

NEWSLETTER

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As always we continue to experience many challenges are successes...

Executive Director

In the last issue of the Newsletter, our outgoing President, Gene Goodrich, detailed the outstanding contributions of our Executive Director, Nora Williams, who has done so much to raise our profile, especially in the Acadian community. Unfortunately, Nora was no longer in a position to accept only part-time employment with us. Since part-time employment is the only kind our resources allow, she regretfully had to make the decision to leave WHS. On behalf of the Society, I would like once again to thank her for her hard work and for her many successes while Executive Director. We wish her the best

and hope to see her often at our special events.

The Executive and the Board are currently considering our options with respect to the position.

Properties

Our plans to repair the back wall of Keillor House, announced at the 2010 AGM, have been put on hold although we are submitting a formal Proposal to Heritage Branch providing details of the renovations we are planning (the wall repairs are part of a broader Proposal). We have already received a grant to study the 'wall problem' and met with encouraging responses from potential partners. However, recent government austerity measures have seri-

ously impacted ACOA and other funding agencies, so we may have to await better times. Fortunately, the problem does not at this time compromise the integrity of the building so we have time to work out a solution. On a positive note, the grant we received enabled us to carry out some repairs to the floor of the Dairy Room of Keillor House.

The Payzant and Card building has also developed a leaky roof, while the 'annex' (the long section pointing westwards) has some structural problems as well. Fortunately, the 'annex' is only used for storage. The Executive Committee has taken measures to buy time to work out the best course of

action. Reports to the Board of Directors will follow as plans unfold.

Museum Attendance

It is disappointing to report a drop in museum attendance. This time, the culprit seems to be a general decline in New Brunswick tourism, caused by the difficult economic conditions of the last few years. However, while times may be tough, we need not be crushed by them. As members of the WHS, we can all help out. Why not make a resolution to visit our fine museums at least once during the coming season! Be sure to bring along family and friends and encourage others to do the same. If you can use 'social media' to multiply the ef-

KEILLOR HOUSE MUSEUM —SPECIAL EVENTS

Sandpiper Festival Breakfast

Saturday, July 23. 7:30 to 10:30 a.m. Pancakes, Sausages, Baked Beans, Muffins, Tea & Coffee. \$6.00, Family Rate (2 adults, 2 children \$15.00. Under 5 years free.)

Weaving a Tale

Saturday, July 23 11:00 am to 3:00 pm. Carding, Dye-

ing, Spinning & Weaving Demonstrations. Textiles for Sale by local artisans. Free admission.

Harvest Supper

Saturday, September 17. 4:30 to 6:30 pm. 'Hip of Beef' Supper & Old Fashioned Desserts. \$14.00. Family Rate. Pre-Book Take-Out at 506 379-6620.

Haunted House Tours

Friday, Saturday. Oct 21-21, Oct 28-29. 7:00 to 9:00 pm. For Ghosts & Goblins of All Ages. \$8.00 No reservation required.

Victorian Christmas Dinners

Saturday. Nov 26 & Dec 3. 6:30 to 10:00 pm. Elegant Four-Course Victorian Dinner. Live Entertainment. \$60.00. Reservations at 506 379-6620. Limited Seating.

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AMNB HONOURS W. EUGENE GOODRICH



Lynn Byrd presenting Merit Award to Eugene Goodrich

Each year the Association Museums New Brunswick (AMNB) grants up to six different Awards to individuals or organizations for outstanding contributions to heritage and the museum community. At the 2011 Annual Conference held in Moncton, a Merit Award was presented to W. Eugene Goodrich.

Eugene is a Past President of the Westmorland Historical Society and Emeritus Professor of History at Mt Allison University.

Gene has provided many years (30 plus) of outstanding service to two very active historical societies in our region—the Tantramar and Westmorland Historical Societies. In both he continues to enthusiastically volunteer ‘cooking breakfasts’—annually for Tantramar, serving tables—whenever needed at Keillor House, and painting buildings—he recently painted the Bell Inn Restaurant by himself! He also participates actively in the many other fund-raising events for both Societies --and often provides anonymous finance help! (We may not receive *any* bills for materials on projects he is working on!)

From the Submission...

- Gene carries out original historical research on important New Brunswick subjects and produces monographs (e.g. *The Keillors of Keillor House*), articles (*See White Fence, WHS Newsletter*) and books (*Stagecoach Days on the Westmorland Great Road* (2010), *The Intellectual World of Josiah Wood* (2009) of great interest to students of New Brunswick’s rich ‘heritage. Revenue from the sales of these publications is assigned to the historical Societies.
- As Chair of WHS Publications Committee, he encourages publication of significant new historical works by others (e.g. Bob Cunningham’s *Fundy: Hidden Jewel of the North Atlantic Coast—A History of the Bay of Fundy*. Ed. & with Additional Notes by Margaret Eaton (2010). Gene’s continuing support made this difficult publication possible.
- He undertook to research, design, and have fabricated and installed historically accurate lanterns for Keillor House and historically appropriate signage for the Bell Inn. This involved a great deal of his time, working closely with Joe Bergeron on design, fabrication and installation
- He also participates regularly interviewing, transcribing and editing for publication ‘conversations’ with outstanding individuals as part of the Society’s ‘Interviews with Extraordinary People’ Series. Each interview takes many hours and transcription is often a challenging task.
- As well as ‘scholarly’ pursuits, Gene is always one of the first to volunteer for the Society’s less than glamorous ‘volunteer activities’. In the spring, he spent two weeks (many long days!) cleaning a ‘soot-filled’ restaurant (The Bell Inn) which was to open in three weeks! Typically, he quietly paid for the dry-cleaning required, and cleaned many items at home. Thanks to his hard work—and the work of many other dedicated WHS Members—the restaurant was able to open on time.

