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The Griffin

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The Griffin

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by Andy Lynch, 2019, pen and ink with
watercolour on paper

President's Report



Sandra Barss

The winter solstice is quickly approaching. Change has been afoot, and we have some good news; we have a new home!

We are very happy to have been able to move into Christ Church Parish Hall in Dartmouth – just up the street from our former location. The top floor of this beautiful heritage building gives us truly grand space, brightened with many large windows, ample floor space, and high ceilings that mean no one has to duck to avoid hitting their head. We even have a bit of a harbour view – who could ask for anything more?

In late October, Emma and I attended the National Trust Conference in Ottawa. It is reassuring to hear the stories of the successes and failures from across the country, to know that the issues we face in Nova Scotia are much the same everywhere else. It isn't just about saving the buildings and their stories; it's about saving the future by adapting and reusing buildings. If we continue to demolish and build "carbon bomb" skyscrapers, we aren't doing that.

This fall has seen Heritage Trust in the media more than usual, though we wish the issues that took us there were a bit more positive; we've had a

few discouraging surprises. We were shocked to learn that the developer charged with destroying the Reid House in Hantsport was allowed to plead down the original eight charges to only two, and that the potential \$1.4 million in fines was reduced to a mere \$86,250. Earlier this month, a judge ruled against a third-party heritage designation, stating that it was "prejudicial" for the Heritage Advisory Committee to receive letters from the public, including from the Trust. Then, a day or two later, we learned that a beautiful heritage home in Sydney, formerly a Bed and Breakfast until sold in 2021, was demolished by its new owner.

Press releases about the first two events are available on our website (<https://www.htns.ca/news>). I wrote the lawyer who defended HRM in the third-party designation case and expressed our belief that the decision is flawed. I am very concerned at the precedent this Decision sets; it challenges the autonomy of HRM – and that of every municipality in the province – to conduct its business, and flies in the face of the intent behind the *Municipal Government Act*. Heritage Trust believes that this Decision must be appealed, and I have encouraged HRM to do so.

Sometimes, it seems that, though many people claim to value heritage, few are inclined to protect it. Our recent press releases appear to have caught the eyes and ears of the media and now some of our politicians seem to be interested in what we have to say. Using the media to discuss our concerns appears to be helping us move toward the changes needed to protect heritage. We think that's positive. So, three steps forward, one step back, but we're getting there.

Wishing you all a wonderful holiday season!

ARTIST

Andy Lynch

Andy started to take art lessons in New Glasgow when he was a teenager. He began drawing buildings and scenes from the *Saturday Evening Post* and admired the work of Norman Rockwell and others who appeared in the Post. When he was in grade 10, his principal, Peter Green said it was time to make the decision between architecture and art college. He recommended architecture, with painting as a sideline. In 1963 Andy entered architecture school, graduated in 1967 and studied planning in Australia at Melbourne University.

Andy used his drawing ability over 50 years of practice to show the context (frequently historic) in which new buildings were placed, and these contextual drawings gave clarity to projects in getting planning and development approval on many downtown projects over the years.

After retiring from practice in 2013, Andy has had time to sketch and paint, just as his principal had suggested. He has done a Lunenburg series of over thirty buildings and still sells prints on Lincoln Street in Lunenburg. He has done two Halifax series: one of sketches of historic and interesting streetscapes; another based on the work of Hal Forbes, primarily in North End Halifax.

Andy's drawings have been available at the Teichert Gallery in the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia and his prints are at Jenny Jib in Lunenburg. He has also had shows at the Halifax Public Library Sunroom and the Lunenburg Art Gallery.



5565 Cogswell St, by Andy Lynch, 2017, pen and ink with watercolour on paper

Two Iconic Acadian Churches at Risk

Joan Dawson

Many of you have probably seen the towering wooden church that stands on the aptly named Church Point (Pointe-à-l'Église) on Saint Mary's Bay in southwest Nova Scotia. You may also know that it is threatened with demolition, as its maintenance is too much for the dwindling number of parishioners to finance. The Église Sainte Marie is a beautiful, historic building, but the local residents who have striven to save it over many years are giving up hope.

North of Church Point, on the way to Digby, lies the community of Saint-Bernard. Here stands another large, imposing church, this one built of granite. It, too, needs a good deal of repair, and this, too, became beyond the means of the dwindling congregation. In this case, there is some hope, as a plan has been developed for adaptive re-use of this historic structure.

Both of these large churches are fine buildings, constructed when their communities were more populous and the residents more observant of religious obligations. Masses were well attended, with congregations of a thousand or more, and parishioners were able to finance the maintenance of the churches. Today, both churches are deconsecrated, and the buildings have been up for sale. A community group has acquired the church of Saint-Bernard, but no buyer has come forward for the Église Sainte-Marie, for which the cost of restoration has risen to more than \$10 million.

Église Sainte-Marie, Church Point

Many Acadians returned to Nova Scotia in the 1760s, when they were allowed back after the 'Grand Dérangement', known in English as the Deportation. When they got back, they found that the farms they had created on the Annapolis River and around the Minas Basin had been taken over by settlers from New England. In 1768 they began



Eglise Ste-Marie, the nave looking to main doors (as published in The Griffin, Dec. 2014, courtesy of le Musée Église Ste-Marie)

to settle on land they were granted on Saint Mary's Bay, the area now known as the District of Clare. The first settlers were Joseph Dugas and his wife, and family. One of the early settlements was at a place called Grosses Coques, and it was here that the Acadians, who were devout Catholics, built their first church in 1774. It was constructed to the specifications of Abbé Mathurin Bourg, who was their first visiting priest. It was a simple structure, with a door and two openings for windows, with planks covering the walls.

Meanwhile, the LeBlanc and Doucet families who had been in exile at Salem, Massachusetts, had acquired land a little farther south where they settled in 1771 at what is now Church Point, and were joined by other families. At first, there was no church. Their children who had been born in exile had been conditionally baptised, but when Abbé Bourg visited the scattered Acadian communities in 1774 he re-baptised them. These Acadians raised large, healthy families, so the population grew quickly. Abbé Bourg returned in 1781 and again performed these ceremonies, but there

was still no church to serve the growing community.

The Abbé made his last visit to the community in 1786, encouraging the residents to build a church similar to the one at Grosses Coques. It was constructed on the point of land we now know as Pointe-à-l'Église, which was by then the centre of a growing Acadian population.

After Abbé Bourg's departure, the Acadians were served by English-speaking priests until 1799, when a new priest, Jean Mandé Sigogne, was appointed. The population was still growing, and some members of the local Mi'kmaw band also attended services.

In 1803, the Bishop of Quebec visited the region, which was part of his diocese. During his visit he selected a site for a new and larger church and cemetery. He specified the dimensions of the building: it was to be 60 feet long and 32 feet wide, with walls 16 feet high. It was to have a sacristy, or vestry, 10 feet by 15. Father Sigogne supervised the work, which did not begin until June 1806. Completed in January of 1808. It was known as La Grande Église, the big church.



A busy day at Pointe-à-l'Église, c. 1948 (courtesy of Nova Scotia Archives, Nova Scotia Information Service, no. 3860).



Église Ste-Marie in 1905, with the “Big Church” across the road, the Juvenile between, and College Ste-Anne visible in the background at right (as published in The Griffin, Dec. 2014, courtesy of le Musée Église Ste-Marie)

This building was destroyed by a disastrous fire that swept through the area in 1820, and in 1829 a new church and a rectory were built to replace it. This building remained in use until it was replaced by the present structure.

In 1890, Church Point was chosen as the site for a college of higher education for Acadian students. Collège Sainte-Anne was operated by the Eudist fathers, and its principal, Father Pierre-Marie Dagnaud, also became the priest of the parish of Sainte-Marie in 1902.

The following year, Father Dagnaud decided to build a grand parish church to serve the college and the community. He employed a French architect, Arthur Regnault, to design the building. Regnault was from Rennes, in Brittany, and the church was built according to his plans, in the style of the stone church in his hometown of Bains-sur-Oust. The Archbishop of Halifax would have liked this also to be a stone building, but the Acadian population had other ideas. Wood was the building material locally available, and more resistant to local weather conditions. So the church was built of wood on a stone foundation. An Acadian master carpenter, Léo Melanson, was employed to undertake the construction according to Regnault’s design. Although he was illiterate,

Melanson successfully followed the architect’s plans, assisted by Acadian carpenters who were used to building with wood. The cornerstone was laid on the northeast corner of the building in June of 1903. Fifteen hundred Acadian volunteers, many of them carpenters by trade, took part in the construction, and the church was completed in two years. It was blessed in 1905.

Léo Melanson was responsible for the construction of several other wooden churches in the area, and in 1944, was awarded a medal for his work by Pope Pius XII.

