

WESTMORLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It's always a pleasure to acknowledge our exceptional volunteers—but especially to tell the story of a special volunteer whose remarkable work in support of the Keillor House over many years cannot be overstated. How can the Society justly recognize Alice's contribution?—this is a question the Board has frequently asked. Simply, what more can we say about Alice? In this and the next issue, Gene tells the story of Alice's involvement with the Society, from the early years working with Sylvia Yeoman, through many trials to our present success. It's a remarkable story of generosity—and on behalf of our Members, I want to thank you, Alice, for your dedication and for everything you have done.

Special thanks to Helen Petchey for her very interesting talk on the Chapman family—and their many contributions to the region, at the AGM. (Helen's book on the Palmers, and her other books are available in our gift shop.)

Opening Day--June 11th

Dr. Gene Goodrich's new book *In Search of John Keillor: A Historian's Odyssey* will be 'officially' launched 'at Keillor House on June 11, with Gene on site for signing. This definitive work on the Keillor family and their relatives, illuminates fascinating aspects of our early history and offers an insightful picture of day-to-day life. In his amusing way, Gene tells, as well, 'the story about the story'—how serendipity often leads the historian to new discoveries. (A full review article, will appear in our fall Newsletter.) For everyone interested in our early history, *In Search of John Keillor* must be on their bookshelf.

This year's new Exhibit *Homey Elegance, Aspiring Gentility: The Furniture Makers of Westmorland County 1785-1850* opens June 11, with new information about Westmorland County

furniture makers. Rare pieces from the Museum and private collections will be on display. Genie Coates and Gene Goodrich worked together on the research, then designed and developed the exhibit. Our thanks to Darrell Butler from Kings Landing and the New Brunswick Museum for sharing photos and information on the pieces in their collections.

A plaque honouring John Keillor will be unveiled and will be part of the Wall of Fame exhibit at the Dorchester Memorial Library. Thanks to Margaret Eaton and Gene Goodrich for their work on this project.

Many Thanks/Welcome Board Members

Six Board Members (five have served 9 years) are retiring this year: Marlene Hickman, Margaret Eaton, Eddy Bowes, Shirley Oliver, Genie Coates and Nancy Vogan. I was able to recognize them individually at the AGM and

KEILLOR HOUSE MUSEUM —SPECIAL EVENTS

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

Sandpiper Festival Breakfast at Keillor House Museum

July 23, 7:30-10:30 am

Pancake Breakfast \$7.00 and family rates

Heritage Fair at Keillor House & St. James

July 23, 12:00-4:00 pm

Try your hand at traditional skills, watch demonstrations and shop for artisan products.

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Homey Elegance Aspiring Gentility

THE FURNITURE MAKERS OF WESTMORLAND COUNTY



2016
Season Exhibit

Keillor
HOUSE MUSEUM

4974 Main Street
Dunsmuir, NB 2M1 2Z1
www.keillorhousemuseum.com

Keillor House Museum is mounting another special exhibit this season, inspired this time by an inspection tour of our furniture collection that Darrell Butler, Manager of Heritage Resources at King's Landing, made at our request in June 2012. The collection had come to the museum piecemeal from various donors over the years, many of whom did not know, or knew only in a general way, the provenance of their gift. As a result, we went for years without fully appreciating what we had.

Darrell's visit changed all that. An expert in antique furniture, he was able to tell us that a number of our pieces are much earlier than we had assumed, some of them dating to the late 18th and early 19th centuries—in other words to the period when Keillor House itself was built. Perhaps even more excitingly, he found half a dozen or so that either definitely were, or could well have been, made in this area.

This was indeed welcome and interesting news because Westmorland County was once home to furniture makers whose work will stand comparison to some of the best made in New Brunswick, itself long known to connoisseurs as the outstanding centre of fine furniture production in British North America. Among our rediscovered treasures are two drop-leaf tables, a chair and possibly a bedstead by Harmon Trueman of Point de Bute, who is also represented by pieces in the New Brunswick Museum and the King's Landing Collection; a secretary desk by Thomas Chapman of Point de Bute; and a but-

ler's desk possibly by George Evans of Dorchester.

These and three other items from the Keillor House Collection are supplemented by fourteen attractive colour panels of pieces now at the New Brunswick Museum, the Fort Beauséjour-Fort Cumberland Museum and King's Landing, and in several homes in Dorchester and Pointe de Bute. They include among others: a chair attributed to Frank Dobson of Jolicure; a schoolmaster's desk possibly by William Trueman Senior of Point de Bute; a blanket chest by John Bateman of Shediac; two chests of drawers, two beautiful tables and a secretary desk by Harmon Trueman; a very impressive secretary desk by George Evans of Dorchester; and a truly stunning cradle made for Queen Victoria's son, Prince Edward, later King Edward VII, by Evans' stepson and apprentice, Thomas Dixon, also of Dorchester.

