WESTMORLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As we reflect on the past few months, it's clear that late summer and early fall have been incredibly busy and rewarding for the Westmorland Historical Society.

One of the major developments has been the structural feasibility study for the back of the Payzant & Card Building. If you remember, an engineer had previously told us that it wouldn't be possible to develop that space. Well, we've got good news: it *is* feasible! Thanks to an architect and a team of experts, the evaluation confirmed that with significant effort and investment, this project can move forward. Stay tuned for more details as we continue exploring this exciting opportunity.

Meanwhile, the Bell Inn has undergone a beautiful facelift. It's now looking as vibrant and inviting as ever, truly standing out in the heart of the Square. A big thank you to Judy Morison for leading this transformation!

Our Victorian Dinners were a fantastic success this fall, and I want to send a huge shoutout to Bernie Melanson and his team of former students for their tireless work. We also owe a great deal to Alice Folkins and her dedicated group of volunteers — their support is invaluable, and we wouldn't be able to achieve what we do without them.

I am also thrilled to announce that Caroline Kaszar has accepted the role of Manager for the Keillor and St. James Textile Museum. Caroline brings an impressive background, and we are excited to welcome her to our team in April.

That said, we do have some important work ahead for the Keillor Museum. The back wall is deteriorating and will require extensive repairs. If you or someone you know has experience with grant proposals, we would love to hear from you. The ongoing work to maintain and preserve our buildings is all done by volunteers, and we greatly appreciate any skills or expertise that can help us continue this important work.

Finally, I want to express my deepest gratitude for your continued support. Keeping our history alive for future generations, including telling the stories of our First Nations and Acadian communities, is more important than ever. To that end, we are forming a cultural committee that will focus on sharing these essential stories moving forward.

As we look to the future, I also encourage you to consider the impact of a legacy gift to the Westmorland Historical Society. If you've ever thought about including us in your will, there are many benefits, please discuss this

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KEILLOR HOUSE MUSEUM —SPECIAL EVENTS

Online Auction Thursday April 1

Spaghetti Supper Sunday May 4

See also page 3

Connect with us on social media or visit our website to see upcoming special events!

Keillorhousemuseum.com Instagram: @keillorhousemuseum Facebook: keillorhouse

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Editor's Tribute to Helen Petchey

It is with mixed emotions that I note the death of Helen Petchey on January 15, 2025. On the one hand it is hard not to feel sad at the passing of another larger than life Dorchester character. On the other, it is hard not to celebrate a life of a hundred and three years as well-lived as hers was. A graduate of Dorchester Superior School in 1939, the year I was born, she enjoyed a long and brilliant career as an inspirational teacher in the Saint John area, then retired to her beloved home town. Here she embarked on a second career (not as well-paid as the first one) as the shire-town's historian. She wrote at least sixteen (by my count; there may be more) booklets on Dorchester's leading families and many of its historic buildings, including Trinity Anglican Church of which she was a devoted member. A list of her books available in the Keillor House Gift Shop may be found on our website (under 'Shop'). Regarding her life, there is not much more I can say about it than what has already been said in the obituary on the Jones Funeral Home website and on our own 'Wall of Fame', which, you will not be surprised to learn, was her idea. Here I just want to add my own testimony, that her works were an inspiration to me as the author of several books and quite a few articles in the *Newsletter* on Dorchester topics. Many of the latter, for example the story of Captain O'Neil, Aunt 'Em' and the Kaiser's watch , and the story of Nellie Palmer Ryan and her engagement to Clarence J. Webster, were direct responses to one or another of her books. Where it was relevant I never embarked on a Dorchester topic without seeing what Helen had to say about it. If I am in some sense her successor as Dorchester's historian, then let me acknowledge that I stand on some pretty broad shoulders. Farewell, Helen. We will miss you.

Gene Goodrich

with your financial advisor.

Thank you again for all you do to help us preserve and share our history.

Sincerely,
Bonnie Chapman Roy
President

REPORT OF THE WHS EVENTS COMMITTEE

Bernie Melanson, Alice Folkins, Debbie MacDonald, Carole Machen, Judy Morison

Our committee is pleased with a successful 2024 season ending in the popular Victorian Christmas Dinners and the New Years Levee. The season opened with an art exhibit inspired by each room in the Keillor House – *Soif D'illusion / Illusion of the Self* a unique exhibit bringing new visitors to the Keillor House. The season continued with a Victorian Garden party and a Traditional Artistry Festival during the Sandpiper Festival where visitors were able to see and try out traditional skills.

We are looking forward to 2025. There will be an online auction the first of April so if you are cleaning house consider donating items (Alice 506-966-0040). We will start the season before the official opening of the museum in June with a Spaghetti supper May 4th. Watch our Facebook and June *Newsletter* for more details on the summer events.

