

WESTMORLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 51 ISSUE # 1 FEBRUARY, 2016 ISBN320813

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It is always a great pleasure to report on the Society's activities and events—and to be able to thank our many volunteers, our donors and enthusiastic members for their sustained support of the Society and Keillor House. I will touch on only a few of our 'successes' with you today...

Fundraising Events in 2015

Our Haunted House Tours (October 16-17, 23-24) were our most successful to date, raising \$14,000 with over 1700 visitors over four nights. Thanks especially to Marilyn and Ted Wheaton, Mike Shea and both their families and friends for their hard work over many weeks, our volunteer 'costumed staff' and Alice's volunteers from Westmorland Institution who helped with 'set up' and 'take down'. The Victorian Christmas Dinners (November 28, December 5th) were sold out—many bookings for next year have already been registered, with the Society raising over \$2,600. Special thanks to our

gifted decorators, Joanne Corey and Moe Gautreau—the Keillor House looked spectacular again this year. Joanne and Moe have given us inspired Christmas themes for over ten years, and we will greatly miss them. Now resident in Nova Scotia, they are unable to be with us next year.

Receipted donations for 2015—including those issued for the Victorian Dinners—totalled \$6,800.

Upcoming Events

On February 13th, NB Heritage Day, Dee Millikan (Supervisor, St. James Textile Museum) will be 'demonstrating' and selling items made at St. James last summer, at our display table at Tantramar Regional High School (7:30—11:30 a.m.). Festivities begin with the Annual Heritage Day Breakfast at 7:30 a.m. (\$7.00 for Adults, \$4.00 for Children). A series of guest speakers will

be at the Town Hall in the afternoon, so mark it on your calendar. As well, Tantramar Heritage Trust will present a new play by Jamie Bradley 'Before the Leaves Turn' at Dorchester Veteran's Centre, March 19th, 3:00 p.m. with donations in support of WHS. (See p.3 for details). Directed by Karen Valanne, the setting is the Tantramar region during the Great War. If you can attend, I know you will enjoy it—with your donation going directly to Keillor House.

Museum Activities

A new Calendar of Events for 2016 has been finalized by Alice and Judy with a Mother's Day Tea scheduled for May 7th and our official opening, June 11th. (We hope to increase visitation this season—from 3,000 visitors in 2015, welcoming more American friends). Alice is currently preparing grant applications for staffing. To date

KEILLOR HOUSE MUSEUM —SPECIAL EVENTS

Mother's Day Tea

May 7, 2:00-4:00 pm

Tea, sandwiches & cakes at Keillor House. Silent Auction.

Call for tickets.

506 379-6695, Susan Spence

Keillor House & St. James Museum Openings

June 11, 2:30 pm (after the Shiretown Festival Parade)

Free guided tours for the day with costumed staff

506 379-6633

Canada Day at Dorchester Veterans' Centre

July 1, 1:00-3:00 pm

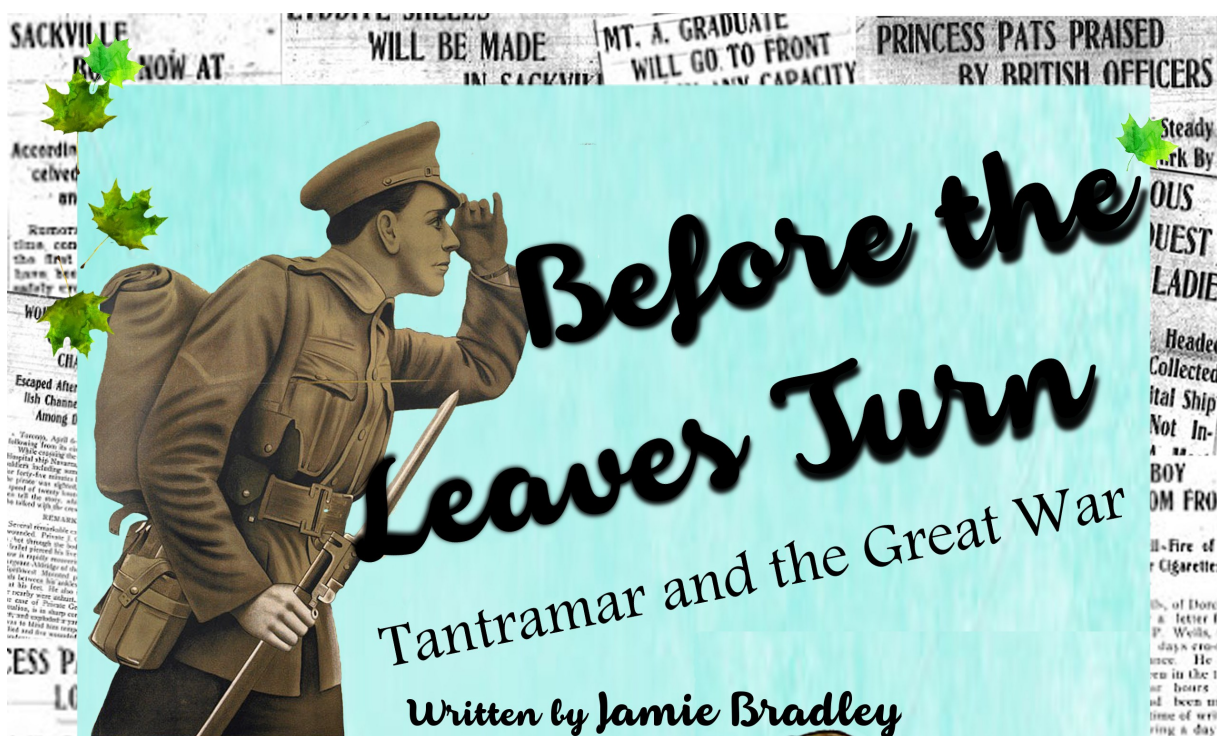
Celebrate "From a Small Village a Nation Grew" with skits and entertainment.

