



THE WOMEN OF HANTSPORT

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Cover photograph: Hantsport Women's Institute, 1951. Courtesy Roy Bishop

Project Overview

This project is the second in a series which started in the Spring of 2018 thanks to the interest and enthusiasm of Hantsport resident Sir Graham Day. Last year's project told the story of an individual, Captain Ray Riley; this year's project examines a much broader group: the women of Hantsport, and their contributions to the community over its long history. To tell the story of women *in* Hantsport is to illuminate the community history of Hantsport itself.

Sir Graham's generous support allowed the project to proceed, with Acadia University Department of History and Classics Honours student Laura Sharpe appointed to research the history of women's activities and lives in the community of Hantsport, and to write a report (this document) covering the topic. She interviewed several members of the Hantsport community, and in cases where those interviews were not restricted by confidentiality requests by interviewees, the interviews' transcripts have been appended to this report. Copies of the audio-files upon which the transcripts are based will be housed in the Dorie and Garnet McDade Heritage Centre in Hantsport, in the collections of the Hantsport and Area Historical Society. Another set of copies, together with a copy of the report, will be deposited in the Esther Clark Wright Archives at Acadia University. Both copies will be freely available for consultation by researchers. In addition, items (photos, documents, etc.) that were supplied by community members to Laura in the course of her research will also be catalogued and included as part of this project's archival materials, with copies lodged at the McDade Centre and the Acadia Archives.

This project has generated materials that will be of use to researchers exploring the impact of women on the community of Hantsport, or to those exploring the lived experiences of women in a community that dramatically reinvented itself over time. It has also served as a profoundly important experience for Laura Sharpe. As a senior history student, with a strong background in community history beyond her studies at Acadia, Laura already had experience in this field prior to engaging this project. As she notes in her conclusion to this report, as someone who comes from a small Nova Scotian community herself, she thought that Hantsport would be readily comprehensible, but what she found was a community that is unique in its resilience and ability to redefine itself in the face of challenges that would sap the will of others. As she also writes there, "While this project is a small start, there are many more women of Hantsport who are not covered within the pages of this report, women whose stories are waiting to be uncovered and told in the future. Furthermore, Hantsport continues to be home to many more amazing women today, and I can only imagine that the same will be the case long into the future." This project should be seen not as a complete investigation but as its first steps. One thing is clear though: the energy, determination, and vision of Hantsport's women have been major guiding factors in the town's history; similarly, the vision and focus of citizens today – like Sir Graham Day – will be crucial as the community embarks on a new chapter in its history moving forward.

-- David F. Duke, September 2019

Author's Introduction

The following report is the result of a partnership between the Department of History and Classics at Acadia University and the Hantsport Historical Society during the summer of 2019. Such a project would also not have been possible without the generous funding and support provided by Sir Graham Day of Hantsport. A special thanks is also due to Jud Porter, President of the Hantsport Historical Society, and Dr. David Duke of Acadia University. Both provided invaluable support and guidance throughout the project, as well as their thorough knowledge of the area. I am also immensely grateful to everyone who agreed to be interviewed about their memories of living in Hantsport: Carolyn and Wayne Folker, Donnie McNeil, Joan Langille, Leland Harvie, Marilyn Guy, and Roy Bishop.

The original proposal for the scope of this project was Women in Hantsport during the Age of Sail. While this did ultimately form the first section of the report, as the research got underway it soon became apparent that the women of Hantsport have made enormous contributions to the town throughout its history. As such, the report turned to honouring the contributions of all women, not just the ones who went to sea. Throughout the process, many accounts were uncovered regarding women's activities in all facets of the community's history, which allowed for the information collected to be organized into three main sections of activity: Women and the Sea, Women in the Community, and Women at Work.

While many different accounts, of many different women are drawn together within this report, it was not possible to tell the stories of all the women who have shaped this town. Therefore, for every story recounted herein, there are more stories awaiting recovery and to be shared with future generations. This report is merely a very small piece of the overall story, created to share the trials facing women in Hantsport, and the even greater

accomplishments that they made within the wider community. I hope that it perhaps will inspire further research into the stories of the community's women, or a continuation of the story as Hantsport continues to change and evolve in the future.

What I have learned from this project is that Hantsport's women have helped to shape this community in unimaginable ways. They were founders of the community, and have helped it evolve through changes from its days as a major centre for shipping, to the days of the mill, and they continue to inspire all who pass through the town. The women of Hantsport have worked tirelessly to support the town, have kept a level head when the going got tough, and created a home for all who come here. I am convinced that the Women of Hantsport, are the reason that Hantsport will continue to thrive for generations to come.

Part I – Women and the Sea

Throughout its history, Hantsport has gone through several shifts in industry. Most recently of course there was the closing of the pulp mill, but the pulp mill was in fact not the initial industry of the town, but instead only entered the picture at the end of the town's involvement in the Age of Sail. As early as 1838,¹ a move was made by the people of Hantsport away from farming and towards sailing due to Hantsport's ideal location on the Halfway River and Bay of Fundy.² The shipping industry then continued as a major employer in Hantsport up until the early 1900s.³

While the process of building ships, as well as the shipping industry more generally, was primarily a male-dominated one at this time, women still played a significant role both on shore, at home in Hantsport, as well as through their trips to sea with their husbands and families. In her book, *Hantsport on Avon*, Hattie Chittick comments on the way she perceived the role played by the women behind these seagoing men. She wrote that, "We read of 'wooden ships and Iron Men', why not a word of praise and courage for the wives of these mariners?"⁴ Chittick's pointed observation seems to also be shared by the women who actually lived the life of a seaman's wife, women such as Margaret Dickie, a long time resident of Hantsport, who once wrote in her diary that: "I think a seafaring life is a hard one for *both* husband and wife".⁵

As these opinions suggest, the roles of women within and associated with the shipbuilding industry have largely been overlooked, but this lack of awareness on the subject does not mean that the women of Hantsport played any less of a role in reality. In fact, Hantsport was home to some truly courageous women who not only took care of matters at home whilst the men were away, but who also went to sea where they experienced hardship

as well as rewarding new experiences. Whilst at sea, the women of Hantsport were no stranger to hard times, dealing with the challenges of births and deaths, and in some truly extraordinary cases, even having to take command of the ships themselves. While giving birth and dealing with death could be challenging enough on land, when one adds in the factor of being on a ship, miles away from medical assistance, it soon becomes clear just how remarkable the seafaring women of Hantsport were in their ability to adapt to their circumstances. Therefore, it is high time for these women to be recognized for their exceptional feats in the seafaring world.

Husbands Away

During the age of sail, shipping and shipbuilding was a major employer of the men in Hantsport, and as such many of them spent long periods of time away from home. Usually the time away was spent at sea, but land-based separation was also not uncommon. Working in logging camps far from settlements was often isolating and separated menfolk from their families for months at a time. Whether the separation was due to logging, or seafaring, the absence of men left the women at home in Hantsport to run their households on their own, and in many cases to raise their families also.

Margaret Dickie married one such seafaring man in 1849, and throughout the diary which she kept, often records the trials that she faced while her husband, Simeon Michener, was away for long periods of time. Multiple entries within the journal make note of her wishing for Simeon's safe return to Hantsport,⁶ as well as the loneliness that she felt when he was gone for long periods of time.⁷ Throughout these entries, she also recalls the trials that came with awaiting news of her husband's welfare through the rare letters he was able to

send.⁸ This is a significant point: it is easy to overlook the fact that, in addition to the *physical* separation of man from family, there was also the near-absolute lack of contact. In today's world of satellite phones, email, and digital video communication, family members are often only a mouse-click away; in the nineteenth century a sailor would have few opportunities to communicate "back home". Months could go by without any contact at all, and this silence wore heavily on the women awaiting their menfolk's return. In Margaret Dickie's case, there were also constant reminders in her life of the dangers that Simeon was facing, and she worried about his trials and the possibility that any trip away from home may be his last.⁹ Therefore, a good portion of Margaret's time in one way or another revolved around thoughts of her husband, whether they concerned her longing for his return, or the possible harm that could come to him while away, or even the possibility that he may not return at all.

Add to these stresses was the fact that time at home was neither peaceful nor without stress. Margaret notes in her diary that Simeon would often return home with no official word on how long he would be able to remain.¹⁰ She wrote at one point that, "It is a week tonight since Simeon came home....I wish he always could make a good stay when he comes home".¹¹ This implies that most of Simeon's visits home were less than a week in duration: it is therefore little wonder that she was frequently left missing him. In addition to this, on several occasions Simeon's time at home would come to an end with less than a day's notice, as orders would often arrive requiring him to ship out the very next day.¹² Simeon was sometimes sent on shorter shipping trips to nearby Windsor, which also forced him to be gone from her again for at least a day, even at those times when he was supposed to have time "on-shore".¹³

The toll that the continuous stress endured during her husband's trips away from home can be seen in Margaret's ready, even enthusiastic, agreement with Simeon's proposal to move the family to the United States and set down roots as farmers: "Our attention is turned to Wisconsin and Michigan, where Simeon, Capt. Curry and some others talk of emigrating to, as it is a good farming country. We women will be glad to have our husbands give up the seafaring life; we are willing to go – brothers, sisters and all – but what the outcome will be, I know not."¹⁴ We should remember that Margaret herself had family whom she would be leaving behind in Hantsport.¹⁵ She was running a school out of her home, instructing approximately 32 children of the town.¹⁶ Yet she was willing to leave all this, and go with her husband to embark upon the life of the farmer in a new country, in order to gain peace of mind regarding her husband's safety at any given moment, as well as the possibility to spend more time with him, thus truly highlighting the toll that the life of a wife to a seafaring man was having on her.

Margaret Dickie's case is not unique though, as many other Hantsport women had to adjust to life with their husbands being away from them for long periods of time as well. Alice Annie (Allen) Coalfleet is another woman whose husband was away at sea much of the time, and she too also recorded much of this experience of being away from him in her diary which she kept between the years of 1886 and 1892. The earliest entries in the diary were recorded during years when Alice was at sea with her husband, George (nicknamed and frequently referred to as Dodd), although in later years she did from time to time remain at home with their children in Hantsport. On these occasions, much like the case of Margaret Dickie, Alice spent time awaiting news of her husband's welfare, and contemplating the conditions that he may be experiencing at sea.¹⁷

Women and Life at Sea

While women frequently remained at home when their husbands went to sea, others also joined their husbands for the journeys, sometimes even with their young children accompanying them. Within her diary, Alice Coalfleet kept a record of her time at sea with husband Dodd, on board the ship *Plymouth*. While it would not have always been the case, Alice noted in her diary that when the “weather is very fine and warm” that they “just about live on deck”.¹⁸ At other times, however, the weather proved to be more of a curse whilst on board as was the case when the ship ran aground on a sandbar in poor visibility in a muddy river.¹⁹ Despite misadventures such as this however, when she returned to the *Plymouth* after having spent time on land, Alice noted with genuine feeling how glad she was to be back on board.²⁰

While there were trials faced at sea by women such as Alice, there were also times of great joy and excitement at the opportunities for exploration. Life at sea allowed these women a chance to experience other cultures and see faraway countries that they would otherwise never have had the chance to visit.²¹ As seen in Alice’s diary, such exotic visits not only allowed her to witness other ways of life, but she also had the opportunity to meet new people and sample new cuisines.²² During one such journey to China, Alice was presented with the gift of a Mongolian tiger skin and was able to witness some locals fishing whilst standing on stilts.²³ It is also during her time at sea that Alice was able to come in contact with fruits, such as pineapples, that were entirely foreign to colder climates such as Hantsport’s.²⁴

Of course, there were great dangers associated with women being at sea, and which can be seen in cases when ships wrecked. However, challenges of a much more mundane nature also arose whilst away at sea. One of these was keeping children entertained. In her diary Alice mentions taking her children onto the deck of the ship not only to allow them to get some much-needed fresh air, but also to dissipate some of their boredom.²⁵ Sometimes these attempts at entertainment went better than others; at one point in her diary, Alice mentions that one of her sons frequently threw his toys overboard.²⁶ For women like Alice, then, raising children at sea was a complicated process, to say the least!

With childhood and life also comes illness, in a time when any illness could prove fatal to a child. Alice Coalfleet's diary also illuminates this at the time when her sons came down with measles whilst away at sea.²⁷ As one would expect, Alice's fear regarding her sons' health is documented within the diary.²⁸ When her first son fell ill, Alice wrote that "I hold him all day – he feels so sick".²⁹ Not only is her worry displayed, but the further realities regarding the general lack of medical care on these seagoing vessels is very apparent. This inability to access medical care is seen as the crew and passengers had to wait until the ship was in port in order to have a doctor come to see to the welfare of Alice's infant son.³⁰ Luckily in Alice's son's case, the illness was not too severe, and treatment came in time to bring the child back to health, however, one can imagine that this would not always have been the case.

Birth at Sea

Birth is one of the elements of life, and it was also part of the experiences of some of the women travelling at sea with their husbands. Alice Coalfleet was one of these women who

had to endure the dangers of childbirth whilst away from home and medical assistance. Alice records in her diary that, while at sea, she went to bed early one night as she was feeling unwell.³¹ In the following day's entry, she records with no fanfare whatsoever that she has given birth to a son, who was delivered the previous night without any doctors or midwives present.³² In fact, she further elaborates that her husband Dodd "is Doctor, nurse and everything else."³³ Furthermore, not only was the baby delivered without medical aid, but it was a full week before a doctor had the opportunity to check on the baby and new mother whilst they were in port.³⁴ Thus, even at a time when medical care was primitive in comparison to the present, and when even simple illnesses (let alone the challenges of childbirth or childhood illness) could prove threatening or even fatal, those who were at sea faced the additional dangers of medical isolation

While childbirth did occur at sea on occasion, it was far more common for pregnant women to remain behind, bringing their babies to term and birthing whilst their husbands were away at sea. Alice Coalfleet's second son was born in this manner whilst Dodd was at sea, and it was several months before father met son for the first time.³⁵ However, he was informed of the birth prior to his return home by way of a telegraph message.³⁶ Upon the baby's birth, Alice had a message sent to her husband, bearing only the single word "George" to indicate that a baby boy had been delivered.³⁷ Why such a terse message? The cost, which was exorbitant: this single word cost Alice the huge sum of \$15.00.³⁸ Whilst this experience was likely trying for Dodd, not being able to greet his new son or be at home to support his wife, for Alice the reality of bringing a child into the world without the support and presence of her husband, and no real expectation of when he would be home again, illuminates the bravery and determination that a seaman's wife had to possess.

Death at Sea

Just as life could begin at sea, much more commonly the sea could end it, and in a variety of ways. One of the most common, in the nineteenth century, was by shipwreck. One such example of this can be seen in the case of the *Loodiana* which sank on 16 January 1892,³⁹ during its journey from New York to London, England.⁴⁰ Eyewitness accounts of the event report that the ship was entirely engulfed in flames prior to sinking, with the last two signs of life on board being the captain of the ship embracing his wife as they waited for the fire to burn through the wooden decking on which they were standing and plunge them into the sea.⁴¹ The wife of the captain, whose name was Rena, was Alice Coalfleet's sister, and in Alice's diary we see the anguish which Alice had to endure during the period between learning of the wreck, waiting to hear from her sister and ultimately receiving word of her demise.⁴² To make matters worse, even after the initial reports of the wreck reached Hantsport and Alice, it was some time before the identity of the couple and even the ship was revealed, thus only adding to the family's pain of loss.⁴³ As the case of the *Loodiana* shows, the consequences of events at sea not only affect the lives of individual women, but also their families and communities as a whole.

In other cases of trouble at sea involving storms, death is also prevalent due to the violence inflicted by nature's wrath: sailors could be swept off the decks, with little or no hope of rescue in such circumstances, and in the harsh North Atlantic climate death from exposure was a constant threat. Whilst the protection of the women on board ships during this time period commonly a high priority not only of their husbands but the crew at large, unfortunately harm cannot always be prevented.⁴⁴ This can be seen in the story of Captain

Hiram Coalfleet of the ship *Happy Home*, who had his daughter Mary and wife Esther (née Shaw) lashed to the *Happy Home*'s mainmast when bad weather pummelled her on 3 January 1881.⁴⁵ Such seemingly brutal actions were taken to prevent the women from being tossed overboard in the violent storm. Sadly, although they were not washed overboard, both Mary and Esther froze to death whilst tied to the mast, and just prior to the arrival of aid.⁴⁶

Many dangers could befall the women who went to sea, as well as their loved ones who more commonly left them behind. The sea was never fair and did not take previous losses into account when claiming lives. Large families that had multiple members at sea stood to lose even more. Alice Coalfleet for example lost both her sister and husband within a couple of months of each other. The death of loved ones was therefore an altogether too-familiar event for some. It was only shortly after learning of the death of her sister that Alice was informed via telegram of Dodd's death at sea on 28 February 1892.⁴⁷ This sudden loss caused Alice to reflect what would happen to her sons if something now befell her too. In the diary entry for the day that she learned of Dodd's death it can be seen that Alice pondered this possibility as she writes: "May my little boys be spared me. They do not realise their loss".⁴⁸

To make matters worse, Alice then continued to face barriers to her attempts to claim the possessions of her late husband, as well as his outstanding salary.⁴⁹ In the end, she received some of his effects, but not his papers, letters, photos, or memorandum book.⁵⁰ Therefore, not only was the widowed Alice left to raise her children without their father, but she was further deprived of some of the items that would have allowed her to better remember Dodd. She does not state in the diary whether she ever managed to draw Dodd's salary after his death, although she noted that the owner of the ship claimed that Dodd had

already received his salary whilst in London.⁵¹ To add to Alice's financial burdens, Dodd never took out insurance, nor did he leave a will when he died.⁵² Doubtless, financial concerns would have led to Alice to consider the possibility of a second marriage, after not even a year had passed since Dodd's death.⁵³

Captaining/Working on Ships

While it may have been a rare occurrence, there are cases of women who aided in the running of ships at this time. In even rarer but not unique instances they ended up navigating or commanding them for short periods. Anna Davison was on board the ship *Ann Eliza* with her husband and niece in Genoa, Italy, when both husband and niece contracted yellow fever.⁵⁴ They both succumbed to the disease and with the aid of the ship's mate John Andrews Anna ended up taking up control of the *Ann Eliza* which she then captained back home to Hantsport.⁵⁵

Unfortunately not much information concerning Anna's odyssey has survived. Even though the story has largely been lost to history, its very existence is extraordinary. In the nineteenth century the idea of a woman actively crewing a ship, let alone acting as master, was inconceivable. Yet extraordinary women like Anna Davison were able to prove that "the fair sex" were just as capable as their male counterparts. And in Davison's case, her determination and ability is even more remarkable when we remember she was grieving the loss of husband and niece as she brought the ship across the Atlantic. Yet she did what she had to do and got her ship and crew safely back to Hantsport.

