

# The Old Train Station News

Newsletter #76

June 2015

When Eileen MacNeil jotted down her memories of the old Bishop's Palace back in the early 1980s, she probably knew that her notes would prove to be valuable someday. While she is perhaps best remembered as a Highland dance and creative dance teacher, Eileen was also a collector of glass and antiques. She would regularly scour auctions, yard sales and flea markets looking for interesting pieces for her own collection as well as artifacts for the Heritage Association of Antigonish. That was in the days before the Antigonish Heritage Museum. These valuable notes regarding the Bishop's Palace are part of that early collection for the museum archives.



## **The Bishop's Palace – Antigonish, N.S.**

by Eileen MacNeil

Even the old sedate, awe-inspiring dwelling of the Head of the Diocese falls under the demolition hammer.

Two generations ago, the Palace was a monument. Set up on a hill, looking down in a loving, protecting manner, on the little cathedral town. The cathedral had been built of local granite stone, but the Bishop's Residence was a wooden structure of four floors and a large attic – a hive of activity with many zealous young men rushing in and out about their various duties.

On the third floor was a chapel, where young boys of the town learned and served the bishop at mass and altar duties. On the third floor also, (long ago) was a printing press where the early issues of the diocesan newspaper, The Casket, were printed and mailed out.

The rooms were monstrous in size with high ceilings and the heating system was inadequate. Young priests used to say they put on their overcoats in the morning (before shaving) so they wouldn't cut their throats, they would be shivering so with the cold! I doubt if this were true, but it makes a good story.

From 1844 to 1886, the seat of the diocese was at Arichat; even so, during much of that time, the reigning bishops resided here in Antigonish. Bishop William Fraser, First Bishop of Arichat, always lived in the heart of town. In 1846, according to Father A. A. Johnston's *A History of the Catholic Church in Eastern Nova Scotia, Volume II*, Bishop Fraser moved into a "superb palace built for him by the gratitude of his people." It was said to be "a really fine house," a wooden structure a little west of our present day cathedral.

In 1855, the St. F. X. College was moved from Arichat to Antigonish. Bishop Colin MacKinnon was living in Arichat at the time, so the seminarians

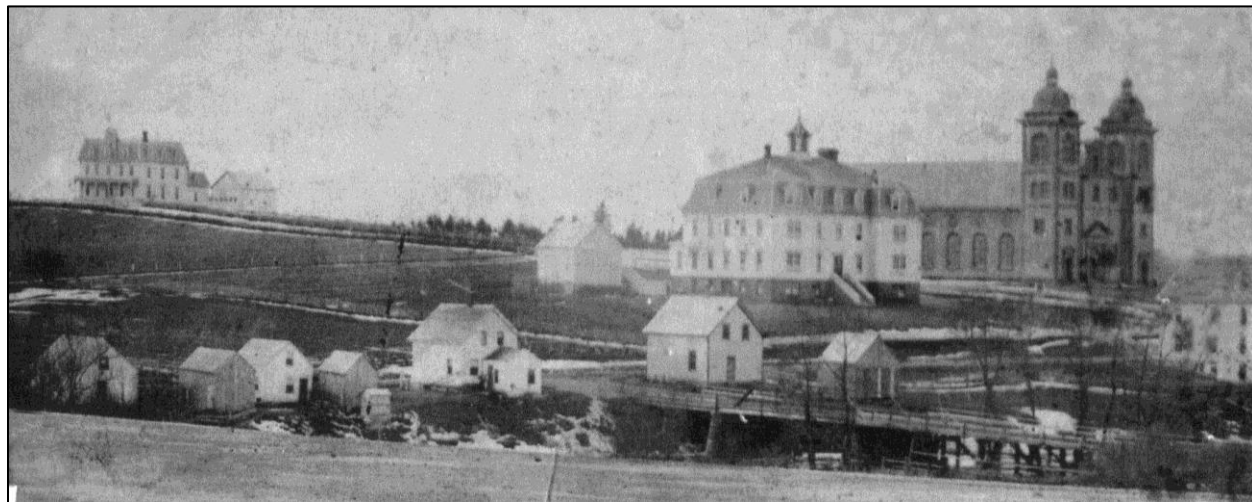
attending the college were placed in the Bishop's residence. When Bishop MacKinnon moved to Antigonish in 1858, he added a much-needed storey to the building. "The Big House," as the residence

