# The Nova Scotia Historical Quarterly

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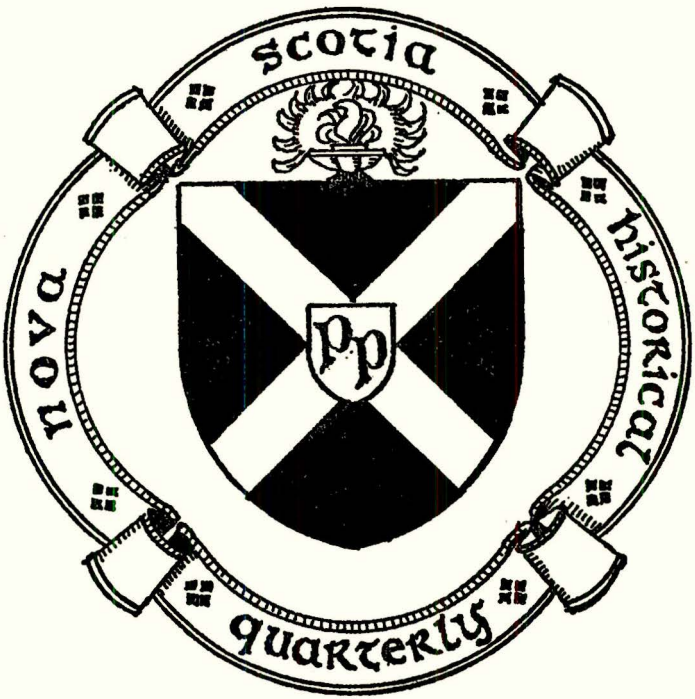

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# *Joseph Howe — Journalist*

LORNA INNESS

This year Nova Scotians are observing the 100th anniversary of the death of Joseph Howe, statesman, visionary, patriot. He is remembered for many things, not the least of which was his involvement with journalism. Indeed, many consider him the best journalist ever produced in Nova Scotia. Certainly, his fight for the freedom of the press was one of his most glorious battles.

Joseph Howe was born into a family well inoculated with printer's ink and with this background and his own natural talents it is not surprising that newspapers and the press were to be major interests throughout his life.

If politics was the "harridan" he married while poetry was the "maiden" he loved, journalism was at the least a dear friend and confidante.

From the sketchy outline of the Howe family that is available to us we know that John Howe, Joseph's father, was born in Boston in 1754 and that he was apprenticed by his father to the printing trade. Twenty years later, Howe was employed by a Boston newspaper publisher, Richard Draper, who produced the Massachusetts Gazette and the Boston News Letter. They

were among the earliest journals printed in the American colonies.

Draper died in 1774, leaving his widow to continue the printing business. A short time later, she took Howe into the business as a partner. The scent of revolution was in the air and, Loyalist sympathies making them both unwelcome and unwilling to stay, Howe and his partner left Boston in 1776 and travelled to Halifax, taking their press with them.

Shortly thereafter, Howe went to Newport, Rhode Island, following British forces in the winter of 1776. There he began publishing a paper called The Newport Gazette, and there he married Martha Minns, a 16-year-old minister's daughter.

Howe continued to publish at Newport until the British evacuation in October 1779 after which he and his wife left for Halifax. By January 1781 Howe had set up shop at the corner of Sackville and Barrington streets and begun publication of The Halifax Journal. Subsequently Howe became King's Printer and postmaster-general, posts later held by his son, John. Howe's first wife died in 1790 and Howe later married the widow of a Captain Austin. In 1804 she became the mother of Joseph Howe.

Of young Howe's early days we know comparatively little, We know from his own statement that he received a minimum of education compared to what was available to a lad of good family at that time. Like Shakespeare, he rejoiced in "small Latin and less Greek", but, like Shakespeare, he was to show a remarkable command of the English language and an ability to wield it like a flaming sword.

The young Howe worked as a clerk in the post office. As fas as exposure to journalism is concerned, we must assume that much of his time as a lad was spent helping in his father's

business, getting the smell of the ink and succumbing to the fascination of the printed page—a page set by hand and produced from the one great press by hand.

To his scant schooling, scant in the sense of higher education, he brought those fundamental qualities of a good reporter —in Howe's day and today— a lively curiosity and a thirst for general knowledge.

In 1826, in company with James Spike, considered to be a remote relation who likely learned the printing trade from Howe senior, Joseph Howe bought the Weekly Chronicle founded in 1786 by William Minns, Howe's step-uncle. Minns had come to Halifax with his brother-in-law, John Howe, and had learned the printing trade in his shop.

The two men renamed the paper The Acadian and General Advertiser and its first issue appeared on January 5, 1827. The paper supported economic and social progress for Nova Scotia and free trade. This partnership lasted for barely a year and then Spike bought Howe's interest; at least the agreement was there, but the debt remained.

This venture, however, did not cause Howe to lose interest in journalism. On the contrary, in 1828, Howe bought The Novascotian or Colonial Herald from George Young who had founded it in 1824. Howe retained the motto on the paper's banner, "The free Constitution which guards the British Press," attributed to Sir James MacKintosh. It was a motto which summarized Howe's strong feelings about "the system under which we live", and it remained on the paper, throughout changes of ownership, until 1922.

It is worth considering here the role newspapers played in the early part of the 19th century. Those flimsy, frail papers, two pages, four, perhaps six, with the tiny print were the sole

form of mass communication. They shared with the mails and word-of-mouth reports, the dissemination of the news, and the news was frequently five weeks, perhaps two months late.

Two major events, one in North America and one in Europe, underlined the importance of the newspapers and led to their becoming necessary household items.

In America, a few early papers flourished prior to 1776, but the events of the revolution and the talents of such able men as Benjamin Franklin firmly established the importance of newspapers. They told what had happened, they gave reasons why, they urged courses of action. Men read them eagerly to learn what was happening as a young nation went through the agonies of separation from its parent and began charting a course along new ways.

In Europe, the French Revolution and, the rise of Napoleon, with the consequent threats to other European nations and to Britain, gave greater importance to newspapers in the Mother Country. The Times, The Old Thunderer, began to set up a network of foreign correspondents in an effort to get on-the-spot reports, eyewitness accounts, however late they might be by our standards, of the bloody events on the Continent.

In these times were forged the principles of accuracy, reliability, of first-hand accounts of people, events and conditions, which form the basis of journalism today. Speed was vital, especially where competition was a factor.

It is interesting to note that the Battle of Trafalgar, decisive, vital to the British cause, was fought on October 21, 1805. The first account of it to be published in London appeared in the London Gazette on November 7, 17 days later. In those days, that was speed.

In the New World, as in the Old, when the sound of arms and gunshot far afield had far-reaching effects, the papers brought not only news, but a sense of the times and conditions.

In Nova Scotia, Anthony Henry Holland, editor and publisher of the Acadian Recorder, would row out to meet vessels coming into Halifax Harbor in order to get the latest news from foreign papers and rush it into his paper.

Approximately the same time that Howe was publishing The Novascotian, a New Englander, Daniel H. Craig, used to take a small, fast boat and meet ships from Europe, either in Halifax harbor or off the coast of Nova Scotia. He carried a supply of pigeons with him and he would scan the papers, make notes of the major stories and send them off with the pigeons to various papers in Boston and New York, beating the competition dependent upon the boat's arrival for the same news. About 1848, Craig ran a horse express service from Halifax to Digby and then by boat across the Bay of Fundy to enable the papers he supplied to get the news fast and first. Craig later became one of the early giants of the Associated Press news service.

It is also fitting to remember that it was a Nova Scotian, Frederick Creed, who developed the system which automatically transmitted news by wire, a system which became the heartbeat of the great news services.

When Howe took over the Novascotian, it fell to him to cull news items from the major foreign papers and journals, to read countless despatches and articles for extracts which he included in the contents of his paper. "From the latest British journals . . . " the heading read and there would be comments about what the Times or other leading papers had to say about events of importance.

Communication, understanding—these were the tasks of the paper and it was a journalist's job to get at the real news, an editor's to interpret or comment.

In a letter written in May, 1827, Howe, observed that " . . . I . . . under the Editorial shelter of that great battery of 'We' thunder away as much nonsense as my contemporaries . . . I already read papers by the dozen, write long leading articles upon subjects about which I know nothing and speculate most gravely upon political changes and affairs of State and all the various accidents by flood and field which come within the reach of my good quill . . ."

"When tired of Editorial restraint and its attendant cant and humbug," Howe added, "I put on the reverend wig and sober phiz of Fred Maple and ramble along in my own way . . . ", a practice followed today by many a journalist and editor who, having disposed of the world's serious issues, turns his talents to wit and humor, usually in a personal column of some kind.

When Howe published his first edition of the Novascotian, he led off with a Prospectus in which he set out his reasons for acquiring the paper and the policies by which he would be guided.

"Although the tranquil condition of the world has diminished the interest which newspapers formerly possessed, when every fresh arrival brought fearful tidings from scenes of blood and carnage, there is a boundless sphere open to Editorial exertion . . . Men do not desire a paper now with the same avidity that they did in 1812, but they dwell on it longer, take a less lively, perhaps, but more lasting interest in its contents, and derive from it more of rational amusement and solid practical instruction . . . "

The role and condition of government was a major interest of Howe's and he now had a forum for his views. He was not long in using that forum. In the issue of January 31, 1828, he launched an attack against practices in local government, an attack similar to the one which led to the spirited and successful defence of freedom of the press in 1835. Writing on the Poor and County rates, Howe noted that:

"Those who have been in the habit of promptly paying these charges from year to year, will perhaps be surprised to learn that there are some individuals in the community who have not paid a farthing for four, five, six and even nine years . . . The Grand Jury last year refused to tax the town, until measures were taken to enforce former assessments; but, as in case of their refusal, the Magistrates have the power to order all assessment, the evil has continued without any remedy."

"While we duly appreciate the blessings we enjoy, we should not be blind to local abuses. We therefore call the public attention to these facts, and trust those whom they concern will no longer neglect their duty . . ." That, as they say, must have put the cat among the pigeons and one can imagine the conversations in the coffee houses and inns.

Howe concluded by asking if it would not be a good idea to publish once a year a statement of the town and county affairs. "At present, unless he chance to be a Grand Juror, nobody knows anything of the revenues of the Town Property, nor of its annual expenses."

That the people should know what their government was up to was one of Howe's guiding principles. His battle for freedom of the press, the famous libel case, comes to mind immediately when one hears the name of Howe, but perhaps an achievement as great was the beginning of regular, detailed and meticulous reporting of the daily debates in the House of

Assembly. Upon assuming control of The Novascotian, Howe noted publicly his intention to attend the sessions and record the debates.

Howe referred to the victory of the British press in gaining the right to report speeches from the House of Commons, "Till speeches began to be reported in detail and contemporaneously, the public at large was almost wholly uninformed of what had passed within the walls of Parliament . . . It is only, therefore . . . since the practice of contemporaneous reporting grew up in England, that parliamentary eloquence has been placed, in that country, upon its present improved footing . . ."

Also, noted Howe, it was possible for the people to follow the actions of their representative, to know whether he spoke out for them or kept silent on important matters. It enabled them to judge whether he might be better replaced when the next election was called.

Howe promised his readers that he would "pay constant attention to the Debates, and publish a weekly supplement to enable us to give them more fully. Many we know are opposed to reporting, on the ground that it protracts the business of the Session, that it leads members to very long harangues, instead of bending their minds to the serious performance of their duties . . . " (The same arguments have since been heard against the televising of proceedings in Parliament and provincial Legislatures.)

But Howe felt that by his actions, "the people . . . without neglecting their affairs, or spending their time in the gallery . . . are provided with the arguments on both sides of a variety of questions in which their interests are deeply involved . . . "

Howe, himself a speaker at some length, said "We are no enemies to a long speech—because it is difficult for a man to

go fully into the merits of any question, in a short one . . . " and he stressed the value of research, and its effect of raising the level of debate.

It is recorded that in his early days as a journalist, Howe lived above his printing shop. By his fourth week as the editor of The Novascotian, he was advertising for "an apprentice to the PRINTING business, a boy, of good recommendation . . . ", so one can guess that the press of work was catching up with him.

We do not know what the circulation figures were for The Novascotian at that time, but it was Howe's aim to run not only a city paper, but a provincial one, as well. The population of Nova Scotia was about 124,000 and in January of 1831, looking ahead to a fourth volume, Howe was able to write: "In every county of the Province, the list of its (The Novascotian's) patrons has been considerably enlarged . . . There is scarcely a settlement where The Novascotian is not constantly read—scarcely a cottage into which it does not occasionally penetrate . . . "

It should be remembered that in those days of small staffs, when a newspaper was almost a one-man band, it was not unusual for a man to wear, as Howe did, three hats—publisher, editor and journalist.

Shortly after Howe began publishing The Novascotian, he set off on his provincial tours, the rambles, during the course of which he got to know people, obtained first-hand impressions of the country, and took subscriptions to his paper—all at the same time.

On the personal side, it is noted that sometimes on summer nights, after sweating long evenings over the press, Howe would run down to the edge of Halifax harbor and plunge into

its waters for a refreshing swim. One can only surmise that the harbor was a lot cleaner in those days and that, when it came to strenuous physical activity, Howe was the Pierre Berton of his day.

Howe opened the columns of his paper to literature and poetry. (Remember, radio and television were unknown and newspapers gave considerably more space to the arts, sometimes giving half the front page to some lengthy epic, such as "The Burial of An Immigrant's Child in the Forests," or an account of "Babylon the Fallen".) Further, Howe was fortunate in being able to draw on the talents of some remarkably gifted men, Thomas Chandler Haliburton, for one. And it was as publisher, of Haliburton's two-volume history of Nova Scotia, that Howe came near to bankruptcy.

Howe made The Novascotian's columns available to those who disagreed with him. He appears to have conducted a lively "letters to the Editor" section, writing on occasion brusque little notes such as:

"We have received a letter purporting to be from Mrs. R.; but it is two (sic) badly spelt to be genuine, we can not insert it . . . "

And,

"Jerry Dunoho's attempt to libel the people of Bridgetown cannot be palmed off upon us—he had better send it to those who are ignorant of the society and petty disputes of the country towns, and who cannot see through the flimsy disguises in which his enemies are arrayed . . . "

Howe insisted, however, that his correspondents "refrain from every species of personality: let them discuss public measures freely; and, if need be, let them fearlessly arraign

public men but at the same time a due regard to decorum, and the decent courtesies of life, should be preserved."

Of his own reactions, Howe commented that "if we have sometimes barbed the arrow, it was generally in self-defence."

Howe's oratory was said to be ringing and compelling. It was also lengthy and it is unlikely that it would be to a modern audience's taste. His literary style—editorial, prose or poetry—was rambling and wordy. No one was at his shoulder urging him to "keep it under 100 words." There was, perhaps, not the same premium on space that there is today. However, he was faithful to the literary style of his times.

In 1838 Howe, increasingly absorbed in politics, left journalism and committed himself to "the harridan I married." There were occasional returns to the newspaper business, but Howe was making the news, rather than writing about it.

How, then do we rate this man as a journalist-editor by today's standards? Had such an award been available to him, would he, for example, have won a Bowaters' Award or even a Pulitzer Prize? And if he did, in what category would it be? For a stirring defence of freedom of the press, for a ringing call for social reform, or for one of those "grass roots" pieces of rural wit and wisdom? Who can say?

It is clear, though, that he was dedicated to the right of the people to know about the people's business, to freedom of speech within the law and bounded by the rules of good taste. He subscribed where feasible to that cardinal rule of journalism —go for yourself and see, rather than accept some other version of something.

He was able to admit an error or make a change frankly; in small things, such as an error in reporting someone's views

on a discussion of the fish bounty, or in large things, as in his changed attitudes to confederation and Nova Scotia's role in it once the union became an accomplished fact.

He was a dedicated patriot and he boasted of Nova Scotia and urged his readers to do likewise. He worked for the good of Nova Scotia and its people. He did not live to see it happen, but many of the things for which he worked have since come into being—free schools, the growth of adult education, for example.

We honor his memory this year. Would not one excellent way of so doing be to institute a form of Howe awards for journalistic achievement in this province?

# *The Great Pontack Inn*

MARJORIE MAJOR

(*The Inn that 'had everything'*)

A colorful variety of Inns, Taverns and Coffee Houses dominated the social life of Halifax throughout the early years of the settlement, among them the one known as the Great Pontack. Probably none served better to demonstrate the baffling, often amusing, but consistently conflicting qualities and forces which then characterized this made-to-order garrison town.

Born in 1749 of political exagences, Halifax, Nova Scotia was a town of intriguing and sometimes exciting contrasts in the 'good old days' of the mid-1700's and early 1800's.