¹ Allen B. Robertson, *Tide & Timber: Hantsport, Nova Scotia 1795-1995* (Milton, ON: Global Heritage Press, 2001), 40.

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- ² Hattie Chittick, *Hantsport on Avon* (Hantsport, NS, 1968), 10.
- ³ Chittick, *Hantsport on Avon*, 13.
- ⁴ Chittick, *Hantsport on Avon*, 26.
- ⁵ Margaret Dickie, *The Diary of Margaret Dickie of Hantsport, Nova Scotia, 1827-1908*, ed. Carolyn K. McGrath (Providence, Rhode Island, 2001), 23. Emphasis added.
- ⁶ Dickie, *The Diary of Margaret Dickie*, 64.
- ⁷ Dickie, *The Diary of Margaret Dickie*, 42.
- ⁸ Dickie, *The Diary of Margaret Dickie*, 63.
- ⁹ Dickie, *The Diary of Margaret Dickie*, 44.
- ¹⁰ Dickie, *The Diary of Margaret Dickie*, 51.
- ¹¹ Dickie, *The Diary of Margaret Dickie*, 15.
- ¹² Dickie, *The Diary of Margaret Dickie*, 51.
- ¹³ Dickie, *The Diary of Margaret Dickie*, 45.
- ¹⁴ Dickie, *The Diary of Margaret Dickie*, 51.
- ¹⁵ Dickie, *The Diary of Margaret Dickie*, 52.
- ¹⁶ Dickie, *The Diary of Margaret Dickie*, 53.
- ¹⁷ Alice Allen, *Transcript of the Diary of Alice Annie (Coalfleet) Allen 1886-1892 On board the bark "Plymouth"*, 24.
- ¹⁸ Allen, *Transcript of the Diary of Alice Annie (Coalfleet) Allen*, 5.
- ¹⁹ Allen, *Transcript of the Diary of Alice Annie (Coalfleet) Allen*, 7.
- ²⁰ Allen, *Transcript of the Diary of Alice Annie (Coalfleet) Allen*, 17.
- ²¹ Allen, *Transcript of the Diary of Alice Annie (Coalfleet) Allen*, 7.
- ²² Allen, *Transcript of the Diary of Alice Annie (Coalfleet) Allen*, 7.
- ²³ Allen, *Transcript of the Diary of Alice Annie (Coalfleet) Allen*, 7.
- ²⁴ Allen, *Transcript of the Diary of Alice Annie (Coalfleet) Allen*, 15.
- ²⁵ Allen, *Transcript of the Diary of Alice Annie (Coalfleet) Allen*, 30.
- ²⁶ Allen, *Transcript of the Diary of Alice Annie (Coalfleet) Allen*, 30.
- ²⁷ Allen, *Transcript of the Diary of Alice Annie (Coalfleet) Allen*, 30.
- ²⁸ Allen, *Transcript of the Diary of Alice Annie (Coalfleet) Allen*, 29-30.
- ²⁹ Allen, *Transcript of the Diary of Alice Annie (Coalfleet) Allen*, 30.
- ³⁰ Allen, *Transcript of the Diary of Alice Annie (Coalfleet) Allen*, 30.
- ³¹ Allen, *Transcript of the Diary of Alice Annie (Coalfleet) Allen*, 9.
- ³² Allen, *Transcript of the Diary of Alice Annie (Coalfleet) Allen*, 9.
- ³³ Allen, *Transcript of the Diary of Alice Annie (Coalfleet) Allen*, 9.
- ³⁴ Allen, *Transcript of the Diary of Alice Annie (Coalfleet) Allen*, 9.
- ³⁵ Allen, *Transcript of the Diary of Alice Annie (Coalfleet) Allen*, 25.
- ³⁶ Allen, *Transcript of the Diary of Alice Annie (Coalfleet) Allen*, 25.
- ³⁷ Allen, *Transcript of the Diary of Alice Annie (Coalfleet) Allen*, 25.
- ³⁸ Allen, *Transcript of the Diary of Alice Annie (Coalfleet) Allen*, 25.
- ³⁹ Allen, *Transcript of the Diary of Alice Annie (Coalfleet) Allen*, 40.
- ⁴⁰ Allen, *Transcript of the Diary of Alice Annie (Coalfleet) Allen*, 39.
- ⁴¹ "A Nova Scotia Captain and his wife drowned: Seen Clinging to the Jibboom of a Burning Oil Ship," *Acadian Recorder*, February 24, 1892.
- ⁴² Allen, *Transcript of the Diary of Alice Annie (Coalfleet) Allen*, 39-40.
- ⁴³ Allen, *Transcript of the Diary of Alice Annie (Coalfleet) Allen*, 40.
- ⁴⁴ Chittick, *Hantsport on Avon*, 19.

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- ⁴⁵ Chittick, *Hantsport on Avon*, 19.
- ⁴⁶ Chittick, *Hantsport on Avon*, 19.
- ⁴⁷ Allen, *Transcript of the Diary of Alice Annie (Coalfleet)* Allen, 40.
- ⁴⁸ Allen, *Transcript of the Diary of Alice Annie (Coalfleet)* Allen, 40.
- ⁴⁹ Allen, *Transcript of the Diary of Alice Annie (Coalfleet)* Allen, 41.
- ⁵⁰ Allen, *Transcript of the Diary of Alice Annie (Coalfleet)* Allen, 40.
- ⁵¹ Allen, *Transcript of the Diary of Alice Annie (Coalfleet)* Allen, 41.
- ⁵² Allen, *Transcript of the Diary of Alice Annie (Coalfleet)* Allen, 42.
- ⁵³ Allen, *Transcript of the Diary of Alice Annie (Coalfleet)* Allen, 42.
- ⁵⁴ Chittick, *Hantsport on Avon*, 25.
- ⁵⁵ Chittick, *Hantsport on Avon*, 25.

Part II – Women in the Community

As is the case in every community, the women of Hantsport have played an important though often overlooked role in the running and development of the town throughout its history.

Through the dedication of these women advancements were made not only to the physical infrastructure and architectural heritage of the town, but they also served to keep alive the memories and recollections of the townsfolk. There is a spirit of generosity and deep-seated desire to help those around them that is exceptionally evident amongst the town's women, a helping spirit which extended well beyond the town's boundaries to encompass those in the broader area as well as those who came from further afield to visit. Women also took on the role of educators of both children and adults; as we have seen, Margaret Dickie ran a school for more than thirty children out of her home, and she was not unique in this regard.

In fact, the devotion of women within the town of Hantsport can be seen from prior to its inception as a town. Early entries in Dickie's diary showcased her involvement in the community through fundraising efforts and attendance at temperance events. In latter part of the nineteenth century the temperance movement within Hantsport continued to grow, with the women of the town forming a union to advance the movement's goals. Later yet, a branch of the Women's Institute was also formed in Hantsport for the betterment of the community. The dedication of the women of Hantsport to its community spirit and cohesion continued down to more recent years with the centennial celebration of the town in 1995, which led to five major projects being undertaken to improve the town of Hantsport for future generations. Through their community work, the women of the town have continued to show their love and commitment to Hantsport, and it is thanks to them that many of the spaces now taken for granted within the town exist and flourish to this day.

The Women's Institute

The Women's Institute (WI) is a long-standing international organization which continues to flourish today, with some 6,300 chapters of the organization from Canada to New Zealand encompassing almost a quarter of a million members.¹ The organization was founded in 1897 in Ontario, and the first chapter of the Women's Institute to be established in Hantsport initially met on 16 November 1915.² The meeting opened with statement of the institute's intended purpose, which was to "bring all the women of the town together to work for the improvement of the town and its citizens".³ The first president of the group was a Mrs. McKeen, and the group quickly decided that their initial project would be to make quilts for the French Relief Fund.⁴

The Hantsport chapter's initial activities were very much conditioned by the ongoing conflict of the First World War. Although the Dominion of Canada escaped the privations of war felt by civilian populations across Europe, the vast majority of Canada's agricultural output was shipped across the Atlantic, leading to shortages at home. That, coupled with the constant fear for the safety of the young men fighting overseas, created significant physical and psychological challenges for the women who joined Hantsport's WI, and it is likely that meaningful activity was a focus of the group's work as it gave the members the feeling that they were making a difference in the lives of others; that they were not powerless in the face of circumstances otherwise beyond their control. Many of the women had family members who were away at war, and at the very least they knew families whose loved ones were absent, in terrible danger, at the front. The constant worry that this engendered was magnified by the challenges of managing homes and families, which many Hantsport women faced alone. As such, it is no surprise that the majority of the actions taken by the WI during

its formative years revolved around aid work for the war effort, such as the knitting of socks for the soldiers overseas.⁵

While the war may have been difficult for the town in many respects, the WI worked hard to take some of the pressure off the community, and to simply promote community cohesiveness. On 27 September 1917, for example, the Hantsport WI held a fair for the community.⁶ As part of the fair, the local children were encouraged to participate by displaying their sewing, vegetables, flowers, preserves and woodworking projects.⁷ Such a joyful harvest-time celebration doubtless helped, if only for a short while, to take the minds of the people of Hantsport off the horrific news trickling out of Flanders, where the appalling brutality of Passchendaele was unfolding. Instead the community could focus on the togetherness to be found within the town, the bounty of the harvest, and the talents of the youth. While the WI continued to support such community displays, they stopped sponsoring and organizing their own fair by 1919 and instead began a partnership with the local county exhibition.⁸

The year 1919 also saw the WI take on a project to restore Hantsport's Riverbank Cemetery.⁹ By the early twentieth century the cemetery had fallen into a state of disrepair, and was in dire need of attention if it was going to continue to commemorate the past of Hantsport.¹⁰ The WI therefore approached the town with an inquiry as to who was responsible for the cemetery's upkeep, at which point it was determined that the town was indeed the caretaker of the property.¹¹ The town accepted that the cemetery was in need of restoration work, but felt that funds needed to restore the cemetery were lacking. The Council therefore informed the WI that they would be grateful for any financial support that the WI could provide to assist with the project.¹² The WI was keen to assist in any way and promised

to donate the money raised at a tea that members had already begun to plan for September.¹³ Furthermore, the institute's members concluded that the town would benefit from expert assistance during the cemetery's restoration and so they secured the services of a gardener from the Truro Agricultural College to travel to Hantsport to consult and offer expert advice to facilitate the restoration project.¹⁴

The restoration of the Riverbank Cemetery was only one example among many of a very wide range of projects undertaken by the Hantsport WI. In its first 50 years of operation the WI undertook projects to improve other town buildings such as the school and post office.¹⁵ When the Churchill House went up for sale, the WI had just begun the search for a new location to hold their monthly meetings, having previously made use of members' homes and rooms in the school house.¹⁶ While they had initially investigated the feasibility of building a dedicated meeting house, but this idea was abandoned when the Churchill House became available.¹⁷ The house was built in 1860 by Senator Ezra Churchill as a wedding present for his son John Wiley Churchill and remained within the Churchill family until it was sold to the community of Hantsport.¹⁸ At the time of purchase, an agreement was reached that the house would be purchased by the WI in conjunction with the community, to be operated as a community centre, with the WI being given use of one of the rooms as a meeting space.¹⁹ The WI ultimately contributed \$2000.00 towards the purchase of the property.²⁰ By having an official place to meet, especially in a community-oriented space, the Women's Institute and their role became more firmly entrenched within Hantsport.

In addition to the physical contributions made by the WI to Hantsport, the group was also heavily involved in the education of the townspeople. As early as 1917 WI members took it upon themselves to teach the children of the area how to garden, and encouraged a

friendly competitiveness by awarding prizes to the children who were able to produce the best gardens.²¹ This promotion of gardening skills within the town continued throughout the Second World War when the WI organized the creation of a community garden.²²

Yet another educational program saw a partnership between the local school and the WI in which institute members went into classrooms to teach the local girls how to sew.²³ Not only were such lessons of direct benefit to the girls being taught, this outreach work also took some of the strain off already-busy mothers. And the program was doubly beneficial: now not only would the local mothers not have to devote as much time to teaching these skills to their daughters, but their daughters were able to aid them in their work around the home.

While both of these educational projects were focused on schoolchildren, the WI also took it upon themselves to educate the adults of the town on important matters such as home first aid, in those days referred to as “Home Nursing”. As part of this effort a sub-committee of the WI was also formed to look into and educate people on the promotion of sanitary conditions, with a focus on the conditions at the local school.

All told, the records for the Women’s Institute in Hantsport exist from 1915²⁴ until 1966.²⁵ The group celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1965, and a short paper was written by member Zella Harvie to commemorate the achievements of the WI over this half century.²⁶ Sadly by this time involvement in the WI had by this point begun to decline, a trend that was regrettably noted by Zella in her history.²⁷ The enrolment of new members continued to decline, and this left the Hantsport WI in considerable difficulty.²⁸ In 1982 a second WI group was formed in nearby Lockhartville, to make up for the decline and loss of the Hantsport group,²⁹ but it too came to an end in 2017.³⁰

While many women of Hantsport participated in the Women's Institute over its duration, there are a number of notable members who were also widely involved in other areas of Hantsport life as well. As noted above, Zella Harvie, who was the coordinator for the local branch of the Ajax Club during the Second World War,³¹ wrote the short history of the group for its 50th anniversary,³² and was involved in the group for many years.

Rebecca Starratt was also a long-time member of the group, whilst also working as an assistant to Dr. Smith in baby deliveries and home care.³³ Rebecca Starratt's granddaughter, Marilyn Guy, noted in an interview that Mrs. Starratt was very devoted to the group and thought quite highly of the WI and the work that it did.³⁴ In fact, it was whilst preparing to attend a meeting of the WI that Mrs. Starratt passed away.³⁵

Finally, Jessie Borden was another notable member of the group. Having been born and raised in Hantsport, Jessie later went away to the United States to work as a hospital dietitian for 25 years.³⁶ However, upon her return to Hantsport in 1949 she soon became involved in the WI and with other volunteer groups within the area.³⁷ Later in life, Jessie Borden was considered to be an expert on local history, having lived in Hantsport for many years and having experienced first-hand many of the changes that it had undergone across that time.³⁸

The Women's Temperance Union

The Women's Temperance Union had a long-running history within the town of Hantsport. However, even before the Union was established, temperance was an important matter within the community. In her diary Margaret Dickie made numerous mentions of attending temperance meetings by herself³⁹ and with other members of her family.⁴⁰

Evidence indicates that an organized group of the Women's Christian Temperance Union was established in Hantsport no later than 1878.⁴¹ While temperance was the main concern for the group, they also fought for other matters such as women's right to vote.⁴² In 1878, the Hantsport branch of the Temperance Union wrote a petition to the Nova Scotia government, clearly stating that they believed that women should be afforded the right to vote and outlining their reasoning behind such an argument.⁴³ The reasons given by the Hantsport group in support of women's suffrage were: that women composed half of the adult population; that they paid tax; that suffrage would promote growth and prosperity in the commonwealth, that positive results had been seen in municipal and school suffrage, and that important men in both political and religious circles agreed that men and women were politically equal.⁴⁴ While these women may have supported the women's suffrage movement for several reasons, the right to vote would also have allowed the women to further continue their fight for temperance. By gaining the right to vote, women would have been able to further voice their concerns regarding the dangers of drugs and alcohol, and to oppose at the ballot box those politicians who did not support their ideas concerning the proper use and sale of these substances.