came to be known, reportedly housed about a dozen seminarians in 1863. Little wonder it also came to be known as “the Seminary.”

Plans for a new official Bishop’s Residence came to light in a May 1883 edition of *The Casket*. “This residence, occupying as it will one of the most beautiful and commanding sites in the town, will be a great acquisition to its architectural appearances.” The site chosen for the new Bishop’s Palace was in the vicinity of the present day parking lot in front of the Annex building on campus.

That year, there was much talk about the construction of a new residence for the Bishop of the Diocese. In August, *The Casket* reasoned: “To no one can it be a matter of surprise that the Bishop of Arichat is building for himself a suitable residence. A couple of rooms in the Seminary might suit his taste as a student, but could not meet his wants as a prelate. . . .” In 1880, three years after his installation, Bishop John Cameron had moved to Antigonish and into “the Big House,” clearly intending to stay permanently. (The seat of the diocese was eventually transferred to Antigonish in 1886.) Surely, the paper argued, “the people of the diocese have no wish to see their Bishop occupy a corner of what has been sneeringly described as ‘an imposing white barn with many staring windows,’ in the position of a boarder rather than that of a host.” Was there some objection to new housing for the Bishop? Soon after, the paper reiterated, “The bishop of Arichat possesses no house of his own in the Diocese. He has been obliged to take up his abode in a corner of the College building. Episcopal hospitality. . . is not easily dispensed in such a place.” More persuasive commentary ensued in a subsequent issue. “The noise incident to the early hours of college life cannot conduce to the repose necessary for the bishop as he advances in years.” Simply said, the bishop must have a new residence – for himself and his clergy. “It is high time that they [the Catholics of Antigonish and the Diocese] should place their bishop in such a position as to be able to offer hospitality to an archbishop, a bishop, or a priest who may visit him.” Apparently, Bishop’s Fraser’s palace had evolved into a dorm that simply did not meet the needs of Bishop John Cameron.

By now, construction was well underway. “The new building is very prettily situated on the hill above the Cathedral. It is two-story with mansard roof. Size 55 by 44, with a wing for kitchen 35 feet by 21. Mr. John McDonald, Antigonish, has the contract.” This building, *The Casket* assured its readers, would belong to the whole diocese.



(The Bishop’s Palace on the upper left circa 1890.)

Another stately residence fit for a bishop would be a costly undertaking for both the parish and the diocese. The cathedral had been completed just a decade earlier but the interior decoration had not yet been carried out. How were the people to fund still another major building project? Again, *The Casket* seemed privy to that information. The old glebe house and lot on Main Street would be sold because the parish priest would now take up residence in the bishop's new house. Other monies would come from a three-day "grand bazaar" hosted by "the good and self-sacrificing women" of Antigonish. Various donations are recorded in *The Casket* – including those of a certain Mrs. Fraser of West River who travelled to Boston to "solicit aid" for this fundraiser. The paper reveals that the bazaar took place with a great deal of fanfare in September in the Exhibition Building on College Street. Rail and steamer rates had been reduced to encourage visitors from other parts of the diocese to attend the bazaar. When all was said and done, the fundraiser was proclaimed a great success.

