

# The Griffin

A Quarterly Publication of Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia

September 2017



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### The Griffin

A quarterly newsletter published by Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia

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Cover image: Convergence, by Shelley Mitchell, 2016, oil on canvas, 40" x 60" (courtesy of the artist)

### President's Report



#### Joe Ballard

This summer I had the privilege of meeting with boat-builder, Eamonn Doorly, at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic. He had just finished a five-year restoration of the Hebridee II, a Marconi schooner built in 1952 and donated to the museum by the Murphy family. The schooner is valued as an example of the work of famed Nova Scotian naval architect, William Roué. A proud Doorly offered to take me out in the 'Bluenose Junior', stressing the importance of preservation through use. I was pleased to hear that this was the museum's philosophy for its new charge. "Use it or lose it" also applies to buildings, which thrive on active use. Appropriate activity in a building realizes and accentuates its value and incidentally (importantly) furnishes an early warning system for maintenance.

In a separate meeting in downtown Halifax, three HTNS Board members and I met with Mayor Mike Savage to discuss two significant structures where *use* no longer appears to be the cornerstone of the site management plan. Both Prince Edward's rotunda (Prince's Lodge), on the shore of Bedford Basin, and Sir Sandford Fleming's Cottage, in the Dingle, sit vacant and deteriorating. The former is owned by the Province and the latter by HRM. Both are Halifax landmarks

previously inhabited by tenants. A paying tenant helps offset costs, provides security, identifies needed repairs, guarantees an adequate level of site supervision, and provides a *use* for the asset. As an aside, either site presents fantastic potential for an artist or writer in residence if either level of government can see value in such an idea. The point is to have *someone* there.

The meeting with Mayor Savage also identified the intangible side of "use it or lose it." If we do not esteem, value, and promote such sites, there is a risk of eroding or even losing the legacy of men like Prince Edward, Duke of Kent, and Sir Sandford Fleming. The case of Fleming, the great promoter of Standard Time, is most interesting. South of the border, Americans back their own man, Cleveland Abbe, as the originator of time zones. In explaining this to Mayor Savage, he instantly grasped the gravity of the threat, likening it to Kingston's or Montreal's challenge to the origins of hockey in Nova Scotia. It is interesting to see how we respond with passion and understanding when such things are framed in a hockey context. Truly Canadian! In this way, it is plain to see that "use it or lose it" becomes synonymous with "value it or lose it". From shipbuilding, to hockey, to architecture, our heritage suffers when it's taken for granted and it thrives when it's lived (or lived in). We must preserve those things that make us unique and, wherever possible, let's preserve them through appropriate use.

### Shelley Mitchell

Shelley Mitchell was born in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and now divides her time between Halifax and Lunenburg. After attending her Foundation year at Nova Scotia College of Art and Design and studying at Georgian College of Applied Art in Ontario, she worked as an architectural draftsman and project manager before returning to NSCAD, where she earned her Bachelor's Degree in Painting and Art History. Since then she has shown professionally in both group and solo shows throughout the Maritime Provinces, Ontario, and Maine. She was featured in the book From Land and Sea, Nova Scotia's Contemporary Landscape Artists, published in 2009, and selected by the Nova Scotia government as the province's official gift at the Vancouver Olympics. Her work is represented in the Canadiana Fund State Art Collection in Ottawa as well as in many private and corporate collections in Canada, the USA, and Europe. Her work can be viewed at www.shelleymitchell.ca.



House at Sand Beach [Yarmouth Co.], by Shelley Mitchell, 2008, oil on canvas, 30" x 30" (courtesy of the artist)



Three Houses [Halifax], by Shelley Mitchell, 2008, oil on canvas, 24" x 36" (courtesy of the artist)

### Witnesses to a New Nation: Selected Images of Our Built Heritage

#### Linda Forbes

When Membership chair (and indefatigable organizer) Michal Crowe suggested that Heritage Trust mount an exhibit of 150 images of buildings, to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Confederation, some of us did not anticipate the work involved. No one could have predicted the extraordinary lengths to which some volunteers were willing to go to make this project a success. Equally surprising, and gratifying, has been the reaction to the show and to the various complementary activities arranged by volunteers associated with the main committee.

The generous financial support of the Province and Trust members and friends made it possible to plan a show travelling to four locales beyond Halifax. The 'images' concept evolved into a photographic exhibit, including archival images in a few cases, and short texts for 150 buildings that 'saw' Confederation: Witnesses to a New Nation. Our attempt to be inclusive of geographic areas and architectural styles, while allowing the stories of the cultural groups, commercial and institutional activities to be told, was quite a challenge. Many valuable buildings had to be set aside, even as we avidly read the stories that were presented with them. The eventual collection was neither exhaustive nor perfect, but it does give viewers some insight into what our province looked like in 1867.

After a *Doors Open* preview at Government House of a small selection of images, complemented by a Dusan Kadlec painting of Halifax and two period costumes, all on loan to us, the exhibit went to the Nova Scotia Museum of Industry in Stellarton for its official opening and a full program of free talks and entertainment during a week in which each nearby town took a turn hosting a day. The northern Nova Scotia exhibit ended with a talk, tour, and tea in a stone farmhouse, all free for visitors.

The exhibit travelled next to Amherst in time for the July 1 weekend. The venue was the former Margolian's/ Dayle's department store, a well-loved 1906 building boasting high ceilings and a grand central staircase, and one that many feared would be lost. It is now home to a collection of small retail businesses and appears to be a gathering spot for knitters ("discussing heritage" at the same time) and other crafters. (http://dayles.ca/our-history/) Our local regional rep and Amherst Heritage Trust member, Leslie Childs, supplemented the show with her own collection of photographs of Amherst's heritage houses, which she invited visitors to annotate with their associations or special concerns. The response – and visitor numbers, local and not - surprised even the optimistic organizer!

From Cumberland County the show went to the South Shore. Historic Shelburne is the home of many pre-Confederation buildings and of Board member-at-large, Chris Sharpe. Chris photographed *all* eligible buildings in

the town before we made our selection; it is his photo of Dock Street on the exhibit's poster. This time the show "went to the people"; it was mounted in the local mall, where many people shop for food. Its two-week run ended with a talk and tour of a provincially-designated 1820s Cape in Sable River. The audience was mainly keen local heritage lovers—including the owner of a late 1700s house and former inn in a nearby community -- but a few HTNS members from Halifax made the trek to the South Shore and enjoyed the visit very much.

The show is now at the Kings County Museum, Kentville, thanks to past Valley regional rep, Bria Stokesbury. It is one of a number of interesting Confederation-related displays. It will remain in the Valley for a month, the longest exhibit of all, before returning to Halifax where it will be displayed at St Paul's Church on the Grand Parade. St Paul's receives large numbers of visitors each year, so the prospective audience for the Witnesses show is good. The show will wrap up where it started off. It will be displayed



Viewing the show at the mall in Shelburne, July 2017 (Griffin photo)



Preview of Witnesses exhibit with period costumes at Government House (Griffin photo)

at Government House during Nocturne, the popular night-long art show. Several communities have asked to host the show following its official sesquicentennial tour.

