

Hammonds Plains Historical Society Newsletter

www.hammondsplainshistoricalsociety.ca
T O S H A

UPCOMING GENERAL MEETING – MAY 27TH

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The Hammonds Plains Historical Society will be holding it's next general on **Monday May 27th –7pm.**

The feature presentation will be the history of phones in the community of Hammonds

Plains. Lew Turner will be at the meeting to talk about his time as a phone repair person in the community.

The meeting will take place at the **Hammonds Plains Community Fire-**



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 Dave

Haverstock at 1541 Hammonds Plains Road, Hammonds Plains, N.S. B4B 1P6

hall.

This is our annual general meeting. At this meeting, we will be electing our Board of Directors for the 2013-14 term. If you would like to become more involved in the society, this is a great way to help out.

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

Annual Fee \$10

WHO DO YOU KNOW?



The last Grade Primary Class from the old Hammonds Plains School from 1966-67 School Year. Hammonds Plains Consolidated School opened in the fall of 1967.

THE STORY BEHIND THE HAMMONDS PLAINS GOLD FIELDS

Do you know that Hammonds Plains once had a designated Gold Field? Geologists in the 1860's established that a belt of metamorphic gold-bearing rock, consisting of five distinct bands, extended along the Atlantic border of the Province, a distance of more than three hundred miles. Traces of gold were found in most of the rivers of the interior.

But not every site where gold was found offered facilities for mining, and thus it happened, that although nearly fifty localities in Nova Scotia were known to be gold-producing, only eighteen have been official-

ly proclaimed and surveyed. One of those sites was in Hammonds Plains. The Hammond's Plains district, which was surveyed in 1863, was never developed due to the public perception that it was too costly to extract gold from them. However, there were attempts to develop small pits to extract gold within the community, with several along the Hammonds Plains end of the Lucasville Road.

The Halifax County Map of 1865 does indicate that the **Hammonds Plains Gold Mines** were located and surveyed out on lands around the south end of Little Pockwock Lake (to-day known as Kemptown Corner).

THE CURLEW STORY

The Curlew Story has been extracted from Stories Of Acadia, Birch Bark Series, 1933 by Rev William Bezanon. Part I of the story was in Newsletter # 3.

Part 2 looks at how a ship built in Hammonds Plains came to be involved in the War Of 1812.

Time is always forcing changes, and the highway from the west was changed at the head of Saint Margaret's Bay to enter Halifax at the North West Arm. As this change destroyed much of Captain Melvin's (Curlew captain) freight trade, he was compelled to seek for other commerce. Lumbering at Lockwood (an early name for the Hammonds Plains area) has always been its chief industry, and at this time a number of the people had erected the first sawmills on the Indian and Pockwock Rivers. Lumber was in great demand in those war days of 1812. But the coast being infested with American privateers, it was not easy to deliver a cargo from Halifax to places needing it, although prices were good. As the Curlew sailed with a load of lumber for Chester Basin, the port captain at Halifax warned Melvin of the risk he was taking, but anxious to take advantage of war prices, and knowing the coast well, he ventured on the way.

The little sloop possessed the best of sailing qualities especially if fairly well loaded, and her crew of three knew how to handle her to advantage. They made a good run down the coast without sighting any ships of the enemy, but just as they entered Mahone Bay, a fog compelled them to anchor for the night near Oak Island, so famous as the burying ground place of Captain Kidd's treasure. In the morning, as the fog lifted, the crew of the Curlew were surprised to see a privateer anchored near them. Members of her crew soon came to board the sloop, but not until Captain Melvin, in a clinch with one of the sailors, had the misfortune to dislocate his shoulder, did they get possession of her. As the prize was small, the captain of the privateer, also called the Curlew, did not think it worth while to proceed with her alone to an American port. After the doctor had set Melvin's shoulder, he placed two of his crew on the sloop, and taking young Nat aboard his ship he set out to seek another prize.

As the Americans boarded the Curlew, to the surprize of Captain Melvin, the African appeared to be paralysed with fear. His wide experience had enabled him to see at once that resistance was useless. That night, however, his conduct was far from that of a coward. Bob Jenkins had seen some life at sea and knew how to conform to occasions. He could play the game of possum as well as the animal itself. One of the sailors of the privateer on watch with Jenkins, who appeared exceedingly docile, allowed himself at times to doze, the African apparently doing the same. This was his ruse to calm any fear the sailor might entertain. Finally, fearing no attack from one who appeared to be a very harmless companion, the sailor allowed himself to fall into a deep sleep. This was just what Jenkins was waiting for, and with a smashing blow he swept the man from his seat, and laid him senseless on the deck, where he soon gagged and bound him hand and foot. The other sailor, who was asleep in the cabin with the captain, was served in the same manner.

