

WESTMORLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It is always a pleasure to be able to report on the many exciting initiatives the Board, the Staff and the Society have undertaken over the past few months.

Congratulations to Our Students

This summer our student staff filmed a promotional video 'Village of Dorchester' submitting it to CTVs *My New Brunswick Minute*. Competing with communities from across the province, our talented team ended up among the 'Top Three Finalists'. Ashley Beaudin, Nabeel Malik, and Allie Russell did the acting (in costume), Annie Lavoie-Rochon the filming using a WHS camera. In addition, Allie did the final editing and Meghan Beaudin, our multitasking manager, wrote the script.

We have been very fortunate in being able to hire such an outstanding staff and we hope it has been a rewarding experience for all of them.

Congratulations to all of you. Well done.

Welcome to Our New Board Members

We welcome three new Board members who bring an impressive range of skills and life experience with them. Just retired from nursing, Debbie MacDonald is looking forward to 'volunteering' in 'whatever ways' Alice thinks are needed; Crystal Grant, a teacher with a degree in Biology from Mt. A, who has spent 12 years 'home schooling' her children, has agreed to be our Treasurer; Marlene Hickman, already contributing to our Newsletter ('Notes from Marlene's Scrapbook'), will, I hope, be persuaded by Gene to publish additional articles in the Newsletter on local history and genealogy.

Thank you for volunteering to serve...

A New Roof for the Bell Inn

The new owners of the Bell Inn Res-

taurant—Andrew Harrison and Sara Craig, are starting to feel at home in their 'new' restaurant and we continue to work closely with them to preserve and maintain the buildings integrity. (As most of you know, its provincial designation means we must maintain its historic character—no vinyl windows for example! And this can be costly.)

As part of the 'updating' of the building, we are planning to replace the roof (last repaired in 1992) which has seriously deteriorated (it leaks!) and make necessary repairs to the structure—removing the old shingles, deteriorated fascia and mouldings, some clap boards, metal flashing and the rain gutter system and installing an ice and water shield, new fascia, new mouldings, some new clapboards and flashing, and a new 'V' type wood rain gutter system.

The new roof that is contemplated is a

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KEILLOR HOUSE MUSEUM —SPECIAL EVENTS

Harvest Supper-Hip of Beef. Keillor House Museum September 20. Time: 4:30-6:30. \$14. & family rates.

Tickets available in advance 379-6620.

Haunted House Tours—Keillor House. Oct 17, 18 & 24, 25 Time: 7:00-9:00. Tickets at door. Special bookings for groups. 379-6620. Adults

\$10, Students \$8.

Victorian Christmas Dinner—Keillor House Nov 29 & Dec 6. Time: 6:30-10:00. Tickets \$65. Book Early 379-6620.

Elegant four-course dinner with wine. Live musical entertainment.

Christmas Carolling—Keillor House Dec. 14. Time: 2:00-4:00. Food bank donations in lieu of admission

New Year's Levee—Keillor House Jan. 1, 2015. Time: Following the Lion's Polar Dip. Admission free! Lots of eats, featuring Ritchie's world famous chili & Alice's almost equally famous turkey vegetable soup.

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MEET THE MUSEUM STAFF

Another season of giving tours and providing visitors with information has come to a close. Each season seems to pass faster than the previous one. This year's museum interpreters were Allie Russel, Nabeel Malik and Colton Colp. We cannot forget to mention Annie Sarah Lavoie-Rochon, who worked for the Museums of South-Eastern New Brunswick this summer and assisted us throughout the summer. Ashley Beaudin was our Assistant Manager, Accessions Cataloguer and Co-supervisor of the Visitor Information Centre. This year was my first as Museum Manager and it was a wonderful experience.

Among many other activities at Keillor House, the staff created a unique video highlighting Dorchester's rich history for CTV Atlantic's *My New Brunswick Minute*. Alice Folkins brought this contest to our attentions and the staff was very eager to participate in it, as the winning town would host *CTV Morning* and *CTV News at 5* for a day. After two days of brainstorming the script was ready! It was not easy to squeeze everything Dorchester has to offer into a one minute and fifteen second video, but we were undaunted. We submitted our video along with a brief text and the following week we received a call from CTV Atlantic informing us that we were one of three finalists, the other two being Dalhousie and Fredericton! It would be an understatement to say that we were very pleased. The day the voting opened, CTV Atlantic aired the three video finalists on CTV Morning and CTV News at 5. The winner was to be determined by the number of viewers' votes. We immediately set about spreading the word on social media and on posters. The support we received from everyone was tremendous and very heartwarming, even though Dalhousie came out on top. Although we didn't win, Dorchester got some great coverage. Many people who came by said that after seeing our video on television they decided they had to visit Dorchester for themselves. If you have not seen it or would like to watch it again, it's on the Keillor House Youtube Page as well as our Facebook Page. Now let me introduce the students who created it.

Allie is a Mount Allison student majoring in psychology and minoring in fine arts. She plans to pursue a Master's degree in psychology and would like to practise as a clinical psychologist. She has been a volunteer with the Moncton SPCA since 2009 and with the Capitol Theatre since 2012. An avid equestrian, she has earned level 1 and 2 certificates from the New Brunswick Equestrian Association for English Riding and General Horse Care. Her other interests include swimming, tennis, theatre and videography. Allie has loved learning about local history and what everyday life was like in the 1800s and early 1900s, as well as sharing that knowledge with visitors. Her favorite artifact is the hair wreath. During the 1860s and 1870s it was fashionable to make a hair wreath as a pastime while mourning. Not many people know this, and the general reaction upon learning it was made of human hair is priceless. Some of Allie's favorite historical facts are that Dorchester was a Shiretown and that it once had a population that greater than Moncton's.