DORCHESTER'S HISTORIC GRAVEYARDS AND WHO LIES IN THEM

THE IDEA FOR THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE CAME QUITE UNEXPECTEDLY and it almost didn't get written. One fine day last summer, WHS member and former Board Member Bob Bowser called me with the suggestion that I do an article on the cemeteries in which Dorchester's most famous lie buried. I took it as a sign of his satisfaction with the many articles on historical figures that have appeared in the *Newsletter* over the years, and was eager to please. But I had to disappoint him by saying that I didn't think I could do much more with this topic than had already been done on the popular website 'Find a Grave'. Afterwards I got to thinking that maybe I had chickened out too easily, that possibly I just might be able to draw on my past research into Dorchester topics to write up something of interest that would not be rendered superfluous by information on the website. What I came up with is the following brief sketch of the origins of the three most 'historic' of Dorchester's cemeteries, followed in each case by a list of the 'historic' people either buried or commemorated in them. By 'historic' I mean the people I have become familiar with in the course of my researches or association with WHS. Not all of them made it into the history books, but most of them should ring a bell with at least some readers. I hope Bob will forgive me if I left out any of his candidates. I should also acknowledge that there are actually at least five cemeteries in Dorchester and its immediate environs, but the following are the ones that are the last resting place of the people who are 'historic' in the sense I am using the term here.

1. The Pioneer Cemetery located beside Highway 106 just below the Maritime Penitentiary was originally a Methodist burying ground that became the cemetery of the United Church of Canada after the Methodists, Congregationalists, and a large body of Presbyterians joined to form that denomination in 1925. According to Dorchester tradition, the land for it was donated about 1781 by John Wheldon (later spelled Weldon). Wheldon was a Yorkshire emigrant, a leading Methodist in the Chignecto, a Justice of the Peace for Westmorland County, a prominent Dorchester farmer, and the father-in-law of our own John Keillor. His (Wheldon's) first wife, Ann Dale Wheldon, who died in 1781, was the first to be buried in it. According to another tradition, probably based on Rev. Aubrey Tizzard's *Methodism, A Flame* (published in1977 and available in the Keillor House Gift Shop), a Methodist chapel was erected on the site soon afterwards and, again according to Rev. Tizzard, it was the first one in what later became Canada. In my book *In Search of John Keillor* I proved that the chapel was not built until 1811-12, the year that John Wheldon actually 'donated' the land, and that, when Ann was buried on it, the land was not yet a consecrated Methodist burying ground. The tombstone standing in the Pioneer Cemetery today "Erected in memory of Ann, wife of John Wheldon Esq.who departed this life in June 1781 in the 40th year of her age" was put up in the early 1820s, probably soon after, or maybe a little before, John's death in 1821. Or perhaps it was about the same time as that of his second wife, Elizabeth's, in 1825, in which case it would have been erected by one of Ann's sons. To judge by the lettering on the tombstones, all three of them were carved by the same hand. Further proof that Ann Dale Wheldon was

buried on a piece on ground that only later became a Methodist cemetery is the fact that, with the single exception of hers, there is no death date of anyone in the Pioneer Cemetery earlier than 1818.

By way of setting the record straight, I should also mention that John Wheldon did not exactly *donate* the land. Actually, it was rare for anyone to donate property for nothing, no matter how worthy the cause. Most often, a nominal sum was paid by the beneficiary. This was usually five shillings, the equivalent of one dollar. This is still the standard minimum price of a legal sale, although today, in terms of purchasing power, a dollar is worth very much less because of inflation. Five shillings is what John Keillor received for the four acres he 'donated' to the county in 1802 for the courthouse and jail. It is also what William Chapman got for the one acre he donated in 1788 for the Methodist chapel and burying ground at Point de Bute—the *real* first one in what later became Canada. John Wheldon, by contrast, was paid (by the trustees of the Methodist Society) ten pounds, or *two hundred* shillings for only *half* an acre! So, far from *donating* it, at a rate of twenty pounds or four hundred shillings per acre, he *sold* it for an outrageous price. Good dyked marsh could at this time be had for ten pounds, i.e. two hundred shillings, an acre, and it was worth considerably more per acre than the isolated patch of upland that Wheldon sold to the Methodist Society. Although it's painful to have to report it of one of Dorchester's early luminaries, in the course of my research on John Keillor I was confronted with evidence that John Wheldon was, at times at least, a bit of a skinflint. As explained more fully in my book, while back in England he once borrowed a sum of money from a brother of Nathaniel Smith, one of the Yorkshire emigrants who knew him well. When Nathaniel ran into financial difficulty after he had emigrated to the Chignecto his brother told him that he could have the money he had lent to Wheldon if he could collect it. When Nathaniel tried to do so John hemmed and hawed and finally gave him only a fraction of what he had borrowed, even though he knew full well that he owed it. This is a bit shocking in a Methodist of good standing who was thoroughly familiar with the teachings of John Wesley and who may even have been converted by one of his sermons back in Yorkshire. Perhaps Rev. Wesley's rules for Christian life about not "borrowing without a probability of paying" or otherwise not "laying up treasures on earth" had temporarily slipped his mind. Charles Dixon of Sackville, another pillar of the Methodist Society, suffered a similar lapse regarding Rev. Wesley's prohibition on owning slaves, although he did eventually emancipate dear old 'Cleveland'.