The exhibit was put together by Gene Goodrich and Genie Coates with help from Judy Morison and Bob Hickman. Graphics are by Leslie van Patter, who also designed our new website.

wish to thank them again for their service. Although no longer on the Board, many of these ‘retired’ Board members wish to continue to volunteer!

The five new Board Members who will join us in 2016 include: Inga Hanson, Bob Hickman, Brian LeBlanc, Bernie Melanson, Bonnie Swift and Karen Trueman—a remarkable group with extensive experience in fields vital to the museum’s success. Thank you for joining us.

Bell Inn Update

A formal advertisement for lease of the Bell Inn has been posted and we continue to have a number of enthusiastic parties contacting us and visiting the site. As you know, since we now own all of the restaurant equipment and chattels, we can offer a ‘turnkey’ operation—a great advantage in this business. The Committee will conduct interviews with prospective lessees in the next few weeks.

Website

The website is up and running—and it is impressive. The Committee—George and Mary Balser, Margaret Eaton, Nancy Vogan, Gene Goodrich and Judy Morison, working with Leslie van Patter, have done a remarkable job. Their sustained and professional approach has given Keillor House one of the best—if not the best—website of its kind in the province. A special thanks to all of you for your commitment to this two year project and for hundreds of hours of work on a demanding time line. (The site, accessible at keillorhousemuseum.com, is very easy to navigate with many helpful links to related sites.) Congratulations to everyone on your successful launch.

As members can appreciate, with so much engagement by committed individuals—and an exciting calendar of 2016 events (*Newsletter*, p. 1), Keillor House is well prepared for another great season. (Just make sure you put us on your calendar!)

Cole Morison

WHAT CAN WE SAY ABOUT ALICE? A RETROSPECTIVE ON HER LIFE WITH WHS PART I BY GENE GOODRICH

Editor’s note: I have had this article in the pipeline for some time and was about to publish it when I got the bright idea of doing a mini-history of the Westmorland Historical Society inspired by one of Alice’s projects described below. It then occurred to me that it would be more appropriate to put the article on Alice at the end of the series. In the last number of issues you have read about the foundation and early history of WHS, the acquisition and restoration of Keillor House, Katie Yeoman’s memories of her parents and their involvement with the Society, and the history of the Bell Inn as well as the Bell Inn Restaurant. Now heeere’s Alice!

When I got one of our recent Newsletters back from the printer I called Alice on her cell phone to arrange a ‘folding and stuffing bee’ with some volunteers from Westmorland Institution whom she was supervising. (After printing, the Newsletters have to be folded and stuffed into labelled envelopes for mailing, a job that takes the better part of a day to do alone.) She said she had someone ‘here’ who could help as

soon as they were finished painting. ‘Here’ turned out to be the Bell Inn, and the painting turned out to be on an outside wall that needed a fair bit of touching up after several years since the last job. It also turned out that Alice was up there on the scaffolding painting right alongside her lads. Of course, knowing her, I wasn’t too surprised at that, but it did spur me to get going on a project I have had in mind for some time, namely to tell the story of her long love affair with the Westmorland Historical Society more fully than has been done. It also prompted me to do the folding and stuffing myself.

Anyone associated with the Westmorland Historical Society knows how central Alice Folkins is to every aspect of its mission. Whether as chief organizer of our special events, supervisor of our rental properties, behind-the-scenes Museum Manager—you name it, and she is always there at the very centre of things. But unless you research it a bit, it’s impossible to appreciate just how deep her commitment to WHS is, and how far back it goes. For the last twenty years, at least,

she has been its main pillar. What may be less well known is that she played an important role in the Society long before that. I know she has received much praise in the *Newsletter* and other places as well, but I think it's now high time to lay it all out a little more systematically. So far as I know, she plans to be with us for a long time yet, but that doesn't mean we should wait for her obituary to celebrate her achievement.



Alice serving at a Mother's Day Tea

In the Beginning

Alice first became involved with the Society in 1977, five years after she and her husband, Ritchie, moved to Dorchester from Sussex and started a family. To help support it, she worked in a hairdressing salon in Moncton. When the owner discovered that she is good in arithmetic he asked her to do the books at the end of each day. In the course of time, her eldest daughter became friends with a daughter of Laurie Read, who

was supervising the restoration of the Bell Inn. When he learned that Alice had been doing the books at the salon but was now on maternity leave and looking for part-time employment, he put the bug in Sylvia Yeoman's ear. (Sylvia, as most readers will know, was the WHS's main 'go getter' at that time.) The Society's bookkeeper, who was also doing the books for the Bell Inn project, wanted some time away from it. So, Sylvia offered Alice the job and the rest, as they say (and as I will say again a couple of times), is history. From bookkeeping she went on to preparing grant applications and getting more and more involved in the acquisition, restoration and maintenance of the various buildings the Society has collected over the years. Each of these projects led her ever deeper into a lifelong commitment that has called forth Herculean labours and selfless sacrifice for the public good, almost all of it as an unpaid volunteer. It really has to be one of the more remarkable volunteer stories of the age.