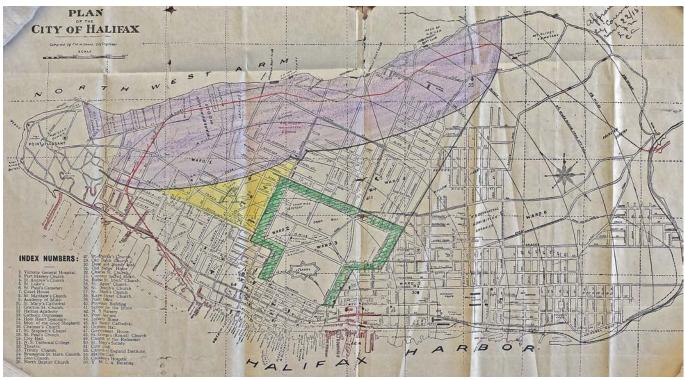
This month and next, you will be able to see the show in Kentville until September 22 and in Halifax from the beginning of October. For those who are left wanting more, about half a dozen of the exhibit subjects also appear in the Trust's publication, Affairs with Old Houses, where personal accounts of the owners' experiences with their houses make a very appealing book. The show's images and texts will be put on-line and there has been some talk about a coffee table book. But these are projects for the future.



Visitors arriving at Government House for Doors Open in June 2017 (Griffin photo)

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### Leading the Way -Town Planning in Halifax During the Early 20th Century



Proposed Residential District, Thomas Adams, 1915 (courtesy of HRM Archives, RG-35-102, Ser. 1B).

### Will Robinson-Mushkat

This article is a summary of a talk presented by the author in the HTNS Illustrated Public Lecture series on May 18, 2017.

The industrial age brought about the rapid growth and development of towns and cities as they became hubs of industry, commerce, and trade. Advancements in technology, production methods, and a growing supply of labour all contributed to the growth and development of cities. There were, however, a number of negative consequences to this urban industrialization. Crime, violence, poor public health, and unsafe living conditions all blighted urban centres. These conditions were felt acutely by the labouring classes, immigrants, and marginalized communities. Movements to counteract these forces became increasingly prevalent

throughout society, born from a sense of moral duty originating in an emerging educated class. The benefits of modern technology, professional practices, and a sense of civic and moral responsibility would improve the conditions within established urban centres and allow replication of positive, balanced urban living into the future.

Halifax, having gone beyond its origins as a strategic British military station and garrison town, experienced many of the effects of Victorian-era urban growth. It was a significant metropolitan centre in British North America during the first half of the 19th century, with strong shipping and financial sectors, along with a growing number of manufacturing industries. Buildings symbolic of Victorian-era epitomes of order, control, and moral consciousness were constructed, including prisons, hospitals, and courthouses.<sup>1</sup> Construction of the

Wellington Barracks along North Street both expanded the city and served as a partition between Halifax's downtown (and the affluent South End) and the labouring class neighbourhoods of Richmond and the North End.<sup>2</sup>

During the post-Confederation period, Halifax experienced both economic and population growth. However, in relation to other Canadian metropolises, like the booming urban centres of Montreal, Toronto, and Winnipeg, Halifax began to lag behind. Yet, within this time period, emerging leaders within Halifax were prepared to counteract the forces of economic erosion through the application of training received at universities and institutions beyond the region, implementation of new technologies, and establishment of professional schools. The modern practice of urban planning - the idea that scientific principles and methods, technologi-



Plan of the City of Halifax - proposed Connaught Avenue extension, 1922 (courtesy of HRM Archives, Z-5-4625)

cal advancements, and guidance from moral sensibility could be harnessed to 'cure' cities of social ills, enhance public health, and improve the lives of all citizens – had become prevalent by the turn of the 20th century.

By this time, Halifax had fully embraced many principles of the "City Beautiful" movement.3 This is exemplified by the long boulevard streets developed at this time - the south end of Robie Street and Young Avenue, which ends with the gates that mark the entrance to Point Pleasant Park.4 However, the minimum cost and design standards placed upon newly constructed houses along Young Avenue acted as a proto-form of 'people zoning' – using planning and urban design as a means of separating classes. Halifax was also impacted by a movement that encouraged municipalities to expand the services they provide. The Civic Improvement League (CIL), formed by the Halifax Board of Trade in 1905, was specifically intended to lobby government for enhanced services, urban reform, and civic beautification.<sup>5</sup>

Central to the success of the CIL was Robert M. Hattie. Born in Pictou County in 1876, he graduated from Dalhousie University. In 1900, following stints as a reporter, he founded *The Maritime* Merchant, served on town council in 1912 and 1913, and was considered "a driving force for town planning in the city of Halifax".6 Hattie was instrumental in the organization of a revival campaign in March 1911. The campaign hosted lectures, from international experts such as John Sewall from Boston and H.H. Vivian from England, on topics ranging from public health, youth, and housing to civic beautification, with the conviction that all were interrelated challenges which the practices and methods of

urban planning could resolve.7

The following year the provincial government legislated the Town Planning Act, which was considered one of the first of its kind in Canada.8 While it was a landmark piece of legislation, municipalities were not obligated to adhere to it.9 For this reason, the 1912 Act was replaced in 1915 with a more stringent Town Planning Act that compelled municipal bodies to form 'Town Planning Boards' and develop planning schemes. The new Act also gave municipalities the power to purchase, sell, and lease land, as well as the authority to approve or deny private development of roads and erection or demolition of buildings. 10 The Town Planning Act of 1915 was the most advanced of its kind in Canada.

