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THIS WEEK

Top Story:: Efforts to revitalize downtown continue



Small steps are continuing to be taken towards bringing Sackville's downtown back to life. A business directory is being compiled, a 'gift idea' brochure is in the works, a community market is already under way, and work is beginning on bringing an agricultural component to the Fall Fair. These are just some of the projects and 'ideas' that were derived from a series of strategic planning workshops with the downtown stakeholders and a public forum held this past spring. These workshops were organized by the downtown issues committee, made up of representatives from the Greater Sackville Chamber of Commerce, Renaissance Sackville, Mainstreet Redevelopment and the town, to discuss ideas surrounding the revitalization of the downtown core. Rebecca MacLean, executive director of the Greater Sackville Chamber of Commerce, said a report was presented to the chamber's board on the various strategic planning sessions and the ideas that resulted from those meetings. The chamber has since formed a committee that will take a look at the report and develop an action plan "to pinpoint some of the projects we can start working on," said MacLean. The report has also gone out to local businesses, organizations and town council for their input, as well.

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Editorial::

Football Mountie renaissance should benefit town

It's been a while since MacAulay Field was crowded with cheering Mount Allison Mounties football fans. But that may chan...

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Sports::

Coach expected to bring wealth of experience to rebuilding Mount Allison football program

Feature::

Hickman family boasts rich history in Dorchester

Reunion draws family members from across North America

By Katie Tower
Sackville Tribune Post

Descendants of John Hickman, an Irishman who settled in Dorchester nearly 200 years ago, gathered in the tiny village this past weekend to pay homage to their family history.

About 50 Hickman ancestors from as far away as Florida, Kansas, Alberta, Ontario and Quebec congregated at the Hickman home on Main Street, a home that has been in the family for five generations.

"They weren't the original people that came after the expulsion but they were there at the beginning when the community was prospering," explained Marlene Hickman.

Marlene and her husband Robert Hickman, a direct descendant of John Hickman, currently live in the Hickman family home that was built in 1834.

"Basically they came here about the same time that Dorchester was developing...so there was 100 years of prosperity in the village and 100 years of prosperity in the Hickman family. The family and the community grew together and then waned together at the end."

The Hickman story starts back in 1817 when Irishman John Hickman arrived in the area. He soon settled on Dorchester Island and several years later, in 1820, he relocated to the 'village proper' to what became known as Dorchester Corner.

He took over ownership of the Dorchester Hotel and lived there for the next 25 years, where he was married and raised nine children, said Marlene.

She notes that John and his wife must have been very happy because all of his children, with the exception of one that died, "married into prominent families or created prominence themselves."

One of John's sons, William, became known as one of the most famous of the region's builders of wooden ships.

"He became famous as a shipbuilder, even though he had a lot of personal tragedies in his life, including children that didn't live and four wives that died," explained Marlene. "He built and maintained a fleet of ships and he had in the vicinity of about a dozen ships sailing all over the world, as far away as Martinique in the Caribbean and to Brimmen in Germany."

Joseph, another son, was a merchant and a ship owner in the area; James moved to Amherst and made his fortune there as a merchant, a



Back row, left to right, John Hickman, Robert Hickman, Judy Hickman Morison and Joseph Hickman. Front row, left to right, John Spencer Howell (II) and his wife Susan, Claire Howell and John Spencer Howell (I). All the people in this picture are direct descendants of Joseph Hickman. (Shiretown Image Maker/Dorchester)

Wed, August 3

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Coming from a Christian perspective, Travis Tait says he enjoys nothing more than working with young people in helping t...

[FULL STORY]



ship owner and a lumberman; oldest son John was the 'corrector of customs' at the village's port, managing the imports and exports coming in and going out of the wharf in Dorchester; while the youngest son married an innkeeper in Sackville.

John's daughter Mary married a Weldon, one of the original founding families in Dorchester.

