



HALIFAX WOMEN'S
HISTORY ♦ SOCIETY

Halifax Women's History Society Monthly Newsletter

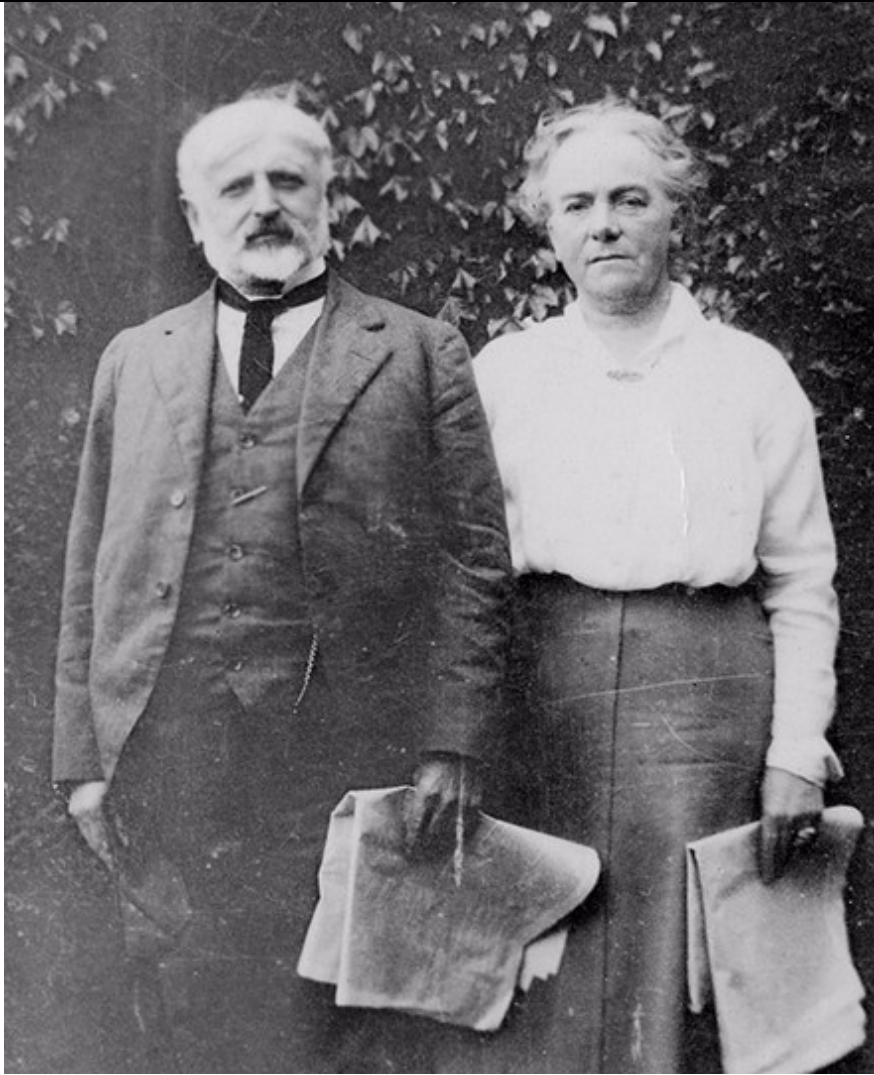
Issue no. 2, August 2016

Woman of the Month: Agnes Dennis

[Agnes Dennis](#) (née Miller) was born in Truro, Nova Scotia in 1859 and is a noted suffragette and women's rights advocate in Nova Scotian history. Agnes was the president of the Victorian Order of Nurses from 1901 to 1946 as well as of the Local Council of Women from 1906 to 1920. She was also the provincial president of the Red Cross, and mobilized nurses and relief efforts during the First World War. She also helped coordinate assistance after the Halifax Explosion in 1917.