In short, Professor Goodrich has contributed in outstanding ways over many years to the success of two historical societies, and his efforts are worthy of this important recognition by the AMNB.

Cole Morison

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

fect by 'tweeting' about the experience: "Thoroughly enjoyed our visit to Keillor House and St. James Textile Museum today. Had great lunch at Bell Inn/Swisscot... This interaction can make a significant difference in museum attendance.

Fund-Raising

While we certainly have our challenges and disappointments, the good news far outweighs the bad. The recent sale of the Visitor Information Centre improved our financial situation, while our success in getting various grants allowed us to hire a great staff to operate the museums and offer visitors a rich experience. In spite of some surprises, our financial situation is sound. And it will improve with your continued support.

Our special fundraising events have always been successful--and some of them are getting more so. As reported at the AGM in June of this year, the Mother's Day Tea in May was once again filled to capacity while the 2010 Haunted House Tour 'terrified' around 1000 visitors, nearly double the previous year's 665. This year, our hard-working team of volunteers outdid themselves yet again, and were rewarded with an astonishing grand total of 13---visitors! Word has obviously gotten around that Keillor House is the place to be for 'the' authentic Halloween experience.

Another highly successful annual event is the Victorian Christmas Dinner, now hosted on two evenings, owing to popular demand. All indications are that both evenings will again be sold out. Hearty congratulations and sincere thanks to all who make this annual event a great success.

New Lanterns for Keillor House

It is also pleasant to report that the lanterns for Keillor House--funds for which were donated by Mrs. Ruth Stanley, are now installed and getting 'rave reviews' from everyone. Owing to an awkward placing of the wiring on the façade of the building it became apparent that it was necessary to commission custom-built lanterns--easier said than done! Fortunately, we were able to employ the services of a master craftsman, Joe Bergeron of Moncton, who executed to perfection a basic design 'cooked up' by Gene Goodrich and his 'lantern committee'. With these beautiful lanterns installed, the wall restoration project, which had been marred by the dangling wires, is finally complete, and Keillor House has never looked better. Again, thanks to all who were involved, and especially to Mrs. Stanley.

Celebrating Notable 'Dorchesterites'

Following a suggestion by Helen Petchey at the 2010 AGM, a Committee led by Margaret Eaton with help from Susan Spence, is building a Dorchester "Wall of Fame"--a series of posters featuring Biographies of outstanding Dorchesterites to be displayed in the village library. The first one, featuring the famous author and editor--Douglas How, is already up and others are in the planning stage. Margaret did a beautiful job in writing up Doug's story and helping design the poster. More congratulations are in order!

Partnership with Westmoreland Institution

Our partnership with Westmorland Institution has been a model of success that deserves a special article of its own--graciously supplied by Margaret Eaton. This is the story of a special relationship that has been developing for some years between the Westmorland Historical Society and the Penitentiary, thanks largely to the effort of two volunteers *par excellence*, Alice and Ritchie Folkins. From the painting of the Payzant-Card Building and the Sir Pierre Landry House to dozens of projects around Keillor House and the St. James Textile Museum, we have benefited greatly from the assistance of enthusiastic work release volunteers. Equally, they have benefited from the mentoring of Alice and Ritchie. This is a story well worth telling, and Margaret tells it well.

All in all, we have much to be proud of...thanks to your continuing support..

Greg Partridge

DORCHESTER MEMORIES—GARFIELD SPENCE 1923-2008— (PART 1)

In 2007 the Library Committee—with urging from Edith Gillcash, Gene Goodrich and Judy Morison, decided to create a digital archive of ‘conversations’ with extraordinary people. To date, Charlie McEwen (See *Newsletter*, Oct. 2008), Art McCready (See *Newsletter*, May, 2009) and Garfield Spence have been interviewed and digitally recorded.

Part 1 of the interview with Garfield Spence is reproduced below—it is, as Gene describes it—‘a sampling, drawn from many parts of the interview, of Garfield’s bittersweet memories of life and times in Dorchester from the late 1930s to the mid 70s’.

