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The Griffin

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3 ARTIST **Alexander Koltakov**

4 HERITAGE TOOLS **The Tools That Built Nova Scotia**
– a unique collection of antique tools from all the trades
Peter Delefes

7 REGIONAL UPDATE **Cape Breton**
Margaret Herdman

8 INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE **Bridging the Fundy Bore: Engineering Feat or Ethical Challenge?**
Holly Hanes

12 REPURPOSING **Making Magic in New Glasgow**
Laurie Stanley-Blackwell

14 REGIONAL UPDATE **Annapolis Valley - Saving the Pillars of the Community**
Avery Jackson

16 LECTURE **Nancy Donnelly and Marlee Donnelly – the Ancestral Homes Network**
Donald Forbes

19 PLACES OF WORSHIP **Churches Lost and Churches Moving On**

The Griffin

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Cover image: Lunenburg Reflection, by Alexander Koltakov, oil on canvas, 16"x20" (courtesy of the artist)

President's Report



Sandra Barss

On August 6, I had the privilege of hearing Elder John R. Prosper speak at a book launch in Antigonish. The book he co-authored is *Joe Marble Plays to St. Anne: a Two-Eyed-Seeing (Etuaptmunk) Pilgrimage*. Two-eyed seeing can be described as combining two perspectives to reach a common understanding and is borne from a collaboration of Elder Prosper and his co-author, a non-Indigenous former academic, Dorothy Lander. The book offers accounts of people from Paq'tnkek Nation who were affected by residential schools and the more recent involvement of some in ongoing Truth and Reconciliation.

*Two-eyed seeing can be described
as combining two perspectives to reach
a common understanding*

Elder Prosper had a profound effect on all present when he described his own near 'brush' with the residential schools, all because he told his school-teacher nun that he was hungry one day at school. When he went home for lunch (one he knew he was unlikely to get because the family had no food) he saw the Indian Agent with his father and hid

in the woods until the agent left, thus avoiding being taken to the Shubenacadie School. Despite this, Elder Prosper retained his faith in God and his involvement in his church. He honoured us by singing the first verse of How Great Thou Art in his Mi'kmaw language – a well-known hymn sung in a language understood by only a few present.

I write about this because, in listening to Elder Prosper, I was reminded that Nova Scotia's history doesn't belong only to those of us with European origins. It especially includes Indigenous (Mi'kmaw) and African Nova Scotian residents, who have their own history and built heritage in our province. The Mi'kmaq predate the Europeans and the Africans were brought to North America as enslaved people. Our shared history has provided us with diverse built heritage, all of which deserves recognition and preservation.

Of particular concern to Elder Prosper is the Church of St Anne in Summerside, Antigonish County. The present church was built in 1867 but, despite maintenance, now needs significant restoration work. Unfortunately, the scope of work is well beyond what a Trust Buildings at Risk grant can reasonably support, but the building is of significance to this small community, and they have now embarked upon a restoration fund to preserve it. We hope they will be successful.

Countless other areas in Nova Scotia have similar structures that are, or were, mainstays of their communities. The Buildings at Risk grants are intended to help with work needed to save such built heritage. We are mindful to consider grant applications for all built heritage structures, regardless of their origins. Through Buildings at Risk grants, the Trust continues to help preserve the built heritage of our diverse and shared cultures throughout Nova Scotia.

ARTIST

Alexander Koltakov

Mr Koltakov is a Canadian artist, born in Crimea, who came to Canada in 2012 after 17 years in Israel. Following a few years in Toronto, in 2016 he moved to Halifax, where he continues to paint and sculpt. During his early childhood in Crimea, well known for its wonderful mountains and sea views, Alexander's grandfather introduced him to painting and he fell in love with the creative pursuit. During his school years, Koltakov studied painting in the art studio of the Crimean artist, N. Papias.

He tries to capture a scene that we often take for granted, or miss

In Canada, Alexander took a number of art courses at the Toronto School of Art and continued to develop his skills and talents as a painter. His work is typically acrylic or oil on canvas, in an impressionist style. He has a special interest in working with plaster-on-wood relief – three-dimensional paintings, as he calls them.

Alexander Koltakov has participated in many plein-air and live painting events in Nova Scotia and Ontario, including the Parrsboro International Plein Air Festival (2017-2018, 2020-2022), Paint Peggy's Cove Plein Air Event (2017-2022), "Pre-shrunk," Argyle Fine Art Gallery, Halifax (2019), and the annual "Paint Sea on Site" festival in Lunenburg (2018).

"When I start a new art project, I become obsessed ... I dream it, breathe it, live it until it's done"

The artwork of Alexander Koltakov can be found in art galleries of Nova Scotia, such as the Teichert Gallery and Argyle Fine Art Gallery, and in private collections all over the world.

Artist's statement

Alexander Koltakov is passionate about the beauty of nature. He aspires to express not just a picture, but life itself, without forgetting the wonder of the



Morning Sun Over the Bay, by Alexander Koltakov, acrylic on canvas, 24"x 36"



Farm by the Shore, plein air, by Alexander Koltakov, acrylic on canvas, 16"x 20"

human presence accompanying it.

He tries to capture a scene that we often take for granted, or miss. His hope is that we can recapture that essence, view that scene, and feel the emotional response to it, which will add colour and light to people's lives.

"When I start a new art project, I become obsessed with it. I dream it, breathe it, live it until it's done, and, even then, the idea doesn't leave my mind, but flourishes and grows into new creations, each of them has a part of my soul inside."

The Tools That Built Nova Scotia

- a unique collection of antique tools from all the trades

Peter Delefes

Kevin Wood has been collecting antique tools for many years. As a teenager growing up in Kentville, he enjoyed exploring abandoned barns and salvaging old wheels, tools, and any other interesting items he could find. His collection of old tools started with woodworking tools and gradually extended to those used by blacksmiths, shipbuilders, wheelwrights, tinsmiths, farmers, and all the other trades. For 30 years he was an Industrial Arts teacher in the Kentville area. During these years he continued to pursue his interest in collecting historic tools, in part by restoring antique furniture. Instead of receiving payment in cash, he preferred to barter with his clients for tools and other artifacts. Over time, his collection became so extensive that he needed much more space to house and display it.

