

## UPSTAIRS AT THE O'DELL— Two Celebratory Exhibitions

This year not only marks the 150th anniversary of Confederation, but also the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Mi'kmaq artist and craftsman Louis Jeremy. He was born on May 15, 1867 in Brickton, Annapolis County, Nova Scotia and died in Middleton on October 17<sup>th</sup>, 1947. He was the son of Josiah Jeremy and Elizabeth Paul, and younger brother to Abraham and Becky.

As a young man, he moved with his family to Tupperville. They had a firm understanding of the woods, and how these resources could be used to craft fine woven baskets, buckets, barrels, handles for tools, and cradles.

Working with hand crafted tools, Louis carved small decorative yet functional pieces such as picture frames, cups and saucers, match holders, pencil boxes, and tiny wooden shoes. He continued in the tradition of his family, but began creating finer objects painted with natural dyes from wild plants, bark, and roots. He finished his work with his homemade linseed oil, rubbed into the objects to give them a polished finish. These decorative pieces were often used as barter for fresh produce from farmers or goods from stores.



Jeremy also undertook many challenging projects; violins made of bird's eye maple with porcupine gut strings, and bow strings made of horse hair, all based on his own designs. He was known for his rocking chairs, toboggans, sleds, wooden skates, skis, and especially canoes that could handle the rough waters of the ocean.

An avid woodsman, acquainted with the animals found in the woods, he created instruments that replicated the sounds of

birds, moose, and deer to name a few. He designed his own guns for hunting, but also used the bow and arrow.

Opening in mid June and continuing through to Thanksgiving weekend, The O'Dell House Museum will feature our collection of Louis Jeremy artifacts together with those on loan to us by Marilyn Durling of Centrelea, Nova Scotia.

The O'Dell will also feature an exhibition that was researched and developed in the summer of 2016 by one of our student curatorial assistants, Alisha Longmire, on Annapolis Royal-born father of Confederation – the Hon. John William Ritchie 1808 – 1890. Born into a legal dynasty, he was the son of Judge Thomas Ritchie, M.P.P., 1777 – 1852 and Elizabeth W. Johnston, 1787 – 1819, sister of James William Johnston, premier of the Colony of Nova Scotia.

Educated at Ichabod Corbitt's School in Annapolis Royal, then tutored privately at home in close proximity to his father, probably influenced him to pursue a political career in adulthood. In the 1820s his uncle James William Johnston took young John under his wing and began to educate him in law. He was admitted to the bar as attorney in 1831, and as a barrister a year later.

By the late 1830s, this young gifted lawyer was appointed law clerk to the Legislative Council. In 1850, he was a member of a commission to revise the statutes of Nova Scotia. Ritchie was a director of the Union Bank of Halifax, member of the Queen's Counsel, and in 1863 appointed to the Board of Governors of Dalhousie University.

In 1864, the government of his uncle J.W. Johnston and Charles Tupper appointed Ritchie to the Legislative Council, and he was made Solicitor General. He became government leader in the upper house and in this position, he passed important legislation dealing with Nova Scotia's entry into confederation. While he was not a delegate to Charlottetown or Quebec, he was charged with selling confederation to

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a reluctant Nova Scotia. He was however a delegate to the London conference of 1866-67, where the union was completed.

His career was capped in 1867 with a seat in the Senate, and in 1870 he was appointed as a puisne judge of the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia. In 1882, he retired to his estate at Belmont overlooking the Northwest Arm at Halifax, and died there in 1890.

This exhibition will not only focus on John William Ritchie but also on other members of this political and judiciary dynasty. Artifacts within our collection belonging to the family will be installed in our special exhibition space and throughout the museum, as they form part of our permanent collection on view. This exhibit will also begin mid June until Thanksgiving weekend.

Wayne Smith

Executive Director/Curator



**Note:** Wayne, formerly the site manager at North Hills Museum, was named our Executive Director/Curator in January 2016 following the resignation of Ryan Scranton, our former Executive Director. Wayne holds an MA in Art History and came to us after a long career at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa.

## A Word From our (Acting) President

Ian Lawrence

It is heartening to see the resurrection of the Annapolis Heritage Society newsletter. A significant portion of our membership lives far from Annapolis Royal, and in the past, a newsletter has been a vital link for them. In addition to keeping membership abreast of our activities and upcoming events, a newsletter provides an opportunity for the Society to publicize the acquisition of interesting new artifacts and rare or unique documents. Profiling our achievements and activities can only heighten support for the Annapolis Heritage Society. In keeping with modernity, the newsletter will be electronic; for members not on-line, a hard copy will be forwarded. Appreciation is due to Lois Jenkins for steering the creation of this new and improved newsletter.



