WESTMORLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Another outstanding year saw many successful events celebrating Keillor House Museum's 50th birthday and Canada's 150th. A highlight was the awarding of the *Senate Sesquicentennial Medal* to the Westmorland Historical Society for our 'valuable service to the nation.' The Honourable Senator Carolyn Stewart Olsen, a long time friend of WHS, presented the medal at an impressive ceremony held in Sackville in December. Congratulations to all our members and supporters on this acknowledgement of your service to Canada. (Further details on page 2.)

Fund-Raising Events and Donations (2017)

Our fund-raising efforts resulted in a 29% increase in 2017 to $13,611. *(See Saluting Our Outstanding Volunteers page 16.)*

Special thanks to Museum Manager Donald Alward and his partner, Heather, for hosting the highly successful 'Dinner with the Keillors' last fall. Mr. and Mrs. Keillor formally welcomed their guests, explained the traditions behind the various dishes served, and talked about the founding of the Society and the Museum. The event was sold out, so be sure you secure next year's invitation early.

New Exhibits and Events (2018)

An intriguing special exhibit has been initiated by our Manager for 2018, designed to attract children and families with children. Entitled *Your Cell Phone*, it will showcase many of the things the smart phone has 'replaced': *clocks, radios, adding machines, compasses, photographs, photo albums, cameras, notebooks, maps & charts, board games, encyclopaedias, etc*. The intent is to spark an interest in both young and older visitors in the tremendous variety of devices that this revolutionary technology can imitate or replicate. The exhibit will be housed in 'Grandma's Room' off the north side of the parlour and is scheduled to be in place when the Museum opens in June.

Another new special exhibit, this one on hearth cooking, will open in the kitchen this season. Besides panels explaining the techniques of fire management and heat control, it will feature the tools and utensils used to prepare meals in the days before cook stoves, selected where possible from our own collection. As a companion project, Keillor House will host a 'Hearth-Cooking Experience' analogous to our 'Needle and Thread for the Bed' workshop. If it is as successful as we think it will be, it could become part of the province's experiential tourism initiative in following years. Gene Goodrich and Donald Alward are the forces behind the initiative, and last fall they visited Ross Farm and King's Landing to get some pointers as well as hands-

KEILLOR HOUSE MUSEUM —SPECIAL EVENTS

Mother's Day Tea- Keillor House Museum

May 13, 2:00-4:00

Tea, sandwiches and cakes served in the elegant setting of the Keillor House. Silent Auction. Call for tickets.

506 379-6695, Susan Spence

Keillor House & St. James Museum Openings

June 9, 2:00

Opening remarks and refreshments.

Free guided tours for the day with costumed staff

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.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

The Bernie Brigade Does it Again

Once again, volunteers from Mathieu-Martin High School, all of them students or former students of Bernie Melanson, helped staff our Haunted House Tour and served in a variety of roles at our Victorian Christmas Dinners. Six to ten of them—both boys and girls—came to the Haunted House Tour, bringing a high level of enthusiasm. One night, Bernie simply 'put out the word' and took the first nine volunteers. There were more! A number of the debonair gentlemen who served at the Victorian Christmas Dinners are now university students in the U. de M. Engineering Programme. Several of them have been coming back every year. We appreciate your help, gentlemen—and look forward to seeing you again next year.

Members of the Brigade

Dominic Cormier, Louis Savoie, Pierre-Olivier LeBrasseur, Justin Lacenaire, Tanik Nait-Ajou, Martin Drisdelle, Marc Drisdelle, Philip Landry.

Bernie is sitting in the chair above, and at the head of the table right.

For a full account of Bernie's longstanding support of the Society—and his personal connection to Keillor House, see Gene's article in the February 2012 issue of the *Newsletter*.

Cole Morison

Senator Olsen presents the Award to Cole

WHS Awarded Senate Medal

The accompanying certificate is signed by the Speaker of the Senate of Canada and The Honourable Senator Carolyn Stewart Olsen. It is addressed to the Westmorland historical Society, and reads:

On behalf of the Senate of Canada, the Senate Sesquicentennial Medal is hereby conferred upon you in commemoration of the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Senate of Canada and in recognition of your valuable service to the nation.

The Senate 150th Anniversary Medal is an antiqued bronze table medal made of Muntz metal, an alloy comprised of bronze, copper, and zinc. It was designed by Lt. Col. Carl Guathier, Director of Honours and Recognition at the Department of National Defence and is made by the Royal Canadian Mint.

on experience in this ancient and fascinating art.

Walking Tour Update

As mentioned in the September 2017 issue, Bonnie Swift, one of our Board members, developed a fifteen-page booklet *Historic Dorchester: A Walking Tour* featuring fifteen historic buildings, with current and historic pictures in full colour. She has now prepared a digital version that will soon be available in English and French for both Android and iPhone platforms. It will be run through Balado Discovery GPS (Balado Tours), whose touring packages and applications are used all over Canada. The Department of Tourism and Heritage helped with the project and WHS contributed 50% of the funding. Thank you, Bonnie, for taking the initiative on these projects and seeing them through to completion.

Properties Update

Mrs. B's at the Bell Inn has become a fixture of the community—so it is with sadness that we report that 'Mrs. B' has had to relocate for family reasons. We are currently interviewing business owners interested in renting the property and hope to have appropriate new tenants by March or April.

Work on the new apartment in Landry House continues, with a move-in date of March or April. Alice has already found a tenant, provided we meet the 'move-in' date!

This has been another exciting year, and I want to thank: Donald Alward, our Manager/Curator for bringing us innovative ideas, and for making our many necessary grant applications—and allowing Alice a 'breather'; individual Board members for working so diligently on the website, special events, collections management, Wall of Fame, and many other projects; Dee Milliken for her supervision of St. James Textile Museum, her workshops and visitor tours, help at the Heritage Fair and at many other events; Alice for working with our tenants, looking after our accounting *and* acting as Activities Co-ordinator; and finally, Gene Goodrich for editing the *Newsletter* (not an easy job) and for his extensive research and many first-rate publications on behalf of the Society.