The grandiosity of the Bishop's Palace did not go unnoticed by one out-of-town guest whose article, "Antigonish," was published in *The Catholic World*, an American monthly magazine of General Literature and Science back in 1885. Promising not to belittle in the fashion of Charles Dudley Warner back in 1873, Amy M. Pope wrote, "*Up on the hill overlooking these religious institutions [the Mount and St. F.X.] towers the palace of the bishop of Arichat. From its windows the view is beautiful, and the little town is seen in its best aspect. Here the saintly prelate lives whose wisdom, learning, and prudence have made him famous – the good and gentle Bishop of Arichat. From here he rules his immense diocese, containing nearly sixty priests, spending his leisure moments in literary pursuits.*"

The bishop's estate was a working farm in the days of Bishop James Morrison. Leo "Boots" Chisholm remembers when the farm was run by a certain John MacNeil of Pleasant Street, also known as "Johnny the Bishop." Apparently, the farm had a large grain field and there were several milking cows on the property. Donald Barry informs that there was a barn to the right of the house. Leo Chisholm recalls the days when Albert Whidden's workers harvested the hay on the property.



Both gentlemen can remember Bishop Morrison out on his deck firing his shotgun at the crows in his grain field. (*Cadets training out behind the palace circa 1945.*)

Eileen MacNeil delights in the magnificence of the palace but also voices its major shortcoming – the cold. Peter Nearing elaborates on the building's failings in his book, *He Loved the Church: A Biography of Bishop John R. MacDonald*, when he recounts Bishop John R.'s years as curate: "*He had a room on the third floor where there was neither electricity nor running water – only a wash-stand with pitcher and basin. Sometimes he had had to break the ice to get enough water to wash his face. There was one bathroom on the second floor, for the Bishop, the priests and the housekeeper.*" Apparently, the coldness of the house was "almost unbearable." Years later, as rector, he would sometimes sit at his desk, wearing his overcoat and overshoes. The noisy old furnace, immediately below his bedroom, kept him awake all hours of the night. Clearly, Bishop John R. had little love for the palace.

When he succeeded Bishop Morrison in 1950, Bishop John R. MacDonald moved into the historic property on Main Street that is today the Victorian Inn. The palace was handed over to the pastor and the assistants of St. Ninian's Cathedral and the building became a glebe house. A modern rectory was built in 1962 and the "old Glebe House" stood empty – but not for long. In May of 1963, *The Casket* reported that the building would be taken over by the White Sisters of Africa on July 1 and

that most of the Sisters would be studying at St. F. X. University.

*The "White Sisters of Africa", a missionary order from Montreal, were eager to send their young "novices" to study at St. Francis Xavier University and The Coady Institute in Antigonish, as part of their preparation for working in foreign lands. They needed a place to live in, and since the bishop had moved to his new residence on Main Street, and a residence and offices for the priests had been built facing the cathedral, the "Old Palace" was now empty.*

*The White Sisters took over the Old Palace until they had completed their own Convent Building. Now, after several years, the new convent for the White Sisters was finished, the moving day settled, and what furnishing the Sisters had no use for they intended to sell.*

*The University had bought the property. The Old Palace was to be demolished and a university building built on the site.*

*I had been involved in projects (over several years) to help the "White Sisters" raise money for their building fund, and when the Head Sister called and asked if I would help them price the furnishings they wished to dispose of, I had an opportunity to see "The Bishop's Palace" from first floor to the attic.*

*I'll never forget the pleasure that opportunity brought me "from the main floor to the attic".*

*A very young, naive Sister had been given the responsibility of this venture so she and I started in the attic, organizing the clearing of the rooms.*

*The beautiful, carved staircase curved from the main floor up to the fourth floor attic, and there we began.*

*There were mirrors, and pictures in beautiful ornate frames, in different sizes and condition leaning against pillars and walls; trunks and boxes of various sizes, some with discarded clothing, clerical robes, books, and bric-a-brac of all kinds. We organized it a bit and then moved down to the lower floor. The bedroom floor, large rooms stripped except for the things considered superfluous and useless to the owner. The discarded boxes and bureaus, some empty, some filled with mementos of other eras and tastes. One trunk contained the cerise cape and ceremonial hat of a priest (to be worn on ceremonial religious services (I assume). Amongst the bric-a-brac from several rooms there were "pipes", "parts of pipes", cases with pipes in them. Finally, I turned to the Sister and said, "get us a large carton and we'll gather these items together. They are real collector's items." As I recall, we gathered at least 20 articles of collector's interest and memorabilia.*

