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The Griffin

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The Griffin

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We welcome submissions
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Cover image: Emmerson Hall, by Gale Armstrong, watercolour and oil on paper, 22" x 26" (courtesy of the artist). Designed as a library by Andrew Cobb, Emmerson Hall (1913) is rare as a stone building and the only Italianate structure on the Acadia University campus in Wolfville (HistoricPlaces.ca).

President's Report



Sandra Barss

Since I last wrote, we were pleased to meet with Minister of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage, Pat Dunn, to discuss heritage in Nova Scotia and what we see as our government's role in preserving it. You may have seen the January opinion piece published in the *Chronicle Herald*, setting out "The Case for Heritage," in which we discussed the economic, environmental, and social value of built heritage in Nova Scotia.

Tourism, and in particular, heritage tourism, is one of the biggest contributors to the GDP of Nova Scotia, adding more through this one sector than the combined contributions of agriculture, forestry, and mining. Research shows that heritage tourists tend to stay longer in Nova Scotia than others, and that, regardless of how they arrive, they often travel throughout the province, staying in paid accommodations, eating at local eateries, and supporting the sites they visit through admission fees, donations, and by purchasing mementoes.

Since the Province announced its ambitious goal of doubling tourism revenues to \$4 billion by 2024, it stands to reason that heritage tourism will play a significant role in that growth. Yet, lack

of protection continues for municipally-registered heritage properties, placing them under threat of demolition after only three years (a provision no other province allows).

One only has to view two distinct heritage areas of Halifax, under attack through development, to understand the loss created when strings of properties acquired over several years become unlucky victims of the same developer. Streetscapes such as Coburg Road and Robie Street have been permanently scathed. Other areas, not limited to Halifax, are now at risk and we need a concerted effort from everyone to guard against such indiscriminate demolition.

There are some successes, too, though. Recently, Halifax Regional Council voted to designate the former home and hospital of Nova Scotia's first black physician, Dr Clement Ligouré, as a municipal heritage site, of importance for all Nova Scotians (*The Griffin*, vol. 45(1), March 2020). However, without changes to the *Heritage Property Act*, it and other similar buildings remain at risk of future demolition, despite their designation.

Recently, we wrote to all provincial MLAs, suggesting what they, as our elected representatives, should do to incentivise heritage property owners to restore and adapt properties (rather than to demolish them). We suggest preferential tax treatment for registered heritage property owners, increasing financial incentives that encourage adaptive re-use and restoration, and increased property taxes for properties where structures have been demolished without building permits in place.

If you know of unregistered heritage structures in your area, please let us know so that we can work with and assist the owners to register them and guard against demolition. With necessary changes in the Act, this will help us collectively to improve protection for built heritage – our cultural legacy and economic engine – in Nova Scotia.

ARTIST

Gale Armstrong



Uniacke House, by Gale Armstrong, pen and ink on paper, 13.5" x 17.5" (courtesy of the artist)

Gale Armstrong is a visual artist. Her initial focus was pen and ink. She was inspired thirty years ago to illustrate her children's book and travel writing. With a life-long passion for architectural form and history, it wasn't surprising that she turned her pen toward the production of detailed architectural illustrations.

This medium has led to the creation of four major series: English Country Cottages, Landmarks of Nova Scotia, Acadia University Heritage Series, and Great Growth Wineries of California. Over 500 illustrations have originated from these as well as the travel book, *Cottage Holidaying in Britain*.

Gale's other focus is glowing watercolours. The luminosity of the paper, the depth achieved with transparent water



Prescott House, by Gale Armstrong, pen and ink on paper, 13.5" x 17.5" (courtesy of the artist)

continued on page 19

The Loyalist Fan

Alan Parish

I have always been attracted to Georgian architecture. By that I include anything up to 1837, when Victoria took the throne. I love the façades of regular rows of windows and doors, like soldiers marching in columns, regular small-paned windows and six-panel doors.

Nova Scotia is fortunate to retain an inventory of Georgian buildings, although, as they say, “they aren’t building them anymore.” Those that remain have often lost the simplicity and charm of the original architecture through alterations.

Another salient feature found in Georgian architecture is ‘roundness’. Think of the Round Church and the Town Clock in Halifax. Often, Georgian buildings have round arches or columns in the interiors.

Another feature of Georgian architecture, which marries roundness with orderliness, is a half-round fanlight over the front door, often with sympathetic sidelights. This typical fanlight has a small half-ball at the bottom middle of the window, with bars radiating upwards in a fan fashion. I love them!

I grew up in Ontario, which had a small inventory of Georgian buildings, mostly in the Kingston area. We called those fanlights “Loyalist Fans” because most of those buildings were built by the Loyalists when they came to Upper Canada in the late 1700s. The humble “Cape” houses of Nova Scotia, whether of one or two storeys, are often of Georgian heritage. A number of these houses have front doorways which include what I call a Loyalist Fan.

Annapolis County, where Sandra and I have an 1810 Cape farmhouse, has probably the best collection of Georgian buildings in the province. A few of them have my admired Loyalist Fan over the doorway. I keep a mental list of these favoured buildings.

One day, this autumn, as I was driving from our farm outside Bridgetown



The “Loyalist Fan” as found (author photo)

to Annapolis Royal, I was shocked to see a complete Georgian doorway, with a Loyalist Fan, lying on its side in the driveway of one of those favoured Georgian buildings. The photo shows what I saw. The new owner of the house had installed a typical hardware store doorway in the old house.

So I contacted the owner of the house. He told me he was either looking for someone to take it away or to place it on Kijiji. I arranged to purchase the doorway for \$200. With the help of a local farmer, we transported the doorway to one of my barns. I had no idea what I would do with the doorway, but, in my view, it needed to be saved.

I point out, at this juncture, that the Loyalist Fan in this doorway was not the usual “rising sun” design. Rather, the original craftsman had replaced the half-ball at the bottom, with a series of nine small squares. The fan lines to the top of the arch remained. Sandra did not like this window’s design. She preferred the traditional rising sun design. It mattered not to me. I was just pleased to have a doorway with a Loyalist Fan.

Two days after the doorway was put in my barn, Sandra and I were having

coffee in Annapolis Royal with a friend who lived in Karsdale, on the northern shore of the Annapolis Basin. I mentioned the doorway and showed her a photo. On her way back to Karsdale, she saw workmen working on the restoration of a 1795 house in Granville Ferry. Out of curiosity, she stopped in. The owner was replacing a porch which was not original to the house, but he was doing it in a sympathetic manner. The original house has a most fantastic (and original) front doorway, with a Loyalist Fan and sidelights (see photo).

At this point, there was no doorway in the porch. My friend inquired of the owner as to what he intended to do with the porch doorway. He replied that he intended to have a craftsman create a reproduction of the original front door of the house (at great expense). My friend indicated that she had a friend (me) who had such a doorway, if he might be interested. He certainly was, and called me that day and sent me a photo of his house with no doorway in the porch, but which also showed a glimpse of the original doorway.

The next day he arrived at my barn, and, for the same \$200 purchased the

IN MEMORIAM

Carol Charlebois (1942-2021)

Those of us in the Heritage Trust who were involved with the repurposing of the Morris House, on Creighton Street in north-end Halifax, will remember Carol Charlebois, the Executive Director of Metro Non-Profit Housing, partner with the Trust in the project. The Morris House – you can see it at the corner of Creighton and Charles Streets in the Old North End Suburb – is an excellent and very successful example of the opportunities for the preservation and re-use of our heritage buildings.

