

# ***The Early Life and Social Developments of Beaver Bank & Kinsac: A Brief History***

## **HOW BEAVER BANK GOT ITS NAME...**

Beaver Bank has been a home for many people for over 200 years. Beaver Bank did indeed get its name from the actual beaver. It was once full of these creatures and they built their dams all throughout Beaver Bank.



## **LAND GRANTS & INFLUENTIAL FAMILIES**

Over 200 years ago, in 1798, the first grants of land were handed out. The grants were given to Andrew Blair, George and John Bond, John Hockinbul, Henry King and also to John and Philip Hefler. These seven people are the first recorded people who were issued land for Beaver Bank.

In July of 1816, William, George, Anthony and Daniel Fultz were granted 1350 acres of land near the boundary between Halifax and Hants counties.

In 1816 the government gave 50 pounds to build a road, which was known as the Rawdon Road. This road would come from the Fultz's property all the way through to Beaver Bank. It was not until 1956 that pavement came through Beaver Bank.



**The above scene depicts Fultz Corner, where the two “Great Roads” of Nova Scotia met in the 1800’s. It is an original piece of art, painted by Jean Watson and the rights to the picture are held by the Fultz House Museum.**

### **BEAVER BANK STATION: THE HISTORY OF A COMMUNITY MAINSTAY**

The railway was a major component to Beaver Bank. Construction of the “Windsor Branch” of the Intercolonial Railway began in 1854. On June 3, 1858, the Halifax to Windsor branch of the Intercolonial Railway was opened. Daniel Hallisey became the first Beaver Bank stationmaster.

Mr. Hallisey established the Hallisey Hotel adjacent to the train station.



**Above is a picture of the Beaver Bank Station and the Hallisey Hotel building.**



**The above picture is of Daniel Hallisey (seen on the left) and his family. Mr. Hallisey was the station agent for the Beaver Bank Station for some time.**

The Beaver Bank station (see below) served Sackville until 1956 and it was located a couple minutes up the Beaver Bank Road, which branched off the Windsor Road near the bridge over the Little Sackville River.



**The Beaver Bank Station**

### **KINSAC: A PROUD COMMUNITY**

Further out the Beaver Bank Road, one will find a beautiful, tiny community called **Kinsac** on the west side of Lake Kinsac. Originally it was considered part of the Beaver Bank district. A land grant in 1810 was issued to John Fleiger and John Pleasant. After the railway was constructed towards the end of the 1800's, Kinsac developed into its own settlement and became a separate community neighbouring Beaver Bank. A number of residents utilized the rail service to commute to Halifax for work. The origin of the name Kinsac is unknown. However, the word may be derived from a Mi'kmaq word meaning "running water."

### **SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS DEVELOP**

As the community grew, churches and schools were added to the area. In 1865, the first school in North Beaver Bank opened. By 1925, Middle Beaver Bank got their first school.



**The Middle Beaver Bank School House**

### **THE GROVE FINISHING SCHOOL**

Anne, Elizabeth, Helen and Penelope established and opened a finishing school in Halifax. While the Grove women were busy establishing and operating their finishing school, their brothers, William and James, had bought a large tract of land in 1847 in Beaver Bank. They called their property *Woodlands* after their grandfather's estate. The family home was built in 1847.

The Grove brothers made their living by being engaged in a variety of tasks, which included: box making, brick making, farming, saw milling. Their four sisters would later settle and join them on the family property.

The Grove's finishing School operated in Nova Scotia's capital city from 1840 through to 1880. The school operated out of their home at the corner of Hollis and Salter Streets.



**The original finishing school run by the Grove sisters was located in Halifax (pictured above).**

Many of Nova Scotia's most established and substantial families sent their young daughters to attend, including: Dickey, Esson, Keith, Taylor, Tupper and Twining. It was said that the four sisters' ability and character influenced for the good a large number of young women from that generation.

In addition to the guidance and direction the Grove sisters provided to young ladies, a part of their lasting legacy will always be the enjoyment they experienced in teaching children, but also the glee, pride and sophistication acquired by their young charges. Teaching children seemed to be in their blood. It was instinctually a part of who they were.

A "Miss Grove" authored a book of what is thought to be the first piece of children's literature written in Nova Scotia, possibly even in Canada, titled *Little Grace or Scenes in Nova Scotia*. The story was written in the 1840's by one of the Grove sisters to teach young readers about the earlier history of Nova Scotia. It was published by C. Mackenzie and Company in 1846. It is unknown whether the author was a family effort, written by all four sisters or whether it was written by just one sister. This remains a mystery.



