

Wolfville Historical Society Newsletter

Founded in 1941

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 3

SEPTEMBER 1, 2010

Fall Fundraising Dinner Saturday, September 18th

The Georgian Style in Wolfville Houses.

This illustrated presentation will examine the development of the Georgian style exemplified in Wolfville houses built between 1760 and 1930. The annual fall dinner will take place at the Old Orchard Inn. Tickets for what is sure to be an intriguing presentation and interesting evening are \$50.00 per person, which includes a \$15.00 tax receipt. Please purchase tickets from John Vaillancourt 542-6766 or Elizabeth Browne 542-2279.



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Programme for Autumn 2009

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|-------------|--|--|
| October 20 | Wolfville
Fire Hall
2:00
p.m. | Shirley Soleil will speak on Silas Tertius Rand who was an advocate for the wellbeing of the Mi'Kmaq people and in pursuit of it he gave them a written language and dedicated his life to teach them how to learn it and use it. His dream was that they become educated. |
| November 17 | Wolfville
Fire Hall
2:00
p.m. | <i>Which Esther do you know? Glimpses of Esther Clark Wright through her letters.</i> This talk presented by Patty Williams will explore Dr Esther Clark Wright's life as revealed through her letters to family, friends and colleagues. In an early letter to her husband Conrad, she described herself as "...a Canadian and a Baptist and a loyal daughter of Acadia. Acadia is so much an expression of my country and my church that it is a part of the other two." Later letters to him reveal an exasperated but loving wife. |

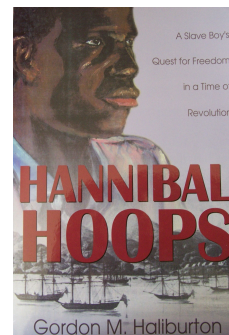
In nearly mint condition this red and white hand pieced and appliquéd quilt in the flower basket design once belonged to Esther C. Wright's family. It has been recently donated to the WHS with a hand written note explaining its provenance.



Book Corner

Recent publications by local authors include my own *Hannibal Hoops* which is a historical novel about the Black Loyalists who came to Nova Scotia in 1783 or thereafter and is available at Randall House Gift Shop; *Second Chance: Life in Nova Scotia During the American Revolution* by Glenn Ellis of Sheffield Mills; and *Reflections of a Restaurant Owner's Son: The Story of the Palms* by Paul (Butch) Young which is available at The Odd Book on Front Street.

Members interested in historical novels might be interested in the new title *The Wilding* by Maria McCann which is set in England at the time of Cromwell.



Board of Directors:

John Whidden, *President*
John Vaillancourt, *Vice President*
Tom Haliburton, *Secretary*
John Lawrence, *Treasurer*
Glen Hancock, *Past President*
Elizabeth Browne, *Membership*
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Gordon Haliburton
Patricia Townsend
Patricia Williams

Summer events!

Mud Creek Days !

The Pirates of Mud Creek!

On July 31st a wonderful crowd assembled to enjoy the gardens of Randall House and Willow Park. Families were treated to a humorous recitation of the *Battle of Blomidon* and a pirate boat building workshop. The boat kits were all prepared by Elaine and Darrell Slauenwhite.

Elaine explains the finer points of boat assembly while Darrell snaps of few pics!



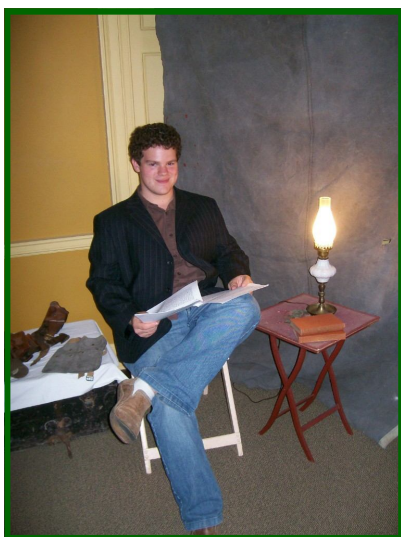
At long last the boats are ready to sail 'merrily down the stream...'

