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Social Anchors of Community: Church, Rink and  
School in Post War Musquodoboit Harbour, Nova Scotia

Cindy J. Kiley

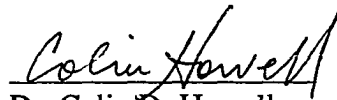
A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the degree of Master of Arts (History)

Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia

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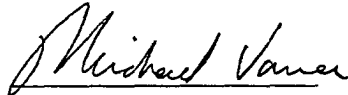
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## **Abstract**

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Title: Social Anchors of Community: Church, Rink, and School in Post War Musquodoboit Harbour, Nova Scotia

Date Submitted: August 31, 2001

Musquodoboit Harbour is a small community on the eastern shore of Nova Scotia. The main purpose of this thesis is to show the ways in which the First United Church of Musquodoboit Harbour, the Eastern Shore District High School and the Eastern Shore Community Centre were social anchors of the community in the post war era. Using a description such as 'social anchors' presumes agreement and consensus but this was not always the case. These institutions were at times 'contested terrain', and reflected the attitudes and values of the time in which they were established in the community.

The years between 1950 and 1980 were ones in which Musquodoboit Harbour experienced a significant number of changes in everything from highway improvements, to the establishment of provincial government offices, to the increase in recreational and educational opportunities as well as the expansion of the local hospital and medical clinic. The community had a small population relative to its local infrastructure and its 'identity' as a link between its own rural hinterland and the urban areas of Halifax and Dartmouth makes it a unique area to examine.



## Introduction:

### Placing Musquodoboit Harbour within An Established Historiography

Nova Scotia communities that exist on the edge of cities, in that liminal space that is neither rural nor urban, have often been excluded from conventional history because they were assumed to have little to offer for serious examination. When they are written, community histories are often celebratory in nature, concentrating upon special events or celebrations like centennials, or great ‘firsts’, such as ‘the first organized hockey league’ or the community’s ‘first telephone call.’ Other communities invent special claims to fame. Lunenburg is the ‘Christmas Tree Capital of the World’, Oxford can boast of itself as ‘The Blueberry Capital of Canada’, Windsor is ‘the Birthplace of Hockey’, and Stewiacke ‘the exact mid-point between the North Pole and the equator’. These labels are intended to give residents their own sense of identity, while appealing as well to a burgeoning tourist market.<sup>1</sup>

Community identity is more likely to be constructed in more mundane ways, however: in the experience of everyday life, and in the central institutions that exist in the town or village. This analysis of the postwar era considers the church, high school, and

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<sup>1</sup> Nova Scotia Doers and Dreamers Guide, 2000, Nova Scotia Department of Tourism.

rink as social anchors of community identity. In Musquodoboit Harbour, a small village on Nova Scotia's eastern shore, situated about thirty miles east of Halifax, the experiences of its residents will be examined in order to better understand the ways in which a sense of community identity was encouraged, reflected, but also diffused, by institutions that involved family, work, school, church, sport, leisure and volunteerism. It is at the same time a study of historical change over time. How did these institutions develop and change over time? What social purposes, and whose particular interests did they serve? Who assumed leadership roles in their development? And finally, to what extent did they reflect commonly held beliefs, or were they sources of conflict and discord?

Conventional accounts of these types of institutions in smaller communities have tended to concentrate on individuals or groups within them, and fail to address broader interactions and relationships within society and beyond the community's boundaries. For the most part, any hint of controversy is bleached out of these accounts. All of these institutions, however, can be studied as sites where values and beliefs are constructed, employed and contested. Explorations of the rink, church, and school will allow us to reflect upon how community and identity, or perhaps identities is a better term, are constructed through a continuous process of negotiation and invention. The institutions under study here did not just reflect an agreed-upon sense of community identity. The rink, the school and the church helped shape Musquodoboit Harbour and the lives of people who lived there. At the same time, these institutions were constructed amidst the 'politics of everyday life'.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Fernand Braudel, On History (University of Chicago Press, 1980)

Over the past half century communities like Musquodoboit Harbour have experienced the impact of larger processes of economic transformation, improved transportation and communications networks, the mobility associated with the automobile, the growth of suburbia and the expanded opportunity for employment in larger urban centers. Out of Musquodoboit Harbour's ever changing relationship with the cities of Halifax and Dartmouth, not to mention its altered relationship to its own hinterland along the Eastern Shore, one can identify the stresses and strains that accompany the community's attempt to create a coherent and uncontested identity for itself.

My purpose here is threefold. By examining Musquodoboit Harbour, I want to make a contribution to a period of study in Nova Scotian historiography that has been largely neglected. While it is true that the last thirty years or so has witnessed an unprecedented scholarly interest in the history of the Maritimes, until recently the focus has concentrated upon the period before World War II. Much of the early work on the post-Confederation history of Atlantic Canada has been concerned with the period 1867-1939, and more particularly upon the processes of industrialization and de-industrialization that affected the region as a whole. By contrast, little attention has been given to the postwar years. With the exception of a few chapters in Forbes and Muise, Atlantic Canada Since Confederation, however, the story of these struggles and the continuing process of economic and social transformation in the years since World War II have been largely ignored.

Canadian historiography was nonetheless revolutionized when scholars such as E.R. Forbes, T.W. Acheson, David Frank, Del Muise and numerous others took up an

examination of the sources of regional disparity and the responses to that process.<sup>3</sup>

Studies were undertaken with the intention of explaining the ways in which the Atlantic region has not only *reacted* to central Canadian manipulation but has been, and continues to be, *proactive* in the struggle to establish itself as an important part of the ongoing development of the nation. The journal Acadiensis was perhaps the most important expression of this relatively new focus within Canadian historiography, providing a forum for scholars and their graduate students to pursue issues specific to the Maritimes. Since its inception in 1971, Acadiensis has provided a wealth of insightful analysis by numerous Maritime scholars determined to recount a story of the area and its economic, social, political, and/ or cultural development. Colin Howell argues that at first much of this scholarship was economistic, emphasizing the male workplace, but in recent years, Maritime scholarship has expanded to include issues relating to gender, class, and ethnicity and the realm of social and cultural production. According to Howell, for the most part, the scholarly work that came out of that interest “has focused upon the struggles to create a more equitable and socially responsible society in the face of debilitating processes of economic transformation.”<sup>4</sup>

At the same time, the major discourses relating to post-Confederation Maritime history have largely centered on the city. Daniel Samson notes that the post-1880

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<sup>3</sup> For more on the processes which led to regional disparity in the Maritimes, please see E.R. Forbes, Challenging the Regional Stereotype, Essays on the Twentieth Century Maritimes (Acadiensis Press, 1989) especially Forbes chapter “The Origin of the Maritime Rights Movement”, p. 100; Also, P. Buckner and D. Frank, eds. Atlantic Canada After Confederation: The Acadiensis Reader, 2 vols. (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1985), vol. 2. ‘Others’ include T.W. Acheson, “The National Policy and the Industrialization of the Maritimes, 1880-1910.” Acadiensis I, 2 (Spring, 1972) p.3-27; David Frank, “The Cape Breton Coal Industry and the Rise and Fall of the British Empire Steel Corporation”, Acadiensis VII, 1 (Autumn, 1977)p. 3-34; James D. Frost, “The ‘Nationalization’ of the Bank of Nova Scotia, 1880-1910”, Acadiensis XII, 1 (Autumn, 1982) p. 3-38

<sup>4</sup> Colin D. Howell, “Two Outs: Or, Yogi Berra Sport and Maritime Historiography”, Acadiensis, XXIX, 1 (Autumn 1999), p. 108.

emphasis on industry and urbanization has produced histories over the past twenty years that support a 'two worlds' approach. In an examination of Atlantic Canadian society and rural workers from 1800 to 1950, Samson has argued that those studies that emphasized the rural have also largely been economically centered, histories based on fishing, farming, or mining, and for the most part influenced by the work of Harold Innis and the staples theory.<sup>5</sup> Innis was an important and influential Canadian historian/economist/sociologist who believed that Canada had been developed as a result of an abundance of primary staples, beginning initially with cod fishing and the fur trade, and followed by secondary staples such as mining, logging, and farming.<sup>6</sup> Samson explains that within the framework of the staples thesis, there is very little attention given to the aspirations of, or differences between, those people who live in the countryside. Rural dwellers were presumed to be cut from the same homespun cloth: they were imagined to be essentially conservative, market-oriented, individualistic, and independent. Unlike the yeomen farmer in the United States celebrated in Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis, moreover, Canadian farmers are credited with a less consequential role in the building of the nation. Except in Quebec, rural history was pushed to the periphery and the focus has been on the supposedly progressive urban areas continually expanding and predictably marginalizing traditional, rural regions. Rural

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<sup>5</sup> Daniel Sampson, ed., Contested Countryside: Rural Workers and Modern Society in Atlantic Canada, 1800-1950. (Acadiensis Press, 1994). p. 2

<sup>6</sup> Recent Maritime applications that work out of Innis' model include, Sean Cadigan's essay in Contested Countryside, entitled "Planters, Households, and Merchant Capitalism: Northeast-Coast Newfoundland, 1800-1855" which examines the economic relationship between fish merchants and fishing people. Cadigan explains that it is useful to look beyond merchant capital as a reason for Newfoundland's late entry into the industrial capitalist transition. As well, Cadigan's book, Hope and Deception in Conception Bay. Merchant-Settler Relations in Newfoundland, 1785-1855 (Toronto 1995) uses elements of the staples model to suggest that the resource base of the fishery and the legal institutions of the initial fishing industry limited the ability of fishing families to respond otherwise to the exploitation by merchants. See also,

Nova Scotian historiography thus remains largely underdeveloped.<sup>7</sup> Given that there are few major historical works in the area of social and cultural production in rural Nova Scotia, especially in the post World War II era, theoretical approaches to the topic are virtually non-existent.<sup>8</sup>

A second objective of this study of Musquodoboit Harbour is to examine the interactions that can exist between a community that rests upon a fulcrum between its own rural hinterland and the urban communities of Halifax and Dartmouth. Just as an arbitrary distinction has often been made between the Maritimes and the rest of Canada, leading to inappropriate myths and assumptions, it is equally simplistic to distinguish too sharply between city and country or urban and rural. How did a semi-rural community such as Musquodoboit Harbour maintain a sense of social cohesion in the face of the economic and social transformations that took place after World War II? This study looks at three institutions – church, rink, and high school – which can be regarded as ‘anchors’ of community. To what extent do institutions of this sort serve to unite the community and to what extent are they the locus of conflicts and struggles relating to age, class, gender, and racial diversity?

In the existing studies of Maritime history, the tendency has been to place too definitive a distinction between the ‘two worlds’ of rural and urban life. Nonetheless, it

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Rosemary Ommer, From Outpost to Outport, A Structural Analysis of the Jersey-Gaspe Cod Fishery, 1767-1886. (McGill-Queens, 1991)

<sup>7</sup> Samson, Contested Countryside.

<sup>8</sup> There are a few however. Colin Howell’s Northern Sandlots: A Social History of Maritime Baseball, (University of Toronto Press, 1995) examines the social and economic influence of baseball on community life from the 1860s to the mid-twentieth century. Also in The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation, E.R. Forbes and D.A. Muise, eds. (University of Toronto Press and Acadiensis Press 1993) there are four chapters dealing with postwar Atlantic provinces. Finally, Ian McKay’s provocative work in The Quest of the Folk, Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia, (McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1994) concludes with a section that focuses upon the province’s tourism industry over the past half century, especially the decades since 1970.

is important to investigate the extent of the separation between the two and the changing character of each in the postwar era as technology and modernization blurred the line between rural and urban communities. Musquodoboit Harbour provides a useful example of a community never fully integrated into either an urban or a rural setting. In the work mentioned previously concerning industrialization and deindustrialization, attention has been focused upon those communities most affected by these changes, studies that tended to have a larger, urban-based focus.<sup>9</sup> It is important to look at Musquodoboit Harbour, and other communities of this sort, to understand the dynamics of development in a community that is neither urban, nor rural, but in-between, situated in a marginal or borderland location. The community's liminality, moreover, can exacerbate the problems of constructing a sense of its own identity, and despite its seeming homogeneity, even the smallest community can share the difficulty borderland regions face when attempting to assert and define a 'national identity'. The study of borderland communities, which is now a somewhat vogueish topic, has a long scholarly pedigree. In the 1920s, Herbert E. Bolton, a student of Frederick Jackson Turner, argued that Turner's 'Frontier Thesis' did not fully explain American development. Bolton explored instead the idea of the accommodation of newcomers and natives upon contact and the negotiation of 'borders'. This borderland construct is based upon the notion that geography - the sense that 'natural' landscapes are particularly important than history in shaping a nation's or region's culture and character. But equally important as geography, is the meaning that is imposed upon it. Nations and national identities, Benedict

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<sup>9</sup> For example, T.W. Acheson, "The Great Merchant and Economic Development in St. John, 1820-1850", *Acadiensis* VIII, 2 (Spring 1979) p. 3-27; Nolan Reilly, "The General Strike in Amherst, Nova Scotia, 1919", *Acadiensis* IX, 2 (Spring, 1980)p. 56-77

Anderson points out, are often artificially constructed out of a sense of belonging to an 'imagined community'.<sup>10</sup>

A third objective of this study is to discuss the role of the state in the private domain of family and leisure after World War II. In a recent study of the postwar politics of recreation in Ontario, Shirley Tillotson has noted that following the Depression of the 1930s and the ensuing world war, Canadians were allowing for state services that were both larger in number and more widespread than before. Prior to the 1940s, the state's responsibility was largely limited to redirecting tax dollars toward assistance for the poor, with some revenues being administered by private agencies and volunteer social workers. Sport and leisure were largely beyond the interest of the state. Instead, recreation fell under a long list of privately operated services such as orphanages, literacy training, nursing services and numerous others that could benefit from public funds but were privately managed.<sup>11</sup> Postwar discourses regarding government's growing social responsibility or 'interference' in the marketplace or in the citizen's daily life were influenced by the experience of the Depression and the state's wartime activities, along with assertions that a "liberal welfare state should provide people with assistance without taking control of their private, moral, or simply personal decisions."<sup>12</sup> By the 1960s and 1970s, government funding and intervention was becoming a matter of course in areas of health, education, the arts, and recreation – and especially sport. "Public recreation

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<sup>10</sup> Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism, (London, 1983) Another paper discussing the influence of borders and borderland analysis can be found in the American Historical Review 91 (February 1986), a 'Forum Essay' entitled "From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in Between in North American History." Authors Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron attempt to disentangle frontiers from borderlands to rescue the virtues of each construct. For more on Bolton, please see David J. Weber, "Turner, the Boltonians, and the Borderlands," American Historical Review, 91 (February 1986)

<sup>11</sup> Shirley Tillotson, The Public at Play: Gender and the Politics of Recreation in Postwar Ontario, (University of Toronto Press 2000) p. 9



programs were meant to regulate popular values but to do so in ways that were consistent with liberal conceptions of freedom. The purpose of state funded recreation, like that of public education, was to mould certain citizen personality.”<sup>13</sup>

In the past, when examinations of sport, family, gender, religion, or education were undertaken, the approach was often one that involved looking at the chosen topic in isolation. Within the last few years, however, more studies have emerged that combine different areas of social history with the purpose of producing a more complete picture of people’s lives at the community level. In a village the size of Musquodoboit Harbour, institutions were closely intertwined and studying them together will provide a clearer understanding of life in Musquodoboit Harbour and the way in which social capital is shaped by economic structures, such as schools and rinks. By examining the role of government in these areas, a critical understanding of the shaping of sport and leisure by the marketplace can be examined and how all of these elements fit into the broader context of the creation of hegemony and the liberal order. Common values become common sense evident in a hegemonic commitment to shared liberal values and a resistance to communism and the Cold War. Studying a community and a common culture of shared beliefs and lifestyles allows for general historical ideologies such as, for my purposes here, the application of a liberal democratic ideal upon the public provision of institutions such as rinks, churches, and schools, to be put to the test in a certain place at a certain time. For example, in the context of the Cold War and responses to it, were the trumpeting of values of individualism and social democracy in contrast to a rigid authoritarian Soviet regime, which met with widespread acceptance.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid. p.11

<sup>13</sup> Carolyn Strange and Tina Loo, Making Good. (University of Toronto Press 1997) p. 27

Suzanne Morton has found that by narrowing study to a small community, it is possible to examine and reconstruct the daily lives of ordinary people in more detail, and “to explore questions about living conditions, identity, and culture.”<sup>14</sup> For men, women, and children in Musquodoboit Harbour from 1950 through to 1980, although their life experiences were in some ways similar to other Canadians, they also experienced daily living in ways specific to their community. Nevertheless, there is value in approaching the study in comparative ways. Lynne Marks’ study of late-nineteenth century Ontario Protestantism in three small provincial communities examines questions about individual and group identity. She has argued that within communities, values, beliefs, and different ways of life can provide a shared sense of identity while also strengthening distinct forms of identity.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, Rusty Bitterman’s examination of nineteenth century Maritime farm households and wage labour makes it clear that Atlantic Canadians moved in and out of different work situations all over the region, suggesting the many ways in which communities were continuously formed and dissolved. Indeed, while small communities look very easy to understand from afar, they become much more complex when closely examined.<sup>16</sup>

Musquodoboit Harbour is a small semi-rural community in Nova Scotia situated on the Atlantic coast, about thirty miles east of Halifax and twenty-five miles east of Dartmouth. It is the seventh locality along the Highway 7, heading east out of Dartmouth

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<sup>14</sup> Suzanne Morton, Ideal Surroundings; Domestic Life in a Working Class Suburb in the 1920s. (University of Toronto Press 1995). p. 5. She compares this approach to that taken by sociologists, influenced by anthropologists, geographers, and in history, the Annales school.

<sup>15</sup> Lynne Marks, Revivals and Roller Rinks; Religion, Leisure, and Identity in Late-Nineteenth-Century Small-Town Ontario. (University of Toronto Press 1996). Also, Nancy Bouchier, “Idealized Middle Class Sport For a Young Nation: Lacrosse in Nineteenth Century Ontario Towns”, Journal of Canadian Studies, 29 (Summer, 1994)

<sup>16</sup> Rusty Bitterman, “Farm Households and Wage Labour in the North Eastern Maritimes in the Early Nineteenth Century”, in Contested Countryside, Samson, ed.

in the direction of Guysborough. The original highway, now the 227, followed the winding coastline, moving its way east and then north to Porter's Lake through two communities, eventually reaching Musquodoboit Harbour before continuing eastward. Evidence of early European, Loyalist, and Acadian settlement along the route exists in the form of old houses and a 117 year old Roman Catholic Church, Saint Anselm's, in the Acadian settlement of West Chezzetcook.

