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# The Griffin

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# The Griffin

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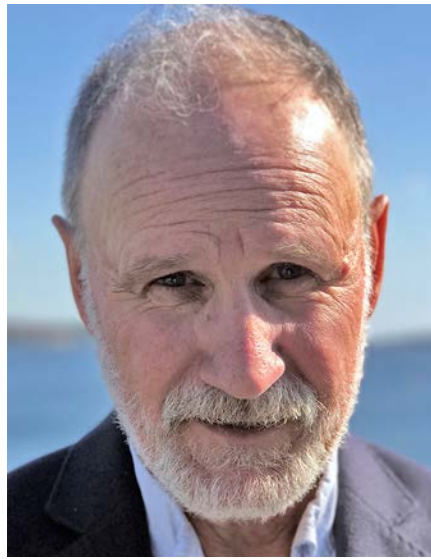
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## President's Report



Andrew Murphy

This fall has been a whirlwind of jet-setting, albeit usually on four wheels.

The first big excursion of the season was to Winnipeg for the National Trust Conference. Thanks in part to the Château Laurier controversy, a major theme of the conference was Standard 11 of the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*, which states that additions to heritage buildings must be physically and visually compatible with, subordinate to, and distinguishable from the historic structure. There were multiple panels on this subject and many more conversations among conference-goers. Luke Stock, our student intern from Dalhousie, also attended the conference. His piece on the debate appears later in this issue.

Also under discussion was the weakness of conservation legislation. The instance most familiar to Nova Scotians is Section 18 of our provincial Heritage Property Act, responsible for the "three year" rule regarding demolition. But lack of legal protections for heritage is in fact a national concern. Not only is Standard 11 frequently violated, but there is no federal legislation in place to protect National Historic Sites. The conference was held in the heart of Winnipeg's

Exchange District, itself a national site, and many attendees reflected on its fragility as they headed out on walking tours and explored its remarkable, irreplicable streetscapes, characterized by old warehouses (now converted into lofts, microdistilleries, you name it!) and elegant 'skyscrapers' of the early 1900s.

Next up was our mid-November meeting with newly-elected MP Lenore Zann and former MP Bill Casey. Lenore's mother, Jan Zann, a former Trust Board member, attended. The Zanns' continued interest in and commitment to heritage is inspiring. We discussed many ideas and goals for heritage in Zann's riding, in Nova Scotia, and on a national scale.

My travels included a trip to Sydney to attend Heritage Cape Breton Connection's fall meeting at the Whitney Pier museum. To meet so many, and such highly individual, heritage groups all at once was certainly a highlight of my fall. Visiting Cape Breton also gave me the opportunity to tour the Red Row in Sydney Mines, a restoration-in-progress of a row of brick miners' cottages, built in the 1820s or '30s, and to meet with Tom Urbaniak to discuss the project's fantastic adaptive re-use potential. Finally, we had a wonderful visit to Trinity Anglican in Sydney Mines, one of two churches by William Critchlow Harris that feature the artwork of his brother, Robert.

Meanwhile, life in Halifax has been far from quiet. Just when you think things have died down, threats to heritage rear their ugly heads again. The latest? Louis Reznick's proposed 22-storey addition to Black-Binney House, a municipally-registered National Historic Site adjacent to Government House. Reznick wants special exemption from the zoning rules of the Old South Suburb Heritage Conservation District, which is in the process of being passed. Finally, the hearing for our UARB appeal of the eight-storey tower beside St Patrick's Church in the Brunswick Street Heritage Conservation Area has been delayed again, until March.

Cover image: St Matthews, Barrington Street [detail], by Jack Ross, 2019, acrylic on wood panel, 24"x18" (available at Argyle Fine Art)

## ARTIST

# Jack Ross

Born in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Jack Ross is a painter and art educator. Jack is a graduate of NSCAD University (BFA 2012) and has worked as a painting instructor with NSCAD's School of Extended Studies since 2014. He grew up in the Annapolis Valley, but has lived in the Halifax region since he was a teenager. In addition to

studio work and teaching, Jack is an experienced custom framer and is passionate about developing his technical knowledge in all areas of his practice related to painting.

### Artist Statement

Jack's work stems from a keen interest in the material qualities of paint as well as painting's history and trajectory within contemporary art. Observational study

is often a key component in his practice. His work is concerned with social spaces, the significance of source material, direct methods of paint application, and the relevancy of painted images in today's technologically dependent society.

Jack can be contacted through Argyle Fine Art, [www.argylefineart.com](http://www.argylefineart.com) or [galler@argylefa.com](mailto:galler@argylefa.com)



Forest Pool, by Jack Ross, 2019, acrylic on canvas, 40"x30" (available at Argyle Fine Art)



Young St at Agricola, by Jack Ross, 2019, acrylic on wood panel, 24"x18" (available at Argyle Fine Art)

Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia  
**Illustrated  
Public Lecture Series**

January 16  
**Martin Hubley  
and Mora Dianne O'Neill**  
**The Watercolour World project**

February 20  
**Carl Yates**  
**Early Water Works  
in Halifax**

All talks take place at 7:30 pm on the 3rd  
Thursday of the month  
Museum of Natural History Auditorium  
1747 Summer Street, Halifax  
Access from visitor's parking lot  
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## *Architecture and Additions: Applying Standard 11 in the Rehabilitation of Historic Places*



Front façade of the former Halifax Memorial Library and burial ground (courtesy of the author)

### *Luke Stock*

Standard 11 - "Conserve the heritage value and character-defining elements when creating any new additions to an historic place or any related new construction. Make the new work physically and visually compatible with, subordinate to and distinguishable from the historic place."

In October I had the great pleasure and privilege of attending the National Trust Conference 2019, *Heritage Delivers: Impact, Authenticity, and Catalytic Change*, in Winnipeg. The sessions were some of the most engaging, affirming, and thought provoking of any conference I have attended. Of particular relevance and interest to me as a student of architecture, and in the

current development climate in Halifax, was a focused panel discussion about the interpretation and application of the standards for the design of additions to heritage buildings as set out in Standard 11 of the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*.

*The Standards and Guidelines* are the first pan-Canadian benchmark for heritage conservation practice, and the 14 standards are based on internationally recognized conservation principles. Standard 11 is of particular relevance and significance to us due to the rapid pace and scale of development on the Halifax peninsula, much of which is occurring in vulnerable, heritage-sensitive contexts, with new towers frequently being billed as 'additions' to historic buildings.

The intended goal of the panel was to share the challenges faced by practitioners, building owners, and regulatory bodies; to identify success factors; and to explore areas where practice and heritage outcomes can be improved when considering additions to historic buildings. The panel was moderated by Natalie Bull (Executive Director of the National Trust). Panel members included Julia Gersovitch (Founding Partner at EVOQ Architecture, Montreal), Michael McClelland (Founding Principal, ERA Architects, Toronto) and Brent Bellamy (Creative Director and Architect, Number Ten Architectural Group, Winnipeg). The discussion focused on the three criteria outlined in Standard 11: *compatibility, subordination, and distinguishability*. This revealed three distinct critical



Former Halifax Memorial Library, showing part of 1970s extension, with a glimpse of the new Central Library in the background (courtesy of the author)

approaches to interpreting and applying the criteria of Standard 11. These can be broadly summarized as ‘distilled-principles’, ‘values-based’, and ‘design by analogy.’

### ‘Distilled Principles’

Bellamy advocated a modernist approach based on what he termed ‘distilled principles.’ This position rejects the application of pastiche and imitation, suggesting that contemporary additions ought to draw from abstract reference to the principles which informed the historic place. He provided the example of the Richardson Innovation Centre, a contemporary structure amongst the 19th century warehouses of Winnipeg’s historic Exchange District. Here the design drew upon the ‘rhythm of punched windows’ and the ‘visual heaviness’ of historic warehouses – this is what he termed ‘intervention within a style.’ Bellamy argued that while heritage conservation is important, the criterion that an addition be subordinate to an historic place is a limitation on creative freedom and architectural expression, and that sometimes intentional opposi-

tion makes for a more powerful architectural statement.

Gersovitch identified this approach as being tied to the ‘problem of ego’ in architecture; she argued that stewardship is more important than ego, and that good contemporary design “recalls the past and speaks of the present without becoming a monument to its creators.”

### ‘Values-Based Context’

McClelland argued in favour of a ‘values-based’ contextual approach to the questions of compatibility, distinguishability, and subordination. This involves looking beyond the tangible architectural form and ‘style’, to try and comprehend the intangible values which informed the original design. For McClelland, our design decisions are symptomatic of our values; and these values may be singular or multiple, they are inherently subjective, frequently overlap, and are subject to change over time. This approach maintains that our buildings ought to reflect this, and as our values change, so too, should our built environment. Heritage buildings, in this sense, are seen as

an opportunity to tell the story either of changing values, or of constant ones.

### ‘Design by Analogy’

Gersovitch argued that the standard provides a framework for the creation of contextually sensitive, nuanced, and thoughtful architecture with the capacity to enhance, rather than degrade, the heritage value of a place. Through Gersovitch’s interpretation, physical and visual compatibility can be maintained through a process of ‘design by analogy.’ This means turning to the reference or model that designers of the period could have used if they had been given a similar design brief. She further argued that the sensitive balance between compatibility and distinguishability can be achieved by using traditional materials but detailing them in a contemporary manner. For Gersovitch, subordination means that the new work must never be the main event, it must be secondary to the historic place. Subordination, here is not simply a question of scale, but rather of establishing a hierarchical symbiosis, which balances between mere imitation of the existing form and pointed contrast. I believe that this relationship was best captured by Mexican poet and diplomat, Octavio Paz, who argued that “when in conjunction, modernity breathes new life into tradition, and the latter replies with depth and gravity.”

