

Harbours & Shipping in Mud Creek

The Smallest Registered Harbour in the World

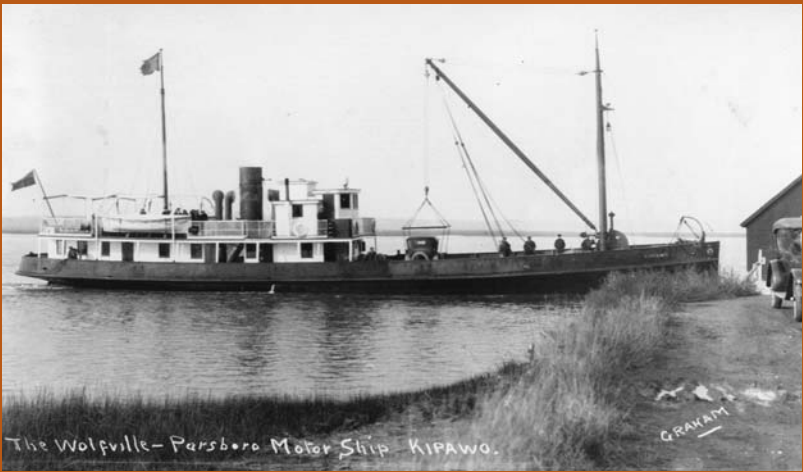
- Mud Creek (known to the Mi'kmaq as Mtaban or mud-catfish-catching ground) is one of many little brooks draining the slopes of Wolfville Ridge.
- The brook emptied into a shallow tidal creek just above today's Visitor Information Centre. From there it widened to make its way into the Cornwallis River and the Minas Basin.
- The tidal creek formed Wolfville Harbour—"the smallest registered harbour in the world".

Trading and Ship Building

- Daniel Bigelow of Upper Horton or Mud Creek was one of Wolfville's first ship builders; from his house beside the harbour he could supervise his shipyard.
- Bigelow's fishing vessels returned from the Grand Banks laden with cod.
- The fish was dried on "flakes" in the field behind the house and traded to the West Indies for oranges, rum and molasses.

The Harbour Split

- In the early 19th century the long bowsprits of sailing ships in the inner harbour would extend across the road and bridge, interfering with traffic.
- The Windsor & Annapolis Railway constructed a railway bridge across the creek in 1868, effectively shutting off the inner harbour for good.
- New wharves were built along the outer banks of the creek, allowing trade and commerce to move closer to the Cornwallis River.



The *Kipawo*, launched in 1926, carried passengers, cargo and cars between Kingsport, Parrsborough and Wolfville until the outbreak of WWII. After wartime service and coastal use in Newfoundland, she was derelict in 1978. She was brought back to Parrsborough where her remains are now the stage for the Ship's Company Theatre.

Early Ferries

- The first recorded ferry to serve the Minas Basin ports was operated by Acadians Francis Arsenau and John Bourq in 1764.
- In the 19th and 20th centuries there were several steam ferries which called at Wolfville, including the *Hiawatha*, the *Acadia*, the *Evangeline*, the *Prince Albert*, and finally the *Kipawo* which continued to serve until World War 2.
- Steam ferries had to nose into the mouth of Mud Creek at high tide, negotiating the bends and sandbars before the tide began to drop.

"Linger too long and the chance would be gone"

- Crews and passengers had to wait many hours if they missed the opportunity to leave Wolfville at high tide.
- The tidal ferry often confused tourists. Upon arriving early for the ferry, one tourist complained to the Stationmaster "There is no agent there, there is no boat there, there is NO WATER there!" (from an account by Esther Clark Wright)

The Cornwallis Wharf

- A wharf on the Cornwallis River was finally achieved in the 1880s, meaning that ships would no longer have to navigate the narrow, twisting creek.
- When violent storms breached the dykes in the early 1930s, cutting off access, the wharf quickly deteriorated and washed into the river.

