

WESTMORLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Walking around my yard this week I finally recognized that spring has arrived at last! The daffodils and hyacinths were out and my beautiful tulips were starting to open up. Spring always makes me smile, but this spring even more so. It's been over a year now since the Covid19 pandemic hit us but I can finally see the light at the end of the tunnel and even though we are not quite out of the woods yet, things are looking up. I hope you all can sense the end is near as well. It was a very trying year for many of us and that holds true for the Society, yet we carried on and prevailed. Regardless, with such a dynamic group of board members, staff and volunteers it was still difficult for me not to see us all out and about in the community tending to our numerous activities and fundraising events.

In spite of the pandemic's impact on our activities the Society still managed to achieve some of its fundraising goals. With the addition of Miriam Andrews to

our board we were finally able to develop our Online Marketing Strategy. As a result, we successfully held our first online auction on April 5th. The auction opened up with some wonderful items that were either created right in our own St. James textile museum or were generously donated to the Westmorland Historical Society for this purpose. The staff and volunteers worked quietly behind the scenes as these lovely textiles, crafts and artworks were bid on through our online auction Facebook page. It was our very first online event and it was a success. The auction raised just over \$1600 in one weekend so we hope to have more online events in the future. Stay tuned!

On April 30th the sale of the Landry house closed. The Landry house had been up for sale for a couple of years. The board decided to put it up for sale to help with the capital cost of

repairs and maintenance of the Keillor House as well as our other buildings. The first project of the year will be a new roof for the additional portion of the Keillor House museum. Much of the proceeds from the Landry House sale will also be invested to help provide for the long-term financial sustainability of the society.

Our annual General Meeting will take place this year by Zoom video conferencing on Sunday June 6th at 7:00 pm. Details of the meeting will be posted on our Facebook page and website. The meeting is open to all members. Unfortunately we will not be able to host our annual meeting dinner with Covid19 restrictions still place, but that just means it will be bigger and better next year.

Gene Goodrich has been working hard on our newsletter as usual and this

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KEILLOR HOUSE MUSEUM —SPECIAL EVENTS

For updates on this year's Special Events, please check our website and/or FaceBook on a regular basis

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THE KEILLOR HOUSE CONCEALED SHOE



When workers were dismantling the south wall of Keillor House in 2005 so that “these stones could rise again,” they found inside it a shoe, a ball, a wooden spoon, and a couple of ‘you-name-its’, obviously put there when it was constructed in 1815. (I know the official date is 1813, but Paul Bogaard and I have shown that it was actually 1815. See the February 2017 issue of the *WHS Newsletter*, available on our website.) Why were they there? Did one of the workers accidentally drop them into the rubble between the inner and outer wall? Or did someone—maybe some mischievous children (they had them even then)—deliberately put them



there? We had no idea but, thinking they might be of historical value, someone (probably Judy or Alice) cleaned them up a bit and put them on display in the Dairy Room, with the intention of someday having them examined by an expert. So far, that hasn't happened, and I am not an expert, but since I have this idea of doing semi-regular articles featuring some of our more interesting museum pieces, I thought I would write something on this serendipitous find, more specifically on the shoe, as it is the only one of them I have anything to say about. The pictures will have to do for the others—pictures are, after all, generally worth about a thousand words.



Not knowing anything about the subject, I assumed that it was rare to find shoes in old walls, and rarer still for professional scholars to be interested in them. I was wrong on both counts. There are literally dozens of websites on this topic, and many museums around the world have specimens on their display shelves. So, there is considerable interest in ‘concealed shoes’, as they are called by the *cognoscenti*, chiefly, it seems, as artifacts of social history. Northampton Museum in England, for example, even has a ‘Concealed Shoe Index’ listing some 2000 discoveries from around the world. Besides walls, concealed shoes have been found in chimneys, fireplaces, under floors, around doors and windows, and even in the roofs of buildings ranging in grandeur from manor houses, to churches, to humble cottages. Countries in the Northampton Index include Belgium, Britain, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, and Sweden, as well as Australia, the United States, and Canada. So the Keillor House shoe is part of the Canadian contingent and perhaps it should be added to the Northampton ‘Concealed Shoe Index’. It could be our entry point into the big league.

Scholarly musings on the purpose of such deposits have tended in several directions, as scholarly musing tend to do. There doesn't seem to be any direct testimony as to why people concealed shoes in buildings, so musing is about all that can be done to explain the practice. The one thing certain about it is that it goes back a long way. The finds have been dated from as early as 1308 (Winchester Cathedral) to as late as the 1930s. One theory is that they were in-

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Spring's letter has some great articles for you all to enjoy. One of my favourites is "The Keillor House Concealed Shoe". It provides several entertaining accounts of how a shoe, discovered by workers in 2005 while dismantling the walls of the Keillor House could have gotten there.

Collections and Museum Activities:

While the museum was closed for the winter, our Manager/Curator, Donald Alward, was still working hard on our collections. One of the items we received was a beautiful Eastlake Settee. The settee was from the home of well-known Dorchester architect John Francis Teed and was donated to us by Anne Baxter of Dieppe. We also bid at the Keys Auction on some very interesting documents from the Edward Barron Chandler home that will soon be on display at the Keillor House. With the closing of the local Masonic Lodge and a generous offering from the lodge's secretary, Macx MacNichol, we were able to collect numerous historic documents and artifacts that demonstrate the lodge's fascinating history in the town of Dorchester. Images of these objects are on page 15.