Teresa Patterson as Rolling Pin Annie and Joe Gnemmi as One Eyed Joe entertained visitors from the Wolfville Recreation Centre and L'Arche community.



So, what did you do this summer?

By Joe Gnemmi



Joe 'moonlighting' at Prescott House and helping them out with a fundraiser

This summer has been quite a learning experience. I've learned more about the place where I live than I ever thought possible to know, with much more left to learn. I've gained an appreciation for the history of Horton in the legacy of hard work, inspiration, and courage of the Acadians and Planters. I'm able to draw connections between past cultures I'm familiar with early Nova Scotia, all the way up to the present. I've learned a lot about running a museum, from various organizational schematics to proper maintenance and care of artifacts and archival materials.

I've seen joy in peoples' faces when they find long-lost ancestors, and can point out the location where they lived on a map. I've seen the time and effort that the WHS has put into the Randall House, and I've heard many compliments from other museum owners, and residents of Planter-style houses. This place does look fantastic.

I would like to thank the WHS for giving me a chance to see how well a real community-operated museum can run under good management. Keep up the good work, and again, thank you.

Message from the President

John Whidden

As the Randall House summer season moves to a close, we can reflect on the many changes and improvements that have taken place in the past few years. Most striking this summer has been the repainting of most of the ground floor, a job undertaken in the pre season time by our hard working volunteers and staff. The new colour scheme sets the rooms and their contents off to great advantage. In addition, the new library/study on the seconds floor provides a congenial space for reading and research which is in keeping with the style of the house.

The fall period opens for us with the annual fund raising dinner at the Old Orchard Inn. While I can make no claims about the merits of the speaker, I can say that we expect the dinner to be as enjoyable as have been the dinners in previous years. Please come and support the Society.

It is only September, but soon it will be January and elections for Society offices at the AGM. I bring this up now because it is getting harder to find volunteers willing to replace those who have toiled for years and now wish to retire. I would like particularly to thank Derek Watts, Gordon Haliburton, Elizabeth Browne and Darryl Slauenwhite who are stepping down from positions they have held for many years and after contributing many thousands of hours of volunteer labour. Next year we will need a Board Secretary, and co-ordinators for the newsletter, volunteers, publicity, membership and property. There is a lot of work involved in running the Society and Randall House, and we have been extremely well served by our member volunteers in these and many other areas. Please think about what you can contribute to this group of interested, accomplished people who keep things moving and improving.

In closing, I want to thank Bonnie and Joe who have presented Randall House to advantage to visitors and members alike over the summer. Their knowledgeable and personable presence have made visiting a rewarding pleasure.

Tax Free! From the Gift Shop

Elaine Slauenwhite

This season has been one of hope, new beginnings and learning. Early on Bonnie and I met with Roeland Hakkert, who advised us that local work and books sold well. He also told us to advertise that we are *tax free*. From that point it was decided that we would give the gift shop an old general store feel. I chose to go to two artists from Bishopville and Lakeville who make lovely sterling silver jewelry. The quality of their work is high but I have managed to keep the prices moderately low. We also have Lavender products from Lavender Grange in Mount Denson and pure beeswax candles from Maritime Beeswax in Sheffield Mills. Books form the backbone of our shop and of course most of them are by local people. Although my expectations were high, I'm pleased to report that at this point the gift shop finances are near to break even point and we have stock left to supply us for the fall and next year.

Now I've told you about my hopes and the way that I presented the gift shop I will briefly touch on my education. One of my major discoveries about this project was how much I enjoy doing it. I like being able to pick out things that I think might appeal to people. I enjoyed stocking the shelves with the help of Jan Baldwin, Joe Gnemmi and Bonnie Elliott. I like telling others about the products that are for sale. Finally I come to my weakness—bookkeeping! I warned Bonnie before I took on the gift shop that as a classroom teacher I often had to spend hours pouring over the book order form trying to make it balance. My secret is out— poor John Lawrence!

We have tickets left for the king-size quilt donated by Debbie MacDonald. If you would like to view the quilt you will find it in the shop. The tickets have been selling steadily. I invite you to come in and have a look at what the gift shop looks like and maybe buy a few pieces of saltwater toffee or a maple treat from our "general store".