Nabeel is currently completing his remaining credits in order to graduate from Tantramar Regional High School. He plans to enroll in the Bachelor of Arts programme at St. Thomas University, pursue a degree in criminology and then join the Mounties. He has played football as an offensive linesman as well as basketball. He loves to travel, interact with people and learn about their culture. Not surprisingly, the thing he liked best about working at the Keillor House was interacting with visitors and listening to their stories. His favourite artifact is the amazing transforming high chair. He likes the way it reminds us that dual or multi-purpose gadgets are nothing new.

Colton is a recent graduate of Tantramar Regional High school. His future plans include getting a degree in computer science and possibly studying for his master's. He would like to work for an information technology company, but his special dream is to join Google. He loves learning about computers and keeping up with new technology, and even his hobbies are 'tech oriented'. However, he also enjoys the occasional game of badminton. Colton worked at the Museum last summer and has been a volunteer for many years. He particularly enjoyed learning about local history and working with others. His favorite artifacts are the lead-lined ice cream mould shaped like a pickle and the amazing "Veedee for Vibratory Massage". He enjoys asking visitors to guess what it was for. They are always interested to learn that it was sold as a cure-all for many ailments including lung troubles, gout, lumbago, toothache, etc.

Annie Sarah is a second year student of graphic design at New Brunswick Community College in Dieppe. After graduating in 2015, she hopes to work as a graphic designer. Her other interests include reading, history, Greek mythology and music. She plays flute, guitar, violin and even the drums, although the last named not as proficiently as the others. She is

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

'simulated wood shake steel roofing system'—which far surpasses wood shingles in durability, and seems to satisfy Built Heritage with respect to historic character.

So far, we have received funding for Boyd Algee Ltd. to undertake the Concept Roof Study (includes design and supervision of the project) and the Minister has issued a Provincial Heritage Permit for capital funds subject to approval of the approach and specifications of Heritage Branch.

We are currently looking at the options for how we can meet our financial obligations for the project.

Thinking About our Historic Buildings

For over a decade at a number of 'strategic planning' sessions, the Board has wrestled with the problem of how to maintain our historic buildings *and* museums with decreasing funding, and with—lets be blunt about it, an 'aging' cadre of volunteers. (Of course, this is a province-wide trend, and no one seems to have a solution.)

Our 'solution' has been to make—at least our historic buildings, 'self-supporting'. We have been successful in this but the work required to maintain these buildings is now too much to ask of our volunteers. (Our three historic buildings have between them 7 apartments, a library, several meeting rooms and a 50 seat restaurant.)

These buildings have been maintained—which means we have met our mandate, and they are currently viable economic entities; but I doubt we will be able to maintain them in the future. So, the best solution—the only one really, is to divest ourselves of some or all of them while they *are* still viable. That way, they have the best chance of being maintained and we can redirect the proceeds to guarantee the survival of our museums.

The Board has agreed on this strategy in principle and has mandated the Executive Committee to put the Landry House on the market. (It is not a provincially dedicated site, and Heritage Branch has no objection to this action.)

Although there is no immediate 'issue' with the Landry House, the Board agreed that we should initiate our long term strategy by putting the Landry House on the market.

It was a difficult decision—but I think it is the right one.

Cole Morison

TO FILE OR NOT TO FILE

Every household has a filing project that is going to be done on a rainy day—only it never ever seems to rain hard enough!

The Westmorland Historical Society has been functioning since 1965—nearly 50 years. During that time we have handled correspondence, minutes, grant applications, marketing materials, payroll records...endless paper work from our homes or various WHS buildings. (The earliest records are in the Archives at Mount Allison, but records from the last few decades have been 'filed' in various drawers with only an *ad hoc* system in place.)

This summer we decided to set up a *file management system* in the newly renovated office in the Keillor House. After some research, Judy Morison and Shirley Oliver began by developing a file list by subject and file name.

Alice helped gather the incredible amount of paper to be handled and brought in Erin, a volunteer from Westmorland Institution, to help. The three have been working every Monday through the summer and will continue into the fall. The project is progressing nicely and all are still getting along!

If you are visiting, don't look too carefully; we are still 'in transition'. The final task will be to find adequate space in the office.

also a “whovian,” the name that fans of the popular BBC television series *Doctor Who* give themselves. She has been playing soccer and ringette for many years and has a particular passion for skating. She remembers her father taking her to the skating rink every week since the age of four. What she has enjoyed most about working for the Museums of South-Eastern New Brunswick and Keillor House is the ‘chemistry’ between the staff and everyone who volunteers at the museums. She says it creates a very warm and supportive atmosphere. She is very happy to have had the opportunity to visit and explore all the historic homes and museums in southeastern New Brunswick. She loves seeing visitors who are very pleased with their tour and truly enjoying themselves. Her favourite artifact is the tin spice box because one can still smell the different spices. She finds it interesting that when visitors take a whiff each one smells something different. Annie Sarah also loves baking bread in our heritage bake oven. During our Heritage Fair she baked bread the entire day!

