

Wolfville Historical Society

Newsletter

Volume 05.3

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September 2005

<http://wolfvillehs.ednet.ns.ca>

President's Message

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Newsletter

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*(Editor and
design/production)*

Randall House is no longer a wallflower! The most obvious sign of life from the WHS in recent years has been this summer's transformation of our museum into the most prominent and well-dressed belle on Main Street. Compliments have come pouring in from all sides, and we can be pleased that what we had thought a daring decision has had such a satisfactory result. When the garden renovations have been completed, we will indeed have a showplace in every sense.

Over the summer the Society has been involved with the evolution of the Horton Landing site. In the 1960s it was pressure from the WHS which led to the erection of the Planter monument. This year through the Kings Heritage Connection we have helped in the establishment there of the Deportation Cross so that the site now accurately reflects its importance in both Acadian and Planter history. The Planter plaque has now been changed to say "New England Planters" rather than the vague "pre-Loyalists". If you have not been to Horton Landing recently, I urge you to go. At high tide, especially, there is a pervading sense of continuity and tranquillity as you look out to Blomidon with cows in the adjacent field as your companions.

We have had a successful tea this summer, the ice cream social was the best attended ever and the Teddy Bears' Picnic chose to occur on an absolutely gorgeous recent Saturday afternoon when I had to be away. We are grateful to those whose hard work has made these events possible. On the 14th of September we will have our annual fundraising dinner. Again we are delighted to be able to fulfill our mission of promoting local history by providing a venue for Professor Jonathan Fowler to discuss his findings to date from the archaeological digs at Grand Pré park. Details of the dinner and of our fall programs follow in this *Newsletter*.

Our Disappearing Media Heritage

by Glen Hancock

Heritage may be an old word – deriving from Old French – but it is only recently that our heritage has been taken seriously by the masses. Even so, we tend to concentrate only on historic buildings and streetscapes as things we should preserve. But there are many other aspects of our heritage to which we are heirs, that fall into the realm of our interests: things like literature and language, institutions, music, art, and traditions of our past. Old letters and records are fast disappearing in the wake of electronic communication. It will be difficult for biographers, historians and archivists of the future to gather original material.

Are we also forgetting the heritage of the press as the large, faceless media empires take over from the families that were identified with newspapers from their beginning? In fact, there are few newspapers anywhere in Canada today that still belong to the families who created them. A rarity in this respect, the *Halifax Chronicle-Herald* is still in the hands of the Dennis family; but the *Herders* of St. John's and the *Duchemins* of Cape Breton are barely memories, dislodged by the big chains like the Black, the Thomson and other media empires.

The personalities of newspapers in the Valley have lost much of their heritage sparkle as well. Most of them are now owned by the Transcontinental Media Group, a name vague enough to stifle heritage response. Only the old folk remember the *Wolfville Acadian* and the *Tiny Tattler*, once Canada's smallest newspaper, founded in Digby county in 1933 by Ivan

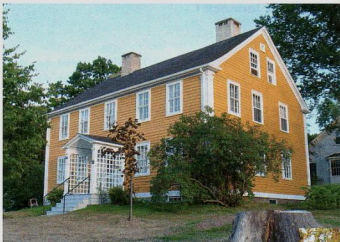
Shortliffe. Who now remembers the old newspaper families? They have faded into the past, along with their readers. In 1883, on the 50th anniversary of the *Yarmouth Herald*, only twelve of the original subscribers were still left. By 1990 there were only two. Now there are none!

The Davidson brothers, who actually lived in Wolfville, edited the *Wolfville Acadian* from its inception until it was absorbed by the *Kentville Advertiser*, where it was relegated to inside pages for a few years before it was lost for good. Some of us will remember fondly the *Acadian* office (and the Davidsons themselves) in the centre of town on Main Street, where not only editorial content was prepared, but also lead typesetting was done and the paper was printed.

Even the *Advertiser's* leading lights, Frank Burns and the Bakers, are all but forgotten. Now the *Advertiser* is no longer printed even in New Minas, much less in its original location in the centre of Kentville where a pub occupies its building. Who still remembers the Blacks of the *Middleton Outlook*, the Beatties of the *Bridgetown Monitor*, or Edith Wallis, who edited the *Digby Courier* after her husband died? Who still remembers the congenial Tammy Kirk of Yarmouth?

In the growing corporatisation of so many businesses today, our local newspapers have lost not only their personalities but are in danger of losing their treasury of the print and photo record of our past as corporate ownership of local print media flees our communities. This is a heritage we must find some way to protect.

Randall House – Its New Look



Here are “After” and “Before” photos of Randall House Museum. Note not only the new paint job – it’s really an eye-catcher – but also the absence of yet another of the fine elm trees that have given Main Street its gracious character in living memory.



Like so much of our heritage, these trees are also disappearing all too quickly. The elm that stands so prominently on the front lawn in the photo to the right is only a 6 by 8 foot stump in the upper photo. [Editor]

Annual Fundraising Dinner

Wednesday, 14 September 2005, 6:30 for 7:00 p.m

Wheelock Hall Lounge, Acadia University

Speaker: Jonathan Fowler

Recent Archaeological Discoveries at Grand Pré and
Other Acadian Sites

Tickets available from John Whidden at 542-5061
or Derek/Heather Watts at 542-0307

Autumn Events, 2005

Thursday, 8 September 2005, at 3:30 p.m.

Tour of The Old Burying Ground (bottom of Highland Ave.)

Led by Board Member **John Vaillancourt**

Wednesday, 19 October 2005, at 2:00 p.m.

Wolfville Fire Hall

Heather Watts will speak on her recently-published book about Deadman's Island

Wednesday, 16 November 2005, at 2:00 p.m.

Wolfville Fire Hall

Gordon Haliburton will talk about Historic Ties between Nova Scotia and the West Coast of Africa

Thursday, 8 December 2005

Annual WHS Christmas Party

SALT HAY FARMERS WANTED

Do you have memories, stories to tell, or information to share about salt hay harvesting in Nova Scotia? I am looking for individuals who have first hand experience of harvesting salt hay, and who are willing to contribute their knowledge and expertise to a research study investigating the social, ecological and economic importance of this traditional agricultural practice. This research is being conducted for a Masters thesis for Atlantic Canada Studies at Saint Mary's University. For more information, or if you are interested in participating in this study, please contact Ruth Lapp at (902) 757-0326, or rlapp@glinx.com, or 138 Red Bank Rd., Centre Burlington, Nova Scotia, B0N 1E0.

COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE NEEDS SEWERS [sic.] *Really??!! Ed.*

Do you have a sewing machine? Would you be able to help the collections committee make *simple* linen curtains for the Randall House? All materials provided. With the outside of the house looking great we want to get the inside looking great too! Contact Heather Watts at 542-0307 if you can help in any way.