Enjoy music, children's games, cake and ice cream.

Museum tours available 10:00 to 12:00 and 3:00 to 5:00

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Before the Leaves Turn

Tantramar and the Great War

Written by Jamie Bradley

The Westmorland Historical Society is pleased to host this historical drama

produced by

Tantramar Heritage Trust

and directed by

Karen Valanne

starring

Samantha Cade, Simon Henderson & Lita Llewellyn

Time: Saturday March 19 at 3:00 pm

Place: Dorchester Veterans' Centre

Light refreshments following the performance

Admission by donation at the door

This is a fundraiser in support of WHS



Sackville
NEW BRUNSWICK

New Brunswick
Nouveau Brunswick
CANADA



Canadian
Heritage

Patrimoine
canadien

Every Consideration for the Comfort and Well-being of the Monks of 2,000 Monks Framed
Great Britain if She Receives Aid From Canada Must Receive it
TO FIGHT FOR AND BOYS HAVE
Fighting Bravely For a Lighter
Will You Avenge the Wrong

she has applied for a Youth Take Charge grant and two Young Canada Works Grants for assistant manager and cataloguer. She was successful in getting two extensions of 35 and 40 hours to cover work carried out by Ashley and Meaghan during Christmas break. Work on new advertising for the Cultural Coast Tourism Guide and the NB Tourist Guide for 2016 has been submitted with redesign by Leslie Van Patter. Every year at this time, Judy and Alice work long hours preparing marketing materials for Keillor House—there are deadlines! Thank you for taking on this difficult and challenging task.

The Website Committee—George and Mary Balser, Margaret Eaton, Nancy Vogan, Gene Goodrich and Judy Morison, working with Leslie Van Patter—has completed the ‘design’ phase of this challenging two year project—by holding monthly meetings for the last six months. Web development—building the site—is scheduled to start in March, with a planned ‘launch’ in the spring. The sustained and professional work of this team promises to give Keillor House one of the best websites of its kind in the province. A special thanks to George and Mary Balser, and Margaret Eaton, for their commitment to the project and their many hours of work on a tight time line. (We intend to detail the work done by this Committee in a future Newsletter.)

Bell Inn Update

The Bell Inn Committee met with two highly experienced *restaurateurs* who provided advice on understanding the metrics of the business, how best to advertise to potential clients and what responsibilities fall upon us in a ‘turn-key’ operation. Legal advice on licensing the name, registering the name and website domain name, etc., has clarified our position, with respect to *owning* the building but *leasing out* the name for use by a business. The Fire Marshall has inspected the restaurant and approved the new floor plan for 44 patrons.

A formal advertisement will be posted in the next week or two—with several parties currently indicating an interest. The Committee wants to work closely with the lessee, help promote the business and take action to encourage its long-term viability. With three apartments adding to the income stream, we have some flexibility in terms of a new agreement.

Contributions to the Graydon Milton Endowment Fund

In 2015 the Society received donations of \$1,150 to be directed into the Endowment Fund to help secure the future of our museums. See Newsletter February 2015, p.3). These gifts will be invested for long-term capital appreciation, and are intended to ‘off set’ expected decreasing support for museums from government. Gifts can be in the form of cash or publically listed securities. (You are eligible for a charitable receipt for the full amount of your gift.) It is also tax effective to assign WHS as a beneficiary of an insurance policy. If you are looking into estate planning—as many of us are at this point in our lives—please consider the option of giving to the Endowment Fund.

This is Not a Prelude to Retirement

In closing, I want to particularly thank one of our Board members, Gene Goodrich, for his many years of outstanding work on behalf of the Society. Members are certainly aware of his original research on local and provincial history—his many books and articles in our *Newsletter* and *The White Fence* (Tantramar Heritage Trust)—but may not appreciate that Gene also edits the *Newsletter*, and has undertaken much of the research and writing required for the new website. His forthcoming book—*In Search of John Keillor: An Historian’s Odyssey*, (See *Newsletter*, September 2015) will no doubt be *the definitive work* on the Keillors and I think all of us enjoy that his writing incorporates ‘frequent inclusion of my own adventures’ (quoting Gene)—offering an amusing glimpse into another side of research.