### Halifax Memorial Library

I wish to frame some of these discussions in the context of a familiar and currently at-risk building from our own province. The Halifax Memorial Library was built between 1949 and 1951 under the design of the celebrated Nova-Scotian architect, Leslie Raymond Fair. It possesses a fine striped art-deco façade that references the classical frontages of the surrounding institutional buildings, particularly the Halifax Provincial Court and Medjuck buildings. When the building was extended in the 1970s, the firm Duffus Romans Kundzins reinterpreted the earlier work, casting the familiar *continued on page 8*

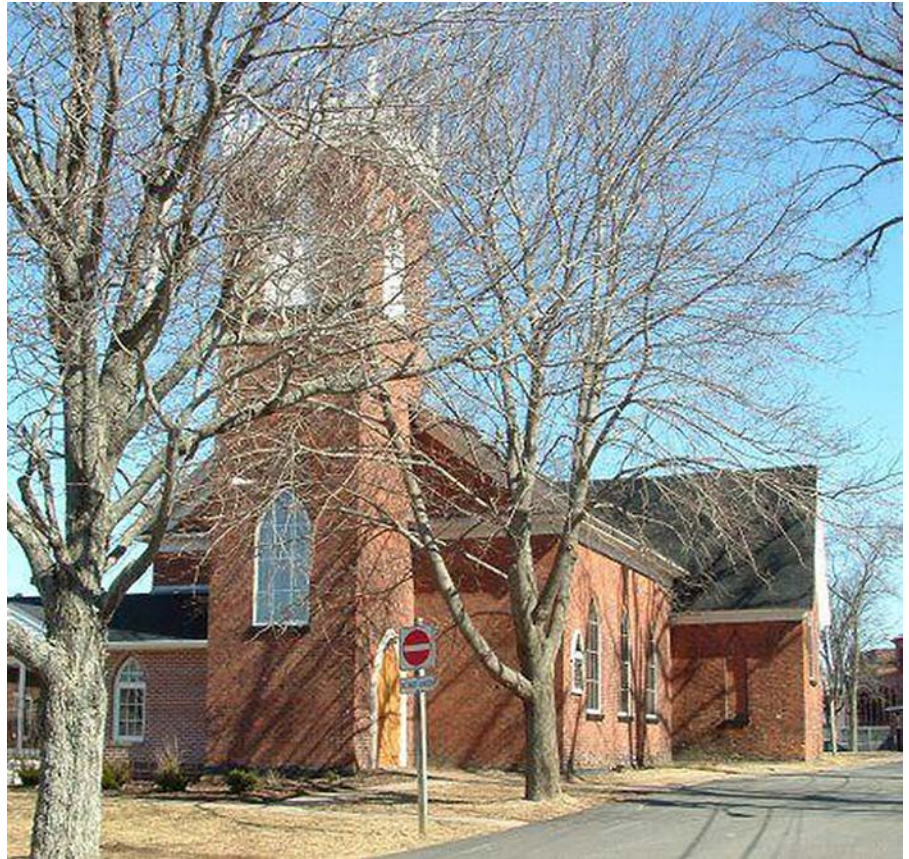
## From the Port to the Town of Amherst, Nova Scotia

Walt Jones

For thousands of years, people have used and lived on the narrow neck of land joining Nova Scotia to New Brunswick. The Mi'kmaq had three villages on the upland ridge where Amherst now sits, providing ready access to food resources across the marshes. Chignecto's geography explains its importance: the distance across the isthmus from the Bay of Fundy to the Gulf of St Lawrence is just over 20 kilometres, all but 400 metres of which is navigable by canoe, thus avoiding more than 1000 kilometres of open ocean travel around Nova Scotia.

### How did Amherst on the Bay become Amherst on the Ridge?

The community now called Amherst started as a settlement at the head of the Bay of Fundy, near the water to facilitate lumber exports and shipbuilding. Therefore, the first community known as Amherst may have been located close to Joseph Morse's house, built about 1760 a few hundred metres from the Bay and near the site of Fort Lawrence and Beaubassin. Another clue to its location comes from a mid-19th century map that shows a large rectangular plot, marked "TOWN LOTS" a short distance west and inland from the port, near the Old Burying Ground on Amherst Point Road. This location makes sense in light of accounts of the British army laying out a town plan for a future community in such a way that the Fort could protect it with cannon fire. This site is also on flat, high ground, close to the harbour. A final clue comes from an essay written by a local woman, Lidia Boomer, about 1906, in which she reports that the original town site was one and a half miles west of its current location. She also includes a hand drawn map that shows the boundary of the current Amherst. When measured, the distance from that boundary to the Old Burying Ground is exactly 1.5 miles. In addition, she says

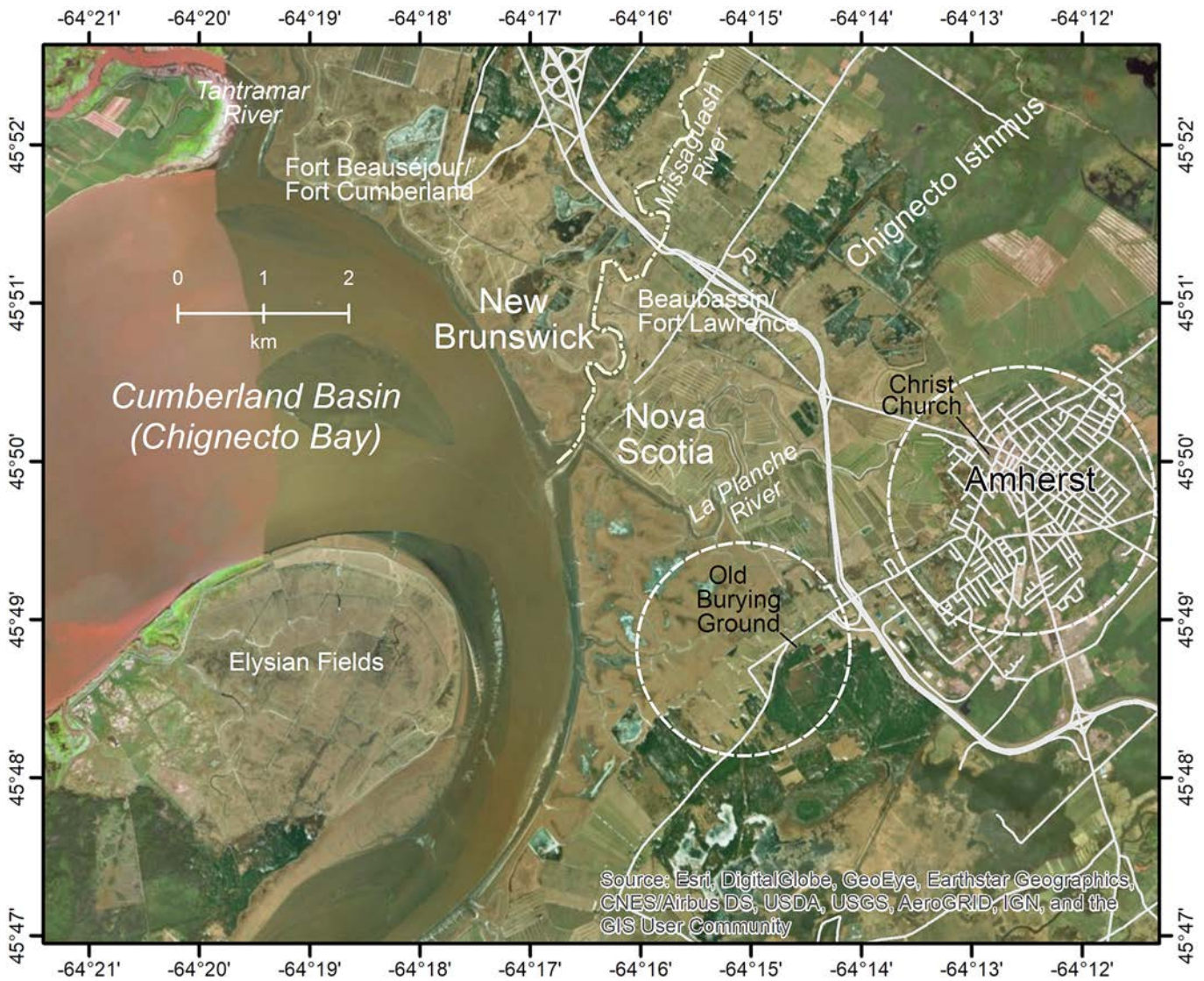


*Christ Church, Victoria Square, Amherst: the brick church that moved (courtesy Canadian Register of Historic Places, Nova Scotia Tourism, Culture, and Heritage, 2007, <https://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=8262>)*

that the old townsite's planned Parade Ground was never used. Instead, the militia drilled on the road outside the Embree house, which along with others is clearly marked on her map, just east of the Old Burying Ground.

The first wave of immigrants enticed to settle Acadian lands following the expulsion began in late 1758 or early 1759. Some had served on the Isthmus as militia members at Fort Cumberland and were encouraged to stay and take up land. Others had answered offers for land grants made by Governor Charles Lawrence in the *Boston Gazette* in the fall of 1758 and January 1759. Lawrence's plan was to lay out 13 townships, each containing 100,000 acres. Chignecto

would become Cumberland Township (LaPlanche River to Aulac River), Sackville Township (Aulac River northward), and Amherst Township (LaPlanche River southward). These New England 'Planters', when they arrived in Chignecto, found that some of their newly acquired plots were widely separated, but soon began trading land to move closer to relatives. A second wave of immigration involved eleven ships with more than 1000 people from Yorkshire, who arrived in Nova Scotia between 1772 and 1775. For the most part, these Yorkshire settlers did not receive grants from the government, but came with enough money to purchase their lands from the Crown or from New England Planters



Original (left-hand circle) and present (right-hand circle) locations of Amherst at the head of Chignecto Bay, with locations of Forts Beauséjour/Cumberland and Lawrence.

who were leaving.

From 1760 to 1783, Cumberland Township rivalled the most important seaports in the region, such as Halifax and Windsor. This level of trade and prosperity may have been the motivation for the influx of settlers and their informal establishment of Amherst as a community and trading centre. It was ideally located to tranship materials across the Isthmus of Chignecto, as the Indigenous people and Acadians had done in the past.

It is clear that “Amherst on the Bay” did not prosper into the 19th century. In the beginning, the Cumberland Town-

ship on the isthmus was thriving and competing head to head with Halifax. In 1785, however, all this changed when the original Cumberland Township was split in half to allow for the formation of a new colony called New Brunswick. Sackville, a settlement formed in 1765 and only nine miles distant from Amherst, was now in the new colony and became a competitor. Sackville had its start several miles inland, in the area now called Middle Sackville and Silver Lake. A marsh road connected it to the mainland of Nova Scotia. The purpose of this road might have been to use the docks at Amherst to ship product to

offshore customers.

In the early part of the 19th century, Sackville’s commerce shifted toward the coast. Docks and a new settlement called Lower Sackville grew up on the shores of the Bay. Amherst was no longer the sole port at the head of Fundy.

#### How did the move occur?

The Christie Trunk and Baggage Company, founded in 1863, is said to have had a pond and a sawmill on Dickey Brook, which runs from the Amherst Ridge down to the LaPlanche River. Further down Dickey Brook, Thomas Lusby built a grist mill and tannery that the

community used for many years. Every community needed a grist mill and this would have attracted settlement.

People may have gravitated east from the original settlement for another reason – topography. The climb from the marsh to Lusby’s mill is relatively easy and would have been more attractive than the slope up from the port to the Old Burying Ground, which is long and steep, not an easy climb with a heavy load, whether on foot or by wagon.

Present-day Amherst is built on rising ground considerably higher than the marsh below, as was Fort Lawrence. The flatlands of the marsh have a harsher climate: more wind and blowing snow in winter and more mosquitoes in summer. The Acadians built their small settlements on the ridges and there is evidence that a settlement called LaPlanche was situated very close to our present town centre.

William Crane, a prosperous Sackville

businessman and politician, succeeded in having a road and bridge built from the Amherst Ridge to Sackville on the Bay between 1824 and 1840. Then it would have made sense for the centre of town (the “Four Corners”) to be located where the marsh road met the road that headed south towards the Minas Basin and Halifax. By 1830, the bulk of the population had migrated to the ridge as shipbuilding declined in Amherst, while Sackville is said to have built 160 ships in the 1824-1840 period.

The original Church of England, now Christ Church Anglican, was built in 1822 about halfway between the “Four Corners” and the Old Burying Ground. By the 1840s, the town had gravitated to its current location because this church was disassembled and rebuilt on its present site on Victoria Square, opening for worship on Christmas Day 1846.

Throughout the 1850s, local leaders worked to secure a Maritime Union to

foster a more prosperous business environment. After several years of negotiation, the Confederation of the British North American colonies was achieved in 1867, helping to ensure that the new Intercolonial Railway would pass through Amherst. By 1872, the railway was a fact and Amherst had the means to join the Industrial Revolution and build a new economy that would grow the community rapidly.

