

# The Old Train Station News

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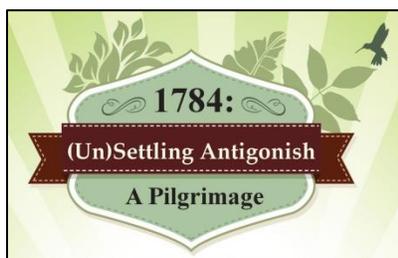
Newsletter #75

May 2015

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*This month's article, by Dorothy Lander of Arts Health Antigonish, promotes an upcoming production.*

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*1784: (Un)Settling Antigonish*, a Summer 2015 pilgrimage of truth and reconciliation to the site of the first European settlement of Antigonish, is the outcome of a collaboration between Arts Health Antigonish (AHA!), the Heritage Association of Antigonish, and the Antigonish Highland Society.

*A healthy community knows its history.*

Also a musical and dramatic performance, the first pilgrimage is slated for Saturday, July 4. You will be transported back to 1784, when Irish Loyalists were the first Europeans to settle permanently at Antigonish Harbour. Traversing sacred land, we will pause at the ancient burial grounds of the Mi'kmaq, and the foundation stones and cemetery of the first Anglican Church in Antigonish. Stay tuned to the AHA! web site ([www.artshealthantigonish.org](http://www.artshealthantigonish.org)) and Antigonish Heritage Walks Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/AntigonishHeritageWalks>) for pilgrimage/performance dates from July through October.

Our lead actors playing Colonel Timothy Hierlihy (Phillip Cooper) and his son Captain Timothy Hierlihy (Alistair Hamilton) carry the storyline of Antigonish's early settlement. They serve as the foil against which our "Diversity Dream Team" of inter-national and inter-generational actors—drawn from descendents of the Mik'maq, Acadian, Irish, African, English, and Scottish Nations—play out their roles. They speak their truth to history, both affirming and challenging the written history recorded almost exclusively by white settlers. The cast and creative team led by Artistic Director Ken Kingston have been work-shopping the script at each rehearsal, beginning back in October 2014 and will continue to do so right up to our first production. Musical director Thea Huard has set our script to traditional music, featuring harp, flute and drum. Costume Designer Maria Van Vonderen has sourced and coordinated the period costumes for settlers and soldiers, with the able assistance for outfitting Loyalist uniforms (Alistair Hamilton), Mi'kmaq (Mary Lafford), and Acadians (Stacey Doiron).

The mixed community that makes up our cast and our participant pilgrims, offers us the chance to re-story the history of Antigonish that is on public record. We must acknowledge that we are all "treaty people" —colonizers and colonized, aboriginals and settlers. We are all on one side or the other of ongoing historical agreements.

*The Antigonish Heritage Museum [antiheritage@parl.ns.ca](mailto:antiheritage@parl.ns.ca) or 902-863-6160*

As a mixed-community pilgrimage, we will celebrate the richness of our diversity and at the same time be called upon to face uncomfortable truths. The health, economic, and social inequities existing today in Antigonish have a long history. On our pilgrimage, we will trace and “re-story” the *social determinants of health* as they apply to our own community in the present moment, e.g., poverty, colonialism, racism, access to health care, environmental sustainability, food and income security.

With the following images, we invite you into our rehearsal space. Prospective pilgrims can begin to anticipate their own participation in speaking truth to history — of settling and (un)settling Antigonish for themselves.



**Right:** Dorothy Lander, dramaturge, with Phillip Cooper (playing Colonel Timothy Hierlihy) pointing to location of historical oyster bed.

**Left:** Alistair Hamilton as Captain Timothy Hierlihy in *Green Coat of the Nova Scotia Volunteers*.



**Left:** Paula Paul and Melissa Paul read 1783 License to Chief of Antigonish Tribe, Anthony Bernard.



**Right:** Thea Huard, Musical Director, plays Londonderry Air

## The Great War Centenary

Our *Great War Centenary* project is taking shape and our motto remains the same: *We will remember them*. You will recall our recent article on our efforts to collect information, photos and memorabilia on our local soldiers who lost their lives in the First World War. We now want to reiterate the significance of this undertaking. A century has come and gone since the beginning of those four very arduous years – difficult not just for the soldiers fighting overseas but also for their loved ones back home in Antigonish as word trickled back that one native son after another had been lost on the battlefields of Europe.