The apple warehouse was erected in 1904 at a time when Nova Scotia was a major world supplier of apples

In 2008, Kevin and his wife, Heather, with their four children, acquired a farm property called 'Sunnyside' in Port Williams, on Highway 358, about 5 km west of Wolfville. Prior to that time, they had been living in a new house in Kentville. Sunnyside farm included a house and two large barns, more than enough space for his burgeoning antique tool collection and for garden plots to grow flowers and vegetables. The germ of an idea to establish a museum was also taking form and the farm would be a perfect location. The previous owner and Kevin agreed to swap properties for one dollar. They exchanged deeds and Kevin and his family took possession of the farm, which had been abandoned and neglected for a number of years. Powder-post beetles had infested the



Kevin Wood demonstrating the use of a spring-driven table saw; once the handle is cranked, generating the necessary rpms in the saw blade, cutting can commence, taking care to stand clear of the still rotating handle (photo courtesy of L.E. Omstead)

wood and had to be exterminated. Structural repairs were needed to stabilize the buildings. Kevin undertook the monumental task of repairing, restoring, and maintaining the buildings himself over the next few years. Since he was still teaching, he was limited to working on the property during after-school hours, weekends, and summers. Now that he is retired, Kevin's energies are fo-

cused on realizing his dream of creating a working tool museum.

He plans to conduct day-long workshops at the museum where young and old can learn to use the antique tools to create traditional items such as apple ladders, wooden sleighs, barrels, brooms, and buckets. These will be made in the old-fashioned way, without electricity. Power tools, when utilized,



Sunnyside Farm, showing the old apple warehouse (1904) in the foreground, the red barn (mid 1800s), and the family home (1829); the white warehouse and the red barn will eventually house the bulk of the museum's collection (photo courtesy of L.E. Omstead, 4 July 2022)

will operate using foot pedals or hand power. He hopes to be able to start the workshops in the summer of 2023.

Seeing Sunnyside Farm, today, it is hard to imagine the dilapidated condition of the buildings 14 years ago when Kevin and Heather acquired the property. The three main buildings consist of a family house, a large red barn, and a white, former apple warehouse. All are fully restored, significant, historic structures. The Cape Cod cottage-style house was erected in 1829 and has had several additions, including dormers, over the years. The barn is one of the oldest in the region, built in the mid-1800s, as evidenced by hand-hewn beams and cedar posts. It is a huge structure, 45' x 90', originally used for cattle and hay. The apple warehouse was erected in 1904 at a time when Nova Scotia was a major world supplier of apples. An elaborate truss system in the attic enables the 40' x 60' main floor, where the apples were once stored, to be free of columns. 'Frostproof' insulated walls kept the apples from freezing or overheating. The main floor is being set up to provide the workshop area for woodworking classes, a leather and cobbler shop, and a sheet metal section.

Next to the barn is a small building from the late 1800s which contains

Kevin's blacksmith tools. The four-acre property is beautifully landscaped with flower beds, walkways paved with antique, rough bricks, a large pond surrounded by stonework, and a whimsical tree-themed fountain called 'Tapestry', made entirely of scrap metal. 'Branches' of black steel tubing with hammered copper leaves support 113 antique copper taps, each connected to a copper waterline. When the pump is activated, the taps emit a cascading flow of water splashing into the pool below. This imaginative piece of artwork attracts a lot of visitors who marvel at its complexity and design.

Among the displays is one ... comprising fog horns, church bells, school bells, fire-engine bells, steam whistles, animal bells, and steam locomotive bells

Kevin has been an active member of the Atlantic Tool Collectors Association and has served as its President. Over the years, he has developed a considerable network of friends and fellow collectors who share his interest in antique tools and the desire to see knowledge of the old traditions passed on to the next generation. When Robin Wyllie died in 2014, the sale of his extensive collec-

tion of over 1000 tools was entrusted to Kevin and took place in the old apple warehouse. It was Robin's wish that the collection remain in Nova Scotia. Vic Hayden, another collector of antique tools, left his entire collection to Kevin when he passed away three years ago. This large collection of tools is artistically organized and displayed in glass cabinets in the former apple warehouse. Kevin Wood is pursuing Robin's and Vic's mission of preserving knowledge about the "old way of doing things." Thanks to his passion and perseverance, an antique working tools museum, providing hands-on experience of the old ways, will soon become a reality.

Kevin's brother, Troy Wood, also has a passion for heritage preservation. In 2007, he bought the Wesley Knox United Church (1921) in nearby Woodville, Kings County. It now houses the Wooden Window and Door Company, which specializes in repairing, restoring, and replicating large-scale complex windows such as those for St David's Presbyterian Church in Halifax. An article on Troy Wood appeared in the June 2020 issue of *The Griffin*.

Kevin prides himself on having antique tools from virtually all the trades. These include woodworking, blacksmithing, cooper, stone masonry,



The woodworking shop located on the main floor of the historic apple warehouse; about twenty old-style work benches will be available to interested people of all ages who may wish to enroll in day-long courses using the antique tools to produce traditional wooden items (photo courtesy of L.E. Omstead)

transportation, fishing, farming, leatherwork, cobblery, tin-smithing, forestry, shipbuilding, sail making, and animal husbandry. There are even fiddle making tools. The tools are being organized into displays which will be located in the red barn, the apple warehouse and the blacksmith shop. Among the displays is one called "Sounds of Nova Scotia," comprising fog horns, church bells, school bells, fire-engine bells, steam whistles, animal bells, and steam locomotive bells. These will have ropes which can be pulled to generate the various sounds. Another display consists of Mi'kmaw tools for weaving and decorating baskets with porcupine quills. The oldest item in the collection is a 3500 year old stone adze. There are Acadian

tools and others used by the French at Louisbourg. The Acadian tools include a number of dyking spades used to build and repair dykes, hay forks, and even wooden clogs for the horses' hooves. An assortment of antique moulding planes can be used to create different profiles for crown moulding and baseboards and can cut tongue and groove joints. Kevin will lend the planes to people who are trying to make or replicate a particular profile.