If the Methodist burying ground's origin was not quite as early or as spontaneously generous as Dorchester tradition supposes, it nonetheless became the consecrated burying ground for members in good standing of the Methodist Society, probably by about the early 1820s. It remained so even after the first Methodist chapel burned down in 1829 and was replaced by a church that was open to other Protestant denominations. (At this time the only other one in Dorchester was the Anglican.) The distinguishing feature of a Methodist burying ground was that it was reserved for those who had received definite signs—visible to others as well as to themselves, including the amendment of life according to Christian principles—that they had been saved. I don't know exactly how long this rule was enforced, but it certainly applied to the first two or three generations of Dorchester Methodists

There are 231 monuments still standing in the Pioneer Cemetery, thanks in large part to an initiative of the Westmorland Historical Society in 2001 led by the late Ted Nicholson, together with his wife, Diane, who was our

Museum Manager at the time, and our Superwoman of all Seasons, Alice Folkins. (Of course Alice!) They talked the authorities of the Westmorland Institution into allowing a volunteer group of inmates to restore the cemetery, and the lads did a great job. There is no way I can mention all these monuments here, but that is not fatal to this article, as only a few of them are 'historical' in the sense I described above. So I will just go through the ones I know something about.

Before I start I would like to mention one alleged burial in this cemetery that didn't take place in this cemetery. According to 'Find a Grave' the tranquil company includes Amos Babcock (1764-1805). The website offers no picture of the monument, as it does for many other burials, but only an image of a newspaper clipping that briefly describes the trial and hanging of Amos Babcock for murder, as well as a list of his family members. The list is accurate, but there is no way that Amos Babcock could be buried in a Methodist cemetery that was reserved for members of the Methodist Society who had displayed visible signs of redemption, especially since the signs included adherence to Methodist doctrines and the amendment of life. As can be read in detail in the June 2018 issue of the *Newsletter*, Amos Babcock belonged to an extreme Baptist sect that was roundly condemned by all the more orthodox denominations, including the Methodists. He swung because he went off his nut during a series of frantic revival meetings and murdered his sister in most hideous fashion. According to the sources I read in preparing the article, he was buried beneath the gallows, a much more likely final resting place for someone whom real Methodists would have numbered among the damned. As a final nail in the coffin (as it were) of the claim that Amos Babcock lies buried in the Pioneer Cemetery: Babcock was hanged in 1805 and the next authentic burial after Ann Dale Wheldon's in 1781 is that of Keziah Brownell on April 3, 1818. Now let's turn to the genuine Methodists buried in the Pioneer Cemetery.

Actually, there is no definite proof that the first four people after Ann Dale Wheldon to be buried in the cemetery were Methodists. Dying at the age of 95 or 96, *Keziah Brownell* could very well have been the mother of Jeremiah Brownell (1749-1835), a Rhode Island Planter who received grants in Sackville Township and established a sawmill in Jolicure. The Rhode Islanders were mainly Baptists, but maybe Keziah had a conversion experience. If she was indeed the mother of Jeremiah her conversion could have come about under the influence of her granddaughter and Jeremiah's daughter, Elizabeth, who married John Wheldon's third son, Thomas, who was a member in good standing of the Methodist Society. The couple moved back to Jolicure (where Elizabeth was born) sometime before Thomas died in 1822 but I could find no trace of a memorial there for either of them, and hence no way of knowing whether they remained active Methodists throughout their lives.

The next three burials were those of young men, *Thomas Watson* in May 1819 at age 15 or 16, *William Seymour* in September 1819, at age 17 or 18, and *John Sayre* in December 1819 at age 23 or 24. I was unable to find any information on William Seymour, but if Thomas Watson was a son of the Thomas Watson (1731-1796) who was for a time Sheriff of Cumberland County, then he was most likely a Methodist, as the Sheriff and his family had emigrated from Yorkshire where Methodism had strong roots. The case of John Sayre is a bit more complicated. He was a son of James Sayre Esq., the Sheriff of Westmorland County who succeeded Joshua Wethered. The Sayers were strong Anglicans (James' father had been an Anglican missionary minister in Connecticut) but as I have mentioned a number of times in these pages there was a thin line between

Anglicans and Methodists during this early period of New Brunswick history. So, the Dorchester Sayres could very well have been members of the Society of Methodists, which at this time was essentially an evangelical prayer group within the established church. This is made even more likely by the marriage of another of Sayre's sons, James Sayre Junior, to a daughter of Benjamin Wilson, the Methodist lay preacher who turned Amos Botsford's stone mansion on Dorchester Island into a tavern and general store. (Described in the September 2024 issue of the *Newsletter.)*. Moreover, when *Sheriff James Sayre* died in 1849 he was interred beside his wife in the Methodist burying ground beneath a handsome monument. Since an Anglican cemetery was by this time available at Holy Trinity, we can probably conclude that they were both members in good standing of the Methodist Society. As to whether his other son, John, was also a member, there is less evidence, but in his case his tombstone hints at the reason for its erection in the Methodist burying ground. On it are inscribed the words "Lost at Sea in the brig Mary Ann." Thus, he was not actually buried in the Pioneer Cemetery. Rather, the monument was most likely erected by his grieving parents who probably recalled definite signs of his redemption. Perhaps the same could be said for the other two young lads, whose monuments are in a similar style. The monuments do not say specifically that the boys died at sea, but given their young ages it is certainly a distinct possibility. We could even romanticize and wonder if all three went down together with the *Mary Ann*.

