

March, 2016



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**The Man Behind The Portrait:
John Howe - Printer, Sandemanian, Loyalist and Spy**

Maida Follini

In the parlour of Evergreen House hangs a portrait of a sober-looking gentleman in a dark coat - John Howe, painted by portrait painter William Valentine. John

Howe is mostly known as the father of the eminent Nova Scotian and defender of the free press, Joseph Howe. John, however, was a significant person in his own right.

Background: Born in Boston in October 14, 1754, John was a fifth generation descendant of a

family who had settled in Massachusetts over 100 years previously. His ancestor, Abraham Howe from Essex County, England, emigrated to Roxbury, near Boston in 1638 and established himself as a merchant. John's father, Joseph Howe, a tinsmith in Boston, left an estate worth over £30,000. Young John Howe learned the printer's trade from Richard Draper, the King's printer in Boston. Draper was the publisher of the first English newspaper in America, the *Massachusetts Gazette and Boston Weekly News Letter*.¹

Religion: John Howe's family belonged to a little-known faith, the Sandemanians.

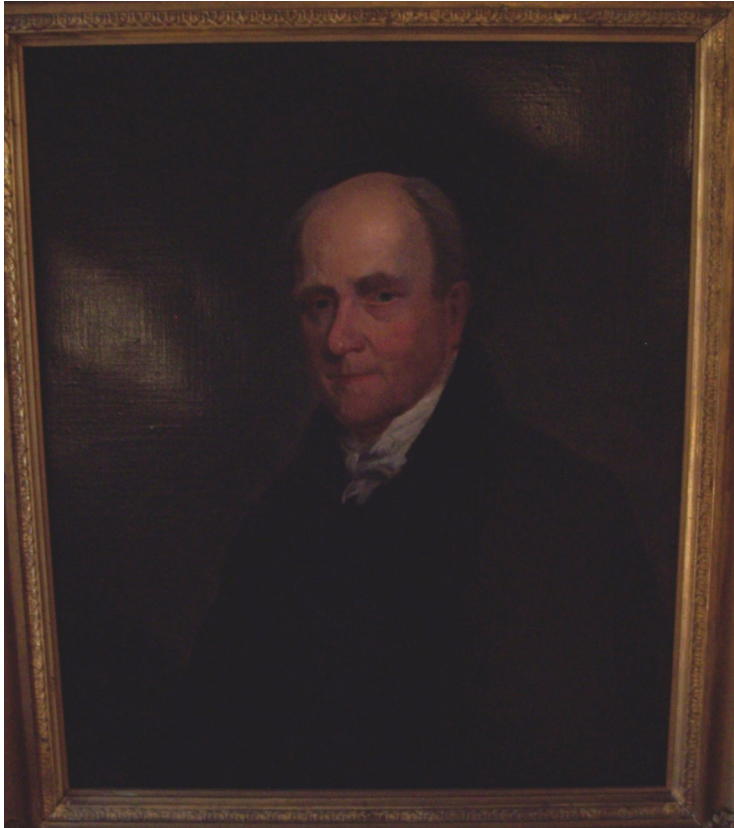
Founded in Scotland, Robert Sandeman brought the faith to New England in 1764. Believers in charity, community ownership of property and pacifism, Sandemanians were expected to live quietly, without engaging in political conflicts. This presented a challenge to John Howe, as tensions grew between the colonials and the mother country, Great Britain.

The imposition of taxes on the American colonies, followed by the Boston Tea Party in 1773, were evidence of increasing antagonism between the colonials and the

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1. Much of the information in this article is based upon "A biography of John Howe, 1754-1835" by Allan Johnstone, <http://allan-johnstone.ca/FamAlbum/Album2/JohnHoweBiography.html>



Portrait of John Howe by William Valentine c.1825. This portrait of Joseph Howe's father hangs in the parlour at Evergreen House.