Gene also serves on the Bell Inn Committee— and as a Board member (and President) for many years, he has undertaken a number of other projects—the research, design and fabrication of the Bell Inn sign and the classic lighting fixtures at Keillor House front entrance; the restoration of the stone wall and other infrastructure at the Bell Inn.

Several years ago, Gene scraped, repaired and painted the whole exterior the Bell Inn virtually by himself!

Thank you Gene for your commitment...

(I had to insist that these comments not be redacted—the Editor wished to exclude them!)

(Editor’s note: The editor did indeed wish to redact these comments, but the President pulled rank on him. Nonetheless, he greatly appreciates the kind words.

WHEN TIME TOOK TIME

BY DOUGLAS HOW

Editor's Note: Bessie Chapman, Dorchester's Senior Citizen of the Year for 2015, worked at the telephone office, the Royal Bank and Dobson's General Store back in the 50s, 60s and early 70s. Consequently, she knew almost everyone in the village at that time, including Douglas How, the Shiretown's most distinguished man of letters. Always an admirer of his, she saved the following article from the Weekend Magazine, August 4, 1973. After treasuring it all these years, she recently shared it with Judy Morison and Judy thought it a delight that should be shared with WHS members. I instantly agreed for two reasons: it's a great addition to the store of 'Dorchester Memories' that we have been building up in the Newsletter over the past few years (so far we have done Charlie McEwen, Art McCready, Garfield Spence and Ernie Partridge), and it's a wonderful reminder of just how good a writer Doug was. After a brilliant career in journalism he came to Mount Allison as a mature student, just as I was beginning my career there, and graduated in 1971 at the age of 52. He went on to a Master's degree from Dalhousie and then turned his hand to history and semi-autobiographical fiction. If you are hungry for good reading material and nostalgic for the Dorchester of yesterday—and haven't already done so—you should pick up his Blow Up the Trumpet in the New Moon and One Village, One War.

In a Maritime college town recently a professor from elsewhere took on about what he considered a local phenomenon: young people hanging around. It's true, they do hang around, like so many birds on a telephone line. They sit around on a curb or on steps in the centre of town, sometimes a dozen of them, sometimes more. They laugh and joke and horse around. Some drift in. Some drift out, all dressed vaguely alike in the never-new clothes of their time.

The professor had noted all this and he considered it, he said, a Bad Thing, a slightly disreputable thing. For some reason, it bothered him. Moreover, he said, a sociologist from the university was studying them from the window of a room he had across the street. Eventually the sociologist would reduce their relationships, their folkways, their lifestyle to the esoteric jargon of his trade. He might even come up with a paper for a learned journal.

The professor's words bumped around in my head for a couple of days, and I couldn't imagine why. Then that computer called Memory told me. I had seen those kids hanging around

and it hadn't seemed strange to me. I'd been away from the Maritimes for a long time, yes, but I'd come back now and I knew why it didn't seem strange.

I used to hang around myself a generation ago in a village not far from the college town. A lot of us used to hang around. If we were through playing ball or swimming or walking on the railway tracks or perhaps it wasn't dark enough yet to go swiping apples, we'd be apt to drift downtown. We'd sit on the curb in the village square like so many birds on a telephone line. Some would drift in. Some would drift out. We all dressed vaguely alike, and not very well, and there were people in town who considered it a Bad Thing.

Over the space of 35 to 40 years I don't remember it as a Bad Thing. I remember it as a Good Thing. True, our conversation tended far more to the profane than to the profound. True, we only laughed and joked and horsed around. Sometimes we'd drift over to the courthouse lawn and lie there in the sun, doing that splendid thing called nothing. It was a good place to be and a good thing to do.

There often was a born storyteller in the group and he'd entertain us. One, I remember, could never get through school, couldn't even remember the year Columbus discovered America, but he never forgot a joke. He was our court jester. We'd laugh at his jokes, or we'd talk about town characters.

The Maritimes were full of characters in those days. We had our share. Like the man in town who someone had figured, by keeping track of his own stories of his varied careers, was at least 158 years of age. Or the beloved little barber who drank lemon extract and, some said, even boot polish, especially prepared. Or the former postmaster whose wife raised Cain about him staying out all hours of the night. One night he sneaked back while she was out looking for him and when she came home at 11 PM he had the doors locked. When she came pounding to get it, he peered out an upstairs window and asked who it was.

"Your wife," says she.

"No wife of mine," says he, "would be running the streets at 11 o'clock," and he put the window down. She had to spend the night with a neighbour.