Curator's Nook by Bonnie Elliott

The end of August always brings bittersweet thoughts. In spite of the recent hot weather, signs of the end of summer are upon us. Almost time to strike the set and put the house into its winter mode. What a beautiful summer it has been and one that has seen an increase in visitors by about %10 from all over, belying the predictions of a poor tourist season. Randall

House has had a good summer and positive response to the changes we've made and good comments by those who are revisiting the museum after many years. Whether visitors came from California or Japan, it is always fun to share our story.

Canada Day and Mud Creek were good events for us and Friday teas have been building as we head towards our closing. For the second time Professor Gillian Poulter will be bringing her class in Public History for a seminar at the museum in September.

The exhibit *Horton Planters*, is a chance to take a glimpse into the past and ask what it must have been



A new look to the parlour has been receiving positive comments.

Visitors continue to ask, what's a drugget?

like to start over in a new land. Parks Canada has teamed up with Randall House to loan some rare items including a ledger owned by Simon DeWolf of Kentville and dated 1797. The reproduction costumes have received quite a bit of attention and give a sense of human presence to the exhibit. All in all a big thank you to Katie Titus and Joseph Gnemmi who hopefully have had an interesting summer working here.



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 ☆ The **What's It ?** Cabinet has ☆
 ☆ been drawing lots of curious gazers ☆
 ☆ this summer as visitors test their knowl- ☆
 ☆ edge of material culture by naming the ☆
 ☆ contents in the cabinet. Fill in a ballot ☆
 ☆ and drop it in the box for a chance to ☆
 ☆ win the book *Mud Creek*. The answers ☆
 ☆ will be posted on our website in the fall ☆
 ☆ and the **winner announced** at the Sep- ☆
 ☆ tember 18th Dinner. No museum staff or ☆
 ☆ Board members are eligible for the draw. ☆
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Passage News: *Conserving an Ardent Valentine on wove paper*

This valentine has been on display for many years inside the miniature cabinet at the top of the stairs at Randall House. It was written in Cornwallis in 1820 by an unknown author. On attempting to transcribe the verses by carefully unfolding the item, the team aborted the task fearing it too fragile to proceed. Ruth Legge, a paper conservator, who fortunately lives locally, was called in for advice. The verses that were transcribed are included here.



Cornwallis, 1820

Meeting with Ruth

On a hot steamy morning last week, members of the Passage team drove up the mountain and down a country lane to West Brooklyn to meet with Ruth Legge in her studio. We hoped to learn more about the process of conserving a paper artefact such as the valentine. On inspection Ruth was able to determine that it was made of *wove* paper, a term used

to describe a machine made paper that has a faint mesh pattern and is made from cotton and linen rags. It was the predominate type used in the 19th century and replaced *laid* paper. The ink is a type of *iron gall* that was used from the 12th until the 20th century in Europe and because it binds to the fabric of the paper, is waterproof. Once the folds are relaxed by being humidified, the full poem of the valentine can be read. The paper then will be submerged in a bath of distilled water and then repairs done to the tears.



Pictured at her lab with a purpose built humidity chamber is paper conservator Ruth Legge preparing to treat the valentine and ease the folds open.

Behold the Emblem of true love
Which wounds the heart & Cruel proves
See here a heart with grief opprest
And love to great to be exprefsd
With cubits darts tis almost slain
If you unfold breaks it in twain

FOLD

These hearts more nearer by Degrees
Not brib'd by friend of flatteries
Tis a pity false tales should ever part
Lovers so near a point in heart



FOLD

Repose your trust in God above
And to each often constraint prove
Your hearts at least will find content
Tis the next fold doth represent