Ashley is currently enrolled in the second year of a bachelor’s programme at l’Université de Moncton, majoring in media relations and minoring in marketing. During the school year she hosts a weekly radio show on CKUM, the university’s student radio station. She is also part of Université de Moncton’s delegation at “Les jeux de la communication” (“The Communication Games”) where nine universities go head-to-head in thirteen different challenges including radio production, advertising pitch, crisis management, debate, newscast, etc. She is quite devoted to the dramatic arts as well. Her original play “Nuit Blanche” took first place in the Frey Festival in 2013. She continues to volunteer with the high school theatre troupe, mentoring the students in writing, performing and coordinating their play. She has been playing soccer since the age of ten and

continues to play in recreational leagues. She started working at the Keillor House Museum in the summer of 2012 and has grown very fond of it. She hopes to use the skills she is acquiring at university to help the Museum get the publicity and recognition it deserves.

I am a graduate student at l’Université de Moncton. This fall I will begin my doctorate in clinical psychology. Only six students a year are accepted for this four-year programme. My therapeutic approach is eclectic with some cognitive behavioral therapy. I previously earned a bachelor’s degree in honours psychology from l’Université de Moncton and am on the dean’s list. I have worked as an assistant professor as well as a research assistant in psychology laboratories on campus. Since 2012, I have been a volunteer at the Ronald McDonald Family Room located in the Moncton Regional Hospital. I also enjoy playing recreational soccer during the summer months. If you saw someone hopping around on crutches at the museum this summer; that was me. I severely sprained my ankle half way through the season and last year I broke my nose playing soccer. I began working at the Keillor House Museum in the summer of 2009 and have been a returning employee ever since. I feel like I have grown up and matured here. I am very grateful for the work and life experience, as well as the skills that I have acquired during these past six years. Everyone I have met—whether Board members, general members of WHS or volunteers—all have been extremely friendly and supportive. Thank you all for an amazing six years!

The staff of the Keillor House Museum would also like to thank everyone who came for a visit, participated in our events and/or volunteered throughout the summer. It is most appreciated and we look forward to seeing you next season!

Meghan Beaudin

THE ORIGINS OF THE BELL INN RESTAURANT

Editor’s Note: *There has been quite a bit about the Bell Inn and the Bell Inn Restaurant in the last few issues. Now Katie Yeoman who, together with her mom, Sylvia, started the restaurant, has agreed to top it off with some reminiscences about its origins and early years. Thanks so much for this, Katie. I know readers will be very interested.*

Have you been to the “new” Bell Inn Restaurant yet? This summer it opened with new owners, new décor and a new menu. After building the business for almost thirty years, David McAllister and Wayne Jones retired for some well-deserved rest. But the change of hands has got people asking, “How did the Bell Inn Restaurant get started?” It’s an interesting story!

The restoration of the Bell began in the mid 1970’s as one of a series of projects in Dorchester that had a wider purpose than simply restoring old buildings, although that was the primary intent. It all began in 1967 with the restoration of the Keillor House as a Centennial project. This was followed by the Bell Inn, Payzant and Card store, Saint James Church, and The Maples (Sir Pierre Landry House). Having been the shire town and a centre of shipbuilding, lumbering and other industries,

Dorchester was once a grand and bustling town. But when those industries faded, and even the court house burned down in the early 1960's, it went into a slump, and the once-grand houses and businesses were grand no more.

The Westmorland Historical Society took the initiative in restoring some of these buildings. Besides preservation, its mandate was to stimulate business and create employment in an area designated as economically depressed. After a small group of volunteers started fundraising by putting on historic teas and vintage fashion shows (I modeled in my first fashion show at age six wearing my grandmother's 1906 bridesmaid's dress!) the Province of New Brunswick came on board with funding but with the stipulation that hiring must be done locally and that the buildings must become self-sufficient. Over the years, these restored buildings provided many jobs, while local people acquired skills that would always be useful to them. Once again Dorchester began to feel proud of its heritage .

The Bell Inn was in a very dilapidated state that only time and hard work could restore. When it was finally close to being ready, the question became, "What will we put here to make it self-sustaining?" It was decided that apartments would provide both local accommodation and a steady income to the Historical Society. But what else? There had to be something to draw people to the village. If they were going to visit the museum and the other yet-to-be restored buildings, they would need somewhere to relax before taking to the road again. And so it was decided that, in keeping with the history of the building, the Bell Inn needed a restaurant.

My mother, Sylvia Yeoman, was in charge of the restoration projects and I was in Alberta managing a restaurant at Jasper Park Lodge. During the earlier phase of the restorations, as part of the fund raising, she and I had run a little tea shop in the County Jail, which for a short time had also been one of the properties managed as a museum by the Historical Society. She decided that I would be just the person to take on running a café back in Dorchester! So she wrote and asked if I'd be interested in coming back to do this. I've always been inclined to entrepreneurship, and like a challenge, so I thought, "Why not?," not realizing what I was about to take on.

We started on a shoe string. Mum had inherited a little money from her mother and used it to buy the fridge, stove, fixtures and second-hand furniture to set up the café. We jumped through many hoops for the Department of Health, which wanted everything shiny and new. At the end of this gamut they said the floorboards weren't close enough together and so we must re-do the floors. After

much struggle we eventually convinced them that we really couldn't rip out the original floor of an historic building that had just been restored.

In the beginning, we just had the front room, with six tables. All cooking was done in the tiny upstairs kitchen. We didn't even have a microwave! The wall hadn't yet been opened to create a door, allowing the restaurant to expand into the rest of the main floor.