Seventeen years later, in 1889, Amherst, would be incorporated as a town with a population of 9000. It was firmly anchored on the side of the Amherst Ridge overlooking the Tantramar Marshes and ready to profit from its position as “the first town in Nova Scotia.” Before long, citizens were calling it “Busy Amherst” and providing quality products across a growing Canada.

*Walter Jones has long been an advocate for heritage conservation in Amherst.*

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## *Architecture and Additions: Applying Standard 11 in the Rehabilitation of Historic Places*

*continued from page 5*

proportions and rhythmic striping of the art-deco façade in a brutalist concrete shell.

The resulting extension is physically and visually compatible with, subordinate to, and clearly distinguishable from the original structure. Visual continuity between the concrete façade of the addition and the limestone façade of the original structure is achieved by means of a plain frieze which caps a fluted concrete wall that makes allegorical reference to the ribbed pilasters of the original façade. At the rear of the building, the extension is subtly separated from the original structure by a slightly inset connecting bay, which serves to create a visual distinction between new and old. The result is a legible building, in which the architectural expression of two different ages is woven together with a common thread of contextual

sympathy. The latter work does not seek to compete with the earlier, but rather celebrates it through physical and visual deference.

Whether or not you are a fan of brutalist architecture, the addition to the Memorial Library exemplifies the approach that is advocated by Standard 11. None of this is to suggest that this is a perfect intervention; there is, of course, a much deeper significance and history to the site, in particular its role as a war memorial, public park and historical burying ground, which ought to colour future interventions on this site. Viewed through the lens of McClelland’s ‘values-based’ contextual approach, the site’s transition from burial ground, to public park, to war memorial and library could thereby be seen as a reflection of changing societal values, and so would not necessarily preclude the future use of the site as say, offices or commercial

retail space. Gersovitch identified that this was really more about rationalizing changes in functional and technical program than it is about celebrating contemporary values. Thus, the standards are at risk of being used as a rhetorical device to justify contemporary design to the detriment of heritage value.

Since the application of stylistic prescriptivism generally inhibits, rather than promotes creative and thoughtful architectural approaches, the language of the criteria of Standard 11 admits a degree of deliberate ambiguity. This allows conceptual space for novel, critical and contextually aware interventions in historic sites. With this semantic ambiguity, however, is the danger that the language of Standard 11 can be appropriated to make architectural rationalizations for the insensitive development of historic places. This weaponization of *continued on page 19*



## Public Parks in Nova Scotia

Thomas Gribbin, Devin Segal,  
Donald Chard

Cultural landscapes are as much a part of Nova Scotia's built heritage as stone, bricks or cedar shingles, yet we often take landscapes and streetscapes for granted and there is limited protection for special views or harmonious urban spaces. In the Trust's monthly series of illustrated public lectures in October 2019, landscape architects Tom Gribbin and Devin Segal and historian Don Chard presented a fascinating set of vignettes of iconic public parks in Nova Scotia: Victoria Park, Truro; Fort Needham and Point Pleasant, Halifax; and the Dartmouth Common. While these share many features, they were developed in distinctive ways for various reasons. Still serving a vital role providing public greenspace, they continue to evolve to meet the needs and new expectations of a growing population. This account is based on Tom Gribbin's introductory remarks, with a few highlights for each of the park examples presented that evening. The story of Victoria Park was covered in a 2015 issue of *The Griffin* by former HTNS President Joe Ballard<sup>1</sup>.

Canadian urban parks largely began their development in the late 19th century: the Victorian and Edwardian period. The glory years were from about the 1890s until the outbreak of war in 1914. In these early years, parks were the focal point for social and recreational activities, with pavilions or bandshells hosting concerts and dances, often the highlight of the social season. Circuses, politicians, dignitaries, and royalty all were frequent park visitors.

Later, and especially through the lean years of the Depression, many Canadian parks fell upon hard financial times. In the case of Halifax, the dearth of attention apparently saved our Victorian Public Gardens. In the mid-century, particularly around the Centennial year of 1967, there was a renewal of interest and investment in green space.



Joe Howe Falls and wooden walkway above, Victoria Park, Truro (courtesy of the authors)

The development of urban parks was part of a general worldwide trend, responding to industrialization and growth of the urban population. Formerly, most people had lived in rural surroundings, so the need for expansive greenspace in towns and cities had been less acute.

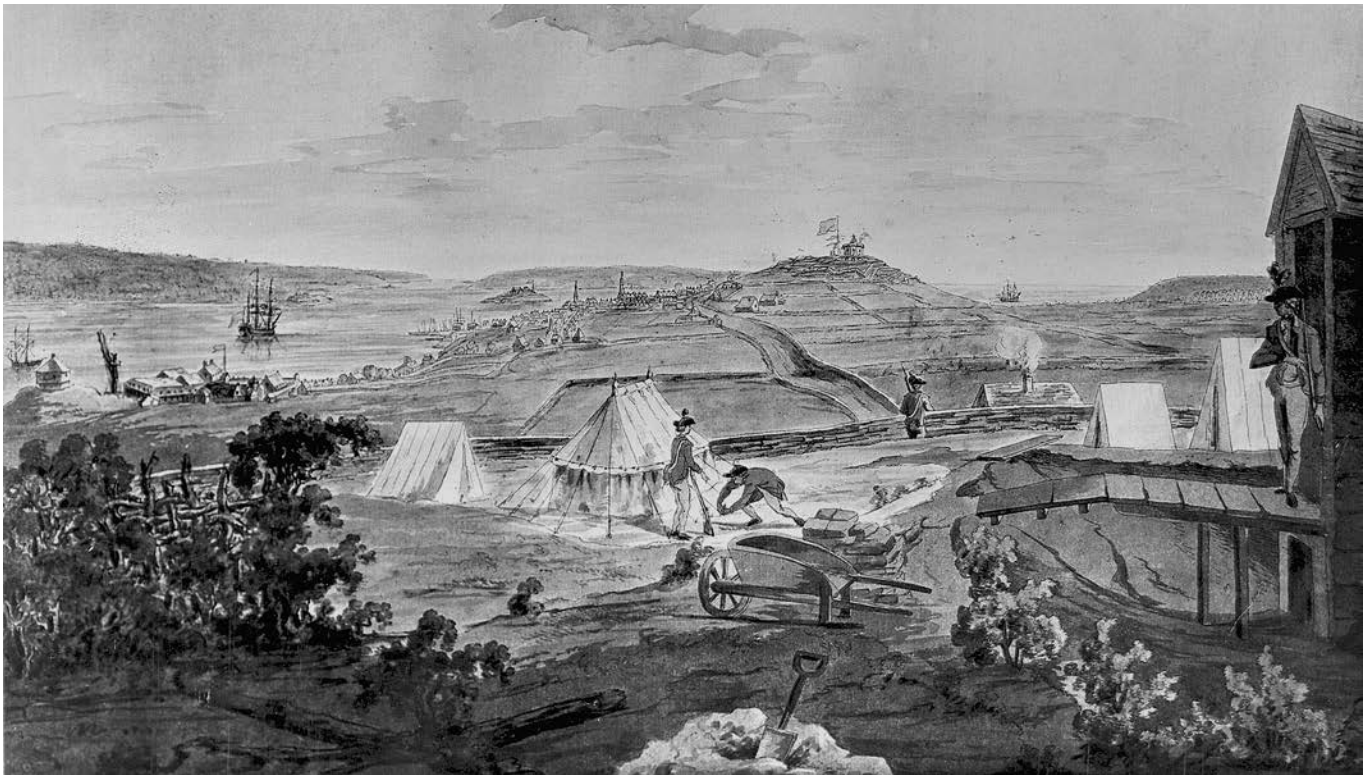
Park creation and development needed open land within the urban footprint. Depending upon the city and its wealth and resources, land could be purchased (expensive), gifted, or left over from development, or as we shall see, could be found in former military land holdings.

In Canada, English trends and design approaches were influential. J.C. Loudon, an early and great promoter of public parks for industrial towns in the UK, wrote prophetically in his *Encyclopedia of Landscape Gardening*<sup>2</sup> that it was relatively limited in the United States "where every man, however humble, has a house and garden." The only "splendid examples" in the USA and other countries in future "will be formed by towns and villages . . . for the joint use and enjoyment of all inhabitants."

One of the most influential land-

scape designers in North America was Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903), who was responsible for New York's Central Park and Montreal's Mount Royal. He was also instrumental in suggesting the preservation for public use of open lands around Niagara Falls – now an iconic Canadian park.

In addition to his built works, which enhanced public support for urban parks, Olmsted's writing and public speeches were perhaps the most politically significant. Utilizing medical metaphors as tools of persuasion, he was able to push his health agenda and generate support for a variety of landscape projects throughout his extensive career. One such example is Olmsted's 1870 address to the American Social Science Association at the Lowell Institute in Boston, where he read his paper, *Public Parks and the Enlargement of Towns*. Focusing mainly on the infrastructure and social challenges of large cities in the United States (such as overcrowding, pollution, and the degradation of mental health), Olmsted offered a variety of solutions which could easily be achieved through the establishment of urban parks.



Halifax Dockyard and Citadel from Fort Needham, circa 1780 (courtesy Nova Scotia Archives accession no. 1979-147 no. 614)

*Air is disinfected by sunlight and foliage. Foliage also acts mechanically to purify the air by screening it. Opportunity and inducement to escape at frequent intervals from the confined and vitiated air of the commercial quarter, and to supply the lungs screened and purified by trees, and recently acted upon by sunlight, together with the opportunity and inducement to escape from conditions requiring vigilance, wariness and activity toward other men – if these could be supplied economically, our problem would be solved.<sup>3</sup>*

### **Parks in Nova Scotia**

Here in our Province, we cannot boast an abundance of famous park and landscape designers, but some stand out. Irish landscape gardener Richard Power, who had spent two years as a foreman on Olmsted's Central Park project in New York, was Keeper of the Halifax Common and designer of the Public Gardens. Many, if not all, of our earlier public open places were strongly influenced by their topography and natural elements of ponds, streams, waterfalls, and vegeta-

tion cover, exploited through the natural ability of the resident military officers, Boards of Trustees, town worthies, interested citizens and, in latter years, town managers, technical staff, or engineers.

An interesting example is that of Sir Sandford Fleming, who arrived in Canada in 1845 as the Government Surveyor and Dominion Chief Engineer. It has been said that under every stone in the British Empire was a Scottish engineer! His estate, laid out to his specifications, was to become Fleming Park, one of the city's much-loved open spaces.

Unfortunately, beginning in around the 1930s, the passive recreational component of parks fell by the wayside, and active recreation came to be seen as the primary purpose of a city park. This perspective gained so much dominance that it had a lasting effect on the general perception of public parks. When parks are discussed, they are often considered to be nothing more than recreation facilities. This view gained traction because funding for parks has frequently been associated with the construction

of recreation facilities, such as playgrounds, ball fields, and tennis courts. Parks have become "loaded" with these uses, thus creating a whole generation of users who think of parks as primarily providing recreation

Today, it is safe to say that the direction in which North America and the developed world is heading in regard to city parks is not a great deal different from what was proposed and demonstrated by Olmsted over one hundred years ago. Landscape architects, although charged with a variety of complex responsibilities, are still in the business of making urban parks with appealing scenery, where natural systems are created or re-created, where people benefit both physically and mentally from being in contact with natural systems, and where they are afforded the opportunity to engage in a variety of recreational activities.

