

Hammonds Plains Historical Society Newsletter

Web Site: www.hammondsplainshistoricalsociety.ca

Facebook: Hammonds Plains Historical Society

What's Going on!

We have been busy planning our first ever Hammonds Plains History Trivia Night during the last few months. At our March meeting on **Monday March 25th** at 7pm, we will be playing Hammonds Plains History Trivia. There will be three games with prizes given for each game. Each question will be about some aspect of Hammonds Plains history. Come and test your knowledge of community history in a fun filled way! Trivia Night will take place at the Cornerstone Wesleyan Church (1215 Hammonds Plains Road).

You can also view the event online by visiting hammondsplainshistoricalsociety.ca. on the evening of Trivia Night, although online participants will not be eligible for the Trivia prizes.

We are excited that our Facebook site now has over 1000 followers. We have been getting great feedback about our weekly posting of photos from our collection. We continue to post weekly historical photos on our Facebook page. You can go onto our Facebook page and see all of the neat photos that have been posted so far. Each of the photos have a short description that goes along with the post.

The presentation that we did in January on the '1940's in Hammonds Plains' can be found on our web page, in case you missed the presentation that evening.

Memberships for 2023-24 continue to be accepted. Check out page 2 to join or renew for the current year.



Don't Miss Our
Hammonds Plains History
Trivia Night!



Join us on **March 25th** for a game of Hammonds Plains Trivia. 60 questions total will be asked (30 multiple choice and 30 fill in the blanks). Questions will span all levels of knowledge about the community, from well known facts to some rather obscure historical tidbits of the past.

Here's a sampling to test your skills:

Which street in Halifax has a direct connection with Hammonds Plains due to its name?:

***Answer will be given at the March meeting.

HPHS AGM

May 27, 2024

Becoming a 2023-24 HPHS Member:

You can become a member of the Hammonds Plains Historical Society by filling out a registration form and e-mailing it to 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 as payment for membership fees.

Donations will also be graciously accepted.

Here's a photo from the 1970's of when Atlantic Speedway on the Lucasville Road was at its peak. The Speedway had weekly stock car races during the 1970's. The track was located on the property of where the Atlantic Splash Pad is today. Anyone living in the area during this time will remember the roar of the car engines during the week end races.



Plan to be with us for our AGM on May 25th when we present 'Inviting Images'.

'Inviting Images' will be a viewing and discussion of some of the more compelling images that we have collection over the years that look back at the history of Hammonds Plains.

We will show a photo from the past, asking the audience if they know what the photo is about and follow up with a discussion of the photo and its significance to Hammonds Plains history.

Our AGM will also highlight the highlights of the past year with the presentation of the Annual Report, Yearly Financial Report and the election of Board of Directors for the coming year.



Here is one of the photos that we will be inviting folks to comment on. What were these buildings? Where were they located? What's the significance of the photo? Join us on May 25th to find out.

Editor's Note: This article appeared in the Halifax Mail Star on October 3, 1958. It is written about two well known and long time Hammonds Plains Coopers, Blake Thomas and Harry Romans who were near the end of their time in that profession in Hammonds Plains. By 1958, the barrel industry in the community had slowly diminished and was only a fraction of the industry that it once was.

Chance for Schooling Was Slim by Bert Wetmore

Given the chance to continue school studies and, if possible, go to college, don't put it aside lightly.

That is the advice of Blake Thomas, 76, and who started work at nine, and Harry Romans who commenced his wood tasks at 11 years.

In the opinion of these veteran Hammonds Plains coopers there's no substitute for an education.

"They didn't think anything of putting us to work in those days," commented Mr. Thomas who drove a horse into the woods after firewood and undertook other heavy chores before he had reached the ten-year mark. So a chance for added schooling had to go.

DEEP SNOW

Both men realized that, particularly in this modern world, adequate schooling should be considered a must, as a groundwork for advancement in any chosen profession or trade. Each expressed the wish he could have continued on in studies.

"It was the Winter of the 'Deep Snow' that I first started into the woods," Mr. Romans recalls. That was about 1904-05. The fall so heavy, and so continuous, "that when we headed for work in the woods we spent the entire first week just shoveling for a mile and a half.

CLEAR TAXES

"Back in those times when you reached 16 years of age you might get a chance to work on the road and help clear off your father's taxes," Mr. Romans recalled, adding that the rate when he started was five cents an hour and the roadwork continued for ten hours a day. "Offer a young chap even 50 cents an hour now and he'd almost knock you down," he commented with a smile.

With that early start he believes that he has not been idle a day since, and largely concerned with the role of cooper. Work of fashioning barrels is not in such demand today he reported, "those paper boxes have help cut us out."

There was a time, say 25 years ago, when you would find some 30 cooper shops turning out barrels not far from here. Today there are only three or four', Mr. Romans said. However, in the district there are mechanized plants engaged in turning out boxes in quantities.

OVER CENTURY

Mr. Romans and Mr. Thomas carry on their trade in a building which as stood in its site for over a century leading towards Pockwock and not far from the junction with the newly widened highway. Natives of the area, Mr. Romans recalls that "I have eaten my Christmas dinner in the same yard, save one year, all my life"

While some changes has come with modern aids, the fashioning of barrels goes on along the lines that have existed through many decades. The split wooden hoops are still used on barrels turned out by the veterans, "for it would be too expensive in use metal ones for apple or potato barrels," However, in their opinion, there is one difference encountered too frequently, and that bis barrels now as a whole, don't measure up to those produced in earlier days, "A man can turn our 50 barrels a day, but 40 is more the average," Mr. Romans said.



BUSY TRADESMEN — Blake Thomas (left) and Harry Romans, 76 and 65 years of age respectively, are still busy as coopers at Hammonds Plains, and look back over work-lives that started when they were nine and 11 years old. They follow their trade in a cooperage that has stood on the site for over a century. (Photo by Wetmore).