

**Submitted to The Dunnville Chronicle
Via E-mail; July 17, 2002
For Publishing; August 14, 2002
By William A. Warnick
180 Rosslyn Ave. South
HAMILTON, ON L8M 3J5
Phone 905 549-6086 E-mail wwarnick@interlynx.net
(Word count 1944)**

Port Maitland and Stromness History Day at Former School

Photos;		
ems107	Steam Tug Mary Ann	
ac028	Senator Laughlin McCallum's home on Feeder Canal west of Stromness	
ac015	Ship yard at Stromness. Bridge # 2 in background Stromness looking east	
waw552	Sign Livingstone Hotel Public Auction from Dale Mater	Jan 16, 1877
ac025	S. S. # 3 Stromness - School	
pl005	Stromness Bridge # 2 at Stromness	Circa 1915
pl013	Livingstone, Family Abt 1935	
gad002	S. S. # 5 Sherbrooke at Highbanks - Class of 1933 - Teacher Genevieve Niece	Circa 1939
jhc008	S. S. # 3 Sherbrooke Teacher Miss Nora McQueen Inspector Mr. Clarke Moses Oct 2, 1916	

It is time for me to hold my annual Port Maitland History Display. This year it will take place at the former School in Stromness, on Saturday August 17th, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. . I will use the day to encourage the formation of a reunion committee by the former students of both now closed schools in the Township of Sherbrooke.

I attended S. S. # 3 Sherbrooke in Stromness. The S. S. stands for Union School Section. The school building has a long history dating back to 1879 when it was built by Archie MacLean and Abe Knisley. I do not know a lot about Abe, but did find an Abe Knisley who in 1889 ran a foul of the law when he, along with Herbert Winkworth, Robert Giles and William Binbridge were convicted in County Court for disturbing a religious service. Archie McLean was a well known carpenter who not only used his skills building homes, but also as a shipbuilder at Stromness.

With a recent find of a history of the Stromness school penned by the late Donnelly Pyle I can now put together what I believe is a complete list of all the teachers who have taught at Stromness since the present building was opened. Donnelly writes that prior to the construction of the present building there had been a one-storey brick school south of the present structure. Classes were often so large that one teacher could not handle all the students. This was resolved by the occasional hiring of a assistant who held class in the cloak-room. Prior to the one-storey brick school there was a log school situated north of the Feeder Canal. Even earlier than this there was a log school building known as S. S. # 1, on the property east of the Highbanks cemetery.

There are a number of class photos from the 1920s and 1930s with as many as fifty-six children in each. This was not an issue until I discovered that only one of the two rooms were in use. The upstairs room was used for many years as a community meeting room, which explains a note I found in the Dunnville Gazette of May 1889. *The pupils of Stromness school under the able management of their teachers, Mr. V. A. Markle and Miss Mabel McKnight assisted by the members of the Stromness Literary Society, gave a grand and most successful entertainment, in the Town Hall, on Wednesday evening May 1st . . .* If you are not familiar with S. S. 3, I can assure you, the class rooms are not very large and those fifty-six children must have sat on each other. Obviously the Town Hall is the upper floor of the school.

It was in 1908, when the former S. S. 5 school at Highbanks was built, replacing the log school (S. S. # 1 at Highbanks). In a history written by Howard Rittenhouse now a Baptist Minister in Owen Sound I discovered the old log school house had a history reaching back beyond 1841, when Baptist Church (Highbanks) Deacons, Stillwell and Doan used it to proclaim the Word of God. Both the Stromness and the Highbanks schools were closed around 1968. Stromness would become the Sherbrooke Community Centre, while Highbanks was sold to Steve and Judy Feczko. Steve used it for a

welding/machine shop for a time. It is presently owned by Gord and June Rafter who continue to use it as a machine shop.

I have occasionally written about Senator Laughlin McCallum and usually suggest he did not own Stromness, nor did he demand loyalty, of its inhabitants, but there was barely a morsel of soil within a few hundred feet either side of the Feeder Canal he did not own and it did no harm to be in his good grace! If you owned the forest, why not build boats! It is widely understood that the first boat to be registered in the new Dominion of Canada was built in Senator McCallum's shipyard at Stromness. It was named the *Mary Ann*. She was a seventy-eight foot steam tug owned by the Senator and captained by W. T. Robb.

The Senator only owned the *Mary Ann* a few years when he sold her in 1872. I do not know how many tugs, schooners and barges were built at Stromness by Senator McCallum but I do have a copy of the registration for hull # 32 a schooner named *M. C. Upper* built in 1874. From the Canadian Vessel's Registration (CVR) I found a document regarding the W. T. Robb. As transcribed it reads; "The steam tug *W. T. ROBB* was built at Stromness in 1864, and registered in Dunnville. Built by George Hardison, she is mastered by W. T. Robb. . . Owners; Laughlin McCallum of Stromness, sold to William Hall of Toronto, Feb. 5th 1872. It is believed that it was scrapped in Toronto." So who is George Hardison? I assume from this and other documents that George was the foreman on the job. It is also apparent from CVR that the Senator leased his shipyard as shown in the registration of the scow *Royal Oak*. It was built for William Hutchison by John Robinson. There is no indication what-so-ever that the Senator had any interest in this ship. Archie McLean would eventually take over the McCallum shipbuilding yard and become well known for his quality and quantity in boat building.