The project was a cooperative effort by several groups to provide housing for youth in transition, in a heritage building. We counted on Carol, as the person with the experience to create a supportive home environment, to guide that aspect of the project. But Carol did much more: as the face of MNPHA, she kept us aware of the end users and their needs. Her good sense, patience, and resilience encouraged us when we stumbled over roadblocks and there were many. Possibly her greatest contribution, beyond the hard work she put into grant writing and negotiating, was her modelling of respectful discussion in the face of conflict. How apt that we are all remembering Carol when there is a housing crisis and civility is often strained.

Morris House is now operated by Phoenix Youth Services and houses a young family. Many thanks to Metro Non-Profit Housing and especially Carol for all the support given to the Trust and the heritage conservation movement through this project.

– Beverly Miller and Linda Forbes

<https://www.harboursidecremation.ca/obituaries/Carol-Charlebois-#!/TributeWall>



Original 1795 door and fan in Granville Ferry (author photo)

doorway. Two days later he arrived with a truck and workmen and took the doorway to Granville Ferry. The doorway was a little narrower than the original door on his house, but it was made to fit and quickly installed. At right is a photo of the doorway installed, but not yet painted.

So although it is disappointing that a Georgian doorway with its Loyalist fan has been removed from its original house, at least it will live on in another Georgian house in the province.

Alan Parish is a former President of the Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia and long-time heritage advocate



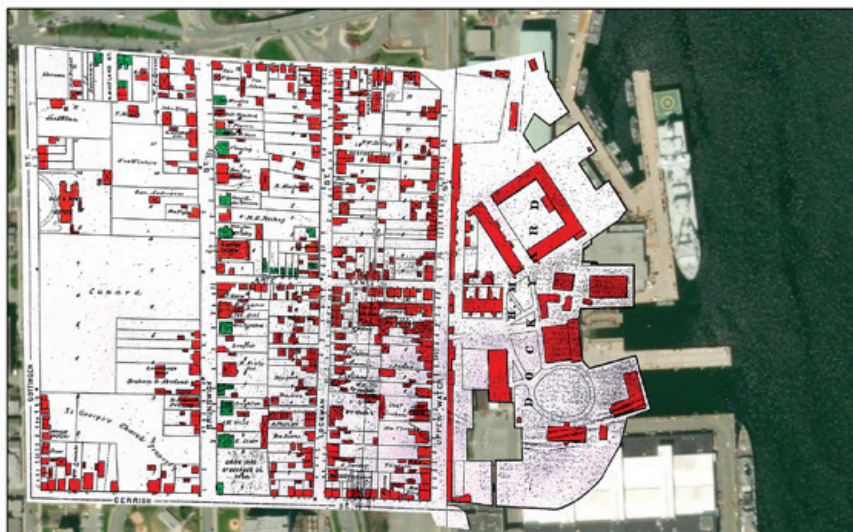
Salvaged door installed (author photo)

The Halifax Memory Maps Project: Establishing a Built Heritage Baseline

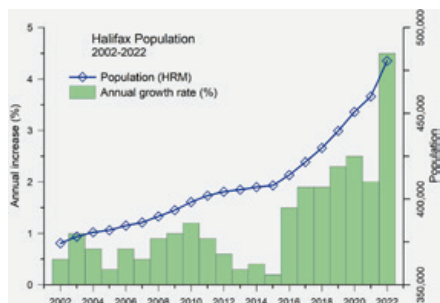
*Jonathan Fowler, Gillian Bonner,
Emily Davis, and Wesley
Weatherbee*

Change is in the nature of cities, and in growing cities like Halifax, the pace and extent of that change is now bracing and transformational. According to Statistics Canada, Halifax is the second fastest growing urban centre in the country after Moncton, New Brunswick. One need only spend time on our streets to witness the increasing bustle. Construction cranes, concrete barriers, and “side-walk closed” signs have become part of the urban fabric.

The forces driving Halifax’s growth are interesting and something of a departure from recent norms. Our sleepy province had, until recently, gotten used to being a net exporter of people, with Halifax’s gradual expansion largely driven by migration from other Nova Scotia counties. Last year, this trend reversed, and Halifax instead attracted (or attracted back) large numbers of immigrants from other provinces. Even greater numbers of new Canadians are choosing to make their home here. All of this poses challenges for Halifax’s built heritage, both with and without official heritage status. As this place is transformed, how do we decide what should be retained and what can be let go? And what values and meanings might new Canadians find in our storied



GIS overlay of Hopkins Plate E (top) coloured to indicate demolished (red) and surviving (green) buildings; and a modern satellite image of the same area (bottom) shows surviving 1878 buildings (green), north to the top [colours can be seen in the digital edition online]



Population growth in Halifax from 2003 to 2022 (Statistics Canada)

buildings.

Stewardship requires measurement, and it is difficult to manage impacts to Halifax’s built heritage resources without inventorying those assets. How many old buildings are there in Halifax? Well, that depends on what you call old, and in any case, age is not the sole determinant of heritage value (although it is an important one). But wouldn’t you like to

know? Perhaps you soon may.

We are fortunate to live in an exceedingly well documented urban environment. This is largely due to historical circumstances, first among them being that Halifax was a formally planned town. Cornwallis and company dropped anchor here in 1749 and set to work as if assembling IKEA furniture; some of the instructions are still to be found in the

