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The Griffin

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The Griffin

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President's Report



Joe Ballard

It may have gone unnoticed for many Nova Scotians, but we are expanding our sense of what can or ought to be recognized as having heritage value. Earlier this year, the Government of Canada announced designations of 17 new persons, places, and events of national significance; Nova Scotia was the big winner with 7 of 17 (or 8 if we claim Ozias Leduc for his fresco work at St Ninian's, Antigonish). This increased scope, which looks at persons and events, rather than just places, serves to expand the heritage narrative beyond architectural details. We see our new \$10 bill bringing attention to segregated spaces and a people's perseverance in the face of racism. Pushing the envelope further, Americans have begun to designate the sites of former slave markets. In Gibson Woods, Kings County, a former segregated school has just received a large investment from ACOA to help transform that humble landmark into an educational tourism destination. For several decades during the last century, school inspectors could recommend separate rooms or buildings for "different sexes or different colours," and Gibson Woods was one place where such powers were exercised despite racial integration being widespread at the time. Troubling

chapters and places warrant recognition too; in many cases their historical meanings are manifold.

More growth in recognizing heritage value has come from an organization known as Project Bookmark. This group was recently in Halifax to acknowledge the literary contribution of Hugh MacLennan's book, *Barometer Rising*, by commemorating a site associated with the book. The mandate of Project Bookmark does not limit it to landscapes associated with real stories but includes imagined ones as well. With two of its last six "bookmarks" being Bluenose sites (the other was Alistair MacLeod's, *No Great Mischief*, in Port Hastings) and no shortage of further candidates, we'll expect this group to be busy expanding its Can-Lit trail in this province.

One realm still largely unrecognized by built heritage advocates in our province is culinary. Perhaps it is time we give a nod to a place associated with Pictou County's brown sauce or Halifax's donairs. Food is a huge part of how visitors want to experience local culture. We are late to the table in this respect, but it is time to pursue municipal or provincial designation for places linked to our culinary heritage even if the related timeline is not extensive.

The intersection of legend and landscape also offers an opportunity to broaden the scope of what is perceived to have heritage value. 'Grandmother's Cooking Pot', that area of bubbling salt water near Partridge Island; or the 'Rejuvenating Pew' in Truro's Victoria Park, where twenty years of aging can be rolled back, are two singular examples of places with folkloric meanings and associations that are begging for recognition. An expansion in the scope of what we identify as having heritage value, whatever form that identification takes, will be beneficial for all heritage assets, not just those that are formally recognized. In this part of the world, a rising tide doesn't just lift all boats; it also means one is no longer stuck in the mud!

Cover image: *Twins*, by Minette Murphy, 2016, pen and diluted marker on paper, 9" x 12" (courtesy of the artist)

ARTIST

Minette Murphy



Brick House on Mitchell, by Minette Murphy, 2016, pen on paper, 9"x12" (courtesy of the artist); this is the house at 2 Mitchell Street on which there was an article in *The Griffin*, September 2016

Minette Murphy is an architecture student from Halifax, Nova Scotia. Her interest in heritage was sparked when she noticed more and more beautiful historic buildings being torn down in the city. She began documenting these buildings through drawing as a way to keep their memory alive. Minette hopes to bring attention to Halifax's decaying urban fabric, and to incite outrage at the destruction of the city's heritage. In addition to this documentation project, Minette has more recently begun doing commissions of private residences. minnettemurphy@hotmail.com



Shed [Halifax], by Minette Murphy, 2016, pen and diluted marker on paper, 5.5"x8.5" (courtesy of the artist)

Defending the Great Long Harbour - Halifax's Built Military Heritage During the First World War

John Boileau

This article is highly abbreviated from speaking notes for the lecture Col. Boileau delivered to the Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia on 19 October 2017.

This lecture considers the evolution of military built-heritage in Halifax and its part in the defence of “the great long harbour” during the First World War. We begin with the role of Halifax as an outpost of empire from its founding in 1749 until the last Imperial troops departed in March 1906.

The British left behind many valuable buildings and facilities, among them the Citadel, Royal Artillery Park, Wellington Barracks, Bellevue House, Admiralty House, and the Dockyard, as well as several forts and batteries, all of which were turned over to the Dominion government. Canada was now responsible for a larger share of its defence, an expense that the new country had largely avoided previously.

Admiralty House ... and Bellevue House ... witnessed teas and garden parties, banquets and balls

Halifax had profited greatly from the continued British military presence, with merchants, tradesmen, and farmers reaping the benefits of catering to this market. Businessmen entertained naval and army officers with oriental lavishness, hoping for lucrative contracts. Haligonians were also very conscious of the cosmopolitan look that large numbers of sailors and soldiers gave the city, which many felt elevated and refined the tone of Halifax society. On the other hand, the seedier side of life in a garrison town often showed itself in the dissipation of sailors and soldiers as well as incidents of public brawling.



'Enemy alien' internees, Halifax Citadel, ca 1917 (Nova Scotia Archives, Notman Studio Collection no. 47, scan 199900095)

Some felt the city had been hurt more than helped by being a garrison town, but others tacitly accepted it as part of the cost of maintaining the community's prosperity.

The officers entered into the city's high society, such as it was, their presence was eagerly sought, and they provided a large part of Halifax's upper-class activities. In spacious official mansions, the resident Royal Navy admiral and British Army general entertained lavishly. Admiralty House on Gottingen Street and Bellevue House at the corner of Queen Street and Spring Garden Road witnessed teas and garden parties, banquets and balls. It was at functions such as these that many a Halifax maiden met her future spouse, as British officers were highly sought-after as husbands for the daughters of the city's 'best families'.

The Army in Halifax in the 19th century was concentrated in two areas: in various barracks in and around the Citadel and, after 1860, at Wellington Barracks on the site of today's Stadcona. In November 1905, the Royal

Garrison Regiment and the Royal Artillery departed Halifax aboard the liner *Canada*, along with 123 women and 318 children. The very last British troops to leave were the Royal Engineers. In March 1906, they marched from Royal Artillery Park down Sackville Street and onto a waiting troopship to the strains of *Will Ye No Come Back Again?* As we know, they never did. Ironically, in a reversal of roles, it was Canadians – over a million strong – who went to Britain's aid during two World Wars, most departing through the Port of Halifax.

Imperial Military Properties Left to Canada

A plaque attached to a low cement wall between the Maritime Centre and St Matthew's Church marks the location of British Army headquarters. The HQ was located in the former home of a Halifax resident, Robert Noble. From 1862 until the departure of the British Army in 1906, this was the headquarters for Imperial forces. From 1906 to 1917,



Naval Hospital, Dockyard, Halifax, ca. 1883, later Royal Naval College of Canada (Nova Scotia Archives, Royal Engineers fonds no. 6871 (Piers 371A), scan 200600872)

it housed the Canadian headquarters of Military District no. 6, which covered the Maritime Provinces. Two granite War Department survey markers – indicated by “WD” and an arrow – in front of the plaque mark the property’s boundary and the right-of-way to Hollis Street, largely unseen and unnoticed by busy passers-by today.

