



Fall 2017



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A House for Annie Leedham

Maura Donovan

When my partner Lynn and I bought our home at 68 Hawthorne Street seven years ago, I was pretty sure that it had been designed by the same architects (Ross & MacDonald of Montreal) who designed the houses in the Hydrostone area of Halifax. Our place, pictured below, has



68 Hawthorne Street today: the “house for Annie Leedham”, built and paid for by the Halifax Relief Commission to replace Annie’s Windmill Road home. In April 2017, it was registered as a municipal heritage property. Courtesy Maura Donovan.

many of the same interior and exterior features as the houses, except that it is built of wood, not hydrostone. Given its date of construction (1918-19), I was also pretty sure that it had been built by the Halifax

Relief Commission (HRC), to replace a home that was destroyed in the 1917 Halifax Harbour Explosion. However, almost all homes in the Hawthorne Street area survived the Explosion, and the nearest Ross & MacDonald houses are a couple kilometres away. So why was this house built on Hawthorne Street?

Answering this question turned out to be more complicated, and a lot more interesting, than I had imagined. I hit many dead ends, and the major pieces of the puzzle finally came together only with the help of Nova Scotia’s super-knowledgeable senior archivist, Garry Shutlak. Along the way, I learned a great deal, and even met some descendants of the Explosion survivor for whom our house was built. Her name was Annie (Wright) Leedham, and she was 70 years old at the time of the Explosion. Here is what we have learned about her story, so far:

Annie Wright was born in 1847, and grew up on her family’s farm on the sparsely populated “Sackville Road” - now Windmill Road in Burnside.¹ Annie’s younger brother, George, became an

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Margaret, Robert and Catherine Wright enjoying the fallen leaves in November 1948. Dartmouth Heritage Museum. 1993.15.105

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internationally successful entrepreneur and a generous philanthropist, although he is perhaps best known today as the only resident of Halifax to die when the *Titanic* went down in April 1912.²

In 1866, Annie Wright married Charles E. Leedham, who hailed from England. They had seven children, and Charles, who worked at the Rope Works on Wyse Road, died in 1889, at age 45. City directories from 1910 to 1916 tell us that Annie was a Windmill Road homeowner. However, prior to the 1920's, Dartmouth Street numbers were almost never recorded in government documents, so it is difficult to pinpoint her exact location. Census records suggest that Annie's house was most likely between Albro Lake Road and Jamieson Street – directly across the harbour from the Explosion site.

In the aftermath of the Explosion, the Halifax Relief Commission (HRC) built new rental housing in Halifax (“the Hydrostone”). The HRC also built single-family homes, in both Halifax and Dartmouth, for homeowners whose houses had been more than 50% destroyed. The HRC was very strict in their stance that no Explosion survivors would be provided with a new home that was valued at more than their pre-Explosion housing. The house built for Annie was a “D9” plan, one of the largest of Ross & MacDonald's 30-some designs. This suggests that her original home was also large. The Dartmouth Heritage Museum has a photo of a heavily damaged home, with “Leedhams Residence,



Windmill Road, Dartmouth, NS” written across it. This was very likely either Annie's house, or the home of her son Charles D. Leedham. Before the Explosion, Charles, his wife Sophia, and their six children also lived on Windmill Road.; after the Explosion, they lived at 89 Fairbanks Street.

At the Provincial Archives, I found correspondence showing that by August 1918 the HRC had approved a new “house for Annie Leedham” on Windmill Road. In October 1918, the HRC advised the builder to construct the house on Hawthorne Street. These records indicate neither why nor where on Hawthorne Street., although the architectural drawings for Annie's house are an exact match to my house.

Through separate records (obtained at the Registry of Deeds), we learned that, in 1914, Annie's daughter Alice and her husband John (Lloy) purchased a parcel of land at 68 Hawthorne Street. Those records do not show whether John and Alice Lloy built a house at 68 Hawthorne before the Explosion, but the 1919 and 1921 city directories show Annie, Alice and John all living at 68 Hawthorne. Based on this information, we can only assume that Annie – or someone else – decided that it would be best for her to live with her daughter and son-in-law on Hawthorne Street, rather than in the devastated Windmill Road area.