This was the time of sailing ships, of press gangs, of drinking, carousing and brawling in the waterfront area of a harbor destined to influence the future of the entire North American continent.

In 1760 there were 'upwards of 100 licensed houses' in Halifax, to quote one historian who added, 'and perhaps as many more which retail spiritous liquors without license.'

In contrast to the heat generated by drink and argument, the town had winters cold enough to freeze the harbor and

bring its sailing traffic to a halt. In spring and autumn citizens and horse-drawn vehicles alike wallowed in mud, in streets and lanes where cobblestones or wooden sidewalks had not yet been installed—and few had these amenities.

In 1750 four hundred lanterns were purchased to light landing places and rough streets, but in a comparatively short time these had been eliminated from the scene by roistering seamen. Perhaps some unruly citizens participated—for this town, born in violence, was largely, but by no means entirely, populated by the London poor who, as settlers, drew rations for five years after the founding of Halifax, but for many years afterwards suffered privations and frustrations.

However, violence was not confined to the waterfront. Indians, against whom the settlement was barricaded, were still regarded as 'savages', although at the same time, the French were buying Indian scalps at Louisbourg and the English were doing the same at Halifax. In pointed contrast, St. Paul's Anglican church was opened for worship in 1750—with neither pews nor heat, but available to serve the religious needs of the community.

Interestingly enough this infant town, so unattractive in appearance despite its scenic location, might also have been given the unglamorous name of 'Dunkville', as the Earl of Halifax, for whom the settlement was named, was in fact George Dunk.

Nevertheless this 'outpost in the wilderness' had quite another side to show to visiting royalty and other distinguished personages. It was during this same period of lawlessness and the disorder that seems to go with early stages of development, events of extraordinary lavishness and formality took place. High ranking officers of navy and army, prosperous businessmen and other human components of an elite society, built and

occupied fine homes and official buildings and they carried out their duties, both administrative and social, with all the pomp and ceremony, color and pageantry to which they had been accustomed in the land of their origin. And the possibility lingers that in some instances at least they may have gone the old customs one better.

Parades and processions were already part of the pattern of life in Halifax when, in 1754, Jonathan Belcher, Esq. was sworn in as Nova Scotia's first Chief Justice, in a history-making ceremony.

On this particular Monday morning in mid-October at the commencement of Michaelmas Term, the new Chief Justice in his scarlet robes walked out of the Governor's house with His Excellency Lieutenant Governor Charles Lawrence. Behind them came the Honorable Members of His Majesty's Council, the Provost Marshall, the Judge's tipstaff, other civil officers and gentlemen of the Bar, the latter in their gowns.

(While no records confirm it, surely it could be assumed this precedent would not have been established unless it had been one of those balmy, frost-spiced, blue-domed days which a Nova Scotia October frequently dispenses.)

The dignified procession walked to the Pontack Inn and entered the 'long room' where a waiting company of 'ladies and officers of the Army' received them and extended congratulations and uttered their compliments in the 'politest manner'. The party was then served 'an elegant' breakfast. A reference to old cookbooks makes it relatively easy to interpret this in terms of the more popular breakfast dishes of the period. That would mean potatoes and sausages, kippers and kidneys, cold meats and hot meat dishes. It would include pies doughnuts, cakes; and very likely pancakes and maple syrup too, on this continent. An 'elegant' meal then, would probably include all these dishes, and local specialties besides!

After breakfast, the entire procession went on to St. Paul's church to hear a sermon from the text: "I am one of them that are peaceable and faithful in Israel." Then the party proceeded to the Court House which had been suitably prepared for the ceremony. Chief Justice Belcher sat under a canopy with His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor seated on his right, as the clerk of the Crown presented His Majesty's commission testifying to the formal appointment.

A faint idea of the variety of activities under the broad roof of the Pontack is in the account of a quite different sort of gathering there on June 24, 1756. This was the auction sale of a vessel and its cargo which had been captured by *H.M. Success* under Capt. John Rous. Details of the capture were heard in Admiralty Court which was presided over by Judge John Collier: "June 2, 1756 *Success* saw a schooner standing from Isle St. John (Prince Edward Island) in toward Nova Scotia. *Success* gave chase, hoisting French colors and firing several shots. Midshipman Tate and a boat crew from *Success* then boarded the schooner, only to find that the crew had set it afire and had quit it. Tate and his men put out the fire and brought it, by order of Capt. Rous, to Halifax. At the trial the schooner was found guilty of being in illicit trade in supplying arms to Indian enemies and Acadians and it was ordered condemned and sold."

What sort of building was this that could—and did—successfully accommodate activities and festivities ranging from auctions, through dramatic productions, to balls, and a wide spectrum of gatherings and civic ceremonies? It is said that a picture is worth a thousand words, but in this instance there is not much choice, for there are no known drawings, or pictures of any kind, which would show the reader the large proportions, unique three-storey architecture and provision for an amazing combination of facilities under its generous roof. Moreover, the Halifax waterfront has changed so drastically

over the years it is difficult to imagine there was a quiet little cove curving in from the harbor to the very foot of Duke Street, which at high tide brought the waters over the horseshoe beach and very close to the rear of the Pontack itself. This geographic fact had a notable bearing on the story connected with one of the Inn's more famous social events.

The assembly rooms—and apparently there were several, were on the second floor. A further separation from the ground or first floor was achieved by a large veranda which some accounts say encompassed the entire building, and others that it was on three sides, one fronting on the harbor.

Underneath this second floor, on which the many glittering and highly formal social events took place, were located the facilities which made possible the diversity of services offered by the proprietor in a series of advertisements appearing in The Nova Scotia Chronicle beginning September 12, 1769, when a new owner made his appeal for business. However, most if not all the facilities mentioned, were probably available under the previous owner as well.

The media of those days consisted solely of weekly newspapers which in turn were severely limited as to size and scope, but the following advertisement in the Nova Scotia Chronicle makes the most of print, so that all that is missing is the photograph:

"This is to inform the Public that John Willis has lately opened the House commonly known by the name of Great Pontack, which he purposes to improve in Public Entertainment, where Gentlemen, of every Profession, both of Town and Country, may rely on being genteely entertained at the most reasonable Rates. He also purposes keeping a CHOP-HOUSE, where Gentlemen may be supplied with the greatest Dispatch, and Dinners dressed at the Shortest Notice.

He begs leave to inform the Ladies that he has a good Convenience for Baking in which they may depend on having their commands duly performed to the greatest nicety; and hot Mutton Pyes every Day.

As he has very good Conveniences for Stabling and Slaughter-house (being very near the Market house) he also purposes to open a Correspondence with the Country Gentlemen, where they can kill and dispose of such cattle as they may have occasion for, and shall always make it a Point to assist to the utmost such Gentlemen that shall favor him with their Commands for their greater Dispatch.

He also begs leave to inform the Public that he has a large and commodious ASSEMBLY ROOM, which was made use of several Seasons, and as he has now opened the House, hopes to have the Honor and Indulgence of having it reinstated, and the best attendance may be depended upon by their most obedient and obliged humble servant.

(signed) John Willis"

One of the records adds this comment: 'We can understand from the above quaint advertisement its value to the inhabitants of that early time—Slaughter-house, ball-room, public conveniences, bakers, butchers' stalls and stabling, all attended to under one roof.'

And another small glimpse of the building itself is contained in the further description which adds 'Its courtyard for waggons being in the centre of the building.' Since this courtyard is also mentioned as the scene of several theatrical presentations one can assume the Inn itself must have been enormous.

Understandably such a conglomeration of activities attracted a varied patronage and the records reveal the Inn was

'a great resort for the loungers of the town, and all kinds of assignations were made, and business attended to at the Pontack'. (A succinct but sadly noncommital comment, that!)

There were, of courrse, certain disadvantages in having the kitchens on the floor below the scene of festivities. Among other things it meant the water required to make tea and coffee had to be heated at that level and brought up in hissing kettles, by scurrying carriers. The ladies and gentlemen, who were usually in the midst of a solemn performance of a minuet, would be momentarily scattered by the kettle-bearing waiters calling out their warning—"Boiling! Boiling!!"—as they made for the far end of the ball-room where refreshments would be served.

It was on just such a gala occasion that one of the most amusing and possibly the most daring episode took place. Doubtless there were many entertaining incidents in the old Inn which went unrecorded—at least in public records. In this case though, it is probably due to the number and prominence of the people involved that it became generally known.

Officers of His Majesty's fleet frequently entertained at the Great Pontack, consequently that little cove at the rear of the Inn served a most useful purpose. Its proximity to both ship and shore made it possible, even feasible, to prepare on board many of the dishes to be served. A ship's crew could then cover the short distance over water, and simultaneously with the beaching of the craft the accompanying stewards would carry the culinary creations into the Inn and up to the banquet room; or, on other occasions, pass them through lower windows for later serving upstairs.

On this particular occasion the British fleet was in Halifax Harbor, on the eve of departure for the West Indies. According to a time-honored custom the city frequently tendered a dinner

and ball at the Pontack for officers and their guests and the usual impressive list of civic and governmental dignitaries and their ladies.

One might like to think the hero of this tale had a heart interest ashore as a compelling reason for what he did that night. But instead, it seems to have been his well-known and inextinguishable thirst for adventure and prank-playing, for which he had a considerable reputation on board his ship, which prompted this bold escapade.

John Willett Payne was a young lieutenant on His Majesty's frigate "*Bruno*", under the command of Captain James Ferguson. Known generally—for good reason—as "Rascally Jock", this young man had managed to earn the displeasure of his Captain on more than one previous occasion; at the same time, it must be admitted, winning the admiration of his shipmates. It was scarcely a matter of surprise to the rest of the ship, then, when it was learned that Lt. Payne had once again incurred the disapproval of Captain Ferguson and had been ordered by him to remain on board ship the very night of the gala ball at the Great Pontack.

This was indeed a blow; but it also provided an irresistible challenge to the high-spirited Payne, whose reputation for wit and mischief were attributed largely to his Irish mother. (Second wife of the Lieut. Governor of St. Christopher's.) It doesn't seem fair to blame her for his troubles, but no doubt this part of his heritage did have some bearing on his infectious good humor. In any event, Jock Payne hadn't the slightest intention of missing the fun at the Great Pontack that night. Rapidly he formed a plan, about which he conferred with certain of his shipboard intimates. Then solemnly he watched his Captain prepare to disembark, resplendent in his formal attire, not so much as glancing at his incorrigible young officer beyond assuring himself he was there, on the ship.

No sooner had the Captain's head disappeared overside, when young Payne scampered below, divesting himself of his uniform as he went, and emerging soon after in civilian attire.

His chosen confederates were ready for him. He jumped into the waiting boat and was taken swiftly to the little cove where—only moments before—Captain Ferguson had landed, and whose crew members were still standing by. Jack approached them, and in his most official tone of voice announced that he was bringing the message for them to go to the nearby Tavern and there to drink to the Captain's health to pass away the hours before the end of the ball. Needless to say they accepted this message with enthusiasm and alacrity. Meanwhile, Lt. Payne instructed his own crew to stand by with the utmost vigilence ready to push off in an instant should the need arise.

Quickly, then, he slipped into the Inn, making his arrival among the guests as inconspicuous as possible. Once inside he contacted others of his friends, and proceeded forthwith to enjoy himself, posing as a young stranger from the neighboring town of Windsor.

The inevitable eventually happened: Capt. Ferguson saw him and more in exasperation than in courtesy approached him and, almost entirely ignoring the young man's lovely partner demanded, "Jock, you rascal, what the devil are you doing here?" Lt. Payne looked blank then injured, assured Capt. Ferguson it was a case of mistaken identity and graciously bowed himself and partner out of the situation, and calmly resumed the dance.

Capt. Ferguson was only partly convinced and from time to time questioned Jock's shipmates. But all he got was confirmation that it was, indeed, a stranger from Windsor. But instead of becoming reassured, Capt. Ferguson's face revealed his growing conviction the 'stranger' was a hoax.

Equally alert was one A.W.O.L. lieutenant, who knew the game was up when he saw that certain expression appear on Capt. Ferguson's face. Although he could not hear his Captain remark to his companion, "Devil take it, that's my rascally Jock Payne!" Taking advantage of the distance between them, and the dancers who were unaware they were running interference for him in his escape, Lieutenant Payne promptly vanished from the scene. As Captain Ferguson made his own excuses and left in haste for the water side of the Inn, the nimble-witted Payne was out of a side door down to the water's edge and into his boat, with a willing crew ready to take off, swallowed up in the darkness by the time Capt. Ferguson arrived. Then, of course he had first to round up his merry crew, still in the Tavern 'drinking his health', before he could get under way. That small delay was all Jack needed—to board ship, shed his civilian attire and get back into uniform. So when Capt. Ferguson appeared shortly afterward on the quarter deck to greet him with the same solemnity as when he'd left ship some hours before, was Lieutenant Payne, saluting smartly. Capt. Ferguson looked at him sharply, by no means convinced that all was as it should be. Besides, didn't he detect a tell-tale glint in 'Rascally Jock's' blue eyes? But what evidence had he to prove it?

Eventually that same 'Rascally Jock' rose to be Vice-Admiral Sir John Payne. And quite some time before that, but after he'd risen several notches in the service, he had confessed his misdemeanor to Capt. Ferguson who, by that time could share the laugh and the two became firm friends. Besides, Captain Ferguson did have the satisfaction of finding out he was right after all—that the young man he saw that night at the ball was no 'stranger' from Windsor.

A truly 'big' event at the Great Pontack must have been impressive to a degree, if we are to judge by the record given us

of what is described as a 'little' dinner! It was given by James Wolfe, another colorful young officer who would later make a considerable name for himself not only at Louisbourg but, also in Quebec. He and his men were to depart for Louisbourg May 28, 1758 just four days after this 'small' dinner party. Anyone with a flair for mathematics might find it of interest, in view of the pay rates then, and the value of the pound sterling, to translate the prices into today's currency. It cost Wolfe nearly £100. Oddly enough, while many records fully as interesting and perhaps more so, have been destroyed, lost or mislaid, this one has remained, as evidence of the times:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 47 plates @ 20/ | £47 | 0 | 0 |
| 70 bottles Maderia @ 5/ | 17 | 10 | 0 |
| 50 bottles Claret @ 5/ | 12 | 10 | 0 |
| 25 bottles Brandy @ 7/6 | 9 | 7 | 6 |
| 10 musicians @ 10/ | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Supplies for musicians | 2 | 15 | 0 |
| 15 special attendants @ 4/ | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Table-master and his supper | 1 | 10 | 0 |
| | £98 | 12 | 6 |

To Genl. Wolfe
Halifax,
24th May, 1758

John Willis
Great Pontack

The British had previously reconnoitred Louisbourg for this engagement which was to prove the last in a see-saw situation and thus change the direction of Canadian history.

The fleet had arrived in Halifax May 8, with 12,000 soldiers in the expedition, destined for Louisbourg. As one writer put it, "The Dunkirk of America was doomed." Lawrence went with them and left Colonel Moncton in charge.

Just three years previously a census of Halifax reported well under 2,000 inhabitants, so the effect of such a large contingent in port may well be imagined.

Nevertheless the town's 'Halifax Gazette' carried many advertisements besides that of the Great Pontack. There were all sorts of tradespeople, professionals and goods, which included about everything from 'choice Hampshire bacon', to house frames and offered services from legal documents to soap and candle making.

The Pontack Inn served as a kind of Lloyds of London for the ship owners, other business men and financiers of the town, who met in the Guild of Merchants' chamber of the Inn.

There was a growing cultural life in Halifax too, quite aside from the public hangings on Citadel Hill, the attractions of the slave market and the various 'goings on' in certain waterfront areas. There was a grammar school, an Agricultural Society, and a lively interest in theatricals.

There was a Night School in 1769 which offered studies in Reading, Writing, Arithmetic and Bookkeeping. Elsewhere one might obtain lessons in French and ballroom dancing. In fact, there was such a variety of attractions available that a young soldier whose regiment had been sent 'up country' wrote in a letter it was . . . "very gay at Halifax—plays, balls and an abundance of good eating and drinking."

There was plenty of the latter beyond any doubt. The town had a number of Inns besides the Pontack and a great many Taverns. A press report of September 1769 reports that on "Saturday last was found dead . . . a Clerk of His Majesty's ship *Baltimore*. His death it's supposed was occasioned by Drinking to Excess" (The press today would not dare to 'suppose' any such thing'.)

In the matter of plays the young town did very well. April 10, 1773, for example, the press carried an advertisement for a benefit to be held in the Great Pontack—a play entitled "The Suspicious Husband". The majority of the productions offered were, like this one, adopted or adapted from the English stage and leaned heavily toward farce.