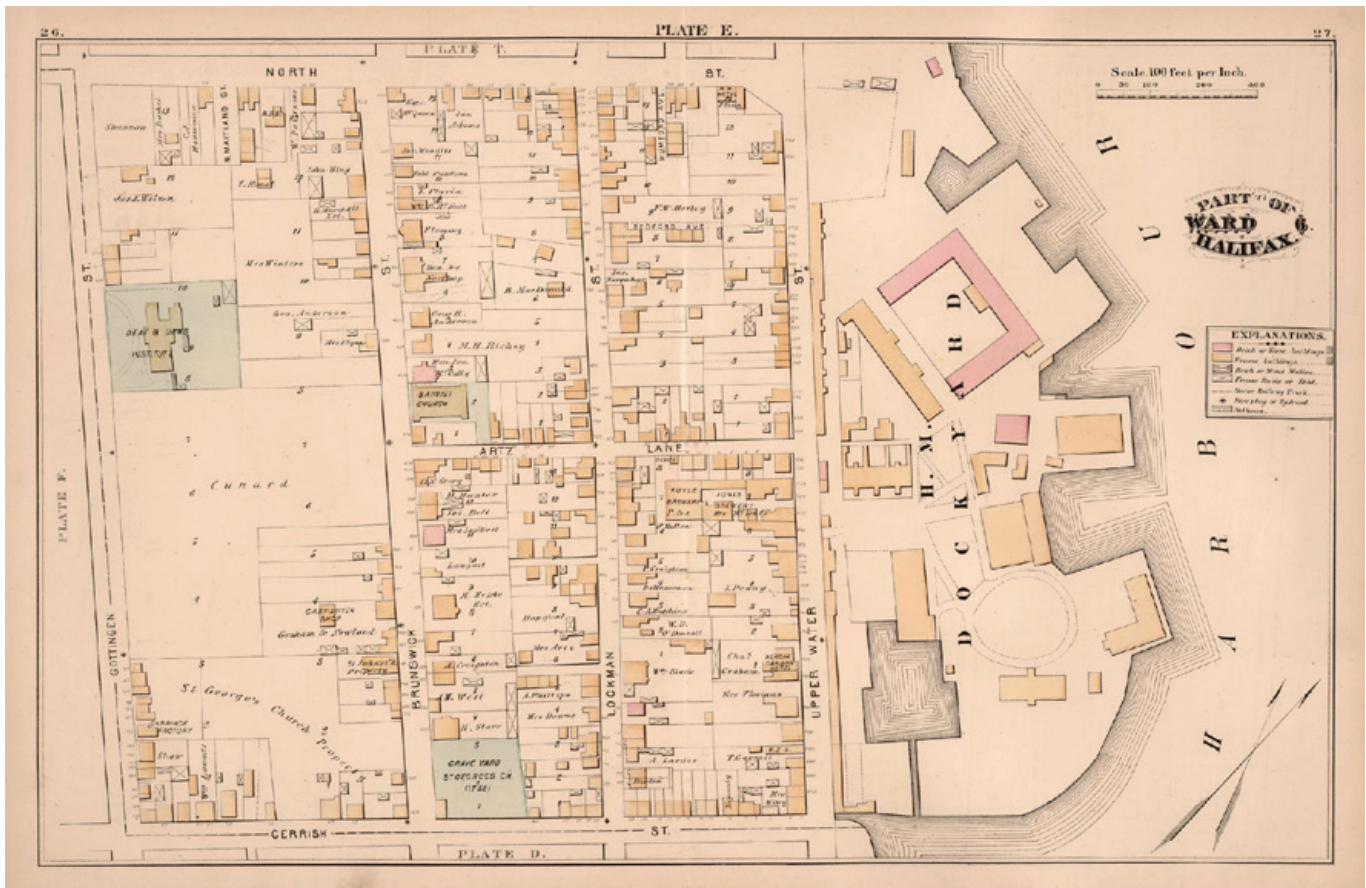


Plate E of the Hopkins 1878 Atlas, showing the North End neighbourhood bounded by Brunswick (left), Gerrish (bottom), and North streets (top), and by the dockyard (right) (David Rumsey Map Collection, David Rumsey Map Center, Stanford Libraries)

archives. Over the decades, as the British Empire's primary naval station in North America, little Halifax was well visited, well drawn, and well mapped by military engineers, cartographers, and artists. By the high Victorian period, a whole range of city atlases, panoramic maps, photographs, and fire insurance plans appeared. Anyone patient enough and curious enough has the raw materials at hand to reconstruct Halifax's evolution in detail and with reasonable confidence.

The *Halifax Memory Maps Project*, based at the Anthropology Department at Saint Mary's University, is beginning to draw this evidence together. Our starting point is the famous *City Atlas of Halifax* published in 1878 by Henry W. Hopkins.¹ It offers a large scale, street by street depiction of public buildings, private residences, industrial structures,

barns, stables, sheds, and the like – in short, everything a curious landscape archaeologist might crowd into a snapshot of Victorian Halifax.

We obtained high resolution scans of the Hopkins Atlas from the David Rumsey Historical Map Collection (www.davidrumsey.com) and georeferenced them in ArcGIS Pro, a Geographic Information System (GIS). Control points, such as the intersections of streets, allow features on historical maps, plans, and aerial photographs to be accurately fixed to the modern landscape.

Before georeferencing the Hopkins atlas plates, though, we took the additional step of checking each building to see if it was still standing. Some cases were easy to diagnose because the building had been demolished, either by large-scale construction projects (e.g. the Metro Centre), or through disasters

such as the Halifax Explosion. Whole swathes of the city have been rewritten in this way. Many other structures have been altered, but if substantially intact we counted them as survivors. A small minority of cases are more ambiguous.

The resulting picture suggests we have, in aggregate, lost more than 90% of the buildings Hopkins recorded in 1878. But this rate of attrition is not uniform across all building types. Outbuildings, perhaps unsurprisingly, have been especially vulnerable, while brick and stone buildings tended to fare better than their wooden framed counterparts.

Demolitions also vary considerably with geography. Old Halifax has been completely erased in some areas but survives in coherent streetscapes elsewhere. Seeing these patterns revealed now for the first time through digital mapping brings the possibility of a

thorough built heritage inventory a step closer to reality.

The 1878 Hopkins maps provide only a baseline, of course, but one must start somewhere. The *Halifax Memory Maps* project will continue in the months and years ahead to incorporate older and newer maps, and eventually aerial photographs, as we continue to track and explore the city's evolution. Nor will this project be kept under wraps. A digital portal will allow users

to freely navigate Halifax through both space and time. Hopefully, the project will also help us to be better stewards of what remains.

Jonathan Fowler is an archaeologist who teaches in the Anthropology Department at Saint Mary's University. Gillian Bonner is a fourth-year Anthropology student at Saint Mary's University interested in pre-contact archaeology in the Atlantic Northeast and archaeological geophys-

ics. Emily Davis is a fourth-year anthropology student at Saint Mary's University with a passion for archaeology. Wesley Weatherbee is the Anthropology Laboratory Technician at Saint Mary's University, where his research focuses on coastal archaeology and climate change.

¹Hopkins, H.W. 1878. *City Atlas of Halifax*, Plate E. Part of Ward 6, Halifax. Provincial Surveying & Pub Co.

IN MEMORIAM

Thomas Norman Creighton (1935-2022)

Tom Creighton, who may be known to many of you because of his work on the HRM Heritage Advisory Committee, died last November 18 at the age of 87. I knew him as a neighbour and ally in several issues that arose here in the Bloomfield Neighbourhood over the last 40 years. It might be safe to say that, without Tom's determination, there might not still be the Bloomfield Neighbourhood.

What we consider the Bloomfield Neighbourhood is the area bounded by North, Agricola, Almon and Gottingen Streets in the North End of peninsular Halifax. Pre-amalgamation, the area was a patchwork of zones, with designations going lot by lot, depending more on the wishes of absentee landlords than anything resembling respect for existing communities. Through the 1980s, there were two initiatives that stood out as defining our sense of community. Both were in response to threats from developers.

One was a proposal that would have seen the destruction of properties at the corner of Fuller and Ontario to allow the building of two apartment buildings. The neighbourhood response, in which Tom was prominent, was to successfully petition City Hall to apply uniform R-2 zoning in the area. As I understand it,



this particular crusade had some in the pre-amalgamation Halifax City administration referring to our area as "Red Square."

The other was a fight that Tom and his wife Blanche did largely on their own. Northwood Manor started buying up properties on the west side of Northwood Terrace, maintaining that they had to create parking for their existing facility. They began by taking down houses just behind Tom and Blanche's Fuller Terrace house, and paving a portion of the now-empty lots. Tom and Blanche made their opposition known. Northwood's approach was, I think, familiar to most of us: complete with architects' seductive drawings showing a lovely park-like landscape with full grown trees and so on. Tom and Blanche were not convinced.

