



The Rucksack

Newsletter of the Friends of McNabs Island Society
 The society is a registered charity: CCRA number 88847 4194 RR 0001



Volume Eighteen, Issue 4

Celebrating 21 Years

Winter 2010 - Spring 2011

Friends of McNabs Island

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Guest Speaker

Dr. Carla Wheaton

Cultural Resource Manager with Parks Canada
 presents

Fort McNab

National Historic Site of Canada: Gatekeeper of Halifax Harbour

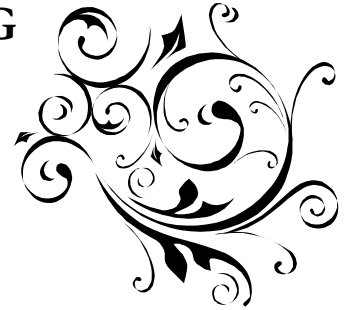
Learn more about the recent work to stabilize this 19th century National Historic Site

Thursday, April 14, 7:00 pm

Small Craft Gallery, Maritime Museum of the Atlantic

1675 Lower Water Street, Halifax

Contact Faye Power 443-1749 or mcnabs@chebucto.ns.ca for details or visit: www.mcnabsisland.ca or the McNabs Facebook/Twitter pages



Parks Canada has undertaken substantial stabilization work at Fort McNab. The most striking change to the site has been the addition of two breech-loading guns formerly in service at Fort McNab but moved decades ago to Fort Ogilvie in Point Pleasant Park and York Redoubt. With the return of its guns, Fort McNab may once more be considered the "Gatekeeper of Halifax Harbour." Work is expected to conclude by the end of April when the site will be once more open to the public.

Pictured right: one of the breech loading guns returned to Fort McNab
 Photo courtesy Carla Wheaton.



| <i>In this Issue:</i> | | | |
|-----------------------|---|-------------------|-------|
| Trail Improvements | 3 | Boyhood on McNabs | 4 & 5 |
| Ministers Meeting | 6 | Events | 8 |

**Friends of McNabs Island Society
Rucksack**

Web address: <http://www.mcnabsisland.ca>

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MEMBERSHIPS: Individual Membership or Newsletter Only is \$15 per year, Family Membership is \$20 per year, Supporting Membership is \$50 per year and Sustaining Membership is \$100 per year. We are a registered charity and accept donations.

Contact address: **Friends of McNabs Island**
PO Box 31240
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We welcome contributions, ideas and feedback.

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**Friends of McNabs Island
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Letter to the editor:

Theresa: Re Memories 1945-50 by Janet Taylor

Jan 3, 2011

I was born in 1938, my mother was Edna McGinnis. The McGinnis, Hurshman families settled on the island around 1900 and yes the water was very warm in the cove and as small children we didn't venture over to the point where the "Taylors" lived but in latter years did visit the Willis family and also my uncle, Doug McGinnis who had a camp near the "Taylors". We lived on Barrington Street at that time and a family of "Squires" lived up the street from us.

The unidentified man in the picture is George Squires. Mr. Squires celebrated his 100th birthday in Oct 2010 in Ontario. At this writing I learned he passed away in Dec 2010. George's name is carved in a rock on the beach, with the date 1925, below the cliff near my uncle's cabin. I spent every summer on the island until I was 14 and still visit every summer.

P.S. I have many pictures if you wish to see them.

Thanks, Darryl Clark

(Editor's note: After discussion, Janet Charest & Darryl both agree the unidentified man is not George Squires. The photo appeared in the Summer 2010 issue of the Rucksack.)

Does anyone know this man?



From left to right Caroline Poirier, Elizabeth Garrett and Mary Squires circa 1920. The mystery man is seated in front.

Photo courtesy Janet Charest.

McNabs Island Trail Improvements

By Catherine McCarthy

McNabs Island is the responsibility of the Department of Natural Resources, but the DNR doesn't have a budget to protect and preserve the park, let alone pay for any improvements that might be needed. A recent report to DNR, as part of the Natural Resources Strategy review, pointed out that all parks in Nova Scotia are seriously underfunded. However, some parks like McNabs don't receive any funding at all.

Since there are so many things that need improvement on McNabs Island, the Friends of McNabs decided to see what we could do to raise money for McNabs. Over the past few years we have raised nearly **\$400,000** to fund trail and island infrastructure improvements.

Last year, significant upgrades to Garrison Road were completed and by the time you read this, the Colin Stewart and Brow Hill Trails will be rebuilt. The Colin Stewart Trail meanders around McNabs Pond, through the McNab Family homestead area and eventually meets Halifax Harbour. The Brow Hill trail is perpendicular to the Colin Stewart and leads to Fort McNab National Historic Site.