Massachusetts Colonial Charter only increasing colonial resistance. British Commander General Gage sent 700 troops to destroy the military stores that the colonials were stockpiling in Lexington and Concord. The *Massachusetts Gazette and Boston Weekly News-Letter* printed an account of what happened after Gage's troops marched to Concord in April, 1775: "...Colonel Smith had executed his Orders without opposition by destroying all the Military Stores he could find.....As soon as the Troops had got out of the Town of Concord, they received a heavy Fire from all Sides, from Walls, Fences, Houses, Trees, Barns, etc. which continued ... from all Places where they could find Cover and continued so doing for the Space of Fifteen Miles..." Fifty British troops were killed and many more wounded.

The Battle of Bunker Hill:

A month after this first battle, June 17th, 1775, colonial troops occupied Bunker Hill, in Charlestown, overlooking Boston. The British responded, landing about 2000 men on the Charlestown shore. John Howe, "saw the battle of Bunker Hill from one of the old houses" in Boston, and "nursed the wounded when it was over." John described watching Sir William Howe leading a charge up the hill "with the bullets flying through the tails of his coat."²

Casualties were enormous on both sides, but the British losses were twice that of the colonials. John Howe's article shows his loyalty to the King, as he reported "This Action has shown the Bravery of the King's Troops, who under every Disadvantage, gained a complete Victory over Three Times their Number, strongly posted, and covered by Breastworks. But they fought for their King, their Laws and Constitution."

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London government. Draper and John Howe published a detailed account of the dumping of the tea into Boston Harbour:

The Boston Tea Party:

"A number of brave and resolute men dressed in the Indian Manner...gave the War-Whoop, ... The Indians, as they were called, repaired to the Wharf where the Ships lay that had the Tea on board, and were followed by Hundreds of People, to see the Event... The Indians immediately repaired on board Capt. Hall's ship, where they hoisted out the Chests of Tea, and when upon Deck stole the chests and emptied the Tea overboard. Having cleared this Ship, they proceeded to Capt. Bruce's and then to Capt. Coffin's brig... in the Space of three Hours they broke up 343 chests, which was the whole Number in those Vessels, and discharged their Contents."

The Battle of Lexington & Concord:

Following the Tea Party, the British closed the port of Boston by the British and annulled the

2. Sir William Howe was no relation to John Howe.

The Director's Desk

Bonnie Elliott

Spring is upon us and with it a new lease on life for the museum. Closing the museum for two months was sad and strange because it was the first time it occurred since its opening in 1967. The result of the closure was that our HRM partners and City Council took notice and brought forth a plan that will help to invigorate us while we jointly work towards finding a new home. We've had quite a bit of media attention lately around the closure. Some past donors of artifacts feared we were closing for good. It was a premature obituary because we are happy to report that we are not going anywhere and have plans to offer programs that people want.

