

Hammonds Plains Historical Society

Web Site: www.hammondsplainshistoricalsociety.ca

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March 2022 Update

As spring draws closer, there is optimism in the air that we finally will be able to once again gather for an in person event at some point in the near future. However, we want to make sure that when this decision is made, most folks will feel comfortable returning to a meeting type atmosphere. We feel that we aren't there yet, and as such we have decided to host another online presentation for our March event.

This presentation will take place on **Monday March 28st at 7pm**. The presentation will focus on our Oral History project with the unveiling of a new film that we have produced entitled 'Down Memory Lane – Reflections of Our Past'. The film looks at some of the long forgotten aspects of life in Hammonds Plains during the mid 1900's, as told by some of our oral history participants. Tune in on **March 28th** to hear all about some of the events of the past that have now become distant memories, such as the old Community Hall, sledding on the roads, the outdoor hockey rink, the Hammonds Plains Phone Company and the Labour Day picnic. On March 28th, we will bring these distant memories back to life.

A direct link to the presentation will be sent to the membership and friends in advance of March 28th. A link will also be provided via our web site.

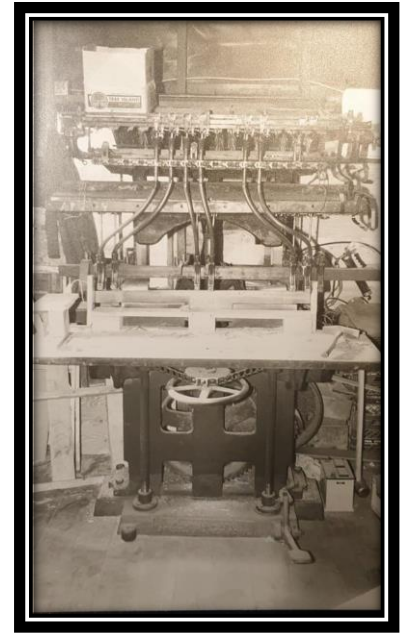


Photo of a Nailing Machine that was used to nail the bottoms onto the wooden fish boxes, used in the R. D. Haverstock Box Shop during the mid-1900's.

Plains Chronicles Podcasts

Our two latest Podcasts have been downloaded on our web site. Episode 8 is called 'Sawdust in the Air – Our Historic Connections to the Lumber Mill', while episode 9 is entitled 'A Tale of Ultimate Grit – The Chesapeake Blacks Story'

Go to the Resources link on our web page to view any of our podcasts.

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) or mailing to 1541 Hammonds Plains Road, Hammonds Plains, Nova Scotia B4B 1P6. Annual fee is \$10.

If you have been a member in the past, no need to fill out a new registration form. Registration forms are available by copying from our web site for new members only.

An e-transfer can be sent to the above e-mail address for membership fees

Donations will also be graciously accepted.

The Dreaded Spring Thraw

We now have a modern highway running through the community. However, the Hammonds Plains Road was once a country road which caused all kinds of problems during the spring season. Before the road was upgraded with an enhanced gravel base in the 1950's, it was susceptible to the annual spring freezing and thawing cycle of the soil, transforming the road into a mound of heaving and mud in the low lying sections, making it veritly impassible in spots. Want proof? Check out this photo from the early 1950's at the intersection of Hammonds Plains Road and Lucasville Road.



News From the Past

From Halifax Mail Star – March 1, 1961

Hammonds Plains News

The Explorer Group under the direction of their Councillor, Mrs. Donald Haverstock and Mrs. Kendell Haverstock held a delightful mother and daughter Valentine tea in the vestry of the Baptist Church, there were 30 present. They opened with their Worship Service with the different members taking part and proceeded to enjoy a dainty tea in keeping with Valentine's Day.

The leaders of the Mission, Mrs. Morton Eisenhauer and Mrs. Frank Thomson, also held a Valentine Party for their group for their group in the vestry of the Baptist Church. 20 were present to enjoy an afternoon of fun and treats, they meet each Wednesday afternoon in the Baptist Church.

Mrs. Lloyd Haverstock was hostess recently to members of Saint Nicholas Sewing Circle, co-hostesses serving were Mrs. Elias Rafuse and Mrs. Earl Haverstock.

The Home and School Association Card party recently at the community hall with 12 tables playing. Winners were: Mrs. Raymond Peverill, Mrs. Clifford Eisenhauer, Mrs. Olive Thomson, Mrs. Norman Boutilier, Mrs. Owen Eisenhauer, Mrs. Dart, Mrs. Bert Boutilier,, Charlie Harris, Norman Boutilier, Clarence Fredericks, Lawrence Crowe, Raymond Peverill and Ted Shipper.

The Junior H. P. Hockey team whipped a team from the Lower Hammonds Plains Road for the second night in succession by a score of 6-1. Bruce Smith and Vernon Kynock starred for the winners each shooting 2 goals. Phillip Eisenhauer scored a breakaway and Frank Smith scored with a hard shot from near the blue line. Butch Biddle ruined the Gordon Fraser's bid for a shutout when he scored a fluke goal, one of the few shots the losers had on goalie Fraser.

A card party will be held at the Community Hall on Saturday March 4th, proceeds will be for the Hall Fund.