The next burial after those of the three tragic boys was that of *Robert Thomas Keillor* in September of 1820 and it, too, may have been associated with a tale of redemption after sailing over some rough waters, in his case figurative ones. Robert was a younger brother of Squire John, the builder of Keillor House. Like him, he, too, was exposed as a young man to the emotional religion of the Methodist Society, married a daughter (named Ann) of John Wheldon, and moved to Dorchester. Here he acquired a considerable amount of land, both by purchase and gift from his father-in-law. Owing to his brother's influence, he was appointed County Jailer, operated a tavern in the courthouse, and did quite well for a time. Then things suddenly went south. After about three or four years he either resigned or was forced out of his job as Jailer and tavern keeper. About the same time, he sold his farm to blacksmith David Chapman and moved with his wife onto a small tract of land, much of it wooded, from which he wrested only a subsistence living. When he died his estate consisted of just three cows and a few plain household items, valued at a paltry forty-six pounds and fourteen shillings. The estate of an average yeoman farmer, by contrast, was about four to six hundred pounds, so at the end of his life Robert and Ann (there were no children) were living in poverty. This was quite a comedown for a man who had once owned a farm worth a thousand pounds. So, what happened?

Although evidence on Robert is thin and difficult to interpret, I did manage to scare up a few of his bar bills and they reveal that he was a regular, at times even a heavy, drinker. This in itself is hardly absolute proof of chronic alcoholism but it is the only clue in the *surviving* record that might explain his sad comedown in the world. His sudden death at the relatively early age of fifty-six may also be relevant to the question. But, if he abused alcohol enough that it led to poverty, how does this square with Methodist insistence on, at the very least, moderation in matters of the bottle and ideally on total abstinence? Of course it doesn't. Yet we know that he died a member in good standing of the Methodist Society. Otherwise he would not have been buried in a cemetery reserved for those who had shown visible signs of redemption, the amendment of life, and adher-

ence to Methodist teachings. It appears that the Methodist spark he caught at an early age burst into flame during a later period of darkness and lit the path to salvation. That the path led through a struggle with a demon whose name also starts with 'R' is perhaps hinted at in the brief epitaph inscribed on his tombstone:

The holy *Triumph* of my soul

Shall death itself out brave;

Leave dull mortality behind

And Fly beyond the grave.

Robert Keillor's burial was followed just seven months later, in May, 1821, by that of his father-in-law, John Wheldon. If anyone in Dorchester should have rested in a Methodist burying ground, it was Wheldon. He was not only a leader of the local Methodist Society and a close friend of William Black, the founder of the movement in the New World; he also supplied the land for it, although as we saw above, not exactly as a free gift. However, if there was a hint of unchristian greed in the sale of the plot at an inflated price and an unbecoming neglect of Rev. Wesley's stricture against borrowing without intending timely repayment, Wheldon *did* evince a laudable Methodist concern for justice when he used his authority as a Justice of the Peace to help the Acadian tenants of land speculator Col. J.F.W. DesBarres appeal to the Lieutenant Governor when DeBarres' agent attempted to raise their rents and evict them if they couldn't pay up.

There is no space here to offer a vignette like the ones above of even a fraction of the 'historic' Methodists in the Pioneer Cemetery. What follows is a list of a few who have appeared in the *Newsletter* and other WHS publications.

Andrew Dale Weldon (1763-1843) was the eldest of John Wheldon's sons by Ann Dale. A farmer with lands adjacent to those of his father (now belonging to the Maritime Penitentiary), he was appointed a Justice of the Peace about the same time as his brother-in-law, John Keillor.

John Chapman (1761-1833) was a son of the original Yorkshire immigrants, William and Mary Chapman. Like John Keillor, he moved to Dorchester from Westmorland Parish to become a substantial dairy farmer as well as a long-serving Justice of the Peace.

Ann Dale Keillor Chapman (1783-1863) was a daughter of our John and Betsy Keillor (and hence a granddaughter of John Wheldon). She was married to:

David Chapman (1782-1845), a grandson of William and Mary Chapman. He was a blacksmith who, after his marriage to Ann Keillor, moved to Dorchester where he did very well both as a blacksmith and a farmer.

Robert Barry Chapman (1801-1887) was a son of the John Chapman Esq. listed above. For many years Robert Barry was Superintendant of the Methodist Sunday School in Dorchester. He was also the father of Robert Andrew Chapman, one of Dorchester's three most prominent ship-builders. No doubt Robert Andrew was also a Methodist in good standing, but he died in Moncton 1918 and is buried in Elmwood Cemetery.

