

# The Old Train Station News

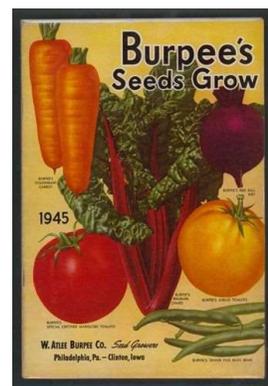
**Newsletter # 110**

**March 2019**

Dear Friends,

After a month or more of dreaming over the latest seed catalogue, I ordered and received my garden seeds. Like most folks who grew up on a farm, it was a love/hate relationship. Even when I escaped the farm, gardening was the one thing that seemed to stick with me. I suspect my desire to “get-away” was more about teenage angst than farming. No matter where I lived across this country, the desire to have a garden was foremost and I’ve always managed to grow a few veggies and flowers.

It is therapeutic! There is something special about getting your hands in the dirt, planting seeds and watching the little plants grow into something beautiful or delicious. (Let’s not talk about sore backs and knees). I had my first garden when I was about five. The people my mother worked for had a market garden and I wanted to help. So, I was given my own little plot up against the fence where the beans and peas could be strung up, a tomato plant, some radishes and a couple of lettuce plants. I understood the importance of caring for the plants because that was the lesson to be learned (not to mention the tasty reward).



Plants have a lot to teach us. A recent conversation with my horticulture production manager daughter, brought home the point to me. She was watching a head-grower running around doing six jobs at once and decided to pull her aside and asked, “What, are you doing!” The answer was a litany of complaints about her staff. My daughter pointed out she needed to let the growers do their work, and her job was to examine the plants and they would tell her what really needed to be done.

Today’s farmers have a much better understanding of soil fertility and plant requirements than our ancestors and even the farmers of my generation. A son farmed like his father before him and did not always understand that soil depleted over time, that crops needed to be rotated, or that fertilizing the soil was necessary. There has been a prevailing belief that anyone can farm – like believing sailors, soldiers and ex-miners can become farmers.



What we don’t have control over is the weather. Mother Nature is always challenging us to respond to a variety of conditions and governments intervene with hair-brained ideas. Despite all the challenges, our ancestors were just happy to have the land and farmers today love what they do. And I will do what I do every year. Soon I will be starting some plants on the window sill and carefully caring for them as I watch for the weather to warm up. Then I will be out in the garden (old knees and all) experiencing the garden coming to life. The cycle of life begins once again. I can’t wait!

*The Epistolarion*



## Threshing Mill Sickness

*The Casket* of November 1933 reported “a peculiar outbreak of what might be called “threshing-mill sickness” is reported from various parts of Antigonish county this fall.” One of the victims, Allan MacDougall died, another was seriously ill, and many others experienced discomfort in the form of severe chest pains and pneumonia. “In every instance, the sickness has followed work on the threshing floor or on the grain scaffolds. Less severe attacks are reported from points

as widely separated as Bayfield, Antigonish Harbor, Ohio and Glen Alpine. It is stated that the grain had heated on the scaffold: that it was discolored; and that when it was turned over a “fog” arose from it. It might be stated here that on account of the excessive rain during the harvest period, accompanied by “muggy” weather, it was difficult to get the grain cut and stored perfectly dry . . . A mild form of sickness frequently follows work at the threshing mill, but this year after the heavy rains the attacks have been more plentiful and more severe.”

“**Threshing mill sickness**”, known as **Farmer’s Lung** is caused by dusts from moldy hay, silage and grain. Grain dust can be a mixture of particles of grain, soil, plant material, fungi, bacteria, residues of agricultural chemicals and the excreta of insects, rodents and birds. Flu-like symptoms including cough, fever & chills, labored breathing, muscle pain, and discomfort starting 4 to 8 hours after exposure. Even small amounts of dusts can cause illness after a person has become sensitized and can cause permanent lung damage and death.