The Citadel housed internees in casemates in the Northeast Salient and the Cavalier Block

The **Citadel** (more properly Fort George) is the fourth fort to have existed on this site, beginning with the founding of Halifax in 1749. From rough log palisades and blockhouses erected by the first settlers, to the fourth and present Citadel constructed between 1828 and 1856, Citadel Hill (a glacial drumlin) has successfully protected the townsite and harbour from a landward attack. During the First World War, the Citadel served as a command headquarters for the defences of Fortress Halifax, as well as barracks for soldiers. Also prisoners of war (more specifically “enemy alien”

internees) were held in the Citadel, just some of the 8,579 interned in 24 camps across the country.¹ The Citadel housed internees in casemates in the Northeast Salient and the Cavalier Block. By April 1915, the camp had become overcrowded and a new one opened at Amherst, with the Citadel now housing only officers.

The Wellington Barracks complex was planned as modern permanent accommodation for an infantry battalion

The **Wellington Barracks** complex was planned as modern permanent accommodation for an infantry battalion and approved for construction in December 1850, after a fire destroyed the existing North Barracks. Two large brick buildings were built. One housed 26 officers and the same number of servants. A larger brick building for the enlisted men was designed to house 555 NCOs and privates, plus a 40-bed hospital. The buildings were essentially completed by 1858 but, due to contract difficulties, full occupancy was not achieved until April

1860. By the 1890s, the complex included married officer quarters, a magazine, a shell store, several out-buildings, and a stable.

The “almost palatial” **Bellevue House** was built in 1801. With its formal gardens, it served as the residence of the British commanding officer. It was gutted by fire in 1885, but rebuilt. After the British left in 1905-1906, the house became an army officers’ mess, and following the Explosion it served as a temporary American hospital (see p.17). Bellevue was demolished in 1955 and the site became a parking lot until the new Central Library was built in 2012-2014.

Royal Artillery Park (RA Park), below the slopes of Citadel Hill, dates from 1797, when the land was acquired by Prince Edward for £150. It has been home to British and Canadian army units ever since. In 1800, Royal Engineer Square and the South Barracks were established on the east side of RA Park to provide accommodation for the Royal Engineers, long before the extension of Brunswick Street from Sackville to Spring Garden Road. Another early brick building still standing in RA Park is the **Cambridge Military Library** (see page 8). Over the years, the British Army erected several wooden buildings in RA Park for various military purposes. They were in poor condition when Canada took them over in 1906, but nevertheless provided valuable service for the next 40 years. Today, only two wooden buildings remain. The **Commanding Officer’s Residence**, on the east side of the now-demolished soldiers’ barracks, was completed in 1805. The **RA and RE Officers’ Mess** is the oldest military mess in Canada, serving officers of the Halifax garrison since 1816.²

The slopes around Citadel Hill were crowded with various military buildings. Almost all have since been torn down, but one group remains. Built in 1903, a long brick terrace on Brunswick Street, with twelve 1½- storey row houses, was originally named **Churchfield Barracks** (around the corner from the garrison church) but today is more commonly



Wellington Barracks, Halifax, 1872 or 1873 (Nova Scotia Archives, Royal Engineers, fonds no. 6970 (Piers 69), scan 200600688)

known as the 12 Apostles.

Near the end of the 19th century, the wooden drill sheds used by the militia on Spring Garden Road next to Bellevue House were in need of replacement. Such facilities for the militia – the part-time army reservists – were the responsibility of the Dominion government. To replace the sheds, the Halifax Armouries were designed in 1895 by the Chief Dominion Architect, Thomas Fuller. An article on this important military building is planned for a forthcoming issue of *The Griffin*.

Admiralty House ... was built on a hill overlooking the Dockyard as the official residence for the Commander-in-Chief of the North American and West Indies Station

Admiralty House, currently the home of the Naval Museum of Halifax, was built on a hill overlooking the

Dockyard as the official residence for the Commander-in-Chief of the North American and West Indies Station. Not only was the location handy to the Dockyard, but the harbour approaches beyond McNab's Island were clearly visible, an ideal vantage point for the commander in charge of an impressive fleet. Work on the house began in 1815 and after an interruption due to stone being used – rather than wood as the Admiralty had directed – it was nearly complete by the spring of 1818, when the first occupant, Rear Admiral Sir David Milne, moved in. Unfortunately, the building's glory days as an official residence were short-lived, as the Admiralty decided in 1819 to move the station headquarters to Bermuda, leaving the Halifax Dockyard as nothing more than a depot. Nevertheless, Admiralty House became a summer residence, as the Royal Navy fleet wintered in Bermuda and summered in Halifax. The latter half

of the 19th century was idyllic, as the navy's primary function was to show the flag and remind the United States that there was a military presence in Canada. Also in the Dockyard, the naval cemetery survives, containing some of the oldest graves in Halifax.

The First World War and the Explosion

By 1904, the political situation in Europe was changing and the face of Halifax was about to change forever. The British government recalled the Royal Navy and the Army, leaving Canada to its own devices. In January 1905, Admiralty House was closed and all the furnishings were sold at public auction. Five years later, the Naval Act of Canada was passed and the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) came into being. All the Royal Navy property, including Admiralty House, was transferred to Canada.

With the outbreak of war in 1914, the RCN needed a building for use as a hospital and Admiralty House took on a new life. The rooms on the first and second floors were used as wards, and the kitchen on the ground floor was used as the operating room. Admiralty House was damaged during the Explosion. The outer roof was blown off, the windows blew out, and the ceilings and walls collapsed. A small furnace in the front foyer tipped over and started a fire, but fortunately it was extinguished quickly. The patients were evacuated to the south end of the city and the house was closed. By 1919, however, Admiralty House was repaired and reopened as the Massachusetts Halifax Health Center Number One, serving as a public health facility for the north suburbs.

Needless to say, due to Halifax's location and valuable facilities, harbour defences were activated on the outbreak of war

Largely neglected after the British departure in 1906, the **Naval Dockyard** remained substantially unchanged when the First World War began in 1914. Rear Admiral R.S. Phipps-Hornby reported in June 1915 that the facilities could only meet the requirements of fishery protection vessels and had no modern machinery. Facilities at the Royal Navy dockyard at Bermuda were superior, yet he selected Halifax as the main base for his ships, due to its location, the ease of entering its harbour, and communications facilities. One of the more interesting remnants of the dockyard is the clock (now relocated to Chebucto Landing). The clock and its domed cupola were originally installed in 1772 and are the last remaining architectural fragments of the 18th-century dockyard structures. During the First World War, the clock and cupola graced the roof of the Hawser Stores. Completely hand tooled, the clock is the oldest working timepiece in Canada.