This is a remarkable team. Congratulations on a job well done.

Cole Morison

It is with sorrow and a deep sense of loss that we inform you of the death of Sylvia Yeoman on January 25th. As many of you know, Sylvia was one of the founders and longstanding pillars of the Westmorland Historical Society. As was entirely fitting, Alice Folkins, her protégé and our other longstanding pillar, represented us at her funeral in St. Luke's Anglican Church, Annapolis Royal. An article on Sylvia's contributions to WHS will appear in the next issue of the *Newsletter*.

Editor's Note:

I am very pleased to have received articles from two of our textile experts that complement each other very nicely and are a timely reminder of the important work our museums are doing to preserve, explicate, and yes, even continue the traditional domestic arts that are fully as much a part of our heritage as our laws and institutions.

Denyse Milliken, the Supervisor of the St. James Textile Museum, not only wove a replica of a 19th century coverlet as a celebration of Canada 150, she researched the historical background of this once common 'bedfellow' and thought long and hard about how to make its fabrication intelligible to non-weavers. I think you will like the results. As background on looms and weaving, review her article in the September 2013 issue.

Judith Rygiel, one of our Research Associates, holds a PhD in Material Culture History and is a professional Master Weaver with her own studio. Here she tells us about the social significance of buttons in days gone by. In the process we also learn a good deal about some of the merchant traders in early Westmorland County, as well as the shopping habits and sartorial tastes of its inhabitants. There is a lot of good 'stuff' in this piece, in both senses of the word.

I originally intended to include the first in a series of forthcoming articles on the Dorchester jails and hangings in this issue, but found that even after adding four pages to the publication there was not enough room for it, so it will appear in the June issue. Perhaps it is just as well. The lurid details of a grisly murder are probably not the best objects of contemplation after being in the company of gentle coverlets and harmless buttons.

A FORGOTTEN BEDFELLOW:CELEBRATING THE HAND-WOVEN COVERLET

Last summer at the St. James Textile Museum we put a special weaving on our 45" wide, four-shaft floor loom as a Canada 150 project. We were celebrating one hundred and fifty years of Canadian Confederation, so for a special work to commemorate the occasion, I decided to weave a reproduction *ca.* 1867 hand-woven coverlet that our visitors could view as a work in progress.

"What is a coverlet?" you may ask. Although coverlets have fallen out of fashion in favour of comforters, quilts, and duvets, *they* were once the top layer that adorned and supplemented the woolen blanket[s] on a bed. They were woven with geometric patterns on a four-shaft (see glossary below) loom or, in fancier patterns, on an eight or more-shaft loom. Looms with more than eight shafts led to the creation of more complex designs featuring flowers, stars, animals, birds, etc.—limited only by the weaver's imagination. The fancier patterns woven on multiple shafts were mostly the work of professional weavers, who were often commissioned by the well to do to create a special coverlet to commemorate an important event such as a wedding or anniversary.

In most households, the coverlets woven on a four-shaft loom were made at home by someone in the family. The first settlers wove theirs using their own hand-processed linen as warp. Later, when it became available, they used store-bought cotton imported from Massachusetts in order to save time. But whether their warp was linen or cotton, their weft was always handspun wool, usually from their own sheep. If you didn't keep sheep yourself, you could always barter some handspun wool from a neighbour. The wool was dyed, while the cotton and linen were left in their natural colour. Household looms were often made by one of the men in the family, shared among family members, and passed down through several generations. Due to space limitations the looms were made narrower than the width of the bed, so the coverlet was woven twice the length of the bed in one long piece, then cut and sewn together with a seam down the middle, matching up the geometric

patterns as required.

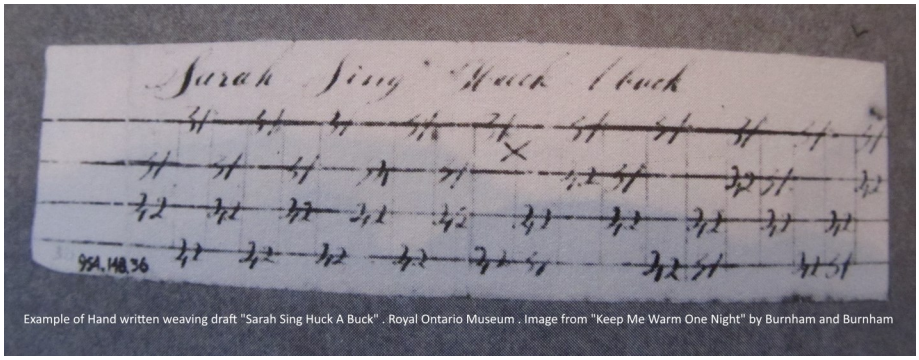
As for the colours, many people used the natural ones of their own sheep, which varied from creams to beiges and browns, to various shades of grey. Yellows, greens, pinks, and (rarely) mauves were sourced from local plants, mushrooms, and seaweed. Bright reds came from rose madder root grown in Holland, or from cochineal (see glossary below), which came from South America and was much more costly. Blues came from indigo originating in India or Japan, or from woad from Scotland. Of course, all of these dyestuffs had to be imported by merchants. After 1856, when the first synthetic dye was discovered, it was also possible to shop for these varied colours at your local mercantile. Like anything else when it is new, synthetic dye was an expensive novelty that not everyone could afford, so most people in Maritime Canada would use natural dyes. Rose madder root and indigo-dyed wool were very popular with professional weavers. At St. James, we have a fine example of a geometric design on display in the form of a dark blue and white coverlet woven by a professional weaver who lived in Shediac.

The early coverlet patterns woven on two shafts were quite simple bands of colour or stripes. Later on, Scottish and Irish settlers introduced the four-shaft loom, and coverlets produced on them were usually woven in either an overshot or double-weave pattern. This made them a lot fancier and more suitable for the top layer of the bed, in contrast to wool blankets, usually woven in a twill weave, or linen sheets woven in plain weave.