*The walls of these rooms had not been painted for many years. The ceilings were high but at one time they had a deep plaster moulding, very ornate and delicately painted, but crumbling away.*

Sheila (Wood) Redden of Cape George was one of those "Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa," better known as "The White Sisters of Africa." Born in Glace Bay, Sheila completed the postulancy and novitiate programs with The White Sisters of Africa in Pennsylvania before coming to Antigonish on March 19, 1964, to attend St. F. X. After high school, Sheila had accepted a couple of terms teaching in the Cape Breton school system, even without a teaching degree. At St. F. X., "Sister Noreen" (as she was now called) completed an undergraduate degree and a Bachelor of Education to enable her to teach in Africa.

Sheila clearly recalls her four years at the Bishop's Palace, especially the cold and the dark. "When the wind really blew, we would all move to the other side of the house." She remembers the old radiators and sitting next to them for warmth, the rocking chairs, the ornate moldings, and all the plaster.

The parlor was to the right of the front entrance. Behind it was a large community room with lots of chairs. The kitchen was next. Big, cozy and bright, it contained a long table, a stove and some old chairs. The chapel, to the left of the main entrance, housed an organ. Behind the chapel was another room with a piano and a large table. Next to it (and off the kitchen) was a pantry with lots of shelving.

"We were very poor," Sheila reveals. For Thanksgiving dinner, everything was donated by the local community. "The community was so good to us!"

The convent here in Antigonish was a house of transition as Sisters came and went. Their numbers varied.



Newly professed Sisters were sent to the university to be educated and to learn English. (Contrary to Eileen MacNeil's remarks, Sheila assures us that "novices" were *never* sent to Antigonish to study at the university or at the Coady Institute. The novitiate was a two year period of isolation, silence and prayer.) Experienced Sisters came back from Africa to attend the Coady Institute.



Lise Rousson of Ottawa was one of Sheila's fellow Sisters at "Star of the Sea," as the community was called. Back then, Lise was known as Sister Miriam de la Croix. Thanks to her generosity, we can share a few photos of those days when the Sisters first came to Antigonish. Above, we see Lise with a visiting brother in front of the old Bishop's Palace.



Lise's photos reveal a happy community. "Lots of singing took place there," Sheila recalls. Often they would gather around the piano to make music. In a song book compiled while she was with the order, Sheila wrote: "This singing together was one of the greatest contributions to our happy community life." But music must be shared and that's what the Sisters did – with the Coady students, X-project, and the local community.

Sheila (pictured front and center and playing guitar) was very involved with music. For a while she played the organ at the cathedral; but over at the

*In one of the rooms we found an old record player and roll type records and a "His Master's Voice" horn type speaker.*

*Early in the summer of that year, Rebecca MacLean (the Secretary) of the President at St. F.X. had called me and asked if I would like to see the antique furniture being restored for the new Bishop's Palace and the new Priest's residence.*

*Bishop James Morrison, the first Bishop of the established Diocese of Antigonish was from P.E.I. Many pieces of furniture had come from P.E.I. In 1912, when Bishop Morrison came to Antigonish, and as some of the delicate chairs and settees became rickety with age, they were stored in the attic.*

*These "relics" now had been taken to the basement of the Science Building on St. F.X. campus. A large crew of craftsmen had been brought in from Halifax to mend, restore and refurbish what could be salvaged. These pieces were to be included in the furnishing of the Bishop's Palace and the new Priests' residence. There were some complete sets of divans and side chairs, straight chairs, some strictly decorative pieces, a beautiful, very large dining table with matching chairs, many Victorian parlor tables and chairs. There were bolts of velvet, tapestry, embroidered materials waiting to replace the covers on the repaired chairs and settees.*