One of the few good things to happen once the government created the RCN was the establishment of the Royal



Members of 1st Regiment, Canadian Garrison Artillery, Fort Charlotte, Halifax, 1914, photographer: Climo (Nova Scotia Archives, Schooner Books, neg. no. N-6963)

Naval College of Canada (RNCC) in Halifax. The college occupied the old naval hospital at the extreme north end of the Dockyard, a long, narrow, four-storey, red-brick building built in the 1860s. The new college was to train prospective officers in naval science, tactics, and strategy and opened its doors in January 1911 with a class of twenty-one cadets. The Explosion badly damaged the college. Although its outer walls remained standing, interior walls and ceilings collapsed and windows shattered, causing a rain of chimney bricks and flying glass. Many of the cadets and staff were injured and two lost the sight in one eye. The RNCC re-opened in Esquimalt in August 1918 and never returned to Halifax.

Needless to say, due to Halifax's location and valuable facilities, harbour defences were activated on the outbreak of war. The various forts and batteries around the harbour were manned and armed with guns. Most were breech-loading and many were quick-firing. Additionally, some batteries were equipped with powerful searchlights for night use, and two submarine nets stretched across the harbour: an outer one from McNabs Island to Point Pleasant Park, and another from the Dartmouth side to Georges Island and then from the island

to the Halifax waterfront.

Two new military facilities constructed in Halifax during the First World War were medical centres.

Pier 2 was taken over by the military as a clearing hospital in 1916 and opened on 1 April 1917, as shown in a well-known sketch by war artist Arthur Lismer. It was totally destroyed by the Explosion.

Camp Hill Convalescent Hospital was originally intended to serve disabled veterans returning from overseas temporarily, before they were sent by train to their homes. It opened its doors in the fall of 1917 and was not yet fully equipped or operational. Although it had a capacity of 240 beds—100 of which were occupied—within 24 hours of the explosion it was stretched to the limits when more than 1400 patients were admitted.

Col. John Boileau is the author of 13 books and innumerable magazine and newspaper articles.

¹<https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/pn-np/ab/banff/decouvrir-discover/histoire-history/internement-internment>

²http://www.htns.ca/pdf_Griffin/2015/GRIFFIN_dec.2015.COLOUR.pdf pp. 4-5

Cambridge Military Library, Royal Artillery Park, Halifax

Peter F. Dawson

Note: The historical material in this paper is based almost entirely on Dr Shirley B. Elliott's paper, A library for the garrison and town: a history of the Cambridge Military Library, Royal Artillery Park, Halifax, Nova Scotia.¹ The original version of this paper was presented by Dr Elliott to the Antiquarian Club of Halifax in February 1988. Dr Elliott (1916-2004) was the honorary Librarian of the CML. From 1954 until her retirement, she served as the Legislative Librarian for the Province of Nova Scotia.²

On Friday, 1 December 2017, the Cambridge Military Library (CML) celebrated its 200th Anniversary as an institution within the Halifax garrison. Brigadier-General Derek Macaulay, Commander of the 5th Canadian Division, and members of the Library's Management Committee welcomed guests from across the city's heritage, academic, and library communities at an evening reception. The reception was also attended by other senior Canadian Army personnel including Commanding Officers, Honorary Colonels, and Honorary Lieutenant-Colonels from Halifax's Army Reserve units. Senior officials of the Royal Canadian Navy and Royal Canadian Air Force were also represented.

The event included a display of some of the CML's most interesting books, including rare volumes from the 18th and 19th centuries, put together by the CML's Librarian, Ms Coral Peterson. Many guests also took time to peruse the fascinating range of titles on the spines of the books in the library's glass-fronted bookcases. For some, it was their first glimpse inside this small but important piece of Halifax's military heritage. In his words of welcome, Brigadier-General Macaulay emphasized the role of the CML in the social life of early Halifax, as well as its important status as one of Canada's first non-university libraries. Guests were invited to drink a toast to



The 200th Anniversary reception in the library, 1 December 2017 (courtesy of Captain M.D.R. Prowse, Canadian Army)

the continued success of the CML as a research venue, a prized heritage building, and a community meeting place.

The CML was founded by the 9th Earl of Dalhousie, who also founded Dalhousie University, which is celebrating its own bicentennial in 2018. Both the CML and Dalhousie were initially funded by Sir John Coape Sherbrooke's expedition to Maine during the War of 1812, which resulted in British control of northern Maine. The British collected over £10,000 in duties, which became known as the Castine Fund. £1,000 of this was allocated for an Officers' Garrison Library,³ intended to provide reading materials appropriate to the officers of the British garrison. Its 1835 catalogue was divided into thirteen categories; the classes, "Voyages, Travels and Geography", and "Travels and Romances" being the largest, and "War and Military History" relatively small.⁴ During the 1860s the CML received books transferred from Corfu after the British Army departure in 1864. The "Corfu Collection" represented a valuable addition to the library, with volumes dating to as early as the 18th century.

The original library was located on Upper Water Street, but moved to

the Glacis Barracks in 1858, where it remained until it moved to its present site.⁵ In 1885, James Shand was commissioned to build a new Library in Royal Artillery Park, in return for title to the Upper Water Street property. The building was completed in November 1886, at a cost of £1350. By this time the library collection totaled some 3000 volumes.⁶

In 1902, the garrison received permission to name the library after His Royal Highness the 2nd Duke of Cambridge, a cousin of Queen Victoria and Commander-in-Chief of the British Army. When the British garrison left Canada in 1906, the library was transferred to the Canadian Militia, and continued to provide a service to the Halifax garrison and community. When the plaque to the right of the entrance was unveiled by the Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia in 1934, the *Halifax Mail* wrote that, "The Earl of Dalhousie... would have been proud of this well-built, finely appointed library which serves the needs of the military men of this post today."⁷

While a public library had existed in Halifax since 1864, the CML remained popular among its military and civilian



The Cambridge Military Library building was purpose-built and opened in 1886 (Griffin photo)

members as a social centre for dances, theatre and other occasions. But as Halifax expanded during the 20th century, together with its range of cultural activities, the relative importance of the CML declined. It continued to offer premises for reading and research, with new acquisitions primarily devoted to military history and science. In the late 20th century, CML hosted an annual garden party and Christmas reception, as well as providing a venue for events such as wedding receptions and private parties.⁸ It also hosted meetings for organizations, including the Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia.