Highlights of the collection include the hand- and pedal-operated tools, which are still functional. Some of these are from the W.F. and John Barnes Co. of Rockford, Illinois, manufactured in the 1870s. Pedal- and hand-operated scroll saws, lathes, routers, drill presses, and

table saws are sought-after collectors' items and are fascinating to observe in operation.

The long-time dream of Kevin Wood to create a working tool museum will soon come to fruition. As he explains, Nova Scotia was one of the earliest parts of the country settled by Europeans; therefore, it has tools and artifacts unique to this province. The museum's vast collection of antique tools in the beautiful setting of Sunnyside Farm in the Annapolis Valley will ensure the site becomes a popular destination.

Peter Delefes is a past President of the Trust and a frequent contributor to The Griffin,

Cape Breton

Margaret Herdman

This has been a very busy and active summer in Cape Breton. The focus for this report will be those heritage churches and former churches that have hosted *Musique Royale* concerts on the island in 2022.

Musique Royale is a province-wide organization that hosts a Summer Festival of early music in venues of historical and architectural significance. This year's festival was the 37th. Each group performs four to six concerts during their tour. Performers come from Nova Scotia, other parts of Canada, the United States, and Europe. Many audience members would never have entered these heritage buildings if it were not for these performances.

The first Cape Breton concert this year was held on August 4 at the former Malagawatch United Church, located in the Highland Village in Iona. Best of Boxwood presented the concert. This building began its life as a Presbyterian church. Built in 1874, the structure took a long journey in 2003 by land and water to its present location in the Highland Village.¹

The second Cape Breton concert was held on August 5 at Black River United Church in Dundee. Best of Boxwood were the performers again. Black River United is part of this year's in-person Doors Open for Churches. Built in 1870, this is the second Presbyterian church in Black River, replacing the first one that was on the site of what is today cemetery land.

St John's Centre for the Arts in Arichat was visited on August 10. Skye Consort with Emma Björling were the artists. St John's Centre for the Arts was built in 1895 as St John's Anglican Church. This beautiful William Critchlow Harris building was deconsecrated in 2014 with ownership being assumed by the Friends of St John's Arichat. This building is also part of the in-person Doors Open for Churches for 2022.



Skye Consort with Emma Björling performing in St Johns Centre for the Arts, Arichat (photo courtesy Janelle Lucyk, Musique Royale)



Best of Boxwood performing in the former Malagawatch church at the Highland Village in Iona (photo courtesy Janelle Lucyk, Musique Royale)

Skye Consort and Emma Björling drove to Baddeck for their next concert. This was held at the former St Peter and St John Anglican Church. It was built in 1883 by Rev. Simon Gibbons, the first Inuit Anglican priest in Canada. A distinctive feature of a Gibbons church is the bell tower, sometimes known as the Rhineland Helmet. The church of St Peter and St John was deconsecrated in 2012. It was a participant in Doors Open for Churches (virtual) in 2021.

The final performance venue was Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Johnstown. Sacred Heart hosted two concerts: Aurore String Quartet and Curly Music. The quartet performed on August 20 and Curly Music on August

28. Aurore String Quartet comprises four of Canada's outstanding young artists, all of whom participated in the Equilibrium Young Artist program at the Lunenburg Academy of Music and Performance. Curly Music is a duo from Belgium and France. Sacred Heart Church, which opened in 1894, has participated in Doors Open for Churches in previous years.

¹ See Preparing to float the Malagawatch Church, *The Griffin* 33, no. 3 (September 2008), p. 20.

Bridging the Fundy Bore: Engineering Feat or Ethical Challenge?

Holly Hanes

Nestled in the lower reaches of the Shubenacadie River, forming the northern end of the iconic Shubenacadie Canal system, six stone pillars stand exposed to the elements and the world-famous Bay of Fundy 'bore'. Few folks know of the history that is associated with the structure and many drive by without so much as a glance.

The bridge that once stood here was the final stage in the completion of the Midland Railway, which operated between Truro and Windsor, connecting small rural communities and their goods to the larger hubs. The construction of 57.84 miles (93 km) of track began in 1898 and was completed with the 1240 foot (378 m) bridge crossing the Shubenacadie at South Maitland on 9 October 1901.

The Engineering Challenge

Construction of this bridge was no small task. Indeed other options were proposed to avoid the crossing. However, the district of Clifton offered a \$4000 bonus, which swayed the views of the shareholders, including well-known shipbuilder Alfred Putnam of Maitland. The construction at the bridge site began on 1 May 1899, under the direction of George E. Thomas, the head engineer with the New York Engineering Contract Company. The cost to complete the piers was estimated at \$100,000, employing a workforce of up to 300 at the bridge site. Because of the remote location and the type of construction, getting materials to the site was a challenge in itself. Cement powder, for example, came from England to Halifax by steamship, Halifax to Stewiacke by rail, and finally Stewiacke to South Maitland on the Shubenacadie River. Fresh water had to be brought in from over two miles away.

A major issue at the outset was the bedrock profile completed by Messrs



Floating span into place (photo courtesy of Jeff Yuill)



Span emplacement, showing scow and tug Bessie, viewed from west abutment (photo courtesy of Jeff Yuill)

McDonald and Company of Halifax, under the authority of Mr A. G. Farlane. Inaccuracies in the reported depths and properties of the bedrock made the construction more difficult, time consuming, and costly.

The first step in construction at the site comprised a cableway to transport men and materials across the water.

This was complicated by the large tidal range and high currents. The tug was stranded on a falling tide while trying to string the cable. The other preliminary jobs included construction of two concrete abutments and four pedestals to support the cableway. Soft shale was encountered under the abutment on the west side of the river. The workers



Five spans of the South Maitland railway bridge, viewed from the road bridge (shadow in foreground, completed 1979), prior to demolition in 1986 (photo courtesy Patricia Langille)

had to excavate through about twelve feet of the shale to reach a hard rock surface on which to place the concrete. The cableway pedestals were then built 30 feet (9 m) in each direction from the centre of each abutment.