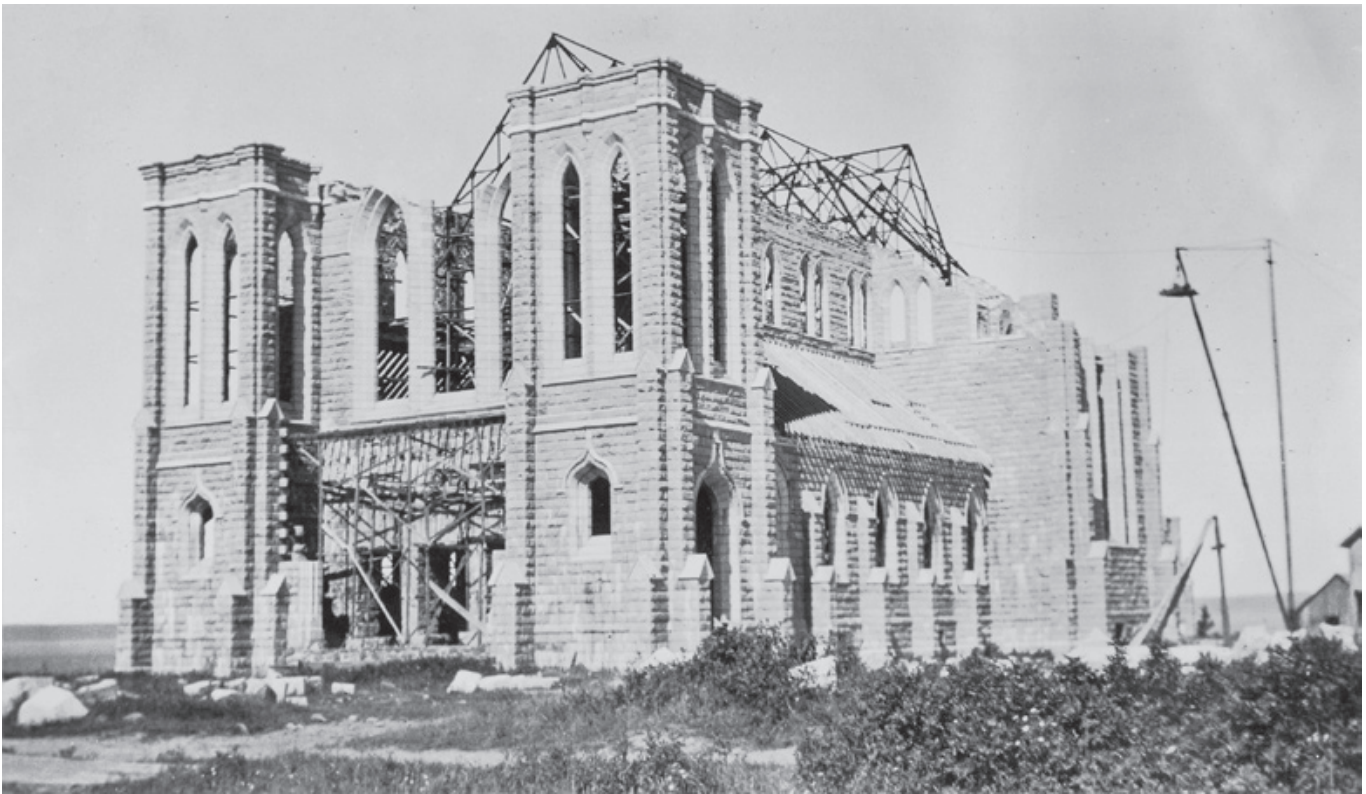
Now said to be the largest and tallest wooden church in North America, the building is very impressive. It is built in the French Romanesque Revival style and is the only example in the world of this style being carried out entirely in wood. It takes the traditional form of a cross, with a nave 190 feet (58 m) long and transepts 135 feet (41 m) across. The ceiling is 63½ feet (~19 m) high, and the bell tower and spire rise to a height of 185 feet, with a cross at the top that adds about 5 feet to the overall height (almost 58 m). It was originally even taller, but it was partially rebuilt in 1914 on a slightly smaller scale after being struck by lightning. There are two turrets flanking the steeple, and four more at

the top of the tower around the spire. The base of the tower is ballasted by 40 tons of rock to protect it from the strong winds for which the area is known. There are 192 steps from the ground floor to the belfry, where there are three bronze bells, brought over from France, and baptised in 1905. The largest of them, named ‘Immaculate Conception’, weighs nearly 1800 lbs. The others are ‘Agnes Angelina’ and ‘Joseph Petronina’. They were originally rung by pulling on ropes, but were later mechanised. In 2005, to celebrate the church’s 100th anniversary, a computer-operated system was installed, but this was destroyed by a lightning strike seven years later.

The interior is magnificent and impressive for its size and spaciousness. The single-storey side aisles are visible between seventy-foot (21m) columns made of Norwegian red spruce brought in from Europe and covered with plaster. The columns support a vaulted ceiling, decorated with symbolic frescoes painted by a Quebec artist named Louis Saint-Hilaire who had studied in Paris. It is said that Louis had a fear of heights, but he completed his work by fortifying himself with a bottle of wine to calm his nerves as he painted. The columns were originally beautifully painted too, to resemble marble – I remember them from an early visit – by Stefano Gennette, an Italian artist who had immigrated to the area, and who also did other plaster work in the church. The marble-painting skill has since been lost and the pillars are now plain white.

There is a balcony at the back of the church where the choir sang, and where the original organ was installed. This organ was replaced in 1972 with a Casavant organ that stands on the main floor, in the north aisle.

The ornate altar with its intricate carving was brought in from France while the church was under construction. The surrounding sanctuary is panelled in wood, with stalls for the clergy on each side. The sanctuary lamp and the magnificent chandeliers in the church were also brought from France. There are two side altars, one made by



Église St-Bernard under construction, early 1930s (Clara Dennis, photographer, courtesy Nova Scotia Archives 1981-541 no. 465)

Father Sigogne for the original church, the other by a local craftsman.

The 800 wooden chairs on which the congregation originally sat were replaced by fine oak pews donated by Lucie LeBlanc in 1969. The acoustics in the church are excellent, and Père Maurice LeBlanc conducted his Acadian choir in concerts there for some years.

Many of the round-headed windows display stained glass brought in from France, depicting scenes from the life of the Virgin Mary to whom the church is dedicated. They are said to have been packed in barrels of molasses for protection on the voyage. If so, the clean-up job must have been daunting. There are enough plain glass windows, particularly in the clerestory, that the building is flooded with light.

Around the walls are carved stations of the cross, and a number of statues. Over to one side stands the font where baptisms took place. Candles were lit in front of a reliquary where precious religious artifacts were preserved.

Unfortunately, the condition of the church has deteriorated, as wooden buildings do. The final mass was celebrated in the church in 2019, and since then its future has been precarious. A society was formed in 2020 to raise sufficient funds to take over and repurpose the church, but it was unsuccessful in meeting its goal, and acknowledged failure in 2022. The diocese has been looking for bids to purchase or demolish the church, which is a provincially designated heritage building. A ray of hope was raised by an anonymous offer of 10 million dollars to restore and maintain the building, on condition that it remained in use as a Catholic church, but that offer was recently withdrawn.

Église Saint-Bernard

The village of St-Bernard lies a few kilometres north of Church Point. In 1907, Père Édouard LeBlanc was appointed parish priest to the growing village. Instead of the small churches found in some villages, Father LeBlanc encour-

aged the residents to build a church reflecting their pride in their community, resembling some of the grand churches of Europe. So, in 1910, seven years after construction was begun for Église Sainte-Marie, the foundations were laid for the church of Saint-Bernard. This time the archbishop had his wish, and the church was built of stone. The prudent parishioners were unwilling to go into debt, so over the following twenty years, as funds were raised, 8,000 blocks of granite were brought from Shelburne to the station at Little Brook and hauled by oxcart to the community of St. Bernard.

Local farmers and fishermen cut the granite blocks as they arrived, and the building slowly took shape. The work was a labour of love that would take 32 years to complete, and the final touches were not put in place until 1942. It is a huge building, 65 m long, with the transepts 28 m wide. Its vaulted ceiling is 21.5 m high at its apex. This church could seat over a thousand people. Although the construction appears to

be all of stone, the interior walls are supported by steel beams – a more modern form of construction than that used for Église Sainte-Marie.

The church is built in the form of a cross, with high vaulted ceilings in the nave and transepts, and single-storey side-aisles. It is Gothic in style, with pointed arches, windows, and doors. From the front, the three main doors are flanked by a tower at each side. Above the doors are three tall windows, and each tower has one small window in the main floor and two tall ones above.