Many of the most wealthy and prestigious families of Nova Scotia sent their daughters to get educated at the finishing school owned and operated by the Grove's because of their reputation that quickly built.

The cost for children under the age of twelve was sixty dollars, which included studies in reading, grammar, arithmetic, history, geography, natural philosophy, botany, English composition and French.

Parents had to pay eighty dollars for older children to attend the school. These children ended up taking the same subjects as the young ones primarily, but also studied such things as algebra and Italian. Music lessons were available for an extra forty dollars a year.

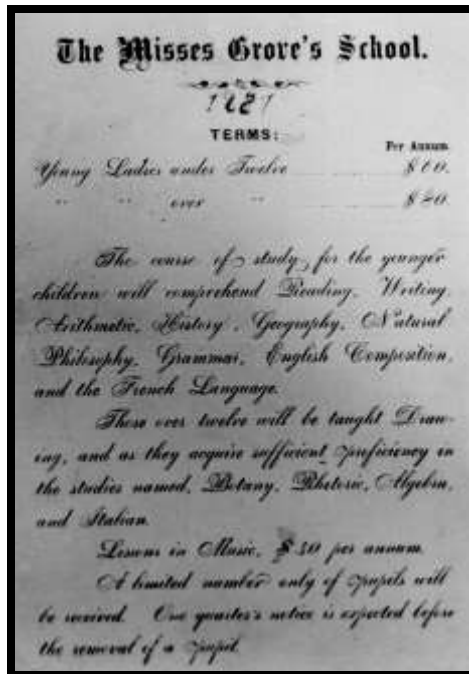
All of the Grove sisters worked as teachers at the finishing school. Then, in 1879, the oldest Grove sister, Elizabeth, died. Shortly thereafter the family run school in Halifax burned to the ground.

Following the devastating fire, the sisters relocated to Beaver Bank.



**The Grove sisters reopened its doors in 1880 in Beaver Bank, some twenty miles from Halifax, where the school had originated.**

A prospectus (see below) was updated and written in the 1880's for the finishing school.



Before Anne, Helen and Penelope moved to the tranquil community of Beaver Bank, the Grove family was one of the earliest families that settled in the community of Beaver Bank.

Miss Helen Grove was the first treasurer of the church, and the first few church services were held in their drawing room. The construction of a church building was a vision that many of the congregational members dreamed of, and with the help and financial aid of the Grove sisters, a church building was able to be constructed.

The place that the Grove sisters referred to as home and ran their finishing school from burned to the ground in 1943.

## THE CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

The first Chapel that opened in Beaver Bank was at the R. C. A. F. Station. It was the Sancta Marie Regina Chapel. The Church of the Good Shepherd (pictured below), in Beaver Bank, was built and had its first service on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1816. The original church building no longer stands on the property as it was sold and removed from the property in 1998 and has now been relocated to Chester for private use. A new church building stands near where the original building stood in Beaver Bank.





**A long-standing Beaver Bank Family, the Grove family, took a great interest in the development of the Anglican church in Beaver Bank, the Church of the Good Shepherd (pictured above), near where their house stood.**

### **TIES TO THE LAND: THE FARMING & FORESTRY INDUSTRIES**

Farming was one of the main industries in Beaver Bank. Mr. Richard Barrett purchased the first mowing machine and horse drawn rake. Mr. S. McKay Shaw owned the first threshing machine in Beaver Bank, which was bought in 1904. Horses powered this machine.

Lumbering and farming were the main sources of income in the early development of Beaver Bank. The lumber trade attracted contractors. The first saw mill was located on the site where the present Barrett Lumber Co. (see painting below) is located.



**The picture above is a painting donated to the Fultz House Museum of Barrett Lumber Mill, painted by Frances Doherty Arnold.**

## **THE TELEPHONE COMES TO BEAVER BANK**

A meeting was held on December 19<sup>th</sup>, 1911 with the election of officers. This meeting was for the Beaver Bank Rural Telephone Co. The business of buying the Lower Sackville line was completed in December 1911. Before this line was bought there was said to be only two telephones installed by the Lower Sackville Telephone Company. In Beaver Bank, one was at the Grove's house and the other one was at the railway station. This was as early as 1905. Slowly, after the line was bought, phones were placed in households until practically every house had one.

### **A CONCLUDING THOUGHT...**

Beaver Bank's early life was like many other communities. It started out as a small community with no electricity and located in the middle

of nowhere, but has been growing for over 200 years and is still growing today as a community changing the lives of many people in the process.