The Bell Inn

The first of these projects was the restoration of the Bell Inn. By the mid 1960s this once-charming chunk of Dorchester history was badly in need of some tender loving care. Fortunately, it was saved by WHS, which was still glorying in its triumphant rescue of the Keillor House. Eager to preserve more of the shiretown's architectural heritage, in 1976 the Society persuaded the provincial government to buy the Bell with the understanding that we would restore it, find a use for it and maintain it. This is where Alice came in. Sylvia set her to work filling out

grant application after grant application. They were mainly successful, and restoration proceeded apace under the general direction of the New Brunswick Historical Resources Administration (now defunct). The grand opening was held on June 28, 1980.

It was while preparing the grant applications for the Bell Inn that Alice and Sylvia formed the close partnership that would shape the Society's mission as a preserver of heritage buildings and give Alice the experience and self-confidence she needed to play an increasingly important role in that mission. Alice had always been shy and afraid to meet new people or to speak in public (hard as that is to believe today). Sylvia became her mentor in many ways, taking her to annual general meetings and making her introduce herself to strangers. The rest of the Board did its part by asking her for a financial report at the beginning of every meeting. Terrified at first, with the friendly support of Sylvia and Mark Yeoman, Ray Maybee, Bob Cunningham and Reg Bowser—all of whom she remembers with great fondness—she gradually gained confidence and turned into the outgoing, go-getting Alice we know today.

At first she was paid for her work and then the money ran out. Almost any one else would have followed it, but not Alice. Even in this short time she had become so attached to the Society and what it was doing for Dorchester that she just couldn't let it go. So she became a volunteer, doing the payrolls and other clerical work and helping Sylvia's daughter, Katie, with what eventually became the Bell Inn Restaurant. At the time of its restoration there was considerable discussion about how the 'Bell' would be used. Suggestions included a folklore research centre, an archive for historical records and a display space for handicraft skills, but none of these had much potential for bringing in revenue. To help sustain the building, Katie and her mother opened up a small tearoom in what is today just the south room of a three-room, fifty-seat restaurant. As described in the September 2014 issue of the *Newsletter*, the tearoom was a smashing success. At the end of its first year it was listed in *Where to Eat in Canada* and has remained there ever since. Even after the Yeomans passed the business on to David McAllister and Wayne Jones, Alice continued to play an important supportive role in it. For example, it was on her initiative and under her supervision that the closed-off doorway between the tearoom and the rest of the building was reopened so that the tearoom could expand into a full-blown restaurant. By this time WHS

owned the building, as the provincial government had given it to us in exchange for paying the back taxes that it had earlier said it would never ask for. It was because we owned it that Alice felt free to go ahead with the alteration. Only when an official from Heritage Branch noticed the new doorway and questioned her about it did she learn that permission is needed to alter a building that has been designated a heritage property, regardless of who owns it. When she explained that the doorway had been there before, all was forgiven. But it's not at all clear that the job would have gotten done if she had asked permission first, rather than begged forgiveness later. Much has been accomplished because of Alice's willingness to take the bull by the horns.

Landry House

The Landry House first came under the aegis of WHS in the early 1980s. Maria Sweeny, a granddaughter of Sir Pierre Armand Landry, had inherited it, but she was now dying of cancer and she wanted to make sure that it would be preserved. Heritage New Brunswick was interested but wanted to involve the Society in its restoration—for this building, too, was in very bad shape. A representative approached Sylvia and asked, if the government were to buy it, would the Society apply for grants and get it restored? This was agreed on and once again Alice made out all the grant applications and administered the payroll, at first as an employee but soon afterwards without compensation. In fact she went further and actually helped out on the job, lugging sheet-rock up to the third floor, among other things. After that she went home and did the bookwork every evening, then met every week with Laurie Read, the Supervisor of the project. This was a long-term project that went on the better part of a decade, for there was never enough grant money at any one time to finish the job. It just proceeded from hand to mouth as the money came in dribs and drabs. Some of it was from the federal government, earmarked to assist people on unemployment insurance. It was then that Alice realized just how important these restoration projects were to the community. For example, they provided an on-the-job training experience for a number of men fresh out of trade school who were finding difficulty getting started in their careers. During the Landry House project she had her last child, but even that did not interrupt her service to the Society and the community. When the stork arrived ten days early, Alice did one of the payrolls from her hospital bed, almost immediately after the delivery. "Well, it had to be done," she said. "Otherwise the men wouldn't get paid on

time." As anyone who knows her could testify, this kind of concern for others, rather than for herself, is the very essence of Alice.