The first recorded family to settle in Musquodoboit Harbour arrived from Scotland in 1819. John Anderson, along with his wife and nine children, constructed a camp, and then a sawmill in a community with "only three houses and very few families."<sup>17</sup> By 1838, the residents were involved in shinglemaking, one in shoemaking, and one each employed as millwright, labourer, ship carpenter, and justice of the peace. Writing in 1840, Joseph Howe indicated the lack of communication between the village and the provincial capital, stating that the best route was by water, some five or six hours to Halifax.<sup>18</sup>

Almost eighty years later in an article entitled, 'The Land of Sleep' in The World Wide Magazine, Lacey Amy wrote an account of his tour along the Eastern Shore in a coach delivering mailbags. He described Musquodoboit Harbour as "the first settlement of consequence east of Halifax, and [which] promises in the future to attain some popularity as a summer resort for the weary Haligonian."<sup>19</sup> The village contained two stores and a 'first class stopping place.' It was common in those days to change horses every fourteen miles and because Musquodoboit Harbour was twenty-eight miles from Halifax, it was situated in a convenient location for a stop-over. Amy described a

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<sup>17</sup> MG 100, volume 102 – N 18-18a (reel 15160) PANS

<sup>18</sup> MG 100, volume 194 - #38c, PANS

deserted sawmill, and a mill dam where ‘four or five speckled trout could be hauled out by jigging.’ In the words of the author, the deserted mill was the result of “the old story of the English spending too much money to construct...recklessly managed...had to close.”<sup>20</sup> The road was described as the only one within seventy-five miles, ‘doubtful if one quarter mile is straight, horses and even oxen, a novelty. In two hundred miles of travel, met six vehicles.’ The area was also described, likely with a good measure of exaggeration, as the most ‘churchy’ district in Canada.<sup>21</sup>

There are a number of reasons why *postwar* Musquodoboit Harbour might be of special interest to historians. For one thing, the years following World War II experienced economic and social transformations that were reflected not only internationally and nationally, but also provincially and regionally. Musquodoboit Harbour was no exception. All levels of government – federal, provincial, and municipal – grew quickly after the war. People were marrying younger, having more children, moving to the suburbs to own their own home and raise their families in more wholesome surroundings, all fuelled by postwar affluence and the fantasy package of a better life. While urbanization was certainly a trend that had been in existence since the beginning of the century, better highways and more localized modern conveniences appealed to that segment of the population desiring the benefits of the ‘suburban lifestyle’. Those benefits included cleaner, healthier air and the pride of home ownership,

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<sup>19</sup> MG 100, volume 221 -#3 (reel 9678) PANS

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

not to mention a place where the emphasis was on the male as breadwinner and womanhood was firmly entrenched in the domestic realm.<sup>22</sup>

Promotions of suburbia and the ideal nuclear family were abundant in the media, including popular American television programs throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Indeed, the focus on rebuilding nations after the war also included rebuilding families. The advent of television meant that almost every home knew what the 'perfect' family looked like by the end of the 1950s. Shows such as 'Father Knows Best' and 'Leave it to Beaver' emphasized parents spending time with children, mom at home, dad off to work after a nice family breakfast, and high-lighted children's interests in sports and music lessons. Of course, Mom needed a car for transporting children to their after-school activities, so that meant eventually two cars per family. In popular contemporary literature, images of the 'simplicity' and healthfulness of rural life was promoted in two best selling books of the 1950s, Ernest Hemingway's novel, The Old Man and The Sea, and closer to home, Ernest Buckler's bestseller, The Mountain and The Valley. Children of this 'baby boom' era grew up in a home and a school that was child-centered.

There was a seamier reality beneath this image of prosperity. In contrast to the 'fantasy' of the 1950s, continuing pockets of poverty and underdevelopment led to various regional programmes and federal transfers that were directed at the Maritimes especially. In Nova Scotia, the government introduced changes that would impact education, transportation, leisure, family, and employment. Compared to the rest of the

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<sup>22</sup> For detailed readings on gender issues in the postwar decades, please see, Veronica Strong-Boag, "Home Dreams: Women and the Suburban Experiment in Canada, 1945-1960," Canadian Historical Review 72 No.4 (1991) 471-504; "Canada's Wage-Earning Wives and the Construction of the Middle Class, 1945-1960", Journal of Canadian Studies 29 No.3 (1994): 5-25; Meg Luxton, "Two Hands For the Clock: Changing Patterns in the Gendered Division of Labour in The Home", in Canadian Family History, Selected Readings, ed. Bettina Bradbury. (Copp, Clark, Pittman. 1992)

country, Atlantic Canadians emerged from the Second World War with a per capita income 24% below the average Canadian – by 1955, it had dropped even thirty to 33% below. Many Atlantic Canadians expected assistance from the state and this, along with advice from department experts, convinced premiers into accepting the need for state planning and federal aid was needed in order to be successful.<sup>23</sup> Initially, poverty was targeted, and the growing public awareness of the social inequalities sweeping through the region led to a significant extension of the social welfare system. Struggles that were grounded in conflicts over values, including equality for women, blacks, natives, and youth, began to emerge through the 1960s. One example of this was the young men conscripted to participate in the war in Vietnam. In Canada, including the Maritimes and Nova Scotia, American draft dodgers were part of a ‘back to the land’ movement that romanticized the rural, buying into the notion of a simpler life. Ian McKay has noted that particularly in Nova Scotia, “the period from 1927 to 1960 witnessed a widespread urban fascination with rural ways”<sup>24</sup>

While not actually a *suburb* of Halifax, Musquodoboit Harbour can be examined in a similar context, as a link between rural and urban. Part of its appeal following World War II was its close proximity to the capital city. Since Musquodoboit Harbour is located within commuting distance to a major provincial metropolis, it carries the appeal of relatively close urban conveniences, like employment, universities, modern entertainment and culture, and consumer ‘needs’ such as shopping malls. At the same time, it is a

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<sup>23</sup> Margaret Conrad, “The 1950s: The Decade of Development”, in The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation, E.R. Forbes and D.A. Muise, ed.

<sup>24</sup> Ian McKay, The Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia. MacGill-Queen’s University Press, 1994. p. 9. See also Raymond Williams, The Country and The City and Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities for more on the way in the romantic notions of the rural served as a cure for the ills of urban life. Williams especially suggests that the contrasts between the country and the city, as fundamental ways of life, reaches back into classical times.

community on its own, considered central along the Eastern Shore as it presently accommodates the regional hospital, including a medical staff of seven doctors, five of whom live in Musquodoboit Harbour; the only skating arena for about 150 miles east of Dartmouth, and the consolidated high school, built for students as far east and west as twenty miles. All of these amenities are considered basic essentials to modern day living. It can also boast the convenience of an RCMP detachment, a public library, and a municipal office. Because of its location and the convenience of modern transportation, residents are able to work in one community, live in another, visit their church, doctor, attend school and play sports in still another. Of course, this was not always the case. During and immediately following World War II, most residents worked locally, in jobs in the natural resource sector, such as fishing and logging. There were few local businesses. A number of the citizens had worked in Halifax or Shearwater during the war but most returned to the community immediately afterwards. Many traveled to the city on Monday morning and didn't return until Friday evening, boarding in town through the week. Children walked to school, sports were localized and the churches were the center of community social activity.

Before the technology that has become synonymous with the 1950s, it was rare for people to make the trip into the city. Almost everything the residents needed was found in the village. The general store sold basic supplies and the village had a post office and a bank. A four-room school for grades primary through grade 12, and two hotels were part of the setting. There was a funeral home and a gas station just outside the center of the village. If a hospital or dentist was needed, the long trip to town was undertaken – the man who delivered newspapers doubled as a taxi-driver when

necessary.<sup>25</sup> The Canadian National Railroad had been traveling through Musquodoboit Harbour since 1917 before heading north towards Truro, so there was also a railroad station in Musquodoboit Harbour. The railway transported goods from the city and took both passengers and natural resources like logs, and later, gypsum into the city. It was known as the 'Blueberry Express, going so slow, the story went, that passengers could pick blueberries during the trip to town.'<sup>26</sup> Along with other rural communities in Nova Scotia, paving of the highway east from Halifax began after the war and by 1950 it was completely finished through the village, making the trip to 'town' much faster.

Throughout the 1950s, the churches were at the center of most of the community's social activities. Depending on which congregation one belonged to, activities varied from teas, to summer picnics, to clubs such as the 20/40 club sponsored by the United Church that catered to young married couples. There were also support groups aimed at young mothers and their children. And the few locals who owned television sets opened their homes for anyone who wanted to watch.

As Musquodoboit Harbour became caught up in the postwar emergence of the modern social service state, new technologies, and increased consumerism of the postwar era, it became less 'isolated'. I would argue that the more connected the community became to the city, the more the residents looked to social institutions, like the church, rink, and school as a way to exercise their vision of citizenship in a liberal, democratic society. Yet in so doing, the results of their efforts were not always free of conflict. The church, the rink and the school were in many ways the anchors of community life in Musquodoboit Harbour: they were also places in which power could be contested, and

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<sup>25</sup> Personal interview Pearl Turner, February 6, 2000

<sup>26</sup> Personal interview Glenda Power and Donnie Rowlings, March 10, 2001



where divisions based upon gender, age, denominational loyalty, and income were experienced.

Chapter one examines the postwar church during the 1950s in its role as a social and cultural anchor, especially in the years immediately after the war when Musquodoboit Harbour continued in many ways to be fairly separate from Halifax. In 1950, there were four churches in Musquodoboit Harbour with active congregations and one of these will be examined in more detail in chapter one. Churches were of major importance in the social life of 1950s Musquodoboit Harbour because they constituted so large a part of the community's visible social activity. Church activities usually involved large groups of people and occurred in public places at organized times. Because of the public nature of their activities, they tended to hold events open to the general public. Often, however, participants were mainly members of the hosting denomination.<sup>27</sup>

The government focus on education in the 1960s in Nova Scotia, moreover, led to the construction of the Eastern Shore District High School in 1965. The education system was transformed in the province with the introduction of consolidated schools and the phasing out of small, one room, schoolhouses. Even though population changes in the Atlantic region were less substantial those in the rest of Canada, the increase was significant. Education, as well as the health and welfare system of the province felt the pressure of a larger group of young people. This 'baby boom' generation was responsible for the transformation of the entire education system in the region, from training facilities for skilled and professional workers to the consolidation policies of the provincial government. Education was the major growth industry of the 1960s, the

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<sup>27</sup> For more on postwar trends in religion, Arthur J. Vidich, Small Town in Mass Society: Class, Power and Religion in a rural Community (1958).

largest item in provincial budgets. Opponents of consolidation worried that the plan would cost too much money as well as destroying community spirit. Municipally and provincially, governments received increased federal support.<sup>28</sup> These concerns will be examined in more detail in chapter II, which outlines the contribution of the school to the reshaping of the social, cultural and intellectual boundaries of the community.<sup>29</sup>

Over the last number of years, sport history has increasingly been written to reflect its connection to larger trends within society. Various models have been employed in the examination of the place of sport in society. While chapter III is not specifically a study of sport, in my examination of the rink I address a number of themes pursued by sport historians today, such as the effects of modernization and globalization and accessibility issues involving gender, race and class. Chapter III will consider the rink as a center of leisure, a site that contributes to both community spirit as well as community rivalry, and where - contrary to the idea of the rural community as a 'peaceful, tranquil setting' characterized by consensus and harmony - there were tensions around gender, class, and ethnicity, as well as age, and the use of space.

The Eastern Shore Community Centre officially opened on November 23, 1973. It had taken almost two years to complete, with the majority of the work being done by local volunteers. Provincially, 23 rinks had opened between 1970 and 1975. The newly formed provincial Department of Recreation encouraged and supported the construction of facilities all over the province. Minor Hockey was the largest user of the Eastern

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<sup>28</sup> The 1960s: "The Illusions and Realities of Progress", Della Stanley in The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation, E.R. Forbes and D.A. Muise, eds. (University of Toronto Press and Acadiensis Press, 1993)

<sup>29</sup> There is an abundance of articles on postwar education policies, including, Janet Guildford, who examines education issues in "Power, Politics and Pedagogy" in The New Maritimes, (Sept/Oct, 1994) pp.11-16. Also, Richard Edsall, "Education: The Boom That Never Goes Bust", Canadian Business, (October, 1963) pp. 56-64; John J. Deutch, "Education For National Growth", Atlantic Advocate, (May 1965) pp. 14-16; Douglas Myers, The Failure of Education Reform in Canada, (Toronto, 1973)

Shore rink with over 800 boys registering the first year. Girls, although far fewer in number, formed a figure skating club with about 250 participants. By 1979, a ringette association was formed.

This examination of Musquodoboit Harbour hopes in some small way to contribute to that missing area of study in Maritime historiography mentioned in the beginning of this thesis, Nova Scotia – semi-rural – post World War II – social and cultural. It is also my intention to encourage further examination of the postwar era in Atlantic Canada.

The United Church in Musquodoboit Harbour has its own historical archive, which has been preserved locally with great care and contains the majority of the primary research used in chapter one. The United Church women in Musquodoboit Harbour were quite consistent in their record keeping through the 1950s, indicating the importance of the church in their lives and the seriousness they placed upon their ‘job’. The research used for chapter in which I examine the high school was the most comprehensive for a few reasons. For one thing, it is a government supported institution and secondly, the tensions involving the school’s guidance counselor received a substantial amount of press, leaving a large paper trail. Finally, rink records, although not kept in any organized system, were fairly complete, containing letters regarding government grants, bank notes, etc. As with both the church and the school, oral interviewing helped to fill the gaps.

## Chapter I

### First United of Musquodoboit Harbour: Family Values and Community Identities

“The United Church has succeeded to a large extent in following its people in the great trek to the suburbs.” So said a United Church publication in 1965. They published the following statistics to substantiate their claim. Between 1947 and 1963, 623 churches and halls were built in Canada; membership rose from 780,234 to 1,057,091; of 374 congregations set up since 1947, all but 55 were located in urban areas, with the largest number in the suburbs.<sup>30</sup>

Throughout the 1950s, churches were at the center, if not geographically then at least socially, of many small communities in Nova Scotia. Not surprisingly, religion and church membership have deeply embedded roots in the values and beliefs of people in the region. One only has to drive through the province to see a proliferation of church steeples. Often, churches were the first public buildings erected, seemingly acting as a stabilizing influence and, at the same time, as a boundary marker between communities. The intention of this chapter is to examine the changing role of the church through the

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<sup>30</sup>Stewart Crysdale, The Changing Church in Canada: Beliefs and Social Attitudes of United Church People. United Church Publishing House, Canada. 1965.

1950s in a small semi-rural community. This study will place the First United Church of Musquodoboit Harbour within the broader context of churches in the postwar era, examining the increasingly more secular trends of the new 'modern' world. It is not exactly a religious study or a history of the building itself. Rather, my intention is to demonstrate the way in which this particular church became one of the social anchors of Musquodoboit Harbour, shifting somewhat from the 'house of God' it had been in an earlier day to a more social organization.

This was nothing new. The Victorian era had witnessed a shift in attitudes that influenced the role of the church in everyday life. The post-Victorian world was one that viewed sickness rather than sin as the main social evil, and reformers championed therapeutic intervention to remedy these social maladies. Armed with a new 'social gospel', even the churches became champions of social regeneration.<sup>31</sup> As churches called for spiritual well-being they found themselves aligned with progressive reformers committed to improving physical, psychological and social health. After World War II, the churches experienced further change. Membership numbers, which had been in decline before the war, began to increase significantly. The postwar development of suburbia, the demand for consumer goods after years of depression and wartime shortages, and the baby boom all combined to redefine what exactly the church meant to the community – and what the community meant to the church.

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<sup>31</sup> This was the case in the church, hospitals and even in improvements within city planning and design. Please see John Webster Grant, The Church in the Canadian Era, The First Century of Confederation, Volume Three of A History of the Christian Church in Canada (McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd., 1972) As well, Colin Howell addresses the issue of 'therapeutic intervention' in A Century of Care: A History of the Victoria General Hospital in Halifax, 1887-1987. Published by the Victoria General Hospital, 1988. In an unpublished M.A. thesis, entitled "Dreaming of the 'Perfect City: the Halifax Civic Improvement League, 1905-1949", Andrew Nicholson examines the impact of social regeneration on city planning in Halifax during the 1920s.

Though Musquodoboit Harbour is not exactly a suburb, it was affected by the suburbanization process that developed in the postwar era. Following the war, promotions of suburbia provided an attractive vision of the future for a widening section of the population. The basic premise behind suburbia was the 'creation' of a 'new village' on the edge of the city. Suburbs were touted as healthier than cities and offered people the pride of owning one's own home. Although Musquodoboit Harbour already had a well-established population, newcomers to the area brought with them the aspirations of suburbanites, especially that of owning their own home in a less costly area. With improved roads and increased automobile ownership, daily commuting to Halifax-Dartmouth became a reality. The trickle of newcomers was slow during the 1950s; the population only increased marginally and figures for Musquodoboit Harbour are not available. From Musquodoboit Harbour east to Ship Harbour, however, a distance of approximately seventeen miles, the population had only increased by 305.<sup>32</sup> By the mid 1970s, the population of the 'Harbour' was 768.

In her examination of Canadian suburbia, which focuses particularly upon women's lives, Veronica Strong-Boag has found that Canadian suburbs are far less homogenous than those in the United States. Class divisions contradict the idea that suburban dwellers were uniformly middle class. In Musquodoboit Harbour, many older residents and even some newcomers were part of the working class, working in the woods or fishing. There was also a substantial middle class emerging, one that increased in size as commuting became easier. Occasionally, differences of opinion between

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<sup>32</sup> Census of Canada 1951, vol. 1; 1966, vol.1, no. 3, table 9; 1971, vol. 1, no. 5, table 16(Dominion Bureau of Statistics)

established residents and newcomers would lead to conflicts, a number of which will be examined in more detail in a later chapter.

The Protestant churches served a stabilizing function in Musquodoboit Harbour as the town faced the changes associated with the postwar era. There can be little doubt of the influence of Protestantism in Musquodoboit Harbour. Until 1955 the only three churches in the village were Anglican, Presbyterian, and United (Methodist until 1925). But how many community members actually attended church on any sort of regular basis? And of the regulars, how many attended out of religious belief and how many felt the church was simply the best place to instill family values? What about those who looked forward to Sunday church as a weekly social 'outing'? Brian Clarke has found that "like the emphasis on family values, compliance with prevailing norms and suburban notions of respectability encouraged church attendance and involvement in church sponsored activities."<sup>33</sup> In other words, through the 1950s, respectable behavior in a small community like Musquodoboit Harbour still included attending church. However, going to church was not necessarily motivated by religious belief or even by concerns about respectability. In postwar Musquodoboit Harbour, church was also about socialization, especially the socialization of women and children.

The official "Constitution and By-Laws of The Women's Missionary Society of The United Church of Canada, 1950" in a paragraph under 'Article 2, Aims and Objectives', stated the following:

The Woman's Missionary Society of The United Church of Canada seeks:  
To unite all the women of the Church for the World Mission of  
Christianity; to provide missionary education for children, teen-age girls

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<sup>33</sup>Brian Clarke, 'English-Speaking Canada from 1854', in A Concise History of Christianity in Canada, Terrence Murphy and Roberto Perin, ed. (Oxford University Press 1996)

and young women; to encourage study, prayer and giving on behalf of Christian Missions at home and abroad.<sup>34</sup>

The Women's Missionary Society (WMS) usually met once a month at First United Church in Musquodoboit Harbour. From 1951 to 1960, the group consistently maintained a membership of between 25 and 30 women. Their names were recorded in an official book provided specifically for that purpose by the United Church of Canada's Literature Department. Under the umbrella of the WMS, there were a number of smaller groups. Beside twelve of the twenty-eight members listed for 1951 were specialized titles such as President, Vice-President, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, Baby Band Secretary, Friendship Committee Secretary, Supplies Secretary, Literature Secretary, Musician, Canadian Girls in Training (CGIT) leader, Mission Band Leader, and Temperance Secretary. The WMS provided a respectable, church sanctified, social setting for some of the United Church women of Musquodoboit Harbour. Under the guidelines set down by the United Church of Canada, the various women's societies associated with the WMS demonstrated substantial independence from groups that usually involved men, groups such as the elders, the session, or the Manse Building Committee.

The Women's Auxiliary and the 20/40 Club were also part of the church. The Women's Auxiliary (WA) membership list was made up of about half of the members of the WMS. They met about once a month at the 'workroom' located inside the church. The meetings followed a procedure laid out by the United Church WMS in its 'Handbook for Auxiliary Officers'. Ten meetings a year were recommended, to be held in the afternoon or evening, in a home or at the church. "The room should be as attractive and

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<sup>34</sup> Constitution and By-Laws of The Women's Missionary Society of The United Church of Canada, 1950.



comfortable as possible”.<sup>35</sup> The handbook suggested ‘an hour and a half or two hours are needed for a good meeting’, with an outline of the ‘typical’ meeting following,

Opening	- 2 minutes
Business period	- 15 minutes
Reports from Two Departmental Secretaries	- 10 minutes
Worship Service	- 20 minutes
Missionary Program	- 30 minutes
Discussion of Missionary Program	- 10 minutes
Closing	- 3 minutes <sup>36</sup>

Members were reminded that “[w]omen, as well as children and young people, enjoy singing together and playing games, and these add to the spirit of friendliness.”<sup>37</sup>

At the January 2, 1957 meeting of the Musquodoboit Harbour First United WA, sixteen members were present when the roll was called. As this was the first meeting of the New Year, the minister was present for the official installation of the new officers. The meeting opened with a ‘devotion led by the minister’. Various reports were read including one regarding the ‘birthday box’, a box filled with ‘cards and gifts for sick and shut in folk.’ The minister suggested a ‘visiting membership committee’ be formed. It was also moved and seconded that a gavel be ‘procured’ for upcoming meetings. It was decided that a ‘pantry sale and light supper’ be held on February 16. At the January 23 meeting held three weeks later, a motion was made to have a ‘cup of tea served at the end of each meeting.’<sup>38</sup> The group often fundraised in aid of the manse. In one instance money was set aside to help pay the light bill, and to purchase material for curtains. The WA also raised money for new choir gowns.

