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The Griffin

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The Griffin

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We welcome submissions
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President's Report



Sandra Barss

Since I last wrote, COVID reared its head in the form of the Omicron variant. Our resolve and creativity have been tested anew through ongoing (and necessary) restrictions on in-person gatherings. This has, of course, included the Trust Board members, now entering a third year of virtual meetings at both the Board and Committee levels. With the most recent announcements, we hope to be able to meet again in person, including at our AGM this June.

Much as we are concerned for the health of those we know and love, the Trust has also been concerned about the lack of protection for historic buildings in Nova Scotia. Our concerns were heightened in December 2020, when the 260-year-old Reid House in Avonport, Kings County, a provincially registered heritage property, was demolished by Halifax developer, Bassam Nahas, through his company, Nanco Developments. The structure, including the foundation, was entirely demolished. Four charges have been laid by the RCMP: two for demolishing a provincially registered property; and two for removing objects from a protected site without a permit.

We await the upcoming trial on this matter, to be held in Kentville. Under the *Heritage Property Act*, penalties can be as high as \$250,000 (section 25(2)) for each offence by a corporate offender, and include that the Court may order the “restoration of the property as nearly as may be to its condition prior to the contravention” (section 25(3)(b)). The Trust would prefer the Court to order this developer to reconstruct the building as has happened elsewhere. It is our view that only a penalty of this nature and significance will send a strong-enough message to act as an effective deterrent to other developers who flout our law.

Of course, this also demonstrates the need for a review of the *Heritage Property Act* itself. The Act was proclaimed 35 years ago, and the last amendments were in 2010 – now a dozen years in the past. A fine of \$250,000 is a very modest penalty for a developer who intends to put many millions of dollars into a project. And because protection for heritage properties in Nova Scotia varies by jurisdiction, it would be helpful to standardize protections throughout the province to more closely mirror the current Act and provide greater disincentives to demolition.

We continue to engage with our legislators to educate them on the need for uniformity across jurisdictions, and to limit the opportunity for anyone, whether intentionally or inadvertently, to ignore the protections implemented for heritage properties. The outcome of the Nahas/Nanco trial might encourage our legislators to consider amending the *Heritage Property Act*. We remain hopeful that, with patient persistence, we will have a positive effect, preserving more of our properties than has been happening in recent years.

Cover image: Mahone Bay Churches, by Mark Gothreau, 2021, graphite pencil, 12" x 14" (prints available)

ARTIST

Mark Gothreau

Born in 1964 in Halifax, Mark Gothreau discovered his natural talent for art at the age of three. His mother, who was a nurse and painted as a hobby, encouraged him with paper and pencil at playtime. Mark's skills as an artist continued to improve through many hours of practice. During his years in elementary school, Mark would spend his free time searching the small school library for wildlife pictures, his focus of interest at the time. He could also be found at the Halifax Museum of Natural History sketching the wildlife displays, much to the delight of others. In 1978 Mark had one of his drawings published in a children's magazine.

At the age of twelve, Mark Gothreau began displaying and selling his artwork at exhibitions. When he was fifteen, one of his exhibitions was a three-generation show at the Dartmouth Heritage Museum. This included the work of his grandfather and his mother, as well as his own. In his early teens, Mark designed his Junior High School's new logo. He also helped to design and paint an 8' x 24' war memorial for the Royal Canadian Legion's anniversary. While at university, in addition to completing a degree in Business Administration, Mark continued to draw for personal pleasure and commissions.

In 2004, he produced a calendar of buildings and scenes from the town of Bedford, Nova Scotia. It was so well received that he reproduced it for 2005, and followed with a calendar of Nova Scotia lighthouses for 2006 and 2007. In 2019, 2020 and 2022 he produced a calendar of scenes of Nova Scotia from his personal collection of original pencil drawings. These calendars, as well as his original drawings, have been purchased worldwide.

Mark has produced limited edition prints representing scenes of Nova Scotia, including Peggy's Cove lighthouse, Indian Harbour, Moir's Mill, and Prince's Lodge Rotunda. While he has been displaying and selling these at local shows,



Looking Back, Chester Train Station, by Mark Gothreau, 1995, graphite pencil, 18" x 28" (prints available)



Prospect Village, by Mark Gothreau, 2010, graphite pencil, 12" x 20" (prints available)

the demand for personalized commissions has grown.

Entirely self-taught, Mark continues to explore a variety of subject matter, concentrating on detail and realism. Today Mark continues to work from his home in Lower Sackville and attends many craft festivals.

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Artist Statement

Being able to do a very personal commission for a client is inspiring. I feel honoured when clients ask me to reproduce a beloved photograph that means so much to them, to be given as a gift, or for themselves. I love travelling the province to find those well-known locations and hidden gems, places for future original drawings.

AWARDS

The Noble Structure - Halifax City Hall

Kristina Ryan

City Hall has stood in the Grand Parade square since its opening in 1890 and is a landmark for Haligonians. As the seat of municipal government, the building has been maintained with periodic renovations to keep up with government needs of the day. The basement of City Hall, once a police station, with jail cells and a courtroom, has recently received sympathetic renovations to accommodate modern offices in a space that reflects its historic past. The refurbishments of 2019-2020 were recognized by a second Heritage Trust award for institutional built-heritage excellence.

Located at the far north end of Grand Parade, facing historic Saint Paul's Anglican Church, stands Halifax's City Hall. Erected in 1888-1890, it continues to serve its original function and has been designated a National Historic Site. This central and desirable location was once the site of Dalhousie College, which remained here until 1886, when the school sought to expand and moved



Finished space outside Clerk's Office (courtesy of Alec Brown of Abbott Brown Architects)

to the Carleton campus. Halifax Council purchased the newly available property as an ideal site for a new City Hall.

With the expansion and modernization of Halifax, it became clear that the city needed a single structure to bring

