

WESTMORLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Thanks to the work of many dedicated volunteers and our new staff, the 2017 season promises to be outstanding with a very full calendar of events and the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the opening of Keillor House. (See *Calendar of Events 2017* enclosed)

Past and Upcoming Events

Our Mother's Day Tea (May 13) was sold out and raised over \$1,000 for the museum. Susan Spence organized the silent auction and sold most of the tickets!—thank you, Susan. Debbie Macdonald, Kathy Bowser and Alice helped serve, and many others volunteered to make the sandwiches and sweets. Well done.

At this year's opening, 'John Keillor' will be officiating—in person, and will reflect upon the significance of our 50 years of operation. We will also celebrate Cana-

da's 150th with the Shiretown Festival, offering free musical and cultural entertainment (Eddy Poirier, Chris Cummings, Stacey Read's Junior Jills, aboriginal drummer and story teller Gilbert Sewell), and a "Taste of Westmorland" supper at the Veteran's Centre. The Special Exhibit 'Homey Elegance, Aspiring Gentility: The Furniture Makers of Westmorland County' will be open and the museum will offer free tours for the day. Listen for the bagpipes and watch the Shiretown Parade at 1:00pm. The day before—at 6:00 pm, will also feature free musical and cultural entertainment (Frantically Atlantic, Ray Legere, Cyril MacPhee) and a 'Taste of Westmorland' Sample Foods, with food from our founding cultures—bannock, cheese, chicken fricot, blueberry and maple deserts, scones and preserves, and many others. (All of these activities are possible because of

Alice's successful application for a Canada 150 Grant.)

One Sunday (June 11) Frantically Atlantic will present a repertoire of songs, tunes and yarns reflecting Celtic and Acadian traditions, and Valdy—a Canadian folk icon, will return to Shepody House. Mrs. B's at the Bell Inn will offer a special meal to follow the concert at Shepody House. 5:00 pm. (Reservations at 506 540-00390).

Canada Day will feature special music and entertainment including the play 'Four Fathers of Confederation'—an original production which investigates the 'events' (and opinions) surrounding the Confederation debates. Children's games, cake and ice cream will be served at the Dorchester Veteran's Centre, 1:00 to 3:00 pm.

The Sandpiper Breakfast (July 29) will take place from 7:30 to 10:30 am at

KEILLOR HOUSE MUSEUM — SPECIAL EVENTS

Canada Day- Dorchester Veterans' Centre

July 1, 1:00-3:00

Special music and entertainment, children's games, cake and ice cream.

Keillor House and St. James Museums tours available 10:00 to 12:00 and 3:00 to 5:00.

Sandpiper Festival Breakfast-Keillor House Museum

July 22, 7:30-10:30

Saturday Pancake Breakfast: pancakes, sausages, baked beans, muffins.

\$7.00 and family rates

506-379-6633

www.keillorhousemuseum.com

Dinner with the Keillors- Keillor House Museum

September 9, 6:00 pm

Enjoy a roast beef dinner — soup, supper, dessert as it would have been served in the 1800's. One glass of wine included.

\$25.00 and family rates

Call for tickets — reservations required.

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DORCHESTER MEMORIES: JIM HOW

“IT WAS BETTER IN THE OLD DAYS”

If you read the article on ‘Captain Edmund O’Neil, Aunt ‘Em’ and the Kaiser’s Watch’ in the last issue (and shame on you if you didn’t), you may remember that it was Don Chapman of Mission, BC who has the watch and sent the pictures as well as some interesting information on Capt. O’Neil. Well, it turns out that Don’s father, Stewart, was a good friend of Jim How, the older brother of Dorchester’s man of letters, Doug How, whose writings have occasionally graced the pages of this Newsletter. Sometime about 1994, Stewart visited with Jim and they got to talking about the good old days in Dorchester where Jim grew up along with Doug in the twenties, thirties and forties of the last century. Also turns out that Jim was a great raconteur just like his brother, and that Stewart just happened to have a voice recorder on him. He passed the audio files on to Don and when Don mentioned them to me, of course I just had to have a listen. Knowing a good thing when I hear it, I asked my new research assistant, Jamie Heap, to transcribe them. Here is a sample that I think is quite evocative of certain aspects of Dorchester life back in the “good old days.” We will probably bring you more from time to time.

Gene Goodrich

"It was better in the old days. I can remember visiting the farms of Ed Turner and my Aunt Jenny McEwen. And going out there, how comforting it was. Lamps were still in vogue in those days, and when you went to bed, you went upstairs, someone was carrying a lamp, and the shadows kept rolling, back and forth. It was a sensation, a comfort to hear the people talking. And to see the glow of the top of the stove, and that drink of tea before they went to bed. And the tide (telephone operator) was gathering all of the information that you poor suckers are stuck with. He's sitting in the corner with his hand over the mouth-piece getting all of the scuttlebutt over the party line.



