

Hammonds Plains Historical Society

www.hammondsplainshistoricalsociety.ca

News from the Past – From Halifax Mail-Star (January 27, 1955)

Tragedy struck the Hammonds Plains area on January 23, 1955 as two Hammonds Plains residents were drown when they plunged through the ice on Big Pockwock Lake. Two other men also fell through the ice but the quick thinking of the fifth person in the party enabled him to pull them from the lake.

Police said the accident occurred about 4:30pm while the five men were making their way across Big Pockwock Lake to a lumber camp. They were pulling a sled laden with a week's groceries which weighed in the vicinity of 200 lbs.

Four of the men were instantly thrown into the water along with the sled, and the only man left on solid ice was 21 year old Garvie Romans Jr. Acting on the spur of the moment he tore off his jacket and then his shirt, knotted them together, and then lay on the ice to give himself traction. Using his home made life line, he succeeded in pulling his father and uncle from the icy waters.

Drown were Perry Romans, 18 and Carl Smith, 29, both of Hammonds Plains. Surviving were Garvie Romans Sr., 55 and brother, Wesley, 42.



Pockwock Lake – Winter 1959



Upcoming General Meetings:

January 26 - A presentation by Mike Sanders on the **Mi' kmaq Archaeology Dig** at Big Indian Lake

March 30 - A presentation on the history of **Schools** in the Hammonds Plains area.

A History of Hammonds Plains

Over the next 2 issues of our newsletter, we will be reproducing a history of the Hammonds Plains area. This history was originally written at the request of Ben Jessome, our MLA.



Travelling to school on the Hammonds Plains Road – 1940's

Honoring our Veterans:

This November we honor the following individuals who were part of the war effort during **World War 11**. All the listed folks were residents of either **Hammonds Plains** or **Upper Hammonds Plains** and were registered with the Canadian Forces during WW11.

Hollis Collishaw

Douglas Eisenhower

Evelyn Eisenhower

Morton Eisenhower

Raymond Eisenhower

Clyde Haverstock

Donald Haverstock

Douglas Haverstock

Burton Melvin

Douglas Oliver

Allan Romans

Charles Romans

Gerald Romans

Granville Romans

Jack Romans

Robert Romans

Arthur Smith

Clarence Smith

Irvin Smith

Ivan Swindells

Roy Swindells



Hammonds Plains Honors its Veterans:

On November 11th, the Hammonds Plains Historical Society proudly laid a wreath to honor the veterans of the community, as part of the Hammonds Plains Remembrance Day Ceremony at Uplands Park.

A crowd, estimated at over a thousand strong, listened as the names of veterans with connections to the community was read during the ceremony.

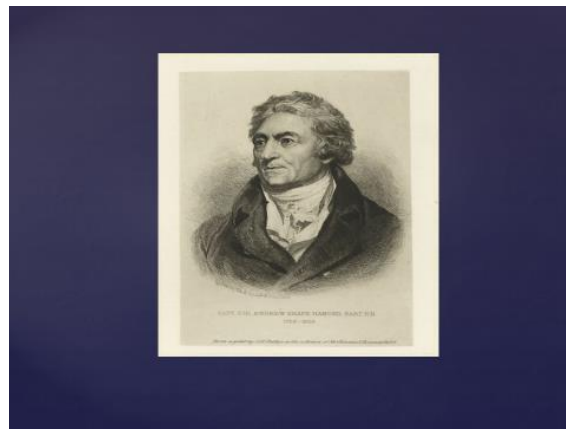


(This Article was written by the HPHS on the request of Ben Jessome's Office. We consider it the best summary of the history of Hammonds Plains that currently exists.)

Hammonds Plains – A Traditional Lumbering Community: A History Part 1

The first residents of the Hammonds Plains area were members of the Mi'kmaq nation, who used the region as their place of residence long before the Europeans visited our province. Winter encampments were located in the area of Pockwock Lake, with summer treks to Bedford Basin a common practice, of which they would have travelled through Hammonds Plains.

By the mid 1700's, with the founding of Halifax, the English had laid claim to the area surrounding emerging capital. The governing body of Nova Scotia issued original land grants to the Hammonds Plains area in 1786 to 72 land owners. The grants became known as the Hammond Plains Grant, named by the new landowners after Sir Andrew Snape Hamond (the Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia from 1781-1782). Most of the original landowners were from Halifax, so they were very familiar with Hamond, and thus the connection to him.



Sir Andrew Snape Hamond

The original land grants were of extreme value to the land owners as they contained virgin forests, thus making high quality lumber. Many of the land owners had the forests cut and sold to the Halifax market (transported to Bedford Basin via horse or by way of the Nine Mile River and then sent to Halifax via the basin). The original grants followed a road which was to be on the main route travelling between the two main English military fortifications in the province (Halifax and Annapolis Royal).

While homes were established on some of the original grants (1791 record indicates only 15 land owning residents), many of the grants were sold off during the early 1800's without homes ever being built on them. During this time, a number of well to do families (mostly from the Chester /Lunenburg area) bought up the land and started to settle in the new community. The most prominent families who arrived during this time became known as the founding fathers, and an active village quickly developed.

In 1815, the War of 1812 ended and the government of Nova Scotia was looking for a place to grant land to the Chesapeake Blacks, who had escaped (or in some cases, were stolen) from

slavery to fight for the British against the Americans in that war. There was a promise made that if the former slaves would take up arms against the U. S., then they would be granted land at the end of the war in British Territory. One area chosen for this were the lands directly north of the village of Hammonds Plains. A group of 500 refugees moved to this area in 1815 and began carving out a community which became known as Upper Hammonds Plains. The land that was granted was the raw, barren, unworked land typical of Nova Scotia's interior. It had the advantages of available lumber, close access to the Bedford Basin, and proximity to what was supposed to be a major highway. In 1815, the Annapolis Road was planned to be a major connecting road in the province and if that came to be, the site would be very advantageous and the new road would run right through the new community. This land had previously been granted to white settlers; however since they had not used the land or made the necessary improvements the lands were expropriated by the crown and used for the settlement of the Chesapeake Blacks. A significant part of the grant was the provision for a schoolhouse and a small house for a schoolmaster. Thus, education was considered a priority in the community before free public education was established in the province.

The dream of a new Annapolis Road also caused the governor in 1816, to sell land grants to establish a new settlement north of Upper Hammonds Plains. This settlement to be called Wellington (although better known as Kemptown) was located near Wright's and Big Indian Lake. It developed into a thriving lumbering community during the 1800's, even with it's own school. However, a major fire destroyed much of the community in the late 1860's and many of the residents chose to move away. By the 1920's the community had dwindled to a few homes and to-day no longer exists.

The end of the dream of becoming a prosperous settlement along the Annapolis Road came to an end during the 1830's when the government abandoned the road project. However, the ensuing years saw the Hammonds Plains area become prosperous in another way, as it became a prominent lumbering region, with creation of mills on the many lakes and then toward the end of the century, shops were established to make wood products such as barrels, shooks and wooden boxes. Copper Shops soon dotted the landscape.



The Mills on Pockwock Lake (1950's)