Dorchester Memories: Garfield Spence 1923-2008 by Eugene Goodrich, September 2009

One of the most delightful features of the small, closely knit Maritime communities of yesteryear was the number of highly evolved “characters” they produced without whom life would just not have been the same. Of the many that Dorchester produced, few could have been more of an institution in their time than Garfield Spence, whose store was for upwards of forty years as central to the shire town scene as bridge parties or ‘doughnuts’ in the square. When Garfield died last year, another piece of Dorchester’s colourful past went with him. Fortunately, a few months before, Judy Morison and I were able to interview him. This was a pleasant nostalgia trip for Judy as well as for Garfield, as he was very much part of her life growing up in Dorchester. This was not only because his store was a social centre for all the young people of the village, but also because he had often worked for her dad, Bob Hickman, whom he knew well and respected greatly. What follows is not a precise summary of the interview, which was wide-ranging, difficult to encapsulate in the space allotted here, and at times perhaps more candid than would be appropriate for public consumption. (Garfield was nothing if not candid). Rather, it is a sampling, drawn from many parts of the interview, of Garfield’s bittersweet memories of life and times in Dorchester from the late 1930s to the mid 1970s, a period which saw, as he put it, “the last of the best” of a world that once was but can never be again.

Garfield was not originally from Dorchester, but it became his home in every sense of the word. Born in She-mogue, in 1937 he came as a teenager to the shiretown from Salisbury where his father, a badly wounded WWI veteran, worked for DeLaval and Renfrew selling kitchen stoves, cream separators and farm machinery before getting hired on as a guard at the penitentiary. Garfield could still remember the holes that went right through his legs, and that he got a princely pension of \$14.00 a month for his pains. Although not strictly speaking a native, Garfield fell in love with his new home almost immediately, perhaps because of his wonderful experiences at Dorchester High School from 1937 to 1941 where he starred on the hockey team and came under the spell of first-rate teachers like Marie Bourque, who taught both him and his children. He also remembered the principal, Mr. Reinsborough, a man he “could listen to all day.” “I would have paid half his salary if he could have taught my kids as well,” Garfield declared tearfully as he recalled some painful circumstances under which the good man left Dorchester.

Or perhaps his life-long love of Dorchester was inspired by the family’s stately home. No doubt it had seen better days when his father bought it from Mrs. Teed, but it was still one of Dorchester’s finest, having been built by the shiretown’s own Father of Confederation, Edward Barron Chandler, for his son, George. It passed to Garfield when his parents retired to Port Elgin, and so he lived the rest of his life in an architectural reminder of what the village once was. He particularly treasured the old accounting books that George Chandler, a lawyer and money lender, had left in the house, and by some miracle were still there. “I’ve gone through the books some,” Garfield said. “He was a lawyer and he never lost money; if he lent you \$100, he got it back.” Another token of his love for this historic home was his refusal to follow current fashion and tear down the outbuildings in order to avoid taxes once they had outlived their usefulness.

After serving in the Air Force (he was stationed in Newfoundland) and working at odd jobs—milking cows, making hay, mowing grass etc., for various local worthies like Senator H.R. Emmerson and Charlie Hickman, Garfield bought his store from a Mrs. Cook (she ran a restaurant there; before that it had belonged to H.F. Tenant from Amherst). For the next thirty-eight years he and his growing family watched the world of Dorchester go by, and became very much part of that

DORCHESTER MEMORIES—GARFIELD SPENCE 1923-2008— (PART 1)

world themselves. Not that Garfield spent all of his working day in the store; that business was often left to other family members so that he could earn extra income in the lumber camps that were still a prominent feature of Dorchester life until the early 1960s. He still remembered getting up at 5:00 am to milk the cows (like many people at that time, he kept a milk cow or two) in order to be in the woods by 7:00 . He also continued to work at odd jobs as opportunity arose, for example replacing power poles that were downed in a terrible ice storm in 1955. Nor did he neglect his civic duties. He was with the volunteer fire department for many years, including at least sixteen as its chief. He was also active in the Lions' Club and other charitable organizations. Over the decades, his store became a community crossroads, his contacts with people were many and varied, and his interest in Dorchester's past remained lively and abiding. Thus, Garfield acquired a wealth of memories and experience that would be a historian's dream if only they could have all been recorded.

As I said above, the interview covered a wide range of topics in no particular order, but several themes did emerge that seem to tie it all together: Garfield's love of Dorchester, its people and its way of life; his delight in the local "characters" and their often amusing doings that gave colour to village life (and people something to talk about); and his sorrow at seeing so much of that life and the buildings that enshrined it fall victim to "progress," often of the most mindless variety.

SOME MEMORABLE CHARACTERS AND EVENTS

Among the amusing incidents Garfield recalled was a late night revelry at the local funeral parlor that got out of hand (as they sometimes did), with one of the celebrants (who will remain unnamed) passing out. Convinced in their impaired state that he had died, the revelers took him up a back road for burial. Fortunately, someone came by in time to prevent an embarrassing tragedy.

