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The Griffin

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3 ARTIST **Seeing the Past Through an Artist's Eyes: Janet Cordelia McKean**
Allen B. Robertson

7 LECTURE **David Jones: Downtown Dartmouth Heritage Conservation District**
Donald Forbes

10 INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE **The Industrial Origin of Stellarton (Albion Mines)**
David Rollinson

12 NEWS **Updates from around the Province**

15 ADAPTIVE RE-USE IN THE PANDEMIC **Open for Business: Art Galleries in Historic Buildings • Part II**
Michal Crowe

The Griffin

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President's Report

Andrew Murphy

Many years ago, I bought an old, run-down building on the corner of Clyde and Birmingham in Halifax. It was mostly rented to students and was really only notable for its forthright homeliness. Today, the building sits at the entrance to the recently-created Heritage Conservation District known as Schmidville.

After years of study and delay, the district was created, and all of a sudden the building had far better zoning rights. One can now have more and smaller units than before, and, importantly, the ground floor can be commercial. The option for smaller units helps to ensure that Schmidville can continue to accommodate a mix of household sizes and income levels. The commercial option enables an appropriate adaptive

continued on page 6



Restored shop front at the corner of Birmingham and Clyde streets, Halifax (accessible entrance at far right end of building)

Cover image: Old College, Pictou, by Janet C. McKean, 1932, watercolour on paper (courtesy Nova Scotia Archives, accession no. 1979-147.146)

Seeing the Past Through an Artist's Eyes: Janet Cordelia McKean

Allen B. Robertson

Art, whether through paintings, drawings, prints, or etchings, has served historians in their studies of architecture. That is no less the case here in Nova Scotia. Buildings now missing from the landscape and those that have survived the years through various uses and alterations can be attested to in artists' creations. Even allowing for creative licence (adding or omitting details), these images document changes in both urban and rural settings in their uses, architectural styles, and any persistence of older building techniques. This article looks to the legacy of one artistically gifted woman, Janet Cordelia McKean, of Pictou, who has left behind her vision of the natural and cultural landscape, whether impressionist or exceptionally detailed. The paintings show Nova Scotia through her eyes and artist's skills.

Janet C. McKean (1887-1964) was the daughter and granddaughter of Pictou area architects, quarrymen, and builders. Her grandfather, Adam McKean (1822-1910), with his son Albert, formed the company of Adam McKean and Sons, Architects and Builders, in 1879.¹ He also operated the family-owned Belleville Free Stone Quarry, which supplied stone for many structures in the Pictou area.¹ The historic Bank of Nova Scotia (c.1878), in the Second Empire style, is an example of Adam McKean's work. This heritage structure remains as a point of interest in Pictou's heritage walking guide.

*Janet C. McKean (1887-1964)
was the daughter and granddaughter
of Pictou area architects,
quarrymen, and builders*

Janet's father, Melville McKean (1855-1931), was a plumbing engineer, studied design (probably through initial tutelage under his father, Adam), and went on to a career as a local supervising architect with the Dominion



View of Jimtown, near Antigonish, by Janet C. McKean, c. 1918 (courtesy Antigonish Heritage Museum and private owners)

government, along with his private practice.² His 1890 design for the Pictou County Jail (also in Second Empire style) produced a surviving two-storey building with a four-sided mansard roof and dormers. Janet and her siblings moved with their parents (Melville had married Mary Munro, a daughter of sailmaker Hugh Munro) to various postings: Moncton, North Sydney, possibly for a time Antigonish, and back to Pictou. The last three places would feature in Janet's artwork.

After completing her education in Moncton (1904), Janet travelled to New York to further her art studies at the innovative institution generally known as Cooper Union (Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art), which she attended from 1906 to 1908. It is known that she studied clay modelling, painting, and more. The *New York Times* (4 June 1908, p. 6) carried an account of a showing at the school: "The annual exhibition of the Women's Art School of Cooper Union shows a large variety



Pictou skyline from Pictou Bar, with corner of lighthouse shed at left and a schooner dropping sail on entering the harbour, by Janet C. McKean, unsigned and undated (courtesy of John M. MacLean)



Sydney steel works viewed from North Sydney, by Janet C. McKean, 1923 (courtesy of Maritime Odd Fellows Home in Pictou)

of examples and obvious industry on the part of the students ... a prize (sic) of [\$10.00] for the best water color work goes to Miss Janet C. MacKean (sic)." Watercolour remained Janet's preferred medium for many years, though later in life she gave classes in pottery. Subsequent records show Janet back in Nova Scotia with her parents in North Sydney (1911 and 1921 federal census), listed as "artist." It is known that she taught art to young students there, as she would later in Pictou during the 1940s and 1950s (in the pay of the Department of Education).

The contrast between old and new technology adds to the painting's visual and historical interest as an artistic depiction of industrial Cape Breton

Among those who studied with Janet McKean, at least two are known. One was Ruth (Salter) Wainwright (b. 1902 North Sydney, d. 1984), who went on to a well established career as a modernist painter, particularly in watercolour. Another, possibly, was Nita DesBarres (d. 1976 aged 76 at Pictou), a noted potter whose work is highly collectible. DesBarres began art studies at Mount Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick, went on to engage in metal work and jewellery design, with work experience in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Halifax (Birks) and New York. After serving as a supervisor of women working in the Pic-

tou shipyard during WW II, Nita bought a house on Denoon Street in Pictou. For a few years both Janet McKean and Nita DesBarres taught evening art classes at the Pictou vocational school.

Following the death of her parents, Janet lived for a time at 32 Kent Street in Halifax. She joined the Maritime Art Association in 1932. In the association's travelling exhibition, at least one of her paintings appeared (*Along Market Street, Halifax, N.S.* [whereabouts unknown]). One of her last commissions (1957-1958) was for three watercolours of floral arrangements for her cousin Zoe (Munro) MacLean, now in the possession of the latter's son, John M. MacLean.

Two of Janet McKean's earliest known paintings are of Jimtown, at the mouth of Antigonish Harbour (one dated 1916, the other possibly 1918). These show a large house, a barn, outbuildings, and what appear to be cottages, most of which have since disappeared. In the painting, these structures are finely detailed, despite the small, background setting. Another watercolour (1918) of Crystal Cliffs, further along the shore, depicts a fine sailboat on the water and a small skiff drawn up on the beach, while the fisherman is seen walking away with his fishing pole. In 1923, Janet depicted two schooners off North Sydney; in the background are the stacks of the steel works spewing smoke, some of which is a luminescent reddish-orange. The contrast between old and new technology adds to the painting's visual and