## Coming Soon—Our New Website!

We think you'll like the look of our new, updated website which will be launched shortly. We're retaining much of the same content, but we're adding more photos and more colour. For the coming year the particular focus will be on the Painted Room on the second floor of the Sinclair Inn, which has undergone conservation work and will be open to the public for the first time this summer. The URL remains the same: [www.annapolisheritagesociety.com](http://www.annapolisheritagesociety.com). Keep an eye out for it by checking our Facebook pages for the Society or for the O'Dell House Museum.

## Collections Corner

Our Society celebrates its 50th anniversary this year; that means we've been building our collection of artifacts for all that time. The process of accessioning every one of those items has taken, and continues to take, hours and hours of work, most of which has been done by dedicated volunteers. This past winter, these volunteers began the process of entering our collection into the Association of Nova Scotia Museums' CollectiveAccess database.

Following is a pair of beautiful items, likely crafted by local Mi'kmaq, that were recently entered into the database:

Collection Nos. 016.07.27/28

"Porcupine quills painted in teal, red, black, yellow and some left natural are arranged in a decorative fashion on a birch bark backing. Motif in centre displays a star design. Design is mounted on birch bark. In the shape of a seat and seat back for a rocking chair."



These two items were donated to AHS some years ago by David and Peggy Armstrong of Granville Beach. They were found some time in the first half of the 20th century in the attic of their house.

- Philip Hyam, Collections Management Chair



This is a celebratory year in more ways than one. First and foremost, it is the 150th anniversary of Confederation.

But on a closer-to-home level, we're proudly recognizing the 50th anniversary of our Society. Who better to tell the story than Dr. Barry Moody, who was there at its beginning and who continues to be a guiding hand as the Society strives to preserve, promote and present our local heritage. This is Part One of the story . . .

## Small Beginnings, Big Dreams

In the spring of 1967, just fifty years ago, a few brave souls in the Annapolis area embarked on a daring adventure. The spark plug was definitely Marguerite Wagner, for it was she who provided the idea and the energy to get this scheme off the ground. Marguerite had for some time dreamed of a project that would rescue some of the heritage buildings of the area, and provide a venue for displaying artifacts illustrative of local history. What better time to embark on such a project than 1967, with all the hype and enthusiasm about the centennial of Canada's birth?

It was Marguerite who first *really* noticed the rundown tenement on Lower St. George Street. Of course she had passed it many, many times before, but now it looked particularly forlorn. Three of its four apartments were obviously empty, and the big front door was now propped open with a snow shovel, allowing the sleet and rain of that spring to beat in on the hardwood floor of the hall. And there was a For Sale sign stuck in the grass in front! What better place to begin the fulfillment of her dream than here in the oldest part of one of the oldest streets in Canada?

Marguerite quickly gathered a small group of like-minded people (fools, some would call them), and serious planning for the acquisition of the old O'Dell house began. Ralph Wagner, a contractor and trucker, was Marguerite's husband; Bob Patterson was a retired Toronto antiques dealer, who had recently restored the 18<sup>th</sup> century Amberman house in Granville Ferry; Ruth Eisenhauer was a crafts instructor at Cornwallis, and several years before had purchased the old Bailey house, a near neighbor of the O'Dell house; Charlotte MacLean and Barry Moody were both university students, summer guides at the Port Royal National Historic Site. It was these six who formed the first society and provided the initial work parties to get the project off the

ground.

But how to begin? The asking price for the property was \$3,500.! Where was that money to come from, let alone money to restore the building, and acquire furnishings and artifacts? Marguerite and Ralph stepped forward and willingly took the risk of purchasing the property, in the hopes that someday the society (not yet even formed) could afford to take it over. It would be a number of years before that would become a reality.

Immediate problems faced us, but exciting challenges as well. There was one family still occupying the building, living in what are now the kitchen, dining room, living room and office of the museum. We had to find them another place to live, and help move them, so that we could begin work on the building. With an empty house, the fun could really begin.

Since the building had been owned and occupied by the O'Dell family for all but about 10 years of its life, there had fortunately been few alterations until it was converted to apartments. And since those changes had been done with new, cheap materials, and in a rather haphazard fashion, it was fairly easy to determine in most cases what was original and what had been added in the late 1950s. Using every available spare moment from our day jobs, we took down flimsy beaverboard partitions, unblocked old doorways, scraped and painted and searched for wallpaper on sale.