The interior is full of light from the windows in the aisles and clerestory. The gallery over the front entrance is home to a fine Casavant organ. Two carved

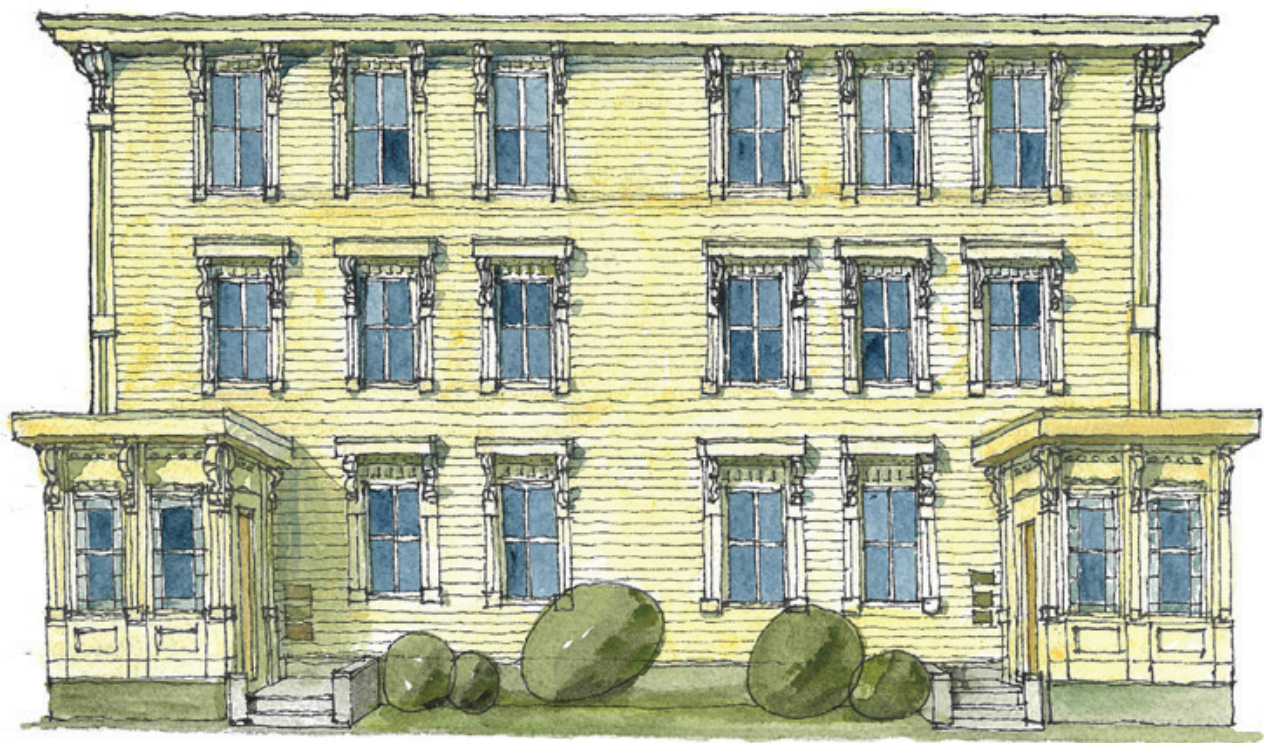
angels near the entrance hold holy water stoups. A statue of Christ stands above the altar, and other statues can be seen around the walls, along with carved stations of the cross above the wood panelling. The panels and pews are made of Douglas fir. At the entrance to the sanctuary stands a simple altar, while the original, more elaborate, altar is far away near the wood-panelled back wall. In front of it stands the baptismal font.

Like Église Sainte-Marie, the building needs significant repairs. The church-going population of the area has dwindled; the Acadians no longer have the large families that they once did. The congregation has shrunk from thousands

of people to a few dozen, and the cost of heating alone is prohibitive. In 2022, because of the drop in the number of parishioners and the high cost of repairs, which would amount to over a million dollars, the church was deconsecrated and put up for sale. It has been purchased by Nation Prospère Acadie and La Société Héritage St-Bernard, which are currently fund-raising to carry out repairs and improve the heating system. It may be converted into apartments.

Joan Dawson is a Nova Scotia historian and a long-time member of the Trust. Her latest book is Nova Scotia's Historic Inland Communities (Nimbus, 2022).

ARTIST *Andy Lynch*



5673, 5677 Cornwallis St.

Andy Lynch '19

5673, 5677 Cornwallis St. [now Nora Bernard Street], by Andy Lynch, 2019, pen and ink with watercolour on paper

RECOGNITION

In Appreciation of Hal Forbes

Andy Lynch

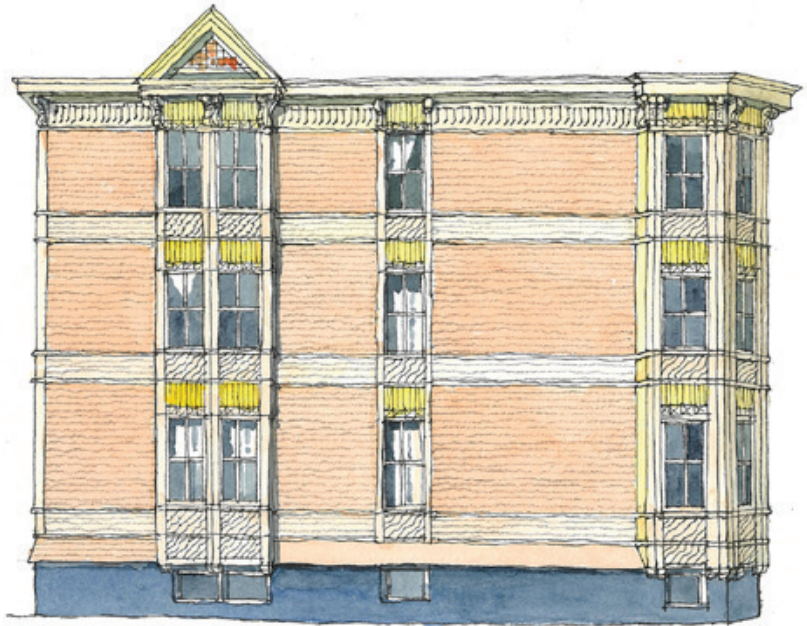
This year, 2023, marks five years since the passing of two icons of Nova Scotia heritage: Hal Forbes and Heather Lawson. Here and on our cover, with examples from his "Hal Forbes Collection," artist and architect Andy Lynch offers a visual tribute to Hal's impact on the old North End. Elsewhere in this issue, we share a reminiscence of Heather Lawson.— Ed.

Hal Forbes brought a special talent to Halifax North. His sense of colour, detail, and history was so appropriate and unique that it conferred a distinctive texture, which makes the area so interesting today. With his costume and theatre background, Hal saw his work as stage or set design, and his distinctive colour palette was an important part of his tool kit. Shortly after Hal's death, his remarkable contribution was summed up by Stephen Archibald, in a blog post, "Gone but not forgotten" (18 September 2018):¹

His restoration and reimaginings of wooden buildings, particularly in the near North End of the city, changed how that district is valued and enjoyed. His training in costume design, experience in theatre set design, and fluency in the language of Victorian architecture prepared Hal to clothe his buildings in the best costumes they had ever possessed.

Illustrations are pen and ink drawings with watercolour by Andy Lynch, 2019

¹halifaxbloggers.ca/noticedinnovascotia/2018/09/gone-but-not-forgotten/



2010 Creighton

Andy Lynch '19

2010 Creighton [at Cogswell], depicting one of two large blocks Hal took on, to the immense benefit of the neighbourhood



2031 Creighton St.

Andy Lynch '19

2031 Creighton St, depicting Hal's own provincially registered home, a project that set the stage for his other rehabilitation work

Encore – Another Century for the Lunenburg Opera House

Tom McFall

Fondly called the ‘Wow Room’, the hidden upper salon is one of many historic features of the aging and aged Lunenburg Opera House. The room’s walls are currently missing their original plaster, window trim, and wainscotting. The pine floors are intact, but needing attention. Some of the earliest electric lighting in the town still hangs in place. Fifteen large windows present a spectacular panorama of Lunenburg Harbour. And the room boasts one of the largest and most elaborate pressed tin ceilings in Nova Scotia. After more than a century of neglect, this amazing room, along with the rest of its building, is destined for a major rehabilitation.

The Lunenburg Opera House was a collaboration of the Rising Sun (Lunenburg) Chapter of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows and a young architect named Leslie Fairn. They conceived a five-storey building with a ship-influenced structural system and Edwardian neo-classical architectural features. The Odd Fellows built theatres across North America and Europe, with a mandate to provide entertainment, education, and edification for local working-class populations, while also generating charitable income – a sort of early social enterprise with a theatre as its centrepiece. The Lunenburg project was grander and more ambitious than most small towns could afford, but the building was intended as a new cultural landmark representative of the fishing industry wealth of the town.

The Odd Fellows’ Music Hall

A January 1909 *Progress Enterprise* headline read “Splendid Opening Concert at the New I.O.O.F. Music Hall.” The article claimed an “admirable” program of performances by the Glee Club, local soloists and choirs, and an “Oddfellows’ Orchestra.” The writer also complained that the 475 chairs were not all filled and the ticket



Lunenburg Opera House, Lincoln Street façade (courtesy Peter Zwicker)



Hundreds of Lunenburgers gathered at the half-built Opera House on Dominion Day 1907 (courtesy Lunenburg Folk Harbour Society)



The tin ceiling and just part of the panorama in the "Wow" Room (author photo)

price of 50 cents was too high. Despite this criticism, the musical life of Lunenburg and the role of the Odd Fellows both flourished in this new landmark.