Emma Margaret Chapman O'Neal (1850-1931) was a daughter of Robert Barry Chapman (and a sister of Robert Andrew). She defied her family to marry Edmund O'Neil, a worker in the Chapman ship yard. After a lifetime of adventure and success, the couple returned to Dorchester where 'Aunt Em', as she was fondly called by her many relatives, including Dor-

chester's most famous man of letters, Doug How, became well-known for her charitable works and strong character.

Capt. Edmund Harris O'Neal (1848-1919) rose from his humble beginnings as a worker in the Chapman shipyard to become a very successful sea captain and, eventually, Marine Superintendant of the Glasgow (Scotland) Steam Shipping Company. During his days as a sea captain he was awarded a valuable commemorative watch by Kaiser Wilhelm II for his part in the rescue of the crew and passengers of a German ship wrecked in the Red Sea. The whole story is told in the February 2017 issue of the *Newsletter*.

George Evans (1786-1858) was an Irish-born cabinetmaker whose extremely handsome bureau desk and four-poster bed (or, more accurately, pictures thereof) were featured in the 2016 Keillor House Special Exhibition on the furniture makers of Westmorland County.

Marcus Palmer (1813-1890) was the fourth son of Gideon Palmer I, the founder of the Dorchester dynasty whose story we told in the June 2024 issue of the *Newsletter*, now online. Unlike his Anglican father and ship-building brothers, Hiram and Barlow, Marcus was a strong Methodist who became a Deacon in that Church. This was no doubt the legacy of his Methodist mother, Catherine Harper Palmer, a daughter of the prominent Yorkshire immigrant Christopher Harper.

James Sayre Esq. (1763-1849 was the High Sheriff of Westmorland County who succeeded Joshua Wethered.

Ann Dale Weldon (1741-1781) was the first wife of Squire John Wheldon, and the first person to be buried in what later became the consecrated Methodist burying ground.

Elizabeth Emerson Weldon (1738-1823) was the second wife of John Weldon. She was the widow of Amasa Killam Sr. (1727-1779), a New England Planter of Sackville and most likely a Baptist.

Elizabeth Wheldon Keillor 1766-1851 was the wife of our John Keillor and there is no doubt that she was a practising Methodist; indeed she was probably the most fervent Methodist in Dorchester. As detailed in my book *In Search of John Keillor* (available in the Keillor House Gift Shop), she had a conversion experience at age thirteen and became a formal member of the Methodist Society. According to her obituary, written for the official organ of the Society, "she was from principle a thorough Wesleyan." "Upwards of seventy years Mrs. Keillor was a member of the Wesleyan Church." And she was no ordinary member. In the estimation of the Methodist minister who wrote her obituary, she had through the holiness of her life attained to what Rev. Wesley called 'Christian perfection', a state achieved by very few, even within Methodist circles.

Nonetheless, there is a question of whether she was actually buried in the Pioneer Cemetery. According to Aubrey Tizzard she was. After pointing out that "there is no accurate account of those buried in this old Methodist cemetery," he drew up a list of twenty-three individuals "from headstones, *The Wesleyan* and other documents…" Among them is "Mrs. John Keillor, Esq. daughter of the late John Wheldon who immigrated to this province from Yorkshire, England, in 1774, died June 4, 1851, age 85 years." Although he doesn't say so, Rev. Tizzard seems to have taken the wording from the tombstone.

But there is a small puzzle: the tombstone was not found during the restoration in 2001 even though lots of older ones were. It's not impossible that it disappeared without a trace between 1977 and 2001 but there is an additional

twist to the tale: As it turns out, John Keillor is buried in the Anglican cemetery, now known as the Dorchester Rural Cemetery, and just below his name on the tombstone are the words "And his wife ELIZABETH died June 4 1851 Aged 85 years."

So now we have a larger puzzle. Was Tizzard mistaken in thinking that he had seen Betsy's tombstone in the Methodist burying ground? If so, how do we explain what appears to be at least a partial transcription from it? If he was not mistaken, how do we explain the words on John's tombstone? One possible answer is that they may have been intended to *commemorate* her, rather than indicate her burial place, and it would be given weight if what I suspect is true, that John's tombstone was erected some years after his death and hers, probably at the behest of their younger son, Thomas, the one who inherited Keillor House. This might also explain the misinformation that John was eighty when he died. But if his tombstone only commemorates Betsy, then hers must have once stood in the Methodist burying ground and we are still left with the question of what happened to it. Without seeing the evidence that Tizzard had before him I know of no way of solving the puzzle. I don't even know how to weigh the probabilities. Assuming she made her wishes known, did she choose to lie among her Wheldon family and other true Wesleyans as a faithful Methodist, or with her beloved husband as an exemplary wife? Whatever her decision, it could not have been an easy one.

2 .The Dorchester Rural Cemetery appears to have begun as the private burying ground of the Palmer family. When Gideon Palmer I, whose story we told in the June 2024 issue of the *Newsletter,* died in Saint John in 1824, his Methodist wife, Catherine Harper Palmer, had him disinterred and reburied in the Dorchester Methodist cemetery. But that was apparently not to the satisfaction of his third son, Gideon II, who built the first Palmer shipyard and was also a churchwarden of Holy Trinity Anglican Church. At some unknown date he established a buying ground on Palmer property, had his father disinterred and reburied (yet again!), and erected a stone monument in his memory. When his mother died in 1832 she was buried beside her husband, apparently without asking whether she had left the Methodist Society. The year before her death, Benjamin Charters (1784-1831) was also buried there. He was followed closely by an infant son of Edward Barron Chandler, a well known pillar of the Church of England.