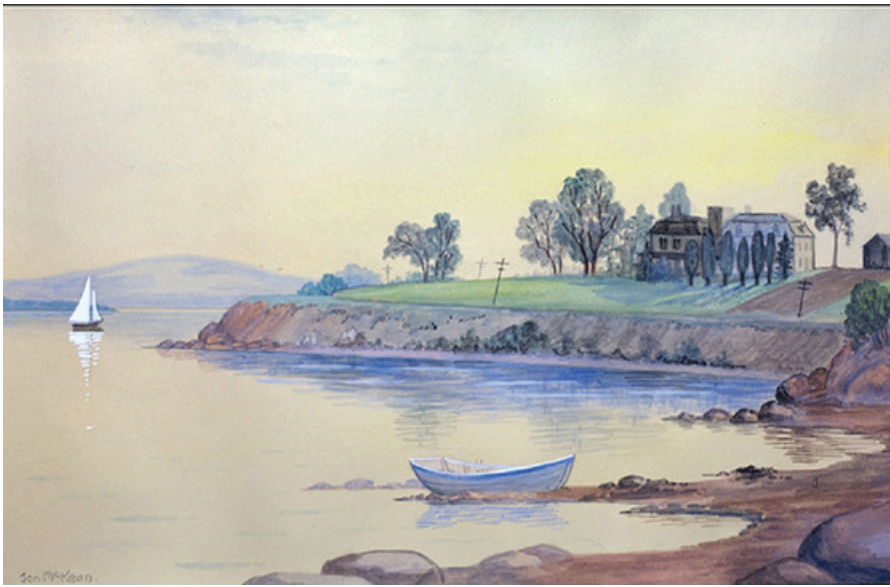
historical interest as an artistic depiction of industrial Cape Breton.

Either before or after Janet took brush to paper for the North Sydney painting, she visited Pictou (or used a contemporary postcard photograph) to paint a harbour scene of Norway Point, with the old Maritime Odd Fellows Home (1923-1999), formerly the property of Lord Strathcona, and earlier the residence of Pictou merchant, Edward Mortimer. Janet's father, Melville McKean, had been for many years an active member of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF), a 19th century charitable society; as early as 1897, he had been the Secretary for Eastern Star Lodge, IOOF, in Pictou. Later he served on the board of the Maritime Odd Fellows Home. This 1923 painting by Janet is still in the possession of the Home, which moved to a new building in 1999.

Janet's watercolours have special atmospheric qualities ... with plenty of snow, there is a glowing aspect to the overall painting

One theme which repeatedly attracted Janet was the Pictou Bar lighthouse.³ A 1926 painting shows it with sailing vessels skimming the water. One can make out the lighthouse and the keeper's dwelling. At least two other paintings of this Light are known. In addition, a small postcard watercolour simply titled *Pictou Light* is held by John M. MacLean; apparently Janet used to do these postcards to send out to family and friends.

During 1941, while living in Pictou, Janet painted a view of Pictou Landing across the harbour from the vantage of the golf course. Near-contemporary photographs and postcards (including one by the well-know photographer W.R. MacAskill) provide useful comparison. Depicted on the far shore are houses and associated farm buildings, as well as waterside structures. The inclusion of built forms suggests connections between people in the scene and the twin aspects of water and land, which were so much a part of Nova Scotian



Norway Point, Pictou Harbour; with the Mortimer House, later the old Maritime Odd Fellows Home, signed Jen McKean (courtesy of the Maritime Odd Fellows Home)

life. Janet's watercolours have special atmospheric qualities. She was able to use the medium to capture the variations in light and how these transformed the landscape.

Three years before Janet's *Along Market Street, Halifax, N.S.* painting, she turned her vision to the old, illustrious Pictou Academy (see cover, this issue). She must have used old photographs and sketches because the original building was gone before her birth. In many ways this painting illustrates Janet's combined abilities with watercolour, natural elements, and architecture. The fine detailing on the Academy raises the question whether here Janet is revealing early drawing lessons with her architect father and grandfather. Perspective is maintained with the other building façades on the street. The Academy is a two-and-a-half-storey, four-gable (cruciform) building with large, multi-paned windows (to admit as much light as possible for classrooms), a two-storey entrance surmounted by a cupola, and the distinctive two end chimneys. Set in winter-time with plenty of snow, there is a glowing aspect to the overall painting. Receding from the viewer is a horse-drawn sleigh, which provides a sense of movement in an otherwise contempla-

tive representation.

Missing from this brief sketch of Janet McKean is any information as to whether she ever assisted her father Melville with architectural drawings or provided illustrated paintings for any of his projects. One would wish to know, as well, who some of her other art students were and how many of these went on to artistic careers of their own. At least two early watercolours by Ruth (Salter) Wainwright show affinities with Janet McKean's style. Without any known examples of her pottery, one does not know if Janet and Nita shared any ideas about that medium. The *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Education of Nova Scotia* (1947) noted that: "Pictou organized a class in pottery under Miss Janet McKean who supplemented her training by attendance at Toronto University during the summer of 1945. She had a most enthusiastic group and has developed a glaze, which according to expert opinion, may result in a product peculiar to that locality. All the goods the students were able to make for sale were disposed of very quickly ..." It was at this time that, according to a letter from DesBarres' sister, Dorette Bate,⁴ Nita turned more and more from weaving to pottery. A fuller account would permit

one to recreate a network of creative women who influenced each other.

There may well be other paintings by Janet herself, in private hands, which would add to her architectural documentation and further enrich the visual record for the built heritage of Nova Scotia.

Acknowledgements: The following individuals and institutions have graciously provided permission to reproduce copies of Janet McKean's paintings for this article: Antigonish Heritage Museum (Jocelyn Gillis; Wendell and Keah Schurman for privately held view of Jimtown); John M. MacLean, Halifax; Maritime Odd Fellows Home, Pictou (Michael Archibald); Nova Scotia Archives. Special thanks to Dianne O'Neill. Photographs of the MacLean collection by the author.

Allen B. Robertson, PhD, an historian and academic, is Vice President Heritage and Research Chair at HTNS.

Endnotes:

¹*Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada 1800-1950*, <http://www.dictionaryofarchitectsin-canada.org/node/2220>

²*Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada 1800-1950*, <http://www.dictionaryofarchitectsin-canada.org/node/2238>

³See account of Fergie MacKay's lecture on the Pictou Bar Light in *The Griffin* (vol.43, no.4, December 2018), <https://htns.ca/quarterly/>.

⁴Letter held in archives of McCulloch House Museum and Genealogy Centre, Pictou.

NEWS

Demolition of provincially registered house

Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia has called on the Province to take legal action against a Halifax developer who demolished – and then burned – the historic, provincially-registered, 1760s Reid House in Avonport (<https://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=7996>).



Former stores (corner and liquor), Clyde Street elevation, before work began



The building as it appears today (Clyde Street to the left, Birmingham to the right)

continued from page 2

re-use of the original store, enhances the financial viability of the conservation work, and can contribute to a more granular streetscape and walking-access services (the '15-minute city').

The original building was a corner store called Lynch's Grocery. It was built in 1895. Not long after, a liquor store was built right next door. It was one of approximately 700 liquor outlets in Halifax at the time, a ratio of one outlet for

every 300 persons. Over the following years the authorities created increasingly restrictive rules, eventually closing all of the remaining outlets in the city on June 30, 1916, using the rationale that people in Halifax should not be drinking while the men were fighting overseas in the trenches. This final closing date was inauspicious: the very next day, July 1, 1916, was the first day of the Battle of the Somme, known to be the worst single day in history for the British army, including the decimation of the

Newfoundland Regiment at Beaumont-Hamel.

