



Hammonds Plains Historical Society Newsletter

Web Site: www.hammondsplainshistoricalsociety.ca

Facebook: Hammonds Plains Historical Society

Announcing Our AGM

- Our upcoming AGM will take place on May 25th at 7pm at the Cornerstone Wesleyan Church. During the meeting, the Board of Director's will be tabling their Annual Report, Annual Financial Statement, along with holding the election for Board of Director's for the 2026-27 year.
- The presentation for the meeting will be 'Winter Bonding – The Story Behind the Hammonds Plains Outdoor Rinks. The presentation will explore a community treasure that was so much a social magnet during the 1900's in Hammonds Plains – The Outdoor Rinks. In particular, the 3 rinks that existed in Hammonds Plains during the 20th century will form the basis of the talk.



- **2026 Annual Report** – The report outlining the activities of the society for the past year that will be tabled at the AGM can be read on page 4 of the newsletter.
- **2025-26 Memberships:** Memberships are still being accepted for the 2025-26 year. As per previous years, the membership fee is \$10 for the coming year. (See page 2 for details).

A Retrospective of the Hammonds Plains Outdoor Rinks

Did you know that Hammonds Plains had several rinks during the 1900's that served as recreational hubs for the community?

During the winter skating season, the rinks hosted both community skates and hockey games. In fact, an organized community men's hockey team, played on these rinks against teams from nearby communities.



The Picture above shows hockey players from Hammonds Plains during the 1940's at one of the rinks.

Come and hear about the history of the outdoor rinks in Hammonds Plains on May 25th at the AGM.

Becoming a 2025-26 HPHS Member:

You can become a new member of the Hammonds Plains Historical Society by filling out a registration form and e-mailing it to haverstockdave@gmail.com. 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 as payment for membership fees.

Donations will also be graciously accepted.

From Our Photo Collection



One event that the community always looked forward to were the church picnics. These were held during the summer, in which residents would jump on the community truck and head to the designed picnic grounds for an afternoon full of socialization, games and food. This photo is from one of the 1940's church picnics.

A Hammonds Plains Heritage Flash



THE BASKET/BOX SOCIAL

During the mid 1900's, a very popular fund raiser in Hammonds Plains was the Basket Social (sometimes referred to as the Box Social). It was an unique event held at the Community Hall to raise funds for the hall and other community needs. Ladies in the community would decorate a basket and include enough food for a lunch for two. The baskets would then be donated to the Basket Social. At the social, baskets were auctioned off to the highest bidder. The lucky bidder and owner of the basket would then eat lunch together. The baskets were most often elaborately decorated as the owners tried to out do each other. The husbands and boyfriends were not supposed to know the identity of their loved ones but most often they did. Sometimes others would get involved and a bidding war would take place, leading to an entertaining environment. The photo above was taken at one of the basket socials at the Community Hall with Terry Tingley, the paster at the Hammonds Plains Baptist Church, as the auctioneer (he is holding the basket he is auctioning off).

A Victoria Day Weekend Tradition

Before the days of suburbia and instant electronic entertainment, a favorite holiday tradition in Hammonds Plains was the family fishing trip. For many families in Hammonds Plains, Victoria Day in May was a day to go fishing with family and friends. Families would pack up a lunch and head to a local lake. In the days before cars and trucks, a wagon would be packed and the family horse would take everyone to a nearby lake.

Most of the family members would have a fishing rod and once on the lake they would most often travel by boat towards a favorite fishing spot. If one didn't have access to a boat, then the shores were used as fishing spots.

Unless families had easy access to a lake further off the main road, the lakes closer to the road were most often used for the fishing excursions.



Here is a picture from the 1920's of a Hammonds Plains extended family with their fishing gear on the shore of Pockwock lake.

Some of the families would stop at one of the lumber camps or a family cottage on the lake shore to have lunch.

The task at hand would be to catch as many trout as possible. Trout was always the preferred catch, with worms and minnows, the most common bait. Fortunately, the lakes of Hammonds Plains tended to have healthy supplies of trout and it wasn't uncommon to come home with at least a dozen or so.



A Photo of Hammonds Plains ladies relaxing at Pockwock Lake, while on a picnic.