While evidence exists to show that the Hantsport group was operating as early as 1878, the formal date given for its inception is 28 September 1933.⁴⁵ The reason behind such a difference in organization dates may be due to changes in leadership within the group, or a move to become affiliated with a provincial or national body of the Temperance Union. Records from this later iteration of the Union also record the highest membership count within the Hantsport group as being 14.⁴⁶ The organization persisted well into the 1960s when its meetings were held on the second Friday of every month.⁴⁷

While a wide variety of temperance issues were explored by the group, the Hantsport branch of the Union appears to have had a particular interest in the education of school children, perhaps echoing the work of the Women's Institute in this regard. The course of study in temperance education was offered to students in grades 4 to 8 and comprised lectures and a written test on the material covered.⁴⁸ Statistics on the course show that it was taught at least seven times in Hantsport between 1949 and 1960.⁴⁹ Of these offerings, the participation numbers are available only for 1959-1960, when 200 students took the course, 147 wrote the test, and 115 received certificates for passing the course.⁵⁰ The overall marks earned by this group of students varied very widely, from 14% to 100%.⁵¹

The Hantsport branch of the Union's efforts in temperance education can further be seen in the work of Miss Gladys Marsters. Miss Marsters belonged to the Hantsport group and in 1963 was appointed the Provincial Superintendent of the Temperance Study Course.⁵² Her work in this position was highly valued, and in 1968 she was awarded a National Life Membership and pin in honour of her work and dedication to the movement.⁵³

The Ajax Club

The Ajax Club, named after a British ship, was established during Second World War to provide accommodations, meals and entertainment to the British soldiers and especially sailors who came in and out of Halifax at this time.⁵⁴ Started in 1940 by Janet Evelyn McEuen, the club operated out of the capacious Odell House in Halifax.⁵⁵ Prior to this time, there had been issues regarding British soldiers roaming the streets of Halifax, as housing was in such short supply.⁵⁶ The Ajax Club also provided alcohol to the men, as during this time pubs – centres of community life in Britain – were not common in Halifax due to the

success of earlier temperance activities.⁵⁷ The laws of the time forbid the drinking of alcohol outside of the home, unless one was a member of a licenced private club, and as such any servicemen who were off duty and not originally from Halifax, were left unable to legally consume alcohol within the city.⁵⁸ This of course did not prevent them from doing so in practice and so illegal public drinking and the purchase of bootleg liquor was widespread.⁵⁹ Therefore, to protect both the interests of the public, as well as the visiting servicemen, Janet McEuen obtained a liquor license for her club, to provide a safe location for the consumption of alcohol.⁶⁰ In a time when temperance movements were still strong, this was not an easy feat, especially since the Ajax Club was located directly across the street from the Fort Massey Church.⁶¹ In part it was its location that led to the Ajax Club's closure in 1942, after complaints were made regarding the behaviour of the patrons of the club and the church's anger at having beer sold so close to its premises.⁶²

It was in the demise of the Ajax Club in Halifax that its inception can be seen in Hantsport. After it was closed Janet McEuen organized a system of homes across the province which would take in British servicemen whilst they were on leave or recovering from injuries.⁶³ One of the locations that was used for this purpose was Hantsport, where it has been estimated that perhaps a dozen different families in the area hosted these soldiers and sailors.⁶⁴ While numerous families did host servicemen, the main organizer of their stays within the town was Zella Harvie.⁶⁵ The Hantsport families who took in the soldiers provided lodging, food, and entertainment to their guests.⁶⁶ As well, the time away from bigger cities and the trials of war was definitely healing and rejuvenating for the servicemen during their stay.

The families who took in soldiers through the Ajax Club had many different reasons for doing so. At the time, the war effort was an enormous undertaking for the province and the country, with many individuals taking it upon themselves to do their part for the war. Many women had children and husbands of their own who were fighting in the war and may have seen in the faces of the soldiers and sailors who showed up on their doorsteps the trials that their own families were facing.⁶⁷ Therefore, the people of Hantsport were doing what they hoped that other people across the world were also doing to make the lives of their loved ones better during this very difficult time.

At the time, Zella Harvie's daughter, Margaret, was living with her in Hantsport.⁶⁸ Margaret was also heavily involved in the work done by her mother, helping to care for the Ajax guests as well as to entertain them.⁶⁹ Margaret and other girls of the town were warned ahead of time that the men may flirt with them, but that it would be best not to become too involved.⁷⁰ Instead, friendships were formed, and time was spent swimming and going to beach parties.⁷¹ Despite the resources which would have been required to care for the Ajax guests, there is no evidence that the people of Hantsport ever received any monetary support to defray the costs of their efforts.⁷²

After the war Zella Harvie received letters from both the Ajax servicemen who had stayed in Hantsport, as well as their families, thanking her for her kindness and hospitality through the years.⁷³ Zella, at the insistence of the soldiers, also took a trip to England so that she could experience the country, whilst being taken care of by the men whom she had once provided for so many years prior.⁷⁴

Other Areas of Influence

While the women of Hantsport were heavily involved in organized groups for the betterment of the community, many of them were also involved in less-structured, shorter-term volunteer projects. Margaret Dickie was one such woman who was involved in various areas of community life. During her time in Hantsport, Margaret took it upon herself to collect funds for a group known in her diary only as the “Union Society”.⁷⁵ Later in the diary, Margaret also makes note of collecting money for a “Union Missionary Society”, which is possibly the same group as she previously collected money for.⁷⁶

Margaret, who worked as a teacher within Hantsport, also took it upon herself to help to organize a Sunday School in 1849.⁷⁷ Not only did she participate as a teacher in the new Sunday School, but local children would also occasionally come to her home for similar church lessons.⁷⁸ As seen through her work in teaching both school and Sunday School, education played a very important role within Margaret Dickie’s life, and she worked to promote it within the lives of the adults of Hantsport, as well as in the lives of their children. Margaret, an avid reader herself, operated a community lending library out of her home, allowing townsfolk to come and borrow reading material from her library as they desired.⁷⁹

In 1995 the town of Hantsport celebrated its centennial celebration, much of which was planned, beginning in 1991, by the town’s women.⁸⁰ Carolyn Folker, who was one of the main overseers of this project, noted that as part of the celebrations a series of larger projects were undertaken so as to improve the town.⁸¹ In this process the town was divided into five neighbourhoods, with each neighbourhood developing and raising funds for their own project, with the funds thus raised then being matched by the town.⁸²

The projects undertaken as part of this project were: restoration and improvement to the William Hall Memorial, the construction of a rest stop outside the post office, a walkway to connect Smith Crescent to Foundry Road, a rest stop being established on the corner of Rand Street and Riverview Road, and the placing of a new sign at the entrance of Riverbank Cemetery.⁸³ In order to raise the funds needed to complete these projects, volunteers held suppers, scavenger hunts, raffles, socials, and dances.⁸⁴ While these projects all required immense dedication and work from the volunteers, the actual centennial celebration itself did not take place until 25 April 1995, and required another round of planning and activities by highly organized and engaged volunteers.⁸⁵

¹ “History of WINS,” The Women’s Institutes of Nova Scotia, accessed August 8, 2019, <https://www.winovascotia.ca/history-of-wins/>.

² Hantsport Women’s Institute Minute Book: November 16, 1915-July 9, 1920, Dorie and Garnet McDade Heritage Centre.

³ Hantsport Women’s Institute Minute Book: November 16, 1915-July 9, 1920, Dorie and Garnet McDade Heritage Centre.

⁴ Hantsport Women’s Institute Minute Book: November 16, 1915-July 9, 1920, Dorie and Garnet McDade Heritage Centre.

⁵ Zella Harvie, “Hantsport Women’s Institute,” Dorie and Garnet McDade Heritage Centre.

⁶ Hantsport Women’s Institute Minute Book: November 16, 1915-July 9, 1920, Dorie and Garnet McDade Heritage Centre.

⁷ Hantsport Women’s Institute Minute Book: November 16, 1915-July 9, 1920, Dorie and Garnet McDade Heritage Centre.

⁸ Hantsport Women’s Institute Minute Book: November 16, 1915-July 9, 1920, Dorie and Garnet McDade Heritage Centre.

⁹ Hantsport Women’s Institute Minute Book: November 16, 1915-July 9, 1920, Dorie and Garnet McDade Heritage Centre.

¹⁰ Harvie, “Hantsport Women’s Institute,” Dorie and Garnet McDade Heritage Centre.

¹¹ Hantsport Women’s Institute Minute Book: November 16, 1915-July 9, 1920, Dorie and Garnet McDade Heritage Centre.

¹² Hantsport Women’s Institute Minute Book: November 16, 1915-July 9, 1920, Dorie and Garnet McDade Heritage Centre.

¹³ Hantsport Women’s Institute Minute Book: November 16, 1915-July 9, 1920, Dorie and Garnet McDade Heritage Centre.

¹⁴ Hantsport Women’s Institute Minute Book: November 16, 1915-July 9, 1920, Dorie and Garnet McDade Heritage Centre.

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- ¹⁵ Harvie, "Hantsport Women's Institute," Dorie and Garnet McDade Heritage Centre.
- ¹⁶ Hantsport Women's Institute Minute Book: November 16, 1915-July 9, 1920, Dorie and Garnet McDade Heritage Centre.
- ¹⁷ Harvie, "Hantsport Women's Institute," Dorie and Garnet McDade Heritage Centre.
- ¹⁸ Hattie Chittick, *Hantsport on Avon* (Hantsport, NS, 1968), 42.
- ¹⁹ Harvie, "Hantsport Women's Institute," Dorie and Garnet McDade Heritage Centre.
- ²⁰ Chittick, *Hantsport on Avon*, 43.
- ²¹ Hantsport Women's Institute Minute Book: November 16, 1915-July 9, 1920, Dorie and Garnet McDade Heritage Centre.
- ²² Harvie, "Hantsport Women's Institute," Dorie and Garnet McDade Heritage Centre.
- ²³ Hantsport Women's Institute Minute Book: November 16, 1915-July 9, 1920, Dorie and Garnet McDade Heritage Centre.
- ²⁴ Hantsport Women's Institute Minute Book: November 16, 1915-July 9, 1920, Dorie and Garnet McDade Heritage Centre.
- ²⁵ Hantsport Women's Institute Minute Book: 1954-1966, Dorie and Garnet McDade Heritage Centre.
- ²⁶ Harvie, "Hantsport Women's Institute," Dorie and Garnet McDade Heritage Centre.
- ²⁷ Harvie, "Hantsport Women's Institute," Dorie and Garnet McDade Heritage Centre.
- ²⁸ Harvie, "Hantsport Women's Institute," Dorie and Garnet McDade Heritage Centre.
- ²⁹ Lockhartville Women's Institute Minute Book: 1982-1987, Dorie and Garnet McDade Heritage Centre.
- ³⁰ Lochartville Women's Institute Minute Book: 2016-2017, Dorie and Garnet McDade Heritage Centre.
- ³¹ Leland Harvie, "Interview With Leland Harvie," interview by Laura Sharpe, June 19, 2019, audio.
- ³² Harvie, "Hantsport Women's Institute," Dorie and Garnet McDade Heritage Centre.
- ³³ Marilyn Guy, "Interview With Marilyn Guy," interview by Laura Sharpe, July 9, 2019, transcript.
- ³⁴ Guy, interview.
- ³⁵ Guy, interview.
- ³⁶ Mike Ingraham, "When CBC's Heritage wanted to know about Hantsport, they went to visit Jessie Borden," *The Hants Journal*, December 17, 1980, 11.
- ³⁷ Ingraham, "Jessie Borden," 11.
- ³⁸ Ingraham, "Jessie Borden," 11.
- ³⁹ Margaret Dickie, *The Diary of Margaret Dickie of Hantsport, Nova Scotia, 1827-1908*, ed. Carolyn K. McGrath (Providence, Rhode Island, 2001), 6.
- ⁴⁰ Dickie, *The Diary of Margaret Dickie*, 42.
- ⁴¹ "Women's Christian Temperance Union, Hantsport, Nova Scotia: Petition for the Enfranchisement of Women (1878)," in *Documenting First Wave Feminisms : Volume II Canada - National and Transnational Contexts*, ed. Nancy Forestell and Maureen Moynagh (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 119.
- ⁴² "Petition for the Enfranchisement of Women," 119.
- ⁴³ "Petition for the Enfranchisement of Women," 119.
- ⁴⁴ "Petition for the Enfranchisement of Women," 119.
- ⁴⁵ Nova Scotia Woman's Christian Temperance Union, 1895-1995, Nova Scotia Women's Christian Temperance Unions, 2005.022-WCT/5, Esther Clark Wright Archives.

⁴⁶ Nova Scotia Woman's Christian Temperance Union, 1895-1995, Nova Scotia Women's Christian Temperance Unions, 2005.022-WCT/5, Esther Clark Wright Archives.

⁴⁷ Nova Scotia Woman's Christian Temperance Union 65th Annual report (1963), Nova Scotia Women's Christian Temperance Unions, 2005.022-WCT/7, Esther Clark Wright Archives.

⁴⁸ Record of Temperance Education Committee of the Hantsport W. C. T. U. (1959-1960), Nova Scotia Women's Christian Temperance Unions, 2005.022-WCT/1, Esther Clark Wright Archives.

⁴⁹ National temperance study course reports ([19--], 1954, 1959), Nova Scotia Women's Christian Temperance Unions, 2005.022-WCT/2, Esther Clark Wright Archives.

⁵⁰ Record of Temperance Education Committee of the Hantsport W. C. T. U. (1959-1960), Nova Scotia Women's Christian Temperance Unions, 2005.022-WCT/1, Esther Clark Wright Archives.

⁵¹ Record of Temperance Education Committee of the Hantsport W. C. T. U. (1959-1960), Nova Scotia Women's Christian Temperance Unions, 2005.022-WCT/1, Esther Clark Wright Archives.

⁵² Nova Scotia Woman's Christian Temperance Union 65th Annual report (1963), Nova Scotia Women's Christian Temperance Unions, 2005.022-WCT/7, Esther Clark Wright Archives.

⁵³ Minutes of Nova Scotia Provincial Woman's Christian Temperance Union, one-day convention, June 12, 1968, Nova Scotia Women's Christian Temperance Unions, 2005.022-WCT/3, Esther Clark Wright Archives.

⁵⁴ Jay White, "Untimely Demise: The Curious Case of the Ajax Club," 'An East Coast Port': Halifax in Wartime, 1939-1945, Nova Scotia Archives, accessed August 14, 2019, <https://novascotia.ca/archives/eastcoastport/ajax.asp?Language=English>.

⁵⁵ White, "Untimely Demise".

⁵⁶ White, "Untimely Demise".

⁵⁷ White, "Untimely Demise".

⁵⁸ White, "Untimely Demise".

⁵⁹ White, "Untimely Demise".

⁶⁰ White, "Untimely Demise".

⁶¹ White, "Untimely Demise".

⁶² White, "Untimely Demise".

⁶³ White, "Untimely Demise".

⁶⁴ Norman Creighton, "AJAX Hospitality," *The Atlantic Advocate*, July 1966, 45.

⁶⁵ Creighton, "AJAX Hospitality," 45.

⁶⁶ Harvie, interview.

⁶⁷ Harvie, interview.

⁶⁸ Harvie, interview.

⁶⁹ Harvie, interview.

⁷⁰ Creighton, "AJAX Hospitality," 46.

⁷¹ Creighton, "AJAX Hospitality," 46.

⁷² Harvie, interview.

⁷³ Creighton, "AJAX Hospitality," 45.

⁷⁴ Harvie, interview.

⁷⁵ Dickie, *The Diary of Margaret Dickie*, 17.

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- ⁷⁶ Dickie, *The Diary of Margaret Dickie*, 61.
- ⁷⁷ Dickie, *The Diary of Margaret Dickie*, 14.
- ⁷⁸ Dickie, *The Diary of Margaret Dickie*, 31.
- ⁷⁹ Dickie, *The Diary of Margaret Dickie*, 24.
- ⁸⁰ Carolyn and Wayne Folker, “Interview With Carolyn and Wayne Folker,” interview by Laura Sharpe, June 19, 2019, audio.
- ⁸¹ Carolyn and Wayne Folker, interview.
- ⁸² Carolyn Folker, “Follow Up Interview,” interview by Laura Sharpe, August 9, 2019, transcript.
- ⁸³ Carolyn Folker, interview.
- ⁸⁴ Carolyn Folker, interview.
- ⁸⁵ Carolyn Folker, interview.

Section III – Women at Work

Women have always worked in one capacity or another in order to help to provide for their families. While some of this work may have been outside of the home, a significant amount involved housework and the raising of children. While these jobs required a great deal of work, women seldom received credit for their household duties as they have traditionally been viewed as part of their inherent role as wife and mother. Other jobs that women were involved with included assisting husbands in their businesses and providing labour on family farms.

While there is no doubt that the women of Hantsport have been providing necessary labour for their families and the community for generations, the focus of this section of the report will be on women entering jobs outside of the home, with some of these positions having long been viewed within a more masculine context. Despite the gender divide, the women of Hantsport proved to be “willing and capable” workers.¹

Their willingness to work took them to the Minas Basin Pulp and Paper Mill across its long history, into the health care profession, and even followed them as they worked at family businesses and started their own. Finally, not all the work done by women in Hantsport was in exchange for a salary, as some put their own lives in harm’s way to save others through volunteer positions in the local fire department.