Graydon Milton Trust:

The Trust's portfolio was prudently put into cash in March 2020 when Covid19 hit and it stayed there for most of the year. The trust was slowly reinvested starting in November of 2020 when the markets started to shift upwards again. I am happy to say that as of April 22nd, 2021 the trust has been fully reinvested and we are already seeing good dividends and returns as a result. Overall, our finances remain strong and if things continue on the same path the Society will continue to grow and expand its activities.

Properties Updates:

All of our remaining rental buildings are fully rented. The Sir Pierre Amend Landry House sold for \$180,000. I wish the new owners all the best and hope they love this beautiful historic building as much as we have.

Acknowledgments:

I would like to thank Donald Alward, our Manager/Curator for his care and dedication to our museum activities and collections. I would also like to thank Alice Folkins for her ongoing commitment to the management of our properties. A special thanks to Miriam Andrews of the Lady Smith Manor for helping us get up-to-date with all our social media and online activities.

In closing, I would like to congratulate all of our staff, volunteers and board members for helping put this challenging year behind us. We will be opening our museum again in June and I hope we will be able to host some fun activities soon. You can stay updated on all of our activities by going to our Facebook page and/or our website.

Bonnie Swift

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-tended as magical charms to protect the occupants against evil influences, particularly witches. Shoes, so the thinking allegedly went, are the only wearing apparel that retain the shape of that part of the owner's anatomy, namely the foot, that wears them, and so they retain part of his/her personality as well. This made them an ideal charm with which to lure the witch's attention away from her intended victim. Popular witch lore also had it that witches are attracted to human scent on shoes and, unable to resist, they enter them and get trapped.

Another suggestion is that the concealed shoe (they seem never to have been concealed in pairs; one was enough to trap a witch) was a fertility charm that would encourage conception in the household. It's true that folklorists trace the custom of throwing shoes towards the bride and groom and/or tying them, along with shoe-shaped confetti, to the newlyweds' car back to ancient fertility rituals. But I think they may be stretching a point in citing the nursery rhyme about the "old woman who lived in a shoe and had so many children she didn't know what to do." I think her problem was that she didn't know what *not* to do. In any case, I doubt that the Keillor House shoe was intended as a fertility charm. By the time the house was built, all the Keillor children were grown up, or nearly so, and Elizabeth was well beyond childbearing age.

I also doubt that John Keillor believed in witches or possession by evil spirits. Not only were science and rationalism well advanced by his time, he was an Anglican, and most Anglican clergy denounced such beliefs as superstition. But they were still alive and well in the evangelical offshoot of the Church of England, Methodism, which was very much the religion of Elizabeth. Although an Anglican Minister himself, John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, openly believed in witches, and so, probably, did Elizabeth. But, whether the Keillors agreed or disagreed on this point, concealing a shoe or other objects in a wall at the time of building was very likely a tradition in Yorkshire, so another motive could have simply been a desire to honour their heritage.

As with other such finds, there is no evidence that explains why the Keillors did this, but in compensation there *is* a fair bit that the shoe could have been made by John or someone in the Keillor household. It took me a long time to accept that someone who aspired to be a gentleman farmer and a Justice of the Peace would have stooped to making shoes as a source of income, but as my research progressed it became increasingly difficult to argue with the evidence. Among a list of goods he bought from merchant Amos Fowler in 1795 were a shoe knife and a quantity of shoe tacks. He also bought bulk leather on a number of occasions, as well as an awl blade and a shoe hammer and shoe thread from merchant Stephen Millidge, who was also the county Sheriff. John was also one of the many creditors who billed Josiah Wood's estate for goods and services still unpaid for at the time of death. One of the items was "a pair of shoes for Mr. Wood," bought in October, 1808, three years after Keillor became a Justice of the Peace, and thereby entering the ranks of the gentry. Nor did the shoemaking stop there. By grant and purchase John owned all the land that later became the centre of Dorchester village. In 1811 he sold a portion of it to his cousin, Thomas Carter, which, a few years later, became the site of the Bell Inn. But he reserved a tiny plot of twenty-five square rods (412.5 square feet) near the courthouse "for the purpose of erecting a cobbler's stall." By this time the oldest Keillor boy, John Junior, was old enough to be a cobbler (he later became a moderately successful farmer) but certainly not in 1795 when the first evidence of shoemaking appears in the surviving record, and he was only four. This leaves John Senior himself, or maybe a hired man. Perhaps I shouldn't have been so snobbish about his making shoes. All indications are that John Keillor was an ordinary hands-on farmer until the early 1800s when he could afford hired men to do the manual labour. In any case, shoemaking was an honourable trade. It was certainly good enough for John Hickman, one of the early hoteliers in Dorchester, and progenitor of a family of very successful businessmen. Hickman's son, John Junior, was a Postmaster and Collector of Customs as well as a Deputy Provincial Treasurer. But he was also a shoemaker. So, even if there is no final proof, there is at least a good possibility that the Keillor House Concealed Shoe was made by John Keillor himself. Furthermore, we don't have to be ashamed of it.

Gene Goodrich

THE DORCHESTER ROOTS OF SACKVILLE'S WOOD FAMILY: SOME NEW INFORMATION

One fine June day in 2017, a lady carrying a large box and identifying herself as Jane Trites stopped by Keillor House and asked to see the Museum Manager. Her mother, Hester S. Trites of Moncton, had recently died and during the house cleaning that usually follows such events the box was discovered in a store room above the kitchen. It contained a bunch of old letters, notes, and other documents of various kinds, but also a series of daybooks and ledgers from a business in Dorchester run by a Josiah Wood. Jane Trites was pretty sure they came to her mother from Cranewood, the grand and gracious stone mansion of Sackville's onetime leading citizen and first major, Josiah Wood, who was also Hester Trites' grandfather. I don't know this for sure, but I think she may have gotten them from Dr. William ("Big Bill") Crawford, Dean and later President of Mount Allison, who bought Cranewood from Josiah Wood's son Herbert Mariner Wood. With the house came an extensive library as well as piles of old papers and other documents that Dr. Crawford didn't want. That's how Keillor House got part of Wood's library. Perhaps knowing of the Wood Library in Keillor House, Jane Trites asked if we would like to have these artifacts as well. Don took one look at them and said 'yes'.

