

September, 2015



GAZETTE

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Seth Coleman, Quaker Whaler

Trade Barriers, Immigration, Shipwrecks, Refugees and Disease: What lessons do past crises have for us today?

Maida Follini

Emigration

When Seth Coleman and his family emigrated from Nantucket, Massachusetts to Dartmouth, Nova Scotia they were not Loyalist refugees, but were part of the Nantucket Whaling Industry, trying to avoid trade barriers which made their business unprofitable. When Nantucket became part of a new nation, British tariffs kept Nantucket whale oil out of Britain.

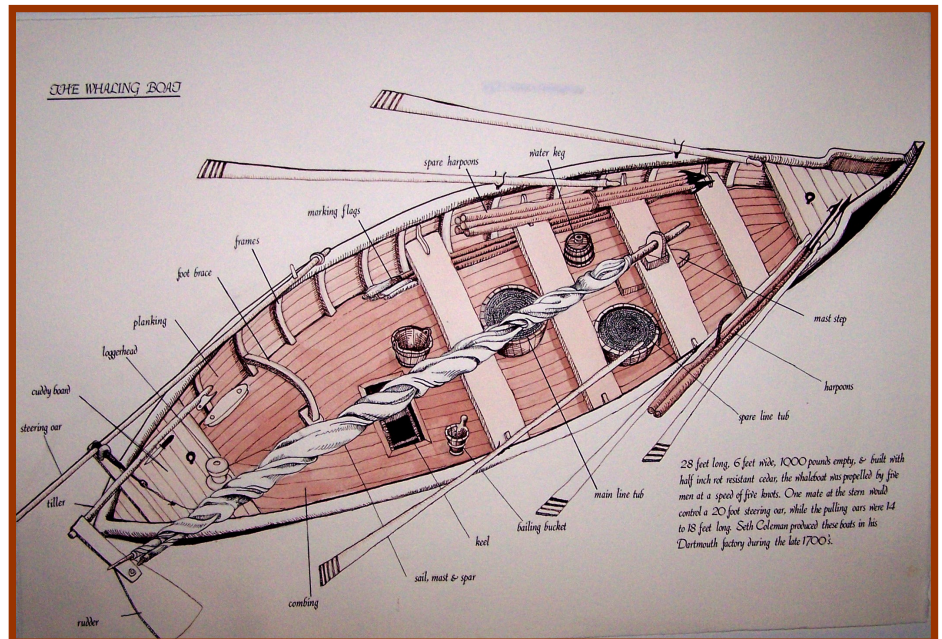
However, Lt. Governor John Parr of Nova Scotia desired to bring in new industries to

Harbour. Here the British tariffs would be less. The Nova Scotia House of Assembly granted the Quakers 2156 acres of land and a subsidy of £1500 for building their homes in the new community. A town was laid out and the different families assigned lots where small houses were built, wells dug, and gardens laid out. Seth Coleman's house is reported to have

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help make his province self-supporting, and he agreed to the request of the Nantucket Quaker Whalers to allow them to establish a whaling colony in Dartmouth on Halifax

Come Join us on Saturday, October 24th at Evergreen House for a special afternoon with the Storytellers Circle of Halifax. See page 8



The Director's Desk

Bonnie Elliott

As we leave summer behind and ease into fall, I'd like to take a moment to recognize what a successful summer it was. Our staff of students brought enthusiasm and a passion for history to share with the many visitors who visited. Attendance doubled at both houses and we were happy to greet each and every person who came from near and far.

Our attention has now turned to the fall and what we will be offering. The Bridal Gown exhibit is on until October 30th, so if you haven't had a chance to visit, you still have time. One of the reasons we had twice as many visitors this summer over last was because visitors really responded to the nine beautiful gowns on display and the exhibition catalogue that recounts the stories of who wore them.