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(Literature Department, Toronto, Ontario 1950)

<sup>35</sup> Handbook for Auxiliary Officers, The Literature Department of the WMS of the United Church of Canada, Toronto, 1950.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Women’s Auxiliary Minute Book, 1957.

Minutes taken from the Manse Trustees are much more informal, and also more difficult to decipher. Between September 1947 and September 1957, the group recorded no more than seven meetings with an average of five men in attendance. The Trustees were responsible for the general upkeep and maintenance of the church and the manse. Records included financial reports and a number of invoices were tucked inside the book from the local general stores.

The 20/40 Club was formed as a social group for both men and women. It met once or twice a month, either at the church or at the home of a member. There was always a 'lunch' provided by the hostess after the formalities were taken care of. The following quotation taken from their book of minutes, states the purpose of the group:

To promote closer fellowship and to insist in all functions of the church and community where the services of the club would be required.<sup>39</sup>

In all cases these meetings followed very formal proceedings, complete with motions made, seconded and carried. Curiously, many of the same names appeared in all of the groups. There are a couple of ways to look at this. Perhaps these were simply hardworking, dedicated community members willing to volunteer themselves and their time for a worthy cause. Another more cynical view would be that there was some measure of trying to keep control of church activities and group memberships involved here, suggesting a desire for power rather than simple generosity.

What significance do such seemingly trivial decisions hold for today's student of history? In a study of late nineteenth century small town Ontario Protestantism, Lynne Marks has found that along with the increased importance placed upon church buildings, there was also an increase in the development of woman's groups associated with the

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<sup>39</sup> 20/40 Minute Book. 1956

church, particularly in Protestant churches.<sup>40</sup> Margaret Conrad has suggested that the central role of the Church in the lives of women was to provide them with a strong sense of purpose and allowed them to resist the dominance of a patriarchal society.<sup>41</sup> In keeping with the doctrine of 'separate spheres', women were regarded as more suited to the private sphere and their responsibilities within the home, including the care and moral education of children. For many women the church provided a natural first step outside of the home. There are a number of studies that argue that through these church groups, women often made their first entrance into public life, learning how to run a meeting, raise money, and organize events.<sup>42</sup> In all likelihood, however, most women rarely assumed a public presence beyond their own local church.

It is also the case that the women's groups that operated within Musquodoboit Harbour were complicit in defining women's character, and by extension influencing the way women should behave. Women were regarded as essentially different than men. Women were given the nurturing job of caring for and providing education for young children and girls, because that is what women were best suited for, leaving public areas like politics, finance and building construction to men. A revival of traditional beliefs regarding the roles of men and women was evident in the post war era. The idea was that women were superior morally to men. In their role as a wife and mother, women were

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<sup>40</sup> Lynne Marks, Revivals and Roller Rinks: Religion, Leisure and Identity in Late-Nineteenth-Century Small-Town Ontario, (University of Toronto Press, 1996)

<sup>41</sup> Margaret Conrad, "Recording Angels: The Private Chronicles of Women from the Maritime Provinces of Canada, 1750-1950," in Alison Prentice and Susan Mann Trofimenkoff, The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women's History, Volume 2 ( McClelland and Stewart, Toronto 1985)

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. For more on the changing role of women in the church, see Ruth Compton Brouwer, "Transcending the 'Unacknowledged Quarantine', Putting Religion into Canadian Women's History". Journal of Canadian Studies 27 (Fall 1992), Wendy Mitchinson, "Canadian Women and Church Missionary Societies in the Nineteenth Century: A Step towards Independence", Atlantis, no. 2, pt. 2 (Spring 1977), Veronica Strong-Boag, "Setting the Stage: National Organizations and the Women's Movement in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century", in The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women's History, vol. 1, (Toronto, 1977)

seen as the keepers of virtue, this being a major factor in the concept of ‘separate spheres’. As long as men could return home at night to the positive influence of their wife and family, they would be able to deal with the corruption in society since they were basically corrupt themselves.<sup>43</sup>

The years following the end of World War II had set in motion an era in Canadian history like none before or since. True, gradual ‘modern’ changes had been occurring in society since the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century, but following the war, several factors led to a re-imagining of the world around us and our ‘traditional’ ways of thinking and doing. For one thing, advances in technology had finally led to rural electrification, telephones, and modern highways reaching even the most remote areas of Canada. By the early 1960s, for instance, there were few homes, if any, that did not have a television set. Almost every Canadian could imbibe a view of society that was mainly American. In addition, TV marketers saw the viewing public as a group of consumers, waiting to be sold the next popular, ‘necessary’ item, in order to ‘enrich’ their lives. At the same time many of the steadfast values and norms from the past were thrown into confusion – nothing appeared ‘sure’ anymore. The war in Europe had left an unsettled feeling in the minds of many, but one thing was certain – democracy and democratic ways of living were far superior to those championed by Hitler, Stalin and the authoritarian dictators of the war. Home and family were what mattered, along with stability and normality in daily life. The war had upset the lives of soldiers as well as those they left ‘behind’ and although there had always been some women in the labour force, many of the women who would normally have stayed at home went to work in war

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<sup>43</sup> Judith Fingard, The Dark Side of Life in Victorian Halifax, (Pottersfield Press, Porters Lake, Nova Scotia, 1989)

industries and even joined the armed forces. As a result, many children grew up without their fathers and traditional ideas about family and home were altered as large numbers of women were forced to raise their children alone or with the help of family or daycare provided by the government.

In a history of the baby boom generation in Canada, Doug Owsram argues that even during the war, ideas of home, marriage, stability, and family influenced a substantial segment of the population. The war had been fought for the family, and home became a symbol of stability.

Christian and democratic countries have made no mistake in emphasizing the value of family and home life. Individuals who exemplify the art of being in a family circle are better fitted thereby for usefulness in larger spheres and for gaining the secret of true happiness.<sup>44</sup>

One consequence of this new focus was an increase in the numbers of babies born in Canada each year, from about 300,000 at the end of the war to more than 400,000 by 1952. It was 1966 before the birthrate dropped below the 400,000 mark,<sup>45</sup> leading to another factor in the new 'modern' world – babies – and lots of them. Owsram points out that following the war, home, marriage and babies were promoted as a 'young adult's route to respectability', a message reinforced by 'social psychologists, politicians, religious leaders, magazines, and advertisements for everything from automobiles to soap and mouthwash.'<sup>46</sup> The time was ripe for a baby boom. In the first place, the economy was flourishing and seemed stable. Second, the generation of young adults who had been born after World War I was already larger in number and finally, many Canadians left

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<sup>44</sup> Doug Owsram, Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby Boom Generation, (University of Toronto Press, 1996) 13.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

school and married younger, without waiting for a higher education.<sup>47</sup> All of these factors led to an increase in the numbers of children born in Canada between 1946 and 1966. Many postwar parents were particularly influenced by Benjamin Spock and his best-selling book “The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care”, published in 1946. In it, parents were encouraged to be more flexible and natural, ensuring a ‘secure’ child.<sup>48</sup> As well, Spock celebrated women who chose motherhood and provided a nurturing home, reinforcing the notion of separate spheres.<sup>49</sup>

It is difficult to predict the way in which a woman’s working life, paid or otherwise, could be influenced by her household and family responsibilities. Perhaps the most important factor in determining her overall ability to contribute was the economic and social climate that prevailed. The women and mothers of Musquodoboit Harbour followed many of the trends evident in the broader population. Most women stayed at home and did not work outside as a paid employee. However, many local women were very involved with charity and volunteer work, usually in their own church or at the local Twin Oaks War Memorial hospital. In some cases, women did hold a measure of authority, but usually organization presidents and vice-presidents were male. On the other hand, there were some women who were employed and simply did not have the time to volunteer in the community. Even with the introduction of washers and dryers, fridges, electric stoves, and vacuum cleaners, which removed much of the most laborious aspects of housework, the number of hours spent doing housework did not decrease by

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> For a detailed analysis of Benjamin Spock and his ideologies, see William Graebner’s “The Unstable World of Benjamin Spock: Social Engineering in a Democratic Culture, 1917-1950” in, The Journal of American History, Volume 67, No. 3 (December 1980) 612-629.

<sup>49</sup> Veronica Strong-Boag, “Home Dreams: Women and the Suburban Experiment in Canada, 1945-60” in the Canadian Historical Review, (LXXII 4, 1991) 471-504.

much. One reason for this could be advertisements in women's magazines and women's pages in the newspapers with lots of advice on ways to cook, clean, and care for children better.

An historical examination of society in the post war era can especially uncover links between suburbia, family values, and church attendance. Nothing embodies the spirit or lifestyle of the 1950s more accurately than suburbia. Indeed, there is no better symbol of postwar values than those attached to the lifestyle that accompanied the move to the suburbs: family, home and a renewed religious commitment. In addition to the baby boom and increases in immigration, a new emphasis on religion led to a substantial growth in church membership in Canada. Between 1951 and 1961 United Church congregations grew by more than 25 per cent, Anglican by 10 per cent, and the Catholic Church increased its membership from almost 40 per cent of the population in 1931 to 45 per cent by 1961. Presbyterianism, which had been declining for the previous thirty years enjoyed modest growth.<sup>50</sup>

Owram claims that 'much of the revival had to do with children'. Parents viewed churches as a place to instill morals and ethics in their children. In Canada, United Church Sunday school membership increased by fifty per cent between the late 1940s and the beginning of the 1960s.<sup>51</sup> In a November 1956 edition of the United Church Observer, an article claimed that,

The Young People's Unions of the United Church is said to be the largest and most vigorous youth organization in the country, with 1239 unions and 30,000 members in the 18 to 24 age group. In addition, there are many hundreds of teenage clubs, Bible Classes, and other youth organizations. Recently a new

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<sup>50</sup> Brian Clarke, "English-Speaking Canada from 1854", in A Concise History of Christianity in Canada, Terrence Murphy and Roberto Perin, ed. (Oxford University Press, 1996)

<sup>51</sup> Owram, Born at the Right Time, p. 106

organization has been produced called Hi-C, which has already enrolled over 20,000 teenagers.<sup>52</sup>

One would think that religious leaders would have been thrilled at the increased numbers in church membership following the war and many were. It was apparent relatively early, however, that the growth was not necessarily due to renewed religious commitment. Increased church membership was just another symptom of the child-centered 1950s. In that age of increased consumption, church and Sunday school was another device joining parenting books and organized children's activities crucial to the development of children. The March 1, 1958, *United Church Observer*, commenting on the growing numbers claimed that,

These worshippers are not seeking the salvation of their souls. They are not suffering guilt, or seeking forgiveness. Rather they want to belong to a community of good people and rear their children in a decent society.<sup>53</sup>

In the examination of the Eastern Shore District High School in chapter II, evidence has shown that changes in education led to conflict within the community. Carrying this examination of the church into the 1960s could very well lead to similar observations. My intention however, was to understand the role of First United in Musquodoboit Harbour during the 1950s, leaving religion in the tumultuous 1960s for another study.

Sunday school was held at the First United church in Musquodoboit Harbour for an hour before the regular morning service. Local residents recall that, as children during the 1950s, they would walk to Sunday school each week and their parents would arrive after for the church service. Most of the children would also stay for church, giving them

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<sup>52</sup> United Church Observer, 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Collector's Issue, (January 1975) 46.



a full two hours of formal religious instruction each week, not including what they received in school. Children attending ranged in age from about five years to fourteen. Each class had a small hard cover book to record attendance and at the end of classes, the Superintendent would read the numbers aloud to the whole group.<sup>54</sup> From 1948 to 1954, Sunday school attendance consistently ranged between 30 and 50 children, usually 36 or 37 each Sunday morning, sometimes as many as 52 would attend.

Religious instruction for children was not limited to Sunday school and the weekly church service. Reverend Fred Withers was the minister at First United, Musquodoboit Harbour from 1956 to 1961. Every Monday at noon, he gave religion instruction to the students at the Robert Jamison Memorial High School in Oyster Pond, which had opened in 1957. There were other groups within the United Church that were dedicated to 'enhancing the moral fiber of children'. The Baby Band was for children up to the age of five, after which they 'graduated' to Mission Band until age twelve. The Canadian Girls in Training (CGIT) was for girls after age twelve. They usually met once a month under the leadership of one of the women from the church. All three of these groups were part of the WMS and often meetings or special occasions would overlap. For example, the WMS and Baby Band met at the church grounds on July 11, 1951 for an annual picnic and formal graduation of the Baby Band members moving up to Mission Band. As was customary, a proper procedure was followed, complete with the reading of the Minutes, and closing with a Benediction.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p.19.

<sup>54</sup> Personal interview Pearl Turner, May 4, 2000. Pearl is a lifetime resident of Musquodoboit Harbour and a member of the First United Church. She attended Sunday school herself during the 1930s and 1940s, and sent her children during the 1950s.

<sup>55</sup> WMS Minutes, July 1951

Terrence Murphy has claimed that “by the 1960s, social and cultural changes in Canada were outstripping the churches’ capacity to adjust.”<sup>56</sup> He gives a number of reasons for this trend – a decline in traditional values at the same time as the consumer lifestyle increased, rises in immigration brought about changes to Canadian society, and as well, young people began to question and criticize older ways and experiment with everything from drugs to oriental religions.<sup>57</sup> As a result of a drop in attendance and membership that occurred in this period, many churches began examining and updating their programs, and as well, a transformation occurred from primarily male dominated leadership to more group-oriented decision-making. At the same time, the boundaries separating the different denominations began to fade. Led in part by the Catholic Church, a new ecumenism was also welcomed by the Protestant faith. The role of the church in society changed from one “in which they defined and legitimated prevailing norms, for a prophetic role, in which they challenge the status quo and call on those in authority to be faithful to their avowed principles.”<sup>58</sup> In 1962, the United Church Women’s Missionary Society and the Women’s Association combined to form the United Church Women (UCW) and merged with the church as a whole.<sup>59</sup>

In an unpublished paper written in 1966 entitled, The United Church of Canada as a Pressure Group in Canadian Politics, 1955-1966, Burkhard Kiesekamp has convincingly argued that the United Church, although often joined in its efforts by other denominations, had divided a number of reform proposals into three categories – moral issues, social issues, and issues which concern the world community. Kiesekamp clearly

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<sup>56</sup>Epilogue, in A Concise History of Christianity in Canada, ed. Terrence Murphy and Roberto Perin, (Oxford University Press, 1996) 361

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. p. 365.

identifies the role of the United Church in areas such as the reduction of alcohol use and drug addiction, gambling, tobacco consumption; the reformation of Canada's divorce and abortion laws; the insufficiency of medical service and care; the inadequacies of low-rental housing; women who are forced into the workforce and many more including issues related to car insurance, agriculturally depressed areas, capital punishment, and high birth-rates among low income families. In world issues, the United Church has actively supported the United Nations and world peace; an increased standard of living in underdeveloped countries; increased trade with 'iron and bamboo curtain' countries; increased knowledge and materials on birth control. They encouraged the United States to withdraw its troops from Vietnam and they held debates on the issue of nuclear weapons in Canada.<sup>60</sup>

The role of the church in the community at large was clearly changing. John Webster Grant has found that as churches were revising and modernizing their curricula, 'unexpected areas of agreement were revealed'. Interestingly, the Roman Catholic Church was a leader in the ecumenical movement that took hold through the early 1960s as Canadian churches began to do things together that had once been done separately.<sup>61</sup> In May of 1965, the 'First Inter-denominational Institute of Rural Clergy' met at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College in Truro, Nova Scotia for a conference, 'Featuring Rural Development'. The conference dealt with issues such as 'the role of the rural church in community development', and looked at the provincial economy – industry,

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<sup>59</sup> Grant, The Church in the Canadian Era, p. 188

<sup>60</sup> Burkhard Kiesekamp, The United Church of Canada as a Pressure Group in Canadian Politics, 1955-1966. (September, 1966) Thank you very much to Dr. Kiesekamp for bringing this study to my attention. He describes with great detail, the relationship of the United Church of Canada with areas of government at all levels, federal, provincial and municipal in the post World War II period.

<sup>61</sup> Grant, The Church in the Canadian Era.

farming, lumbering and fishing. At the conference, five denominations were represented, with special recognition to the Catholic Church and its long time involvement in rural development through the Extension Department of St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish. A United church minister from Upper Musquodoboit spoke on a number of issues, including, the relatively recent mobility of the world, the urbanization of 'our rural people', what he calls 'sociological changes' such as television and the way in which entertainment had changed from the old country store, church or hall. He felt as though 'the church is the only rural institution left, the rural school is gone, and the rural store' that used to be a gathering place. He spoke about the 'inferiority of the farmer, the desire to get his child through high school, university so he can leave the farm.' He also referred to a 'Father Hugh MacPherson as an early supporter of rural high schools that would help students stay in the country, to stay rurally minded. MacPherson said that 'rural high schools are only glorified city high schools, it is foolish to think there is room at the top for everyone.'<sup>62</sup> The conference closed with a joint resolution proposed by Father John Rankin, Glendale and seconded by D.J. Godley, Auburn, Kings County,

Be it resolved that a letter be sent to the proper authorities and published in the press encouraging and requesting that the various communions get together to identify and solve problems that exist in their local communities and that another institute be held next year to consolidate and evaluate what has been done. We commend the very fine spirit of charity and brotherhood evidenced here.<sup>63</sup>

What made the First United Church a social anchor in Musquodoboit Harbour?

This chapter has shown that for a number of the residents in Musquodoboit Harbour,

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<sup>62</sup> Proceedings, Inter-denominational Institute for Rural Clergy Featuring Rural Development, May 10, 11, 12, 1965. Nova Scotia Agricultural College, Truro, Nova Scotia

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

most especially some of the women and children, the United church provided not only an escape from the drudgery of home, but also companionship and a sense of purpose within the larger community. Women's organizations were supported; indeed they were encouraged and promoted by the United of Canada. But this support was of a gendered nature. The involvement of women in the church was clearly defined, in the 'rule' books provided, in the minds of the women, and in the world in which they lived. The role of the women was very clear. Some church activities, rather than dividing by age or by gender were intended to bring groups together. The social columns of the Dartmouth Free Press for example were not complete without descriptions of the latest church socials.

The Dartmouth Free Press was a weekly newspaper, based in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. It printed its first paper on July 1, 1954 including front-page phrases such as 'will build and boost Dartmouth', 'community newspaper', 'It will stand behind all men'.<sup>64</sup> Each community around Dartmouth and along the Eastern Shore had a separate column reporting the social events of their area. The one from Musquodoboit Harbour usually focussed upon church related events in the community such as times of services, bake sales, CGIT fundraising, WMS work – 129 home visits, 25 hospital visits, 23 packages sent to County Hospital. Mission Band held 10 meetings in 1955, Baby Band has 14 babies enrolled, 4 are life members.<sup>65</sup> Seeing an event in the newspaper elevated it to a higher level of importance. These women felt as though their job was important. The church told them so, they told each other and finally it was confirmed in the news.

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<sup>64</sup> Dartmouth Free Press, July 1, 1954, p. 1

<sup>65</sup> Ibid. January 19, 1956

Society emphasized the importance of raising children properly, and how important the role of the mother was in that task.

Modernization in Musquodoboit Harbour followed similar patterns as the rest of Canada and involved the separation of institutions involving religion, politics and the economy. At the same time, however, creating a national or a community identity involved encouraging and promoting relationships between cultural identities such as religion with politics like the United Church's involvement in social welfare issues through the 1960s for example.<sup>66</sup> In order for the church to survive in an increasingly more secular society, adjustments had to be made. Sometimes, however, at the risk of sacrificing the values of liberty and equality.