Overshot is so called because the weave structure involves patterned weft threads lying on top of two or more warp threads which are then locked in by another weft thread woven in plain (or tabby) weave in between each 'shot' of pattern weave. Generally, the plain weft threads are the same size as the warp threads, while the pattern thread or wool may be twice the thickness in order to make the pattern stand out.

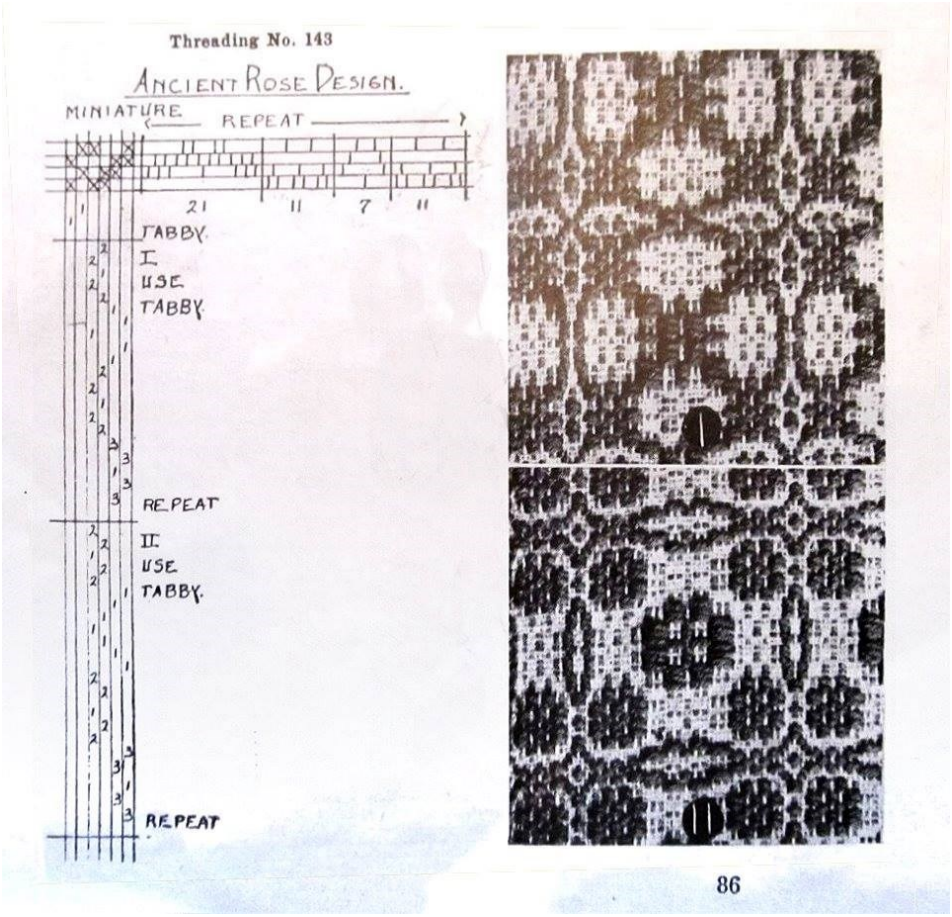
Double-weave, on the other hand, involves two layers of interconnected weaving: two sets of warp and two sets of weft. With its extra layers, a double-weave coverlet provided more warmth for the cold winter nights. Double-weave coverlets, too, were the work of professional weavers. They are also known as “Summer and Winter” coverlets because their patterns’ colours are reversed on the other side. Weavers would often “sign” their coverlets in one corner by weaving in their name, or possibly the name of the person they made it for, and the year it was made. Coverlets were thus a wonderful way for weavers to express their individuality and creative talent.

Old weaving patterns were drawn on a graph of four lines, each space in between the lines corresponding to the shaft of the loom. Often, these patterns, called a “weaving draft,” were treadled in exactly the same way they were threaded. The instructions for this commonly read, “tromp as writ” or “tromp as drawn in.” Such patterns were often quite complicated, with as many as a hundred and fifty different parts in the sequence of a pattern. As they were often hand written, having been copied from a book, it required quite a long piece of paper to write down all the treadling combinations in addition to the threading, especially because the geometric patterns in the design were complicated. For example, if the weaving draft told you to thread the first heddle (see glossary below) on shaft 1, then the third heddle on shaft 2, then the second heddle on shaft 1, then the next three heddles on shaft 4, and so on, you would “tromp” treadle 1, then “tromp” treadle 2, then back to treadle 1 again, then “tromp” treadle 4 three times, and so on. Weavers would fasten their weaving draft to the face of the loom and keep track of their progress by sticking a sewing pin into each position as they came to it.



Example of Hand written weaving draft "Sarah Sing Huck A Buck" . Royal Ontario Museum . Image from "Keep Me Warm One Night" by Burnham and Burnham

Weavers could also vary the pattern by weaving "rose fashion, "meaning by reverse treadling from the pattern threading. A good example of this can be seen in the "Whig Rose" or "Ancient Rose" pattern, also known as "Young Lover's Knot." Thought to have originated in Germany, this pattern found its way into Britain and was brought to New England and Maritime Canada by early settlers. It may be found in many collections of weaving drafts as well as in vintage weaving publications, and is still published today.



The 18th century Planter, Yorkshire, and Loyalist home weavers only knew how to do the plain, or tabby, weave. The peoples who most influenced the weaving traditions of Maritime Canada during the 19th century were Scots, Irish and German weavers who had been put out of work by the mechanization of the weaving industry in their home countries during the Industrial Revolution. They were the ones who introduced the techniques and patterns of overshot and double-weave. They left home expecting to farm in Canada but found that here they could again profitably practise their chosen profession.

Many worked as itinerant weavers, travelling from settlement to settlement with a loom that was easily disassembled for travel and quickly re-assembled on arrival. Once employed, the weaver usually set up in the employer's barn, which is the reason this type of loom is often called a "barn loom." We have an example of one in the Beachkirk Collection, which is our pride and joy at St. James; it is currently set up to show our visitors how rag rugs were woven. These looms were put together with wooden pegs, and both the warp beam and the cloth beam serve as the brake mechanism. The warp beam is so heavy that it takes three people to move it!