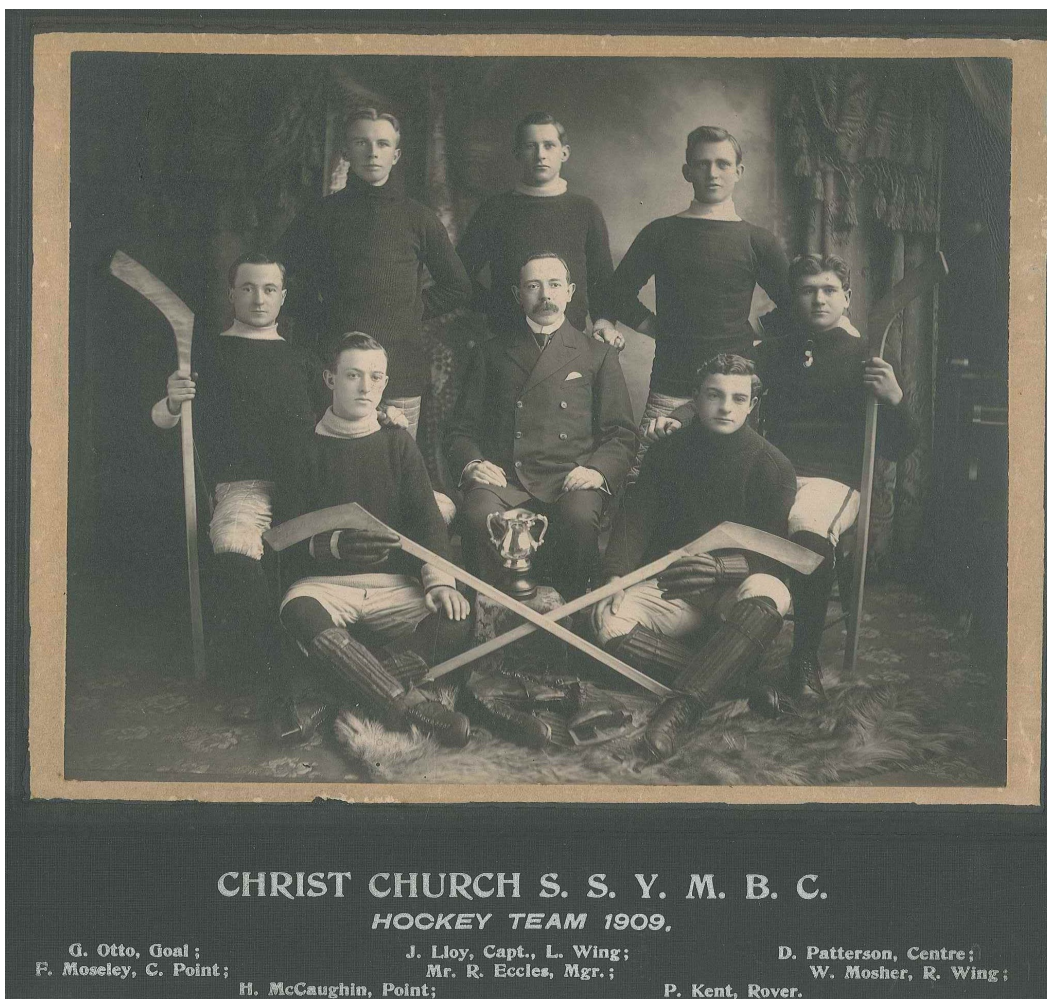
In the meantime volunteers and Board members have been busy working on archival materials, planning events for the next year and working towards the Association of Nova Scotia Museums (ANSM) evaluation that will take place this summer in July .

There is a plan underfoot that may see lunches being served in the parlour. Quaker House will see eight new panels prepared by the Eastern Shore Quakers that will introduce visitors to the history and beliefs of the Quakers.

The Calendar team are putting together an intriguing sports calendar to celebrate the history of sports and recreation in Dartmouth. Designed as an 18 month calendar beginning in January 2017, it will be available for purchase this summer. This project will form a major fundraising opportunity for us as each page will be purchased by a sponsor.

In an effort to increase our revenue, the Board approved an increase of admission fees from \$2.00 to \$5.00 beginning April 1st. Membership fees will remain the same. To make it easier for visitors to pay admissions and shop in our gift store, we will be introducing a credit and debit system.

I hope to see you at the museum this summer or perhaps at the AGM when David Jones will be giving a talk on the Starr Manufacturing Company.



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Evacuation of British & Loyalists to Halifax:

With George Washington's army surrounding Boston, a stalemate lasted for eight months, until in March of 1776, when canons were brought by the colonials from Fort Ticonderoga in New York and installed on Dorchester Heights. When the British realized they had no protection from a bombardment, they decided on an orderly retreat. The Evacuation of Boston by the British took place March 17, 1776. The military establishment, government officials and prominent loyalists were evacuated to Halifax, and John Howe, the King's Printer, was among them.

A Stint in Rhode Island:

In Halifax, Howe was appointed Printer for the [British] Provincial Forces and early in 1777 he went to Newport, Rhode Island with General Clinton whose forces had captured that city in December 1776. Howe printed the *Newport Gazette* from 1777 to 1779. There, in Newport on June 7, 1778, John Howe married his first wife, Martha Minns. The following year, in October, 1779, the British evacuated Newport, Rhode Island for New York and the Howe family went with them.