By the time you receive this newsletter, our newly stocked and redecorated gift shop should be open for business. Along with the books written by our prominent local authors, we've introduced products from local producers who sell at Alderney Market. Now you'll see jewelry, handcrafted wood items, soaps, framed shell glass pictures and beautiful hand-woven articles all of which are of high quality. September is a good time to start thinking about your Christmas shopping, and purchasing at our gift shop helps support the Museum and our local producers. Plus, we are tax free!

A post card exhibit is scheduled for October. The museum has many postcards that are scenes of Dartmouth and ones sent from all over the world to addresses in Dartmouth. The Storytellers Circle of Halifax are lined up to regale us with their well told and spooky stories. In order to accommodate the number of visitors who would like to come to this pre-Halloween tea, we are holding it in the Red Parlour. The artifacts will be temporarily moved out in order to accommodate the tables and chairs. [\(See page 8 for details of all the events.\)](#)

Attending the Alderney Market this past summer has been a fun weekly outing and a good place to meet new and long-time members. Continuing through the fall, feel free to drop by our table to say 'hello'. If I don't see you there, let's hope I see you at the museum.



With funds provided under the HRM Capital Project, Quaker House is under going some exterior work..

Sam Cross & Greg Poole re-clad the front and repair windows at Quaker House.

Visits to the eighteenth century house doubled this summer.

Next year interior work will be undertaken

The Curator's Corner

Crystal Martin

Edward George Cooper (AKA Ted Cooper, or EG Cooper)

Edward George Cooper was born in Lowestoff, England on November 26, 1921. He immigrated to Canada at the age of five with his parents and sister. Upon arriving in Canada they settled in the Annapolis Valley, where Mr. Cooper attended school in North Kingston. He later served in the Royal Canadian Navy, going on to work for the Civil Engineering section at Greenwood. After moving to Dartmouth, he worked in construction as a finished carpenter.

Ted Cooper's passions included the outdoors, which led him to become a long-time Scout leader. He was also a great singer and guitar player, performing in many bands over the years. Another well-known passion was his love of art. Mr. Cooper didn't receive any formal training, but was well rounded in many areas. This included becoming very proficient in wood carving, especially carving gun stocks with hunting scenes. He also dabbled with acrylics, but found he preferred to work with leather. His first pieces included belts and purses, and later moved onto creating and painting images on leather canvas. He was also noted for making saddles with beautiful artwork.

Mr. Cooper died at age 74 on February 14, 1995 and is buried in the North Kingston Cemetery.

The Dartmouth Heritage Museum has one piece of EG Cooper's artwork in the collection, and has been in touch with both family, as well as a local community member, who have others. However, we would love



This man on a bronco by E.G. Cooper is the only work by Cooper in the DHM collection.

EG Cooper, 1983, Leather & Acrylic

Acc #: 1983.010

to learn any information regarding his life while in Dartmouth, and to hear if there are pieces of artwork in the local area. If you have more information, please contact the museum curator at 902-464-2004 or martinc@bellaliant.com.

Article Source: Allan Cooper

This postcard album is one of the albums that will be on display in *The Golden Age of Postcards & Beyond: A Look Back at the Original Text Message* from November 14th 2015. The album features postcards from all over Nova Scotia, Canada and Europe. It once belonged to Mabel Patterson and dates from the early twentieth century. See page 8 for details.



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been on the northeast corner of Ochterloney and Water Street (now Alderney Drive.)

The Boat Building Business

Seth had his Master's papers and had shipped on many a whale voyage as a young man, but his later occupation was boat building - in particular the whale boats that were lowered from larger vessels, and rowed by crews close to the whales who could then be harpooned. Considering that the whaleboats were vulnerable to the angry waves and even angrier whales fighting for their lives, there was a continuing demand for new boats. Coleman was also contracted to build gigs, tenders and lifeboats for the British naval vessels who were stationed at the Halifax Naval Shipyard.

