized this corner's importance with the construction and opening of the new TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) Centre and home for international student activities.

When the TESL Centre was in the 100-year old Halifax Infants' Home (<http://htns.ca/Infants-Home.html>), the University featured the iconic view of this building in its advertising for the Centre. And why not? It is



Corner of Inglis Street and Tower Road, Halifax, with Halifax Infants' Home on opposite corner and the new TESL Building beyond (photo by Don Forbes)

a unique building on the campus and in the whole South End. Forgive me if I express the view that the new building's external demeanour is no different from a modern-built office building in any part of Burnside or Bayers Lake. The new TESL Centre will never speak to persons approaching the campus as does the adjacent heritage structure, with its handsome brickwork designed by the remarkable local architect, J.C.P. Dumaresq.

Yes. Corners are Important.

Which corners in our community speak to you? Is it the Sterns Building at the northeast corner of Alderney Drive and Portland Street? This building for over a century has greeted every vehicle and passenger coming off the ferry in Dartmouth and proceeding into the community. The City of Dartmouth carefully retained the plaza across the street when they redeveloped the ferry landing some years ago. It will still greet you if you exit the ferry terminal to the south (seaward) and head up the steps to Portland Street.

Is it the former Gate House of the

Oakland Estate at the northwest corner of Robie and Oakland Road? Is it the remnant corner created when Halifax tore down the heart of the city for Scotia Square? This left the Morse's Tea Building and Cunard's part of Historic Properties as the *de facto* entrance to downtown as you make your escape from the Cogswell Street Interchange. Or is it the small oasis of heritage structures at the northwest corner of Spring Garden Road and Barrington Street? Here the Catholic Archdiocese of Halifax had a difficult debate whether to redevelop the whole corner area. It was Archbishop Anthony Mancini's decision to live in the Glebe House that triggered important repairs and a beautiful restoration¹.

Could it be the adaptive reuse that is now in progress at the oblique corner of Windsor and the jog in Chebucto Road? An initial sharing of space in the former Saint Mathias Anglican Church over a number of years allowed the tiny Antiochian Orthodox Church across Windsor Street to overflow at times into the Anglicans' space. This has blossomed into an ownership change of the Saint

Mathias property in 2012. Now a local developer, Louis Lawen², has taken on the challenge and is in the final stages of the conversion of 6131 Chebucto Road into what will become an iconic and outstanding Halifax corner. None of us will be able to pass that corner without remarking upon and remembering it.

We have not had much experience in Halifax of using, or reusing, our corners very well. We were designed on a British rectilinear grid and our architects have tended to follow suit. Witness our worst corner since Halifax began to suffer the pains of redevelopment in the early 1960s. We were persuaded by a Toronto professor's late 1950s report to lay waste to some 24 acres of the downtown core and in its place the 'grand old men of Nova Scotia' put up Scotia Square. Think of the northwest corner of Duke and Barrington at the foot of the Duke Street Tower and weep. A vertical concrete slab without a single window looking at the Harbour and not a whisper of a bus shelter for 45 years! That corner speaks to no one; it insults us all.

Saint Mary's can grace its campus and our city by addressing its corner of Tower Road and Inglis with a carefully thought-out, repurposed, and restored Halifax Infants' Home that will speak to its students, faculty and staff and to its neighbours for another century and beyond.

Yes. Corners are Important.

Alan Ruffman BSc., MSc., P.Geo. is President of Geomarine Associates Ltd, Honorary Research Associate in the Department of Earth Sciences at Dalhousie University, and Adjunct Professor in the Dalhousie School of Planning. He is a former member of the Board of Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia.

1 Saint Mary's Glebe House was the recipient of a Built Heritage Award from Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia (HTNS) last year in recognition of this work.

2 Another recipient of a Built Heritage Award from HTNS some years ago for his repurposing of the former Greenvale School in Dartmouth.