And it was on a Friday night when the stores stayed open that Aunt Jenny would harness the horse car. I can still see this white Arabian carriage horse. And the way she'd go to Dorchester down to the old Herb Palmer store, the Payzant Card. And Murray Dobson had a little store there and a little restaurant came about. There were two lampposts in the square. We got our electricity generated from the penitentiary system.

The ladies would all go to the dry goods centre at Herb Palmer's. And that was in the days of F.C. Palmer. He's long since gone and Herb's gone and the old house is just dilapidated. Things go on and they don't go on. But they would go there and they would get all the gossip. They were just hungry for it. Then at about ten o'clock the store closed and you'd see the guys coming because one had a crock of beer or something. He brought it through Fairfield and give it to the guys out there at the Cape. There'd be a few bloody noses. Then you'd hear the sound of the iron-tired wagons and clippity-clop of the horses. And they're all gone back to the farms.

And they got enough there. They were saturated, their belief in humanity restored. All this gets around. And it's like folklore really. It's no different than being on the Internet. Eighteen year-olds, some as young as ten or eleven—the things they can conjure up. I remember I bought an encyclopaedia set one time. It was after the Second World War. I was still taking a course—it must have been in 1947. I bought a set from a guy selling Encyclopaedia Britannica, and I doubt I've read one hundred pages in forty-five years. If we had a computer back in my day, we'd be just as smart with them as kids are today. I got all my education on the back of a scribbler page: multiplication times tables. It was better in the old days."

the Keillor House (\$7.00) with special family rates. The Heritage Fair will follow, from noon to 4:00 pm. Try your hand at traditional skills and shop for artisan products. At 2:00 pm we will launch the *Dorchester Historic Walking Tour Guide—Celebrating 150 Years in Dorchester*. It should be a great day!

New Staff for 2017

Donald Alward, our new Museum Manager, has been at work since April ‘getting up to speed’ on the Museum and events planned for 2017. This year the Association Heritage New Brunswick introduces the ‘Collective Access’ initiative which involves putting collections data on the ‘cloud’—making it accessible to curators via the internet. He is applying for two computers under the ‘Computers for Schools’ program and may purchase a third if necessary for the new collections management system. Donald is also interested in having the Board ‘update’ our current museum policies and procedures and will work with Inga Hansen on this project.

He has reorganized the Gift Shop to better showplace items and provide improved ‘circulation’ and is also investigating a new payment system for credit/debit transactions, the ‘Pay D’ system, which would allow us ‘off site’ access.

We have hired four new staff for the season, and they bring a wealth of talent and experience with them.

Faye Campbell, a recent graduate of Dalhousie/Kings (Honours Anthropology), will pursue a Master’s Degree in Museums and Curatorial Studies next year, and has volunteered at the Museum of Natural History (Halifax) and the Royal Ontario Museum (Toronto). Faye has facilitated educational, ecological and ‘discovery’ programs, and looks forward to working with Donald to improve her curatorial knowledge and skills. Her thesis explored ‘the perceptions of curators regarding Indigenous (re)presentation...in the museological and art worlds in Atlantic Canada.’ Faye is fluently bilingual.

Dallas Steen, a bilingual French major at Mt. Allison, earned a BED in education (Moncton), and has worked as a program assistant/leader at Magnetic Hill and Resurgo Place. Dallas has guided tours, supervised students and intends to pursue a teaching career. She will work on programming events and activities—as well as guiding tours.

Our two high school students are Alanna Mitton and Lucas Doucette. Alanna, who is in Grade 11 at Tantramar, has volunteered for two years at Keillor House (Haunted House Tours) and has a keen interest in Dorchester and its history. Lucas is on the Honour Roll (Moncton High), has won numerous academic awards, tutored new immigrants in English and has been a volunteer instructor for the Lacrosse Association. He will be attending Dalhousie University this fall.

Website Update

If you have not yet visited our website (keillorhousemuseum.com) I think you will be impressed by its professionalism. It’s easy to navigate and includes *Newsletters* from 2007 to 2016 and a great gallery of photos covering many events. Upcoming Events (2017), a short History of the Society, the History of Keillor House, Information on Current Exhibits, and helpful links to related sites are also included, with much more besides. Thanks to the Website Committee for their continuing work.

Congratulations Again Alice!

On May 18, 2017 Alice was awarded a Paul Harris Fellowship by The Rotary Club of Sackville in recognition of her many years of helping her community. The award is ‘in appreciation of tangible and significant assistance given for the furtherance of better understanding and friendly relations among peoples of the world.’ This follows on her Siegfried Janzen Award described in the last issue of the *Newsletter*.