Women at the Factory

The Minas Basin Pulp and Paper Mill was incorporated in March of 1927 and continued to operate until December 2012.² During its history, the mill employed both men and women at its Hantsport location. In fact, the mill was considered to be quite progressive due to its

policy of hiring female workers.³ During the mill's early days, women were employed within as counters, to count the paper products being produced and then to package them.⁴ In its initial years approximately a dozen women worked at the mill, with the number rising to approximately 100 women being employed at its height.⁵

While the female workers at the mill started out as counters, over time they began to be promoted to positions as machine operators, quality control personnel and administrators.⁶ As the women progressed through the ranks within the factory, there did not appear to be any lack of respect shown to them due to their positions in a typically male industry.⁷ In fact, the women at the Hantsport mill took it upon themselves to fight for changes in working conditions, thus improving the working environment for all. During the time that the mill was in operation, female workers brought about the implementation of longer breaks and better air conditioning within the mill buildings.⁸ Their efforts to improve the working conditions at the mill certainly would have allowed for the male workers to develop a greater sense of acceptance towards the women, as they came to see just how dedicated the female workers were to the plant.

Women in the Fire Brigade

The first fire department in Hantsport was established in 1906.⁹ It was not until 1990 however, that the Women's Fire Auxiliary was formed.¹⁰ It was this group of dedicated female volunteers that aided the firemen behind the scenes, thus allowing them to better perform their roles. In a 2019 interview former fire chief Donnie McNeil noted the invaluable role these women had played for the community of Hantsport.¹¹

This group of women were always ready and able to provide assistance whenever it was requested, not only to provide help at the scenes of fires by supplying refreshments to the firemen, but also in helping to organize and provide food for special celebrations or fundraisers for the fire department.¹² While undoubtedly various members of the community still aid the fire service in this manner, the Ladies Auxiliary officially folded in 2004, two years prior to the department celebrating its centenary anniversary.¹³

Remarkably, it was not until 1996 that the Hantsport Fire Department admitted its first female firefighter.¹⁴ Amber McNeil joined the department when her father Donnie McNeil was the chief.¹⁵ Chief McNeil was away at a firefighter's conference out of province when he received a phone call to inform him that his daughter Amber had applied and been accepted into the fire department.¹⁶

As for the possible inspiration behind her application, Donnie McNeil notes that she likely applied in order to prove a point.¹⁷ According to Donnie himself, he had previously voiced concerns over females not being able to meet the physical demands of fire-fighting, an opinion of which no doubt Amber was aware.¹⁸ This opinion is also what likely led the other firefighters to keep Amber's application and acceptance into the department a secret until Donnie was out of province.¹⁹

Despite his reservations however, Donnie noted that Amber worked exceptionally hard, and was a well-respected member of the team.²⁰ He also believes that by Amber joining the department, it inspired other firefighters to work harder in their own roles.²¹ Since Amber became the first female firefighter in Hantsport, a number of other women have also joined the department.²² Once Amber joined the department as its first female firefighter, she served as an inspiration to others, who had never even considered such a volunteer position, to give

it a chance. Furthermore, for the new generations of women in Hantsport, growing up in a town where there are women visibly involved in such a group would have opened doors and opportunities for what they would dream of becoming in their future. Therefore, the role taken by Amber as the first female firefighter in Hantsport would have been revolutionary for the women whom came after her, and how they viewed their possible opportunities in life. Notably, in 2005 Jill Sanford was the first female to be awarded Firefighter of the Year in Hantsport.²³ Such an achievement by a woman just further goes to promote the legacy started by Amber a mere decade earlier.

Women in Health Care

Health care within the home has long been a role attributed to women, with male doctors only becoming involved when deemed absolutely necessary, and then once again leaving any longer-term nursing duties to women. Mothers and other female relatives would have been responsible for caring for sick children and family members, aiding in the care of new mothers, and providing nursing for the elderly. In fact, health care was so directly seen as being within the sphere of women that the Hantsport branch of the Women's Institute saw it as their responsibility, almost from their point of inception in 1915, to offer a course in first aid and nursing basics to the community.²⁴

While the roles and circumstances have changed over time, childbirth is still as important an event as it was in the earlier days of Hantsport. As is seen throughout the world, babies were initially delivered right at home, and it was not until the 1940s that hospital births in nearby Windsor became more common.²⁵ During the time of home deliveries in

Hantsport, the doctor would have to travel between six and ten miles in order to attend to his patients, and a week of bed rest was assigned to all new mothers.²⁶

It was under the tenure of Dr. Gordon Kent Smith, who practiced medicine in Hantsport between 1925 and 1985, that Rebecca Ann Starratt took on the job of aiding the doctor in home deliveries.²⁷ Rebecca was 53 years old when she began assisting the doctor and had no formal medical training.²⁸ However, she had had 14 children of her own (12 of whom lived past infancy), and as such was well experienced in birthing processes.²⁹

Over the course of her time with Dr. Smith, Rebecca helped in at least 50 cases of child birth and providing home care.³⁰ Due to her involvement in so many cases within the town of Hantsport, many of the townspeople had Rebecca to thank for her assistance in their own birth or that of a loved one. In these cases, Rebecca assisted in the birth, helped with clean up, and provided after-birth nursing and infant care advice to the new mother.³¹ While those were the typical expectations, in one notable case, Rebecca delivered William Starratt (born 1934) on her own as the doctor was not able to make it in time.³² The delivery of baby William demonstrates just how capable a woman Rebecca was, and the ability that she had to remain calm in situations where things did not go to plan. While this case is the exception, in the majority of cases, Dr. Smith would stop by and pick up Rebecca while en route to the various house calls.³³

While it is unknown at what point Rebecca retired from her assistance position with Dr. Smith, it is assumed that it was likely in the late 1930s as by this point home births were becoming rarer. Her granddaughter Marilyn Guy remembered that Rebecca often spoke very fondly of Dr. Smith.³⁴ Rebecca Starratt was also noted as having been a big supporter of nursing as a possible career for women. Marilyn Guy recalled that her grandmother often

suggested that she should pursue nursing, however she did not end up following this path despite her grandmother's urging.³⁵

Women as Entrepreneurs

The women of Hantsport have a long history of entrepreneurial spirit, as can be seen by the fact that the first known store in the town is recorded as having been run by a woman out of the front room of her house.³⁶ Zella Harvie, who was also the organizer of the Ajax Club in the area, as well as a dedicated member of the Women's Institute, continued this tradition of women as storekeepers. Zella assisted in the running of the L. B. Harvie Grocery Store owned and operated by her husband.³⁷ In fact, assisted may be the wrong word for Zella's role in the store, as it is recorded that she was very involved in its ownership and management.³⁸ Certainly she continued to own and operate the grocery store for years following the death of her husband.³⁹ The grocery store is also not the only business that Zella Harvie had a hand in. Her grandson, Leland Harvie, noted that Zella also owned a number of rental properties.⁴⁰ These properties were Zella's alone, which she kept, rented out, and made her own money from.⁴¹

Further back in the 1800s, Margaret Dickie also proved to have an entrepreneurial leaning of her own. Whilst her husband was away at sea, Margaret travelled to the Horton Academy in order to write the examination necessary to become a teacher.⁴² Once she had passed the test, she then proceeded to run her very own school out of one of the rooms in her home.⁴³ The school proved to be a big success, having 13 pupils on its first day of operation on November 21, 1849.⁴⁴ Later on, this number would rise to more than thirty students.⁴⁵ Within her diary, Margaret mentions a new potential pupil's father coming to enrol his

daughter in the class, and also raising the possibility of boarding.⁴⁶ Thus we see a situation in which not only was Margaret running a school of her own, but also potentially providing living quarters for at least one of her students. One thing is for sure, Margaret was an independent woman, and kept plenty busy whilst her husband Simeon was away from home.

¹ Dick Groot and George Bishop, *We Wanted It to Last Forever: Closing the Minas Basin Paperboard Mill* (Gaspereau, NS: South of the River Publishing, 2015), 17.

² Groot and Bishop, *We Wanted It to Last Forever*, 24.

³ Groot and Bishop, *We Wanted It to Last Forever*, 30.

⁴ Carolyn and Wayne Folker, “Interview With Carolyn and Wayne Folker,” interview by Laura Sharpe, June 19, 2019, audio.

⁵ Carolyn and Wayne Folker, interview.

⁶ Carolyn and Wayne Folker, interview.

⁷ Carolyn and Wayne Folker, interview.

⁸ Carolyn and Wayne Folker, interview.

⁹ Heather Anne Davidson, *From Bucket Brigade to Mutual Aid: The Hantsport Fire Department 1906-2006* (Kingston, NS: T & S Office Essentials and Printing, 2005), 1.

¹⁰ Davidson, *From Bucket Brigade to Mutual Aid*, 82.

¹¹ Donnie McNeil, “Interview With Donnie McNeil,” interview by Laura Sharpe, July 12, 2019, audio.

¹² McNeil, interview.

¹³ Davidson, *From Bucket Brigade to Mutual Aid*, 94.

¹⁴ Davidson, *From Bucket Brigade to Mutual Aid*, 86.

¹⁵ McNeil, interview.

¹⁶ McNeil, interview.

¹⁷ McNeil, interview.

¹⁸ McNeil, interview.

¹⁹ McNeil, interview.

²⁰ McNeil, interview.

²¹ McNeil, interview.

²² McNeil, interview.

²³ Davidson, *From Bucket Brigade to Mutual Aid*, 95.

²⁴ Hantsport Women’s Institute Minute Book: November 16, 1915-July 9, 1920, Dorie and Garnet McDade Heritage Centre.

²⁵ Marilyn Guy, “Interview With Marilyn Guy,” interview by Laura Sharpe, July 9, 2019, transcript.

²⁶ Guy, interview.

²⁷ Guy, interview.

²⁸ Guy, interview.

²⁹ Guy, interview.

³⁰ Guy, interview.

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- ³¹ Guy, interview.
- ³² Guy, interview.
- ³³ McNeil, interview.
- ³⁴ Guy, interview.
- ³⁵ Guy, interview.
- ³⁶ David Pollard, *Ships & Sails & Hantsport Tales* (Altona, MB: Friesens Corporation, 2010), 75).
- ³⁷ Carolyn and Wayne Folker, interview
- ³⁸ Carolyn and Wayne Folker, interview.
- ³⁹ Carolyn and Wayne Folker, interview.
- ⁴⁰ Leland Harvie, "Interview With Leland Harvie," interview by Laura Sharpe, June 19, 2019, audio.
- ⁴¹ Harvie, interview.
- ⁴² Margaret Dickie, *The Diary of Margaret Dickie of Hantsport, Nova Scotia, 1827-1908*, ed. Carolyn K. McGrath (Providence, Rhode Island, 2001), 20.
- ⁴³ Allen B. Robertson, *Tide & Timber: Hantsport, Nova Scotia 1795-1995* (Milton, ON: Global Heritage Press, 2001), 51.
- ⁴⁴ Dickie, *The Diary of Margaret Dickie*, 38.
- ⁴⁵ Dickie, *The Diary of Margaret Dickie*, 53.
- ⁴⁶ Dickie, *The Diary of Margaret Dickie*, 49.

Author's Conclusion

It has been an amazing and eye-opening experience to have been able to spend the summer reading and learning about the women who have called Hantsport home over the years.

Throughout the entire process, I have never ceased to be amazed by the adventures they had, their constant support of their families, and the steps that they took in order to shape Hantsport into what it is today. The women of Hantsport, both past and present, have done tremendous things for this community. There is not a single aspect of community life in which the women of this town have not played a part.

I grew up in the small community of Great Village, Nova Scotia, across the Bay of Fundy from Hantsport. As such, I have some experience with the dynamics of small communities but did not know many of the specifics of Hantsport and what made it unique. As I delved into the sources concerning Hantsport's past, I came to see that in many ways it was much like the other small communities that I had researched in the past. However, I also came to see that Hantsport was also very much its own unique example of a small town, one the likes of which I had never seen before.

Hantsport has faced many of the same trials that have challenged other communities, both big and small, throughout the years. However, the difference is in how the people of Hantsport have taken these trials in stride and done their best to work with and adapt to them. While all members of the community played a large role in how the town dealt with the difficulties that it faced, the focus of this project has been on the women of the town, and it is from their reactions that my opinion on the town was formed.

The women of Hantsport have lived through and come out on top of many of the hardships that they have faced. They took care of property and families, whilst supporting

husbands who were away at sea. They were there through the end of shipbuilding and into the era of the new pulp mill. They left the home and had jobs, held important positions within the community, and worked for the advancement of themselves and their loved ones. They even provided a home away from home for British servicemen during the Second World War, when they no doubt already had too much on their hands, yet there was always room for the Ajax guests.

Throughout the project I have had the honour of learning about the stories of these brave women, reading about them in their own words, and hearing accounts told of them by those who remember all that they did. While this project is a small start, there are many more women of Hantsport who are not covered within the pages of this report, women whose stories are waiting to be uncovered and told in the future. Furthermore, Hantsport continues to be home to many more amazing women today, and I can only imagine that the same will be the case long into the future. May their lives and stories continue to shape Hantsport in the years to come. The women of Hantsport have a long and extraordinary history, and suffice it to say, it will not stop here.

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Appendix: Interviews

Carolyn and Wayne Folker, 19 June 2019

Laura Sharpe 0:01

So this is a recording of an interview with Carolyn and Wayne Folker for the women in Hantsport project and the date is Wednesday, June 19, 2019. I'm the interviewer. And I'm Laura Sharpe. And here we go. So, my first question is, what is the history both of you have within the town? So, have you lived here your entire lives? Or have you come and gone throughout the years? Etcetera?

Wayne Folker 0:25

Yeah. Okay.

Carolyn Folker 0:27

I've lived here since 1961. And I was, came from faraway Windsor, seven miles away. Kilometers, I guess I should be saying. And yes, I've spent most of my life in Hantsport.

WF 0:45

Yeah, I was born in Hantsport, and have lived here all my life. I did go to grade 12 in Windsor, boarded there, but came home on weekends and so on. So, uh, I would be a full time citizen since 1940.

LS 1:03

Okay, great, thanks. So that's going to be really helpful because a lot of people we have coming are just partially been here and then gone elsewhere. So it's nice that you've been here for quite a while. So then, um, seeing as you have been here for quite some time, how do you, how, aware do you feel the townspeople have been regarding the work being done within Hantsport by women's groups such as the Women's Institute and other women's groups?

CF 1:30

When I first came to Hantsport, they were very active and there were several of them. The Women's Institute I wasn't involved in but I was aware of some of the ladies who were. Uh, I was involved with the Hantsport Memorial Community Center, was probably my pet. And uh, also we had a [?] Memorial Hospital auxiliary, which was very active. And we had, well, I wasn't involved with, but the Hantsport fire department had a very active ladies auxiliary. Well, all the churches have, most of them are still active. Um.

LS

Yes.

CF 2:07

Groups. And, um, you know, it's it was a lot of us as far as young women and young

mothers, it was almost part of our, or most of our social life, because the husbands were all involved. But at that time, the community center was the men's group, and we were the Ladies' Auxiliary.

LS
Okay.

CF
So, but then eventually, probably back in the 80s, we came together as one group. So I did, I was on the executive of the HMCC Ladies' Auxiliary, as well as the HMCC executive in later years. And we had the Hantsport Homeschool Society. I was on that and on the executive from time to time. And the Ladies Auxiliary to the hospital. I was involved with that and on the executive. Um. What else did I say there? They were just very thriving groups. And, uh, we had, we had a lot of enjoyment made a lot of friendships. Plus, we raised lots of funds.

LS
Yes.

CF
Each of the groups. Yeah. It was great.

LS
Yeah.

CF
And actually, I'm happy to say that the hospital, the Hantsport Memorial Community Center still has a very active group, and they're doing a great job raising funds.

LS
Oh, that's great, yes.

WF 3:33
Yeah, one thing that you should mention is that you, when you talk about church groups, you were a leader in C. G. I. T.

CF
Yeah, yeah, I didn't, didn't serve on their auxiliary group.

LS
Yeah.

CF
United Church women, they were called. I did work with them somewhat if they needed help, you know, at functions but I did work with the, uh, C. G. I. T. group in, I think from probably about 66 or 67 till 1970 when I had my third child. And then when I, after that I

started working with the smaller group because I had to take baby with me. And so they were called the Explorers.

LS

Yes.

CF

I worked for years with that group.

LS 4:20

Was the group long running within the town of Hantsport, or, the C. G. I.?

CF 4:24

The C. G. I. T., had been long running and, uh, and it ran probably eight or nine years after I left, another lady took over. It was a good group. Some of the girls who had been C. G. I. T. members became leaders.

LS

Yes.

CF

I had the pleasure of working with Jud's sister Andrea then, and then there were two young school teachers who came to Hantsport, and Barbara Coolen and Elaine.

WF

Black was it?

CF

Elaine, her name is now Boyd, I can't remember her last name. But so we have the four of us, worked with that group for about four years.

LS

Yes.

CF

It was really rewarding.

LS

Yes.

CF

To work with, uh, Mr. and Mrs. Guy, Reverend Guy and his wife was very active in the church. So we had a good relationship with them too.

WF 5:18

And also, just speaking on her, Carolyn's roles, uh, she also was the chairman of the Centennial Committee.

LS

Okay, yes.

WF

Over and over all that. We, we ended up with people volunteering, but all of a sudden, it was so overwhelming that, because we started two or three years prior to the centennial year of 1995. And a lot of people were on the committee and they were sort of overwhelmed with all the workload and so on. So as mayor, I got a little nervous saying, well, who am I going to get that I can talk to, and have them consistently there and so on.

LS

Yes.

WF

So I thought of Carolyn and asked her if she would do it. She, she said yes and thank God she did because...

CF

I did, yes.