The Kipawo Leaves and Returns

- During the Second World War Wolfville's last ferry, "the *Kip*" left to become a naval auxiliary vessel and served throughout the war.
- When "the *Kip*" was abandoned on a Newfoundland sandbank in 1978, a group of local citizens organized by Jack Sheriff determined to try and bring her home.
- The *Kipawo* didn't quite make it back to Wolfville but can now be visited in Parrsborough, where she forms part of the Ships Company Theatre.

Below: Low tide in Wolfville harbour c1932. The schooner *Theoline*, built in Maine in 1917 is on the right.



Wolfville harbour from Randall's Hill c1910. The causeway carrying the railway is clearly visible with the incoming tide filling the area between it and the shoreline. There are two schooners at the wharf this side of the Skoda building. The houses at the extreme left, centre left and right foreground still stand.



Low tide at the old Wolfville wharf on the Cornwallis River in 1925; it was reached by a road which ran straight out from Main Street opposite Victoria Avenue. The *Prince Albert*, predecessor of the *Kipawo*, used this wharf which was destroyed by storm and high tides in the early 1930s.



Wharves and sheds around Wolfville harbour c1900. The four storey Skoda building, first a patent medicine plant, then a flour mill, ended up with a dance hall and community centre on the upper floors and a storage facility on the ground level. It burned in 1931.

Creating the Present-day Harbour

- Gradually the old inner harbour was filled in and the creek dammed to create the Duck Pond where children sailed boats in summer and skated in winter.
- In 1967, Canada's centennial year, the Town created Willow Park on the site of the inner harbour. The ducks were banished and the pond reduced in size. Flowers now bloom where the sailing ships used to anchor.
- The Visitor Information Centre receives tourists today at the heart of the original village, where the bridge once crossed Mud Creek.
- The old wharves in the outer harbour have vanished but small pleasure craft can still tie up at the new dock at Waterfront Park.



The excursion steamer *Hiawatha* leaving Wolfville harbour.



Acadia Heritage Properties



Emmerson Hall, an Andrew Cobb design in the Italianate style.



Carnegie Hall, a practical Georgian Revival science building.



The Acadia Ladies' Seminary in the Victorian Second Empire style with whimsical cupolas.

Emmerson Hall

- In 1913 Hon. Henry R. Emmerson and family significantly contributed to construction of Emmerson Memorial Library.
- Building was designed by former Acadia student and well known architect Andrew Cobb.
- Emmerson was twice Governor of Acadia, New Brunswick's Minister of Public Works, Attorney General, and Premier of the province of New Brunswick.
- One of the few stone structures still standing in Wolfville. In 1967 the library was converted into classrooms and offices for the School of Education.
- Now known as Emmerson Hall.

Carnegie Hall

- Before Carnegie Hall science classes at Acadia University held in temporary classrooms in the arts building.
- In 1909 American philanthropist Andrew Carnegie offered Acadia University \$30,000 to establish a dedicated science building.
- The building housed preparation rooms, laboratories, and classrooms for physics, chemistry, geology and biology.
- Construction of Carnegie Hall signified Acadia's evolution from classical college to liberal university.

Seminary

- Designed by Andrew Dewar, the Seminary is the oldest building on the Acadia campus, and is architecturally unique to the university, displaying many Second Empire features.
- Opened in 1878 as the Acadia Ladies' Seminary.
- Oldest structure in Canada used to house women pursuing post-secondary education.
- Originally a finishing school affiliated with Acadia University (women were unable to enrol in academic classes at Acadia at that time).
- Included residence and classrooms for female students.
- By 1881 women were permitted to enrol in classes at Acadia.
- Clara Marshall (Seminary student) was the first woman to earn a degree at Acadia in 1884, was one of the first women to receive a Bachelor of Arts degree in Canada.
- Alice Fitch (also a Seminary student) graduated the following year with a Masters of Arts degree, the first Masters degree awarded to a woman at Acadia. Fitch went on to become the first woman to sit on the university senate.
- In 1980 the Seminary became a co-ed residence with its first floor functioning as classroom and office space.
- The Seminary is currently home to Acadia's School of Education.



