

Timelines - Baddeck and Area history

by Jocelyn Bethune

Have you ever called the Freshmart the Red & White? The Home Hardware Handy Andy's or the Blue Heron the Hardware Store?

If we could step back in time and walk through the village streets, what businesses would you see? Different eras and lifetimes bring different businesses to mind.

The Baddeck & Area Historical Society members had an assignment for their monthly meeting in March - to bring a list of area businesses from the past.

Willie Roberts set the scene with his memories of Chebucto Street in the 1930's.

"There was just an alley way between the Congregationalist Church and Bethune's Garage," Mr. Roberts recalled. The church had stood empty for over a decade, when in the 1890's Mabel Bell purchased the building, renamed it Gertrude Hall and turned it into a library for the community. It was one of the first libraries in Cape Breton and by the 1930's was well stocked with 7000 books. It burned in a spectacular fire in December 1939.

"I remember the night the library burnt," Roberts said. "There was a saw mill at Bethune's Garage, down behind, near where the Co-op is now. I remember hearing the mill when we were in school at the old Baddeck Academy," he said.

Mr. Robert's reminiscences next took us to the empty lot to the west of the Telegraph House. This area once housed the Thistledown Restaurant, but prior to that, it was a tea room operated by Murdoch MacAskill (who was perhaps better

known as 'The Bishop').

"You could go in there and get ice cream in a saucer - what a treat that was! I remember the new Bras d'Or House (Wongs) had livery stables in back and Alex MacKenzie had a barbershop between the (new) post office and the Telegraph House. He was called the 'Silent Barber' because he never said a word, but he always cracked his gum."

"Angus MacKenzie had a tea room

where the post office is today and upstairs he had a meat room. The best thing I heard was the Lakeview (a steamship that delivered goods to Baddeck) arriving at the dock. Then I knew Angus MacKenzie would have ice cream," Mr. Robert's

said with a smile.

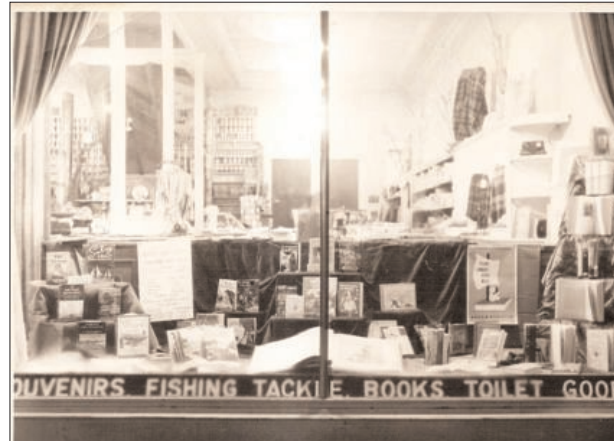
Victoria County archivist Joan MacInnes recalled businesses from the 1960's - Connick's Barber Shop, Hassan's Clothing and of course, the White Store. Others had memories of the Stop & Shop, Mrs. Johnny's pool hall, Archie Ferguson's store on High Street, Plummers Cabins and the Lake Cabot Cottages.

Some members, who have settled here more recently, recalled businesses from the 1980's and 1990's - Bunky's, The Barnsider, Boutique Calliope and Sally's Fabric Cellar.

Do any of these businesses bring back memories for you? Why not drop into the next meeting of the Baddeck & Area Historical Society meeting, April 21st at 4 p.m. in the courtroom at the courthouse. We'd love to see you and hear your memories of people, places and events from Victoria County's past.



Looking east, down the old Margaree Road toward Bethune's Corner sometime in the 1930s.



A view of the window at the White Store with a "Young Canada Reads" display around 1952.

Branch 53 news

by Calvin Hillier

The spring flowers in some places in the County are in bloom, while mine are just peeking above the ground. Most of us older folks still think we will have a spring snow storm, although it won't last too long. It was said that the spring snow was the poor farmers' fertilizer. The scariest thing is that with not much snow this past winter, the woods will be a lot drier and a worry for fires. Take heed, residents, let nature take care of the old grass; it's so easy for the smallest grass fire to cause a huge forest fire.

