

Wolfville Historical Society

Fall/Winter2017

NEWSLETTER

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Did you know that next year is Wolfville's 125th anniversary (or quasiquicentennial)? We are excited to celebrate this historic milestone with a new exhibit entitled "The Changing Streetscapes of a Small Town." The exhibit will explore how Wolfville has changed over the past 125 years through the display of historic and contemporary photographs. If anyone has any photographs from the 1950s to the present day that they would possibly like included in the exhibit please contact us at randallhouse@outlook.com.

President's Message

As the days grow shorter and darker and we hunker down in preparation for the winter months, we figured it might not go amiss to remind you of warmer, brighter times at Randall House – lots more of which will be provided in our 2018 season!

We are currently making plans for next year, which will include working with the Town in planning events to celebrate Wolfville's 125th birthday. We also intend to build on the success of this past year's workshop series by offering a wider selection of activities; if you have a suggestion, please let us know (randallhouse@outlook.com) – we'd be delighted to have your feedback! At the same time, we are also working hard to ensure that we keep our museum as interesting and relevant as we can make it, which means tackling challenges as varied as finding storage space, improving the display of our collection, and developing our fund-raising opportunities.

As I'm sure you are aware, maintaining a small rural museum in these hi-tech times is a complicated task, for a variety of reasons. However, we are well aware of the unique opportunity here in Wolfville to ensure that Randall House museum continues to play a valuable role in a vibrant community.

Martin Hallett

*Come visit the WHS Christmas table at the
Farmers' Market
this Saturday (December 9th)*

**A Song from the Randall House Garden Gnomes:
a thank you to the WHS
for letting us tend the Randall House gardens.**

(sung, more or less, to the tune of Heigh-Ho from Snow White and the ~~Garden Gnomes~~ Seven Dwarves)

*We plan, plan, plan and dig, dig, dig
and plant the whole morn through;
We pick, pick, pick and prune, prune, prune
and weed the whole morn too.
And then when the summer's warmth is gone
and all our flowers look forlorn,
We say goodbye with a smile and a sigh
aaaaand
We plan, plan, plan...*

We have had a very good summer. The garden bloomed lush and colourful, and as historical as we can manage in an age of hybrids and imports. The plants of the Randall House gardens are, when possible, based on a list of plants available to the aspiring pre-1850s gardener. But we know we are doing something right when the butterflies swarm the garden like tiny flower faeries come to give the garden gnomes their benediction. And this year the Painted Ladies settled in and made our gardens their home. O! What a sight!

Now on to business!

First of all, a thank you to our fellow Town of Wolfville garden gnomes who dug up an old rose bed and helped us prepare the ground for our new apple tree on the northwest corner of the garden, near the park. Next, a special thank you to Alan Deacon who not only donated an offspring of his magnificent dogwood tree, but rolled up his sleeves and donned his wellies to help us plant, stake, and tend our newest arboreal addition.

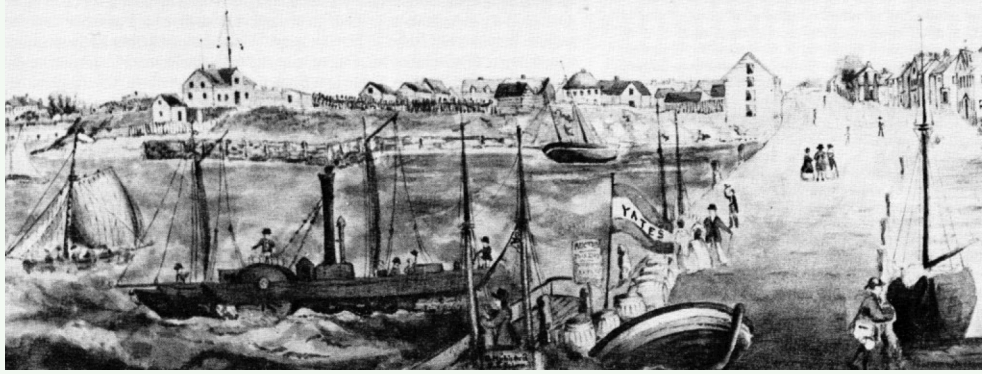
Continuing in the vein of donations:

- We have repopulated our marsh mallow (no, not marshmallow... please do not try to toast these over your bonfires!) patch with new, young plants donated by the kind folks who tend the Harriet Irving Botanical Garden.
- Also, we would like to express our appreciation for the New Dawn rose which happily climbs the east side of Randall House, decorating the wall with foliage and blossoms all summer long, which was donated some time ago by Kathy Stewart. Thank you, Kathy!

See you all next year, trowel and shovel in hand to *dig, dig, dig*....