Finally, in June 1979, it was opening day. We had a ceremony and cut the ribbon—and crossed our fingers in the hope that it would work! The original menu was small, with everything homemade from scratch. We made the bread, jam, mayonnaise, specials, desserts – including the now famous Bell Inn ice cream, from my grandmother's original recipe. I began at 6:00 a.m. starting with the bread for the day, and worked my way through the morning routine: start the bread and put it to rise, make cakes while it's rising; punch the bread down and put it to rise again, then make the ice cream and cookies. Meanwhile, up at the house, Mum made a huge pan of soup, which she would bring down at lunch time. While the bread was baking, get the kitchen cleaned up. By 10:00 opening time everything had to be ready. I remember days when Murphy's Law seemed to rule supreme: the bread wouldn't rise or the cakes were burnt or the soup was not ready... oh dear, I would panic! But generally, everything ticked along like a well-oiled clock. Mostly I worked on my own, with back-up from Mum and a friend who would come over from Sackville to help. Specials for the next day and other main course foods were cooked at night after closing. It was a long day! On Mondays we were closed and, not having a car that first year, I rode my bicycle to Sackville, coming back loaded down with sacks of flour and groceries. Sometimes that marsh wind was blowing so hard up from the Memramcook River that I had to get off and push the bike, unable to ride against the wind with all that weight. I was in very good shape by the end of the summer!

During the first days, we had no idea if we would succeed or not. But people liked the food and the atmosphere and soon it began to pick up. There were the retirees who liked to come in for morning coffee and a cookie right out of the oven, whiling away the time with pleasant chat. Glen Illsley would sneak in for "just a half piece" of cake. "Don't tell my wife!" he would say, winking. Or the afternoon ladies, who came for lunch and stayed to compare recipes and cooking tips with me. Pat Cormier would bring pictures of the beautiful wedding cakes she had made for people and I would sigh, knowing that I could never make a cake like that! I still have the original Bell Inn cookbook, written out

by hand, full of local names. Betty Spence's cinnamon loaf, Lily Wiggins' lobster stew (she used to own the Frosty Hollow Inn), Mary Weldon's blueberry cake, Jim Snowdon's favourite oatcakes, Margaret Henderson's carrot cake, Bert Hickman's lemon snow pudding, Alice Folkins' lasagne, Charlie Emmerson's oatmeal cookies. No, Charlie didn't give me the recipe. But he loved those cookies and every morning he would come in for them, announcing to any tourists he saw, "You gotta come in and get some of them good cookies!" Charlie was probably the best advertising we ever had!

As the summer went along and business became steady, friends and family helped me keep up with everything. Marsha Lemos, formerly of Aliper's Hearth Bakery and now chief baker at Cranewood on Main Bakery Café in Sackville got her start at the Bell Inn. Marsha and I worked away together, trying to keep up with the baking and cooking. Marsha was neat and I was messy—I think I drove her crazy! But she persevered and has been baking ever since. At one point, my sister and her husband were visiting from England. They came to help me each day and guests of the restaurant were treated to seeing my brother-in-law, a Royal Marine Commando in the British military, take up most of the tiny kitchen as he washed mountains of dishes or made sandwiches while my sister waited on tables. Granny's homemade ice cream was definitely our best seller, made with full cream and all natural ingredients in small handmade batches. Sometimes on a sunny afternoon there were actually people lined up at the door, patiently waiting for ice cream! The museum craft shop at that time was in a small building in the Bell Inn parking lot and so people who had to wait for a table amused themselves happily, looking at the homemade quilts and jams and other local crafts. Betty Adams ran the shop, regaling visitors with local history and lore.

And so the summer passed. Then one day, towards Thanksgiving and the winding down of the season, we received a letter. Imagine the hugs and exclamations between Mum and me as we read that we were being added to the "Where to Eat in Canada" guide! Our first summer! It had been a risk, and an investment, and a lot of hard work, but we did it! And with that stamp of approval, I treated myself to something I had needed for a long time: a car!

After a few years, including the final year we had the business, when a chef rented it and ran it himself, it was time for a change. Business start-up is a hard slog, and I was young (only twenty-one when we opened) and ready for a change. David McAllister and I were long-time friends, and

one day we were sitting having coffee. He had just left a job, and I had the chance to go to a new job but didn't know what to do about the Bell Inn. We had a brainwave: David would take it over! I would be free, and he would have his own business. He opened with a couple of friends, and shortly afterwards Wayne Jones joined them. Wayne's family had been in the restaurant business for years and with that experience he became the chef. David had excellent customer service experience and ran the dining rooms. Together, starting from the little kitchen and front room, they built the business over almost thirty years, expanding into the rest of the main floor and basement kitchen as business grew. Under their ownership the Bell Inn became the focus of many local events, festivals, and special occasions; host to dignitaries and luminaries; received award after award; and there was never a year they weren't in "Where to Eat in Canada".

Thirty years of running a restaurant is enough, so when David turned sixty-five last year, it seemed like a good time to retire. The business was sold and the Westmorland Historical Society stepped in to do many renovations and improvements for the new owners. Now the torch has passed to Andrew Harrison and Sara Craig. New look, new menu, new owners, but the Bell Inn Restaurant continues to thrive, as it has since that long ago June day when I cut the ribbon and Wally Sears snapped my picture for the *Sackville Tribune*. Good luck, Andrew and Sara!