Benefits were presented quite frequently in this form, in aid of the ever-present and painfully obvious poor. "The Suspicious Husband" had been an outstanding success in England. It was performed in Drury Lane and in Covent Garden and listed in Bell's British Theatre among "the most esteemed English plays."

Like several other titles of the period this was written by Dr. Benjamin Hoadly, a physician 'of considerable eminence', with the collaboration of his brother, John. Benjamin was the elder son of the Bishop of Winchester. Originally, this play was to have been called "The Rake". A steel engraving, apparently illustrating the theme, shows a man stealthily entering a room by a window while coming out of another room is a woman with a candle held aloft. A midnight rendevous? But in the dedication message to the King the author assures him it is obviously "in good taste", thanks him for letting his royal name appear on it and compliments the King on his being able to participate in 'it's innocent amusement', and, in the style of the period the entire message is couched in exaggerated and flowery phrases. Despite all this, one critic is reported to have remarked sourly, "not one stroke of wit in the whole play!"

This one and another play called "The Guardian and the Lying Valet" and others, were performed at the Great Pontack, where the courtyard served as the theatre. The advertisements stated the admission for these plays to be from 2 to 5 shillings. They also requested the ladies attending to "dress their hair as low as possible, so that patrons behind them may see the stage."

The actors were mainly "gentlemen of the Navy, Army and town." Who took the female roles is not clear. But many theatrical productions were presented at the Pontack before the Duke of Kent built a theatre on the site of the original Acadian School. It was also the custom then to present hunting and other songs as entertainment between the acts.

The press, in 1786, reported a grand ball in the style of "Ye Olden Time" held at the Pontack to celebrate the birthday of Queen Charlotte. Although in the middle of winter, it was kept as a great festivity for many years in Nova Scotia. The January 5, 1786 affair was said to be 'outstanding'. Snow lay heavy in the streets. It covered 'Signal Hill' to the depth of 'many inches'! Horses and sleighs could cope with this situation and one can easily imagine the tinkle of harness bells and the crisp spine-tingling sound of metal runners on packed snow. Cannons sent their noisy salute through the crisp air. There were parades and military displays and all sorts of public observances to entertain the citizenry. It was quite a day! But the climax was the brilliant 'assembly' at the Pontack, reserved, of course, for the gentry and officials and their ladies.

The latter were ravishing with their elaborate hair-dos, the hair powdered and curled over a framework and adorned with feathers, ribbons, laces, flowers, jewels or a combination of several of these. They wore high-heeled, buckle-front slippers which peeped tantalizingly from beneath folds of rich brocades which fell gracefully over hoops. The men wore white breeches, embroidered waistcoats with lavish lace frills at wrists and necks. The young dandies among them usually had highly decorative snuffboxes in evidence, their 'quizzing glass' (monocle) swinging nonchlantly from its ribbon and their small swords bright with polish.

The guests assembled at 8:30. Then, at the close of the fifth country dance, supper was announced. This was accom-

plished by the dramatic rise of a curtain which separated the room where the dancing took place and another room where refreshments were served. Facing the guests was a long table, its entire length a breath-taking display of confections and pastries, the famed art of one Signor Lenzi. The Goddess of Health presided over one end and Venus the other, while rising from the middle was an artificial fountain. On either side of it paraded the triumphs of the signor's skill: pyramids, obelisks, monuments and temples, and all the foods highest in favor for such an event.

The rooms were blazing with the light of many waxen candles and spermacetti candles (whale oil was still a reliable source of illumination.)

With all the musical talent available through the presence of so many men of the services there was no problem to acquire excellent music for all the intricate dances then in vogue, as well as for the lively steps of traditional dances. The music continued throughout the dinner and until dancing resumed at 12 midnight, to continue until 5 o'clock in the morning.

Then followed the toasts! There were supposed to be twenty of them on the list, but an extra one—or several—would not be unusual.

Among them on this gala occasion was the 'toast of the evening' in honor of a Miss Sarah Gray, a New York belle who was visiting a family by the name of Newton at the time and who won instant and enormous approval among the young blades.

The records tells us 700 bottles of fine wines of various vintages and sorts were consumed during the merry evening. The gentlemen retired at 11 o'clock in the morning, according to one report, which neglected to say anything about the ladies.

One can only presume they had been escorted safely home some hours earlier. Apparently with some justification, the evening was described as having had "the lively abandon of harmless mirth!"

The North British Society was among the more important groups to hold regular meetings and to celebrate special occasions at the Great Pontack. In the earliest days the group, then numbering about twenty-seven, met at the home of a member—John Rider—but later they held all their gatherings at the Inn. In the Society's printed minutes covering the years 1768-1903 it says "From this place (Pontack) notices were issued for public meetings, and at this variety house our Society met for many years." The Society, formed March 26, 1768, was known familiarly as the "Scots' Club" and it is true that the Scottish element predominated in Halifax from the period of its settlement down the years.

It follows that St. Andrew's Day was the one to be celebrated with the most enthusiasm and conviviality. In 1778, the reporting of the quarterly meetings at the Great Pontack referred to the 'unsettled state of matters in the neighboring Colonies which were felt in the city, so near the war.' Lieutenant Governor Sir Richard Hughes was among the guests at the 1779 observance of St. Andrew's, with commanding officers of both army and navy. At a later date 'the festival' was described as "the day crowned with mirth and jollity" . . . "At precisely 3 o'clock the company sat down to an elegant dinner. Andrew McGill, then president-elect, in the chair, called for toasts: The King and St. Andrew; Land of Cakes and St. Andrew; St. George's Old England—and St. Andrew; St. David, Ancient Britons—and St. Andrew; St. Patrick, Ireland—and St. Andrew; the Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Nova Scotia — and St. Andrew; The Navy, the Army, the individual commanding officers and, of course, St. Andrew. At the request of Alexander Thomson, vice-president, another toast, this time to

The Mother of All Saints and St. Andrew. (It was said this had been ommited in consideration of the presence of the Rev. Dr. Breynton of St. Paul's Anglican Church.) By this time the company was ready to accept a variety of toasts, two rounds of them, "and the evening closed in great mirth, jollity and Scots feeling"! (One is persuaded to believe it!)

Then in 1783 Lodge No. 115, Ancient York Masons, agreed to celebrate the festival of St. John at the Pontack and announced in the press that 'any ancient brethern that do intend to visit on the occasion are desired to enter their names with Brother Lennox before Christmas day', signed by the then secretary. Many of these gatherings, characterized by "wit, mirth and good speeches", began at 3 o'clock in the afternoon and carried through until 10 o'clock at night.

Another popular diversion at the Great Pontack was the dancing assembly. For example, in 1782 there were two sets of subscription dancing assemblies all during the season, one of them being held in the Coffee House maintained by a Mrs. Sutherland.

The description of a men's supper party at the Pontack was found in the diary of a Halifax garrison officer, who told of some fifty toasts given during the evening, following this procedure: They all stood up on their chairs and twenty-three bumpers were given without a halt. According to this eye witnes, and participant: "It was the most laughable sight I ever beheld—the old governor and all, so drunk they could scarcely stand up." The writer added, with a smugness one dares to question, "I was tolerably well myself—knew perfectly what I was about."

There is a lack of complete agreement among historians in the spelling of the name "Pontac(k)", whether or not to use a 'k' at the end. It is probably largely a matter of choice for

almanc (k) was spelled with a 'k' at that time. But the name of the prominent family in Bordeaux, France—the home of some of the best clarets in the world—is almost certainly Pontac, and that is where the Inn's name originated.

The great fire of 1666, in London, destroyed a popular Tavern called the "White Bear", after which M. Pontac, son of the president of the parliament of Bordeaux, was asked to establish a new one on the site. This was on Christ Church passage, leading from Newgate Street to Christ Church. According to John Tinds in his "Club and Club Life in London", the place became famous for the excellence of its wines and the reasonable prices charged for them. Among others, the Fellows of the Royal Society held meetings in the establishment, which bore the name of its manager, until well into the mid-1700's.

The equally popular Great Pontack in Halifax, the namesake of that famous London club, was built on the site of a former auction business by John Butler, who was a native of Martock, Somersetshire, England. Among other offices, he was an army agent during the American Revolution, a member of the old Council of Twelve and a prominent merchant. It was built sometime previous to 1754 and operated by a Jerseyman by the name of Decartaret. The first mention of a licensed convenience of this sort was when Captain William Piggot was given one to open a coffee house in April of 1751. John Butler's nephew succeeded to a large portion of his estates, among them what is now the popular ski resort near Halifax which bears the name Martock, after the elder Butler's birthplace.

Early statutes regulating the operation of Inns and Taverns in Halifax state "they must not suffer disorderly persons, hired servants, apprentices or minors to resort to their houses, or to have liquor therein." Probably these people didn't mind too much since there were many ways and places in which to satisfy their appetites for 'mirth and merriment'.

But while drinking was indulged in freely by all classes smoking in the streets of Halifax was strictly prohibited by the Magistrates of the town. Of course, one could always quench a thirst at the town pump near the Province Building. It was famed for the excellence of its water.

But water was not available in sufficient quantities to deal with several big fires during the early years of the town and one of these, in the fall of 1837—"a most destructive fire"—spelled the end of the Great Pontack. The fire started in a tailor shop near the Jeruselem Coffee House and spread to the Pontack. Apparently Willis was no longer operating it for records state it was occupied and run by George T. Fillis at that time.

Actually Halifax had two Pontacks, the Great and the Little Pontack, but the latter didn't come into existence until some years after the Great Ponack had been destroyed by fire. The 'little' Pontack was located at the corner of Harvey and Pleasant (Barrington) Streets.

The curious admixture of wealth and poverty; the varied tastes and culture of a society created largely out of military needs; the regimentation and ceremony associated with an 'elite' composed of highly placed service officers, governing personages and influential merchants—all in juxtaposition to a citizenry with meagre resources and limited education, combined with the robust tastes of servicemen on port leave; these are the factors which set the pattern which has dominated the thinking and the development of Halifax well into the 20th century.

It is, perhaps, these cross-currents which have given the old garrison city its unique character and flavor—and may enough of it be preserved to continue to confound, to fascinate and to challenge visitors—and writers—for many years to come!

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# *A Halifax Tragedy*

EDITH CREIGHTON

## MURDER FOR MACKEREL

Among the old gray stones in St. Paul's Cemetery in Halifax, Nova Scotia, are many whose inscriptions suggest thrilling and sometimes sombre stories, stories which may be pieced together from old newspapers, and some which are, perhaps, lost forever.

One of these with an intriguing inscription which is still easy to read says:

To the Memory of
Captain John Westmacott
of the Royal Staff Corps
Died May 4th 1816 in the 29 year of his age
His Death was occasioned by
wounds received from Two
Villains in possession of stolen goods
Whom he attempted to secure
When he was performing Military
duty in Halifax early in the
Morning of 17th April 1816.

In the chilly darkness of the early morning of April 17, 1816, Captain John Westmacott of the Royal Staff Corps set

out on his rounds to visit the guards in the city of Halifax, which at that time lay largely between the Citadel and the water front.

The unpaved streets were dimly lighted and the town was still, its silence broken only by the hoof-beats of his horse as the captain made his way to points of duty.

He had time to think of the architectural studies in which he had excelled until they were interrupted by his joining Wellington's army in the Peninsular War. There were thoughts of home, of friends across the sea, of the gentle mother who lived among the refinements of the home in which he was reared, of the seemingly interminable days required for letters to arrive by sailing ship from England. Darkness and solitude are fertile fields in which the mind may wander.

Suddenly his attention was drawn to two men, dimly discernible, and certainly up to no good. They were staggering under the weight of heavy bags, and as he drew nearer he could see that they were partly clad in military uniform.

Challenged, one of them began to run. Captain Westmacott overtook him and, pinning him against the wall of the Presbyterian Meeting House, was in the act of drawing his sword when the other man knocked him from his horse with a billet of wood. The first one then wounded him severely over the face and head with a sharp weapon, observing, "Damn him. We have done his business now. Let us be off."

On Friday, April 19, the Weekly Chronicle of Halifax shocked its readers with a modest paragraph recounting the bare facts of the brutal attack. The Acadian Recorder of Saturday carried the same story. There were great hopes of the captain's recovery and news of other events near and far took precedence over this local assassination.

There was an announcement that "the perpetrators of this atrocious outrage have hitherto eluded the most rigid investigation." But Captain Westmacott was still alive.

April ended and May came with its promise of renewed life in trees and plants; but for Captain Westmacott there was no such promise, and on the fourth of the month he died in consequence of his wounds.

On the eighth of May Military Headquarters issued the following order;

> "The Commander of the Forces entertains no doubt that the Troops in the Garrison fully participate in the feelings of horror and concern with which he views the inhuman and atrocious murder of Captain Westmacott of the Royal Staff Corps who in the execution of his Duty early on the morning of the 17th Ult. received wounds from two assassins of which he is since Dead. As it appears that the murderers at the time of committing the fatal Deed were partly dressed as Soldiers, His Excellency feels assured that the Troops will consider themselves called upon in the strongest manner by this circumstance to use every effort likely to lead to the Discovery of those Villians for whose detection he informs them that the Provincial Government has offered a reward of One Hundred Pounds. And although the Commander of the Forces is aware that among brave and good men no recompence will be required to induce them to do their Duty by discovering everything that is likely to give light upon this shocking transaction, yet, as there may be found men, who from motives of timidity may feel unwilling to come forward under an idea that after having informed against a comrade they could not remain with comfort in the Corps to which they belong. The Commander of the Forces is pleased to declare that any Soldier (except the

Two men who committed the Murder) who will within the space of Three Calendar Months from this Date give such information as may tend to the Discovery of the murderer or murderers of the said Captain John Westmacott so that they may be apprehended and brought to Trial shall, on the offender or offenders being convicted thereof, receive in addition to the pecuniary rewards already offered, a full and complete discharge from His Majesty's Service if it is his wish to accept it.

This order to be read to the Troops in Garrison at Six Successive Parades and its meaning fully explained to the men, it is also to be communicated in like manner to the Outposts, Detachments and men in Hospital, and the Commandant will be pleased to adopt such other measures as shall appear to him most likely to obtain the information required and bring the Offenders to Justice."

This verbose proclamation brought results.

On Saturday, May 11, 1816, the Acadian Recorder announced that the murderers were caught. James Fleming, who kept a shop near the Town Clock, reported that between two and three o'clock on the morning of the seventeenth of April, two men whom he identified as M'Grath and Dibett, came to his house and deposited about half a barrel of mackerel, telling him that they would return later. Shortly after, they came back and reported that they had met the Grand Rounds and they had done his business. They said that he was damned saucy and deserved what he got.

For more than two months the wheels of Justice slowly turned. On Friday, July 12, The Weekly Chronicle carried the story of the trial of Michael M'Grath and Charles Devit, alias Deveret, soldiers late of the 64th Regt. for the murder of Captain John Westmacott of the Royal Staff Corps.

These men had left Melville Island some time after roll call on the night of April 16, and had broken into the store of Messrs. Tremain from which they had stolen bags of salted mackerel. Twice they went to the house of James Fleming whose wife was one of the principal witnesses against them. After their encounter with Captain Westmacott and their second visit to Fleming's they returned to Melville Island before daybreak.

Both men were found guilty and the Chief Justice pronounced the sentence of the law to be carried out with little delay. Both men were to be hanged on Monday, the fifteenth, between the hours of ten and two o'clock.

The execution was evidently a public spectacle, for a letter to the editor of the Recorder, July 20, 1816, gave an eye witness account of the affair, the first he had ever attended, and, he hoped, the last. There were many spectators who saw the successful hanging of M'Grath. Devret's halter broke, however, and he was seen walking about with the priest who had attended the men as prisoners.

Many of the spectators, supposing that Justice had been satisfied, melted away. But a messenger was dispatched to the Lieutenant Governor, Sir John Cope Sherbrooke, to ask the procedure to be followed in this most unusual case. The governor said that the man had been sentenced to hang and the sentence must be carried out. Devret was hanged again at about half past three.

On September 14, 1918, Occasional, who had a column in a Halifax paper, wrote a note on the events surrounding the death of Captain Westmacott. He mentioned that M'Grath was tall and well built, and when the drop fell he was immediately strangled. Devret was small and wiry and fell directly into his coffin below, but at once stepped out. Occasional quoted Sir

John Cope Sherbrooke as saying to the messenger sent to him regarding the failure of Devret's execution. "Tell the sheriff to get another rope and if that won't do, get a chain. He must be hanged."

On January 23, 1926, Occasional refers to the stone in the cemetery and says, "The headstone has only the following inscription: 'Captain John Westmacott, died 4 May, 1816.' "

There are many facts one might like to know about the life and death of this so promising young man, eulogised as a brilliant artist, a mathematician, and a classical scholar who could speak French and Spanish fluently and read Italian.