We have not found any information that would tell us more about the Leedhams' situation, such as what happened to Annie herself on that awful day in December 1917, or her health following the Explosion – although given that Annie died in 1921, she may have had some health problems. We do not know where on Hawthorne Street John & Alice Lloy lived prior to the Explosion, nor how that structure was affected by the Explosion. And, as previously noted, we do not know exactly

Somewhere on Windmill Road, December 1917: A badly damaged Leedham family home. This was likely either Annie's house, or the home of her son Charles D. Leedham, his wife Sophia (Gavel) Leedham, and their children.

Dartmouth Heritage Museum. 2010.019.001

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where on Windmill Road Annie lived prior to the Explosion.

The Leedham descendants who I have met do have a story about the Explosion. It involves their father, George Leedham – Annie’s grandson, and the son of Charles & Sophia – born December 28, 1912 and named for his great-uncle, George Wright. On December 6, 1917, young George was just shy of five years old, and not yet old enough to be in school. At

9:04 am, he was standing outdoors, at his usual perch where he would watch the ships in the busy harbour – a favourite pastime of children in wartime Halifax and Dartmouth. He was watching a large ship that was on fire, when it suddenly exploded.

And changed everything.

¹The Wright family farmhouse was on land that, more than a century later, became the home of the Moosehead brewery.

²George Wright was profiled in the last edition of the DHM’s *Gazette*.

Join Our Team!



Hawthorne School Intramural basketball.
Date unknown. Dartmouth Heritage Museum.
1972.027.007

We’re Looking for Volunteers!

Are you interested in volunteering at the Museum, but not sure how you can help? We have a variety of positions for volunteers. Whether you enjoy working with the public or behind-the-scenes, we have something for you!

We are currently looking for volunteers to help in the following areas:

- Board of Directors
- Cataloging (working with online database)
- Costume Sewer (sew pieces of clothing necessary for the interpretive costume program)
- Museum Support (organizing, administrative duties etc.)

For more information on these positions, please contact the Museum at 902-464-2300 or info@dartmouthmuseum.ca.

Staff News

Visitor Services Officer

Julia Clarke

Summer has come and gone, which means it's time for our summer sound-off. (Basically just a summer re-cap, but who can resist the alliteration of "summer sound-off"?).

We had a fantastic summer at the Dartmouth Heritage Museum. Both Evergreen House and Quaker House saw an increase in traffic over last summer. We saw lots of visitors from outside of Nova Scotia and even quite a few international guests. Darren Fisher, Member of Parliament for Dartmouth-Cole Harbour, visited Evergreen House on August 23 to meet our summer students and had a tour of the museum. Thank you to everyone who visited!

What about the events? Well, our weekly event, Afternoon Tea at Evergreen, was a hit! We were



Delicious scones and cookies just waiting for guests to arrive. Provided by Karyn's Cookies & Treats.

fortunate to have live music at our teas in August and September provided by siblings, Alistair and Lydia Maksym, and their mother, Jennifer Publicover. Tea, scones AND music - what more could you want! We hope to bring them back again next year. Our Parade of Sail Viewing Party and Old Fashioned Fair event on August 1 went off without a hitch and brought in lots of new visitors to the museum. Lots of ships were seen and prizes were won. Thank you to everyone who attended one of our events during the summer! And, thank you to our staff and volunteers for their tireless effort.

Do you have an ideas for next summer? Let us know! Send your suggestions to info@dartmouthmuseum.ca.



Above: Guests both inside and outside of Evergreen House watching the Tall Ships sail by on August 1.

Below: Courtney and Shannon, two of our staff members, with MP Fisher visiting our exhibit *Explosion! Dartmouth's Ordeal of the 1917 Disaster*.



Staff News

Collections Assistant

Shannon Baxter

The autumn breeze has ushered in the month of October. People young and old will be looking forward to Halloween fast approaching. With the addition of this month having a Friday the 13th, superstitions, scary stories and all subjects of macabre and terror tend to be on the forefront of people's minds.

