

Hammonds Plains Historical Society

www.hammondsplainshistoricalsociety.ca

News From the Past: Mail Star June 1968

New Hammonds Plains School Marks Opening

The formal opening of the Hammonds Plains Consolidated School was held Wednesday evening, June 5 in the school. Rev. Bernard Armstrong opened the meeting, followed by the singing of 'Faith of Our Fathers' led by Grade 4, 5 and 6 students. During the program several other selections were sung by the same students, which merited praise to them and their music teacher, Mrs. Johnson.

The chairmen of the trustees, Donald Haverstock gave the welcoming remarks. The keys were presented from Merlin Kerr, Woodworkers Ltd. To Keith L. Graham, Architect; to Deputy Warden Nicholson; next to Mrs. Scott, chairman of the municipal school board, then to Donald Haverstock, and finally to Mrs. Mildred Nicholson, principal of the school.

Mrs. Nicholson was one of the principals chosen from Halifax County to receive a Centennial Medal. These medals were given for valued service to the Nation. Mrs. Nicholson's varied service was done in the organization and planning of this school. She came to Hammonds Plains in the fall of 1966. Upper and Lower Hammonds Plains schools were then integrated and classes were held in both schools until Dec. 11, 1967, when all classes moved into the new school.

After the presentation of the keys, the Deputy Warden, presented the flag and plaque to the school. The plaque bears the Coat of Arms of Halifax County. The teachers and pupils were pleased with the gift of an illuminated globe presented by Mrs. V. Bradley, regent of the Sylvanus A. Morton Chapter IODE.

Councillor Earl Giles introduced Dr. Harold Nason, Deputy Minister of Education, who was the special speaker.

Donald Boutilier, a trustee, gave thanks to all concerned and Frank Quinta closed the program with the benediction. Following the meeting, refreshments were served.

The next day, the Principal, teachers and pupils assembled on the school grounds at which time the flag was raised.



Upcoming General Meetings:

February 7th (1pm – 4pm)

Open House Drop in to the Hammonds Plains Community Center to see displays and pictures of the area's history. Also enjoy a traditional dessert while viewing.



The new Hammonds Plains Consolidated School as seen soon after it opened – Spring 1968

Become a HPHS Member:

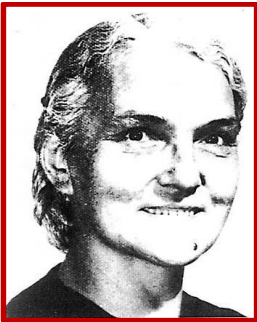
You can become a member of the Hammonds Plains Historical Society by filling out a registration form and e-mailing it to Dave Haverstock (haverstockdave@gmail.com) or mailing to 1541 Hammonds Plains Road, Hammonds Plains, Nova Scotia B4B 1P6. **Annual fee is \$10.**

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



New Upper Hammonds Plains School built in 1945, which Madeline Symonds was instrumental in raising funds for

Madeline Francis Symonds



Madeline Symonds



Madeline Symonds Middle School

Only two Hammonds Plains residents have ever had a public Hammonds Plains Landmark named after them. One of them was Madeline Symonds. She is considered an iconic educator in the Upper Hammonds Plains community and a leader within the African Nova Scotian population.

She was born in Saint John, New Brunswick in 1905. Both of her parents died when she was very young and as a result she was sent to the Maritime Home for Girls in Truro. The superintendent of the home, at that time, was appointed to be her guardian.

Over the years she attended school and completed her grade twelve. In 1927 she entered a teacher training institution in Truro, the provincial Normal College. The graduating class of 1928 was proud to boast Madeline as the first African Nova Scotian female to graduate from the Normal College.

In August 1928, at the age of twenty-three, Madeline approached the inspector of schools to teach in Upper Hammonds Plains, as many teachers who previously taught there had gone to other locations. She received the job and went on to teach at the Upper Hammonds Plains for 30 of the next 36 years.

The school in Upper Hammonds Plains was a small wooden building with a wood stove. Each desk had a seat built on it and three children could sit together. Grades were taught from the ABC class to the end of grade nine.

She was instrumental in raising funds to enable a new schoolhouse to be built in 1945. With the new school, came new programs and new teachers. After a few years, further additions were added to the school.

Mrs. Symonds was appointed principal of the school. She later gave up this administrative position and returned to teaching grade three.

During the early 1950's, Mrs. Symonds also taught correspondence and adult classes after school. Some of these students went on to pursue careers in theology and medicine.