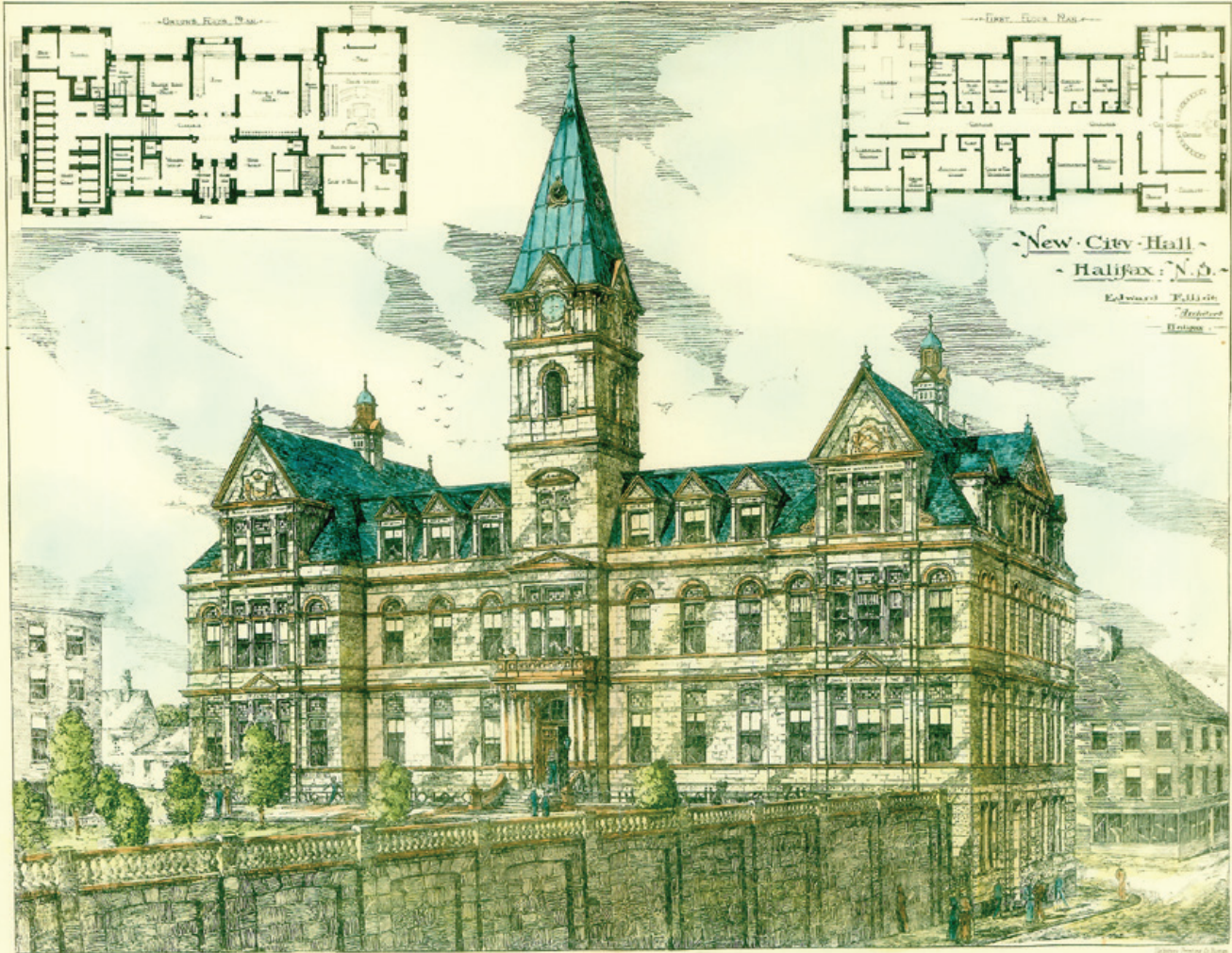
together the many civic offices.¹ The concept of one central City Hall became popular in Canada's large cities at this time. Under public scrutiny, Halifax Council was persuaded of the need.

When the architectural plans were first published in 1886, the press dubbed the new City Hall, "The Noble Structure."

Through an advertised contest, local architect Edward Elliot was selected to design the structure in the Second Empire style. The design gave the building a regal and monumental appearance. When the architectural plans were first published in 1886, the press dubbed the new City Hall, "The Noble Structure."^{1,2} The interior was equally grand as it housed the mayor's office and Council Chambers. Edward Elliot's interior plan incorporated much more than offices for municipal officials; it also included public spaces, such as a community library, known as the Citizens' Free Library. A police station was built in the basement, equipped with its own holding



Basement interior after demolition (courtesy of Alec Brown of Abbott Brown Architects)



"The Noble Structure" as illustrated in this perspective rendering published in *American Architect and Building News*, June 1887, with glimpses of the former building on the northwest corner of Barrington and Duke, houses further up Duke, and the factory building on Argyle (courtesy Halifax Municipal Archives, CR10-026)

cells, and a magistrate's court, where trials for petty crimes could be held.³

Few exterior features of City Hall have been altered since its completion in 1890. One of the most recent projects involved the restoration of the building's decorative stonework, for which it received a Heritage Trust award in 2014.⁴

Another significant event was the re-installation of two bronze bells in the tower in 2021. Now they can be heard again by the people of Halifax for the first time in over a century. One of these is believed to have been hanging in the tower at the time of the Halifax Harbour Explosion.

In the year 1896, the basement of City Hall attracted public interest because of then little-known magician, Harry Houdini, who visited Halifax and arranged to be imprisoned in one of the cells at City Hall. In town with the traveling Marco Magic Company, Houdini was inspired by a local jailbreak story that received great hype in the press. Aware of the public interest, Houdini created a stunt that would give him the career-long recognition of a jail-breaker.⁵ On 25 June 1896, Houdini made his way to the police department located in the City Hall. There he dazzled the reporters and police officers with handcuff escapes

and a number of card tricks, but his most grand piece of magic came when he was locked in one of the cells. The police officers, at Houdini's request, took him to the male lockup, located at the Argyle Street end of the building, and imprisoned him in a cell wearing only a bathing suit; his clothes were locked up elsewhere. Not long after resuming other work, the police office received a phone call notifying them that one of their prisoners was at the Carleton Hotel and requested the return of his clothes – the 'prisoner', of course, was Harry Houdini.⁵

A century and a quarter after



East-end elevation drawing, signed by Mayor Patrick O'Mullin and builders Rhodes and Curry in May 1888, showing basement entrance to Police Department and recessed windows and door in sub-basement (courtesy Halifax Municipal Archives, E-6-511)

Houdini's mysterious escape, the lower level of City Hall, once filled with police officers and petty criminals, now has been transformed into modern Clerk's Office spaces, a meeting room, and a staff café. The recent renovations took care to expose and maintain the original structure of the space. This was achieved by stripping away previous renovation materials from the floor, ceiling, and walls, uncovering the original Victorian construction. Massive masonry piers, wood, steel, brick walls and high ceilings were uncovered and were exposed in the final design. Drywall was limited and materials such as ash, birch and glass were used, creating a contrast between the historic Victorian structure and the modern offices within it. For this project, the City received a second Heritage Trust award recognizing accomplishments in an institutional category.

... took care to expose and maintain the original structure of the space ... brick walls and high ceilings ... materials such as ash, birch and glass were used, creating a contrast [with] the historic Victorian structure

The modern renovation of City Hall's basement respects the building's historic past while meeting the needs of a contemporary government. The ongoing maintenance and sensitive interior renewal of City Hall ensures that this historic building will continue to serve the needs of Halifax's government, people, and heritage.

Kristina Ryan is a field archaeologist with Davis MacIntyre & Associates and earned her MA in History at McGill University.

¹Brian Cuthbertson. 1999. History of the Grand Parade and Halifax City Hall. *Journal of the Royal Nova Scotia Historical Society*, 2, 79.

²Brian Cuthbertson. 2000. *Halifax City Hall*. Halifax: Halifax Regional Municipality.

³Judith Fingard, David A. Sutherland and Janet Guildford. 1999. *Halifax: The First 250 years*. Halifax: Formac Press.

⁴*The Griffin*, 40 (1), 12-15 (March 2015).