Because there is space and encouragement for building and strengthening friendships, family values, and sometimes even economic change, religion is inherently community based. In Musquodoboit Harbour, the First United Church was a social anchor of community during the 1950s. It provided a respectable space for various members of the village to gather and a kind of stabilizing force amongst a segment of the population. In this way, the church was less a divisive institution than the school, and later the rink, will prove to be. There were however, gender divisions as I have noted in this chapter. These divisions were common for the time in which they occurred but were assumed by many and thus little tension was created as a result. Gender roles were defined, separated, and the general population of Musquodoboit Harbour seemed comfortable with that. The community stability that I have indicated was evident in the

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<sup>66</sup> For a comparative view of religion in Canada and the United States and its impact on identity please see William H. Katerberg, "Consumers and Citizens: Religion, Identity, and Politics in Canada and the United States", in Rethinking Church, State, and Modernity, Canada Between Europe and America, David Lyon and Marguerite Van Die, eds.(University of Toronto Press, 2000)

United Church did not carry over into the newly constructed Eastern Shore District High School. Unlike the church, the high school was 'contested terrain', and it would not take long for the community to divide over a number of issues directly related to the school and its construction.

## Chapter II

### Eastern Shore District High School: Consolidation/ Conflict and Educating the Community

Community identity. What constitutes identity for a community? Is it the way in which members see themselves? Or the way they are viewed by ‘outsiders’? There is little doubt that the identity of a community is ever changing, but what, specifically, contributes to the idea of one community being ‘different’ from its neighbour? In examining the historical issue of ‘community identity’, it is important to understand that the history of a country, region, or community is not merely a story of progress unfolding in a linear fashion. There are forces within and without, which drive change and these changes involve conflict, very often at the grassroots level. New identities are continually created, imagined and reimagined, especially as ‘modern’ inclinations make the world appear ‘smaller’. Rural areas especially, have lost some of their insularity and as a result, their individuality, as the world approximates Marshall McLuhan’s ‘global village’.

As the 1960s unfolded, the ongoing struggle between the ‘modern’ in opposition to the ‘traditional’, ‘out with the old, in with the new’ so to speak, was not without



conflict and controversy. As the 'border' separating Musquodoboit Harbour from its nearest urban neighbours, Halifax and Dartmouth, continued to be less defined -- in a process that really had begun after World War II -- blunting the old dichotomy between *country* and *city*, longtime residents of the 'Harbour' were sometimes uncomfortable with the changes that would accompany the advancements in communications, transportation and other technologies. On the one hand, 'modern', 'urban' amenities were no longer the exclusive right of the metropolis. Improvements in highways began to make it possible for residents of Musquodoboit Harbour to commute to Halifax-Dartmouth on a daily basis, making the community even more attractive for people wishing to live in areas outside the city. This was an ongoing trend, an extension of the suburban movement that had begun in the early post-war years. With advances in technology and improvements in highways and communications, not only was the general infrastructure of the eastern shore community experiencing change, but the population of Musquodoboit Harbour expanded with an influx of 'townies' settling in the area. Census figures for Musquodoboit Harbour are not specific or easily comparable over time, given vague and changing definitions of the community's boundaries. Still, one can state with more than reasonable certainty that the population only grew very slightly in the first few decades following the war. In spite of this, if one considers the growth in infrastructure that took place in these years, Musquodoboit Harbour became more of a liminal space, a dynamic and changing community linking rural and urban, instead of a village unto itself. In some ways, the community had always served as a 'link' between the metropolis and a rural hinterland, but this became more pronounced in the postwar era as new demands for modern conveniences and consumer services extended beyond the reach of the city.

The reimagining of 'community identity' was particularly evident during the early years of school consolidation in Nova Scotia, and in Musquodoboit Harbour in particular when the Eastern Shore District High School opened to students in September 1965. Teenagers living along the Eastern Shore, from Lake Echo to Ship Harbour, a distance of approximately thirty miles, began to attend school together on a daily basis. Constructing identities of their own amidst the changing character of the family in the postwar era, students absorbed the influences of the new youth culture, as well as revealing their attachment to their particular local origins. Two student populations were combined to form the new school, the first were those from Robert Jamieson High School in Oyster Pond; the second were those students who lived in the communities of Lake Echo, Porter's Lake and Chezzetcook who had been attending Graham Creighton High School in Westphal, outside of Dartmouth.

The new consolidated high school required Musquodoboit Harbour to rethink its community identity as almost six hundred teenagers began to arrive by bus on a daily basis. Beginning in the fall of 1965, for six hours a day, ten months of the year, the population of Musquodoboit Harbour essentially doubled. Although these students would naturally view themselves as members of their own home communities, they would also come to identify themselves as students of the same school, which happened to be located in Musquodoboit Harbour. Of course, school loyalty was particularly evident when it involved competition with another school, be it a sporting event like a high school hockey game, or a team vying for the provincial title on CBC television's 'Reach For the Top'. In both of these situations, the teams were comprised of players from Lake Echo, Porter's Lake, Jeddore, Musquodoboit Harbour or one of the other

communities in the school district. Team members, who may have competed *against* each other in the past, if they had had any contact at all, now were teammates.

But the growth of these shared allegiances did not necessarily mean harmonious consensus. Indeed, conflicts had arisen over the location of the new school even before the first sod was turned. Residents of Jeddore and Oyster Pond, communities east of Musquodoboit Harbour, expected the new building would be constructed in a location close to Robert Jamieson High School, which had opened in 1957 in the community of Oyster Pond, about nine miles east of Musquodoboit Harbour. Various educational departments decided that Musquodoboit Harbour should be the site of the new school. Once the location had been agreed upon, it seemed only logical, to some people at least, to employ Helen Jennex, principal of Robert Jamieson, as the principal of the new school, a decision which ultimately would be made by the chairman of the local Board of School Trustees.<sup>67</sup> A number of residents from Musquodoboit Harbour did not agree with her hiring. It was not so much the person chosen for the job, they argued, it was the process undertaken to hire her that concerned them. Many people felt that a proper and transparent hiring procedure should be followed, with the job advertised, and a screening process to follow. These dissenting citizens felt that Mrs. Jennex may not have possessed the necessary qualifications for the job. At the very least, there had not been any real competition for the position. This incident occurred at a time when educators themselves were becoming increasingly more qualified through the expansion of education programs in universities and teachers colleges. Local residents, and especially, but certainly not exclusively, newer community members, wanted the best education available for their

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<sup>67</sup> Personal interview Dr. Phil Jardine, May 12, 2000. Dr. Jardine was a member of the School Trustees and was asked to chair the committee formed to investigate the 'Dingle' controversy.

children. Expectations of what was the 'best' were changing in these years. Advanced education and upgraded credentials for teachers were part of the new 'modern' world.

Education was an important issue in the province of Nova Scotia following World War II and has been called 'the major growth industry of the Sixties in Canada.'<sup>68</sup> Through the 1950s and 1960s, school populations grew by one third and education costs more than doubled in all four Atlantic provinces. In Nova Scotia, education expenditures increased from \$13.6 million to 35.6 million between 1950 and 1960.<sup>69</sup> In order to provide equal educational opportunities in all areas, rich and poor, rural and urban, consolidation of schools and their administrators seemed to be the solution. The Halifax County school board held its first meeting regarding high school consolidation on February 5, 1947. Following a review of a "Departmental Rural High School Policy", School Inspectors, Harold Weir and Harold Nason concluded that too much money was being spent in rural areas and they suggested consolidation of grades seven through twelve. By constructing centrally located schools, they proposed, communities would be able to enjoy better facilities and equipment, and students a more modern learning environment.<sup>70</sup> In Halifax County, it was recommended that either five or six schools be constructed over a period of time. The intention was "not to provide schools of an elaborate nature", yet "a broad program of instruction will be provided including manual training and domestic sciences."<sup>71</sup> The report recommended the province pay for the

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<sup>68</sup> Margaret Conrad, "The 1950s: the Decade of Development" in, The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation, E. R. Forbes and D. A. Muise eds. (University of Toronto Press and Acadiensis Press, 1993)437

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. p. 399 - See also, F.H. Leacy (ed.) *Historical Statistics of Canada*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Ottawa 1982), Series W94-149, and *Annual Reports* for the provincial departments of education provide statistics for enrolments and expenditures for education-

<sup>70</sup> Secretary to the Board, C.P.J. Briggs, Halifax County School Boards, 1832-1982, A Review of Our Past. (Check PANS for call # and year published) p. 10

<sup>71</sup> Ibid. p. 11

building and equipment; operational expenses, including salaries, maintenance, and bus conveyance would be divided with 75% paid by the province and 25% by the area served.<sup>72</sup>

Consolidation was not an easy adjustment to make for residents of the County. A number of board meetings were held during 1951 to discuss the division of the area. It was suggested the county be divided into three sections, then four, then ten. Finally on November 9, 1951, the County turned down the proposal and recommended trying again in January 1952, to “encourage consolidations between sections wherever possible.”<sup>73</sup> The process of educating children had already been undergoing a change over a number of years, especially during the Depression and war years, as small schools were closed and children were forced to travel to a neighboring school in order to decrease costs associated with education and school building maintenance. “According to the records available, the first consolidation in the County was approved by the Minister on January 1, 1955, when the Lower Sackville School Section and the Cobequid Road School Section were consolidated. The board had approved of this consolidation on December 7, 1954.”<sup>74</sup>

The Halifax County School Board met with local trustees in Musquodoboit Harbour on January 5, 1956, to discuss the many changes brought about by the Education Act that had been revised beginning in 1956. While not *every* response was negative, a number of meetings were “very long, vocal, and heated”<sup>75</sup>, as the board encountered considerable resistance during their meetings with the ratepayers in each community.

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid. p. 16

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid. p. 20

However, many residents also saw the advantage of the changes as the Board explained the process of consolidation that would take place beginning in 1956 and continue each year until 1981.<sup>76</sup> More than one observer has noted that often during these meetings, the split seemed to be between lifelong residents of the Eastern Shore, and relative newcomers who had moved to the area from the city or elsewhere, a trend that was becoming increasingly more common.

More and more, in this era of suburban-style living, Musquodoboit Harbour was being viewed as a viable alternative to city living; it was rural-like, yet at the same time offered 'modern' conveniences that were unavailable in more remote areas. Musquodoboit Harbour had sported a well-equipped hospital since 1949, complete with a delivery room and nursery. On July 8, 1965, the Dartmouth Free Press, carried an article describing the local Twin Oaks War Memorial Hospital, and included a promotion of Musquodoboit Harbour.

Once the residence of the people who were born there who did business in the district, the Harbour is now largely an outpost of commuters – navy people, Dalhousie professors, businessmen, shipyard workers. It has also become a favorite place for retirement, and probably one of the reasons has been, besides the well-settled, well-serviced village, the hospital itself.<sup>77</sup>

The 'Harbour' was changing. It had once been an isolated community, reasonably self-reliant, but also dependent upon the city, for services such as dental care, employment, or supplies delivered by train. Outside telephone service had been a reality since the early 1940s, but following World War II, the pace of change accelerated in keeping to some degree with the changes that were occurring across the province and across the country. In fact, the entire Western world experienced considerable change

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

during those first few decades following the War. In Musquodoboit Harbour a number of new businesses and public services became available with the coming of the medical center, a drugstore, volunteer fire department, a provincial Motor Vehicle office and Lands and Forest office, a second gas station, and the high school. On August 5, 1965, the Flewwelling's Drug Store opened and provided space for a dentist office and a qualified optometrist. In addition to these new services, newcomers to the village expected the same education opportunities available in the cities from which they had come. In the past, small schools with one or two classrooms had been typical in rural areas, but in the postwar era, parents wanted a more 'modern' education for their children. New educational institutions in the city came equipped with large gymnasiums, woodworking and metal working shops, and cooking and sewing labs.

One notable advantage of consolidation was that it could help alleviate the scarcity of teachers that plagued the educational system during the late 1950s. This national issue has been touted as one of several reasons that the school system was so unprepared for the onslaught of students during the 'baby boom' of the 1950s and 1960s. Public education had suffered financially during the Depression, lowering teacher salaries, and the wartime boom and post war prosperity offered up many employment alternatives to teaching. In 1951, for instance, the average manufacturing wage in Nova Scotia was 40% higher than the average annual teacher's salary.<sup>78</sup> As well, Doug Ooram has found that the image of the schoolteacher was one of a 'stuffy', aging 'spinster' or a young unmarried woman, forced by school boards to leave at the time of marriage. By 1951, more than 70% of teachers were women. There were two reasons for this –

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<sup>77</sup> Dartmouth Free Press, Thursday, July 8, 1965. p. 2

teaching was viewed as a 'nurturing' profession, more suited to women than men, and low pay had led to difficulties in engaging male teachers.<sup>79</sup> Through active recruitment drives, both at home and in the United Kingdom; the return of married women to the teaching profession and the temporary lowering of qualifications for teacher training; the shortage slowly began to abate. During this time, as well, teachers could decide where they preferred to teach and the cities of Halifax and Dartmouth both paid teachers above the provincial salary scale. The Department of National Defense - whose schools were located in Shearwater, Shannon Park and Beaverbank – also paid their teachers according to the Halifax scale, which was the highest in the area.

What made matters more difficult was that some of the larger urban school sections in the County raised area rates to pay the teachers over scale and there was continual competition between these sections in attracting teachers. Because of this competition, even within the County, the rural schools had very little chance of getting good qualified teachers or any teachers at all in some areas.<sup>80</sup>

County schools were usually forced to wait until most other positions were filled before they could hire. Here is where the consolidation plan was helpful. Consolidation would ensure an equal payment structure throughout the County, and thus alleviate teacher shortages and delays in hiring.

There was still the problem of classrooms, however. "By the mid-1950s, the national expenditure on school construction was consuming nearly \$200 million a year....even a relatively small province like Nova Scotia was opening a new school every five days....expenditure on school construction every year for the next ten years should

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<sup>78</sup> Doug Owram, Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby Boom Generation. (University of Toronto Press, 1996) 116

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Briggs. p. 21



be at least 85% higher than 1955's all time high."<sup>81</sup> The construction of the Eastern Shore High School in 1965 occurred around the same time as a number of other provincial schools were either newly built or renovated and expanded in order to accommodate an increase of 3395 students in the county.<sup>82</sup> That same year, ten new schools were opened - six high schools, and four at the junior high level.<sup>83</sup>

As the numbers of children, and hence the size and numbers of schools increased, so were government bureaucracies transformed in order to manage the growing numbers. Textbooks and curriculums became consistent along with school consolidation as funding for education was centralized; ensuring those poorer areas would receive the same educational services as young people in richer school districts. As Owrap has pointed out, "school consolidation had an effect parallel to that of suburbanization."<sup>84</sup> Children were divided by age, redefined as a peer group, and "daily contact with those of differing ages postponed."<sup>85</sup> In addition, one of the goals of educators was to ensure that the finished product (i.e., the graduated student) would be a worthy, democratic citizen. The Second World War and the Cold War had sent a strong message; authoritarian leadership would undermine the principles of democracy. Children must be given the tools needed to make their own decisions as they moved into the larger society. "The basic principles of child-centredness, anti-authoritarian teaching, and belief in the social importance of education did take hold through the 1950s and into the 1960s."<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid. p. 120

<sup>82</sup> Annual Report of the Nova Scotia Department of Education, 1963, p.10 (PANS)

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Owrap, p. 123

<sup>85</sup> Ibid. p. 124

<sup>86</sup> Ibid. p. 128

Early in 1962, as the 'baby boom' generation began to attend school in unprecedented numbers, many parents wanted their children to stay in school and receive a better education than they themselves had achieved, in order to be well prepared for the new 'modern' world and all of its technological innovations. Often this meant staying in school and finishing grade 12. In an earlier day, if a student stayed in school after grade nine, it was usually with the intention of continuing on to university. In Nova Scotia, as part of the new impulse to keep children in school, the provincial government initiated a program intended to address all levels of student ability. This 'Broadened High School Program' later dubbed the 'The General Course' would allow students not intending to go to university, an alternative, and courses in science, mathematics, English and history were offered. Part of the program requirements allowed for assistance in life choices and career strategies for students through a qualified guidance counselor. The ratio of guidance staff to students was set at one to four hundred.<sup>87</sup>

When the Eastern Shore High School opened in 1965 there was a guidance counselor on staff. Roy Dingle was mentioned in the Dartmouth Free Press as having organized a 'folk-rock hootenanny' on November 19, 1965, along with students and faculty to celebrate the opening of the new 'gym-auditorium'. The public was invited to attend and the article written the following week, November 25, claimed that between 300 and 400 people attended, hailing the event as a 'smashing success'.<sup>88</sup> Students at the school developed an immediate rapport with Mr. Dingle as he assisted them with their future plans for a post-secondary education or vocational career. Later in the school year,

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<sup>87</sup> For a more complete overview regarding the motivations behind 'The General Course' program, please see David Scott Wilson, The Problem of Dropouts in Nova Scotia, MA Thesis, SMU, 1966. Wilson devotes a complete chapter to the issue of provincial recommendations with regards to high school 'dropouts.'

the Dartmouth Free Press covered the annual 'High School Career Day'; a tradition carried over from Robert Jamieson High School. Dingle is mentioned in this March 17 edition as a man who "has had extensive training in the fields of guidance and social work in centres all across Canada."<sup>89</sup> Two weeks later, in the March 31<sup>st</sup> edition, however, the newspaper reported that Dingle's contract was not being renewed and announced a meeting for parents and school board members that very night. The Mail-Star, Halifax's daily newspaper, considered this worthy of front-page treatment. A picture of a large group of demonstrating students graced the front page of its March 29 edition, along with a report on the incident.<sup>90</sup>

The protest of Dingle's non-renewal had started a few days before. At a school variety show held in the high school gymnasium on Friday, March 25, 1966, Dingle had taken matters into his own hands and announced to the audience that his contract, due to expire on March 31, 1966, would not be renewed for the following year. The following Tuesday, about 400 students protested the Municipal School Board decision in front of the school, leading to the report in the Mail-Star. The protest was held during the lunch hour break, involved 'well-known sport cheers' combined with Dingle's name, and unnamed student spokesmen told the paper that 'there were no leaders of the demonstration and that no school rules had been broken.'<sup>91</sup>

Chaired by well-known broadcaster, Edmund Morris, the March 31<sup>st</sup> public meeting attracted about 300 people and lasted over three hours. Parents, students, teachers, members from both the Board of Trustees and the County School Board

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<sup>88</sup> Dartmouth Free Press, November 18, 1965. p. 8; November 25, 1965. p. 2

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., March 17, 1966. p. 10

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., March 31, 1966. p. 1 and 13

<sup>91</sup> The Mail-Star, March 29, 1966. p. 1 and 2.

discussed the issue at length and the members of the general public, including parents, students and teachers, left without hearing why Dingle had been fired. Dingle explained that following a March 1<sup>st</sup> school board tour of the school, he had met with the principal, vice-principal, and two trustees where he felt pressured to step down from his position. He refused to leave unless fired so they fired him.

The public meeting held on March 31<sup>st</sup> ended with the formation of a committee of ten representatives from the public requested to investigate the matter. Dingle was asked to submit a written request to both boards and they in turn would respond with a letter stating the reasons for the dismissal. The next meeting would be held the first Tuesday after Easter to review the reasons presented to Dingle.

This incident at the high school continued over a period of many months with the Dartmouth Free Press reporting the developments every week. Many residents remember the affair as one that was 'blown out of proportion'.<sup>92</sup> Certainly emotions escalated and there was much controversy between communities especially. In little more than a month, the issue became one of competency with respect to the administration and the principal, Helen Jennex – whose hiring had been controversial from the beginning. By mid May, 1966, one of the ten original committee members told the Dartmouth Free Press that the 'real objective was to get rid of Helen Jennex, that Mr. Dingle had not been investigated at all.' This provocative public statement aroused the anger of everyone involved on the committee as well as members of the general public, with the committee making their protest public by putting an advertisement in the Dartmouth Free Press. A lawyer was hired and subsequently a court action was filed against the woman who had

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<sup>92</sup> Personal interview Thelma Carmicheal. June 3, 2001. Thelma's late husband Robert (Bob) was one of the ten on the investigating committee.

made the statement to the newspaper. When the case finally did arise in court, the judge 'threw it out'.<sup>93</sup> The issue came to an end when Mrs. Jennex accepted a position as a teaching principal of Jeddore-Lakeville, an elementary school in Oyster Pond, a job many people felt she was better suited for.