Building the Piers

After these preliminaries, construction of the six bridge piers could begin. Pier number one, closest to Windsor (South Maitland), was the first to be undertaken. This pier was a major challenge because the rock under the pier was very uneven. It soon became clear that construction would need to be coordinated with and respect the tide. The workers would have to protect the new concrete at the end of each shift, before the tide would come back up the river. This was done by covering with canvas and large stones. The construction process went rather slowly. Pier one was rectangular and different in shape from the other piers. Its purpose was to keep the ice off during the winter months.

The next to be started was pier number six, the one closest to the Truro (Clifton) end of the bridge. It was the first pier constructed using a pneumatic (pressurized) caisson (as had been used

in the building of the Brooklyn Bridge, which opened in 1883). Here again, the bedrock testing proved faulty – the reported rock type was incorrect and at incorrect depth.

Accident at Pier Five

Pier number five, approximately 500 feet from the eastern bank, was the next to be constructed. An error in the operation of the caisson at this pier would ultimately cost four men their lives. Again, the bedrock testing supplied incorrect data – bedrock was 14 feet deeper than anticipated. Also due to the nature of the material, dynamite was required to complete this pier.

The bridge that once stood here was the final stage in the completion of the Midland Railway, which operated between Truro and Windsor

On the morning of Sunday 20 August 1899, at approximately 8:45 am, an accident occurred. Because of the timing of the tide and the fact that George E. Thomas did not feel it safe for the men to be in the caisson when the bore came in, the men were near the end of the night shift, which ran

between the tides (3:00 am until 9:00 am). Fatigue was probably a contributing factor among the crew of sixteen men. Because the pneumatic caisson relied on air pressure to keep water and mud out of the workspace, there was an airlock with two doors operated by a lever system. Due to some suspected carelessness (in the opinion of George E. Thomas), both doors were opened, causing the water to come in on the men. Some men panicked, which is what is suspected to have led to their deaths. Also unmentioned in Thomas's subsequent report on the accident was previous damage to this caisson when it had floated a quarter mile downstream, after which it leaked.

Based on witness reports given by the men inside at the time of the accident, there were two opinions on how fast the water had come in initially. However, in a statement given by John H. McDonald, who was working nearby at the time of the accident, he said the water began coming in rather slowly. This allowed some men to escape up to the surface, using the order given by Michael Bolger to operate the bucket (a device to transport men to the roof of the caisson), while others panicked.



Workers laying rail on completed bridge (photo courtesy CHArt Society, Maitland)

The bucket was ordered to stop when it crushed William Donagan against the side of the caisson, killing him instantly.

There were no changes ... following the "thorough investigation" ... management evaded responsibility and failed to take any corrective measures

Michael Bolger's statement was as follows: "Gave signal for bucket, also ordered it to stop. So as to guide the bucket into the shaft. Then I saw all the water coming in and knew something

was the matter. I went into the shaft, to see what was the matter and was first man up. Knew about how high the water would come. Did not think the men were in danger." Bolger was in charge of the crew that morning. He did not panic because he did not feel that any of the men were in serious danger. Normally the water would have come in slowly and there would have been plenty of time to allow the sixteen men to exit the caisson. However, the jerk when the bucket halted opened the door more, allowing more water to rush in.

Michael Bolger continued "Went right back and saw two men standing there, head and neck above the water, but they did not come out. I asked for assistance to help two men out." The two men were dead as a result of drowning. The men who died in the accident were Luke Petters (49), James Wilkes (37), William Donagan (28), and Con Dacey (20, also known as James Donahue). The bodies of the men from New York were sent back to their families and Con Dacey was buried in Maitland on the Robinson Road. His gravestone is engraved, "In loving memory of Cornelius Deasy. A native of Cork, Ireland, who was drowned at South Maitland Bridge, Aug. 20. 1899, aged 20 years. May his soul rest in peace." On the side face of the stone is the inscription, "Erected by the employees of the engineering contract."



Gravestone for Con Dacey (aka Cornelius Deasy), Robinson Road RC cemetery, Maitland (Griffin photo)

The Ethical Challenge

An inquiry took place almost immediately on a nearby boat. It was determined that all machinery was working fine, both before and after the accident. The foreman of pressure work on the west side of the river, Jerry Murphy, recalled the water level being only six inches below the shaft opening. The bodies of the men were located in the bottom of the caisson after the accident.

There were no changes to the machinery following the "thorough investigation." Nothing really changed. Four men did not come back to work the next day. Three failed to return because they no longer wanted to deal with the terrifying tides, and one (Patrick O'Brien) failed to return because of injury. The work went on the next day. A Charlottetown newspaper stated that over 100 men did not return to work, expressing concerns about management. There was no mention in the inquiry about the age of the lock tender operator, who was new to the job and only 16 years of age. It is clear that management evaded responsibility and failed to take any corrective measures.

The Shubenacadie Bridged

After the completion of the piers, the spans made of steel were fabricated on land and floated into position. Each span, weighing 160-200 tons, was floated on scows at high tide to be placed on top of the piers. Each of the five spans had to be floated about 1100 feet and required eighteen people to ensure correct placement.

The rail line had already been laid from both directions, awaiting the completion of the final component, the bridge. The spectacle of floating the span into place drew a trainload of passengers. However, William Stryker (Dominion Bridge Company head engineer) said the conditions were not favourable and folks should come back tomorrow. The next day, 29 July 1901, trains arrived from both Windsor and Truro to view the first span being placed.

The second was installed on August 14th, and the fifth and final span was

placed on August 28th. During the placement of the final span, the cable snapped; the tugboat *Bessie* came to the rescue and controlled the unhooked cable.

... trains arrived from both Windsor and Truro to view the first span being placed

The bridge was completed at a total cost of \$212,616.01 for construction and \$5509.90 in engineering fees. The railway operated for more than eight decades, being acquired by the Dominion Atlantic Railway in 1905 and closed by the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1983. Af-

ter the line was abandoned, the bridge was demolished in 1986. Today only the piers remain; the western abutment and pier support a viewing platform at the East Hants Tidal Interpretation Centre.

Holly Hanes completed her MA in History at Dalhousie University in 2020. She is now a Teaching Assistant, incorporating this content into guest lectures for the History of Engineering, a mandatory course for each engineering graduate. She sits on the Board of Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia as regional representative for Cumberland, Colchester, and East Hants.