Was it compulsory for him to drop his architectural studies to join Wellington's army in the Peninsular War? How did he come to do garrison duty in Halifax? What care did he receive in his fatal illness? What were the rations of the soldiers at Melville Island that two would steal salted mackerel? Surely a strange theft. When was the inscription on the stone enlarged and by whose orders?

One may ask of the winds that in winter blow the drifts over the old gray stones, and of the dappled shadows that play around the graves at any season. But there is no answer there. Perhaps somewhere, hidden away in obscure records, pieces of the puzzle may be found.

# *Letter From Another World, 1757*

MALCOLM MacLEOD

The first big wartime convoy that ever came to Halifax arrived in harbour during July, 1757. It comprised 200 merchantmen and 20 men-of-war, and brought seven regiments fresh from Britain to join other troops in an attack on French Louisbourg. Among this host was Lieutenant Henry Pringle of the 27th Regiment. History owes a debt to his pessimism. When his unit was ordered to the New World, Pringle did not expect to survive the campaign. He resolved to write, monthly, a detailed letter to his brother Robert in Ireland, so that when he did stop a papist bullet, the family would at least have a full record of his next to last days.

Actually, he survived six years of war in North America intact, and died at a ripe old age after retiring a Major-General in the 1780's.

His first letter[1] from this side of the Atlantic was an interesting description of Halifax the fledgling naval base and garrison town—Warden of the North in apprenticeship—eight years after its founding. He began with the last week of the two-month passage from Cork, Southern Ireland. The frustra-

tion and hazards in trying to make a landfall in the days of the sailing ship are clearly revealed.

"Halifax—Nova Scotia
31st July 1757

Lest you might have fears for your Brother, I will not date my letter from another World, altho' in reality I might. This is the third I have seen, for I am sure the last I inhabited was quite new with respect to the one I was born in; & this/tho' I believe of the same family with Europe/yet has only the features of a distant relation. Such are the charms of novelty that, until I see you again, I should wish to have a thousand miles intervene between the date of each Epistle; they might then afford a variety, from the large strides I should take, equal to any Correspondence, except a genuine collection of letters from the Dead.—however, altho this is wrote very near two thousand four hundred miles from Caledon,[2] yet not much more than the length of Ireland comes in between the 30th of June and the 31st of July; we were then not very far from the Island of Sable, which you may see is laid down in the map only as a speck, yet is surrounded by a large dangerous shoal, and was fatal to some French ships last War. Therefore the Admiral's[3] instructions to the whole Fleet, were very positive to keep to the southward of it, not only to avoid the French by running in a narrow sea between it and Cape Breton, but in case of separation, as the most likely means of coming together again, by all pursuing the same *path*,—this happened to a great many of us, for after we joined the Fleet, the Men of War & Transports were dropping in every day, altho' about twenty of them, & two or three King's ships got into Harbour a week before us. We were so rejoiced at seeing our friends again, & the weather proved so very calm for two or three days afterwards, that we often hoisted out

our boat to visit, or to fish; the latter we always laboured at, whenever we found bottom, but never had fish for dinner except the very day we came upon the Banks of Newfoundland, & yet other ships caught hundreds. By our reckoning, & sounding, on the fourth we began to look out sharp for land, besides the quantity of sea-weed floating all around us, were certain signs we were not far from the shore—every cloud in the horizon we hoped to find a mountain, & by the time half the crew had sworn to its solidity, it would prove what the sailors aptly term it, *Cape Flyaway*—the next morning a strange Man of War joined us, who saluted and spoke to the Admiral, upon which he set all his sails & made directly for the land; but our old friend, the fog, was determined to pay us a parting visit; he contracted our prospect to a span, which obliged the Fleet to lie too in the evening, & continue so all night, lest we might run against a dangerous shore just before us—all the next day & the one after that, we did nothing but tack, now to the N. again to the S., then lie too, then tack & retack again, so that we indented oftener than the lightening in the frontispiece to Virgil's Aneaid. I often reflected what anxieties & what hopes & fears Columbus must have experienced in looking for a Country so difficult to find, altho we were certain it was not far from us—the Admiral was obliged to give the signal for tacking so very often, as he wished to be sufficiently near to take the advantage of the return of day light, & during the whole voyage, it was impossible for any man to act with more caution for our safety than he did; this was yet not so near as to endanger the Fleet. & indeed now, & very apparent even to us, who were ignorant, but those who understood these matters, applauded him much.—about two o'clock the Fog cleared away, & our spirits returned to see the Men of War hoist their Colours, which is the signal for land, & soon after we, lower Gentlemen, saw it also—then every sail was set, & all tended to the

same point—You never saw, in the race ground at Armagh,[4] such strenuous competition for a saddle, or a silver pair of spurs, as there was here to gain Cape Sambro, which is very near to the Harbour of Halifax—"

At noon on July 8th, 1757, Lieutenant Pringle's ship the ANNA finally came to anchor in Halifax harbour. After nine weeks at sea, Pringle greeted the Nova Scotia town as a perfect paradise for the waterlogged. His monthly letter home continued with talk about the too-long ocean crossing and touches upon the strategy of the British concentration against Louisbourg.

After a bit of experience he modified that part about paradise. Seen up close, Halifax in the eighth year of its existence was mostly pine trees, stumps and stones.

"Every yard we approached the land, we discovered something new, either in the form or the smell of it; for tho' the latter might seem fancy to us who had been so long at sea, yet in fact the perfume from the Pine trees was very extraordinary, & the most gratfull I ever experienced —towards night we began to draw together at the Harbour's mouth, where we endeavoured to get a Pilot from the several small Boats that came out to meet us, but the Men of War must be served first, so that, depending upon the openess of the Harbour, we ventured in with the crowd; & without a rub, came to an Anchor at 12 o'clock, close to George's Island, which lies a little below the Town of Halifax & where they are now erecting a work to defend the entrance of the Port.—thus ended a journey of nine weeks by sea, which we began to be quite out of humour with, not that our reasons to complain were greater than we might expect at that Season of the year but every day beyond six or seven weeks grew more and more tedious; besides, our amusements, which were but

few, by such frequent reflection, no longer entertained—A shark or a grampus, that used to make us fly from our seat; would not now take us to the window, and curiosity could scarcely draw us out of the Cabbin to see the armies after armies of porpoises in pursuit of prey, tho' really they were equal in number/if any thing will bear the comparison/to the sand of the sea—we were too far to the Northward to be entertained with flying fish or Dolphins. We saw but few of the latter, which are, I believe, the handsomest inhabitannts of the ocean; the variety & liveliness of their colours equals the plumage of any bird; yet, notwithstanding their beauty, we attempted their lives particularly one who travelled with us a whole day; yet his motion, like an arrow, was too quick for our spear, nor would he take a bait—all these things diverted during the time we expected to make our passage in, but when that elapsed we grew anxious, & the Fogs helped, not a little, to blunt the edge of our curiosity; so that you may well imagine/as you love a pun/a Harbour was a Haven to us. I am certain the prospect of the country, the next morning, equal'd my idea of Paradise, yet upon a nearer acquaintance, I found this gay looking scene to be made up entirely of small pine trees, & stumps & stones—altho' I was eager to tread upon firm ground, yet during the 9th we were ordered to stay aboard with the Troops, & the next day they indulged us by disembarking the whole, & encamping us about half a mile from the Town with six Battalions that had arrived with Lord—[5] from N. York, about a week before us. Altho' he was sufficiently early for us, yet he was much later than he intended, as there were six French Men of War cruising in those Seas, who probably would not have quit them so soon, if they had not been told by the Master of a Schooner they took, that the English Fleet was then at Halifax; upon which false information they retired into Louisbourgh, & left the sea open for Lord L. & 70 Transports, who had so slender a

Convoy, that the most of them must have fallen a prey to the French, if his Lp's prudence had not delayed them, & been satisfied the Enemy had retired before he suffered them to sail."

Ashore at last, Henry Pringle described the Halifax of 1757—wide but grassy streets, ineffective fortifications, magnificent harbour. "A tolerable place at a distance from it"—damning faint praise. And the inhabitants! What he has to say about the first Haligonians will not make citizens of the 1970's brag about being descended from the earliest settlers. Pringle found the people a lot of lazy bandits, convicts and cutthroat merchants.

The more things change, the more they stay the same?

"Here we had the pleasure of meeting members of our military friends, the whole place was alive, & reviews was our daily business—our encampment extended about a mile, upon a rugged rising ground at the back of the Town, which the soldiers reared with great fatigue, & from whence we had a fine prospect of the harbour & wood without end.

The united fleets of Men of War & Transports, all lying within a stone's throw of the Quay, were no small addition to the scene; & the Town, situated upon a strip, looked like a tolerable place at a distance from it—The ground it stands upon, is of pretty large extent, & surrounded with close, strong picquets, by way of fortification. The streets are regularly land out, long & wide; but broke up by streams of water, & they have grass sufficient in them to feed their geese. Their Church is a handsome building, tho' of wood, as are all the Houses in the Town, except the Powder Magazine—There are some Batteries of Guns upon the Quays that would annoy an Enemy, if

they would take the trouble of placing themselves properly for that purpose, as they could easily destroy the Town, without giving these Guns any trouble, for which reason a very expensive work is begun upon George's Island, to prevent an Enemy's approach, which is no difficult task, as the harbour is too easy of access at all hours. Yet were all their intended works completed, a French fleet could land their Troops out of their reach, & destroy the Town in twenty four hours, with a force superior to two Reg'ts, as they have no Citadel upon the hill to defend the back of the Town, or repulse the French, if they thought proper to attack it. Why they do not, you may perhaps inquire, & many people wonder at it; but as I am persuaded the French have political reasons for most of their proceedings, no doubt some of them interefere in this seeming neglect—whether mine are theirs, I know not, but I think it for their advantage to let the Town remain. No scheme can ever be formed against Cape Breton or Quebec, but that Harbour must be their rendezvous, & there, I am convinced, they have now/& probably ever will have/friends to give them early notice. besides, the French could not keep the Harbour, but at an expense by no means equal to the advantage of it, as they have a better in its neighborhood; I mean one of more difficult access, & more easily defended—yet, in some particulars, none in the world is superior to this; the Depth of the water, even at the Town, is equal to anything, & besides where all our fleet lies, there is a Bason about half a mile further in the land, six miles across, & in most places too deep for anchorage, being above eighty fathoms; yet notwithstanding this, I am of opinion the French would rather prefer a settlement upon St. John's River, in the Bay of Fundy, as it would be a better way of preserving a communication between Europe & Quebec, when St. Lawrence is frozen; & even now, I believe, Packets are convey'd that way in winter, since the loss of Beausejour, upon the Isthmus of

this Peninsula—In many places between this & that Fort, & between this & Annapolis Royal, I am told, there is very fine land; & indeed here, tho' upon the seacoast, it is very fertile & produces every thing the lazy inhabitants take the trouble of sowing, which extends no further than a small garden tacked to each of their wooden habitations, & they depend upon Providence for everything else, which perhaps you would call a species of madness, if you were acquainted with the Banditti, who have this impulent confidence—Rome, in its infancy, was a well regulated state to this, for without offence to a few honest people, whom necessity has compelled to live there, among whom I include the army, that famous City could not boast more Pickpockets, among her first founders, than Halifax can —The question here, is not, who is that man or woman? but, can you tell me what he or she was Transported for? & I have been entertained by some very jolly highwaymen, with their own stories. however it is a settlement well worth attending to, & indeed England has been at a great expense to form it—The progress it has made, in so few years, is amazing, yet many people grumble, & say things are by no means equal to the money granted; yet that will for ever be the cant of the crowd, nor do they consider, that in the beginning of such things, great expense & great labour make but an indifferent appearance —however, without flattery to the Gentlemen who have had the management, there are great difficiencies. matters are badly regulated; & we may say that, even now, there are great neglects or abuses; for I have seen the Butcher paid 6d/sixpence/Ster'g pr pound for mutton that the dealer sold him for 4 shillings; great hardships imposed upon people, who brought things to serve the army, from other parts of the Continent—"

Pringle goes on to tell about the frolicsome first week on shore. No doubt he leaves out the most interesting parts as be-

ing unfit for family consumption. His closest approach to a tale of the whorehouse port is ever so dainty: "Our imaginations had run a long time upon every thing we could not get aboard ship". Undeterred by "rapacious extortioners", the British soldiers plunged cheerfully into extravagance.

The only worry the good people of Halifax seemed to have was the occasional band of marauding Micmacs in French service—but since they confined themselves to snatching folk from the less-well-guarded Dartmouth shore, even that was okay.

> "Every thing is excessively dear, & few officers can eat, & dring only punch, for their pay. however, we indulge our appetites at the expense of our savings at sea—our imaginations had run a long time upon every thing we could not get aboard ship; we had declared war against sallads & garden-stuff of all sorts, & yet what the place afforded served not many days—the bread is a great treat to us; I never saw any so good. but is most like/tho' many degrees above/the French manchets, I have often eat at your room in the College—Madiera & small punch are our chief liquors; the latter absolutely necessary for the Climate, which is much warmer than your summer, altho' I find no inconvenience from the heat, unless I exercise a good deal at noon, nor is the sun troublesome except at that hour. It is interesting & amazing to observe the innumerable variety of insects he has brought to life, all fluttering & buzzing round us, particularly grasshoppers & muskitoes.—I have seen a few innocent snakes, nor do I learn that there are many venemous in the woods, which are standing every where, except where our Camp & the Town is, & a few scattered spots along the shore—the Inhabitants are not much afraid of the Indians, as they are mostly gone off to the French, except a few at Cape Sable, who dare not come down; & the great disputed Tract of

Nova Scotia beyond the Isthmus, has very few, or no inhabitants of any kind—however they have been annoyed by small parties of them, & several People cut off upon the shore opposite to the Town; for which reason there is now a Barrack defended by a small work & a large Guard consistantly kept there—the Government of the Place is not a military one altho' there is a Governor & Lt. Governor both residing here, but there is a Judge sent from England/I believe by the Lords of the Trade/to determine all Civil causes, & they have a Corporation—the variety of nations that has settled here, produces but two religious Houses—a Church & a Presbyterian meeting House; the first is not finished within, altho' they have service there, yet, I am of opinion, it will require more time to introduce religion here, as the first settlers generally leave their's in the Country they have deserted.

I know that a Captain of our Regiment found more honesty among Jews than the Christians, they making him pay 30 shilli'gs Ster'g a week, for a dirty room, no longer than a closet; & five shillings for riding their horse to the Camp, which is about half a mile; whilst a conscionable Jew let him have a ride for four. They were all impatient for our arrival, not from any anxiety about the Expedition, but the hopes of plunder made them receive us with joy, & earnest to serve us, in order to pocket our Dollars; they had by this time stripped the troops from N. York, & we were a fresh prey, ready to plunge into extravangances, & indulge these rapacious extortioners, which we cheerfully did, to the utmost of our abilities—"

Pringle makes some penetrating comments about the changes of the Louisbourg campaign, leaving his conclusions open. "In general those great people who form schemes, are very seldom sufficiently informed." Many of his remarks show a well-tuned mind, and a definite effort to make these monthly

letters read well for posterity. "I am afraid our wealth is weighed in too nice a scale against our intelligence", he writes. How much more chivalrous that is than Siegfried Sassoon's version of the same sentiment from the time of World War One—"We're cursing the staff for incompetent swine". At troop reviews, Pringle observed, praise and censure should be sparingly bestowed, and all comparisons carefully avoided. Along with other wise aphorisms, the wittiest passage of his July letter occurs in this excerpt too, when he tells about two of the British soldiers being taken prisoner. Some French Indians "carried off two of our Rangers, who were in the woods to look sharp".

Look sharp, indeed!

"In the midst of our momentary jollity, the grand object of our Expedition was always before our Eyes. Louisbourg was the subject of all conversations, & every hour produced various reports—yet upon the whole it was too obvious, that we were not properly acquainted with the strength of that place—I do not apply it particularly to our Commanders here, but in general those great people who form schemes, are very seldom sufficiently informed. I am afraid our wealth is weighed in too nice a scale against our intelligence, & without the latter, I am certain they can never assure themselves of the former.