Understanding a high school as a social anchor of community necessarily involves researching historical events surrounding the institution – its construction, participants, uses. The biggest obstacle to this type of examination of course has to be the lack of available documents. Interviewing local residents and substantiating their stories with newspaper articles has been one method of research, looking at minutes from board meetings would be an obvious other. This is where the problem lies. These items are next to impossible to find or are protected by government privacy acts. Many of the conclusions that I have come to in this research are based upon the opinions of others combined with my own understanding of the contexts within which the high school existed, context including the trends of this time period. One of the men interviewed claimed that the main reason for parental involvement in the Roy Dingle issue came out of a 'willingness to support the children in their cause'. Relating this with my own research, one cannot help but conclude that the values in society at that period, being as focused upon the child as they are purported to be, resulted in a stronger reaction than may have been expected in an earlier day. The newspaper articles shown on pages ? and ? illustrate as well the importance placed upon democratic ideas and a citizens right to assert their own opinions and beliefs. Certainly the firing of Mr. Dingle, although serious at the time, pales in comparison to stories of corporal punishment, for example, an accepted practice not so many years previous. These students had grown in a society and

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<sup>93</sup> Personal interview Dr. Philip Jardine (Phil), June 15, 2001.

were educated in a system that not only supported but also indeed *promoted* the child's right to have what they wanted, and they wanted Mr. Dingle. However justified his termination as guidance counselor may or may not have been, the issue was lost in the rush to assert the 'rights' of the parents, children, and staff of the school.

Early in October 1965, a number of citizens from the Eastern Shore and the Musquodoboit Valley area had met with representatives from both the federal and provincial governments with the combined goal of forming the 'Musquodoboit Rural Development Commission'. The group was described as having "undertaken an intensive program to stimulate the economic growth of the region, offering leadership in rural development to communities across the country."<sup>94</sup> The first topic considered by the group was education and one study had indicated that it would be an asset to the community if school facilities were used more efficiently, specifically, the newly constructed high school in Musquodoboit Harbour. Since the early 1950s and before, education for both children and adults had been viewed as a solution to the region's unemployment problems. The first Atlantic Conference on Adult Education had been held in Amherst in June 1951 with the primary purpose of organizing group discussions addressing the issue of community problems, with education for adults receiving the majority of attention. In 1955, at the Atlantic Regional Conference on Adult Education in Charlottetown, the director of the Adult Education Division of the Nova Scotia Department of Education, Guy Henson, argued that education was a crucial factor in regional development.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Dartmouth Free Press, October 7, 1965. p. 2

<sup>95</sup> Forbes and Muise, p. 400

In October 1965, the Dartmouth Free Press reported that registration for adult education classes at the high school in Musquodoboit Harbour had been ‘heavy’, although no exact numbers were given. Courses that were offered ranged from academic subjects such as grade VII to grade XI science, grade VII to grade XI math, history from grade VII to X and classes in both sewing and woodworking with ‘more to come’.<sup>96</sup> “Adult education is the lever by which determined adults assisted by dedicated teachers, can open the door to greater opportunity.”<sup>97</sup>

Another government initiative in this focus upon adult and secondary education was the construction of Vocational schools in the province. In a January 13, 1966, Dartmouth Free Press article written by then Dartmouth Alderman, Eileen Stubbs, the issue of vocational and technical training was addressed. She pointed out that the Federal government had offered large capital grants under the Technical and Vocational Training Assistance Act. There were five programs ranging from vocational schools in conjunction with high school programs to adult training facilities. The expiry date for application to the program had been extended from March 1967 to March 1970.

Alderman Stubbs is quoted as saying,

Most provinces immediately snatched at the opportunity of federal subsidization of these much needed educational programs. Nova Scotians sat around talking about the great export of brains and the fine system that this province has in their present schools.

Aiming primarily at Dartmouth and Halifax County children, she claimed that ‘80% of students have less than a senior high school education and no opportunity for vocational or technical training.’ Halifax had taken advantage of the option and used the

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<sup>96</sup> Dartmouth Free Press, October 28, 1965. p.5

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

federal funds to build a vocational school for 2000 students, mostly unemployed adults. The provincial government had drafted a new comprehensive program for Nova Scotia schools, considered to be 'all inclusive'; 'not one child has been omitted in our school system'. Alderman Stubbs maintained that thousands were leaving school frustrated because of the lack of curriculum that 'develops their natural talents and abilities', the 'present system is geared for university preparatory according to authorities'. As well, she asserted that there was a teacher shortage, and not enough guidance counselors 'to implement a program that has every Johnny going in his own direction'. The article made several additional points: Home and School, Educational Associations, Labour Unions, and Industrial leaders have been 'shouting these needs for over fifteen years'. 'Under the federal act, places like Vancouver are operating schools and classes twelve hours a day and twelve months of the year for adults who desire training and further education and are exploring avenues of extension facilities'. 'Half of the Canadian population is under 22, a segment we have shortchanged long enough and who are being asked to face a world of unemployment and discouragement.'<sup>98</sup>

This cry for action on the part of Alderman Stubbs, however overstated, was a reasonably clear indication of the focus of many provincial and municipal officials at this time. In 1960, the federal government had initiated the Technical and Vocational Assistance Act referred to by Alderman Stubbs in an effort to retrain the workforce of the region. It was 1968, however, before the Dartmouth Regional Vocational School was officially opened, designed for the people of Dartmouth and the Eastern Shore.

Closer to home, citizens of Musquodoboit Harbour were involved in another contentious issue not long after the 'Dingle' affair. When the school trustees decided to

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<sup>98</sup> Dartmouth Free Press, January 13, 1966. p. 13.



explore the possibility of installing a sewage treatment plant for the school, not everyone in the area agreed. In fact during a particularly riotous demonstration, one resident was arrested for unreasonable behavior. It took a full year to complete the job as production was halted due to protesters.<sup>99</sup>

How did the arrival of the Eastern Shore District High School change Musquodoboit Harbour? How was the school a social anchor of the community? Alongside the notion of a 'social anchor', one must be sensitive to discord and antagonisms that are characteristics of any community. The high school was and is a public facility where tensions were played out. In this chapter, I have focused upon a number of contentious issues - choosing the location of the school, the hiring of the principal, student and parental activism, and surrounding all of these issues, government involvement in the community. The school, like the church and the rink, was one of those institutions that helped define a sense of community identity, and reinforced the cultural values of the day. They also were places where interests clashed, where disagreements developed, and where the life of the community was being made on a daily basis.

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<sup>99</sup> Personal interview David and Bea Dwyer, May 15, 2001.

### Chapter III

#### Of Rinks and Community: Constructing Identity In Post War Musquodoboit Harbour

On November 19, 1973, a 'standing room only' crowd attended the ceremonial ribbon cutting that signified the opening of the Eastern Shore Community Center in Musquodoboit Harbour, Nova Scotia. The Eastern Shore provincial representative and Member of the Legislative Assembly, A. Garnet Brown, unveiled a plaque commemorating its opening and stated that the 'rink was one of the most modern and best equipped of its kind in the province.'<sup>100</sup> For then president, William 'Billy' Smith and friends, it had been a long three years of hard work and dedication since the idea of building a rink was first suggested by a couple of local men during a campaigning tour by Garnet Brown. Funding for the rink had been made possible from a number of different sources. A Local Initiative Program (LIP) sponsored by the Nova Scotia provincial government, was responsible for some of the paid labour necessary in the construction of the facility. Various provincial and municipal government grants assisted in completing the project.<sup>101</sup> In addition, a huge fundraising effort was undertaken involving door to door canvassing along the eastern shore from Lake Echo to Sheet Harbour, and finally, a

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<sup>100</sup> Dartmouth Free Press, November 21, 1973

<sup>101</sup> Rink records are stored at the Eastern Shore Community Centre in Musquodoboit Harbour.

loan in the amount of \$135,000 from the Royal Bank in Musquodoboit Harbour, helped to ensure the \$400,000 facility would open by September, 1973 – just in time for the new minor hockey season.<sup>102</sup>

In the few years leading up to the opening, as committee members worked at gathering support for the location and cost of the new rink, providing a place to play minor hockey was only one reason given for promoting the construction of the new building. The site chosen was a central location along the Eastern Shore, and the large piece of property required for such a project had been donated by the Central Recreation Commission of Musquodoboit Harbour.<sup>103</sup> The nearby high school, Eastern Shore District High, would now be able to create two hockey teams, one each at the junior and senior level. Lacrosse was mentioned as a sport that had been making a comeback in Nova Scotia and could be accommodated during the summer months; the building could house large meetings or bingo when the ice was taken out at the end of the winter; extra ice time could be available for Halifax and Dartmouth teams needing another ice surface.<sup>104</sup>

There were social reasons promoted as well. Parents believed that the crime rate in the area had dropped by 75% when, even before the rink was built, local youth had become more involved in softball and hockey.<sup>105</sup> According to local businessman, Charles Keating, an associate of Garnet Brown, “if we deny our youth items and facilities

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<sup>102</sup> Personal interview Billy Smith, July 30, 2000. I would like to thank Mr. Smith and his wife, Dawn for their assistance in remembering the details of the rink’s beginnings. Mr. Smith was the General Contractor of the project, volunteering his time. Mrs. Smith looked after the finances while the building was under construction.

<sup>103</sup> Personal Interview Dr. Phil Jardine, August 23, 2000. Dr. Jardine was part of the original Rink Commission, played Old-Timers hockey, and assisted the coach of the Eastern Shore High School team during their most successful seasons.

<sup>104</sup> Halifax Mail-Star, August 25, 1973

<sup>105</sup> Personal interview Percy Watkins, May 3, 2001.

available in most other centers and communities across Canada, then we have to be willing to take all future consequences. These activities help mold solid and beneficial citizens.”<sup>106</sup> Since the nineteenth century, organized sport had been viewed as a way to promote and maintain respectable behavior and moral ‘manliness’<sup>107</sup>. Church leaders and many members of the medical profession had promoted exercise and physical activity as a way to revitalize both the health of the body and of the spirit. Varda Burstyn argues as well that as industrialization pushed fathers out of the household and into factories, “sport addressed the socialization needs of younger boys and adolescents for the kind of ‘rough’ surrogate fathering that the preparation for manhood required.”<sup>108</sup> During the 1930s and with the unemployment associated with the Depression, moreover, recreation and sport was seen as a remedy for preventing the ‘moral decay’ that went along with ‘the particular perils of wage-earning’ within an industrial capitalist society. Recreation was promoted as a response to unemployment.<sup>109</sup> Shirley Tillotson addresses this issue in her treatment of recreation in postwar Ontario. She has found that in the same way that youth became the object of ‘moral panic’ during the 1950s, in the 1930s it was the industrial worker that stirred social concerns. With a focus aimed specifically at the

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<sup>106</sup> Halifax Mail-Star, June 1972, the writer is quoting Charles Keating, a local businessman and associate of Garnet Brown. In the earliest planning stages, Keating was president of the Rink Commission but handed the job over to Billy Smith, who volunteered to be the General Contractor on the project. Smith worked closely with architect, Harry Mitcheltree.

<sup>107</sup> For a detailed examination of the social purposes of sport in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, baseball in particular, see Colin Howell, Northern Sandlots: A Social History of Maritime Baseball (University of Toronto Press, 1995)

<sup>108</sup> Varda Burstyn, The Rites of Men: Manhood, Politics, and the Culture of Sport (University of Toronto Press, 1999) p. 63

<sup>109</sup> For a study of Ontario Recreation and the shaping of liberal democracy see, Shirley Tillotson, The Public at Play: Gender and the Politics of Recreation in Post War Ontario (University of Toronto Press, 2000)

threats plaguing men and boys, recreation was connected to the moral regulation of leisure activities.<sup>110</sup>

There have been a number of books published over the last few years celebrating Canadian rinks and small town hockey. Many are little more than nostalgic stories that romanticize the sport and the way it has impacted upon father/son relationships. Some suggest connections between hockey, the rink, and the construction of national character and identity in Canada.<sup>111</sup> In The Rink: Stories From Hockey's Home Towns, Chris Cuthbert and Scott Russell, both of whom are hockey fans and broadcasters for the CBC, describe Canadian rinks and their importance as follows,

The hockey rink is the place where many Canadians grow to maturity, and as much as the church or the school, it allows the people of the community to gather for entertainment and fellowship.....it excluded no one and was a place where everyone was welcome.....the common building in most communities, whether urban or rural, is the local rink.<sup>112</sup>

The Rink is comprised of ten chapters, describes twelve rinks and contains personal stories and experiences extracted from over two hundred interviews from players, rink managers, coaches and fans. Cuthbert and Russell interviewed one Ontario woman who, as a young girl, 'loathed going to the local arena to watch her brothers play on Saturday mornings'. Only as an adult was a 'deep understanding revealed' to her of the importance of a rink in a community. Other books see hockey as an essential component of a functional family life. Roy MacGregor's The Home Team, Fathers,

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid. p. 25

<sup>111</sup> In the last five years alone, a few released titles are Bruce Hood with Murray Townsend, The Good of the Game: Recapturing Hockey's Greatness (Stoddard Publishing, Canada. 1999); Bill Boyd, Hockey Towns: Stories of Small Town Hockey in Canada (Doubleday Canada, 1998); Chris Cuthbert and Scott

Sons, and Hockey examines the relationship between hockey players and their fathers, quoting his editor, Barbara Berson, in the introduction,

National pastime, rites of passage, family traditions – hockey is absolutely central and integral to the lives of boys and their dads, and much of what happens between them begins to unfold the very first time a young father leads his little one out onto the ice. Hockey is the vehicle through that complex relationship, and it is also the expression of that relationship.<sup>113</sup>

Yet many men also remember hockey as an activity in which their fathers did not have an interest. One Musquodoboit Harbour man, age thirty-nine, remembers getting himself out of bed at 5:00 am Saturday mornings at the age of ten, borrowing his father's old high school football gear, (shoulder pads, shin pads, etc.) and standing by the side of the road in the dark waiting for the hockey bus to Lantz.<sup>114</sup> Another ex-minor hockey player is remembered for walking to the rink with his skates already on his feet early on Saturday mornings, most mornings without having eaten any breakfast. It was not at all unusual for some boys to travel with another player's parents to every game, especially once the minor hockey system involved a weekly game in the city.<sup>115</sup>

The Rink and The Home Team are only two of the many collections of stories released in Canada over the past five or six years. There have been a number of other books as well that make similar connections between hockey in Canada and our sense of family, community and nationhood. Although larger arenas in Canada are mentioned

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Russell, The Rink: Stories From Hockey's Home Towns (Penguin Books Canada, 1997); Roy MacGregor, The Home Team: Fathers, Sons and Hockey (Penguin Books Canada, 1995)

<sup>112</sup> Cuthbert and Russell, The Rink, p. xiii

<sup>113</sup> MacGregor, The Home Team. Fathers, Sons and Hockey, p. 3

<sup>114</sup> Personal interview Ian Dwyer, February 4, 2000.

<sup>115</sup> Personal interview Dave and Edyth Shuman, November 16, 1999. The Shumans moved to Musquodoboit Harbour in February 1973, as the rink was being constructed. They had two sons, age 5 and 7, who had played hockey in Dartmouth for one year, and daughter, age 8 who had figure skated for one year in Dartmouth.

and described in many of these narrative style books, none have offered a critical analysis of the rink. Of course, this was not the intention of the authors. They are what they were written to be, a step back in time to a more romantic past when hockey was played simply for the 'love of the game'. Occasionally, these nostalgic musings provide a rationale for criticizing and offer up ideas for correcting the problems they see as existing in the whole hockey system, from minor hockey all the way to the NHL<sup>116</sup>.

This chapter examines the rink in Musquodoboit Harbour as a social institution that intended to create a space for organized recreation for 'children'<sup>117</sup> and a vehicle for social cohesion. As we will see however, the Eastern Shore Community Centre can also be studied is a place where community tensions and rivalries can be examined. From the beginning, there were conflicts regarding the location of the building; the naming of the rink and who should be represented. Not all would agree with the decision to build a rink. Why the decision to build a rink, then? Why not a swimming pool? Or a curling rink? Which members of the community made these decisions? Who had 'first choice' when selecting the use of the ice? Questions such as these required answers and simply by raising them community members could influence the outcome of a social institution that became an important part of Musquodoboit Harbour. How these questions were answered were affected by the immediate context: the time period in which the facility was constructed, the geography of the surrounding area and the different constituencies represented, and prevailing political, economic, and social trends. In Musquodoboit Harbour, the rink was a main center of attraction, especially for young people, from its

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<sup>116</sup> The Hood/Townsend book in particular, The Good of the Game, attempts to address the issue of violence in hockey in a non-analytical manner.

<sup>117</sup> This intention was stated many times from various interviewees as well as in the original constitution voted upon by the rink commission.

opening in 1973 through to the early 1980s. In the immediate post war era local churches had been the center of social activity, often because events involved large groups of people and occurred in public places at organized times.<sup>118</sup> Through the 1960s and 1970s, however, there had been a decrease in church attendance. By the time the rink was built there was little else in the way of entertainment or social gathering places, especially for teenagers, other than hanging around the corner store. Many parents felt that at least if their child was going to the rink to watch hockey they would be supervised or 'safe'. The reality was that many evening or weekend games, especially those played by teenagers or young adults involved alcohol and/or drugs among the fans before, during and after the games. Eastern Shore residents were like many other Canadians who felt as though the rink was a place where young people would 'grow to maturity', although maybe not always in the ways parents or community members would have approved of.

Musquodoboit Harbour was not the only small community to build a rink in the province around this time. There were a number of rinks already in existence in larger cities. In Halifax, for example, the Forum had been constructed in 1926, and the Centennial Arena and the Saint Mary's University Arena were opened in 1966. After 1970 a number of rinks opened across the province. Between 1972 and 1977, 34 rinks opened in Nova Scotia, nine of which were within a thirty-mile radius of downtown Halifax. These included Musquodoboit Harbour, Dartmouth, Cole Harbour, Bedford, and Sackville.<sup>119</sup> Garnet Brown was described by the Halifax Mail-Star as, "confident in stating that when the Musquodoboit Harbour rink was first conceived it started a chain

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<sup>118</sup> For more on the church related social life of Musquodoboit Harbour, see my examination of the community in the 1950s in an earlier chapter.

<sup>119</sup> Nova Scotia Sport and Recreation Commission



reaction around the province. Since the construction was started, countless communities applied for and received government assistance for similar recreation facilities.”<sup>120</sup>

The proliferation of sporting facilities in Nova Scotia, and rinks in particular, was part of a continuing national postwar trend that had involved an increased role for government in areas of health, leisure, and education. In recreation and sport, federal initiatives in 1961 had resulted in Bill C-131, intended to “encourage, promote and develop fitness and amateur sport in Canada.”<sup>121</sup> In 1972 Nova Scotia established a new Department of Recreation with a budget of \$700,000 to be used for the construction of rinks, pools, tennis courts, and ball fields. In 1973, the budget was increased to \$1,000,000. The Department of Recreation was concerned with “how we use our assets; human resources, man-made facilities, and most important – natural resources of land, sea, air - so much promise for healthy recreation.”<sup>122</sup>

Some of the promoters who wanted to form a recreation department believed that the ‘age of the new leisure society’ was on the horizon. Due to early retirement and the ‘inevitable’ four day work week, they argued, it was important to ensure that since ‘the man of the house would soon be around for an extra day, it could be too much for the woman of the house’. It was important to find some type of activity to keep the men busy.<sup>123</sup> Interestingly, postwar discourse regarding leisure usually involved individual choices for men and ‘family-centered’ activities for women.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>120</sup>Halifax *Mail-Star*, November 19, 1973. p.15

<sup>121</sup> *History of the Canadian Peoples*, p. 361

<sup>122</sup> Garnet Brown Speeches. RG 57, volume 600, #1 November 16, 1972. (PANS)

<sup>123</sup> Ibid. I found no other mention of this ‘new leisure society’ but felt it was worth mentioning if only as an illustration of the persuasive discourse of Mr. Brown.