Agnes' tireless effort in providing medical assistance and other forms of support to wounded and returning soldiers saved and improved countless lives. Agnes and her colleagues are an example of the coordinated effort women formed in the domestic front lines during both the First and Second World Wars; despite not going overseas or picking up a weapon these women were a vital support system for the war effort. Even though they were volunteers and participated through traditionally "feminine" roles, such as cooking, nursing, knitting and the like, women like Agnes Dennis proved the efficiency and significance of female volunteer organizations in Nova Scotia and all over Canada. Women turned out in droves to assist in the war effort, yet tragically their contributions have often been overlooked by history. Agnes' dedicated work and steadfast leadership makes her an incredibly influential woman in Nova Scotia's history.

Agnes' daughter, Clara Dennis, is quite renowned in her own right. She was famous in the 1930s as a maritime travel writer, photographer and journalist. Her extensive collection of photographs provide insight into the foreign land of inter-war Nova Scotia, and include a rare look into 20th-century Mi'kmaq life.

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Agnes Dennis with her husband William.

Clara Dennis Nova Scotia Archives accession 1981-541 no. 1086

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Historical Monuments of Women across Canada

Shannen Koostachin in New Liskeard, Ontario

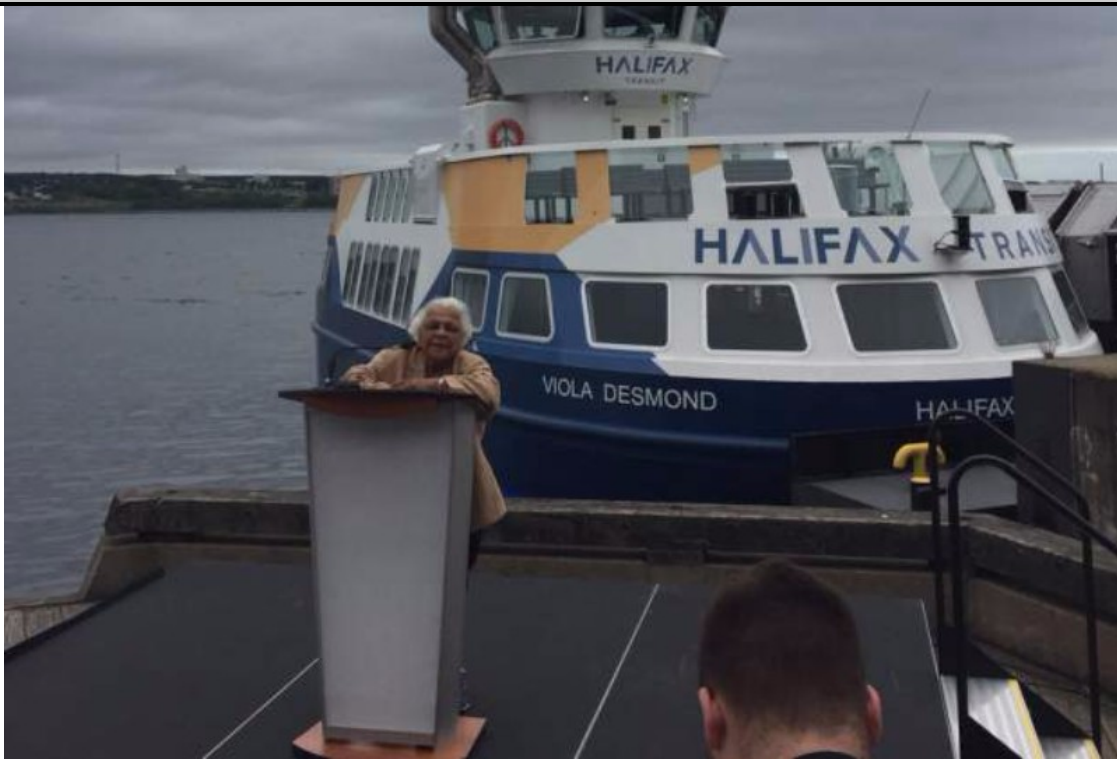
As of October 2015, a graceful monument of Shannen Koostachin now stands in New Liskeard, Ontario. Shannen was a young Cree woman who was a influential advocate for improved education for Canada's many extremely isolated indigenous communities. She passed away suddenly in 2010 in a car accident, but her efforts and strength have been immortalized in a bronze statue that depicts her in traditional clothing. While it is heartbreaking that she has so soon become an historical figure, her memory lives on to inspire future generations and provides an example to other cities of representation in public art. She has also been made into a DC comic book character!