I make no doubt but there are several rogues upon this Continent, who carry on at this time an illicit trade with the French at Cape Breton, & supply them with provisions—Was the point attended to, it would be no difficult matter to detect one of those, who, by being encouraged in his roguery, would become a Dolon,[6] L. L. has taken all the steps necessary to make discoveries, by sending out small vessels, some of which are not yet returned, but the fogs render their endeavours of little use —Captain Rous[7] picked up a small fishing boat with two

men, but they were not in Louisbourgh since May, therefore must be ignorant of its present force—He observed along the Coast, several parties of Indians, who lighted parties upon his approach, to inform the French. report one day said there was a large Garrison & 17 sail of the line there, under the Command of Mons'r Boufferman.[8] The next account made the garrison small, & only seven sail there, & five gone to Quebec, as they were ignorant where we intended to strike the blow. We are sure that a Fleet has come there from France, for we just saw them at sea, as I mentioned in a former letter; & we are likewise certain six sail has arrived from the W. Indies —so that sometimes the vox populi was for attacking Martinico, or some place to the Southward; at other times we made an easy conquest of Louisbourgh.—however, nothing was neglected necessary for such an attack; large jointed Boats were made for landing, & facines &c have been making every day. L. L. has reviewed the seven Battations from Ireland, & approved of them all.—Several people paid our Reg't compliments upon this occasion, which notwithstanding in general its success depends upon very trifling accidents, yet some amongst us, give it the rank of a glorious campaign—a proper emulation amongst the soldiery should no doubt be preserved, yet, as it oftentimes happens that the best Troops may mistake, & make, what is called, a bad review, & an indifferent Reg't be lucky & appear well, praise & censure should be sparingly bestowed, & all comparisons carefully avoided. In the midst of our pursuits after intelligence, the French are no less assiduous, — more successful than we, for a few days ago, some of their Indians carried off two of our Rangers, who were in the woods to look sharp; This has been variously commented upon, the most candid, placing it to the account of ill luck; others, to design, & that these fellows have been employed to throw themselves into the hands of the Enemy. however, we cannot

suppose our armament here to be a secret at Louisbourg; they certainly expect us, & our Troops are impatient to get there."

As always with a big military operation in the works, rumours flew thick and fast, and grumblers and doubters outnumbered the trusting patriots. Servicemen from this century's wars will recognize a lot that is familiar in Lieutenant Henry Pringle's account of wrangling and waffling 200 years ago. Every second day new plans for the Louisbourg assault came out, and every time the word was, It's all been changed! Between the lines of this last excerpt from Pringle's monthly letter to the folks at home, one can read pretty clearly that the 1757 British plan to attack Louisbourg was developing into a classic fiasco. (They did, however, mount a successful siege the next year.)

While the leaders were trying to decide, the men spent the last three weeks of July in training and mock battles. War games in Halifax were a lot safer than approaching the real bombs and bullets of the Cape Breton fortress.

"During this short pause, Lord Loudoun has thought proper to inform the unexperienced part of the troops, in some measure, what their duty at a siege is.

Works have been made, & trenches opened before them, which the Picquets of the line have attacked & defended alternately; & altho' oftentimes several circumstances would happen which made us laugh, (as there were no balls flying about) & there were many jokers concerning this mock Fort, yet it certainly was informing to those who were absolute strangers in this respect, of whom the largest part of the army was composed.—it is certain, the duties of fatigue have been very frequent to the men, since we landed; but as we have a prospect of

experiencing a great deal more, they will be the better able to admire it—To remove the innumerable stumps & large stones off the ground we encamp on, has been a great work; for altho' the People have cut down the Trees here abouts for firewood, they have left about three foot of each standing, which they would not be at the pains to remove; nor, in fact, have they hands to do it, for so vary expensive are labourers, that in the midst of this thicket, firewood is dearer than in London.

Besides these works, the soldiers have been employed in, L. L. has made a garden & enclosed it with a stone wall, for the use of the Garrison, which was a thing much wanted, & which it is amazing has not been done before—altho' these things were apparently necessary, & the delays have not been greater here than the proper preparations for such an enterprise must require; as well as the doubts, that either the want of, or the variety of intelligence must occasion; there are not people wanting who cry aloud against our Councils of War, from whence not a syllable of their debates or determinations have ever transpired to us—if amongst these imprudent & short-sighted railers, none but the more ignorant & meaner of the crowd were found, the grievance would not be new; but what will the soldier think, if he, whose arms must effect what his superiors project, observes them wrangling in their schemes, or talking aloud of misconduct in those upon whom their dependance is, & in whom a confidence ought to be inculcated—this error has been shamefully fallen into by a great man amongst us, Ld C: H:,[9] who has made no secret to the meanest soldier, that he is wiser than the whole Council together—No doubt but their opinions will differ, nor will it even excuse this officer, if hereafter it is proved he is right; for whatever plan is generally agreed upon, should be vigorously pursued by all, altho' some may think it defective.

I could scarcely credit the reports until lately I had the honor of being in his Company, when he varified them fully, by proving/as he thought beyond dispute/that before then he would have been in possession of Louisbourgh if he Commanded.

I really had compassion for him, as I verily believe he would execute the active part of his duty extremely well, but so very flagrant have been his imprudences, that they have compelled L. L. to put him under an Arrest, an action, I am certain, very disagreeable to his Lp, but absolutely necessary for the preservation of discipline.—At present Louisbourgh must be as strong in men & ships, as it can be this summer; & altho' appearances are, as if we were not truly acquainted with either, yet things are drawing to a determination some where, & I am of opinion it will fix there, every thing conspires to that end, & it is surprising to observe how earnest both officers & soldiers are for the Enterprise; altho' there are few of them who know how great consequence that object aimed at, is to the French; & how much they dread the losing of it.

I sincerely hope to date my next Letter from thence, as it is strongly reported we shall all Embark Tomorrow or next day, altho' nothing decisive/that we can learn/has been received from our spies, or determined upon by our General Officers.—I am already intimate with its Fortifications, and have scratch'd out its plan, its Harbour & Batteries; & like Captain Bobadil,[10] make no doubt but we shall take it, & Quebec too.

I am very Sincerely Yr's &c—"

## FOOTNOTES

1. Public Archives of Canada, Manuscript Group 18, L 8, pp. 43-59.
2. A village in the south-east corner of County Tyrone. Northern Ireland, about thirty miles east of Enniskillen. Pringle's hometown.
3. Admiral Francis Holburne.
4. Irish town seven miles east of Caledon.
5. John Campbell, fourth Earl of Loudoun (1705-1782). He joined the army in 1727, was made Governor of Stirling Castle in 1741, and aide-de-camp to the King in 1743. In 1745 he raised a regiment of Highlanders (the 54th) to help fight the Scots rebellion, and was its colonel. This unit was almost wiped out in the battle of Preston. He was colonel of the 30th regiment of foot, 1749-1770; colonel-in-chief of the 60th foot (rifles), 1755-1757; colonel 3rd foot guard 1770-1782; second in command (under Lord Tyrawle) of British troops in Portugal, 1762-1763.
   His career in North America was not a success. Named captain-general and governor-in-chief of Virginia (17 February 1756) and Commander-in-Chief of British forces on this continent (10 March), he arrived in New York on 23 July. By the time he arrived at Albany to assume active command, affairs at the isolated post of Oswego on Lake Ontario were rapidly passing from worse to worse, and the fort capitulated to Montcalm's army from Canada August 14th. In 1757 he concentrated most of his troops at Halifax for an attack on Louisbourg, but called it off on the receipt of disquieting intelligence about the strength of the French fortress. While the army was absent from the main theatre on the Canadian border, Montcalm took Fort William Henry. The British Government ordered his recall at Christmastime 1757. An American wise-cracked said he "was like Saint George upon the signposts, always on horseback but never advancing". Stanley M. Pargellis, however (**Lord Loudoun in North America**: introduction to **Military Affairs in North America, 1748-1765**, credits his superior administrative abilities.
6. A double agent in Greek mythology (**Iliad**). A Trojan, he volunteered to go to the Greek camp outside the city as a spy. When Diomedes and Odysseus captured him, he gave them valuable information about Trojan dispositions.
7. Captain John Rous, commanding officer of HMS SUTHERLAND, 1757-8; involved in the abortive Louisbourg campaign, 1757, its capture in 1758, and the siege of Quebec.
8. Joseph de Bauffremont, French naval officer, gained rank of Chief of Squadron in 1755. In 1757 he led one of three fleets that successfully rendezvoused at Louisbourg with reinforcements. He became Prince de Listenais in 1762; Lieutenant-General of naval forces, 1764; Vice-Admiral of France, 1777; died 1781.

9. Lord Charles Hay. Ensign 1722; served at the siege of Gibraltar, 1727, and with Prince Eugene on the Rhine, 1734. Promoted captain, 1743; colonel of the 33rd Regiment, 1752; major-general in 1757. When Loudoun gave his Halifax army its battle order, Hay was to command the third of four brigades. In the councils of war considering whether the attack on Louisbourg should not be given up, Hay was for keeping on. Loudoun's preparations he characterized as: "The general was keeping the courage of His Majesty's troops at bay, and expending the nation's wealth in making sham sieges and planting cabbages when he ought to have been fighting." He was sent back to England under arrest and finally—in 1760—court-martialled for insubordination, but died in May that year before the verdict was made public. Some contemporaries considered him not fully right in the head during the last years of his life.
10. A comic character in Ben Johnson's play **Every man in his humour** (1598). Bobadil was a pompous old soldier, cowardly and foolish, but not vicious. Vanity was his forte. He had many boastful (fake) anecdotes about alleged highlights of his military career. Charles Dickens once played the part.

# *W. J. Ancient —*
# *Hero of Shipwreck Atlantic*

PHYLLIS R. BLAKELEY

Early in the morning on April 1st 1873—April Fool's Day—a messenger arrived at Terence Bay with the news that the White Star liner *Atlantic* was ashore at Mars Head near Lower Prospect and there were hundreds of passengers still on board. The fishermen of Terence Bay decided that it would be quicker to walk overland than to row or sail against the wind. With them walked the thirty-seven year old Rev. William J. Ancient, their Church of England clergyman, a wiry man, six feet tall, with a pleasant tanned face and bright eyes. They arrived at the wreck about 9 a.m.

The luxury liner *S. S. Atlantic* belonged to the White Star and Ocean Company and was on a regular voyage from Liverpool in England to New York with about 976 people on board. She was constructed of iron, 420 feet long, and had 4 masts and a funnel, and 6 water-tight bulkheads, and was valued at $500,00. Her captain, James A. Williams, had decided to call at Halifax because the coal on board had been rocky and had burned badly and there was not enough left to reach New York if the vessel ran into a gale. Because of poor navigation the *Atlantic* struck Mars Head at 3:10 a.m. on April 1st and in a few minutes heeled over and filled with water. Some of the passengers and crew climbed up the masts. Then three of the

officers managed to rig a line to a slippery rock forty yards away and some of the passengers succeeded in reaching it. Fishermen from Lower Prospect were rescuing them by going out in their rowboats to the rock where the tide was rising.

When the Terence Bay contingent arrived many of the shipwrecked had been rescued either by jumping from the rigging into the sea near a fishing boat and being pulled on board the little craft, or by hanging on to ropes and struggling through the seething, boiling waters from the wreck to the shore. Groups of rescued passengers were standing around shivering. Michael Clancy and his daughter Sarah Jane O'Reilly, Dennis, Kate and Agatha O'Brien, the Ryans and others were doing their best to care for the shocked passengers but there were not enough homes in Lower Prospect to shelter everyone. Mr. Ancient made arrangements for some of the younger and stronger men to start walking to Terence Bay where they could be cared for.

By afternoon all the living had been rescued or washed off except a boy, and a man and a woman still tied in the rigging on the mizzenmast high out of the water. The man was J. W. Firth, the First Officer of the *Atlantic,* who had fastened the woman to the mast and had promised to remain with her until they were saved. A young Englishman had succeeded in reaching the deck with his wife and child and helping them into the mizzen rigging, but a wave snatched the child. Immediately Captain Williams had ordered everyone to get into the fore rigging because that part of the vessel was higher and more sheltered. The young woman said she was too exhausted to attempt to move but entreated her husband to go and save himself. He did so, but Firth had promised to stay. The woman was dressed only in a thin night-gown, with jewels sparkling on her fingers. At first she had kept up her spirits by singing hymns but now she was dropping with exhaustion and cold. The sea had become so rough that the boats could not venture near enough to the wreck to rescue them.

Mr. Ancient went over to Edward Ryan, the magistrate, and said: "The water is smooth enough. You can get alongside in a boat".

"But you cannot get at them when you get out there, Mr. Ancient" replied the magistrate.

"Give me a boat and some men: put me on board and I will get them" and Mr. Ancient walked over to where they were hauling up the boats. The crew of the boats which had rescued so many were Dennis and Frank Ryan, James Coolan, John and Benjamin Blackburn and James and Michael O'Brien, Patrick Lacy, Patrick Dollard and J. J. Tooley, assisted by others whose names were not reported in the newspapers of the time.

At first the fisherman refused to row Mr. Ancient to the wreck because they said it would be certain death for all, and they must have been very tired from their many trips to the rock and the wreck. The clergyman insisted that he knew exactly what to do because of his naval training and that he could rescue the three still out on the *Atlantic*. We do not know the names of the four men he persuaded to man a boat for him.

The bow of the *Atlantic* was high out of the water while her stern was submerged. Great seas were washing over the liner's hull and the little boat was in great danger of being swamped if they rowed too close. The crew refused to put Mr. Ancient on board. "John" entreated the clergyman, "if I am doomed I won't hold you responsible. Put me on board."

While they were arguing the boy jumped off into the waves. They picked him up and wrapped a coat around him. Mr. Ancient insisted that he could get aboard safely at the bow where there was some shelter, and he did. He cut a rope from

the rigging and by fastening it around his waist and taking hitches around each davit to make a lifeline, he slowly made his way towards the man and woman. The man in the rigging shouted that the woman had perished from the cold and he was too weak to save himself. Ancient shouted back:

"You are an officer, are you not?"

"Yes"

"Then you know how to make a bowline?"

"Yes, sir."

Ancient then threw him an end of rope, first taking a turn around the davit. "Now put your confidence in me and the Lord and move when I tell you". Clumsily Firth tied the rope and started to climb down the stay. A tremendous wave broke on board and washed him off, but the rope lashed to a davit held them both. When the next sea came Ancient hauled the sailor back on board. Firth yelled:

"O Lord, I have broken my shins! I have broken my shins!"

"Never mind your shins, Man! It is your life we are after," called Ancient as he dragged the officer along the life line he had made. Again and again both men were buried in the great seas that came sweeping over, and only his early training as a seaman in the British Navy enabled him to perform the return journey. Finally Ancient reached the sheltered bow and lowered Firth into the waiting boat.

The boy who was saved was 12 year old John Hindley, the only survivor of the hundreds of women and children who embarked on board the ill-fated *Atlantic*. He was emigrating

from Lancashire with his parents and young brother to join two married sisters in New York. He had been awakened by a great noise and got up to see what was happening. The ship suddenly tipped over but he followed some men into an upper berth in the upper steerage compartment. One of the men broke open a porthole and someone pushed the boy out and yelled at him to climb up and hang onto the ropes. When John was taken to Halifax, Alderman William H. Neal outfitted him from "top to toe" with clothing from Neal's drygoods store on Granville Street and he was photographed by William Chase. A reporter observed that the boy was too shocked to realize the dreadful tragedy.

Although there were at least 138 women on board the *Atlantic* not one woman was saved. Hardly any woman succeeded in reaching the deck and I wonder how many were drowned by the weight of their heavy long sodden skirts? Some women were in the lifeboats which capsized and others swept overboard with their children because they did not have the physical strength to hang onto the rails or the rigging. James Bateman of London had succeeded in getting his wife upon the rigging, where she died from exposure.

The Dominion Government steamer *Lady Head* with Customs' officials, the Cunard steamer *Delta* with newspaper reporters, and the steam tug *Goliath* were dispatched from Halifax to Prospect to bring the survivors to the capital. The steamers anchored safely offshore while the *Goliath* with lifeboats in tow went in to embark the shipwrecked men. Most of the passengers in the *Atlantic* had been emigrating to the United States and soon they were on board—dressed in guernseys, old sweaters, overcoats, bits of blanket around their shoulders, many without shoes and stockings had their feet tied up with wisps of straw and old pieces of cloth. One man wore hand-knitted woolen mitts while another sported lavender kid gloves. They were so bruised and sore from being knocked against the

rocks that they were scarcely able to stand. One man had both legs broken.

It was only when the survivors had boarded the steamers that Captain Williams of the *Atlantic* could make an estimate of the losses—he said that there were 33 cabin passengers, 800 steerage passengers and 143 crewmen—making a total of 976 so that 546 had been drowned. Freeman D. Markwald of New York, who had been saved, remained until he identified the bodies of the 19 cabin passengers who were lost and made arrangements for their burial.