Katie Yeoman

REPORT ON THE KEILLOR PROJECT, OR A RESEARCHER'S SERENDIPITOUS THRILL

You may have heard that I am writing a book on the Keillors of Keillor House and been wondering—with eager anticipation, I trust—when you may buy a copy. I thought it would be finished long ago but progress has been slower than expected, mainly owing to the difficult nature of some of the sources I have to work with. Even after decipherment, deeds of sale and old ledgers often tell their stories only after long and tortuous interrogation. But another hold-up has been that, several times, just when I thought I had finished a section, I unexpectedly stumbled upon new material that forced a revision to integrate new information. I want to share a case in point because I think you will find it interesting and also because it seems like a good way to begin a series of reports on other aspects of my 'Keillor Project' that I will give from time to time by way of building interest (with mercenary intent, of course) and also to compensate for the slowness in getting it done. It now looks like another year before that happy event.

I will postpone the harrowing account of how I made the discovery to the end of this report—for dramatic effect—and begin with the particular item in question. (There are others to come.) It is a statement of account that Harmon Trueman rendered to John Keillor for various services he performed for him in the years 1801, 1802 and 1803. To see why this is interesting you have to know something about Harmon. He was the eldest grandson of William Trueman Senior, the 'original' Trueman patriarch who immigrated from Yorkshire to the Chignecto with his wife and only son, William Junior, in 1774. He appears to have been Granddad's 'favourite' because when the old man died in 1797 he left him the 'Mauger Farm', later known as 'Hilltop', which had been his first purchase. He also left him something else of great value (or at least I surmise that he was the one who did): a remarkable skill as a joiner, or carpenter who specializes in making and fitting joints, and, at the higher end of the trade, furniture. William Senior had been a joiner back in the old country (and maybe a miller as well) and Harmon may have been his surrogate heir in this respect. William Junior, Harmon's father, is said to have had a withered arm, and was probably unable to practise this trade. It's pleasant to imagine Granddad enjoying his sunset years in the knowledge that his skill would, after all, be passed on to another generation of Truemans.

Harmon proved a worthy heir to both legacies. A very successful farmer and sawmill operator, he took his place among the leading men of the county, eventually (in 1822) becoming a Justice of the Peace. But he was also a very skilled carriage and wagon maker as well as an exceptional furniture maker whose pieces are today considered a valuable piece of New Brunswick's material history. As reported in the September 2012 issue of this *Newsletter*, Darrel Butler, Chief Curator of Material Heritage at King's Landing and an expert on furniture, gave a fascinating lecture on the historical value of the collection of artifacts at Keillor House. He identified several pieces that he is pretty sure were made by Harmon, and he waxed rhapsodic when talking about them. He said they were as fine as anything being produced in British North America at that time, fully comparable to the work of the Saint John luminary Thomas Nisbet. This is particularly impressive when we consider that, unlike Nisbet *et. al.*, Harmon was not a full time professional furniture or cabinet maker. One wonders what he could have accomplished if he had been.

It is very nice to have some of Harmon's pieces at Keillor House, as they certainly represent the kinds of things that would have been found in it during the Keillors' time here. But they only came to the museum much later, and, until now, there has been no documentary proof that any Keillor ever acquired furniture made by Trueman. This discovery proves that at least one of them did, and at a surprisingly early date. When the account was rendered in 1803, Harmon was a young man of twenty-five, still unmarried (that happened in 1807) and just nicely getting himself established. It appears that he was working out during the fall and winter months after most of the farm work was done, probably trying to earn a little extra for a nest egg to share with his prospective bride. What better place to do it than with one of the relatives who was beginning to do quite well for himself? John Keillor was his uncle (Harmon's mother, Elizabeth Keillor Trueman, was John's sister) and in the market for a good handyman. Harmon spent considerable time in Dorchester working for him during these three years.

The first items we see on the 'invoice' are a half dozen Windsor chairs, followed soon thereafter by a "desk, tables etc." which took him three weeks to finish. Here was Harmon the furniture maker. But he also made his uncle a cart tire as well as the tongue and axletree, mended a saddle tree, forged up some hinges and drawer handles (unless he bought them and

was just billing John for them) and even rebound an old Bible. (It's edifying to know that it was being read.) Here was Harmon the carriage maker and general handyman. Then he worked on the house and barn, putting on clapboards, laying floor and squaring up timber for framing a building—Harmon the skilled carpenter. Just for good measure he also put in a day and a half of 'cradleing' or cutting grain with a scythe. (Before Cyrus McCormick developed the mechanical reaper in the 1830s, grain was cut with a scythe to which was attached a pronged device called a cradle that laid it down in rows so that it could easily be picked up and bound into sheaves or bundles.) Finally, he performed other unspecified, but semi-skilled labour for Keillor. I know it was semi-skilled because he was paid six shillings a day for it. Common grunt labour was worth about half of that. As an additional 'favour', from time to time he also paid small bills for his uncle with the idea of collecting from him later, and he even appears to have gone on a shopping trip to Halifax for him.

We thus learn some interesting things about Harmon from this document. But I found it even more gratifying for what it told me, or rather confirmed to me, about John Keillor. I have expended a good deal of effort in demonstrating that he was socially ambitious and for many years sought, subtly at least, to win an appointment as one of the county's Justices of the Peace, a position that entitled him to the title 'Esquire' and with it real standing in the community. He worked towards this by performing outstanding service in a large number of the parish offices that were at the heart of local government. He was appointed Town Clerk every year since the office was established in Dorchester Parish in 1789. (The parish offices were for a one-year term but were renewable at the discretion of the Justices of Peace in the winter sitting of the General Sessions of the Peace, which also served as a county court and administrative council.) He also served many times as a (tax) Assessor, Overseer of the Poor, Surveyor and Commissioner of Highways—in fact in more offices more often than anyone else in the parish, and by a wide margin.

