

# Hammonds Plains Historical Society

www.hammondsplainshistoricalsociety.ca

## Upcoming Picture Night (pictures from the past):

At our General meeting in **May**, we are planning a picture night. We are asking our membership to bring a picture(s) of Hammonds Plains along with them that depicts something interesting about the past in the community. The picture could be a picture of a building, a community event, fashions of a by-gone era or past industry within the community. At the meeting each person with a picture will be asked to talk about their picture to the group for a few moments.



Picture of Thomson Store – 1955 (Located at 1735 HP Road, next to Baptist Ceremony)



## Upcoming General Meetings:

**March 24<sup>th</sup>**

**General Meeting - A presentation on Upper Hammonds Plains. To be held at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Upper Hammonds Plains.**

## 2014 HPHS Calendar:



Our **2014** calendar year is still on sale. The calendar provides a look into the community from bygone days. The calendar is \$10 each. They are available at the Hammonds Plains Pharmacy and Hammonds Plains Service Center.

## Becoming a HPHS Member:

You can become a member of the Hammonds Plains Historical Society by filling out a registration form and e-mailing it to Dave Haverstock

([haverstockdave@gmail.com](mailto:haverstockdave@gmail.com)) or mailing to 1541 Hammonds Plains Road, Hammonds Plains, Nova Scotia B4B 1P6. **Annual fee is \$10.**

Registration forms are available during one of our general meetings or by copying from our web site.

## Oral History Project:

During the past two years, we have been inviting longtime residents of the community to participate in an oral conversation about their memories of the community of an earlier era. The conversations have centered on childhood memories, memories of noteworthy events in the community, school recollections, and reminiscences of former buildings in the community. A favorite theme in the project has been discussions of the changes that have taken place in the community during the past 50 years.

To be interviewed for our project, one has had to be a resident in Hammonds Plains for at least 40 years. If you would like to be interviewed, just contact us and we will set up an interview time at your residence.



(One of the more significant memories of Hammonds Plains.  
The paving of the road in 1957)



## Did you know that the War of 1812 is part of Hammonds Plains History??

While the War of 1812 was fought nowhere near the community of Hammonds Plains, its legacy did have a major impact on the development of the community. The War of 1812 was fought between the USA and Britain.

At the time, Britain was involved with the War against France and Napoleon. The USA wanted to continue trade with France, but the British set up a trade blockade to stop American ships from carrying supplies needed by France in their war effort with Britain. The Americans wanted the British to stop the blockade, but the British refused. Canada became a target because the USA wanted the British out of North America.

A large part of the War of 1812 was fought on land, in the territories of Upper Canada, around the Great Lakes. Nova Scotia's part in the war was to act as a harbour to the British ships that operated to harass the eastern American ports. Admiral Cochrane led a force that sailed up Chesapeake Bay, attacked Washington D.C (and burnt the main public buildings). As his patrol ships made multiple visits to the area, Cochrane welcomed aboard the slaves from the surrounding plantations.

The British wanted to hinder the American economy by taking away their slave labour, so they convinced some of the black Americans to fight against the USA by offering them freedom. The slaves were offered free passage, rations, land and freedom. One place where the slaves were promised land was in Nova Scotia, and one of the land grants set aside for these transplanted folks from the south was in Hammonds Plains.

## Hammonds Plains First Baptist Church



The Baptist faith has been prominent within the Hammonds Plains community since the early days of the community. We know that some of the very early residents of the community, were Baptist in faith and were practicing their religion in the community during the 1820's, probably in private homes. Rev. Alder Richardson had moved to the community during this time and was the first known pastor.

A meeting place for workshop was established by 1830, in the lands that currently house the Hammonds Plains Baptist Ceremony.

In 1841, a donation of one quarter acre was made for a school or place of worship on the site of the current Baptist Church. A church was built on this site during 1842-43 with the first service being held on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1843. The early church was also used as a school. The church was lit by candles (and later oil lamps) and heated by two wood stoves at the back of the church.

It was also during 1843 that the congregation officially joined the Association of Baptist churches in Nova Scotia.

In Dorothy Bezanson Evan's Book 'Hammonds Plains – The First 100 Years' she makes reference to the strict guidelines of the Baptist faith during the 1800's – "... it was the custom to use Saturday afternoons to prepare for the Sabbath. Conference meetings were held, which all members were expected to attend. At these meetings the members 'told the exercises of their minds', and this was required before communion. Members who quarrelled with one another were also required to resolve their differences before coming to the Lord's Table, and could be excommunicated if they failed to do so. Not only were members excluded for quarrelling and failing to attend conferences, they were harshly censored for worldly ways" Worldly ways usually referred to so-called called social evils such as 'dancing, getting drunk or gambling'

During the second half of the 1800's, the Baptist congregation grew, with many baptisms taking place. Sunday School was first held in 1858. A big addition to the church was an organ which was donated in 1866. During the late 1800's, two members of the congregation went on to actually become ministers – Christopher Haverstock in 1878 and William Bezansen in 1890. William Bezansen became well known as an author, as well. Some of the family names associated with the church during the 1800's were Melvin, Thomson, Haverstock, Smith, Bezanson, Little, Wright, Romans, Frizzell, Hays and Moran.

Prominence in the Baptist faith is that Baptism is generally reserved for those who are held responsible for the decision to obey or not. Therefore to become a Baptist member, one has to be old enough to declare their faith. The faith also believed that immersion in water was necessary as a symbol for commitment to the church. Most of these baptisms took place at First Lake, which also became known as Baptism Lake by local residents because of this practice.

In 1883, the church building received a major renovation. It was moved back from the road, considerably enlarged, and the interior renovated. The renovated church looked much like it does today, highlighted by a front steeple, gingerbread moulding above the entrance, and stained glass arched windows.

A parsonage, where the pastor lived, was built in 1903-04.

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the church evolved into a place of worship to meet the needs of a growing congregation and community. As with the other churches in the community, the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw cycles of struggle and revival.

In the early 1900's, new pews were installed and the distinctive interior wooden panelling consisting of narrow strips of wood laid in a diagonal direction replaced the old plastered walls.

A significant event in the church occurred in 1924 when a memorial tablet was unveiled to honor resident Christopher Haverstock (not the same Christopher Haverstock mentioned earlier) who died during World War 1 serving his country.

The church took a big step forward during the 1930's with electricity arriving in 1932 (complete with electric lights), a new wood furnace to replace the wood stoves and in 1935, completion of a basement, along with new entrance steps, occurring at a time when vehicles were becoming mainstream in the community. In 1937, a baptistery was built, so that Baptisms could be held in the church.

Improvements continued during the mid 1900's, with installation of an oil furnace, new kitchen facilities and an upgraded pulpit area. In 1962, a church hall was added to the rear of the church, including the two kitchens which were placed in the basement.

During the late 1900's a sound system was installed as the technology age started to influence

The current cemetery was always known as the Baptist cemetery, however, it was not deeded to the church until 1967. Until that time, many community members were interred in the cemetery regardless of church affiliation.

The church remains to-day with the same look as it did in the 1960's. During it's 170 year history the church has hosted many weddings, baptisms, funerals of prominent residents, church suppers, Sunday school, Vacation Bible school during the summers, ABC Bazaar (Tea and Craft Sale as a joint project of the Baptist Catholic and Anglican churches of Hammonds Plains), movies and sewing circle meetings.