We'd talk about characters, or about the things we had done. Like the Saturday night one irascible old farmer came to town, tied up his horse and went shopping. When he came back the horse was in the shafts backward. Some of the boys had done it. It was good for a laugh for weeks.

Or we'd talk about girls or the New York Yankees or the Canadiens or the teacher who wore long red bloomers, flaming crimson bloomers, right down to her knees.

Often enough there would be older fellows there, men in their 20s and even 30s. One had a job at the courthouse and it gave him a special status. It seemed an awesome thing. The others had no jobs. They were men stopped dead in their tracks by the Dirty Thirties. Some had been out West on the Prairie harvests, and they'd talk about that. One had had a tryout with a professional hockey team and he'd tell about the day it ended: two old pros nailed him behind the blueline and plastered him on the roof.

One was a classic mimic. He'd take off people like the old man up the road who awaited the coming of electricity with great excitement, then was violently indignant when he found out what it meant. He wanted the lamps back because he couldn't snap the wall switch and get into bed before the lights went out.

One had gone all the way to Detroit to make Henry Ford's incredible \$5-a-day, and then he'd been laid off and came home dejected. "Father," he said, "I've come home to die." "To die, be damned," his father said. "You've come home to eat." We had an expression for it: "Livin' off the old man." There were a lot of guys livin' off the old man in those days, good guys too.

We were always glad to have them. There were no rules for hanging around, no exclusive sociological peer groups. Everybody was welcome. Everybody laughed or joked or horsed around.

One evening there were some girls going through the square and one of the boys was showing off for their benefit. Then his father came along and put him in his place. "Lee-o-nel," he called out as he passed, "did you feed the calf?"

It was a great thing to do, hang around. It must have been. We did it many a spring, summer or autumn afternoon or evening, and we did it for years. It was part of our culture, raw thought it could be, part of our lifestyle, and yes, if you want to put on the dog, part of our humanity. Sometimes, in the city rat race years later, I'd find images of those evenings coming back to me. They didn't seem disreputable. I remembered them for the companionship of lethargy.

One village friend told me a few years back that he'd had a long-distance phone call very late one night that winter. It was an old, old man calling from somewhere down near Boston. He'd asked the operator for my friend's father but the father had been dead for years so he talked to the son. He said he just had to talk to someone from the village because the village was flooding back to him. He'd hung around the square for years before.

I don't know what hanging around did for us, and what it didn't do. It would be hard to say. Certainly, some of the boys didn't turn out too well in later years. One went to prison. One deserted his wife and kids. At least one drank himself out of a job. But others didn't do too badly. One became the manager of a trust company. One became a judge. One became a magazine editor. One of the older fellows eventually set up his own business out West and is doing very well indeed. Another, at last report, was making \$30,000 a year out in California. Half a dozen of them never got a chance to show what they could do. They died in the Second World War.

I find now that I remember all of them with the warmth of having known them when time took its time, when we could speculate on such momentous things as whether Murray Cooke was lying when he said he had driven his car up the corner hill without shifting gears. If we ever met overseas during the war, we'd greet each other like long-lost brothers. That's the way we felt then. That's the way we still feel.

I don't know what those kids are saying to one another in their college town today. It doesn't really matter. But I would like to make a suggestion to that sociologist peeking out of his window at that phenomenon perched across the street: Why not study, instead, the phenomenon of people who come into a new milieu and judge it by standards that are not its own?

KATIE'S MEMORIES: A ROCKLYN GIRL'S RETROSPECTIVE ON THE EARLY YEARS OF WHS

Editor's note: In the last two issues we featured articles by Katie Yeoman and myself about the first year of WHS and the acquisition and restoration of Keillor House. In an earlier issue Katie told us about how the Bell Inn Restaurant came to be. I am happy to say that she is back again, this time with a charming and beautifully written piece on her childhood memories of her parents' early involvement in the Society and her own happy experiences in Rocklyn and Keillor House, followed by some reminiscences on the early days of the Bell Inn and other restoration projects. As most readers will know, Mark and Sylvia Yeoman were charter members and pillars of WHS for many years. It is interesting to learn how and why they first got involved—and aren't we all grateful that they did?

In 1943, Captain Mark Yeoman took an unscheduled break from the war. He had had malaria and dysentery in North Africa, and was then badly injured by shrapnel during the Italian campaign. So he was sent home for a short leave to recuperate. His parents were living in Halifax at the time, and they had met a nice couple from England, Jean and Sydney Monies. They invited Mark's parents to bring him over for a visit. Jean and Sydney had a daughter, Sylvia, a busy student who stopped in briefly to say hello. Full of life and good humour, she was a breath of fresh air. But the visit was short and soon Mark went back to the war, and Sylvia went away to school. She studied Fine Arts at Mount Allison and in Boston, and when the war was over she went back to England, where she studied fashion and costume design in the fashion houses on Bond Street in London. Meanwhile, Mark had come home to Canada. He decided to go to Law School at Dalhousie University in Halifax. When Sylvia came back from London, they met again. In 1952 they married and moved to Moncton. Mark and Sylvia Yeoman, my Mum and Dad.