⁵Bruce McNab. 2012. *Metamorphosis: the Apprenticeship of Harry Houdini*. Fredericton: Goose Lane Editions.

Pioneer Home of Stephen and Elizabeth Pyle, Boylston

Chris Cook

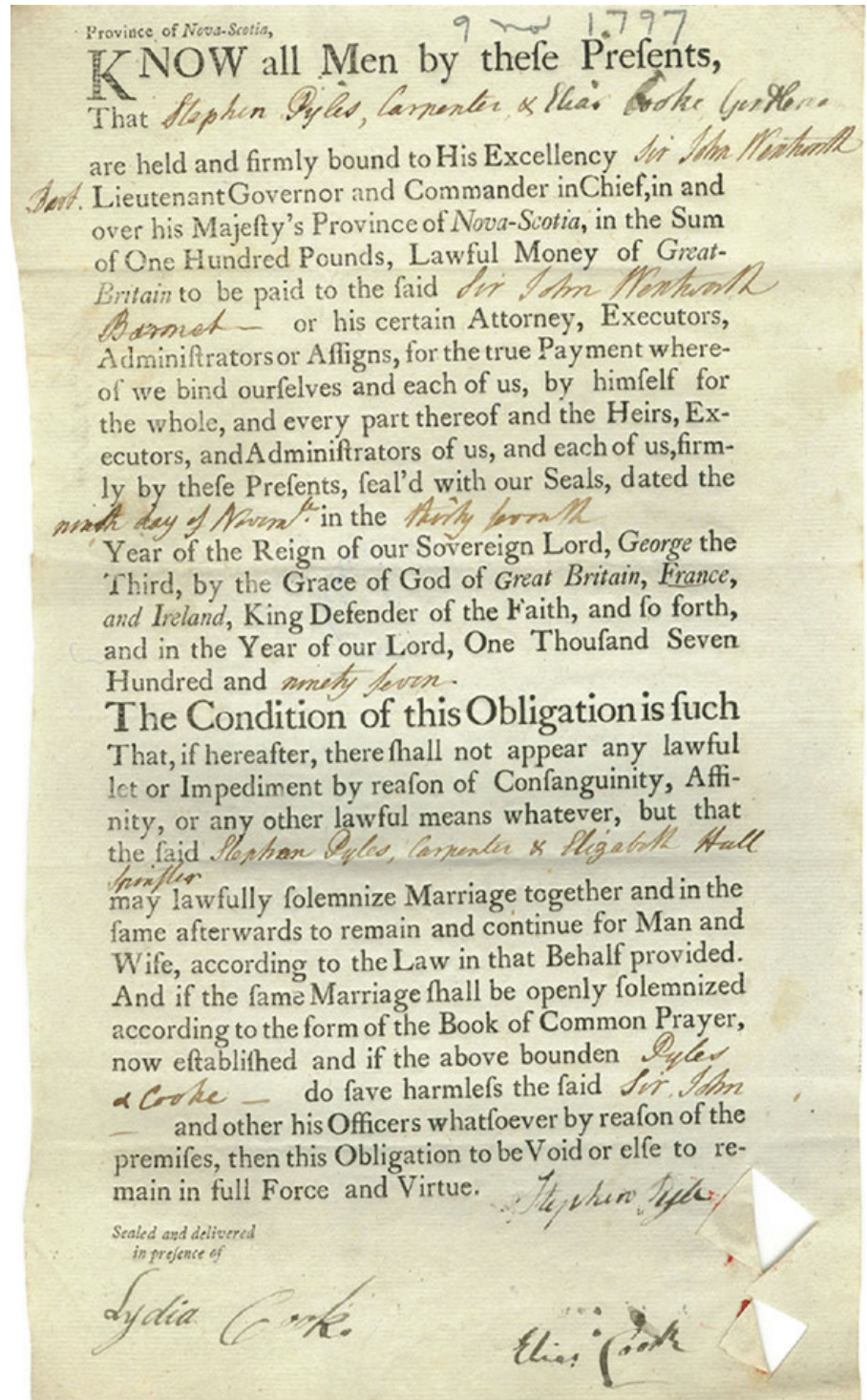
The following article is an adaptation of a chapter prepared for an upcoming book on Boylston, to be published by the Guysborough Historical Society later this year.

The beautifully maintained farmhouse atop the hill in the centre of the village of Boylston can be traced back through the Pyle family over 200 years. It is quite likely one of the last houses in the entire area constructed by an original grantee. Family tradition states that the house goes back to Stephen Pyle, who was born in 1762 in Chester, Pennsylvania.

Stephen Pyle was a member of the large Loyalist group, referred to as "The Associated Departments of the Army and Navy," who received grants of land in the Guysborough vicinity. A.C. Jost¹ states that many of the persons making up this group were among the last to leave New York at the end of the American Revolution. Not all members were soldiers or naval personnel from the British forces; the group also included members of the staff and others employed by the British Army and Navy. Pyle received 50 acres of "front lands" and 150 acres of "back lands." He also received Lot 11 in Block O of the Northeast division of the newly laid out Town of Guysborough.

It is known that Pyle married Mary MacKenzie in 1785, but in a rare action for the times, they filed divorce papers on 23 July 1788. These state that "some differences have arisen" and they "agreed to live separate and apart." Stephen committed to give Mary half of his "country lands" in Guysborough, and to build her a small house to live in "forever" – at this time, he was described as a carpenter. The "country lands" would refer to the 150 acres of "back lands" which he had been granted.

Evidently, Pyle decided to cross the Milford Haven River and to start over. In a quickly growing community, his skills



Stephen Pyles [sic] and Elizabeth Hull, Marriage Bond, 9 Nov 1797, witnessed by Elias and Lydia Cook, fourth great grandparents of the author (courtesy Erin Katajamaki and Nova Scotia Archives)

as a carpenter were likely sought-after. In 1786 and 1789 he purchased property in the Manchester and Boylston area within the Hallowell Grant. This would prove to be a very good decision, as he would eventually meet his wife, Elizabeth Hull, in the Manchester area.

Ten years later, Stephen would marry Elizabeth, who was half his age. He was 36 and she was 17. On 9 Nov 1797, Stephen Pyle signed a Marriage Bond identifying his intention to marry Elizabeth Hull. The Marriage Bond represents an official engagement. A man who had proposed to a woman went to the courthouse with a bondsman (often the father or brother of the prospective bride) and posted a bond indicating his intention to marry the woman. The bond was an amount of money that the prospective groom would have to pay as a penalty if an impediment to the marriage was found. No money literally changed hands at the time of posting the bond. But if the groom was discovered, for instance, already to have a wife whom he had abandoned, the marriage could not go through, and the man would have to pay. The groom's signature on the bond served as security for a young woman's future. Considering Stephen's past, it was perhaps a wise and cautious choice on her part.