Tom was present at a great number of meetings, pointing out the mistakes Northwood had made in process and their failure to inform people in the neighbourhood about the intended development. Tom and Blanche were steadfast and finally convinced Northwood to abandon the rest of their plan. I know there were compromises on both sides and the parking lot you see near the corner of North and Northwood was as far as Northwood (the corporation) was able to get.

On the way to compromise, Tom realized that an industrial building owned by Plastics Maritimes over on Bloomfield Street was going up for sale. He pointed out that a win-win situation existed in the possibility that Northwood Manor might sell its residential properties on Northwood Terrace to would-be homeowners, buy the industrial property and make the parking lot over on Bloomfield Street. That is what occurred. Eventually, Northwood used that property as the site for another seniors' residence.

I think that Tom was a remarkable example of the extent to which we should all be actively involved in making sure that society works for everybody – I believe that 'citizen-activist' is the term. Here is the link to his obituary online: <https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/halifax-ns/thomas-creighton-1102816>

– Peter Lavell

NEW PUBLICATION

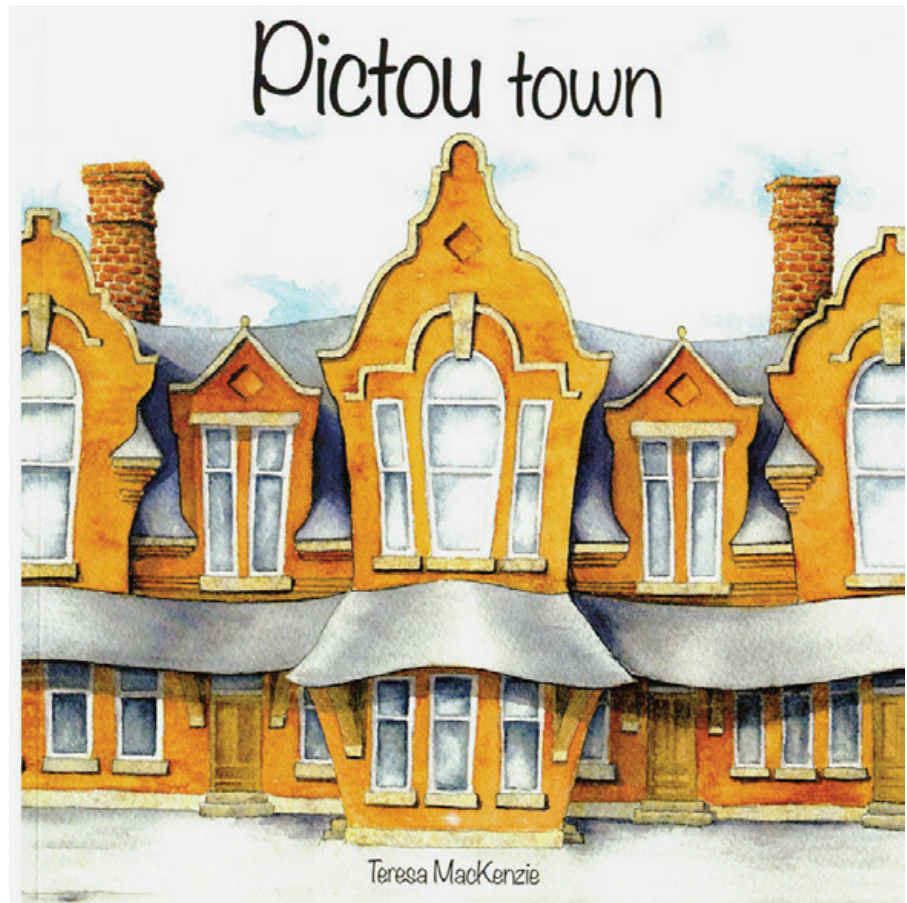
Pictou town

We are pleased to report that a new publishing house, The Pictou Bee Press, has just released Teresa MacKenzie's book, *Pictou town*, which was launched at the McCulloch House Museum & Genealogy Centre on Sunday, February 26th. On a lovely sunny day, in spite of a power outage and no heat, this event drew a crowd with standing room only.

Combining art, history, and poetry under one cover, this volume showcases Pictou's built heritage in Teresa's signature style, which is whimsical and picturesque. According to Laurie Stanley-Blackwell, co-publisher, "*Pictou town* is essentially a visual love poem."

This small book is designed as a souvenir to commemorate both the 250th Hector Anniversary and the 150th Anniversary of Pictou's town incorporation. It is the inaugural publication of The Pictou Bee Press, which is named in honour of James Dawson, who published *The Bee* newspaper in Pictou from 1835 to 1838 and operated the first bookstore in Nova Scotia outside of Halifax.

For more information, see The Pictou Bee Press website (www.pictoubeepress.com) or online bookstore (<https://the-pictou-bee-press.square.site/>).



Author, Teresa MacKenzie, speaking at the book launch in the McCulloch House Museum and Genealogy Centre, of which she is the Curator. Teresa was the featured artist in *The Griffin* v. 46 no. 4 (Dec 2021)

The Amos Pewter Story in Mahone Bay

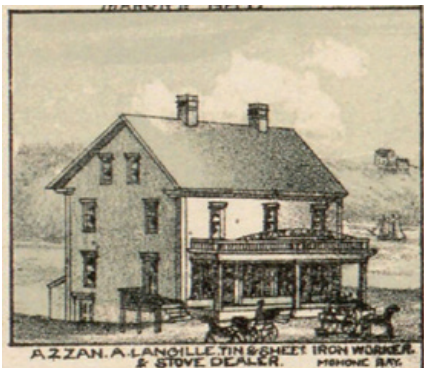
The Juxtaposition of Repurposed Heritage Buildings with a Successful Craft Business

Peter Delefes

In the spring of 1974, Suzanne and Greg Amos had just completed an internship in pewter making in Fredericton and were considering where to set up their business. They were both Maritimers by birth. Suzanne's family had deep roots in Nova Scotia and Greg was born in New Brunswick. In selecting a place to establish their business, they knew they wanted to become part of a small Maritime community near the ocean. They opened their store on the first of April 1974 in what is now the last remaining boat shop on the waterfront of the town of Mahone Bay, Lunenburg County.

The buildings

The little building has a long and storied past. According, literally, to the writing pencilled on a door – “Shop built in 1880” – the building was then 94 years old (and is now 143). In February 1880, Mary Arnold Zwicker sold land and half of a water lot (60 feet along the road and 200 feet into the water) to carpenter William Strum and boat-builder John H. Mader. Here they built a boat shop which appears on the 1885 A.F. Church map with detail of Mahone Bay. In 1883, Mary Zwicker sold the second half of the



The “Homestead” building (now the “plum building”), showing Azzan Langille’s tin business; detail from *Birds Eye Map of Lunenburg*, by Oakley Hoopes Bailey (courtesy Nova Scotia Archives)



The young proprietors of Amos Pewter, with the door-within-a-door at the east gable end, 1975 (photo courtesy of Fred Danforth)

water lot to John Mader.