In the early years of the 21st century, the CML has continued to evolve. Within the last decade, it has received two major collections: the map collection from the library of the now-defunct Pearson Peacekeeping Centre, and substantial accessions from the former library at Canadian Defence Liaison Staff (London). In addition, it continues to receive donated books, and a modest annual grant for book purchases. The focus of current acquisitions continues to be on military studies, while maintaining its historical collections.

At the same time, the CML provides a venue for meetings, training activities, social events and other activities. Since the 1990s, it has been used by the Canadian Army Command and Staff College, Kingston, to support courses for Army officers in Atlantic Canada. The CML is currently managed within the Headquarters of the 5th Canadian Division, which includes Canadian Army formations and units within Atlantic Canada.

The CML building itself is now over 130 years old. It represents a fine example of 19th century British military architecture, with its exterior and interior both relatively unaltered (except for the addition of the sunroom in the 1940s). A major restoration program is planned over the next few years. This will maintain the heritage character of the building, while performing necessary repairs and modernizing the mechanical systems to improve both energy efficiency and climate control (essential for conservation).

The CML remains open on a part-time basis, and continues to attract both tourists and researchers. The Management Committee is intending to put the catalogue on-line, making it accessible

to a global audience. Improvements in the CML's information technology will also make it a better research and learning facility, and a venue for conferences and other activities. In short, the CML is alive and well, as it begins its third century of service to the Army and the broader Halifax community.

Major Peter F. Dawson, CD, AdeC, is President of the Cambridge Military Library.

The Cambridge Military Library is currently open every Wednesday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. To book an appointment for research or a library tour, please contact Coral Peterson at (902) 427-4494 or by email at coral.peterson@forces.gc.ca.

¹Elliott, Shirley B., *A library for the garrison and town: a history of the Cambridge Military Library, Royal Artillery Park, Halifax, NS. Epilogue* (Fall 1989), no. 8, 1-11.

²Dr Elliott held the degrees BA, MA (Acadia), SB (Library Science) (Simmons College), an honorary DCL (Acadia, 1998) and an LLD (Dalhousie, 1995). Among her publications are: *Nova Scotia in Books, 1752-1967* (Halifax: The Halifax Library Association, 1967), *The Legislative Assembly of Nova Scotia, 1759-1983, a Biographical Directory* (Halifax: Province of Nova Scotia, 1984), *Nova Scotia in London: A History of its Agents General* (London: Office of the Agent General of Nova Scotia, 1988), and several entries in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*.

³Dalhousie had previously noted that, "there is not a Bookseller's shop in Halifax, nor is there an individual possessed of anything that can be called a Library." Earl of Dalhousie. *Journals*, p. 75.

⁴A copy of the *Rules and Catalogue* is located at the Nova Scotia Legislative Library.

⁵Harry Piers, *Evolution of the Halifax Fortress*. Halifax: Public Archives of Nova Scotia (1942), p. 61. Elliott however suggests the possibility of other locations before the 1886 relocation.

⁶Elliott's paper provides a figure of 30,000. I believe this to be a typographic error, based on the CML's limited shelf space, and its current collection of 12,500 volumes.

⁷*Halifax Mail* (29 October 1934), p.3.

⁸As another example, the June 1988 meeting of the Library History Interest Group of the Canadian Library Association was held in this library.

Das Ältestes Haus: Lunenburg's Oldest (80-82 Pelham Street)

Paula Kinley Howatt

My family and I are very proud of our family history and ownership of 80-82 Pelham Street, Lunenburg, which has long been recognized as the oldest house in this historic town. I am the present owner of this house, which has belonged to members of my family for five generations.

The house is strategically nestled in the centre of the town's UNESCO World Heritage district¹, overlooking the harbour, on the corner of Duke and Pelham Streets.

House within a house

Historical research suggests that a structure existed on this site during the Acadian period of the 1600s, long before records of deeds. Various experts have examined the house, particularly the construction materials, and have found evidence of Acadian design. These elements of the house are believed to predate the settlement of the Foreign Protestants,² who received grants from the British government when Lunenburg was established in 1753.

... elements of the house are believed to predate the settlement of the Foreign Protestants ...

My father, the Hon. John James Kinley, was a local businessman, who was appointed to be the Queen's representative for Nova Scotia and was honoured to serve as the province's 29th Lieutenant Governor. He loved his hometown of Lunenburg and especially treasured this historic property. Many years before my father's death, he and I worked together for a long time organizing information about the Pelham house. He left me his personal notes regarding the heritage of the property.

My Dad noted that this house is often referred to as the Romkey House. It was my father's contention that the



Upper bedroom with exposed beams; dormer at right (out of frame) overlooks the harbour (Griffin photo)



The house has tin ceilings in the former Customs office (seen here) and other parts of the main and lower floors; note double doors opening to the street, as seen in the historic photo (Griffin photo)



Pelham Street façade of the Ältestes Haus (Oldest House) in Lunenburg; note harbour view, Duke Street at left, side lot at right, plaque, and hydrant at the corner (Griffin photo)



Corner view with Ina Romkey at the door of the room that was used for many years as the Customs office; date unknown but after installation of fire hydrants in 1903³ and believed to postdate WW I (courtesy of the author)

house was too ancient and too historic to be named after only one family of owners, even if they were our family relatives. He liked to refer to the house in German as *das Ältestes Haus*. He made a second plaque, which he put on the outside of the house, using the German translated to mean Oldest House – thus the name which we hope will be used for this historic treasure.

During repairs, it was revealed that the house encloses a smaller, much older house, with architectural characteristics confirmed by independent professionals to be those of an Acadian home. As a young child my father was told by his family, and always told us, it was “a house within a house”. My father inherited the house from Ina Romkey in 1972. He closed a stairway Ina had constructed in the centre of the house and during this time of repair, he consulted with building inspectors, architects, and experts with Parks Canada. They confirmed that the central construction

was of a more primitive, much earlier Acadian design and suggested that the house could have been built as early as 1630, when historical records confirm that these lands were occupied by Acadians who were fishing and farming and living peacefully in the area known as Mirliguèche Bay, now Lunenburg Harbour.

Customs House

For years, this home served as the Customs House, a centre of commerce where those entering the harbour came to register their merchandise. I was always told by my family that the rooms on the left side along Duke Street, with the double doors, served as the customs office.

My father had the title to the property searched through the land registry. This revealed that a Crown Grant was made of the property to Bernhardt Keller as part of the land grants to German settlers after the expulsion of the Acadians. The deeds reveal that the property changed hands after Keller to successive German settlers: George Unstadt, Henry Kistner, and Jacob Ulshe. In 1760 the house was sold to Colonel Anderson, a planter from Pennsylvania who paid £180 for the property. I understand that Col. Anderson changed the structure to an American style known as New York Dutch. The house has retained this form with minor alterations up to the present time.

For years this home served as the Customs House ...