This Colin Stewart – Brow Hill trail loop will allow visitors to visit Fort McNab, which reopens this spring following an expensive make-over by Parks Canada, and return to Garrison Road via Brow Hill and the Colin Stewart trails. Eventually we hope to install park benches along this trail loop so that visitors can stop to appreciate the scenery near the McNab homestead, McNabs Pond and Halifax Harbour.



A French drain will be installed to take water off wet areas, like those pictured, on the Colin Stewart Trail.

This past year, we received \$25,000 from HRM to pay for composting toilets on McNabs. Within a few weeks a new barrier-free Clivus Multrum toilet will be installed on Garrison Road near Teahouse Lane. This will be the first of several composting toilets we hope to install on the island. If we can raise the necessary funds, we hope to place composting toilets near Fort Ives and Wreck Cove. These environmentally friendly toilets will be a welcome addition for island visitors.

Most of the funding for the island improvements this year comes from a grant from the Department of Health and Wellness, as well as, funding from HRM councillors, Jackie Barkhouse, Bill Karsten, Darren Fisher, Jennifer Watts, and Dawn Sloane. The Dartmouth and Southwestern Community Health Boards contributed too.

In addition, after sending out a call to our members in February asking for support for the trail project, we are happy to report that we raised \$1,450 in memberships and donations to date. Thank you everyone, every little bit helps.

This extra money helps us match the funding from NS Health and Wellness. The Department agreed to fund 1/3 of our total expenditures up a maximum contribution of \$45,000. However, in order to receive the total contribution, we need to raise \$90,000 or 2/3 of the total expenditures. We still short of this goal by about \$10,000.

If you haven't renewed your membership yet for 2011 or would like to make a contribution, please fill out the membership form enclosed in this Rucksack. Remember that because we are a Registered Charity, all contributions to the Friends of McNabs Island are tax-deductible. Also if you have any ideas on how we can raise funds to improve the trails and infrastructure on McNabs, please give me a call at 434-2254 or email mcnabs@chebucto.ns.ca



Joey?, Sidney Burnett, Jackie Lynch and Harold Curran 1937

BOYHOOD ON MCNABS

by Carolyn Mont

Over the past few years, I have had the pleasure to meet and chat with a number of people who were full or part time residents of McNabs Island. Each of them has offered an insight into a period of time on the island. Many of them have allowed me to write about their particular memories and some have written their own stories.

I recently had the opportunity to meet and talk with another former resident, Harold Curran. His story covers a period not previously covered in *The Rucksack*. Harold is a grandson of Matthew

Lynch and lived with his grandparents in the house we call the Matthew Lynch House for about 12 years. His mother was Etta Marie, sister of Bill Lynch and Gladys (Lynch) Conrad. The Lynches had two other children, Bertha (Lynch) Graesen) and Jack. Jack also lived on the island as an adult and his house is the one opposite Fort Ives. What a wonderful spot for a boy to grow up.

Harold has an excellent memory and loves to talk about his childhood on McNabs. He lived there from the early 1930's until the mid 1940's. He told me that in the winter, the boys often played hockey on the pond at Ives Cove which looks up the harbour to the city. At that time there were a number of families living on the island and there was no problem getting a hockey game going. It was usually a great time but Harold remembers one time when he fell through the ice and had to crawl to safety.

There was no snow removal system on the island other than shovels. Harold enjoyed shoveling snow and there was lots of it to shovel. At times, the Lynches had a helper who would move the snow with a horse-drawn plow.

This helper was known to Harold as Harry the Hermit. He lived in a small shack near Back Cove, overlooking Lawlors Island. He was a European who had a white dog and several cats. He was sometimes employed cutting hay on Gladys Conrad's field.

Some of you will remember the ponies Bill Lynch, Harold's uncle, had at the Bill Lynch Fair. During the off season, those ponies lived on McNabs Island and roamed free a lot of the time. I certainly remember seeing them when I visited the island as a child. We were always delighted to see them but heeded our parents' words of caution. Harold, however, had no cautious words to heed. In fact, when the ponies were on the island during his time there, they were his responsibility.

He knew all the ponies by name and has lots of stories to tell about them. He lived in his Uncle Billy's house (the Matthew Lynch House) which is on the Military Road. Soldiers would often walk that road going from one fort to another. One dark and foggy night, an all black pony named Blacky was on the road when a soldier was walking along it. Blacky walked up to the soldier who didn't see



Ponies grazing on McNabs Island

or hear him and bumped him in the belly. The soldier was terrified and we can all imagine the laughter that would have caused among the locals in the days following. Another time, a woman had come back from town with groceries in her basket. As she walked from Garrison Pier, a pony walked behind her gently nibbling on the food.