The normal fate of such acquisitions is to sit on the shelf for some time until museum staff can be spared to catalogue them. Even then, fragile old books and loose documents are difficult and time consuming to study because of the care that must be taken in handling them. They are also often difficult to read, so it can get pretty uncomfortable stooping over them, squinting through a magnifying glass. But, it's an ill wind that doesn't blow someone some good, and this includes the nasty blast that infested the whole world in 2020. The 'good' that it blew our museums (and museums everywhere) is the time away from other duties that it afforded our staff. Don seized the moment and over the summer he and his staff catalogued all 131 items and scanned their 1435 pages into high-resolution tiff files that can be instantly magnified on a computer screen to make even the smallest squiggle legible. To simplify the present task, he downloaded a copy onto a memory stick for me.

I was interested in the new acquisition because I had done up a descriptive catalogue of all the books in the Wood Library in Keillor House, together with a brief biography of the Josiah Wood who once owned them. It was published by WHS under the title *The Intellectual World of Josiah Wood*. From the research I did for it I knew that this Josiah Wood (1843-1927) was the grandson of another Josiah Wood (1776-1809) who lived in Dorchester. The first Josiah made only a brief appearance in the book, but I ran across him again when writing *In Search of John Keillor*. Mount Allison University archives houses a collection of documents mainly related to the settling of Wood's estate, and from them I learned that he and Keillor had regular dealings. Some other details in the collection allowed me to offer a somewhat fuller sketch of him than the one in *The Intellectual World*. The university archives also holds another document that does not have Josiah Wood's name on it, but it yielded some interesting information on John Keillor's brother, Robert, whose story I also told in the Keillor book. It is a 'daybook', which was a daily record kept by merchants of each transaction, whether selling, buying, or lending, as it took place. At the end of the day the transactions in the daybook were entered into a ledger under the name of each customer who had an account, noting his/her debits on one page and credits on the facing page. This daybook ran from May 2, 1812 to August 28, 1813 and was archived as that of an unidentified Sackville merchant. After examining it carefully, I wrote, very perspicaciously as it turns out, "We will probably never know whose it was, as both covers and the pages where that information



Sary (Sarah) Wood her Day Book Dorchester 1808

would have been recorded are missing... From the contents it is clear that it belonged to a family that farmed, operated a saw mill, and ran an informal part-time tavern offering meals, bed and breakfast, and drinks throughout the day when it was open. The owner, or his wife, also custom-made coats, trousers, and other articles of clothing. Apparently noting the large number of Sackville names among the customers, the archivist... surmised that it was from a business in...Sackville but failed to notice the even larger number of Dorchester names... I don't think there can be any doubt about it: the daybook is from a business in Dorchester."



As I looked through the splendid images of the daybooks in the collection that Jane Trites gave us, I suddenly had a sense of *déjà vu*. Comparison with images of the "unidentified" daybook in the Mount Allison archives (image on the left—I took it myself; that's why it's not so good) confirmed it: they are all part of the same series of daybooks. So, instead of having just one unidentified daybook from May 1812 to August 1813, we now have seven, beginning in 1806, that had once belonged to Josiah Wood of Dorchester. Better yet, besides the daybooks, the Trites gift also included five ledgers (also called 'account books') from Josiah Wood's business in Dorchester and its immediate successor. They contain much additional information on him and his 'business', as do several other documents in the gift. One item that was once in Cranewood, but unfortunately did not come into Hester Trites' possession and has apparently been lost, is a diary kept by Josiah Wood. His grandson referred to it in an address he gave to a Sackville historical society that *is* in the Trites gift, and a Miss Cogswell, who wrote a brief article on the first Wood for the Saint John *Daily Sun* sometime in the later 1800s, (quoted in full in Howard Trueman's *The Chignecto Isthmus and Its First Settlers*, sold in the Keillor House bookstore) had seen it as well. Together with the Trites gift and the materials in the Mount Allison University archives, they now make it possible to offer something like a complete sketch of one of Dorchester's early citizens. I think you'll agree that it's quite a good yarn.

Josiah Wood was born in 1776 (the year of the American Declaration of Independence) in Lebanon, Connecticut, into a family of modest means. His father served the Revolutionary cause as an express rider carrying dispatches from the Governor (whose mansion was right across the street) to officers in the field, and died during the war. His mother had a tenuous connection to Nova Scotia in that her father had once considered moving there as part of the Planter migration invited to settle the lands recently cleared of Acadians. In 1759 he was granted 750 acres in Cornwallis Township, followed by another 500 acres in 1763. He must have come up at some point, but appears to have returned to Connecticut soon afterwards, without, however, selling his grant. Then he died, leaving no more tracks in the record apart from his progeny of whom Josiah's mother was one, now widowed with a family to support in much straightened circumstances. She seems to have made a good job of it, at least for Josiah, who somehow got a decent formal education as well as training in cloth working, including weaving, fulling, and dyeing. But perhaps the lure of the land was greater than that of the dyeing vat. Perhaps he saw greener pastures lying to the northeast. Whatever the case, he (or he and his mother) got it into his head to travel up to Nova Scotia and reclaim his grandfather's grants, which the two of them did in the year 1800.

