

# Hammonds Plains Historical Society

Web Site: [www.hammondsplainshistoricalsociety.ca](http://www.hammondsplainshistoricalsociety.ca)

Facebook: Hammonds Plains Historical Society

## Impact of COVID-19 – September 2021 Update

AS PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED THERE WILL BE NO GENERAL MEETING FOR SEPTEMBER DUE TO COVID-19. MEETING ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER 27<sup>TH</sup>.

At our September Board of Directors Meeting, we reaffirmed our commitment to get back to hosting presentations once again. We have targeted November for such an event. To guide us, we have sent out a survey to our e-mail distribution lists asking opinions on whether an in person vs virtual gathering would be preferred.

If you are not on the distribution list and would like to offer an opinion, please go on to our web site to give us your feedback. It will only take less than a minute to complete the survey.

Have you taken an opportunity to check out one of our new podcasts? If not, you can view one by going to the resource section of our webpage. The newest podcast is entitled '**The Legacy of the Hammonds Plains Cooper**'. The Podcasts are only about 10 minutes long so a view shouldn't take too much of your time. Coming soon will be a talk about the unique charm of the once well-known Hammonds Plains landmark, the Yankeetown Church.



## Do You have any Hammonds Plains Photos from the 1970's?



1970's - The last Days of the Pockwock Mills. The Haverstock Brothers Mill on Pockwock just before it was demolished - 1974

We are also currently putting together a presentation on 'Hammonds Plains of the 1970's'. We are trying to collect some photos of that decade to help in the presentation. If you have any which you think might be useful to us, please contact us via [haverstockdave@gmail.com](mailto:haverstockdave@gmail.com).

### **Do You Remember the following from the 1970's?**

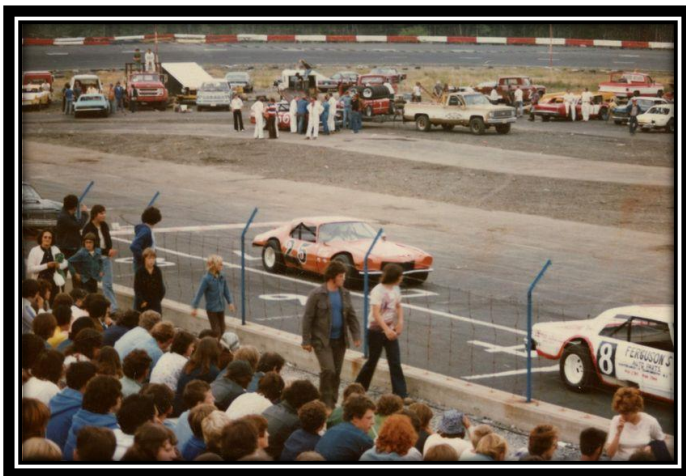
- Pockwock Water Plant opening
- Highland Park getting started
- Haverstock Camp Ground highly visible business
- Atlantic Speedway introduces speed and engine power to the area
- The Fire Department forms the Ladies Auxiliary
- The ABC Bazaar unites the community churches

## Becoming a HPHS Member:

You can become a member of the Hammonds Plains Historical Society by filling out a registration form and e-mailing it to Dave Haverstock ([haverstockdave@gmail.com](mailto:haverstockdave@gmail.com)) or mailing to 1541 Hammonds Plains Road, Hammonds Plains, Nova Scotia B4B 1P6. **Annual fee is \$10.**

Registration forms are available during one of our general meetings or by copying from our web site.

## Race Day at Atlantic Speedway



## The Thrills and Spills of Atlantic Speedway

Folks living in the Hammonds Plains area during the 1970's undoubtedly can reminisce about the noise of roaring engines infiltrating the still summer nights. It was the decade of Atlantic Speedway and the weekly stock car races were front and center in the community during the summer racing season.

Atlantic Speedway (the forerunner of Atlantic Splash Adventure) was built with a racing oval, grandstand, control tower and parking lot, all carved out of the woods on the Lucasville Road. The track consisted of a half mile asphalt oval track with banked turns and opened for races in June of 1970. It was noted for its red and white guard rails around the outside of the track. The track was owned and operated by Jim Corbett.

The track hosted weekly racing for maritime stock car owners in several divisions, regularly drawing crowds of 2-5 thousand. The biggest names in maritime car racing circles made their presence at the track, as the fans cheered on their favorites to get the checked flag. Upsurges of noise in the stands was common during the races as collisions and car passes proved to be crowd pleasers.

The track also hosted special auto events including drag racing, demolition derbies and 'side shows of the day', such as motorcycle jumper Jose Canuck and the Imperial Hell Drivers. The legendary daredevil, Evel Knievel once even performed at the track. The most unique performer may well have been Bennie the Bomb Koshe who was famous for blowing cars up while he was in them. Media covering the 'Human Bomb' event at the time said "it was a blast!"

The track was transformed into an enjoyment park in 1981, after Scotia Speed World was built near the airport. It's hard to believe that the Lucasville Road site has been a beacon for summer enjoyment for over a half a century now, evolving from its origin as a thrill and spill auto speedway.

# Remember When?

Favorite Places to visit outside Hammonds Plains during the Mid-1900's



Top Left – A trip to Sunnyside / Chicken Burger in Bedford for a treat.

Top Right – Shopping Trip to Simpson's (on Mumford Rd).

Bottom Left – A movie at the Paramount Theatre on Barrington Street (Halifax).

Bottom Right – Horse Racing at Sackville Downs (Picture of parking lot – Now, that's a crowd!).

## Our Scholastic Roots Run Deep

Formal schooling in Hammonds Plains can be traced back to the very earliest days of permanent settlers arriving in the area. Several of the first European settlers of Hammonds Plains (late 1700's) were educated folks who greatly valued the ability to read and write as a key life asset.

Consequently, these early settlers promoted education for their children. Home schooling was the norm at the time where individual parents or a group of neighbours got together to pool their resources to present learning experiences for their children.

In 1816 when lots in Upper Hammonds Plains were divided to form the historic African Canadian community, the Nova Scotian Governor issued a grant of 100 pounds (\$175 in today's dollars) to build a school along with a small house for a school master. The school lot was established on the hill overlooking Taylor Lake. The school opened in 1820, making it the first official school in the Hammonds Plains area. During the early years the school operated with support from donations (The African Society of London was a major donor). These donations helped to pay for books and school materials along with the teacher's salary. By 1828 the school had 55 students ages 6-16, who were all African Canadian students. During some of the very early years, there were times when the school did not operate as no teacher could be found.



Interestingly enough, the earliest teachers at the Upper Hammonds Plains school were white, with some having connections to local families. By the 1830's, some local white children were permitted to attend the school, although they were, according to records, charged tuition for attending.

Accounts also indicate that two unofficial schools had formed in the village of Hammonds Plains (one at English Corner and one near the Lucasville Road) by 1830. There was also evidence of a night school for young men over 15 years of age, located in the cellar of a local residence. Around 1840 a community school was established for families of Hammonds Plains residents at the newly built meeting house which was located next to the community cemetery of the time, recognized today as the First Baptist Church Cemetery.

Today's large modern schools in Hammonds Plains highlight the importance of education in our community so it is only fitting that we come to appreciate the depth of our scholastic roots. It is notable that the scholastic roots in Hammonds Plains were well established before education was formalized in Nova Scotia in 1864 with the Free Schools Act.