His grandfather, Matthew, was often building things. At one time, he built a very small house on the island, near his home. Harold remembers horses hauling the logs used to make this house which was built as a retreat for Josephine (Josie), Matthew's wife. He fixed up this tiny house in the woods with carpeting and furniture. On occasion, during the war, someone from the army stayed there. I have heard this house referred to as the Dwarf House but perhaps a better name would be Josie's Retreat.

The school Harold attended was within Fort Hugonin. There were no guns in the fort between the wars and the school was for students up to grade 8. When he was in Grade 9, Harold travelled on the duty boat to town to attend St. Patrick's High School. The little school he attended on the island had approximately 12-15 students and was heated by a beehive stove in the middle of the room. The families he remembers attending school there were: Hurley, Morrissey, Deveau, Farrant, Cleveland, Fader, Macdonald, Frederick and Hurshman. These families were full time residents of McNabs Island.

I think Harold is the only person I've spoken with who remembers the merry-go-round on the picnic grounds. That location has also been known as Finley's Pleasure Grounds. Bill Lynch bought the fair equipment and eventually took it off the island but Harold remembers being there with his mother and Aunt Gladys watching a beauty contest.

If anyone else has stories of their time on McNabs Island, please let the Friends of McNabs Island know. We would love to have those memories in our history. (Photos courtesy Harold Curran)

No Donation is Too Small

Hi Cathy and Friends of McNabs Island,

Please find enclosed money for a family membership and an additional donation (\$33.33) to the Friends of McNab's Island Society. The money is a donation from my 9 year old son, Reid. For his birthday party this year, he decided that some of the money children gave him would go to charity. He chose your organization, the Friends of McNabs Island.

My son Reid has had three birthday parties on McNabs Island. The first one was when he turned 7 and the other two when he turned 8 and 9. The friends he invited for the last two years have said "It's the best birthday party we have ever had". He is even thinking he would like to go there for his 10th birthday party and may try to have an overnight sleepover/camping event on McNabs.

We look forward to your newsletter and hope to participate in some island activities with you in the future.

Sincerely,

Holly, Phil, Reid and Lachlan Brown



Reid (second from left, holding up his stick) and brother Lachlan (centre front), celebrating Reid's birthday on McNabs Island. Photo Holly Brown

Meeting with Government Ministers

By Catherine McCarthy

On March 22, **Faye Power and I**, along with **Becky Kent**, MLA for Cole Harbour - Eastern Passage (including McNabs Island), met with two provincial cabinet Ministers; **Percy Paris**, Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism and **Charlie Parker**, Minister of Natural Resources.

Minister Paris had called the meeting to get to know the Friends of McNabs Island better. Last September, the Minister and his staff visited McNabs Island for the first time and he was truly impressed. Minister Paris sees McNabs as a park with great potential. This past year, his department gave the Friends of McNabs Island funding to develop an Interpretation, Orientation and Signage Plan. The plan will outline the best way to tell the McNabs Island story to visitors, and lay-out details for the design of future visitor kiosks for Garrison Pier and Wreck Cove, as well as, design trail directional signs for the island.

We appreciate the interest of the Tourism Department in McNabs Island and hope that the Department can convince other government departments that McNabs Island is special for Nova Scotians and our visitors.

We are constantly hearing stories of tourists, who stumbled upon McNabs. Last fall we had a visitor from France take part in our Fall Foliage Tours, and just the other day, I had a call from a woman in New Glasgow who took friends from England to the island last September. These English tourists were on a cruise ship from New York to Nova Scotia with a port-of-call in Halifax for a day. They chose to spend that day on McNabs Island and had a wonderful time.

What better place for our visitors to experience Nova Scotia's natural beauty and discover fascinating historic sites than on McNabs?



Joan Cleveland, Bill Bulger, Marge Cleveland, Sis McGraw, Bill Tomes & Spot the dog at the club house. Photo courtesy Faye Power (Cleveland)



Skating on Ives Point Pond in 1944
Photo courtesy Faye Power (Cleveland)



Pond hockey, Ives Point Pond in 1937
Photo courtesy Harold Curran

McNabs and Lawlor Islands Beach Cleanup

Sunday June 5 (rain date- June 12)

Time: 10 am – 4:30 pm

Help the Friends of McNabs Island Society cleanup **McNabs and Lawlor Islands Provincial Park on World Environment Day!**

Location: Meet at Murphy's on the Water, Cable Wharf, on the Halifax Waterfront before 10 a.m. Space on the boat is limited and available on First Come, First Served basis.