*I have many happy memories of that morning spent admiring those lovely old pieces of furniture. There were 22 chairs and 8 settees or divans.*

*Later in the summer when the Sisters were ready to move to their new residence, and the day to dispose of their surplus furnishings was organized, I met the young Sister. "Oh, Mrs. MacNeil, she exclaimed, "You would have laughed if you had been here on our moving day." The Principal of the high school sent over a group of the high school boys to move all the things from the upper floors and attic, down to the main floor. "I looked up the stairway", she said, "and here were the boys outfitted in clerical gowns and the "cerise" robe and hat, and other regalia, coming down the staircase in procession, each pretending to be smoking all those fancy pipes." I guess there is a fancy "collector's" pipe included in many boys' "treasure" chest today! "I said nothing, but I didn't laugh." However, I suppose we should all be thankful many of those beautiful pieces of furniture we salvaged and are still in the Antigonish area.*

*For myself, each day I have the pleasure of seeing a 10' high bookcase cabinet, and four beautiful parlor chairs, with needlepoint seats, and a "Bishop's" chair in my own living room, in my old school house home in Lochaer.*

Bishop of Antigonish had evolved into a humble convent for missionary Sisters.

chapel, Father Greg MacKinnon was looking for guitar music and so Sheila and a group of university students organized a folk group there. "I was the singing nun," she chuckles.

In a 1964 article for *The Casket*, H. M. MacDonald wrote about the Bishop's Palace and the sign of the pelican over the front door of the new home for The White Sisters of Africa: "The pelican standing on its nest and looking down upon its hungry brood. . . ." Lise remembers the pelican above the door. "There was glass around the frame of the door to let some light come in, I guess, and this was set outside above the door in the shape of a pelican feeding its young, the kind of picture we sometimes saw in the magazine."



(Photo: *The Casket*, December, 17, 1964)

H. M. MacDonald informed that the palace had been renamed "The White House on the Hill" and that "there is already something warm even around the exterior and within." He revealed that "where once a guest room awaited the visitor there is a little chapel, with altar and fixtures the work of the Sisters themselves." The grand palace for the

Lise Rousson remembers when The White Sisters of Africa moved out of the old palace and into Mount St. Bernard while awaiting the completion of their new convent on Hillcrest Street. That was in the fall of 1967. The Bishop's Palace came down the following year (according to R. A. MacLean in *Bishop John Cameron: Piety & Politics*) to make room for the expansion of St. F. X.

Snippets of information are all that are left of the old monument – as Eileen MacNeil dubbed the residence. Needless to say, we're most grateful to Eileen for her detailed sketch as it corroborates the renowned grandeur of the place. We weren't able to verify whether the third floor actually housed a printing press, as Eileen suggested, or if early issues of *The Casket* were actually printed and mailed out from there. She indicated four floors, including a large attic; three are obvious in the photos and confirmed by Sheila Redden; back then, *The Casket* initially reported two. Eileen used the term "White Sisters" but this is not entirely correct. Sheila notes that their official title is "Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa" but that the Sisters are better known as "The White Sisters of Africa."

As for Sheila Redden and Lise Rousson, they have their own reminders of their stint at the Bishop's Palace. Lise has the photographs which she graciously shared with us and Sheila has a compilation of songs that she composed while she was with the order, including one called "Star of the Sea." The humility and simplicity of that song are a stark contrast to the busyness and splendor found in Eileen's commentary. The poverty and charity practiced by The White Sisters of Africa was also a far cry from the image of the bishop ruling from his towering palace, as depicted by Amy Pope back in 1885.

**\*\* STAR OF THE SEA \*\***

In the Bishop's palace high upon the hilltop  
The atmosphere is quiet and serene.  
For he moved to a new home,  
And the house stands all alone.  
The place soon to be called - 'Star of the Sea'.