"And they can be tied into the Shediac Inn, which was just recently torn down," said Marlene.

The couple first owned Weldon House, an inn in Dorchester, and then moved to Shediac and developed the Shediac Inn. They again relocated, this time to Moncton, and owned a hotel where the Brunswick Hotel now sits, on the corner of Highfield and Main.

Second daughter Susan married the head of the telegraph office in Sackville, one of the first of its kind in the region in the 1850s.

"So, as you can see, these were some pretty prominent people," she noted.

The family history, which Marlene has been gathering for many years, also details the story of one of Joseph Hickman's grandsons who was killed in the Kinmel Park Riots at the end of the First World War.

Two of the grandsons had gone overseas and one was killed during the riots as they were waiting to return home. On an evening in March, 1919, trouble broke out amongst 20,000 disease-ridden, war-weary troops stationed at Kinmel Park in Rhyl, North Wales. Many of these soldiers had been involved in the great battles of World War I, including the battle of the Somme. They thought the fighting was over. But by morning's light, 21 of them were wounded and five dead - killed by their own countrymen. One of those soldiers killed was the Hickman family member.

"He was an innocent bystander and was killed in his tent," said Marlene.

Many of the Hickman descendants served in both the first and second world wars and were decorated, she said.

Marlene said her family also recently discovered another Hickman descendant, who was able to provide more information for her genealogy research, and who arrived in Dorchester this weekend to visit the home that was built by his ancestors.

John Howell is from Florida and is the descendant of Alma Hickman, granddaughter of Joseph Hickman, who married a Davidson from Bridgewater. Alma was said to have died in childbirth and her daughter was raised by another family and didn't maintain a close connection with the Hickmans and they eventually lost touch.

"So by chance, this gentleman (John Howell) discovered that his grandmother (Alma's daughter) was a Hickman and that perhaps she came from Dorchester and that's all he knew."

While doing research on-line, John Howell discovered the Keillor House and contacted the staff there to see if they had any information about the Hickman family in Dorchester. He soon came to find out that the Hickmans still lived in Dorchester, still in the original family home.

Although it's been great discovering a new branch on the 'family tree,' Marlene said there are still branches that the family has yet to discover. Many of the Hickmans' died at a young age, leaving behind children that were soon orphaned.

Doing the research for the family tree has been a big job, Marlene notes, but has been a lot of fun. Although she has been filing papers and gathering information on the Hickman history for nearly 25 years, she only recently started pulling it all together.

Her husband, she says, has always been aware that there was a rich history in the family but he didn't have all the details.

"He just had random facts. Somebody was a shipbuilder, somebody owned a store..."

Last summer, after a suggestion by one of

the older Hickman cousins to have a family reunion, Marlene decided that she better get all the facts straight about the Hickman history.

"I thought 'I better find out what this history is about because I've lived in this house for almost 30 years. I've been living in the same walls as four other generations...they lived here, they died here."

Marlene and Robert's two daughters were the fifth generation to grow up in the house and will probably be the last.

"The Hickman name in Dorchester will end with my husband," said Marlene. "There are a lot of Hickman males, but they won't be living in this house in Dorchester. This will be the end of the era."

Learning about the history of her husband's family has brought about a greater appreciation of what the Hickmans' accomplished over the years.

"They were not the Kings," said Marlene, "but they were the backers and they were the supporters. And if some of them hadn't been dealing with so many personal tragedies in their lives, who knows what they could have accomplished?"

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CHRIS LEBLANC
COLUMNS: - TANTRAMAR TEEN - **A bit of nostalgia to burst my adulthood bubble**



TODAY'S GENERATION BENT ON 'IMPROVING' THINGS TO FIT CHANGING SOCIETY

One quiet Sunday morning I found myself surfing through the television channels at 60 kilometers per hour; oh wait, I mean 60 channels per second (and I just couldn't find a darn thing on TV too) desperately trying to find something of slight amusement. A...

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