On April 3rd the tug *Hoover* started from Halifax with the schooner *Amateur* in tow, freighted with 200 coffins and boards prepared for others. On the ship were some who had come to Halifax to identify dead relatives. Lying in rows on the rocks and peat were 152 bodies recovered from the sea—men in heavy seamen's clothes, women in dresses torn to rags in the waves, children covered with sailcloth. Those identified by Captain J. A. Williams or Third Officer Cornelius Brady were placed in coffins and taken to Halifax on the tug. The other bodies were examined by the magistrates, and those unidentified or unclaimed were placed in coffins in long trenches for burial. Cunard's Halifax office was acting as agent for the White Star line and sent down extra picks and shovels and gravediggers to help the men of Prospect and Terence Bay. An ox-team slowly came up from the water with its heavy load of rough pine coffins.

There is a photograph of the burial service of the victims of the wreck of *S. S. Atlantic* showing Rev. W. J. Ancient reading the service before an open trench while the villagers and a few visitors from Halifax are gathered by. The Protestants were buried in the little cemetery at Terence Bay while the Roman Catholics were interred at Prospect. The Canadian Parliament voted $3,000 to pay expenses of burial of bodies from the

*Atlantic* wreck and for rewarding the fishermen and Mr. Ancient.

William Johnson Ancient was a native of Lincolnshire, England, and had joined the British Navy, served on H.M.S. *Mars* from 1859 to 1863, and was posted to Halifax as a scripture reader. Later he studied for the Anglican ministry and was ordained deacon in 1867 by Bishop Hibbert Binney and sent as missionary by the Colonial and Continental Church Society to Harrietsfield and Terence Bay and Lower Prospect, then a poor and scattered parish. The Rev. Mr. Ancient was a seaman who understood the fishermen and sailors who largely composed his parish and was respected by them for his personal bravery and his sincerity. Undeterred by fog, sunken reefs and waves, he travelled along the rocky coast in a little boat to visit families in remote coves and walked miles inland along narrow muddy trails to bring God's word to those assembled in a log-hut in the woods.

In 1868 Bill Ancient had come to the "Terns Bay Mission" as it was called, where he found the Church building half-finished, just boarded in and shingled. His congregation gave twenty dollars and promised more in the fall if the fishery were successful. With forty dollars more donated by friends in Halifax, the clergyman bought a stove and pipe and lamps and boards to floor the nave and chancel and partition off a vestry. School was held in a "small place about fourteen feet by twelve, situated under a hayloft, with an average attendance of thirty to forty children". Mr. Ancient and Mr. J. R. Miller, the School Inspector for Halifax County, called a meeting of the parents who raised forty-two dollars and promised to donate their labour towards building a new school house. When the teacher left, Ancient himself taught school each evening from 6 to 7:30, followed by a short Bible class.

Mr. Ancient ministered to 212 church members scattered throughout five preaching stations—Terence Bay, Lower Pros-

pect, Harrietsfield, Brookside, and Sambro. He reorganized his choir to induce more young people to join it and he subscribed to some magazines such as "Sunday At Home", and "Our Own Fireside" which he allowed the choir members to take home. He was ordained priest in 1872. He reported to the Colonial and Centinental Church Society: "Yesterday I had a wedding and a funeral at Sambro and did not get back until this morning, owing to the strong N.W. wind. I fear I took a bad cold at the grave as I feel very poorly to-day—cold chills, headache and blistered hands from rowing. I have been across the Bay three times this week and feel anything but in good condition for writing."

Ancient's bravery in rescuing Firth from the rigging caught the imagination of the world. The Chicago Relief Committee sent a magnificent watch to the clergyman and a sum of money to be distributed to the rescuers. They also remembered some of the young women who had been so kind to the shipwrecked passengers for they sent a gold locket and chain and twenty pounds sterling to Mrs. Sarah Jane Clancy Reilly and a gold locket and chain and ten pounds sterling each to the Misses Agatha and Kate O'Brien. Funds were raised in Boston and eighty dollars sent to be distributed among deserving families of Prospect who had rendered service to shipwrecked passengers.

W. B. Christian of Prospect (who had recovered the body and property of W. H. Merritt) was presented by the dead man's relatives with a silver medal made by J. B. Bennett of Halifax. Michael Clancy, of Lower Prospect, who was largely responsible in saving lives and property from the wreck of the *Atlantic,* never put in a claim for recompense of any kind. When J. B. Morrow, of the firm of S. Cunard and Company, was in England in 1874 he obtained a sum of two hundred dollars for Mr. Clancy from the White Star Line.

The rector of St. Paul's Anglican Church in Halifax, the Rev. George W. Hill, offered Bill Ancient the position of assist-

ant curate at Trinity Church in Halifax, then part of St. Paul's, and he accepted. On leaving Terence Bay he gathered all the people together at a Pic-Nic in the field near his house and after prayer and singing the hymns in which they had so often joined, he preached a farewell sermon.

On October 8th, 1873 when Lieutenant-Governor Sir Adams Archibald presented Mr. Ancient with a massive gold watch and a check for five hundred dollars for his "gallant and humane conduct . . . in rescuing at imminent peril to his own life, the life of the Chief Officer of the ill fated steamship *Atlantic* . . ." Mr. Ancient himself praised the bravery, endurance and humanity of the men of Prospect in their efforts to save life and said "all he had done, it was simply his duty to do."

From about 1880 to 1890 Mr. Ancient ministered in Hants County at Rawdon, Lakelands and Uniacke Mines. For about fifteen years before his death, Mr. Ancient was secretary-treasurer of the Anglican Diocese of Nova Scotia. This beloved clergyman died at his home on Smith Street in Halifax on July 20, 1908. He was seventy-four years old. He left a widow and three daughters, one married to Rev. W. B. Sisam. One of his daughters had opened a school on Sable Island in May, 1901.

A ballad about the "Loss of the *Atlantic*" paid tribute to the men of Prospect—

> Among the men of Prospect shore,
> Who risked a watery grave
> And spurred up those around,
> The shipwrecked men to save
> Was their kind and loving clergyman,
> Mr. Ancient is his name,
> Whose deeds deserve to be engraved
> Upon the roll of fame.

He said: "My friends, come take the boat,
And try whom we can save",
Then boldly took the foremost part,
The bravest of the brave.
The hardy men who gave such help,
Deserve the highest praise
Oh, ne'er forget their noble deeds.

# *Loyal Subjects, Able Artists And Honest Men*

LEWIS W. COLLINS

A commentary on the growth of architecture as a profession in Halifax, Nova Scotia. 1749-1973

Halifax, Nova Scotia, was, in large measure, a *fiat* city, a unique move by Great Britain on the chessboard of eighteenth century European imperialism. It was to remain a colonial keystone of Empire long after its most recalcitrant citizens had accepted Canadian Confederation and even after its narrow streets had echoed for the last time to measured tread of Imperial troops.

In spite of succeeding periods of demolition and renewal and the devastating effects of several major fires in the heart of the original townsite, Halifax apparently retained much of its original appearance and eighteenth century colonial atmosphere until the beginning of the 1914-18 War.

Streetscapes still remained, if we accept the evidence of William Notman and other photographers[1] and artists, that recalled the almost medieval appearance of the original town streets as it had earlier been recorded by Richard Short and other military and civilian artists in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

A detailed examination of the work and methods of builders and architects in Halifax since the founding of the city, while much needed, is beyond the scope of this paper but a brief outline of the gradual emergence of architects as a separate, organized and registered professional group will be attempted.

Some of the problems confronting the researchers are, perhaps, epitomized in two associated buildings on Argyle Street in Halifax: St. Paul's Anglican Church and St. Paul's Church Hall.

At present, it would appear that we do not know the master builder responsible for the erection of St. Paul's Church and possess only fragmentary details of its actual construction. The principal historian of St. Paul's, the late R. V. Harris, appears to have assumed that the founder of Halifax, Hon. Edward Cornwallis, brought plans for the church from England.[2] By whose hands such plans may have been drawn, if indeed, they existed, is presently unknown, although the architecture of St. Paul's is said to recall that of St. Peter's, Vere Street, London, designed by James Gibbs (1682-1754), 'the friend and disciple' of Sir Christopher Wren.

We were told that the frame of this church came to Halifax by ship from Boston[3] and this tempts one to further speculation about the design and its origin.

The origin of the present St. Paul's Church Hall (1902) is better known. At the north-east corner of the Hall, a large cornerstone faces on Argyle Street. Its badly flaking sandstone surface still boldly proclaims that the architects of the Church Hall were Harris & Horton (W. C. Harris, W. J. Horton) and its builder one Henry Sanders (presumably Henry Sanders, Halifax mason and builder) and that the stone was laid in 1902 by the Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia, Hon. A. G. Jones.

Since the architectural firm of Harris & Horton no longer exists and both the builder and the Lieutenant-Governor of that day have gone to their rest, one wonders what further evidence of the origin of this building is still available to the investigator.

St. Paul's Hall, although suffering some signs of external deterioration, continues to provide a unique and interesting commentary on the development of local masonry architecture in the late Victorian period. In its quasi-military appearance it reflects the heavy masonry construction best represented by the Halifax Armouries (1896) and, in lighter vein, by Lindola, the miniature castle of Cape Breton marble on Young Avenue, that has long been the residence of Col. Sidney Oland.

Certainly nothing as elegant or elaborate as this Young Avenue mansion was attempted, at least in stone, by Haligonians in the earliest days of settlement, although we are told that Col. Horseman built a small stone house that was taken over as a town prison after the Colonel returned to England.[4]

It would appear, however, that after the initial "shelter stage" of settlement, which, at least in part, lasted through the first year, roughly from the landing in the early summer of 1749 until the opening of St. Paul's for worship in September, 1750, considerable sophistication was achieved in the design and erection of wooden buildings on the original townsite. While tents and rude shelters of logs and bark were pressed into service in the early months of settlement, records indicate that frames, planks and boards were being shipped in at an early date from New England, an activity that became all the more necessary when saw mills established by Col. Cornwallis failed to provide needed materials.[5]

It is interesting to speculate if the little colony would have been able to continue if such materials for shelter had not been

readily available in such a compact and serviceable fashion and if an increasing number of energetic and experienced New Englanders had not soon appeared to revitalize the settlement and help to erect the kind of housing they had developed in their bustling New England communities.

Cornwallis mentions at one point that his people lack experience in building with wood. To this must be added the fact that during the very first days of settlement there must have been a shortage of men skilled in building trades. Of the initial 2,576 settlers, only some 200[6] are listed in the Mess Books in categories associated with building construction.

Sufficient building frames and materials had reached the town between 1750 and the departure of Cornwallis in 1752 that larger and more durable wooden buildings had been made possible. The early primitive shelters had largely given place to wooden buildings of some size, generally with either steeply pitched or gambrel roofs, many of which, especially the gambrel, were enlarged with simple dormers on the street slope. Many of these buildings in the centre of town were both dwellings and shops with a large shutter in front that could be let down during business hours to serve as a counter for the displaying of goods. Lanterns from Boston were hung on poles and cast dim pools of light on some of the streets on dark winter nights.

A budding trade in real estate is recorded in the early issues of the *Halifax Gazette,* which began publication in March, 1752. Buildings of considerable size are advertised,[7] some of one and one-half storeys and others perhaps larger. There are references to prefabricated materials, especially house frames, being shipped into Halifax from New England while items such as bricks and hardware[8] were still coming from England.

These published details support such later graphic records as the engravings of Richard Short and further testify to the primary influence of the older American colonies on the developing architecture in wood in the new town. Tiny houses with roofs pitched sharply back and front, larger structures with more moderate pitches, large buildings with gambrel roofs and dormers, salt boxes and Cape Cod cottages, all in wood, appear to have characterized local domestic architecture in the first half dozen years of the infant colony's existence.

Thomas Beamish Akins in his *History of Halifax City* offers this summary:

> "Before the year 1760, the houses were generally built of square and round timber, some with small pickets placed upright between the stubs of the frame, and the whole covered over with clap boards; they were usually of one story with a hipped roof, the shops and half doors with no glass, swinging signs, and wooden shutters opening downwards on which goods were exposed for sale. Several of these old houses were in existence in 1850, windows and doors being altered."[9]

There was also specialized structures: warehouses, barracks, hospitals, and, after the beginning of the Dockyard about 1758-1759, special naval buildings. One suspects, however, that the basic domestic architecture remained largely unchanged, at least until the coming of the Loyalists in the 1780's.

Little information has been gathered together that would enable us to identify many of the master builders responsible for the erection of buildings in Halifax between the founding in 1749 and the American Revolution.

Occasionally names and functions do appear. T. B. Atkins notes in his *History:*

"There were three still houses in Halifax in 1753. Mr. Best, the master mason, and Mr. Clewley, the master carpenter, having been ordered to inspect them."[10]

Few variations in building techniques are obvious before 1760.

For example, it was not, apparently, until after the demolition of Louisbourg by British sapers about 1760 that suitable stone in quantities sufficient for building purposes reached Halifax. It is supposed that stone from Louisbourg was used in domestic structures erected by a number of Haligonians in the last third of the eighteenth century. Prominent among these was the home of the Hon. Richard Bulkeley, Provincial Secretary and warden of St. Paul's.[11] This mansion, known as Carleton House, eventually became a popular small hostelry at the end of the nineteenth century and now stands transformed into the Carleton Hotel.

In the quarter century between the beginning of the American Revolution and the departure of the Duke of Kent in 1800, a number of events were to affect the architectural history of the Town.

Significant among these events were a number of fires within the boundaries of the original townsite, the coming of the Loyalists, and the presence of Prince Edward himself.

T. B. Akins lists at least four serious fires: two in 1789, one in 1792 and one in 1796.[12] Three of these occurred between Barrington and Water Streets.

The coming of the Loyalists after 1776 and especially in 1783 and later years placed a serious strain on available housing in Halifax. The presence of so many new citizens undoubtedly led to the construction of new dwellings some of which

were to be ornaments to the Town, since many of the Loyalists were people of cultivation who had known comfort and graceful surroundings. The Loyalist tide that flowed into Nova Scotia during this period also carried with it craftsmen and master builders who were to have a marked effect on the architectural history of both the Province and its capital. It was also to provide the name with which the story of architecture as a recognized profession in Nova Scotia might be said to begin, that of Isaac Hildrith, Architect of Government House.[13]

Ten years after the arrival of the Loyalists, Haligonians welcomed a Commander in Chief of Royal blood, a vigorous leader who was to have an effect on Halifax that the centuries have yet to erase.

Prince Edward, the respectable soldier son of George III, came to Halifax in 1794 determined to put the town in a proper state of readiness to meet the French threat. His early and unhappy impressions of both the town and its fortifications only served to confirm in him the rightness of his judgment.

While much has been recorded and written about Prince Edward, or the Duke of Kent, as he is better known, few writers have stressed the range of the Duke's interest in architecture. Obviously schooled and even innovative in his knowledge and use of various aspects of military design, a fact best demonstrated in his skilled use of the "Martello Tower" and the military semaphore, the Duke was, if not an amateur architect, at least something more than a mere dilettante in some of the aspects of domestic architecture. While we must note the evolution of Prince's Lodge and its Rotunda and recognize its note of idiosyncrasy, it is in the Duke's sponsorship of such buildings as St. George's Anglican (Round) Church and, to a lesser degree, the Town Clock, that we recognize a more mature approach to achitecture on the part of this unique military leader. Edward's influence on all aspects of the local

scene well justifies the judgment of the Halifax historian, Dr. Thomas Raddall that "for a century afterwards the Haligonians talked of Edward's time as a golden age."[14]

The names of a few builders and carpenters appear in various records of this last quarter of the eighteenth century in Halifax, but few specific details have been organized and published.

In his book, *The History of St. Andrew's Lodge, No. I,* the late R. V. Harris records brief biographical details of early members together with the year in which they first appear on the rolls of the Lodge. Among these are noted Hugh Kirkham, (1771-2), a builder by trade, who lived on Argyle Street near St. Paul's and made repairs to the Church fabric. Another builder was John Anderson (1784). Charles Dunbrack (1799), a carpenter by trade, made certain additions to St. Paul's in 1812. Perhaps the most outstanding name is that of John Henderson (1797), a contractor who erected brick buildings, some of which are thought to be still standing but whose most impressive piece of work is Government House.[15]

Other names occasionally come to the surface when least expected. A book of poems by a Nova Scotian provides us with the name of a master carpenter whose work leads us back to the Duke of Kent. A volume entitled *Nova Scotia—Warblings of the Wildwood,* by the late W. E. Heffernan, of Halifax and Springhill, includes a photograph of the house on Brunswick Street in which he was born. The house has a central doorway, gambrel roof and plain dormers and below the picture is the following note:

> (The house represented in this photo is in the city of Halifax, Nova Scotia and is situated on the West side of Brunswick Street, the third house from the Round (St. George, English) Church, and directly opposite St. Pat-

rick's Church. It was built by, and was the home of Mr. Malisch, my great-grandfather. He was an officer in the Hessian (German) Regiment of Loyalists, and was master carpenter in the King's works, and built the Prince's Lodge for H.R.H. the Duke of Kent. My grandmother was born in this house in the year 1780. My father was born in it on 28 May, 1806, and I was born in the same room on 21st July, 1835. It is the subject of a poem written by myself entitled, "Our Homestead." This property is still well preserved, A.D. 1905—W. E. Heffernan.)[16]

This building has since been demolished, possibly when the adjacent St. Patrick's Schools were built.