CHORUS

Star of the Sea...Star of the Sea....  
'Tis the place where the Lord wants us to be.  
We give thanks, O Lord above,  
For this home which we all love.  
For this treasure which we call - Star of the Sea.

Now, in this house upon the hill are some White Sisters.  
They live together happy as can be.  
From afar they all have come  
And they work and pray as one  
In the home which they have called - Star of the Sea.

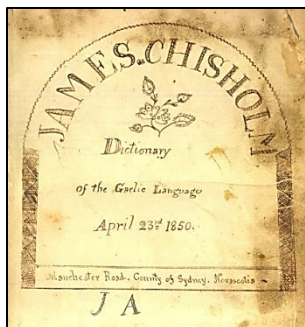
Their life is one of hard work, service and devotion.  
'Mid joy and sorrow, strife and poverty.  
'Tis among them you will find  
Christ's love for all mankind  
And the likeness of His queen - Star of the Sea



(Renewal of vows: Lise wearing the old habit, 1965.)

Not a hint of the old palace remains today – but what an imposing structure it was in its heyday! Some of our storied past was determined behind those great walls as bishops ruled supreme. Oh, to have been a fly on that beautifully carved staircase spiraling heavenward, on one of the pillars, or on one of the ornate picture frames that decorated the place. Think of the stories we'd have to tell then.

## Recent Acquisitions



**Donnie L. and Mary Ellen MacDonald of the Heatherton area** recently donated a Gaelic dictionary to the museum. Published in Scotland in 1845, the book has a detailed nameplate created for a certain James Chisholm and dated April 23, 1850. "Dictionary of the Gaelic Language" it reads. The base of the decorative plate is inscribed with "Manchester Road. County of Sydney. Novascotia." (Nova Scotia was written as one word.)

Who was this James Chisholm? Donnie and Mary Ellen aren't sure. They assure us that the dictionary has been in the old house for many years.

**Terry Murphy of Summerside, Prince Edward Island**, brought in an eight-day clock (manufactured by the Ansonia Clock Company of New York) and some dishes that were used in the lighthouse keeper's home at Pomquet Island. Terry's grandfather, Michael Murphy, served as lighthouse keeper from 1890 to 1924.



The first Pomquet lighthouse was built in 1868 and consisted of a square tower twenty-three feet tall. In 1910, a combined lighthouse and dwelling was established. That lighthouse was thirty-four feet in height. The present structure, which is automated, was built in 1959. It has a white, square pyramidal tower with a square lantern and galley. The light gives a white flash every four seconds and is visible for six nautical miles.



**Danielle Duggan of Hawthorne Street** came in with a World War II cot and an interesting pair of snowshoes found in the garage of the old Gordie Zinck property they purchased a couple of years ago. The cot is collapsible and portable.

We're wondering if these items were once purchased from a war surplus store? Were the snowshoes used for Boys Scout camp?

Both cot and the snowshoes date to about World War II.

- **Shaun and Pam Chisholm of Hillcrest Street** brought in some hand-crafted kitchen implements from his Uncle Roddie Chisholm's home in Lower South River dating back to the early 1900s. A donut-hole maker and some tinware items are part of this collection.
- **Zane and Michel deNoncourt, St. Josephs**, donated a DVD on Latvian immigration.
- **Jessie DeYoung of Pomquet** donated a photo of Alexander Landry, WWI veteran.
- **Eleanor Belland, College Street**, brought in a 45 record of the Marian Boy Choir as well as cards, photos and papers from the Belland collection.
- **Anne Sears of Hillcrest St.** donated a copy of *The Black Battalion* by Calvin W. Ruck.
- **Alex Cameron (Royal Canadian Legion) of Lower South River and town** gave a record album from the Antigonish Legion Pipe Band (circa 1977).
- **Jim MacIntyre (of Jim's One Stop)** brought in a ticket for an Anne Murray concert from back in 1970. It was given to him as a promotional item for selling tickets to the event. The cost of the ticket for "An Evening with Anne Murray" was \$1.25. Jim was never able to attend this event at the Oland Centre because, of course, he was working.
- **Martin MacDonald, Bay Street**, donated a framed portrait of his father and two sisters taken in Boston in 1913 when Alexander, Margaret Mary and Irene MacDonald of Maryvale were young children.
- **Margaret Bailey-Graham of Heatherton** brought in some material (photos, souvenirs and booklets) on the Frasers Mills School Reunion.
- **Gary Fleuren, Cloverville**, donated a framed lithograph of a Berkshire-Type Steam Locomotive.