But he needed more in order to be considered for an appointment as a Justice of the Peace, namely a certain degree of wealth, or at least an evident prosperity. Justices of the Peace didn't have to be rich, but since the office was both poorly paid and quite burdensome (men sought it for the prestige it brought as well as a genuine desire—at least in John's case—to serve King and coun-

try), they had to be well enough off to be able to devote much of their time to it, rather than sweating out a living through manual labour. As 'Esquires', Justices of the Peace were considered to be 'gentlemen', people of a certain refinement above the common herd. As farmers, which most of them were (others being merchants or professionals of some kind while many were both), this meant being able to hire labourers or contract with tenants to do the 'hands on' work while they managed the operation and their wives and daughters planned dinner parties (and of course what to wear at them). After labouring long and hard over many difficult documents, I learned that John didn't start out in this position. Beginning in fairly modest circumstances as a hard-working yeoman farmer like most of his neighbours, he gradually built up his farm to the point where this was possible, helped along the way at various points by his father-in-law, John Wheldon Esq., a Justice of the Peace since the founding of the province and one of the most prominent men in Dorchester Parish.

What is particularly interesting to me about Harmon's 'invoice' is its date. From a good deal of other evidence, some of which I will tell you about in a future issue, I concluded that Keillor finally achieved the requisite prosperity and the free time that went with it soon after the turn of the century. In fact, it was in January 1802 that he donated four acres of land for a new courthouse and jail after the original one at Westmorland Point (Mount Whatley) burned down and the shiretown or county seat was moved to Dorchester. (See the June 2012 issue of the *Newsletter*: "Why Dorchester Became the Shiretown and Sackville Did Not.") In the deed he is identified as 'John Keillor of Dorchester, gentleman' whereas in all previous deeds involving land transactions he was a 'yeoman', in other words an ordinary farmer with substantial holdings (as opposed to a tenant farmer or farm labourer). Since the deed was a public document kept in the county record office, it seems that he was now openly proclaiming a level of prosperity that set him apart from most farmers and allowed him to live as a 'gentleman', managing the farm but no longer labouring in the fields, meadows and barnyard, and thus a suitable candidate for the office of Justice of the Peace. This he achieved three years later in 1805, the next time a new slate of Justices was appointed.

So, Harmon's 'invoice' fits perfectly into the case I was building anyway from many other documents, but it also adds some important corroborating detail. At this time, Keillor House as we know it was still in the future. Until it was built in 1812 or 1813 (or thereabouts) the Keillors still lived in the log house that John built in the 1780s down on what came to be called Robb's Creek near St. Edward's Church, now Dor-

chester's civic centre. It was large enough to raise eight children, but it was hardly the home of a country squire, especially as long as it was still faced with exposed logs. From the account with Harmon, it appears that in 1801-02 John was having it covered with clapboards, in other words giving it a facelift to make it look a little more upscale, and probably fixing up the barns a bit as well. But he wasn't yet ready to build the stone house that, from the road at least, proclaimed that here no ordinary farmer dwelled. Like the clapboard cladding over the logs, Harmon's Windsor chairs and finely crafted furniture added another whiff of gentility, but they, too, attest to the limits of Keillor's means as well as to his social ambitions. With their steam-bent backs and lathe turned round-tenoned legs and uprights, the chairs required considerable skill to make, and were no doubt a significant step upwards from the simple affairs that had probably served hitherto.

But they were not Chippendale. At two pounds six shillings—or forty-five shillings—for the six of them, they represented a little more than seven days' wages of a skilled labourer, reckoning at six shillings a day. The same money would have fetched six pounds of Souchong tea (the ancestor of Earl Gray, and very popular with the better off) or ten pounds of Bohea, the regular stuff. You could also have bought about seven fancy shawls, eight bushels of salt, or six gallons of spirits if so inclined (as many were). At six pounds nine shillings or 129 shillings (or twenty-one and a half days' labour), the desk and tables represent the single biggest item on the list (except the shopping trip to Halifax). These were substantial purchases, especially considering they were discretionary, not necessities of life, and no doubt they were excellent value for money. But they were still a long way from the imported finery that would have been found in the Botsford or Chandler homes. This is consistent with my other evidence that, while Keillor was relatively prosperous by this time, he was far from being the wealthiest man in Dorchester and in fact may have been exceeding his means somewhat to maintain the lifestyle associated with gentleman farming. (Incidentally, his watch that Harmon took to Peter Etter to be repaired is another indication of his aspiration to gentility.) Harmon's bill also supports this thesis. When he rendered the final account in 1803, also listing the credits, John still owed him £12.17s.5d., something, interestingly enough, that he doesn't explicitly state (I did the subtraction myself). Moreover, of the £47.0s.3d. he *did* pay at the time, only £32.10s. was in cash. The rest was as credit for twenty-seven weeks of board, first at ten shillings, and then at ten shillings six pence a week. (He must have found Harmon eating a little more

than expected and upped the price.) All this in turn fits my other thesis that John Keillor did not win his appointment as a Justice of the Peace because he was wealthy or particularly well connected. (His relationship to John Wheldon, Esq. certainly didn't hurt him any, but lots of others had similar connections, including to the real 'Big Man' of the county, Amos Botsford, Esq.) He rose to that position (and filled it with distinction) through competence and sheer dedication to duty—but that's another story.