The Acadia campus c1875 looking north west. The first College Hall, "the College built without money", is at the centre of the photograph. Sawyer House is at the extreme right.



Left, the Seminary (1878) and the second College Hall (1878-1922), and below left to right, the second College Hall, Welton House and barn, and Chipman Hall (1875-1914).

Produced in cooperation with the Wolfville Historical Society and the Acadia University Archives.



WOLFVILLE HISTORY SERIES

Wolfville's Churches



St. John's Anglican Church c1910 in its Gothic form.

1778: The Wolfville Baptist Church, Canada's oldest Baptist congregation, is established. Services are held in the meeting house on the site of Clock Park which is shared with other denominations and also used as a court room.

1818: St. John's Anglican Church is built as a Palladian, Wren-style building.

1820: The first Baptist Church is built to the west of the Burying Ground on what is now the Festival Theatre parking lot.

1853: St. Francis of Assisi Roman Catholic Church is built on the south side of the Ridge Road beside the Roman Catholic cemetery.

1860: The second Baptist Church building is constructed at the corner of Main Street and Highland Avenue.

c1860: A Methodist Church is erected on the east side of Gaspereau Avenue just above the present R.C.M.P. parking lot.

1868: A Reformed Presbyterian Church is built on the south side of Keen (now Prospect) Street.



St. Francis of Assisi Roman Catholic Church and parish hall.

Downtown Wolfville c1890 from the roof of the Acadia Ladies' Seminary. Stones in the Old Burying Ground are visible between buildings in the extreme left of the picture. The second Baptist Church (1860-1912) is in the centre, and



Wolfville United Baptist Church shortly after its construction in 1912.

1875: St. Francis of Assisi Church is destroyed by fire.

1883: The present St. Francis of Assisi Church is built on Main Street.

1885: The Presbyterian Church is moved on rollers to Main Street at the corner of Seaview Avenue.

1887: St. John's Anglican Church is gothicised. A bell cote replaces the tower, vertical siding replaces the clap-board, and gothic windows replace the Palladian.

1903: The Tabernacle, the present Royal Canadian Legion building, is built as a Sunday School and mission of the Baptist Church.

1912: The present Baptist Church is built to replace the second building. (C.H. Wright, contractor).

1913: The Presbyterian Church burns to the ground.

1914: A new St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church (Andrew Cobb, architect; C.H. Wright, contractor) is dedicated on the same site, and stands there today.

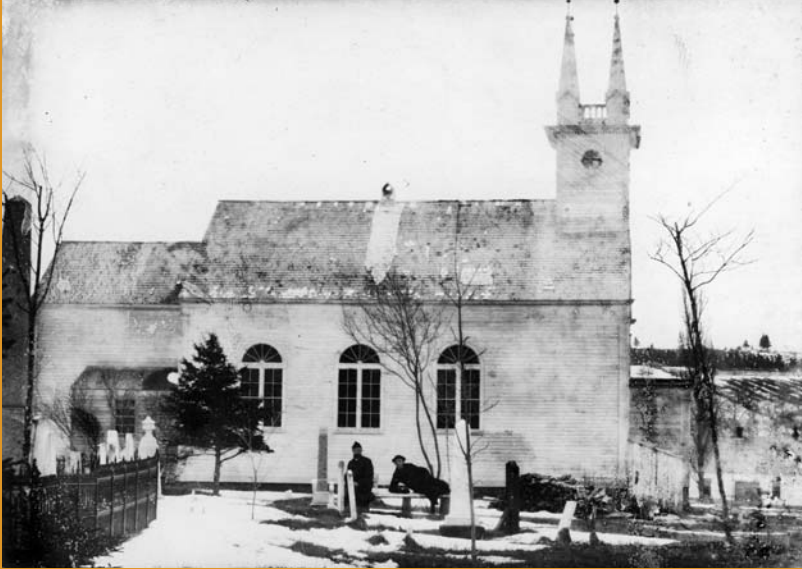
1923: The Wolfville Methodists and Presbyterians decide to unite their congregations at St. Andrew's, two years before the United Church of Canada is created. The old Methodist Church is torn down and lumber from the church is used to build the four houses which stand on the site today.