### **Victoria Park, Truro**

Truro is blessed with this magnificent town park of approximately 1000 acres,



*Gates to Point Pleasant Park, Halifax, from an old postcard (courtesy of the authors)*

created through the vision and land donations of several prominent citizens and opened on 5 July 1888, with accompaniment of the Truro Cornet Band, as part of the celebration of Queen Victoria's Jubilee. The park was envisioned as a magical place following the picturesque style of landscape design, strongly influenced by its dramatic topography, waterfalls, old-growth hemlock, and cultural features ranging from a heritage Holy Well to whimsical sites such as 'Jacob's Ladder', the 'Fairy Dell', 'Nymph's Grotto', and 'Rejuvenation Pew'. For an engaging read on the history of the park, see Joe Ballard's article in *The Griffin*<sup>1</sup> and his book, *Fairy Dells and Rustic Bowers: the Creation of Victoria Park* (2017).

### **Fort Needham and Point Pleasant Parks, Halifax**

These two large open areas in Halifax are examples of the conversion of military lands to park purposes. Fort Needham is located on the summit of a hill (one of numerous glacial drumlins surrounding Halifax Harbour) and was established to protect the Royal Navy's Halifax Dockyard from overland attack. Later, when the site was deemed to have no military importance, soldiers stationed

at Wellington Barracks used the land for polo games and training. Later, after establishment of the Civic Improvement League in 1907, architect Andrew Cobb was hired to produce illustrations to rally support for a comprehensive city plan, including a park to be established at Fort Needham. At the time of the Halifax Harbour Explosion, debris rained down on the park land, which was afterward used as a camp for residents made homeless by the blast. Subsequently it became the site of the memorial to the victims of the Explosion and has recently benefited from landscape improvements, part of a broader new overall plan.

Point Pleasant Park, at the southern tip of the Halifax Peninsula, was likewise occupied by the military and hosted part of the Halifax Defence Complex, including the Prince of Wales (Martello) Tower, constructed in 1796. Prior to European settlement, the park area was a sacred place for the people of Mi'kma'ki and hosted an annual spring festival. The present park was formally established in 1866, administered by a Board of Directors under the chairmanship of former premier and chief justice, William Young. The park has undergone a series of intentional and natural

changes to its landscape. It was affected by port expansion in 1915 and 1929, and lost land to the Halterm development in 1968. The destruction of much of the post-1866 forest in Hurricane Juan in 2003 crystallized the community's resolve to invest in a long-term plan to help preserve the park.

### **Dartmouth Commons**

The Commons in Dartmouth once comprised 150-200 acres extending along the harbour and inland north of the town, which was formally granted for community use. The park today covers less than 50 acres, as the majority of the commons land has been turned over to other uses, ranging from cemeteries, a mast yard, and other military facilities to schools, housing, commercial retail, hotel, and office development, and the MacDonald Bridge footprint, including the toll plaza. As time passes, it is important to reflect on the history and origins of the Commons and why these lands, now centrally located in the city with very fine views, should be respected and preserved. The Commons are also a major gateway to Dartmouth and could benefit from some thoughtful enhancements.

*Tom Gribbin is a retired landscape architect formerly with Parks Canada and Public Works Canada. Devin Segal is a senior landscape architect and Director of Landscape Architecture with Fathom Studio. He has been involved in design work for both Fort Needham and Point Pleasant parks. Don Chard is a retired historic site planner with Parks Canada, a former MLA, and a past member of the HTNS Board.*

<sup>1</sup>J. Ballard, A Victorian pleasure ground in Truro, *The Griffin*, 40 (4), 14-16 (December 2015), [http://www.htns.ca/pdf\\_Griffin/2015/GRIFFIN.dec.2015.COLOUR.pdf](http://www.htns.ca/pdf_Griffin/2015/GRIFFIN.dec.2015.COLOUR.pdf)

<sup>2</sup>J.C. Loudon, *Encyclopedia of Landscape Gardening* .... New Edition (London, Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green and Longman, 1835), Book I, Gardens in North America, p. 401

<sup>3</sup>C.E. Beveridge and C.F. Hoffman (editors). *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted: Supplementary Series, Volume 1: Writings on Public Parks, Parkways, and Park Systems* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 182-183.

## *Merigomish School Re-Purposed as Community Centre*



*Teacher Isah MacGlashen's mixed-grades class, Merigomish School, circa 1905 (courtesy of Don Robeson); note corner boards, wide trim, large 6-over-6 window and transom over door*

### *Michal Crowe*

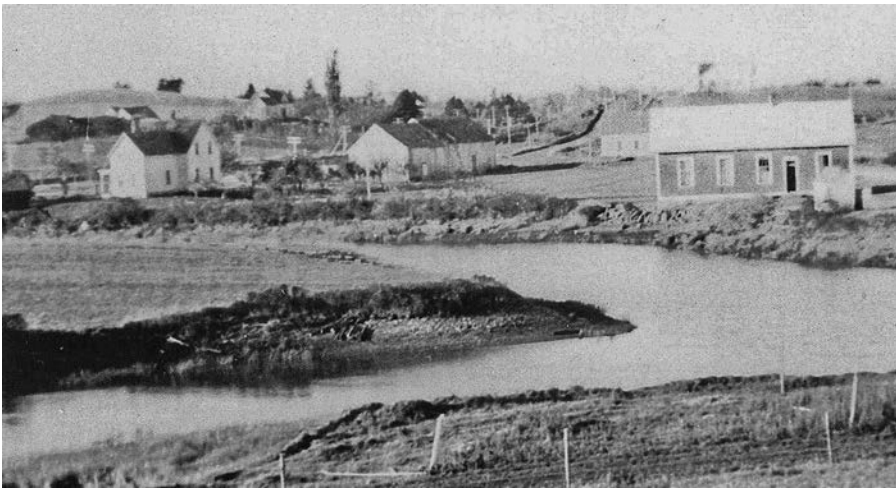
Merigomish village is a rural community established in the 1700s on traditional Mi'kmaq lands by successive waves of French and Scottish settlers, including disbanded soldiers from the Duke of Hamilton's Foot following the American revolutionary war. By the late 1800s, it had become a commercial hub on the northern shore of Pictou County, just west of the Antigonish County line. In the area were several churches, including St Paul's Presbyterian (Merigomish) and St Andrew's Roman Catholic (in Egerton), MacDonalds General Store, a Temperance Hall, several furniture factories (such as Cumming's in Piedmont and Dewar's in Barneys River), as

well as a thriving fishing and lumbering economy. The Halifax and Cape Breton Railway ran through the community, with sidings for loading manufactured products and lumber from the mills at Sutherlands River, Merigomish, and Barneys River. It is reported that so much lumber was harvested during that time that the hills around were denuded of trees.

The Merigomish School was a one-room schoolhouse originally built in 1875, about a foot off the ground on a stone foundation. The southeast corner was close to an eight foot bank along Finlayson Brook. The school had large, multi paned windows that let in lots of light. A short walk to the east, very close to the water, was the two-door

outhouse. Now and then the outhouse got a bath on Hallowe'en. Another room was added in 1885, resulting in a school building 54 feet (16.5 m) long and 28.5 feet (8.7 m) wide, with a ceiling height of 13 feet (4.0 m).

In 1939, the two-room school used the larger room for Grades Primary to 10. The smaller room had been a classroom, but was now used for storage and as a dressing room for Christmas concerts. In the classroom, the teacher's desk was at the front on an eight inch high stage. The stage was used for performances; movie screens and the blackboards were on the wall behind the teacher's desk. Seats for the students were mostly double, with younger kids put beside older students, for very good



*View from Finlayson's Hill in 1935, showing two arms of the harbour at the mouth of Finlayson Brook and the school before it was moved, Merigomish Hall behind school, Merigomish United Church on the hill beyond (courtesy of Don Robeson)*

reason. There were two entrances, one on the west for girls and the other on the east for the boys and adults. Both opened into the larger room.

In 1945, the school was moved back from the water, 40-50 feet (12-15 m) to the west. This was done with wooden rails and wooden rollers, and pulled by a 1941 Chev car. Frederick Fulton moved the building with the help of his sons (Russell, Lawrence, and Albert) and others in the community.

The school was placed on a full-sized concrete basement foundation with two washrooms, basement windows, a hot air coal furnace, coal bin and lots of space to play on rainy days. The new and only entrance was now on the east side with a porch and stairs going to each room and the basement, as it is at present. A \$3000 loan was arranged to cover the expenses of the renovation and this was paid off in 1954. In 1960, a small west-side entrance was added, and then in 1961 a third room.

Before the move, water had to be carried by bucket from a spring near the neighbouring Dunn home. After the move, a well was drilled and, although the water tasted a bit salty, which was not unusual for the area, it was still used. The janitor's role was to keep the place warm by tending the stove all day and later the furnace, as well as to sweep and clean the rooms each day after



*Merigomish School class, circa 1945, including Grades 7 and 8 (courtesy of Don Robeson)*

school. This duty was contracted out to an older student each year. In 1950, the student was paid \$100 for the year and that student was Albert Fulton.

In 1976 the school was declared obsolete and the students from Merigomish, Sutherlands River, Egerton, Big Island, and Lower Barneys River were bussed to Frank H. MacDonald Elementary School or East Pictou Middle School in Sutherlands River.

Don Robeson attended the Merigomish School from Grade Pri-

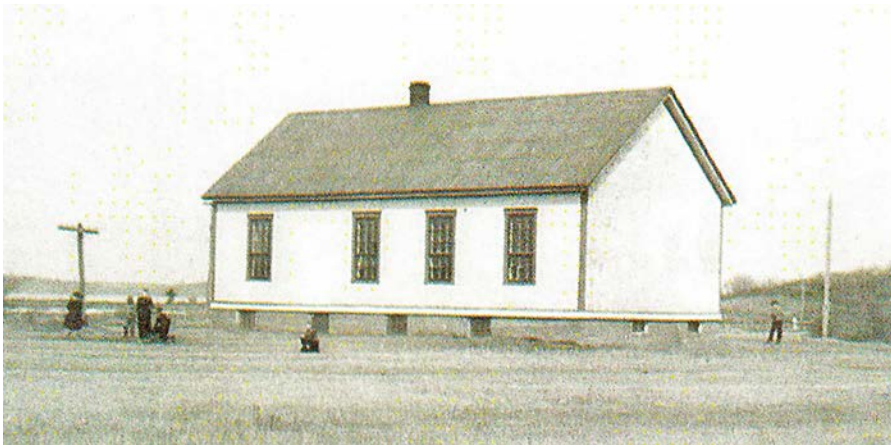
mary to Seven and was one of the last students to graduate from the school. At that time, there were three classrooms and three teachers, one of whom was also the Principal. Some of the teachers who taught at the school from the late 1950s to its last years were Christine Olding, Katherine Murdock, Elizabeth Fraser, Margaret Bannerman, Margaret Germaine, Agnes Johnston, Daniel McCormack, Catherine Anderson, Kay Murdock, and Patricia Mason.

Recently, Don Robeson and his brother David built a replica of the old Railway Station and the main floor has become a local museum. Within the collection are photos of the students from the school, an old student register,

a student desk, and the principal's desk.

When the school closed it was used casually as a centre for community meetings and for seniors' gatherings. But without dedicated attention and no formal business plan, the bills were not paid and the electricity was cut off, causing the pipes to freeze and water damage.