Flash forward over a hundred years and my workmen started to demolish the poorly-constructed apartments on the ground floor of the old shop. As they peeled back the layers, we discovered that the corner store was mostly intact, with a lovely panelled ceiling hidden behind a lower false ceiling, which had been built to make the space easier to heat. So much of the store was intact that we were able to recreate most of it, especially all of the windows with their original frames still in place. The reconstruction crew was led by Kyle Cheeseman, a recent Dalhousie architecture graduate and a restoration veteran, having worked in Hal Forbes' shop for many years.

At the time of writing, the restoration is almost complete. The COVID crisis has slowed the demand for bar and restaurant space, but there is an interested party. If they go ahead and establish a licensed restaurant, it will be the first legal drink served in this location in over 105 years.

HTNS President, Andrew Murphy, is a chartered accountant and small-scale developer. His projects include Glube's Lofts on Gottingen, a residential development of the former Glube's furniture store.



Preserved ceiling uncovered in former corner store

David Jones: Downtown Dartmouth Heritage Conservation District

Donald Forbes

In a first for the Heritage Trust, our initial fall lecture this year was pre-recorded by well-known Dartmouth historian and heritage advocate, David Jones, for presentation at the virtual Annual General Meeting (27 October 2020). The lecture is available on Youtube (see link below) and thereby accessible to members across the province or further afield, and indeed to anyone anywhere with an Internet connection.

David's topic was the proposed Downtown Dartmouth Heritage Conservation District (HCD), one of three currently under consideration, and the first of three (Downtown, Five Corners, Harbourview) proposed for Dartmouth. Halifax currently has three such districts – Schmidville, Barrington Street, and the Old South Suburb. As David explained, a heritage conservation district is "a defined area of historical or archaeological value that is protected by regulations governing such things as demolition, exterior alterations, and new development [and may include incentives] to encourage private architectural conservation ..."¹

... [the proposed] downtown Dartmouth [Heritage Conservation District] scored highest on all criteria

HRM has adopted four evaluation criteria to prioritize work on new HCDs: (1) high concentration of registered heritage properties; (2) areas that include rare examples of historic architecture; (3) areas that are experiencing a high rate of change based on development permit activity in the past 5 years; and (4) areas that include the potential for large-scale redevelopment under current land-use designation. Of all three currently promoted HCDs across HRM, downtown Dartmouth scored highest on all criteria. Within its boundary (encompassing just 0.24 km²), there are 165



Ochterloney Street looking east from Edward Street, 1907, with St Peter's Hall at right and pre-Explosion Grace Methodist Church in the distance (courtesy Dartmouth Heritage Museum, accession no. 1993.015.744) – Traffic was not the pedestrian hazard it is today!

properties, 15% of which are registered heritage, with an average age of 154 years (1866). In the matter of development pressure, large-scale redevelopment is occurring or projected, and 83 development permits were issued over the past five years.

The earliest surviving building in old Dartmouth is the Quaker House (57-59 Ochterloney Street), dating from c. 1786, part of the Dartmouth Heritage Museum. In his lecture, David pointed out that the history of occupancy goes back thousands of years, as Mi'kmaq people lived all along the Dartmouth waterfront, back through the lakes and on ridges and knolls in what is now Dartmouth. Much later, the Shubenacadie Canal followed the traditional travel route of the indigenous population to Cobequid Bay via the Dartmouth Lakes and the Shubenacadie River system. Important evidence of Mi'kmaq habitation exists, including largely forgotten burial sites.

Burials of later settlers are preserved in cemeteries that form part of

the proposed HCD, but other burial sites are almost forgotten. The first St Peter's cemetery was adjacent to the 1829 Catholic chapel on Ochterloney Street, at Edward. Later, when St Peter's Hall was built on the property in 1894, some burials were uncovered. Now it is a parking lot, just outside the HCD boundary, emblematic of many places with hidden histories in the city at large. David raised this issue to highlight the need for an Archaeological Management Plan, a heritage conservation tool widely adopted across Canada, but as yet unrealized in HRM.

The earliest surviving building in old Dartmouth is the Quaker House ... dating from c. 1786

St Peter's Hall is one of the many lost heritage structures in downtown Dartmouth. Since the 1980s heritage inventory was completed, at least three pre-1850 houses and ten pre-1900 buildings have disappeared in the



Central School looking north from corner of King and Quarrel (later Queen) streets, c. 1890, by prolific Dartmouth photographer George Craig (courtesy Dartmouth Heritage Museum, accession no. 1995.002.003) – every building in this photograph is gone; note street lamp suspended over centre of intersection

downtown core, and of course many more were lost over the years before that, both in and adjacent to the HCD. Long-gone heritage gems, such as the Central School on what was later the Post Office property, exist only in photographs. Early 1750s blockhouses, on Dartmouth Point and the ridge above the King Street firehall, are known only from old documents. Some of the 18th century structures that survived into recent times, including Quaker whaler houses, were demolished to make way for incongruous developments such as the former Maranova Hotel and Dartmouth City Hall, or are now parking lots, such as the lot beside the firehall. Other surviving very old houses are threatened by a lack of owner interest in their heritage value and business goals focused

on large-scale development. As of this writing, within the proposed HCD, we can identify 16 pre-1850 buildings from Dartmouth's first 100 years and 51 built in 1851-1900, now at least 120 years old. At least two pre-1850 homes and several pre-1900 buildings, including two historic churches, lie just outside the proposed HCD, within a block or two of its boundary, if not just across the street.