For Stephen Pyle, his bondsman was 76 year old Elias Cook, namesake of the community of Cook's Cove. As stated above, the bondsman was often the future bride's father or brother. However, the status of 17-year-old Elizabeth Hull's father was in question in 1797. According to A.C. Jost, Elizabeth's father, Moses Hull, arrived with the other Hallowell Grant settlers c. 1787. He was accompanied by Elizabeth, her sister Philomela, and a brother Samuel. Jost further states that Moses Hull did not stay long in Boylston, but returned to the United States and was rumoured to have drowned. No record was ever found of his wife, and he may have been a widower upon arrival in Nova Scotia. However, Jost's account of Hull's departure from the Boylston area does not seem to be accurate, as reference



Pyle family in front of Stephen Pyle home, 1920 (courtesy of Sarah Scott)



Stephen Pyle home in 2022, seen from the rear, showing the bay window featured in the poem (author photo)

to Moses Hull of Manchester selling property can be found as late as 1802. Of note, Moses Hull sold property to Stephen Pyle in 1796. Perhaps this was how Elizabeth and Stephen were first introduced.

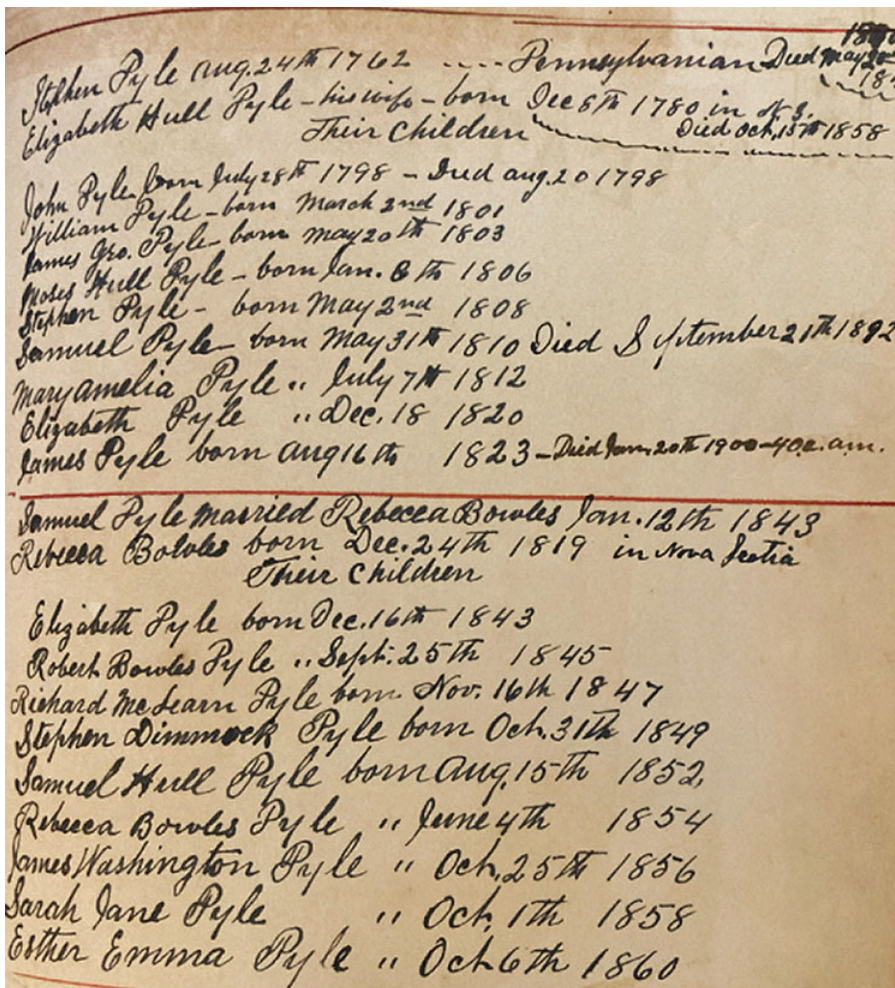
So, if Moses Hull was living in the area, why did he not act as Stephen Pyle's bondsman for his daughter's forthcoming marriage? The answer may be in the connection between Elizabeth Hull and Elias Cook. This connection comes through Elizabeth's sister, Philomela. About 10 years older than Elizabeth, she married Benjamin Cook in 1787. It is possible that Elizabeth may even have lived with Philomela and Benjamin for some time, particularly if she had no mother in her life. Benjamin Cook, was the son of Elias and Lydia Cook, who lived in

Cook's Cove. Undoubtedly, the elder Cook would have served as a father figure to Elizabeth, while Philomela and Lydia were female role models, so it is not much of a leap to deduce he could serve as her future husband's bondsman.

The Pyle home

It is logical to conclude that the house was constructed near the time of Pyle's marriage to Hull in approximately 1797. This was the home in which they raised their family. Over the next 25 years they would have eight children. The last, James Pyle, was born when Stephen was 60 and Elizabeth 43.

A search of the deeds of that period shows Stephen Pyle purchasing four parcels of land between 1786 and 1789.



Pyle family Bible records for Stephen Pyle and son Samuel Pyle (courtesy of Brian Muller)

He is stated as being "of Guysborough." The 1796 transaction between Pyle and Moses Hull lists the latter as being of Manchester. Four of the five transactions were for property in Boylston and Manchester.

The current owners claim that the smaller kitchen piece attached to the southern end of the house was added in 1819. A foundation stone in this part of the house has that date carved in it. At this time, Stephen and Elizabeth had six children, with two more yet to come. An expansion was likely required to accommodate the growing family.

It is known that nearby on the hill was a Long House, a boarding house of sorts that housed farm workers. Stephen and Elizabeth's son, Samuel Pyle Sr, was to take over the property in 1838, just

two years before Stephen's death. In 1843 he married Rebecca Boles.

Samuel and Rebecca would have 10 children, including Samuel Pyle Jr, one of the community's most successful merchants. The property remained in the Pyle family until 1945, and was acquired by William Campbell and his wife Flora in 1947. Flora Campbell was a fixture within the Anglican Church in Boylston, playing the organ for all occasions, and was one of the last active members of the church before it closed.

The current owners of the house were given a poem that Flora Campbell wrote about the Pyle house while she lived there:

There's a beautiful house upon a hill,
 Where children run and roam at will.
 The old spruce tree with her arms so wide
 Watches Jim Crose as he sits there and hides

There's a pond of water and a stream expands
 Right down a slope to barren land.
 The arms of the apple trees wave up and down,
 As though they are beckoning to the kids
 downtown.

An old two-holer built over the stream,
 Where a feller sits to read 'n dream.
 It sure is beautiful to hear the water rush by
 And look out of the window at a blue summer
 sky.

We'll open the door and go inside
 And I'll take you on a short tour guide.
 First is the kitchen, so cheery and bright,
 Where tea is served from morn till night.

...
 We wander into another room
 Where music dispels any sign of gloom
 Where children's fingers on the piano play
 Sweet music, soft but always gay.

This old house many tales can tell
 From sitting room up to bay window well.
 Tales of children with laughter and glee
 As they listened to stories on dear Mum's knee.

...
 You know, this old house is many years old,
 So it has many stories yet to be told
 Of the builders and dwellers of days gone by
 Who struggled to build on this hill so high.