ARTIST

Alexander Koltakov



Secluded Corner of Halifax, by Alexander Koltakov, acrylic on canvas, 14"x 14"

Making Magic in New Glasgow



First United Baptist Church c.1914 (photo courtesy Wanda White and Asa Nodelman)



The Odditorium, New Glasgow (photo courtesy of the author)

Laurie Stanley-Blackwell

A former Baptist church in New Glasgow is undergoing a major transformation, inspired by the creative vision of Wanda White, who runs the business Sense and SensibiliTea, and Asa Nodelman, a heritage carpenter who completed the NSCC program in heritage carpentry. This building was originally home to the First United Baptist Church and was built in 1897 after a devastating fire destroyed its predecessor. Located at 195 Forbes Street, this church epitomizes the standard features of High Victorian architecture, with its asymmetrical and visually interesting design. The building's embellished central entrance and conical turret with its candle snuffer roof project an air of whimsy.

Under its new owners, this repurposed church will be called The Odditorium and will serve as an art hub, with designated spaces for a tearoom, performance/event venue, gallery, workshop,

multi-purpose craft room, commercial kitchen, and private living quarters. The couple intends to showcase the building's spacious dimensions, architectural details, beautiful interior light, and splendid acoustics.

The building's embellished central entrance and conical turret with its candle snuffer roof project an air of whimsy

This major project will involve extensive upgrades such as the installation of accessible washrooms, reconfiguring floor space, and constructing a catwalk for lighting and sound equipment. Among other things, Asa and Wanda plan to convert the upstairs apartment to "an open plan that daylights and accentuates exciting architectural features," frame areas to create the "puppet" and "blending" rooms, reuse antique ceramic door knobs and ornate door hinges, recycle ornamental front panels from an

upright piano, and retain such original elements as the stained glass windows (on both the main and second floors), the pendant church light fixtures, tongue-and-groove ceilings, multiple staircases and landings, and wooden wainscoting.

In future, the building's fanciful exterior may even be enhanced by balconies and a widow's walk. The couple's primary goal is to combine "heritage and modern carpentry with some strong and interesting twists," while turning the old church into a visual odyssey that awakens delight, wonder, and curiosity.

If you want to follow the ongoing renovations at The Odditorium, check out their Facebook page, *The Odditorium Art Space*.

Laurie Stanley-Blackwell is on the Board of HTNS and is regional representative for Pictou, Antigonish and Guysborough Counties.



The Odditorium ceiling, New Glasgow (photo courtesy Wanda White and Asa Nodelman)



The Odditorium, New Glasgow (photo courtesy Wanda White and Asa Nodelman)

Who's Who in the Trust?

A new Board was elected at the Annual General Meeting in the Cambridge Military Library earlier this summer. The HTNS volunteer Board members are as follow (the first six constituting the Executive Committee):

Sandra Barss, President
 Louis Comeau, VP Finance
 Janet Morris, VP Heritage
 Andrea Arbic, Secretary
 Beth Keech, Treasurer
 Mimi Fautley, Awards
 Terry Smith-Lamothe, Buildings at Risk
 Linda Forbes, Communications
 Denise Hansen, Education
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 Michelle Davey, at large
 Joe Ballard, at large
 Andrew MacAdam, at large
 Margaret Herdman, Cape Breton
 Patricia Nicoll, South Shore
 Avery Jackson, Annapolis Valley
 Holly Hanes, Cumberland-Colchester-East Hants
 Laurie Stanley-Blackwell, Pictou-Antigonish-Guysborough

Non-board committee chairs include:

Michèle Raymond, Program
 John Corbett, Membership
 Donald Forbes, Editor, *The Griffin*

The Trust office, managed by Executive Director, Emma Lang, now includes:
 Hayley Frail, Project Coordinator, Before It's Gone Halifax
 Natasha Jukes, Adaptive Re-use Project
 Mikyla Gillis, M.I., Archives
 Ava O'Neil, Voluntary Service for Duke of Edinburgh Award, Digby Fisheries Heritage Project

Annapolis Valley - Saving the Pillars of the Community

Avery Jackson

Nestled along the base of the North Mountain in the heart of the Annapolis Valley sits the quiet, rural, farming community of Clarence. Along this stretch of the Clarence Road stand two pillars of the community: the Clarence United Baptist Church and the Clarence East School (now Community Hall).

Over the years, both buildings faced a similar fate, falling into disrepair and ceasing to be used for community facilities . . . until a rural revival occurred. The community rallied for the preservation of its community structures.

Clarence Church

The first revival occurred in 2012, with community members coming together to preserve the Clarence Church, which was later registered as a Heritage Property in the Municipality of the County of Annapolis. Much has been written about this building. In 1981, Elizabeth Pacey described the structure as “the very essence of a picturesque rural church in an idyllic pastoral setting.”¹

A place of worship in Clarence can be traced back to the Reverend Dr Thomas Wood, an Anglican missionary who was the first individual to create a dictionary between the English and Mi’kmaq languages. Wood owned this property in the 1760s, and it is the first land grant he held in this part of Nova Scotia. He is known to have travelled through the region as a missionary.

Happily, the same group that had stepped in to preserve the Clarence Church took the initiative at the Hall

The grant land was sold a few months before Wood’s death, after which there was very little travel by Anglican missionaries to Clarence, then called the “Back Settlement.” The lack of leadership of the ministers led to dissenter populations forming a Congre-



Clarence United Baptist Church (author photo)

gational church housed in the “North Meeting House.” This building was the predecessor to the current church and was “rather longer than wide, with the pulpit being set up high with the minister well shut in, the pews were also straight back with doors.”² The communities of Clarence and Paradise later decided their religious beliefs aligned with those of the Baptist faith, and decided in 1810, to form a Baptist-affiliated congregation.