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*Sandra (Pettipas) Perro is requesting information on the old **Smith Hall in Tracadie**, which hosted week-end dances as well as occasional concerts. She remembers Kitty Wells performing while she was growing up in the area years ago. Sandra thinks it was later converted into a War Surplus or Second-hand store by a local Tracadie resident, Sam Facey. It was later demolished. Any info would be appreciated – contact Jocelyn*

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### Support the Museum Buy a Ticket – Win a Wall Hanging

Marleen MacDonald-Hubley has been quilting for a couple of years and has donated this striking wall hanging as a fund-raiser to support the Museum’s efforts to install interpretive panels for the Museum windows.

Tickets (\$2 or 3/\$5) will be sold until October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019.

## Outdoor Rink a Reality: Construction of Rink Progressing Very Well

St Andrew's R.H.S. "The Record," December 12, 1959 (edited for length)



The big news story in the minds of the students is that the long-awaited rink is now under construction. There seems to be an atmosphere of eager anticipation throughout the whole school as the students await the completion of the rink and the coming of cold weather. One can almost see the flash of steel and feel the impact of player against rival. The rink will be a tremendous outlet for the energy of the students. Skating parties and student-teacher matches are being keenly anticipated.

This "Rink Committee" under the chairmanship of Mr. J.F. MacDonald and associate members Colin MacGillivray, Austin O'Keefe, Angus Cameron, Clarence Cameron, James Deagle and Geno Scattalon, was formed last spring and have been working on plans for the construction of the rink ever since.

The rink, when completed will be the standard 80 x 100 ft. There will be boards and of course, natural ice will be used. Provision is also being made for a roof and proper lighting fixtures. This rink project has the full approval of the County Council and financial support has been pledged by the Home and School Association. The financing thus far has been done by the student canteen.

The initial work is being done by the Rink Committee, but the students are soon to be called upon to pitch in and help with building and erecting the boards. For the rink to be the success that we all want it to be, the complete support and cooperation of the whole student body will be necessary. So, come on fellow students, let's get on the bandwagon and really support this project. – written by Douglas MacEachern

The rink, where Chisholm Park is today, had a "pot-belly" stove in the club house where you could go to put on your skates and get warm. Phil Arsenault and Leo "Boots" Chisholm recalled "*On a crisp cold evening you would stick your head out the door in town and could hear the music wafting through the air and knew that skating was on! They said that a record player provided the music. One of the finer skaters in the area was Boop Pelly from the MacLellan's Mill end of town. All the girls loved to skate with Boop.*"

## Beannachtí na Feile Pádraig – Happy St Patrick’s Day

Watch out for the “*fairies*” - Certain trees are revered “especially hawthorns and holly bushes which country people will never ever chop down or remove for fear of disturbing the “*fairies*” who often live underneath and who are likely to wreak havoc if disturbed, they will sour milk, cause crops to fail and animals to sicken and die.” – *Ireland’s Hidden Gems*

## “The Book Sale” - You’ve Been Waiting For

Every year we receive numerous used books offered from our patrons for the benefit of the Museum. These books are excess to our Museum needs and cover Antigonish, Guysborough, Cape Breton and other areas of the province. The published material being offered include Pamphlets, Coffee table books, Crafting Books, Tourism books, Research books and books of general interest.

**April 6<sup>th</sup> from 12:00 – 3:00pm**



### AT THE MUSEUM

#### From our Displays:

**March:** Alistair Hamilton will provide an interesting **Loyalist Era Military Costume** with accoutrements for display.

We are adding **lights** to our display cabinets. What a difference!

#### Books for Sale:

“**A Clyburn Story**” by **Barry MacKenzie** – The story of a family who moved from the U. S. to the Isaac’s Harbour area of Guysborough County.

“**The Tides of Time**” by **Suzanne Stewart** – A gentle seasonal excursion through rural labour in northeastern Nova Scotia and Cape Breton.

#### Mark your Calendar:

**We are having a book sale! April 6<sup>th</sup> from 12:00 – 3:00pm**  
You won’t want to miss it!

### Garden

*One of a vast number of free outdoor restaurants operated by charity-minded amateurs in an effort to provide healthful, balanced meals for insects, birds and animals.*

Henry Beard and Roy McKie in

*Gardener's Dictionary*