1959: St. Francis of Assisi becomes an independent parish; it formerly was part of St. Joseph's, Kentville.

further to the right the distinctive flattened peak of the C. H. Porter & Son building can be seen. Sawyer House is in the foreground; turned around to face south it served in the 1950s and early 1960s as Acadia's School of Theology.



The Presbyterian Church aflame, August 1913



St. John's Anglican Church c1882 in its original Palladian form. The steeple blew down in the 1850s and was replaced by four finials in the corners of the tower.



The Presbyterian Church on the move from its original site on Prospect Street to its new Main Street location.

Produced in cooperation with the Wolfville Historical Society
(Randall House Museum, 259 Main Street, Wolfville)



Main Street & Downtown

Main Street was once part of the Old Post Road linking Halifax with Annapolis Royal. The little settlement of Upper Horton grew up where the Old Post Road curved around the muddy banks of Mud Creek and its tidal harbour. Shipyards and businesses were established, servicing the busy wharves where apples and potatoes were loaded from farm wagons to schooners which carried them to other parts of the province and the world.

The trestle of the Annapolis and Windsor Railway effectively cut off the upper harbour in 1868 and relegated shipping and trade to the outer creek leading to the Cornwallis River. You can still see remnants of the wharf timbers sticking out of the muddy banks.

Later in the 19th century other business grew up to the west along Main Street and some of them are still there today. Look for these historic commercial buildings:

Herbin’s

Herbin’s small and elegant jewellery shop was founded by John Frederick Herbin in 1885 and is still in the same family after four generations. His first store was replaced in 1898 by the building that still stands on the corner of Linden and Main. J.F. Herbin was a man of many talents. He was descended on his mother’s side from an Acadian family and it was he that bought the land where the Acadian village of Grand Pre once stood and made possible the national historic site that is there today. Poet, writer, local historian, geologist, and community leader, he was one of Wolfville’s outstanding citizens.

The Warehouse Mall (Wolfville Fruit Company)

Tom Sheppard in *Historic Wolfville*, says “The Wolfville Fruit Company was one of dozens of fruit cooperatives that formed in the valley in the early 1900s, as people bought shares in the business. It was set up in 1914 by a group of apple growers from the area as a fruit warehouse, expanding later into the selling of groceries.” The Wolfville Town Hall had offices in the other side of the building. Chain stores forced smaller enterprises out of business, and the Wolfville Fruit Company grocery store closed in the 1950s.



The MacDonald and Chisholm building was built prior to the mid-1860s when it was moved to this site; it has housed a long succession of grocery and hardware businesses.



The Wolfville Post Office (1912–1971)



The Wolfville Fruit Company store in the 1940s.



The Wolfville Opera House, built in 1911, became in 1923 the Orpheum Theatre, and in 1947 the Acadia Theatre.



Main St. looking west early 1900s. Hales Store on the left and J.D. Chambers on the right

the Acadia Cinema (the Opera House, the Orpheum Theatre)

The Opera House opened in this former hotel in 1911. By 1915 silent films were in full swing with a piano accompaniment, and local audiences thrilled to John Barrymore in *The Man from Mexico* and Mary Pickford in *Fanchon the Cricket*. Lectures, concerts and amateur entertainments were held and high school students presented ambitious and colourful dramatic stage presentations at the Opera House, especially at Christmas. In 1923 the name changed to the Opheum and later again to the Acadia Theatre. Today the interior has been renovated and once again serves as a community focus for films and stage entertainment.

Joe’s (the Palms)

Every teenager in the 1940s knew about the Palms—it was where you could meet your friends, have a soda and jive to the music of the juke box, under the friendly eye of proprietor Cecil Young. Like many downtown businesses, the store had originally been a house, but in 1921 the Young family remodelled the street front and opened their store. Mrs. Hannah Young, Cecil’s mother, one day ran out of the usual ingredients for her homemade ice cream and added a box of grapenut cereal, thereby inventing what is still a firm Valley favourite—grapenut ice cream.