Evergreen House is best known as the home of Helen Creighton, Dartmouth-born folklorist who not only collected songs, but also ghost stories and superstitions from all over Nova Scotia. This includes stories of ghosts, buried treasure, and forerunners. She compiled these stories into two books: *Bluenose Ghosts* and *Bluenose Magic*.

One of the more interesting subjects that Helen covers in *Bluenose Magic* is that of witches and witchcraft in the Maritimes. She recorded what people believed were characteristics of witches, how to 'dispose' of a witch, and different symbols or objects that are meant to either repel or do harm to a witch.

Here are some excerpts from *Bluenose Magic* in regards to witches:

"To be a witch you have to curse your father and mother and read the black art book. The Bible speaks of familiar spirits and witches."

"A witch can't step over a broom handle"

"Witches can't live unless they are tormenting somebody; they are still doing it."

"It's bad luck to talk about witches."

"Put money in corners of the house and that get rids of witches. Also needles. She turns herself into a cat and she has no skin on her and the needles stick to her."

Helen Creighton began collecting folk songs and folklore in 1928, and continued to do so well into the 1960s. This puts into perspective of how pervasive certain beliefs and superstitions were in the Maritimes. Whether people still believe that a witch may curse them, or would rather dress up as a witch for Halloween, it is still rather neat to think about how views have changed over time.



DHM Society Donors:

Each year Society Members give over and above the membership fees to help us run our programs at the Museum.

Hats off to their ongoing generosity!



Jean Wagener

Barbara MacKenzie

Roland Thornhill

Karen Munroe

Bernard Hart

Brenda Shannon

Gary Aitchison

Catherine Harrison

June Marsden

Margot Walker

Ann Creighton Day

Carol & Rick Richardson

Lorna Huestis

Sally King

Audrey Manzer

Karen Colter

Carmen and Jerry Moir

Wilma Stewart-White

Holly Gunn

David & Sylvia Harvey

Peter Payzant

Like most not-for-profit organizations, the Dartmouth Heritage Museum Society is largely dependent on the generosity and support of the community. To help reach our goals we are working on a new fundraising package to involve individuals and organizations. Current opportunities include sponsors for new exhibits as well as advertising spaces in our Dartmouth Heritage Museum calendar, "Blades, Bats and Racquets: Dartmouth Sport and Recreation". If you are interested in pledging your immediate support or in being notified when the package is available, please contact 902-464-2300 or info@dartmouthmuseum.ca.





Main Level — Opening mid-October — *Morbid Curiosities*

October is best known as the month when all things spooky take centre stage. Here at the Dartmouth Heritage Museum, we are planning to shed light on some of our more peculiar and fascinating artifacts.

Morbid Curiosities is a new temporary exhibit that show cases artifacts that, at first glance, may make skin crawl and heads turn. The three different themes being covered are Victorian Mourning practices, medical practices from the past and “creepy” dolls. The exhibit will not simply be a chance for people to gawk at the strange and unfamiliar (but gawking is encouraged). The goal of the exhibit is to help visitors learn more about these artifacts and why, at the time the objects were created, they were not seen as spooky or strange.

The exhibit will run from mid-October until mid-November.

Psst... Exci-tea-ing Event News!

We're delighted to announce that the Museum is planning an exciting event in October in partnership with Sense and SensibiliTea, a local historical tea producer! More details to follow. Keep an eye on our website and social media pages in the coming weeks.

Halifax Explosion 100th Anniversary Reception

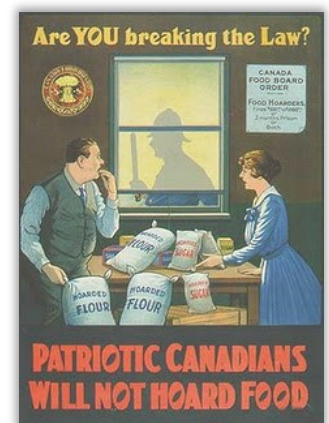
Join us for a reception on December 6 at Evergreen House following Dartmouth's Halifax Explosion ceremony of remembrance at Mont Blanc Cannon Park. Visit our popular exhibit, *Explosion! Dartmouth's Ordeal of the 1917 Disaster* and enjoy some light refreshments. The reception will run from 10:00 am to noon. Open to the public.