In 2007 a committee was formed to refurbish the building and make it into a community centre. Every way conceivable to raise funds was imple-



*Merigomish School circa 1950, on new foundation after it was moved (courtesy of Don Robeson)*

mented, including Sunday flea markets, bingos, raffles, 50/50 draws. The annual Merigomish Family Fun Fest was recreated, featuring the Cardboard and Duct Tape Boat Race, as well as local musicians and a BBQ. Raising funds in a small community is very difficult. Eventually the committee was in a position to look for outside funding. Financial support was obtained from the province, the municipality and ACOA to bring the building up to code for electrical and plumbing; repair the water damage, and make it wheelchair-accessible.

Due to neglect, the interior walls had to be taken back to the studs, but the ceiling is original, although now covered with gyproc. The exterior is original clapboard and the floors are original maple. The original wood shingle roof remains but is covered with a metal roof now. At one point there had been another metal roof over the shingles but it had rusted and was removed during the renovations. Spray foam has been added for insulation. The old washrooms were removed and old windows, which were inoperable and on the wrong side, were moved to the sunny side and more windows were installed for additional light. Solar panels were donated. Materials for the renovations were donated or purchased at a discounted price to help the team effort. In addition, a kitchen was added and space for the bar.

After 11 years of dedicated hard work comprising more than 2000

volunteer hours, the official opening was on 22 August 2015. The Merigomish Area Recreation and Social Association has a very dedicated group of volunteers who keep the building safe and sound and arrange for activities to suit all interests and ages in the community. There are regular music concerts featuring well known artists such as Valdy, Doris Mason, and John Gracie, as well as emerging artists. Physical fitness classes and political rallies provide a gathering point for varied interest groups. In 2014, the Association partnered with the Nova Scotia Farmers Market and now there is a farmers' market held in the School on Sundays in the summer. There is a very

tasty Sunday Brunch as well, cooked and served by volunteers

*Merigomish Area Recreation and Social Association (MARS): An ongoing, non-profit, community project run by volunteers, dedicated to raise the spirit of a rural community in need of a structure to house social, physical and entertainment events in the community. 1682 Merigomish Shore Road, Highway 245, Pictou County. Contact - 902.926.2116 David Hillier.*

*Thanks are extended to David Hillier and Debby Ratcliffe of the Merigomish Community Centre for their stories and photos. Vickie MacDonald, Albert Fulton and Don Robeson, all former students of the school, were invaluable for their input of stories, photos, and recollections of the school both past and present.*

*Michal Crowe is an active member of the Trust and spearheaded the Canada 150 travelling exhibit and follow-up HTNS publication, Witnesses to a New Nation: 150 Nova Scotia Buildings that Saw Canada's Confederation of 1867.*



*The school building today, as the Merigomish Schoolhouse Café (courtesy of Glenn MacCara)*

## Doors Open for Churches 2019

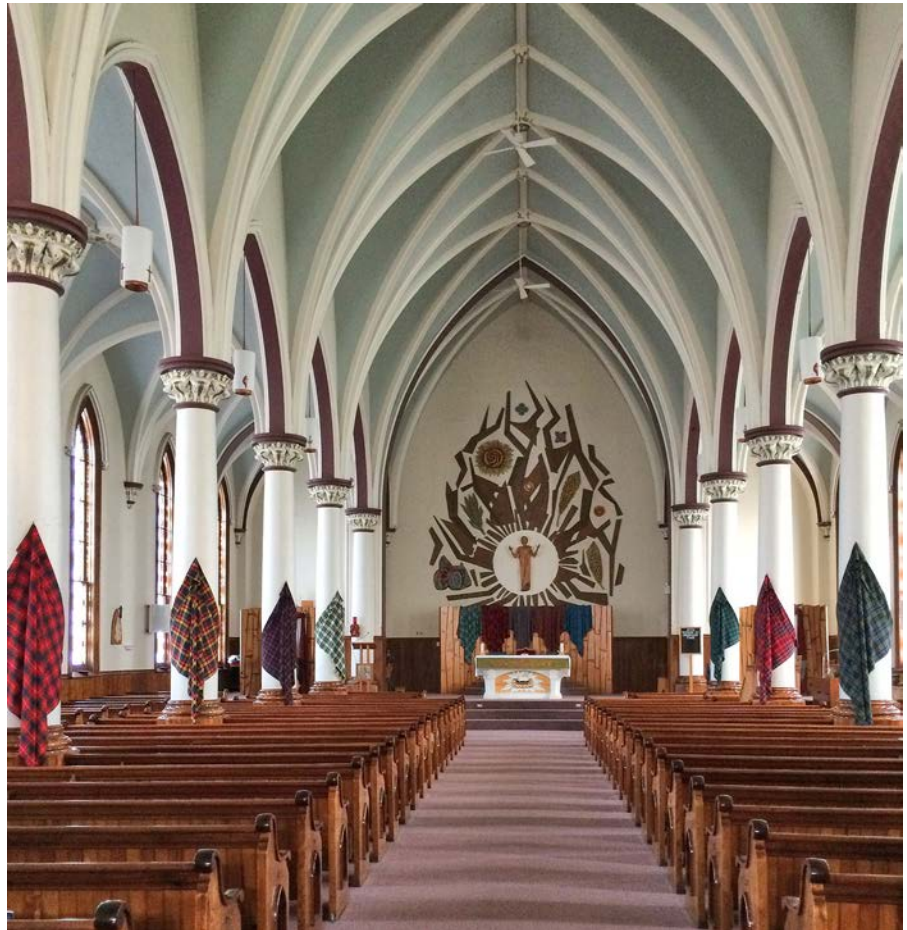
*Marg Herdman*

The Doors Open for Churches event has expanded from six participating counties in 2018 to eleven in 2019. There were no events in Annapolis, Antigonish, Colchester, Cumberland, Digby, Kings and Queens; it is hoped that all counties in the province will participate in 2020.

Events were successful in all areas. Shelburne County (Barrington and Clark's Harbour) received over 100 visitors. Lunenburg County had most visitors in some churches that had buses stop to visit. East Hants, which was originally scheduled for the weekend of Dorian and had to be rescheduled to the following weekend (coinciding with the Hants County Exhibition in Windsor) had 80. The Cape Breton churches were open on designated days during Celtic Colours in October; many were able to share their buildings with folks from around the world.

On the whole, churches that were open in rural areas had the greatest number of visitors. Churches, as places of worship, are gradually disappearing from our rural communities. Congregation members are expected to travel, often long distances. Churches are going the way of the railway stations, the schools, the post offices, and the list could go on. Rural communities are being especially hard hit as their populations decrease. Most in these locales do not realize that they are trying to save built heritage; they see these buildings simply as a part of their lives and their histories. In a number of these churches, the volunteers were able to tell the visitors whose ancestors had worked on the church and in what capacity. These buildings are like home to them. Their courage, dedication, and persistence are what are keeping these buildings alive.

Some of the buildings that were included in this event have been repurposed. Church properties are unique; they were specially built for



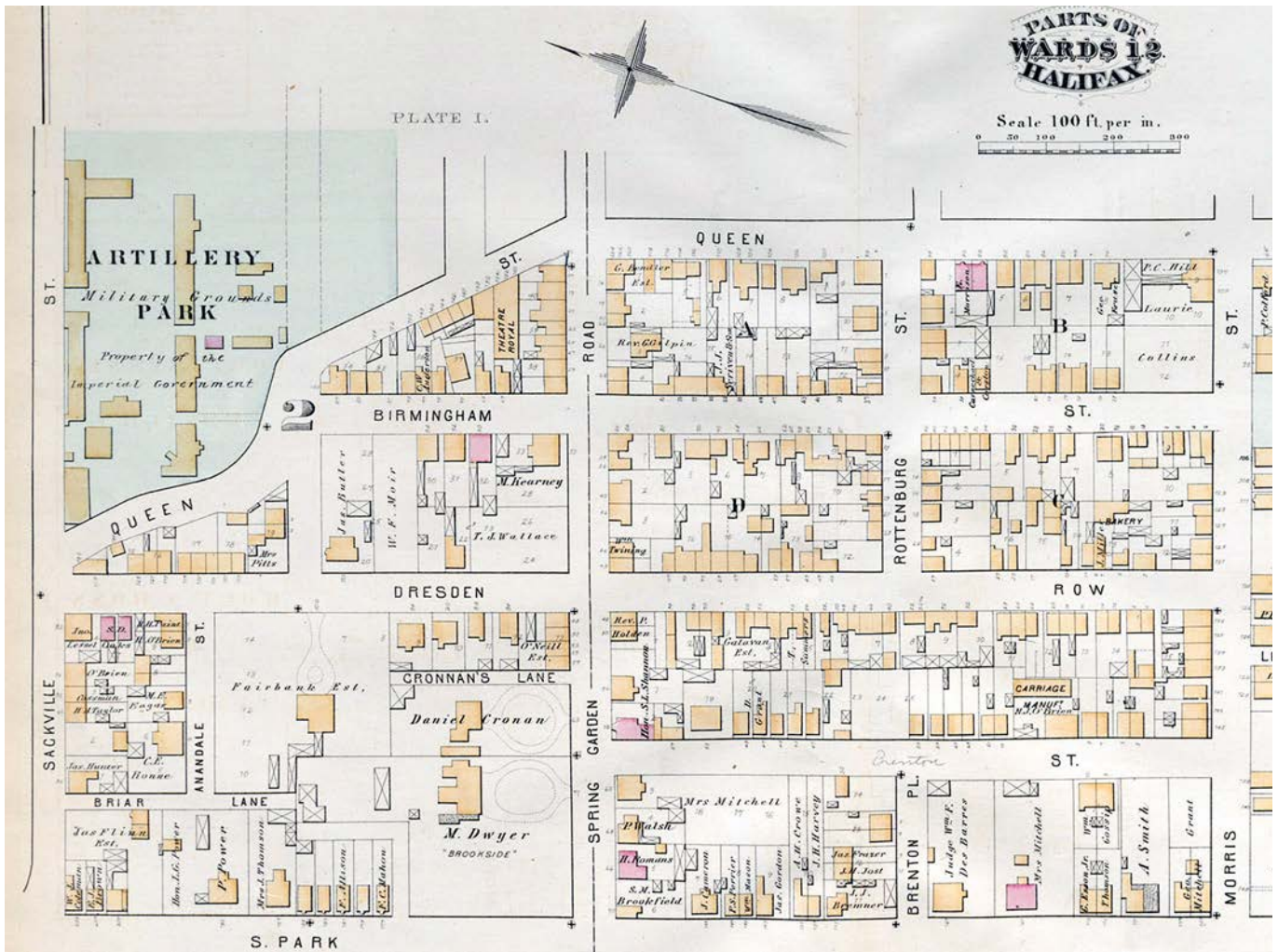
*St Mary's Roman Catholic Church, Mabou (courtesy of the author)*

and by the people to meet a community's religious needs. If circumstances change, and they are no longer needed for their original purpose, their open interior spaces present an opportunity for adaptive re-use. They can still play an important and vital role in the community. A few examples of these are St James United Church Heritage Site (Spry Bay), the Old Meeting House Museum (Barrington), Chapel Hill Museum (Shag Harbour), Lower Selma Museum (Lower Selma), High Tides Arts and Community Centre (former St David's United Church, Maitland), St Peter and St John Anglican Church (Baddeck) and St John's Centre for the Arts (Arichat).