In particular, Pockwock Lake was a favorite lake to head to during the Victoria Day weekend. It was the largest lake in the area, had numerous cottages and had a boat launch for those who needed to tow their boats to the lake. Wright's Lake was also well used as a fishing spot.



Quite a catch at Wright's Lake – 1940's

During the 1970's, with Pockwock Lake being turned over to the city of Halifax as their new water supply, surrounding lands being bought up by developers limiting access to the lakes and the effect of acid rain reducing the trout population, the Victoria Day Fishing trip slowly stopped being a family tradition, making it past history.

2025-26 Annual Report

The past year has been highlighted by the successful completion of our 2020-26 Strategic Plan. The Board of Directors has worked extensively since 2019 devising and then implementing this plan. We are pleased to report completion of each of the objectives, as laid out in the 2019 Plan, with the possible exception of the creation of a Historical Interpretation Panel, along the Hammonds Plains Road. The Panel project had to be put on hold due to unforeseen insurance issues.

The Board was once again extremely fortunate to have most of the Board members from the previous year returning to the Board. This provided the consistency and experience to move society initiatives forward in an efficient manner during the past year. We welcomed Blair Haverstock to the Board, and his knowledge of the history of the community has helped to guide discussions and decisions on society affairs.

Since our AGM last May, the Board of Directors has had 8 full Board Meetings, plus one working session to plan for our special Picture Trivia Night. For the most part, meetings were done online. The focus this past year during the meetings was on planning for general meetings and working on our Strategic Plan objective of planning a special event.

We had 5 general meetings during the past year, with each having a presentation component to it. Unfortunately, weather issues really impacted the attendance at the meetings, and we saw an overall drop in folks attending our meetings due to this. In September, we explored **'The History of the Hammonds Plains Baptist Church'**, via a presentation done at the church by Blair Haverstock. The November meeting tackled the **Canadian Census** and we did a presentation on the Hammonds Plains connections to the census. Our January meeting was an exploration of the **1930's in Hammonds Plains**. Due to weather issues, we had to move the January meeting at the last minute to an online one. At the March meeting, we hosted a special event entitled **'Picture It'**, in which we displayed pre 1970 photos of places and events that Hammonds Plains folks of previous eras had connections with. Participants had to guess what each photo contained in an interactive matter. Tonight's presentation finishes off our yearly schedule with a historical look at the **Outdoor Rinks** of the 1900's in Hammonds Plains.

We also did a special presentation for the Beford Library on **'The History of the Hammonds Plains Road'** in February.

Society memberships maintained healthy numbers this past year. As of April 30th, we had 70 paid members for the year.

Our finances remained consistent with the past couple of years. We were successful in applying for a HRM Community Grant, which was used to buy a new laptop and associated operating platforms. As stated in our Annual Financial Report we continue to have reserved funds in the \$4000+ range.

Our newsletters continued to be published and sent out to members via e-mail throughout the year. In total we published 5 newsletters, each being sent out at the time of each of our general meetings.

Our web page was updated throughout the year, with regular postings of society activities. We added three more episodes of **'Hammonds Plains – A Journey Thru Time'**, which is a multi-piece video account of the history of the area. To this date, 12 episodes have been completed, taking the history of the community from its beginning to the end of the 1960's. Plans are underway to finish this series next year.

Our Facebook page continued to have regular posts as well, with the highlight being the weekly **'Did You Know?'** facts, in which an interesting historical fact about the Hammonds Plains area was presented to the public. This has proved to be a popular feature. The Facebook page now has over 11 hundred followers.

As indicated earlier in this report, a key priority at our Board meetings this year was given to the Strategic Plan strategy on planning a special event. Throughout the course of the year, the Board planned for a special **Picture Trivia Night**, which was held in March. We also set up an artifact display during the event. The Board felt that the concept of the event was well received, although there was a disappointment in the attendance numbers for the evening.

Significant time was also spent discussing a transition plan for the Board, as a way to recruit new members and to have new blood in the executive roles. It was felt that such a plan would help provide a way to ensure a greater chance of sustainability in the future. The plan will further be developed at future meetings.

In summary, the past year saw us continue to promote the history of Hammonds Plains in a positive light. While weather issues did affect some of the meetings, thanks to a dedicated Board of Directors, we are ending the year in a good position to carry the Board forward into the 2026-27 year.