WF

She was involved and a lot of work with it, it was one big thing.

CF 6:08

I was involved from 1991 because it began with, uh, projects for each neighborhood, the town was divided into five neighborhood.

LS

Okay, yes.

CF

And we were all given the challenge to raise funds, and whatever funds we raised would be matched by the town for a project of our choice within the neighborhood. So I, I was the chairperson of our neighborhood. And then when I, uh, the chair of the committee, had a whole lot of other things going on in her life, and and so I became the chairperson of the committee. That was a really, fun job too.

LS

Yes.

CF

Because of all this, all the neighborhoods, and all the things we did, and the fundraisers. It was just, the town was really buzzing.

LS 7:02

Yes. Can you give some examples of the different...

CF

Oh, yes.

LS

Projects?

CF 7:04

Like our project was, there was a little Smith Crescent, it was called, is called, but it was a little small subdivision built but it didn't have any connection to the sidewalk in town.

LS

Okay.

CF

So I ours was the Smith Crescent walkway which if you walk down towards Avon Street you'll see it. So we paid the expenses of having the walkway put in plus we, um, there was an, an idle area there so we obtained that and made a little park, nothing fancy just and a bunch, but there were lots of children on the other side of the street so they had a little play field.

LS

Yes.

CF

And then the, this neighbourhood, neighbourhood two, they did the little project in front of the post office. It's called, uh, a stop for mail.

LS

Okay, yeah.

CF

They just put some landscaping in and the three little benches, a place for people to stop and chat and, uh, and neighborhood... Let's see who else, Neighborhood three did the restoration of the William Hall monument.

LS

Yes.

CF

And, uh, did some landscaping around that as well. And then neighborhood four did a little park going up the hill. And just a place people walking up the hill could stop.

LS
Yes.

CF
And landscape.

WF
I think it was Harry Salter Park you're talking about.

CF
Yeah, okay, sorry.

WF
Along Riverview Road, or Ram Street. But yeah, that is the name of it.

CF
And then neighborhood five did a project at the cemetery. They put a sign in, leading into the River Bank Cemetery. And then inside they put some benches.

LS
Okay, yes.

CF
And it was fun and it was so interesting. All the fundraisers the neighborhoods came up with like the, uh, the one on Cherry Lane is the one that stands out in my mind the most, that's just down behind the post office.

LS
Yes.

CF
It was lined with cherry trees. So anyhow, they put on a strawberry supper and, uh, had the square dancing club and music. It was so much fun. And we did, uh...

WF
All the February Valentine dinners.

CF
Yeah, that was the, our, our, that was our main fundraiser. We started a Valentine candlelight dinner, which went on for 21 years.

LS
Oh, wow.

CF
It was, it was...

LS
Popular?

CF
Yeah, it was a really great way to get the neighbors together. And...

LS
Yes.

CF
And live in February for the sort of adult side here.

LS
Yes.

CF
And, uh. What else? I don't want to leave anybody out. But can do you want me to go on?

LS
Yes, you're welcome to.

CF 9:49
Yeah, let's see, so that's Smith Crescent. And, uh, I'm trying to think what their fundraiser was.

WF 9:56
Well, that uh, just to piggyback on what you're saying, that walkway was called John Wally.

CF
Yes

WF
After I've seen the gentleman here...

CF
Yeah.

WF
In the picture, John Wally Churchill, the walkway was named after him. I think it was in the last ship built in Hantsport out of the 99 that was built here. But, uh, and also, we, I think, uh, neighborhood five, which Carolyn's talking about, we also was involved in the, uh, revamping of the, or building of the park area, uh, that was donated to us by the, uh, Fundy Gypsum Company. They had a green area which was sort of a buffer between residents and uh, and the Gypsum Company. And that Gypsum Company came here, I think, uh, was in 1947, in the summer, and uh, Avon Street, which now ends in the park way that they donated

the land, and we have a gazebo built out there and the, and a lot of areas and we've held functions in there, like music and someone and so forth. And then it, but that Avon Street used to run right around the waterfront...

LS
Okay.

WF
Right over to Davison Street, which is down by the mill. So that's a part of the history of the town. And it's quite a, quite a thing when the park was built, you know, or made from neighborhood five and others that were involved in it. So those were the, the two areas I think that really are still in existence and uh, and there's a time capsule buried there. 1995, be reopened in 2095. And there's a lot of artifacts in there. Some of for example, Jimmy Preston's, uh, ornaments that he made out of the clay.

LS
Oh yes.

WF
There's one of those in there, but I gotta I gotta feeling it's just going to be dust. When when they open it. But anyway, so that's, uh, that was the big thing. So uh, other than that, I think that covers?

CF
Yeah, we did a lot...

WF
A lot of the roles.

CF 11:57
My point of the book, The, the artist, lady artists in the town. Uh, I don't know, there was a gentleman in the group, the Tea Room Artists they were called at the time.

LS
Okay.

CF
Some of them have been painting in town since I came here in 1961. But they got together and donated the mural on the building across...

LS
Okay, yes.

CF
On the grocery store, yes.

LS

Yes

CF

Unfortunately it's not, it's not in very good condition anymore.

LS

Yes.

CF

A lot of us are no longer around. And I did some restoration work myself for a couple of years. I think 2014 was the last time, juts uh, Wayne won't let me go up on the staging anymore.

WF 12:44

There's an indication of what you're looking for Laura, because when they got the idea of doing that mural, there was what, over a dozen ladies that came out that were...

CF

Their names are all on it.

LS

Yes.

WF

I think Joey Patterson probably was the only guy that worked on it at all later on, the women artists were just the background.

CF 13:02

He was our advisor, he brought the picture in.

WF 13:05

Yeah, exactly.

LS 13:07

What year was this?

WF 13:10

That was building up to 1995? Wasn't it? Or there was a during that?

CF

Yes, it was as...

LS

Centennial?

CF 13:15
We did it in 94.

LS
Okay, yes.

CF
Yes.

LS
Okay.

CF
It stood up for quite a while.

LS
Yes.

WF 13:21
So talking about women's roles, I know that you're going back to the age of sail. And my great great grandfather who is here in the museum pictures, and his, one of his sons, Thomas or Teddy did the model ships, he was a ship's carpenter, but we have records or, or information that the wives of the sea captain's went to sea, some of them died at sea.

LS
Yes.

WF
Because of one reason or another. And, uh, I know that my great great grandmother went to sea at times, because my, uh, Captain William Folker would be away for some time, two or three years on trips to Australia. And I have books in the house where there's one of their children would be presented with a little Old Testament book at sea when he was five or six years old and all these things. So the families totally went together, not every trip but...

LS
Yes.

WF
When it was a good, very long trip they would go and so there was a lot of involvement with the with the, uh, sea captain's wives getting involved in the trips. And uh, and then as a as a town as the sailing ships faded out, the mills sort of uh, came and filled in the gap of the employment problem and that, and as a result, there was a lot of ladies that worked at the mill and people came from outside too for the jobs and therefore built the town up and more involvement by some of these ladies, because one of the strongest functions in the early mills was that they would hire ladies as counters, that would be counting the plates and so on. And as time progressed through the mills, well the, the number of machines were built, because

uh, referring to Key's Fiber particularly is uh, they went from aboat, I know this question is later on your thing, but they went from about a dozen ladies that were hired first probably, very close to a number of 100.

LS

Oh wow.

WF

So you can see where the involvement of these people coming in and they hired local people, it was a big thing in those days if, if a, if a parent was employee and it was a real good employee well then the chances are the children...

LS

Yes.

WF

Will be working as well. And uh, that was the norm for quite a long time. And uh, and as a result the there was a lot of people and new families and someone to take part in the things like the community center and have this outsider fresh involvement.

LS

Yes.

WF

And, and a lot of them settled here because they they love the the town and the atmosphere and uh, and we sort of thrived on that. So uh, it's it's always been uh, quite a role for the for ladies to be here. And and to do these things. And uh, and and and there was a lot of times that the whole family would work at the mills. So I won't go any further than that. Because you have a little later on that point. But it's being born and brought up here. And you could see throughout there was a lot of people and a lot of ladies involved in all these aspects of the town and very important to it because they, they took on the roles in the community center and all the ones that Carolyn mentioned. And I know she came here as a young bride she, she was involved in all these things, as were many you know.

LS

Yes.

WF

So...

CF 16:45

This is something that I love about the town. Uh, I just felt so welcomed by everybody, all age groups. Like the sweetest little ladies would stop me on the street, "You're married to Wayne and your sister. baby." And all this. And you know the more I got to know them, everyone of them really interesting women. Uh, this one little neighbor, we had, Bicko

Davison was her name. She's probably mentioned in the book somewhere. But she also went to sea with her father.

LS

Okay.

CF

And uh, things I found out about her over the years like she took photographs and developed them herself. And I should have brought those, I'll get them to but we have some little photographs that she took on the day to day way.

LS

Okay. Great. That would be very...

CF

Really nice. And like some of them were just developed on, on plain tape.

LS

Yes.

CF

Yes.

LS

Yeah.

CF

Really, they're really nice.

LS

I bet.

CF

I'll get those to you.

WF 17:39

So going down your itinerary here, again, Laura, the number three, uh, there was uh, some some of the ladies that went to sea ended up recording this and so on, and I turned some of the records over to Jud so you'll come in...

LS

Yes.

WF

Contact with those later on. So I want to take time to go into that because one in particular, he has went in the real big detail is the day to day activities and so on.

LS

Okay, yes.

WF

And it would be somewhat indicative of the other ladies that went but, uh, you know, it's, it was important to their husbands. I guess they'd be there and as it is with the ladies that came to the mill.

CF 18:20

Another point too, like, their husbands were gone for such a long stay.

LS

Yeah.

CF

Like they had children. Almost like three generations.

LS

Yes.

CF

Year, year wise. You know what I mean?

LS

Yes.

CF

Yeah. Like Wayne's great great grandfather was the eldest of Captain William's children, Allana, right down to, uh...

WF

Freddie.

CF

Freddie who was only 10 years older than Wayne. The women had, you know, they really had a lot of responsibility at home. Raising these children on their own. And for the most part, I think they did a fine job.

LS

Yes

CF

And, again, a lot of the young women, like well, Margaret and Jud were, you know were so fortunate in the retirement, they're doing all they're doing for the town.

LS
Yes.

CF
And our family doctor is a Hantsport girl who came back.

LS
Okay, yes.

CF
Yes, she went to, she got her medical training in the Armed Forces. And then we have her as their family doctor and it's fantastic.

LS
Yes.

CF
She's a wonderful doctor.

CF 19:26
I think that's really nice.

WF 19:27
Yes. Now some of them here, getting down to, um, number four. In the itinerary here. The uh, the roles that women played in, within the community: where do you think they had the largest lasting impact? Now, every organization they were involved with, I mean with the Women's Institute and all the auxiliaries, they were very important. One stands out particularly, because my mother was in it, is the ladies auxiliary of the fire department.

LS
Yes.

WF
And it's sort of a chronicle that they did. Like when they had a big banquet each year, to celebrate uh, what the firemen did. Firemen, I say, because that's what they were called in. But now it's firefighters, because there has been women in all, became firefighters.

LS
Yeah.

WF
But the women would prepare all this food and everything, uh, sea food.

CF
Sea food chowder.

WF
Yeah.

CF
The legend.

WF
And, but they weren't allowed to go to the banquet. And so over the years that changed, and now they, when they had them in later years, the women, and were invited along with it, which is appropriate, but it was...

LS
Yes.

WF
Sort of the thing that you have to look at and kind of chuckle because of oh, here, here's everything's prepared. And the women waited outside.

LS
And then did cleanup afterwards.

WF 20:42
That's, that's not at all what, it was all over. But with the involvement of the and they were the backbone of a lot of organizations and a lot of organizations, they were just solely women in them, like the Women's Institute or a church group or something like that.

CF
There was one group that we did forget, it was the Rebekahs.

LS 21:01
Yes.

CF
And they have been so generous. Like during the centennial, they planted a lot of trees around the town, and they were just, there were very few left of them, and they were just "what can we do this? What can we do?"

LS
Okay, yes.

CF
Yeah, it's just...

WF 21:19
Now, now. Number five, you talked about the number of women I covered that because we can imagine when the mills, the CKF mill, it, Minas Basin, started in 1928 I think it was.

And, and since closed in uh, 2012. But um, CKF was this sort of a child company of Minas, I think that what was going on is that the Minas Basin used to manufacture pulp product. Which is the basic raw material for making paper and they would sell it people like Scott's paper mill and so on. And then a lot of these organizations want to form their own control of the raw material right up the whatever, so Minas Basin sort of sort of found himself without a market. And then when they, R. A. Jodrey, the founder of the company realized that there was a company in the United States that used pulp to manufacture paper plates, well then through a coordinate, or uh, joining with them, my guess and his Canadian wing of what they were doing this sub-CKF was born in 1933. Well, when they had one or two, one rough machine, I mean, the counters would be, it was probably only the day shift. So it would be something like a about a dozen women. And then it grew from one rough finish machine up to six, I think it was and then added World China, which was a smooth finish plate, you know, the world champ plates and so on.

LS

Yes.

WF

They they would have, uh um, you know, numbers, like I said, I think it was well over 80, almost to 100 ladies involved, so I can be corrected on that. But anyway, those ladies were hired as counters and, and, and uh, put the plates in the boxes and so on. But over the years, the company brought, made some of them operators of the machine.

LS

Okay, yes.

WF

But before that were men's jobs. And so that was the way it was, but it was in time they became operators, they became quality control, administrators and so on. And I think some of them were even taken into the office. And so uh, it's the company was, you know, very good to the to the employees and and we're always on the forefront. I think that stems from the founder, and it certainly carried through with with his heirs that that's like some Mr. John Jodrey, George Bishop, David Hennigen, Bruce Jodrey, well, they are, they were very concerned people, not I know, for instance, one aspect that bothered me because I worked on the plant. And then I was taken in the office and, and had a chance to raise up through the ranks because they were expanding so fast if people were getting better jobs, and so on. And, but there was a lot of ladies that were the top belt in the machines, and they'd be up in the summertime in extreme heat. And it was a big concern, but it was the days before air conditioning. So they, they would introduce things like more breaks for the ladies, maybe longer breaks. And then they had hoses coming from outside to put air, cool air up above. And then they get into an elaboration of air conditioning, and so on. So it's just one example of what I'm saying that they, there was a lot of concern for employees and so on. And I think that the men who, a lot of them, as I mentioned earlier, were the wives working there too. So there would be a certain quite a bit of consideration for not only the family connection, but for, for the human aspect...

LS
Yes.

WF
Of everything. So because I've been in companies where I've seen a lady and a man working side by side doing the identical job, and I said one time on a tour, not here in town, but outside and on one of the tours I was on. I said, how much money did they make? And and they said, well, the man gets \$1.50 an hour, let's say and the woman gets \$1 20. And I'll say, they're doing the exact same job. But that's the way it is. And it was the way it was.

LS
Yes.

WF
And hopefully a lot of, lot of that has been corrected. Although still need a little improvement.

LS
Yes.

WF
And I know you don't want to hear that, but that's the thing that sticks out in your mind.

LS
Yes.

WF
When you're young and you're getting involved in these things.

LS 25:38
Yes, uh. How did the men feel about the women beginning to take on the more traditional male jobs within the mill?

WF 25:45
I think that with everything else, it's hard to, to say. I mean, any man that has a wife, sister, mother, or whatever, you have to respect.

LS
Yes.

WF
And when you work with somebody, it's, as I have with the different women on the plant, and so on and see their capabilities, and that they were just as qualified, some cases, maybe a little better, because they would be neater in certain aspects, they have the attributes that that women bring to things like this. And I think that the man I, I don't ever recall seeing anything that was disrespectful because of somebody got a promotion ahead or whatever.

LS
Yes.

WF

I don't ever recall seeing any of that, it may have existed but I didn't recognize it. And so I think a lot of the fellas, if some ladies were really standing out on their work on, determine this, look what's happened to the plate telco operator, he's got something on the on the die that's making the plate so on, and they would pick up on things from their job. And when they were finally recognized as very capable and quality control, they were made quality control testers and this type of thing. So I think it was a gradual process. And uh, and everybody recognized that it doesn't matter male or female, if somebody is capable of doing it. Let's do it.

CF 27:08

I think the admirable thing too, is they were given all the same benefits as men. As you know, a lot of women go to work today. They're not getting any health benefits.

LS
Yes.

CF

You know, it's not a good situation for especially young mothers.

WF 27:25

And I think that over the period of time, the outside influence like...

CF

In the pension later.

WF

I'm not saying it's the good thing here. But when the wars came, and they, and women start going into battle and becoming the sailors and soldiers and everything else. Who else could, how could you say anything? Like if a person is qualified to fight in the war with you side by side? How can you say they're not capable of anything else?

LS
Yes.

WF

So yes, that's the key to it all. And that influence plus, being in a small town and everybody knowing one another. I don't think you try to differentiate between the ability of, by gender. Okay, so that's, that's my own. feeling. But I know there's a lot of people would echo that.

CF 28:15

I think too, that a lot of the ladies that I knew as retired ladies here, I just learned by chance

over the years, what interesting careers they had, like our, uh, Friends of the Library, the group was called they've had a couple of really nice presentations in town. They did one on the Titanic.

LS

Okay, yes.

