



# YARMOUTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S HISTORIGRAM

November 2008

Volume 8, Issue 10

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Read all about it! -- Prime Minister Stephen Harper makes a visit to the town of Yarmouth and to the Yarmouth County Museum and Archives on Saturday, October 4th! With only a few hours notice, the Education Wing of the Museum was transformed into an area with a nautical theme, with the aid of a ship's bell along with a large ship's wheel. This would be the background for the platform where Mr. Harper would give his brief speech. Following his speech, Mr. Harper took some time to answer a few questions. He was truly impressed with what he saw of our Museum & Archives and made several encouraging remarks. Before he left he was entertained with a political story from Betty Crosby about a bulldog owned by her father. Betty is one of our more senior members of the Historical Society. Following her story, Mr. Harper then took the time to share a story with her about his two grandfathers. Some pictures were taken, and he was on his way!

Ann Winkels and her committee are running full tilt in organizing a Christmas Party for November 29. This is an event that will take you back in time and will be one to remember. I'm sure Bruce will tell us more about this in his report. Keep up the good work, Everyone!

We were pleased to have Rose Purdy as our guest speaker at our October Society meeting. Rose is a member of the First Nations Acadia Band in Yarmouth. She works as a drug addiction counsellor. With the aid of a power-point presentation, Rose explained some of the ways the Mi'kmaq people lived. They hunted geese and ducks at night making it easier to sneak up on them while they were sleeping. She explained about sweet grass, referred to as "the hair of mother earth" and that it was used as an incense. Rose shared about the talking circle, a traditional way for native people to solve problems. In this circle a token, usually an eagle feather, is passed around the circle, the one holding the token is the only one to speak. What is said in the circle stays in the circle. Rose also spoke about the 'sweat lodges', Mi'kmaq clothing, and how they built wigwams. She talked about basket-making and what the different ones were used for. Also she mentioned about 'dream- catchers' which were hung over their beds, to catch good dreams. All in all this was a very educational talk for each one of us.

I want to encourage you to attend our upcoming Society meeting on November 7 at 7:30 at the Museum. You don't have to be a member to attend. If you know someone who might be interested, please pass the word along. Our guest speaker will be Mary Louise Killam who will be sharing information from a letter written to her from her father. Our Society meetings/ programs change each month and have something of interest for everyone. I hope to see you there.

One of the challenges put forward in the last few weeks is to encourage more people to take an interest in what we have to offer within the Yarmouth County Museum and Archives. Unfortunately, some people tend to think that museums are only for older folks and I'm here to tell you this is not the case. The fact is we need our older folks to share their history on things of the past but we also need our younger people to learn and be able to pass this information along to future generations. So my challenge goes out to everyone to encourage others to learn more about our Museum & Archives so that they might become interested enough to want to join in with us. There are some benefits in becoming a member, such as free admission to the Museum & Archives, along with 10% off items purchased at our gift shop, to name a couple. Thank you, and please pass the word along to friends and acquaintances!

*Charles Winship*  
President

## 2009 Nominations

The 2008 Annual Meeting will be held during the monthly meeting in February, where the 2009 board will be selected. Currently the nominating committee is considering individuals for board positions. If you have an interest or know of someone with an interest in serving on the board or any committee, please call Vaughn Bullerwell at 742-6715 or email vbullerwell@eastlink.ca.



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## NEWS FROM THE DIRECTOR

by Bruce Bishop



Minutes before the arrival of Prime Minister Harper, the Museum's Education Wing was packed with people, lights and undercover Mounties.  
Photo by Bruce Bishop

Probably the highlight of this past month would have been the visit by Prime Minister Harper on October 4. I was given 36 hours' advance notice, and it was quite a whirlwind event. The following Tuesday, the local newspaper The Yarmouth County Vanguard provided quite a bit of coverage of the press conference, and the Museum was mentioned in a *Canadian Press* photograph, in the *Chronicle Herald* and on live network television. (I found out about the latter when a friend in Toronto called to tell me her niece in Winnipeg had heard Mr. Harper's thanks to the Yarmouth County Museum and Archives at the beginning of his speech.)