After limping along for years from grant to grant—all of them managed by Alice—the restoration was finally completed in the early 1990s. Then the question arose: how to sustain the building? She and Sylvia came up with the idea of dividing it into apartments and bringing in tenants. Of course there wasn't much money to hire the work done, so guess who volunteered to help with the patching and painting, etc. One of the tenants was the village, which was looking for a place to accommodate a medical centre. For a while, a Sackville physician served the community from the Landry House. When he was forced to retire for his own health reasons the ladies tried using the space for the museum gift shop. When this didn't work out either (it was just too inconvenient for most museum visitors), they decided to convert it into another apartment. There was a small problem, however. The restoration grants had run out and there was no ready money for this purpose. So Alice convinced Warren Folkins, a local contractor who is also her brother-in-law, to do the job on his own dime and wait for the rent to start rolling in before being paid back over time—with no interest. With rent-paying tenants the goal was met. The building was restored and saved for posterity and it not only began to pay for itself, it even generated a small profit to boot. And all this was accomplished at a time when the Society didn't even own it! A decade later, after ownership had been transferred, it was time for another restoration. Leaks had sprung, wood had rotted and paint had peeled. Fortunately, by this time the wonderful relationship with Westmorland Institution that we will learn about in the next issue had developed, thanks also in very large measure to Alice. Through a combination of her keenly honed grant-getting skills and the volunteer labour of inmates on the Institution's work release programme, Landry House was repaired, repainted and secured for the future. Now for sale, it should prove a sound investment for its future owner, who will also have much to thank Alice for.

Just because she was doing all this as a volunteer (and much more besides, as we shall see) didn't mean that she and her growing family didn't have to eat, just like everyone else. So that she "could afford to be a volunteer," as she jokingly says, she took a job as Executive Assistant to the Director of the Atlantic Waterfowl Celebration in Sackville during the years 1990-92. Put in charge of marketing, she played an important role in several award-winning projects. In 1995 she enrolled in the business technology programme at the community college and after graduation secured a position at the Royal Bank call centre. Starting as an electronic receptionist helping customers with mortgage applications, etc., she was soon promoted to being a support person for other receptionists and after that to a customer care representative

assisting clients with their banking concerns. As anyone who knows her would suspect, she was a valuable and valued employee throughout her career with the bank.

St. James Textile Museum

After its congregation dissolved in 1968, the St. James Presbyterian Church languished in an increasingly dilapidated condition until it was deeded to WHS about 1985. Once again, it was Sylvia and Alice who found a use for a historic building and engineered its restoration. During the 1970s, Pam Black, a passionate life-long weaver, opened a textile studio in the Beachkirk United Church at Upper Cape, which had been similarly decommissioned. There she amassed a wonderful collection of artifacts that included a hand-made loom dating from about 1800, a complete set of the tools required to turn raw fibre into cloth (carders, breaks, clock swifts, spinning wheels etc.), a fine collection of historic textiles as well as many workshop and farming tools such as hand-made rakes, lathes and the like. However, by 1984 her eyesight was failing and, to top matters off, her studio had been vandalized. (The miscreants had even tried to set fire to it.) Worried about its future, she contacted Sylvia, who in turn contacted Heritage New Brunswick and a temporary solution was found. Pam ran the studio as a museum and WHS paid for additional staff out of its grant money. In the meantime Alice procured additional grants to fix up St. James so that the collection could be moved to it. The stained glass windows, which had suffered considerable damage, were professionally restored by Cuppon's Studio in Saint John, while a number of local people were hired to do the scraping, painting, etc. (At this point the fruitful relationship with Westmorland Institution was still in the future.)

After the collection was moved to Dorchester Alice got another grant to catalogue it. From it, WHS was able to pay Pam a salary to lead the project while Alice and Betty Adams volunteered their time to help her—in the dead of winter with only minimal heating. With the St. James Textile Museum up and running, Alice began to think about how WHS could assure its future, as Pam still owned the collection and there was as yet no plan as to what would become of it upon her demise. After considerable discussion Alice persuaded her to donate it to the Society in return for a tax credit on its assessed value. At that time (around 1989) WHS was so poor that it didn't have the money to pay for the appraisal, so Pam generously agreed to do so herself—and was glad she did: it came in at a cool \$100,000, a win-win development, to put it mildly!

After this coup, Alice trained her sights on getting the outside of the church fixed up again, as the first restoration project had left many things undone. By this time, volunteer labour from the

Westmorland Institute was becoming available and, with help from Diane Nicholson, the then Museum Manager, she made it even more cost effective by procuring a grant from Benjamin Moore and sweet-talking them into donating \$5000 worth of paint to boot.

But of course she didn't stop there. She also applied for and got a Built Heritage grant that met dollar for dollar whatever the Society could raise either in money or "in kind." Since volunteer labour counted as "kind," she was able to turn the inmates' contribution, reckoned at the going rate for such work, into matching cash from Heritage. This was then used for a new roof. Sylvia used to say that Alice can turn dimes into dollars, and it was hardly an exaggeration. Although it would be impossible to calculate it exactly, if we include the value of the grants, the volunteer labour and the assessed value of the Beachkirk Collection, she and Sylvia added at least \$300,000 in assets to the Society, just on the St. James project alone.