After completing thirty years in education, Mrs. Symonds retired from teaching in 1964. She had spent almost her entire teaching career in Upper Hammonds Plains. She continued to be active in the church as well as the Upper Hammonds Plains community.

She was married to George Symonds and had a family of seven. During the 1980's, she moved out of the community and lived in Montreal, East Preston, Halifax and Truro during her later years. She passed away in 1996.

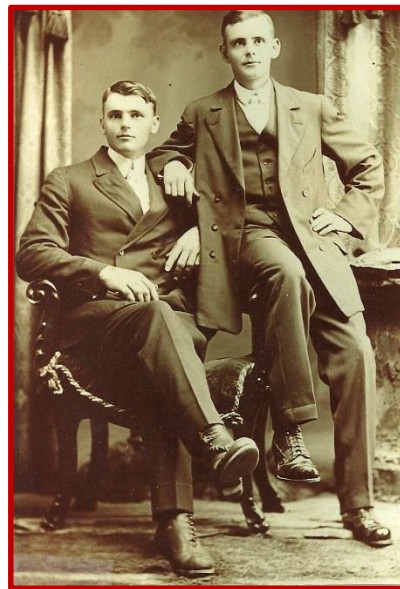
Remembering Christopher Haverstock (1890 – 1918)



Few residents in the history of Hammonds Plains, sacrificed more than Christopher Haverstock. He made the ultimate sacrifice, losing his life fighting for his country during World War 1. The following is his story.



Christopher in uniform – 1917



Christopher is on the right

Christopher was born in Hammonds Plains on January 26, 1890, the youngest son of John and Emma (Bezanson) Haverstock. He followed several generations of Hammonds Plains Haverstock's being named Christopher, after his great grandfather of the same name, the original Haverstock in this area.

His boyhood home was located approximately where Hammonds Plains Consolidated School is located to-day. His childhood was typical of children growing up in Hammonds Plains during the late 1800's. Religion played a big part in his family's life and it was noted by residents at the time, that he was part of the Sunday School gatherings every Sunday.

Christopher had a brother, Maurice who was a couple of years older than him. They would have spent many hours playing together as children around their home. The boys could often

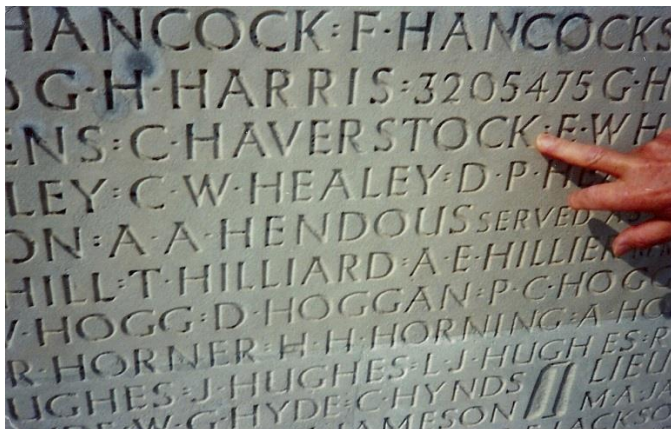
be seen with their parents attending to their vegetable garden, attending to their livestock or in the hayfield.

Christopher attended the Lower Hammonds Plains School located a short distance from his home. At some point after 1910, he went to live in Bedford and worked there as a laborer.

Answering the call to serve his country, Christopher enlisted to join the Canadian Army in November 1916. After training in Halifax, he went overseas in 1917. He became a Private in the 85th Battalion, of the Canadian Expeditionary Force in the Canadian Infantry stationed in France. He kept in touch with his family, writing letters on a regular basis, often telling them not to worry, that he was safe and the war would be ending soon. All the village of Hammonds Plains during WW1 joined in support of their overseas sons. Many letters were written, parcels of food sent and knitted clothes were made for the hometown boys, including Christopher.

The Halifax Mail Star reported that Christopher had a narrow escape on Christmas Day 1917, with a shell bursting his water bottle, but he escaped unhurt. The article also indicated that he had many friends in his infantry unit and was very much liked by his comrades and company officers.

On March 31st 1918, he was sent to the front line of trenches for the first time. That very day, he was hit by a piece of shrapnel passing just under his helmet. He died almost instantly, in a trench near Arras, France. Department of National Defense documents say that Christopher was buried near where he died, with an unmarked grave. His name appears on the Vimy Memorial in France to honor all the Canadian soldiers who died in action in France during WW1. His family also erected a memorial inscription on his father's gravestone in Hammonds Plains, in the Baptist Cemetery.



Christopher's Name on the Vimy Memorial



Vimy Memorial