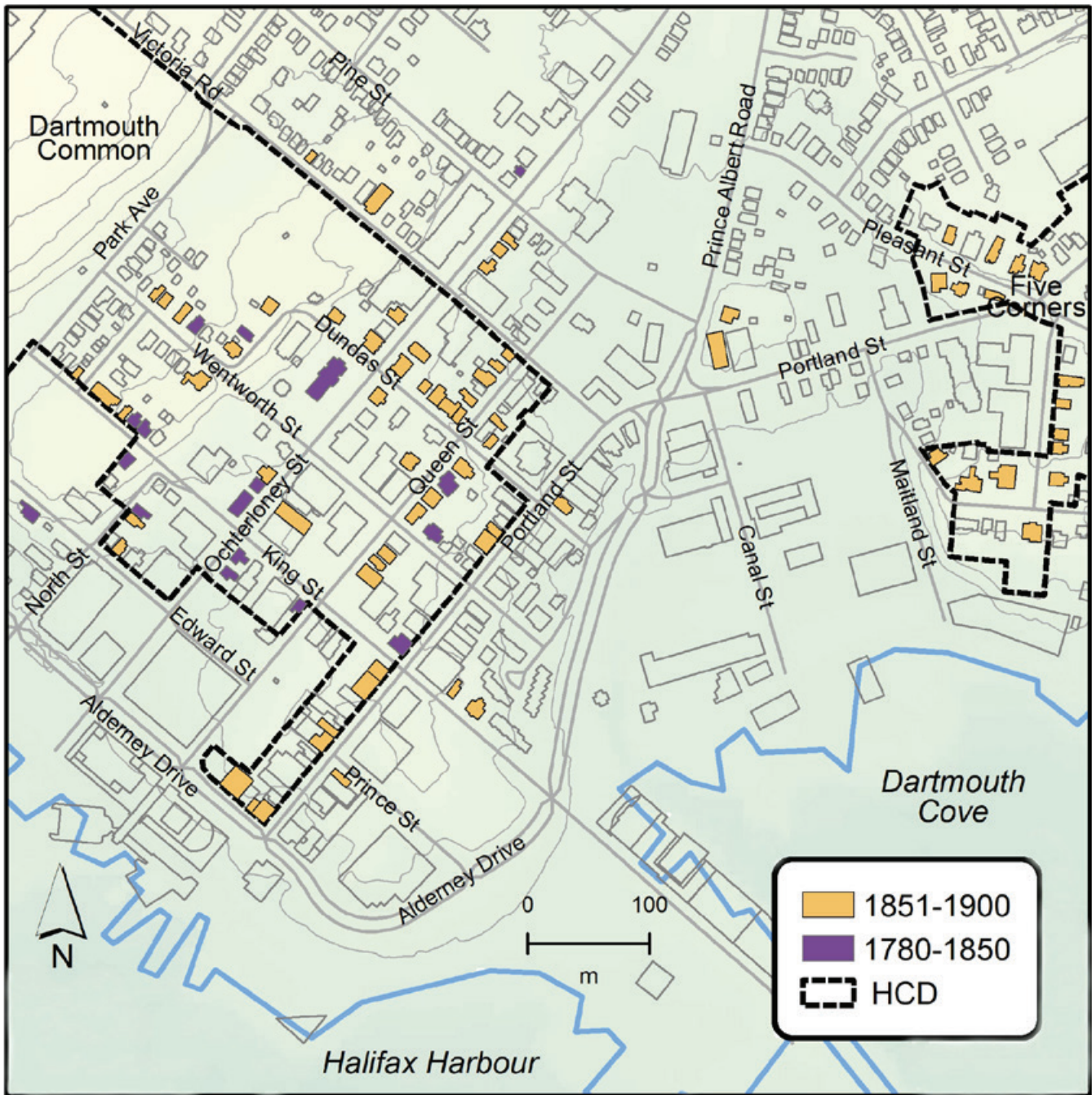
... within the proposed HCD, we can identify 16 pre-1850 buildings from Dartmouth's first 100 years ...

While the proposed HCD boundary has many curious convolutions and omissions, we hope that rules under a new conservation district will promote conservation of historic structures and

streetscapes through a variety of incentives. We know that property values rise and economic opportunities multiply in communities that prioritize heritage conservation. Downtown Dartmouth is already seeing a revitalization of small business and increased visitor interest. The promotion of its rich built heritage will only enhance the general sense of vibrancy in this important corner of the Halifax Regional Municipality.

In the meantime, check out David's lecture at <https://youtu.be/zoqxKfmr16U>

¹<https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/standingcommittees/200928cped1241.pdf> [link broken]



Boundary of proposed Downtown Dartmouth Heritage Conservation District (at left, beyond edge of map, it encompasses the Common southeast of Thistle Street) and part of proposed Five Corners HCD, showing existing buildings within and adjacent to the HCD dating from Dartmouth's first 100 years (1750-1850, none older than 1780s) and the following 50 years (1851-1900), based on Heritage Inventory Sheets held at Dartmouth Heritage Museum; HCD boundaries, streets, building footprints, contours, and digital elevation model from the Halifax digital open data portal (<https://www.halifax.ca/home/open-data/>); thick line (from provincial boundaries dataset) shows former shoreline pre-dating new ferry terminal and Alderney Gate

The Industrial Origin of Stellarton (Albion Mines)

David Rollinson

The exploitation of natural resources formed the backbone of Nova Scotia's early economic activity. Today, fishing, mining and forestry play a lesser part in the lives of Nova Scotians, yet their past prominence remains within the landscape and lives of the province.

The cutting of trees and the digging for gold across the length and breadth of Nova Scotia produced what in today's terms we would call 'pop-up' settlements. Built quickly and cheaply and abandoned just as fast when the trees were all cut and the ore all gone, little now remains of their brief existence. Hastings and Crossburn (Annapolis County) and Whiteburn (Queens County) are well known examples.

These settlements were the result of an 'if you dig it, or cut it, they will come' philosophy that relied mainly on itinerant workers in industries where the skills necessary were either easily acquired or limited. Many men and their families followed the work as it moved around the area. The inauguration of a more industrialized economy, with its requirement for highly skilled employees and fixed workplaces, contributed to the development of more permanent and sustainable communities. However, not all of these achieved the longevity that would see them into the 21st century.

Nova Scotia's earliest ventures into the new world of the industrial revolution were focused on the mining of coal and the production and working of iron. These certainly needed a highly skilled workforce and massive investment in plant and infrastructure. The early days of 'digging' coal at Louisbourg and in Pictou County or the early iron works in Annapolis County never reached critical mass where there was enough work to warrant the development of a community. However, by the 1820s, the new technologies and an expanding North American economy combined



A prosperous summer's day on Foord Street sometime in the late 1960s – it looks little different today (postcard image, courtesy of the author)

to literally change the fortunes of coal and iron in Nova Scotia, leading to the appearance of several new communities. Sadly, fate and circumstances would decree that not all of these 'new towns' would survive as long as their inhabitants would have liked. Those based on the production of iron from ore seem to have been more susceptible to failure than those who made a living from the mining of coal.

The General Mining Association (GMA), an English company, improbably owned by a leading jewelry business, had aspirations of wealth through the exploitation of the significant coal seams known to exist in Pictou County and Cape Breton. In 1827 the mining of small amounts of coal, on a casual basis and using hand tools, was common around the western bank of the East River of Pictou. The coal supplied the

few local inhabitants and blacksmiths, and its activity was not sufficient to generate a dedicated community. All of this changed with the arrival at Pictou, in June of that year, of the men and machinery of the GMA. In short order the British workforce of skilled miners, artisans and engineers were sinking shafts down to the coal, building a steam-powered iron foundry and mine pump and laying a horse-powered tramway. By October, the General Manager was in residence in his rather palatial house, Mount Rundell (which still stands), and the workmen were in less palatial, but weather-tight, wooden houses. And so, the settlement of Albion Mines was born. A company town if there ever was one.

As quickly as the shafts were sunk and the engine houses were built the small community established its



The electric tram travels down Acadia Avenue, a new and prosperous housing development, probably during the First World War; spire of St John's Church can be seen in the background (postcard image, courtesy of the author)



Located on Foord Street, the main thoroughfare, the prominent Miners Monument records the high human cost of mining to the community of Stellarton (author photo)

permanence. After weeks at sea there would have been a communal sense from surviving this shared experience. Also strengthening the fellowship was the fact that many of the 100-plus men who came were drawn from the 'Black Country' in the English Midlands. Current research leads to the conclusion that many of the men came from the area around the towns of Tipton and Dudley, so they may even have known each other before leaving Liverpool.