Post Office

The Wolfville Post Office was built in 1911-1912 at the height of the era of Federal grandeur; the upper floor housed the Customs offices. Standing closer to the street than present building, this imposing structure was the

focal point of Main Street both visually and socially, dominating the Hales building to its west, and the two bank buildings opposite as it was intended to do.

It was a robust building, clad in red sandstone, and in style was what might be called a variant of Victorian classical revival. Behind it was a municipal garden maintained by the Wolfville Gardening Club. In the early 1950s the sandstone was replaced by grey granite cladding.

In a stunning display of official vandalism this building was demolished in 1971 and replaced by the present uninspired structure.

MacDonald and Chisholm

Rupert Prat was the first recorded merchant to use this very old building on the corner of the road leading to the harbour. He was the brother of the renowned Prat sisters who ran the Primrose Bindery in New York. Rupert Prat sold “choice family groceries” as well as a variety of household items. He sold it to Harris & Harvey who had a reputation for “good honest goods and right prices” and in 1944 it became the Acadia Stores. Glen Hancock, whose uncle owned the meat store next door, worked there as a boy earning two dollars a day. His greatest trial was small boys who delighted in knocking over the tall pyramids of tin cans that the staff had just erected.

Porter’s

When Burpee Witter ran this store in 1893 you could exchange good washed wool from your own sheep for dry goods, boots and shoes and straw hats. Built in 1880, the store was run by several local merchants over the years, including John Chambers who was later Mayor of Wolfville. He sold it to Charles H. Porter in 1920 and it still remains in the Porter family.

Produced in cooperation with the Wolfville Historical Society (Randall House Museum, 259 Main Street, Wolfville)

Main Street c1900. The horse and buggy stand in front of the Herbin building, the sole structure visible in the photo which is still standing. The Masonic hall occupied the top floor of the Eaton Block to the right. From 1960 until the building was torn down in 1972, this space, known as the Waldorf, became the only student apartment in Nova Scotia with its own stage and dance hall.



History of Public Schools in Wolfville

The Free School Act of 1864 made education more widely available and replaced “travelling pedagogues” or the private schooling that was offered by Horton Academy and by Mrs. Best who educated young ladies in the Charles Randall house. In the cellar of the T.A.S. DeWolf house the family and the neighbours’ children had to share their classroom with curing hams, while a school was also held at one time across the road in the Temperance Hall on the upper level of what is now the MacDonald and Chisholm building.