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Happening in Halifax

Woman on the Water!

To follow up on last month's woman of the month feature, Viola Desmond, Halifax's newest ferry named after her has officially launched as of July 7. It was launched from Nathan Green Square and Viola's sister Wanda Dobson spoke, as did the Honourable Dr. Mayann Francis. It was truly a proud and historic moment for the city!



Society News!

Upcoming Events:

"We'll Meet Again": 2WW North End Services Canteen Reenactment and Fundraiser

October 1st, 2016, 1:30-5:00 pm

Ward 5 Neighborhood Centre, 5540 Russell Street

Tickets \$15

Come join us as we celebrate one of Halifax women's key contributions to the war effort. Featuring 1940s-style dancers, singers and bands, authentic food and baked goods as well as historically-accurate Second World War knitted scarves and hats for purchase. All proceeds go towards the Woman on the Waterfront project. Tickets will be available for \$15 and include a lunch, and tickets will be available to members for purchase by late August. There will be two sittings, one at 1:30 and another at 3:30.

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Edith Girouard Nova Scotia Archives MG 1 vol. 3359

Volunteering Opportunities

Calling all Bakers! Help Stock the
Pantry Shelf! Bake to Victory!

Do you make Magical Molasses cookies? Have a fabulous family recipe or delicious treat that you love to share? Interested in baking a traditional War Cake? We would love your donations for the pantry table at the North End Services

Canteen Reenactment and Fundraiser. Not a baker but love to stock your pantry shelf with price-winning pickles or jubilant jams and jellies? If you have an extra jar or two we would love to add your donations



Halifax Manument Photo Series

We have started a photo series highlighting the lack of diversity in Halifax's historical monuments. On our social media we will post photos

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Hayhurst at pamehayhurst@yahoo.ca for more information and details on donating to the pantry table at the upcoming North End Services Canteen Reenactment and Fundraiser. Traditional recipes can be provided.

Let's go Bakers! To Victory!

Knitters!

We are looking for people willing to knit historic 2WW scarves and hats for our upcoming North End Service Canteen event. If interested, please contact Susan Dower at suedower@hotmail.com for the knitting patterns and more information.

General!

General volunteers are also needed to help us have a successful event. Roles may include ticket and item sales, food services and physical assistance to senior citizens. To volunteer please contact Sarah Toye at stoye1812@gmail.com

people of colour, Indigenous peoples, members of the LGBTQ+ community, the differently abled and other marginalized groups are represented.

About the Society

Founded in 2013, the Halifax Women's History Society (HWHS) researches and makes known the untold story of the remarkable contributions that women have made to the history of Halifax. "A Woman on the Waterfront" is the Society's first project.

Membership is available for anyone who wishes to support us. Lifetime membership is \$25 for adults and \$5 for students, purchasable by paypal on our [website](#).

Women's work is too often invisible to the public, especially in the history of the Second World War, which focuses on men and rarely mentions women's volunteer work. Without the work of countless volunteers, Halifax would not have been able

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Halifax home during the war. There are more than 100 cairns, steles, sculptures and plaques in Halifax. Less than a dozen are of female figures and most of these are from mythology or are symbolic. A monument — The Volunteers/Les Bénévoles — to women volunteers would honour them and provide public acknowledgement of their numerous contributions.



Newsletter Submissions

Have something you would like to see in our next newsletter? An event, news story, picture, piece of writing or historical figure that is relevant to our cause? Please send us the information and we would be delighted to consider it for next month. We ask that submissions be consistent with our mission of sharing the untold stories of women in the history of Nova Scotia and Halifax - any that do not will not be included.

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