

HERITAGE/ARCHIVES NEWSLETTER

January 2005

It is three years this month, since the Heritage and Archives Department found its new home in an office on the 2nd floor of the old part of the Court House (of interest to note, it once was Charlie McCurdy's office during the time he was clerk/treasurer for the county for a period of thirty-three years, and from all accounts, it resembled a mini-museum with all the artifacts he collected from both near and far).

During the past three years, many, many people have visited and several events have been held here in conjunction with heritage related occasions. Each month saw a few new (old) items arrive in the form of papers, books, or photographs and as a result the archives has grown and continues to grow each year.

This month has been remarkably busy with both e-mail inquiries and people visiting in person. One of our regular and faithful visitors, Vince MacLean, from Washabuck never fails to pay his monthly visit and offer his support for the efforts being undertaken here in the archives. Despite the stormy and cold weather, quite a few people dropped by with inquiries and also to share information.

The Province of Nova Scotia through the Canadian Historic Places Initiative is undertaking a pilot project whereby the built heritage of the province will be input into a data base and will be accessible for the general public. Victoria County has been singled out as the "test" municipality, therefore, all the built heritage properties which are presently in our inventory will be entered into the Provincial data base. Monies for this project will be provided by the Province and for a period of eight weeks throughout February and March, a person will be employed to assist in entering the information into a data base.

The Heritage/Archives Clerk attended a meeting in Sydney at the Old Sydney Society in the Lyceum on January 21st and met with representatives of a newly formed group of individuals from museums and archives in the CBRM. The purpose of this meeting was to put forth ideas in order look for ways whereby museums and archives can achieve a permanent year round status rather than just seasonal as is the case with many at the present time. It was a very informative meeting and resulted in several constructive ideas being put forth. A second meeting will take place next month.

The Iona Connection will be holding a board meeting on Tuesday, 15th February. Our archives will be hosting this meeting at the Court House.

Just a note about Heritage Day which is the third Monday in February, plans are underway for hosting an event in the archives – similar to what took place last year whereby people visited the archives and were invited to have a cup of tea and snacks. Last February was extremely successful with approximately twenty plus people paying a visit, and most ended up staying the entire afternoon. At the moment, it is hoped to host

this event on Monday, 21st of February. Presently, the Court Room is booked by Family Court so, depending on their schedule for that day, we might have to plan for another day of that week.

The heritage building featured in the last issue of “The Victoria Standard” was written about the MacRae –Bitterman -Aikman stone house in Upper Middle River, West Side. This old house which is entering its one hundred and fifty-fifth year was built in 1850. By the mid 1970’s the state of deterioration of this house was very advanced and it was thought that it was beyond restoration. However, with the undaunting efforts of the Bitterman family who purchased the house and property in 1976, it was restored and now is year round family home. It also displays a Provincial Heritage Property plaque – only four buildings in Victoria County have Provincial recognition.

That is the news from the Municipal Archives for the first month of 2005. We are looking forward to celebrating Heritage Day next month. Watch for a newspaper notice and posters.