The recorded information shows that Col. Anderson lived in the house for several years while he was building or had built other houses along Pelham Street, particularly the north end of Pelham, known to this day as the 'Anderson Houses'. Col. Anderson sold the house to John Oxner, who willed it to his relative, Lewis Oxner, the Vendor to my relative, J. Edward Dowling.

The 1871 Census shows a northern Irish Dowling family living in Lunenburg at this Pelham Street address. The cen-

sus lists the father, J. Edward Dowling, his wife Mary Ann Dowling, and their six children. It records Edward Dowling as Collector of Customs and thus explains why the house was used as the customs office. A civil servants' list from 1885 to 1889 confirms Edward Dowling as a Collector of Customs, first appointed on 1 October 1869.

One of the six Dowling children, Mary Dowling, was my great grandmother. She married Bruno Young. Their oldest child, Lila, my paternal grandmother, married John James Kinley

Senior. Their son, John James Kinley Jr, was my father.

Another Dowling daughter, Ella, and her husband became owners of the property. A marriage record shows that Ella Dowling married William Romkey in Hyde Park, Massachusetts, on 7 September 1872. Aunt Ella was a beautiful seamstress. I have many pieces of her handiwork, including her wedding dress and her daughter's christening dress, worn by my father, myself, my three children, my grandson, and other family for four generations.

Uncle Will and Aunt Ella had one



Basement stairway (one of three) leading up from original kitchen and dining room (Griffin photo)



Upper landing with view through front dormer and exposed cladding of the 'house-within-a-house' (Griffin photo)

child, Ina Dowling Romkey, born in June 1893. Ina never married. Legend is that her boyfriend was killed in the war. Ina inherited the property on her mother's death and bequeathed it to my father. It was my father's wish that I receive the property, which was transferred several years ago.

Later history

My husband Eric and I had our wedding rehearsal party hosted in the home's formal dining room and lived in the house when our eldest son, Matthew, was a young child. My brother, J. Edward Kinley, also lived in the house and brought his son, Andrew, home there as a new baby.

I have many wonderful memories of visits with Ina and of family dinner parties at the house. Ina was kind-hearted and admired by all. She was like a second grandmother to me; we were very close. She happily accepted the name I gave her as a young child: 'Niney'. Ina had a diploma in shorthand and worked alongside my grandfather Kinley in Lunenburg, in Halifax when he was MLA, and on Parliament Hill in Ottawa

when he was MP and then Senator for the South Shore. While Ina was working in Ottawa, she rented a portion of the Pelham house. She never forgot her Lunenburg roots and kept a second apartment for herself, thus the two units (80-82 Pelham Street).

... the house encloses a smaller, much older house with architectural characteristics of an Acadian home

During the Second World War, Ina rented part of the house to Norwegian military officers and their wives. Lunenburg had a training camp, known as Camp Norway, set up in 1940 to assist Norwegian seaman who could not safely return to their home country following the German invasion. Camp Norway was important to the history of Lunenburg and the province. Both my grandfather and my father received medals from the King of Norway for their assistance to the Norwegians, who were provided with support and friendship in Lunenburg and other parts of the province. Our house became a gathering place for the Norwegians during

this period. When they vacated Camp Norway at the end of the war, it was taken over by Canadian naval personnel. During that time, the commanding officer, Lt Cdr Thomas Barbour, and his wife rented part of the house.

In September each year, Niney spent her holidays volunteering at the Fisheries Exhibition housing office. I loved being with her then and watching as she worked for hours helping to find accommodation in private homes for the many visitors to this special, traditional, Lunenburg week-long event. I am sure she would be happy to know that her home has now been opened to visitors as a vacation rental property.

My husband, our daughter Stephanie, and I recently oversaw a reconstruction and renovation project, which lasted over two years. We worked alongside the lead carpenter, Travis Hiltz, and other skilled local tradespeople to address the many needed repairs to the house, while striving to preserve the home's history and charm. We are proud to preserve this heritage and are happy that this home is now a place where individuals and families can come to visit, relax, and enjoy Lunenburg, the home's history, and the panoramic view of the harbour. This rental format also enables my family to still enjoy the home, with all its memories. The rental listing can be found under 'Lunenburg's Oldest House' on Airbnb, Booking.com, Cottages in Canada, and Canada Stays, or inquiries to oldesthouse01@bellaliant.net

Paula Kinley Howatt is the eldest daughter of a former Lieutenant Governor, the late Hon. John James Kinley, and present owner of the property.

¹<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/741>

²<https://archives.novascotia.ca/genealogy/foreign-protestants>

³<http://ldfd.ca/about-us/history>

Mantel Tales

Lyndon Watkins

Draw back the bolt, push open the gate, and step inside the cluster of Georgian cottages on Birmingham Street in Halifax. Ask yourself: *Why do these simple structures have such long-lasting appeal?* You smile at their playful, doll's-house proportions, and wonder who lived there a century or more ago. Step further into the garden and you lose the strident clamour of the city to discover privacy, peace, and tranquility.

Without any written record of their construction, it is impossible to know exactly when they were built and by whom. But the first occupants are thought to have been the four daughters of Christian and Elizabeth Schmidt, he a German artillery officer from Dresden, she the daughter of James Pedley, a Birmingham immigrant land owner from England.

Successive generations lived and died here in houses physically sturdy but very spartan, to the extent that, after the indoor plumbing was installed, two cottages shared a single toilet. The flight to the suburbs that followed WW II hastened the cottages' decline.

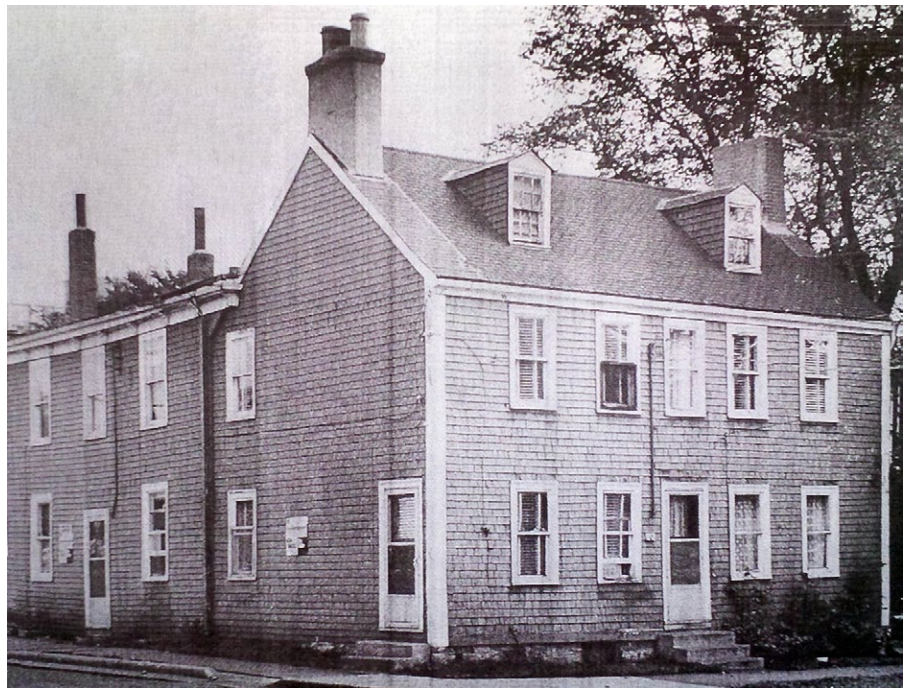
This amazing find was, in every respect, characteristically Georgian ...