In 1828 coal was being mined using steam, bricks were being made on-site, and more men were arriving from England. A general store and tavern were in place. During the summer, the cricket pitch at Mount Rundell was well used. The Scottish miners, who came starting in 1829, brought curling with them, although it would be 1876 before they had use of an indoor rink. A one-room school was established in 1828. As the mining operations intensified, more men came to work at the mines, attracted in part by the regular work and pay cheque. By 1838 the population of Albion Mines was 1243, which was almost double that of the nearest settlement, New Glasgow. Census records began to show the diversification of occupations in the community, a sign of

growth. By the time of Confederation, Albion Mines was well established, and the mines were benefiting from the healthy American market for Pictou County coal. Plans for the new railway were greeted with local 'rejoicing', and a small Volunteer Militia with 50 men and one officer had been formed.

In February of 1870 ... Albion Mines became ... Stellarton, a name derived from the coal called 'Stellarite'

In February of 1870, the community of Albion Mines became, after a citizens' decision, Stellarton, a name derived from the coal called 'Stellarite'. New collieries appeared over the years as the older GMA pits became unworkable or exhausted. The Foord pit and later the Allan Shaft provided work below and above ground for the town's residents, until the latter's closing in 1951.

I think it is fair to say that the study of the history of industry is not popular today in academia. More is the pity, as whatever the industry, the 'nuts and bolts' are only a part of the story of communities and the people who lived, worked (and in the case of mining often died) there. Stellarton can claim several 'nuts and bolts' firsts and a 150-year local history that is unique. As the 200th anniversary of the founding of Albion Mines approaches, it could benefit from greater attention.

David Rollinson is author of Nova Scotia's Industrial Heritage: a Guidebook (Nimbus, 2017)

Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia lectures

will continue virtually this winter.

Watch for e-mail announcements of upcoming talks.

We will aim for our usual third Thursday of the month for Youtube premières.

The talks will then be available at <https://www.htns.ca>, where you can now view our first two virtual talks.

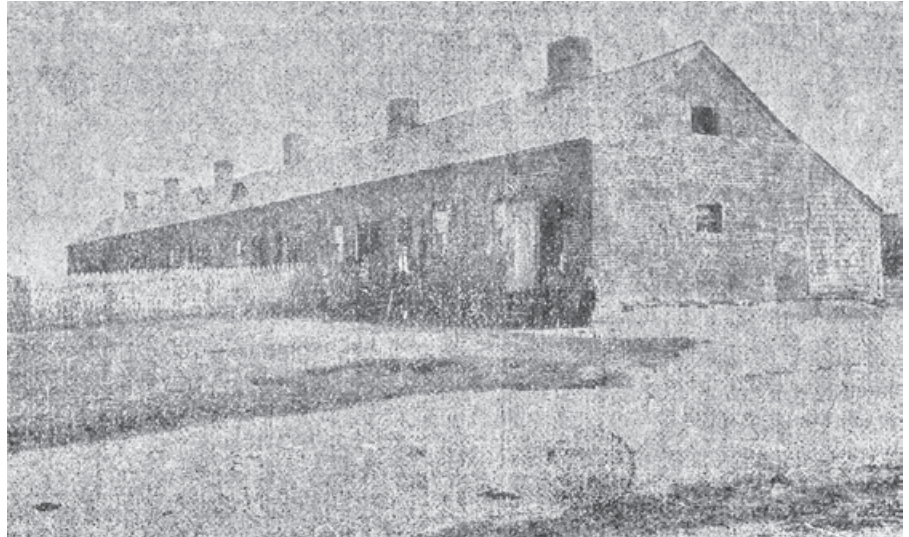
Updates from around the Province

Several HTNS Board members are regional representatives and help to alert the Trust to challenges and successes in all parts of the province. The following update is taken from reports to the November 2020 Board meeting by Marg Herdman (Cape Breton), Laurie Stanley-Blackwell (Guysborough-Antigonish-Pictou), and Patricia Nicoll (South Shore), with contributions from local volunteers. They noted the unusual circumstances of 2020, which forced many small organizations to adapt in various ways.

Cape Breton

One of the small rural churches at the north end of the island that took part in Doors Open for Churches in 2019, sponsored by HTNS as part of the Celtic Colours festival, has chosen a pandemic alternative to their usual Celebration of Light. This has been an annual tradition since about 2003, but the situation this year required thinking outside the box, literally, moving outside! The tree was to be lit with white lights in tribute to the memory of loved ones, to the celebration of special occasions (births, marriages, anniversaries) in the past year, or just to wish friends and neighbours a Merry Christmas. Meanwhile, **Victoria County** is working to have public washrooms reconfigured along the Cabot Trail. These are to be available even when host buildings, such as the North Highlands Community Museum in Cape North, are closed.

The Sydney Architectural Conservation Society is still examining options for the Red Row in **Sydney Mines**. This lost an end wall in post-tropical storm Dorian in 2019. After considering 'moth-balling', SACS is now exploring a second option, a skeleton or 'ghost outline' structure. A steel outline, with some symbolic brick preservation, representing the last three or four units, would be open to the elements. A comparable project, with which Jerry is familiar, is Franklin Court (the former Benjamin Franklin House) in Philadelphia. This



Red Row, Sydney Mines, built c. 1835 as workers' housing by the General Mining Association (see article on Stellarton, this issue), from an old newspaper clipping; two children appear to be standing by the near corner and one or two others to the left of the man in a tie (courtesy Beaton Institute, Cape Breton University, "Brick Row, Sydney Mines (reproduction 1971)" acc. 77-385-519) – with thanks to Anna MacNeill and Gerald Pocius

might still be an expensive project but seems quite realistic in the long term and could be a candidate for an infrastructure stimulus project to create a great public space.

In **Port Hood**, the Chestico Museum was open this year by appointment only. As in many other small community museums, volunteers and students were able to accomplish much.

In the **Highland Village**, Iona, a post-and-beam structure was erected for the Cash Shingle mill, using traditional hand methods as much as possible. The tender for the new visitor centre is expected to be out by the end of the year. The new facility will provide additional space for archives and artifact management.

The summer of 2020 was an extraordinary time for the **Isle Madame** Historical Society and LeNoir Forge Museum. Visitors were few and programming was non-existent. It became a time for work on displays and archival materials. With help from the Department of Community, Culture, and Heritage (CCH), two

important maintenance projects were undertaken. One addressed the erosion of the foundation stones for the provincially registered LeNoir Forge. The other, with support from CCH and St Joseph's Credit Union, replaced windows and siding on the Lorenzo Building, which houses the society's offices and archives

Guysborough County

The most noteworthy development relating to the preservation of **Guysborough's** built heritage is the status of the old Canada Post building (also the former home of the Ship Registry and Customs Office), which was erected in 1902. It enjoys the distinction of being Guysborough's first brick building. Still equipped with its original working bell clock, this building is a much-loved landmark for Guysborough residents. It was recently sold to private hands and is being attentively restored by its new owners. One would wish the same fate for the John Walsh house, located on Guysborough's Main Street. Currently vacant and for sale, it was featured as



Antigonish Court House, 1855 (photo by Paul Toman, reproduced courtesy of Ethel Toman; originally published in Witnesses to a New Nation: 150 Nova Scotia Buildings That Saw Canada's Confederation of 1867, Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia and SSP Publications, 2018)

"Heritage for Sale" in our June 2020 issue (*The Griffin*, vol. 45, no. 2).