<sup>124</sup> Except for backyard barbecuing, which became a symbol of the domesticity of the new fatherhood in the 1950s. See Christopher Dummitt, *Better Left Unsaid: Power, Discourse, and Masculine Domesticity in Post-War Halifax, 1945-1960*, MA thesis, Dalhousie University, 1997.

Despite the absence of an arena in Musquodoboit Harbour before 1973 residents of the community still played organized hockey. A number of young men on the Eastern Shore played in a senior league at the 'old Dartmouth rink'. Also, for four hockey seasons, 1969/70, 1970/71, 1971/72 and 1972/73, a group of local fathers and sons had traveled to Lantz, about an hour drive north of Musquodoboit Harbour, to play minor hockey. During the 1969-70 season, three cars would each take five boys, age thirteen and fourteen, every Friday night. They played one game per week, and it was not uncommon for the team to lose 25 – 0. Eventually, the group raised enough money to purchase a large van that would hold fifteen boys. In 1971, they bought an old bus, also acquired through fundraising efforts. By this time, there were four teams. They made one trip every Friday night and two trips on Saturday. One father usually did the majority of driving.<sup>125</sup>

When the Eastern Shore Community Center opened in 1973, more than 800 boys registered for minor hockey. Players came from as far away as Spry Bay, approximately 40 miles east of the rink, and as far west as Preston, a small Black community east of Dartmouth. The boys ranged in age from five to fifteen years. There were associations from eleven different communities along the eastern shore; Preston, Lake Echo, Lawrencetown, West Chezzetcook, Porters Lake, East Chezzetcook, Musquodoboit Harbour, Jeddore, Spry Harbour, and the East Marine Association, which was a combination of a number of communities located about an hour east of the rink. Most associations had a team in each division, which were divided according to age and each association was responsible for their own registration and fund raising. The youngest boys, those who were under eight years old, were in the atom division; 9 and 10 year olds

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<sup>125</sup> Personal interview Percy Watkins, May 3, 2001

were squirts; 11 and 12, peewee; 13 and 14, bantam; 15 and 16, midget; and 17 and 18 played at the juvenile level. Every Saturday was minor hockey day at the rink. Beginning at 6 a.m., teams from the various communities would compete against each other. Coaches for the youngest boys would often put six teams on the ice at one time. The ice surface was divided into three separate areas. A long, thick rope would be laid along each of the two blue lines and the center ice, and the goalie nets were placed across the ice from each other, making each playing area one third of the regulation size. This way, three games could be played at the same time. Among the older boys, one game was played per hour. There was no stopped time except for the last two minutes in the third period. In the atom and peewee levels, the buzzer on the clock was sounded every two minutes to signify a line change, in order to ensure equal ice time for all of the players. Games generally began with the youngest boys playing earliest, and the oldest boys finishing at 10 p.m.<sup>126</sup>

Who played minor hockey in postwar rural Nova Scotia? Certainly not every young boy, but a high percentage of the male population in the communities surrounding Musquodoboit Harbour began their minor hockey experience at the Eastern Shore Community Centre in 1973. In 1971, the Canadian Census Bureau had recorded the population of Musquodoboit Harbour as 768. The population of the Eastern Shore, more specifically the area served by the rink, was close to 15,000. When the rink opened in the fall of 1973, almost 900 boys registered for minor hockey, about half of the boys between the ages of five and nineteen.<sup>127</sup> Hockey was a popular sport in Canada and had been

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<sup>126</sup> Personal interview with David and Edyth Shuman, November 16, 1999.

<sup>127</sup> Census of Canada, 1973 (Dominion Bureau of Statistics)

since before the turn of the century.<sup>128</sup> Sociologists Richard Gruneau and David Whitson have found that traditionally, hockey had been a sport for male working-class Canadians, especially in rural areas and small towns. They claim that in most communities in Canada, minor hockey was viewed as an important aspect of the social life of the area, highly recreational for young people and a “consuming life interest for the host of parents and other volunteers whose efforts as coaches and organizers make minor hockey happen.”<sup>129</sup> In an era when social and economic changes in North America had led to a society that was much more child-centered than ever before, minor hockey was one major sport that was promoted as an activity which could keep young boys busy and out of trouble. Of course, a defining moment for many Canadian hockey fans was the 1972 Canada-Russia hockey series when the ‘largest television audience ever assembled in Canada’ was glued to their sets. On September 28, 1972, when Team Canada’s Paul Henderson scored the sixth and winning goal at 19:26 in the third period, adults and children across Canada cheered as they watched the final game in the series.<sup>130</sup> More than ever, hockey was ‘Canada’s game.’

After World War II, as the Cold War pitted the West against the Soviet Union, a liberal world-view emphasizing the freedom of the individual, penetrated not only the political system but extended to domestic life and sport. Liberal notions of individual freedom and private property rights were contrasted with the ‘unfreedom’ of Hitler’s Germany, and Stalin’s Russia. In childrearing there emerged a determination to allow the

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<sup>128</sup> In the Maritimes, an early reference to hockey was made by Thomas Chandler Haliburton in *The Attache*. He mentions playing ‘ice hurley’ in his youth during the early 1800s, claimed by historians to be a crude version of the modern game. See, Sheldon Gillis M.A. thesis, *Putting It On Ice: A Social History of Hockey in the Maritimes, 1880-1914*, Saint Mary’s University, 1996 p.14.

<sup>129</sup> Richard Gruneau and David Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada* (Toronto, 1993) p. 154

<sup>130</sup> Burnstead, *History of the Canadian Peoples*

children of the free world to be more free than children had ever been before. One of the best selling books of the 1950s and 1960s, Dr. Benjamin Spock's, Common Sense Book of Baby And Childcare, provided information and advice on raising infants and children.<sup>131</sup> Of course, society had to be in the right mood in order for the ideas surrounding the child-centered society to become popular. The prosperity of the 1950s and 1960s gave many parents the financial ability to provide their offspring with extra time and money.

Creating the perfect environment for each stage of a child's development took up a lot of time. Washing machines, vacuum cleaners, electric stoves, and, eventually, a second family vehicle helped to allow parents, especially mothers, some of the extra time required to devote to their children. Former NHL goaltender, Ken Dryden, in his book, Home Game: Hockey and Life in Canada, claims that post war parents were committed to involving themselves in the lives of their children and give them every opportunity to 'be the best that you can be'. It was a period when conventional wisdom in school, media, and self-help books emphasized the benefits of early introduction to skill development and learning. Community newspapers like the Dartmouth Free Press, contained weekly reports on local minor sports and often included tips from the 'pros' such as Gordie Howe on various hockey skills for example. Organized children's sport fit right in with early childhood education, learning through toys and games, educational television initiatives, and lessons in everything from dance to piano promised a liberated and progressive future for the new generation.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> I look a little more closely at Spock's book in an earlier chapter. See the section on the United Church in Musquodoboit Harbour.

<sup>132</sup> Ken Dryden, Home Game: Hockey and Life in Canada, p. 204

In its first three hockey seasons, Minor hockey experienced a boom at the Eastern Shore Community Centre. The hockey association continued to register large numbers of boys, and the skills of the teams improved. One goal of the Rink Commission was to ensure that financial difficulties would not prevent a child wishing to become involved with a sport offered at the rink. Boys initially paid \$1.00 each time they were on the ice. Seventeen players per team, two teams, \$34.00. Ice cost \$45.00 per hour to rent. Referees, linesmen and timekeepers together, cost between ten and fifteen dollars per game. Each association was responsible for fundraising the balance remaining after the boys paid their dollar. Some of the more popular ways to raise money were bottle drives, carwashes, bake sales, skate-a-thons, raffles, and dances – organized by the parents of the team members. After two years as a house system, where all the games were played at the Eastern Shore rink, a few minor hockey coaches and parents decided to form one all-star team at each level to play a few exhibition games against teams outside of the eastern shore. For the next two years, players with higher skill levels played on two teams, their house league team and an all-star team comprised of a few players from each area. In the late winter of 1977, the Eastern Shore Peewee All-Star team defeated the Central Minor League Champions in a two game total goal series, winning the team a spot at the Provincial Championships, held that year in Amherst. Although the Eastern Shore team did not win the provincials, the tournament signified the end of Eastern Shore Minor Hockey's position as an outlaw league, separate from Central Minor. The Central Minor Hockey League was a regional division of the Nova Scotia Minor Hockey Association and included hockey teams from Bedford, Sackville, East Hants, Dartmouth, Halifax, Spryfield, and Eastern Shore.

In the 1970s, especially in Dartmouth and Halifax, there were more opportunities for girls to play hockey than there had been before. However, there was still a general feeling that boys and girls should not play on the same team. Liberal notions of individual freedom thus ran up against hockey's gender divide. There were examples, however, of that divide being breached – but not in hockey. In Musquodoboit Harbour, a few parents with young girls decided to start a figure and power skating club when the rink was first opened in 1973. Of the three women involved, two had recently moved to the area from Dartmouth and had been involved in skating associations in the city. Initially, the women who handled the first registration in September 1973 expected about 60 girls to join the group. 240 actually registered, and a waiting list was formed with twenty-five additional names. About 30 of the registrants were young boys interested in the power skating program, often to improve their skating for eventual participation in minor hockey. Following registration, about ten parents volunteered to serve on the newly formed executive and to help with coaching. Some of the women could barely skate. The ten took figure skating seminars in Truro and Saint Mary's University involving both on and off ice training. A professional skater was hired in Musquodoboit Harbour to oversee the skaters and the program during figure skating lessons every Sunday afternoon. In contrast to minor hockey, which was organized according to community and governed by Nova Scotia Minor Hockey and the Canadian Minor Hockey Association, the Eastern Shore Figure Skating Club was one association consisting of skaters from all eleven communities and was basically self-governed, following only the testing procedures outlined by the Canadian Figure Skating Association. The fee for figure skating was \$1.00 per child per week. However, the organization put sixty skaters on the ice at one

time and raised enough money to pay for the ice time and the services and travel expenses of the professional figure skater. Every spring, to close out the season, the Club held a Carnival so that members could show off their skills. Usually, the carnival was organized around a theme. The first year, 1973 was a masquerade in which costumes were judged. In 1976, for example, the theme was the American Bicentennial, and costumes were designed and fabricated by volunteers. Themes used in other carnivals were the Wizard of Oz, Teddy Bear's Picnic. Occasionally, guest skaters would perform solos.<sup>133</sup> The Skating Club would charge admission and usually about 400 spectators attended the Sunday afternoon performance that signified the end of the winter season in figure skating.

A number of parents were interested in competitive sports for their daughters and ringette was starting to become more widely known in the province. It was 1979 before the Eastern Shore Ringette Association was formed. The league began with two teams and by 1984, there were five teams of about fifty girls. The names of the various age divisions show ringette has developed as a women's sport. Bunnies is the non-competitive level for girls age 8, 9, and 10; competitive levels include petites for 8, 9, 10 year olds, Tweens for 11 and 12 year olds, junior belles are 13 and 14, senior belles are 15, 16, and 17, debts are for ladies 18 and over. Unlike hockey, Ringette is a totally 'non-contact' sport. Promoters at the time 'had the impression that ringette was replacing women's hockey.'<sup>134</sup>

During the 1973/74 hockey season, the Eastern Shore District High School also made use of the new rink. Although there had been High School hockey off and on for a

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<sup>133</sup> Personal interview Edyth Shuman, November 16, 1999. Mrs. Shuman was the first President of the Eastern Shore Figure Skating Association as well as a volunteer coach.



number of years since the school's opening in 1965, it was the new ability to play games at home that brought out the most fans. For two years ESDHS had a very competitive team, playing home games on Friday nights against teams from the city. After a couple of years and with increasing pressure from city teams, ESDHS changed their home games to Tuesday nights and the number of fans dropped dramatically.

Through the 1970s, the minor hockey system at the Eastern Shore rink followed the guidelines of the Nova Scotia Minor Hockey Association, using their age divisions and their rules and regulations. Under this system, boys continued to play minor hockey until they completed the juvenile division at age nineteen. From there, the players with the best skills could go on and try out for a junior team outside of the Eastern Shore usually in Cole Harbour, Dartmouth or Halifax, since there was no junior team in the local association. For the average player, the boy (or young man) who wanted to continue to play hockey at his home rink, there were few options – only one in fact – the ‘outlaw’ Eastern Shore Senior Hockey League.<sup>135</sup> ‘Outlaw’ was the term used to describe leagues that wrote their own constitution and played games within their own rink.

When the rink opened in 1973, a number of men who had been playing senior hockey in Dartmouth formed the Eastern Shore Senior Hockey League. The association had six teams, two from Lake Echo, BC Construction and the Wonderland A's, (unofficially, they referred to themselves as the ‘employed’ - BC Construction - and the ‘unemployed’ - Wonderland A's.) BC Construction mainly consisted of players from

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<sup>134</sup> Eastern Shore Weekly, March 27, 1984, p. 12 (PANS, reel #8330)

<sup>135</sup> Personal interview Rick Crimp, March 5, 2001. Rick played in the Senior League from 1976 until it evolved into the Gentleman's League in the early 80s. The Gentleman's League continues to be very

Preston and Lake Echo, and Wonderland A's were from Lake Echo and Porter's Lake. Grand Desert had a team, as did Musquodoboit Harbour, Jeddore, and Spry Harbour. The men on these six teams ranged in age from about sixteen to mid thirties. There were a variety of skill levels in the league. One of the younger players, Randy Smith of Lake Echo, had played a couple of years with the Cole Harbour Colts Junior 'A' team. A few of the local high school and junior high teachers were on the team, playing against their own students. The teams used full body contact and the rink would be filled with fans every Sunday afternoon and Wednesday evening. The games were especially popular during playoffs when the rivalry between teams tended to be even more intense than usual.

In Nova Scotia, senior amateur hockey leagues had been popular until about the mid 1960s when a drop in spectator attendance at the games occurred at about the same time as teams began to be flooded with increased costs. The main reason for the increase was the necessity for imported players – with increased salaries - in order to remain competitive. The Nova Scotia Senior Hockey League had had a gentlemen's agreement not to use imports since the beginning of the 1959-60 season. League President, John Mullane, did not want the heavy schedules and expensive payrolls like those of the Maritime Major League of the 1950s.<sup>136</sup> Two teams in the league broke the agreement, hiring imports from New Brunswick. The following year, each team was allowed to sign three imports, after the league rule was changed. Teams had argued that increases in skill would lead to increased support from the community. Senior hockey had almost

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active at present with sixteen teams involved. Players must be over nineteen to play and there is no body contact.

disappeared in Ontario so there were a large number of amateur players looking for teams to play on. Imports increased team costs, so the league changed the schedule to two games a week but the community would not support the increased number of games. Part of the problem was because of the easy access to the high quality of hockey played in the NHL that was available to fans on television.<sup>137</sup> In an unpublished thesis that examines the disappearance of senior hockey in Nova Scotia, author J. Andrew Kimball argues that the disappearance was due to the desire of young, talented hockey players to play professional hockey either in central Canada or the United States. Nova Scotia did manage to keep a senior league longer than other parts of Canada due to a smaller population that would not support a professional team. Fans continued to attend games but Kimball claims it was only a matter of time before all of the best players left, and fans lost interest in a game that had lost the high quality it had in the past.<sup>138</sup> In Bruce Kidd's book, The Struggle for Canadian Sport, an entire chapter is devoted to the success of the NHL as part of the process of capitalist development, leading to the eventual disappearance of community-based hockey. Unfortunately, Kidd does not address issues in the Maritimes, focusing specifically on Central Canada. However, comparisons can be made between the two regions.<sup>139</sup>

The Eastern Shore Senior Hockey League did not have many players with the same skill level as the Senior A level teams had had in the city, the teams involved played somewhere between a C and D level of hockey. Nevertheless, the league provided many

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<sup>136</sup> The Silent Ending: The Death of the Community Hockey Tradition in Nova Scotia. R. Andrew Kimball, 1986. Unpublished Thesis, St. Mary's University. I would like to thank Stephen Coutts of the Nova Scotia Sports Hall of Fame for bringing this study to my attention.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid. p. 96

<sup>138</sup> Ibid. p. 103.

<sup>139</sup> Bruce Kidd, The Struggle For Canadian Sport (University of Toronto Press, 1996)

hours of entertainment for hockey fans along the eastern shore. The games often featured fights between players on opposing teams. Certain teams stirred up hostilities between fans more often than others. For example, there was always tension between the fans cheering for the Lake Echo teams and the fans that supported the teams from Jeddore or Spry Harbour. One did not always cheer for the team representing their home community; sometimes fans lived in one area and cheered for the team their friends played on. Although the high school was located in Musquodoboit Harbour, most of the players and fans knew each other as fellow students and had attended the school at one time or another. The exception was the team from Spry Harbour, those players attended Duncan MacMillan High School in Sheet Harbour. So team loyalties were often unrelated to the community the team was from, it was usually who was on the team that interested fans. Fans did not always cheer for their 'own' team, but the team their friends played on. Games were held on Wednesday evenings and Sunday afternoons and the majority of the fans were teenagers or young adults. Often, arguments or even fights broke out among the fans, but it is difficult to distinguish how much of this was actually connected to the hockey game and how much was related to the alcohol and rowdiness that tended to be part of the event.

Recently, in studies involving sport, historians have started to concentrate on the relationship of sport and recreation to society, rather than to emphasize the individual sports, feats and participants. This study of the rink in Musquodoboit Harbour has focused upon a number of the issues surrounding the use of the rink between its opening in 1973, to approximately 1980. Certainly I have placed more emphasis on the two main users of the rink in the first seven winters after the rink was opened – boy's hockey and

men's hockey. This is not because these two groups were any more important than those associations that involved girls. There can be no doubt, however, that the reason the rink was built in the first place was because the idea was put forward by a number of *men* who had *sons*. Some of the men on the original rink commission played hockey in the Old Timers League. All of their sons played minor hockey, senior hockey and/or high school hockey at some point during the first few years that the rink was open and many of those sons continue to play at present as men in the Eastern Shore Gentlemen's League, no body contact allowed. Although the rink was created amidst the social and economic transformations that followed World War II, it is important to understand that the rink did not emerge out of some uncontrolled, inevitable process, but was created because of the decisions and efforts of individuals at the community level – in this case, a small group of men. The Eastern Shore Community Centre was a 'gendered arena'.

Even with the renewed liberal notions of freedom and democracy that were in place after World War II, that freedom often did not extend itself beyond the needs and desires of men. In a study of the history of architecture, Patricia Vertinsky has found that post war modernism revealed itself in the construction of a number of public facilities such as gymnasiums, swimming pools, and rinks. Architecture, 'deeply enmeshed in constructing spatial relationships, is also implicated in the construction of the other'.<sup>140</sup> When the Eastern Shore Community Center was constructed, special attention was given to the design of the building with regards to cost efficiency. The rink was built to modern, functional, utilitarian standards as opposed to the post-modern trends of today. Within those standards, they still managed to construct a gendered space allowing no

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<sup>140</sup> Patricia Vertinsky, in a paper delivered to the Sport Symposium at Brock University, 2001. Thank you to Dr. Colin Howell for bringing it to my attention.

separate place for women hockey players. There were separate bathrooms but not dressing rooms.

Examining the rink as a social anchor has illustrated the contentious nature of the institution at the same time that it reflects the increasing secularization of society in the postwar era. The changing characteristics of Musquodoboit Harbour over time from the relatively peaceful period in the 1950s when the church was often the center of the 'Harbour's social life, through the more turbulent 1960s when the high school was built, to the time of the rink's construction in 1973, has also uncovered the increased focus upon children in the period. This chapter has revealed the rink in Musquodoboit Harbour as a social anchor of that community. Along with the high school that had been built in 1965, the opening of the rink exposed the community to a regular onslaught of visitors from the surrounding areas. Minor hockey in particular encouraged interaction between the different communities and also with the larger cities of Halifax and Dartmouth. Especially in the post war era, Musquodoboit Harbour became a community linking the rural areas of the Eastern Shore to the larger urban cities of Halifax and Dartmouth and minor hockey was one way through which this connection was made.