FOLD

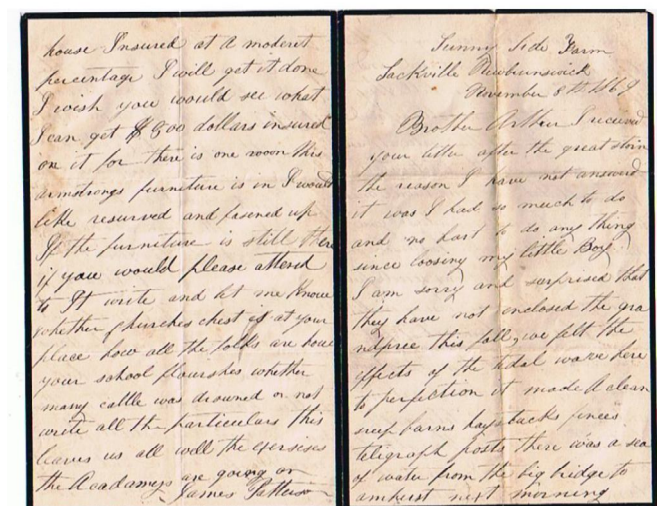
What hurts the one it kills the other
Like twins they live with one another
Cupid has wounded both as doth appear
Unfold and they approach more near.

(End of current transcription)

A New Acquisition- The Saxby Gale letter

by Peter Dockwrey

Hurricane Earl reminds us that it is coming to that time of year when we in Nova Scotia take note of the forecasts and look forward to stormy weather. Hurricane season and the October gales have made of us a stout and sturdy folk and, while Nova Scotians may consider from time to time "battening down the hatches" against Nature's assault, they tend to be no more over zealous in that regard than real men are to eat quiche.



Except when the odd storm visits to remind us that we can actually get devastating weather events. Such was Hurricane Juan a few years back. And such was that drenching of mythic proportions—the Saxby Gale of 5 October 1869. Original letters dated to the 1860's have recently come into the possession of the WHS which were addressed to Arthur McNutt Patterson the principal of the Acacia Villa School, Horton. One such letter written by his brother gives a brief first hand account of that storm and its effects. The gale raged up through the Bay of Fundy leaving a trail of destruction in its wake. Areas of the coast of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia abutting the Minas Basin were affected—Maitland and as far as Truro as well as Sackville (as we shall see from the letter quoted below.) The cause of so much damage was mostly owing to the fact that it coincided with unusually high tides that breeched the dykes, in what we now know as a "storm surge."

The present generation, with its ecological awareness and consciousness of global warming, is familiar with this nightmare scenario. In the aftermath of 5 October 1869 there were widespread news reports of the desolation left by what must have seemed an apocalyptic visitation (as chronicled by Shirley Elliott in her article for the Journal of Education, in 1961.) Barns and dwellings were destroyed and there was huge loss of livestock--cattle and sheep drowned and in many cases swept out to sea. Weeks afterwards the smell of death lingered in the air. The recently built railway was hard hit and the section between Grand Pre and Wolfville lost track and bridges. Including those who perished at sea, the loss of life in the region has been estimated at about a hundred souls.

The storm has also a fabled place in the history of the science of meteorology—as it had been predicted a year in advance by a Lieutenant S M Saxby of the Royal Navy whose warnings were widely published in the London press. He based his forecasts on the influence of the lunar and solar cycles on the tides. Readers had a year to speculate on his scientific acumen and to decide how seriously to take the threat he conjured up. Had he been wrong about 5 October, he would scarcely be remembered even as a crank. Since he was right he quickly became and has remained a hero of this new environmental science.

With this in mind, there follows a brief quotation from the discovered letter. The excerpt has been subject rather liberally to spelling and punctuation changes for the sake of clarity.

James Patterson
Sunny Side Farm
Sackville, New Brunswick
November 8th, 1869

Brother Arthur,

I received your letter after the great storm The reason I have not answered it was I had so much to do and no heart to do anything since loosing my little boy. I am sorry and not surprise that they have not enclosed the Grand Pre this fall. We felt the affects of the tidal wave here to perfection. It made a clean sweep [of] barns, haystacks, fences and telegraph posts. There was a sea of water from the bridge to Amherst next morning but we are working at the dykes. Some are enclosed and if we have an open fall they will be pretty generally repaired or enclosed to stop the water at present. For to give you the particulars it would take too long. I will mention one or two little incidents. You know old Mr. John Patterson on Coles Hang(?) he is getting quite feeble. When the water was rushing in his house they got him out of bed and was getting him up stairs when the front door burst in and in walked a telegraph post. The old man thought he was going to be drowned... Mr. Cogswell cattle was carried from the Island Marsh on to the west marsh, cattle from Manudy (?) came a shore at the Joggins. I give you a very faint idea of the destruction.