Sterns Building at the foot of Portland Street, Dartmouth, overlooking plaza and the harbour (photo by Don Forbes)

NEWS

Board of HTNS Meets in Historic Head Office Boardroom of the Bank of Nova Scotia

The Trust Board met in January in the Boardroom of the Bank of Nova Scotia, 1709 Hollis Street, Halifax. This building serves as the Head Office, Nova Scotia Regional Office, and Halifax Main Branch. It opened on August 3, 1931, and has been carefully maintained by the bank, with sensitive renovation and restoration work completed over the past two years. The bank was the recipient of an

HTNS Built Heritage Award at this year's awards ceremony, held across the street at Province House on February 21. The upstairs boardroom is original to the building, with fine period lighting, and is decorated with portraits of former bank leaders. Our meeting in this venue was made possible by Mr. Stephen Groves, Manager, whose hospitality was greatly appreciated.



(Photo by Peter Delefos)

Programs Sponsored by Other Societies

Dartmouth Heritage Museum

26 Newcastle Street, Dartmouth
Current Exhibit: Models, Miniatures & More: The spirit of old Dartmouth captured in form and photographs. Many of the models from the old Wyse Road Museum on display at Evergreen. Included with \$2.00 admission.
Tea and Tales at Evergreen House: the Storytellers Circle of Halifax, World Storytelling Day 2014, Monsters and Dragons: The Good, the Bad, the Ugly! Saturday March 22, one sitting only 2:30-4:30 pm, tickets \$10.00, advance booking recommended.
Comedy & Cake fundraiser, with Lorne Elliott, Friday May 2, 8:00 pm, Alderney Landing Theatre, Dartmouth Waterfront. Silent Cake Auction begins in the Rotunda at 7:00 pm. Tickets on sale now! \$30.00 advance tickets, \$40.00 at the door. Tickets may be purchased at the Museum (cash or cheque sales only) or at Alderney Landing Box Office or on-line at www.ticketpro.ca, phone: (888) 311-9090.
 For more information, call: (902) 464-2300 or e-mail: museum@bellaliant.com. Museum hours posted on-line at <http://www.dartmouthheritagemuseum.ns.ca/index.html>

Genealogical Association of Nova Scotia

Monthly meetings held in the Akins A/V Room, Nova Scotia Archives, 6016 University Avenue, Halifax
 March meeting is **Old Family Photo Workshop**, presented by Jenny Milligan, MEd, Socio-Costumologist. Sorry, all places are taken, but a waitlist may be a possibility.
Cemetery Conference: Old Stones, from Exploration to Preservation, May 24-25, 2014, Nova Scotia Agricultural College Campus, Truro, NS. Six lecture sessions with Dr. Allan Marble, Gary Wright, Bill Curry, Kevin Bartlett and Sean McKeanne, Heather Lawson, Deborah Trask. Field trip to historic Onslow Cemetery, poster displays and networking opportunities. For more information on the conference and a registration packet, contact Dawn Josey at info@novascotiaancestors.ca or go to GANS Office Open Dates, 3258 Isleville Street, Halifax, NS. The office is open to everyone. Stop by to chat, do some internet research, check out our library or buy a publication or membership. Bring a friend!
 Sunday, March 23, 1:00-5:00 pm
 Sunday, April 13, 1:00-5:00 pm
 Sunday, April 27, 1:00-5:00 pm
 Sunday, May 4, 1:00-5:00 pm
 For more information, see <http://www.novascotiaancestors.ca/>

Industrial Heritage Nova Scotia

Meets the first Monday of the month at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, Halifax, at 7:30 pm, except in April this year, when they will co-host the Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia lecture on Thursday April 17, 7:30 pm at the Natural History Museum (see notice of upcoming HTNS lectures elsewhere in this issue). For more information, e-mail: chair@industrialheritagens.ca or see: <http://www.industrialheritagens.ca/>

Nova Scotia Archaeology Society

Monthly meetings are usually held at 7:30 pm on the fourth Tuesday of the month (except June, July, August) in Room L176, Loyola Building, Saint Mary's University, Halifax.
 Upcoming lectures:
Sharing the Past: a Symposium on Public Archaeology, Dr. Tim Schadla-Hall, University College London, Thursday March 20 (note change of date and day of week)
Historic Halifax Archaeology, Brittany Houghton, Vanessa Smith, Nick Moore, Samantha Grant, Tuesday April 22
Archaeology at the "Village Thibodeau" Acadian Planter Site, Sara Beanlands, Tuesday May 27 (AGM) For more information, contact the Nova Scotia Archaeology Society at (902) 309-4411, <http://www.novascotiaarchaeologysociety.com/>