By that time, the sills had rotted, causing the floors to sag. Four layers of roofing material no longer kept out the rain, and snow blew in through holes in the exterior cladding. Rents were as low as \$40 a month, hardly enough to buy oil for the kitchen range, the sole source of heat. One lucky couple saw their chance to escape from this when they won the lottery. Their departure prompted a takeover by new owners and the start of the physical rejuvenation of the houses.

Outwardly the buildings remained much as the Schmidts had known them. The plaster and lath ceilings and the fireplace mantels were gone, removed



The south cottage in Lyndon Watkins' cluster of Georgian cottages on Birmingham Street, Schmidville, Halifax (courtesy of Elizabeth Burke, reproduced from The Griffin, September 2013)



House on Dresden Row from which the mantels were rescued, as it looked shortly before demolition (courtesy of the author)



Rescued mantel in the dining room (courtesy of Lyndon Watkins, reproduced from *The Griffin*, September 2013)

by necessity during the restoration. While the ceilings couldn't be saved, infilling between the beams with plaster board enhanced both appearance and spaciousness. Finding a sympathetic replacement for the missing mantels, however, seemed well-nigh impossible until two renovation scavengers happened upon the unfortunate but fortuitous demolition of a house on Dresden Row, which some think may have been the family home of the Schmidts.

The work was being done by hand, mechanical wrecking still in its infancy. So it was possible to find salvageable items like the mantel seen propped against a wall. I could hardly contain my excitement when I asked one of the workmen what would happen to the mantel. Surprised that anyone would want it, he settled for \$5. This amazing find was, in every respect,

characteristically Georgian, beautifully proportioned, and exquisitely decorated. It took months of TLC to remove layer upon layer of encrusted lead paint. But what emerged was a mantel in age and design worthy of anything that once came from the studio of the great Scottish architects Robert and James Adam. Transported to Birmingham Street, it fit perfectly into the fireplace. Better by far than anything previously discovered in Schmidville, it raises intriguing questions of origin. Was this the work of a gifted local artisan, or was it brought here by sailing ship from Boston or Great Britain? We may never know. But this mantel is as glorious as any now found in Government House.

And that isn't all. By an almost incredible coincidence, a second mantel was rescued from the same site by my interior decorator friend, Harvey Ayre.

Not quite as elaborate as the first, it once graced a parlour in the Dresden Row home. Harvey found it on the sidewalk after the demolition and used it in his design work until infirmity forced him to retire. He graciously allowed me to have it, saving two important artifacts from the recurring and shameful destruction of Halifax's Georgian past.

Lyndon Watkins has conserved more than a dozen old houses, including this cluster in Schmidville. A co-founder of Frank magazine, he has played key roles in the Friends of the Public Gardens and the Friends of Schmidville. In 2013, he was honoured with a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Heritage Trust.¹

¹See *The Griffin*, v. 38 (3), September 2013, pp. 8 and 9-11.

Halifax, City of Sadness and the White Star Connections

Blair Beed

The following is drafted from notes by Blair Beed and the illustrations from his HTNS lecture in November 2017.

Exhibition

To mark the 100th Anniversary of the Halifax Harbour Explosion, Saint Patrick's Parish mounted a remarkable public exhibition in the parish hall on Brunswick Street, Halifax, from 23 November to 6 December 2017. Entitled *People in the Face of Disaster: Remembering the Halifax Explosion*, it was organized by Blair Beed, Church Historian and Project Chair, with the assistance of Emilie Pothier, Patrick Murphy, and Rick Butler (Co-Chair, Saint Patrick's Restoration Society). The exhibit was not limited to the story of the parish, although Saint Patrick's was very much affected – many parishioners were victims, the church was severely damaged, and a temporary sanctuary had to be set up in the Casino Theatre, Gottingen Street. The hall (basement), where the exhibit was held, was the 1200-seat lower church, which was pressed into service after a month of repairs. It was a year before services could return to the main-floor sanctuary.

The exhibits ranged across the community, featuring stories of people and organizations from Halifax, Dartmouth, and beyond who were connected unexpectedly to the worst disaster in Canadian history.

Members of the Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia were invited to a preview of the exhibits at a tea kindly hosted by members of Saint Patrick's Parish. This was much appreciated.

Based on Beed's books (*1917 Halifax Explosion and American Response* and *L'explosion de 1917 à Halifax et les secours américains*), the exhibition gathered materials from a wide range of sources. Among others, Janet Kitz, author of *Shattered City*, kindly contributed



Replica of a North End Halifax parlour before the Explosion – the war was on everyone's mind because of the large number of Canadian men and women serving overseas and the terrible losses, but the devastation wreaked on Halifax and Dartmouth was entirely unforeseen (courtesy of Blair Beed)



Hearses lined up on Halifax wharf, 6 May 1912 (Nova Scotia Archives Photograph Collection, Transportation & Communication, Ships & Shipping, RMS Titanic #3, scan 200501033)



American relief workers, probably including members of Harvard University medical team, standing in front of Bellevue, the American relief hospital on Spring Garden Road at the corner of Queen Street (now the site of the Central Library), Halifax, International Film Service, December 1917 (Nova Scotia Archives, Nathaniel N. Morse Collection, 1989-298, scan 200200021)

maps and photographic panels, while survivor families loaned books, photographs, and furniture for the display. The collection of historical photographs was quite extraordinary.