By 1888, there seems to have been a residence east of the boat shop, though who built it is unclear. Together, the boat shop and home are referred to as the “Homestead” in several lot plans. As discovered by Deborah Trask, a drawing of the building appears in the margin of an 1890 map of Lunenburg (with an inset of Mahone Bay), labelled “Azzan Langille, Tin and Sheet Iron Worker and Stove Dealer.” Likely, Langille’s business occupied the ground floor. The upper two floors seem to have been built as a duplex and accommodated two families.

Strum and Mader built the boat shop in the vernacular style, a distinctive design with four tall (4-over-4) hooded windows on the façade, and the entranceways on the gable ends. The main entrance is at the east end where, today, customers enter the pewter shop through a door within the original boat doors with their hooks still in place.

John Mader acquired full ownership of the building after the death of William

Strum in 1905. Mader was recorded as a boat builder in the 1901 census and “boat builder/concrete piping” in the 1911 census. A plot plan dated 1948 shows a second shop behind the boat shop. It apparently was topped by a cistern to hold fresh water for casting concrete. The ornamental concrete blocks and finials that can still be seen around town were likely cast in this building. In 1947, John Mader’s granddaughter sold the property, with the two shops and home, to William and Blanche Heisler. Thus, began a new phase of boat building in the little boat shop.

They opened their store on the first of April 1974 in what is now the last remaining boat shop on the waterfront ... of Mahone Bay ...

William ‘Bill’ Heisler (1886-1983) was a well-known figure in Mahone Bay. He was born on Tancook Island and moved to Gifford Island, where he started a boat building business in the early 1920s. During his lifetime, he built over



View of complete "teal building" with rhododendrons and two of Mahone Bay's famous spires in right background, 2022; same elevation as the architectural drawing below (courtesy Max Sheehan)



Detail from East Elevation architectural drawing, showing connection between the original 1880 boat shop at left and new addition (courtesy of architect Michael Grunsky)

100 boats. Initially, they were built for fishing and for trade. In time, as demand changed, he also built boats for pleasure. After his move to Mahone Bay, he built small yachts and dories in the old boat shop.

Birth of a business

When Suzanne and Greg set up their pewter shop in 1974, the interior of the building was still configured as a workshop. Suzanne refers to "the serendipity of finding a workshop in which to set up our pewter workshop." Work benches still ran the full length of the street and water sides of the building. Chances are that the boat builders chewed a plug or two of tobacco, as the dog was discovered gnawing on the well-worn grooves in the floorboards.

The shop had been wired for electricity but lacked running water. There was and still is no interior insulation in the walls, where the studs remain exposed. Birch bark served as house wrap



Amos Pewter buildings seen from across the cove, 2023 (courtesy Dave Welsford)

between the sheathing boards and the shingles. There was a wood/oil stove for heat and a steam box for bending planks. Out back of the shop was the remnant of a fire pit. David Stevens (1907-1988), well-known area boat builder, mentioned in conversation that as a young fellow he sometimes tended the fire when lead was melted to pour keels.

... little could they have imagined that, when they moved ... the pewter making into what they thought had been a home, it had in fact been a tin shop ...

In preparation for opening the store, Greg and Suzanne built a simple partition to separate the work area from the display space. Soon they were engaged in producing a variety of pewter items. They printed their first mail-order catalogue in 1974 and started shipping parcels to customers. Suzanne recalls that, at that time, the postage to send a small parcel to Montreal by Canada Post was 27 cents.

The Amos Pewter business grew during the next two years. In April 1976, Suzanne and Greg purchased the shop

and raised the roof by adding a gable dormer on the water side. The work of re-imagining and repurposing the building had begun.

Re-imagining and expanding

In 1988, needing more space, they took steps to expand the building. Designed by architect Michael Grunsky, the addition on the water side mimicked the footprint of the old boat shop but was stepped back so as not to overwhelm it, and to retain the view to the harbour as much as possible. The now-enlarged building is a harmonious blend of old and new elements. The elegant and sympathetic design provides a magnificent interior and exterior setting for the pewter shop.

Over time, Greg and Suzanne once again filled the workshop and, in August 1997, they acquired the "Homestead" residence next door. Again, they hired architect Michael Grunsky to convert the building from apartments to a workshop and design area. The renovations in 1998-1999 included plumbing, heating, and dust removal equipment on the ground floor, and production facilities

above. The addition of two dormers, similar in style to those on the addition to the former boat shop, provided a visual connection between the two buildings and added more light and headspace to the third floor for a design studio.

Making an impact

Amos Pewter joined the Economuseum® network in 1998. The goal was to share knowledge of traditional crafts. In 1999, the workshop adjoining the store was redesigned and opened up to provide enhanced displays about the history of pewter and how it is made. Visitors could interact with the craftspeople as they poured molten pewter into moulds and spun the discs to make various items such as jewellery, ornaments, tableware, and picture frames.

When Suzanne and Greg set up the business in 1974, the former boat shop was red, the traditional Lunenburg County boat-shop colour. In 1988, they 'raised a few eyebrows' in the town when they painted the exterior teal, with a plum accent, similar to the colours they had adopted to display the pewter in the store. In 1999, they painted the adjacent building, to the east, a flip of the store colours, choosing plum as the primary colour, with teal as the accent. These vivid hues showcase the two buildings and enhance their appeal.



West gable end of the old red boat shop on Main Street, Mahone Bay, with the harbour at left, May 1974 (courtesy of Suzanne Amos)



Interpretive workshop, interior of addition overlooking the water, 1999 (courtesy Eric Hayes)

Connections and legacy

Suzanne emphasized the connections between the various commercial uses of the former boat shop and the “Homestead” property next door. It seemed so fitting to set up their shop initially in a former working building, the boat shop. And little could they have imagined that, when they moved most of the pewter making into what they thought had been a home, it had in fact been a tin shop. Over the span of 100 years or so, the building’s function was book-ended by the working of tin (pewter being 97% tin).

On the boat shop property, for over a century, the process of casting was used in making of concrete blocks, transforming molten lead into keels, and lastly forming pewter into ornaments, including some with boat motifs honouring the days of sail and those who built boats on this site.

From its outset in 1974, Amos Pewter has been a year-round business. Over almost 50 years in business, they have designed hundreds of beautifully crafted pewter items. The company has received several awards for design,

craftsmanship, and entrepreneurship, from organizations such as the Nova Scotia Designer Crafts Council and the Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia. The Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia bestowed an award for the unique way in which a significant piece of Maritime built heritage has been adaptively re-used. Amos Pewter’s link to an historic building is an intrinsic part of its brand, which has attracted visitors and tourists to the town and helped to anchor and grow the craft movement in Nova Scotia.

Don Sheehan purchased the business in 2005 and the property in 2010. With his guidance, and the work of his skilled and dedicated staff, the tradition of pewter making continues to thrive in this and several other locations.

Heartfelt appreciation to Suzanne Amos for entrusting me with the task of encapsulating, in this short piece, the adaptive re-use of the former boat shop and the remarkable success story of Amos Pewter. Thanks, also, to Deborah Trask, a friend and heritage researcher for the Town of Mahone Bay, for her help sorting out the various residential and

commercial property owners associated with the Amos Pewter property over a 150-year period. I am grateful to Don Sheehan, Sebastien McSween, and staff of Amos Pewter and to architect, Michael Grunsky, for assistance with the article.

Peter Delefes is a former President of the Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia and a frequent contributor to The Griffin.