In 1853, this building was moved, and the current structure was built on the site the same year by Charles B. Clark. After the original building from Wood’s era was moved, it was used as a workshop by a local farmer, and eventually burned. The current building,

constructed by Clark, is a fine mixture of Classical and Gothic Revival styles. The design features a medium-pitched gable roof and a three-bay façade, with a large central belltower. The uppermost part of the steeple contains a crenellated wall on the tower with a finial at each corner. The sides of the main structure are adorned with large gothic windows with hood mouldings. One of the most striking features of this structure is the open cage belfry, which was redesigned in 1902 to accommodate the addition of a bell. In the mid-2000s, the building’s fate was uncertain, with the congregation divided on the next steps for the building. However, its future changed one day when community members

heard the ringing bell calling them. This call led to the creation of a historical group to help preserve this piece of heritage for future generations.

Clarence East School

The history of a school in Clarence can be traced back to around 1845, with early teachers being soldiers who received land grants in the community. A later teacher at the original school, Mr Handley Fitch, would go on to commission a boarding school just down the road. He had teachers come from England to educate young ladies in English, Latin, French, drawing, painting, and music.

On 16 June 2022, the community celebrated the official designation of the [Clarence East School] as a Municipal Heritage Property in Annapolis County

The building on the site today was built in 1891, where the original building once stood.

This building was constructed in the Greek Revival style and has a steeply pitched roof on a one-and-a-half-storey wooden structure. There is a three-bay façade with a centrally placed doorway. Striking features of the building include ornate woodwork on the peak and eaves and original windows.

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, the building's fate was uncertain, similar to the situation at the Clarence Church. The building faced the prospect of being closed and sold into private ownership due to an ageing board of directors and dwindling coffers. Happily, the same group that had stepped in to preserve the Clarence Church took the initiative at the Hall. Their first step was to register it as a Municipal Heritage Property to protect it and enable it to apply for grants to help restore the exterior of the building.

On 16 June 2022, the community celebrated the official designation of the building as a Municipal Heritage Property in Annapolis County.



Clarence East School, now Community Hall (author photo)

Significance of the Built Heritage

Through the designation of structures as heritage properties, we don't just celebrate a building; we also commemorate and look back on all of those for whom this piece of built heritage had meaning and to those who cared for it.

Some may look at buildings such as the Clarence East School and Clarence Church and not recognize the importance of built heritage in rural communities. Once these buildings are gone, they don't come back, and a place like Clarence can turn into just another country back road.

One could say that buildings like these are the very essence of a community and its beating heart. Historic buildings help us to evoke our origins and better comprehend who we collectively are today.

These structures help to define a sense of place, an identity for a community, and most importantly, a place to call home. Built heritage contributes to

feelings of connectedness and community pride. Examples of heritage such as these buildings can excite curiosity about our past and give people a means of encountering their neighbours. To not protect structures like the Clarence East School would mean forgetting about its significance for so many generations past and losing the essence of community.

For communities such as Clarence, people, families, and industries come and go, but the one thing that remains is the built heritage. This is, in fact, what defines and characterizes a community.

Avery Jackson is on the Board of the Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia and regional representative for the Annapolis Valley.

Endnotes

¹Elizabeth Pacey, *More Stately Mansions – Churches of Nova Scotia 1830 - 1910* (1981), p. 57.

²S. N. Jackson, *Historical Sketch of the Paradise and Clarence United Baptist Church* (1910), np.

Nancy Donnelly and Marlee Donnelly – the Ancestral Homes Network

“Home is where the heart is.” This well-known expression is rich in meaning and widely felt, implying that a family makes a home, and it could be anywhere. Sometimes, however, our hearts are captured by particular homes associated with childhood memories, family gatherings, or other rich experiences. The homes of grandparents or other relatives can assume iconic status as a focus of family reminiscence among members of particular generations.

Those who delve into family history typically discover other significant homes in various branches of the family. In some cases, the building(s) may still be standing (or may even remain within the family), while in others the house may be gone, or the area may be completely redeveloped and unrecognizable. Nevertheless, the history of what was there is important: photographs, land records, correspondence, other documents, or handed-down stories may enable us to recreate in memory the architecture, ambience, and significance to family or community of a long-lost home.

This was the origin of an idea that occurred to founder Philip Donnelly about 12 years ago at the time he was researching his family history in Ireland for a memoir published in 2010.¹ He noted that it was much easier to find the burial place of an ancestor than to discover the place that person had called home. Thus began the Ancestral Homes Network (AHN),² which was registered as a not-for-profit corporation in December 2020. CEO Nancy Donnelly and VP Technology Development, Marlee Donnelly, introduced Trust members and guests to this intriguing start-up project in an engaging virtual lecture on 17 February 2022. A recording of the lecture can be found on the Trust’s YouTube site.³

Nancy described the project originating out of Phil Donnelly’s concern



Stone thatched cottage on a 10-acre farm, occupied at 1901 census by Michael Tully and family, Greaghnadarragh, Co. Cavan, Ulster (courtesy Philip Donnelly)



Donnelly (Philips) farm home in Greaghnadarragh, Co. Cavan, Ulster, occupied by four generations of the Donnelly family from 1820 to 1947, and recorded in the AHN (courtesy Philip Donnelly)

for abandoned homes in Ireland and the gradually fading memories of those who had lived out their lives there. AHN was created to provide a platform to capture those memories before they are lost and to facilitate the preservation

of records of homes in any place at any time. As Nancy said, “The project aims to preserve information that would not necessarily be saved, many ancestral homes being modest and not a focus of historical attention.”



Canada

44.637° N, 63.586° W

Geographic Administrative Division: Structure Details

Roof Description

Clad in asphalt shingles. An unusual mansard roof with a uniquely moderate pitch and octagonal roof turret.

Wall Description

Clad in a combination of wooden shingles and clapboard.

Floor Description

Built atop a masonry foundation of coursed rubble and stretcher bond brick. The brick portions of the foundation are primarily surrounding the basement windows.

General Description

A 2.5-storey building of light, balloon frame construction with a roughly rectangular plan. The home is a very rare example of a transition between two popular Victorian styles, Second Empire and Queen Anne Revival. It exhibits a high level of architectural integrity with respect to layout and additions. The house retains its modified rectangular plan with minimal changes.