Many memories in its walls do dwell
 And stories their walls will never tell
 The cries of pain and the joy of laughter
 Are hidden deep in the walls and rafters.

Takes a heap of lovin' to make a house a home
 We need the Love of God
 - it can't be done alone.
 The old folk built this house with pride
 Where God and man live peaceably inside.

Chris Cook is President of the Guysborough
 Historical Society.

¹A.C. Jost, *Guysborough Sketches and Other Essays* (Guysborough, 1950).

Keeping Nova Scotia's Heritage Schooners Afloat

Peter Delefos

Before Christmas, while sojourning at my local coffee shop, The Bike and Bean in Tantallon, I had the good fortune to meet and chat with Jim Carwardine, a resident of the St Margaret's Bay area, a sailing enthusiast, and founding member of the Nova Scotia Heritage Schooner Rescue Society. He explained that the purpose of the group is to identify and refurbish old unwanted Nova Scotia schooners and have them sailing in Nova Scotia waters once again. Many of these old schooners have been left neglected on the shore, or, in sailors' parlance, 'sitting on the hard' for several years. Without a rescue effort they will soon be lost, forever.

In January, I visited Jim's waterfront home in Seabright. One of Jim's two vessels is the *Glen Dora*, a 36-foot fishing schooner built on Tancook Island in 1931. She is one of the three remaining Nova Scotia built schooners in the province from the pre-World War II era. For my edification, he recommended two books on the subject of wooden schooners: *Schooner Master – A Portrait of David Stevens*, by Peter Carnahan (Nimbus Publishing, 1989) and *The Tancook Schooners – An Island and its Boats*, by Wayne M. O'Leary (McGill-Queens University Press, 1994).

Between 1904 and 1940, approximately 300 Tancook schooners were launched

Many people associate schooners with the iconic Grand Banks fishing schooner, *Bluenose*, 143 feet (36 m) in overall length. In fact, much of the fishing done in Nova Scotia was of the inshore variety, close to home, in smaller schooners in the 35-50 foot range. The main species caught were ground fish, using long lines, and mackerel and herring, employing nets. In the late 19th century and the first half of the 20th, the



Glen Dora, built as a fishing schooner in 1931 by Wesley Stevens on Tancook Island; converted to a yacht in 1934, length overall 36 feet; restoration in progress by current owner, Jim Carwardine, Seabright (courtesy of Jim Carwardine)

waters along the South Shore of Nova Scotia were teeming with these species.

The term schooner refers to the rigging of a particular kind of sailing craft. It is a vessel with a minimum of two masts, rigged fore and aft. The foremast is shorter than the main, or aft, mast. Schooners are often gaff rigged. Near the top of each mast is a spar called a gaff, which holds the top of the sail, enabling the use of a wider, quadrilateral sail. Schooners also employ jibs and headsails, and larger schooners carry topsails and staysails.

In the first four decades of the 20th century, a unique type called the Tancook schooner evolved and became the standard small sailing workboat for inshore fishing and coastal trading along the South Shore of Nova Scotia. They were built primarily on the Tancooks and in the immediate surrounding area in Mahone Bay. Big Tancook Island is the largest of Mahone Bay's numerous islands. Situated at the mouth of the bay, it is about six miles (~10 km) southeast

of Chester and thirteen miles (21 km) northeast of Lunenburg. The next largest island is Little Tancook, about a half mile away. The name Tancook derives from the indigenous word 'uktancook' meaning 'facing the open sea'.

Michael O'Leary, in his book, *The Tancook Schooners*, describes these craft as the ultimate expression of the Tancook boatbuilding genius. Between 1904 and 1940, approximately 300 Tancook schooners were launched by Tancook boatbuilders. Four boat-building families – the Stevens, Heislars, Masons, and Langilles, all based on Tancook Island – were responsible for most of the schooners built during this period. It is believed the first Tancook schooner was built by Amos Stevens in 1903. It was characterized by a round or spoon-shaped bow, a counter (stern with pronounced aft overhang above the waterline), an oval or elliptical transom (vertical termination of the stern), a fixed keel, and a gaff rig. The majority of Tancook schooners were under 50 feet. With each new schooner,



Elsie L, built by Ray Stevens on the Western Shore in 1967, length overall 32 feet; acquired by the newly formed Nova Scotia Heritage Schooner Rescue Society (NSHSRS) in July 2021 (courtesy of NSHSRS)

the builders made fine adjustments to hull designs and tested them through observation and trial and error. In this manner, the Tancook schooner reached its final form of development by 1930.

The Tancook boatbuilders were referred to as 'fisherman-farmers'. They fished, farmed and did some coastal trading. Cabbage was the key item in Tancook's agricultural economy. The larger schooners made frequent trips to Halifax. The manifest of one of these schooners indicates a cargo of 1,910 dozen cabbages (nearly 23,000 heads) and 275 half barrels (27,500 pounds) of sauerkraut.

With the advent of World War II, the Tancook fishing schooner was being replaced by motorized Cape Island boats which soon came to dominate the inshore fisheries in Nova Scotia. As well, the Province of Nova Scotia undertook a massive road building program in the 1930s. The movement of fish and agricultural items was taken over by trucks, supplanting the use of schooners as coastal freighters. Highway 3, connecting Halifax to Yarmouth, was paved in



Adare, built in 1905 by Reuben Heisler on Tancook Island, length overall 41 feet; major rebuilds in 1938 and 2001-2006; an extensive refit is needed (photo attributed to Peter Oland, courtesy of the Nova Scotia Schooner Association)



Atlantica, built 1967 by David Stevens in Montreal, with the Expo'67 logo on the staysail (courtesy of Jim Carwardine)

1939.

The years after World War II offered new opportunities for the Tancook boat-builders. As the demand for schooner sailing for pleasure grew, people were buying up some of the old pre-war fishing schooners and converting them to pleasure craft. In 1961, the Nova Scotia Schooner Association (NSSA) was established. A second and third generation of the old Tancook boatbuilding families started building new schooners for racing and leisure use based on the designs perfected back in the 1930s. These new craft were admired for their sleekness, elegance, and beauty, and are considered by many to be works of art. The schooners' aesthetic is described by Stevens' biographer, Peter Carnahan: "No other sailing boat has lines quite as balletic, as reminiscent of dancers, racehorses, whippets – that special category of living things that triumph over normal gravity

and inertia."

One of the most prolific boat builders of the post-World War II era was David Stevens (1907-1988). He epitomizes the industry and genius of the master boat builder. He and other builders breathed new life into schooner construction. During his lifetime David Stevens built 71 boats, most of them schooners. As his reputation as a master boat builder flourished at home and abroad, he had several international clients. One customer was a Greek shipping magnate named Mr. Kulukuntis.

David Stevens was commissioned by the Atlantic Provinces to build a two-masted schooner at the Atlantic Provinces' Pavilion at Expo '67 in Montreal, to demonstrate the seafaring traditions of the Maritimes. With a crew of five, he built, rigged, launched and sailed a 47-foot schooner, the *Atlantica*, during the six months of the fair. More

than a million people watched the construction process. Queen Elizabeth II visited the pavilion and met Stevens. He was awarded the Order of Canada for his work as a master craftsman of schooners. Speaking of the schooner *Kathi Anne II*, which he built alone, in 1972, he said, "She's the closest thing to a human being that a man can build."