Return to Halifax:

Martha and John's first child, Martha (Jr.) was born in New York City, December 25, 1779. During the following year in 1780, John and Martha Howe and their baby returned to live in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Here, five more children were born: Sarah, 1782; John, Jr., 1784; William, 1786; Jane, 1788; and David, born November 10, 1790. Sadly, Martha Howe died after David's birth, as a result of complications of childbirth on November 25, 1790.

Re-settling in Halifax, John Howe set up his print shop and began publishing the *Halifax Journal*. In 1798, after eight years of widowhood, John married his second wife, Mary (Ede) Austen on October 25, 1798. Mary was the widow of Henry Austen. From this marriage there were two children, Sarah Foster Howe, born 1800 and Joseph Howe, born 1804.

King's Printer, Postmaster General and Agent for the King's Packet Boats:³

In 1801, John Howe was appointed King's Printer, Postmaster of Halifax and, in 1803, and Deputy Postmaster General for the Maritime colonies, as well as Agent Manager of his Majesty's Packet Boats in Halifax. Ordinarily such positions would provide a good living, but unfortunately, Howe was also responsible for paying £200 a year as a sort of pension to the former holder of the office. This payment continued for about 7 years, and turned out to be greater than the income from the office! Consequently the family income depended primarily on the printing business.

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3. A "packet boat" was a vessel used to carry post office mail between Britain and its embassies, colonies and outposts.

EVENTS & EXHIBITS



The Golden Age of Postcards & Beyond: A Look Back at the Original Text Message

Around the turn of the twentieth century, billions of postcards were bought, mailed and collected in albums. A quick and easy form of communication, postcards can be compared to the social media craze today. With close to 1,000 postcards in the museum's collection, this exhibit will showcase just a small portion. Featuring beautiful postcards from local sites and around the world, as well as collector's albums, it is truly a trip back to a slightly slower time, in the "Golden Age." Try writing and sending a postcard to a friend and family member with pen and ink.



\$2.00 Admission. \$5.00 after April 1st. Members and children under 12 are free.
Tuesday - Friday 10am – 5pm & Saturday – 10am -1pm & 2pm – 5pm

Evergreen House, 26 Newcastle Street, Dartmouth

Adult Colouring Day at Evergreen House



When: Saturday, May 14- 2016 10 am-2:30pm

Admission to Dartmouth Heritage Museum, Exclusive Pre-Release Colouring Pages created for event and Colouring Tips, Talk & Share. *Chance to win fantastic door prize*

Also an opportunity to visit the new "Dress-Up Room". Light lunch & hot/cold beverage will be provided. **Cost:** \$25
Space is limited to max. 30 participants.

For reservations or for more information please contact: 902-464-2300

Dartmouth Heritage Museum

26 Newcastle Street, Dartmouth, NS B2Y 3M5

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A Spy for the Lt. Governor:

In 1808, John Howe received another duty. Lt. Governor Sir George Prevost sent him to spy on the United States, to determine whether there was agitation for war in the new country. Tension was once again increasing, as the British Navy was stopping American vessels, searching them and impressing Americans into their forces. John Howe, with the purported aim of visiting relatives, traveled to Boston, Washington, Norfolk, and New York observing public feelings as he went. He found the cities poorly defended and he saw no evidence of preparations for war. In November Howe travelled again to the States, this time taking dispatches to British Minister Baron Erskine. While in Washington, Howe, with the British Minister, attended interviews with President Thomas Jefferson and President-elect James Madison. Howe reported that war with the United States could be avoided if the blockade against U.S. ships trading with France was lifted. The British did not, however, change their policy, and President Madison declared war on June 18, 1812.⁴

After his two trips as a spy, John Howe remained in Halifax pursuing his printing business. In 1810 he was appointed Justice of the Peace, and Justice of the Inferior Court of Common Pleas. He helped establish the Halifax Police and the setting up of a House of Correction (prison.) He became a Magistrate and as he was growing older, gave up his positions as King's Printer and Postmaster, to which his oldest son, John Howe Jr. was now appointed.