Our first three local men died during the latter part of 1915. As the war progressed, more and more lost their lives – some at the battles of the Somme, Courcellette, Passchendaele and Vimy Ridge, others in less famous skirmishes or of wounds, disease, gas, accidents and whatnot. “The Casualty Lists make sad reading in numerous Canadian homes just now,” *The Casket* reported back in the autumn of 1916. As time went on, the paper continued to acknowledge the “splendid” boys who made “the supreme sacrifice” and the “grief-stricken” parents and families here at home in Antigonish. It wrote of our town and county, “already sorrowing for many of our brave boys killed at the front” and then being “plunged into deeper mourning” when news came of the death of yet another “beloved” soldier.

To date, we’ve made good progress researching some of the soldiers; we have limited details on others; and then there are a few for whom we haven’t been able to locate any information at all. We’re grateful to our readers who have come forward with data, newspaper clippings and photos. Just recently, Veronica Delorey of North Grant brought in some information on a certain Alexander Landry of Pomquet. Thanks to Sister Harriet Hermary of Alberta, we now have a photo and some data on her uncle, Arthur MacDonald of Dunmore.

What about the men for whom we have no pertinent data? These men did their part and so they deserve to be remembered too. We’re working diligently – combing service files online, old editions of *The Casket*, the internet, and any other available sources – so that on the anniversary of each soldier’s death we’ll be able to post a template including that man’s photo and some personal and military particulars. To make this happen, we need more people to come forward to help us fill in some of the gaps.



We understand that some may be reluctant to give us their photos and keepsakes but maybe they would be willing to let us scan or photograph some of these documents. Ambrose and Frances Chisholm of Havre Boucher did just that. Among their collection is a memorial plaque that was issued to the next of kin of all British and British Empire service personnel who died as a result of the Great War. Apparently, 1,355,000 of these medallions were issued after the war and into the 1930s. This particular “Dead Man’s Penny” has Ambrose’s uncle’s name engraved on it – Edward Alexander Chisholm – as well as the inscription “He Died For Freedom And Honor.”

Ambrose and Frances also provided us with a copy of a studio photograph of Edward Chisholm in uniform, dated 1914, and a copy of a letter from Lieutenant W. R. Goodman, Royal Field Artillery, announcing Major Edward A. Chisholm's death. These particulars are absolutely relevant to our research.

We now know that Edward was a son of Duncan and Mary Margaret (MacGillivray) Chisholm of Havre Boucher/Linwood and one of four brothers who signed up for military service. When war broke out, Edward was a student at Dalhousie Law School. His attestation papers reveal that he was twenty-two years of age and that he had some previous military training. A brief write-up in *Catholics of the Diocese of Antigonish, Nova Scotia, And The War* notes that Chisholm was given a commission as Captain in the 25<sup>th</sup> and shipped overseas. On the battlefields in France, he was recognized for bravery and promoted to the rank of Major. Two days before the Armistice was signed, Chisholm was killed "leading a charge on a machine gun position." The letter from Lieutenant Goodman reveals that Edward was "absolutely fearless." Clearly he was well respected. "He was such a great fellow, & men & all practically worshipped him. He will be irreplaceable as a Battery commander & was much thought of by the higher commands in this Division & many others who knew him."



Each of our local boys and men who died while serving with (or as a result of service with) the Canadian Forces deserves to be commemorated in like manner. While we're extremely grateful to those who have already contributed to this project, we require more help. The Museum welcomes any and all information, documents, photos and letters that will help us complete this valuable project and ensure that *all* of these men will be remembered.

Catherine MacGillivray

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## Recent Acquisitions

**Tom Farrell of Antigonish** brought in an old container that was used by the *Antigonish Ice Cream Company* to store and ship products.



Shaun Chisholm, whose father, "Long Leo," operated the ice cream business from 1933 to about 1958, indicates that containers such as these would be packed in twos and placed in cork-lined canvas bags and then shipped on to consumers in places like Cheticamp.

Shaun's brother, Kevin, remembers when ice cream was shipped in tall five-gallon metal containers which were then packed into much larger galvanized iron pails and insulated with eel grass and crushed ice. As a young boy, he went along on many deliveries around town and on trips to Cape Breton Island – up Route 19, to Mabou, Inverness and Cheticamp.

- **Clare O'Hallaron of Antigonish** donated a 'Certificate of Service' given to her family after the death of her brother William. William T. O'Hallaron was born in Antigonish in 1922. He died while serving with the Canadian Forces in France at age 21 and is buried in the cemetery at Cleve. The family lived on Main Street above the "Home Bakery". Prior to his time in the services, William worked delivering telegrams out of the train station, a job he had begun after school.
- **Margie Bailey of Heatherton** brought in a series of World War II photos that show family members (including her father) who served overseas.
- **Donald C. MacLellan of Scituate, Massachusetts**, donated a few photos of the Cameron/MacLellan families of Lanark. Photos date to the 1940s.
- **Chalmers MacLeod of Antigonish** contributed a tourism brochure (dating back to the late 1920 or 1930s) of the Town and County of Antigonish.
- **Author and historian Joan Dawson** stopped by and donated a book she recently had published entitled *A History of Nova Scotia in 50 Objects*.