Few of the pre-World War II schooners have survived. Amazingly, one of those which still exists, though not currently in use, is *Adare*, a 41-foot schooner built by Reuben Heisler on Tancook Island in 1905. Several of those built since the war have been lost. There are still a few boat builders in Nova Scotia supplying a dwindling market for new wooden sailing craft.

Today, wooden boat enthusiasts, and in particular, younger ones, do not have the skill, time or money to acquire, refurbish, and maintain the old classic sailboats, and building new ones is prohibitively expensive.

The Nova Scotia Heritage Schooner Rescue Society was established in 2021 with the ambitious goal of preserving Nova Scotia's wooden schooners. They plan to do this by acquiring old schooners, rebuilding them and making them available to local communities. In July 2021 the Society undertook its first wooden boat rescue by acquiring *Elsie L*, a 32-foot, two-masted, schooner built in 1967 by Ray Stevens. It now resides at the East River Shipyard awaiting restoration. With professional assistance and hands-on involvement in the restoration of *Elsie L*, the participants will learn the skill set needed to restore other wooden boats. The Rescue Society has identified several in need of immediate rescue and restoration. A discussion is now underway among members of the Society as to how many boats they can acquire for restoration and how they will be made available for use in communities. The Society is undertaking a fund-raising program to assist with *Elsie L's* restoration and the longer-term project to save other schooners. Further information about the Nova Scotia Heritage Schooner Rescue Society

is available on their website: <https://schoonerrescue.org>. Those interested in supporting the objectives of the society are invited to become members of the organization and to consider donating to the project. Receipts for income tax purposes are available. The sponsorship, by an individual, of the entire restoration of one of these boats would be immensely beneficial to this legacy project and enable the Rescue Society to save more of these unique wooden vessels, a significant piece of our built maritime heritage.



Peter Delefas is a former President of HTNS and a frequent contributor to The Griffin.

Hebridee II, a scaled reduction by William Roué of the original Bluenose, launched in 1953, length overall 42 feet; donated to the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic in 2009, fully restored over a six-year period by the Museum's Shipwright and Assistant Curator of Smallcraft, Eamonn Doorly (courtesy Maritime Museum of the Atlantic)

Mark Gothreau



Tatamagouche Train Station Inn, by Mark Gothreau, 2018, graphite pencil, 12" x 15" (prints available)

Housing Woes



Remnants of fine-scale urban fabric with distinct sense of place, dwarfed by block-scale, high-rise development, Queen Street and Dresden Row at Sackville Street (Griffin photo, February 2016)

Christopher Miller

Published in 1831, Victor Hugo's novel, *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*, was an immediate success. Not only did it serve to entertain an enthusiastic public; it also brought attention to a decaying Gothic cathedral, *Notre-Dame de Paris* (the title of the book as originally published). Hugo had earlier published a paper, *War on the Demolishers*, which railed against the defacement and demolition of medieval buildings and Gothic monuments. Thanks to the novel's popularity, officials in Paris were persuaded to

pursue the restoration of the dilapidated cathedral to its former glory. Stories like these are golden hallmarks of building conservation and should be revisited to remind ourselves of past victories.

Let's fast forward to the 21st century. Still many valuable structures are not protected. With the rising demand for housing as the world's population grows, conserving traditional urban environments will likely prove more difficult in the years ahead.

Take, for instance, the city of Halifax: it is currently roaring with development. Cranes are dotted across the city's

horizon, working diligently to erect new concrete high-rises with impressive speed. Such development has already consumed a number of architectural gems in the name of housing and density, and it will definitely threaten more.

Today, over 50% of the world's population lives in urban areas. According to the UN, this proportion will top two thirds by 2050.¹ These numbers are unprecedented and will cause cities and towns to adapt in new ways. Our existing urban fabric – Halifax's built heritage – is a vulnerable target. Heritage architecture, low-rise and human-

scaled, is generally seen (from a business perspective) as weak competition relative to high-rise buildings that offer greater housing density. It will become increasingly difficult to oppose developments that seek to demolish traditional structures when the need for housing will be higher and higher with each passing year.

An article published by CBC last summer quoted Neil Lovitt, Vice President of Planning & Economic Intelligence at Turner Drake & Partners, stating that 20-25 thousand housing units would need to be built in Halifax alone in order to make up for the shortage over the last five years.² The fact that Halifax is this far behind is alarming, to say the least.

Lovitt says this is due to a surge in immigration, increased university enrollment, and people from other parts of

Canada moving to Nova Scotia. Census data released by Statistics Canada in February show that HRM's population grew by 9.1% over the five years 2016-2021,³ while the urban core grew by 26%.⁴ These variables contribute to the recent construction frenzy seen in Halifax

If left unchanged, these numbers will only worsen. An upward trend in population growth with inadequate local housing will only deepen the pressures to expand development within the existing built environment, further diminishing the built heritage stock.

So how can these obstacles be overcome?

Healing the existing urban fabric will need to be a chief priority in future dialogues. Preservation efforts ought to focus on maximizing the potential

of existing materials and infrastructure wherever practical and possible. Not only is this a pragmatic approach, but it is also a more sustainable one. Utilizing the embodied energy in these buildings, rather than demolishing and building anew, is the option with a lower emissions footprint.

It is possible to revitalize our built heritage by making sensitive adaptations, while simultaneously increasing options for housing. Adaptive repurposing efforts will have to continue to lead by example and clearly illustrate to the public how traditional architecture can not only be preserved, but revitalized.

With the present shortage of housing and a planning philosophy that prioritizes density, more of Halifax's standing buildings and traditional streetscapes will be removed in the name of expediency. The Centre Plan, in particular, is a threat to our diminished existing inventory. Building conservation efforts will need to be ever more vigilant and clever if Halifax's distinctive character, our greatest tourist draw and economic driver, is to be saved. What lies ahead will be challenging and the tides of development even stronger, but not impossible to overcome if enough people come to recognize what may be lost.

Christopher Miller is a construction professional and writer based in Nova Scotia.

HTNS Lectures are Online

Did you miss one of our talks?

Catch up by watching online. You can find the links to individual talks on the Events page of our website (<https://www.htns.ca/events.shtml>) or go directly to our Youtube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCtnRCmk6WF-z9UxkxE886fw>).

At the moment, the following talks are available:

- » Downtown Dartmouth Heritage Conservation District «
DAVID JONES
- » The Stones of Spring Garden Road «
DR HOWARD DONOHOE
- » The Myers House, parts 1 and 2 «
DR BRENDA HATTIE
- » Insuring Older and Heritage Buildings «
AMANDA DEAN AND ANEILL MACCAUL
- » History and Historic Places at Pier 21 «
STEVEN SCHWINGHAMER
- » AncestralHomes Network «
NANCY AND MARLEE DONNELLY

Lectures are on the third Thursday of the month (September to June) at 7:30 pm either on Zoom or (perhaps soon) in person. Members will receive an email notice, or watch for notices on the website.

