

# Gertrude Parker

Gertrude Fletcher was born in October 1891 in Quebec. She married Richard Thomas Parker in 1915. They had six boys and one daughter.

Mrs. Parker took over the Sackville telephone switchboard in 1946. When she took over the Sackville Telephone Exchange it had less than fifty members. By the time she finished in 1963 she had around 300 lines to look after. She held her position with the telephone company until the dial phone system that was introduced in 1963.

The Halifax Chronicle-Herald once wrote an article on Parker, stating: "Until the dial system was introduced in 1963, Mrs. Gertrude Parker was the telephone operator, the brains, the human component, through which every call in the area had to funnel. She was as far removed from the computerized dial system, or the nasal recording, as the human heart is removed from the robot."

She passed away in 1980 after a struggle with health issues.



# The Sadie Thomas Story

The stories surrounding Sackville's education system are widespread, from travelling in the nippy days of February to recalling the memory of hearing fingernails scrape across blackboards. It is in hearing these types of stories and the histories of the schools themselves that one realizes how Sackville schools have been rather special. There have been many talented and wonderful women who crafted innovative lessons that taught intuitive life lessons.

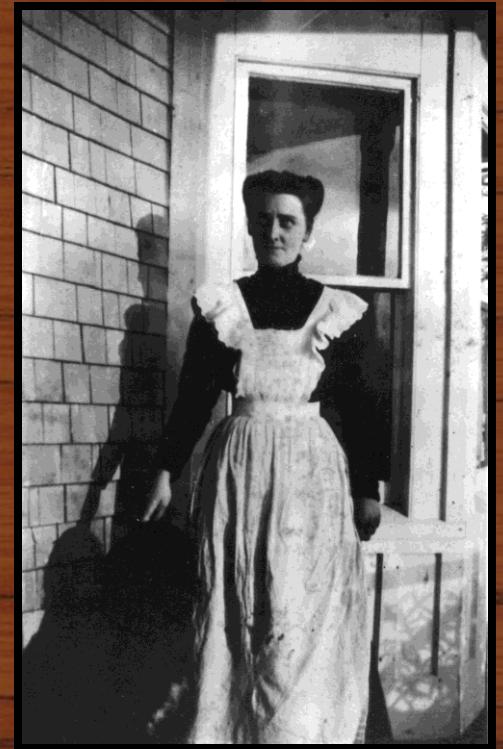
Not only was Alexander Gray Schultz blessed with the birth of a daughter, but the people of Sackville, along with future generations, received the great fortune of one Sarah Schultz being born.

One of Sackville's most remarkable teachers was born in 1881. Known as Sadie by her friends and loved ones, Sadie lived a remarkable life. She had to quickly adapt and be able to use her abilities and skills to care for her family, after her husband Harry passed away. Harry was the son of Elijah Thomas and brother to mill operator Ed Thomas. Sadie supported her family by being a teacher at the Lower Sackville School located on the Old Sackville Road.

The community grieved and mourned when she died in 1970 at the age of 88. Former students spoke fondly of her lessons and her nurturing nature.

## *Leading the Charge... One Step Forward*

**Sadie Thomas (pictured below)  
One of Sackville's Finest  
School Teachers**



**FULTZ  
HOUSE  
MUSEUM**



# Trailblazers that Led the Way

## *Amazing Stories from Some of Sackville's Strongest Women*

Many women married young in the last two centuries and spent their time at home raising their children, attending to household duties and caring for their husband, and were completely content and happy. There were still others who took pleasure in seeing their babies grow into maturity, loved their spouse, but still had a desire for more, to do more. They had a thirst needing to be quenched whereby they could be independent, take initiative, and sought, developed and gained a voice for their young and aging families and their community.

While it may have taken time, men and women began to realize that the women of Sackville represented half of the community's talent, energy, courage and commitment.

As you read through these profiles and the history of these pioneering women, be in awe of their courage, perseverance and determination and take their experiences and accomplishments as inspiration.

This is the story of some of Sackville's pioneering women, who represented the "first" women of Sackville - true trailblazers.

## *A Long, but Liberating Walk*

A man by the name of Fred Payne married a woman named Nellie. Fred and Nellie had a daughter. Nellie experienced and suffered from homesickness and frail health and she died. Fred was left with the possible responsibility of raising his daughter as a single parent, unless he was quick to act.

Fred almost immediately proposed to Nellie's sister, Emily, who was known as Emm by her family and close friends. She thought it was only right to accept the proposal since she felt sorry for the motherless child. It was not until after they were married that Fred told Emily that the daughter had died from scarlet fever in the children's home. One could assume that Fred wanted to be cared for regardless of what had to be said or done. They did however stay together and have children.

Once the horrible truth was out, that the niece she had been prepared to raise as her own was dead, Emily came to the natural conclusion that she had to rid herself of a deceitful man, and start her life again. She never forgave him for deceiving her and she spent the rest of her life "honorably" trying to distance herself from him.

Mrs. Payne walked to Sackville from Halifax. Emily walked a total of 16 miles. She purchased two acres from a widow named Mrs. Robinson and hired a carpenter named Mr. Scott to build her a one-room home. From here, it grew in time to have eleven rooms.

As a WWI raged in Europe, the city of Halifax had its share of sailors arriving in port, seeking the warm embrace of a woman's comfort. Many illegitimate children were born and needed to be cared for. At one point, Emily cared for twenty-five babies in her home. She showed these wee tots love and attention. She embraced them, as if they were her own.

She embraced life. She loved to sing hymns and visit her sister Lou in Bedford. One way she asserted her independence and tenacity was through her love and joy of bird hunting. She often told stories of bird hunting expeditions from her childhood.

Freedom requires individuals to be free to use their own resources in their own way. As a result of being tricked into marriage, Emily soon realized the importance of liberty and determining one's own destiny through their independence. She used the resources she had at her disposal to her benefit.



Emily Payne (in the centre) pictured with some of her family members