CF

And uh, David Folker, who you may have met, he's involved with the group. And he uh, gave a presentation, and he was talking about the Borden sisters.

LS

Yes.

CF

So when I came to town, they lived in the little house with the green shutters over there.

LS

Okay.

CF

And they had a big spinning wheel in the window, and they made the most wonderful placemats, hand-woven. And they made runners and sweet little bags. I got one of the family somewhere still. So I thought, you know, they were just lovely.

LS

Yeah.

CF

Crafty women. But then when David gave his presentation, they had both gone out and had careers and retired back here.

LS

Yes.

CF

So I was asked me the other morning, they were just leaving. So if you have a chance, or if not, I'll try to get some more information. But I know one of the sisters worked away as the librarian and the other one was professional too.

LS

Yes.

CF

And they came back to retire. I thought that was kind of neat. And Alice Fuller. She was when I came to town. She was the manager of the Sears.

LS
Okay.

CF
Store.

LS
Yeah.

CF
Yes, in Hantsport. And uh, really interesting person. She was a Boy Scout leader and uh, just a really vivacious, always walked, her home was just up Hants Border but she would walk downtown just, just like ah fashionable, she was so stylish. And wonderful artist. She painted. And uh, so Wednesdays, I'm not sure of the year, but we could probably get the information from her son Michael. But she was going on an African Safari and I was just flabbergasted. What a wonderful adventure your going on!

LS
Yes!

CF
She said, it's my second time. And she uh, she said Grace Blackburn and I went once. So I was just, I thought that was pretty amazing. And Helen Patten, she was the postmistress.

LS
Okay, yes.

CF
In Hantsport. That was kind of neat. Felli Patten, her sister in law and her husband ran a great little grocery store right on the corner of the way. And un, Leland's grandmother.

LS
Yes.

CF
She was very active in running of the grocery store. Her husband had passed when I came to town, but she was very active as far as managing and owner of it. And uh, yeah, it was really kind of neat too, the way they spoiled us. Like uh, if I would walk up town with the babies and go to get my groceries and Felli Patten, was like "well, Ted will bring that down for you".

WF 31:20
And that he would go in and unpack it.

Unknown 31:22

Yeah. And then if it was a stormy day, they say “now you just call if you want something”. So I would call and they, Ted would come down, then we were in the second story apartment near the mill, one of the company houses. And he would yell up, uh, “got your groceries”. He’d come up and unpack them all and take his little box back. And the same with Leland’s grandfather, John Harvie. He would deliver them. It was...

LS

Great service.

CF

Yeah, really. If we had that service today we would be all set.

LS

Yeah.

WF 31:53

John Harvey, his father.

CF 31:55

Yeah, John, but John, son John was, used to deliver.

WF

Yeah.

CF

Groceries too. Leland’s father John.

WF 32:03

Yeah. Known as grandfather of the store.

CF

I didn’t know. He had passed by the time I came to town.

WF 32:08

Was...

CF

Yes. I know of him.

WF

Yeah. She's, she's quite a lady too, his his grandmother.

LS

Yes.

WF

Zella Harvie. You probably have more information on her than anything but...

LS

Yeah, and I interviewed him this morning about her as well.

WF

Oh good. That's good, you've got all the information.

CF

She was amazing.

WF

So basically, Laura, I think we've we've covered one way or another and not not in this order of what happened here. But I think is there anything that we missed in the, on the layout here that you want to address?

CF

I don't want to be braggish, but I do have one thing that I am very proud of, is that I was presented a Paul Harris award for my involvement in different organizations in the town over the years and by a neighbor who you know, he was very active in the town too. He was one who sponsored me. Plus it was presented in my hometown of Windsor so.

LS

Oh, congratulations.

CF

Thank you, and I'm very proud of that.

LS

Yes.

LS 33:04

So is there anything else you want to touch on here, or have we covered?

WF 33:07

Other than the fact that even from a town involvement, you know, we hired a police officer.

LS

Yes.

WF

We've had a lady recreation director, and so on. So they have played the role in...

CF

Oh, in the fire department.

WF
Yeah.

CF
Amber.

LS
Yes.

WF
And yeah, she probably has that story, too. So anyway, uh, it's it's an indication of the community that, that the ladies were in these jobs and filled them and wew just as capable as anybody.

LS
Yes.

CF
There are a lot of interesting ladies in this town, I used to play cards with a lot of them. Um, the older ladies, now I'm the older ladies, we always joke at a bridge club, we say we used to say the old girls Rich Club. We're it. But no, there's some beautiful people.

LS
Actually, because, we, part of the project is we're making a list of notable women that we are going to make some posters on like the one that's here.

WF
Okay.

LS
So I'll just show you in case you're interested. These are who we've come up with so far as options for it.

WF 34:32
Yeah, Marguerite Lawrence was my first teacher.

CF
Yeah.

LS34:35
And that's what Jud thought, he suggested that you might have had her. Yes.

CF
And there were a couple of ladies who were veterans.

LS 34:43

Yes.

CF

You have their names do you?

LS

Yes, yes.

CF 34:46

And it says Jessie Borden, but she had a sister, Elmira.

LS 34:50

Yes. Um, the sister was the librarian. And I believe, and then Jesse was a nurse, maybe.

CF 34:56

I taped up that day because I when they did this presentation, there was no one taking pictures or taping. So I did it on my phone, which I put on my old computer, which was three months ago, we had four power outages in a row. So I have to find someone who...

LS

No, we have...

CF

We have pictures up, don't we?

LS 35:13

We have an old CBC documentary in which the two, um Jessie was featured in it and so I've watched it.

CF

Oh, good.

LS 35:21

Yes.

CF

Good, yeah.

WF 35:23

When I was mayor, she, I had a call from her. "Uh, Mayor Folker, could you come over to visit me sometime? I have something I want to show you". Somebody tell you this story?

LS

No, I haven't.

WF

Anyway, yeah, I thought she will, what will she be wanting to see me fore, so anyway, I go “I’ll make it up by such a such a time”. So I went up. She met me at the door. She was in Jubilee court, the seniors home.

LS

Yes.

WF

They'd already built Jubilee Lodge. And I didn't realize there like competition between the two. But anyway, she's, first thing she said, when I walked in the door and the hall. She was walking ahead of me. She rubbed her hand along the railing. “They don't have this Jubilee Lodge”. So anyways, I'm thinking, cause she was in the antiques and I have, we have an older house and a lot of antiques. And so I thought well, that's she's picked up something she wants to see. So anyway, I went in. And she said, “Come in and have a seat”. So I sit down and she sat on the bed, and, and so on. I'm looking as to what seems, you know. And then she reaches out and clicks a light switch on and off right by the bed. She said they don't have that at Jubilee Lodge. She said, “I can just, when I go to bed at night, just reach up, click it on and off. And that’s it.” Because “normally”, she said, “at home and everywhere, I had to get out of bed and walk across the floor”.

CF

Yes.

WF

And that’s what it was.

LS

Yes.

WF

Show me how it had a light switch right next to the bed. But I brought a video of the, *Canada's Most Unlikely Millionaire* on R. A. Jodrey. And this guy was the one that found all the plants and everything and when they hit, when the, if you watch the video, you'll see that all the interview and everything is like a half an hour long. And so it shows him I think going to bed and starts to fade in the darkness and all sudden he gets out of bed and goes across and quick, turns the light off. And that's what made me think of...

LS

Yes.

WF

The later years, later for this, how important it was. But the, I know that's off topic, but it's it's not just unique to ladies.

LS

Yes.

WF

Old people. So and and, uh, and Zella, uh she was friends with my great great aunt at Halls Harbour where she was born and brought up by my great great grandfather, as I mentioned earlier, was the sea captain and he came to Halls Harbour as a young cabin boy. And after a second or third trip in he jumped ship because he had met this young lady, the middle daughter of this Captain Thomas Parker, whom he married. Uh her, her father and mother took him in and said that you if want to marry our daughter you're not going to marry her until you're successful in what you are going to do. So uh, he was um just the cabin boy or whatever on the ship then. So he, he went worked hard and he became a sea captain at 19 years of age. And they eventually married and came out, back to Hantsport. So when Zella who was brought up in Halls Harbour, she knew all the history of the family, was great friends with our family members. And so when I became mayor, she said to Carolyn, "my someday we're going to go over and I'll introduce you to your relatives", because there were seven daughters in my great great grandmother's family and all the relatives all stayed there except for my great great grandmother, because my great great grandfather brough her over here. And so she's "I'll take you over and introduce you and we'll go over there sometime".

CF

We'll go to the, we'll get lobster at the cottage.

WF

Yeah. And so I think it was about four days later. It was five...

CF

No, it was probably a few weeks.

WF

Was it?

CF

Yeah.

WF

Anyway.

CF

A Sunday night.

WF

Yeah.

CF

Yeah.

WF

Yeah. And I think it was five, quarter after five in the morning. The phone rang and I get up and I said "hello". And was Zella Harvie saying, "Are we going to Halls Harbor or what?" So she was she's quite...

CF 39:18

So we set a date. Yes.

LS

Determined.

WF.

Oh, yeah. Anyway, so.

LS t39:23

And that's it I think, um, thank you so much for coming. And being part of this. It's been great.

WF

Yes.

CF

It's been, thank you for all you're doing.

LS

Oh, thanks.

WF

Yeah. We're anxious to see the end result. So all the best if there's anything in a follow up, feel free to call, either one of us, you can write our phone numbers down.

LS

Good.

WF

On the page.

LS 39:38

I'll just stop the recording.

Interview with Leland Harvie, 19 June 2019

Laura Sharpe 0:01

Okay, so this is an interview as part of the Hantsport women's project on Wednesday, June 19 2019. We're interviewing Leland Harvie and my name is Laura Sharpe doing the interviewing at the McDade Heritage Center in Hantsport. So, Mr. Harvey growing up, did you hear about your family's involvement with the Ajax club? And if so, what sorts of things were often reminisced upon?

Leland Harvie 0:28

I think that I remember, and good morning, Laura, I'm pleased to be part of this project. And I'm glad that you taking it on. And I hope it turns out well.

LS

Thank-you.

LH

I remember I would say, every year with a family, we would have a Christmas gathering at my grandmother's place. And I remember the photos on her wall of some of the boys that had stayed with her over the years. But also the fact that every Christmas, she would receive packages of chocolates and cookies and cards and calendars from England, and Scotland, from all these ones that want to be remembered or wanted her to you know.

LS

Yes.

LH

Every year. And quite amazing number of little gifts and things that she would get every year from these boys who were so thankful. So that was the kind of conversation or what's what struck me or what reminded me of that every year.

LS 1:29

Yes, yes definitely. Did you hear stories about the things that happened during the time of the Ajax club?

LH 1:37

No, I, because that would be much too way before my time.

LS

Yes.

LH

And so only only after the fact and the things that I remember seeing or being talked about.

LS

Yes.

LH 1:53

Yeah.

LS

Great. So I understand that you're aunt Margaret was heavily involved with assisting,

LH 2:00

Yes, she would have,

LS

Your grandmother?

LH

Still living at home at the time of the second World War. And yes, she was very involved in that.

LS 2:08

Do you know what kind of duty she fulfilled during?

LH 2:11

I think mainly just make entertain them, looking after them, cooking, you know, that sort of thing? Also, they they had quite a network of of other families in the area.

LS

Okay.

LH

Where they would they they didn't look after all of them themselves.

LS

Yes.

LH

So there were many other families and people involved in the town, where she would receive word that they were coming up on the train. And then they would just depending on, you know, some of them were very seriously injured. Some of them just shell shocked from being torpedoed by the Germans and so on. Most of them were in the merchant marine. And so depending on, you know, the nature of their problems or their injuries, and that they would be sent out to different other families.

LS

Yes.

LH

All around in the area, and they coordinated that kind of thing.

LS 3:05

Do you have any idea rough number of how many families were involved within Hantsport?

LH 3:10

I've, I've seen different other names mentioned. And but I, I'm sure there would have to be at least a dozen other families

LS

Okay.

LH

Involved.

LS 3:21

Great. Do you know what inspired Zella to get involved with the Ajax club?

LH 3:27

War time was, my grandmother lived through both wars. She was born in, near Bill Town. And her father died very, very young. And so she grew up with her grandparents, the Nevilles in Hall's Harbour.

LS

Okay, yes.

LH

And so she was pretty much an only child and and she talked about sometimes being lonely, but she enjoyed her schoolwork and she did nursery rhymes and things like that. But, after she married and they moved here to Hantsport, my father was in, or my grandfather, who was the original Leland, who I'm named for, he came to Nova, to Hantsport and he opened or bought a small grocery business, the bottom of William Street.

LS

Okay, yes.

LH

Across from the fire station. And they ran now be Harvie's store. And then my father took it over and for over 65 years. So they were very involved in the community. My grandfather was in the fire department. And so she was in different women's groups, baptist church groups all the same. So I mean, it was something that came probably very natural to them, where they had both boys were in the services and and so it was just part of the the general war effort.

LS

Yes.

LH

A role that everyone contributed in one way or another. I just remembered something else at Christmas time, in a closet, she had blackout curtains that she was still keeping, just in case.

LS

Yes.

LH

Those Germans and their raid sirens came.

LS

Yes

LH

And she had to put the blackout curtains back up again. I remember she kept those folded neatly away, just in case they ever needed to be used again.

LS

Always prepared.

LH

Yes

LS

So, you mentioned the male members part in the war services. And do you know how her different male family members felt about her work with the Ajax club and if they supported it?

LH 5:34

Well, my father was overseas at the time. And so yes, of course, they appreciated the kindness of of people, I do remember my dad telling me that they would get a ration of chocolates or cigarettes or something. And while he was in Belgium, or Holland, and the local people would be happy to in exchange for those because he didn't smoke smoke, to, to wash their clothes for them

LS

Okay

LH

And that sort of thing.

LS

Yes.

LH

So I think that they would very much appreciated the kindness of strangers.

LS

Yes.

LH

Being in a place like that. And anything they could do for anyone would you know, they would go out of their way to look after them.

LS 6:18

Yes. Great. So we already touched upon this, the idea that there were other members of the community who were involved with the Ajax program. So those who weren't directly involved, you know, if they welcome the soldiers being in Hantsport, or if they kind of avoided them at all.

LH 6:40

I'm sure that it was a charitable thing. I don't think that there was, these were just British boys. And they were just welcomed, I'm sure.

LS

Yes.

LH

I'm sure they were welcomed in the community.

LS 6:58

Yes. So what do you know, what sorts of things were involved with hosting the soldiers? Providing food, sleeping arrangements? Entertainment?

LH 7:06

There was rationing on at the time.

LS

Yes.

LH

So I that's one thing that I was wondering if they did receive extra ration tickets, and that sort of thing for things like sugar or shortening or those things. But here in the valley, it wasn't so bad because of, you know.

LS

Yes.

LH

All the natural food and products and milk and butter and cream, that sort of thing.

LS
Yes.

LH
Were available here, where they weren't available in the city. And so people didn't, didn't, you know, only those those few things that you, like gasoline. And so, but there were, I remember seeing ration book tickets that she had saved. And I think there might be a few here in the McDade Heritage Centre.

LS
Yes.

LH
from the war time. So I wonder if they did get a few extra when they were hosting these ones?

LS
Yes.

LH
Yeah, they probably did.

LS 7:58
Yeah, it would certainly make sense that they would.

LH
Yeah. Yeah.

LS
But I've also heard stories of other cases with similar situations where they didn't receive extra. So it's hard to say really.

LH 8:08
It's hard to say I yeah, that maybe they're putting themselves out. But I'm, yeah, I was some, some did need medical attention, that's for sure.

LS
Yes.

LH
And, of course, at that time, people really didn't understand. You know, post traumatic stress disorder.

LS
Yes.

LH

Those kinds of things. They, you know, being shell shocked. They didn't really understand the nature of those things, there weren't proper treatments or anything for that. I think just being in a calm, quiet atmosphere, you know, away from away from the poor, away from city.

LS

Yes.

LH

Would would be helpful, you know, restful and that sort of thing. Come that's that That in itself would probably be a benefit. Plus, you know, just being healthy air.

LS

Yes.

LH

Water and having, you know, just a relaxing time just to visit, I'm sure how many of them.

LS 9:01

Yes. Do you have any idea of the length of stay of the majority of the soldiers?

LH 9:06

They were probably on a schedule as to when their ship was being repaired or when they were going to be redeployed.

LS

Yes.

LH

So their time here might, in some cases, been very short, only a few days, and maybe in other cases, They may have been here a couple of weeks.

LS 9:23

So talking about the idea, we talked about your aunt Margaret, helping with the entertainment aspect and things what sorts of things did the soldiers do for entertainment while here?

LH 9:35

Just looking through this article by Norman Creighton, reminded me that they would go on picnics, and they would go fishing, or they would go to the beach or that sort of thing. They would take them on little day trips, like that.

LS 9:51

Okay, yes.

LH
Yeah.

LS
See, the sights around Hantsport, yes. So we already covered the question about whether they were were provided with extra food stamps or things.

LH 10:03
I've always wondered about that, I don't know the answer.

LS 10:06
Yeah. No, it would be certainly interesting to look into for sure. So was Zella ever involved with the earlier days of the club when it operated out of Halifax? Or did she slowly get on board after it became more of a billeting operation to rural communities?

LH 10:23
She would not have been able to travel down to Halifax, no.

LS
Yes.