Cole Morison

EDWARD BARRON CHANDLER AND ALBERT JAMES SMITH: DORCHESTER'S FATHER AND STEPFATHER OF CONFEDERATION

*Editor's Note: This year being the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation, your faithful editor thought it a good idea to commemorate the two Dorchester men who played important roles in it, the one as advocate, the other as opponent. My new research associate, Jamie Heap, who inspired last issue's article on the Weldon hearse, offered to do the digging and put together a preliminary report that could be shaped into a readable story. Here is the result, and it reveals that there was far more to these two gentlemen than their respective roles in Confederation. Each made other, and equally important, contributions to New Brunswick's political development, while one of them was knighted for services to a country whose existence he had once opposed. Their careers as well as their personalities were colourful as well as complex, and there is simply not enough space to do justice to both of them in one issue. Here we bring you the story of the Father before he actually became a Father of Confederation. The next issue will introduce the 'Stepfather' and examine their complicated relationship before, during and after Confederation. Neither Chandler nor Smith has received a full-length political biography but we will strive to present the essentials of their respective contributions, as well as some sense of their contrasting personalities. Above all, we attempt to explain clearly and in brief compass the great issues of their time and their involvement in them. Further interesting information on their lives and families may be found in Helen Petchey's **Chandler of Rocklyn** and J.E. Belliveau's **The Splendid Life of Albert Smith and the Women He Left Behind**, both sold in the Keillor House Gift Shop.*

Part I: The Father, Edward Barron Chandler

Our story must begin with Edward Barron Chandler (1800-1880), as he was already at the peak of his power and influence when Albert J. Smith came on the scene. Chandler is often identified with the Loyalist elite and the "family compact" of wealthy and privileged families that, to a large extent, ran New Brunswick for the first fifty years of its existence. However, any implication that he was born with a silver spoon in his mouth would be unjustified, for in many respects he was a self-made man. His grandfather, Joshua Chandler of New Haven, Connecticut, was indeed once very wealthy (a lawyer among other things), but his property was confiscated when he joined the Loyalist side during the American Revolution. Ordinarily, he would have been able to claim a large compensation from the British government after resettlement in Nova Scotia, but on his way from Halifax to Saint John to file his claims he was shipwrecked with the loss, not only of his own life, but those of several members of his family, together with the all-important documents needed to back up his claims. As a result, the members of his surviving family, which included Edward Barron's father, Charles, received only a modest settlement of £1000 each.

This was no mean estate, but it was hardly a fortune either, and so Edward and his siblings grew up in relatively modest circumstances in Amherst where their father was High Sheriff of Cumberland County. He couldn't afford to send his sons off to a fancy private school, but they did get a good basic education in the local common school, thanks to an excellent teacher, and after graduating young Edward went off to Halifax to seek his fortune. When he couldn't find suitable employment there he returned to the Amherst area, worked on a farm at River Philip and finally apprenticed as a blacksmith. Just as he was settling into a life of artisan labour, a job came up as a clerk in the local small claims court in Amherst (the county seat) and he got it. With due diligence and great frugality he soon saved up enough to put himself through "law school."

Actually, there were no law schools in those days. Lawyers trained for a number of years with an established lawyer of good reputation (of course they paid him for it) until they could pass the necessary exams administered by a board of other established lawyers and be admitted to the bar. Edward didn't have far to go for his training. His cousin, William Botsford (whose



mother was one of Charles Chandler's sisters) had a flourishing law practice at Westcock and was, in addition, the Solicitor General of New Brunswick as well as the Speaker of the House of Assembly (provincial legislature). It would have been hard to find a better man to train under. As an added bonus, Chandler met his future wife at Westcock House, the splendid brick mansion William had inherited from his father, Amos Botsford. She was William's niece, Phebe Millidge, who had been living with the Botsfords since being orphaned at a young age in 1807. We will learn a bit more of Phebe and Edward's life-long romance below.

In 1821, after three years of training, the young apprentice lawyer was admitted to the bar of both New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, but wealth was still in the future, although not that far. Years later, in order to illustrate his rise from humble beginnings, and to cultivate the common touch, he loved to tell the story of how he and another student travelled to Halifax to sit their exams. They had only enough money between them to hire one horse, so they rode it by turns, each one riding five miles, hitching the nag to a tree and walking on while his companion caught up with the horse, rode five miles past him, hitched the horse to another tree and walked on...etc. The story of his ride to Fredericton touched another and equally edifying theme—his capacity for hard work and his early promise as a lawyer. He made the trip almost non-stop, stayed in town only long enough to pass his exams and returned with his first summons in hand, issuing it to the Sheriff almost from the saddle. According to another tale, the Lieutenant Governor happened to be present when Chandler was pleading one of his early cases in Fredericton. Mightily impressed, His Excellency predicted, "You will yet be a great man in this country."

By all accounts E.B. was indeed an excellent lawyer, very persuasive with juries, very sage in his advice to those seeking legal opinion, and he soon had a large number of clients both big and small on both sides of the N.B./N.S. border, making his practice one of the largest in the province. As his cousin had done before him, he began accepting promising young aspiring lawyers as students and soon made Dorchester the successor of Westcock as the centre of legal studies in south-east New Brunswick.