Seth was granted the shoreline from Ochterloney Street to Church St for his boatbuilding business and he later petitioned for an additional grant of shoreline to enlarge his premises:

The Petition of Seth Coleman of Dartmouth Humbly Shews: That your Petitioner is an inhabitant settled at Dartmouth with a very large family and his principle business is building and repairing boats for the shipping employed in the whale fishery and as the whale fishery increases very fast your petitioner finds it necessary to erect another shop for boat building. Your Petitioner therefore Prays the Governor to grant him a Certain tract of Land in said Dartmouth.... etc." [signed] Seth Coleman [Dated] Dartmouth, 12th March 1790. Approved 12th March '90, Gov. Parr!

His family was indeed large. He had married Deborah Swain in 1768 in Nantucket and they had brought eight children with them to Nova Scotia where they had five more.

As well as his boat yard, Seth took part in town affairs in Dartmouth. At different times he served as pound keeper (to control stray animals), fence viewer and surveyor of lumber and woods for Dartmouth. Among his many aptitudes, it was said that he could hurl a harpoon with deadly accuracy, build a whaleboat, heal the sick, keep accurate accounts, and could reverently read aloud passages from Scripture.

The Quaker Whalers Divide

Although the whale fishery became well-established and profitable in Dartmouth, a change in

British policy worked to undermine this venture. In 1790, agents came from England to encourage the Quaker whalers to leave Dartmouth and establish their whaling port in Milford Haven, Wales. The British authorities wanted the profits to accrue to the British Isles, without competition from their colony of Nova Scotia. Several leading families of whalers left for Wales with their ships. The Quaker community was much reduced. But Seth Coleman was one who stayed. He had a thriving boat-building business and was much involved in the Dartmouth community. As well, he became Clerk of the Dartmouth Quaker Meeting.

Mission to Sable Island

In 1801, an important task was assigned to Seth Coleman. A vessel had been wrecked on Sable Island and Lt. Governor Wentworth wrote to Coleman to proceed to the island and "*afford every aid and assistance to preserve any People and Property you may find there.*" While there he was to "*make the best observations in your power respecting the uses - situation, practicability and mode of building a Light house on the Island...*"

Coleman reported to Gov. Wentworth that "A Light house is necessary which is obvious from the circumstances of the late misfortune, the vessel being bound to England,...she must have passed not more than 1½ miles from the place... This light would save the lives of many person as vessels have been frequently lost from which none have escaped." ⁴ Coleman wrote to Wentworth that it would be feasible to build lighthouses on Sable Island, and suggested placing signal cannon and life saving stations at each end of the island. That same year, 1801 saw the establishment of the first life saving station on Sable Island, although his suggestion of a light house was not acted upon until the late 1800s. Since then life-saving stations have served to rescue many from shipwrecks who otherwise would have been drowned - early models for the rescue work of national coast guards who continue their work in the current crisis in the Mediterranean.

The Black Refugees from the War of 1812:

During this war between Britain and the United States "thousands of slaves in the Chesapeake Bay region of Virginia fled the plantations and asked the British to be removed."⁵ The British navy took some 2000 Black Refugees on board their ships and brought

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them to Halifax. Many were settled at Dartmouth and Preston. The first came ashore October 2, 1813. Although promising them their freedom, the British authorities provided little or no assistance to the refugees when they arrived. There seems to have been no organized plan for their employment or maintenance. Some were granted small tracts of 10 acres of land. A year later, their condition was very poor. They lacked work, food and clothing.

Seth Coleman was concerned about the refugees and often visited them. In March, 1815, Coleman found many of them subsisting on very little. Often the men watched the children while the women walked several miles to the white-owned farms “to seek a day’s work at Washing or Sewing.” He deemed the refugees “a Virtuous People” despite their lack of education. Indeed, Coleman never saw any of the refugees intoxicated, “which could be said of very few white folk in the colony.”⁶

The Smallpox Epidemic

In this impoverished state, the refugees soon had another challenge to cope with. In the fall of 1814, an epidemic of smallpox broke hitting the poor particularly hard.⁷