Now for the exciting tale of how I discovered Harmon's 'invoice'. During one of my occasional website perusals of the Loyalist Collection at UNB, where I frequently find research material, my eye was caught by a reference to a microfilm containing a letter that one, Sally Botsford, wrote to her father, the 'Famous Amos'. It has no relevance to either John Keillor or Harmon Trueman, so I will skip the details of why I was interested in it. The important point is, I wanted to see it, and since travel is difficult for me, I was able to bend the Collection's rules and examine it at Mount Allison through Interlibrary Loan. The microfilm is entitled 'Amos Botsford Papers 1762-1839' but there is also another one listed just above it on the website as 'Botsford Family Papers 1784-1860' and didn't I ask for the wrong one? I might have discovered my mistake immediately upon loading the reader and sent it back for the right one, except that—unlike most of the Collection's microfilms—it has no finding aid at the beginning of the reel. So I was forced to go through it frame by frame looking for the letter. Of course I didn't find it, but I was amazed when Harmon's invoice appeared on the screen. However, that was nothing compared to my reaction to another surprise, namely two other accounts, one from Stephen Millidge and the other from Amos Fowler, two prominent merchants of the region, also to John Keillor! I nearly fell off my perch, because I have known about them for a long time and thought they had been lost. Lloyd Machum referred to them in the little pamphlet he wrote on *The Dorchester Keillors*, the one sold in the Keillor House gift shop. He had clearly seen them but he didn't say where, and for several years I have been trying unsuccessfully to track them down, finally concluding that he once had them in his possession, but they were somehow not included in the papers he left to the University of Moncton. Now here they were.

But wait, it gets richer. The Loyalist Collection does not have the originals of these documents, and I was particu-

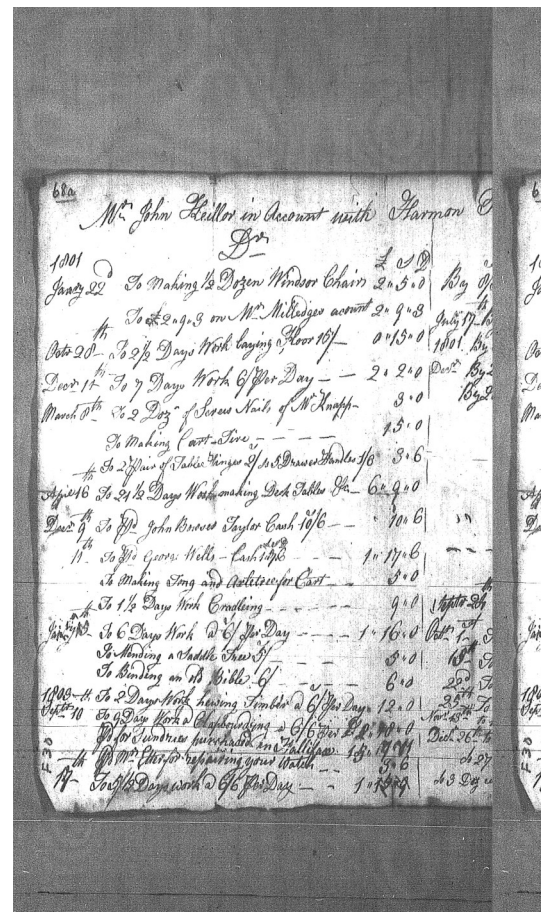
larly excited about the possibility of finding more of the ledgers if they existed (the microfilmed documents are only a couple pages of what are obviously ledgers) as they would be very relevant to the work I am doing on Keillor. So I was surprised to learn (this is also on the Loyalist website) that they are in the New Brunswick Museum, because I had searched its collection a number of times for them. Perhaps I had overlooked them? Maybe a different spelling? Nope, still no joy. So I contacted the lady who created the Loyalist Collection. Similarly puzzled, she dug up her notes on the microfilm and informed me that it had come to UNB before her time. It was created by a committee formed to commemorate the two hundredth anniversary of the Loyalist exodus in 1783 and was part of a project to go around to all the libraries, museums etc. it could think of, filming anything its hirelings thought might be even remotely relevant. Apparently they had little clue what they were looking for, and even less organizational talent. If it looked interesting they shot it and buried it wherever they thought it might be vaguely relevant. This explains why documents pertaining only to John Keillor, Amos Fowler and Harmon Trueman are on a reel entitled 'Botsford Family Papers'—which does actually contain some Botsford family papers as well. But why aren't they on the Museum's electronic finding aid where I have found many similar things? A little more sleuthing revealed that it's because after they were microfilmed back in the 80s they were simply put back in a box and have remained uncatalogued ever since. So I still have some hope of finding more of the ledgers, but I wouldn't even have known that at least parts of them are still 'alive'—and certainly nothing about Harmon's 'invoice'—if I hadn't stupidly requested the wrong microfilm on Interlibrary Loan. Such is the precision of doing historical research.

P.S. I later got the microfilm that Sally's letter is on. It turned out to be from Sally's *mother*, also called Sally. But it's very interesting—and I found lots of other good stuff on the microfilm as well. See why it takes such a long time to finish an historical project?