By this time, the planning legislation, in conjunction with civic motivation, federal funding for modern infrastructure, and employment of outside

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expertise, began to have a large impact on Halifax. Upon its formation in 1916, the Halifax Town Planning Board (TPB) began the process of developing a comprehensive plan for the city. In what would prove to be a decisive decision, the Board, under the leadership of Robert Hattie, enlisted the services of the renowned Scottish planner, Thomas Adams. Born in 1871, Adams rose to prominence as Secretary for First Garden City Ltd, which in 1903 founded the "Garden City" of Letchworth, a planned suburban community north of London.<sup>11</sup> In 1914, Adams agreed to work as an advisor for the Commission of Conservation, a Federal body commissioned by the Laurier Government. Adams would act as an advisor for towns and cities across Canada until the Commission's demise in 1921.12 In 1915, Adams, with local assistance from Frederick W. Doane (City Engineer) and Hattie, developed a plan for Halifax (see first map). This plan sought to delineate and separate the residential and commercial areas of Halifax, preserve the lands along the Northwest Arm, and enable residents to petition the municipality in the future to zone areas as residential, to ensure that unwanted commercial and industrial activities would not seep into their neighbourhoods. Adams also strongly advocated the development of plans which incorporated both Dartmouth and Bedford, believing that all three municipalities would eventually be amalgamated.13

The explosion that occurred in Halifax Harbour on 6 December 1917 changed the focus of Adams' work in Halifax for the remaining years of his employment with the Commission of Conservation. The devastation was widespread for much of the North End. With the formation of the Halifax Relief Commission (HRC), the primary objective became the rapid reconstruction of the North End in a manner that would benefit the survivors of the explosion. Housing needed to be durable, safe, and affordable, as it would be managed by the HRC. The result, the Hydrostone neighbourhood, employed many of

the principles of the Garden City that Adams had helped develop in England. Grass boulevards provided green space and separation between vehicles and pedestrians. Service lanes ensured that services were accessible but kept away from residents. Commercial and retail services were located along Young Street. The location of the Richmond School, at the intersection of Devonshire and Dartmouth streets, was intended to be a community focal point within the neighbourhood.14 By 1922, the development was virtually complete and survivors of the Halifax Explosion had a rebuilt, resilient community.

While the reconstruction of Richmond and the development of the Hydrostone was a hallmark in the overall recovery of Halifax, Adams regarded his work in Halifax as only partially complete. The motivation for larger, comprehensive city planning had begun to wane. The HRC had been awarded sweeping power and control over much of the North End, eliminating any role for the TPB in the Devastated Area, and inhibiting comprehensive planning.

The Board had sought throughout the late 1910s and early 1920s to create an extension of Connaught Avenue, parallel to the railway line to the newly developed terminals in the South End (see second map), but their efforts were blocked by residents.16 The TPB transitioned from a forward-thinking civic organization to one that was employed to arbitrate disputes between residents and approve smaller-scale developments. Further, the economic stagnation that beset the city and the larger Maritimes region in the early 1920s saw a decline in population growth, reducing the need for further urban expansion. This would last until the late 1930s, as the global economy recovered from the Great Depression. While the TPB did not cease to exist, it remained dormant from 1922 until 1931.17 For a scant few years, the combination of authority vested through legislation, availability of funding, expertise, and civic motivation, made Halifax a leader within Canada with regard to urban planning.

Will Robinson-Mushkat has studied both the history and practice of urban planning at Saint Mary's University and Queen's University. Raised in, and a resident of, Halifax, he works as a professional planner and has an avid interest in the promotion of the history and heritage of the city. The contents of his May 2017 lecture were derived from research undertaken for his 2010 MA thesis.

#### Endnotes:

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<sup>10</sup>An Act Respecting Town Planning. SNS 1915. c. 32, sec. 3 (3) and 3 (3a).

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<sup>14</sup>John C. Weaver, "Reconstruction of the Richmond District in Halifax: A Canadian Episode in Public Housing and Town Planning, 1918-1921." *Plan Canada*, 6 (1). March 1976. pp. 36-47.

<sup>15</sup>Ernest Clarke, "The Hydrostone phoenix: garden city planning and the reconstruction of Halifax, 1917-21" *Ground Zero: a Reassessment of the 1917 Explosion in Halifax Harbour* (Alan Ruffman and Colin D. Howell, eds). Halifax: Nimbus Publishing Ltd, 1994, pp. 405-406.

<sup>16</sup>"Armview Drive Eliminated" *The Morning Chronicle*, 15 March 1922, p. 2.

<sup>17</sup>Minutes of Halifax Town Planning Board 1916-1949, 29 June 1931, HRM Archives, 102-40.1, p. 69.

### Maitland's Heritage Conservation District

Maitland, East Hants, is an historic village at the mouth of the Shubenacadie River. The Mi'kmaw names alluded to 'healing waters' and 'the place where the river runs fast', a reference to the tidal bore that runs up the Shubenacadie twice a day. The village was the site of an Acadian settlement, Ville Robert, and parts of the community are still protected by dykes originally constructed at that time. Later, the Shubenacadie Canal provided a water route between Dartmouth and Maitland, connecting Halifax Harbour to Cobequid Bay. Maitland was a busy, industrious, and populous community with a summer ferry across the river to Black Rock. However, when the railways replaced water transport, the Midland Railway (beginning operations in 1901) bypassed Maitland with a bridge 10 km upstream. Combined with the end of wooden shipbuilding, this contributed to a slow decline.

With many shipyards along the river and nearby coast (the A.F. Church map of 1871 shows four within the village alone, as well as a sail loft and blacksmith shop), Maitland was home to carpenters who could build ships that ranged the world's oceans and finely-crafted houses at home. The Lawrence House, originally the home of famed shipbuilder and politician W.D. Lawrence, is now part of the Nova Scotia Museum. The rich endowment of heritage structures includes the Frieze and Roy store, established in 1839, the oldest continuously operating general store in Canada. In recognition of its outstanding architectural legacy, Maitland was declared Nova Scotia's first Heritage Conservation District in 1995. At that time, the Conservation District Plan and By-Law stated that there were "about seventy 19th century buildings in the village and one, the Putnam/ Frieze house, which may date from the 18th century ... forty-two houses, two churches and church halls, seven commercial or formerly commercial



The classical revival Foley House, ca. 1870, for sale through Viewpoint (John Knol, 902-758-5000)



The Second Empire Capt. William Douglas House, ca. 1850, private sale (902-261-2040)

buildings, and seventeen outbuildings including barns, livery stables, storage sheds, and one surviving [shipyard] shed ... Most ... date from the mid-19th century (1850-1870)."

Today, Maitland is a small but active community, with several businesses in addition to the store and associated café. These include a herb farm, bed and breakfasts, a fine restaurant, an arts and crafts gallery, and a tidal bore rafting business. St David's, the former United Church (originally Presbyterian) is now a performance space, the High Tides Arts and Community Centre, operated by the CHArt Society (Culture, Heritage, and the Arts). The carpenter-Gothic Holy

Trinity Anglican Church remains a place of worship. The village is also home to the Maitland & District Volunteer Fire Department.

Property owners committed to the conservation of older homes are key to maintaining the historic character of the community. Many have been drawn to Maitland by the beauty and charm of its built heritage. Today there are a few properties on the market in the midst of the village, offering an opportunity to join and contribute to this dynamic community.

additional image on page 12

## Onward from that Fatal Event - a Post Explosion Story (Revelations from the Attic)

### Sheila Fougère

This article is based on a talk the author presented in the HTNS Illustrated Public Lecture series at the AGM on June 15, 2017

Sometimes the most difficult tasks yield unexpected rewards. In 2016, after a long and wonderful life, my 92 year old father passed away. Emptying the home in which he had lived for more than 50 years was an emotional and arduous task. Little did I know, in addition to the many memories shared there amongst my parents and six siblings, I would discover a trove of documents from another generation. They would paint a new picture of my family's struggles after the Halifax Explosion in 1917.