From its days as a ship building centre, Dorchester was known as a "party town" (the village square was not called 'the devil's half acre' for nothing) and it is interesting to note how much of that tradition was still alive in Garfield's younger years. He remembered that, besides the Windsor Hotel, which boasted the longest bar east of Montreal, there were any number of watering holes in the area, many of them private houses where liquor was easily obtained. He also remembered the last load of joy juice smuggled into Dorchester by boat, a remnant of the daring days of Prohibition. The smugglers lit a fire down by the train station to divert attention away from themselves and quietly slipped up Cherry Burton Road to hide their treasure, only to have it stolen soon afterwards by a fellow fan of John Barleycorn who happened to see them stashing it.

Then there was the story of the horse that got stuck up in the loft of Herb Palmer's barn for an entire summer. This tale has taken on mythic proportions over the years, with some swearing it really happened, others that it was made up as a joke. In either case, it is the central incident, around which much else revolves, in Doug How's novel *Blow Up the Trumpet in*

NEW WELCOME CENTRE IN KEILLOR HOUSE

A Welcome Centre has been opened in Keillor House to replace the Visitor Information Centre recently closed in the village office.

It will be staffed by a dedicated staff member (2012) and local Senior Volunteers providing Visitors with first-hand accounts of the area and its history. Their stories & intimate local knowledge should make each visit a unique experience!

The Welcome Centre project—supported by a Horizons Grant, will also document & digitally record these special stories and make them part of our history archive. '

If you have any 'stories', reminiscences (or anecdotes) that you think should be recorded, please contact Alice or Nora who will arrange for you to visit at a time convenient for you.

Help us to preserve this vital part of our local history..

Local History Series

As part of this initiative Cheryl Feindel has volunteered to give the first talk in our Local History Series on the subject 'What a Woman Can Do...' (The life of women in the 19th-century.) Cheryl will be speaking on Thursday, August 11, 2:00 to 4:00 pm. at the Keillor House.

If you would like to be part of the Series...please contact us!.

DORCHESTER MEMORIES—GARFIELD SPENCE 1923-2008— (PART 1)

the New Moon. Garfield thought it really happened. According to one version, as a practical joke, Charlie Emmerson, eldest son of the Senator, somehow got Palmer's old delivery horse (Herb ran a store where the post office now stands) up the stairs to the second story of the barn that stood just across the street from the store. Garfield seemed to remember that, tempted by the smell of oats, the horse went up the stairs on its own, made a 'pig' of itself, and got foundered. In any case it took an entire summer of planning to get the beast down again, which, of course, called for a celebration. Whether or not all this really happened, or was just a village legend, the story illustrates the kind of rough humour and innocent fun that once flavoured the life of small rural communities.

Among the village "characters" was Russel Tower, "the salt of the earth" in Garfield's opinion. He wasn't a big man, but he was very strong and tough, and he had a ready wit. Apparently he liked to brag a bit about his fighting abilities during his younger days, especially when chewing the fat with 'the boys' down at Bishop's Hardware, where many of the older set gathered daily to tell stories and swap lies. One day a travelling salesman who happened to be listening in piped up: "According to you, you were some man. Can you name anyone who can confirm this?" Without missing a beat, Russ replied that yes, he could, but they had all either died or moved away.

Then there was Turner Reid whom many Dorchesterites will still remember as the local blacksmith and plumber. (He came over periodically to fix our well when we lived in the Emmerson house during the early 70s, carrying his tools in a knapsack slung over his shoulder). Garfield recalled that Turner could fix just about anything, although perhaps not always with precision. When fitting pipes, for example, he would often cut them longer than needed and then torture them into position, observing that you can always make them shorter, but it's harder to make them longer.

Another character was Roy Fillmore who sometimes worked with Turner, and always argued with him on how to do the job. A very small man, he also worked occasionally for Bob Hickman. One day Bob was going to Amherst and Roy asked him to pick him up a pair of overalls, as his were getting worn out. "What size?" asked Bob. "As big as you can get", came the reply, apparently in jest. Bob, who also had a sense of humour, came back with a size 84, big enough to contain four Roys!

Other people Garfield remembered not so much for their amusing ways as for their sterling character. One example was Tom Carter who by sheer hard work had become one of the biggest farmers in the area with ninety milk cows, four hundred head of beef cattle and any number of pigs. Although quite wealthy, he was as unpretentious as he was kind and generous. On more than one occasion he helped Garfield out financially asking no more collateral than his word. "How can you down a man like that?" Garfield asked with emotion. And Tom wasn't the only one like that. "They were down to earth people in them days; if you were in a hard spot they would help you out."

To say that Tom Carter was down to earth would badly understate the case. There was none of that fancy dressing up for him just to go down to the store- his barnyard boots and overalls were plenty good enough for him. This included the time he went to a fancy furrier in Moncton to buy his wife a top-of-the line mink coat for Christmas. Somewhat taken aback by the unmistakable marks of the farmer's calling still clinging to his apparel, the saleslady asked, perhaps a trifle haughtily, how he thought he was going to pay for it. "With this" said Tom, pulling out a wad of bills from his pocket. Needless to say, the lady learned a whole new lesson in how not to judge by appearances.