Events

Year	Description
1897	William McCulloch Boak purchases lots in the Edward Shields subdivision in 1897 and commissions the construction of this house on the property.
1905	William McCulloch Boak sells the property to James Frederick Barry.
1912	Rudolph Alexander Hobrecker purchases the property from Arthur J. Dove and Emily J. Dove.
1957	Rudolph and Bessie Hobrecker sell the property.
2022	The property is slated for demolition by its current owner, Dalhousie University, resulting in considerable public outcry.

Part of AHN record documenting architectural details and key events associated with the 1897 home at 1245 Edward Street, Halifax, recently gutted by Dalhousie University

The definition of an *ancestral home* adopted for the project is a *human habitation* or *its remains in any time period anywhere in the world*. If the location of a home (present or past) is known and there is some knowledge of its character and who lived there, it can be captured as an ancestral home in the network. Thus the project spans the gamut from archaeology to built heritage and from historical geography to genealogy. There is potential for synergy with other initiatives, such as the Nova Scotia Geo-Genealogy Project, which aims to associate names in the 1881 census with the locations of structures and head-of-household names recorded on the Ambrose F. Church County maps published between 1865 and 1888.⁴ If there is evidence for the appearance and history of one of these structures captured as an ancestral home with corresponding coordinates, then the dot on the map could open a larger window to the lives of the families living there in the past. Furthermore, in cases where the maps were published well before 1881, such as Halifax County (1865) or Hants County (1871), Ancestral Homes

data could record the homes of people captured in the census and living in homes constructed after the maps were prepared. The Samuel O'Brien home (1876) in Noel, Hants Co., recorded in the AHN, is one example.

The AHN is gradually beginning to expand. It currently includes 94 ancestral homes in Ireland, the USA, across Canada, and a smattering elsewhere (Algeria, Lebanon, and Australia). The value of the network will grow as more sites and details are added. Thus a primary purpose of the lecture was to open our eyes to the opportunity and to encourage participation. The vision is to build an International Archive of Ancestral Homes (IAAH), to be a long-term repository of information not readily captured in other historical or genealogical databases. As the number of records increases, the IAAH has the potential to become a valuable research tool.

Various initiatives are being pursued to grow the network, including one with the Chinese Canadian community. The historic Wing Sang Building (1889) on East Pender Street in Vancouver is captured as an ancestral home, in which

the upper floors were residential and the lower commercial. This, the oldest building in Vancouver's Chinatown, is a registered heritage structure, slated to become the new Chinese Canadian Museum. There is another concentration of ancestral homes recorded in the Ottawa area. In 2020, fifteen homes of Irish settlers in the Ottawa Valley were the focus of a one-semester cultural heritage research project by architecture students at Carleton University. A number of Scottish settler homes were added as an academic project in historical geography at the University of Ottawa.

In Nova Scotia, there are relatively few sites thus far, but great potential to expand the network in this province. Sites already captured include the Married Officers' Quarters (1901) and Lighthouse Keeper's Home (1960) on Georges Island. Also currently included in Halifax are the Henry House (1834) and the Waverley Inn (1865). In addition, pointing to a role for the AHN to support heritage preservation efforts, the 2½-storey 1897 Second Empire and Queen Anne style home at 1245 Edward Street in Halifax is included, with consid-



William Higgins House, Canada

45.722° N, 63.303° W

Geographic Administrative Division

Structure Details

Year	Number of Doors	Number of Windows	Number of Rooms
1844	2	13	10

Roof Description

Gable roof, originally clad in cedar shingles, later asphalt shingles.

Wall Description

Wood-frame, with outer cladding of wood clapboard, elaborate corner boards, and wood panelling on recessed front entry.

Floor Description

Softwood throughout.

General Description

This building appears to date from before 1844, when it was referenced in the property description of a deed transferring

Events

Residents

First Name	Last Name	Occupancy Period	Birth Date	Death Date	Gravesite	Additional Information
Blanche	Forbes	12th October 1918 - 19th January 1962	8th April 1878	17th January 1957	Tatamagouche Community Cemetery Link	Moved here, vacating manse when widowed, with five children then 1-15.

Part of AHN record for the c. 1844 home of the author's paternal grandmother (both in photo, c. 1952) in Tatamagouche, with example of architectural details and genealogical information for former residents

erable architectural and occupant detail. This home has been slated for demolition by the owners, Dalhousie University, who have already gutted the formerly gracious interior, sparking extensive public outcry.

During the February lecture, Marlee Donnelly led attendees through the on-line site, explaining the straightforward registration process, the steps involved to add an ancestral home, and the search tools available to discover homes by location, residents' names, or any of a number of other categories such as events, structure, or census. She has prepared a number of YouTube tutorials, which can be accessed under "About Us" on the AHN site,⁵ to guide first-time users through these quite simple procedures. An Android app is also available to broaden the appeal and facilitate mobile entry of data on-site.

To gain some personal understanding of the site and to contribute additional content, I recently added four Nova Scotia homes associated with my own family (in Noel, Maitland, Tatamagouche, and Dartmouth), as well as another in which my maternal grand-

mother grew up in Inglewood, Ontario. After a short learning curve, it proved to be quite straightforward to add a range of details and to go back and edit or append additional details and photos later. The primary and minimal data required are (present) country name and geographic coordinates, which can be obtained using a mapping app or by civic address, and a couple of additional details on the home, residents, or events. There is a data entry page for architectural details and others for historical events associated with the home, former residents including dates of their occupancy, census records pertaining to people living in the home, and information sources or acknowledgements. There is also an opportunity and encouragement to add photographs, which may be historical or contemporary. Adding a picture allows a thumbnail view of the building to be seen in a search and increases the visual appeal and value of the site.

During the February lecture, the speakers provided a clear explanation of the rationale for the Ancestral Homes Network and the potential value of the

future archive. We thank them both for taking the time to introduce us to this new and intriguing tool and hope that the lecture has sparked some interest among members of Heritage Trust, who collectively have knowledge of a multitude of Nova Scotia's ancestral homes. The International Archive of Ancestral Homes has great promise as an open repository of information on present and former homes of all descriptions in Mi'kma'ki, Acadie, and Nova Scotia. We hope that volunteers will be forthcoming to add many more records from this province.