The restoration led to exciting discoveries at times. One Saturday morning, immediately after getting rid of the tenants, we tackled what clearly had to be the old kitchen, which had been divided into two rooms. Imagine our delight when the removal of a beaverboard wall revealed the intact kitchen fireplace and brick bake oven, something we had scarcely dared hope had survived. We celebrated that evening by building a fire in the oven and baking a pizza, certainly the first, and probably the last, pizza to be baked there. This was only one of many, many good times that we all experienced at the O'Dell House.

There was more to do, of course, than tear down walls and paint woodwork. We needed to do research on the building and the O'Dell family, look for funding, find artifacts and furnishings, form a society, and gather additional supporters. Attempts to involve the Nova Scotia Museum were initially met with a heavy dose of cold water. The then director told Marguerite and me that "You can't save every old building, you know." Ouch. In fairness to him, he was probably inundated with such requests for help in that Centennial year, as communities and individuals became excited about their history like never before. We left the meeting chastened, but not discouraged. We would do it ourselves then, if no help was to come from Halifax. - *Continued on next page*

Small Beginnings, Big Dreams, *continued* . . .

It would take another two years to put all of the pieces in place before we could proudly open the O'Dell House as a museum in the summer of 1969, but that story will have to wait for another issue of the newsletter. The building had been saved, the process started, and part at least of the dream had been realized. And there were other buildings in town in desperate need of attention. As high as were our expectations, and as extensive as were our dreams, I doubt if any of us could have envisioned just how far we would travel in the next fifty years. *(To be continued.)*

## Saying Goodbye, with Regrets

Two of our long-term volunteers will be leaving our community soon: Wayne Morgan and his wife Jerri Costa. Wayne, over the more than 20 years he has been with the Society, has served as president of the Board, as chair of the Genealogy Committee, was in charge of the former "Bricks & Boards" venture, and most recently was chair of the Sinclair Inn Committee. Jerri was a former member of the Board, was a chair of the Membership Committee, and served as an animator at museum events.

The Society owes a huge debt to Wayne for the work he has done over the years in adding to the Genealogy Centre's collection. He spent countless hours transcribing land transactions for the town of Annapolis Royal up to 2003; scoured *The Annapolis Spectator* and other local newspapers for Annapolis County vital statistics and local history items; abstracted vital statistics for Annapolis and Digby counties from the Baptist newspaper *The Christian Messenger* (1837-1884); published family histories on several local families; and much more. All are available for researchers to access at the O'Dell House Museum.

Wayne and Jerri, we send you our well-wishes and our sincere "Thanks" for your selfless contribution to the Society.

## Annual General Meeting

**NOTICE:** Our AGM has been moved to May, so this year it is being held on **Wednesday evening, May 31st at 7 p.m., at North Hills Museum.**

We are in hopes that the 15-minute video of the Painted Room at the Sinclair Inn that is being produced for the Society will be ready for presentation that evening.

For particulars please watch the Society's website, Facebook page, or email us.

## Job Opportunities

### Interpretive Guide – North Hills Museum Granville Ferry, Nova Scotia

We are looking for a dynamic and personable individual who enjoys imparting history to the public. The Interpretive



Guide is responsible for activities including visitor reception, tours, assisting in workshops, participating in the planning and implementation of special events. They are also responsible for the opening and closing of the museum, monitoring the collection, and various administrative duties, including retail, and research for educational programming. The ideal candidate will have knowledge of Windows10, Microsoft Word and Excel. Bilingualism would be an asset. This position is Seasonal Full-Time (40 hours a week) from June 1 – October 15, 2017. The pay rate is \$14.00 an hour. Interested candidates can forward their resume to Wayne Smith Executive Director/Curator at [annapolisheritage@gmail.com](mailto:annapolisheritage@gmail.com), or drop off their resume at 136 St George Street, Annapolis Royal, between 1:00 – 4:00 pm Tuesday – Friday.



The Annapolis Heritage Society is offering summer employment as **Curatorial Assistants and Interpretive Guides** to students who will be attending or returning to college or university in the fall of 2017. Students will undertake a wide variety of museum tasks and engage the public that visit both the O'Dell House Museum and Sinclair Inn Museum. Interested candidates should forward their resumes no later than May 11th to Wayne Smith at [annapolisheritage@gmail.com](mailto:annapolisheritage@gmail.com) or stop by the O'Dell House Museum at 136 St. George Street between 1:00 - 4:00pm Tuesday – Friday.

# Genealogy Centre Notes

## Genealogy Drop-in Group

People like to talk about genealogy. So we've started something new at our new and updated Genealogy Centre, a genealogy drop-in session for anyone interested in talking about anything connected to family history.



