



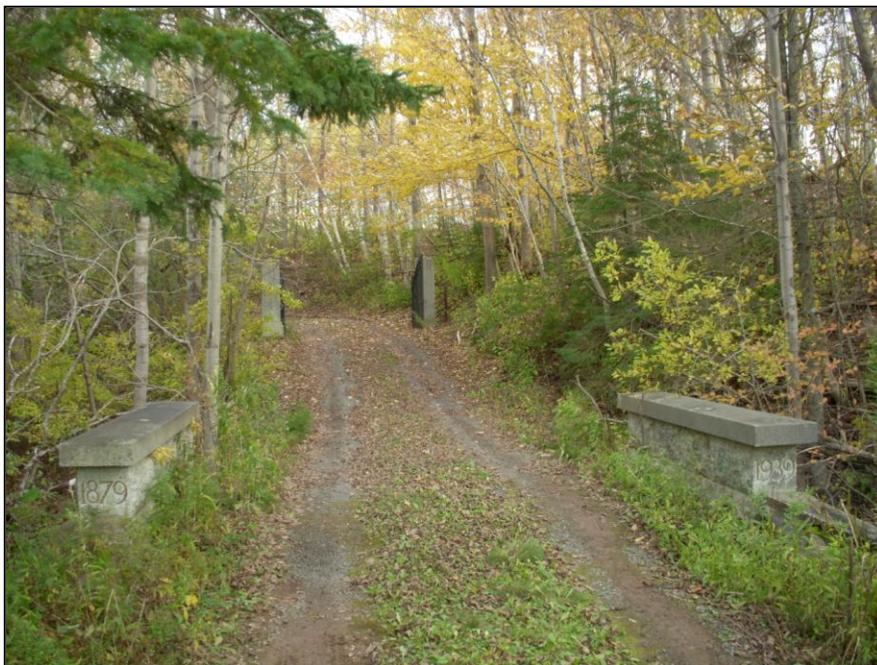
The Old Train Station News

Newsletter #20

October 2010

October warrants a commentary on something spooky and what could be more eerie than a graveyard, especially approaching Halloween? Cemeteries abound in and around the town and county of Antigonish. Of the more than fifty that have been chronicled to date, Paddy's Hollow, down at Harbour Centre, must be the most unique little burial ground of all. Tucked in out of the way, many locals are oblivious of its existence and its whereabouts; still, the folks down along Antigonish Harbour take great pride in this little piece of hallowed ground where many of their ancestors rest.

The name itself is intriguing. Reminiscent of the title of Washington Irving's short story, *The Legend of Sleep Hollow*, Paddy's Hollow has a bit of a supernatural attachment as well. In her 1930s book, *Folklore of Nova Scotia*, Mary L. Fraser writes that Paddy's Hollow, near the "burying ground" down at the Harbour, was the scene of more than one strange sighting. Of course, this allegation only adds character and interest to this quaint little spot.



The grounds have such character that they could easily be the setting for a screen production. The road into the graveyard dips down sharply as you approach a small, narrow bridge that, in summer, almost completely obscures a little stream as it disappears into the shrubbery. Trees close in on the lane and block some of the daylight but the dates 1879 and 1939 are clearly visible where they are carved into either

side of the cement supports of the bridge. An open wrought iron gate greets you and beckons you into a brighter clearing in the trees. The drive swings around to the left of this clearing and then around the

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back of a little knoll but your eyes are drawn to the large cross on the right. It is not your typical wooden cross with the crucified Christ but a large granite cross in an art deco style that was popular in the 1920s and 30s. As in a typical old graveyard, stones are scattered about in a haphazard manner. Then you spot the sundial and bench perched on top of the knoll. Out through the trees, you catch a glimpse or two of the waters of the beautiful Antigonish Harbour. Now, try to picture this place on a dark foggy evening. Imagine the atmosphere!

Last month, my husband and I drove down to Paddy's Hollow for a quick look around. It was a "powerful" September day, as my Dad would have called it – clear and fresh. Local resident, Joe Stewart was giving two gentlemen, a father and son team from Fort Lauderdale, Florida, a tour of the grounds. Seamon and David McGrath have relatives buried here too. In the late 1700s, Daniel and Paula McGrath landed and settled down in this area but, as with many of the early settlers, there is no stone to mark their grave.



We stopped to admire the sundial. The inscription on the face reads, "Nothing very long abides." Standing in the midst of an old graveyard, these words prove to be a tad unnerving but prophetic at the same time. The sun shone brightly on that September day so we could clearly read the time. "The sundial is right on," observed Seamon as he showed me the time on his watch. He pointed out the configurations table mounted on the seat of the bench next to the sundial. I looked, but it was all Greek to me.