Two thousand pieces of glass, in all shapes and sizes, scattered around the hall represented the approximate number of those who died on 6 December 1917 or later from their injuries. The glass was also symbolic of the many who suffered eye injuries or were blinded by flying glass. The exhibits included representations of comfortable rooms with family treasures that seemed secure before the disaster. In another area was a school room with the Explosion's

date written on the board, ready for an ordinary day of classes in the lead-up to Christmas. Elsewhere were shattered rooms and a debris pile. Projected on a screen were 13 minutes of silent film documenting rescue, recovery, and rebuilding activities in the immediate aftermath of the disaster.¹

Stories of assistance from across the country and American neighbours were part of the exhibition too. Africville offered care to survivors coming along the rail line from Richmond and helped them on to the Sisters of Charity at Mount Saint Vincent Academy. The incoming train that was stopped at Rockingham before the Explosion was filled

with injured and dying in Richmond and returned immediately to Truro, where temporary hospitals were set up in the Courthouse, Normal School (now the Library), and the Fire Hall. Rapid assistance came from other rail-connected communities including Bridgewater, Windsor, and New Glasgow. American sailors in port were quick to offer help, including a work party that boarded up windows to help keep some heat at Victoria Hall. Offers of help came in the same day from the State of Maine and a relief train departed from Boston that evening, travelling through the blizzard, arriving in Halifax on December 8. The Boston Red Cross Hospital Unit arrived



SS *Imo* aground on the Dartmouth shore not long after the Explosion; the French Cable Building can be seen in the distance (courtesy of the Marine History Collection, Nova Scotia Museum, MMA MP207.1.184/270)

shortly after and set up at Saint Mary's College, while the State of Maine Hospital Unit took over the Halifax Ladies College. The Rhode Island Red Cross sent 52 doctors and 52 nurses, and so it continued. Help poured in from across Canada and the United States, and financial aid from the King and Queen, other members of the Royal Family, the City of London, and British possessions from Newfoundland to Hong Kong.²

The exhibition was open for the two weeks leading up to the 100th Anniversary. It was intended to share the stories of ordinary citizens who did remarkable things on that fateful day and during the recovery that followed. And there were many stories to be found. But as the handout said, "Thank you for visiting Saint Patrick's Hall. We could not cover the stories of all 60,000 residents and thousands of military [personnel] in Halifax on December 6, 1917, or all those who came to help. With approximately 2,000 dead, 9,000 injured, and 25,000 without adequate shelter, there are stories still being discovered."

Lecture

The Saint Patrick's exhibition was one of many special exhibits, panels, talks, walks, and memorial services organized in the weeks and days leading up to the Anniversary. On Thursday, 16 November

2017, Blair Beed presented an illustrated lecture in the Trust's regular monthly series. Entitled 'Halifax, City of Sadness and the White Star Connections', it recalled the prominent and traumatic role that seamen and citizens of Halifax played in the recovery of bodies following the loss of the "unsinkable" White Star liner *RMS Titanic* in 1912. Beed identified a number of connections between the loss of *Titanic*, the White Star Line, and the Explosion, just five years later.

Many victims of the *Titanic* sinking were brought to Halifax, where they were buried in the Fairview Lawn Cemetery and two others in the city. Memorial or burial services were held in the Starr Street Synagogue, St Paul's Church, St Mary's Cathedral Basilica, All Saints Cathedral, Brunswick Street Methodist Church, and St George's (Round) Church. A gravestone in the Christ Church Cemetery in Dartmouth commemorates *Titanic* victim and prominent businessman, George Wright, who bequeathed his home on Young Avenue at Inglis Street to the Local Council of Women (his body was never recovered).

Some of the people involved in handling the *Titanic* victims would later be caught up in the management of the Explosion dead. The system of cataloguing victims' effects developed at the time of the *Titanic* loss would be adopted again following the Explosion.

An ironic link between the *Titanic* sinking and the Halifax Harbour Explosion is the White Star connection. *Titanic* was the pride of the White Star Line in 1912 and sailed on her maiden voyage. Her sister ship, *RMS Olympic*, was converted to a troopship during the First World War and called frequently in Halifax for many years after³. *SS Imo*, the Norwegian-flagged Belgian Relief vessel that collided with *Mont-Blanc* in the Halifax Narrows, setting off the Explosion, was originally launched in 1889 as the White Star cargo liner *Runic*. Sold in 1895 to the West Indies and Pacific Steamship Line, she was renamed *Tampican*. Passing through other owners, the ship was sold in 1912 to the Southern Pacific Whaling Company out of Kristiania, Norway, and renamed *Imo*. Following the Explosion, *Imo* was refloated, repaired, and put back into service in 1918. Renamed again *Governøren* in 1920, she foundered in the Falkland Islands the following year – a ship of many lives and names.

Blair Beed's encyclopedic knowledge and remarkable collection of photographs made for a highly entertaining and educational evening. Through his lecture and the exhibition at Saint Patrick's, he made important contributions to the remembrance of Explosion victims leading up to the 100th Anniversary.

Blair is a Halifax historian, author, and tour guide, a life member of Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia, and a former program chair and member of the HTNS Board.

¹ Available on the virtual archive of Nova Scotia Archives (<https://novascotia.ca/archives/virtual/?Search=THexp&List=all>)

² Blair Beed, *1917 Halifax Explosion and American Response*. Halifax: Nimbus (1999).

³ Arthur Lismer's painting of *Olympic* in dazzle camouflage, alongside in Halifax with troops returning from the war, graced the December 2017 cover of *The Griffin*. Some suggest that the soldier standing in the lower right corner is A.Y. Jackson, a fellow war artist, who is said to have been visiting Lismer when this painting was completed.

Pictou Parade of Sale (Part 1)

Michelle Davey

There are many remarkable heritage properties for sale in Pictou these days, at very reasonable prices. Some are in desperate need of new owners to maintain the distinctive built heritage of this early Scottish community and cradle of education in Nova Scotia.

Pictou County Jail 1890
28 Willow Street, Pictou.
\$190,000



Architect: Melville McKean.
Lot size: 0.47 acres.
Building size: 6843 sq. ft.
Zoning: commercial. Includes most contents and furnishings and two paved parking areas to the front and back of the building.
History and heritage features: This sandstone block structure, Second Empire in design, with a mansard roof and quoin work, served as the Pictou County jail from 1890 to 1969. Until recently, it housed the Pictou County Municipal Offices. The building experienced a sprinkler problem after it was vacated and all of the walls and some of the interior structures had to be removed. All that remains on the two bottom floors are the wall frames (metal) and the upper floor has partial walls, where water damage was removed. Therefore this building is an open slate, ready for any business or renovation project.

27 Water Street 1825
\$172,500



Lot size: just under 1 acre.
Building size: 3900 sq. ft.
Zoning: commercial. This building offers a great business opportunity in the heart of Pictou. It is close to the waterfront, and offers 3 levels of commercial and retail space to display or grow a business. Two large street level windows are great for advertising. There is plenty of street parking and a lot at the rear of the building.
History and heritage features: Originally a stone block building, the front half was renovated to a storefront prior to 1878. Flat roof with parapet on façade. Rear half is original vernacular stone block construction. The original owner was John Patterson Jr (son of the founder of Pictou). The building has always been a store of some sort.