Payzant-Card

The St. James Textile Museum was great training for Alice's next project. The museum was no sooner finished than the Society got the news that the village was going to bulldoze the Payzant & Card Building. This was not without considerable justification. It was owned by a Moncton slumlord who had done the profession proud. Known locally as "the beehive," it was divided into no less than eleven shabby apartments and some of the tenants were so slovenly that even the cockroaches were disgusted, although not enough to leave. Broken windows and the artifacts of evening reveries strewn into the street were a common sight. Finally, someone from the Department of Health literally waded into the building wearing rubber boots in order to protect himself from the bugs, and it was duly condemned. Nonetheless, the Executive of the Society was appalled at the prospect of losing yet another historic building. (Reg Bowser had done considerable research into local history and knew that it had once proudly stood as the Weldon Hotel and later the Payzant-Card general store.) President Ray Maybee approached the village, which had taken it over for unpaid sewer bills (\$20,000!), and not a moment too soon: the bulldozer was already on site, ready to go. He bought it for a dollar with the stipulation that it had to be boarded up within twenty-four hours, remarking as he handed over the money, "Here's a loony from a loony." (The coin was just then coming into circulation.) With the dozer idling impatiently in the background he, Reg and a few others got the job done with only an hour to spare. Then the real fun began. The Society agreed to put

in a village library once the building was fixed up, as the current one had also been ripening as 'dozer bait' for some time. (It was on the 'to do list' a few years before, but was miraculously spared when some genius sent a crew to wreck the wrong building and no one could persuade the foreman that it was a mistake.) Alice was told to apply for a grant, which of course she did successfully. Unfortunately, only after it came through was it learned that the village wanted certain changes to the lighting in order to accommodate the heavy book cases, something that would put the project over budget by about \$20,000. Nonetheless, the Society, and particularly Alice, was determined to go ahead. The old library was now scheduled for demolition and she knew that the new one had to be ready before that happened, because if the village ever lost its library, even for a short time, it would stay lost. The Society didn't have the money to finish the job and it couldn't apply for another grant until this one was spent, so she and Sylvia personally guaranteed a loan to cover the shortfall. The loan officer shook her head in wonder at this selfless act, as most people would, but, as Alice explained, "Sylvia and I wanted this village to survive and everything in it that we could possibly bring in." The village certainly has reason to be grateful. Not only did it get a new library for nothing, for fifteen years it paid only minimal rent. That's how it recovered its unpaid sewage bill.



The two pillars

Clearly, the building wasn't going to be sustained by the library alone so Alice and Sylvia (who had pretty much become the main pillars of WHS by this time) decided that it needed some apartments to bring in

revenue. But first they had to scare up about \$105,000 to renovate the interior. Alice got a grant of \$25,000 from New Brunswick Housing, leaving another \$80,000 to raise, which they did by mortgaging the Bell Inn. One reason the renovation was so expensive was that the bearing walls in the library had to be matched with the structural supports in the basement. She and Sylvia decided where the walls should go and Alice contacted a Sackville engineer she happened to know (she had gotten very good at finding the right people at the right time) and got him to draw up the plans. Once again, Warren Folkins did the work for a good price. The apartments were finished, tenants were found (by 'guess who')

and rents were collected (also by 'guess who', the same 'guess who' who still does the bookkeeping). The cockroaches were given their eviction notice.

Alice also seized the opportunity to involve the local Lions' Club in the preservation of the building. (Both Warren and her husband, Ritchie, are long-time members.) The Lions didn't have a meetinghouse, so Alice cut a deal. If they would assist with one project or fundraiser a year for it, they could have a room rent-free, which WHS also uses on occasion for Board meetings. Thus, both organizations make good use of the table and chairs that Alice scrounged from Atlantic Wholesalers when it moved from Sackville—that's how the room got furnished.

Nor was this the end of alterations to the building. When the Society took it over, the basement had only about a foot of crawls space; in other words it hardly had a basement at all. But Alice felt that it needed one because the Society had acquired quite a collection of farm equipment, and the Fire Department needed storage for its historic fire engines and other paraphernalia. Even if there was no space to display it, it still needed to be stored. So Alice decided to put in a basement. She started by buying a codebook and familiarizing herself with the technical details to make sure it would be done correctly. With some preliminary sketches in hand she again approached her Sackville engineer and asked him to verify that the plans were up to snuff. He said that the supports would have to go beyond code because of the weight of the books in the library. Rather than being wood, they would have to be structural steel. He then drew up the needed engineer's plans, but this time he had to charge a fee, as his name was on them, and he could be liable if anything went wrong. When Alice priced his modifications at an additional \$17,000, her heart sank, but not for long. When she heard that the CN shops in Moncton were closing (by this time her ear was constantly on the ground listening for opportunities), she was advised to get in touch with Gary Wiggins, a Dorchester local, who was aware of what the CN shops were tearing down and what might be available that we could use. As a result of her initiative, he brought down steel girders to Dorchester and installed them—all for \$4000. When her Sackville engineer inspected the job, he was mightily impressed. "My God, Alice," he said. "I shouldn't have worried. A fully loaded tractor-trailer could run through this building and it would never go down. You're an overachiever." No exaggeration, that.