The Duke of Kent for whom, apparently, Mr. Malisch worked in the building of Prince's Lodge, helped to ensure that Haligonians entered the nineteenth century with improved morale, a certain pride and a new sense of direction even though he, himself, was to leave them, never to return, in the summer of 1800.

The stresses of war with the resulting consolidation of interests, the opportunities to amass wealth and further personal fortunes and a general maturing of public taste helped to set the stage for a marked advance in the architectural history of the town, especially in masonry construction, during the first quarter of the new century.

In its earliest stages we note the presence and support of the Duke of Kent. As Grand Master of Lower Canada, Prince Edward laid the "Foundation Stone of Free Mason's Hall" in June, 1800. He must also have been interested in the efforts being made by his friend, Governor Sir John Wentworth, to get the Government to build a new and more fitting Government House but could not stay for the ceremony of laying its corner-

stone. The Duke had also been interested in promoting the building of a Town Clock but it did not begin operation until 1803, nearly three years after the Duke had returned to England.

Probably the best architectural monument of a civilian nature to the Duke's interest still standing in Halifax is St. George's Anglican Church.

In a brochure entitled *Brief Histories of the Old Dutch Church and St. George's (Round) Church* compiled for church officials in 1967 the author noted:

> "While serving as commander in Halifax from 1794-1800, Edward, Duke of Kent and later father of Queen Victoria, displayed considerable interest in the "German mission" North Suburbs. It is said that it was at his request that one William Hughes, who had come to Halifax with the Duke, designed a new church to replace the Old Dutch Church. Hughes was assisted, apparently, by J. Flieger, a member of St. George's congregation and by J. Merrick of the Department of the Surveyor-General. In any case, the design followed the circular pattern of architecture so favored by the Duke of Kent and still to be seen in the Rotunda at Prince's Lodge and in the Town Clock in Halifax."

Of the buildings mentioned, which began to grace Halifax at the opening of the new century, it was perhaps the most controversial, Government House, that produced the first principal reference to an architect in local architectural history. While additional details have recently been published[17] about this able and efficient individual, an Englishman, Isaac Hildrith, his full role in the design and construction of Government House is still not clear.

Hildrith, who was, apparently, in the course of his career "a house carpenter, a merchant, a master builder, a surveyor, and perhaps an engineer, as well as an architect," after two sojourns in America at the time of the American Revolution, eventually came to Shelburne in 1783 with other Loyalists. In Shelburne he designed and directed the building of Christ Church, (1788-89) and in 1797 assisted in the survey of a route for the proposed Shubenacadie Canal, an undertaking strongly supported by the Governor, Sir John Wentworth.

With the completion of the report on the Shubenacadie Canal project by Hildrith and his partner Chamberlain, one is not surprised to learn that Hildrith was selected as architect charged with the design and construction of the Government House so keenly desired by the Wentworths. The origin of the plans for Government House is still not clear and there is a tradition that they came from the Adam brothers in England. In any case, for the six years he was associated with the master mason, John Henderson, in the erection of this graceful building, Hildrith apparently gave satisfaction and received £50 as a Testimonial from the Legislature upon his discharge at the end of December, 1806.[18]

Isaac Hildrith died in Shelburne, Nova Scotia on September 16, 1807, at the age of 66. His tombstone records him as "Architect" and includes an epitaph any architect might wish: "A loyal subject, an able artist and an honest man."

Other major buildings, many of heavy masonry construction, were erected during the opening decades of the nineteenth century. Further research will probably identify men who may be classified as architects rather than builders but names are not readily available until mid-century.

Certainly, after the problems associated with Government House and not withstanding the high opinion in which Isaac Hildrith was held, it is to be noted:

> "In 1811, another committee of the Legislature reporting on plans for a Province House declared: ". . . it is not necessary that the Commrs. should have any Great Skill in Architecture. Honest Men with a plan and all the Sections of the Work Calculated for them Can with the Assistance of a God and Skillful Builder as their foreman carry on such a Work without difficulty."[19]

Something of this approach to the need for architects and architectural knowledge may have characterized other areas of the community and may thus have contributed to the apparent scarcity of qualified architects that present evidence would appear to suggest. Certainly it was to men who might be designated as master builders and skilled draughtsmen that the Legislature turned in the construction of Province House.

Dismayed by the unexpected cost of Government House, members of the Legislature did not take definite action to provide themselves with proper quarters until March, 1811. On August 12, the cornerstone was laid. Miss Shirley Elliott in her pamphlet, *A History of Province House,* notes that:

> "Previous to this (laying of cornerstone) three Commissioners had been appointed by the Legislature, one of whom, John Merrick, prepared the plan and elevation of the proposed building, while the work was conducted by an architect builder, Richard Scott."[20]

The Legislature of Nova Scotia first met in its new building in February, 1819 and has so continued to meet in these dignified surroundings.

Other impressive buildings were erected in the early years of the nineteenth century, a number of them in the depressed years following the close of the Napoleonic Wars. One might note among them the following buildings still standing in 1973:

Admiralty House (1814-19), Black-Binney House (c. 1819), Halifax Banking Company and Warehouse (c.1823), Keith's Brewery (1830-40). To this list should be added the Royal Acadian School (1820-22), demolished to make way for Scotia Square and Dalhousie College (1820) demolished to make way for Halifax City Hall (1887).

Still other buildings might be added since fires continued to plague the older sections of town and re-building became necessary. Akins notes a disastrous fire on Hollis Street opposite the old Government House in February, 1801. Another, considered then to have been the most disastrous in the Town's history, burned sections of Sackville Street and Bedford Row in 1816. Further fires in adjacent areas are noted in 1817 and 1820. Still another fire on the upper side of Granville Street about 1827 apparently may have resulted in regulations directing that re-building be carried out in stone or brick.[21]

With the increase in the number of newspapers and journals in the first quarter of the century and the decision of their editors to include more local news, more detailed evidence of the various aspects of the building trade became available. Yet, this material notwithstanding, all too little documentation has yet been uncovered that enables the researcher to identify architects and master builders and link them positively to their creations. One of the most recent and closely documented studies of a specific group of Halifax buildings prepared by an historian of the National Historic Sites Service of the Federal Government provides added testimony in support of this statement.[22]

There were architects and architect-builders and they did advertise themselves. In the *Nova Scotia Royal Gazette* of 13 October, 1813, J. Plaw of Charlotte Town, Prince Edward Island, "a Professional Architect", offered his services. In the *Acadian Recorder* of 15 February, 1817, McLean & Templeton

informed Haligonians that they had "commenced Teaching the Art of Architecture & Perspective Drawing, in all its various branches . . . " *The Novascotian* of 7 November 1832 noted editorially that a School of Architecture had been opened in Quebec and that a Mr. Johnston was said to be planning "something of the same kind here". *The Halifax Journal* of 4 March, 1839 included the advertisement of John McPherson, architect, who, after 20 years service in Great Britain was offering his services in Nova Scotia. One of the most significant of these advertisements was that of Henry G. Hill, "Builder & Draughtsman" which appeared in the *Novascotian,* 22 March, 1838. In his advertisement, Mr. Hill noted that he was discontinuing his Cabinet business and was now offering his services "as an Architect, Draughtsman and Builder."[23]

Henry G. Hill was a well-known builder in Halifax and his name is associated with the design of such widely divergent examples of local architecture as 1714 Robie Street (Caldwell-Mills-Aramovitch House) (c. 1840) and the City Prison (1857).

While the distinction may be finely drawn, it is possible that Henry G. Hill may represent the full development of the "architect builder" classification that existed throughout most of the century and even after the more specialized "architects" had established their position and function and were moving toward professional recognition.

A number of activities and events assisted in the gradual local refinement of this distinction.

Evidence of a desire to improve and extend architectural knowledge and elevate taste is to be found in the courses of public lectures provided by the Mechanic's Institute that became popular in Nova Scotia in the 1830's and 40's. In the course of its first year of operation, 1832, two lectures on

architecture were given at meetings of the Halifax Mechanic's Institute. On February 7, 1848, Henry Elliott, architect and Dartmouth native who had designed the Dartmouth Institute building, lectured there on architecture. Mr. Elliott was again a lecturer in the 1862 session. [24]

Two events occuring just after mid-century were important in further defining the development of the architect as professional on the local scene. The first was the need to re-build Granville Street after the fire of 1857 and especially after the fire of 1859. The second event was the architectural competition held to select a plan for a "building of brick or stone with two court rooms for the Supreme Court", a law library and quarters for the Registry of Deeds and Probate. The 1859 fire on the northern section of Granville Street and the Court House design competition, which they won, brought to Halifax for about four busy working years the Toronto architectural firm of Messrs. Thomas & Sons. William Thomas had designed St. Lawrence Hall (1850) in Toronto. Thomas and Sons were probably the largest architectural firm in Canada in the 1850's. In Halifax, the firm was represented by a son C. P. Thomas. Besides the Courthouse, this firm was responsible for the design of the new St. Matthew's Church and apparently, for many of the new buildings built to replace those lost by fire in 1859 on Granville Street between Duke and Buckingham.[25]

Not all of the new buildings met with approval. Even the scholarly and retiring Halifax historian, T. B. Akins, noted rather tartly that the new buildings on Granville Street had been erected "at a cost and in a style far beyond the requirements of the city."

With the appearance of the first city street and business directories in Halifax in the 1850's and 60's, further evidence, frequently marred by typographical errors, becomes available to the researcher.

Nugent's *Business Directory* of 1858-59, under *Architects* lists Alex Baine, Davidson & Graham, W. Finlay and Henry Hill.

*The Halifax, N.S. Business Directory* for 1863 published by Luke Hutchinson, includes a rather longer list that contains names of a number of architects who will become well-known in the architectural history of the City: Elliott & Busch, Wm. Findley, H. G. Hill, Hay & Stirling, Marshall (Architect to the city), Henry Peters and C. V. (sic) Thomas. This list has two additional points of interest. It records that the City had an Architect on Staff, one B. G. Marshall but the Directory does not list a City Engineer. The reference to an architect named Thomas is certainly to C. P. Thomas of William Thomas & Sons whose Halifax office was on Hollis Street. This appears to be the only available reference in local directories to this architect.

The first issue of *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory,* published in 1859-70 lists under Architects: George Blaiklock, Henry Elliott, Elliott & Busch, Malcom & Johnston, Henry Peters, and David Stirling. Of this list it is probable that Henry Elliott, Henry F. Busch and David Stirling can be classified as architects and the others as architect-builders.

By 1871-72, the city had a new Architect, Horatio B. Sellon. Sellon is listed privately under Architects in 1873-74 and no City Architect is recorded. It is possible that the appointment of an exceptionally capable City Engineer, E. H. Keating, in 1875 inaugurated the strong engineering tradition that distinguished Halifax City Staff until very recent years and may, in part, have made the position of City Architect redundant.

As the Directories unfold their annual testimony, some insight into the developing patterns of professional architectur-

al preparation emerge. In-office training is succeeded by junior partnership and this often in turn, by independent status. Henry Busch begins with Henry Elliott, David Stirling with Hay, Andrew Dewar begins as a partner of David Stirling, James C. Dumaresq and John McVean establish a partnership, Elliott & Hopson begin business, and in 1900-1901, J. C. Dumaresq & Son and Harris & Horton appear for the first time in the local directory.

With the establishment of the Technological Institute in in 1877, instruction in a fairly wide range of technical subjects was made available. In the Institute calendar for 1879-80, Andrew Dewar, Architect, is listed as Instructor in Architectural Drawing. In his course, Dewar covered:

> "Plan-drawing to scale, designing, perspective, the five orders, style mouldings and ornaments, drawing from casts, drafting frames for wooden buildings and, in general, practical drawing useful for mechanics in the building trades."[26]

The Technological Institute evidently achieved some standing for it is listed in 1880 Calendar of the University of Halifax as one of the institutions affiliated with the University. The University of Halifax did not include a department of Architecture although it did support a Department of Civil Engineering.

While the Technological Institute was a considerable step beyond the old Mechanic's Institute in its offering, it appears that many local architects trained and qualified within the firms that employed them. Architects who had trained and qualified elsewhere still appeared in Halifax and carried on their profession. Some like William A. Hendry in the 1870's, left government service to practise. The late Andrew Cobb, who began to practise in Halifax just before the First World

War, rounded off his training in the aethetic atmosphere of a school of architecture in Paris. One of the longest-lived of all Nova Scotian architects, the late Leslie R. Fairn, was a superintendent of building construction, taught Mechanic Science, studied Architecture with Edward Elliott of Dartmouth who designed Halifax City Hall, was licensed and practised in Florida before returning to practise for over a half a century in Nova Scotia. He was a Charter Member of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada and a Past President of the Nova Scotia Association of Architects.

Another transitional figure in local architectural history was the late A. Edwin Priest, who died in his 80's in 1972. Priest apparently began his career about 1908 as clerk in the office of Walter J. Busch, son and successor to Henry F. Busch, was next clerk to R. A. Johnson, draughtsman for H. E. Gates, then draughtsman in Priest and Sons, a firm established by his father, Capt. Reuben Priest, Master Mariner, and then finally, in 1921, is listed as Architect but remains a partner in the family firm until the 1930's. Edwin Priest was at one time Secretary of the Nova Scotia Association of Architects.

At least one Halifax name, that of Dumaresq has been recorded consistently in the list of Halifax architects since the early 1870's when James C. Dumaresq began to practise. About 1900, James took his son, Sydney, into partnership. In 1973, James's grandson, J. Philip Dumaresq carries on the family tradition in his own firm. While the names Elliott, Busch, Fairn and Fowler recall other local architectural family traditions, none can match the extent and, perhaps few can surpass the century old architectural influence, of the Dumaresq family.

Although it is clear that the profession of architect had become clearly defined and its function recognized by the end of the nineteenth century and certainly by the time of the First

World War, the Nova Scotia Association of Architects was not incorporated until its Act was passed by the Legislature of Nova Scotia on the 28th day of April, A.D., 1932, and the practice of architecture thus defined in law. This Association, a specifically Nova Scotian association, replaced earlier organizations of local and Maritime architects such as the Maritime Architects' Association.

It is perhaps a fitting note on which to conclude this survey to record that a distinguished Halifax architect and prominent member of the Nova Scotia Association of Architects, Allan F. Duffus, is this year President of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada after having served as its Dean.

The present status and influence of architects in Halifax, exposed as they are to a rapidly changing civic environment and supported at last by a vigorous local School of Architecture, is a far cry from the days when Mr. Best, the master mason, and Mr. Clewley, the master carpenter, were ordered to inspect the still houses in the Halifax of 1753.

FOOTNOTES

1. Joseph S. Rogers, **Rogers' Photographic Advertising Album,** Halifax, N.S. 1871 (1970).
2. Reginald V. Harris, **The Church of St. Paul,** Toronto, 1949, p. 15.
3. Letter, Governor Cornwallis to Lords of Trade & Plantation, Halifax, 19 March, 1749-50.
4. T. B. Akins, **History of Halifax City, N.S.H.S.** p.p. 32, 220.
5. Letter, Governor Cornwallis to Lords of Trade & Plantations, Halifax, 30th April, 1750.
6. Author's estimate. (See **Nova Scotia Archives I,** Halifax, 1869.)
7. **Halifax Gazette,** Monday, April 6, 1752, p. 2; and Monday, April 13, 1752, p. 2.
8. Ibid, Monday, April 13, 1752, p. 2.
9. T. B. Akins, **History of Halifax City, N.S.H.S.** p. 219.
10. Ibid, p. 10.
11. Ibid, pp. 217, 233.
12. Ibid, pp. 95, 97, 103, 113.
13. Charles Bruce Fergusson, **Isaac Hildrith (c. 1741-1807), Architect of Government House, Halifax,** Dalhousie Review, Vol. 50, No. 4, 1970-71, pp. 510-516.
14. Thomas H. Raddall, **Halifax, Warden of the North,** Toronto, 1971, p. 116.
15. Reginald V. Harris, **The History of St. Andrew's Lodge, No. 1,** Kentville N.S. 1950, pp. 46, 55, 88, 89.
16. W. E. Heffernan, **Nova Scotia, Warblings of the Wildwood,** Springhill, N.S. 1908. facing page 56.
17. Charles Bruce Fergusson, **Isaac Hildrith (c. 1741-1807) Architect of Government House, Halifax,** Dalhousie Review, Volume 50, No. 4, 1970-71, p.p. 510-516.
18. Ibid p. 515
    See Also, J. S. Martell, **The Romance of Government House,** Halifax, N.S. 1956.
19. Ibid (Martell), p. 11
20. Shirley B. Elliott, **A History of Province House,** Halifax, n.d., n.p.
21. T. B. Akins, **History of Halifax City,** N.S.H.S., p. 139.
22. Susan Buggey, **Halifax Waterfront Buildings Project, Historical Report,** National Historic Sites Services, Ottawa, 1972.
23. Ibid, p.p. 114, 115, 120, 121.
24. Charles Bruce Fergusson, **Mechanic's Institutes of Nova Scotia,** PANS, 1960, p.p. 30, 42.
25. Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia, **A Sense of Place,** Halifax, N.S., 1970, p. 10.
26. **Technological Institute, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Second Announcement, 1879-80,** p. 13.