A Place for a Garden

By Gisela Westphalen

Did she or didn't she? And if she did, WHERE did she plant it?

We, the garden crew, think that there was a kitchen garden at Randall House in Mrs. Randall's day. There is mention of Jerusalem artichokes somewhere; also, using ground around one's house for decorative plants only, is a relatively new custom.

When we re-introduced a kitchen garden to the museum grounds about 4 years ago, we planted it where Mrs. Randall very likely had hers; on the south side of the house, near its kitchen entrance. It was unproductive despite good organic nourishment and watering. Since the Randall's days, huge trees have grown up shading that area. So, as Mrs. & Mr. Randall would have done had they been confronted with the same problem, we searched and debated and finally settled on the new location for the food garden off the north west corner of the house. Alan Smith kindly constructed and put in place four 4X4 plant frames. It is conceivable that the Randalls might have grown their vegetables and fruit within sight of the road? Yes! They would have adapted rather than put a lot of effort into an increasingly fruitless garden plot in the shade of growing trees just in order to keep with old tradition; adaptation being key to survival. *Continued next page...*



Wolfville Historical Society
Randall House Museum

259 Main Street
Wolfville, Nova Scotia

Phone: 902-542-9775
E-mail: randallhouse@live.ca

*"We are the
community's collective
memory"*

We're on the web and in
colour!

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



Wolfville Historical Society



Bulletin Board

- ◇ Quilt tickets are going fast. \$2.00 each and 3 for \$5.00. Purchase form Board member or at the Museum.
- ◇ Last Day to visit the museum is September 15th.
- ◇ Last Afternoon Tea is September 10th. 2-4 Imported teas, home baked scones, local Jam and Quark. Très Classique! \$6. 00 per person.
- ◇ Thinking of Christmas shopping? Visit our TAX FREE gift shop.
- ◇ Have you paid your 2010 dues?
- ◇ The Pot Luck picnic held on July 7th at the Keech's in Grand Pre was a success. Members came to sup in the beautiful surroundings of the Keech's property and learn about the local landmarks. Same time next year?
- ◇ The Wolfville Curling Club is celebrating its 115th Anniversary this year and 75 years since the building of the rink. Members who would like to donate pictures, stories, memorabilia are asked to contact Bonnie at the museum. 542-9775
- ◇ This year we're making plans to host a Christmas party at Randall House and soon we'll have some exciting news on that score.

Garden continued...

The town of Wolfville provided some topsoil and bark mulch; we dug deep under an old pile of plant matter, possibly dating to Mrs. Randall's time, for wonderful black compost. Whoever had spare plants and seeds brought them along. We planted, weeded, watered and have been harvesting beans, chard, cucumbers, carrots, tomatoes since early July leaving the onions and leeks to grow long into the fall. On either side of the new steps leading from Willow Park, there are now berry plants and rhubarb growing to productive maturity.

We, the garden crew, are pleased with our decision and the results. Knowing that we can grow a meaningful amount of produce in that small area and that there isn't a Randall family to eat it, have plans next year to supply the food bank with fresh vegetables from our small but mighty garden.

Wolfville Historical Society

Annual and Sustaining Membership Application Form for 2010

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Town: _____ **Prov.:** _____ **P. Code:** _____

Phone: _____ **E-mail:** _____

Do you wish to receive your newsletter by e-mail? Y or N

Annual Membership: Individual - \$20.00; Family - \$30.00

Annual Sustaining Membership: Individual or Couple—\$100.00

A receipt for income tax purposes will be issued.

Please fill out the above form and send it along with payment to:

**Wolfville Historical Society
259 Main Street, Wolfville N.S.
B4P 1C6**