Antigonish County

One of the most notable restoration projects in **Antigonish** in 2020 is the renovation of the Stewart Building, a brick structure originally owned by J.H. Stewart, founder of Antigonish Wholesaler's Limited and one-time mayor. The Oak Manor, site of MacEachern's family-owned menswear store since 1963, was recently purchased by developer Rob Secco, Caper Development Limited. The building has been fortified with steel structural beams and reconfigured to accommodate two upstairs apartments and a first-floor brew pub, the Spindrift Brewing Company.

The uncertain fate of Antigonish's handsome neo-classical court house,

built by "Sandy the Carpenter" MacDonald in 1845 (one of three built by MacDonald in northern Nova Scotia), was resolved this past year. In March 2019, the Municipality of the County of Antigonish threatened to put the local landmark up for sale and hosted a meeting for proposals from community groups and private developers. Fortunately, the province stepped in (backed by a submission from the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society), proposing an increase in monthly rent and contribution towards required capital repairs. As a result, the county has decided to retain ownership of this National Historic Site and has renegotiated its lease arrangements with the province. Most recently, the court house has been painted and fitted with a new entrance, which is not sympathetic to the building.

Pictou County

There have been ups and downs with **Pictou's** built heritage over the past year. The old Post Office, an imposing sandstone structure built in 1895, which was purchased several years ago by an English investor, David Elliott, recently went on the market again. His original plan was to combine retail, residential, and community spaces, including a restaurant/pub, Airbnb rentals, and a top-floor flat. The owner undertook several significant renovations, such as a new roof, new wiring, radiant in-floor heat, sprinkler, alarms, and a ventilation system, which will contribute significantly to the long-term preservation of this remarkable building, best known for its windowed chimney.

The fate of the Renton House, built c. 1837, on Kempt Street, has been less for-



The LeNoir Forge, built in 1793 on the Arichat waterfront, is provincially registered (Griffin photo)

fortunate. This old house of wood construction, with two five-sided dormers, was partially demolished in July 2020. Its remains are now exposed to the elements. The Fogo House on Beeches Road is also destined for destruction. This wooden structure, which was purchased by the Pictou Golf Club c. 1920, was originally the residence of Judge James Fogo and was built c. 1853. Its demise parallels that of the late Victorian mansion, the Purvis House, on Cottage Street, which was carved into apartments and then extensively vandalized. As one local heritage advocate glumly remarked, “Here you have three wooden heritage buildings, one lost, one being left to the elements, and one waiting to be torn down.” Still, it should be noted that there is a new sense of energy in Pictou town. One hopes that the mill closure, as well as the upcoming *Hector* 250 Anniversary, will serve as a catalyst for a renaissance.

Some exciting renovations are currently being undertaken in **New Glasgow**, such as the newly renovated Goodman Building on Provost Street. Progress continues apace with the restoration of the stone building at Bell’s Corner on Provost Street. The building, recently acquired from the town by the Nova Scotia Spirit Company, has required extensive pointing. Jamie

MacGillivray, a Pictou County lawyer and property developer, is the impetus behind one of the most exciting projects in New Glasgow, the Roseland Theatre, which was built in 1913. The building was in a badly deteriorated condition and threatened with demolition before it was purchased by MacGillivray in 2015. The exterior is decorated with a vast mural called “Justice” by Halifax artist, Christian Toth, paying homage to Viola Desmond’s resistance to the segregationist policies of the Roseland Theatre. The building is slated to be the home of the Bespoke Motor Company.

South Shore

Despite the pandemic, there has been significant progress on the restoration of the Perkins House in **Liverpool**. It was built in 1766 for Simeon Perkins, a businessman, judge, member of the NS Assembly, and best known for his remarkable diary. His home, a provincial museum, has been closed to the public since 2015 due to structural issues.¹ Restoration has moved ahead rapidly this past summer and should be completed by early to mid 2021. Significant issues with the foundation had to be addressed initially. Other work included replacement of wide, rough-cut boards (the saw mill in Sherbrooke

Village was used to produce these). Three chimneys were restored, one of which was an addition to the back of the house. Perkins mentioned in his diary that this area was used as a summer kitchen. Currently work is progressing on replacing the roof with cedar shakes and new clapboard is being added to the front and sides of the house. The house contains no insulation, so it was wrapped with tar paper. Plywood was added to some areas under the restored floor to make the house as air tight as possible so it can be heated. A small woodshed was built in the back yard to resemble one that would have been there when Perkins lived in the house. This shed now contains all the electrical and mechanical elements for the house so no modern elements such as electrical panels are visible on or in the house itself. Shortly work will move inside to finish the restoration: replacing all the old electrical wiring, plastering, adding moulding and heating and security systems. A wheel chair ramp has been added to the back of the house, so while not visible from the street, it allows for disabled access. The goal is to finish the work by March 2021 and re-open to the public some time next summer. The NS Museum is developing new interpretative programming. The design and supervision of the work has been managed by Architecture 49. Mid Valley Construction was awarded a contract in the amount of \$1.2 million for the restoration work. It will be a great accomplishment to complete the restoration of this Queens County gem. Pictures of some of the work can be viewed on The Perkins House Museum Facebook page.

¹See article by Allen Penney in *The Griffin*, 41(2), June 2016, https://www.htns.ca/pdf_Griffin/2016/Griffin-Vol41.2-Jun2016.pdf

Open for Business: Art Galleries in Historic Buildings - Part II

Michal Crowe

In the last issue, we introduced the topic of Nova Scotia galleries and small businesses located in heritage structures. We listed 16 examples and four were profiled in that issue (*The Griffin*, 45(3), September 2020), the first of a four part series. Here we describe another four from the list: the Ice House Gallery

in Tatamagouche, the 14 Bells Fine Art Gallery in Halifax, The Bread Gallery in Brooklyn, and the Dawn Oman Gallery in Bridgetown.

Not only are these businesses fine examples of adaptive re-use and sources of inspiration and potential gift ideas, they are also small enterprises hard hit by the loss of tourism revenues and local business over the past many months

of the pandemic. All could benefit from increased awareness and more Nova Scotians supporting these and other local businesses. If you live close by or are out and about, please consider patronizing one or more of these. If you are not close, you can refer to the list in the last issue and consider supporting one or more closer to home.

The Bread Gallery

Re-purposed historic store

Joan McKenzie, owner

7778 Highway 14, Brooklyn, West Hants, NS, B0N 2A0

902-757-3377; <http://breadgallery.blogspot.com>;

thebreadgallery@gmail.com

Winter hours: Tuesday-Saturday 8 am to 5 pm,

Sunday 10 am to 4 pm

This building, situated on a prominent corner in the village centre of Brooklyn, was built by Maynard Miller c.1909 and has had a long life as a general store. After his death, it continued as the Brooklyn General Store, and later as Camiot's Grocery Store. Eventually, F.S. Etter and Sons used it as part of their building supply company, which evolved into a Home Hardware owned and operated by Reid Church.