## Our Summer Students Introduce Themselves



**Liam Cogger:** *"My name is Liam Cogger and I'm nineteen years old. My parents are Fred Cogger and Anne Marie Penny and I live on Gillis Way. I just finished my first year at St. F. X. where I'm in the Sciences program. I'm considering doing a Math Major. My job at the museum is to sort through and study the Iain Millington Collection. I love cross-country running and music."*

Left to right: Liam Cogger, Konnell Phyne and Casey Bellemore as they assist with displaying a WWII Victory Loan flag which was being photographed for Novamuse.

**Casey Bellemore:** *"One of the Heritage Association summer students this year is Casey Bellemore. Casey is a Saint Mary's University student majoring in Business Management, and is planning to add a minor in Classical History come September. Having grown up in St. Andrews, she is very happy to be home in Antigonish for the summer. She is working on fundraising and research for the Heritage Association of Antigonish, but her main task is the Antigonish Memory Project. Through this initiative, Casey interviews elders from around Antigonish Town & County. This project is a great fit for Casey as she loves talking to people. Her first interview was recently posted on YouTube along with the older videos on the AntigonishHeriMuseum channel. Hopefully more will join in the near future. If you want to*

know what else she is up to, follow @NishMemories on twitter. She posts some Memory Project interviews there, as well as goings on in Antigonish. Casey encourages people to come in and visit her and her coworkers at the Museum.”

**Konnell Phyne:** “Born in 1996 in New Glasgow, Konnell Phyne is no stranger to the wonderful world of history. Konnell really enjoyed his history classes through high school and studied military history on his own time. After High School, he went on to St. Francis Xavier University where he is currently doing a Biology Major, while still maintaining his interest in history. After completing his first year, he was taken on by the Antigonish Heritage Museum Board as a summer student. Here Konnell has continued his learning about history and helping others do the same. One of the many projects he is working on is called The Made in Nova Scotia Project. This project essentially is the cataloging and gathering of information of old businesses of Antigonish Town and County before inputting the information onto the public Nova Scotia Museum page NovaMuse. If you want to know more about what Konnell is up to, “Like” us on Facebook (Antigonish Heritage Museum) or “Follow” us on Twitter (@Antheritage).”

## Black Loyalist Heritage Centre

Jocelyn Gillis, curator, attended the opening of the Black Loyalist Heritage Centre at Birchtown earlier this month and deemed it “well worth taking the time to visit.” The innovative exhibits and the modern technology are very impressive and reveal who the Black Loyalists were and the hardships they faced in Shelburne County. The land was inhospitable and agricultural prospects were remote. Some of the Birchtown blacks came up to Monastery and Upper Big Tracadie and established a settlement here in Antigonish County in 1787.

## OOSHjIN PUBLIC: reflections on the present past

Juanita MacDonald, formerly of Springfield, did an interesting blogspot on Mount St. Bernard recently. You can read it at <https://ooshjinpublic.wordpress.com/>. Juanita has lived and worked on public history related projects in Ottawa since 1998.

Thank You

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## Summer Museum Hours of Operation

Monday through Saturday: 10:00am - 5:00pm. Open Canada Day.