Some of these churches had well-

known architects or builders (Gibbons and Harris); most had local craftsmen (in some cases shipwrights) as builders. Some have beautiful windows with wonderful stories (the Jewish windows in St Matthew's United Church in Inverness, the Robert Harris windows in Trinity Anglican Church in Sydney Mines). All have their very own unique stories. Thanks to the many volunteers who opened their doors and shared with visitors the stories of their churches. As well, a thank you to the co-ordinators in each of the counties for all their efforts that have made this event a success.

# Briar Cottage, 106 Dresden Row, Halifax



Detail of Hopkins' City Atlas of Halifax, 1878, Plate H (courtesy of Nova Scotia Archives, <https://novascotia.ca/archives/maps/plate.asp?ID=10>); note "Fairbanks Est." in lower left

Garry D. Shutlak

Looking through a recent number of *The Griffin*, I was struck by the photograph of Briar Cottage from the Humphrey Collection at Nova Scotia Archives<sup>1</sup>. It is interesting to look back and see what we have lost and to realize that the razing of history is an ongoing affair in the urban development of Halifax.

The house was built on property originally owned by John George Pyke (1743-1828). The Honourable Joseph Allison (1785-1839), merchant and banker, had the house built. He sold the property for £1500 to Lewis Johnston, M.D.

(1785-1867), who named it *Briar Cottage*. When later put up for sale in April of 1839, the property measured 188 feet by 208 feet with an extension in the rear 55 by 40 feet "with a barn, stables and a well of good water. It has a variety of fruit trees and a well cultivated garden on the premises. The dwelling House has accommodation for a large family. The house is 52 feet by 34 feet with a frost proof cellar under the whole in which are two kitchens, vegetable, coal and store rooms and a pump of the best water."<sup>2</sup> A more detailed description was not provided, as the plans of the house could be seen at the offices of William

M. Allan or Henry Pryor Esqs.

The property was purchased by Edward Allison (1803-1876), son of Jonathan C. Allison, for £1400 May 1839 and he resold in July 1839 for the same price to William Blagden Fairbanks (1796-1873). Mr Fairbanks was the senior partner in Fairbanks and Allison (with Jonathan C. and David Allison). He was married to Letitia Collins, half sister of the Honourable Enos Collins. Of their ten children, only Jessie Louisa and Frederick Prescott were born in the house. Their grandson, William L. Kohl, died there 14 April 1871. After a highly successful business career in international ship-





*Briar Cottage frontage on Dresden Row, date uncertain (courtesy of Nova Scotia Archives, Humphrey Collection #2, acc. 1988-153, loc. 37-2-6); note hydrant marked '+' on Hopkins' map*

ping, William B. Fairbanks retired "at a comparatively early age ... He entertained liberally, and his hospitality was noted in military, naval, and civic social circles."<sup>3</sup> William B. died in Briar Cottage on 03 May 1873<sup>4</sup> and his wife Letitia on 21 May 1884.

Following her death, the house was purchased by Daniel Cronan (1808-1892) from the heirs of Letitia Fairbanks in 1885 for \$9000. The following year, Mr Cronan rented the property to John Murphy and his family. Daniel Cronan lived at the adjoining property at 63 Spring Garden Road, called *Rose Cottage*, purchased from John Spry Morris in 1852. Upon his death, he left "both *Rose* and *Briar Cottages*" to his sister Ellen Cronan (1818-1893). On her death, the property went to his sister Mary Skerry (1819-1896). Mr John Murphy was the founder of J. & M. Murphy (John & Michael Murphy), wholesale dry goods, gents' furnishings, small wares, etc., 17-19 Granville Street. Mr Murphy

married Mary Cronan, daughter of John & Ann (Matthew) Cronan and a niece of Daniel Cronan. John and Mary [great-grandparents of HTNS President Andrew Murphy] acquired the property from the Skerry family.

Sometime between 1889 and 1895, the house was renovated and modernized, with full mansard roof, two storey bay window on the south front of the building, and a new, three-storey entrance. The porch was retained on the facade north of the new entrance. Of their eleven children only Clara and Monica were born in this house. At least three family members died in the house: John Murphy in 1903, Mrs Mary Murphy in 1932, and Miss Mary Agnes Murphy in 1939.

The trustees of Mrs Mary Murphy sold the property to Arthur W. Smith, agent for Nova Scotia Coach Line, later known as Acadian Lines, a division of United Service Corporation (Fred. C. Manning). In 1942, the bus line built a

station at 102 Dresden Row and rented the house to the Norwegian Seamen's Mission, who had a chapel on the ground floor and accommodation for seamen on the upper floor.

The accompanying photograph shows the street frontage on Dresden Row at an uncertain date (after the installation of hydrants and prior to the renovation mentioned above); the front walk has the configuration shown on the 1875 Hopkins map. A photo taken on the same occasion showing the house façade, with some of the same people (most obviously the gardener) was published with the account of Kelly Nelson's lecture on Schmidville in the June 2019 issue of *The Griffin*<sup>1</sup>. The house was razed in November 1951. Bert Wetmore took photographs at the time and wrote an article that appeared in 8 December 1951 issue of the newspaper. At that time, the house was one hundred and twenty years old. The *continued on page 23*

## Dawson House, 10327 Peggy's Cove Road, Glen Margaret

*Janet Morris and Elizabeth Burke*

The low November light revealed some very pleasant surprises to two Heritage Trust house enthusiasts viewing 10327 Peggy's Cove Road. The listing agent, Tim Hoare, of Tradewinds Realty, arranged the viewing but the owner who opened the door to us with enthusiasm was a familiar face – Jo Beale, well known Nova Scotia artist and gallery owner.

This two-and-a-half storey storybook house sits perpendicular to the main road, half turned away from view, and is graced with a balanced front façade featuring a solid six-panel door with transom and sidelights, flanked by pairs of 6-over-6 sash windows, matched at the upper level, and with a centre window above the entry door flanked with sidelights. These are all familiar features of a classic Georgian house of 1830s vintage. This house was built by John D. Lambert (c.1800 -c.1860), a master builder and joiner from Glen Margaret, who merits a place in Maud Rosinski's *Architects of Nova Scotia* and is there described as an "exceptionally skilled carpenter". Though (mysteriously) named the Dawson House, it was built for the Isnor/Isner family. Although the pair of five-sided dormers look original to the house, we learned that they were added in this century by owner/architect, Doug Miller. A narrow front porch was removed, revealing the classical lines of the house. The house is surrounded by a white picket fence, opening to the flagstone walkway. The approach is further balanced by matching benches on either side of the walkway, and some large evergreen trees and bushes on the left, with a large deciduous tree on the right, all of which frame the house beautifully.

The mysteries of the house continue as one travels around to the opposite façade, where, due to the rise in the land, a perfectly balanced one-and-a-half



storey home presents the original front door with transom, flanked by 6-over-6 sash windows on either side. A centre dormer has been added on this façade, again appearing as an original feature. Two offset chimneys protrude out of the steeply pitched gable roof; the home has two operating fireplaces, and two fireplaces that have been closed off, but could potentially be restored.

Entering through the 'old' front

entry, one can't miss the large lock box and giant operating key. Original hinges, door knobs, and door hardware are intact throughout this enchanting home. Quite a narrow entry hall is further narrowed by the stairway leading down to the former kitchen level, and, at the opposite end, a stairway leading up to the bedroom level. Again, the handrail, banisters, stair treads, all appear original to the home.



The living room, to the left of the old front entry, is a very cozy long, narrow room with central operating fireplace. The sole departure from the balanced, classical design throughout the house is the addition of a wall a few inches inside the entry, added in the 1970s by restoration architect, John Stevens. The new wall enabled his incorporation of some architectural features salvaged from a house once belonging to Judge Sampson Salter Blowers, well known for curtailing slavery in the province (It is unfortunate that Blowers' home wasn't celebrated in situ at its Barrington and Blowers Street, Halifax, location).

The opposite side of the centre-hall plan accommodates a dining room, galley-like kitchen, and eating area, small in scale but charming and comfortable.

At the top of the narrow stairway is a small bathroom with claw-foot tub, a bedroom, and a second bedroom with an en-suite bath. Both bedrooms have sloping walls and interesting nooks and crannies. The attic is accessible via a narrow steep stairway. There, one can examine the initials "AH" carved in the beams (another mystery) and pegged roof trusses.

The lower level of the home once

housed the kitchen; wood panels insulate a large open fireplace with iron swing-arm and a bread oven. Behind the fireplace wall is a furnace and utility room. There is a large partly finished space opposite the kitchen that serves as a work area or whatever use a new owner may imagine. A bathroom once serviced this level but was removed.

The home's decor is simple and lovely. Heavy linen curtains on pine rods grace the windows, and are included in the sale price. The walls are painted an off-white which simulates the appearance of plaster. Trim and floors are painted a slightly darker tone giving an understated elegance.

Water views of Long Cove are visible from many windows and the property includes deeded ocean access across the road. The property is serviced by a dug well and septic. There is ample parking and the zoning permits commercial uses. The house has served as a Bed and Breakfast, a décor shop and an art gallery. The property is serviced by Bay Rides, a partially volunteer transit system; regular transit once serviced the area, but has been discontinued. The property is neither provincially nor municipally designated as a heritage property, though few buildings in the

province can be more deserving of such a designation.

We are grateful to the current and past owners for enhancing the property and for their loving care of this special place.

Listing:  
Tim Hoare, 902-222-1508  
Tradewinds Realty Inc.  
MLS No. 201925784  
\$279,900

*All photos by Jarrell Whisken, Elemental Photography, courtesy of Tim Hoare, Tradewinds Realty inc.*

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## ***Architecture and Additions: Applying Standard 11 in the Rehabilitation of Historic Places***

*continued from page 8*

the language of heritage conservation as a tool to make retroactive justifications for design decisions is readily apparent in a plethora of current development proposals in Halifax. It is concerning to see such principles being adopted as simply another tool in the marketing playbook of developers. By providing an adaptable and effective framework for critically assessing interventions in historic places, the *Standards and Guidelines* have the potential to elevate heritage through promoting sensitive design interventions. As heritage advocates, we must seek to employ these standards as publicly, widely, and rigorously as possible, lest their noble intention continue to be hijacked to justify projects that degrade and diminish rather than enrich and celebrate heritage value in our historic places.

*Luke Stock is a Master of Architecture student at Dalhousie University and a student intern with the Heritage Trust.*

## Saving Canada's Oldest Methodist Church

Judy Kennedy

According to the *Canadian Register of Historic Places*<sup>1</sup>, the former Centenary United Church, Upper Granville, is valued for the exceptional quality of its Gothic Revival architecture, including both interior and exterior details. It features "a tall roof with a steeply pitched gable, two entrance porches, and a large rose window centred on its front façade." It is believed to be the oldest Methodist Church still standing in Canada. The church was built in 1792 "on a back road in Beaconsfield." Seven years later it was moved by ox teams to its present location in Upper Granville, where it became the central charge for the Annapolis Valley Circuit.

Having completed the rehabilitation of their church in Granville Ferry<sup>2</sup>, Anne and Syd Read noticed that another church was on the market in nearby Upper Granville. This one had already been partially rehabilitated, but still needed a lot of attention to both structural issues and historical details. Anne, the driver of this project, was ready. Once title was acquired in 2019, she lined up the contractor who had rebuilt the Granville Ferry church in part, Darrell Hudson, for the summer. Work started in May, with many challenges, seen and unseen.