They took passage on the *Hope*, a schooner built, owned, and operated by Capt. Elijah Ayer, a former Connecticut Yankee

who now lived on Dorchester Island (the main settlement at that time) from where, in association with several brothers, he carried on a seaborne trading enterprise that encompassed the New England coastline as far south as Newport and Providence, Rhode Island. It was at one of these towns that the Woods likely boarded. Nova Scotia not being one of Ayer's trading destinations, they put in at Dorchester Island and it was probably while waiting there for passage to the El Dorado of their dreams that twenty-four year old Josiah first met Capt. Elijah's sixteen-year old niece, Sarah (daughter of his brother Mariner). The next thing we know for sure is that by October, 1800 the Woods were living in Newport, Nova Scotia, where Josiah got a job in a cloth mill while waiting for an interview in Halifax with the Governor and Chief Justice to see about the land grant. During slack times at the mill he picked up his pocket money by teaching school, starting with four students. There were no public schools in this country at that time and it was not uncommon for impecunious men with some measure of education to set up shop, usually as a sideline, teaching the three Rs to children whose parents could afford the generally modest fees. Josiah was also musical, able to sing as well as play the flute, and this made him quite popular at local dances and corn husking parties. He and his mother finally got their interview in February, 1801 and it turned out to be a disappointment that should have surprised only the naively optimistic. Their claim was declared invalid, probably because the land had been so long left unsettled, perhaps also because the government had little sympathy for opportunistic and belated 'Loyalists.'

After another summer in Nova Scotia the Woods returned to Dorchester where the main attraction was undoubtedly Sarah Ayer. In a letter written in October, 1801 Josiah's mother informed her family back in Connecticut that she was keeping house for her son in Dorchester and that she expected he would be married that winter or next spring. And so he was, although maybe not quite as soon as she thought. Various genealogy sites date the marriage of Josiah and Sarah to 1804, the birth of their son, Mariner, to 1806, and that of their daughter, Ann, to 1809. During his first half dozen or so years in Dorchester Josiah made much of his living as an itinerant weaver. A lot of farmers kept sheep, and the women and girls carded and spun the wool into yarn. Much of it was knitted into stockings, mittens and other useful articles, but in many households it was also woven into a coarse woolen cloth called 'homespun', used mainly for work clothes. However, weaving at that time was not generally considered women's work. Traditionally it had been done by professional male weavers and during the early 19th century they would come into the better class homes for a few days and do up the weaving, particularly the fancier kind. Josiah also gave lessons in weaving for a fee, as is evident from John Keillor's account with him, as well as those of several others. He probably taught the girls in the family, as we know other professional weavers did. It was in this way that during the 19th century domestic weaving gradually became women's work instead of men's.

He also tailored clothes, or at least I thought he did when I first saw the number of coats, pantaloons, trousers, and vests in the ledgers. But then I noticed numerous references to making bonnets and also to making and altering gowns for various ladies, including Mrs. Keillor (Elizabeth) and several of her daughters. A silk and a muslin gown as well as a wedding dress were made for Gideon Palmer's daughter, Nancy, who married William Trueman of Point de Bute's son, John, in 1805 or 1806. At this point it dawned on me that, rather than a tailor—or perhaps in addition to a tailor—there was a seamstress in the family, namely Sarah. If so, we could say that their marriage was also a business partnership, something that would be confirmed by events to come.



John Keillor's account: First line "to making a gown for Elizabeth." Fourth line "to schooling 6/9; "to instructions in weaving 1/4"

It was probably Josiah's cloth-working skills that first caught the attention of Capt. Gideon Palmer, a New York Loyalist of considerable means who had received a grant of the lands surrounding the pond that has ever since borne his name (later the site of the extensive Palmer shipyards.) Being of an enterprising sort, he decided that what Dorchester needed was a fulling mill and here was the man to run it. But first a word of explanation: Woolen cloth woven on a manual loom had a loose weave that left it limp and easy to fray. Worse yet, it was still saturated with oils, dirt, and other crud. So it had to be thoroughly cleansed ('scoured' was the technical term) and then stiffened and thickened by pounding the daylights out of it. This could be done with a wooden club or even with hands and feet (usually the women's) but it was lot of hard work. Scouring wasn't a fun task either, as the cleansing agent was a mixture of a special clay (called 'fuller's earth') and stale urine. The more pleasant alternative to hand-fulling was the fulling mill, driven by a water wheel that powered wooden hammers and was equipped with scouring vats well away from the dwelling house. (The smell was just as bad, but that was the fuller's problem.) Already common in the Middle Ages, fulling mills, like carding mills, grist mills, and saw mills, came to America with the first colonists and were erected wherever there was enough woolen cloth being woven to make them profitable.



After soliciting subscriptions from investors, among them Elijah Ayer, Capt. Palmer built the fulling mill sometime in 1805 and rented it to the Woods for £25 a year. Besides scouring and fulling, its services included dyeing and pressing. Customers came from all over the county and beyond, including for example Christopher Harper of Sackville, William Trueman of Point de Bute in Westmorland Parish, and Martin Bent of Fort Lawrence, Nova Scotia. (Bent was one of the ones who paid for instructions in weaving.)