Two recent articles in The Griffin deal with built heritage in Mahone Bay. In the March 2022 issue, there is an article by Peter Delefes entitled “Keeping Nova Scotia’s Heritage Schooners Afloat.” This traces the evolution of the Tancook schooner, a distinctive wooden sailing craft which was built on the Tancook Islands and surrounding area in Mahone Bay. The December 2022 issue features an article by Bob Sayer entitled, “The Mahone Bay Centre: from Old School to Community Centre” — Ed.

Randall House Community Museum in Question



Beverly Boyd

The Canadian Register of Historic Places describes the Randall House in Wolfville as
*... valued for its age as it is one of the two oldest houses in Wolfville,
... valued architecturally as its exterior has been well maintained to reflect its original New England Colonial style; and its Georgian interior has been meticulously restored to house the museum of the Wolfville Historical Society ...*
(HistoricPlaces.ca)

Those values are in peril.

Randall House, over 200 years old, needs major, all over, exterior rehabilitation. Three years into a global pandemic, the few volunteers sustaining this built heritage and community museum require more than a new roof, windows, and siding repairs.

The storied house is named for the Randall Family. Charles Randall first

purchased the house in 1812 and it stayed in his family for 115 years. Charles Patriquin bought the property in 1927. His vegetable garden became a local attraction, and he maintained a duck pond where local children spent many happy hours. In 1947, he sold the house to the Wolfville Historical Society (WHS), and it became a museum. In 1987, the house won status as a Nova Scotia Provincial Heritage Property.

Welcoming visitors, sharing stories, conserving a collection

In 1949 the entrance fee was 25 cents for a museum visit, and a then live-in Superintendent earned \$20 a month. In 2022, admission was by donation, with a seasonal Curator/Manager and two summer students welcoming visitors and sharing local history on-site and in the streets.

Throughout these years, citizens have donated time and money to pre-

serve the house and contributed items to the museum's diverse exhibits. Conservation work is also done each season, with over 3000 objects already archived and available for public information via *NovaMuse*, the online collection site of the Association of Nova Scotia Museums (ANSM). Finding storage for this large collection has proved a challenge over the years. With the building exterior now threatened, the WHS Board of Directors feels the weight of ethical duty toward the collection, recognizing that any item accepted was given to the society in a trust arrangement, with the understanding that it is a valuable part of our town's history.

Volunteerism changing

Like many other non-profit groups, the WHS exists based on a volunteer model, and in 2023 volunteerism is not what it was back in 1941, when the WHS was formed.



Statistics Canada (November 2022) reported that 67% of organizations are experiencing a shortage of new volunteers, over 50% are challenged with retaining volunteers, and 35% have reduced programs and services involving volunteers.

The WHS Board has felt that directly too, in the recent challenges we have experienced recruiting new leaders and displayed in membership and community surveys conducted as part of WHS's 2020-2021 strategic planning. While the majority of survey respondents showed strong support for the WHS mandate and programs, when asked about volunteering over 80% responded negatively.

These national and local snapshots on volunteering indicate that maintaining the house as a community museum based solely on volunteer time is no longer sustainable. Much of the dwindling volunteer time offered to the Society in recent years has been taken up by Randall House itself, everything from gardening to management roles. Seasonal staffing has been effective in delivering limited interpretative programs and collection conservation work, but there is need to improve the museum 'offer' to

All photos courtesy of the Wolfville Historical Society

meet changing visitor expectations. As well, other WHS activities such as local heritage promotion, education, and public events are not possible without more volunteers or paid personnel.

Who can help?

The WHS has solicited annual funding from municipal, provincial, and federal levels of government, and has a modest investment fund for urgent needs. Museum and membership revenues meet only a fraction of the WHS's funding requirements. But a requirement of upwards of \$200,000 for exterior renovations is well beyond what is in the bank.

The ANSM has been a source of advice and direction: It describes its member museums in part as "... actively engaged in their communities, ... environmentally and financially sustainable, and operat[ing] according to professional standards..." The amount of ANSM information recently passed on to the Board to help us address our financial sustainability issue is impressive but daunting, and any transformational changes will indeed require heritage and legal professional capacity beyond ours.

The provincial department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage has advised us to continue to apply for various grants and phase the work in over several years, as well as to apply for National Historic Site status for Randall House. However, these avenues are no guarantees of sustainable funding, and will require even more dedicated volunteer time to project manage renovations, develop such applications, and follow up.

The Town of Wolfville has helped Randall House over many years, with grants and in-kind support. While the WHS has at times envisioned the town taking over the house as an iconic heritage building on the town's eastern gateway, with the WHS continuing some level of program involvement, this option has not achieved traction against other priorities in a small town budget. According to the *Canadian Register of Historic Places*, Wolfville is home to 31



designated heritage buildings, including two National Historic Sites. The *Wolfville Municipal Planning Strategy (2020)* sets some overarching, policy directions including "...Sec.3.2/6. To use the Nova Scotia Heritage Property Act to preserve our built heritage and advocate for the strengthening of the Act over time."

Next steps

While we consider all options, the WHS Board has resolved that it cannot leave Randall House threatened, nor can it take decisions on its future without engaging the community. A recent article in *The Grapevine* (January 2023, <https://grapevinepublishing.ca>) and social media have brought forward some donors and some suggestions. We know we are not alone as many community historical societies and designated heritage properties are experiencing similar challenges and questions over their future.

There is "public good" in protecting and presenting our heritage assets, be they buildings, collections, lands, stories, and more. This is demonstrated by the last 75 years of volunteer stewardship of Randall House as a community museum. But today, if the community doesn't know about it, or is not able to experi-

IN MEMORIAM

Alan Ruffman (1940-2022)

ence it in meaningful ways to appreciate it, citizens will not continue to generate political support, or give of their time or other resources to keep it.

Successful cultural heritage groups and entities recognize that creating and maintaining such relevance for Canadians is the key to sustainability and survival. It is a cycle, and despite its built heritage values, Randall House is spinning toward losing relevance, and even its very existence.

Is one of the fastest growing towns in Canada, within the top tourism region in Nova Scotia, willing to let go of its community museum and second oldest house? At the very least, should we not protect Randall House and look toward a sympathetic new use of the building and its central Main St. property overlooking the original Mud Creek? What are the most appropriate ways forward for the associated collection? Rather than annual grant processes, are there more reliable public funding models for long-standing volunteer organizations like the WHS, or to add professional heritage capacity within small towns like Wolfville?

These are just a few of the important questions raised by the peeling paint on Randall House. At stake is not only the built heritage of Wolfville and Nova Scotia, but our community and visitors' understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of our rich cultural heritage ... now and for future generations.

Beverly Boyd is with the Board of Directors, Wolfville Historical Society (wolfvillehs@ednet.ns.ca). Any further advice and support from members of the Heritage Trust would be appreciated: Please contact Martin Hallett, President, WHS at kaiserhallett@yahoo.ca or call 902-256-2016.



Well, 2022 was a bad year. The Europeans got another war going. In my small circle of friends there were deaths: deaths of parents, of brothers, Tom Creighton died, and in a terrible end to the year Alan Ruffman, 'Citizen Ruffman', died on December 28.