Before I move on to another subject, might I suggest the people of Stromness should be proud of Senator McCallum for among many other accomplishments he was elected to the House of Commons in 1867 for the former riding of Monck, making him among the first parliamentarians in our nation. He found himself in and out of elected politics until 1887, when he was appointed to the Senate. Besides his political and commercial pursuits Senator McCallum was connected with the militia, having served as Captain of the Dunnville Naval Company; serving at Fort Erie at the time of the Fenian raid. The Senator's home remains today and has been restored. It is owned by LeRoy and Pat Snively.

The Livingstone Hotel is said to have once been owned by Laughlin McCallum. From a sale poster we know that a mortgage sale took place on January 16, 1877 at which time the owner John Aikens was forced to dispose of his business. Three mortgages were held on the hotel and the lenders wanted their money. They were John H. Pyle holding the 1st mortgage, Elizabeth Falconer the widow of George Pyle holding the 2nd, and Ellis Silverthorn holding the 3rd. I have no information as to the outcome of this sale. I know that David Livingstone became the owner and that he had a licence to operate a tavern in Stromness by 1881. David continued as owner until his death in 1931. His wife the former Rose Kenney, and their daughter Beatrice continued its operation until the mid 1940s. It was sold to Fred Kilgour of Welland who ran it as, "*an old person's home*." Fred suggested to a young Colman Bagu (who later became the mayor of Port Colborne) that he purchase it. Colman attempted unsuccessfully to get a liquor licence. Judge Robb, who was then chairman of the Liquor Control Board held a meeting with Colman's lawyer Jim Leach to discuss the matter. The Judge ruled that he could not grant the licence because "*he has many old friends in Dunnville who would kill themselves on that winding Feeder road after drinking*." Ludie Chambers then purchased it and continued it as a senior home until, the building was purchased by Jim Molnar who then sold it to Dale Mater a great-grandson of David Livingstone.

Off the shore of Sherbrooke is the remains of the old light-house on Mohawk Island designed and built by a man named John Brown. John Brown was thought to be one of the best marine lock builders and engineers working with stone in North America. His light-house is still standing though in poor repair. Mike Walker of Lowbanks continues to make efforts to save it as an historic site. To this end I invited Lee Murdock of Kaneville Illinois a singer of traditional songs from the Great Lakes, and a Song-writer of ballads and folk music relating to Great Lakes heritage to visit Mohawk Island. I have provided Lee with a number of articles about the island, its history and tragedies. Hopefully he can come up with a song that will give a higher profile to the island, assisting Mike and the friends of Mohawk Island in the much needed fund raising.

John Brown also constructed the lock at Port Maitland. In its time it was believed to have been the largest lock in Canada. This lock remains at Port Maitland and is deteriorating and has become the depository of unwelcome garbage. The story

of this lock has been ignored, yet it is an important chapter in the history of the Welland Canal. I hope you will take a trip down to Port Maitland and take a look at it.

Visit the history display on Saturday. Meet Jim Schuit and John Burtiniak who have a great postcard collection. Jim collects Grand River cards while John will show his Sherbrooke collection. Des Rasch will once again display his many and very interesting antique surveying tools and old maps. The Dunnville District Heritage Association will support me once more by bringing along a Haldimand County School photo display as well as many other sundry items. Ontario Genealogical Society - Haldimand County Branch, will have many local families genealogies available and more importantly aids that can be purchased to assist you in your own research. They will be selling Cemetery Transcriptions mostly for Haldimand County, Wesley Methodist Baptismal Register for Haldimand County 1843-1846, Voters Lists Dunn Township 1898-1899, Voters List Canborough Township 1880 and 1922, Farmers Directory 1891-1906, and who knows what else! Recently our Dunnville Airport has experienced a renewed interest and with that came even greater exposure for the history which was responsible for it being there. R. C. A. F. # 6 Association Dunnville Inc. will have a display where you can learn the contribution young people from around the Commonwealth made while serving in Dunnville. Cheryl MacDonald tells me; *Along with a selection of heritage books I'll have a display on teachers - a significant part of which will be "Beyond the Classroom" - a look at teachers who went on to bigger and better things. Among them: Arthur S. Hardy, who taught high school in Caledonia before becoming prime minister; Meta Schooley Laws, who taught in South Cayuga while working as secretary for the UFWO, and whose efforts helped the United Farmers of Ontario win the 1919 election; Charles Wesley Coulter, who taught in Dunnville, then became a lawyer and County Crown Attorney for Haldimand.*

I am hoping Mike Walker will be able to find the time to get away from his busy marina to display his Mohawk Island photos and other related items. Then of course there is yours truly! I will bring my Port Maitland photos as well as many school photos I have collected over the years. There will be two tables manned by volunteers from S. S. # 3 and S. S. # 5 Schools to sign up all former Sherbrooke students in a hope that we can get a school reunion underway. Name tags will be provided to all former students in the hope that they will find an old friend. Violet Crumb Nee Ross, and Carroll (Carl) Kenney will compete for the most senior former Stromness student. I think Carroll has Violet beat by a couple of years!

If you have items, you wish written about or pictures you would be willing to lend, please drop me a note. Let me know how you feel about these articles. William (Bill) Arthur Warnick 180 Rosslyn Ave. South HAMILTON, ON L8M 3J5 e-mail wwarnick@interlynx.net Phone 905 549-6086.