After the library was completed, government grants dried up almost completely, victims of the austerity programmes instituted in the early 1990s. So now Alice and Sylvia turned to fundraising to keep it going. To elaborate on just one exam-

ple: the New Brunswick Museum gave the Society a number of items that it considered surplus with the understanding that it could add them to its collections or sell them. Since they were not vital to the collections, they sold them and gave the proceeds to the library. They also sold other items that people donated for the purpose, put on suppers and generally did whatever they could to support it. Counting the grants, fundraisers and volunteer labour—which included a paint job by our friends at Westmorland Institution—she and Sylvia added over \$350,000 of value to the Society with the Payzant-Card project, and it was largely Alice who made it happen.

Of course, everyone was duly grateful. In fact the province was so grateful that it offered to give WHS the Sir Albert Smith House (Woodlawn) and throw in the old provincial jail for good measure. This time Alice had to say no, as she just couldn't do any more. This may seem like a paltry excuse since, except for the above mentioned work for WHS, she was only holding down a full-time job at the bank, volunteering at the local food bank (she was a founding member), participating in the activities of the Lioness's Club (a founding member), sitting on the school board (eleven years), working with a youth club (which she and two others organized), teaching Sunday School and raising five kids. But I guess we all have our selfish moments.

To be continued

A FAMILY FOR ALL SEASONS BY DOUGLAS HOW

Editor's Note: In the last issue we reprinted a delightful article on 'hanging around' that Dorchester's man of letters, Douglas How, had published in 1973, and that Bessie Chapman had saved and treasured for many years before sharing it with Judy Morison. It was wonderfully evocative of Dorchester life in the 1930s, 40s and early 50s, and a great addition to the series of 'Dorchester Memories' that have appeared in the Newsletter from time to time. Not surprisingly, the response has been positive, and it has encouraged me to add another of Doug's pieces reflecting on his youth in his beloved village. This time it's about his family, and it was saved by Judy Morison from an old issue of the Reader's Digest. The date of the article has disappeared from Judy's scrapbook, but from Doug's statement that he was sixty-one at the time of writing, and knowing that he was born in 1919, I cleverly deduced that it was written about 1980.

One day in the 1950s I went to visit two of my aunts who were living together in their old age. One, as she habitually did, was reading *True Confessions*. The other was reading the Bible, the meridian of her life. The first was volatile, temperamental. The second was placid, reserved, a pillar for years of her church. When I compared their reading material, they both chuckled. "In a family," the volatile aunt twinkled, "you get all kinds."

They were members of my extended family, though that term meant nothing to me then. It was only later, during the 70s, when I was a middle-aged student at New Brunswick's Mount Allison University, that the words gained significance for me. An American professor studying this sociological phenomenon commented that in an increasingly urban, restless and nomadic North American society, the notion was fading. But here, he said, it remained a term with relevance. Around the room young students pricked up their ears. So did I. Something happened inside my brain.

Of course, I thought, that's what we were in growing up. All those uncles and aunts and cousins within a relatively few miles: a network up to four generations deep, some carefully tabulated in family Bibles, all tabulated in some endless genealogical quilting of the mind. All mattering in some special way.

The term 'extended family', I thought, explains not only them but what my mother did when she became a widow at thirty-one. That's why she left Winnipeg and came home to her New Brunswick village to raise her family of four. It was her extended family that drew her back to the strengths it had, and she was wise because strengths there were. I'm sixty-one now and I've never ceased to be grateful for the decision she made.

My mother and father had uprooted themselves and gone to Winnipeg as two Maritimers caught up in the settling of the West. They met there and married in 1911. Then, abruptly, ten years later, she was alone. She had been a pretty, some even

said a vain, young girl. She became a courageous, beloved woman, without complaints, with fears and apprehensions she kept from all of us. On an income that varied over the years between \$40 and \$60 a month, she gave us a sense of security, of respect and belonging.

It was a sense deepened and enlivened by that extended family. My mother's people, the Dobsons and Chapmans, had lived in our part of the Maritimes ever since the arrival in the 1770s of what are known as the Yorkshire settlers. Some had lived for more than a century in and around our village, Dorchester, a county shire town of 800 on a hill overlooking a tawny sweep of marsh and an inlet of the Bay of Fundy. It was a place of stately homes and fading eminence. To outsiders it was the town where the penitentiary was; to me and many others, it was a happy, Tom Sawyer-like place to grow up.