Gene Goodrich

Mr. John Keillor in Account with Harmon Trueman

	£	S	D
1801			
Janry 22d To making ½ Dozen Windsor Chairs.....	2	5	0
To £2.9.3 on Mr. Millidges account.....	2	9	3
Oct 28 th To 2 ½ Days Work laying Floor 16/.....	0	15	0
Dec 14 th To 7 Days Work 6/ per Day.....	2	2	0
Mar 8 th To 2 Doz. of Screw Nails of Mr. Knapp.....	0	3	0
To Making Cart Tire.....	0	15	0
To 2 pair of Table Hinges 2/; 5 Drawer Handles 1/6.....	0	3	6
April 16 To 21 ½ Days Work making Desk, Tables &c.....	6	9	0
Dec 9 th To Pd John Bowser Taylor Cash 10/6.....	0	10	6
11 th To Pd George Wells Cash 1.17.6.....	1	17	6
To making Tong and Axletree for Cart.....	0	5	0
To 1 ½ Days Work Cradleing	0	9	0
1802			
Jan 15 th To 6 Days Work @ 6/ per Day.....	1	16	0
To mending a Saddle Tree 5/	0	5	0
To Binding an old Bible 6/.....	0	6	0

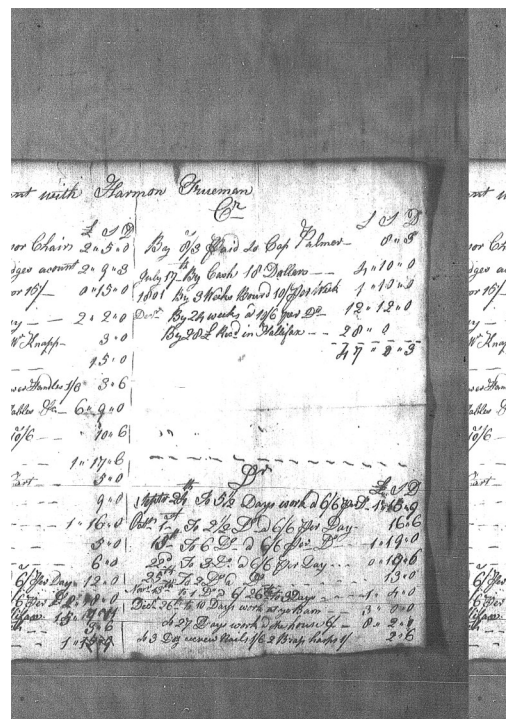


1803

Sept 10 th To 2 Days Work hewing Timber @ 6/ per Day.....	0.12. 0
To 9 Days Work @ Clapboarding @ 6/6 per Day.....	2.18. 0
Pd for Sundries purchased in Halifax.....	15.17.11
Pd Mr. Etter for repairing your watch.....	0. 3. 6
17 th To 5 ½ Days work @ 6/6 per Day.....	1.15. 9
20 th To 5 ½ Days work @ 6/6 per Day.....	1.15. 9
Oct 1 st To 2 ½ Do. @ 6/6 per Day.....	0.16. 6
19 th To 6 Do. @ 6/6 per Day.....	1.19. 0
22 nd To 3 Do. @ 6/6 per Day.....	0.19. 6
25 th To 2 Do. @ Do.....	0.13. 0
Nov 13 th To 1 Do. @ 6/ 26 th to 3 Days.....	1. 4. 0
Dec 26 th to 10 Days work at ye Barn.....	3. 0. 0
To 27 Days work @ the house 6/.....	8.2.0
To 3 doz screw nails 1/6; 2 brass hasps 1/.....	0. 2. 6

Cr

By 8/3 paid to Cap Palmer	0. 8. 3
July 17 th By Cash 18 Dollars.....	4.10. 0
1801 By 3 Weeks Board 10/ per Week.....	1.10. 0
Dec. By 24 weeks @ 10/6 per Do.	12.12.0
By 28£ Rec. in Halifax.....	28.0.0

 47.0.3




Donations, Memberships and Newsletter
Submissions to:
4974 Main Street, Dorchester, NB
E4L 2Z1

Keillor House Museum
Tel.: (506)379-6633
Fax: (506)379-3418
E-mail: keillorhouse@nb.aibn.com
www.keillorhousemuseum.com

Museum Hours

June 14 to Sept. 13 2014

Tuesday to Saturday

10:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Sunday

12:00 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. (506) 379-6682. morc@rogers.com

Annual Fees

(Includes Newsletter)

Individual: \$10.00

Family: \$15.00

Sustaining: \$25.00

Life: \$150.00

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SALUTING OUR OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEERS

A Message from Alice to our Volunteers

Dear Volunteers,

We are very grateful for the large number of dedicated volunteers we have. It's now fall and the museums are closed but there is still lots going on. By the time you read this, the Harvest Dinner will be over and the volunteers will have done another great job. But now the two Victorian Dinners on November 29 and December 6 are sneaking up fast and we are already taking bookings. So call me at 379-6620 as soon as you can to avoid disappointment. This is a wonderful event, and if you are not coming as a guest, perhaps you would consider volunteering. We have lots for you to do.

Even before the Christmas Dinner we have the Haunted House Tours on October 17 & 18 and again on the 24 & 25 and we need volunteers for that as well. You will need to be at Keillor House by 6 PM to get ready for a fiendish good time. If we get enough volunteers we could expand the hellish experience to the carriage house and bring in even more victims (oops, I mean customers). Call me and leave a message if I am not home. I will get right back to you. You can also call Mike Shea, Marilyn or Teddy Wheaton. All of us are in Dorchester.

Sincerely,

Alice