It began with the removal of the doors, door frames, and baseboards deemed inappropriate for a 1792 Gothic Revival church. Spray foam insulation of the ceiling wings followed, the ceiling arch and walls having recently been done, allegedly. Interior walls were repaired and recovered with a thin parging to allow the re-etching of faux stone blocks, a Gothic Revival feature.

The challenges mounted as the exterior work began. The whole frame of the central Rose window had to be rebuilt in situ – outside and in! Many of the Gothic windows on all four sides had to be repaired with old glass (sourced locally) and lead. Several frames needed work too, inside and out, showing the



Dual entry doors and rose window, former Centenary United Church, Upper Granville (photo courtesy of Darrell Hudson)



Roof structure and ceiling (photo courtesy of Darrell Hudson)

signs of up to 200 years of water damage and extending to the structures below them.

Finally the interior was ready for the installation of the finished ceiling boards covering the newly-insulated

sections between the arches. Cleaning, sometimes repairing, and retouching the arches followed. Only then, with the scaffolding removed, could work begin on the living spaces below:

*continued on page 23*

## Scott Robson: Visit Nova Scotia in 1819 with Artist J.E Woolford and Lord Dalhousie

*Donald Forbes*

At the inaugural fall lecture of the Heritage Trust's 2019-2020 season, on September 19, Scott Robson, retired Curator of the History Collection at the Nova Scotia Museum, took us back 200 years for glimpses of the province through the eyes of two astute observers of that time.

George Ramsay, 9th Earl of Dalhousie, was appointed Lieutenant Governor in 1816 and left a journal record of his four years in Nova Scotia, during which he visited most parts of the province<sup>1,2</sup>. John Elliott Woolford (1778-1866), eight years younger than Lord Dalhousie (1770-1838), was a military landscape artist (or topographical draughtsman) skilled in the art of recording the world around him. He had come to the attention of Dalhousie and joined his military staff when both were serving in Egypt during the Napoleonic Wars. Dalhousie acted as a patron and promoter of Woolford's artistic works, and brought him to Nova Scotia as "landscape and portrait painter and Draughtsman to His Excellency"<sup>3</sup>. They travelled extensively throughout the province and Woolford left us a remarkable visual record to accompany the written impressions in Dalhousie's journals.

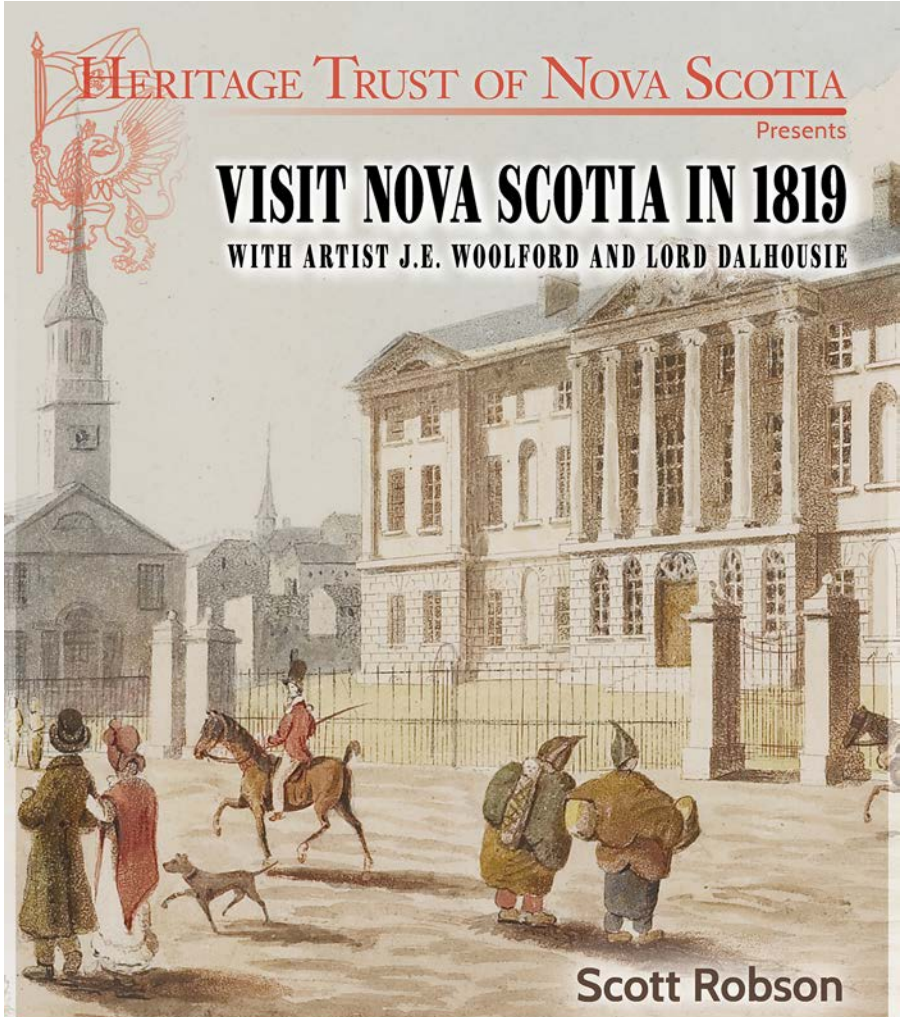
Scott Robson said that he first 'met' Dalhousie and Woolford a few summers after he started at the Nova Scotia Museum. Since then he has encountered and travelled the roads with them many times. As many of the roads have not changed much<sup>4</sup>, he says it is fun and instructive to compare Woolford's watercolours with Google Earth views from the same angle today.

As Mr Robson pointed out, the year 1819 (200 years ago) was remarkable in many ways. Within the decade, Beethoven was to compose the *Missa Solemnis* and his 9th Symphony. Napo-

leon, defeated at Waterloo in June 1815, was four years into his exile on St Helena. It was the year of Queen Victoria's birth, three and a half months after Lord Dalhousie opened the newly completed Nova Scotia Legislature on 11 February.

The wonderful immediacy of Woolford's work is evident in the lovely aquatint used in the lecture poster,


showing Haligonians going about their business in front of the new Legislature on a spring morning in 1819. This image was reproduced in its entirety in our March 2019 issue, accompanying the account of Garry Shutlak's lecture on the anniversary of Province House, the oldest legislature building in Canada<sup>5</sup>. In other works, Woolford depicted the

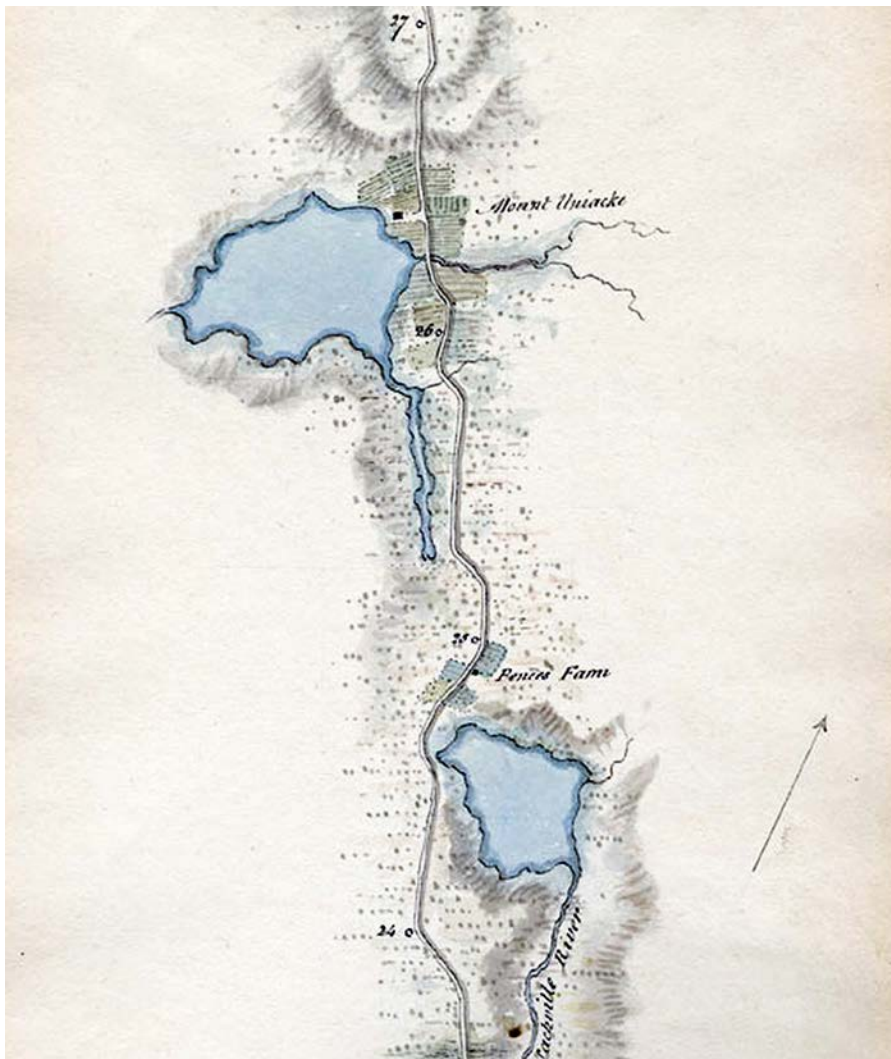


HERITAGE TRUST OF NOVA SCOTIA  
Presents  
**VISIT NOVA SCOTIA IN 1819**  
WITH ARTIST J.E. WOOLFORD AND LORD DALHOUSIE

Scott Robson

Thur 19<sup>th</sup> Sept 7:30pm | Museum of Natural History | 1747 Summer St

www.htns.ca     HeritageTrustNovaScotia    902 423 4807



Portion of strip map for the Windsor road in the vicinity of Mount Uniacke (miles 24-27) (courtesy of Nova Scotia Archives, virtual gallery: <https://novascotia.ca/archives/woolford/>)

panoramic view from Halifax Citadel<sup>6</sup>, the situation of King's College on a hill above Windsor, early bridges across the Gays River and the West River of Pictou, and a view of Mahone Bay with Zwicker's Inn, to name but a few.

On his travels with Dalhousie, Woolford produced a wealth of landscape depictions (primarily in line and sepia wash), many of which are in the collections of the Nova Scotia Archives, Nova Scotia Museum, and Dalhousie University (Killam Memorial Library, Special Collections).

In addition to the landscape views, Woolford mapped the major roads from Halifax to Windsor and Truro (later

Nova Scotia Trunk Highways 1 and 2) in a series of strip maps capturing the detailed topographic features including rivers and lakes, as well as inns, houses, farms and other properties, the names of property owners or occupants, and the mileage from Halifax. These were assembled into an album (as Joan Dawson has stated, "in the period style of English road books"<sup>4</sup>) and entitled *Surveys of the Roads from Halifax to Windsor and from Halifax to Truro*. It was Mr Robson who identified these maps in the Archives as Woolford's work<sup>4</sup>.

The Windsor and Truro roads followed the same route around Bedford Basin to the Sackville River, but divided

at Fultz's Inn (Twelve Mile House), a popular destination for breakfast after an early start from Halifax. Travellers then bore left to Windsor along what is now the Old Sackville Road, or turned right to Truro on the Cobequid Road. The Windsor Road passed the Uniacke Estate at Miles 26-27 (the latter milestone can still be seen) and reached the small but important port town of Windsor beside Fort Edward on the Avon River a little past Mile 44. The road to Truro was longer, reaching that destination on the Salmon River at the head of Cobequid Bay at Mile 63. Woolford's map of Truro shows the bridge over the river to what is now Bible Hill, the S-bend, and the junction with the Pictou Road that still exist in the street pattern today.