¹World Urbanization Prospects: the 2018 Revision. United Nations Population Division, 2019, available at <https://digitalibrary.un.org/record/3833745?ln=en> (accessed 2022-02-21).

²Woodbury, Richard. Nova Scotia affordable housing shortage no longer just hitting low-income earners. CBC, 25 August 2021, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/nova-scotia-affordable-housing-federal-election-1.6149928> (accessed 2022-02-05).

³This was the sixth fastest growth among the 25 largest municipalities (census subdivisions) after Brampton, London, Kitchener, Oakville, Ontario, and Surrey, BC: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/as-sa/98-200-x/2021001/98-200-x2021001-eng.cfm> (accessed 2022-02-21)

⁴Innis, Adam. Halifax's downtown population growing at fastest pace in Canada. *The Signal*, University of King's College, 9 February 2022, <https://tinyurl.com/2p9d72p3> (accessed 2022-02-21)

Histories and Historic Places at Pier 21



Pier 21 and the annex building in 1929 or 1930 (courtesy Nova Scotia Archives, Longley scrapbook in the Harry and Rachel Morton Fonds)

Steven Schwinghamer

As a major ocean immigration site in Halifax from 1928 until 1971, Pier 21 is a designated National Historic Site, the location for two national historic event plaques, and the home of a national museum. With about a million immigrants having passed through the site, mostly within the living or familial memory of current generations, there are personal narratives about this site as a gateway to Canada in communities across the country. Many local people visit during their schooling, and others come for programs and events. This sounds like a resounding success. However, what we have at Pier 21 is an overwhelming story

that can drown out many other histories of and at the place. Here, we will explore just a few of those neglected histories: the Nova Scotia Nautical Institute, the Black railway porters, and the South End grain elevator.

What we have at Pier 21 is an overwhelming story that can drown out many other histories of and at the place

The accompanying early image shows Pier 21 shortly after construction. The two long sheds are the principal buildings of the Pier 21 complex: in the foreground, the customs annex; and in the background, Shed 21 itself, which

is generally referred to as Pier 21. Both sheds were part of the historic arrival process at Halifax. The waterside shed housed the ocean immigration facility on its second floor, running from the north end (where we see the exposed brick face with its row of windows) to the edge of the next brick structure (the office bay in between Sheds 21 and 22). The second storey of that shed is the entirety of the designated area of the National Historic Site. It is the historic home of Pier 21's immigration facility itself. When passengers were done being examined for entry, they crossed the ramp into the one-storey shed in the foreground. Inside that ramp, their hand baggage was checked by customs, and



Between Shed 21 and the annex building today, the space where the tracks ran (author photo)

once in the shed — the annex building — they retrieved their large baggage (if they had any) and waited for the train.

For those of us who are familiar with the area today, what the Halifax Port Authority calls the Seaport, you may see immediately that a great deal has changed, including most of the space that was designated as a National Historic Site.

... the influence ... to discourage and penalize potential Black settlers — while also occasionally recruiting specific Black labour for railway work ...

We can see changes that affect most of the historic passenger arrivals facility at Pier 21. The south half of the immigration space on the second floor of Pier 21 has been converted for use by the Canadian Museum of Immigration, and the north half has been transformed by the creation of the port campus of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD). Up until 1998, much of the interior remained identifiable with the footprint of immigration operations, and about half of the immigration layout remained intact until the 2006-07 reuse of the historic site by NSCAD. The NSCAD renovation overwrote the historic im-

migration space, but it is very much in line with the history of Shed 21 as the long-time home of a school, the Nova Scotia Nautical Institute. That training facility for mariners was located in the former immigration quarters for about twenty years, compared to the immigration presence of about forty years.

I regret the losses in the designated historic place very much, but there are built heritage elements that survive that might anchor presentation of some neglected histories. One such heritage element is the space between the sheds. This is where the tracks ran for trains that carried immigrants inland. Many immigrants travelled in the simple and sparsely-equipped Colonist cars¹, but some travelled in sleeping cars. The sleeping cars were the working domain of a small but politically significant group of Black Canadians: the porters. Work as a porter was one of the few socially accepted posts for a Black man that intersected with the public world of white Canada. A number of the porters became significant community leaders, in part based on their contact with Black communities (and their politics) wherever their trains took them, in the United States and Canada.

To further contextualize this work:

the railways were important agencies for settlement to Canada. They advertised, recruited, and arranged for transportation for settlers to Canada all over North America and Europe. However, American rail partners were urged to discourage Black Americans, who were deemed unsuitable for immigration to Canada by officials of the immigration branch at the time. In the early 1900s, railways were synonymous with power of all kinds in North America, and their agents and officials enjoyed the 'soft power' that this gave them. In that climate, the influence of their officials to discourage and penalize potential Black settlers—while also occasionally recruiting specific Black labour for railway work—is significant. This was an example of transnational white solidarity (per Kornel Chang's phrase), where racism and prejudice led to the cooperative construction of exclusionary practices.² The space between the historic sheds ties this complex history to the place of our city and to the community of African Nova Scotian men who were part of the fraternity of railway porters during the twentieth century.

The history of the rail service and the porters has a strong link to what is now the dominant story of the site—pass-



Aerial view of the grain elevator in 1931, with the Halifax Cold Storage building in the foreground, from the Richard McCully Collection, photographer Harold Reid (courtesy Nova Scotia Archives, 2012-010-003 no 11 neg 187)

enger arrival. However, the history of the site shows us that commercial motives and operations were central to the development of the Ocean Terminals, which makes it baffling that the history of industry and commerce near Pier 21 does not enjoy more prominence in our public memory. The disjoint from this history is strange alongside the visible domination of the present surroundings by container traffic, ships, cranes, and the like. My favourite indicator of that history lies just up the road from the annex building. It is the grain elevator, which has an interesting political history. At the time it was built, it was argued that a better port and appropriate grain-handling facilities in Halifax would help address the “national transportation problem” by having Canadian goods and products shipped, as much as possible, via Canadian infrastructure and Canadian ports. This point was reiterated with increasing vigour as the Maritime Rights movement gained momentum after the First World War. Maritime Rights advocates looked to resolve losses in political representation, financial subsidies, and in transportation infrastructure (espe-

cially the Intercolonial Railway) in order to secure the place of the Maritime provinces as full partners, fairly compensated, in Canadian confederation.

I doubt there are too many people in Halifax who look at the elevator and spare a thought for the complex history of regional grievance politics in Canada

There were good reasons to be skeptical of the economic prospects for investing in this infrastructure. As a result of the addition of the new terminal, Halifax’s old grain elevator had much reduced rail access and the associated older piers fell into disrepair. After almost two million bushels of wheat were shipped through Halifax in 1920, only 300 bushels were shipped through the port in the following two years combined.

Nevertheless, the project proceeded and the grain business outlasted immigration at Pier 21 by some years. I doubt there are too many people in Halifax who look at the elevator and spare a thought for the complex history

of regional grievance politics in Canada, and I am just enough of a history nerd to believe that to be a shame.