I must say I was ambivalent hosting the Prime Minister at the Museum, as his Conservative government had cut funding to museums by 25% in 2007. Prior to the federal election, the Canadian Museums Association asked its members to urge each federal political party to have a renewed vision for Museums in the next four years. Every party except the Conservatives responded, and the other parties' replies can be found on [www.museums.ca](http://www.museums.ca). Below is part of a sample letter the Association was suggesting be sent to the party leaders:

*"Museums are vitally important to economic activity in our communities. Across Canada, they employ more than 24,000 people and contribute more than \$17 billion to the national economy, including \$650 million in direct salary and wages. They also draw people to our regions and communities. More than 59 million people visit Canadian museums every year — more than attend all live sporting events. Sixty percent of international tourists visit Canadian museums — making them a central plank of community tourist plans in every region of Canada. For cities and communities across this country, museums are vehicles for*

*economic growth and sustainable and regeneration.*

*Beyond their economic development value, museums also play a critical societal role in engaging the local community, reflecting the historical roots of regions, communities and peoples, and providing a point of civic pride. More than 55,000 Canadians contribute to museums through volunteer work. A further 600,000 are 'friends,' patrons and members of museums. They provide a focus for community involvement and community expression."*

By the time this Historigram crosses your desk, the federal election will have come and gone. We'll either have more of the same, or perhaps another party in power that doesn't agree with cuts to our cultural, heritage and arts industries will be in business.

On another note, I hope you will consider donating an antique (china, crystal, dishes, a figurine, etc.) or treasure (semi-precious or precious jewelry) to our Auction during the Edwardian Christmas Party on November 29 at the Burrigde Campus of the N.S. Community College. Please call me to arrange pick-up or delivery and I'll make sure you get a donor form. Appraised items can receive charitable tax receipts.

Another thing we can use for this year's major fundraiser are Air Miles — the regular ones, or Aeroplan miles (Air Canada). We're in the process of figuring out the transfer details, and by the time you receive this, I'll know more about the deal.

Thank you for your continued support as we enter into the busy holiday season!

## The Curator's Corner

by Nadine Gates

The exhibit "Stitches Through Time" has been a fun and educational exhibit to put on. Research on the sewing machines in the museum's collection has shown that we are truly fortunate in the generosity of our donors. The photos I am including in this issue of the Historigram are of the Gardner and the Raymond sewing machines on display in the "Stitches Through Time" exhibit.

In 1862, the enterprising American Charles Raymond, relocated to Canada in order to avoid lawsuit entanglements with the Singer Company, whose sewing machine Raymond reportedly "copied". His Guelph, Ontario establishment proved more successful than the original Montreal business. His first location in Guelph was on Yarmouth Street. In 1896, Raymond sold the business to J.G. Sully and Christian Kloefer who continued as the Raymond Manufacturing Company until it was sold to the White Sewing Machine Company of Cleveland in 1916. The company was then moved to Cleveland. The Gardner machine is the earliest machine produced by the Gardner Sewing Machine Company of Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. The Gardner's Improved Sewing Machine, more simply known as the Gardner, was patented in 1870 and featured a screw for tightening the needle bar, improvements to the shuttle, and a feeding apparatus regulated by a thumbscrew on the side of the arm. The Gardner Sewing Machine Company went out of business in 1886. These are but two of the machines on display until November 15th.



### Singer Sewing Machine Company

The Singer Corporation, manufacturer of sewing machines, was first established as I.M. Singer & Co. in 1851 by Isaac Merrit Singer and Edward Clarke. Best known for its sewing machines, it was renamed Singer Manufacturing Company in 1865, then The Singer Company in 1963. Today, the Singer Corporation produces a range of consumer products, including electronic sewing machines. It is now part of SVP Worldwide, which also owns the Pfaff and Husqvarna Viking brands, which is in turn owned by Kohlberg & Company.