Other colourful characters fondly remembered by Garfield include Jude LeBlanc, who for many years drove the only taxi in town and was popular with everyone, Eugene Weldon, who could build anything out of wood or iron after seeing it just once, Mary Poirier, who ran a restaurant by the old post office and owned the car that Jude drove as a taxi, Marjorie Cummings who also ran a store, and Mary Steeves, who worked at the court house. All of these ladies were apparently strongly independent in both word and deed. What they and all the others had in common was a strong individuality and a sense of belonging that develops best in small rural communities where people wrest their living directly from the land and live together in a spirit of equality, independence and tolerance. For all their human failings, the decline of these communities is much to be regretted, and no one regretted it more than did Garfield.

KEILLOR HOUSE MUSEUM—LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The Executive Committee and the Board have taken several new initiatives and completed a number of important projects over the past year or so—

Highlights

- 1) Successful investigation of required wall repairs at Keillor House under the capable direction of Jack Lines
- 2) Successful repairs to Dairy Room floor and paneling completed under direction of Jack Lines (Spring 2011)
- 3) Sale of the Visitor Information Centre with proceeds to Capital Endowment (July 2011)
- 4) New signage for the Bell Inn and Bell Inn Restaurant designed, fabricated and installed by Gene Goodrich and his Committee. (Spring 2011)
- 5) An extensive much-needed general refurbishing of the Bell Inn (March-April 2011)

- 6) Accounting system redesigned matching Fiscal and Calendar years—allowing greater transparency and easier Membership Renewal, under the capable leadership of our Treasurer, Bob Bowser
- 7) Redesign of Penitentiary Exhibits in Carriage House under the direction of Alice and Nora, with help from the Westmorland Institution (Summer 2011). Official Dedication, Sept. 10, 2011.
- 8) New lanterns (courtesy of Mrs. Stanley) for the front door surround of Keillor House—are being fabricated and will be installed soon by Gene Goodrich and his Committee (Fall 2011)
- 9) Welcome Centre opened in Keillor House. Join Cheryl Feindel for initial talk *What a Woman Can Do*. Thursday August 11, 2:00-4:00 pm.

The Society is grateful for financial support received from Heritage Branch (*Highlights 1, 2, 7*) and for financial & volunteer support from the Westmorland Institution (*Highlights 5, 7*).

STAGECOACH DAYS ON THE WESTMORLAND GREAT ROAD

In the last issue of the *Newsletter* I began a summary of the talk I gave to the Annual General Meeting of October 2008 entitled *Stagecoach Days on the Westmorland Great Road*. After outlining the history of the stagecoach companies which operated on this road, I promised in the next installment to say something of what it was like to travel by stagecoach. But, in the interest of completeness, I will postpone that to the next installment and instead bring you up to date on the things I have discovered since giving the talk, which was itself only a summary of a work in progress.

In last issue's installment I wrote that "three main stagecoach lines came through Dorchester. One ran between Dorchester and the Miramichi and later Bathurst, but I found very little information on it." Since then I discovered quite a bit about this line. It was started in 1835 by the McBeath brothers, Alexander and Donald, from Black River near Chatham and it operated for about ten years before being replaced by a rival line which ran only from Chatham to Moncton. For the first five years it used only a small two-horse open carriage, and throughout its existence it relied mainly on the mail contract and government subsidies to sustain operations, as there was relatively lit-

tle passenger business on this route. In the beginning it ran only once a week between Chatham and Dorchester, leaving Chatham at 6:00 pm Tuesday evenings and arriving in Dorchester—a distance of just under a hundred miles, at 3:00 pm on Thursdays (if travelling conditions were good). The carriage left Dorchester later the same day and arrived back in Chatham about noon on Saturday. By 1836 the McBeaths had improved on these times by adding more horses (and more changes). They could now leave Chatham at 10:00 am Wednesday morning and be back from Dorchester by 8:00 am Saturday morning—in time to meet their coach leaving Chatham for Bathurst on that day.

The 1830s and early 1840s were a time of prosperity in New Brunswick, and government coffers were full from the timber revenues generated by a booming export business, making it possible to offer relatively generous subsidies to stagecoach lines. The McBeaths did not fail to get their share and by 1838 they had expanded their service between Chatham and Dorchester to twice a week. In 1840 the government offered a £200 incentive to run a covered coach on this route and the brothers quickly responded. This was certainly an improvement on the open carriage, but, covered or not, the coaches on this route remained small two-horse affairs considerably less comfortable and impressive than the fancy imported four-horse models used by the *Victoria* and *Harvey*

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lines on the Saint John-Dorchester route after 1838. They were also significantly slower, averaging about 5-6 mph over the road.