He also went into land speculation and money lending in a big way, holding at one time, according to the records in the New Brunswick Land Registry Office, more than 350 mortgages. Needless to say, he accumulated considerable wealth, and this in fairly short order, as the following anecdotes illustrate. In 1822 he moved with his new bride to Dorchester in order to be close to the county court, at which he did a lot of

legal business (as well as at the Supreme Court in Fredericton). For his first home, he bought John Keillor's old house, which had been sitting vacant since the Keillors moved into their new stone mansion just up the hill about five or six years before. In Chandler lore it is always referred to as a 'log cabin' but readers of the Newsletter (September 2014) will know that in 1802-03 Harmon Trueman had remodelled it for the Keillors into something quite decent. Certainly, it was commodious enough for the Keillors' eight children and the four Chandler offspring who would be born there. Nonetheless, it was relatively modest, as were the Chandlers' first furnishings. Years later, E.B was fond of recalling that he and Phebe "commenced housekeeping with only two spoons, two forks, two plates and cups and saucers and with a household equipment equally scant." Less than a decade later, he was able to move into Rocklyn, one of the finest and most beautifully furnished homes in the province. It even surpassed Westcock House by a considerable margin.

The next step up the ladder for a successful lawyer and man of increasing means was to go into politics. He started by getting involved in the Westmorland Agricultural Society founded in Dorchester in 1825 under the leadership of cousin 'Bill' Botsford, who became President. Chandler was elected Secretary and John Keillor, who was a friend of both of them, Treasurer. The contact thus fostered with the local farmers stood him in good stead when he ran for and won a seat in the House of Assembly in 1827. It was as an Assemblyman that he first gave the lie to the notion fostered by later opponents that he was dyed in the wool conservative opposed to all progressive change. The first issue he involved himself in concerned the control and disposition of revenues from the Crown lands (chiefly from timber licences) and customs duties, and in order to clarify it, we first need a brief look at the structure and functioning of the provincial government at this time—something that will prove useful in explaining other issues down the road.

Before the late 1830s, New Brunswick's government was a (to us) strange mixture of authoritarianism and democracy. A Lieutenant Governor appointed by the Crown was advised (although he could theoretically ignore the advice) by a Council of twelve, also appointed by the Crown, but on the Lt. Governor's advice. The Council was composed of well-paid office holders (the Provincial Secretary, all the judges of the Supreme Court, the Attorney General and the Surveyor General) as well as a few other favourites without public office. All the origi-

nal members were drawn from the Loyalist elite, the wealthiest, best educated and most prominent of the American refugees who had been forced out of their homeland by the Revolution, many of them related by marriage and all of them bonded by a sense of social and cultural superiority. Naturally, they perpetuated their own kind in subsequent appointments to the Council, giving rise to complaints about a ruling “Family Compact” on the part of jealous outsiders, many of them of Loyalist extraction themselves, but generally of a more commercial and less pretentiously aristocratic hue.

To the Lt. Governor and Council was added the House of Assembly made up of elected representatives from each county whose number varied from six for the most populous (Saint John only) to two for the least populous. (Westmorland sent four.) At an early date, after a bitter struggle with the Lt. Governor and Council, the House won the right for individual members to divvy up available revenues for the benefit of their own constituents (roads, bridges, etc.) as well as the right to approve or reject money bills introduced by “the government” (i.e. the Lt. Governor and his Council), something that had also been enjoyed by the assemblies in the American colonies before the Revolution, but was no longer the practice in Britain. The result was “pork barrel politics” on a grand scale and severe restrictions on the government’s ability to implement policies disapproved of by a majority of the House. These restrictions were in large measure circumvented with the rise of the timber trade—and trade in general—following the Napoleonic wars, because timber revenues from Crown lands (where much of the timber was cut), as well as customs revenues, were in the hands of officials appointed by the Colonial Office in England, which handed them over to the government of New Brunswick. By the 1830s these revenues had become so large that many of the members feared the House of Assembly might be circumvented altogether. One of them was Mr. Chandler, who thought that, “this arrangement denied the people of the province one of their basic freedoms.” [Michael Swift’s article on Chandler in the authoritative *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*] Early in his term he sat on a committee considering the problem and in 1833 he and another member were sent to London to try to convince the Colonial Office to hand over the “territorial and casual revenues,” as they were called, to the House of Assembly.

They didn’t quite succeed, but they made a fine impression on everyone and Chandler “gained a great reputation as a champion of the people.” [Swift] When the House sent another delegation three years later (that included E.B.’s friend and protégé, William Crane of Sackville) the mood had softened, in part because of the good work of the first delegation, in part because of con-

cern over increasingly strident demands for ‘responsible government’ (a term we will meet again) in ‘Canada’ (which at that time included what would later be called Ontario and Quebec). The Colonial Secretary now wanted to hold up New Brunswick, the least reform minded of the provinces, as a model of accommodation, and to encourage this attitude he finally agreed to surrender the coveted revenues to the control of the House in return for its guarantee to pay the salaries of a fixed list of provincial officials and civil servants, something earlier suggested by Chandler.

As an Assemblyman Chandler also adopted “a progressive and enlightened attitude” [Swift] towards Catholic political rights (they were not allowed to vote until 1830 and for a considerable time thereafter only upon swearing allegiance to the King/Queen and his/her Protestant heirs), school administration (improving the quality of teachers), immigration (quarantine stations and hospitals for diseased immigrants, etc.), and the special concerns of the Acadian population. (For example, he favoured exempting them from taxes for poor relief on the grounds that they took care of their own poor, and even supported separate schools for them, something that did not play well with many of his more conservative and anti-Catholic colleagues in the House).