In addition to running the fulling mill, Josiah again took up teaching school as a sideline, no doubt with the help of Rev. Thomas Dilworth's *New Guide to the English Tongue*, otherwise known as the 'Spelling Book'. Widely used in both Britain and America well into the 19th century (Abraham Lincoln claimed to have taught himself to read from it), it was common in every household that aspired to a basic education for the children. Virtually every local merchant kept it in stock. Far more than a mere "spelling book," it began with the alphabet, followed by tables of increasingly complex syllables to be memorized (ba, be, bi, boo, etc.), which quickly led to the ability to read and construct simple sentences. But since Rev. Dilworth was indeed a Reverend (Anglican, of course), and this was a time when education was supposed to inculcate virtue and religion as well as knowledge, the first simple sentences were not 'see Dick run' and other suchlike drivel found in the first readers of my day (1940s) but much more edifying utterances like "Who is God but our God?" or "In God do I put my joy," etc. More advanced readings included, for example, animal fables that illustrated moral maxims, some of them still familiar: "Honesty is the best policy"; "One good turn deserves another"; "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, etc." But my favourite is the one cautioning us to be careful on whom we waste our charity: "Throw a crust to a surly dog and he will bite you."

Besides the three famous Rs, Josiah taught singing and music, to adults as well as children. One of the adults who studied vocal music with him was Benjamin Wilson, a Methodist lay preacher and storekeeper on Dorchester Island. Among his younger charges were several Keillor kids, a son and daughter of Elijah Ayer, and Gideon Palmer's youngest son, John, who, when he was nearly a hundred years old, told W.C. Milner, the author of *Dorchester and the Surrounding Area* (sold in the Keillor House bookstore) that he still remembered Dilworth, although not much else about his schooldays.

In 1807 a new opportunity came the Woods' way. In 1802-1803 Dorchester got its first courthouse after Westmorland County's original courthouse at Mount Whatley burned (or was burned) to the ground. The new structure was rather a grand affair, a two-story frame building somewhat larger than Keillor House, with the courtroom and jail on the second floor. Strange as it may seem, the first floor was occupied by an inn/tavern, complete with a bar for thirsty lawyers, litigants, and onlookers, and probably also by the Jailer's quarters, as it was the Jailer who kept the tavern. Even stranger perhaps, it was also used as a meeting house for the local Methodists and Anglicans, as there was no church in the village before 1812.

When the courts weren't in session—which was most of the time—the inn/tavern served the travelling public as well as a long list of local regulars in need of a social centre and/or a quick 'pick-me-up'. Dorchester's first Jailer and tavern keeper was Robert Keillor—no surprise there as his brother, John, had donated the land for the courthouse as part of his campaign to win an appointment as a Justice of the Peace. But by mid 1806 Robert was all through with the business for reasons that were undisclosed and perhaps should remain so. (There are hints in the record that he may have drawn down the stock a bit more than was prudent.) In 1806 Josiah took out his liquor licence and ran the tavern in 1807, at the end of which year he was rewarded by the General Sessions of the Peace (the bi-annual meeting of the county's Justices that had jurisdiction over such matters) with a lease of the whole courthouse ("with the exception of the Bitters Room and Dungeon"), together with the public lands adjoining, for £10 a year. The following year he was allowed to clear the public land in return for a £4 rent reduction. He built a log cabin on it, which he used for a schoolhouse and possibly also as a dwelling in order to free up space in the courthouse for overnight guests. John Palmer remembered the log cabin well, as he was one of the pupils who profited from dear old Dilworth within its well-chinked walls. There was also a stable for the horses of the overnight guests, but whether Josiah built it, or Robert did, is one of the unsolvable, but fortunately minor, mysteries of this tale.

Selling liquor for consumption on the premises (shockingly enough, even on Sundays although it was against the law) was a large part of the business. Among the selections were ale, wine, rum, and gin, as well as a variety of mixed drinks, the most popular of which was shrub, a fruit liqueur made with rum and/or brandy mixed with fruit juice and vinegar. As would be expected, things sometimes got a little lively in the barroom. To judge from the entries in the daybooks (most people bought on credit), some of the patrons would have put a fish to shame, and notations of tumblers—and even the odd table—broken and charged to the culprit's account were not infrequent. Of course the barroom clientele was overwhelmingly male, but I noticed at least one exception: In the course of one day Betsey White consumed a pint of ale, a pint of jack (another liqueur), followed by another half pint of the same. She paid the bill by cash and 1½ dozen eggs.

Besides serving liquor, the tavern offered meals to bar patrons as well as meals and lodging to overnight guests, some of whom sometimes stayed for extended periods. I think it's fair to assume that Sarah took a hand in this, as Josiah had other things besides the tavern to keep him occupied and probably didn't have time to cook and clean, even if he hadn't thought it below his dignity as a man. (Notice on page 5 that one of the daybooks has Sarah's name on it.) There is also clear evidence in the ledgers that Sarah had some help, at least part of the time. Miss Marion Steeves paid her bill for fabrics in part by a credit of eight weeks of work. Betsey Minor had a bill for some plates, some cotton, and for altering a gown. Among her credits were ten weeks of work at the rate of £8 a year and an old skirt that she probably contributed to the rag bag. But against this she was docked for nine days of lost time and charged for nine days of board.

Assuming it was she, and not Josiah, who was making and altering the ladies gowns, bonnets, slippers, etc., we can say that Sarah continued on with her seamstress business. There are also frequent entries in both the day books and the ledgers for making coats, vests, pantaloons, and other male apparel, but I suspect, although I can cite no direct evidence, that she did this work as well, maybe together with Josiah. He still did some scouring, dressing, and dyeing of cloth although he was no longer working full time at the fulling mill. (There is a document in the Wood fonds at Mount Allison indicating that the lease was for two years.) Of course she would also have been looking after little Mariner, and, by sometime in 1808, was pregnant with Ann.