Lord Dalhousie's first view of Attorney General Richard John Uniacke's estate was in February 1817, travelling by sleigh to Windsor. He recorded his initial impressions of the recently completed country house and barn: "Mount Uniacke is the only Gentleman's seat on the road, finished last year, has a very comfortable neat appearance but tho' called is not a Mount, but situated in a bottom between two very pretty and extensive lakes"<sup>1,4</sup> This trip was undertaken "for no purpose but to see the Country just now in its complete winter, and to try the travelling in sleighs."<sup>1,3</sup> The following summer he traversed the road in a gig and did not suffer the inconvenience of roads clogged with snow that complicated his return journey in February.

All the while, throughout these travels and many more, Woolford was sketching and mapping, recording the topography, roads and developing cultural landscapes of Nova Scotia 200 years ago. Scott Robson brought these times alive through the eyes, words, and drawings of Lord Dalhousie and his accomplished artist protégé.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Marjory Whitelaw (ed.), *The Dalhousie Journals* (Oberon, 1981), 3 vols. Volume 1, first published in 1978, covers the years in Nova Scotia.

<sup>2</sup>René Villeneuve, *Lord Dalhousie: Patron and Collector* (ABC Art Books, 2008), exhibition by the National Gallery of Canada, curated by René Villeneuve.



Title page of Woolford's 'Road Book' containing maps for the entire length of the roads from Halifax to Windsor and to Truro (courtesy of Nova Scotia Archives, virtual gallery: <https://novascotia.ca/archives/woolford/>); note inscription dated 1855 from Lt Gen. [Sir Charles Stephen] Gore to his friend, Mr Wallace

<sup>3</sup>We are indebted for some details to notes on Woolford's career in the on-line gallery of the Nova Scotia Archives, *Woolford's Surveys: The Roads from Halifax to Windsor and Truro, 1817-18* (<https://novascotia.ca/archives/woolford/background.asp>).

<sup>4</sup>Joan Dawson, *Nova Scotia's Lost Highways: the Early Roads that Shaped the Province* (Nimbus, 2009).

<sup>5</sup>*The Griffin*, 44 (1), p. 9 (March 2019) – [https://www.htns.ca/pdf\\_Griffin/2019/Griffin-Vol44.1-Mar2019.pdf](https://www.htns.ca/pdf_Griffin/2019/Griffin-Vol44.1-Mar2019.pdf)

<sup>6</sup>*The Griffin*, 38 (4), 10-11 (December 2013) – [http://www.htns.ca/pdf\\_Griffin/2013/GRIFFIN.dec.2013.C3.pdf](http://www.htns.ca/pdf_Griffin/2013/GRIFFIN.dec.2013.C3.pdf)

<sup>7</sup>Thanks to Scott Robson for comments on an earlier draft of this report.

## Briar Cottage, 106 Dresden Row, Halifax

*continued from page 17*

photographs have not survived at the Chronicle newspaper or the Nova Scotia Museum. Today, the property is the site of the Martello Apartments, 1550 Dresden Row.

*Garry Shutlak is Senior Research Archivist at the Nova Scotia Archives, a long-time contributor to The Griffin, and an Honorary Life Member of HTNS.*

<sup>1</sup>*The Griffin*, 44 (2), p. 5 (June 2019), <http://www.htns.ca/quarterly.html>

<sup>2</sup>Advertisement for sale of the house in the *Novascotian* (Halifax: 18 April 1839), p. 129, col. 4 (Nova Scotia Archives, reel 8073). Spelling then was 'Brier Cottage' but thereafter always 'Briar', as in the street name Briar Lane.

<sup>3</sup>Lorenzo Sayles Fairbanks, *Genealogy of the Fairbanks Family in America, 1633-1897* (Boston, privately published, 1897) – e-book: <https://books.google.ca/books/>

<sup>4</sup>Date of death from death notices and obituaries; the *Acadian Recorder*, *Presbyterian Witness*, Nova Scotia Historical Vital Statistics, and reference 3 give different dates.

## Saving Canada's Oldest Methodist Church

*continued from page 20*

upgrading the kitchen area, bedroom, and two bathrooms and creating another sleeping area in the loft. This last required an additional section of railing for safety, designed with the decorative motif found on the three tie rods above the open area below.

As ever, the goal was to respect the style and the period of this building. Its most distinctive feature is certainly the rose window with its circles-within-circles pattern. The design of the major side windows, with pointed arches and heavy mouldings (architraves), is repeated in the windows of the five-sided chancel behind the sanctuary and in the window below the rose. The arched

beam supports with carved details are further supported by wooden corbels, Gothic Revival style.

Another striking feature of this project is the landscaping, all done by Syd Read, known to be a rock hound. He cleared the upward sloping back yard, building a rock-walled garden and a stone tile patio above. A lawn followed below and, for good measure, a fire pit. Then he built a low rock wall in front of the entrances facing the highway, with plants above, complementing this newly restored-and repainted-heritage treasure.

Anne's thoughts on the project? "It's fascinating, watching the building come alive again, both inside and out, these

past months. It's now ready for the next 100 years". Starting next summer her plan is to offer it as a unique place for visitors to stay, enhancing their visit to this historic area.

*Judy Kennedy is a long-standing member of HTNS residing in Granville Ferry.*

<sup>1</sup>Canadian Register, *Canada's Historic Places*, Centenary United Church, Upper Granville, NS. <https://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=6288&pid=0>

<sup>2</sup>Judy Kennedy, Repurposing Granville Ferry's Holy Trinity Church. *The Griffin*, 39(4), 8-9 (December 2014). [http://www.htns.ca/pdf\\_Griffin/2014/GRIFFIN.dec.2014.COLOUR.pdf](http://www.htns.ca/pdf_Griffin/2014/GRIFFIN.dec.2014.COLOUR.pdf)

## Programs Sponsored by Other Societies

### Colchester Historeum

29 Young Street, Truro NS

**Vanguard: 150 Remarkable Nova Scotians:** exhibit highlighting the contribution of 32 remarkable individuals who changed and inspired Nova Scotia from 1867 to 2017; on view until 27 March 2020. Free admission.

**Marigold Guild of Needle Arts: Stitch In:** first Wednesday of the month (February 5, March 4), 10 am to 2 pm. All welcome. Free admission. More info: <https://colchesterhistoreum.ca> or [facebook.com/colchesterhistoreum](https://facebook.com/colchesterhistoreum)

### Hammonds Plains Historical Society

Hammonds Plains of the 1960s – A Decade of

**Hope:** following the general meeting, this presentation will focus on the big changes that occurred in the community during the 1960s through pictures and personal stories. Cornerstone Wesleyan Church (1215 Hammonds Plains Road), January 27, 7 pm.

**The History of Our Very Own Ghost Town – Kemp-town:** following the general meeting, this talk will focus on the development of Kemp-town during the 1800s and its demise and disappearance in the early 1900s. Hammonds Plains Community Center (2041 Hammonds Plains Road), March 30, 7 pm. More info: [hammondsplainshistoricalsociety.ca](https://hammondsplainshistoricalsociety.ca)

### Nova Scotia Archaeology Society

Lectures held in Burke Theatre A, Saint Mary's University, Halifax, at 7 pm

**Under Dartmouth's Oil Refinery: Finding Fort Clarence,** by David Jones, January 28

**Community, Archaeology, and Black Refugees – Beechville, Nova Scotia, case study,** by Robert Shears, February 25

**Tools of the Digital Archaeologist: Applied Case Studies in Nova Scotia,** by Wesley Weatherbee, March 31

### Royal Nova Scotia Historical Society

Lectures held at the Public Archives, 6016 University Avenue, Halifax NS

**Caribbean Slavery and the Scottish Diaspora in the Maritimes:** lecture by Dr. Karly Kehoe, which will explore the colonial privilege of the Highland Scots by linking Maritime settlement with Caribbean money. January 15, 7 pm. Will be live streamed on RNSHS Facebook.

**Topic To Be Announced:** lecture by Dr. Mathias Rodorff. February 19, 7 pm. Will be live streamed on RNSHS Facebook.

### Women Challenging the Constitution: New

**Evidence:** lecture by Louise Carbert, based on a paper published in 'Atlantis' using the approaches identified by feminist institutionalism, focusing on the interactions between the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (CACSW) and the Canadian government during the constitutional crisis of 1980-81. March 18, 7 pm.


More info: [www.rsnhs.ca](https://www.rsnhs.ca) or [facebook.com/TheRoyalNovaScotiaHistoricalSociety](https://facebook.com/TheRoyalNovaScotiaHistoricalSociety)


## PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

Announcing a major legacy project by the Nova Scotia heritage community to restore and preserve a complete set of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century A. F. Church maps. The maps of each county are uniquely valuable for locating the names and precise geographical location of each household at that time. The remaining copies, now more than a hundred years old and much degraded, are in danger of being lost for all time.


*Please help us with maps that you may have in your attic or back room to restore and preserve a set as a legacy for future generations.*

**Help Us: [www.mircs.ca/maps](http://www.mircs.ca/maps)**







Geological Association of N.S.




West Hants Historical Society



Heritage Association of Antigonish

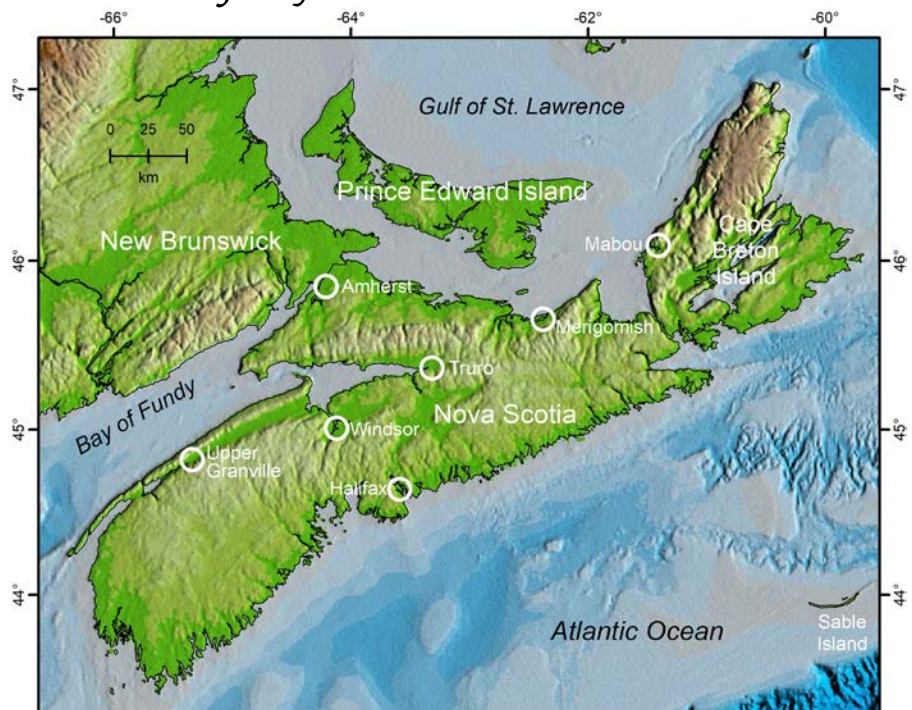


East Hants Historical Society



Maritime Institute for Civil Society

## Locations of subject matter in this issue



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