## Guysborough Heritage Day

Guysborough Heritage Days will be held at the Old Court House Museum on August 30. Highlights for this event include:

- Reading and book-signing with Loyalist authors **Gloria Wesley (Desmond) and Marion Timmons**.
- The launching of the Drysdale Lecture Series: Author, researcher and lecturer, **Stephen Davidson**, will discuss Guysborough's Black Loyalist settlers found in Sir Guy Carleton's Ledger, *The Book of Negros*.

Check out this event on Facebook. *Guysborough Heritage Day: Our Loyalist Heritage*

## Heritage Association of Antigonish

### Summer Ceilidhs

Our first summer ceilidh will be held outdoors at the museum on Thursday, July 2, at 7:30pm. This first event will be free of charge. Ceilidhs will be held on a weekly basis until September. Kindly watch the media for more details.

### Patrons Program: *We Appreciate Your Support!*

**Ninette Atwood, Nepean, Ontario:** Silver Patron  
**Whidden Park, Antigonish:** Silver Patron  
**Jim Grant, Toronto and Antigonish:** Platinum Patron  
**Don Gauthier Carpentry, Antigonish:** Silver Patron  
**Mike Hassin Enterprises, Antigonish:** Silver Patron  
**Aphrodite Art & Fashion, Antigonish:** Silver Patron  
**Keltic Motors Ltd., Antigonish:** Silver Patron  
**Brownstone Restaurant, Antigonish:** Silver Patron  
**C. L. Curry Funeral Home, Antigonish:** Silver Patron

## Message from the Chair – Heritage Association of Antigonish (Working today to preserve yesterday for tomorrow.)

On June 6, 2015, I attended a day-long workshop called *Stones, Bones, and Smartphones: Investigating Nova Scotia's Cemeteries*. The event was hosted by the Broch Research Collective, St. Francis Xavier University. This workshop included sessions on several subjects and projects.

I was most impressed with the work the community of Port Maitland undertook to restore, preserve and perpetuate three old pioneer cemeteries in their community. The three cemeteries were overgrown with trees. Their collective efforts have been rewarded with three historical assets that people can experience for years to come. Here is the link to their website: <http://www.oldstones.ca>

In addition to work on the cemeteries, the group completed genealogical work on those that were buried in these cemeteries.

The community group engaged the grade 4 students in their local school to assist with the use of QR Codes. For those that are not familiar with a QR Code, it is a marking that you can scan with your smartphone; it then displays a page on the internet with related information. The community group placed the QR Code for each grave on a brick and the students were engaged to place the brick beside the related tombstone. Thus, each gravestone has a QR Code and, if you are visiting these cemeteries, you can scan and then view the related genealogical information.

The presenter of this lecture advised that it was most interesting to watch the students' reactions as they came to realize their individual connections with their related forefathers.

What a great way to get youth to take an interest in our shared history.

I was also impressed with the great work completed by our friends at The Cape Breton Genealogy & Historical Association. They have developed a website resource that has a wealth of information for anyone doing genealogical research. Here is the link to their site: <http://www.cbgen.org>

You have to become a member of their Association to access these resources; however, the small membership charge is well worth the price.

On the evening of June 2, 2015, I attended a learning session presented by Duncan MacDonald. He provided a background for the upcoming *Ships of 1801* production called "The Year of the Burning". This production will be the Main Stage event for the Antigonish Highland Games on July 11, 2015.

The Heritage Association of Antigonish and Arts Health Antigonish (AHA) are pleased to showcase the first performance of the production of *1784: (Un) Settling Antigonish* which will be held on July 5, 2015. Tickets can be purchased at the Museum.

The Highland Games will start on July 5 and end on July 12, 2015. The games include a strong flavour of Scottish culture and fun. You don't have to be Scottish to join in and I would encourage anyone reading this message to attend some, or all, of the events— especially the two noted above.

Until next, Take Care and God Bless.

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