There I found family fitting into that realm of things where individuals reach out for strengths beyond themselves. It was a miniature, yet more intimate parallel of ties that bound you to community, nation, monarch, God. It was rooted in blood, sanctified by time, entrenched in a sense of place. It had a loyalty, patriotism, even a code all of its own. In its variety, it was an introduction to the landscapes of life itself.

Depending on how you looked at it, our extended family included well-to-do relatives and poor relatives, Liberal relatives and Conservative relatives, Protestant relatives and a few Catholic relatives, farm, village and nearby city relatives, sober relatives and some who drank too much. There was one great uncle who boasted that his general store did the biggest business in town. Across the dusty main street stood a shabby rival, an edifice so ramshackle, so cobwebbed and drab that its survival was sheer mystery. People joked about the old man who ran it. We didn't. He was family.

Some relatives were technically cousins. If they were old enough, we called them uncles and aunts. In the Post Office, a relative greeted you as family through the narrow wicket, her cheeks as red as apples, her eyes so merry there was dancing in them. There was the Chapman great uncle with the outsized Chapman nose, and the Dobson uncle who slugged it one day in an episode of anger.

There was the pretty cousin who did something that still reminds me of a migratory bird returning home. She crossed the continent on a visit from Vancouver, fell in love, married and settled down where her mother had

been young. Then her sister came and did precisely the same. There were relatives who "had to get married" and others who "married beneath themselves." There were other family skeletons tucked away in family closets, lingering memories of slights, hurts and modest infamies which would at times erupt into embarrassing revelation, then be tucked away again.

Sometimes we held big clan picnics at the beach, with old people and young people and babies to reinforce our ranks, with food overflowing around bonfires, with gossip and reunions and people saying someone's looks were the spitting image of someone else's. It all stood there before you, the trunk and limbs and twigs of the family tree.

Through wounded relatives, there lingered memories of World War I. Through farm relatives, we felt the forces that were inexorably eroding the family farm. Through gone and distant relatives, we felt the pull of cities, the decline of villages like our own.

Having no father, no grandparents still around, I suppose I was particularly vulnerable to all this. An uncle helped my mother financially throughout her life. But he was distant, remote, even unknown. The local extended family supported her in other ways. Its elaborate hierarchy became part of me. I was confused by two uncles diametrically opposed to each other. I came close to worshipping my mother's only brother, Frank Dobson. He was the personification of what a family could be. It was said that when his mother died, young, of cancer, he vanished after the funeral and spent the night on her grave, a teen-ager sobbing heartbreak into the mystery of death. He would never talk about it. He went off to war and was twice wounded, and he would never talk about that either. He worked long hours, a six-day week, and he and Aunt Laura had five children of their own. Yet each Saturday night he came, tall, ruler-straight, up the walk to visit my mother. On Christmas Eve he came to help decorate the tree.

On Sundays he took his children to visit his oldest sister, Maud, and her husband, Ed Turner, on their farm just outside town. Though they had four children of their own and a brutal, never-mentioned struggle with a mortgage, it was they who had taken him and his kid sister, Nin, in when their mother died. It was they who took us in for a time when we arrived from Winnipeg, who provided us with milk and other things free for years. I thought of them as great oak trees, bulwarks in my life.

Through the boisterous Moncton family of Uncle Fred and Aunt Nin Cosman, visits even became a way of life. They had, in all, fifteen children, two of whom died young, and to provide for them in the Depression years, Fred worked at not one but four jobs. The main one was with the railway; but he also kept the

books for another firm at night, then left to lead his band at dances. On Sundays, in the family basement, he gave music lessons. For some time he also had another sideline, making crystal sets. Through the earphones of one that he brought us, I heard, thin and distant, my first radio.

Our twenty-four local first cousins became, in fact, virtually brothers and sisters to us, sharing secrets, teasing, laughter, growing up. Nevertheless, the person who stood unquestioned at the very zenith of our family was my great-great-aunt Em. She lived in a spacious, handsome old wooden house, and she marched through the lives of relatives like some stern and certain queen. This was strange in a way because in her youth she herself had defied the family's dismay and run off with a waif of a boy who worked in her brother's shipyard. She had come back late in life, rich, it seemed to the rest of us, because the waif had risen to become Commodore of a steamship company, and as Captain Edmund O'Neal had been awarded a gold watch inscribed by the Kaiser for a daring rescue at sea.

We lived with Aunt Em for some time, and later visited often. I thought of her in words that began with capitals. She was Old; she had Money; she had Firm Opinions. One was that my brother should not play with a Hickman because the Chapmans and the Hickmans had been bitter rivals in their shipbuilding days. She bore the family flag high in Society. She had the best car in town, a long and lordly Buick, and she had brought with her from Scotland a chauffeur to drive it and his wife to be her maid. For some years my friend the chauffeur cut my hair in the kitchen and provided a regular supply of British penny dreadfuls which bared to me for the first time the precocious range of the human imagination.