Alan was a brilliant man. He and Linda, as partners, were closely involved in progressive politics in Halifax for 50 years. By chance, he met Brian Gifford on the Dalhousie University campus and through him became a part of the Ecology Action Centre at its inception. Alan was 82 when he died, a decade older than most of the baby-boomer group of local activists. All of them aware early of the importance of energy issues in how our communities are structured, and with a particular emphasis on the useful possibilities of local governments.

An Ontarian, Alan migrated here to study oceanography and marine geology, subjects that formed the basis for his 'gainful' work in the company Geomarine. And though he was passionately interested in geology, he and Linda settled into the fullness of Nova Scotia life, especially valuing what makes life here so wonderful: friendliness, love of the ocean, a sense of community, a respect for history.

Inspired by activism on the model of what Jane Jacobs initiated in New York and Toronto, Alan became a force in the

organizing to stop the proposed Harbour Drive, which would have destroyed much of the city's historic downtown along the waterfront. A number of the buildings saved have become a showplace for Halifax, home to thriving businesses, and anchors for the attractive boardwalk. Arising from that early 1970s activism was 'Movement for Citizens' Voice and Action' a locus for discussion of municipal planning issues and which led to a brief period of an elected Council that paid attention to these matters. Mostly, though, our Councils never failed to disappoint Alan.

Alan was a scholar of singular dedication. He travelled to libraries, archives, and museums worldwide to pursue the questions he wanted to follow. He wrote about icebergs, earthquakes, tsunamis, and the ill-fated ship *Titanic*. He collected maps, tree cross-sections (cookies), newspaper articles, books, and journals. His downtown office, in a refurbished stone building, was full of his collected items, including whale bones on the stairs. The home he and Linda found in Ferguson's Cove overlooks the outer harbour with large windows. It too is full of the collections of his lifetime.

Alan remained a close monitor of our local government. He wrote to the Council, he appeared before it at hearings, and he challenged several of its decisions in court and at the UARB. His object was to advocate for sensible land use planning, especially to make HRM a truly human-scale and liveable city. A core part of that was preservation of historic Halifax: our older buildings, the Citadel, views, and in recent years the Halifax Common. He served on the Board of the Friends of the Halifax Common, and also on the Board of Heritage Trust.

Quintessential Alan was his successful acquisition of a lot at the foot of Salter Street. He tracked down the heirs of Captain Josiah Wood and obtained a Deed to the land and water lot, on which he parked his Volvo for years until

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Maintaining a Steeple, Saint Peter's Parish Church, West Pubnico



Saint Peter's Church (l'Église Saint-Pierre), West Pubnico, when still quite new (date and source unknown, courtesy of the author)

Laurent d'Entremont

Some of our most iconic church buildings in Nova Scotia, including some of international standing such as l'Église Sainte-Marie in Church Point, are threatened by inadequate funding and high costs for maintenance. Safety regulations have changed over the years, undoubtedly for the good, but when these structures were built, ways were found to access and repair them. The following text was written in 1993. The West Pubnico church, which was completed in 1892, is now another 30 years older and remains a source of pride and a place of solace in the community.

Saint Peter's Church (l'Église paroissiale catholique Saint-Pierre) in West Pubnico is now 100 [130] years old and

still in excellent condition, a tribute to the craftsmen who built it. The man in charge of construction one century ago was Louis P. LeBlanc of West Pubnico, not yet thirty years of age. Of the ten carpenters who worked on this huge structure, eight were from West Pubnico: Joseph Philippe LeBlanc (foreman), Moise I. d'Entremont, Joseph Rémi d'Entremont "Joe Botte" (my paternal grandfather), Vincent d'Eon, Cyriaque d'Entremont (grandson of Benoni), Charles A. LeBlanc, his brother Anselme LeBlanc, and the youngest of the group, a boy under twenty years of age, Etienne H. d'Entremont.

The first mass was the Midnight Mass at Christmas 1891, the work far from completed at the time. The parishioners sat on temporary benches. The

priest was Father J.J. Sullivan. Of course, all those who worked on the church when it was new are no longer around, but some who climbed the steeple when it first needed paint and repairs are here to tell their stories. If you were to ask ten people the correct height of the steeple, you would get ten different answers.

Climbing the steeple

Many years ago, the parish priest, Father Denis Comeau, had hired Oliver (Malone) Amirault to paint the steeple for a certain price. When it came to settle the account, the priest said that the bill was higher than what Oliver had quoted. "That's all right," Malone told the priest "the steeple is also higher than what you had told me." The steeple is



L'Église Saint-Pierre, West Pubnico, as it is today (courtesy of Brianna Belliveau)

about 125 feet (38 m) from ground level to the cross.

In the 1920s, the church, like any building that had seen many winters, was in need of repairs, especially the steeple. Mandé à Landry d'Entremont, who is only three years younger than the church, remembers that a man from outside the village had been hired to install lightning rods on the church. This man with nerves of steel made his own ladder by nailing slats of wood

at intervals as he went up the steeple. Upon reaching the top he had discovered that the upper part of the steeple was in need of repair and the people on the ground had noticed that the steel cross was slanting to one side. This had been caused by wood deterioration, as a result of many years of leaking.

Mandé and Joseph Rémi d'Entremont were hired to do the repairs. But as Joseph R., who was boss, did not dare to climb, the task fell on

Mandé's shoulders. He knew he could climb as he had gone partway up on the lightning man's ladder.

When the church was built, a small hole was left on the back of the steeple, close to the top. This was for passing a rope or cable from inside to be lowered to the main roof.

To reach this hole, Mandé d'Entremont had to build a ladder on the inside of the steeple (it is still there). This was hard work as he was leaning backward all the way up, much like going on the underside of a ladder.

When the rope was passed through, ladders were tied together and hoisted all the way up. As Mandé was making his way on these wobbly ladders, two elderly ladies were going into the church. They yelled to him that they would pray for his safety. No safety lines, only prayers for protection.

A long rope was tied to the heavy and leaning cross. A young boy, François d'Entremont ("Sardine"), on his way to school, was told by Mandé to pull on the rope to see if the cross would move. Much to the surprise of the workers, the cross came crashing down on the steeple and stuck a few inches into the ground. The two senior ladies had just started praying when they heard this thunder-like noise coming from above, and for a moment thought their prayers had been too little, too late, and that Mandé was now handyman to Saint Peter.

Later, the top 25-foot section of the steeple was rebuilt and strengthened; it has weathered all storms since then – It still leaks but only when it rains.

The bosun's chair

For Héliodore d'Entremont of Lower West Pubnico, at ninety years of age, his steeple climbing days are behind him but when the church needed a fresh coat of paint he was right there. A device called a *bosun's chair*¹ was installed with the necessary rigging; this was to be used for going up the steeple. Before Jimmy Murphy of Yarmouth, who was in charge of the church painting crew, could decide who would paint

the steeple, Héliodore, tall, slim, and light as a feather, sat in the bosun's chair and started going up. Murphy shouted for him to come back down, but when he saw that Héliodore was not afraid of heights, he gave him a brush and a can of paint and sent him back up the steeple.

As soon as Héliodore had reached the top and started painting, boss Murphy 120 feet below began hollering orders, which were ignored completely. "Don't you know who the boss on this job is?" Jimmy Murphy yelled in frustration. Héliodore fired back his classic line that has survived to this very day: "When I'm up here, I'm the boss." For the benefit of the spectators, who were always present, Héliodore would push his bosun's chair away from the steeple and let it swing, enjoying the ride.