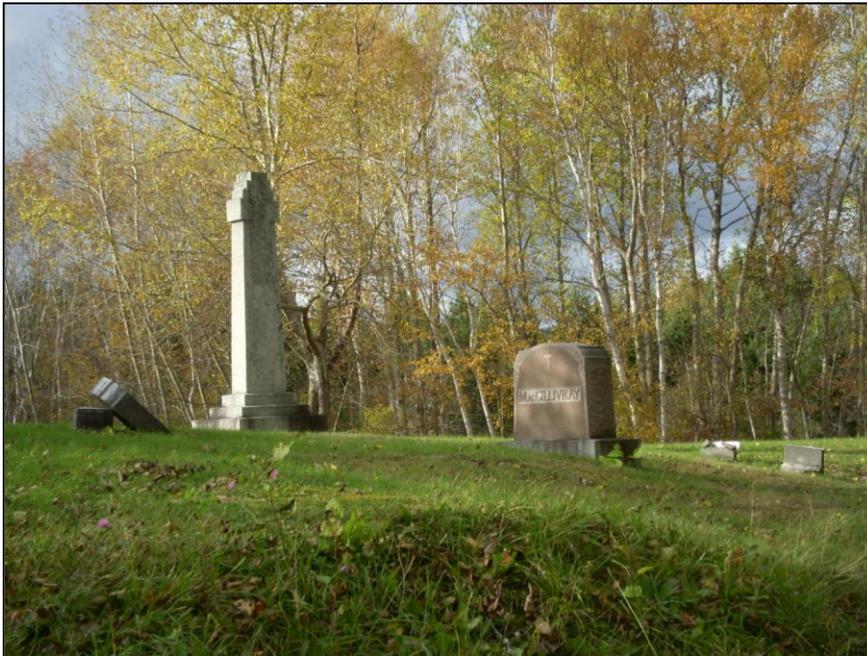
The towering stone cross contains the typical monogram, *IHS*, used in Western Christianity to refer to Jesus Christ. Near the base, between two Scottish thistles, we read the Gaelic words, "*Chan eil againn an so baile buan.*" The other side of the pedestal carries the translation which echoes the message on the sundial: "We have here no abiding city." This Gaelic message is significant as it is one of the few remaining remnants of the old Gaelic culture that once flourished in this little community along the harbour.

Close inspection reveals that the oldest grave dates back to 1841 when Hector McDonald passed away on October 31st – Halloween, of course. Clearly, this is an old burial ground. A guided tour with Joe Stewart shows that many Chisholms lie buried there. Several McDonalds, a family of



MacGillivrays, and a sprinkling of Macsaacs, MacLeods, MacPhies, Mahoneys and Smiths are found there too. A couple of Dunns, Grants, and a single Campbell complete the list. Still, Joe knows that many others lie in unmarked graves. Who were these people? Joe dreams of the day when the community will erect a monument with the names of others who were buried there but whose names were never recorded. In the meantime, he's compiling a list of names.

Joe is passionate about maintaining and preserving Paddy's Hollow and, as usual, he had a few wonderful stories to tell. At Finlay MacPhie's grave, his eyes lit up, remembering that day back in 1951 when they buried the old bachelor. Joe and another youngster had been recruited to dig the grave. The boys dug, shoveled and tossed the cold, hard earth for quite some time. They had been instructed to dig six feet down but it was a bitterly cold day. Who could blame a couple of youngsters for quitting just short of completing their dreary task? Standing near the grave at the burial service the next day, Joe's Dad looked down and muttered, "Doesn't look like six feet to me!" He was a carpenter and he would know with just a glance – but the burial went on. Thanks to Joe and his accomplice, Finlay MacPhie rests under just four-and-a-half feet of dirt.



Sadly, very little recorded history remains but local lore does indicate that a certain Andrew MacGillivray of Halifax, and originally of Antigonish Harbour, paid for renovations back in the late 1930s. That explains the date, 1939, on the bridge supports and the small plaque on the base of the cross which reads: *C. L. Keddy Monument Works. Manufacturer, Designer, and Sculptor. Kempt Road, Halifax.* Andrew, a graduate

of Provincial Normal College, Saint Francis Xavier University and Harvard University, was a civil engineer with the Department of Public Works in Halifax. He never married; one sister, Mary, also remained single and the other, Margaret, joined the order of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Toronto as Sister Euphemia; and so Andrew had absolutely no heirs. Sprucing up the little cemetery at Paddy's Hollow was obviously his legacy to the community. In September of 1966, he passed away and he, too, was buried in the little cemetery at Harbour Centre, next to his parents, John and Effie.

Many questions remain; namely, how did this little graveyard get its name? Was one of the original landowners an Irishman by the name of Patrick? Joe couldn't answer this question but then neither could the *Crown Land Grant Map*, the *A. F. Church Map of 1879*, or anyone else whom I asked.