In 1931, just as the Depression settled in and I was twelve, Aunt Em died. In the years since, the extended family has grown, put out new branches. The war and the prosperity that followed scattered much of it as I'd known it. I left too and was away from the Maritimes for years. Yet all that time I remained an exile thinking of home. Eleven years ago I came back, drawn, I suspect, as my mother was, to the roots our extended family had fashioned in our lives.

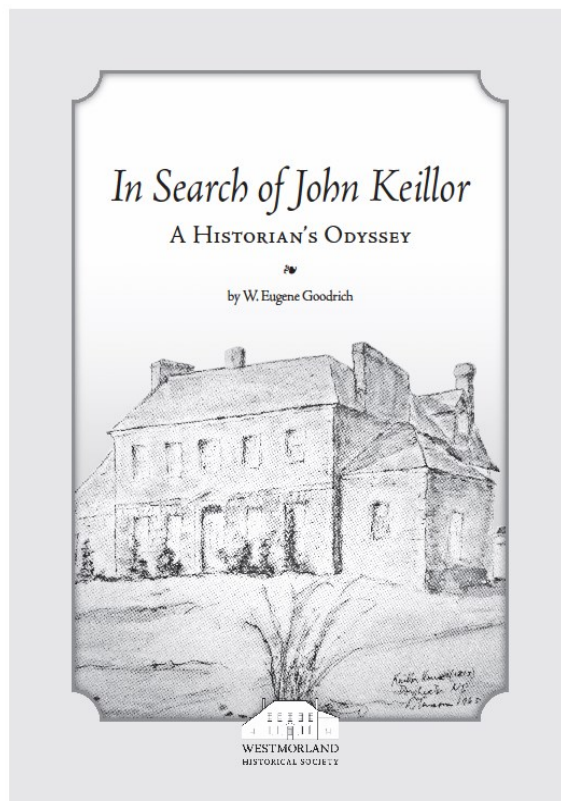
I have never regretted it. Though the family of my youth has vastly changed, the ties are still there, unspoken, remembered, prized. On a recent trip I called on my mother's sister Nin, still laughing at eighty-four, on a first cousin of my mother, on two first cousins of my own.

We talked family by the hour.

Psssst! Have you seen our new website? The Website Committee is proud to announce that our new website is up and running. It looks great thanks to our designer, Leslie van Patter, and there is lots of good stuff on it, thanks to the work of the Website Committee: Judy Morison, Mary and George Balser, Margaret Eaton, Nancy Vogan, and Gene Goodrich.

Check it out at keillorhousemuseum.com



New Publication by WHS

W. Eugene Goodrich, *In Search of John Keillor, A Historian's Odyssey* (2016): Based on virtually all the surviving evidence, this definitive analysis tells the story of the Dorchester Keillors about as fully as it can be told. It also tells the sometimes-harrowing tale of how evidence survives—or doesn't—and is often discovered by serendipity as much as by methodical research. Because very little direct evidence—diaries, personal letters, family traditions, etc.—exists for the Keillors, most of the story is reconstructed from the indirect and unwitting testimony of land grants, petitions, deeds of purchase and sale, wills, estate inventories, account books, business letters, court records, miscellaneous family papers (unfortunately, not the Keillors', as they left none), tombstones, genealogical records and other silent witnesses, including Keillor House itself. It can be difficult to wring a coherent story from such diverse sources, but in compensation they offer much interesting and valuable information on many more topics and people than just the Keillors, and this is fully integrated into the odyssey. Besides Keillor descendants and members of the Westmorland Historical Society, this book will appeal to anyone interested in the early history of the Chignecto, and especially of Dorchester.

Price: \$28.00 (coil bound). All proceeds go to the Westmorland Historical Society.

The official launch will be held on Opening Day, June 11 and the book will be available at the Keillor House Gift Shop, at Tan-tramar Heritage Trust, Sackville, or from the author: (506) 536-1143 or goodrich@mta.ca



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 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

Research Associates

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SALUTING OUR OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEERS

Urgent Message from Alice

Volunteers have always been very important to the Society's operations, and this year they are more so than ever due to the changes in the province's SEED (Student Employment Experience Development) grants. Under the new rules, prospective employers are no longer able to know in advance which students qualify to work under this programme. Instead, we have to rely on applications from the students, who are mailed a voucher and left to decide for themselves what kind of work to apply for—whether it be at the local museum or their favourite amusement park.

Unless there are some last minute changes in the rules, we will have to depend on our volunteers to keep the doors open during the hours we have advertised. Can you help? We urgently need volunteers, not just for the special events, but also during the times the museum is open for tours.

Let me know if you are interested in being a craft demonstrator or volunteer tour guide. I can be reached at 379-6620 or by E-mail joansal@nbnet.nb.ca.

Alice Folkins,
Museum Manager and Activities Coordinator