Miss Steeves' purchase of fabrics is a reminder that the tavern didn't just sell liquor and meals. Josiah never took out a retail licence, which would have allowed him to compete with merchants who did, such as Benjamin Wilson and James Sayre over on Dorchester Island, or 'Keillor & Smith' just down the hill from the courthouse. But, like others in the area, including John Keillor before he partnered with William Smith and paid his licence fee, and William Trueman over at Point de Bute, he could get away with selling small quantities of various kinds of goods on an informal basis. Among the most common items

besides cotton wool, Cambric, thread, skeins of silk, indigo and other things associated with fabrics, were tea, sugar, plumbs, raisins, handkerchiefs, straw hats, and tobacco (of course tobacco.) Like other businesses of the day, the tavern also lent small amounts of cash to customers. One wonders where he found the time for it, but Josiah bought a piece of haying marsh from Elijah Ayer and a bit of upland from John Keillor and got himself a couple of cows and a few chickens so as to have butter and eggs on hand. He even saved up enough butter on occasion to ship out a few firkins to the Saint John market on William Harper's agile little trading schooner *Weasel* (so named, apparently, for its ability to dart in and out of the small coves where Harper retailed from the vessel). However, Wood was never an independent farmer. He pastured his cows and horses with John Keillor, and Keillor regularly sold him milk, vegetables, and meat, no doubt for the tavern/inn. In short, what the Woods ran in the county courthouse was a combination of tavern, restaurant, guest house, and convenience store.

But this wasn't enough for the enterprising Josiah. Starting as early as 1804 he began to get into long-distance trading, buying grindstones and gypsum and shipping them on various local vessels, particularly those of the Ayers, down to 'Quoddy' (the popular name for Passamaquody Bay and/or Eastport, Maine), Boston, New York, and as far down as Rhode Island. Already discovered by the French, the Bay of Fundy at low tide offered up a type of sandstone that could be shaped into particularly high quality grindstones eminently suitable for sharpening tools and instruments and boring out muskets and rifles, for which reason it was in high demand in the American states. There were large organized grindstone quarries at Grindstone Island (that's how it got its name), Beaumont (near the later Fort Folly Indian Reserve), Rockport/Slack's Cove (known as North Joggins), and Wood Point, while individuals quarried them for pocket money all along this coastline. There were gypsum mines/quarries near Hillsborough, 'Pink Rock' near Johnson Mills, Hardledge, and probably other places as well that I don't know about.

Josiah was hardly a pioneer in this trade, which was established long before he ever hit these parts, but over time he came to ship considerable quantities. In 1804 Elijah Ayer billed him for delivering thirty grindstones to Quoddy and other early records mention fifteen, thirty, thirty-six—in that range—but by 1806-1808 there are records of eighty-nine, a hundred and fifty, two hundred, and on one occasion four hundred and eighty-two grindstones being shipped. A Captain Alexander MacKay, who appears to have sailed the *Hope* for Ayer, was credited with freighting fifty-eight tons of plaster and twenty-six tons of grindstones to Quoddy for him. Wood seems to have bought the grindstones in small quantities from individuals like Benjamin Tower of Sackville who delivered them to a designated vessel. The historian's oath of complete honesty compels me to add that this was not always to the seller's satisfaction. Among the documents at Mount Allison is a certificate of judgment dated December 3, 1808 and signed by Edward Dixon, Justice of the Peace, authorizing Joseph Brown to recover four pounds eleven shillings and sixpence plus four shillings cost of suit from Josiah Wood for his failure to pay for 30½ grindstones that the plaintiff had delivered to him on June 15, 1807. Josiah denied owing anything but the good Justice noted that "the delivery of the stone was proven beyond possibility of doubt and the defendant could not prove by any evidence whatsoever that the said stone or any part of them had ever been accounted for." Did Josiah have a memory lapse? We hope that's all it was. Like William Harper and other merchants of the day, he also accepted grindstones as payment on customers' tavern accounts.

It was probably not his regular practice, but Josiah sometimes went along on these trading voyages. Captain Richard Gross of the schooner *Fancy* later billed him for some cash that he had lent him in Newport and Providence, Rhode Island, as well as for some rum in Boston. Besides the freight of thirty grindstones, Elijah Ayer staked him to a passage to Quoddy in 1804, together with rum for the voyage. Elijah's younger brother, Thomas, also a sea captain, noted that Wood owed for two passages to Quoddy in 1806, followed by one "for self and boy" from Quoddy. (The boy was unlikely to have been Mariner, who was still a baby; he was probably a young helper.) Although he evidently went to Boston, Newport, and Providence on occasion, his most frequent destination was Quoddy, more specifically Eastport where he dealt with merchant Jabez Mowbray. In return for the grindstones and gypsum, which was used as fertilizer as well as for plaster (after being burned), Mow-

bray supplied him with crockery, glassware, copperware, candlesticks, tea, raisins, blankets, shoes, tobacco, silk shawls, India cotton, and a number of other items that he could retail in Dorchester or use in his home.