In New Brunswick, some rural residents were still spinning and weaving for their homes until the early 20th century. Flax was still being grown in the Memramcook Valley and processed into linen. (See the article "Domestic Textile Production in Early

New Brunswick" in the February 2012 issue of the *Newsletter*, also available online.) As store-bought fabrics became more readily available and affordable, most notably after World War II, spinning and weaving skills were gradually lost, while sewing continued pretty much as before. As a result, sewn patchwork quilts quickly became more popular than woven coverlets as bed coverings. Wartime was a time of rationing, when every scrap of fabric in the house was economically re-used, and after the war ended people were very glad to be able to shop for new fabrics to brighten up their homes in the hope of new prosperity to come.

GLOSSARY

Cochineal: A tiny red parasitic bug native to cactus plants in South America.

Heddle: Typically made of cord or wire and suspended on a loom shaft, heddles separate the warp threads for the passage of the weft. Each heddle has an eye in the centre through which the warp is threaded.

Indigo: A rich dark-blue dye originating from either India (*Indigofera tinctoria*), or Japan (*Persicaria tinctorum*).

Rose Madder: One of the oldest natural red dyes coming from the root of *Rubia Tinctorum.*

Shaft: The frame that holds the warp threads. From it are suspended the heddles.

Tabby, or plain weave: A weave structure with the weft alternating over and under the warp threads.

Twill weave: A weave structure with the weft passing alternatively over one warp thread, then under two warp threads.

Warp: The longitudinal threads running the length of the piece being woven. They are held in stationary tension from the shaft while the transverse weft is shuttled over and under them from one side of the frame to the other.

Weft (also called the 'woof'): The transverse threads running the width of the piece being woven, back and forth through the warp from one side of the frame to the other.

Denyse Milliken, Supervisor

St. James Textile Museum

ALL THAT GLITTERS: SHOPPING FOR BUTTONS IN EARLY WESTMORLAND COUNTY

Westmorland County residents had access to a surprisingly wide range of luxury goods during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Fancy dishes and cutlery, metal candlesticks, glassware, milled soap, embroidered vests, ruffled shirts, velvet shawls, and luxurious textiles were perhaps frivolous in a pioneer society, but many residents nevertheless saw them as fulfilling a need to display their relative wealth. These luxury goods arrived at the ports of both Saint John and Halifax and eventually made their way to the more remote communities, such as those in the Sackville-Dorchester areas.

Both the Saint John and Halifax newspapers frequently carried advertisements from merchants describing what was potentially available, but the ads could be somewhat deceptive. They often mentioned that a particular vessel was "arriving soon" with a cargo of anticipated goods, but the same ad might run for another six months or more with no firm date of arrival. Weather and the vicissitudes of trans Atlantic shipping meant long delays in the delivery of both newspapers and consumer goods. Advertisements only stated what was potentially available to consumers. Whether they actually purchased these luxury goods or simply admired them is impossible to determine with precision.

Fashionable dress was a token of status and affluence in early New Brunswick as much as it was in New England or other parts of the developed world. Land, livestock and dwelling house were the most obvious badges, but luxury goods also proclaimed the owners' position on the social ladder. Among the small and easily overlooked items in this category were buttons. People did not simply collect pretty buttons for the sake of their prettiness. They purchased them for the practical purpose of fastening their clothing and also for the social purpose of making a fashion statement. Whether cheap or expensive, buttons were always associated with textiles and had little use on their own. Expensive cloth always cried out for expensive buttons. This was as true in Westmorland County as it was in Saint John or Halifax. Account books and probate inventories from Westmorland County between 1784 and the 1830s reveal that consumers in the hinterland were well aware of what was fashionable and desirable in the more sophisticated urban centres, and, although often fragmentary and incomplete, they offer a new perspective on the humble and seemingly insignificant button. One prominent Dorchester family, the Keillors, appeared in many of them and it will be instructive as well as interesting to analyze their purchases of luxury goods, including buttons.

Buttons and other sewing notions, such as various types of thread, tapes, ribbons, and lace, arrived in Westmorland County in three different ways. The men folk might go on arduous multi-day shopping trips to Saint John or Halifax to replenish their supplies and see what was lately fashionable. If they were satisfied with a more limited selection, they could also shop closer to home. Local merchants and traders often set up small rural stores featuring modest quantities of goods purchased from wholesalers in the two port cities. For some, a third option—buying from an itinerant merchant—was often more convenient. Two Saint John merchants, in particular, filled their vessels with goods and periodically visited ports along the Bay of Fundy, including stops in Westmorland County.

Few 18th century travelers to the Chignecto ever commented on the inhabitants' clothing or how it was fastened, but two that did, Yorkshiremen John Robinson and Thomas Rispin who toured the area in 1774 as prospective settlers, included observations both about clothing and the source of textiles. There were merchants, they noted, "whom they [the locals] call store-keepers" that retailed "all sorts of [imported] cloths, linen as well as woolen, and wearing apparel."

Settlers also made and wore 'homespun', a term applied to locally made hand-woven woollen cloth. Home-produced linen was likewise fairly common, especially among the Acadians. Many Acadians in the Memramcook Valley grew flax and were experts at processing it into linen cloth as well as linen thread, which was especially useful for making the warp threads when weaving wool. Well into the 19th century, some Acadians still paid their bills at the local store with hand-woven linen cloth. The old account books often showed entries for "French linen", and "French cloth" on both the credit and debit sides of the ledger, meaning that the storekeeper sold much of the linen he took in as payment, no doubt for

more than he had credited the customer.

Both men and women wore hand-woven homespun garments for everyday use but dressed "exceedingly gay on Sunday's," wrote Robinson and Rispin. Men wore the "finest cloth and linen, including ruffled shirts on the Sabbath," while women decked themselves out with "callicos with long ruffles." Our two travelers were so impressed with the Sackville women's Sunday dress that they thought they "outdid the good women of England." They didn't mention how these "exceedingly gay" garments were fastened, but we can take it for granted that a ruffled shirt or ruffled calico dress was not done up with large rough homemade horn buttons.