1833 also saw one of the first steps towards reshaping New Brunswick’s government more along the lines of the British constitution with its House of Commons, House of Lords and a Monarch advised by ministers who enjoyed the confidence of the House of Commons, and indeed were often members of it. In that year, the Colonial Secretary (the British official responsible for the colonies—Lord Goderich, just for the record) ordered that the Lt. Governor’s Council, which had hitherto performed both legislative and executive duties, be divided into two distinct bodies, a Legislative Council and an Executive Council (incidentally, still the official name for the Cabinet in New Brunswick). The reason for mentioning this here is that in 1836 Chandler was appointed to the Legislative Council (effectively the Senate) where he remained until he became Lt. Governor two years before his death. Despite his youth when he first entered the upper chamber, right from the beginning he “played the part of an elder statesman,” [Swift] always respected for his moderation, level headedness and sagacity. Sackville and Dorchester historian, W.C. Milner, who knew him personally (Chandler was his great uncle), offered a lively description of him in this role: “No member of the old Council presented a more marked individuality

than Mr. Chandler. Spare, slight, clean shaven, dressed immaculately in black, always busy in his place, either reading or writing, apparently paying no attention to what was transpiring about him, and taking no part in the ordinary routine of debate, when a subject interested him, he was on his feet in a moment, his fine, clear cut features lighting up, he would rapidly present a statement of fact and argument to the House that had authoritative weight and knowledge and ripe experience that was rarely inconclusive.”

Like most of his colleagues, Chandler did not favour full responsible government for New Brunswick at this point, ‘responsible government’ meaning that the ministers of the Crown, viz. the Executive Council, must enjoy the confidence of the majority in the House of Assembly or resign, as was the case in Britain. The main reason for this reluctance was the concomitant of responsible government, also the practice in Britain, namely that the government would have the sole right to introduce money bills in the House of Assembly, and that the ‘pork bawling’ that made individual members of the House veritable little Caesars in their constituencies would have to stop. There were already reformers in New Brunswick who demanded this, but they were in a small minority and Chandler was too much of a moderate to join them, as he felt the province simply wasn’t ready. However, responsible government came anyway (in several steps) largely due to pressure from the Colonial Office in Britain. In 1841 a new Lt. Governor (Sir William Colebrooke) arrived determined to make this change, apparently assuming it would be popular. Naively, he introduced a bill to surrender all money grants to the government and when it was overwhelmingly defeated he dissolved the House and called new elections—which returned a majority still wedded to the old ways. At this point (1843) he decided to change tactics and appoint (as was his prerogative) an Executive Council made up of a mixture of moderates and reformers that would work towards more gradual change and eventually gain control of the Assembly. His first choice from the Legislative Council was Chandler, whom he recognized as a man of calm reason with a large capacity for accommodation and timely change. As W.S. MacNutt, New Brunswick’s leading constitutional historian, put it, “if there was a leader whose opinions could encompass the prejudices of all, it was the cool and business like Edward Barron Chandler.”

Because a number of the new Executive Councillors were related by blood or marriage (E.B. was not one of them) the new government was still a ‘family compact’ to its opponents (of which it had more than a few), but in

fact a new day had dawned in the provinces’ political development and Chandler was one of those who took the next tentative step towards responsible government, although perhaps inadvertently. It was occasioned by Lt. Governor Colebrooke’s misstep in appointing his son-in-law to the recently vacated (by death) office of Provincial Secretary (probably the most important one of the Executive Council) in spite of the demands of Lemuel Allen Wilmot, the most outspoken reformer at this time and a member of both the Executive Council and the House of Assembly, that the new appointee must be a member of the House. When Colebrooke refused to reconsider, Wilmot resigned from the Executive Council and Chandler and two other moderates followed him out the door, thus setting the stage for the full implementation of responsible government—which Colebrooke actually agreed with in principle but now felt to be impractical in the absence of a party system in the House that could discipline the heterogeneous crew of independents into orderly and coherent policymaking. In the event, the British government disallowed the appointment, but not before the House of Assembly after two weeks of raucous debate passed its first ever motion of non-confidence against a government. The appointment of a new Secretary pro tem avoided a crisis—and hence full implementation of responsible government at this point—but Colebrooke was forced to recall Chandler and the other moderates (though not Wilmot) back to the Executive Council and business went on pretty much as usual under the ‘Compact’—with all the usual opposition from increasingly dissatisfied reformers—until the next development, in which Chandler was called upon to play the most important role of his political life, that of head of government.

