

Heritage/Archives Newsletter
September, 2004

Autumn officially arrived last week, and it came as quite a shock that summer, such as it was, was over for this year. The time has literally “flown” by here at the Heritage and Archives department.

September was an extremely busy month for visitors. People from as far away as Alberta and as close as just around the corner to the Court House in Baddeck paid visits to the Archives with inquiries on various matters relating to history, events, and personalities in the County. One gentleman, in particular, Mr. Bill Danielson, who lives part of the year in Smelt Brook, in the process of writing a book about weather conditions in Victoria County. To date, he has collected data from the communities north of Cape Smokey. He stopped by on two occasions in September whereby he was able to access the diaries of Robert Emsley. Mr. Emsley was our first official postmaster in the village of Baddeck. He first operated the post office from his home and later on, when the new but now “Old Post Office” was constructed in 1885, he took over the duties as postmaster in that building. He kept diaries from 1856 to 1889 and the weather was an important component of his daily entries. Mr. Danielson was extremely pleased to be able to take away photocopies of these diary entries. He is of the opinion that these diaries will be of great assistance when he is compiling his book.

The Archives was presented with a colour photograph of Mr. C.W.K. McCurdy by a family member, Geraldine Dawe. Mr. McCurdy, for those who do not know, was the Municipal Clerk/Treasurer for Victoria County. His career spanned a period of thirty-three years. He came to assist his father, the Hon. W.F. McCurdy in 1922 and ended up taking over his father’s position as Clerk/Treasurer. Mr. McCurdy retired in 1955 and was succeeded by Bennie MacAskill. To date, Mr. McCurdy has the distinction of having held this position in the County for the longest period of time.

And speaking of Mr. McCurdy, in the mid to late 1960’s, Municipal Council had a wooden bench constructed by a local carpenter, Mr. Maurice Watson. This bench was dedicated to the memory of Mr. McCurdy. The bronze plaque which denotes the recognition of Mr. McCurdy’s tenure with the County, unfortunately, contains a mistake in that his name is incorrectly spelled – “Mac” is used instead of “Mc”. It is the feeling of the Archives that steps should be taken to correct this mistake. Before long, we hope to have a new plaque installed with the proper spelling of his name.

The third and final historical presentation was delivered on Wednesday, 8th of September at the Alexander Graham Bell Museum in the lecture theatre at 7:00 p.m. There were approximately 12 to 14 people present and they were, by far, the most interested group who attended during these sessions. It was a great way to end the series. The Bell Museum people hope to continue with this programme in the 2005 season – July to September. These presentations and lectures are free of charge and provide visitors and

locals a glimpse into the past by learning about the history of our county and the early beginnings of the village of Baddeck.

The Heritage and Archives Clerk along with seeing to her normal duties has been extremely busy with the upcoming Municipal election. The election will be upon us in a very short time, and so much work must be done regarding lists, ordering the proper forms, and meeting all the elections act deadlines, etc. There will be great relief when the 17th of October rolls around!

Following the election, which happens on the 16th of October, the regular routine of the archives, and the built heritage project will get back, hopefully, to its normal work. We are looking forward to a good fall and getting a lot of field work accomplished between the middle of October and the end of the year.

That is news from the Municipal Archives and Heritage Department for September. Hope everyone has a very "Happy Thanksgiving".