To complete a trio of local characters who dared to climb the steeple, Louis Edgar d'Entremont, at 82, is just a young feller compared to the other two. The church needed upkeep and, about forty years ago, all the shingles on the steeple needed to be re-nailed before they could be painted. Jimmy Murphy had said nailing shingles was not a job for painters,

After volunteering for the job of nailing the shingles, Louis Edgar used the same type of bosun's chair that Héliodore had used before him. All ropes, pulleys, and hooks had to be new or good as new. The person who was to go up always did his own knot-tying and felt safer on account of this.

It took Louis Edgar a good part of the morning just to hoist himself to the top of the steeple. It was slow going, holding on with one hand and doing the rope work at same time. The view, which was breathtaking, compensated for the effort of going up. To the north, he could see that section of the village and parts of Pubnico, Argyle, and beyond; to the west, there were Lobster Bay, many islands, and even Wedgeport and Surette's Island visible. To the south, were Pubnico Point, Charlesville, Forbes Point, etc. and to the east, all of East Pubnico, including the harbour and

back woods.

After taking a short rest, the church handyman, dressed in carpenters overalls and with a pocketful of shingle nails, tried to get his hammer out of his back pocket. The hammer was stuck, and had to be yanked loose. It slipped from his hand, fell onto the main roof, and bounced to a hayfield nearby. This did not speed things at all, and being this close to Heaven, Louis Edgar did not dare express his feelings with words. Retrieving the hammer by descending the bosun's chair took care of the rest of the morning.

Louis Edgar d'Entremont lived in the big white house just north of the church (still does). As he was busy nailing shingles, his wife Fidelis and their two young children (Raymond and Jocelyn) went outside to watch. But seeing him dangling in the bosun's chair was no fun, and they went back inside. It felt safer not to watch.

Over the years, many people have gone to the top of the steeple, including Benoit J. d'Entremont, father of this writer, who helped Mandé secure the metal cross when it was repaired after it had fallen. Years before he joined the Department of Agriculture, my father worked with his father (Joe Botte), Gustave Amirault, and Mandé d'Entremont. He always considered going up the steeple a great achievement, and indeed it was.

Today the steeple is covered in aluminum siding, making it more-or-less maintenance free. There is no longer any reason to go up the steeple and the bosun's chair only exists in the recollection of people like Louis Edgar and Héliodore d'Entremont.

Laurent d'Entremont is a community historian, writer and story-teller living in Lower West Pubnico, Yarmouth County.

¹The 'bosun's' (boatswain's) chair was originally devised (and is still used) for maintaining rigging on sailing vessels; also used on lighthouses and for window cleaning on tall buildings.

Gale Armstrong

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colours and the vibrancy of the inks are vital in her work. The transparency of the watercolour medium is her eye to historic architectural form and spirit. She frequently combines watercolour and pen and ink. The results can be very lively but controlled paintings. Or, quite vivid, light hearted and bright renderings of the subject matter.

Gale has also been a teacher, innkeeper, travel and food writer and administrator. During all this time, she has never been without a sketch book.

She winters in the United Kingdom and the influence of the great traditional English watercolourists is apparent. Although she has travelled widely and lived many places she is a born and bred Nova Scotian, from a province which always provides captivating subjects and scenes for her work. She lives in Lunenburg, has a gallery on Lincoln Street, and is a member of Art 1274 Hollis.

Alan Ruffman

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he and the city settled their differences. But in case there was ever any doubt, his ownership gave him clear standing to address the city on downtown planning issues.

In addition to being friends with Alan, I co-taught with him. For many years I taught the course on Land Use Planning Law at Dalhousie. Because of Alan's expertise in the political realities, I invited him to work with me in orienting the students to the real world of how local government works. It was always a treat to have him in class.

Were it still the custom, Alan should be put to sea in a dory piled with his papers and then set alight: a farewell to Alan the warrior, Alan our friend, Alan the model citizen.

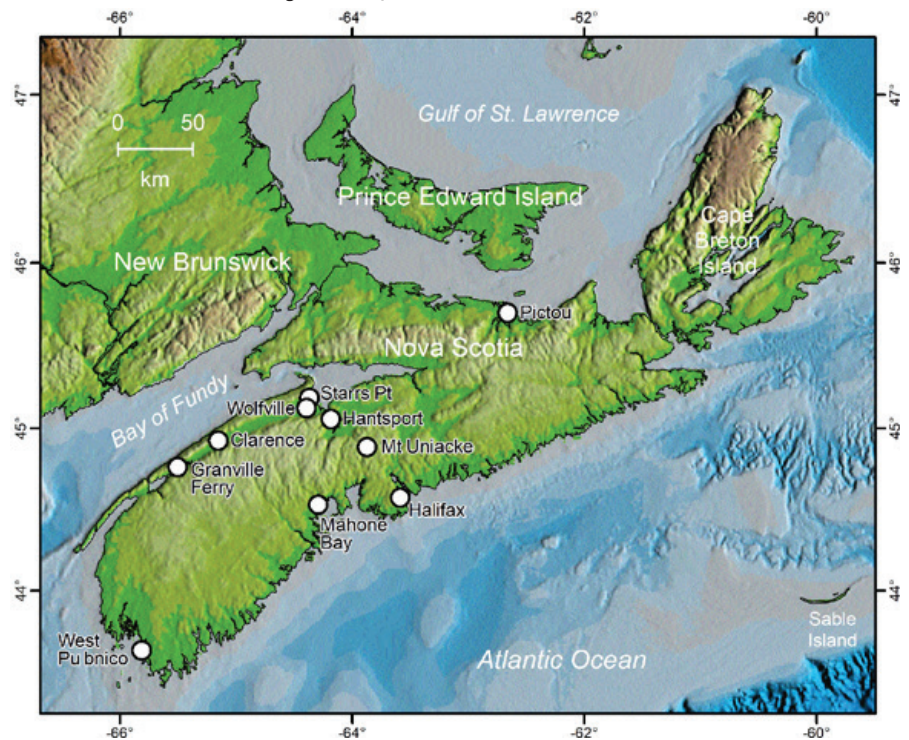
– Howard Epstein

Churchill's Tourist Home, Hantsport, 1927



"Churchill House Campground" – relaxing at a cottage in the grounds, 27 July 1927; photo from collection of the late Col. D.F. Forbes, DSO and bar (1906-1957). Members of HTNS may recall the enjoyable dinner held at another Churchill House ("The Cedars") in 2016, and the article by Elizabeth Churchill Snell, "Three Churchill Houses on the Avon River in Hants County," in the September 2016 issue of *The Griffin*. The house shown here was the first, the historic "Shipyard House" built for shipbuilder, Ezra Churchill, in the early 1850s. Ezra's grandson acquired the house in 1909 and, following a divorce, his wife Elsie retained it. In the 1920s, she had seven cottages built on the grounds and ran the establishment as Churchill's Tourist Home. This historic house was demolished in December 2021. With our thanks for historic details to the Hantsport and Area Historical Society (www.mcdadeheritagecentre.ca/2022/01/18/the-shipyard-house).

Locations of subject matter in this issue



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