There is an impressive list of both textiles and fashionable clothing in the inventory of Josiah Smith of Westmorland Parish drawn up in 1789 for probate purposes. Valued at £659 pounds, his estate, quite a substantial one for that time, included over a hundred yards of thirteen different fabrics as well as forty pieces of clothing. Smith apparently liked waistcoats. Ten of them appeared in his inventory, including a velveret one assessed at seven shillings and sixpence (written 7/6), about the price of a half-gallon of rum. Velveret was a cotton pile fabric similar to corduroy and sometimes printed. Smith also had four Sunday shirts in his wardrobe, a ruffled one valued at 12/6, and three plain ones at 4/- (four shillings) each.

Vests such as those found in Smith's probate inventory were a common piece of wearing apparel in the late 18th century. They could be either plain and 'serviceable' or quite elaborate and expensive. A variety of shapes and prices catered to different tastes and purse sizes. The most expensive "vest shapes" were pieces of embroidered fabric with the vest outline printed on it. A seamstress or tailor would cut out the vest, assemble it to fit the customer and then sew on either pearl or metal buttons. Lesser-priced vests featured printed or quilted fabric.

Materials used for vest and coat buttons evolved considerably from the mid 18th to the early 19th century. Metal buttons made of copper, brass, or pewter were common and popular prior to 1800. Yellow brass was an alloy of copper and zinc, while dull grey pewter was usually composed of four or five parts tin to one part lead, sometimes of copper. Both copper and brass buttons could be stamped, engraved or plated with ease. In order to supply a ready market for shiny fasteners, button manufacturers in both America and Britain experimented successfully with different ways to plate copper-based buttons with a thin sheet of silver or tin.

Pewter buttons were versatile, inexpensive and commonly worn by working class people. However, this grey metal was soft and not very durable because the shanks and eyes frequently wore out with the constant rubbing of the thread attaching them to the garment. Some households made their own buttons by heating a hand-held button mould in a bed of hot coals, then filling it with molten lead or pewter. The resulting button could then be covered with fabric or other embellishments.

During the 1790s button manufacturers in Birmingham, the centre of British button production, began to experiment with ways to improve the quality of pewter buttons. By increasing the amount of tin to 90% and adding 10% copper instead of the lead, they could make a harder, higher quality and more durable button. A steel or brass wire loop embedded in a hump of metal on the back also made these "hard white" buttons more serviceable. To differentiate them from cheaper pewter buttons, manufacturers often embossed patterns of stars or pinwheels on the button's face and marked the backs with their company's name. Unfortunately, these hard white buttons were also more expensive. Saint John merchants sometimes mentioned metal buttons from Britain in their advertisements. David Blair's September 1784 ad in the *Royal Gazette and New Brunswick Advertiser* included both metal and plated buttons. Three years later, in their ad in the same publication, two other Saint John merchants, William and Thomas Pagan, advised customers that their store carried white, yellow, plain, and figured buttons. Both kinds of metal buttons would eventually find their way into Westmorland County households.

Button moulds were also common from the 18th to the mid 19th century. Manufacturers, and some ordinary inhabitants as well, cut circular blanks from wood or from cow or pig bones, or cast them in pewter. They then drilled a central hole in the blank to facilitate covering it with embroidery or fabric. A similar process produced what was called a Dorset

or Cartwheel button, made by wrapping embroidery thread around a circular metal ring then embroidering the center portion.

"Fashionable" seems to have been the most common term used to describe the more expensive buttons in merchants' account books and advertisements prior to 1800. For example, in 1793 Charles Cane, a Sackville bricklayer and mason, purchased 1½ dozen "fashionable" buttons from merchant James Ratchford for 5/7, making the price of each button a bit more than 3½ pence, more than six times what the cheapest button might have cost. Sleeve buttons, consisting of two linked buttons were even more fashionable and expensive. Cane paid 3/9 (45 pence) for his, while John Keillor purchased a pair from merchant Richard Lowerison for five shillings (60 pence).

Most early merchants simply listed "buttons" in their account books with no other descriptor except the size. In general, this was the practice of Lowerison, who came from Yorkshire to what was then still part of Nova Scotia 1772. He initially settled on the Petitcodiac River with his wife Mary and their young family but later purchased land and a farm at Point de Bute near Fort Cumberland. Lowerison seems to have had some means when he came to the area. Local legend had him engaged in the cattle business and sending beef cattle to Halifax. For many years he also ran a small store serving local residents. He died in 1825 at the ripe old age of eighty-four.

Lowerison's surviving ledger for the years 1782-1789 includes 173 customers. It frequently refers to the day's transactions simply as "to sundries," but fortunately it identifies each individual item in enough other places that, in spite of its limitations, it still conveys a good idea of the kinds of goods carried. Between 1782 and 1784 Lowerison sold 192 common (as opposed to "fashionable") buttons to ten different customers, including a dozen to John Keillor in 1783. At six pence a dozen, or a 'ha'penny' each, Keillors' were the least expensive of the common sort. The most expensive of this category went for eighteen pence a dozen. None of these entries indicated the size of button, or what it was made of.

After moving to Dorchester from Fort Cumberland in 1783, John Keillor opened accounts with a number of other local merchants. His younger sister, Ann, married one of them in 1788. Amos Fowler was a Loyalist from New York who settled near Fort Cumberland in the mid 1780s and established a mercantile business soon afterwards. He owned a schooner that brought in goods from Saint John and perhaps occasionally from the United States, and there is a strong likelihood that it also delivered orders to Sackville and Dorchester. None of Fowler's actual account books has survived, so we have no evidence of who his other customers may have been, but we do have the statements of account (in other words his requests for payment) that he sent to John Keillor covering the ten-year period between 1789 and 1799. They list all the items Fowler sold to him during that time and thus offer a great deal of interesting information on the kinds of goods he stocked and/or imported on demand.