## Conclusion

The preceding chapters outline the changing characteristics of community life in Musquodoboit Harbour during the first few decades after the Second World War. Beginning in the 1950s, if not before, the area experienced new technologies, better communication services, improved transportation, and expanding employment opportunities for its residents. At the same time it provided some outsiders a growing awareness of the area as a desirable community in which to live. In this thesis I have tried to link the postwar history of this local community to intellectual developments that were occurring outside of Musquodoboit Harbour: in Nova Scotia, Canada and most of the western world. Among them were increased secularization, a new focus upon family life and child rearing, and assumptions of affluence.

Today, in the lives of many residents, Musquodoboit Harbour hardly seems separate from the city. Since highway 107 was completed as far as the 'Harbour' in the 1980s, the drive to 'town' takes barely twenty-five minutes. The population of the village has grown substantially in the past twenty years and even though other rural areas continue to decline and lose community members, Musquodoboit Harbour's proximity to the city makes it a viable area for commuting. People think nothing of driving to 'town' every day, sometimes twice a day. Interestingly, a large number of the newer residents have romantic notions of 'preserving the character and identity of the community'. In

this postmodern era of consumer-based nostalgia, residents struggle to construct an identity for Musquodoboit Harbour through the establishment of various craft shops, cottage industries and events aimed at attracting tourists to the area. Government support for tourism may be just as important as community-based initiatives, however. Just recently, the Halifax Mail-Star contained a front-page article reporting that a number of U.S. based tour bus companies are refusing to include the Marine Drive highway (#7) on their tour next summer because of poor road conditions. The article also credits a number of American recreational vehicle owners with the same complaint.<sup>141</sup>

How does one attempt to study and understand the history of a small community like Musquodoboit Harbour, Nova Scotia? At the beginning of this thesis, I pointed out that traditional studies of community are often celebratory in nature. The approach I have undertaken tries in part to connect a small area with the larger world in which it exists. This is nothing new of course. It is simply a *student's* approach to history, differing from examinations of the past that tend to be more triumphant and that exalt the lives of the important individuals. Regular, ordinary people are the focus here – forming and shaping history while living regular, ordinary lives.

From the beginning, I knew my purpose and knew reasonably well what I was trying to say. I knew that the rink and the church and the school were, and are, focal points in many small communities. I also knew that there had been a transition over time from the more church-centered society of an earlier day to the increasingly secular society that emerged after World War II. I did *not* know how to deliver my assumption that institutions like the church, the rink and the school, served as 'social anchors' of community. What specific issue or issues could elucidate this proposition within the

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<sup>141</sup> Halifax Mail-Star, p1



institutions that I chose to study? Obviously it would have been impossible to give a chronological narrative of every aspect of an organization, and this was not my intention in any case. As it turned out, the available research materials decided the course I would take, and the project seemed to take on a life of its own. Much of the history of these institutions was based upon the hard work and dedication of volunteers. Historical documents were not always readily available, complete, or even in existence for that matter. And so I consulted what was available, and supplemented the documents with oral testimony. Not surprisingly, I discovered that while the rink, church and school were ‘social anchors of community’ in Musquodoboit Harbour, they could at the same time be ‘sites of resistance’, especially the rink and the high school. Indeed, all three were areas where the cultural values of the period studied were reflected, encouraged, and played out.

My most important question was this. To what extent can the rink, school and church be identified as social anchors of community in Musquodoboit Harbour? It became clear to me that the answer to this question differed depending upon the particular institution. For one thing, my examination of the church illustrated that it exercised a relatively stabilizing effect within the community. This was not an uncommon role for the church to play during the 1950s. As explained in chapter one, the new focus on families after the war led to an increased interest in the church, mainly as a place to reinforce family values – an important preoccupation within society at that time. On the other hand, the school and the rinks were more complicated, because their metropolitan reach extended beyond the boundaries of the town. While they served as ‘social anchors’, they were more often sites of conflict, perhaps because they pulled

people into Musquodoboit Harbour from the surrounding hinterland. Unlike the churches, which served residents of the town, the rink and the school drew upon a broader constituency.

The notion of cultural institutions as sites of resistance is not a new one and was useful to me. According to Antonio Gramsci, culture is a battleground in which power is always being exercised, resisted and negotiated. Gramsci's ideas about hegemony were helpful in clarifying the process of cultural production and the continual negotiation of cultural values in postwar Musquodoboit Harbour. A noticeably common thread running through this work, and indeed through the postwar years, was the increased emphasis upon children and their well being, be it educational, recreational, emotional, or spiritual. Beginning with Sunday school and various church sponsored activities and organizations like mission band, baby band, and CGIT groups as well as boy scouts and girl guides, it was not long before Musquodoboit Harbour residents recognized the benefits of children's sports. In the emerging postwar 'liberal order', which Ian McKay expresses as "one that encourages and seeks to extend across time and space a belief in the epistemological and ontological primacy of the category 'individual'"<sup>142</sup>, the acknowledgment of the *right* of every child to equal education was quickly followed by the demand for government initiatives in recreation in many small communities in the province. Did not every child now have a *right* to sport and recreation?

While the church and the high school tried to address the needs of both boys and girls, they did so in specifically gendered ways. The principle of equality, therefore, did not always extend across the sexual divide. In the United Church, boys and girls stayed

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<sup>142</sup> Ian McKay, "The Liberal Order Framework: A Prospectus for a Reconnaissance of Canadian History", Forum essay, Canadian Historical Review 81, 4 (December 2000)

together until they reached the age of twelve, when they left the Mission Band. The girls went on to CGIT and boys joined Boy Scouts. CGIT was a United Church sponsored organization, while Boy Scouts was interdenominational, belonging to no church in particular, indicating the church's interest in the continued Christian education of young girls. Girls did handiwork and sewing, led services within the church occasionally and went camping, although not every summer. Boys followed the Boy Scout handbook and learned about survival in the great outdoors while gaining leadership skills.

While attempting to address the educational needs of every child, high school courses were offered that would ensure that democratic values within society were reinforced. Oworm has found that in areas of science, English, and health for example, ideas about progress, democracy, good mental and physical health, citizenship, and behavioral standards were part of the curriculum.<sup>143</sup> When the Eastern Shore High School opened, girls were offered courses in the new cooking and sewing labs while boys took woodworking, metalworking and drafting, emphasizing separate, but equal, roles for men and women. On the other hand, the rink had been built to accommodate hockey players, male hockey players. So as society was striving for more and better opportunities for children, girls had been marginalized although participation in figure skating was four times the number expected when the rink opened and ringette started only a few years later.

Another theme that runs through this thesis is that Musquodoboit Harbour occupies that liminal space between the city and the rural countryside. Here, we are reminded of Daniel Samson's Contested Countryside and his idea of rural and urban areas as being 'two worlds in Atlantic Canada', separate, but at the same time,

interrelated especially in industry and economy.<sup>144</sup> This study of Musquodoboit Harbour is important because it reminds historians of the relevance of communities that link the urban and rural, and highlights the necessity for more sophisticated methods of analysis for understanding small towns on the margins of urban centers.

The contested nature, or in the case of the church, lack of contest, of the three institutions examined here illustrates more closely the identities of Musquodoboit Harbour in the postwar era, identities which were altered over time. By focusing upon the women in First United, the idea of the church as a 'social anchor' in Musquodoboit Harbour was illustrated and reinforced. It encouraged gatherings and gave some members a venue in which to express ideas and opinions. In 1950, opportunities like that were limited for women, but things were changing. Television, an increasingly more affluent society including the welfare state, and the women's movement were instrumental in facilitating that change. Later, the 1960s and 1970s witnessed a cultural revolution that almost certainly impacted the church as much as it did the rink, school and many other institutions in the province. Further study is needed in all of these areas. One result of this study will be to raise even more questions about Nova Scotia in the postwar era.

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<sup>143</sup> Owrarn, Born At the Right Time. p. 128-129

<sup>144</sup> Samson, Contested Countryside. Samson refers to a number of studies, which debunk the notion of urban areas of the region being the sole producers of the local economy. See for example, Ian McKay, 'The crisis of dependant development: class conflict in the Nova Scotia coalfields, 1872-1876' in G.S. Kealey, ed., Class, Gender, and Region: Essays in Canadian Historical Sociology (St. John's, 1988) 9-48; and T.W. Acheson, 'The Great Merchant and Economic Development in St. John, 1820-1850, Acadiensis, VIII,2 (Spring 1979) 3-27

### Post Script: September 2001

Musquodoboit Harbour has retained its role as a link between the cities of Halifax and Dartmouth and its own surrounding hinterland. The functions of the rink, school and church in the community, however, have certainly been altered over time.

In 1979, a junior high school opened in Gaetz Brook, about five miles west of the Eastern Shore District High School. From that point on, Eastern Shore High was used for grades ten to twelve, with grades seven, eight, and nine attending Gaetz Brook Junior High. If this study had been taken to the contemporary period, one may well find that the role of the school is less of a center for community activity.

Probably the institution that has experienced the most dramatic change in community usage is the rink. Whereas in 1973 minor hockey registered almost nine hundred boys; the Eastern Shore Minor Hockey Association was pleased to register about 250 per year over the past ten years, and had even fewer registrants during the late 1980s. As recently as a few weeks ago, rumor around the community was that the rink was experiencing financial difficulty and its opening for the winter season could be delayed. I have heard since of the Halifax Regional Municipality stepping in to assist with the problems so everything should work out fine. Up until this point, the rink was 'self-

supporting' and not part of the municipal tax bill, but it looks as though that may be about to change.

First United in Musquodoboit Harbour still remains relatively stable, although the United Church of Canada has most certainly experienced its share of controversy over the years in issues such as the performance of marriage ceremonies for homosexuals and the ordination of homosexuals, and the change to more inclusive language in scripture and hymn books. There was a new building erected in Musquodoboit Harbour in the early 1980s, so it is now able to accommodate more community activities – not necessarily church related, and a larger Sunday school. There has also been an increase in membership enrolment since the new church was built.

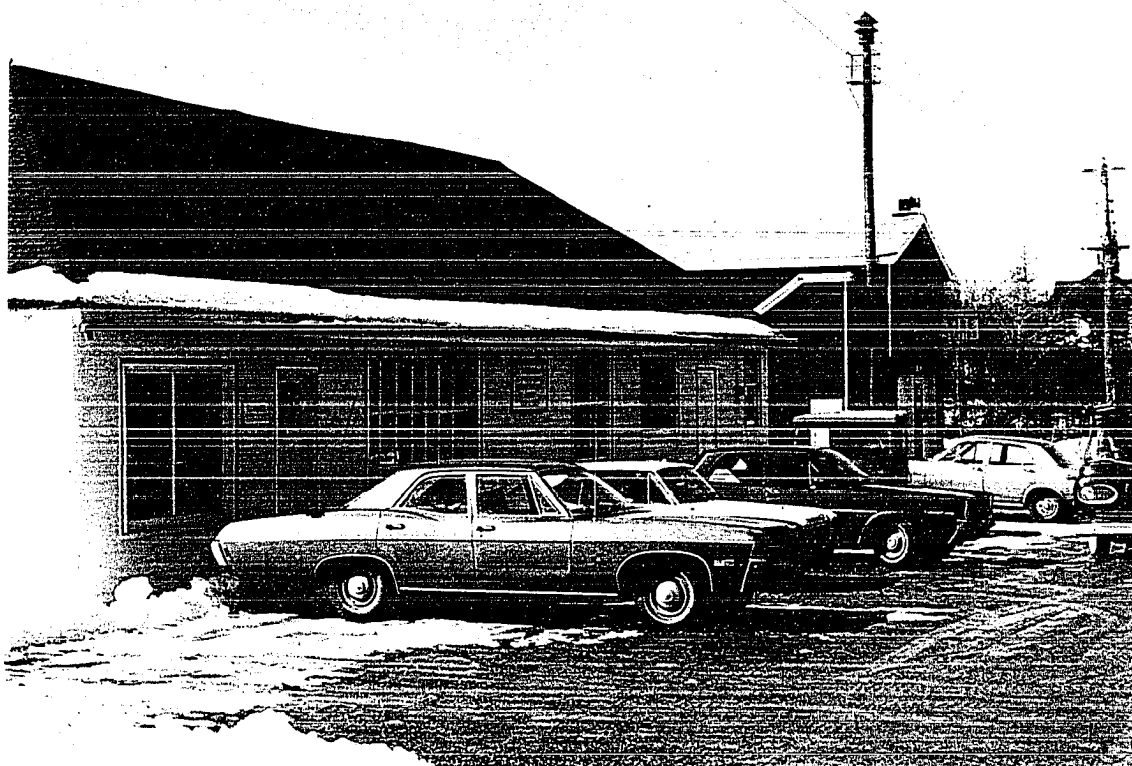
At present, the concept of community identity has increasingly been associated with the longing for an earlier time. As people try to invent identity, we look less to the function of institutions that were both sites of conflict and social anchors and more to our imagining of our communities.



Musquodoboit Harbour Elementary School, used for grades primary to twelve until 1957



The first Twin Oaks Hospital, a new one was built in 1977. The old building is presently a senior citizens nursing home, 'The Birches'



Department of Motor Vehicles (left) and Department of Lands and Forests (right)



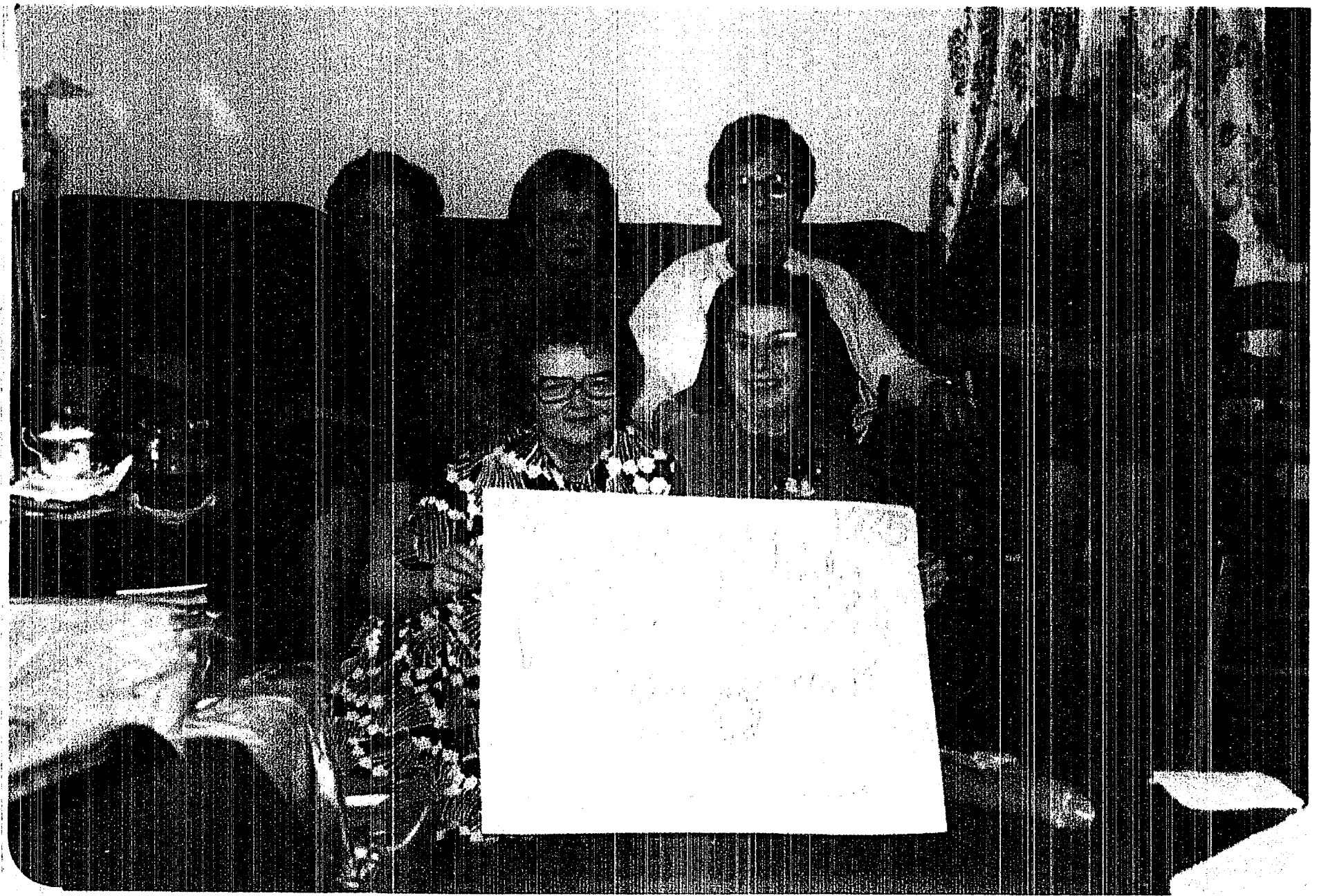
Flewelling Pharmacy



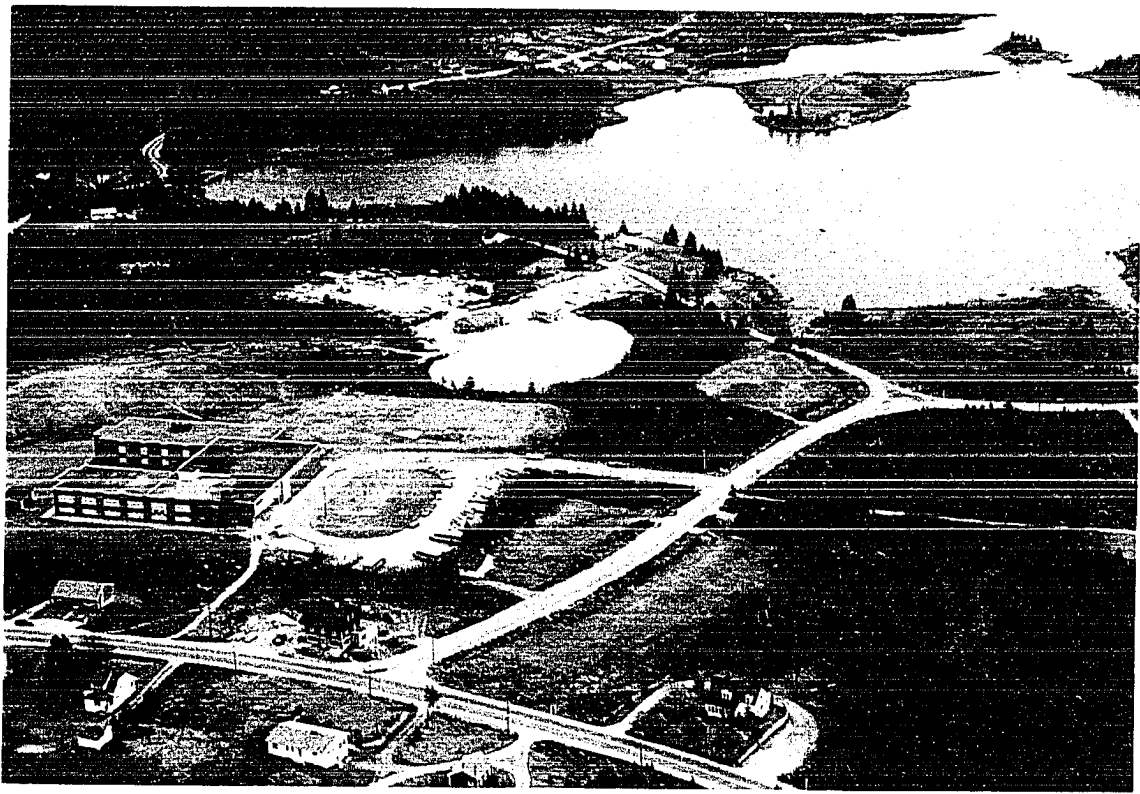


First United at Musquodoboit Harbour

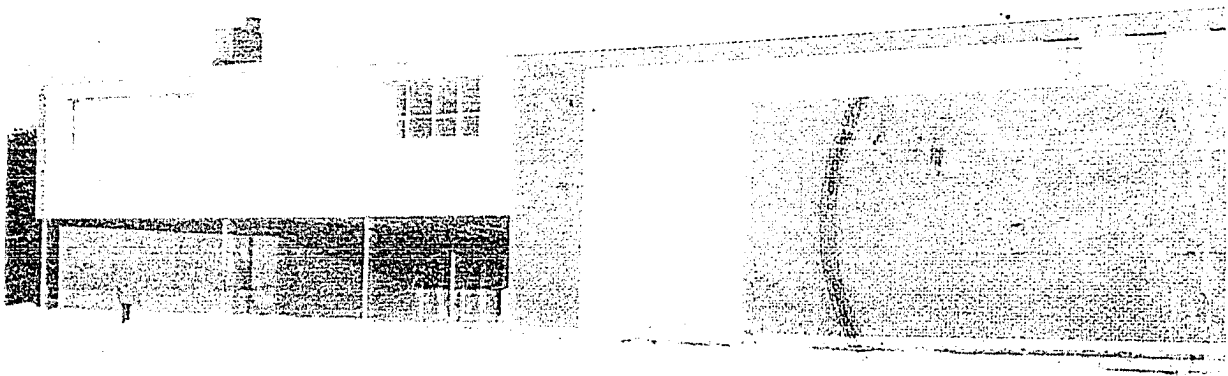




Former members of the Women's Missionary Society (WMS), later named the United Church Women (UCW)