Samantha Bissix





THE TALE OF TWO DROWNED SISTERS A SAD STORY WITH A WOLFFVILLE CONNECTION

The *Fairy Queen* was a St. John, New Brunswick registered boat, built in Granville, NS, that replaced the similar steamer *Rose* (shown) and plied between Charlottetown and Pictou. "A clumsy, under-powered paddle-wheeler, she was leaky and had a bad habit of running into sandbars. Her crew was often rounded out at the last minute by whoever was hanging around the wharf willing to work for low wages." Many people travelled on her as a quick way to get to Nova Scotia from the island. On the 7th October 1853 the weather was stormy and the inexperienced captain delayed sailing until the winds died down later that evening and also giving the crew time to visit local drinking establishments! On board were two granddaughters of Judge Elisha DeWolf, daughters of Elisha DeWolf jr., 22 year old Eliza Arabella and her younger sister Alice Jane who were heading home.

At about supper time, not far from Pictou, the ship's steering rope broke, which it often did. The crew managed to repair the rope but forgot about keeping the boiler's fires going. *Fairy Queen* now had steering, but no power. *Fairy Queen* was used to leaking, and relied on a steam pump connected to the main engines to keep her dry. With the winds picking up, the vessel became unmanageable. "With the pump down, and with waves breaking over the hatches, the boat was in danger of foundering. Soon the water broke into the engine room, making it impossible to rekindle the boilers".

The Captain decided to abandon ship and ordered for the larger life boat to be launched, able to hold 24. Some of the crew, including the Second Mate, jumped into the lifeboat and drifted away from the steamer. A call for the small lifeboat was made. Two crew, the women and the cabin boy were supposed to be in this lifeboat which would hold 10, but instead, more of the crew jumped in. The captain claimed afterward that he protested, but a crewman, armed with a large oar, suggested otherwise. "The frantic passengers lined the rail, crying to be saved, but the mate sprang forward and cut the rope, heedful of the screams that fell about him and drowned out the very howl of the wind." And so the lifeboats drifted ashore without the passengers and rest of the crew. At midnight the *Fairy Queen* capsized, "she gave a lurch and broke in two, all were thrown into the water". A story in the DeWolf family adds an even more tragic twist to the story as it is told that one of the DeWolf girls attempted to board one of the life boats but was hit on the knuckles by one of the crew, cutting her fingers.

Only 9 of the 16 people left on board were strong enough to hold on to the wreckage and survive. The two sisters were not among them. Those who survived spent 8 hours in the sea before drifting ashore. "The next morning a rescue tug from Pictou came across the scene. The *Fairy Queen*'s bow was still floating at anchor. Her stern was bobbing peacefully a little distance away. There was no trace of survivors. Seven people, including all five women and the cabin boy, were dead." There are various ghostly legends connected with this tragedy. One of them has it that on October 7, 1853, at the exact moment the *Fairy Queen* gave into the angry sea, seven ghostly lights were seen entering the Kirk of St. James. One for each victim of the wreck.

Image: *The Rose at Pownal Wharf* ca. 1849 from a painting by George Hubbard in the collection of the PEI Museum and Heritage Foundation via <https://sailstrait.wordpress.com>
Sources: *Ship Registrations 1787-1966*, Library and archives Canada; *PEI: An Unauthorized History* 1996, 97 by Boyde Beck and John Burden; *My Island, My People* 1979 by Lorne C. Callbeck and Kenneth Garnhum; *Shipwrecks of Prince Edward Island* by Daniel McMurrer & David MacKinnon www.edu.pe.ca/eastwiltshire/grass01/Phys3a.htm and DeWolf family history.
Prepared by Christine (DeWolf) Lynch who has been delving into DeWolf family history recently.



Floral Splendour: The flower-arranging workshop

The Crockpot that Crossed Borders

Here is a very important piece of travel advice to all you destination seekers out there: if you do not want to be pulled aside at customs while crossing the US/Canadian border do not carry a crockpot that is over 100 years old in your carry on bag. You might be thinking that this seems like an odd piece of advice to be sharing but it is inspired by a true event. A few weeks ago the museum was contacted by Rebecca Locklear, an author and retired school teacher, who wanted to donate a small crockpot that was once owned by her great grandmother Blanche Edna Schofield. Blanche was a school teacher in the one room school house in Black River and married to James (Jim) Schofield. They lived in the area until they moved to the 'Boston States' later in life.

After much discussion Rebecca decided that to avoid the crockpot from getting damaged during transit (it is in almost perfect condition) that she would fit it among the things in her carry-on bag.

Unbeknownst to us all this would lead to a series of very unfortunate events in which Rebecca would be pulled aside at customs and questioned by five different TSA Agents. According to the story that we were given several of the agents were convinced that the crockpot had enormous monetary value and her story of donating it to small community museum was not true. Eventually Rebecca changed her story and told the agents that it was a family heirloom that she was taking home to give to her cousins that she would be staying with while in Nova Scotia. After much convincing she was eventually released and was able to deliver the crockpot to the museum where it has found a new home in our kitchen display. While it's true that we have over 6000 objects in the permanent collection here at the museum this artifact certainly has one of the most exciting (and quite honestly hilarious) stories yet!

Krystal Tanner