By 1809 the Woods were doing quite well for themselves. Neither of them had inherited great wealth, but by diligent application in a number of enterprises they had arrived at the cusp of a modest prosperity. Then disaster struck. Sometime before May, when he is first noted as ‘deceased’, Josiah died at the age of thirty-three. No one seems to know the cause. The only hint in the surviving record is a bill to his estate from Dr. Rufus Smith, the Chignecto’s most popular physician at that time, for two doses of “vitriol roman”, one in December 1807, another in February 1808. Vitriol roman (copper sulfate) was used as an emetic, which means that he must have suffered from stomach problems. We might suspect cancer, but it’s also possible that he consumed more alcohol than was good for his health. From 1803 to 1807 he had fairly regular occasion to go to Sackville, and when he did, he usually had dinner at a log-house tavern kept by Widow Jane Humphrey. According to the bill that Mrs. Humphrey later sent to his estate, he was wont to wash it down with three gills (1.5 cups), or even a half pint, of rum. This was not necessarily egregious by the drinking standards of the day, but if he kept up the pace over an extended period it probably wouldn’t have helped his stomach condition.



Mrs. Humphrey's bar bill

Whatever the cause of it, his death must have been a severe blow to Sarah, who was either pregnant with Ann or had only recently delivered her. Besides managing the tavern, which the day books show she did, there was the estate to settle. This was always a bother, but in Josiah’s case it dragged on longer than usual. He left a lot of debts when he died—the bills to his estate preserved in the Wood fonds at Mount Allison run into the dozens—while quite a few owed him money, with the result that it took several years to get it all settled. As if Sarah didn’t have enough trouble, Gideon Palmer sued the estate over some matter to do with the fulling mill. We don’t learn what it was, only that it was settled by arbitration. This was probably a relief, but it would have been an irritation nonetheless. Although details are scanty due to the nature of the documents I had to work with, I would guess that Sarah entered a difficult period after her husband’s death.

But she had a rescuer. Gideon Palmer’s eldest son, Philip, (who was two years younger than Sarah) was a frequent patron of the tavern, but also a man of considerable talent and ambition. He later became a government-appointed surveyor, a Captain in the local militia, a Justice of the Peace, and, eventually, a member of the provincial legislature. He also owned a large chunk of the Dorchester marsh as well as hundreds of acres of timberland and some excellent farmland in Middle Sackville. The day books after 1809 have both his and Sarah’s name on the cover and numbers of notations in the ledgers also make it clear that he was involved in running the tavern/inn/convenience store soon after Josiah’s death. But they were more than just business partners; he and Sarah were married on May 6, 1810, about a year after she became a widow. I have a notion that Philip succeeded Josiah as Jailer, but I can’t prove it because there is an infuriating gap in the surviving record of the General Sessions of the Peace from mid 1809 to 1832, which would probably have recorded his appointment, and certainly his liquor licence. In any case, the tavern continued to operate in the courthouse for some time, as an entry in the day book dated September 22, 1810 for William Wells having “dinner at court” plainly shows. That Sarah continued to be active in the business is proven by a letter to her from Jabez Mowbray, the Eastport merchant, informing her that he had received her money and was now sending the goods she had ordered. How long the business continued is impossible to say exactly. The last entries in the ledgers that came to Keillor House date to 1822, but by that time the courthouse had burned down and been replaced by a smaller structure, and Andrew Kinnear became Jailer sometime before this

happened. The books were probably taken to Middle Sackville to where Philip and Sarah removed, I'm guessing around 1815-1818, and used in Philip's business there. The names in the ledgers became increasingly Sackville ones.

Sarah and Philip went on to have nine children, all of whom did well in life. They both lived to a ripe old age, she to ninety, he to eighty-seven, and romantically died within a year of each other. Two of the boys became lawyers and another one a physician, but Philip and Sarah didn't neglect Mariner. Besides giving him as good an education as could be got in Sackville during the 1820s, Philip set up a store for him next to the Palmer farm when the lad, who showed an early talent for business, was only sixteen. It was a great success, and Mariner gradually expanded it into an import-export enterprise that encompassed Britain, New England, and the West Indies, making him one of the wealthiest merchants in Sackville. In 1841 he married Louisa Trueman whose fervent Methodist convictions became a powerful shaping influence in the family and led Mariner to become an early and ardent supporter of the Wesleyan Academy founded by Charles Frederick Allison in 1843 that would afterwards grow into Mount Allison University. They named their eldest son after his paternal grandfather, and Josiah became one of the first two graduates of the new academy. He then completed his law studies under his father's half-brother, Alcalus Palmer, in Dorchester and was about to set up practice when his own younger brother, who was supposed to take over the family business, died of consumption, and Josiah felt duty bound to take his place. Applying himself with great devotion, he expanded the trading enterprise quite beyond what Mariner had done and branched out into farming, lumbering, shipbuilding, banking, and many other ventures. He was the founder and eventual president of the railway that ran between Sackville and Prince Edward Island until 1989. He went into politics as a Conservative and in 1882 defeated Dorchester's most famous Liberal, Albert J. Smith. (Albert never recovered from that blow.) Re-elected in 1887 and again in 1891, he was appointed to the Senate in 1895. Throughout his adult life he was a devoted patron of Mount Allison, succeeding his father as Treasurer of the Board of Governors and personally financing its worthy endeavours such as creating the "Swan Pond." He was also instrumental in the campaign to incorporate Sackville as a town (separate from the jurisdiction of the county) and in 1903 became its first mayor. As befitted its leading citizen, he purchased its finest home (actually some time before) from its former leading citizen, William Crane, and renamed it Cranewood. The final feather was stuck into his cap in 1912 when he was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of the province, in which office he served until 1917. He died in 1927 at the age of eighty-four, universally admired for his integrity, vision, and public spirit.

No doubt this was a family saga of great success—and all because Nova Scotia was not on Captain Elijah Ayer's itinerary for that fateful voyage in 1800.