Pier 21 enjoys a designation as a National Historic Site and serves to host the remembrance of a couple of national historic events. However, many key stories of the site—especially those that are important to our city and communities—are not part of the designated and dominant storytelling linked to the site. I hope this brief introduction to some of those histories will enrich your experience of Pier 21 and the Ocean Terminals—but I also invite you to follow the spirit of the talk and re-read your own favourite historic sites, looking for neglected and marginalized stories that may need a little more attention.

Steven Schwinghamer is a historian with the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 in Halifax. This is a brief summary of his Trust lecture on 20 January 2022.

¹<https://pier21.ca/explore/online/tell-me-more-about/the-colonist-car-dan-conlin>

²Chang, Kornel S. Enforcing transnational white solidarity: Asian migration and the formation of the U.S.-Canadian boundary. *American Quarterly*, 60(3), 671-696 (September 2008), doi:10.1353/aq.0.0027.

A Tribute to Andrew Powter, Hampton, NS



Andrew Powter (left), Achim Jankowski (next to him), David Panton, Veterans Affairs Canada, and colleagues, at the 2001 opening of the Beaumont-Hamel Visitor Centre (photo courtesy of Achim Jankowski)

Many will remember Andrew Powter as an active member of the Trust, contributing to the Buildings at Risk Committee, supporting heritage workshops, and writing practical guides on topics such as “Keeping wood siding on historic buildings” and (with Craig Sims) “Maintenance and repair of historic wood windows.”¹ He was generous with his time, offering sage advice to community groups with built heritage assets. As HTNS Board member, Marg Herdman, said, “Andrew was a caring person who generously shared his expertise. We felt blessed that he visited us in Arichat, providing a pro bono assessment of the former St John’s Anglican Church.” In semi-retirement, Andrew was active internationally in promoting sustainable heritage conservation. Among other activities, he served as Project Coordinator for ICOMOS, with international and Russian colleagues, to develop a conservation concept plan for the 300-year old wooden Church of the Transfiguration, part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Kizhi Pogost in Karelia, Russia.² We are grateful to Achim Jankowski, a Trust member and former colleague of Andrew’s, for the following generous tribute.

I have had the privilege of knowing Andrew since I first joined the Heritage Conservation Program team of Public Works Canada, as a landscape architect, in 1988. As Chief, Period Architecture, Andrew was our team leader in the field of heritage conservation. With his leadership, he provided knowledgeable guidance in this field of expertise, through the planning and team work for the various projects. In addition to my conservation Landscape Architect Supervisor, Andrew was my mentor.

Several years later, I was given the opportunity to join the multi-disciplinary conservation planning team, headed by Andrew, in preparing the Conservation and Presentation Planning for the Canadian National Vimy Memorial and the Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial, the two iconic First World War battlefield memorial sites in France. These important studies, completed in 1997 for Veterans Affairs Canada, provided the foundation for several significant projects thereafter, one being the Beaumont-Hamel Visitor Centre. It was the culmination of a series of rehabilitation initiatives for the Beaumont-Hamel

Newfoundland Memorial site. The opening ceremony of the Visitor Centre was held July 1st, 2001, the 85th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme.

These heritage conservation related projects, initiated by Veterans Affairs, were due in great part to Andrew’s team leadership, his heritage expertise, and his positive guidance of the work of the conservation professional team members. He was a passionate Conservation Architect, and his work has left its mark.

During our retirement, we enjoyed continued contact and friendship, while living in close proximity in Nova Scotia. Andrew continued to pursue his conservation passion, in part by restoring his heritage home and Studebaker vehicles.

Andrew passed away on the third of February 2022. He will be missed by all of us.

*Achim Jankowski
Landscape Architect (ret’d), APALA, FCSLA
Cornwall, Ontario*

¹These and other documents can be found on the National Trust website at <https://archive.national-trustcanada.ca/get-involved/help-homeowners>

²Andrew Powter, Kizhi Pogost World Heritage Site, Karelia, Russia - an interdisciplinary and international approach to conservation planning and monitoring. *ICOMOS Bulletin*, 7(1) (1998), available at <http://archive.canada.icomos.org/wood/papers/kizhi-p.html>

To Mark the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

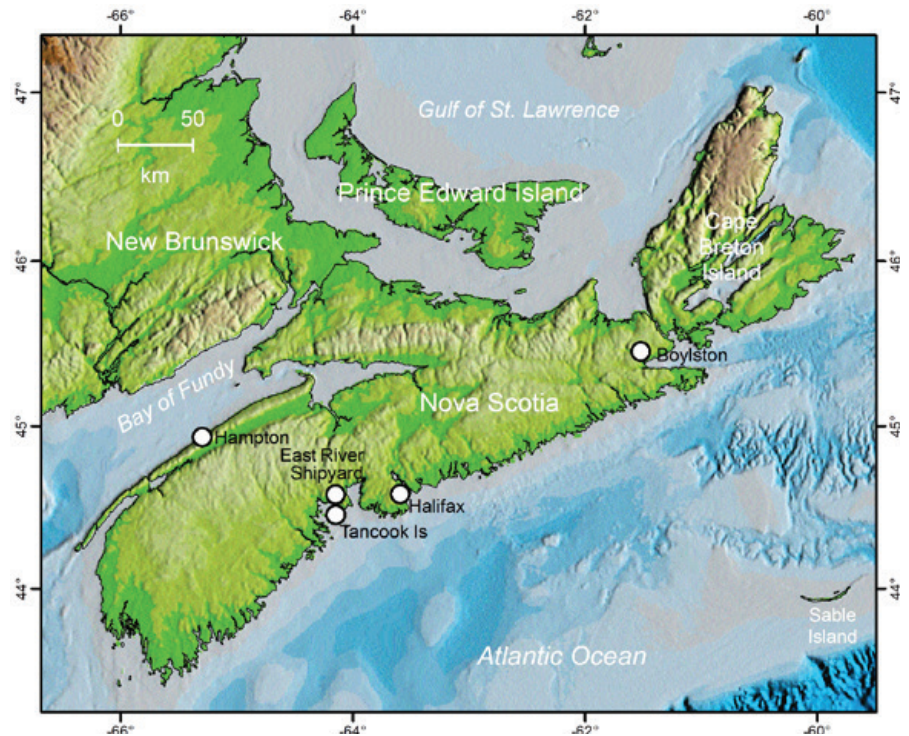


In recognition of the Queen's 70 years on the throne, we reflect back on a moment in Halifax during the Royal Tour of 1951:

"The Duke bids farewell to Premier and Mrs Macdonald at the doorway of Province House while Princess Elizabeth waves to the crowds cheering in the rain (and Mrs J.A.D. McCurdy looks on)," Nova Scotia Bureau of Information, 7 November 1951

(courtesy of Nova Scotia Archives, Album no 9 – The Royal Tour 1951 – p. 29; caption from <https://archives.novascotia.ca/jubilee/archives/?ID=9>).

Locations of subject matter in this issue



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