We had one of those attics like you see in the movies — boxes filled with old toys, trunks filled with memorabilia from WW II, furniture past its useful life, and other treasures from lives well lived. Amongst the clutter, I discovered an old plastic grocery bag filled with papers, including correspondence, receipts, and personal notes dated between December 1917 and the spring of 1920. There were letters from the Halifax Relief Commission, the City of Halifax, and Pickings & Roland Surveyors. There were carbon copies of personal correspondence from both my grandfather and my uncle related to post-Explosion matters. There were lists of personal and household belongings for insurance claim purposes. There were receipts for the burial of relatives from Snow's funeral home and Mount Olivet Cemetery. And there was a cheque receipt book for payments after the Explosion, for building materials and the purchase of property.

The basic story of the Halifax Explosion is well documented. My grandfather, James P. Vaughan, lost his wife and two of his six children. He lost a daughter-in-law and his two grandchil-

dren. He lost his home and three other houses he owned on Albert Street in north-end Halifax. He had missing family to find, the dead to identify, and burials to arrange. He sustained permanent physical scars and suffered emotional trauma that caused him to refer to the event only rarely later in life. His losses were soon compounded by news of a son's death overseas in the Battle of Passchendaele. But this was the story I already knew. What was made clear to me, after finding this collection of papers, was the long and complex journey back to normalcy that faced my family and probably many others.

My grandfather temporarily boarded with his sister's family on Brunswick Lane (now Falkland Street). His eldest son, Jim, was a bank manager in Richibucto, New Brunswick. Jim Junior would be a force in assisting my grandfather to deal with the paperwork required in the aftermath of the disaster. The repeated trips to Halifax would cost Jim his job.

The newspaper urged people to make up lists of their material losses. I

found 9 pages of expenses and claims for belongings and property. It gives a glimpse into the life they had and it seems as though they had been comfortably off. Imagine trying to list everything you own! I found pages of handwritten notes making calculations and reminders of what needed to be done. Newspapers reported that the ruins continued to smoulder due to an abundance of coal used to heat homes. In the documents I found, six tons of coal were listed as the contents in one of my grandfather's rental properties.

In the coming months and years, my grandfather, a builder by trade, would want to rebuild on his land. He lived in 'the restricted zone' and could not rebuild without permission. A 15 March 1918 letter from Jim Jr states, "Bell [Ralph P. Bell, Secretary of the Relief Commission] told me that they were considering building either cement or brick houses in the North End. So you will want to be sure before you start with a wooden structure." Among the papers in the attic were an original copy of the *Act to* 



The Vaughan family circa 1910, with James P. Vaughan in the back at left



Vicinity of Albert Street property after the Explosion (wreck of the Imo can be seen grounded on the Dartmouth shore)

Incorporate the Halifax Relief Commission and a copy of Rehousing for the Halifax Relief Commission ... Drawings and Specifications from Ross and MacDonald Architects of Montreal. I suspect these were obtained in an effort to comply with regulations. The Relief Commission would, it seems, become a source of much frustration for my grandfather and his son Jim.

In November of 1918, almost a year after the Explosion, my grandfather wrote a letter to Governor Samuel Mc-Call, who was visiting Halifax at the time. He thanked Gov. McCall and people of Massachusetts for the assistance they had rendered to Haligonians. He went on to say that he believed the Relief Commission were making efforts to disguise the ongoing hardships that still persisted. In a bitter closing, he wrote, "I am living in temporary quarters which I was obliged to construct at my own expense, with the understanding that my home and houses would be built last Spring. I am still left in suspense, and the Relief Commission are decidedly unconcerned as to how I am to provide for relief for the approaching winter." Also among the papers from the attic was an undated carbon copy of a bill for

\$147.00, detailing the cost of materials and labour for a temporary home and coal shed.

In the planning for reconstruction, Albert Street, where Grandfather Vaughan had owned civic numbers 97, 99, 101, and 103, was slated to be widened and turned into a major thoroughfare. Items of ongoing correspondence with the Relief Commission and with Pickings & Roland Surveyors spanned the years 1918 through 1920. The Relief Commission listed all four of the Vaughan properties in the newspaper as being held up for expropriation, yet sent a letter to my grandfather stating that they had no intention of acting on the notices.

The family story is that when they came to survey the land for re-alignment, my grandfather stood stubbornly with a shotgun in hand, demanding that they rightfully recognize what he knew was his. Handwritten notes sketch out a letter that my grandfather presumably later sent to Pickings & Roland Surveyors, granting them permission, as agents of the Relief Commission, to come onto his property for the purposes of verifying his contested property claim.

The section from the Relief Com-

mission document says: "Whenever the Commission determines that any land or interest therein, whether situate within the devastated area or elsewhere, is required by the Commission for any purpose, the Commission may expropriate such land or interest therein without first endeavouring to contract with the owner thereof, or any person having an interest therein for the purchase thereof." I can see by the correspondence that there were two lawyers involved on behalf of my grandfather and my uncle. I'm guessing they were not going to go easily with this! In the end, the Relief Commission took a four-foot strip of disputed land.

In August of 1919, receipts show that James P. Vaughan purchased property at the corner of Hanover and Veith Streets (just around the corner from his former home on Albert Street) for \$700.00 from Murdock Finlay of Roxbury, Massachusetts. Cheques were also written for shingles, nails, and glass. At some time between 1919 and 1921, he built a two storey building on Hanover Street, which became home for two of his sons. The lower floor was a store that they operated called Vaughan Brothers Grocery. That building remains to this day. Next to this on Veith Street, he built another house, which also still exists, for his brother-in law.

During the winter of 1920, my grandfather had problems with his water pipes breaking in what must have been by then a more permanent structure at 101 Albert Street. He sent a bill to the Halifax Relief Commission for damage to his plumbing. It seems as though this may have been forwarded to the city. The response letter from the Assistant City Engineer throws the ball back into the Relief Commission's hands: "Dear Sir: In reply to your letter of the 11th inst, the reason that you have been unable to get water since the date mentioned, is that the Relief Commission have cut down the roadway on Albert Street, leaving in some places only about 18 inches of covering over the water pipe and due to this, the latter froze. In January we attempted to thaw

this out and had thawed about 60 feet when the attempt had to be abandoned owing to the extreme cold, and it was considered that even tho' we succeeded in clearing the pipe it would freeze again. I would suggest that you take this matter up with the Relief Commission. I can appreciate the inconvenience you have suffered and have every sympathy for you in not being able to get water, but you can readily see that the fault does not lie with this Department. Yours faithfully, HW Johnston, Asst. City Engineer"— Imagine the frustration!