Joan and Michael McKenzie moved to Brooklyn in 1991 but found they could not get a decent loaf of bread

without driving a fair distance. In 2009, when the building came up for sale, they felt a small local shop might fill the void. The lovely empty building would take a year to restore as it had some structural problems. The project was complicated by unexpected building regulations and some interesting surprises. They didn't know much about starting a bakery, but had help from people with experience, and it seems to be working well. There is a resident ghost which the bakery staff call Helga. She comes out early in the morning to taunt the busy bakers.

The gallery is in a room adjacent to the bakery. It was a surprise when the ceiling and floor above were removed, as it provided so much more space above. The cross beams and structural rods add a note of architectural interest to the gallery. There is a studio upstairs where small meetings can be held, or additional paintings can be displayed.

Bread and sweets, a café and a gallery. Who could ask for more?



The Bread Gallery, Brooklyn (courtesy of Joan McKenzie)



14 Bells Fine Art Gallery

Located in municipally designated heritage Hydrostone Market block

Cheryl Bell, director

5523B Young Street, Halifax, NS, B3K 1Z7

902-406-2355, www.14Bells.com

Winter hours:

Tuesday-Wednesday and Saturday 10 am to 5 pm,

Thursday-Friday 10 am to 6 pm, Sunday 12 noon to 4 pm.

The name and logo of the Gallery are a tribute to the North End community, which was decimated in the Halifax Harbour Explosion on 6 December 1917. It is also a nod to the family name, Bell. The 14 bells chime daily from the nearby Memorial Bell Tower in Fort Needham Park, which commemorates the victims of the Explosion.

This is not a repurposed building, but it is a 'cornerstone' of the Hydrostone District, now a National Historic Site of Canada. The district was developed by the Halifax Relief Commission to replace part of the neighbourhood destroyed in the Explosion. Following the Garden City movement promoted by noted town planner, Thomas Adams, it included a new street plan with grass boulevards

and service lanes. It employed concrete blocks ('Hydrostone') as the primary building material. In his capacity as a member of the federal Commission of Conservation, Adams had helped to develop a new city plan for Halifax in 1915. He was influential in the planning of the district, including the designated commercial row separated from, but adjacent to, the 10 residential blocks of the 'garden suburb' to the north.

This two-and-a-half-storey commercial structure, facing an appealing triangular town square, comprises six commercial units. It was designed and built in 1920-1921 by George Ross of the Montreal firm of Ross and Macdonald. Over time, it began to look tired and needed refurbishment. Larry Swinamer of Latex Properties acquired the row in 1993 and received a Heritage Trust Award in 1995 for his renovation with minimal architectural intervention.

The 14 Bells gallery includes two second-floor units which had previously housed the Legal Information Society, as well as a spa. Works of art hosted by the gallery showcase 35 contemporary working artists in Nova Scotia. It is the only gallery in the North End of the city specializing in fine art.



Commemorative plaques at the Hydrostone Market, October 2018 (Griffin photo)



Entrance to 14 Bells Gallery (note heritage plaque) (courtesy of Tia Crouse)

Dawn Oman Gallery

Re-purposed historic church

Dawn Oman and Scott Henderson, owners
298 Granville Street, Bridgetown, NS, B0S 1C0
902-588-2002; <https://www.dawnomanart.com>
Winter hours: daily, 10 am to 5 pm (call ahead to ensure they are not out of town)

Built during 1871 and opened in January 1872, this church was called Providence Methodist Church because there had been no injuries experienced during construction. At that time, Bridgetown was only fifty years old, with a population of about two dozen families. The lumber for the church was milled at Currell Mill in Bloody Creek and the bricks came from a Bridgetown brick yard. With large beam construction, the sanctuary is said "to look like the upside-down hull of a ship."

In 1921, ahead of Church Union, the Methodist congregation and members of the Gordon Presbyterian Church on Queen Street came together to form the Gordon Providence United Church. Although there had been two previous organs in the church, one having come from a church in Yarmouth, a highlight of the church's history was the 1952 purchase from the Robie Street Methodist Church in Halifax of a 1902 Casavant Frères pipe organ (Opus 163), in memory of W. Allan Hicks. The eight stained glass windows on the main floor of the sanctuary were donated in 1953 by Mrs Alice Willett in memory of her

husband, Robert Harold Willett. The large rose window and the two below it were donated in 2001 by Henry and Linda Hicks in memory of Henry and Pauline Hicks. The church was put up for sale c. 2012, as the dwindling congregation was obliged to sell and share space with the Alphonsus Catholic Church of Bridgetown.

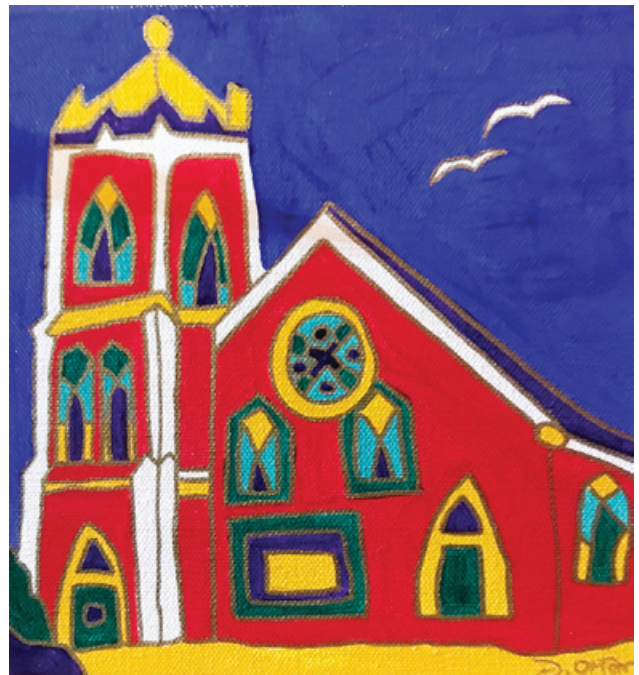
In 2014, new owners Dawn Oman and Scott Henderson had a lot to do to make the space liveable. Scott first renovated the entryway for Dawn's studio and gallery. Subsequently he had to remove 6000 square feet of wall during restoration to install plumbing, insulation, and electrical service. Dawn and Scott have allowed the church to continue as a presence in the community, offering a great attraction to organists, Musique Royale, and other groups who find the space particularly appealing.

Dawn is a First Nations artist from Yellowknife, a direct descendent of Chief Snuff of the Yellowknives, one of the signatories of Treaty 8. Her work, primarily now in acrylics, is inspired by the elders' traditional beadwork and embroidery. Dawn has received numerous prestigious awards. Her work includes the official logo for Canadian North, widely seen on the fins of the airline's jets and other aircraft. The Royal Canadian Mint chose one of her designs for the fifty cent coin collection; four designs have been selected for UNICEF cards; and the Vatican chose her art for some of their official Christmas cards, to name just a few examples of commissions she has received.