When the medical doctors in Halifax refused to go across the Harbour to vaccinate the inhabitants there, Seth Coleman offered his services. Although not a doctor, “this zealous good man procured what materials and information were necessary” and on the next Sunday set to work.⁸ Inoculation material was taken from a subject infected with cowpox, a less serious form of disease related to small pox. From the cowpox rash, material was collected and used for the vaccinations. At first Coleman had to overcome the resistance of the people to being vaccinated. However “by a patient disposition and a great share of good sense, aided by his Quaker habits, he, at length, persuaded them to meet him at convenient places...Mr. Coleman had vaccinated about 500 of these people...not one of them died of or had been seized with the disorder after vaccination had taken place”.⁹

“The well-informed Nova Scotians regretted the racial prejudice expressed by most colonists and officials,” Coleman declared. “My feelings have been often hurt at the expressions of People who are ignorant of their Situations...”

Coleman knew government funding was needed, but government assistance was poorly planned and half-hearted.¹⁰

Approximately 1600 Black Refugees were settled in Dartmouth and the Halifax area. For the first few years there was much opposition to their presence. In 1817, Lt. Governor Dalhousie tried to deport them to the United States or to Sierra Leone. None of the refugees were willing to go back into countries where they might be re-enslaved. He next tried to send them to Trinidad but few were willing to go. In order to subsist, Black Refugees raised crops on their small lots, worked as carpenters or day labourers, wove and sold baskets, or worked as cleaners and charwomen.

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Although Seth and Deborah Coleman went back to Nantucket late in life, living in Dartmouth, is Elizabeth Anne Marsters Smith, the great-great-great-great granddaughter of Seth and Deborah. Left, Sally King and Right, Elizabeth Anne Marsters-Smith.



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Charity from white citizens and self-help from Black groups and churches ameliorated, but were insufficient to provide a good basis for the settling of the Black Refugees of 1812. The consequence was long years of inequality and hard challenges for the refugees, the effects of which continue to the present day.

The Coleman Family and Their Descendants

After many years living in Dartmouth, running his boat-building business and carrying out community activities, Seth Coleman returned to his native island. Two of his daughters, Rebecca and Mary had died in Halifax in 1820. Seth, his wife Deborah, and sons William and Alexander sailed on the schooner *Eliza Ann*, arriving in Nantucket in October, 1821. Seth died the following spring, March 26, 1822 at the age of 77. Deborah lived another fourteen years, dying August 15, 1836.

Those remaining in Dartmouth included Seth's eldest son, John Brown Coleman, Sr., who ran the boat building business in Halifax, until his death in 1838. John Brown's son William (1814-1886) was "for many years the careful and genial captain of one of the Dartmouth ferry steamers".¹¹ Another son, George Coleman, remained in Dartmouth, where he, like his father and grandfather, was a boat builder.

A third son, John Brown Coleman, Jr. (1803-1871) became a whaler out of Nantucket. He was master of the ship *Charles and Henry* when, lying at Eimeo in the Society Islands, he signed on board as a boat steerer a young man named Herman Melville who later wrote the classic, *Moby Dick*.¹²

All the daughters except Mary married, some living in Halifax and others in Nantucket. One daughter, Deborah Coleman Paddock moved to Ohio and Indiana with her husband. Sons Charles, William and Alexander worked with their father in Dartmouth and later returned to Nantucket.

Although Seth and Deborah and many of their descendants left Dartmouth, there are still descendants of the family living here. One of these is Elizabeth Anne Marsters Smith, the great-great-great-great granddaughter of Seth and Deborah.

What We Learn from History

As we consider the career of Seth Coleman and the Coleman family we can see how contradictory policies between British and Nova Scotia authorities prevented the long-term development of the Quaker Whale fishery in Dartmouth. Many shipmasters including Seth's grandson, were driven away from Nova Scotia. Similarly, conflicting interests among the authorities prevented the smooth resettlement of the Black Refugees of 1812, in spite of the concerns of well-intentioned citizens like Seth Coleman. Whether it is settling refugees, building a canal, or encouraging a local industry, constant reversing of plans results in failure. Current goals of increasing immigration into the Province and assisting with the refugee crisis in the Mid-East and Europe will require determination and consistency if a successful outcome is to be achieved.