LH
That would've been out of the question. Because she had her responsibilities to her family and her home and the business here running out in.

LS
Yes.

LH
So I can't imagine her being in Halifax at any time doing anything with with that organization as it was in the city now.

LS
Yes. So, so in addition to taking on the soldiers who were on leave into her own home, I've read within some of the things sent to me that Zella also oversaw the placement of the soldiers within other homes in Hantsport. How did she come to oversee such a project?

LH 11:07
I don't know how she first came in contact with Mrs. McEuen. Janet is it?

Unknown 11:12
Jennet. Yes.

Unknown 11:18
There must have been some must have been some correspondence, some letters back and forth that this and and there were, there were other communities involved.

LS
Yes.

LH
It wasn't only Hantsport I know that much. So I guess they relied on someone to look after things. I know. Because having the store, they would have had deliveries, they had horses, and they would deliver groceries. And they also had, would pick up mail from the trains, everything went by train.

LS
Yes.

LH
So they would have the ability to to, I remember the horse stalls in the barn [?]. The barn is still there. But I don't remember the horses. Don't remember the horses. My grandfather was still alive when I was little, I, I do remember him but he died when I was four, maybe. But I suppose just having a little general store like that would be like the center of the community.

LS
Yes.

LH
You know, everyone going through, you, you'd pick up the news and and you'd pass it along. So it was kind of like a little hub of the community.

LS
Yes.

LH
So that way she would know people and get in contact with people. And plus just having the means and ability to do that is probably how it just kind of evolved.

LS 12:48
Yeah, no, that makes sense. So then we're going to switch our focus slightly to the Women's Institute, because I understand Zella was involved with it. And she even at one point were a short history of its involvement here. So do you know if she was involved with the Women's Institute at the same time that she was involved with the Ajax club or if they were separate time periods?

LH 13:12
I don't know. I think maybe the Women's Institute came later, maybe after the war. I don't know the exact time frame. And so she was also involved with the Baptist women, the Flavius group.

LS

Okay, yes.

LH

And they would meet regularly, they have teas in the afternoon in each other's homes and so on, and raise a little money for different projects. And so on.

LS

Okay.

LH 13:39

But the Women's Institute, they were involved with the start of the community center, of course, and other things, but I honestly think that might have come like after the War.

LS

Okay, yes.

LH

That's only my...

LS

Yes.

LH

Just my rough guess of the timeline of when that started.

LS 14:00

Yes, no. And I think there from what I can tell, looking through the records, there might have been an earlier version of the Women's Institute, but also there could have been a break in between when the wars, because there were so many other things going on. But also they may have been involved in knitting and things for the war effort and stuff for sure.

LH 14:21

That's something that everyone was doing.

LS

Yes.

LH

Care packages and knitting socks and mittens and that sort of thing, everyone was involved in that.

LS

Yes, yeah. So, I have, the question was with once again, we kind of answered this, whether she was involved with the two groups concurrently or if they happened at different periods. But do you think that the work between both aided in her work with each of the corresponding groups?

LH 14:59

Probably, um, yes. Besides her, you know, church work, besides the Flavius, besides the Women's Institute, besides helping run the business of the general the store. L. B. Harvie's store, she was quite a good businessman himself. Business person. She actually owned a couple of of houses at at the bottom of Hantsport and rented them out.

LS

Okay.

LH

For income. She she was quite a quite a smart business lady herself.

LS

Yes.

LH 15:37

Yeah, yeah.

LS

Was her husband involved in these rental properties or was just?

LH

No, I think that was her money.

LS 15:41

Okay.

LH

I think that was something that she did on her own.

LS

Yes.

LH

Yes. As she kept an interest in the in the store, even after my father took it over and remodeled it, and she would be there, I remember, working way, chatting to everybody, taking orders over the phone, we'd deliver groceries, twice a day, or in the afternoon later. And bagging sugar and brown sugar and white sugar and beans and things, they all came in bulk and, and she would scoop them out and weigh them up and package them and so on. But she she, she worked there well into her into her 70s. And yes.

LS

So.

LH 16:29

So and but involved in all all all kinds of things.

LS

Yes.

LH

Going on in the town.

LS

Yes, no.

LH 16:35

There was another ladies group here, but it was associated with the lodge the Rebekah Helping Hands lodge.

LS

Yes.

LH

Here in Hantsport. I don't know a lot about it. I know that my other grandmother, my on my mother's side, Ethel Hurt, she was a member of that Helping Hands Rebekah Lodge. And I have a photo that she took of a Valentine's Party back in the 20s or something. That went on for a long time.

LS 17:04

Any idea what sort of work the lodge did or?

LH

Again, it was a social kind of thing. And they did charitable works and raised money for different projects and things like that.

LS

Okay, yes.

LH

Yeah.

LS

Yeah

LH

Same way that the Rotary...

LS

Yes.

LH

Or those kinds of...

LS

Yes.

LH

Knights of Columbus or in or whatever, Lions Club, but that kind of service organization, but they were around I think much earlier.

LS

Okay.

LH

Than even the Women's Institute but I don't remember my grandmother Harvie being part of that. I don't remember that.

LS 17:41

Okay. Yes.

LH

Yeah.

LS

Yeah.

LH 17:42

Yeah. But that was just another group.

LS

Yes.

LH 17:46

That were here in Hantsport.

LS

Yeah. Well, she certainly had her hands full with all the other things she was doing. So moving on, is there any...

LH 17:56

Her family, her family there in Hall's Harbour, they were Baptist, free Baptist and the Harvies were from Kingsport, but moved into Kentville. So I think they were married in Kentville. They were always Methodist. So I, when my dad died recently, and we were talking about, you know, his lifetime of service at the Baptist Church here in Hantsport. That wasn't necessarily true. I believe that when Gram Harvie was young, or at home with the

with the two younger ones, Margaret and Richard, babies, I think there was a little backslide. And my grandfather, my dad, probably were going to the Methodist Church.

LS
Okay.

LH
Which would be now the [?] United Church.

LS
Yes.

LH
That was the Methodist Church. I believe they were going there for a few years before my grandmother said “well that’s enough of that”. They went back to the Baptist Church.

Unknown 18:59
So yes, so she was pretty strong willed. And, yes.

LS
Yes.

LH
And very tough. I mean, she lived to be in her one hundredth and first year, yes.

LS 19:10
Very impressive, yeah. She sounds like a formidable woman for sure. Um, so just skipping back to the Ajax, Ajax Club for a minute. Is there anything particularly noteworthy that happened at the Ajax club that you think we should hear about?

LH19:31
I'm, like I say I don't, I wasn't born...

LS
Yes.

LH
When this happened. I and looking at the pictures, I remember this picture being of this one with, who lost both his legs back, oh, that was one of your favorites. In this article, it mentions the trip that she made.

LS
Yes.

LH

To England, to and Scotland to visit some of the some of the boys. And I don't know what year it was. I was only skimmed through this last night. But that's not the only trip that she made.

LS

Okay.

LH 20:09

I was working on the history of the Harvie family. And in 1984, I had planned to go and I did go to Scotland to finish up my research and then published my history of the Harvie family of Hants County later that year. And so she found out about that and we talked it over and she said, you know, I'd like to go with you. And so she's now, it's 84. Okay, she was born what 96, I've forgotten the exact year. So she had a little trouble getting a new passport because they didn't have birth certificates in Nova Scotia till after 1908. So she got that arranged. And then at the last minute, she wound up in the hospital in Wolfville with Cataracts, but now that wasn't going to stop her. So away we went, at that time, Air Canada, the flight to London made a stop in Prestwick. And we visited one of the boys, so I actually met one. His name was Burt Skilling.

LS

Okay.

LH

And they met us at the airport in Prestwick, not too far from where they lived a little town called Dumpfries and stayed at their home for a couple of days. They took us around and to Edinburgh for a day trip, and met his daughter there. Anyway, that from there, I went on to London, and then I did my research and so on, but she stayed with them. And then I rejoined them, I think the very day that we were heading back home, but anyway, that was so that was not the only trip that she made.

LS

Yes.

LH

So I did get to meet one of them.

LS

Okay.

LH

And, and, but I don't remember a lot of conversation about time here in Hantsport, they were just so happy to see her, and just catching up and wanting to show her around, and that sort of thing. But I don't remember a lot of talk of that, that Burt Skilling that I've met.

LS 22:19

Yes.

LH 22:21

About this time it has by just don't recall it. I've a lot of things going on.

LS

Yeah.

LH

You're visiting scholars, you're going to Edinburgh, you're going to the National Library, going to the Registered Office, I'm doing my Harvie research, and so on and so on. So that wasn't really something that I was focused on their conversation.

LS

Fair enough.

LH

But anyway, that's a second trip to besides the one that's mentioned there?

LS

Okay.

LH

Yeah.

LS

Yeah. So then we have a question about whether there were any, if, groups of soldiers who proved problematic during their time, they were over rambunctious, or if everyone was pretty tame and well behaved while here?

LH 23:02

Um, I don't remember any stories like that. I suppose it's the tendency that over time, people only remember the good things.

LS

Yes.

LH

I'm sure there could have been some trouble. But I honestly have no recollection at all. Of anything, like any kind of girls, no.

LS 23:27

Okay. And then we've already touched on this. So whether the community was welcoming towards them, and we...

LH 23:35

I think [?] was quite a, quite a few other people involved. And they, they certainly didn't do it

all the work themselves. But no.

Laura 23:46

Yeah. So the soldiers while they were here, did they, they were certainly out and doing activities and things throughout the community, where they actively attending public community events, or where they helping with different community events while they were here?

LH 24:03

I'm sure that they, I'm sure that they were involved in whatever was going on at the time. Yes, yeah.

LS

Yeah.

LH

Just to stay busy...

LS

Yes.

LH

And to meet people and whatever was going on, I'm sure they did things like that. If they were at a farm, I'm sure they would be put to work, if they were able, you know.

LS

Yes.

LH

Like everyone else. So you know, if you have a farm to run and cows to milk and eggs to collect and plant and things to plant and harvest, and whatever the time of year was, we're always tourists to do around. People did have large gardens, farm gardens, market gardens, in this area, and, and so I'm sure even chopping wood or anything like that.

LS

Yes.

LH

I'm sure that they were. Yeah, they were "Oh, here we go. Here's another, another body at the table".

LS

Yes.

LH

And it's another pair of hands to help out with the work around the farm.

LS 25:01

So that is all the questions I have for you. Is there anything else that you'd like to mention about your grandmother with her work in any way?

LH 25:10

No, I think I've rambled on enough. Already. And there, there is obviously other material available about those things, say the Ajax club, you just need to dig around a little bit more.

LS

Yes.

LH

But I'm sure you have plenty for her. You. I don't know how many you have in total, but you won't have time to to focus on everyone in the...

LS

Yes.

LH

Same kind of detail. It's hard to find records for some of these women, I'm sure.

LS

Exactly, yeah.

LH

This one. I'm sure there's, besides my little talk here are many other resources available. So this one is probably relatively easy for you.

LS

Yes, yeah.

LH

What about photos? Do you have some, or?

LS 25:54

I have two that Jud sent me.

LH

Yes.

LS

Of, I don't know. They're not connected directly to your grandmother.

LH

You maybe just need a portrait or something.

LS

Yes.

LH 26:05

Like that. I don't have, I looked, but I don't know if anything good. All the photos. All our family photos right now are in Ottawa with my sister, who was planning to have them all digitized, but I haven't heard anything since and I don't expect to see much, their daughter was involved in some kind of conservation course and had access to that kind of thing. But now she has a full time job. With the National Capital commission. Right now they're restoring the Houses of Parliament.

LS

Okay, yes.

LH

So it's a very big project.

LS

Yes.

LH

So I don't expect to see anything. I'm sure that she can dig something out if we look for it. But there are many photos there. I think about, that probably has more to do with other aspects of the town. Not just family photos.

LS

Yes.

LH

Perhaps should belong here, you know, eventually I'll get them back.

LS 27:01

Yes.

LH

Yeah. But I don't have many myself. I have a couple I found of that trip I mentioned to Scotland in 1984.

LS

Yes.

LH

With Grammy and Burke Skilling and his wife. Going to see Robbie Burns in hopes of having some kind of community fair or something on an on some estate grounds. They're actually not very good. But I have a couple like that, but not like just a single.

LS
Yes.

LH
I have a couple of that I found in another album from either a 95th birthday party or hundredth birthday party we held up at the church where she's fairly elderly. But still looking pretty good.

LS
Yes.

LH 27:50
Yeah. But I don't have personally many right in my possession.

LS 27:55
Yes.

LH
At this time, to share with you.

LS 28:01
Alrighty, so that concludes our interview. Thank you so much for your time.

LH
Thank you. Thank you.

LS 28:06
It was great. Thanks.

Interview with Roy Bishop, 21 June 2019

Laura Sharpe 0:02

This is an interview with Roy Bishop as part of the women in Hantsport project and the date is Friday, June 21 2019. My name is Laura Sharpe and I will be interviewing Mr. Bishop. So, we're going to start with the first question I have for you here. So the question is, what was your grandmother, Isabel Jodrey's, connection to Hantsport? I know that she would have been here during the time that her husband R. A. was running the mill. But did she live here prior to the opening of the mill? And did she remain here after R. A. retired?

Roy Bishop 0:37

Okay, um. She did not live here prior to the opening of the mill, and even for several years thereafter, because their home at that point, well, from 1918, I believe, through to 1936, their home was in Wolfville. And, um, the house still exists, although it's been expanded a bit with an addition put on I believe, but it's the Landmark East school.

LS

Okay, yes.

RB

He started in Wolfville.

LS

Yes

RB

He owned, he bought that property in 1918. And at that time, the lot that it sat on ran all the way down to the railway track, so it's quite large. And the mill in Hantsport was incorporated in 1927. They began construction on it early in 1928 and a year later, I think it was January 29, that the mill started producing ground wood pulp. But at that point, my grandfather commuted from Wolfville, from his home to Hantsport. And he had other interests in the Gaspereau, Black River area, and also on the Avon River south of Windsor, he had one, two, two power plants down there and a large, quite a large dam which he built in the 1920s. Anyway, he's still involved in those things, by 1935. And those first, those few years prior to 1935 were very rough financially. He did manage to keep the mill going, but that's another story. But, uh, by 1935, he had a chance to buy what was then the Churchill Shipyard house. Which was adjacent to the mill property. Which he did, he bought the house and in October of 1936, he and his family moved to Hantsport. Their former home in Wolfville, became after that... a lot later I mentioned Landmark East, but before that, it was the, I think it was the Paramount Inn in the West end of Wolfville for many years, until Landmark East came along and purchased it. So my grandmother was born in Gaspereau. She grew up in Gaspereau actually Melanson, down the river from Gaspereau village. And she was married there. And she and her husband R. A. spent the first seven years of their married life living in the Gaspereau Valley. After which, as I mentioned, they lived in Wolfville and then subsequently, Hantsport. So, Isabel Jodrey had no connection with

Hantsport. No direct, everyday connection, at least until she moved here with her children in 1936. I say children, they were adults by that point.

LS 4:20

Okay. How many children?

RB

Three.

LS

Three?

RB

Three, yeah. Yeah, the oldest child was my mother. And at that point, she had her BA from Acadia and was teaching school.

LS 4:36

But all three children moved to Hantsport with their parents at this point was it or?

RB

Yes.

LS

Okay.

RB

Yeah.

LS

And then after R. A. retired from the mill, did they continue to live in Hantsport? Or did they go elsewhere at that time?

RB 4:52

R. A. did not retire.

LS

Oh, okay.

RB 4:57

Doing what he did was, if you like, is about retirement from about age ten. And he once said that he had no intention of retiring and he said the other employees could kick, kick him out if they wanted to. But anyway, he did not retire. But he did, of course, old age and declining health, as it gets to anybody, meant that he was no longer after...by the late 60s, he was no longer actively involved.

LS

Mm hm.

RB

And he died in 1973. All the time living in the house only, which was in the mill property. In fact, he never bought the house personally. His company bought it and he rented it from the company.

LS

Okay.

RB

And that continued after his death. Isabel Jodrey lived there for another 15 years by herself. Except the house was in two sections and the West Wing, which I understand was the servants' quarters, in the Churchill era was branded by various families. In fact, uh, my parents moved into the servants' quarters in 1941. And stayed there 20 years and that's where I grew up.

LS 6:32

Okay. So, you have lots of memories of the house?

RB 6:35

Oh, yes. Yes. No, yeah, as children we had free run of the entire house. So, we knew our grandparents well.

LS 6:42

Yes, I suppose. So. Yeah. So, overall, how would you describe Isabel and what are your memories of her?

RB 6:52

Well. She was, uh, I should say to the two documents are I have here for you in electronic form. Just briefly mention what, where they came from. I wrote them both the first one I wrote, because when she died at her funeral, I gave the eulogy.

LS

Okay, yes.

RB

And so that's one of them. And the other one I presented it verbally at Acadia University, in the Roy Jodrey residence when it was presented to the university.

LS

Yes.

RB 7:35

Yeah.

LS

What year abouts was...?

RB

it's on the document, I think.

LS

Okay.

RB

2003 maybe.

LS

Okay, yes.

RB

I'm guessing. Isabel died, the funeral was for us back in the year she died, which was 1988. But she was born in 1888. So she was 100.

LS 7:55

She had quite a long life then.

RB 7:59

Oh yeah, quite remarkable.