My grandfather's woes with the Relief Commission prompted him to write a letter to the Editor, slamming the Commission, in March of 1920. It is unclear to which paper he wrote, or if it was ever published. His harsh criticism and a call for an investigation into their dealings, leave the reader in no doubt about his opinion of the group at the helm. "How farcical it all seems. The houses constructed in the devastated area are now held up for sale at prohibitive prices, and all comers, barring the victims of the Explosion, may select their choice ... Expropriation of properties, cloaked by a suddenness of civic enterprise and improvement, was one of the methods employed to take away the last hope of those who some day planned to have their houses replaced on the spot where they had lived since their childhood, but the sufferers have no such prospect, and we find the remnants of families scattered about everywhere." In closing, he welcomed a rebuttal from the Relief Commission. No evidence of this exists.

By 1922, five years after the Explosion, things seem to have settled somewhat. My grandfather married Agnes Leahy and had built his permanent residence at 103 Albert Street. He eventually built several houses, which still stand today, on Albert Street, Hanover Street, and Veith Street. I have further research to do to clarify dates of construction. In 1923, Agnes gave birth to a son, Philip, at O'Shaughnessy Private Hospital (today an apartment building at the corner of Gottingen and North streets). I am Philip Vaughan's daughter.



Family members in front of house built by James P. Vaughan at 103 Albert Street (now 3237 Devonshire Avenue) circa 1933

James P. Vaughan went on to work as a contractor and brick layer in Nova Scotia, Boston and Newfoundland. He worked on Halifax landmarks such as the Nova Scotian Hotel, the Lord Nelson Hotel, the original Halifax Infirmary, Oxford School Bungalow, and the Protestant Boys' Home, where St Agnes School now stands. Interestingly, he built the first pedestal for the very controversial statue of Edward Cornwallis.

My grandfather died in 1940. The stories I have of him are those relayed by my father and other family relatives, as well as information gained from the treasures in the attic and trips to the library and archives. My father and his older brothers were all successful businessmen who contributed to Halifax in various ways. I, along with my sisters and brothers, am most fortunate to have some tangible links to our family history. Now we not only have the documents that tell a broader family story, but we can still see the fruits of our grandfather's labour and tenacity, in the homes he built in north-end Halifax.

Sheila Fougère is a life-long Haligonian and a former HRM councillor, first elected as the lone woman on Council in 1998.

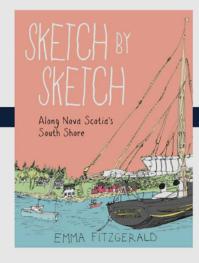
All illustrations courtesy of the author

### continued from page 9



The Gothic revival Denny Smith House, ca. 1875, for sale through Century 21 Trident Realty (Lee Coley, 902-402-6686)

### Sketch by Sketch Along Nova Scotia's South Shore



EMMA FITZGERALD's first book, Hand Drawn Halifax, won the Coast's Best of Halifax award for Best Book in 2016. She received a BFA in Visual Art at the University of British Columbia, spending her third year honing her drawing skills at L'École des Beaux Arts in Paris, and earned her master's degree in Architecture from Dalhousie University. She lives in Halifax.

### Encounters with the places and people of the South Shore

Just as the award-winning *Hand Drawn Halifax* was "a love letter to the city," Emma FitzGerald's newest book takes readers on road trips along one of the most picturesque parts of Canada.

As Emma sketches her way along the South Shore, residents share their insights and histories, appearing in her whimsical drawings through every season. Readers will meet a fourth-generation female sail maker in Second Peninsula, learn the recipes for summertime rose vinegar and winter Bluenose dark rum, make an autumn visit to Birchtown's Black Loyalist Heritage Centre with author and activist Desmond Cole, and escape the wintertime weather inside the Sipuke'l Mi'kmaq art gallery in Liverpool.

Fans of Emma's artwork will enjoy her appealing narrative of the unique communities of the South Shore.

Formac Publishing (James Lorimer and Company) have announced the publication of Emma FitzGerald's latest book. Readers of *The Griffin* will be familiar with Emma's work, which we have featured more than once. ISBN 9781459504769, Hardcover, \$24.95, publication 1 September 2017, 140+ illustrations.

### Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia Illustrated Public Lecture Series

#### **SEPTEMBER 21**

Liam Caswell

When the War Came Home: a Dartmouth Perspective on the 1917 Harbour Explosion

#### **OCTOBER 19**

Col. John Boileau

Defending the Great Long Harbour: Halifax's Military Built Heritage during the First World War

#### **NOVEMBER 16**

Blair Beed

Halifax, City of Sadness, and the White Star Connections

All talks take place at 7:30 pm on the 3rd Thursday of the month

Museum of Natural History Auditorium 1747 Summer Street, Halifax Access from visitors' parking lot Information: 902-423-4807

### Company Houses, Company Towns: Heritage and Conservation

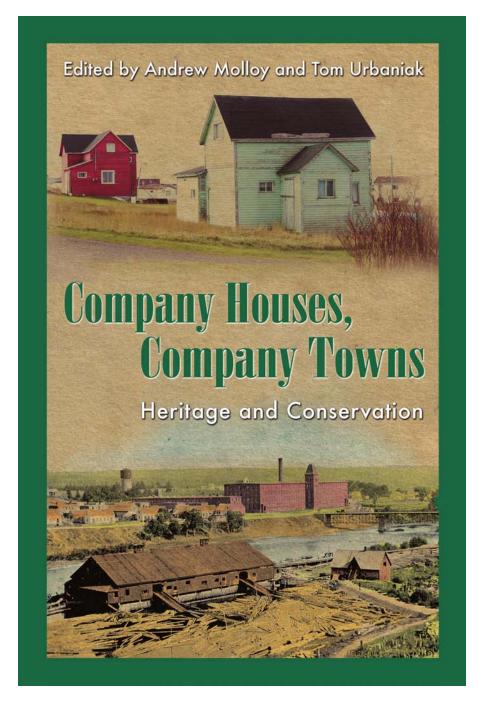
Edited by Andrew Molloy and Tom Urbaniak. Sydney: Cape Breton University Press, 2016.

#### Gerald L. Pocius

On a drive from the heritage neighbourhoods of Sydney to working-class Whitney Pier, one passes the company houses along Victoria Road, duplex dwellings now in ill-repair, many boarded up and empty. Where, in recent memory, scores of buildings that comprised the SYSCO steel plant sprawled over the land separating genteel Sydney from the ethnic workers of Whitney Pier, few structures remain today. In its place acres of green grass, devoid of most other vegetation, have become Open Hearth Park — an eerie legacy to an industrial town of houses both grand and modest, houses that extended to the edges of the mill site. In the world of built heritage, such industrial landscapes are often neglected, disappearing, poorly understood, dismissed. Andrew Molloy's and Tom Urbaniak's collection, Company Houses, Company Towns: Heritage and Conservation, opens up necessary conversations on this important heritage.