Endnotes

1. Petition of Seth Coleman to Lt. Governor Parr, March 12, 1790. NSARM
2. John Patrick Martin, *The Story of Dartmouth*, privately printed, 1957, p. 138.
3. Lt. Gov. Wentworth to Seth Coleman, June 11, 1801; Nova Scotia Archives
4. Seth Coleman, Report to Lt. Gov. Wentworth, quoted in Douglas W. Trider, *The History of the Dartmouth Quakers*, self-published, Hantsport, 1985.
5. *Ibid*, p.140.
6. Alan Taylor, *The Internal Enemy: Slavery and War in Virginia, 1772 - 1832*. N.Y., Norton & Co, 2013.p.371 ff.
7. John Boileau, *Half-Hearted Enemies*
8. Report of the London Vaccine Institution for the years 1821,1824,1826 1827.
9. William Sabatier, Letter, July 28, 1823, printed in Reports of the London Vaccine Institution
10. Alan Taylor, *The Internal Enemy: Slavery and War in Virginia*, Norton Co.
11. Mrs. William Lawson, *History of the Townships of Dartmouth, Preston and Lawrencetown*, Halifax, 1893.
12. John Patrick Martin, *The Story of Dartmouth*, privately printed, Dartmouth, NS, 1957, p.315 note. Also, US. Consular Records, National Archives, Washington D.C. Lahaina Records 1842-55 No. 7625.