Then it was John Keillor's turn. In spite of his early exposure to Methodist teachings and his happy marriage to a Methodist saint, John did not have a Methodist "born again" conversion experience, but remained loyal to his Anglican roots. He was for many years a pew-holding member of St. Ann's Anglican Church in Westcock, where he attended services every Sunday, rain or shine. When he died in 1839 Holy Trinity had not yet acquired a cemetery but, rather than bury him at Westcock, someone in the family, probably his son, Thomas, who was by this time a vestryman of Holy Trinity, decided that it would be appropriate to bury him in the Palmer family graveyard where other Anglicans lay buried. Among them was *Humphrey Gilbert* who married Robert Keech's daughter and founded Willow Farm. Robert himself was buried there in 1842, in spite of having been one of the trustees of the Methodist Society. Apparently, like John Keillor, he failed to receive the necessary visible signs of redemption according to Methodist lights. As speculated above, Thomas Keillor was most likely the one who erected the monument to his father that includes a commemoration of Betsy, probably

years later. I suppose we can add an additional speculation that Thomas, in spite of having been a pew-holding member of the Methodist Church, may have had his mother reburied in the cemetery of the church to which he and his father belonged. But somehow that seems unlikely.

Soon after John Keillor's death there were several other burials in the Palmer family cemetery. They included three members of the Backhouse family (originally settled at Sackville); nineteen-year-old Thomas Hickman, son of John Hickman, one of Dorchester's first innkeepers; twenty-seven-year old Robert Moore; five-year-old Thomas Palmer (a son of Gideon Junior?); and a Sally Palmer Read, possibly a married daughter of Gideon II. It appears that for some years Palmer allowed people from the community to bury their loved ones on his property, presumably after asking permission.

Then, in 1844, for one shilling, Palmer sold a half acre to the "Church Wardens and vestry of the New Church built in Dorchester (Holy Trinity) nearly opposite the residence of the Honorable Edward B. Chandler…" The surveyor's description in the deed leaves no doubt that it was the nucleus or oldest part of what is today known as the Dorchester Rural Cemetery. Typical of its ecumenism, it was not to be exclusively for members of the Anglican Church, but was to be a "Public Burying Ground." But it was also to be ground consecrated by the Church of England: The deed charged the churchwardens and vestrymen to "use their endeavours to procure the proper diocesan to consecrate the said piece of Land as and for a Public Burial Ground." I don't know exactly when this happened—or even *if* it happened. At this point the history of the cemetery gets a bit murky. All I know is that, while its nucleus was donated to Holy Trinity (there is a deed to prove it in the Trinity archives and the New Brunswick Land Registry Office), it is not affiliated with any church today. According to an article (re)published in the *Sackville Tribune* December 30, 1909 "in 1852 [Lt.] Governor [E.B.] Chandler gave the town a grant of land to be used as a cemetery. This is the cemetery now used by all Protestant denominations." In her well-researched book on Chandler Helen Petchey was able to add that Chandler owned a large tract east of the village "which he gave to the township for a rural cemetery, once known as 'Greenwood Cemetery."

We turn now to some of the other 'historic' people buried in the Dorchester Rural Cemetery whose gravestones number among the 1,340 still standing. (The total number of burials is unknown.)

Undoubtedly, the two most 'historic' in the proper sense of the term are those of Edward Barron Chandler (1800-1880) and Sir Albert J. Smith (1822-1883), Dorchester's 'Father and Stepfather of Confederation'. They are too well known to need further identification here (see the June and September 2017 issues of the *Newsletter*) but it's worth noting that their tombstones are located on the same knoll, close enough to one another for John Belliveau to remark that, if they could reach out, these onetime political enemies could touch hands in confirmation of the reconciliation they achieved near the end of their lives. Most, if not all, of their family members are also buried in the Rural Cemetery. They include *Phoebe Millidge Chandler* (1802-1889), E.B's beloved wife and chatelaine of Rocklyn; *Charles Upham Chandler* (1839-1882), the first owner of 'Swiscote'; *George Wentworth Chandler* (1835-1895), the first owner of 'Maplehurst'; and *Joshua Chandler* (1849-1881), first owner of the Second Empire house opposite the other two that was recently torn down (see the June 2017 issue of the *Newsletter* for details). Sir Albert's widow,

Lady Sarah Young Smith (1847-1926), was one of Dorchester's *grande dames* (the other being Emma Chapman O'Neal), known for her eccentric ways that included being driven around the shiretown in her horse-drawn carriage. She was too old-fashioned—and too careful of her money—to own a car.

The other monuments listed here, in alphabetical order, are those of people who have either appeared from time to time in these pages or are otherwise of special meaning to the Westmorland Historical Society:

Betty Adams (1925-2019) was a long-time volunteer and guiding spirit of the St. James Textile Museum. Her obituary appeared in the February 2020 issue of the *Newsletter*.