During the 1910s and 20s, the concert hall and the building were variously called 'Music Hall', 'Opera House', and 'Odd Fellows' Hall'. And the Odd Fellows variously presented local musical performances, theatrical events, touring troupes, vaudeville and Chautauqua shows, silent movies, and social, political, and fundraising events. Lunenburg Operatic Society, Lutheran Dramatic Players, Lilliputian Opera, and Red Cross Hospital Ship concerts were some of the early performance highlights.

By the 1930s and the Great Depression, the Odd Fellows' Hall took on a second life as the Capitol Theatre. Projection equipment was installed, along with folding seats and a popcorn booth.

Some crude renovations were started to 'modernize' the neo-classical styling. For a while, the theatre thrived by presenting mainstream movies: silent, black and white, and later colour and stereo. During World War II, the hall was often packed for nightly and matinee showings of Hollywood dramas or comedies and official war-time news reels. When the Capitol Theatre closed in 1976, the last of the Odd Fellows put their building up for sale.

New Owners and Aspirations

Come 1983, Acadia University professor and theatrical director/producer, Jack Sherriff bought the aging hall. He started more rough modifications to the building with a plan to stage live theatre. He re-opened the building, which he re-named Lunenburg Opera House, ten years after buying it. He intended to

capitalize on the pending UNESCO designation (1995) of Old Town Lunenburg, and the cultural tourism boom which was about to start. Sherriff extended the stage, added second-hand theatre lighting, and produced a few plays. Alas he was long on plans and short on resources - his project just didn't take off. Perhaps his legacy was to discover, uncover and preserve the original, and now very rare, stage mural.

Throughout the cinema and theatre decades, local cultural organizations continued occasional uses of the old hall. It was then, and still is, the largest performance space in Lunenburg, and despite its deteriorating state, provided a valuable venue opportunity. In the 2004-05 period, a group of local arts organizations, including the Lunenburg Folk Harbour Society, investigated the potential for acquiring and re-purposing

the concert hall and its other spaces. But they were scooped by a newly arrived entrepreneur, named Farley Blackman, who bought the building and began his own renovations. He did some significant work on the exterior of the building and to the main concert hall, but left much of the structure in an unusable state. His most famous venture was a Gordon Lightfoot concert in 2016.

A decade and a half after buying the Lunenburg Opera House, Blackman listed it for sale for \$2.25 million, an astonishing 10 times more than he paid for it. Over the next two years there were multiple price reductions. Then, a surprise offer came to the board of the Lunenburg Folk Harbour Society. They could buy the building for \$733,800, with a significant grant from the Ford Family Foundation. Soon after, another generous donation from local business owners Susan and Gunther Reibling completed the purchase of the building. More than a decade after the first attempt to acquire and revive the venerable concert hall, the Lunenburg Folk Harbour Society was finally able to realize its dream of a permanent home. Well, some day ...

A Permanent Home for the Lunenburg Folk Harbour Society

Lunenburg Folk Harbour Society has an almost 40 year track record of successful and popular folk music events. It is most famous for the Lunenburg Folk Harbour Festival, an annual August weekend that attracts up to 50 musical acts and several thousand ticket buyers to multiple locations throughout Old Town Lunenburg. This festival has matured into the largest music event on Nova Scotia's South Shore and the largest festival in Lunenburg. It appeals to musicians, audience members, volunteers, and media from across Canada, the US, and Europe.

The Society also produces a "summer in the park" bandstand series focussed on emerging folk genre musicians. And the Society organizes various educational and community projects. With the acquisition of the Lunenburg Opera House, the Society now also



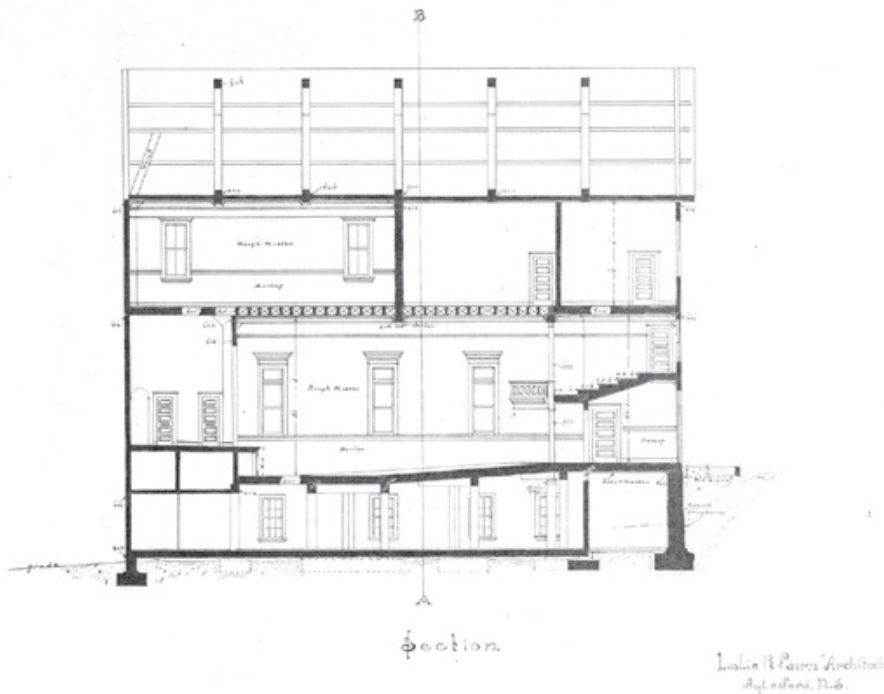
Original architectural drawing for the Lunenburg Odd Fellows Music Hall, front elevation, showing elegant façade design (courtesy of Nova Scotia Archives, architectural drawings, Leslie R. Fair, Architect, Aylesford, NS)

presents spring and fall concert series with about 20 performances in the historic hall. Other organizations are currently presenting film, opera, comedy, a children's festival, and even Flamenco dance events.

The Lunenburg Opera House needs a lot of work – several million dollars' worth – to bring it into the 21st century while also preserving and enhancing its heritage value. Although the main hall and balcony, along with two public washrooms, are useable, the rest of the building cannot be occupied. Until ...

Building and Realising the Vision

Soon after the acquisition, Folk Harbour Society formed a Lunenburg Opera House Team to develop and guide the master plan for the building. Despite Covid delays, the team has coordinated concept, funding, and other community workshops, planning sessions, user focus groups, research projects, and preliminary fund raising. Through an architectural competition, Dartmouth based Fathom Studio was chosen as lead consultants. They bring to the project their own experience with con-



Original architectural drawing for the Lunenburg Odd Fellows Music Hall, longitudinal section (courtesy of Nova Scotia Archives, architectural drawings, Leslie R. Fair, Architect, Aylesford, NS)



A 1923 performance featured a children's choir, along with fancy staging and early sound equipment (courtesy Diane Oxner)

temporary design in historic settings, as well as a cluster of experts in structural and mechanical engineering, acoustics, theatre design, heritage research, energy efficiency, project management, and construction estimating.

The basement will include new washrooms, green room, and a "cellar" social area. The lobby will be improved. The main hall will be restored to its original Edwardian character and upgraded for acoustics; new projection,

musical and theatrical technologies will be added. The balcony will be made fully accessible and more comfortable. The upper floor 'Wow Room' will be faithfully restored. Other areas will be renovated for new purposes such as the Folk Harbour Society offices, a kitchen, more washrooms and storage areas. Original features, including the proscenium, stage mural, hardwood staircase, pine floors, hundred-year-old trim, ornamental tin ceilings, original lighting, will be preserved or restored. The new elevator and stair tower will make all the floors fully useable. And an exciting attic option offers additional space for future uses. New high efficiency systems will heat, cool, ventilate, light and secure the building. This is all with a goal not only to 'fix' the Lunenburg Opera House but to set the stage for another century of use.

Fund development for the Lunenburg Opera House project is underway. Construction plans, schedules and budgets are emerging, stage by stage. Construction probably won't start for another year, or two, or three. And like much work on heritage structures, most of the change will be hidden within.

The Future

A half decade or so from now, the Lunenburg Opera House may look much the same. But it will be sturdier, warmer or cooler, fresher, brighter, smarter, better sounding, more useful and purposeful in many ways, more inviting, more gracious, more accessible and accommodating, and much busier. It will finally become the landmark concert hall imagined more than a century ago by its original builders.

Tom McFall is Vice President of Lunenburg Folk Harbour Society and chair of the Lunenburg Opera House Team. After an Alberta-based career in design and cultural management, he retired to Lunenburg to restore a classic bump house and to "work harder than ever" as an arts volunteer.