By 1842 seven pairs of horses pulled the coach between Dorchester and Chatham. Each team was boarded at one of the inns or livery stables along the way. Boarding costs *each year* were as much as the horses were worth in the first place! In Dorchester McBeaths' horses do not seem to have been boarded at either Hickman's (the 'Dorchester Hotel,') or Weldon's (later the Payzant-Card Store), but rather at a livery stable owned by a William Laurance. The other boarding places—all of them inns, included Shediac (Lannan's Inn), Buctouche, Richibucto, Kouchibouguac, Black River and Chatham. During this period the coach left Dorchester on Mondays and Fridays at 5:00 am and arrived the same day in Chatham about 10:00 pm, for an average road speed of over 6 mph. For some reason not explained in the advertisements, the trip from Chatham to Dorchester was made in two days, with an overnight in Richibucto.

The boom of the 1830s and early 1840s was followed by a serious and prolonged depression, caused mainly by the British government's decision to end the preferential treatment of colonial lumber in accordance with the free-trade doctrines of Adam Smith that were first becoming popular with policy makers at this time. Government subsidies were cut across the board, while mail service was reduced to once a week. Under these circumstances, with passengers averaging less than two per trip, the McBeaths—who had already lost a modest amount on their operations in 1842, were driven to the wall. By 1844 their route had been taken over by a Fredericton operator who ran only between the Miramichi and "The Bend", as Moncton was called in those days; as a sign of the times it once again ran only once a week. The section between Dorchester and Shediac was abandoned at this time. In 1847 a group of Shediac residents petitioned the legislature for a grant to aid a certain Andrew Simpson "in running a Weekly Stage between Dorchester and that place", but, as was usual with such requests by this time, it was tabled without further action. Whether Mr. Simpson went ahead without government aid is impossible to say from the evidence I have seen.

As noted in the first installment, the depression of the 1840s and the consequent shrinking of government subsidies hit the *Victoria Coach* particularly hard because its owner, John Vail, did not have a mail contract, as it was monopolized by his rival, David Caldwell of the *Harvey Eastern Royal Mail Stage*. I said that I was "unable to determine whether the *Victoria Coach* went out of business, as the meager evidence I have found so far is ambiguous..." Since then I have found enough evidence to convince me that Vail did in fact 'fold his tent', probably in 1845. But any joy David Caldwell may have felt in doing down a rival and gaining a monopoly on the Saint John-Amherst route was short lived. In 1848 or 49 a new actor appeared in the form of the King brothers, James and Andrew, who, curiously enough, also hailed from the Sussex area (like both Vail and Caldwell). They had won a reputation for speed and reliability by operating a fast mounted courier service (essentially a "pony express") to carry special mail and news dispatches from the British steamers arriving in Halifax to Granville Beach (near Annapolis Royal), from whence they were delivered by fast steamer to Saint John, there to be flashed across the continent by the newly arrived telegraph. When the completion of the telegraph to Halifax in 1849 put their pony express out of business they were able to parlay their reputation for reliability into mail contracts from both the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick governments, and soon afterwards they set themselves up in the stagecoach business in both provinces. In Nova Scotia they bought out the line from Halifax to Annapolis Royal and operated it until the coming of the railroad as *Kings' Western Stage*. Their route in New Brunswick is less clear as they do not seem to have advertised in any newspapers, but it is certain that they operated out of Saint John and ran at least for a while to Nova Scotia, possibly all the way to Halifax.

In any case, *Kings' Coaches*, as they were called here, must have been a formidable rival for Caldwell's *Royal Eastern Mail Stage*, even though the depression of the 1840s was giving way to renewed prosperity during the 1850s, so more passenger traffic may have compensated somewhat for any loss of mail contracts. (It is unclear whether the *Kings'* carried all the New Brunswick mails or just the express). There is very little evidence on how the competition between Cald-

STAGE COACH DAYS ON THE WESTMORLAND GREAT ROAD

well and the *Kings*' played out. Both of them were still in business until shortly before the completion of the *European and North American Railroad* between Saint John and Shediac in 1860, but at some point they apparently divided the route between Saint John and Moncton, with Caldwell taking the Saint John-Sussex section and the King Brothers the stretch between Sussex and Moncton.

The section between Moncton and Amherst was acquired about 1858 by yet another player whom I failed to mention in my talk, as I had not yet come across the evidence (thin as it is) that he ever operated a stage line. This was William Hickman, famous in Dorchester history as one of the shiretown's leading ship builders and mercantile enterprisers. As noted in the first installment of this report, he was the son of John Hickman, owner of the 'Dorchester Hotel', also known as 'Hickman's Inn', which had served John Vail's *Victoria Coach* as ticket office and stagecoach inn in Dorchester. William bought it from his father but in 1856 sold it to Harry Wilbur and soon afterwards bought the Bell Inn. In the last issue I wrote: "The Bell Inn is also supposed to have been a stagecoach stop, and it may very well have been, especially during the few years when William Hickman ran it as an inn. But there is no mention of it as such in any of the records I have seen, which is a bit of a disappointment." I am now pleased to be able to correct that statement, and also to supply the evidence that Hickman did indeed run a stagecoach line. In 1860 the Sackville newspaper man and historian, W. C. Milner, who was then a recent graduate from Mount Allison, took a stagecoach from Amherst to Moncton. According to an account he wrote seventy years later, it left Amherst at 11:00 pm and rolled over the Tantramar Marsh in the darkness to Sackville, stopping there for an hour at Coll's Hotel which, Milner notes with some satisfaction, was "not wanting in liquid refreshment". From Sackville it plodded "over the hills to Dorchester, where we changed horses at Hickman's Hotel (which had to have been the Bell Inn, as we know that the 'Dorchester' was sold to Wilbur in 1856)- the proprietor owning the stage line from Amherst to the Bend, Mr. King at the latter place owning it from the Bend to Sussex."