The essays in Company Houses, Company Towns are important first for their documentation of a wide range of Canadian industrial heritage — buildings and landscapes — from the Yukon to Ontario, Quebec, and then Atlantic Canada. Industrial buildings are quick to disappear. Factories and warehouses can be gentrified and repurposed into condos and trendy lofts, but the coal wash houses, the smelters, the ore crushers, quickly vanish when deindustrialization occurs. As do the modest company houses.

Several essays set a framework for issues important in understanding Nova Scotia's industrial landscapes and buildings. Barbara Hogan et al. document the Elsa silver mine landscape in the Yukon. A number of camp communities emerged in the area, beginning around 1913, the last closing in 1989.



The buildings associated with the mine still standing are from the 1940s and 50s, "simple, unadorned, functional." The mill site is largely contaminated and ongoing plans involve the demolition of many structures. The situation at Elsa raises questions of what to do with abandoned buildings at a contaminated

industrial site: documentation then demolition?

In contrast to Elsa, two essays deal with company towns that have preserved remnants of their landscape heritage through government leadership and civic action. Alex Forbes chronicles the industrial history of Marysville, New

Brunswick, a nineteenth-century mill town on the Nashwaak River system. Lucie Morisset and Jessica Mace examine the company town of Arvida in Quebec, founded in 1925 by the Aluminum Company of America.

What makes the studies of both Arvida and Marysville important are the discussion of the efforts made by local residents to ensure the preservation of important industrial features of both towns. In Marysville, the large surviving cotton mill became a rallying point to raise awareness to the importance of the town's built legacy. Private owners of the remaining company row housing began to take steps to rescue and renovate what they increasingly saw as important parts of the town's history. Arvida, on the other hand, never was divorced from its industrial legacy: aluminum continues to drive the town's economy. And thus generational interest in the well-built homes of the community led to extensive programs that ensured the continuity of the built heritage that coincided with town life.

The economics of typical company towns are usually based on an extractive or manufacturing industry; as that industry declines, heritage often takes over. Tom Urbaniak's essay, however, discusses a unique form of organized community, one founded not on the industry of mill or mine, but on the heritage industry itself. Urbaniak examines the complex heritage of the town of Kaszuby, Ontario, a site where various forms of Polish identity have been contested over the years. Kaszuby has seen both its tangible and intangible Polish identity evolve since the nineteenth century, from original Polish farm settlements, to intentional Polish heritage landscapes beginning in the 1950s: scouting camps, summer cottages, permanent houses of Polish newcomers. Urbaniak's essay is an important case study of the very nature of heritage; as he argues, "heritage and place are not meant to be finally and authoritatively defined, but continually redefined, questioned and explored" (p. 179).

Three essays deal with what is the most challenging and most problematic

heritage issue facing the built world of company towns: the fate of the ordinary company house. Gail Weir discusses worker's houses on Bell Island, Newfoundland, describing family histories of the meagre dwellings built by the Nova Scotia Steel and Coal Company. Richard MacKinnon provides an important typology of company houses in the Sydney area, demonstrating the wide range of housing built there. Finally, Tom Urbaniak and Andrew Molloy focus specifically on one of these typical Cape Breton company houses, and the Habitat for Humanity project to retrofit it, rehabilitate it, and put it on the market for modern re-use.

These three essays point to a troubling heritage quandary: that the ubiquitous small company house is not a candidate for rescue and restoration. Company houses are typically not considered heritage houses, but candidates for demolition. Built heritage often depends on gentrification, with proper return for investment. The experiment of rescuing and rehabilitating the Glace Bay company house indicated the monetary constraints on such efforts: retrofitting costs exceeding market

value. Is industrial built heritage only a possibility with gentrification?

The collection of essays assembled by Tom Urbaniak and Andrew Molloy is an important contribution to the specifics and the material legacy of industrial towns and landscapes. But what is even more important is that this volume raises questions of why company towns and especially company houses – still remain a challenge in the built heritage world. The fact remains that there are few if any actual company houses in the coal and steel towns of the Sydney area restored, that there is no notion that restorations should involve ordinary worker's houses. Each year, one more duplex company house on Victoria Road disappears, several more are boarded up, gradually becoming intangible memories. Company Towns, Company Houses raises as many questions as answers, and reveals that the company house remains an unresolved enigma, a built form that does not easily fit into the heritage world of opulent banks, fine churches, and stately mansions.

Gerald L. Pocius is Visiting Research Professor at Cape Breton University in Sydney.

### ARTIST Shelley Mitchell



The Halifax Club, by Shelley Mitchell, 2008, oil on canvas, 24" x 36" (courtesy of the artist)

### Did You Know? Houses Have Tales

#### Leslie Childs

HTNS's travelling photo exhibit, Witnesses to a New Nation, has had lots of great outcomes in Amherst, where it ran for two weeks in early July this year. Some were predictable, like raising the profile of built heritage, meeting new people who share a passion for old buildings, and heightened appreciation for the depth of history in this small community on the "other side of the Cobequid." But the best lesson I learned was that Houses Have Tales and that it's the stories about people and their community where many people's interests really lie.

Built heritage is, I suppose, all about architectural details, house styles, workmen, and economic history, but this summer I learned that it is more importantly about people and the connections to these important places, large and small, in their lives.

It all began when I started to think about advertising the photo exhibit. I realized that I was focusing on getting word out to people who already knew and loved old houses — the converted — but how could I entice new viewers to take time from their busy lives to think about built heritage and how it can affect their community ... and maybe even become fans themselves?

Amherst is richly endowed with heritage houses as well as imposing institutional and commercial structures. When (or if) people think about built heritage, many probably think of famous sites such as Canada's Parliament, but not necessarily of familiar buildings close to home. Built heritage is right here at home, as much as in faraway exotic places. Why do we put more value on the unknown rather than on those places we know well? And often there are unexpected connections between heritage at home and elsewhere.

In 1857, Queen Victoria named a small town up the Ottawa River as the site for the new capital of a country

called Canada (combining what today are Ontario and Quebec). Those promoting the new capital understood that architecture could play a pivotal role in communicating Canada's importance and position in the world. The new legislature was to sit high on a promontory overlooking the river and the country to the north and west. In 1859, a design competition was held and a contract was awarded to the winners, Thomas Fuller and his associate, Chilion Jones. The resulting Gothic-revival Houses of Parliament opened on 6 June 1866, a full year before Confederation became a reality.