Above: The gallery building during its time as a United Church (archival Presbytery photo courtesy of Scott Henderson)

Right: The Sanctuary, by Dawn Oman, acrylic on canvas, 6" x 6" (courtesy of the artist)



The Ice House Gallery

Gallery in historic creamery ice house

Marshall Feit, operations manager

Grace Jollymore Joyce Arts Centre, 39 Creamery Road,
Tatamagouche, NS, B0K 1V0 902-657-3500;

<http://www.gracejollymore.com/the-ice-house-gallery>;
arts@creamerysquare.ca

Winter hours: Wednesday-Thursday 10 am to 5 pm, Friday-
Saturday 10 am to 8 pm, Sunday 12 noon to 5 pm

This modest wooden structure was built in 1924 by Alex Ross and came into operation in 1925. It had a pitched roof with no ceiling, allowing the heat emanating from the melting ice to rise and escape. There was also a chimney to facilitate the extraction of the warm air. The floor was of wood. Ice was harvested east of Tatamagouche at Lake Mattatall (now known as Lake Kennedy). The ice was kept from melting with insulation of straw and sawdust. Though primarily intended for the Creamery, there was enough ice harvested that locals could come and purchase some for their home use. J.J. Creighton purchased



The working ice house with harbour behind (courtesy North Shore Archives)

the Creamery in 1930 and made butter there until his death in 1967. The railway ran right in front, making it easy for the butter and cream to be transported around the province.

Scotsburn Dairy acquired the Creamery in 1968 and operated it until 1992, when they donated it to the Village. The Ice House became a farmers' market, meeting space, film projection, and all-purpose building for the community. In 2003, a committee was formed for the Creamery Square property to plan ways to make the village more attractive to travellers and tourists. The result was The Grace Jollymore Joyce Arts Centre, incorporating the Ice House (which was moved a little way from its original location), a Theatre, a Farmers Market, museum, and archives, as well as a space for traditional boat building. Although the Ice House has had extensive renovations, such as a new roof, a concrete floor, and drywall added to the original studs, the dimensions remain the same. The building still stands as a reminder of its initial purpose and the importance of the dairy business in days gone by.



The ice house today as the Grace Jollymore Joyce Arts Centre (Griffin photo)

Many thanks to all those who helped by supplying ideas, interviews, inspirations, photographs, or directions. For this selection of sites, our thanks to: Marshall Feit, Grace Jollymore Joyce Arts Centre (Ice House Gallery); Cheryl Bell and Tia

Crouse (14 Bells Fine Art Gallery); Joan McKenzie (Bread Gallery); and Dawn Oman, Scott Henderson, and Marg Herdman (Dawn Oman Gallery).



HERITAGE TRUST OF NOVA SCOTIA

PRESERVING NOVA SCOTIA'S BUILT HERITAGE

Calls for Submissions

Built Heritage Awards

Recognizing excellence in restoration, sympathetic adaptive re-use, or other conservation work on a heritage building is one of the truly pleasurable aspects of promoting and celebrating Nova Scotia's built heritage.

We count on nominations from our members and friends. Do you know of a project, completed within the past five years, which followed the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada? (Not sure what that is all about? Ask us and we'll explain.) It could fall within one of several categories: residential, commercial, institutional, re-purposed and more. Send us your suggestions when you see a likely candidate.

The **deadline for nominations** is **Friday, January 8, 2021**. Please contact William Breckenridge at awards@htns.ca.

Buildings-at-Risk Fund

HTNS has a grant program for heritage properties which are in need of repairs. Although grants usually are modest, up to \$2000, each application is reviewed individually and special circumstances are considered for the allocation of funding. To make an application, please go to the Grants page for an application form and helpful information about the Fund: <https://www.htns.ca/grants.html>.

Heritage Trust believes in helping retain Nova Scotia's built heritage and hopes to support your maintenance or improvement project in this way.

For more information or help in applying, please contact Terry Smith-Lamothe at buildingsatrisk@htns.ca or call the Trust at 902-423-4807.

Membership

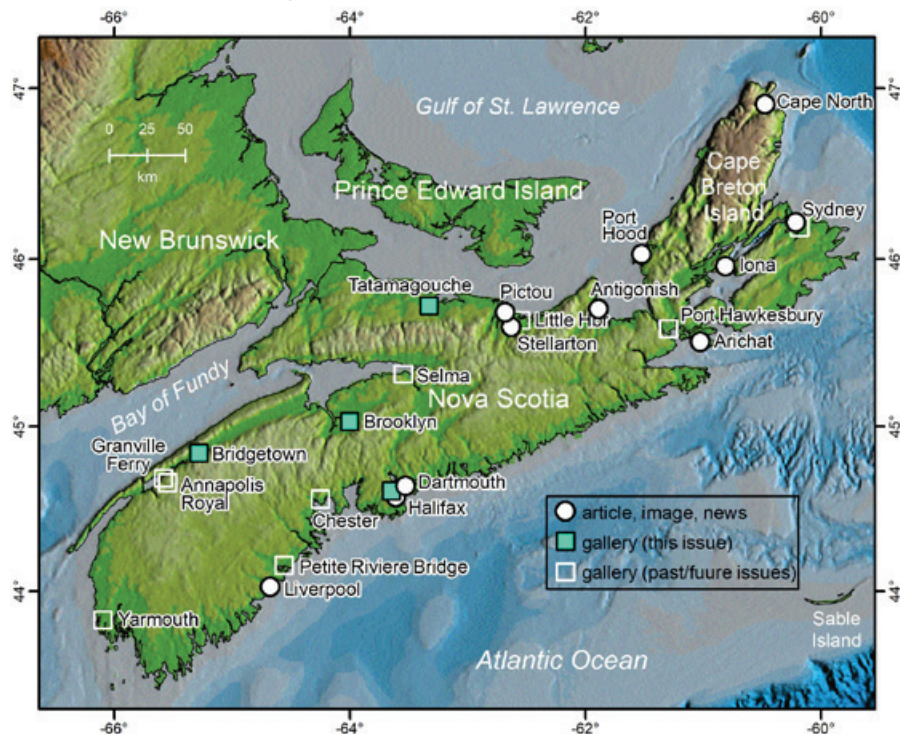
It's that time of year again. If your envelope *does not* say 2021, it is time to renew. For more information, contact membership@htns.ca or go to: <https://www.htns.ca/membership.html>. We are looking forward to another year of protecting and promoting our province's built heritage resources for our shared future and generations to come.

Post-Explosion Relief at the Halifax Armoury



Displaced residents of Halifax queuing for relief at the Halifax Armoury following the Halifax Harbour Explosion of 6 December 1917. Note the broken windows and VR (Victoria Regina) over the door of the Armoury, which was built in 1895-1899 and designed by Thomas Fuller, Dominion Architect. A Classified Federal Heritage Building, it is home to the Princess Louise Fusiliers and Headquarters of Militia Area Atlantic. Photograph by International Film Service, later published as a partially coloured postcard by H.H. Marshall, Halifax, under the title "People waiting for food supplies at Armouries" (courtesy Nova Scotia Archives, Nathaniel N. Morse, 1989-298, negative N-7082).

Locations of subject matter in this issue



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