Religious Activism:

Christianity called for visiting the poor, the sick and the imprisoned. "During the War of 1812, [Howe] had rendered all sorts of kindnesses to the American prisoners incarcerated on Melville Island..."⁵ In his retirement years John Howe increased his charitable work, lodging former prisoners in his home until he could find employment for them.⁶ John Howe would "take his Bible under his arm every Sunday afternoon and, assembling around him in the large room all the prisoners in the Bridewell, read and explain to them the Word of God." He was lay preacher to the Black Refugees who had arrived during the War of 1812. He regularly visited the poor and disabled of Halifax and Dartmouth, carrying with him tea and sugar to provide comforts for help those in need.

Influence on his son Joseph:

Joseph Howe says of his beloved father John: "For thirty years he was my instructor, my playfellow, almost my daily companion. To him I owe my fondness for reading, my familiarity with the Bible, my knowledge of old Colonial and American incidents and characteristics. He left me nothing but his example and the memory of his many virtues, for all that he ever earned was given to the poor. He was too good for this world; but the remembrance of his high principles, his cheerfulness, his childlike simplicity and truly Christian character, is never absent from my mind".⁷

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4. See J. Murray Beck, "John Howe" in Dictionary of Canadian Biography, vol. 6.

5. Allan Johnstone *John Howe Biography* op cit.

6. Ibid.

7. William Lawson Grant, "The Tribune of Nova Scotia" in *Chronicles of Canada*, Eds G.M.Wrong & H.H. Langton

8. Information on family from Allan Johnstone, "A Biography of John Howe, 1754 -1835" see note #1 above. Allan Johnstone is a descendant of John Howe, Joseph Howe, and Joseph's daughter Ellen.

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Death and Descendants:⁸

John Howe lived to the age of 81 years. He died in his sleep on December 27, 1835. He was survived by his 2nd wife, Mary Ede, who died in 1837; and by four of his eight children. His eldest son John Jr. took over his father's work as newspaper publisher and postmaster, his daughter Jane became a school teacher, son William became assistant commissary general in Quebec, and youngest child Joseph Howe, became a defender of freedom of the press, reformer of government, Lieutenant Governor. But if the son was one of the most eminent Nova Scotians of his day, the father should be held one of the kindest, most Christian, and most socially sensitive Nova Scotians of his 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 !

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Dartmouth Heritage Museum Society



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*Protecting, Preserving
& Promoting our
Heritage*

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Just a reminder that your membership dues for 2016-2017 are due April 1st, 2016!

DHMS Membership Form

Individual Membership - \$20

A \$10 tax receipt will be issued, you will receive our newsletter by mail, and membership will entitle you to free admission to museums (Evergreen and Quaker House) upon presentation of your card.

Family Membership - \$30

A \$15 tax receipt will be issued, you will receive our newsletter by mail, and membership will entitle you to free admission to museums (Evergreen and Quaker House) upon presentation of your card.

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.

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

Dartmouth Heritage Museum Society, 26 Newcastle Street, Dartmouth N.S., B2Y 3M5

Cutting Edge: The History of Dartmouth's Starr Manufacturing.



No. 779—150 Lines x 2 Cols.—300 Agents Lines.

The Starr Manufacturing Company, makers of the world's first modern skates, built their famous factory on top of the workings of the defunct Shubenacadie canal in Downtown Dartmouth. The Starr plant was demolished in 2000. The site now lacks any formal commemoration of Starr's legacy, although the production of Starr skates was named an Event of National Historic Significance by the Federal Government.

Please join the Dartmouth Heritage Museum Society in learning about Starr's roll in developing hockey, their diverse product lines and their contributions to the war effort.

You are encouraged to share your memories and artifacts of Starr Manufacturing.

David Jones is a proud member of the Board of Directors of the Dartmouth Heritage Museum Society. He is a historian and archaeologist.



No. 781—150 Lines x 2 Cols.—300 Agents Lines.

Annual General Meeting

7 pm

Wednesday, May 25th

Christ Church Parish Hall
61 Dundas Street, Dartmouth