From Fowler the Keillors bought many ordinary commonplace items such as tea, dishes, spices, soap, nails, tobacco and rum. However, they also spent considerable sums on luxury items. In February 1789 John bought a silk handkerchief for 9/- when ordinary ones cost 2/6. In 1793 he purchased an expensive vest shape for 12/6 when more common ones cost 5/5. He also bought a very expensive "pair of blankets" in 1792 for 26/-. Manufacturers usually wove blanket lengths in yard-wide widths. Customers subsequently sewed two blanket lengths together to make a complete blanket.

John also bought fabric and sewing notions from Fowler approximately every six months, clearly for the ladies of the household. His, or their, total button purchases amounted to 121 buttons for the ten-year period. In February 1789, for instance, he purchased twelve buttons, another eighteen large buttons in June 1790, and an additional twenty-four large buttons in January 1791. The average cost per button was between one and one and a half pence each. The large buttons may have been used for outerwear similar to those on a coat he ordered from Amos Fowler in January 1799. This would have been an expensive purchase. The bill for Keillor's coat totalled £1.2.0, including the cost of making it. Labour alone came to 7/6, more than half the cost of the 3¼ yards of fabric needed. Fowler's bill also included twelve large buttons and twelve small ones. Whether they were of brass, pewter or metal mould buttons is not stated but the large ones were certainly expensive enough, costing

three and half pence each, the price of a pair of children's shoes.

Another merchant of the area who had John Keillor as a customer was Stephen Millidge, a New Jersey Loyalist who was appointed High Sheriff and Deputy Crown Surveyor for Westmorland County in 1786. In 1790 he married Sally, the eldest daughter of the county's leading man, Amos Botsford, and went into partnership with his wife and father-in-law to open a retail store in Westcock, the first one in Sackville Parish. Soon afterwards, he acquired a half interest in a schooner and established a trading business that reached as far as Eastport and Boston. Because he was away from home much of the time (and also because she was highly intelligent), Sally was very much involved in the management of the store.

Very few of the Millidges' business records survive but a statement of account to a Samuel Everly shows just how many textiles and sewing notions this one customer purchased during a two-month period in 1793. He purchased seven different pieces of cloth, including two quantities of "French linen," two dozen ordinary buttons, four shirt buttons, fourteen skeins of sewing thread, four sticks of twist and a skein of silk. Sewing thread was not sold on wooden bobbins as it is today, but by the ounce in skeins. The twist, a tightly twisted two-ply thread, might have been used for making reinforced buttonholes. The silk could also have been used for this purpose, or perhaps for embroidery on metal rings for Cartwheel buttons or embellishments on button moulds. Besides Everly, the only other Millidge customer for whom a record survives is John Keillor, who bought a considerable quantity of goods in 1802 and 1803. His March 22nd 1803 purchase of 1½ dozen buttons cost him 6/-, or four pence per button. These were expensive buttons and more than he had paid Fowler for his coat buttons in 1799.

Stephen Millidge died suddenly in 1803 at the age of forty-two of what the newspapers called "an apoplexy," which could mean either a stroke or a heart attack, but Sally carried on the business until she and their only son were drowned in a tragic accident in 1807. As Stephen had no time to make out a will, by law his estate had to be inventoried by sworn assessors for probate so that Sally could inherit it. His total assets were valued at an impressive £2922, the second highest in the Westmorland County probate records up to that time. Among them was his £200-half interest in the schooner *Boyne* as well as full ownership of an unfinished brig still on the stocks, valued at £700. There was much other valuable property besides—including a slave girl named Rose—totaling £1389. His store inventory listed 225 yards of fabrics and a large quantity of buttons.

Millidge didn't hesitate to proclaim his status and hard-won affluence through his "wearing apparel," assessed at £20.8s [shillings], the price of a good saddle horse. Among the most expensive items in his wardrobe were two broadcloth coats with velvet capes, assessed at £1.10s. each, two ruffled shirts worth £2.12s., a fur hat "of the best quality," valued at £1, and a pair of silver knee buckles for 2/6. Clearly, Stephen bought only the finest quality materials and didn't care much about the cost.

Francis Pemart and William Harper were two Saint John merchants who regularly served remote customers along the Fundy coast. Both had an interesting personal history. Pemart was born at sea and brought up in France before his parents removed to New York State. As an adult he brought a 195-acre farm in Cortland Manor, Westchester County, where he raised horses and cattle. By 1774 this property was worth £2000. He also purchased a sloop and built a wharf and store to go with it, but then the American Revolution brought a drastic change of fortune. A staunch Loyalist, he saw his home burned, his property confiscated and his sloop stolen and sunk. He was eventually taken prisoner and spent five months in jail. At the end of hostilities he and his family moved to Saint John where he bought two lots on St James Street with a house and outbuildings and once again opened a mercantile business. At some point he bought another sloop, the *Kitty*, which he used as a floating store.

Like Stephen Millidge, Pemart died suddenly without leaving a will, in his case in 1798, so there is also an inventory of his estate in the probate records. In fact, there are two of them. The first lists his property and moveable assets in Saint John. The second, drawn up a few weeks later, lists his stock of goods and obligations "from the County of Westmorland." Forty-four familiar names from " Up the Bay" owed him over £70, a significant amount of money. These debts were for past purchases and cash advances, called 'notes of hand'.

Among the debtors were a dozen Acadian families from the Memramcook Valley and nine German families from the Hopewell area as well as some of the more prominent men of the county. Pemart had obviously made some bad business decisions, as his total debts exceeded his assets. His schooner and property were sold to pay these debts. The assessors attempted to collect what was owed to his estate and to liquidate the merchandise he had stocked up for customers "Up the Bay." Among the items destined for Westmorland County were numerous yard goods, blankets, shoes, hats, and knives and forks. Also included were four dozen "mettle" buttons at six shillings a dozen and four pairs of expensive brass and silver sleeve buttons.