# *Contributors*

LORNA INNESS, who writes about Joseph Howe as a journalist, reviews books for The Halifax Herald Ltd., and produces two columns weekly: Provincial Diary, in The Chronicle- Herald, and That Was the Week . . . , in The Mail-Star. The columns deal with people, places and events 30 years ago.

She combines living in a small Eastern Shore community with working in Halifax and considers that she has "the best of both worlds."

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MARJORIE V. MAJOR was born and received her early education in New Hampshire. She attended university in Maine and furthered her education in Halifax, Nova Scotia, at the Maritime Business College and with university extension courses in Newspaper Advertising.

She has held office as President of the Canadian Women's Press Club, Nova Scotia Branch; Canadian Author's Association, Nova Scotia Branch, is a founding member of the Business and Professional Women's Club, and is a member of the Landmarks Commission of the City of Halifax.

Mrs. Major resides in Halifax and is a freelance writer of long experience. She has been associated with the Halifax Mail-Star for over twenty-five years. Editor of The Commercial News, edited The Halifax Gazette, and written many feature articles for such magazines as Chatelaine, Saturday Night, Atlantic Advocate, and others. She has also done extensive work in public relations, radio and television.

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EDITH MURRAY CREIGHTON was born in Halifax and received her early education in Halifax schools. She received the degree of Bachelor of Arts from Dalhousie University and the degree of Master of Arts from McGill University. She also studied at the Sorbonne and Columbia University.

Her articles have been published in Saturday Night, several newspapers and professional journals. She has also given radio talks on various subjects.

Since her retirement from teaching high school and university French, Miss Creighton has been writing, painting, and is actively interested in historical research. She resides in Halifax.

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MALCOLM KENNETH MacLEOD was born in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia. He received the degree of Bachelor of Arts from Dalhousie University in 1958, the degree of Master of Arts in History from the University of Toronto in 1961, and is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Ottawa. He received a Canada Council doctoral fellowship 1967-70.

Mr. MacLeod has written numerous historical articles on predominantly Canadian Naval subjects for several magazines and periodicals and has many book reviews and newspaper items to his credit.

He is a member of the Canadian Historical Association and the Atlantic Association of Historians.

Mr. MacLeod is Regional Interpretation Officer, National Historic Sites Service. Previous to this he taught history at Memorial University of Newfoundland.

PHYLLIS RUTH BLAKELEY was born in Halifax, Nova Scotia. She was educated in the public schools of Halifax and graduated from the Halifax County Academy in 1939 with the Governor-General's medal and the St. George's Society Prize for literature. She attended Dalhousie University, where she graduated in 1942 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree with distinction in English and History, and, after obtaining a Diploma of Education the following year, she began a teaching career.

After receiving a Master of Arts degree in Nova Scotian History from Dalhousie University in 1945 she was appointed to the staff of the Public Archives of Nova Scotia as a research assistant. In 1959 she became Assistant-Archivist, a position she still holds.

Miss Blakeley is the author of *The Story of Nova Scotia,* a junior high school studies textbook. This was revised as a history text for Grade 6 and is used in the schools under the title *Nova Scotia—A Brief History.* Among many other published works by Miss Blakeley are *The Story of P.E.I., and Nova Scotia's Two Remarkable Giants.*

In 1969 she received a certificate from the Canadian government "on behalf of the Canadian people to record our thanks for a generous contribution to the preservation and enrichment of Canada's historical heritage."

Miss Blakeley is a member of the Canadian Historical Association, the Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia, the Nova Scotia Branch of the Canadian Author's Association, and the Editorial Board of the Nova Scotia Historical Quarterly.

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LOUIS WILLIAM COLLINS, native Haligonian, son of Halifax contractor and builder. A graduate in Arts and Education of Dalhousie University, now Principal of Westmount School in Halifax. Chairman of Halifax Landmarks Commission, Member of the Board of Trustees of The Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia, and member of the Nova Scotia Historical Society and the Association for Preservation Technology. Married, three children. Hobbies, collecting Nova Scotiana. Lectures on historic Halifax and its landmarks.

# *Book Reviews*

LORNA INNESS

**The Big Ship, Larsen, Sheer and Omholt-Jensen**
**223 pages, paperback, illus. published 1973**
**McClelland & Stewart Ltd. $3.95**

This is a paperback edition of the account first published in 1957, of the voyages of the St. Roch and the experiences of former Supt. Henry A. Larsen during his career with the RCMP. The book was reissued in line with the centennial anniversary celebrations of the RCMP this year.

Larsen spent much of his time with the RCMP on Arctic patrol service, and that is described vividly in this book. But the highlight of his service was the time spent aboard the St. Roch, the 104-foot, 197-ton wooden motor schooner built in North Vancouver for the Arctic patrol service.

In June 1940, the St. Roch sailed from Vancouver to Halifax ing her way through heavy ice conditions, the vessel reached the East Coast port, which was at the height of its wartime service, in October 1942. She became the second craft to make the trip through the Northwest Passage.

At Halifax, the St. Roch was refitted with a larger engine and in 1944 she sailed for Vancouver, on a more northerly passage, and reached her home port after only 86 days. She was the first vessel to make the trip in both directions, east and west. Sgt. Henry Larsen was in command on both voyages.

The St. Roch, which lay neglected for some years after the end of her active service, was acquired by the people of Vancouver and is now preserved there as a museum.

This book is an absorbing account of police work and seamanship in the North in the days when it was relatively unexploited and still represented a remote frontier.

**Nova Scotia: Window on the Sea, Hans Weber, Ernest Buckler**
**127 pages, hardcover, illus., published 1973**
**McClelland & Stewart Ltd.—$12.95**

This book, which was just published as the last issue of this Quarterly went to press, is a photo-study of one way of life in this province. The book has been high on the best seller list since it appeared on the shelves of local book stores, which says a lot about the enthusiasm Nova Scotians have for first-rate books about their own province.

The photographs, in color and black and white, were taken by Hans Weber, a free-lance photographer who spent several years taking pictures at random before thinking about putting them together in a book. A meeting with Ernest Buckler led to thoughts of a book and it is Buckler's text which accompanies the pictures in Window on the Sea.

The Book shows a "land (which) is by turns joyous and bleak." The outlook is rather more bleak than joyous and the study of life on the farm and in the fishing community looks at life in all its rugged simplicity. A man stands beside the back door of his home on a hill overlooking a bleak, winter landscape, the seacoast held in thrall by ice. Boats and fish sheds, unpainted houses and fences, barns and shacks with grey, weatherbeaten shingles form the subject matter of many of the pictures.

Buckler writes of a Nova Scotia "grounded in the sea, but rooted in the land." It is a province, he states, "almost but not quite an island, where the arteries go out to the Main, but the beat is all of itself."

He writes of people in a way of life, "the life from Faulkner and the life from Hardy." He writes of people who carve out an existence in a hard environment with resourcefulness and independence like "snowfences that hold against the gale."

What prompted this book in part is the concern, shared by both Weber and Buckler, that this rugged independence and individuality are fast being overwhelmed by the march of mechanization and "progress", of box-like houses and shopping centres, asphalt and conformity, which lead "all things to sameness."

The book is a candid look at the harder ways of rural life in this province, where, Buckler, states, "the spirit of this Nova Scotia seems to be fast disappearing."

It is the hope of these two men that others will see the value of this side of Nova Scotia and seek to preserve that spirit to keep all traces of that way of life from being lost forever in the pursuit of "counterfeit" qualities.

**Bell, by Robert V. Bruce**
**Hardcover, illus. published April 1973**
**McClelland & Stewart Ltd.—$12.50**

This volume is subtitled Alexander Graham Bell and the Conquest of Solitude and it is an in-depth study of Bell's career interwoven with his family life. For one of Bell's major interests was the teaching of the deaf and he married in 1877 Mabel Gardiner Hubbard, one of his deaf pupils. The story of their courtship and marriage is told with compassion and provides a human background against which is displayed the inventor's technical brilliance and success.

The Edinburg-born inventor's interest in the mechanics of speaking, in elocution and "visible speech" were as important to him as his later work with the telephone and heavier-than-air flight experiments.

The interest of inventing was there in the boyhood days. When a friend's father suggested that the boys "do something useful" concerning harvesting, Bell worked out a means of threshing grain.

In later years, when Bell went to see Joseph Henry at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., the director/scientist/inventor listened to the young man and then urged him to perfect his invention himself: " . . . when Bell protested that he lacked the necessary electrical knowledge, Henry answered firmly and succinctly: 'Get it!' "

"I cannot tell you how much these two words have encouraged me," Bell was to write to his parents.

The book deals with the perfecting of the early telephone, and then with the effect that this invention had on the life of Bell and his family. The work meant long hours of separation from his family, whether shut in his study at home or on a lecture tour or working in another country.

When in 1890 Bell wrote to his wife: "I feel more and more as I grow older the tendency to retire into myself and be alone with my thoughts . . .", his wife wrote to him: "Please try and come out of your hermit cell . . . I want you to succeed in your experiments, but not to lose all human interest in the process . . . "

When Bell was travelling in London, his wife wrote to him from Paris: "Accept all the invitations to dinner you get and meet all the great men you can—I want to hear all about them. I always feel as if you were my second self and all the gorgeous people you meet I meet too, and enjoy far more than if I really met them. Never mind a little dyspepsia. We'll go home to Cape Breton and live on bread and milk the rest of the summer."

The conquest of solitude—for humanity at large and within the Bell family is studied in this book with warmth and humor. One sees not simply the great inventor, as one sees him so often carved in marble or shown in an old photograph, but as a living person with doubts, uncertainties, ambitions and joys.

Included in this book is the story of Bell's involvement with the National Geographic Society. "The world and all that is in it is our theme", he said.

Well, the potential of the county and its resources, of County Harbor, of the land itself seems to be gaining new recognition as attention centres on the Canso area. But whether a railway will ever provide the answer to transportation problems, is still uncertain.

Fifty years of agitation and partisan politics and yet there is no railroad. There remains only a reminder of a dream and the thought of what might have been.

**Lighthouses of Nova Scotia, by David E. Stephens,**
**80 pages, paperback, published 1973**
**Lancelot Press, $2.**

David Stephens, a teacher with writing as a second interest, has taken a look at another aspect of the Nova Scotian scene—the lighthouses which deck the province's coastline and which have been silent witnesses of many occasions of drama, tragedy and heroism.

The book is illustrated with photographs of some of the major lighthouses and contains stories about lights and lightkeepers, about the business of running a light and a brief chapter on lightships.

(For a story of life in a lighthouse, day by day, season, by season, Evelyn Richardson's We Keep A Light, dealing with her life on Bon Portage, must rank as a Nova Scotian classic in this field.)

Those who are particularly interested in this subject will welcome the list of selected lighthouses which Stephens has included at the back of this book. The list is taken from the Ministry of Transport's List of Lights, Buoys and Fog Signals—Atlantic Coast 1972. It starts near the New Brunswick side of the Bay of Fundy and follows the coastline of Nova Scotia in a counterclockwise fashion back to the New Brunswick border on the Northumberland Strait.

**Pictou Pioneers, by Roland H. Sherwood**
**117 pages, paperback, Published 1973,**
**Lancelot Press, $2,95**

This is the latest published collection of tales and anecdotes about Pictou told by Roland H. Sherwood who has built up a reputation as the "master story teller" and Pictou County historian. The book is one of those published as Pictou celebrates the anniversary of the landing of the pioneers from the Hector.

Sherwood's stories underline the hardships and dangers faced by the early settlers of Pictou County, and the courage and strength, resourcefulness and daring which enabled them to build a strong and vigorous culture.

**The Girl from Loch Bras d'Or, by Margaret MacPhail,**
**217 pages, paperback, published 1973**
**Lancelot Press, $3.95**

This book is a sequel to the volume, Loch Bras d'Or which won friends for Mrs. MacPhail in many parts of the world. In this second book, Mrs. MacPhail, who was born on a farm in Cape Breton in 1887, writes about a girlhood in those days when the first faint stirrings of emancipated womanhood (still a long way from Women's Lib) were being heard in the land.

In the course of time the young heroine becomes a teacher, and travels to New York and to Europe. On a journey home to Cape Breton before going to Boston, the young girl rows to an offshore island, gathers "seashells, and white water lilies and picks green gooseberries . . .", recapturing the essence of childhood, and of a gentler way of life than that found today; of a time when a poor family might still harvest the natural riches of the land.

And, in those days, Boston, that cosmopolitan centre of wonders and wealth which was to lure so many Nova Scotians away from their province to make their fortunes, "was not far away any more . . . just overnight from Halifax by boat."

**It Happened Yesterday, by Michael MacKenzie**
**92 pages, paperback, published July, 1973**
**Commercial Press, Corner Brook, Nfld., $1.95**

A collection of tales, "designed as a possible source of enjoyment, as well as a brief record of life in the past," this volume is full of stories of adventure, of mystery, of the supernatural and of the drama of life in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland in years past.

Most of the stories first appeared in the Cape Breton Post, between 1955 and 1958; some new material has been added for this second edition.

Michael MacKenzie is a school teacher with a taste for writing which has developed into a successful hobby.

**From the Highlands and the Sea, Compiled by the Ingonish Women's Hospital Auxiliary,**
**100 pages, spiral-bound paperback, 2nd Ed., July 1973. $2.50**

Some hae meat and canna eat,
And some wad eat that want it
Bue we hae meat, and we can eat,
And sae the Lord be thanket.

The well-known Selkirk grace by Robert Burns is one of the quotations about food which are included in this cook book. Fittingly enough it appears on the same page as Bessie's recipe for Bannock.

The book is a collection of recipes from Cape Breton kitchens, recipes which have been assembled by the members of the Ingonish Women's Hospital Auxiliary. The ladies hope that

everyone will have "a grand ceilidh" when they use the book and likely they will.

Beginning, naturally, with that Scottish staple, porridge (and such variations as Frumety and Scotch Forach), the book deals with soups and chowders, game, fish, main dishes, vegetables, breads and other baked goods.

While the book lacks the lively written commentary filled with historical information that is to be found in some cook books, most notably in Out of Old Nova Scotia Kitchens, by Marie Nightingale, its recipes have the homespun Cape Breton touch and help to contribute to the sociological background of that island and, as well, of Nova Scotia.

# Notes on Nova Scotia

The font in St. Paul's Anglican Church, dates from the reign of Charles I of England.

* * *

Captain James Cook, noted cartographer and explorer, spent the winter months of 1758-62 in Halifax compiling charts.

* * *

Rev. Aaron Cleveland came to Halifax in 1750 to be minister of Mather's (St. Matthew's) Church. He was great-grandfather of U.S. President, Grover Cleveland.

* * *

Province House, the seat of government of Nova Scotia, is constructed of native sandstone which was brought from Wallace in Cumberland County. Completed in 1819, it took eight years to build at a cost of £52,000.

* * *

The city of Halifax leases the property comprising Point Pleasant Park from the Federal Government for one shilling a year.

* * *

Fleming Park, Halifax, was donated to the city by the inventor of Standard Time and builder of the Intercolonial Railway, Sir Sanford Fleming.

# *PONTACK SAUCE*

*From the famous restaurant Pontack's on*

*Lombard Street, London, England*

1 pint ripe elderberries

1 pint vinegar or claret

1 teaspoon salt

1 blade mace (approx. 1/4 t.)

12 cloves

40 peppercorns

1 small onion (finely chopped)

pinch of ginger

Boil vinegar or claret and pour over elderberries in stone jar (or covered casserole). Cover and let stand overnight in warm place (very low oven). In the morning drain off liquid into saucepan adding remaining ingredients, boil ten minutes, bottle and seal. Do not strain. To be served with meat course.

*This recipe appeared in a recent issue of SHE in an article Food For Free by Richard Maybe in which he says that "The sauce was meant to be kept for seven years before use. He reports good flavour after seven days and definite improvement after one year.*

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