Stonehouse ca. 1832
13 Water Street, Pictou.
\$299,500

Building size: 2150+ sq. ft.
Zoning: commercial. Where modern meets history. Unique stone building in the heart of Pictou with full undeveloped basement and water view. Combine your business and living quarters. The upstairs 3-bedroom apartment was extensively renovated 9 years ago with an open concept living & dining room. Very spacious master bedroom with ensuite, two huge bedrooms on the top floor with adjoining bathroom. The retail space includes two large windows for maximum visual exposure, and another space that would make a great office. The 800+ sq. ft storefront is ready to be fully developed.



History and heritage features: 2.5-storey vernacular stone block construction. Symmetrical 5 bay façade, recessed door framed by display windows. Steep-pitch front gabled roof, end wall chimneys, two Scottish dormers, 6 over 6 windows west slope, 1 bricked in dormer east slope. Quoins, belt course, and stone window casements.

Programs Sponsored by Other Societies

Chester Municipal Heritage Society

AGM and Presentation: **The Life and Times of the Shubenacadie Canal**, lecture by Syd Dumaresq, describing the replica of the Flume House, which his firm designed, and the background story of the canal. St Stephens Anglican Hall, Regent Street, Chester. 27 April, 7:00 pm.

Dartmouth Heritage Museum

Evergreen House, 26 Newcastle Street, Dartmouth NS

Mother's Day Tea at Evergreen, hosted by Claudia Chender, MLA: 12 May, 11am. Celebrate Mother's Day with delicious scones, cookies and sandwiches, along with piping hot Morse's tea. No charge, but space is limited. Please RSVP with Grace at chenderoutreach@gmail.com or (902) 406-2301.

Fort Sackville Foundation

Learn about the new Arctic Patrol Vessel being launched in Halifax in 2018 and about the man it was named for: Harry DeWolf. 3 April, 7pm, at Lebrun Centre, Bedford. Admission free, donations gratefully accepted. For more information call 902 835 8076.

Hammonds Plains Historical Society

Meetings held at Cornerstone Wesleyan Church, 1215 Hammonds Plains Road
AGM and Presentation: **The History of the St. Nicholas Church Cemetery**, 28 May, 7:00 pm. Open to the general public with refreshments provided.
hammondsplainshistoricalsociety.ca

Kings County Museum

37 Cornwallis Street, Kentville NS
Opens for the summer season, 2 April
kingscountymuseum.ca; [facebook.com/kingscountymuseum](https://www.facebook.com/kingscountymuseum)

Mahone Bay Founders Society and The Mahone Bay Museum

7th Annual Heritage Awards Dinner, 21 April at the Legion Hall in Mahone Bay.
Tickets \$30: available online, at Kinburn Pharmasave and from board members; call 902-627-1091.
The Heritage Recognition Awards recognize individuals, groups or projects that have made an exceptional contribution to the heritage of Mahone Bay and area.
For more info and nomination forms: mahone-baymuseum.com.

McCulloch House Museum & Genealogy Centre

86 Haliburton Road, Pictou NS
Tartan Day Events: 8 April, Stone Soup Café Scottish Breakfast 8:30-12:30, Gaelic Poetry & Prose: Music, Haggis, Dance 6:00 pm.
mccullochcentre.ca

Nova Scotia Archaeology Society

Public lectures held at Burke Theatre A, Saint Mary's University, Halifax
New Approaches to the Rock Art of the Canadian Maritimes, lecture by Bryn Tapper: 24 April, 7:30 pm.
Aboriginal Archaeology in Northwest Australia, lecture by Ben Pentz: 22 May, 7:30 pm.
nsarchaeology.com; [facebook.com/nsarchaeology/](https://www.facebook.com/nsarchaeology/)

Royal Nova Scotia Historical Society

Public lectures held at Public Archives of Nova Scotia, 6016 University Avenue, Halifax. Free admission.
The Citadel on Stage, lecture by Alex Boutillier: 18 April, 7:30 pm
Medicine at the Fortress of Louisbourg: Trauma, Disease, and Cultural Influences, lecture by Jeanette Verleun and Dr. Carly MacLellan, 16 May, 7:30 pm.
rnshs.ca; [facebook.com/TheRoyalNovaScotiaHistoricalSociety](https://www.facebook.com/TheRoyalNovaScotiaHistoricalSociety)

Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia

Illustrated Public Lecture Series

THURSDAY APRIL 19

Allan B Robertson:
Hantsport: Industries Found in a Small Village

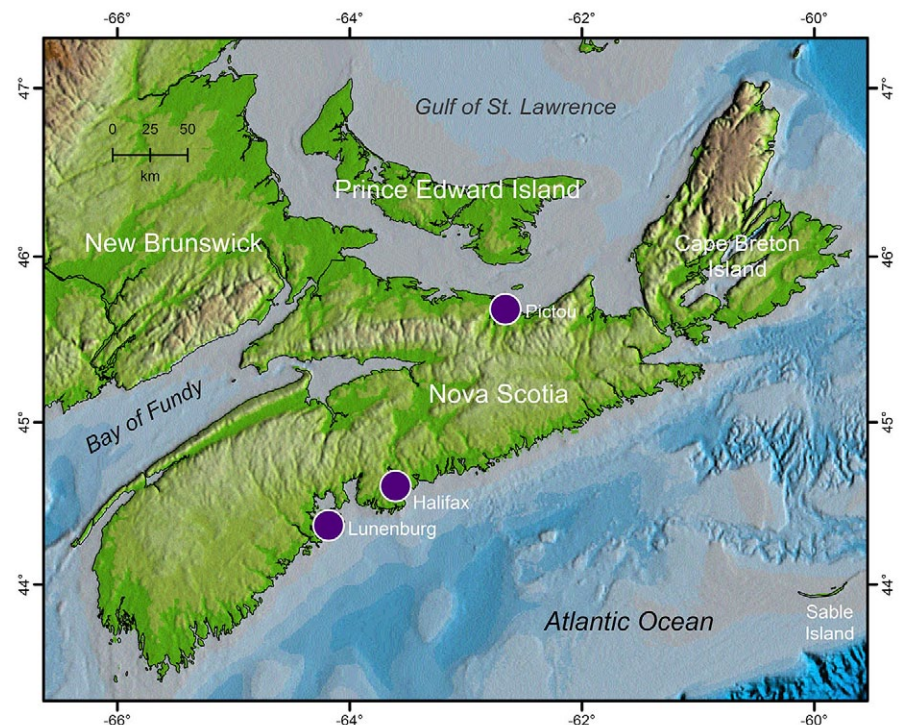
THURSDAY MAY 17

Anita Jackson:
Gardens Lost and Found

All talks take place at 7:30 pm

Museum of Natural History Auditorium
1747 Summer Street, Halifax
Information: 423-4807
Facebook @HeritageTrustNovaScotia

Locations of subject matter in this issue



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