Another piece of evidence confirming that Hickman ran a stagecoach line between Amherst and Moncton, and that "Hickman's Hotel" (*viz.* the Bell Inn) was where the coach stopped in Dorchester, comes from a letter writ-

ten in 1858 by a William Cochrane to a friend in Massachusetts describing people and life in Dorchester. It somehow came into the possession of W. C. Milner who published it in the *Moncton Daily Times* (December 20, 1926). Cochrane wrote: "Close beside [the Weldon Hotel] is Hickman's Hotel. He is the proprietor of the stage line from Amherst to Moncton which performs a tri-weekly service." However, from the accounts of both Cochrane and Milner it is clear that Hickman's stagecoach was usually a much smaller and more modest conveyance than the four-horse 'Concords' used by his predecessors on the Westmorland Great Road after 1838. According to Cochrane, there were generally only three or four passengers on each trip (but there were now three trips a week, rather than two as before) and for this a small two horse "covered wagon" sufficed (though we can be sure it was not merely a farm wagon, as it would have had springs). But every two weeks the English steamer deposited numbers of people at Halifax who continued overland to Saint John and points west, giving Hickman (and other stagecoach operators along the route) more passengers than the small vehicle could accommodate. Then "a big coach with four horses loaded with passengers dashes down the hill to the Hickman stables. This is the great event of the day and attracts a crowd."

The accounts of Milner and Cochrane are the only evidence I found for Hickman's line, but there is every reason to suppose it continued operations until the completion of the *Intercolonial Railroad* in 1872 finally ended the stagecoach days on the Westmorland Great Road.

Gene Goodrich

Workshop on *Westmorland County Furniture*'

August 22, 2011

Keillor House Museum

Daryl Butler, Curator, Kings Landing will be presenting this full-day workshop. The morning session will focus on 'Westmorland County Furniture' (Slide Presentation), the afternoon on challenges of 'historical interpretation'. Daryl encourages attendees to bring relevant artifacts for interpretation.

Contact: Keillor House Museum for Reservations
and Details (506) 379-6633

DORCHESTER MEMORIES—GARFIELD SPENCE 1923-2008— (PART 1)

MEMORIES OF A WORLD WE HAVE LOST

In interviewing Garfield, one of the things that surprised me most was how much of traditional Dorchester life still clung to existence during his younger years, and how quickly most of it vanished in the 1960s. Although already long since in decline, the main features of pre-industrial farming, fishing, boat building, lumbering and small scale family owned commerce were still very much in evidence, so that in 1960 the village and surrounding area were still closer to what they had been in 1900 than to what they would be in 1970.

The Farms

An obvious example is farming. Driving, let us say, from Johnson's Mills to Memramcook past abandoned houses, collapsing barns, old fields grown up to alders, weed-covered meadows innocent of cattle, and creeping suburbanization everywhere you look, it is hard to visualize the rural beauty those of Garfield's generation still knew. Farms varied in size, of course, but it was not uncommon for farmers—Garfield remembered Curtis Crossman, Bill McEwen, Ed Turner and Lorne Rockwell as examples—to be milking 50-60 cows by hand. Others had beef cattle in the dozens and even hundreds. In the absence of expensive production quotas or vexatious pasteurization laws it was no problem to sell farm produce through the local stores. Besides the stock he got from Atlantic Wholesalers or Black's in Sackville, Garfield regularly sold local beef, pork and chicken in his store.

Today, we still see some hay grown on the marsh, but not much else. In Garfield's younger days farmers still grew grain there, and small wonder, as, in his words, the marsh can "grow anything." Garfield himself did a bit of farming the old way. He cut his own hay, brought it to his barn and stacked it all by himself. On occasion he even seeded with a hand seeder, just as was done in the 19th century. Although it was no longer common by the time he had grown up, he still remembered farmers who grew a couple of acres of wheat to make their own bread. When farming near Shemogue, his parents would take their wheat to the Hickman mill in Port Elgin to be ground into flour. Payment was in kind, usually 10% of the flour.

The Woods

Although no more a professional lumber jack than he was a farmer, Garfield also worked in the woods—and loved every minute of it. He often worked for Bob Hickman, cutting trees with a cross-cut saw and yarding them out with a team of horses. Garfield particularly loved working with the horses, as did most woodsmen. "The horses had to love the drivers and the drivers had to love the horses," he recalled fondly. And they were smart, too. "Some of them old yard horses could turn on a dime and give you nine cents change. You just had to speak to them; they knew what you were saying."