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### **Gravemaker Research – A Never-Ending Journey**

On Friday, June 5, 7-9:00 pm, People's Place Library: Lecture by Dr. George Thomson, Research Fellow at University of Glasgow, on gravemaker lettering.

### **Art Exhibit: *Beneath the Stones***

June 5-30, People's Place Library: Showcasing work depicting cemeteries in Antigonish County and Scotland by Nova Scotian artists Russell Jackson, Anna Syperek and Bill Rogers. Opening reception on June 5 at 6:30.

### **Antique Photo Workshop: June 6, 2015**

The Isle Madame Historical Society is hosting an Antique Photo Workshop on June 6<sup>th</sup>. With the help of facilitator Jenny Milligan, M. Ed. Socio-Costumologist, learn to date old photos and place people in your family tree. The cost (\$30) includes handouts. Registration is required. Phone 902-226-9364 or e-mail [islemadamehistoricalociety@gmail.com](mailto:islemadamehistoricalociety@gmail.com)

### **Cape Breton's Christmas – Book Two**

Ron Caplan of Breton Books invites all storytellers to submit a tale about a memorable Cape Breton Christmas for consideration for a new book. Stories or memories may be sad, happy or both and can tell of a Christmas in Cape Breton or far from home. It can be your story or one that you've heard. Like last year, the royalties from the sale of this book will be donated to *Feed Nova Scotia* through CBC's "Light Up a Life" project. This invitation is open to everyone. Send your stories to [bretonbooks@gmail.com](mailto:bretonbooks@gmail.com).



## Journey Back to Birchtown: June 5-6, 2015

Please see the site for more details: <http://blackloyalist.com/>

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## Pomquet Heritage Museum

Sister Theresa Vincent (accompanied by Congregation Leader Sister Brendalee Boisvert) will share her vocation story at the SASC Building in Pomquet on May 31 at 2:30 pm. Admission: free. All are welcome.

## Von Fundraiser

VON hosted their annual fundraising walk on Saturday, May 23. After a walk around The Landing, participants enjoyed a barbeque and cake. Donor generosity enables VON nurses and volunteers to deliver support and services to those in need within our community.



## Heritage Association of Antigonish

### Learning Events

- On Monday, June 1<sup>st</sup>, **Allan Marble** will give a presentation entitled “*Dr. John William MacDonald, a Pioneer in the Public Health Movement in Nova Scotia.*”
- **Rosalie MacEachern** will give a talk called “*Behind the Scenes: The Year of the Burning*” on Monday, June 22, at 7:00 pm. **Duncan MacDonald**, producer of *The Year of the Burning*, will join her at this presentation. This production will be the third in a trilogy of Highland Clearances thematic concerts.

### Patrons

Silver: **William Thomas MacDonald, Dracut, Massachusetts**

Gold: **Pam & Shaun Chisholm, Antigonish**

Platinum: **Angus MacGillivray, Williams Point**

## Message from the Chair – Heritage Association of Antigonish

(Working today to preserve yesterday for tomorrow.)

With the assistance of funding from the province's *Student Career Skills Development Program*, we are pleased to announce that our work will continue on the *Memories Project*. The Association recently hired Casey Bellemore. Casey is in the process of updating our list of interviewees and has completed her first interview. If any of our readers know of a candidate that should be interviewed, please contact the Museum at 863-6160 and speak to Casey.

We also received funding from the federal government's *Canada Summer Job*. To work with the Antigonish Highland Society (who also received funding under this program) we hired Frank MacFarlane. For the next six weeks Frank will be working on several projects for the Association and then he will work for the Antigonish Highland Society.

These cost sharing programs provide the additional resources we need to hire students. These work assignments allow students to develop workplace skills and earn funds to assist with their ongoing education.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the Governments of Nova Scotia and Canada for making scarce financial resources available to support these important programs.

The Heritage Association of Antigonish was incorporated on May 20, 1982. Our organization is 43 years old. In honour of this milestone being achieved, the Association is planning a grand Ceilidh on Thursday, July 9, 2015. We are currently working out details and will keep you posted.

Until next, Take Care and God Bless.

Angus MacGillivray, BBA FCGA [angus.macgillivray@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:angus.macgillivray@ns.sympatico.ca)