LS

Yes.

RB

Her health was surprisingly good, her entire life. She slept on some ice when she was 90 and fell and broke her hip. But the surgeons fixed that up and she was walking a few weeks later, and the weeks after that, she threw away the cane and kept on going.

LS

Gotta love the determination here.

RB

Yeah. Well, I mean, she, of course grew up in the uh, last years of Queen Victoria's reign.

LS

Yes.

RB

Living in the farming communities in Gaspereau. And that was before they were any cars. And she, when she had to go anywhere, like into Wolfville, she would hitch up the horse to the wagon and take the horse into Woldville.

LS 8:57

It's hard to imagine

RB

Yeah.

LS

Yeah, but I suppose.

RB 9:03

Yeah. But that was what it was like then of course. The horse was the main means of getting around.

LS

Yes.

RB

Any distance at least. Of course there was the train ran through the Valley then and if you wanted to go to Halifax, you likely took the train. Be a long road, long trip, behind a horse in a wagon on a rotted dirt road to Halifax.

LS

I imagine so, yes.

RB

Yeah, but that anyway, that's the time that she grew up in. And uh, anyway, she lived a century.

LS 9:46

Remarkable. So would Isabel have had any input into R. A.'s decision to open the mill here in Hantsport instead of elsewhere.

RB 9:55

She, of course, was his wife, she looked after the home, looked after the children, entertained guests that he often brought home, sometimes [?] for meals. And she did that, surprisingly well. She, I never heard her complain once. And she was a good cook. Resourceful. And she actually kept the books for some of his early business endeavors. She was not, I don't think she did that by the time he opened the pulp mill here in Hantsport, because at that point, they were both around age 40. And, of course, he had many employees he hired several dozen people to help operate the mill, including his secretary at the time was Grace McClatchy, who later married and became Grace Bent. And Grace Bent, Grace McClatchy Bent with his secretary from, I think, the mid 20s. Perhaps a bit before the mill opened because he had an office in Windsor, when he was building the power plants on the Avon River. I think she became a secretary about that time. Anyway, by the time they came, opened the mill in Hantsport, Grace was his secretary and stayed with him his entire life. So I don't think Isabel

was needed. Uh, R. A. had at least one accountant then too, to keep his books. It was Lee Fielding, who also moved to Hantsport with his family, back in the 1930s, I believe. About the time the mill opened. So I don't think it was necessary for Isabel to keep the books.

LS

Fair enough,

RB

By that time.

LS

Yes. So just like, I believe I read that there were several different locations that were being talked about before the mill was here, was, is that correct? Or am I...?

RB 12:20

Well, as I mentioned, in the, starting in 1918, for 18 years he lived in Wolfville. And through the 1920s, mid 20s in particular,, he was busy building power plants on the Avon River, South of Martock in Windsor down towards the community of Von. So he was down there virtually every day, commuting from Wolfville on the dirt roads in the 1920s cars.

LS

Yeah.

RB

And because it was a long commute on those roads, he opened an office in Windsor. And for sometime, I'm not sure how long it was in what is the old Victoria Hotel on Water Street.

LS

Okay.

RB

The building is still there.

LS

Yes.

RB

And so we had an office there. He was the managing director of the Avon River Power Company. I think I've got that correct. Which built the power plants on the Avon River. The South branch of the Avon river, not the West branch. And the Avon River Power Company built an office building in Windsor, it's quite close to where the interchanges with Highway 101 now. That's roughly where the old train station was too. Anyways, it was very near the train station on the river side of the Water Street in Windsor. So, in terms of his work days, he was based in Windsor. Although, he, on the weekends at least he went home to Wolfville.

LS 14:16

Okay, so they did see him occasionally.

RB
Yeah.

LS 14:19
Just not frequently.

RB
But he did not have he did not have a particular interest in Hantsport until he was looking for a place to build what became the ground wood pulp mill, Minas Basin Paper Mills Limited it was called initially in 1927, when it was incorporated. And he uh, the Churchill property, which was I guess a dilapidated wharf at that time, was essentially vacant, not being used. Economically Hantsport was, had three hard times from the early 1900s up until the pulp mill appeared. Anyway, he saw the property, the pulp mill property, sorry, the Churchill property, which had been the shipyard. Churchill Shipyard. So that was there, it was empty. Nobody was using it. The ability of freighters to access the pulp mill was much better at Hantsport than at Windsor. Because it's not nearly as far up the river. And the tides are less of a problem. Well, there's still big tides at Hantsport, but to get enough water under a freighter loaded or whatever, it was easier to do that at Hantsport and the navigation up the Avon River and Oak was far less of a problem from Hantsport because Hantsport is closer to the mouth of the Avon and Minas Basin. So the shipping possibilities were good. The space, the land was available. And the Halfway River, which empties, right besides the Churchill Shipyard property actually, and of course, is still there today. Yeah, the Halfway River. It's good water, good supply of water. And a pulp mill needs water.

LS
Yes.

RB
Lots of water.

LS
I suppose.

RB
So there was this river that was not being used, there were no power plants on it. And so the river was there, the water, the space where the mill was there at the Church Shipyard Property, and the shipping conditions for freighters to take the pulp to markets was far better at Hantsport than in Windsor. And on top of that, the town council in Windsor would not give him any favourable treatment for taxes.

LS
Yes. That would be certainly a motivator, so yes.

RB

Oh yeah, absolutely. So that's how the pulp mill came to Hantsport. And what, nine years after the incorporation of the pulp mill, was before it was built, of course, R. A.'s family, Isabel and children moved into the shipyard house, October 1936.

LS 17:33

So we already discussed that Isabel didn't really have much to do with the operation of the mill at this time.

RB

That's, that's right. She was not an employee.

LS

No.

RB

No.

LS

Um, but did they ever discuss matters regarding the mill at home? Or was it a situation where it's once you leave work, you leave all work matters at work, and nothing really gets discussed at home regarding the company,

RB 17:57

I, I never heard them, discussing the mill, other than maybe a sentence or two about some topic, but I think R. A. Jodrey was a one man show in terms of keeping tabs from the top as to what was going on and what should be done. By that point, he had a lot of experience because he had built a pulp mill on the Gaspereau River. That was back in 1919. He had built, well, an electric power generator in the same dam that he built on the Gaspereau River for the pulp mill. And he ran electrical power lines down the Gaspereau Valley and over into Wolfville. And he actually got in this car or behind the horse, whichever at that point, and he visited housewives up and down the Gaspereau Valley and probably in Wolfville and Port Williams and Canning to sell them electric stoves and make a market for his electricity.

LS 19:09

Yes, I think I read that somewhere, actually. Yeah.

RB

Yeah.

LS

Yeah.

RB 19:15

Yupp, so.

LS 19:18

So within the...

RB

Anyway, my point is, he had a tremendous amount of experience. And besides the pulp mill and the power plant in Gaspereau, as I mentioned, he had in the 1920s, he built or supervised the building of two power plants on the Avon River. So with three power plants behind him with a small pulp mill, still running at that point. He knew what to do to start a pulp mill here.

LS

Yeah, fair enough.

RB

Yeah, and so he didn't have to ask the lady that fed him and looked up his shoulder too much about what to do.

LS 20:02

Fair enough. So what was Isabel's role like within her own family? So we've kind of gone into this how she fed everyone and took care of everyone. So I kind of expand here on, was she like the glue that held it all together, or was she outspoken regarding its dynamic? How was the dynamic essentially?

RB 20:24

If she hadn't been the woman she was or if she wasn't there? I don't know if R. A. Jodrey would have been able to cope with what he did. She had a heavy workload. He, um, to some extent he didn't like Sundays. I was going to say the weekends but back then people worked on Saturday.

LS

Yes.

RB

So Sundays and holidays he found a bit frustrating because he had things to do and he wanted do them but the people he interacted with, other businessmen and the like of course were off with the families or off to church or something. Now, you say your question again.

LS 21:22

So I asked what was her role like within her own family?

RB

Yes.

LS

And the dynamic she...

RB

Yupp.

LS

Had within the family.

RB 21:28

So I can't, she certainly was a tremendous asset to her extended family. There's no question. Without her I don't know what it would have been like, but she wasn't the only glue because her husband R. A. Jodrey was steady as a rock.

LS

Yes.

RB

Even though he was incredibly busy. You know, he, he did not go to the to the, go to the pub on Saturday night, and stagger into work in the morning. It was not him. He did not drink. He did not smoke. He often, he would often chuckle at the weaknesses of certain of his employees, because what they did or should have done and didn't do, but uh, he never, he wasn't vindictive, or anything like that. He just was amused by human frailties.

LS 22:38

Yeah, and there certainly is some, so.

RB

Yupp.

LS 22:41

Was Isabel involved in any of the women's groups within Hantsport, such as the Women's Institute or church groups or just in the community as a whole

RB 22:49

Yupp, she went to church virtually every Sunday, the Baptist Church here in Hantsport, well, when in Hantsport to the one here. And I'm, before my time, but I suspect she did the same thing in Wolfville. R. A. Jodrey would, at least in my time of knowing him, he would be in a church to attend somebody's funeral. But he was not a Sunday church goer.

LS

Not everyone is.

RB

He would much prefer to read the financial reports when there was nobody to talk to on that day.

LS 23:37

But she wasn't involved in say the Women's Institute?

RB

Yeah, okay. Let's come back to that. Yes, definitely she was.

LS

Okay.

RB

She was, she was an active member. The Women's Institute. She was a member if that's the term of the Eastern Star group.

LS

Okay.

RB

The Women's Eastern Star, I'm not sure that's the correct name. And I don't know what they did because I was never a member, it was a ladies' group.

LS

I suppose not, yes.

RB 24:11

And virtually at least once a week, I would say she was off playing bridge other, with three other ladies so they could sit around the table, four hands playing bridge or sometimes she would have, that often took place in her home down in the Shipyard house and sometimes they would set up three or four card tables in the big living room and have a dozen or more ladies in to play bridge and eat sandwiches and whatever. So she was very active socially with the ladies and Hantsport.

LS 24:52

Yes. So if, that's basically what my next question was, whether he was close...

RB

You you might recall the other day, Ann Day, Graham Day's wife, mentioned that my grandmother and Zella was it, Harvie?

LS

Yes, I believe so, yes.

RB 25:09

Dropped in on Ann Day when she was a new person in town. And, but Ann said that they chattered away merrily to each other but didn't say that much to Ann. But uh, I mean, that was what she was like she, she, I don't know if this was Mrs. Harvie or my grandmother who had the initiative that afternoon. But they wanted to be social, but with the new person in town.

LS 25:48

So within the town of transport, obviously your grandmother was well liked. So the question was, what perception do you think people had of your grandmother?

RB

Oh, I never heard an unkind word said about her. Everybody it's not too strong of a word I would say they loved her.

LS

Yes.

RB

As a lady in the town. She was so active and invariably pleasant. I never heard her say a bad word. No. Inappropriate bad word about anybody. So she was discreet, friendly, always upbeat. Never, never in a bad mood. Never depressed from what I knew of her. Just a remarkable lady. I think that's one reason her health was so good. Because in my experience, people that oh, have issues of depression or are nasty to other people, that their health tends to fall apart before their very old.

LS

Oh, yes.

RB

Yeah.

LS

Yeah.

RB

That was not her problem.

LS 27:00

No, and she certainly lived long to prove it, so.

RB 27:01

Yeah. Yeah. She was off in Mount Densen and up to Wolfville playing bridge, within a week of her death.

LS

Oh wow.

RB

She was 100 at that point. She was no longer driving herself around. But obviously somebody took her to the bridge parties. So mentally, she was still sharp and physically remarkable for somebody that age.

LS

Yes.

RB

Yupp.

LS 27:31

So then just one more question I have about your grandmother before I have a few questions about your life in Hantsport.

RB

Yupp.

LS

So just it's, do you have any final stories or information about Isabel and her life and involvement in Hantsport that you'd like to share? Or have we pretty much covered it all?

RB 27:55

I mentioned that she never, she was not a person to complain at all. And when she moved into the shipyard house in 1936, the surrounding property was really beautiful. Large trees, flower gardens. What's that purple flower grows in a tall bush like thing. Violet? I can't think of the name.

LS 28:30

I can't either so, flowers are not my specialty.

RB 28:34

You know. And anyway, there were lots of flowering trees and so on, and chestnut trees and flower, what's the name of that flower? It will come to me. Anyway, fantastic property. Trees, garden. The house had a conservatory on it, which is a glassed in extension on one corner of it where she had probably 30 or 40 potted plants, a lot of them in bloom. So she had a green thumb.

You would often go out in the, in the yard and on the lawns, were there were flower gardens and she'd be planting things or digging out the weeds. Anyway, just a spectacular property. Nothing like what's left of it now. And when the Canadian Keys Fibre expanded, as it did through the, oh, after the Second World War, they begin expanding the Keys Fibre starting in the late 40s. And through for the next 20 years, there are several expansions and each expansion chopped off more of the property. Landscape, the trees, the gardens, the lawns, around the shipyard house. And today, even the conservatory is gone. It was taken off the house in 1965. Because in that year, the extension that was built on CKF needed space and they ran it right up almost, well they did, they would have hit the house if they hadn't ripped the conservatory off.

LS

Oh my.

RB

In the first place. But from her bedroom window when she moved in in 36 she couldn't look out, upon oak trees and flowers and the small hill. Hardly anything in sight. Other than nature in this lovely, lovely grounds by, that was 1936, by 1966, when she looked out her bedroom window about 20 feet from the window, about the same height on the second floor was the brick wall with the windows as a Key factory. And she never complained. I never heard a word out of her, what a shame that I've lost this beautiful property. And she'd should look out and she'd be interested in watching the ladies. They're counting plates as they come out of the machine.

LS 31:30

Very understanding woman.

RB

Absolutely. Yeah.

LS 31:35

So now I'm just going to ask a few questions about your life in Hantsport. So growing up in Hantsport, what was your perception of the work done by various women's groups within the community? Were you aware of any of these groups existing and what they were doing? Or?

RB

Well, I was aware that they existed because my grandmother went off to the meetings and my mother to some extent and, but not being a girl, a woman I had no, I never entered the doors to those folks. So I, I'm sure they did good things, raise money or whatever. providing food for various events in town, but I honestly don't know any details.

LS 32:28

And also were there any other notable women who stand out to you when you think of Hantsport that played important roles here?

RB 32:39

Some of my grandmother's friends, lady friends, I got to know them to some extent because they were often down in the house to play bridge. And well, I mean, I was three years old when I moved in there and I knew them as I was growing up. They'd come and go of course with the bridge parties. And one of the ladies that stands out, I mentioned her the other day, Marguerite Lawrence.

LS

Yes.

RB

Who was my first teacher. She was a regular of my grandmother's to play bridge. Now there was a Mrs. Err Gertridge, E R R, anyways, they lived just out in the Hantsquarter. She was a very sweet lady. Regular. Mrs. Juddie Newcomb. I think Juddie was a nickname of perhaps of her husband. So I can't tell you the property of her husband had, but anyway, this Mrs. Juddie Newcomb was in that group.

LS 34:00

So, Marguerite Lawrence. She was your first grade teacher you said, how was she as a teacher? What do you remember of her?

RB

Oh, yeah, you know, as I mentioned the other day, her mother was, well, I knew her, well I didn't know her personally, but I saw her mother many a time because I dropped by Miss Lawrence's home, which was apparently the old Captain Lawrence's home down at the corner William Street and let's see and what's the other street there? It's not Oak. Oh, should know it. Anyways, it's almost down to the wharf actually. It's gone now because the Scotia Recycling offices are there. But anyway, Marguerite looked after her mother in her mother's old age, she was a very old lady. And that's the name I brought up the other day because if I can find out what her husband's first name was they might be able to pin her down.

LS 35:01

The mother's husband, so the father of Marguerite we found out was a Charles Lawrence. Jud looked her up the other day.

RB 35:09

Captain Charles?

LS

Yes, yeah.

RB

Okay, good.

LS

Yes.

RB

Which I was right, was the captain.

LS

Yeah.

RB 35:18

Yeah, um, yeah well, Marguerite was special to me because it was one of the ladies that showed up in the shipyard house and she talked, she was my first teacher. Grade one. I was home schooled for kindergarten. And she was a, oh, a lovely, pleasant lady. I never heard her say anything nasty, or discipline any child inappropriately. And she, her personality was such that she could just captivate a room of young children. And she was very artistic with her coloured chalk and lots of pretty patterns on the board. Like drawing circles, different colors for the numbers. And teaching the children how to pronounce words. How to do basic arithmetic. It was just a delight.

LS
Yeah.

RB
The way she did it.

LS
Sounds like it.

RB 36:22
Yeah.

LS 36:25
Well, I think that is all the questions I have for you. Is there anything else you wanted to bring up? Or is that it?

RB 36:32
You probably have seen the new library here in town.

LS 36:36
Yes, I've been in actually, yes.

RB
Okay, good.

LS
Yeah, no, it's great. And it's named after them of course. Yes.

RB
Yes, yeah, yeah.

LS
Anyway, thank you so much for your time. It's been great having you here to share your stories with us.

RB
Do you have a laptop here?

LS
I do, yes.

RB 36:53
Okay. Well, if you would get that I'll give you this file.

LS

The file, sounds great.

RB

We should look at photos.

LS

Okay, sounds great. I'm just going to stop...