### Wilson and Wheeler Company Sewing Machine

Founded by Nathaniel Wheeler and Allen B. Wilson. By 1854, A. B. Wilson had patented the rotary hook and the four-motion-feed sewing machine. The company moved to Bridgeport in 1856 and became known as the Wheeler and Wilson Manufacturing Company. This standard treadle machine is considered to be quite collectable today. Singer took over the Wilson and Wheeler Company in 1905.

*Gift of Mr. Phillip Hurlburt.*

## Activities in the Archives

by Jamie Serran, Archivist



In honour of Remembrance Day in Canada and Veterans Day in the United States, we are very pleased to share this story from Marilyn L. (Morton) Medler of Framingham, MA. Her father, Ralph Wyndom Morton, was born in Yarmouth in 1902 – “a little young to serve in World War I. But he told a war story of his own.

“In 1918, when he was 16, wheat farmers in the Prairie Provinces were desperate for harvesters since so many men had gone for soldiers. Recruiters appeared in the Maritimes, looking for boys to hire for the summer. Though not actually a farm boy at home, Dad signed on and found himself on a farm in Saskatchewan. He gave few details of the job – long hours, hard work, plenty to eat – but each work day ended with him taking the draft horses to the creek to drink. He would lead one and ride the other, with ‘a back so wide I almost split my straddle’. He worked through September. When it was time to leave in early October, winter and snow had already come to the prairies. The farmer took him to the depot by sleigh, across miles of unmarked white.

“Dad never went west again but he was always proud of that summer’s work..”

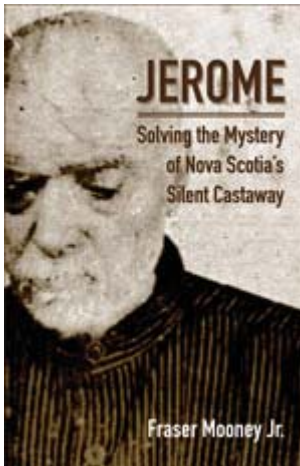
The accompanying photograph shows Ralph Wyndom Morton on the right. The younger boy may be his brother Kenneth. The photo is courtesy of **Mrs. Elsie Hilton** of Yarmouth.

Thank you to **Marilyn Medler** and **Elsie Hilton** for sharing this story and photograph with us.

# THE MAST HEAD GIFT SHOP

**AVAILABLE NOW!**

**JEROME**  
Solving the Mystery  
Of Nova Scotia's  
Silent Castaway  
by local author Fraser Mooney JR.  
**Price \$17.95**



For many Nova Scotians the name Jerome is synonymous with Maritime mystery, much like Oak Island, the Marie Celeste, or the Shag Harbour UFO crash. Jerome was the name given to the nearly dead, legless stranger who washed up on a Digby Neck beach in 1863. During the next fifty years, Jerome spoke only a few words and never revealed his identity. Local Yarmouth author Fraser Mooney Jr. embarked on a ten-year investigation to find the remarkable truth about Jerome. Using newspaper articles, historic documents, and interviews, Mooney explores and dispels the myths that have long been associated with Jerome and provides amazing detail about his life on Digby Neck. He takes us through Jerome's life—from his appearance on the beach, through the time he spent living with a number of families in the region, to his death.

**BOOK LAUNCH Thursday November 6 @ 7 pm in the Education Wing.**

## PERFECT GIFT IDEAS AVAILABLE!



**Amos Pewter**  
2008 Ornament  
**TREE OF LIFE**  
**Price \$17.00**



**2009 Pocket Calendars**  
Engraved with Yarmouth County  
Museum & Archives  
**Price \$6.99**

## MAY WE RECOMMEND!

**The Mariner's Book of Days** 2009, \$14.94

**Land of the Loyalists** Their struggle to shape the Maritimes, by Ronald Rees, \$16.95

**Cleansing**, A selection of poems by local writer Brenda Tate, \$10.25

**A Matter of Coincidence & Selected stories** by local writer John Nause, \$10.25

**Growing Up with Julie** by Gerry Steele, \$19.95

**Under the Doctors Care 1776-2007** by Hattie Perry, \$35.00

**Celebration** – YMCA in Yarmouth, \$10.00

Shipping is available on everything in the gift shop.  
Email/call the museum with your request.