This occurred in 1848 when a new Lt. Governor, Sir Edmund Walker Head, was appointed with a mandate to form a government that would be accepted by the majority of the House of Assembly without question (which the current one wasn’t following the departure of Wilmot and the appearance of a new generation of reformers who wanted to dissolve the ‘Compact’ and make the government totally responsible to the House.) Head didn’t have an excuse to dissolve the House and call for new elections, as they had just been held two years before. So, by ‘Cabinet shuffles’ and gentle nudges into timely retirement to make room for new blood, he simply jiggled the Executive Council he had inherited from Colebrooke into an administration “combining the best talent available and commanding a wide base of support.” And it was Chandler he picked to head it. Again in the words of MacNutt, “The public prestige and sage councils of the Dorchester lawyer were so generally taken for granted that without him no administration could be formed.” Several other moderates remained, while several old fogies retired and the

vacancies were filled with two powerful and articulate reformers, Wilmot and Charles Fisher, both of whom would play important roles in the political life of our 'Stepfather of Confederation', Albert J. Smith. Chandler and his moderate 'Compact' colleague, Robert Hazen, cleverly solved the problem of the government's previous failure to secure the sole right to initiate money bills by nominating John Partelow, the chair of the House appropriations committee (effectively the comptroller of the public trough) as the new Provincial Secretary (replacing the pro tem appointment who had no seat in the House). As noted above, the Secretary was automatically a member of the Executive Council.

Interestingly enough, Chandler held no public office, although he informally exercised many of the functions of a premier—a name still in the future. (He was offered the Attorney Generalship but declined, as he wanted to devote his time away from government to his still very active law practice.) Thus, while he headed a 'Compact' government, "nobody could deny that [it] was responsible to the House of Assembly or that it was just as popular a government as could be obtained at the time." [MacNutt] Perhaps his best qualifications for the position were his pragmatic level headedness and complete lack of aggressive party spirit. As Milner put it, "his mind was essentially judicial in its cast, his disposition mild and conciliatory, and he therefore possessed a strong antipathy to violent measures or inflammatory appeals... Mr. Chandler was no orator; he was a rapid speaker, easy in delivery and possessing great tact and force in saying the right things; his mind was always too full of business—of the subject matter in hand—ever to think of capturing the imagination of his hearers, or bewildering them with figures of rhetoric."

It was while he was in government that Chandler made his two great contributions to New Brunswick's economic development: railways and free trade (then known as 'reciprocity') with the United States. Both were stimulated in large measure by what was seen as a threat to the timber trade—the main pillar of the province's economy—occasioned by Britain's changing trade policies. In 1806 Napoleon Bonaparte, following his smashing victories over just about everyone except the British, set up his infamous (in British eyes) 'Continental System' imposing a Europe-wide embargo on British trade. In retaliation, Britain slapped high tariffs on Baltic timber—its traditional source of supply—and allowed colonial timber and lumber to come in virtually duty free. Napoleon met his Waterloo in 1815 but the differential tariffs remained intact until the early 1840s when Adam Smith's famous doctrines on the wonders of free trade, formulated in the 18th century but

mainly ignored at the time, began to come into vogue in Britain, although not so much elsewhere. Policy changes began with a reduction of tariffs on non-colonial imports that set off a nasty depression in New Brunswick lasting into the late 1840s. Then, in the early 50s, Britain adopted the full doctrine in all its glory, causing general panic in New Brunswick over the prospects of another crash as well as growing bewilderment—and even resentment—over being abandoned by Mother England, so dear to Loyalist hearts (though less so to the proliferating population of Acadians and Irish immigrants).

One solution to the dilemma was seen in increased trade with the other British American provinces, and for this a railway system, already well developed in Britain and the United States, was essential. Chandler saw this from early on and soon became a leading advocate in what can only be described as 'railway mania' in New Brunswick. The line of most immediate interest to the more developed parts of the province was one that would connect the port of Saint John and the western counties with a port on the east coast. In 1850 he, Wilmot and the great Nova Scotia reformer, Joseph Howe, attended what was called 'The Great Railway Convention' in Portland, Maine where they agreed with Maine railway promoters (who were angered over New York and Boston sucking up their state's commerce) that the envisioned line should be extended from Saint John to connect with the growing American rail network, giving Maine products access to the British and European market and Maritime goods access to the American. Thus was born the idea of the European and North American Railway running from the Maine border through Saint John to Shediac. It didn't get done immediately, in part because it got mixed up with another scheme banded about at the time, a railway from Halifax to Quebec (later to be known as the Intercolonial) that got bogged down in a disagreement over its proper route. The British government (which was expected in large measure to finance it to atone for its 'abandonment' of the colonies) wanted it for military purposes and so favoured a route along the east coast and north shore, as far away as possible from the Americans, while business interests and the majority of New Brunswickers naturally wanted a Saint John River valley route closer to the main population centres. In 1851 Chandler and Howe went to Toronto where they and members of the Canadian legislature agreed in principle to build an inter-colonial railway (this would later be a big issue in Confederation). The following year Canadian railway booster Francis Hincks met with Chandler in Fredericton, after which the two of them traveled to Halifax (possibly by stagecoach, more likely by special carriage, in any case with horses) where they and

