

Hammonds Plains Historical Society

www.hammondsplainshistoricalsociety.ca

Upcoming Picture Night (pictures from the past):

At our General meeting on **May 26th**, we are planning a picture night. We are hoping our membership will bring a picture(s) of Hammonds Plains from the past. 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. Come and learn about our history, through photography.



Plane Crash at Wright's Lake, Kemptown - 1951



Upcoming General Meetings:

May 26th Annual General Meeting – at Cornerstone Wesleyan Church – 7pm. Election of new **Board of Directors** will take place at this time. If interested in being on BOD, contact us at:
haverstockdave@gmail.com

Our Barrel-Making Heritage

Hammonds Plains has had a long history of barrel-making. Cooper Shops dotted the landscape of HP, from the 1820's until the 1960's. See our **May Newsletter** for an article on the history of barrel making in Hammonds Plains.



Charlie Symonds outside Cooper shop
in 1949

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) 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.

Learning About the Past – Atlantic Speedway (1970-80)

Did you know that the Hammonds Plains area once had a Stock Car Racing Track?

Recent inhabitants to the community may find it hard to believe, but those living here during the 1970's will remember the roar of race cars filling the quiet summer Sunday evenings. The Hammonds Plains area was indeed a Stock Car hotbed during the 1970's.



Racing at Atlantic Speedway – 1977



A view of cars getting ready to race on Atlantic Speedway



A Race Car on Atlantic Speedway – Mid 1970's

Atlantic Speedway (currently where Atlantic Playland is located to-day) was opened in 1970, with a racing oval, grandstand, control tower and parking lot carved out of the woods, on to the Lucasville Road. The track consisted of a half mile paved track with banked turns.

The track hosted weekly racing for Maritime Stock Car owners in both the Sportsmen and Modified car divisions. It was common to draw crowds of 2-5 thousand during a nice summer night.



A Program from one of the Racing Car Events

The track was owned and operated by Jim Corbett. The track also hosted special events such as Demolition Derby's and Auto Daredevil feats. In fact, legendary daredevil, Evel Knievel once performed at the track.

The track was transformed into an amusement park in 1981, after Scotia Speed World come into existence.

(This the third of a series on the histories of the long standing churches in Hammonds Plains)

Emmanuel Baptist Church – Upper Hammonds Plains

Thanks to booklet entitled 'Whatever Your Will, Lord: A Brief History of Emmanuel Baptist Church' written by Rev. Willard Parker Clayton (1984) for much of the history in this account.



The Emmanuel Baptist Church has had a long history in the community, evolving out of a desire for a religious experience from a devoted group of Chesapeake Blacks, who were granted land in Upper Hammonds Plains in 1816. The early settlers were soon attracted to the Baptist faith, at the time was being promoted by Rev. John Burton, who was in the process of establishing the Baptist faith in the Halifax area. In 1794, Burton was referred to as "the only Baptist in the city of Halifax."

Around 1820, Father Burton founded the Hammonds Plains Second Baptist Church. The church was particularly significant due to the fact it was the first church in Nova Scotia to contain a large number of the African race in its membership. A place of worship was built along the road, close to Taylor Lake (thought to be across the road from the current Community Center). There is evidence that the church was moved or rebuilt at another site, as the 1865 census shows Baptist Churches in two locations in the Upper Hammonds Plains Community, with both on the north side of the highway.

In 1845, Rev. Richard Preston established a separate version of the Baptist faith in Upper Hammonds Plains forming the Hammonds Plains Baptist Church, also known as Emmanuel Baptist Church. This congregation was formally created because by the 1830's, Father Burton's church in Halifax was being plagued by dissensions, power struggles and racial tensions and Preston had broken away to form a new ministry which by the 1840's had become the focal point of black evangelism in Nova Scotia. In total, Preston established 11 Baptist churches in the province.

The Hammonds Plains Baptist Church building was built in 1845, very close to the current church location. The second half of the 19th century saw the church go through both growing pains and increased participation within the community. An interesting feature of the early church was the accompanying wagon shed which was used for the shelter of the horses which folks used to travel to the service. Baptisms were regularly done at Taylor Lake. During this time it was common practice for baptism candidates to make house to house visitations in the community, with every house being visited, no manner what the faith was within the house.

Church records during the 1800's often included the names of long standing Upper Hammonds Plains Families including; Whiley, Anderson, Jackson, Marsman, Jones, Goffigan, Williams, David, Allison and Symonds.

The 20th century brought forth many changes to both the building and the organization of the church. Various church related groups were formed, such as the Men's Laymen's group (the first Black Church to have a such an organization) in 1904. A Ladies Auxiliary Group was formed soon after the end of World War 1.

In 1914, a new place of worship was built and the name was officially changed to **Emmanuel Baptist Church**, to coincide with the dedication of the new building. In 1930, electric lights were introduced and in 1937 the wood stoves were replaced by a floor furnace. See picture below for a picture of the church from 1939.

Since 1820, the Second Baptist Church had been in existence in the community, but in 1939, the two Baptist Churches joined together to form the Emmanuel Baptist Church. This solidified the church as the true focal point of the community.

In 1959, oil heating was installed and a parsonage was built so the minister could live on site.

After the 1960's the congregation continued to grow and it was decided to do a complete renovation of the church building. This renovation (extension) was completed in 1975 and included a new electrical system, increased seating, a new baptismal pool, carpeted pews, an electric organ, a sound system offices and a senior citizens parlor. The picture above reflects what the church would have looked like after the renovation.

The church continued to grow at a tremendous rate during the late 1900's and early 2000's as its congregation grew, especially from outside the community adding ethnic and denominational backgrounds to its membership.

In 2005, another major renovation was completed, with the creation of a modern complex consisting of a 650 seat place of workshop and many enhancements.

One of the things that the church is extremely proud of, is that six ordained pastors have come from its congregation since 1845; including Rev. Martin Anderson, Rev. Dr. Willard Clayton, Rev. Calvin Symonds, Rev. Mervyn David, Rev. Sherry Avery and current pastor, Rev. Dr. Lennett Anderson.



Emmanuel Baptist Church in 1939