As they settled into life in Moncton, they began to make friends. Dad had always had an interest in genealogy and local history. A born and bred New Brunswicker, he was proud of his roots here. He met other people in the area who shared these interests and they began to get together

to talk and compare notes. Coming home after these meetings, he would regale Mum with stories of people and events and places from times past, and she became interested too. Soon she began to join the meetings whenever she could. There was much talk at these gatherings about how to preserve the history of the area. Meetings became more regular and talk became more certain that they would like to do something concrete. Acadian, English and Indigenous history was all around them, but beginning to vanish as modernization swept through post-war society. There was considerable concern that research and preservation must begin now, before it was too late and valuable artifacts and first hand knowledge were lost. Many of the people at these gatherings would go on to be the founders and early members of the Westmorland Historical Society.

Meanwhile, Mark and Sylvia's little family was growing. We lived in a small house in what was then Middle Coverdale, now a part of Riverview. The house was getting crowded. Mum and Dad began to think about something a little bigger. Dad's law work frequently took him to the village of Dorchester, which, as the Shire town of the county, had the courthouse, jail and registry offices. During breaks, he would often walk around the village, admiring the lovely old Georgian and Victorian homes and buildings. One day in the late 1950s he discovered that the house of his dreams was for sale. There in Dorchester, at the top of the hill across from the old Trinity Anglican church, stood Rocklyn. Once a grand Georgian 'manor house', built of hand-cut stone in 1831 by Edward Baron Chandler, a Father of Confederation, it now stood empty. It had stood empty for some time and was in bad shape. It was for sale—but no one wanted it. He gave it a lot of thought. Walked around, looked at it, shook his head, then went back and looked again. It would be a daunting task. It needed a huge amount of work. And he would need to convince Mum. He would have to convince her to move to a village where she knew no one, to live in this big battered old house with the kids. Five children at the time, all under the age of six, as Mum is fond of recounting.

But Dad had seen the house in its glory days. He knew what it had been, what it could be. In the 1930s, his father, Rev. A.R.

KATIE'S MEMORIES (CONT.)

Yeoman, had been the rector at the Anglican Church across the road, along with St. Paul's in Sackville and St. Ann's in Westcock. Dad and his mother would accompany him to the services in Dorchester, and they often stopped in afterwards to visit the Teed family, who lived in Rocklyn at the time. Dad knew the house well and, as a child visiting, had often wished that one day when he was grown up he could live there. And here it was, badly in need of an owner who would give it the tender loving care it needed. He begged and persuaded and cajoled, and finally Mum said yes. In the fall of 1959, we moved to Rocklyn.

Moving to Rocklyn was a good introduction to both local history and to restoration work. When we moved in, the house was impossible to heat, the plumbing was creaky and unpredictable, the wiring was prone to short-circuiting, and the wallpaper was peeling. The walls were still the original lath and plaster, and had been damp and unheated for some time. After the house got dryer and warmer, the plaster began to crumble in places and needed constant repair. One day as we sat eating, a large portion of the ornate ceiling came down. The original slate roof leaked in so many places that we ran out of buckets and bowls when it rained. And we kids were convinced that the house was haunted! But, little by little, things were repaired or replaced or rebuilt. What had been a mass of weeds around the house turned out to be the original formal garden, and Mum spent many happy years restoring it back to the original plants. Spring brought lilacs and apple blossoms in the little orchard and a field full of narcissus and daffodils. Summer nights were scented with honeysuckle and mock orange, while nodding English roses and peonies and monkshood and delphiniums and lilies and foxgloves filled the garden with colour. In the fall, the barberry hedge and Virginia creeper turned a brilliant scarlet that still showed bright as the first snows began. By the early 1960s, Rocklyn had become a real home, with an open door to all who were interested.

The house would be a popular focus for the fledgling Westmorland Historical Society, for formal and informal meetings and later for fund raising teas and fashion shows. Later

still, people would come and go as they planned and implemented the restoration projects, museums, workshops and businesses that would become the Heritage Properties in the heart of the village. Many times, strangers would simply appear at the door, often walking right in, in the mistaken idea that it was a museum. Some would turn out to be Chandler or Teed or Keillor descendants who had heard there was someone living there that was interested in the history of the place. We would show them around, and they would reminisce and talk about their ancestors and relatives who had lived there. Later, when the Keillor House Museum was being planned, this would turn out to be a good connection, as the people came back with family heirlooms for the new museum: exquisite vintage costumes, furniture that had been in their families for generations, Victorian diaries, paintings, old family recipe books, and donations to the Historical Society. Some of these items were originally from the Keillor House or Rocklyn, and so were of particular interest

In February 1964, the Ways and Means Committee of the Westmorland Historical Society suggested that the Society sponsor a "Period Tea" in June at Rocklyn. The Tea would cost adults 75 cents, children to pay 35 cents. A period fashion show was to accompany what they decided to call the Centennial Tea. Money would be raised towards Centennial projects, coinciding with preparations for Canada's Centennial Year celebrations coming up in 1967. This would be the first event that we all as a family were involved in.