William Harper is the best known of the early Westmorland County merchants, thanks to the literary efforts of his great-granddaughter, Helen Harper Steeves, who inherited some of his account books and was fascinated by them from an early age. In 1924 she published a small but delightful book about his mercantile activities and the living conditions of early 19th century Moncton. Like Pemart, Harper had an eventful and ultimately tragic life. Born in Yorkshire in 1764, he joined the British Navy at a young age and served in North America. At the close of the Revolutionary War, the nineteen-year-old sailor found himself on a vessel ferrying exiled Loyalists from Maine to Saint John. Among them was fifteen-year-old Sarah Hamm, a refugee going with her family to resettle in the new Loyalist haven. William was smitten. After his discharge from the Navy, he returned to Saint John to set up a general merchandising business and to court Sarah, not necessarily in that order. They were married in 1791 and had three children before she passed away in November 1808 at the age of forty. That same year their thirteen-year-old son, whose name has not come down to us, followed his mother into the grave. Despondent, William sold his Saint John house at a loss and moved to "the Bend" (Moncton) in May 1809 with eleven-year-old Ann and five-year-old George. He wasted no time in finding a new wife. Four months later, in September 1809, he married Ann Dixon, a daughter of Major Thomas Dixson, one of the "war heroes" in the suppression of the Eddy Rebellion. Two other daughters, Catherine and Eliza, joined their siblings in the Harper household on Hall's Creek between 1812 and 1814. Harper had not bought property when he removed to the Bend in 1809 but rented premises for his business and home. In 1812 he purchased a 32-acre property from Christian and Rosanna Trites near Hall's Creek.

Harper was an astute businessman who had realized in the late 1790s that he could augment his Saint John enterprise by making regular trading voyages to Bay of Fundy ports, including those in Westmorland County. He outfitted a small schooner, the *Weasel*, with consumer goods and went on sales trips to service customers in remote communities. Two surviving account books give a comprehensive picture of his business prior to his move to the Bend as well as the shopping habits of his customers along the Fundy coast. The first of them covers the years 1796 to 1800 and contains over a hundred different accounts. Harper transacted business in Quaco (now St. Martins), Shepody, Moncton, Memramcook, Dorchester, and Sackville in New Brunswick. He also had stops in Cap d'Or, Maccan, Nappan, Minudie, Horton and Windsor in Nova Scotia, as well as in Lubec, Eastport, and Boston in New England. The second surviving account book covering the years 1807-1810 was mainly for Westmorland County customers. Two other account books after 1809 show him running a number of different businesses to support his growing family. Along with general merchandising, he was active in the timber trade and also operated an inn and tavern in his home. The *Weasel* continued to service the eastern end of the Bay of Fundy, where customers sometimes paid their bills with grindstones. One of the surviving ledgers for the years 1815-1820 contains the accounts of over four hundred customers. A second smaller book includes various accounts and letters between 1829 and 1831.

Most of the buttons Harper sold before 1800 were of the "generic" sort, but he also carried "mettle" buttons in stock, as he sold two dozen of them to Charles Dixon of Sackville in 1796 for 1/3 a dozen. Perhaps the best indication of the kinds of buttons considered fashionable is the large order he placed with the Saint John wholesaler, James Scotson, in December 1796. Along with a large variety of textiles and

fancy vests, it included nearly 1200 buttons. Among them were best-plated (metal) buttons, regular plated buttons, large plated (metal) buttons, shirt buttons, and undifferentiated buttons. The large plated buttons sold for three pence each while the other buttons in the order were much less expensive.

A new type of shiny button was introduced towards the end of the 18th century. Manufacturers in Birmingham had been busy working on a process to make brass buttons more elegant yet affordable. Between 1797 and 1800 they developed a gilding process by combining five grains of pure gold per gross of buttons with mercury. (A gross is 144 items.) They then dipped brass buttons into this solution and cooked them in a furnace. Three different qualities of gilded buttons resulted, depending on the amount of gold used. The prescribed amount for "single gilding" was 1/96th of an ounce to cover a one-inch button. To ensure quality, the button manufacturers asked Parliament for laws to keep unscrupulous competitors from gilding with too little gold. To further protect their process, they had their company name, together with the words "single gilt", "double gilt", "triple gilt," etc. stamped onto the backs of their buttons.

Nehemiah Merritt, a Saint John merchant, included these new gilt buttons from Birmingham in an advertisement he placed in the *Royal Gazette* on the 17 June 1805. Merritt must have been hopeful that the vessel, the *Douglas,* would soon arrive from London, as the same ad appeared in the newspaper for the next fifty weeks. Among the sewing notions was a quantity of gilt breast buttons as well as gilt coat buttons. These buttons would still be popular for at least another thirty years and find their way to Westmorland County.

Gilt buttons were so valuable that they sometimes appeared in estate inventories, for example that of John Downing, a mariner from Dorchester who died in late 1812 without leaving a will. Downing was born in Port Lajoie, Prince Edward Island, in 1755 to an Irish father, David Downing, and an Acadian mother, Dorothy Boudrot. He and his young family evaded the Acadian expulsion by fleeing to the Miramichi and later to Restigouche. The entire family, including John and his two siblings, were captured in 1762 by British troops and imprisoned at Fort Cumberland. After the war ended the family eventually settled at Franklin Manor near Nappan. John married an Acadian woman, Margaret Haché from Westcock in 1780 and moved to Dorchester about 1790. David Downing later settled with his wife and his four children at Dover in Dorchester Parish.

Few further details about John Downing have come down to us except those to be found in the inventory drawn up for probate purposes after his death. Two Justices of the Peace, John Keillor of Dorchester and James Watson of Moncton, and Downing's wife, Margaret, were the administrators of his estate, valued at a very respectable £536. This included land, a boat, his personal belongings and what appears to have been store merchandise. The merchandise inventory alone ran to more than five pages and included over 250 yards of textiles and nearly 2000 buttons, valued at £3.12s.8d[pence]. There were thirteen different types comprising plated coat buttons, yellow buttons (likely brass), white buttons, common buttons, waistcoat buttons, and 576 gilt buttons. Valued at 3/- to 4/- a gross, the gilt buttons were by far the most expensive in the inventory.