Gene Goodrich

SO, YOU THINK WE HAVE IT TOUGH?

One of the comforts in tough times such as the ones brought on by this miserable pandemic is the reflection that things could be, and often have been, much worse. It would be ridiculously easy to come up with myriads of examples from that long tale of woe and misery that is so much of human history, but this is a *local* historical society, specifically the Westmorland Historical Society, so of course one would want to illustrate this small bit of profundity with instances of a local flavour. I have a good one in my files on the Trueman family fonds in the Mount Allison University archives, a vast body of records that I have been working through over the last several years. It is a letter written by Rev. William Bennett to John Keillor's brother-in-law, William Trueman of Point de Bute, dated September 1, 1803. William Bennett was an English Methodist lay preacher who practised his faith with such fervour that, in 1800, he was sent by the British Wesleyan Conference as a missionary to Nova Scotia. After a brief time in Liverpool and Shelburne, he came to the Chignecto where, as a result of the labours of the well known lay preacher William ('Bishop') Black, there was a strong stirring of the Methodist spirit among the Yorkshire settlers, a number of whom, while still in Yorkshire, had heard and been converted by John Wesley himself. This included William Trueman who had come over at age twenty-two with his parents, William and Ann Thompson Trueman, had married John Keillor's oldest sister, Elizabeth, and was now raising a family of ten children on a prosperous farm on Aulac Ridge called 'Prospect' because of its splendid hilltop view of the Tantramar Great Marsh. William Trueman was an especially active member of the Methodist Society and he made it his pleasant and spiritually uplifting duty to offer hospitality—sometimes over an extended period—to itinerant Methodist preachers 'on circuit', among them William Black. This is how William Bennett first came to stay with the Truemans in 1802, the year that the Nova Scotia District meeting decided that he would go to New York for formal ordination. Before leaving for this most meaningful of events he became very close to the family. Trueman undertook to look after his belongings while he was away in New York and ship them to Saint John where Mr. Bennett planned to spend some time in mission work after his ordination.

The letter informs the Truemans of his safe arrival back in Saint John, thanks them for the "particular care" of his boxes (which he found in good condition), comments on the various states of Methodist souls in Saint John (they ranged from being "pretty much engaged," to "cold and formal," to downright "contemners of real religion"), and makes loving enquiries about the family. (How was dear old "Mammy Keillor," William's mother-in-law who lived out her last decade in the Trueman home? Had Mary, the second-youngest daughter, forgotten him? He hoped Betty, the youngest, and she "are good girls & mind their books and needles.") He then adds the sentences that are the real point of quoting his letter here. (I just thought the other bits are interesting, and besides, I have lots of space.)

"It is a time of general health in this place. New York affords such a scene as no one scarcely ever beheld. The south & east part are entirely evacuated. It is said 15,000 made their escape in one day. The little vessels that were going to different parts in the country would be all crowded. They would hang on the rigging or anywhere rather than be left behind. What a mercy it is not our case! How ought we to improve times & health! Farewell in love to Sister Trueman [William's wife, Elizabeth Weldon Trueman] & all friends from *Wm. Bennett*"

What calamity had the recently 'Reverended' Bennett witnessed in New York that had so mercifully spared Saint John? Clearly it was some kind of epidemic, and with today's digital technology it took about one nanosecond to find out that it was yellow fever, an "acute viral haemorrhagic disease transmitted by infected mosquitoes." And a nasty bug it was, too. It first hit Philadelphia in 1793, killing about five thousand people. Its coming towards New York led to the creation of the city's first Board of Health. One of its first actions was to quarantine boats coming from Philadelphia. Although this and other early

efforts helped to delay the disease, cases began to emerge in Manhattan in the summer of 1795 and soon reached epidemic proportions, repeating the performance in 1799 and again in 1803, the year Rev. Bennett witnessed it. Thousands of people died and hysteria mounted. Upon infection, most victims experienced headaches, followed by severe exhaustion, high fever, and a slowed heart rate. There would then be a brief remission, followed by delirium. During the delirium the skin and eyes took on a characteristic ghastly shade of yellow—that's how you knew it was yellow fever. In the final stages victims vomited up black bile and exited left, or in whatever direction they were heading.

It's nice to know that while the horror south of the border was unfolding it was a "time of general health" in Saint John. Were (incipient) Canadians even then more virtuous than their American cousins? Or was it just the ever-active Fundy breezes blasting back the mosquitoes? The answers to such questions could reveal the character of nations, but seeking them is no part of local history.

Gene Goodrich

RECENT MUSEUM ACQUISITIONS

As mentioned in the President’s Message, Keillor House has recently acquired several interesting new items. Anne Baxter of Dieppe donated a beautiful Eastlake Settee that once graced “The Hedges,” described as “one of the most handsome and picturesque homes in Dorchester.” Located near the penitentiary, it belonged to John Francis Teed, whom Helen Petchey called “Dorchester’s master-builder.” Dorchester buildings he both designed and/or constructed include Maplehurst (for George Chandler, son of Edward Barron), the Baptist and Methodist (later United) churches, as well as a restoration of Trinity Anglican. He also completed St. Thomas’s Chapel in College Bridge and was the chief contractor for the Owens Art Gallery and Centennial Hall at Mount Allison.



The Hedges



The Eastlake Settee

The other acquisitions are the original document appointing Edward Barron Chandler to be one of the Commissioners to oversee the completion of the Intercolonial Railroad, purchased at the Keys Auction, and some paraphernalia from the recently closed Masonic Lodge in Dorchester, courtesy of Macx MacNichol.





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