Blair Botsford (1821-1887), a son of William Botsford and a grandson of Amos. He served as High Sheriff of Westmorland County and later as the first warden of the Maritime Penitentiary.

Edward "Eddie" Bowes (1940-2019) was a longtime and faithful member of WHS, including service as a Board member. Besides the handsome bookcase/secretary desk in the 'dairy room' that once belonged to Sheriff Joseph McQueen, he left us a legacy of research papers, documents relevant to Dorchester history, and some fond memories of his cheerful personality. Eddie's obituary appeared in the June 2019 issue of the *Newsletter.* Also buried in the Rural Cemetery are his parents *Russel Bowes* (1916-1995) and *Roberta Chapman Bowes* (1918-2000)

Reginald Burton Bowser (1916-1995) was a leading member of WHS during its earlier days and the author of the valuable book *Dorchester Island and the Surrounding Area*, available in the Keillor House Gift Shop. He was also the father of WHS member and former Board member Bob Bowser. Bob's mother, *Gladys* (1921-2013) lies buried beside his father.

William Keillor Chapman (1809-1891) was the business partner of Thomas Keillor (Keillor & Chapman) and the builder of 'Brookside', once one of Dorchester's most gracious homes. It stood on the site of the Dorchester Veterans Community Centre.

Byron Everett Duffy (1907-1977) was the personnel officer at the Maritime Penitentiary and a very active member of WHS during its early days. He gave unstintingly of his time to act as Interior Supervisor of the restoration of Keillor House as a museum (see the September 2015 issue of the *Newsletter* for the story of our first megaproject). As the penitentiary's personnel officer he saved many historical documents as well as artifacts of prison life from being discarded. During the mid-1960s his campaign resulted in Canada's first prison museum. Soon after the opening of Keillor House in 1967, the collection was transferred to the 'Coach House' as an annex to the museum and remains today one of our most important exhibits. See our website for details.

John Hickman (1786-1856) was an Irish immigrant and shoemaker who ran the 'Dorchester', one of the shiretown's earliest hotels. He was said to have been "a man of many anecdotes and sayings" and "a clever and popular servant of the people."

Joseph Hickman (1821-1889) was one of John Hickman's nine children. He was the founder of the Hickman lumbering enterprise that continued well into the twentieth century. He also ran a general store which, as the 'J.H. Hickman Company', became a Dorchester institution. It was taken over by Alan Bishop and was thereafter known as 'Bishop's Hardware'. Colourful details of the store's history may be found in Helen Petchey's *The*

Hickmans of Dorchester's Heyday, available in the Keillor House Gift Shop. Joseph was also the brother of William Hickman, one of Dorchester's three most prominent ship builders, the one who resided in the Bell Inn during its glory days. Given his and the family's longstanding connection with Trinity Anglican Church, we would expect to find his gravesite in the Dorchester Rural Cemetery, but there is no record of it. Did his tombstone fall down and disappear, or was he buried elsewhere?

Douglas George How (1919-2001), Dorchester's 'man of letters' wrote (among many others) two books relevant to the history and culture of his beloved village: a novel *Blow Up the Trumpet in the New Moon* and a commemoration of the Dorchester lads and lassies who served in the two world wars, entitled *One Village, One War, 1914-1945*. Doug was also a war correspondent and Managing Editor of the Canadian edition of *Reader's Digest.* He was the first person to be commemorated in the WHS Wall of Fame.

Thomas Keillor (1798-1887) was the younger son of John Keillor, and the one who inherited Keillor House.

Mary Jane Moore Keillor (1820-1899) was the wife of Thomas Keillor.

Arthur DeBarnet McCready (1909-2012) was centenarian who lived at Johnsons Mills up to the time of his death. Originally from New York, he was a progressive farmer and for many years the Postmaster at Johnson's Mills. Eddie Bowes wrote a piece on him for the May 2009 issue of the *Newsletter*.

Edessa Chapman McQueen (1864-1937) purchased Keillor House from the estate of Thomas Keillor and was probably the first to call it 'The Keillor'. She was married to:

Joseph Avard McQueen (1862-1918), High Sheriff of Westmorland County. His office was in what later came to be called the 'Dairy Room', which now houses the Keillor House Gift Shop.

Arabella Chapman Palmer (1846-1908) was the wife of shipbuilder and merchant Hiram Palmer and the mother of 'Nellie' Palmer Ryan whose story we told in the September 2022 and February 2023 issues of the *Newsletter*.

Frederick Clinton "Fred" Palmer (1859-1945), a grandson of centenarian John Palmer (see below), owned and operated a general store under the name of 'F.C. Palmer and Company Limited' that, like the Hickman store, became a Dorchester landmark and institution. Extremely civic-minded, "Fred" also (along with much other volunteer work) served on the County Council in which capacity he was instrumental in establishing the Municipal Home (better known as the 'Poor House') in 'Woodlawn', the former Albert J. Smith residence. This story is told in the June 2018 issue of the *Newsletter*. Interesting details about "Fred" and his store may be found in Helen Petchey's book *The Palmer Brothers in the Chignecto,* available in the Keillor House Gift Shop. Helen also mentions that, as a County Council member, Fred worked "toward the incorporation of the rural cemetery."