William Wells was another Westmorland County merchant who competed for customers. Born in Yorkshire in 1742, he came to the Chignecto in 1772 with the first wave of Yorkshire immigrants. He married Margaret Dobson in 1768 and had a large family of thirteen children, nearly half of whom died at an early age. The family originally settled near Fort Cumberland. Then Wells bought a farm in Upper Point de Bute although he had identified himself as a mason when he came to Nova Scotia. Exactly when he turned his attentions to mercantile activity is unknown. When he passed away in 1819 his sons, William Junior and George, continued the business—which included a blacksmith shop—into the 1840s.

The Wells' surviving account book detailed transactions for 117 customers between 1810 and 1822. (Those after 1819 were obviously handled by one of the boys.) Like other merchants, he carried a wide variety of merchandise including textiles, tea, coffee, "spirits", spices, almanacs, spelling books, fine hats, indigo (dye), silk gloves and even saddles. Almost half his customers purchased buttons. Little information was included on the kind or size of buttons. Many of the thirty button transactions ap-

pearing in the first 140 pages were incompletely described. Some did not record the price while others were vague about the quantity. (See my note below.) However, we can get some idea of the prices. A customer could purchase one dozen buttons for as little as eight pence or as much as thirty-six pence (three shillings). Most bought the cheaper ones. Thomas Oulton's 1814 purchase was an exception. He bought a dozen gilt buttons for 3/- or three pence each.

William Wells left a will with bequests of property and cash to his six surviving children and his wife Margaret. Assessors took an inventory of the merchandise in the store but not of his property or moveable assets. The store inventory included a wide variety of items with a total value of £175. At the bottom of the last page were four entries for buttons. There were no less than seven dozen glass buttons in stock, valued at eight pence apiece. They had been recently developed by button manufacturers and were the latest fashion. Evidently, Point de Bute people didn't wish to be left behind.

This examination of buttons in Westmorland County would not be complete without mentioning the rather large order William Harper placed in 1831 with one of his English agents, Holderness and Ward of Hull. Besides a long list of other luxury goods he wanted in exchange for the lumber he had shipped, Harper requested eighty-four gross of buttons, amounting to more than 12,000 individual buttons. The order was divided into twelve gross each of white milled coat and white milled vest buttons, ten gross of large (coat) moulds, six gross of vest moulds, and thirty-two gross of three different kinds of gilt buttons. Harper specified that the gilt buttons must be of middling size with good eyes. Among the gilt buttons were six gross for coats, ten gross for vests and sixteen gross of "bell buttons" for vests. Westmorland County would be well supplied with gilt buttons, which remained fashionable into the 1840s.

In 1831 a terrible fire ravaged William Harper's house and store. The shock of seeing his home and livelihood go up in flames was more than he could bear and the seventy-year-old collapsed and died shortly thereafter. Although he left a will, the probate court ordered an inventory of his estate since he operated a business. Three appraisers valued his total estate at £1374. It included the store's inventory (which took four pages to list), his personal effects, five lots of land, a boat, what was left of his store and homestead, and two pews in the "meeting house at the Bend," which is now a National Historic Site. The fire did not claim everything in the store's inventory. There still remained just over £130 worth of merchandise and the scorched but still largely intact remains of the three ledgers that allowed his great-granddaughter to tell Harper's tale. Among the spared merchandise were sixteen "fashionable" glass buttons that, sadly, didn't get to adorn a lady's dress.

Author's Notes:

I first found Helen Harper's *The Story of Moncton's First Store and Store Keeper* in a box of books in my mother's attic in Moncton. It changed my career and research agenda by sending me on a quest to discover more about shopping in Westmorland County during the colonial period. Unfortunately, amateur historians like Steeves didn't make use of footnotes, so the sources for some her material still remain elusive.

I would like to thank Gene Goodrich for sharing important documents, including John Keillor's transactions with Amos Fowler and Stephen Millidge, and William Harper's will and estate inventory.

William Wells' ledger was separated at some point and later found its way into two different and entirely unrelated collections of documents. One of the collections called the later portion an "anonymous account book" but a closer inspection revealed it to be a continuation of the first one.

Judith Rygiel

THE SAD END OF A LOST LANDMARK—AND OF A DREAM

The Hickman barn ca. 1912. The Hickman house, residence of Cole and Judy (Hickman) Morison is at the extreme left. It is still very much 'alive'.

The barn at Minudie ca. 2013

It is with great sadness that we inform you of the recent (December 2017)demolition of the historic Hickman barn that was a Dorchester landmark until it was dismantled and moved to Minudie in 1942. (See "Memories of a Lost Landmark" in the September 2013 issue of the *Newsletter*.) After the move it continued, although in much diminished splendour, to serve as a barn until the early 1980s, after which it sat idle as part of the Ruth Symes property that was slated to become a museum after her death. The Minudie Heritage Association had some hope of restoring the barn along with the magnificent house, but that has now been shattered. We are informed that all the wood is scheduled to be removed with an excavator, leaving only the foundation stones as a possible monument to its memory.

Jamie Heap and Gene Goodrich

The sad remains 2017

WESTMORLAND
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Museum Hours

June 9 to Sept. 8 2018

Tuesday to Saturday

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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 (1815) 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, E4K 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

Judith Rygiel, Jamie Heap

Editor, *Newsletter*, Gene Goodrich

Saluting Our Outstanding Volunteers

Editor's Note: As a different way of saying a collective 'thank you' to all our outstanding volunteers, Cole put together the following table of your fundraising success:

	2017	*2016*
Mothers' Day Tea	896	897
Sandpiper Breakfast	511	214
'Dinner with the Keillors'	224	-304
Haunted House	9,623	8,263
Victorian Dinners	1,550	1,205
Other	807	-
Totals	$13,611	$10,475

Thanks to the continuing support of our many friends and members, our fund-raising efforts resulted in a 29% increase in 2017. The table above compares this year's events with last year's. At Volunteer's Day we extended our thanks to our volunteers but many of you could not attend; so, we want to thank everyone again for their generosity—with such busy schedules, we know you had to make a special effort to find the time.

Cole Morison