At the advice of Captain Melvin, who was able to give but little assistance, Jenkins hauled the anchors of the Curlew and as the wind was fair, set sail for Halifax. They might have easily fled from the other Curlew, but their purpose was to turn, if possible, the tables on their American namesake. Suspecting that the privateer was lurking off Saint Margaret's Bay, the injured Captain remained on deck to direct the sailing of the sloop. Giving the African the course, he told him to keep his eye on the North Star. Melvin soon realized that his man muse be getting his stars sadly mixed as he called for another. It was not one of the clearest nights, but because Melvin knew every inch of the coast, they made Halifax Harbour early in the morning, and reported to the authorities the presence of the enemy.

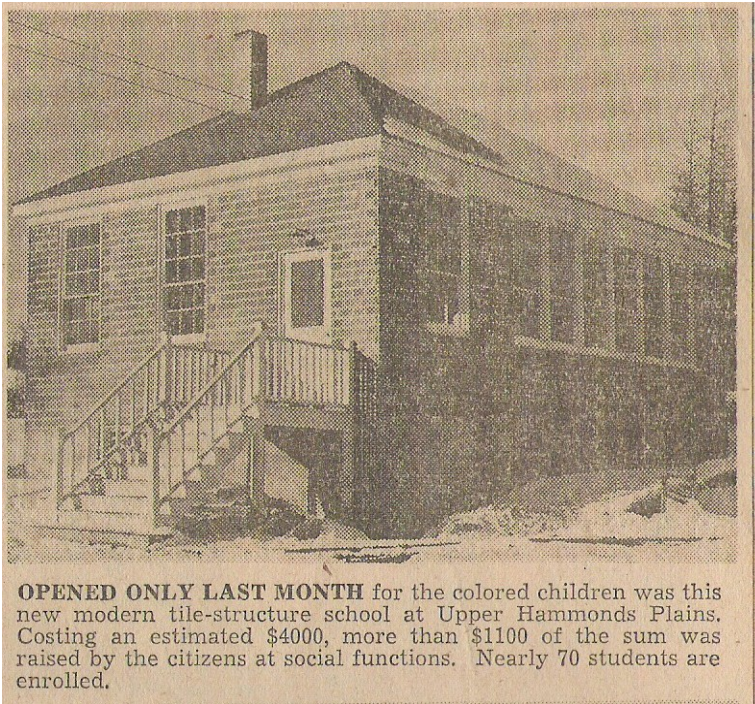
A warship of speed was soon sent out, which met the privateer on the coast between Saint Margaret's and Sambro, and after a few sharp rounds, the enemy was captured and brought to Halifax. Young Nat was none the worse for his thrilling experience, but needless to say the captain of the American privateer did not bless the day he met the English Curlew.

HOW THINGS HAVE
CHANGED



The above building (cira 1956) served as the Hammonds Plains Community Hall for many years. It was located on the property of the present day Fire Station.

NEWS FROM THE PAST -
THE OPENING OF NEW SCHOOL IN UPPER
HAMMONDS PLAINS FROM 1945



OPENED ONLY LAST MONTH for the colored children was this new modern tile-structure school at Upper Hammonds Plains. Costing an estimated \$4000, more than \$1100 of the sum was raised by the citizens at social functions. Nearly 70 students are enrolled.

Officially Open Modern School

The modern brick and tile school at Upper Hammonds Plains, built through community effort, was officially opened Monday afternoon at an impressive ceremony. Before a large gathering Chairman Edmund Symonds expressed the pleasure of members of the community at the completion of the building.

Speakers brought challenging messages urging the community not to look upon the building of the school as an end in itself, but to strive to have a more skilled child and adult education presented in the school.

The school house was officially opened by H. A. Weir, chief inspector of schools. Other speakers were B. C. Silver, inspector of schools, Halifax County; Mrs. W. P. Oliver, Warden, W. J. Dowell, R. M. Fielding, M.L.A., H. Capt. W. P. Oliver, Roy McOnie, Richard Symonds, Councillor A. W. Evans, and Rev. B. A. Cobham. Mrs. Madeline Symonds, teacher, read the financial report.

Carl Oliver, who built the school house, received many compliments on his fine workmanship and co-operation.

Supper was served by the ladies of the community, after which there was dancing to the music of P.O. Percy Haynes' band.