

Heritage/Archives  
Newsletter  
March, 2009

It is hard to believe that three months have gone by since the new year arrived. Even though Spring is merely a date on the calendar in Cape Breton, take heart, it will get nice before long! Once again, it is time to let everyone know of the activities and happenings in and around the Heritage and Archives Department.

The number of visitors who came by the archives during March was few, however, the telephone and e-mail visitors were quite significant. Assistance was provided to the best of our ability for those seeking information and research materials.

I attended the Nova Scotia Historic Properties built heritage conference in early March. I was away for three days, however, it was a very rewarding conference. Just being in Lunenburg, where the conference took place, is an education in itself with regard to historic buildings.

Up coming on Tuesday, 7<sup>th</sup> April, The Iona Connection will be conducting a special focus group meeting for heritage and cultural groups and individuals in Victoria County. This meeting will be held at the Alexander Graham Bell Museum in the Theatre on the above date and beginning at 10.00 a.m. Any group or individual with an interest in the creation of a sustainable path for heritage in Cape Breton is encouraged and indeed, most welcome to attend.

Still with the Iona Connection, the annual meeting will be held on Saturday, 18<sup>th</sup> April and it also, will be held at the A.G. Bell Museum at 10:00 a.m. Anyone with an interest in the culture and heritage of our island is urged to attend whether you are a member or not. The Iona Connection is an umbrella association which looks after the interests and welfare of the heritage groups on Cape Breton Island. The Bell museum and the Victoria County Archives are jointly hosting this meeting. Please note that there will be a fee of \$7.00 to cover lunch costs. Looking forward to seeing everyone on the 18<sup>th</sup> of April in Baddeck.

The March newspaper article written for the "Victoria Standard" featured the former Neil "Millionaire" MacNeil house – the Inverary Inn – on the Shore Road, Baddeck. Built in 1891, this elaborate dwelling was built for Mr. MacNeil's mother, Mary. Neil and his family were originally from Washabuck. He left Cape Breton when he was in late teenage years and joined his three older brothers in Boston where they were carrying on a building and contracting firm. By the mid 1880's, Neil took over controlling interest of the family business and he ran it until his retirement in 1912. This house was one of three dwellings which he constructed in Baddeck. The other two were: Auberge Gisele Inn which was built for his niece, Mary Campbell on the occasion of her marriage, and the MacNeil House, located on the Silver Dart Lodge property which he built for himself as a summer home. It quite amazing that all three of the "Millionaire" MacNeil houses

are still standing and a part of the built heritage and also, that all three are a part of the tourist industry.

That's the news for March. Watch for more news from the Heritage and Archives at the end of April - Happy Spring and Happy Easter.