Howe (surprisingly enough given the commercial rivalry between Halifax and Saint John) agreed on the Saint John River valley route and decided to propose it to the British government in a united front. Soon afterwards, in the spring of 1852, Chandler and Hincks met the Colonial Secretary in London only to be informed that there would be no financial support for a route that did not run along the coast. Disappointed but not daunted, Chandler stayed on in London until fall where, in a bold and courageous move, he negotiated with British railway contractors to begin construction on the European and North American line. Such was the confidence in him that in October the House of Assembly confirmed the arrangements he had made—and after only nine days of debate. Of course the costs mounted, the government had to pony up more than expected, and the project wasn't completed until 1860, but "the era of railway construction had at least commenced, and the man primarily responsible for it was Edward Barron Chandler." [Swift] Milner called him "the pioneer railway promoter in this province."

The other possible response to Britain's changing tariff policies was a free trade deal (or 'reciprocity') with the United States, something that had been talked about since the mid 1840s. New Brunswick's commercial leaders had two main objectives in mind: the opening of the American market to New Brunswick timber and fish, which laboured under a 20% tariff, and access for New Brunswick vessels to the lucrative American coastal trade from which they were excluded. As 'bait', they were willing to grant the Americans duty-free entry of their goods and legal access to New Brunswick's inshore fisheries from which the Yankees had theoretically been excluded by an 1818 treaty between Britain and the United States, although they fished there anyway. Proposals to this effect were made in 1849 but Congress rejected them. Northern protectionists feared that reciprocity would bring in a flow of British manufactured goods to compete with American industry. Southern politicians representing the plantation owners believed it would be a prelude to annexation (something freely talked about on both sides of the border) and would thus add to the number of states opposed to slavery, forbidden in the British Empire since 1833 but a very hot issue in American politics at this time—and about to get hotter.

However, New England's burning desire for complete access to the inshore fisheries of the British colonies put pressure on Washington, and the British did their part by enforcing the 1818 treaty with patrolling warships. Their seizure of several American fishing vessels created a sensation in the United States and led to renewed efforts to set-

tle the fishing issue (which was of long standing) by treaty rather than by another war with Britain. By 1854 Britain was fighting the Crimean War and didn't want a distraction on the other side of the Atlantic, so was also eager for a deal. Here it must be explained that New Brunswick and the other British American provinces had no authority to negotiate treaties with foreign powers—only the Mother Country could do that—and that reciprocity would come in the form of a treaty between Great Britain and the United States, to apply to all the provinces. The British government sent Lord Elgin, the Governor General of Canada, together with representatives of the provinces to Washington to strike a deal. Representing New Brunswick interests was Edward Barron Chandler, an early and enthusiastic supporter of reciprocity and, as we know, the effective premier. In informal meetings with congressmen, the smooth-talking crew, all of them well versed in the art of persuasive 'hospitality', strengthened the conviction of northerners that reciprocity would hasten annexation but at the same time they planted the novel notion among the southerners that it would *prevent* it because the provinces would be so happy with the results of free trade that they would never want it—and so the deal was done. New Brunswick didn't get the hoped for access to the coastal shipping trade, while the Americans did get free access to the inshore fisheries, but, like the other provinces, it could now send its timber, lumber and other raw materials duty free into the United States. There was considerable opposition in New Brunswick to some of its terms, but such was Chandler's prestige in the province that he and Partelow were able to get it ratified by the House of Assembly. In spite of its defects, the reciprocity treaty of 1854 gave a great boost to the economy and ushered in a new period of prosperity. It was another feather in the hat of E.B. Chandler, while its abrogation by the Americans twelve years later would play a large role in the defeat of his nemesis,



Rocklyn

Albert J. Smith, in the second Confederation election (1866).

With the signing of the reciprocity treaty and the beginning of construction on the European and North American Railway, Chandler was at the height of his power and influence. A Vancouver newspaper later called him “the most conspicuous public man in the province” before Sir Leonard Tilley’s time (of whom more anon). One reason for this was his lavish hospitality at Rocklyn, which Milner described as “altogether exceptional” and even “princely.” But it had nothing to do with vulgar ostentation. In fact Chandler had a horror of being thought pretentious and he was “never overbearing or imperious to his poorer neighbors.” Although “renowned for its good cheer and fine wines” Rocklyn was the setting for quiet refinement, not raucous partying, where the “most charming of hosts and raconteurs” entertained and edified important people from near and far, while “cool reason always prevailed.”



Phebe and Edward by Albert Gallatin Hoit, late 1830s

From Helen Petchey, Chandler of Rocklyn

Equally upstanding and blameless was E.B.’s private and family life. Again according to Milner, he “had no intimates, except his wife, who when they had passed the half century mark together were quite as devoted to each other as young lovers. While a splendid raconteur and most genial, he at the same time possessed that dignified, even distant, demeanor that repelled any familiarities... If his political record was as absolutely pure and clean as a public man’s can be, so his private life was pure and honorable.”