Our Branch 53, in Baddeck, has finally elected a Treasurer and Secretary. Zone I Commander Clifford McIntyre officiated and Acting Sergeant at Arms Hillier presented the new Officers, April MacLean and Laura Dixon to be installed by the Zone Commander. The previous Treasurer and Secretary, Darlene Cameron and Clara Hillier volunteered until permanent members could be found. The Branch thanks them for their help in filling this void. President Heather Miller has finalized the Committees that will oversee the many tasks in running the affairs of the Branch, and the list of committee members is posted on the bulletin board.

Our Dart Teams had a successful competition recently in the Zone Competitions. The winning ladies team was Shelly Asaph, Mary Ann MacIver, Cary MacDonald and Debbie Fraser and they will be representing our Branch at the Provincial finals in May. Shelly and Mary Ann also entered the ladies doubles and won, and will play in Provincials in May as well.

The men's team of Kenny Pierrard, Kenny Harris, Leser MacAskill and DG MacKenzie won the Zone Competition and played in the Provincials at the East Bay Branch. Kenny Pierrard and Lester won the men's doubles at the Zone Competitions and represented our Branch in the Provincials. While both men's teams didn't win, they didn't come in last. Well done fellows!

Some news concerning the Royal Canadian Navy 100th Anniversary celebrations follows. The Stadacona Band will present concerts across the Province, starting on April 25th at Cornwallis; in Halifax on April 26th at the Rebecca Cohn Theatre; May 23rd in Canso at the Canso Academy and the final concert in Sydney on July 31st on the Boardwalk.

The actual date of the Anniversary is May 4th, and in Halifax on that day 1,000 sailors will march through the streets of Halifax. On the following week, the HMCS Toronto will be in Sydney, an International Fleet review will take place in Halifax, starting with the arrival of ships on June 23rd and stay until July 2nd. The ships will be open for public tours as well. For

further information on the 100th Anniversary visit www.canadian-navy100.forces.gc.ca.

The Battle of the Atlantic ceremony and church service will be held at the Little Narrows Presbyterian Church, with Rev. Adam Lees officiating, starting at 11 am. Legionnaires from all Branches are invited to attend, as well as the general public.

On March 30th, I attended the Last Post Fund annual meeting in Halifax. As of April 1st, Marc Gauthier will be the new regional manager of the refurbished Atlantic Region which will consist of Last Post Fund Branches in Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. The Nova Scotia Branch, of which I am the director for Cape Breton Island, will continue to operate. Our Branch is made up of volunteers, except for the office staff. The office on Chebucto street will also stay intact and Adm. (ret'd) Barry Keeler was asked to stay on as President during this transition year. All other officers and directors agreed to stay on board.

The Last Post Fund-Special Grave Marking for the period April 1, 2009 to March 15, 2010, included 31 cases, of which 21 were accepted, 2 not approved due to service or financial eligibility and 8 were withdrawn due to no interest on the part of the potential applicant. The Last Post Donation Fund paid for 7 grave markers (\$4,455.55) and the Veterans Affairs paid for 20 markers (\$19,478.65). At the present time in Cape Breton, we have 4 cases waiting for approval.

I just received notice from MLA Keith Bain on Resolution No. 153, Baddeck Academy Students: Remembrance Day Poster Contest, which he presented to the Legislature:

WHEREAS, last November, Baddeck Academy was the only Cape Breton-School with three separate Provincial Remembrance Day artwork poster finalists, who all placed second in their respective grade categories; and **WHEREAS**, the three finalists were Grade 9 student Kaitlin Chadwick in the Junior Black and White Division, Grade 10 student Brittany Fitzgerald in Senior Colour, and Grade 8 student Duncan Nicholson in Intermediate Colour; and **WHEREAS**, Royal Canadian Legion Branch in Cape Breton, which had respective placings in the Nova Scotia/Nunavut Command; **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that all MLAs in this House of Assembly applaud the dynamic artwork exemplified by those three students at Baddeck academy, keeping alive the achievements and sacrifices made by those who served and are serving in times of war and conflict.

Resolution adopted by the House of Assembly.

Our next Branch meeting is on May 6th at 7:30 pm or 1930 hours.



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