Historical Society members receive 10% discount on all purchases.  
No tax is charged on purchases in the gift shop.  
Orders can be emailed to [ycmuseum@eastlink.ca](mailto:ycmuseum@eastlink.ca)



Only 110 tickets will be sold!  
The social event of the holiday season takes place  
**Saturday, November 29, 2008**  
**6:30 p.m.**

*An Edwardian  
Christmas Party*

at Burrige Campus, NSCC, Pleasant Street

It's all about Christmas in Yarmouth 100 years ago!  
Live Auction; Buffet Dinner; Wine Bar; Entertainment  
\$50 person/\$450 for table of 10 – **Limited Tickets Available**  
Call (902) 742-5539 for Reservations

*MENU*

Cold Lobster Salad; Garden Greens Salad  
Roast Turkey with Oyster Sauce  
Roast Sirloin of Beef  
Carmelized Garlic Mashed Potatoes  
Seasonal Vegetables, steamed  
Plum Pudding with Hard Sauce; Apple Pie  
Assorted Cheeses and Dainties; Tea and Coffee  
Wines by *Domaine de Grand Pré*

*Bid on a return trip to Helsinki, Finland via **Finnair** for Summer 2009!*

# Museum marks 50th anniversary

By Eric Bourque  
THE VANGUARD  
NovaNewsNow.com

This is a milestone year for the Yarmouth County Museum, which was established a half-century ago.

Originally located in the former Milton library in Yarmouth's north end, the museum moved to its location on Collins Street in the late 1960s, the official opening of that facility taking place on June 9, 1969, Yarmouth's Natal Day.

The museum, of course, has changed and grown a great deal since its launch in 1958 and its relocation a decade later to the building that previously had housed Central United Church and, before that, the Congregational Tabernacle Church.

Helen Hall, the museum's first paid archivist and a former president of the Yarmouth County Historical Society, recalls the museum's first home in the north end of town.

"I remember going to some meetings there," she said in an interview last week. "It was so small...and as soon as the museum was established people began to bring artifacts, of course, and there just wasn't enough room for them."

Referring to the museum's new home, she cites the financial donation by Major Daniel Murphy that helped make possible the acquisition of the old church and she notes too the effort that went into turning the place into a museum.

"I can remember all the volunteers coming in working very, very hard to get it open in a matter of a few months," she



Peter Eldridge, Helen Hall and Nadine Gates in the Yarmouth County Museum next to the wheel from the North Star, a ship that was wrecked off Yarmouth a century ago. Eric Bourque photo

said.

Peter Eldridge, chair of promotions for the historical society, feels those who were involved in the society at the time deserve credit for striving to establish a museum, a place to help preserve and promote the Yarmouth area's heritage.

"We have to be impressed by their foresight," he said.

As it reaches the half-century mark in its history – and the 39th anniversary of its move to Collins Street – the museum

remains one of the area's main attractions, a venue where everyone – visitors and locals alike – has a chance to step back in time.

More than just enabling people to look back, however, Eldridge says he views the museum as a place to celebrate the community, to recognize the accomplishments of local individuals, businesses and organizations.

Eldridge and Hall cite the value of the museum as a teaching tool – mention-

ing, for example, visits to the museum by local schools – and also as a place for groups to meet, an asset in this regard having been the education wing that opened a few years ago.

As for what people will find at the museum, the list is long – from the wide assortment of items in the museum's display areas to the archives (the most extensive, non-institutional archives in the province) to the late-19th-century atmosphere recreated in the neighbouring Pelton-Fuller House – but the museum structure itself apparently is an attraction for a lot of people.