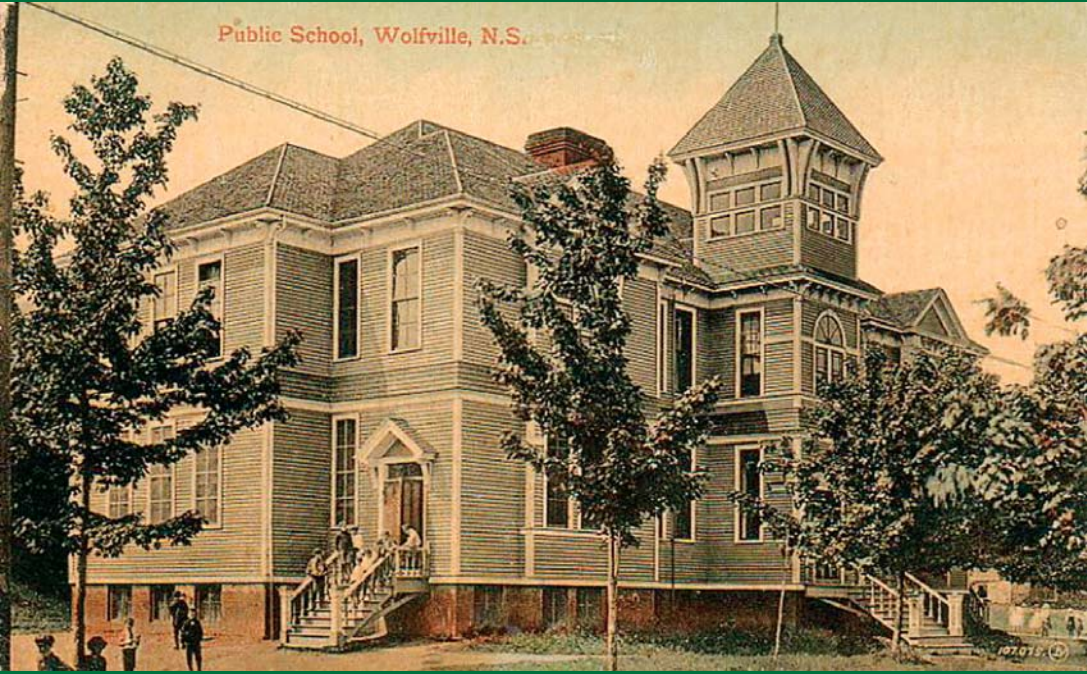
- 1864:** Wolfville’s first free school was built on the corner of Highland and Acadia Streets on what is now the school playground. It was not highly thought of, being described as “rough and awfully dirty”. It shared the building with the town jail and also housed the firebell.
- 1893:** Completion of the MacKay School on Acadia Street. It was named for the provincial superintendent of education, and considered one of the most modern in the county. By 1897 it was educating students up to grade 10 and 11 level.
- 1907:** W.H. Chase, the apple king, gave books to the school library.
- 1909:** An anti-cigarette league was formed among the boys, who wore special maple leaf badges.
- 1920:** A night school began in the school building, for those who wished to improve their education.
- 1921:** The Munro School was erected. The architect was a former teacher, Leslie R. Fairn, and it was constructed by Wolfville’s foremost contractor, Charles H. Wright. Primary classes continued in the MacKay School while grades 5 to 11 occupied



The first Wolfville Public School (1864–1926) on the south east corner of Highland Avenue and Acadia Street.

the Munro. B.C. Silver was principal from 1922 to 1940, and O. Rex Porter held the position for the next 30 years. The drama program at the school was popular and successful, as were track and field meets.

- 1926:** The original Wolfville School of 1864 was demolished to enlarge the primary playground.
- 1927:** For the first time the Compulsory Attendance Act was enforced in Wolfville.
- 1928:** School colours were adopted—powder blue (later royal blue), black and gold.
- 1935:** Local students won eleven of the eighteen prizes offered for English composition by the Ceylon Tea Company of Montreal, including first prize which went to Ernest Forbes Young.
- 1940s:** A cadet program was organized to train boys for the armed services and achieve proficiency in drill and marksmanship. The cadet band was a popular feature of the program.
- 1955:** The house next to the Munro Building on Acadia Street was purchased and renamed the B.C. Silver Building. Continuing the eastward expansion along Acadia Street, the Longley property was bought and the house relocated. This gave the needed space for the construction of a new high school.
- 1956:** New Wolfville High School built.
- 1964:** Gladys I. West retired after teaching for 52 years in Wolfville, and was honoured by staff and students alike. New offices, a library and teachers’ room were added to the high school and another half million dollar extension voted.



The MacKay School (1893–1972).

- 1965:** The B.C. Silver building was demolished making room for a gymnasium addition to the high school. By the 1970s parents were urging the replacement of the venerable MacKay building as well as the Munro building to allow the building of a modern elementary school.
- 1972:** By late fall the older school buildings were gone and classes had begun in a new elementary school, designed by Leslie R. Fairn, and constructed by V.C. Woodworth. It featured the new “open classroom concept”.
- 1973:** The formal opening of the new school took place in January 1973. After more than a century of building and rebuilding, the Wolfville School had achieved the form that it still has today.
- 1977:** Despite opposition that included a brief sit-in by the students, Wolfville became part of the amalgamated county school board and the high school classes ceased. Students from grades 10 to 12 now attend Horton District High School in Greenwich.

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The Munro School (1921-1972) with the Wolfville High School Cadet Corps formed up in front. The house in the left background, named the B. C. Silver building after a popular and long serving principal, housed the home economics and industrial arts departments from 1956 to 1966.

