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**Life goes on, Even on Christmas and New Years!**

As the annual *what do you call the holiday* debate approaches, I am reminded life does not always provide the expected. For instance, some of you are still waiting for me to finish my series on the churches of Sherbrooke and Dunn. Yet again, that is not going to happen this month. Instead, I decided to look through my research for items of interest that happened on or near Christmas or New Years. It goes without saying that not all things were desirable!

My research surprised me in that I discovered these were the days of marriages. I was not so surprised that people would marry on Dec. 24<sup>th</sup> or 26<sup>th</sup>, or Dec. 31<sup>st</sup> or Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup> but I find it interesting that they would marry on Christmas or New Years! I will name only a few. Otherwise, this article will turn into a boring data base! Hannah, daughter of Wm. Root, married Hiram second son of Daniel Dickhout on Christmas 1889 in Sherbrooke, - likely at the Baptist Church. I have never found any children from this marriage, nor do I have any idea what happened to Hiram and Hannah. Another wedding to steal the minister away from his turkey dinner was that of Sarah McIntee, who's parents remain a mystery to me, and Robert, the son of Wellington (Delly) Thompson. This marriage took place at the Dunnville Methodist Church and was conducted by Rev. J. C. Stevenson, in 1903. Family history tells us that Robert and Sarah were only about 14 or 15 years young at the time of their marriage. They would have a long marriage and become the parents of six off-springs. Many of us remember Rev. Emery Shank and his lovely wife Anne. Rev. Shank was married on Christmas Day 1921, to his first wife, Annie Siddall the daughter of Mrs. George White and the late James Siddall.

Havoc does not take a holiday! Christmas Day 1886, saw the fire of the fish-house of W. Dougher and Co., which totally destroyed the buildings including nets valued at \$1,800. Christmas Day 1933, would see the fiery destruction of Milo Gillap's second restaurant at Port Maitland. I have written about this restaurant before. It was a favourite tourist spot at the foot of the west pier in Port Maitland.

New Years meant a change for the Byng Post Office in 1893, when George Stephens took over the store in the village and inherited the Post Office duties along with it. George and his wife Alice Flower ran the store for many more years and can be found in many turn of the century photographs taken by their son-in-law Edwin J. McKee.

The Christmas season of 1932, would find hard-ship and death, for Richard (Dickie) Foster Sen. The lighthouse keeper at Mohawk Island and his son James went missing while returning from a season of caring for the lighthouse. Added to the loss of Richard and James was the fact that the two men were returning to assist family after there had been a fire at home. In 1932, there was no radio or phone communication with the island. Swinging lamps from the end of Chalmer's lane was thought sufficient. After a few days of bad weather and un-returned signals, Richard Foster Jr. and Ovide Charette, made their way to the island. There they discovered that the light had been secured for the winter and things looked as if the Fosters had left the island for the winter. A search was called for, in which a number of local fish tugs including the Maitland Rose were used. Fred Vorwerk, a local fisherman and recreational pilot made arrangements for a plane from Buffalo to join in the search. The winds were terrible and slush ice piled on the shore as much as 15 feet high and 200 feet wide. If the Fosters were caught in the ice banks formed along the shore, there would be little hope of finding them alive. On New Years week-end, James's body was found within hailing distance of a farm house at Point Abino. As fate would have it, Ovide Charette, a family friend found Richard's remains just off shore and only a short distance from James. This at least ending one part of the family's nightmare.

New Years Day was also a day for getting married, or at least some young couples thought it was. On January 1, 1890 Bill Hart, and Sarah Ross, the daughter of David Ross and Mary Kenney tied the knot with the help of Rev. R MacKnight. Another well-known couple selected New Years Day 1908, to exchange their vows. They were thirty-year-old Anson Minor, son of Reuben Minor and Catharine Kinnard; to twenty-nine year-old Candace Niece, daughter of Hosea Niece and Louisa Burkett. Their marriage took place at the Baptist parsonage in Dunnville. I have no notes of any offsprings from either of these couples.

In all my records I have only one holiday birth. Melissa Dickhout, who would marry Bill Pew was born on January 1, 1841. She is the only person whom I have recorded to be born on these holidays, and I have recorded many births! There were a number of deaths to take place on these holidays, but why end on that note!

Merry Christmas, Happy New Years, and Season's Greetings to all faiths as we celebrate our special time of the year!

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@cogeco.ca](mailto:wwarnick@cogeco.ca)