The H. P. Hockey Club will hold a pantry sale in the vestry of the Baptist Church on Friday March 3rd at 6:30pm.

A History of the Hammonds Plains Fire Department

Firefighting has had a long history in Hammonds Plains. Considering the community was dependent on the forest industry for much of its history, this is not surprising. During the early years of the community, there was no organized firefighting organization, with fires being put out by neighbours carrying and dumping buckets of water on any fires, as best as they could. Evidence exists that a number of forest and house fires impacted life in Hammonds Plains during the 1800's. Lack of resources and the inability to have quick responses did lead to some tragic results during the years spanning the 19th century.

The early 1900's brought forth the hand held fire pump can and a number of the local mills acquired them as part of their business. Several mills caught on fire during the early 1900's and were burnt to the ground. However, it was a house fire in 1941 on the Pockwock Road claiming two lives that pushed the thought that some form of organized fire response was needed in the Hammonds Plains area. During the next few years, efforts were initiated to establish a dedicated Hammonds Plains Fire Department. Several portable back packs and other manual equipment were purchased at this time, designated as a community resource, stored at the community hall.

In 1944, a big fund raiser was held to move things forward. As a result, equipment including a portable pump, hoses, back packs and buckets were purchased and a small building was erected on the site of the current fire station to store the equipment. A formalized volunteer Fire Department was also formed. The structure of the department was such that it had two companies, each with a separate captain, supposedly to deal with designated districts in the community. Hammonds Plains resident, Maurice Eisenhauer acted as the first chief.

During the 1950's, the department was able to obtain a truck complete with portable pumps and hoses, acting as the first official community fire vehicle. The truck was a big support in the fighting of brush and forest fires, although it had to be set up to make it serviceable once a fire call was received and it needed a dedicated water supply to be effective. In cases of larger fires and house fires, the Bedford Fire Department responded to calls within the Hammonds Plains area. By 1960, the Bedford Fire Department was under pressure to keep their fire services just to the designated Bedford area. Consequently, discussions took place that Bedford might not be able to respond to Hammonds Plains calls in the future. This led to a community meeting in Hammonds Plains and it was decided that it was time for Hammonds Plains to have their own fire station and proper fire truck. Therefore in 1961, an incorporated Hammonds Plains Fire Department was created and fund raising was established to build a 2 bay station next to the Community Hall (on current Fire Station property). The newly formed department was able to purchase a second hand truck and get a donated tank from the Bedford Fire Department. A siren fire alarm was installed in the community which was set off when a fire call came in, notifying the firefighting volunteer who were present in the community to report to the station.

It was during this time, that the first subdivision started in Hammonds Plains with Uplands Park coming on board. All of the sudden, the need for fire services was given higher priority, with the rapid increase of homes in the community. In 1965, a new tanker truck was purchased by the ratepayers, with fund raising being done to equip the new truck with a proper tank, pump and hoses. However, it wasn't until 1969, that the department were able to obtain a new set of equipment for the firefighters, including boots, fire hats and coats.

Weekly training sessions were held with the volunteer fire fighters as they were kept up to date with using the new equipment. Controlled burns within the community were a common practice that the department used as a training exercise.

After the old elementary school across the road from the fire station was closed in 1967, it was decided by the community that it would best be used as a replacement for the aging community hall, located next to the station. It was felt that the best course of action would be to buy the old school and have the Firemen's Association operate and maintain the facility. Therefore in 1969 the old school gets turned over to the Fire Department. Soon after, a ladies auxiliary was formed to support fund raising for the Department.

During the 1970 - 80's, upgrades were made to the Fire Station, including the addition of two new bays. New trucks were also purchased, making it possible for the Department to have its first fully equipped truck, along with its first pump panel truck, in which water pressures could be controlled through the truck.

A highlight for the Fire Department during the 1970's & 80's were the yearly fire competitions between other volunteer fire departments. The Hammonds Plains Department were successful in winning a number of trophies during the years of the competitions. The annual fun day was introduced during this time, whereby the Fire Department hosted an open house inviting the community to the station to participate in a series of demonstrations and family orientated activities.

By the 1980's it was felt that the community had outgrown the original fire station, with increasing calls for a new facility. As a result of the fire department fund raising, support from area Halifax County councilor, Phil Eisenhower and provincial government funds, monies were attained to build a new 4 Bay Fire Station. It opened in 1991. New vehicles were added during the 1990's, including the addition of a custom made cab pumper truck.

In 1996, with the creation of the Halifax Regional Municipality, most of the fire services were merged under one organization, however the Hammonds Plains Station, like many of the other rural Halifax County Departments remained a volunteered department. It was named as Station 50 under the Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency restructuring. The 911 system also came into effect during this time.

In 2002, two day time paid staff were introduced to the department, while new trucks were purchased including Tanker 50, which was the first truck purchased at the department purchased by HRFE.

With the closing of the Upper Hammonds Plains Fire Department in 2005, the Hammonds Plains Fire department became responsible for the former territory of the UHP Department. To-day, Station 50 is a fully staffed HRM Fire Department with 4 paid staff, housing 4 Fire Fighting vehicles.



The Old Hammonds Plains Fire Station pre 1991
1980's



A controlled burn of Haverstock Brothers & Son Cooper Shop –