

Heritage/Archives Newsletter
February, 2009

Well the shortest month of the year is nearly at an end and it is again time for the monthly newsletter.

Needless to say that February sped by especially considering all the activities and events connected with the 100th anniversary of the flight of the Silver Dart and National Heritage Day events.

The third Monday in February is National Heritage Day. Proponents of heritage day would like to see it officially recognized as a statutory holiday. Since 1990, there are at least five provinces which have this third Monday of February as a provincial holiday, however, sadly to say, Nova Scotia is not among those five. Maybe someday!

This year, the Heritage and Archives celebrated heritage day on Wednesday, 18th February by hosting an open house. As provincial court is held on Monday's, the court room was not available on the actual day. There was a wonderful turnout and we had forty-one enthusiastic people who dropped by between 2:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. Our theme this year was the 50th anniversary of the re-enactment of the flight of the Silver Dart which took place on Monday, 23rd February, 1959. I was most fortunate to have been loaned a video of a film by the National Film Board of Canada which was made to commemorate that historic event. It proved to be most popular with the visitors – it was played three times throughout the afternoon. There was a small display of memorabilia in the form of programs, souvenir booklet, photos, etc., which were also loaned for the exhibit. Many of the people who came to the open house on the 18th February had also attended the fiftieth anniversary re-enactment and everyone was unanimous that it was a bitterly cold day back in 1959.

The flight of the replica of the Silver Dart did not happen as planned on Monday, 23rd because of very bad weather conditions. However, spectators were treated to five test flights which took place on Sunday, the 22nd – the weather was ideal and the pilot took advantage of the pleasant weather conditions to the delight of those in attendance. Other events took place at the Bell Museum which included the unveiling of the plaque by the National Historic Sites and Monuments Board, the launch of the legacy project, the issuing of both the commemorative stamp and coin, etc. I paid a visit to the welcome centre which was operated out of the Baddeck Community Centre during the Silver Dart celebrations. I collected quite a lot of printed material which was available concerning the anniversary. This material will be stored here at the archives.

This month the article in the Victoria Standard was not about an old building instead it was written about the Hon. George Henry Murray. Back in December, our archives was given a gift from the Cape Breton Centre of Heritage and Science (The Old Sydney Society) which was a beautifully framed photograph of the above named. George Murray was the Premier of Nova Scotia for a period of twenty-seven consecutive years

which to date, is the longest tenure for both a premier of our province and any other head of government in Canada's history. Premier Murray was born in Grand Narrows in June, 1861 and he died in January, 1929 at the age of sixty-eight years. He represented Victoria County in the Legislature. Following his retirement from politics, he twice declined an offer of knighthood and he twice declined offers to join the federal cabinet of Sr. Wilfred Laurier. Just recently, this photograph was hung in the Court House. It can be viewed upstairs in the new part of the building.

Apart from the forty-one people who attended the open house, there were an additional fifteen visitors throughout February along with several other visitors via e-mail and telephone.

I hope to attend a built heritage workshop to be held in Lunenburg early next month. This workshop is being put on by the Historic Places Initiative. Having attended two other workshop in prior years, I hope this one will be just as interesting and informative.

That's the news from the Heritage and Archives Dept. for this month. Let us all hope for an actual spring this year. Sounds like March will be coming in like a lion so we will hope that the old adage holds true, and it will go out like a lamb. I look forward to reporting back at the end of next month.