A Personal Reflection on the Gravestone Work of Heather Lawson, Stone Cutter and Carver

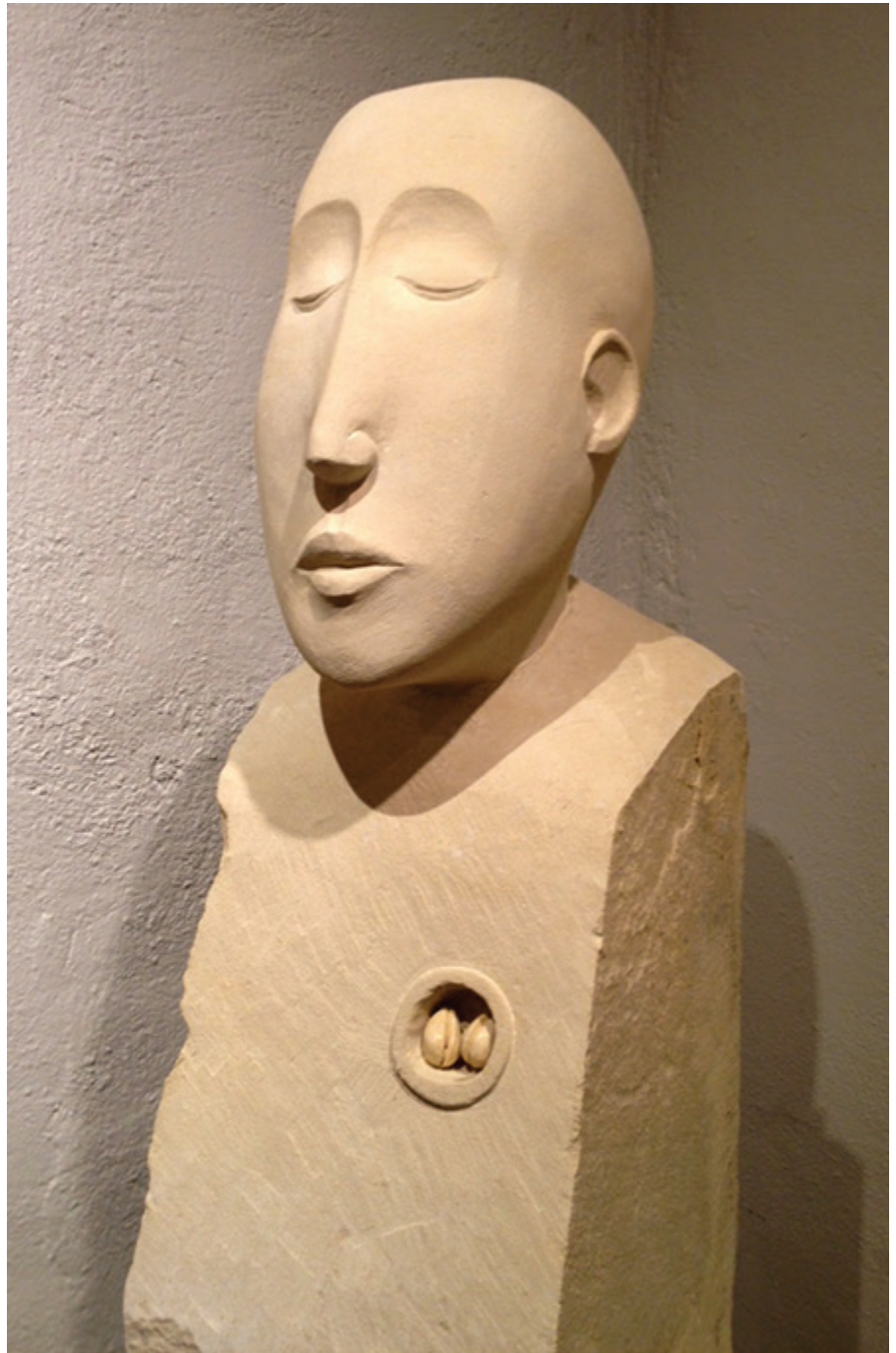
Deborah Trask

Five years after Heather Lawson left us, Nova Scotia is poorer for her loss, but far richer for the sculpture she left us, the monuments she created and preserved, and the knowledge and wisdom she shared.

Many of you will have known Heather Lawson as a stone carver and crafts-person, with a workshop, gift shop and spectacular gardens at her home in Bass River. I knew Heather because of her deep knowledge of stone preservation. She taught many of us how to care for gravestones, and she even made some on commission.

I first met Heather when she was a student in the stonemason program in the 1980s. I don't actually remember her, something she would tease me about later, just the surprise to see a young woman in the group. I was on the curatorial staff of the Nova Scotia Museum at the time, and my employer encouraged my personal interest in gravestones as artifacts. In fact, the province published my early research on the topic as a book in 1978. I was also an advisor to the W.B. Wells Foundation for several years. Every so often, they put on a training workshop for cemetery custodians in Cumberland County. I did this for them a couple of times, with different conservators, but one year Heather presented at the same workshop. Afterwards, we stayed in the cemetery discussing and arguing over different approaches to stone preservation, and a friendship was born.

In 1998 we were asked to do a Maritime Noon phone-in, ostensibly to discuss cemetery preservation. Most callers simply wanted to tell Heather how much they admired her sculptures, though she herself never called them that. One caller, the Rev. Ulrich Dawson, asked if we would do a preservation



Hope, by Heather Lawson (courtesy of Lynda Macdonald, Harvest Gallery, Wolfville)



Heather Lawson emerging from her Bass River workshop (courtesy of Ben Proudfoot and Breakwater Studios)



Heather in her studio (courtesy of Ben Proudfoot and Breakwater Studios)

workshop in Port Maitland, Yarmouth County, and we did. Out of that workshop, the Old Beaver River/Port Maitland Cemeteries Preservation Society was formed in 1999. Heather had done a lot of resetting work in the old section of the Robie Street Cemetery in Truro – the old section is a provincially registered heritage property. She also began working on the Garrison Burying Ground, Annapolis Royal, on the grounds of Fort Anne National Historic Site.

As Heather learned more through hands-on experience with gravestones, we continued to do cemetery preservation workshops wherever people asked. I can remember a whole day workshop in Lunenburg, one in Arichat, another in Noel, East Hants, one in Kentville, and several more. Heather also helped community groups preserve their cemeteries, by providing training in basic resetting, and doing the more complex repairs herself. Good examples of this would be the old graveyards in Mahone Bay and Port Medway.

In 2005, the International Association of Gravestone Studies held its annual conference at Saint Mary's University. I

was the conference chair and led a bus tour to visit Heather at her workshop, where she let participants try their hand at cutting stone before we all had lunch on her deck. As part of that conference, Heather led a hands-on workshop resetting toppled stones at Camp Hill Cemetery, Halifax. She and I helped organize and participated in the GANS Cemetery conference at the Agricultural College in Truro in the spring of 2014.

"I knew Heather because of her deep knowledge of stone preservation. She taught many of us how to care for gravestones, and she even made some on commission"

I have been involved with the Old Burying Ground in Halifax since the early 1980s when it was still St Paul's Cemetery. The Old Burying Ground Foundation was formed in 1987 and brought in international stone conservators over several years to advise on what to do with the surviving artifacts. The reports piled up, but we really needed an expert to actually do the work. Hurricane Juan toppled several trees in the OBG, which in turn knocked over gravestones, so Heather was hired to repair and reset them. After that, with cost-sharing funding from Parks Canada, she did a stone-by-stone assessment of the more than 1200 stones at the OBG, and we began a planned, phased repair and resetting project, with the painstaking work done by Heather each September. The last thing Heather and I talked about was how work might continue at the OBG without her.

Heather made a number of gravestones on commission – I know of one in Petite Riviere, another in Arichat, a number in the upper section of the Economy cemetery in Colchester County, not far from her home. When my father died in 2012, I asked Heather to make the stone. Knowing that the old stones in the Yarmouth area are all of New England slate, she asked if I wanted it in slate, even though she really didn't have the tools, as she normally worked in local sandstone, or Indiana limestone.



Gravestone for the author's father, F. Stuart Trask, carved by Heather Lawson, Town Point Cemetery, Chebogue (author photo)

Any excuse to get new tools! So we ordered a piece of slate from Virginia, gave her a photo of the ancestral stone from 1780, and asked that there also be a border of ivy. Later she told me that the slate was so easy to polish that she got a little carried away with it.

To see something of Heather's workshop and her work as a craftsper-son, watch the beautiful 10-minute video *Stone* by Breakwater Studios, 2015, directed by Ben Proudfoot and done as part of a series for the Craft Alliance Atlantic Association and the NS Designer Craft Council (<http://breakwaterstudios.com/film/stone/>).

There is also a two-page spread on Heather Lawson, "Broken things made whole," in Robin Metcalfe's beautiful book *Studio Rally: Art and Craft of Nova Scotia*, published by Goose Lane Editions and Studio Rally Productions in 1999.

Heather Lawson died on 7 September 2018, after a short illness. Donations in her memory can be made to the Heather Lawson Emergency Relief Fund, through Craft Nova Scotia (<https://craft-novascotia.ca/heather-lawson-fund/>). This fund assists craftspeople who have suffered financial hardships due to events such as disability and illness.