Volunteers came from the Historical Society, from the Village of Dorchester, from Moncton, Sackville, Shediac and the surrounding areas. The house was cleaned and polished till it sparkled, and then set up with little tables throughout the four main ground floor rooms, which opened into each other with the hallway and sweeping staircase in the middle. Flowers and fancy tea cups and other china and cutlery were all laid out, while back in the kitchen and pantry, plates of food—little fancy sandwiches, cakes, cookies, scones, all homemade—were piled high. There was so much to do, and this was a whole new venture—I still remember Mum trying to put on finishing touches as people were beginning to arrive! Upstairs, we were madly getting into costumes. We

KATIE'S MEMORIES (CONT.)

must have been awfully fit, as everyone managed to get into the tiny-waisted Victorian clothes, including the rigid corsets! There were no professional models among us, just a group of people of all ages ready to show off the lovely costumes that had been donated to the Society. I was the youngest, very small at the time, and wore the pink silk flower girl's dress and lace cap that my grandmother had worn at a wedding in 1906.

The Tea was a great success! It proved to be just the first of many more that we did over the years, all of them popular events. Nowadays, it would be considered a sacrilege to wear the actual artifacts. Items like original clothing are carefully catalogued, handled with the greatest care, and stored out of reach. But back then it was a way to showcase some of the collection in order to pique the public's interest and raise money for the Society at the same time. And what a display they made! We swept down the broad staircase in our satin and velvet and lace, as music played and the guests oohed and awed. We went one at a time from room to room, twirling our skirts, stopping at the tables so people could admire the workmanship of the clothes and see the beauty of the fabrics. We modeled children's clothes, night clothes, ball gowns, old ladies all in black like Queen Victoria, wedding dresses, bicycling costumes, bathing suits, summer dresses, men's suits formal and informal—giving a beautifully comprehensive idea of the clothes of the period.

We did similar events right into the 1980s at various locations in the area such as the Moncton Museum, Champlain Place Mall, Dorchester School, and Mount Allison. They were always popular and garnered a lot of interest for the Westmorland Historical Society. When Keillor House was officially opened, we kids spent many days at the museum, particularly that first summer, as so much was done by volunteers. We acted as tour guides, and often wore the costumes, too, especially if there was a special event like an afternoon tea or strawberry social. Wearing our costumes, we handed around trays of food and cups of tea or coffee to the throngs of guests. Looking back, it sometimes seems that we spent more time in Victorian costumes than we did

in our own clothes!

Once the Keillor House Museum was opened, local history and preservation became a more focussed interest for my mother. Getting everything in place to finally open the museum was quite a struggle at times, from raising the money to buying, restoring and setting up the house. And then there were more events to publicize the museum and raise yet more money. However, having done it once, the people involved knew it could be done again, and they began to discuss what other buildings might be saved in the same way.

The fundraising and events promoting local history began once again. There were afternoon teas at the Keillor House (and at one time in the County Jail, when it was briefly owned by the Historical Society). One summer, Professor Doug Manz from Mount Allison had a summer project doing *Son et lumière*, a sound and light show usually presented in an outdoor venue of historic significance, with special lighting effects projected onto the façade of a building and synchronized with recorded or live narration and music to dramatize the history of the place. Boat rides across the Memramcook River to Taylor village were organized to replicate the old ferry crossing that was used before the covered bridge was built. Trips were organized to other historic sites in the area. Lectures were arranged and lots more fashion shows and teas were put on. Mum and Dad were at every event, enjoying the fun.

We did some historical research of our own, too. Old Mr. Bannister from Dorchester had put many small hand-lettered signs around the Dorchester/Taylor village areas, pointing out all kinds of now long forgotten historical sites such as where old docks and buildings and families and businesses had been, back in the heyday of shipping and lumbering. Many a Sunday afternoon Dad would pile us into the car and drive us over to one of these spots, where we would hunt for Mr. Bannister's signs. Dad had the idea that somebody should catalogue and map them. But eventually we couldn't find them any more, lost to thickets and weather. They were a wealth of information, now sadly gone.

KATIE'S MEMORIES (CONT.)

In 1974, Lloyd Folkins was elected as MLA for the riding. He was very interested in continuing these historic projects, and had a wish that Dorchester could be restored and developed into something of an historic village, making a three-pronged point of interest in conjunction with King's Landing Historic Village, and Village Acadien. Dorchester certainly had the interesting history and beautiful buildings to merit preservation, and many people were keen to work towards this goal. I remember endless meetings at the kitchen table with politicians and historians, and of course local artisans like Laurie Reid and Percy Tower who were skilled at stone masonry and carpentry and all the other work that would need to be done. Anyone who wanted to be involved joined these meetings, all having long discussions of what could be done and how to do it.