By the 1870s, the government decided that it was time to have a strong presence in cities and towns across the country. English-born Thomas Fuller became the Chief Dominion Architect and immediately set to work to plant the federal stamp across the country, often in the form of a Post Office, Customs House, or both. The buildings were grand and spoke loudly of the wealth, power, and trustworthiness that stood

behind them.

Amherst, Nova Scotia, along with many other communities, received a Thomas Fuller post office. Built in 1884-1886 by Rhodes Curry, a well-known Amherst firm working across the region, the new post office was built of red sandstone that was quarried locally. It stood tall and proud at the town's main entrance, welcoming all to a place of importance. Local craftsmen added floral carvings and a magnificent copper-clad clock with four faces. Who could doubt that important things happened in a community that was home to such grandeur?

From the arrival of the Intercolonial Railway (ICR), Amherst's prosperity began to grow quickly. Local entrepreneurs built more sandstone buildings, large factories appeared, and businesses branched into other related industries. Successful companies such as Rhodes Curry, Hewson Woolen Mills, Tingley Granite, and more took advantage of Amherst's central Maritime location and the fact that if straddled the ICR main-



This house at 171 East Victoria Street in Amherst was built by John Bent about 1780, on a 600 acre land grant at the top of the Amherst Ridge with a stunning view of Fort Beauséjour (photo courtesy of the author)



This house at 169 East Victoria in Amherst was built about 1875 by Arthur Dickey, son of Father of Confederation R.B. Dickey; Arthur was later MP for Cumberland County (1888-1896), serving in several portfolios including Minister of Justice and Attorney General for Canada (photo courtesy of the author)

line. Thus was born "Busy Amherst" and the latter's prosperity led to the building of many imposing homes.

To engage the public with built heritage in Amherst, I reasoned that they needed to relate to something local and familiar, to which they already had a connection — the houses and streetscapes they pass every day of their lives, the places their grandparents and great grandparents knew, loved, and talked about. So on a whim, I grabbed my camera and began touring Amherst streets, randomly photographing houses and other buildings that looked interesting to my eye. Some were big and some were small; many were well maintained, others not so much. Some had turrets, and many had back "ells". But what did they have in common?

How could I pull these photos I'd taken into some kind of presentation that would draw viewers in and engage them? That's when it came to me. Houses Have Tales. Houses have people and people have lives. More often than not, something noteworthy happened in or around every house in town ... and continues to happen.

Along with the HTNS Witnesses exhibit (featuring pre-Confederation buildings), which was on display at Dayle's Grand Market for the first two weeks of July, the Amherst Heritage Trust exhibited 130 photos of Amherst buildings from the 1770s through to 1915, the initial stage of the Amherst Heritage House Inventory project. And visitors (723 signed the guest book) provided dates and stories for 104 of the

130 Amherst structures.

The photographs, stories, and notes contributed by exhibit viewers are filed together and the plan is to add more buildings in Amherst and then more widely in Cumberland County. The photos and 'tales' that go with them will be shared on the Facebook page of the Amherst Heritage Trust (@amherstheritagetrust). Over time, it will be possible to edit and update entries as new information arrives. To contribute to the Inventory, you can send your facts and stories through Facebook or by e-mail to sharonjones1248@gmail.com.

Leslie Childs, with Amherst Heritage Trust, is Cumberland, Colchester, and East Hants regional representative on the Board of the Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia.

### Cape Breton Doors Open: a Self-Guided Tour of Inverness and Richmond County Churches

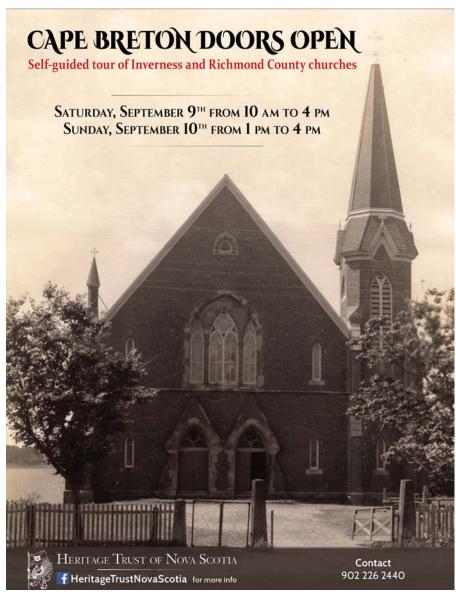
Places of worship are becoming endangered, especially in rural Nova Scotia. While most are still well used, some of these buildings are no longer in active use for worship. Yet they represent a significant community resource that was highly valued by early settlers.

Join us in exploring Cape Breton's built heritage in a free, self-guided tour of 19 Richmond and Inverness County churches. Heritage Trust's Places of Worship Committee is coordinating a Doors Open event in cooperation with Roman Catholic and Protestant churches. Local community members will welcome visitors to churches in the following communities:

Arichat • Broad Cove • Cheticamp • Creignish • Dundee • Glencoe Mills • Inverness • Johnstown • Loch Lomond • Mabou • Northeast Margaree • Petit de Grat • Port Hood • Princeville • River Denys • River Denys Mountain • Strathlorne • West Bay Road

Saturday, September 9 from 10 am to 4 pm

Sunday, September 10 from 1 pm to 4 pm (some exceptions)



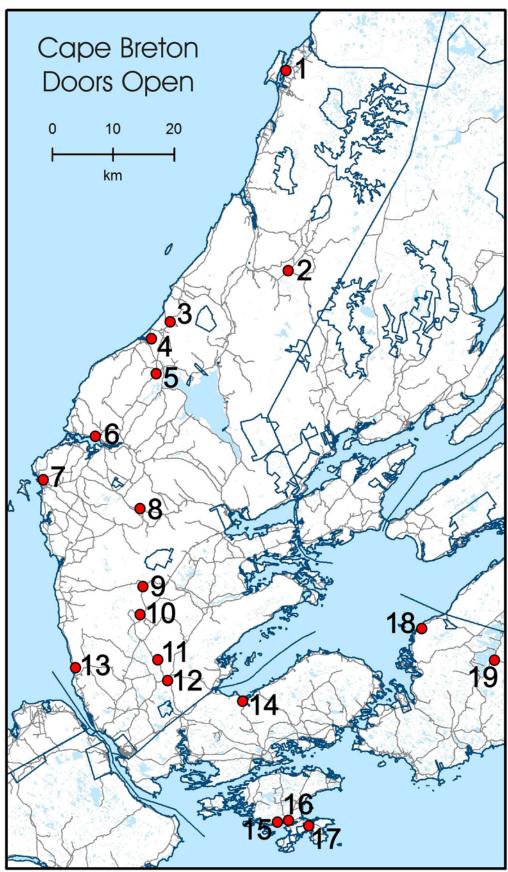
St Peter's Church, Port Hood (poster by Greg McGrath)

### Halifax Harbour Explosion - 100th Anniversary Exhibit

Saint Patrick's Church, Halifax, will be hosting a public exhibit in the parish hall, 2263 Brunswick Street, November 23 to December 6, to mark the 100th Anniversary of the Halifax Harbour Explosion. Although St Patrick's was damaged and restored, the exhibit is

not limited to the parish story. It features stories of people and organizations connected to the worst disaster in Canadian history. Led by historian and author Blair Beed and based on his books (1917 Halifax Explosion and American Response Nimbus; L'Explosion de 1917 à Halifax

et les Secours Américains, DTours), it is a gathering of materials from various sources. Janet Kitz, author of Shattered City, has kindly contributed map and photograph panels. Books, photographs, and furniture loaned by survivor families will be on display.