Overhead photo of ESDHS

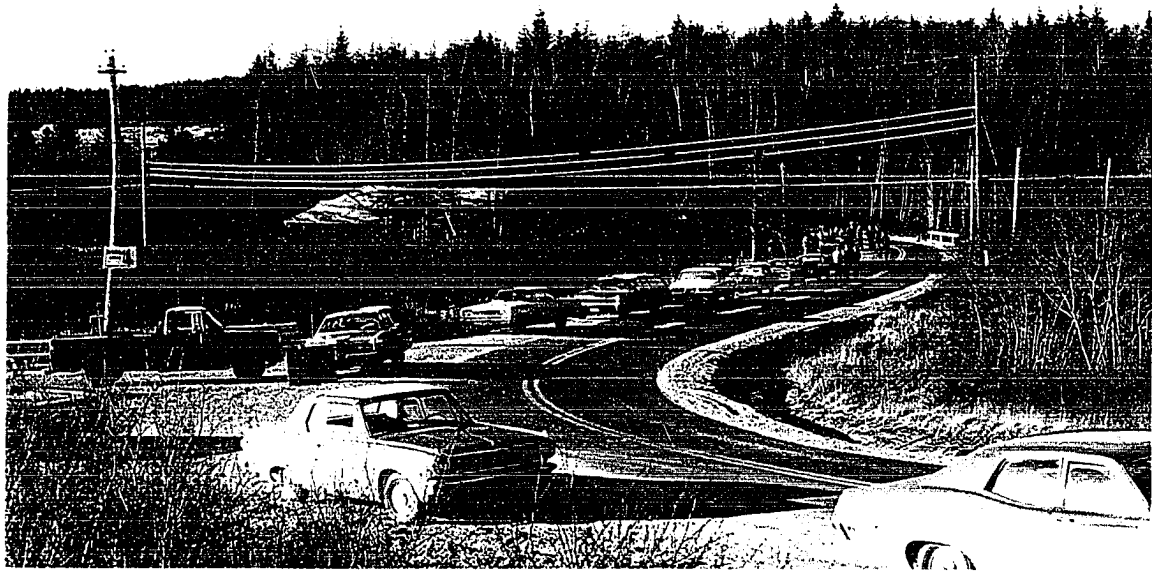


Eastern Shore District High School

Dr. Schmitt, Daniel Johnson  
Robert Johnson, Joseph Johnson, William  
Robert Johnson, Daniel Johnson  
Rev. Dr. Johnson, Daniel Johnson



Construction of the Eastern Shore District High School sewage treatment plant



Demonstrators protesting the construction of the sewage treatment plant





EASTERN SHORE residents at Musquodoboit Harbour examine plans for the new rink at the site where the foundations are being placed. A fund-raising drive has started to help complete the project. Without the rink, minor hockey players must make round trips of up to 120 miles. (Hughes Photo)



A \$200 CHECK was presented to the Eastern Shore Recreation Commission by Nancy Findlay, right, president of the student council of the Eastern Shore District High School to William Smith, left, chairman of the Eastern Shore Recreation Association to help with the construction of the new rink in the area. —(HUGHES PHOTOS)



Eastern Shore Community Centre under construction



Overhead photo of Eastern Shore Community Centre



EASTERN SHORE residents at Musquodoboit Harbour examine plans for the new rink at the site where the foundations are being placed. A fund-raising drive has started to help complete the project. Without the rink, minor hockey players must make round trips of up to 120 miles. (Hughes Photo)

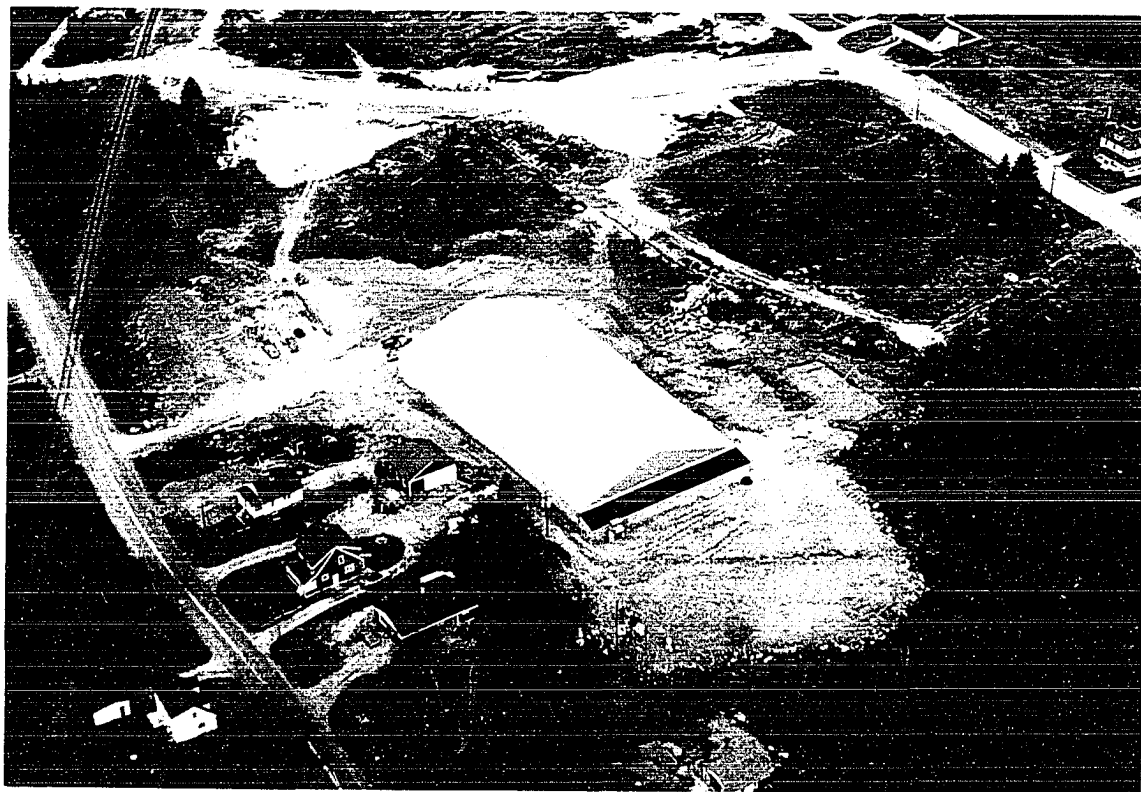


A \$200 CHECK was presented to the Eastern Shore Recreation Commission by Nancy Findlay, right, president of the student council of the Eastern Shore District High School to William Smith, left, chairman of the Eastern Shore Recreation Association to help with the construction of the new rink in the area. —(HUGHES PHOTOS)



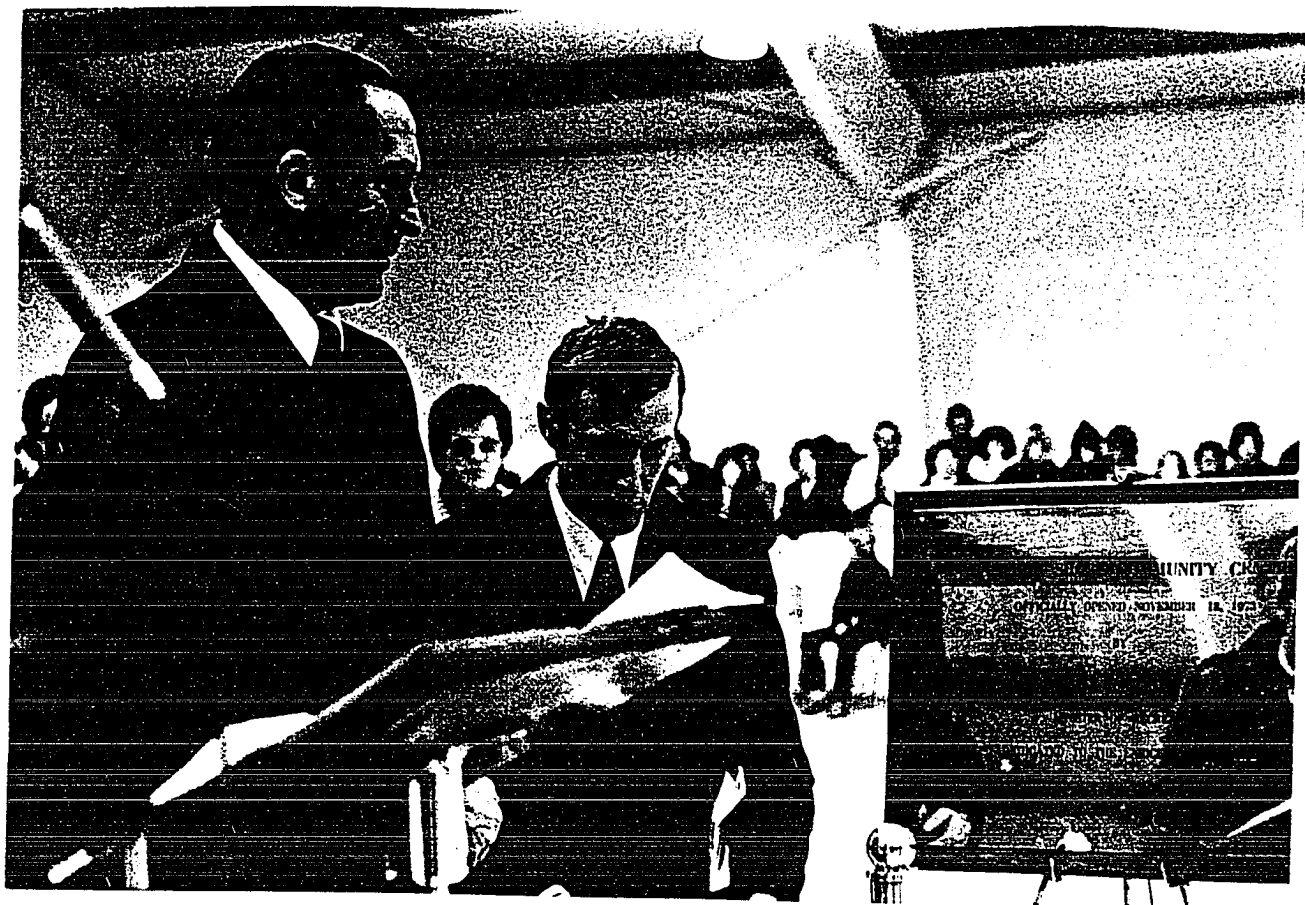
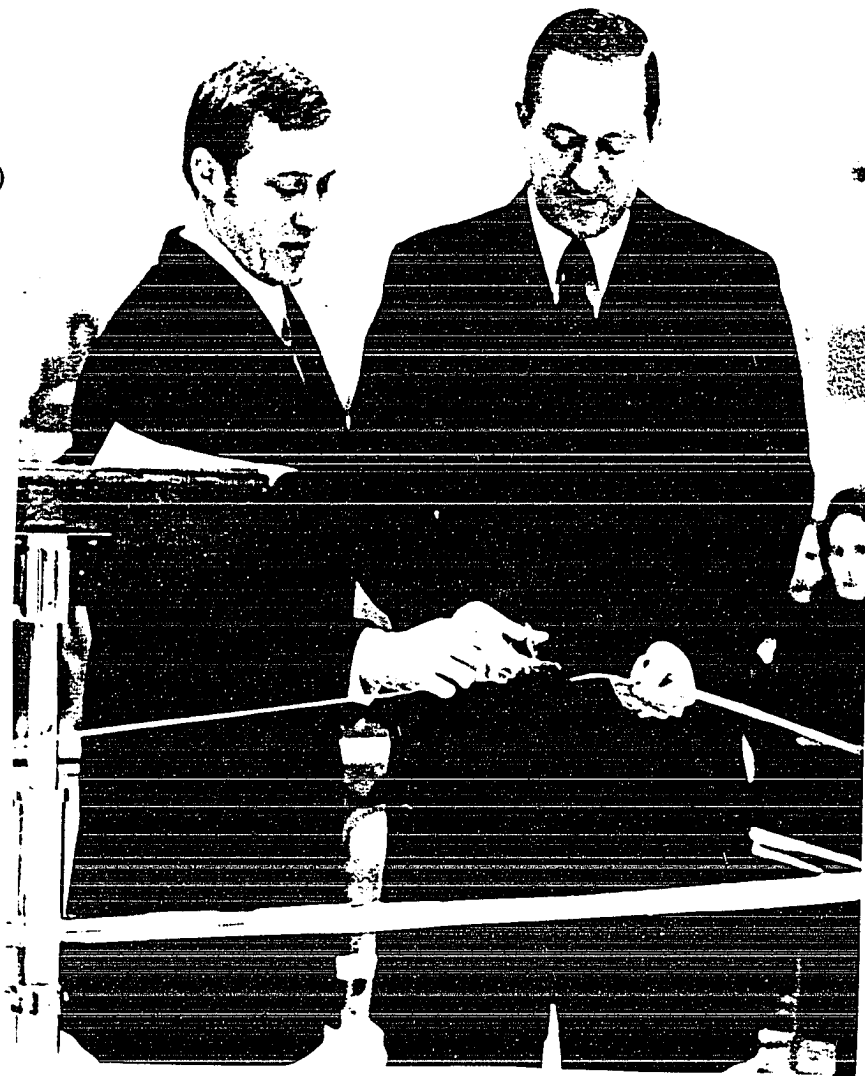


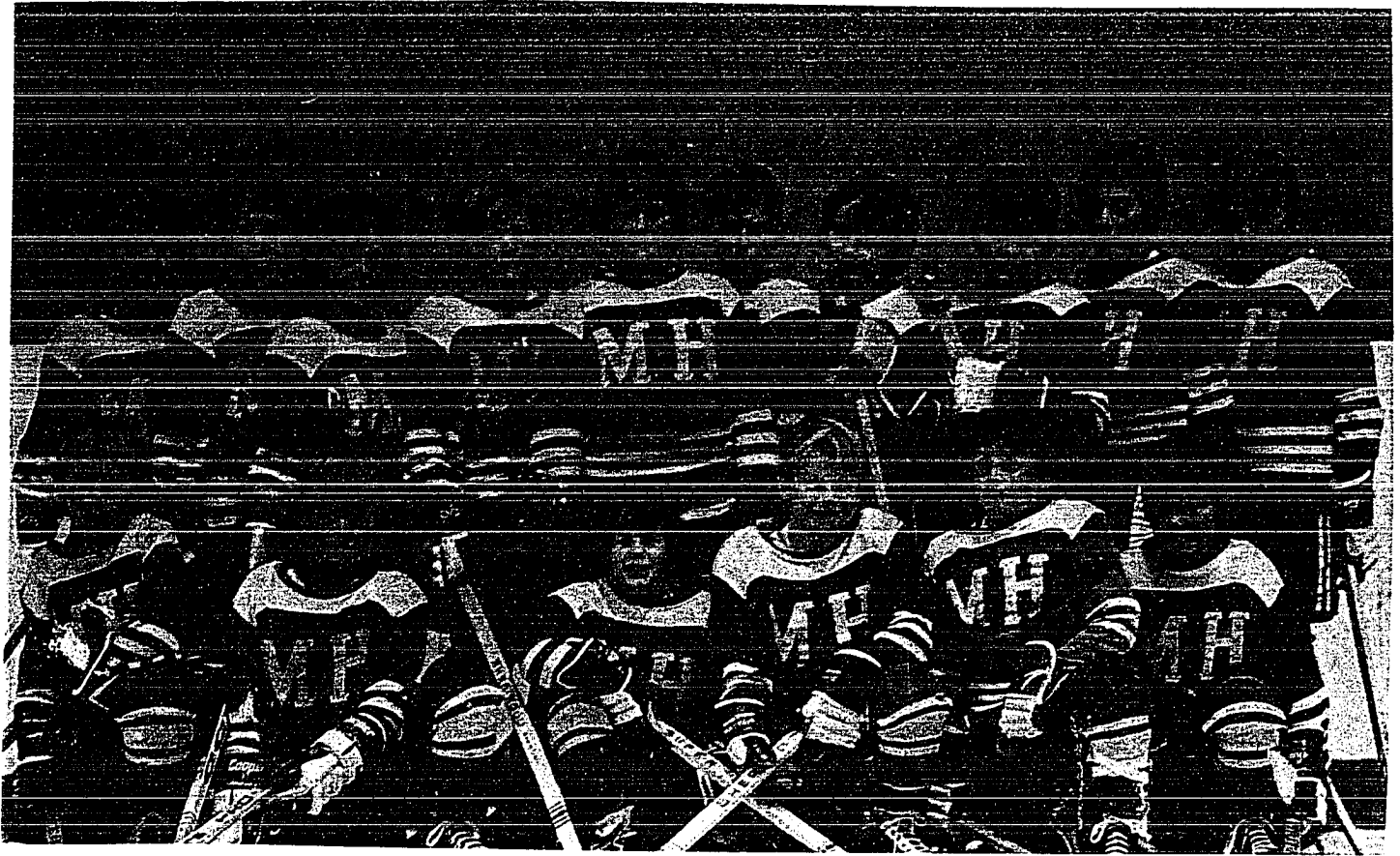
Eastern Shore Community Centre under construction



Overhead photo of Eastern Shore Community Centre

Rink opening, Billy Smith, general contractor (left)  
(right) Liberal MLA, Garnet Brown





One of the first minor hockey teams at the rink, the Musquodoboit Harbour novices



The ESDHS hockey team

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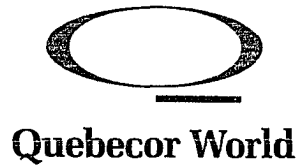
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To:


Cindy Kiley  
455 East Petpeswick Rd.  
Musquodoboit Harbour NS BOJ 2L0

July 17, 2002

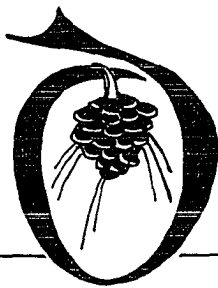
Dear Ms. Kiley,

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Good luck in your endeavors!

Yours truly,  
  
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DS/sw



# G.D. DWYER

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Cindy Kiley  
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July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2002

Dear Ms. Kiley,

This letter serves as a letter of permission for the use of any of my photographs you feel would assist in your thesis entitled, Social Anchors of Community: Church, Rink, and School in Post War Musquodoboit Harbour, Nova Scotia. I understand that the thesis is a research document and is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Arts degree in history at Saint Mary's University in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Sincerely,

G. D. Dwyer

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