While its history may be vague, folks along the harbour are very fond of Paddy's Hollow. In 1982, the Landing 4-H Club spent a month working "to restore the site to its original beauty" after some years of neglect. The gate was painted, bushes were removed, the grass was cut, and stones were uncovered and uprighted. To mark the restoration and reopening, the burial ground was blessed and a memorial mass was held. Since then, local residents work diligently to keep the grounds neatly manicured and, truly, they have reason to be proud.

People come and go more often than you would think. Several days ago, I drove down to take a few fall photographs for this article and found Louis and Anne MacEachern and Joe and Lillian Murphy visiting the cemetery. Joe and Anne are brother and sister and they have siblings buried here too – but years ago, as young children. While there is no marker yet, Anne clearly remembers that they were laid to rest near the sundial in among the few bushes that grow there now. She, too, intends to add her relatives' names to a list already found at the museum.

Small communities need people like Joe to help keep their history alive. His enthusiasm is contagious. "What a spot to spend eternity!" he exclaimed on that beautiful fall day back in September. No wonder people instantly mention his name when you inquire about Paddy's Hollow. Burial grounds hold a wealth of information about the community they serve and so they must be maintained and preserved and that is exactly what Joe intends to do. Still, his light-hearted humor kicked in as Ron turned the truck around near the big old birch tree to head back to town. Our windows were down so we heard him call, "Hey! You just ran over my grave!" Oops. Sorry, Joe. We didn't know.

Happy Halloween, folks!

Catherine MacGillivray



Guest Speaker in November!

On November 22, at 7:00 p.m., Doug Hunter will give a talk at the Museum on the topic of "Collecting Tools". His discussion will focus on "identification, use, care and handling of your antique tools." You are invited to bring along an old, or an unusual, implement for the discussion.

Lighting Renovations at the Museum

Has anyone noticed the new lighting that was installed in early September? We're finding it a great improvement and we hope that you do too!



You are Cordially Invited!

On Sunday, November 28th, 2010, the Antigonish Heritage Museum is hosting a Christmas Party from 2:00 until 4:00 p.m. for all volunteers, donors, and folks interested in the museum and its work. The afternoon will include storytelling and music with an Acadian flair - but let's not forget the Christmas Tea! Let us know if you can make it. (Anyone wishing to help out with this social can call Jocelyn at the museum.)

The Archived Newsletters

The archived newsletters are now available, just in time for Christmas. The March 2009 – July 2010 editions are spiral bound and on sale at the Museum for \$15.00. These bindings will make excellent gifts, both now and at Christmas time. They are easy to wrap, tuck nicely into a Christmas stocking, and are the perfect gift for family and friends who live away.

Recent Acquisitions



Thanks to Isabel Myette for this little snippet of Bayfield history. The small building on the left was the Post Office. On the right is the dry goods store and hotel. Both establishments were operated by William Rennels. According to the 1891 and the 1901 Census, William and his sister, Frances, were both unmarried and living at the same location. We can only presume that they shared the responsibility for running the operations. No one is identified in the photo.



Isabel Myette has been busy gathering photos from her community and she has graciously shared her findings with the Museum. In this old photo, we see Oswald McKinley with his salmon catch. Ozzie, born in 1898 and a resident of Liscomb, Guysborough County, was a fisherman at Afton Station. He was married to Grace Myette of Tracadie.

Note the old 1950 or '51 Chevy truck. She's a real beauty!

- Thanks to David Brown for the composite photo of the 1912 graduating class from Provincial Normal College. The photo includes the Inglis twins from Lochaber, Alice and Clara. Upon graduation, both ladies “went away” to teach in Western Canada.



- A special “thank you” to Bill Landry for donating Stephen A. White’s English supplement to the *Dictionnaire Genealogique des Familles Acadiennes* (Genealogical Dictionary of Acadian Families). This will be a great aid to those of us with limited French language background.

The Genealogy Nook

The Chisholms have been out in full force trying to find their relatives!

- Brett Chisholm of Boston is seeking ancestral information on Thomas William Chisholm who married an Elizabeth Bailey.
- John and Carole Callaghan of Wilmington, Delaware, are looking for connections to a Colin Chisholm who was married to Jennie (Jane Ellen) McKeon.
- Eleanor Buswell of Reno, Nevada, is seeking the ancestry of Mary Chisholm (daughter of Finlay and Elizabeth Chisholm, Beauly) married to Daniel MacDonald (parents unknown). Can anyone identify Daniel’s parents?

Discover your *Nova Scotia Roots* Contest

Win the ultimate history lover’s vacation! To enter this contest, go to NOVASCOTIAROOTS.COM and search your family name. Fill out the entry form and indicate why you think you have Nova Scotian roots. Contest runs from October 12 – November 30, 2010. The Grand Prize includes a private session with popular Nova Scotian genealogist Terry Punch, travel for two, to and from Nova Scotia, and five nights’ accommodations as well as a six-day car rental. The winner gets to choose when and where he or she would like to research his or her roots. Join in on the fun!