Royal Nova Scotia Historical Society

Lectures are held at 7:30 pm in the Akins A/V Room, Nova Scotia Archives, 6016 University Avenue, Halifax (except April 16):
Highland Shepherd: Rev. James MacGregor, 1759-1831, Dr. Alan Wilson, Professor Emeritus, Trent University, Wednesday March 19
Thomas Raddall and the 'Jolly Millionaire' Leo Koretz: a Young Author, Fugitive Chicago Swindler, and Nova Scotia's Dazzling Summer of 1924, Dean Jobb, Associate Professor and Associate Direc-

tor, School of Journalism, University of King's College, Wednesday April 16. Note: This will be the Annual Dinner at Dalhousie Club, 6:00 for 6:30 pm, reservation required.
Transformation and Triumphalism: the Irish Catholics of Halifax in the Mid-Nineteenth Century, Dr. Thomas Murphy, Professor Emeritus, Saint Mary's University, Wednesday May 21
 For more information, see: <http://rnschs.ca/>

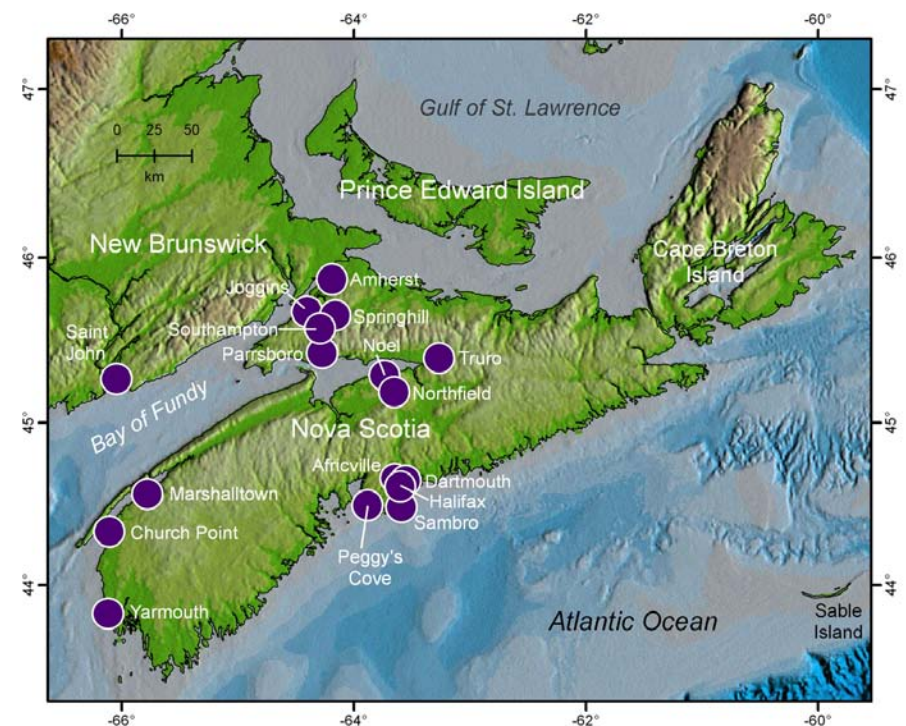
Weymouth Historical Society

St. Thomas Church, Weymouth, NS
 Historic Teas, every Thursday from July to September.
Historic Tea, hosted by VON, July 19, 2:30 to 4:30 pm. For more information, contact the Weymouth Board of Trade, e-mail: info@weymouthnovascotia.com

Yarmouth County Museum and Archives

22 Collins Street, Yarmouth, NS B5A 3C8
Mothers' Day Tea, Saturday, May 10
Fathers' Day BBQ, Saturday, June 14
 Exhibits: Hannah Minzloff, Portraits of Main Street, April to June. Gerald Babin and Bill Veinot, May to June, lower level gallery
 For more information, contact Ingrid Deon, Assistant Director, (902) 742-5539, e-mail: ycmuseum@eastlink.ca

Locations of subject matter in this issue



Base map data courtesy of Geological Survey of Canada, Natural Resources Canada