Things now took on a much more professional tone. Unlike during the early years of the Westmorland Historical Society when volunteers did everything, now with more projects planned, and maintaining and managing Keillor House becoming more involved, things would need to be run in a business-like manner. Government money was going to be involved. Dorchester Heritage Properties was created to manage projects and property. Fundraising began in earnest and endless calls were made to government agencies to find out how to go about it, and where money could be sourced. The provincial government of the time, under Premier Richard Hatfield, was interested in promoting business in New Brunswick. The timing for Dorchester Heritage Properties was right. Money could be sourced. There would, however, be strings attached. While funding would be provided—initially for the Bell Inn project—the government was not interested in maintaining buildings in perpetuity. They would have to be self-sustaining, so businesses would have to be created or other ways found to bring in income. Mum had the idea that the Bell Inn would be the ideal place, given its history, for a small restaurant or tearoom.

After Dorchester lost the courthouse to fire in 1963, the registry offices and everything else moved to Moncton, taking away a considerable source of business from the village. After that, long time local businesses slowly disappeared. There was no longer anywhere to eat in Dorchester. It was hoped that a tea-

shop in the heart of the village would give locals a place to drop in and sit over a cup of tea or enjoy a nice meal. As well, the Bell Inn would have three apartments (later, two apartments and a doctor's office, before the restaurant took over the whole main floor), which would bring in a good income.

Another stipulation for the government funding was that hiring must be done locally. The village was officially categorized as an economically depressed area, so job creation was very important. Over the years, these projects and businesses provided many jobs and new skills for local people, often paying their way through university, too. While Mum managed the projects, the work was done under the guidance of a provincial architect, and sometimes the local workers wondered about decisions that were made. There was consternation when the architect decided that the original front door of the Bell Inn should be removed and the front remodelled to be what he felt was typical of the period and style of building. I remember Mum making endless phone calls, trying to find a way to stop this, as it seemed senseless to change what was original and unique to something that it had never been. However, the money was tied to the architect's decisions and so in the end, they had to accept what he wanted to do. These projects weren't always smooth going, when the red tape got tangled up.

The Bell Inn officially opened in 1979. It was followed by a series of projects, including Saint James' Presbyterian Church, now the textile museum; the old Payzant and Card grocery store, which now houses apartments and the Dorchester Library; and The Maples, built by Sir Pierre-Amand Landry, the first Acadian lawyer in New Brunswick (later provincial cabinet minister, judge and chief justice). It was years of work, getting the projects underway and seeing them through. Dad's business took him away more and more, so while he still enjoyed going to meetings of the Westmorland Historical Society, local history had more or less become Mum's "business". Our lives were steeped in the old buildings of Dorchester.

KATIE'S MEMORIES (CONT.)

Through all the hard work and endless time spent on these projects, Mum never lost her passion for the value of preservation. Always keenly interested in her surroundings, she did water colours of buildings and costumes and landscapes. Believing in the importance of Acadian and local Mi'kmaq history, she often joined in events in both communities, and spent many an afternoon talking to Louis Knockwood or Dorothy Nye about the old traditions, or what plants were used medicinally, or techniques for crafts. Mum and Betty Adams, who now ran the craft shop attached to the Bell Inn, began to make exquisite replica costumes in order to preserve the originals, and the museum became well known for its costume collection, which it often lent to other organizations such as the one that put on the New Brunswick bi-centennial celebrations. They did workshops for other historical organizations, teaching them skills they had mastered through the years. Mum's background in costume and fashion design proved very useful, and Betty was an excellent seamstress and quilter. Their work is still displayed today.

In the 1980s, Dad was beginning to think about retirement. He and Mum decided that Rocklyn would make a good Bed and Breakfast that would also bring in a retirement income. They began to take in guests. They came from all walks of life: bird watchers coming to see the sand pipers down at the beach, visitors to the Penitentiary, academics visiting Mount Allison, tourists travelling by the back roads. Many stopped in just to see the interesting old house, and ended up staying for bed and breakfast. Mum and Dad would sit with the guests in the evening, telling them tales of history and local lore. The guests loved this, often writing afterwards to tell them how it had inspired them to get to know more both about this area and, if they were tourists, about their own areas. Often, the same people would come back to stay year after year, always being sure to visit Keillor House and the Bell Inn restaurant,

the latter now expanded and run by David McAllister and Wayne Jones – and never out of the *Where to Eat in Canada* guide since the very first year.

Mum was honoured for all her years of dedication. In December 1983, she was made a Member of the Order of Canada. Her official biography line reads, "Sylvia Yeoman deserves her reputation as 'amiable steamroller' in her efforts to preserve the New Brunswick heritage. After a period as teacher and fashion designer she vigorously campaigned to restore historic buildings at Dorchester, New Brunswick, and helped to develop museums, libraries and historical societies." As kids, it was a family joke, whenever someone asked, "Where's Mum?" we would always answer, "She's at the Keillor House." She did indeed work tirelessly!

