

Hammonds Plains Historical Society Newsletter

www.hammondsplainshistoricalsociety.ca

UPCOMING GENERAL MEETING – MARCH 25TH

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Upcoming General Meeting—March 25th (Farming in Hammonds Plains)	1
Becoming a Member?	1
Who Do You Know? 1949 P-4 Class	2
Interesting Facts about Hammonds Plains	2
The Curlew Story	3
How Things Have Changed	4
News from the Past—New Stillwater Bridge	4

The Hammonds Plains Historical Society will be holding it's next general on **Monday March 25th –7pm.**

The feature presentation will be on Farming in Hammonds Plains.

Despite the rich history of Hammond Plains growing as a forest based community, farming in the community has had an important place.

Brian Murray (Manager of Blue Barn Farms) and Eric Eisenhower will talk about what farming has looked like in the community during the past 100 years in an interview style presentation.

Did You Know that in 1911, there were 19 folks in the community who were listed as farmers?



B E C O M E A M E M B E R ?

You can become a member of the Hammonds Plains Historical Society by filling in a registration form and returning it to Ted

Mistzela at 1342 Hammonds Plains Road, Hammonds Plains, N.S. B4B 1P6

Registration Forms available at general meetings or visiting our web site.

Annual Fee \$10

WHO DO YOU KNOW?



Do you know someone from the 1949 Grade Primary-4 class at Hammonds Plains School? Can you believe it—42 students!

INTERESTING FACTS FROM HAMMONDS PLAINS DAYS GONE BY

Did you know that:

- The members of the Mi'kmaq Nation were the first folks to walk through Hammonds Plains on their way from their winter camps on Pockwock Lake to their summer encampments on Bedford Basin.
- The Hammonds Plains once had it's own phone company called the **Hammonds Plains Mutual Telephone Company**, lasting from 1902—1953. The first message was sent over wire on June 7th 1902.
- Electric lights first appeared in Hammonds Plains on May 1st 1932.
- The Hammonds Plains Road was paved in 1957.
- Hank Snow played at dances in the old community hall, before he became famous.
- There was a fatal airplane crash in near wright's Lake in 1956.

THE CURLEW STORY

The Curlew Story has been extracted from *Stories Of Acadia, Birch Bark Series, 1933* by Rev William Bezanson.

Part 1 looks at the thought of building a ship in Hammonds Plains.

The Curlew is a bird, often found on the shores of the Isle Royal in the autumn. The male has a long, slender curved bill, a graceful head and neck, a grey back and white breast. It is very shy and swift in flight, and as a consequence ships great and small have often been called the Curlew.

In the early days of Acadia, there was a sailing vessel of this name, which from the days of its building, had a very strange and fascinating story. She was not a great war-ship, but a little sloop which was built in a strange place, and sailed the sea in the days of war. Shipyards are almost always by the shore, where a vessel when completed may be readily launched. The Curlew, however, was built, not near the seashore, or a great inland lake, but, like Noah's Ark, at a place where no water for floating her was in sight.

Over a hundred years have passed since the sound of hammer and saw was heard on her stout timbers. Nathaniel Melvin, the builder of the Curlew, was also owner and master. He, with others, at the beginning of the 19th century, moved from Chester, Nova Scotia, to form a new settlement on the main highway from Lunenburg to Halifax. The junction of this road with the one from Halifax to Truro was at the head of Bedford Basin, and Melvin's new home was about five miles away. They planned to call the place Lochwood, because of it being surrounded on all sides by the primal forest.

Melvin was an expert shipbuilder, and he while at Chester, followed this business. On moving, he found himself with a supply of good ship's material on hand, of which he could not dispose owing to the dull times in shipbuilding. To move this twenty-five miles to an inland place seemed to be very foolish action, for ship's stock is not easily converted to any other use but firewood, and where he planned to make his new home, firewood was to be found in abundance. In moving the stock the owner had a definite plan in mind, but so singular was his idea that he refrained from confiding it even to his own family.

Nat, his oldest son, thought it was madness on the part of his father to move the junk, as he called it, so far, for it would take two full days to make the journey with the oxen, and at that time the road was none too good. The other members of the family also opposed the moving of the material, but they had known the purpose the head of the house had in mind, they would have worried as to his sanity, for he was going to use it to build a ship five miles or more from Bedford Basin's shore.

On laying the keel of this little vessel, a storm of derision broke upon his action. To build a ship that distance from the nearest tide water seemed to be the work of a mad man. It was truly a bold venture and furnished the subject for many a conversation. No one doubted Melvin's ability to build a ship, but how he would get it to Bedford was the problem he could not solve. To accomplish this, the builder had his plan, and although he had never seen it tried out, he believed it would work.

On completing her hull he built under her two large sleds with runners of hewn beech, which he shod with old cart tires. With the help of his neighbors he gathered eight yoke of oxen and several horses, hitched this team to his sleds, and, with the road almost clear ice, he hauled, the hull to the Basin's shore. On accomplishing this, the storm of applause exceeded the storm of derision.

Here he completed the sloop, and she was soon carrying freight, most of which was from a grist and paper mill which stood near the junction of the highways. On one of his trips to Halifax a wiry looking colored man came aboard, and asked Captain Melvin if he was in need of a hand. The Captain had seen him several times before at the wharf, and on learning that the fellow had fled from before at the wharf, and on learning that the fellow had fled from the southern states, and knew something about ships, he took him on. The venture proved a happy one for both. The man, like many of his oppressed race, was deeply religious, and as Melvin was also of this type, master and servant were soon on terms of real brotherhood which knows no race clash. At the wharf the African had noticed the Christian conduct of the captain, and this had led him to seek to enter his employ ([Part 2—Next Newsletter](#)).

HOW THINGS HAVE
CHANGED



Check out the leisure wear during the 1940's for bicycling on the Hammonds Plains Road. Can you imagine folks riding bicycles in shirt & tie to-day?

NEWS FROM THE PAST — STORY ABOUT THE
MAJOR UPGRADE OF THE HP ROAD FROM
OCT. 1957 — THE NEW STILLWATER BRIDGE



BRIDGE ON NEW ROAD — A new concrete bridge erected to serve as part of the new highway through Hammonds Plains is shown above, where it spans Stillwater Lake. The new road is on the route previously known as Yankeetown Road — from the Plains road junction at English corner. (Wetmore Photo)

Oct. 1957