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# MAHONE BAY SETTLERS MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

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**The Mahone Bay Settlers Museum is a community-based museum and resource centre operated by the Mahone Bay Founders Society.**

**The Mission is to provide educational and recreational experiences that celebrate and preserve the history, culture and traditions of the Mahone Bay area.**

## Winter Project

Even when the doors are closed, work never stops at the Settlers Museum!

This autumn and winter the Museum received an internship grant through the Canadian Museums Association's Young Canada Works in Heritage Organizations program, which allowed us to hire back Victoria Hirtle, Dean's List graduate from St. Thomas University with an Honours Degree in English and a Minor in History. Vicky has been employed with the Museum as a summer student for the past four years.

Vicky's project from October to December was to digitize a collection of over 2000 photo negatives taken in 1986 of the Inglis/Quinlan ceramic collection. This set of pictures would be an invaluable asset to the Museum for standard tasks such as exhibit planning, the creation of informative labels, research, and much more. A special scanner capable of working with transparencies was borrowed from the Nova Scotia Museum, and with a great deal of patience the project was completed on time and well within museum standards.

The second half of this project, which began in early January and concluded at the end of February, was two fold. The first component was to take the digital images and connect them to their textual records in a format that was easy to access. Barbara and Gary Wuertz, our invaluable volunteer tech team, put together this database, while Vicky had the job of editor - reviewing the records and photos to make sure the proper connections were made.

The second component did not deal with the collection of digital photographs, but instead with the Museum collection as a whole. Vicky worked closely with volunteer curator Wilma Stewart-White and Manager Deborah Trask to catalogue and accession Museum artifacts. This involved becoming familiar with standard museum terminology as found in Robert G. Chenhall's book *Nomenclature for Museum Cataloguing—A System for Classifying Man-Made Objects*, learning the proper procedures for numbering artifacts and what equipment is to be used, and developing computer skills needed for data entry.

Both of these projects will require additional attention in the future, but they are off to a great start!



Vicky slaving over the collection database.

## School Book Launch

Mahone Bay history will come alive on **Saturday April 19**, at the Mahone Bay Centre, with the publication and launch of a history of the old Mahone Bay School, where the Centre is now located. ***Mahone Bay Old School: A Life and Times***, is over 250 pages, in a coffee table format (10" X 13"), coil ring bound for ease of handling. Researched and written by Bob Sayer, long time Mahone Bay resident, the book contains a background outline of school, town, and national events to provide the setting for first person accounts of school and town life, school board records, newspaper clippings, photographs, and memories of principals, teachers, and students. There are pictures on every page. More than 1400 names are listed in the index, so you can look up family and friends. The price of the book is \$35. To ensure that you have a copy from the first printing, contact the Centre office at 624-0890 to learn how to "pre-order" with a \$20 deposit by March 26.

On Saturday, April 19 at 2:00 p.m., Bob will present the book, share with us the experience of interviewing many former students and teachers, and introduce some of them to tell their stories "live". You will have a chance to roam through our newly repainted halls and rooms, hear the choir and band of present day students from Bayview School, and reminisce with former teachers and schoolmates. Coffee, tea and sweets will be served.

The Settlers Museum plans to have a sales table at the book launch event—hope to see you all there! Volunteers to help Manager, Deborah Trask, please call the museum at 624-6263.

# A Cup of Tea with Capt. Urban Wolff

By Victoria Hirtle

From the first summer I began working at the Museum in 2004, I immediately bonded with certain objects more so than others. One object, or more accurately set of objects, was a lovely bone china tea set, painted with pink lustre in a house motif, owned by Percy W. Inglis.



Bone china tea set owned by Urban Wolff.  
Photo courtesy of the Nova Scotia Museum.

As attracted as I was to the set, it would take an additional three years before I began to research the family that owned these pieces, and the real obsession began.

According to the records Percy and his niece Clara Quinlan so kindly left behind, the set was once owned by Capt. Urban Wolff. It was the name 'Wolff', which was so impressively Anglo-Saxon in origin - suggesting amazingly heroic characteristics - that struck me so intensely and began my quest. I wanted to know all I could.

The Wolff story began with Nicholas, a farmer from Durlach Germany, who in 1751, at the age of 29, crossed the Atlantic Ocean on The Murdoch to settle in the New World. Between he and his two wives, Annalise (d. 1758) and Anna Dorothea, 15 children were born into the family. John Wendel (b.1764), child number seven, was married in 1784 and fathered 9 children with his wife Anna Maria. John Wendel's third son George (b. 1791) married in 1813 and with his wife Cath had four children. Enos (b. 1832) was the youngest of those four, and father to Urban, who was born in Mount Pleasant, NS, February 22, 1866.

In his youth it became clear that Urban was destined for a life at sea. Before the age of 20 he was the master of fishing schooners and other various vessels operating out of LaHave and Bridgewater. At 21, Urban traveled to the United States and became a Captain, governing various ocean vessels, including the six-masted *Wyoming* and the only seven-masted schooner ever built, the *Thomas W. Lawson*.

Between 1900 and 1910 the then married Urban, his wife Annie, and their son, Brent, moved to Mahone Bay to live with Urban's second cousin Anne Lilleta. Anne Lilleta had married George Pickles (d. 1901), a local doctor, and lived on Edgewater Street where the Irving now stands. It was while in residence at this house that Wolff made his true mark on history.

In 1916, while sailing off the Jersey Shore, Urban and his crew on the *Wyoming* saved the lives of two Cape May fishermen. The March 8, 1916 Progress-Enterprise Newspaper reads: "New Jersey fishermen, blown before wintry gale all night, rescued as all hope seemed gone by the schooner *Wyoming*, Capt. U.O. Wolff, of Mahone Bay, N.S., and brought to Boston. Two Cape May fishermen, blown more than 40 miles off their course by the 60-mile gale of a week ago last Monday, were rescued and brought here yesterday on the six-masted schooner *Wyoming*, having cheated death from exposure and starvation by less than half the round of a watch dial."



The Pickles House.  
Photo courtesy of David Hennigar.

On the morning of August 14, 1924, Urban died at the age of 58, his death described in the obituary as simply 'sudden'. He is buried in Bayview Cemetery next to his wife and family, all marked with impressive stones of polished red granite. The Pickles/Wolff house was demolished in the late 1950's.

As much as I have learned about Urban and his family, I know there is further knowledge to be gained. If you have any information regarding the Wolff family, please contact the Settlers Museum.

## Sources:

Ralph Getson, Curator at the Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic  
The Progress-Enterprise  
Lunenburg County, Nova Scotia Genweb Project  
Canadian Census 1881-1911  
Bayview Cemetery

## Paint Mahone Bay



The Paint Mahone Bay Committee is happy to welcome Sally Warren as its new committee chair. We look forward to the up coming summer festival and all of the fun and excitement that goes with it!

**Paint Mahone Bay takes place July 12 and 13, 2008.**

## Heritage Planning Strategy

The province unveiled the new Heritage Planning Strategy "A Treasured Past, A Precious Future" on February 25th. This is a government-wide plan detailing the 3 main directions for the next five years. The full strategy document in English and links to the French, Mi'kmaq and Gaelic versions are available at [www.gov.ns.ca/dtc](http://www.gov.ns.ca/dtc)

A copy is also available at the Settlers Museum for your perusal.

## MARK Your Calendar!

**"Our Best to You" bake sale  
May 31st  
St. James Anglican Church Hall**