People are encouraged to bring along what they're working on, share their experiences gathering material, ask for tips about how and where to start if they're just beginning. We'll introduce people to the resources available in the Genealogy Centre to help with research. The next session will be held on Tuesday, May 2nd, from 2:30 to 4 pm, upstairs in the Genealogy Centre at the O'Dell House Museum, 136 St. George Street, Annapolis Royal. There is no charge. Beginning in June and through the summer months the gatherings will move to an evening, probably the first Friday of each month to coincide with "First Fridays" here in town. Keep posted by checking the O'Dell House Museum Facebook page, or call or email us.

## New Acadian Resource

Interest in Acadian roots continues to rise. It may be because Port Royal was the seat of Acadie that in recent years we have seen an increase in the number of visitors and queries seeking information about Acadian ancestors. Whatever the reason, we recognize the need to expand our Acadian resources to meet the demand. Along with other materials, we have Stephen A White's 1999 edition of his *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles acadiennes* and are planning to purchase his next edition – which adds additional generations – when it is published. Recently we acquired an out-of-print copy of Janet B Jehn's *Acadian Exiles in the Colonies*, published in 1977. Jehn collected copies of ships'

lists of Acadians who were expelled and to where they were taken, then she identified the names, and in many cases was able to add information about their time in exile. A valuable resource for serious researchers.

## Dalhousie Settlers

In this year of significant anniversaries there's another milestone to be added. Although the actual grant for the Dalhousie Settlement wasn't signed until October 1821, this year marks 200 years since the disbanded soldiers of the Fencible Corps drew for their lots in the summer of 1817 and marched out to claim them along the old military road between Annapolis Royal and Halifax. The settlement was named for the Earl of Dalhousie who was Nova Scotia's governor at the time. Many in our area can trace their lines back to the settlers whose lots fell on the western end of that road, like Joseph Buckler, Archibald Gillis, William Dargie, Thomas Anderson, John Dunn, Stephen Hannan, Henry Inglis, John Orde, James McLaughlin, and James Todd. With heartfelt thanks to Michael Barton of London, England, who a few years ago took it upon himself to search out the military records of these men at the National Archives in Kew, we now have, for most of these men, their places of birth (in Ireland, Scotland, and England), the names of their regiments (primarily the 98<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot and the 5<sup>th</sup> Royal Artillery), and for some their father's names and their dates of discharge.

## Hours & Fees

Genealogy volunteers are on duty from 1 to 4 pm Tuesdays through Saturdays.

Daily research fee: \$10.00 (waived for members), photocopies extra.

Can't get to the Centre? We do research for \$20/hour (Canadian). Send queries (be as specific as possible) to [annapolisheritage@gmail.com](mailto:annapolisheritage@gmail.com), or to Annapolis Heritage Society, PO Box 123, Annapolis Royal, NS, B0S 1A0

## MEMBERSHIP FORM

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please check the appropriate class of membership (amounts are in Canadian dollars):

\$15.00 — Annual individual\*

\$50.00 — Annual business\*

\$25.00 — Annual family\*

\$200.00 — Lifetime patron

“\*” - Annual memberships expire on anniversary date

You may pay by cheque or money order made out to **Annapolis Heritage Society** and mail to:

Annapolis Heritage Society, P.O. Box 503, Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia, B0S 1A0

or call (902) 532-7754 to pay by credit card.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Town/City: \_\_\_\_\_ Prov/State: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal/Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Quarterly newsletters will be sent to members by email; a paper copy will be mailed to members without email.

Would you like to become more involved in the Society — By serving on a committee? Writing an article for the newsletter? Dressing up in period costume and becoming an animator? Doing some computer research on a project? Helping accession donated items? If you have a particular interest, please list it here or give us a call:

### ANNAPOLIS HERITAGE SOCIETY

**PRESERVING, PROMOTING AND PRESENTING OUR LOCAL HERITAGE**

#### *O'Dell House Museum*

*136 St George Street, Annapolis Royal, NS*

#### *Sinclair Inn Museum*

*230 St George Street, Annapolis Royal, NS*

#### *North Hills Museum*

*5065 Granville Road, Granville Ferry, NS*

**Mailing Address:** P.O. Box 503, Annapolis Royal, NS, B0S 1A0

**Email:** [annapolisheritage@gmail.com](mailto:annapolisheritage@gmail.com)

**Phone:** (902) 532-7754

**Website:** [www.annapolisheritagesociety.com](http://www.annapolisheritagesociety.com)

**Facebook pages:** Annapolis Heritage Society; O'Dell House Museum; North Hills Museum