Knaut-Rhuland House – Conserving an Architectural Gem in Lunenburg

Patricia Nicoll

The Knaut-Rhuland House (c. 1793) at 125 Pelham Street, in the centre of Old Town Lunenburg, is one of the finest examples of British Classical design in Canada. In 2003, it was designated a National Historic Site of Canada.

The land on which the Knaut-Rhuland House stands was purchased in 1759 by Philip Augustus Knaut, a few years after the arrival of the settlers referred to as “Foreign Protestants”. In approximately 1793, Philip’s son, Benjamin Knaut, a successful and wealthy merchant and Sheriff of Lunenburg, erected the current building.

There are no known building records and the architect or designer of the house is undetermined. However, the builder most certainly adhered to Classical design principles as reinterpreted in post-Renaissance England. This style emphasized symmetry and regular proportions, and eventually became popular in the British colonies. Homes influenced by British classicism first appeared in the Maritimes towards the end of the 1780s.

The Knaut-Rhuland House is a two and a half storey building of post and beam construction on a raised stone basement, with an overall effect that is substantial and elegant. A double staircase leads to the central main door with original sidelights and fan-shaped transom. The house has a centre-hall plan with two large front rooms and two smaller rear rooms on each floor. The quality of wood finishes inside the house is especially fine.

The Lunenburg Heritage Society, a 51-year old charitable organization, has owned the Knaut-Rhuland House since 2000. The house is operated by the Society as a popular private museum telling the story of the early colonial settlement of Lunenburg and is open to the public on a seasonal basis. It is the only museum in the town that offers a glimpse



The Knaut-Rhuland House as it appeared in the 1980s (courtesy Lunenburg Heritage Society)



Repaired foundation wall (courtesy Lunenburg Heritage Society)



The Knaut-Rhuland House with restored façade; note Lunenburg Opera House behind (Griffin photo)

of domestic life in Lunenburg from the late 18th century into the Victorian age.

To ascertain the state of preservation of this important building, the Lunenburg Heritage Society commissioned a Conservation Report by SableARC Studios of Charlottetown, PEI, under the direction of lead architect, Greg Munn. This was completed in 2022 and Mr Munn continues to support the Society in its efforts to conserve the house with his consultation and design services.

The condition assessment and scope of repairs listed in the Report indicated a number of urgent projects required to stabilize the building and prevent further structural deterioration.

Phase One projects, undertaken in

2022 and 2023, consisted of rebuilding a section of the stone foundation that had failed, reframing the roof structure around the western chimney, and repairing stair openings, both former and current, leading to the basement. This phase of work was completed in October 2023 and was funded through the federal National Cost-Sharing Program for Heritage Places (administered by Parks Canada), a provincial Conservation Work grant from the Heritage Development Fund (NS Department of Communities, Culture, and Heritage), generous grants from the Bragg Foundation and Marguerite Hubbard Foundation, and many private donors. Heritage Standing Inc. of Fredericton provided the design

work for the repairs in this phase. The masonry work was meticulously and beautifully completed, using heritage materials and methods, by East Coast Masonry of Chamcook, New Brunswick.

Phase Two of the conservation work is now underway. The house is affected by poor site drainage and the recent extreme summer rains have only exacerbated this problem, causing high humidity levels throughout the basement and upper floors. A topographic survey, site plan, stormwater analysis and management plan of the site are now underway with the objective of producing a workable design to move water safely away from the foundation of the house.



Masonry work in progress by East Coast Masonry (courtesy Lunenburg Heritage Society)

The Knaut-Rhuland House conservation and renewal is only possible through the dedication of the members and volunteers of the Lunenburg Heritage Society working with heritage professionals both local to the Lunenburg area and further afield. The Society continues to fundraise to support this important work. More information can be found at www.lunenburgheritagesociety.ca.

In a town with numerous historic buildings and fine architecture, the Knaut-Rhuland House holds a special place in Lunenburg's past. With care and effort, this special building will be preserved as a destination for the learning and enjoyment of future generations.

Patricia Nicoll is a member of the Board of the Lunenburg Heritage Society and Chair of the Knaut-Rhuland House Renewal Committee. She is a past Board member of HTNS and past HTNS regional representative for the South Shore.

In addition, the exterior siding and trim and window sashes will be repaired in the second phase. In 2021, a generous grant from the HTNS Building at Risk fund contributed to the repair and rebuilding of the window sashes on the front façade. The goal is to repair the remaining sashes in a similar manner.

Investigations continue to analyze paint samples, determine the age of the building's clapboards, and complete repairs to keep moisture out, following the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*. Once the repairs are complete, the house will be painted in an historically appropriate colour using linseed oil paint and traditional finish methods. This will be an exciting part of the conservation work as the exterior is the most visible part of the conservation work planned to date.

As a final part of Phase Two, research is also underway to consider the design of the main entrance, including the front door surround, porch, and stairs. The transom and sidelights are original to the House and admit light to the centre hall.

ARTIST *Andy Lynch*



2019, 2013 Bauer Street

Andy Lynch '19

2019 [2009], 2013 Bauer Street, by Andy Lynch, 2019, pen and ink with watercolour on paper

Discovering a 'Trinity' of Churches in Middleton

Michael G. Winters

There has been one church building in Nova Scotia that has long been a curiosity for me, as little notice seems to have been paid to its origin or history. It sits lonely and forlorn in Middleton, at the side of the Evangeline Trail, with a few windows boarded up, a locked door and no evidence of any recent activity around it.

I wondered: when was this structure erected, what faith community gathered here to worship, who were its founders, its clergy, and its parishioners? What interesting stories are entwined around this old building? What special events and activities took place within its walls? Someone must know; somewhere there had to be stories about this place. An internet search gave me no information, nor did records of recent sales at this address. Investigating websites and parish records of various church denominations took me no further into discovering anything about this lonely little white church, set parallel to and just a few metres away from the edge of the town's Main Street.

"... an important part in the history of Middleton's trio of 'Holy Trinity' churches ... But it seems, for whatever reasons, its former presence as 'the middle church' has been forgotten ..."

There had to be a way to identify how this church came into being, who regularly walked through its door, and how this pretty house of worship fell into vacancy and disrepair. Why could I find no history of this church?

I moved on, believing that I was not the only person who had ever taken its photograph, and perhaps posted it online. I started with websites and social media pages of local community groups in the Annapolis Valley, but disappointment came again, when no clues were



Second Holy Trinity "Church of England & Rectory" in Middleton (courtesy of Paul Harmon)

to be found. It wasn't until I expanded my search to look for old postcards that the break came! There, on an undated postcard on a trading site, was an image of the church, pictured with a large house adjacent to it, and identified as "The Church of England."

Now my search became easier, and I was able to contact the local heritage group, which provided me with a brief report on the building. While information is widely available about Middleton's well-known Old Holy Trinity Church (established in 1791), and today's Trinity Anglican Church (consecrated in 2011), it seems that few know that there was "the church in the middle," a second church, another Holy Trinity Church of England, that served the area's Anglicans from 1893 to 2011.

In the early 1890s, it had been over 100 years since the establishment of the original Holy Trinity Church, set in the pines a few kilometres west of Wilmot. The Reverend John E. Warner was appointed to the Parish of Wilmot, and immediately plans were underway to build a new church, closer to the grow-

ing town of Middleton. Although now centred in town, the parish retained the name Wilmot, originally the name of the entire district round about. During the ministry of Reverend Warner, property was purchased from the Wheelock Farm on the south side of Main Street in Middleton. A new church, Holy Trinity Church of England, a rectory, and a barn were erected in 1893. During Rev. Warner's second ministry (1906-1910), a Parish Hall was built.

I have been fortunate to locate a few more old photographs of this church. While I have yet to discover much more about this church's community of believers, its construction and its 118 years of serving the needs of the people of Middleton, my curiosity hasn't waned as I realize that it has likely played an important part in the history of Middleton's trio of "Holy Trinity" churches and the Parish of Wilmot. But it seems, for whatever reasons, its former presence as "the middle church" has been forgotten. It deserves to be remembered. Yet, curiously, it has not been widely appreciated, nor has its heritage value



The second church as it appears today, Middleton (author photo)

been prominently recognized. Will that change? I, for one, certainly hope so.

Michael G. Winters is a photographer whose retirement project was to photograph every Anglican church in the province. Along the way, he has documented many other churches, and has shared his finds on the Wooden Churches of Nova Scotia Facebook page. To read more about his project, see the June 2021 issue of The Griffin, vol. 46 no. 2 (<https://www.htns.ca/back-issues>).