Bring work gloves, drinking water, a lunch and ENTHUSIASM. We will supply the garbage bags and **FREE** transportation to the island for volunteers willing to clean up the beaches.

Groups of more than ten persons must pre-register with the Friends of McNabs Island by calling Cathy at 434-2254 (evenings) or Faye (443-1749) or by e-mailing mcnabs@chebucto.ns.ca. Visit www.mcnabsisland.ca or our **Facebook** page for more details.

Over the past 20 years, volunteers have collected a staggering **9,500 bags of garbage and recyclables** from the beaches of McNabs and Lawlor Islands Provincial Park.

McNabs and Lawlor Islands Paddle and Clean-up

Saturday, September 10 (Rain date September 17)

Time: 9:30 am

Join fellow sea kayakers and open canoeists of Canoe Kayak Nova Scotia and Friends of McNabs Island Society for a leisurely paddle along the shoreline of McNabs and Lawlor Islands Provincial Park in Halifax Harbour. We will stop at several beaches to collect litter. Plastic bags will be provided, and a motorboat will pick up the full bags afterwards.

PFDs have to be worn while on the water, while the safety equipment required by the Coast Guard (floating line, bailer, and signalling device - e.g. whistle) will need to be on board. Bring your own lunch and drinks.

Location: Meet at the Shearwater Yacht Club, 9 Avenger Place in Shearwater.

Contact Katalin Ohlsson at 902-464-1236, (evenings) or at Katalin.Ohlsson@ns.sympatico.ca for more information or to pre-register.

Fall Foliage Tours of McNabs Island

Sunday October 16, (rain date October 23)

Time 10 am – 4:30 pm

Join the Friends of McNabs Island Society for the annual Fall Foliage Tour of **McNabs Island Provincial Park**. See the island in its autumn splendour and participate in guided history and nature tours.

Wear comfortable shoes and bring a lunch and drinking water.

Location: Meet at Murphy's on the Water, Cable Wharf on the Halifax Waterfront before 10 a.m. Space on the boat is limited and available on First Come, First Served basis.

Cost: \$12 (members and children) \$14 (non-members).

Groups of more than ten persons must pre-register with the Friends of McNabs Island by calling Cathy at 434-2254 (evenings) or Carolyn (477-0187) or by e-mailing mcnabs@chebucto.ns.ca. Visit www.mcnabsisland.ca or our **Facebook** page for more details.

McNabs Island Facts

88 Visitors to the Island were surveyed last summer. Survey says....

Did you know that 43% of visitors last summer were visiting the island for the first time?

Did you know that 42% of visitors landed at Garrison Pier and 38% landed at Wreck Cove?

Did you know that 36% of visitors travelled to the island in a private boat?"

Did you know that 92% of visitors say they would come back? The same percentage of visitors would recommend McNabs Island to their friends and family.



Duty Boat to McNabs
Deckhand Seldon Coolen
on deck & Captain Doug
MacGregor at the helm.
Photo courtesy Faye Power

VOL·UN·TEER

(vŏl ən-tîr) *noun*

A person who performs or offers to perform a service with no expectation of compensation

The Friends of McNabs Island Society runs on volunteer power, please consider giving a few hours of your time.

Not all jobs take a lot of time, some can be one-time-only help with an event, doing call backs or mailing out the newsletter. Please contact the executive through our email address.

Annual membership to the Friends of McNabs Island Society runs on the calendar year and includes a year's subscription to the society's quarterly newsletter, *The Rucksack*.

We thank you for your continued support and welcome your interest!

Send cheque, payable to:

The Friends of McNabs Island Society

PO Box 31240, Gladstone RPO
Halifax, NS B3K 5Y1

Phone Lyn Underhill at 444-7482 for membership inquiries.

**The society is a registered charity:
CCRA number 88847 4194 RR 0001**

The Rucksack is published by the **Friends of McNabs Island Society**.

Contributions, ideas and feedback are welcome.

Visit our website at: www.mcnabsisland.ca

Phone: Cathy (902) 434-2254 evenings
or email mcnabs@chebucto.ns.ca.

This issue went to print April 2011

For email updates about McNabs Island, send your contact information to:
mcnabs@chebucto.ns.ca or visit our Facebook group.

All memberships are renewable by the end of each year. Please fill out the renewal form enclosed with this issue. Your support for McNabs Island and our society is invaluable.

For any membership inquiries contact Lyn Underhill
at mcnabs@chebucto.ns.ca or by calling 902-444-7482.