– Donald Forbes

Endnotes

¹ Philip Donnelly, *The Eyes That Shone: from Ireland to Canada in the 1950s* (Renfrew, Ontario, GSPH, 2010).

² <https://www.ancestralhomes.net>, info@ancestralhomes.net

³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jUWwa1I9Jbc>

⁴ https://www.kithobservatory.ca/geogen/the_concept

⁵ <https://www.ancestralhomes.net/about> or <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqodtTTG-9bqcOjD0MccEWbQ>

Churches Lost and Churches Moving On

As we go to press, there comes news of a suspicious and devastating fire which completely destroyed the historic former River Philip United (formerly Methodist) Church in River Philip, Cumberland County. Based on information in Canada's Historic Places register,¹ this building (which was in the process of being restored) was the congregation's second church, built in 1862, when Methodism was spreading rapidly and congregations were growing. The church was constructed over the graves of John Black and his wife, Barbara, to mark their importance in the introduction of Methodism in eastern North America and the high regard in which they were held by their local congregation. The church overlooked the same rural setting witnessed by the area's first settlers, and the people of River Philip regarded their church as a landmark that was pivotal to the social and spiritual development of their community. This loss will be very deeply felt.

A sad but less sombre event on Sunday 28 August was a service of decommissioning of a delightful little wooden church on a hilltop near Middle Musquodoboit. From a post on the Trust's Facebook page, the former Higginville Methodist (later United) Church, like too many other small rural churches, is no longer to be used for worship. Unlike some, it could not remain where it had been built over 132 years ago, beside its cemetery. A call went out a few months ago for bids to move or demolish the building.

Fortunately, it will have a second life: a local musician has bought the building and plans to move it to a new location, where it is to become a studio and performance space.

Although the building still bears its decorative iron "1888" beside the entrance doors, Methodist records show that it was not begun until 1889 and opened in February 1890. Its construction drew on the community's talents and material support. According to



Higginville United Church, 15 June 2022 (Griffin photo)



Distinctive features include curved pews and confessional rail, 28 August 2022 (Griffin photo)

Dwight Higgins: "The church was built by 'Carpenter' John Higgins (9th) on land donated by my great grandfather Peter Higgins. It has stood looking over the historic settlement for over 130 years."

The building is larger than originally intended (42 ft by 40 ft rather than 28 ft) and has little decoration, save a stained glass window above the doorway. Handcrafted lettering is a distinguishing feature: the date and name of the church were wrought in metal, as was the exhortation at the front of the church, "Praise ye the Lord" (the name was removed from the exterior before the decommissioning service).

Label mouldings top the rectangular side windows and roundels terminate the hood mouldings over the arches on the façade. The panel design of the interior doors is reflected in the panels at the ends of the curved pews (the exterior doors are replacements). The confessional rail in front of the pulpit is a reminder of its Methodist past. We hope that other reminders of its past will follow this well-loved building on its journey.

Endnote:

¹ https://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=11856&fbclid=IwAR33Gwyl791eV22Nf2S8sVjMCV3jHRFmHw1aPwTOX_S3WD8Q4Y-IsUXh01M

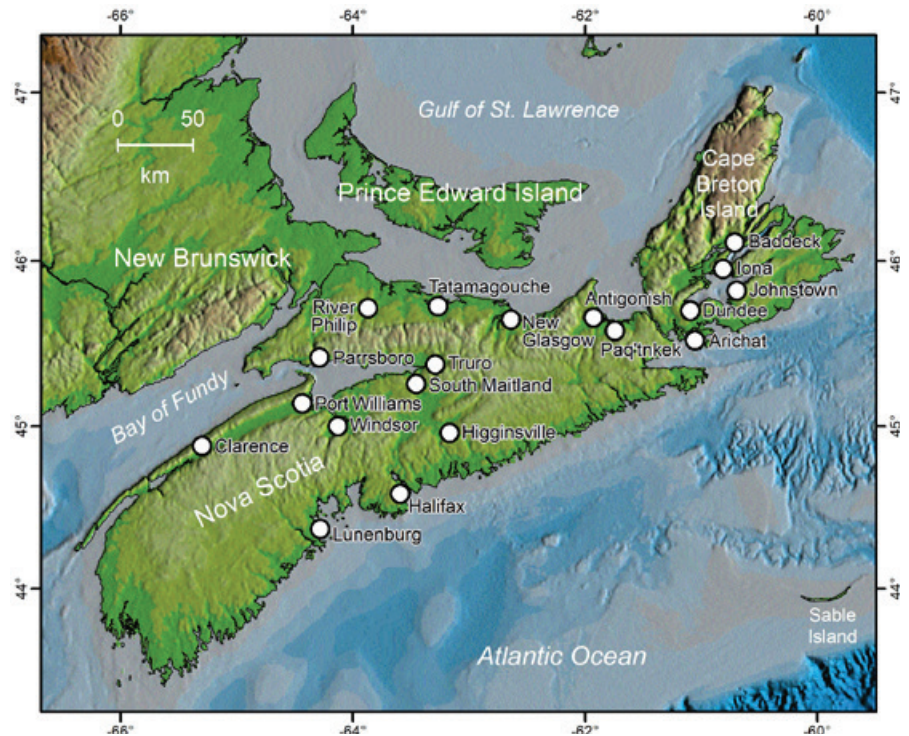


You can lead a horse to water ...

George Forbes (1829-1910), carpenter and farmer of Little Harbour, Pictou County, at one of three public water troughs in New Glasgow, 1897. The horse appears to be drinking ahead of the six-mile journey home. This is believed to be the trough located on the edge of Market Square, at the corner of Market Street (now Dalhousie Street) and James, where the Salvation Army is today. Thanks to Barrie MacMillan and the 1878 *Panoramic View of New Glasgow* (Nova Scotia Archives) for clues to the location. Such water troughs must have been a common amenity of Nova Scotia towns around the turn of the 20th century, a feature of our built heritage which has mostly disappeared (photo courtesy of the late George Forbes, grandson).

Do you have a photo suitable for a Moment in Time?
Please contact griffin@htns.ca

Locations of subject matter in this issue



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