Historical notes

First church (1791): The Parish of Wilmot was founded in 1787, when Bishop Inglis selected a site for a church in Lower Middleton. He chose a piece of land owned by a Mr Chesley. Church construction began in the same year, but was not completed until 1791. In the meantime, in 1789, Bishop Inglis appointed the Reverend John Wiswall as the Parish's first Rector. Wiswall took a great deal of interest in the building project. Indeed at one point, at least, the bishop remonstrated with him because he was spending too much time on the building and not enough on his pastoral

duties. The church, finally completed after so many years, was consecrated by Bishop Inglis in 1791. This building, known now as Old Holy Trinity Church, has been maintained by the Old Holy Trinity Charitable Trust, and is one of the oldest remaining Anglican church buildings in Nova Scotia. It is located at 49 Main Street in Middleton.

Second church (1893): In 1893 the Rev. John E. Warner was appointed and immediately plans were underway to build a new church, closer to the growing town of Middleton. Although now centred in town the parish retained the name Wilmot, originally the name of the entire district round about. During the ministry of Reverend Warner, property was purchased from the Wheelock Farm on the south side of Main Street in Middleton. A new church, Holy Trinity Church of England, a Rectory and a barn were erected in 1893. Reverend Warner stayed in the parish for only three years – he must have enjoyed his ministry in the Parish, however, since he returned to serve again from 1906 to 1910. During this time, a Parish Hall was built. This church building, in use for more than 110 years, is now owned privately, and is located at 246 Main Street in Middleton.

Third Building (2011): From 2008 to 2014 the parish was served by the steady, caring leadership of the Rev. Matthew Sponagle. The Parish of Wilmot decided in 2009 to proceed with building a new church in Middleton. The sod-turning ceremony was held on 14 December 2010; the church was constructed over the winter and spring and opened for services on 10 July 2011 with the Right Reverend Susan Moxley presiding. Known as Holy Trinity Anglican Church, this modern building is located at 45 Main Street, next to the Parish cemetery and the original, 1791, Old Holy Trinity Church.

George Wayne Rogers, NSAA, FRAIC

George Rogers, a former President of Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia (1972-1975), Chair of the Halifax Landmarks Commission, and a member of the Heritage Advisory Committee, died on 11 September 2023 at the age of 85. He was a practising architect for more than five decades. Among his professional awards were five Lieutenant Governor's Awards and a Governor General's Award for Architecture, the latter for the design of the *HMCS Sackville* Interpretation Centre on the Halifax waterfront. His obituary, from which most of the following text has been taken, illustrates the breadth of his interests and his contributions to the community in architecture, planning, education, church, and sailing.

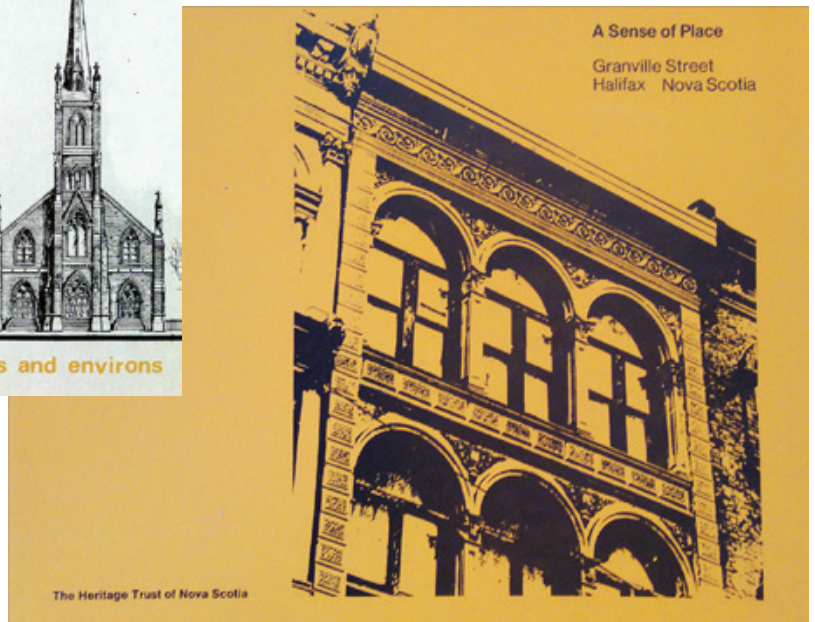
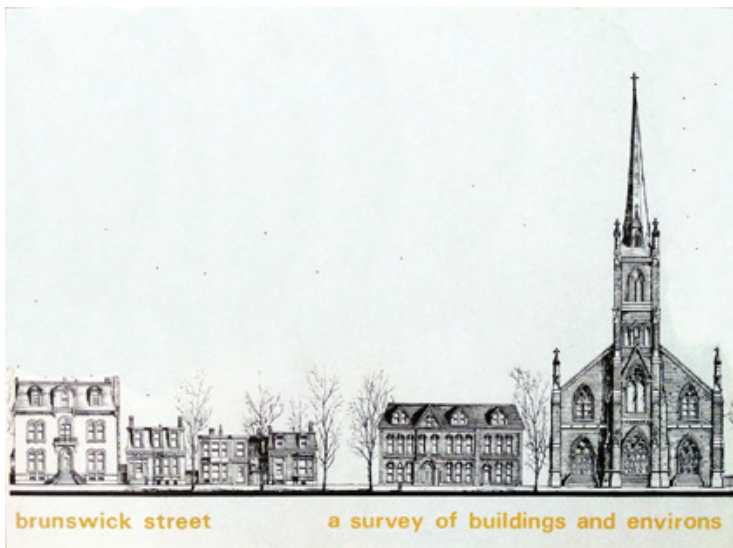
"An historian of church architecture, George co-authored *Thy Dwellings Fair, Churches of Nova Scotia, 1750-1830* [with Allan Duffus, Edward MacFarlane and Elizabeth Pacey] and *More Stately Man-*



sions, Churches of Nova Scotia, 1830-1910 [with Allan Duffus and Elizabeth Pacey]. As an editor his work included *Brunswick Street: A Survey of Buildings and Environs* for the Halifax Civic Advisory Committee on the Preservation of Historic Buildings and *Granville Street: A Sense of Place*, which was influential in the saving of the Halifax historic waterfront district."

George served for many years as a Board member of the Old Burying Ground Foundation, and also on the Parish Council of St Mary's Basilica, and other Archdiocese committees. He was a founding member and first Chair of the St Vincent de Paul Society for Hope Cottage, and a past Board member of the Waegwoltic Club. A full obituary was published in *The Chronicle Herald* (Saltwire) 22 September 2023 and at <https://tjtracey.com/tribute/details/2524/George-Rogers/obituary.html>.

Photo courtesy of Stan Kochanoff

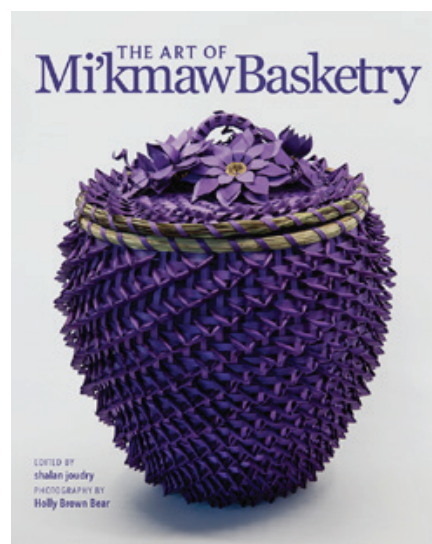


Books for Christmas

A Pictou Christmas, text by Laurie Stanley-Blackwell, art by Teresa MacKenzie. Pictou Bee Press, Pictou, hardcover, ISBN: 978-1-920297-05-6, \$25.00 (November 2023). *"A Pictou Christmas offers a whimsical spoof of "The Twelve Days of Christmas" with a Pictou-Scottish twist. This beautifully illustrated new holiday book also contains a brief account of Christmases past in Pictou town and county."*



The Art of Mi'kmaw Basketry, ed. by shalan joudry, photographs by Holly Brown Bear. Formac Books, Halifax, paperback, ISBN: 978-1-459507-21-0, \$29.95 (October 2023). *"Mi'kmaw artists are creating a wide range of imaginative and beautiful work using the skills and traditions of basketry weaving given to them by their elders and ancestors. In this book, nine artists present their work and their stories in their own words. Their unique artistic practices reflect their relationships to the natural world around them and their abilities to create unique and beautiful objects using a mix of traditional and contemporary materials and forms."*

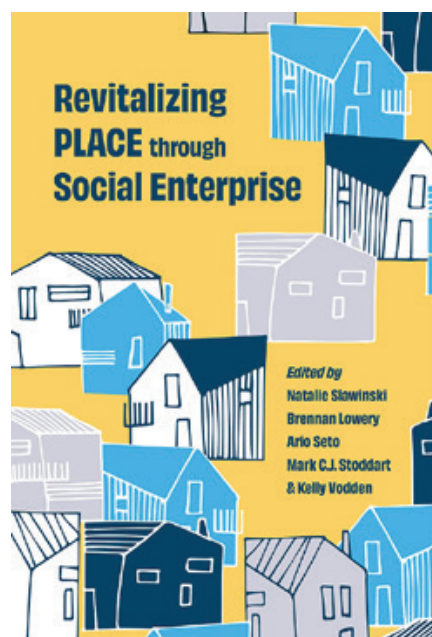


Revitalizing PLACE through Social Enterprise, eds Natalie Slawinski, Brennan Lowery, Ario Seto, Mark C.J. Stoddart and Kelly Vodden. Memorial University Press, St John's, paperback, ISBN: 978-1-990445-17-0, \$29.95 pre-order (shipping 13 Dec 2023). *"Academics and practitioners introduce the PLACE Framework as a new approach for exploring how place-based social enterprises reimagine and revitalize communities."*