The Chandlers had a large family of nine boys, most of whom grew up to be successful, and two girls who died at a young age. A loving father and grandfather, E.B. “took a large hearted, a patriarchal interest in their welfare and happiness” and, to his family, his death was “like the going out of the sun.”

So far in his life, Edward Barron Chandler had gone from one success to another, and there were new triumphs ahead in the twenty-six years left to him on earth. But in 1854, just at his peak, he was about to receive a setback that would end the rule of the ‘Compact’ in New Brunswick, after which he would go on to meet new challenges on his way to becoming a Father of Confederation. The man who played the leading ‘non supportive’ role in this second phase of his political life was the other of our two Dorchester actors in this historic drama, Albert J. Smith.

Jamie Heap and Gene Goodrich

To be continued

THE CHANDLER FAMILY

BASED LARGELY ON HELEN PETCHEY, *CHANDLER OF ROCKLYN*

Rocklyn was the scene of sorrows as well as joys. Edward and Phebe had eleven children but only sons reached maturity, and not all of them did so. Charles Henry died in infancy just a year after his baby sister, Sarah Elizabeth. Chauncy, the tenth child, died at age seven, the victim of a bonfire near his home. The oldest, William Botsford Chandler, said to have been a brilliant student, died of tuberculosis at the young age of twenty-five soon after his marriage. The youngest son to survive childhood, Joshua, died at age thirty-two, just a year after his father, whom he served as Secretary while E.B. was Lieutenant Governor. He was a graduate of King's College, Windsor (since moved to Halifax), and a barrister at law. His young widow, Minnie, later became a companion of Albert J. Smith's widow, Lady Smith, and spent her last years at the Smith mansion, 'Woodlawn'. "She and Sir Albert's widow were familiar figures in the shiretown riding about in the handsome Smith estate coach." Stephen Millidge Chandler died in 1878, the year his father was appointed Lt. Governor, of an accident at Bulmer's Mill in Frosty Hollow where he owned a grist mill. He was fifty-three. Although he managed to bury two wives before marrying a third, Charles Upham was only forty-three when he died in 1882, two years after his father. To only two of the Chandler children was vouchsafed anything approaching the Biblically allotted 'threescore and ten' years, the one short by a decade, the other long by as much. George Wentworth, a lawyer like his brothers Charles and Joshua, made it to sixty, while Henry Amos, a physician, exceeded his father's span by two years, dying in 1919 at the age of eighty-two.

Phebe Millidge Chandler had also known her share of sorrows besides so many of her children's early deaths. Her father, High Sheriff Stephen Millidge, died at age forty-two when she was but a year and a half old and her mother perished four years later in a tragic drowning accident that also claimed her only brother. As mistress of a grand mansion with seven servants and a coachman, as well as a devoted mother of a large family, Phebe was much respected and admired by high and low alike. E.B. had to be away from home a lot, and he certainly left it in capable hands. He was a lucky man, and all indications are that he knew it. "Phebe Chandler's funeral services at Trinity Anglican Church was largely attended during a fierce winter storm. Neighbours, townsmen and mourners from Moncton and the Chignecto came to show their regard for the Governor's Lady." One of her surviving legacies is a hand-written cookbook, "the indispensable guide to the royal hospitality for which Rocklyn became famous."

Rocklyn is not the only Chandler House in Dorchester. Three sons received handsome houses as wedding presents. George Wentworth received 'Maplehurst' in 1858. Charles Upham and Joshua were married in a double ceremony in 1869. Charles was given 'Swisscote' and Joshua a similar dwelling across the street that seems no longer to have a name. All three are in the Second Empire style and were built by John F. Teed, 'Dorchester's Master Builder'.



Maplehurst (George)

Swisscote (Charles)

Name Unknown (Joshua)



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 www.keillorhousemuseum.com

Museum Hours

June 10 to Sept. 9 2017

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:
 SOME OF ALICE'S 'FORGOTTEN HEROES'

We have so many wonderful volunteers that it seems no matter how often we mention them, there are some who don't get their due notice. To remedy that, I asked Alice to come up with a few names for this issue. You can be sure of more to come in future issues. (Your faithful editor)

Andy Partridge has come every spring and used his tractor to till the Keillor House garden without any remuneration or even thanks. Without his help we would not be able to have this garden producing veggies for the Keillor House kitchen and for the guides to nibble on.

Another forgotten hero is **Janice Bear** who comes to my rescue every time I need a flyer, or a ticket made for the different events at Keillor House—whether it is for the AGM or the Haunted house. Thank you Janice for your talent on the computer.

Susan Spence is the lady who always takes care of the silent auctions we have at our AGM and our Mothers Day tea. She also takes care of the selling of the tickets and many other jobs. She is there for us at every opportunity. I guess it is true: if you need something done, ask a busy person because they know how to create time. Susan certainly does.

If you want to see someone jump in and get the job done, another volunteer is **Debbie MacDonald**. She can prioritize, organize and keep everyone focused. It doesn't matter whether it's peeling potatoes for a dinner, doing the dishes after an event, or planting tulips. If we had more Debbies, our work load would practically float unbidden from our shoulders.