Mark and Sylvia shared their love of history with all who were interested in the beautiful old house that always felt welcoming. But in 1989 Dad died. Mum continued to do Bed and Breakfast at Rocklyn. Continued to work on the various projects and plans. Participated in meetings and events and fundraisers. But it wasn't the same any more. Dorchester had changed. She didn't drive, and there was no longer bus service in and out of town. There were no more grocery stores, or any of the other businesses that had been there when we first arrived. Many of her old friends had moved out of the village and into Moncton or Sackville or farther. And without Dad, the house felt empty. After a few years, she sold Rocklyn and she and her sister moved to Annapolis Royal, a place of considerable history. One of the first things she did after moving there was to join the local historical society. "Now," she said, rubbing her hands. "What are we working on?" History is in her bones.

Katie Yeoman

REPORT ON THE KEILLOR PROJECT: IT'S ALL DONE BUT THE PRINTIN'

As promised, the editing of the manuscript has been completed and it will soon be ready for the printer. This is a big job in itself and one that should never be carried out by the author alone, who will always be his/her own worst editor. I was very fortunate to have the unstinting and totally voluntary aid of Rhianna Edwards, a retired professional archivist from Mount Allison who also happens to be a terrific editor with an uncanny eye for detail—right down to the spaces between the letters in the footnotes (and there are about 850 of them). Not only did she clean up the text to near perfection (I say 'near' because no one ever finds all the gremlins until after the printing), thus saving me from a number of embarrassing errors, she also drew my attention to some features of the 1871 census that I was unaware of and which led to an interesting addition to the story of Thomas Keillor, the one who inherited Keillor House from his father. As a result, I came closer than indicated in my last report to my original goal of an exhaustive account of all the Keillors who lived in Keillor House. Thomas and Mary Jane are still treated in an 'epilogue', but it is actually much more than an epilogue. Nonetheless, I decided to stay with the title *In Search of John Keillor: A Historian's Odyssey*, rather than *The Keillors of Keillor House*. In spite of the length of the epilogue and appendices, John still takes up the lion's share of the text and a good part of it is about finding the story as well as telling it.

For the particulars of what the book covers, what it is based on, and who might be interested in it, I refer you to the Report on the Keillor Project in the last issue of the *Newsletter*. Here I want to turn to a more delicate matter, namely money. The main motive in writing it was to leave a legacy for Keillor House, Keillor descendants and WHS that will enrich the museum experience (museum staff will find it particularly useful in preparing guided tours) and make a contribution to local history, particularly the history of Dorchester. But I also wanted to do some fundraising for the Society, and to that end every cent of the proceeds will go to it. To save on printing costs, and also because it makes it much easier to handle its 400-page bulk, it will be coil bound by Mount Allison reprographic services for about \$18.50 a copy. If we sell it at \$28.00 it should make a worthwhile contribution to our finances, provided we sell enough copies and are not stuck with an excessive number of unsold extras (minimum print run is 21 copies = \$388.50). It would help the cause immensely if I had some idea before printing of how much demand is out there. Should I start with 30 copies? 50? 75? (Remember, there is no limit per customer.) Drop me a line and let me know if you would like to do both yourself and the Society a favour by seizing on this once in a lifetime opportunity to find out *A Lot of Stuff on the Keillors and Much Else Besides* (the title I didn't use, but was tempted to). There will be a formal book launching (details to follow in the next *Newsletter*) but if you are in the area you can pick up your copy or copies from me from about March 1.

Gene Goodrich

goodrich@mta.ca or:

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Donations, Memberships and Newsletter

Submissions to:

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E-mail: keillorhouse@nb.aibn.com

www.keillorhousemuseum.com

Museum Hours

June 11 to Sept. 10 2016

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 1960 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: \$15.00

Family: \$20.00

Student: \$5.00

Life: \$150.00

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SALUTING OUR OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEERS

Red Alert! Alice needs fresh meat

As you know, Alice is the spider who catches all the flies that keep us going as a Society. She has quite a stock on hand—and wonderful specimens they are, too—but she would like to have some more in the web because the supply will be running low soon. A number of board members are reaching the end of their term and have to step down after the AGM by the terms of our bylaws. So she is asking you to step up, if you possibly can. She promises not to work you to exhaustion unless necessary and is particularly interested in folks with bright ideas who like to take an active part at meetings. (There are only about five a year and most survive them.)

Additionally, she would like some more help for the Mothers Day Tea on May 7. If you like to cook, make sandwiches, or are willing to donate something for the silent auction (jewellery, pictures, books, doodads, etc.), she can sure use you.

To enter Alice's web, call her at 379-6620 or email joansal@nbnet.nb.ca

Your faithful Editor