Call for Recipes!

Do you have a recipe for war cake? If so, we want it! We want to serve war cake during the reception on December 6 and we are hoping you can help. War cake refers to a type of cake commonly made during and after the First World War that features little or no eggs, butter, sugar or milk because they were difficult to obtain.

Please send any recipes, with your name and a brief history about it to info@dartmouthmuseum.ca or mail them to:

Dartmouth Heritage Museum
26 Newcastle Street
Dartmouth NS B2Y 3M5



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Upper Level – **Explosion! Dartmouth's Ordeal of the 1917 Disaster**

To commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Harbour Explosion, we present the exhibit, *Explosion! Dartmouth's Ordeal of the 1917 Disaster*. This exhibit explores and reflects upon the impact of the event on Dartmouth. It focuses on the cause of the Explosion and how Dartmouth residents worked together to rebuild their community. This exhibit includes the much talked about Frank Baker diary, oral histories from survivors, eyewitness accounts, and artifacts from affected homes and families. The exhibit will run until January 2018.

Main Level – Closing Early October – **Rare Dartmouth Maps**

A look at the art of the cartographer from 1755 through 'til the 1960's through examples from our permanent collection.

Lower Level – **The Carriage Room Photography Studio**

Come and visit our recreation of a 19th century Photographic Studio to learn how the art of photography has developed through the years. Peer into the past through the lenses of select antique cameras, and witness the process of creating wet-plate photographs.

26 Newcastle Street, Dartmouth

T: 902-464-2300

www.dartmouthheritagemuseum.ns.ca

\$5.00 Admission. Members and children under 12 are free.

Tuesday-Friday, 10am-5pm. Saturday, 10 am-1 pm & 2-5 pm

Evergreen Writers' Group

We welcome newcomers to our meetings at Evergreen House, 26 Newcastle Street in Dartmouth. We get together the first Wednesday of each month for discussion, encouragement, providing feedback to each other on works in progress, guest speakers and workshops. For more information, call 463-5612 or email

evergreen_writers@yahoo.ca



Dartmouth Heritage Museum

protecting, preserving, and promoting our heritage

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<http://www.dartmouthheritagemuseum.ns.ca/>

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DHMS Membership Form

Individual Membership - \$20

Individual membership entitles you to free admission to both historic houses (Evergreen and Quaker House) upon presentation of your card, invitations to exhibit openings and functions, a \$10 tax receipt, our newsletter, and a vote at our AGM.

Family Membership - \$30

Family membership entitles you to free admission to both historic houses (Evergreen and Quaker House) upon presentation of your card, invitations to exhibit openings and functions, a \$15 tax receipt, our newsletter, and a vote at our AGM. Family membership includes two parents and children under 18.

Please also consider the following levels of giving...

\$50 Donor - Your name will appear in the newsletter, and a full tax receipt will be issued.

\$100 Friend - You will help sponsor one of our exhibits, your name will appear in the exhibit, the newsletter and a full tax receipt will be issued.

\$500 Benefactor - Your name will appear in our annual calendar, your name will appear in our newsletter, and a full tax receipt will be issued.

Group Member - For companies, universities, foundations, governmental departments, etc. Please visit our website for more information.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Select Membership Type	Annual Fee	# Years	Total
Individual Member (tax receipt for \$10.00)	\$20.00		\$
Family Member (tax receipt for \$15.00) Includes parents and children under 18	\$30.00		\$
Total Membership Fee			\$
Donations are helpful and appreciated with tax receipts issued for the full amount. Would you like to make a donation at this time? If yes, please indicate amount in the box to the right.			\$
Total Payable (Membership + Donation)			\$

Please make cheques payable to the Dartmouth Heritage Museum Society and send to:

Dartmouth Heritage Museum Society, 26 Newcastle Street, Dartmouth NS, B2Y 3M5

Check the box if you would like to receive the E-bulletin by email? Yes No

Would you like to receive our Newsletters? Yes No If yes, by ___ email or ___ post mail?

From time to time, we recognize our members and donors publicly. We respect your privacy so are asking that you expressly indicate whether we can publish your name, or not: Yes No