Gideon Palmer (1808-1880) was the third son of Gideon I. He donated the land for the cemetery, so it is most appropriate that he is buried here.

Hiram Weldon Palmer (1839-1923) was the eldest son of Gideon II. Together with his brothers, Barlow and Philip, he ran the Palmer shipyard, one of Dorchester's 'big three'. He was also the father of 'Nellie' and lived at 'Woodlands', the gracious home now owned by WHS member Greg Partridge.

*John Palmer (*1788-1889) was the second son of Gideon I. He lived to be a hundred and was working on a dyke at the time of his death. He was a man of many talents and occupations as detailed in W.C. Milner's *Early History of Dorchester and the Surrounding Area*, available in the Keillor House Gift Shop.

Julia Chapman Palmer (1849-1914) was the wife of Barlow Palmer and sister of Arabella Chapman Palmer.

Marcus Barlow Palmer (1848-1904) was the second son of Gideon II. He ran the Palmer shipyard together with his brothers, Hiram and Philip, and built 'Belmont', the only other Palmer mansion still standing.

Philip J. Palmer (1786-1873) was the eldest son of Gideon I. He married Josiah Wood's widow, Sarah, and went on to become a prominent Sackville farmer-merchant, Justice of the Peace, and member of the New Brunswick legislature.

Janet Spidle Partridge (1933-2017) was the beloved wife of our living source of local lore, Ernie Partridge. Ernie has already erected his own tombstone beside hers but as a youngster of ninety-five he plans to stay on the surface a bit longer.

Lorna Estabrooks Partridge (1959-2007), beloved first wife of Ernie's son and WHS member Greg, was the very able Treasurer of WHS as well as a very active volunteer in the community until she was prematurely taken from us.

Helen M. Petchey (1922-2025) was a Life Member of WHS and the author of many books on Dorchester topics, most of them available in the Keillor House Gift Shop. She is also commemorated on out Wall of Fame (see our website).

Mary Keillor Robb (1786-1864) was the eldest child of John and Betsy Keillor. She was married to:

John Robb (1796-1875) husband of Mary Keillor who established an oat mill on a stream that ran through Keillor property. It is still known as 'Robb's Brook'.

Garfield Spence (1923-2008) ran the last of Dorchester's old-time stores, and much beloved it was, too. Garfield's story is told in the June and November 2011 issues of the *Newsletter*.

John Francis Teed (1830-1901) was, in Helen Petchey's words, "Dorchester's master builder". Besides building the new Methodist church that became the United Church and restoring Trinity Anglican, both in Dorchester, he was responsible for St. Thomas Catholic Church in St. Joseph, Owens Art Gallery and Centennial Hall at Mount Allison, the train station in Sackville, and many other handsome buildings as well.

These are only a small portion of the gravestones still standing in the Dorchester Rural Cemetery, the ones I thought would be of interest to readers of the *Newsletter*. In perusing the list of the 1,340 gravestones on the Find a Grave website, I could not help but notice the number of families that had/have multiple members buried here. Their surnames include: Ayer, Bell, Buck, Carter, Chandler, Chapman, Mitton, Stiles, Teed, Wilbur, and many others.

***3. St. Edward's Catholic Cemetery*,** located near the corner of Water and Main streets, was established on land donated by Sir Albert J. Smith, an Anglican, sometime in the early 1880s. Among its 219 monuments still standing are those of people who have appeared in these pages. Two of them were founding members and major pillars of WHS.

Israel L. Knockwood (1859-1932) was the chief of the Dorchester Mi'kmaq who bought a piece of land in the vil-

lage of Dorchester. It became the second 'incarnation' of the Fort Folly Indian Reserve. (See the February, 2020 issue of the *Newsletter* for details.)

Robert "Buck" Olsen (birth year unknown-1892) was the star of Dorchester's third hanging. His story is told in the February, 2029 issue of the *Newsletter*.

Peter Thomas (1879-1942), another Mi'kmaq chief, was a great hunter and storyteller and also a friend of the young Ernie Partridge, whose tenacious memory has so often enlightened these pages. Peter also appears in the February, 2020 article on Dorchester's Mi'kmaq.

Sylvia Jean Yeoman (1926-2018) will be known to every active member of WHS. For years she was our main pillar and the mentor of Alice Folkins who succeeded her in that role. Her story is told in the June, 2018 issue of the *Newsletter*.

Mark Yeoman (1921-1989) was Sylvia's beloved husband. Also a founding member of WHS, he gave unstintingly of his time and talents as a lawyer and was an inspiration to all who loved local history and built heritage.

Gene Goodrich

WESTMORLAND
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Donations, Memberships and Newsletter Submissions to:
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www.keillorhousemuseum.com

Museum Hours

June ? to after Labour Day

Wed to Sunday 10am to 5pm

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 five 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
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