"I watch visitors come in," said museum curator Nadine Gates, "and you see their eyes start to look around the building, soaring upwards."

Helen Hall's early memories of the museum's present-day home include the days when the curator – including Eric Ruff, who held the position three decades – didn't have an office.

"Anyone who came to talk with Eric, they had to sit on the bench and talk to him there at the front desk," she said.

(The new museum's first curator was Bill Lent, who was followed by Charles Goldring and then Ruff.)

With regard to the museum's 50th anniversary, as of last week, no commemorative activity had been scheduled.

But then, anniversary or not, everyone is encouraged to visit the museum when they have the chance. Eldridge, for instance – reiterating his view of the museum as a place of community celebration – invites citizens to "celebrate the achievements of our people."

\*\* With thanks to the Yarmouth County Vanguard (April 29/08) and reporter Eric Bourque for their kind permission to print this news report, especially for readers who may not have seen it.



The Overseas Club was a Veterans' organization established in 1923. It was organized so that its members could officiate at any celebration or demonstration in which veterans were asked to take part, and to assist veterans with any cause they might wish to promote. From the beginning, the Club arranged services and observances for Armistice Day. This photo is from their 1981 celebration.

## MUSEUM TIMETABLE

**Thursday, November 6** – Book Launch – “Jerome” by Fraser Mooney, Jr., 6 p.m.

**Friday, November 7** – Historical Society Meeting, 7:30 p.m.

**Tuesday, November 11** – Museum closed.

**Wednesday, November 12** – “Coastal Life” magazine launch (invitation only), 5:30 p.m.

**Friday, November 14** – Deadline for Submissions for December newsletter

**Thursday, November 27** – Board Meeting, 7 p.m.

**Saturday, November 29** – *An Edwardian Christmas Party*, Burrigade Campus, 6:30 p.m.

**DECEMBER  
HISTORIGRAM  
DEADLINE:  
FRIDAY  
NOVEMBER 14<sup>TH</sup>**

As members are aware, *postal costs have again increased*. If you are interested in receiving your newsletter by email, (in Adobe pdf format) email us at the following:  
**[ycmhistorigram@eastlink.ca](mailto:ycmhistorigram@eastlink.ca)**

## NEW MEMBERS

Dannielle Pottier - Halifax, N.S.

Frances Edwards - Yarmouth, N.S.

Marsha Turner - U.S.A.

Dorothy Fraser - Ontario

David Olie - Yarmouth, N.S.

Charles Meagher - Yarmouth N.S.

Gaynor Kleiber & John Thompson - Yarmouth, N.S.

Debbie Sullivan & Family - Yarmouth, N.S.

## YARMOUTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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**PRESIDENT Charles R. Winship**

**DIRECTOR Bruce W. Bishop**

**MUSEUM CURATOR Nadine Gates**

**ARCHIVIST Jamie Serran**

### E-mail

Museum - [ycmuseum@eastlink.ca](mailto:ycmuseum@eastlink.ca)  
Archives - [ycarchives@eastlink.ca](mailto:ycarchives@eastlink.ca)  
Historigram - [ycmhistorigram@eastlink.ca](mailto:ycmhistorigram@eastlink.ca)

### WE'RE ON THE WEB!

<http://yarmouthcountymuseum.ednet.ns.ca>

### HOURS OF OPERATION

#### Fall & Winter Hours

Museum & Archives Open (Members and Non-Members)

Tuesday – Saturday, 2 – 5 p.m.

#### Administrative Staff:

**Director:** Monday – Friday, 9 – 5 p.m.

**Curator:** Monday – Thursday, 9 – 2 p.m.

**Archivist:** Tuesday – Saturday, 9 – 5 p.m.  
(closed for lunch daily 12 – 1pm)

## Membership Fees

Membership fees to the society are for a calendar year. Dues and membership for 2009 are currently being accepted.

Single.....\$25.00

Family.....\$40.00

Life (single).....\$400.00

Life (family).....\$550.00

**Please make payment to:**

**Yarmouth County Historical Society**