



Halifax Women's History Society Monthly Newsletter

Issue no. 8, February 2017

Woman of the Month: Frances Lilian Fish, Q.C. (1888-1975)

Frances Fish was born in 1888 in what is now Miramichi, New Brunswick. Her biographer described her as “an athletic, husky-voiced woman Amazon,” and she played ice hockey well into her 20s. In 1910 she received a B.A. from the University of New Brunswick, followed by a Masters of Classics from the University of Chicago in 1913 and, most notably for our purposes, in 1918 was the first female law school graduate in Nova Scotia (Dalhousie University). In the September of that year she was the first woman called to the bar in Nova Scotia.

Aside from the incredible achievement of being Nova Scotia's first female lawyer, Fish accomplished this during a time when women were still not considered persons under the law, and was called to the bar only a few months after Nova Scotian women (not including those of Asian descent or First Nations women living on reserves) were given the right to vote.

She worked briefly in Halifax, then Ottawa, then Montreal, and finally found her way back to her home town in New Brunswick. It was here that her legal career flourished most; she specialised in adultery (which was then illegal) and sexual offences. Fish was an advocate for the underprivileged and marginalised, particularly women, children and the poor.

This was not the last of Fish's successes. She was also the first woman to run for public office in New Brunswick - an accomplishment despite not winning the seat. In 1947 she was named New Brunswick's first female deputy country magistrate, and was appointed a Queen's Counsel (Q.C.) in 1972. Every two years, the Nova Scotia Association of Women and the Law issues the Frances

Frances Fish, there is a portrait of her in the Law Courts in the downtown, and she is noted on the Dalhousie Law School website. However, she is not on the Canadian Encyclopedia website or that of the dictionary of Canadian biography. Hopefully, as one of the many feminist trailblazers in Nova Scotian, Maritime and Canadian history, her achievements will one day be properly appreciated.



Happening in Halifax

Dalhousie Feminist Seminar Series

"Death and the Working Woman: Actresses, Illness, and Forms of Labour on the 19th-Century Stage"

Roberta Barker, Fountain School of the Performing Arts

February 10, 12:30-1:30, Marion McCain 2021

We are the Griots

February 13-19, Anna Leonowens Gallery

Facebook event [here](#)

Evenings @ Government House

African Heritage Month 2017 : "Passing the Torch . . . African Nova Scotians and the next 150 years"

Additional information and registration [here](#)

Royal Nova Scotia Historical Society Lecture Series

‘after planting their few potatoes they wander about the Island’: The Mi’kmaq and British Agricultural Policies in Nineteenth Century Nova Scotia
Courtney Mrazek, Doctoral Student, University of New Brunswick
Wednesday, February 15, 7:30pm, Public Archives of Nova Scotia

Maritime Museum of the Atlantic Lecture Series

"Redemption Songs with Jon Tattrie"
February 28, 7:00pm, Maritime Museum of the Atlantic
More information [here](#)

Society News!

March 9 — Save The Date!

You're invited to the exciting reveal of the design for *The Volunteers/Les Bénévoles*. The monument is the first full-sized monument to recognize women's contributions to the history of Halifax. It recognizes the extraordinary volunteer work of women during the Second World War.

Please join Mayor Mike Savage and members of the Halifax Women's History Society as we mark this important milestone for the Society's Woman on the Waterfront Project.

When: Thursday, March 9 at 10 a.m. to noon

Where: Halifax Hall, Halifax City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax

We will provide more information later this month as the March 9 date draws closer. In the meantime, mark your calendar!

About the Society

Founded in 2013, the Halifax Women's History Society (HWHS) researches and makes known the untold

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 to meet the needs of the huge influx of people into the city or support the military personnel and their families who made 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.



 Share  Tweet  Forward

Copyright © 2017 Halifax Women's History Society, All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#)

MailChimp.