STUDENT'S REPORT

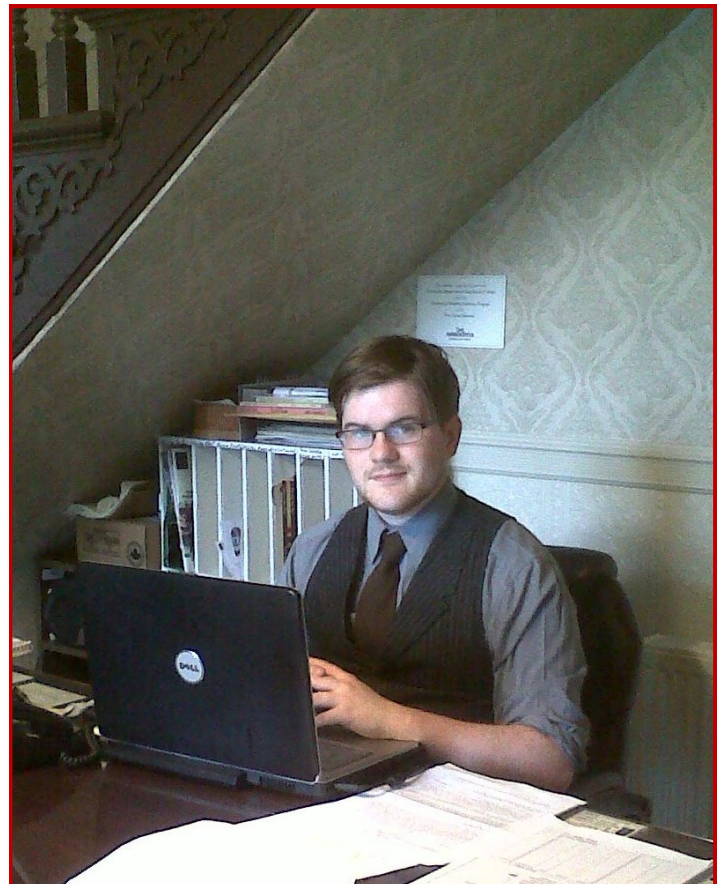
By Liam Caswell

My name is Liam Caswell. I am a fourth year university student currently finishing my honours degree in history at Mount Saint Vincent University. I have held the position of heritage interpreter with the Dartmouth Heritage Museum for three consecutive summers. As well as working at the museum during summer, I have also spent the autumn and winter of 2014 and 2015 working as an unpaid volunteer. After three years of both a paid employee and a volunteer, I have cultivated the highest regard and loyalty to the museum and its mission to share Dartmouth's rich heritage with both the local population and those visiting from abroad. Under the direction and guidance of Director Bonnie Elliott and Curator Crystal Martin, the summer staff is given charge of all manner of responsibilities which aid in both the scenes administration and visitor interaction.

As a summer employee one is given not one workplace; but two, each of which comes with its own focus and unique responsibilities. At the Quaker House, we are given beautiful handmade eighteenth century costumes and have the task of sharing with our visitors the story of Dartmouth's Quaker settlers, with in depth explanations and demonstrations ranging from textile manufacturing to dangers of the South Pacific whaling industries. Days at Evergreen House -- the current nerve center of the Dartmouth Heritage Museum complex -- are marked by a multitude of responsibilities for the summer staff. On top of the central job of ensuring all visitors receive a warm welcome and any information they desire on the house and Dartmouth at large -- this is usually accomplished through the offer of a full guided tour of the premises -- the summer staff are also given the opportunity to play an active part in archival work, advertising, and various other administrative tasks which allow for the museum to continue offering its wonderful programs and services to those who visit. On top of the varied standard duties performed by us summer staff, this summer we introduced Evergreen's weekly teas, highly successful events which allowed for the summer staff to take part in preparing the food and beverages as well as serving guests. So enjoyed were these tasks that the all of us looked forward to the teas with eager anticipation.

After three amazing summers at the Dartmouth Heritage Museum I can safely say that there are few better jobs offered to Nova Scotian students. As a history student I have been able to spend my summers pursuing a topic that I love while gaining valuable experience in visitor interaction and museum management. Every year I meet interesting people from both around the world and my own community who share with me their own experiences and knowledge, allowing me to learn almost as much as I teach. Every year I work at the Dartmouth Heritage Museum I feel truly privileged to be a part of such an extraordinarily valuable local institution and I hope that I will be able to maintain my associations with the museum for years to come.

Summer student Liam Caswell doing front desk duty at Evergreen House.



EVENTS & EXHIBITS

NOW ON



Bridal Gown Exhibit- June 5th to October 30th, 2015

A brand-new exhibit featuring nine bridal gowns from the first half of the 1900's is currently on. On display throughout the summer, each beautiful dress has a unique story and connection to the local area. Visitors will experience the developments in fashion first-hand by observing the styles chosen by the brides of the past for their special day. A coloured catalogue will be available for purchase at the front desk for \$5.00

Uncovered Gems: Warehouse Secrets Revealed

This exhibit will take a glimpse of some of the artwork, artifacts and archival stored at the warehouse. As a result of the progress that is being made to the collection stored at the warehouse, many of the treasured items are being uncovered! This exhibit will include an eclectic array of things chosen by the museum staff, the Collections Management Committee and warehouse conservators.

UPCOMING

Hallowe'en Tea — Saturday, October 24th

2-4:30 pm

With The Storyteller Circle of Halifax. This year due to the popularity of the event we're holding it in the Red Parlour at Evergreen House. Freshly baked Scones, Strawberry jam and cream cheese all served up with pots of hot tea. Details will follow. Book now for reservations. \$10.00 per person.

Phone 902-464-2300



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

Opening Saturday, November 14th 2015

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 both locally 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."

Evergreen House , 26 Newcastle Street, Dartmouth, NS.

Open 10-5pm, Tuesday– Saturday. Closed 1-2pm, Saturday

For more information on all events call 902-464-2300

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*Protecting, Preserving
& Promoting our
Heritage*

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Membership Notice

For those who have not yet paid their 2015-2016 membership dues, please consider doing so.

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.

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\$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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