

Hammonds Plains Historical Society

Web Site: www.hammondsplainshistoricalsociety.ca

Facebook: Hammonds Plains Historical Society

Impact of COVID-19 – November 2021 Update

At our October Board of Directors Meeting, we made the decision to try a virtual presentation as a **November general meeting**. This decision was based on the results of the survey that we sent out, along with the COVID situation in Nova Scotia, at the time of that board meeting.

We are looking at this presentation as an opportunity to gauge whether we might be able to increase our audience by holding such an event. We look forward to the results. Please join us on November 29th to see if this might work for you. Our web page has all the necessary information for you to easily connect and join us. Questions will be entertained during the presentation.

Our newest podcast is now up on the webpage. It is an account of the infamous 1951 Airplane Crash. Entitled **'Tragedy in the Skies – The 1951 Airplane Crash'**. Learn about the how the incident unfolded and its aftermath. Just follow the Resources link to open the podcast. Coming soon will be a history of the historic Hammonds Plains Community Center building.

We will accepting membership fees for the 2021-22 year. Check out the section on becoming a HPHS member on the next page to follow through on this.



NOVEMBER 29TH VIRTUAL PRESENTATION

The Up and Downs of a Turbulent Main Street – A History of the Hammonds Plains Road



A 1955 photo of Hammonds Plains
Road (at Woodhaven Campground
entrance)

Join us for our very first virtual presentation. On Monday November 29th at 7pm, we will be hosting an online meeting using the Zoom platform. The presentation for the meeting will be 'The Ups and Downs of a Turbulent Main Street – The History of the Hammonds Plains Road'. Tune in and find out the long journey the Hammonds Plains Road has endured to reach to-day's status as one of best known (and well travelled) roads in HRM.

Go to our web site for directions for the link to the presentation.
hammondsplainshistoricalsociety.ca

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.**

If you have been a member in the past, no need to fill out a new registration form. Registration forms are available by copying from our web site for new members only.

An e-transfer can be sent to the above e-mail address for membership fees.

Donations will also be graciously accepted.

A Historic Milestone



Eric Eisenhauer celebrates 100th Birthday

On October 15th, life long Hammonds plains resident, Eric Eisenhauer celebrated his 100th birthday. He joins a very select group of Hammonds Plainers who have reached this historic milestone. He has been a friend of the society during the yers, providing us with historical accounts that we have used in our research over the years.

Congratulations, Eric!

News From the Past

From the Halifax Mail Star –

June 21st, 1948

Hammonds Plains Group is Active

The monthly meeting of the Admiral Provo Wallis Chapter I.O. D. E. took place June 8th at the Forrester's Community Hall, with the Regent, Mrs. Charles Harris, presiding.

The members of the chapter and members of the Hammonds Plains Hockey Club held a basket social and dance at the Forrester's Hall, May 19th and the proceeds were divided between the hockey club and the chapter. The chapter convener of the social and dance was Kenneth Thomson, assisted by Mrs. Harold Wright and Miss Mae Wright.

The Chapter also sponsored a Field Day for the pupils for the pupils of our local school, Friday afternoon, June 4th. Farrel Thomas kindly gave his field for the sports. The children had races and peanut scrambles and candy. The committee in charge of the field day were Mrs. Douglas Eisenhauer, convener; Miss Ruth Haverstock, Mrs. K. Thomson, and Miss Mae Wright. A vote of thanks was given by the chapter to Melvin Eisenhauer, who kindly furnished the transportation from the school to the grounds and home again. The chapter also moved a vote of thanks to Rev. Mr. Cobham who so ably looked after the sports, etc. A vote of thanks was also given to Farrel Thomas for the use of his field.

Each member of the Order has been requested to make and fill a nursery bag for the children of the QE Hospital, England and have them ready for the September meeting. Two food parcels were sent to Britain during the month.

The chapter is having a sewing and knitting party at the Forrester's Hall, Wednesday afternoon and evening, July 14th. The chapter cordially invites all the ladies of the community.

The Little Mill by the Side of the Road



The little mill by the side of the road – 1940's

For over 150 years, a Hammonds Plains landmark stood along the Hammonds Plains as a symbol of the importance of the forestry trade in the community. This was the first mill built in the Hammonds Plains and it became known simply as the 'little mill by the side of the road'. For those who lived during its time as a working mill, it served as a landmark that everyone knew. The following is its history.

In 1818, John English bought original lot 16 of the Hammonds Plains Land Grants. The lot encompassed the area around where Vernon's Thunderbird Restaurant, Beacon Electric and Hammonds Plains PharmaChoice is located to-day. English decided to build a small mill close to his residence along the developing road, next to the small stream that ran from Bartlett's Lake. The mill was built between 1818-20, powered by a water wheel with water provided from the stream. In the early days, the mill only was used to cut timber into wooden boards.

After John English passed away, the property was sold by his daughter to George Mason in 1853. Mason was a forward thinking entrepreneur and besides taking over the mill, ran a hotel out of his large house. To create more power for the mill, he diverted some of the water leaving Bartlett's Lake to create a human made pond known as Mason's Pond, so to provide a more constant water source to run the mill. During the mid 1800's when the mill was run by George and then his son, George Jr. it is believed the mill started to produce wooden boxes. A cooper shop was built across the road from the mill during this time but it was operated by the Bezanson family, although it is thought the mill provided all the pieces for the barrels.

The uniqueness of the mill was highlighted by the fact that the main road ran within a meter or so of the building and a sharp turn in the road ran just around the corner of the mill.

The mill was sold to Nathaniel Melvin during the late 1800's. The Melvin family lived near the mill and had connections to the Mason family through marriage. The mill remained in the Melvin family until 1905 when Sidney Eisenhower purchased the Melvin property. The mill became known as 'Uncle Sid's Mill' during his tenure. His larger than life personality made the whole community feel like he was really their 'uncle'. Sid was well known for calling out greetings with his great booming voice as fellow residents passed by the mill, either walking or on a horse drawn wagon. He had the gift of gab and enjoyed gathering tidbits of community news from passersby.

Eisenhower upgraded the wooden box shop part of the business and started to make wooden soft drink boxes for the local market. The major soft drink companies of the Halifax area used his boxes to transport their drinks from factory to the stores. A turbine was also installed in the mill so that it could create sufficient power when water levels were low. Sid was also one of the first folks in the community to have a phone, making his business one of the first in Hammonds Plains to employ the phone as a commercial asset.

When the Hammonds Plains Road was upgraded and paved in the late 1950's, a major portion of the project was to reroute the road around the mill. It was decided that the old road route contained too sharp of a corner around the back of the mill, so a new section was added in front of the mill to have a gradual turn around Mason's Pond. By this time, Sid was over 80 years of age and he decided that it was time to retire, as wooden products were becoming less in demand. The business closed down for good in the early 1960's.

The mill stood until 1967, when it was burnt down due to safety concerns by the Fire Department in a controlled burn



Uncle Sid's Mill – 1955 (Notice how close to the road the mill was)