Garfield also remembered the lumber camps that once dotted the winter woods, in particular one owned by Bob Hickman located at Goose Creek down by Martin Head. As many as twenty-five local farmers or farm boys, both French and English, would drive their teams from as far away as Salisbury, Sackville, Midgic or Upper Dorchester to spend the winter cutting timber and enjoying camp life, no small feature of which were the huge meals. Under Bob Hickman's careful management only mature trees, mainly spruce, together with some fir, were taken, leaving plenty for the next generation. Garfield recalled how big and beautiful they were—and wept to think of the ruin that ruthless clear cutting has inflicted on the woods since machines replaced the horses.

As a former nurse, Judy was interested in what happened to men who got hurt in the woods. "No one got hurt in

DORCHESTER MEMORIES—GARFIELD SPENCE 1923-2008— (PART 1)

them days,” Garfield replied. The men were careful and, being inured to hard work since childhood, they were very much stronger than they are today. Garfield recalled that he himself could carry five heavy feed bags at a time, something that would daunt even a well-trained weight lifter today. Lumbering, he believed, could never be done in this way again. There are not enough men or horses with the necessary skills and stamina, and almost no one willing or able to work like they did in his time. It was truly a different world.

Mills

Where there was lumber and grain there were also lumber and grist mills. Some of these were still operating in Garfield’s younger days, others he knew only as rusting relics from a busier time. There was one on Ayers Brook down from Palmer’s Pond. Another on Dorchester Cape had been owned by a Robson family who also ran a big farm where mill workers boarded. It sawed the lumber for boats that were still being built nearby. Bob Hickman had one that was mobile. When they were done sawing in the woods behind his house they would move it down to Dorchester Cape, and when that was done they would go on to Johnson’s Mills and Rockport, all of which were part of the Hickman timber lands. The mill was run by a stream engine that burned the slab wood, so little was wasted, and it employed some twenty to twenty-five men. “It would be wonderful to have that today, what with unemployment.” Garfield mused wistfully.

end of Part 1

37th Annual Conference of the Association Museums New Brunswick

Crowne Plaza Hotel, Moncton

October 13 to 15, 2011

For more information: www.amnb.ca or phone (506) 454-3561

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E-mail: keillorhouse@nb.aibn.com
www.keillorhousemuseum.com

Museum Hours

June 13 to Sept. 19 2011
Tuesday to Saturday
10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Sunday
12:00 noon to 5:00 p.m.

PRESERVING THE PAST FOR THE FUTURE

The Westmorland Historical Society is a non-profit charitable organization founded in 1965 with the mandate to collect, preserve and promote the rich cultural heritage of Westmorland County, NB. For four decades the WHS has worked with local partners to apply this mandate in a unique *entrepreneurial way* by encouraging *self-financing historic sites* attracting visitors from across North America. The historic Sir Pierre Landry House, the Bell Inn, and the Payzant & Card Building, contain apartments or businesses that help off-set the costs of preserving these historic buildings.

The Society's stellar museums—the Keillor House Museum (1813) housing the Graydon Milton Library and Genealogical Centre— and the St. James Textile Museum, contain remarkable collections attracting genealogists, researchers and visitors from across North America.

How to become a WHS Member?

Contact Judy Morison, our Membership Secretary, at 4974 Main Street, Dorchester, NB, E4L 2Z1. Tel: (506) 379-6682.

Annual Fees 2011

(Includes *Newsletter*)
Individual: \$10.00
Family: \$15.00
Sustaining: \$25.00
Life: \$150.00

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SALUTING OUR OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEERS AND DONORS

We want to thank our many Volunteers and Donors for their continuing generosity...

In 2010 we had 89 individual volunteers—most volunteering more than once, who gave many hours to the Society's special events and activities (We have so many volunteers this year that we do not have enough space to list their names...) I hope that you know how much we value your contributions...

For supervising work release and lawn maintenance at the museums & historic properties: Ritchie Folkins

For many days refurbishing & doing required maintenance at the Bell Inn: Gene and Joanne Goodrich, Alice and Richie Folkins, Ginette Glue, Judy and Cole Morison

For planning & maintaining the gardens at Keillor House again this year: Bernie Melanson and his student volunteers from Mathieu-Martin

For volunteering at the St. James Textile Museum, and representing WHS at the Lupin Fair and at other events: Betty Adams and Dee Milliken.

For once again designing and building an extraordinary Halloween 'dungeon' at Keillor House: Wendy and Warren Folkins—and their team.

For 'Halloween decorations': Karen Olive, Amy Cormier and Alice Folkins.

For their extraordinary Christmas decorations at Keillor House: Joanne Corey and Moe Gautreau

For his many hours preparing budgets and greatly improving our accounting system: Bob Bowser

For very many committee hours and for volunteering to be our Society Secretary: Kathy Bowser

For countless hours finding, organizing, and 'encouraging' volunteers—the heart of this organization: Alice Folkins.

In future Newsletters we intend to profile more individual volunteers...

The Editors

KEILLOR HOUSE
CLOSED MONDAYS
FOR 2011 SEASON