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### 9-10 September 2017

- 1 Chéticamp (Saint-Pierre RC))
- 2 NE Margaree (St Patrick's RC)
- 3 Broad Cove (St Margaret of Scotland RC)
- 4 Inverness (St Matthew's UC)
- 5 Strathlorne (St John's UC)
- 6 Mabou (St Mary's RC)
- 7 Port Hood (St Peter's RC)
- 8 Glencoe Mills (St Joseph's RC)
- 9 River Denys (Forbes UC)
- 10 Glendale (St Margaret of Scotland RC)
- 11 Princeville (Princeville UC)
- 12 West Bay Road (St Margaret's RC)
- 13 Creignish (Stella Maris RC)
- 14 Dundee (Black River UC)
- 15 Arichat (Our Lady of Assumption RC)
- 16 Arichat (St John's fomerly Anglican)
- 17 Petit-de-Grat (St Joseph's RC)
- 18 Johnstown (Sacred Heart RC)
- 19 Loch Lomond (Calvin Presbyterian)

### Programs Sponsored by Other Societies

#### **Annapolis Heritage Society**

North Hills Museum Tea & Garden Party, September 10, 2-4 pm. Free family events of live music, tea and treats at North Hills Museum, 5065 Granville Road, Granville Ferry. Donations welcome. Hon. John William Ritchie: Annapolis Royal-born Father of Confederation, exhibit at O'Dell House Museum (136 St George Street) until October 9. 902-532-7754; annapolisheritagesociety.com

#### **Colchester Historeum**

29 Young Street, Truro

The story of 'Mary Miller Her Book' and similar manuscript tunebooks, lecture by Dr. Nancy Vogan, retired educator from Music Dept, Mount Allison University, September 28, 7:30 pm. 902-895-6284; colchesterhistoreum.ca

#### **Fieldwood Heritage Society**

Barns of the Eastern Shore, lecture by Gordon Hammond, September 14, 7 pm, St John's Anglican Church, corner of Church Street and Hwy 358, Port Williams. Lecture will be preceded by tour of a barn across the street, 6 pm, and followed by a general discussion on barn typology and similarities and differences between Eastern Shore and Annapolis Valley barns. Admission \$10 (cash or cheque). fieldwoodhs@gmail.com

#### **Hantsport & Area Historical Society**

Meetings are held at 7 pm at St Andrew's Anglican Church, 59 Main Street, Hantsport Field Trip to Akin's Burial Grounds in Falmouth, September (date TBA).

Regular Society Meeting, September 27. Official Opening of Hantsport Heritage Centre, October 21 (tentative).

Regular Society Meeting, with guest speaker, October 25.

Regular Society Meeting, with guest speaker, November 22.

902-352-2025; http://nsgna.ednet.ns.ca/hantsport; facebook.com/HantsportAreaHistoricalSociety

### **Industrial Heritage Nova Scotia** with the **NS Museum of Industry, Stellarton**

Come Dig with Us! We'll be excavating on the site of the Albion Mines Foundry (1828), September 9-10, free, all ages welcome (children must be joined by an adult).

Please pre-register by calling the museum, 902-755-5425

#### Memory Lane Heritage Village

5435 Clam Harbour Road, Lake Charlotte **Musique Royale Concert** in the historic Clam Harbour Church, followed by a lamp-lit three course dinner in the Cookhouse, September 9, concert 5:00-6:30 pm, dinner 7 pm, \$55.

**Forest Festival**, celebrating all our forests have to offer, October 14 and 15, 11 am-4 pm, free admission.

Eastern Shore Players Dinner Theatre, an original murder mystery dinner theatre in the Heritage Village Cookhouse, October 20-22, 5:30 for 6 pm. \$40.

902-845-1937; 1-877-287-0697 (toll-free); www. heritagevillage.ca

#### Ottawa House Museum

1155 Whitehall Road, Parrsboro Christmas Tea and Bake Sale: September 24, 2-4 pm, Tea \$7 per person. 902-254-2376; ottawa.house@ns.sympatico.ca

### Royal Nova Scotia Historical Society

Public lectures held at Public Archives of Nova Scotia, 6016 University Avenue, Halifax. Folklore – Is it Relevant in the 21st Century? Phyllis R Blakeley Memorial Lecture by Clary Croft, September 20, 7:30 pm.

The End of the "Gentlemen's Agreement": the Collapse of Catholic Education in Nova Scotia, lecture by Robert Bérard, Professor and Director of Graduate Education, Mount Saint Vincent University, October 18, 7:30 pm.

"The people's rights we have sustained" - the Nova Scotian Repeal and Annexation Movements (1867–1869), lecture by Mathias Rodorff, PhD candidate, History Department, LMU Munich and Dalhousie University, November 15, 7:30 pm

City's Saviours: the Military Response to the Halifax Explosion, lecture by Col. John Boileau (Ret'd): December 13, 7:30 pm https:// rnshs.ca; info@rnshs.ca

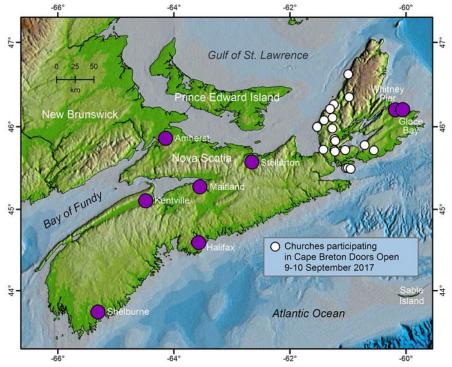
#### St George's Round Church, Halifax

Fall lecture series:

History of the Little Dutch Church and the Community That Built It, Garry Shutlak, Saturday September 9, 2 pm, in the Little Dutch Church. Averting the Malignity of Slander: Treason, Murder, and a Conspiracy of Weak and Deluded Men, the story of the only man buried in St George's crypt, Matthew MacDonald, Saturday September 16, 2 pm, in the Round Church.

Sacred Geometry in the Architecture of the Round Church, 1800-1827, Matthew Vanderkwaak, Saturday September 30, 2 pm, in the Round Church

### Locations of subject matter in this issue



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