Four Seasons of Nova Scotia, by Len Wagg. Nimbus Publishing, Halifax, hardcover, ISBN: 978-1-774712-19-1, \$29.95 (September 2023). *"In Four Seasons of Nova Scotia, bestselling photographer-writer Len Wagg showcases the beauty of Nova Scotia's landscapes in spring, summer, fall, and winter."*

Big Rory of Market Square, text by Laurie Stanley-Blackwell, art by Karen Megronigle. Pictou Bee Press, Pictou, paperback, ISBN: 978-1-920297-04-9, \$18.99 (August 2023). *"Inspired by the tradition of the Scottish storyteller, [this book] features tales about the good ship Hector, the Year of the Mice, two local giants, and the colourful policeman, Peachie Carroll ... Big Rory, is an old cat with a fondness for storytelling and shortbreads."*

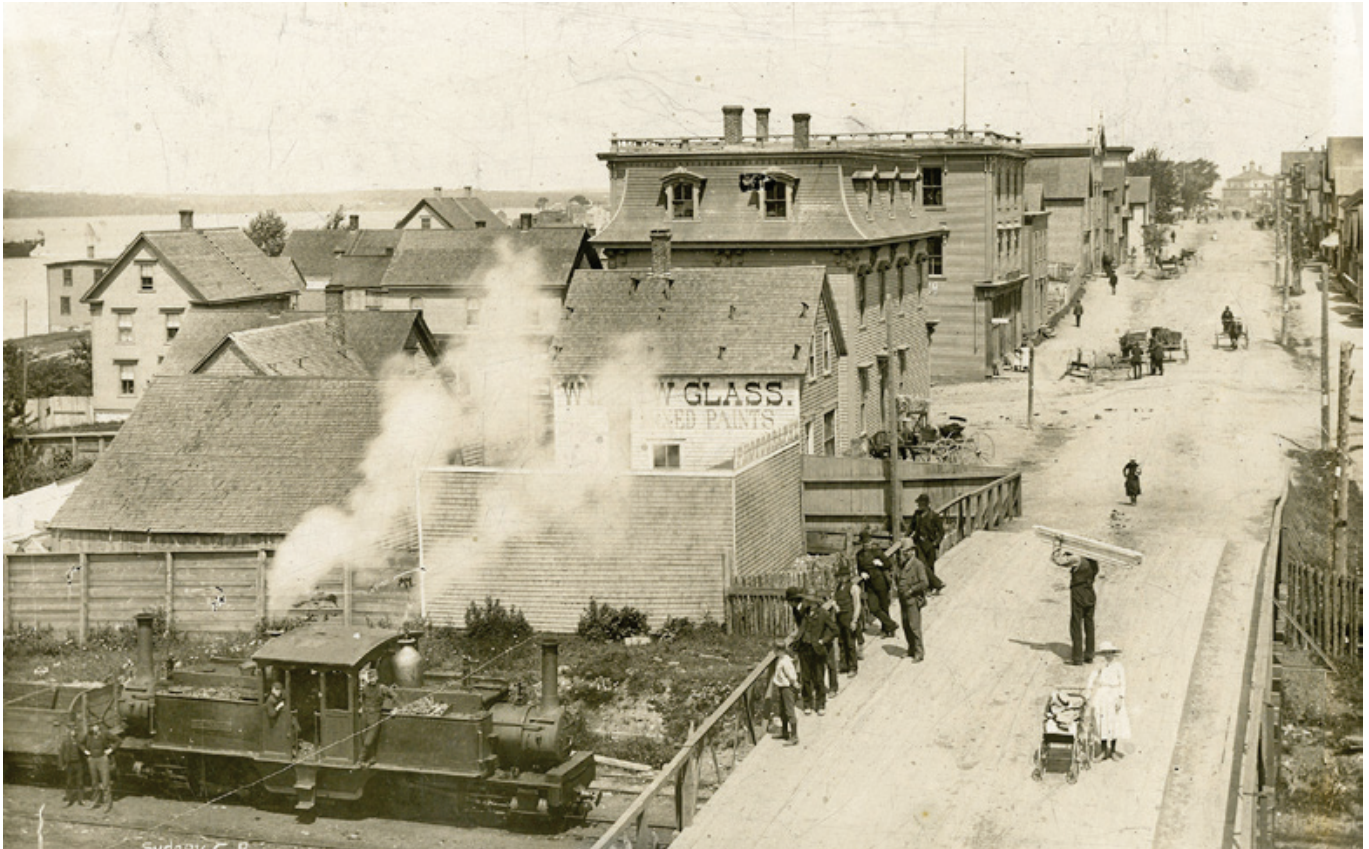
When the Ocean Came to Town, text by Sal Sawler, art by Emma FitzGerald. Nimbus Publishing, Halifax, paperback, ISBN: 978-1-774712-00-9, \$13.95 (October 2023). *"A love letter to the ocean, and to adapting to climate change, the newest picture book by award-winning creators Sal Sawler and Emma FitzGerald will inspire young readers to build better solutions, and communities."* Ages 3-7.



Out of the Dark, by Julie Lawson. Nimbus Publishing, Halifax, paperback, ISBN: 978-1-774712-34-4, \$14.95 (September 2023). *"Following in the immediate wake of A Blinding Light, with a universal message of hope and determination [in the aftermath of the Halifax Explosion], Out of the Dark uses a dual point of view to tell a remarkable story of rebuilding and resilience in a time of global upheaval."* Ages 9-12.

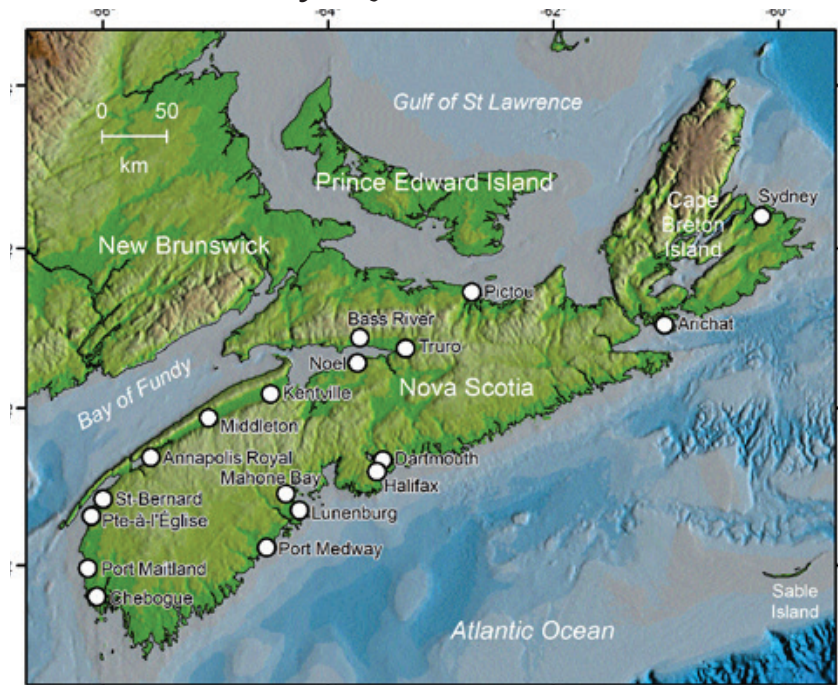
Shovels, Not Rifles: a Novel, by Gloria Ann Wesley. Formac Books, Halifax, paperback, ISBN: 978-1-459506-05-3, \$19.95 (August 2023). *"Historical young adult fiction set in the First World War featuring a young African Nova Scotian in the No. 2 Construction Battalion who faces racism and discrimination from his fellow Canadians."* Ages 13-18.

A Sunny Morning on Charlotte Street, Sydney, 1893



A crowd has stopped on the Charlotte Street bridge to watch the narrow-gauge Fairlie double-ender of the Glasgow & Cape Breton Railway, which has stopped to have its picture taken. The railway had been taken over earlier in the year by the newly incorporated Dominion Coal Company (DOMCO). The harbour can be seen at top left over the roof tops. The photographer's studio (and sign) is on the left at the end of the bridge. The building at the near corner of Wentworth Street, beyond the window glass business, is still standing. Just visible at the bend in the distance is the Holy Angels Convent. Photographer: Umlah Studios (courtesy of the Beaton Institute, CA BI 77-167-301 "Coal Engine Passing under Charlotte Street").

Locations of subject matter in this issue



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