

PICTOU COUNTY ROOTS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Sept 2026 Volume I Issue VII

UPCOMING DATES

Sept 9 Monthly Meeting 2pm
Speaker Dr. Allan Marble

Oct 14 Monthly Meeting 2pm
Speaker TBD

Oct 14 Obituary writing
workshop at the Library at
6pm

Oct 15 Dark/Cemetery
Tourism talk at the Library,
6pm

Nov 7 Clyde F. Macdonald
Book Launch at the Library,
2pm

Special presentation on Sep. 9:

How smallpox prevented George Washington from attacking Halifax in December 1775

Smallpox has been the scourge of humankind since antiquity. But could it also be the reason that Halifax -- and by extension, Nova Scotia -- remained out of rebel hands during the American Revolution?

On Sep. 9, 2026, a special presentation will take place at the regular monthly meeting of the Pictou County Roots Society, titled "How smallpox prevented George Washington from attacking Halifax in December 1775." This talk will be delivered by noted genealogist, historian, and Order of Nova Scotia recipient Dr. Allan Marble. The meeting will take place at 2:00 p.m. in the Community Room of the New Glasgow Library; attendance is free and all are welcome. Read below for information about the talk and a brief biography of Dr. Marble.

About the talk:

"Smallpox caused the deaths of thousands of people across North America during the 18th-century. There was no vaccine, effective treatment or cure. During the first 50 years of the 1700s, there were at least three major epidemics in the American colonies. In 1775, as Commander-in-Chief of the rebel army, George Washington decided to attack Halifax because it was the only naval dockyard where reinforcements and supplies could be landed by Britain's Royal Navy on the east coast of North America. Washington's plan was thwarted, however, by a major outbreak of smallpox in Halifax which lasted for four years. Could one conclude that smallpox prevented Nova Scotia from becoming part of the United States? Join Dr. Marble on Sep. 9 for a discussion about this little-known episode of Nova Scotian (and American) history."



About the speaker:

"Dr. Allan Marble, ONS (Order of Nova Scotia), is a retired professor who taught at three universities from 1967 to 2010. He held a joint appointment in the Faculties of Medicine and Engineering at Dalhousie University and was one of the founders of the School of Biomedical Engineering at that institution. As Director of Research for the Department of Surgery, he authored or co-authored over 80 journal papers on the cardiovascular system and served as Chair of a Committee of the Medical Research Council of Canada. In addition to his academic work, he also made significant contributions to genealogical research in Nova Scotia and wrote three books on the medical history of the province. In 2024 he was inducted into the Order of Nova Scotia in recognition of his research on the cardiovascular system, genealogy, the history of medicine, and his leadership in introducing biomedical engineering at Dalhousie."



The Pictou County Roots Society is proud to present

Dr. Allan Marble

Order of Nova Scotia, retired professor, medical historian

"How smallpox prevented George Washington from attacking Halifax in December 1775"



Free lecture, all are welcome to attend!

Wednesday September 9th 2026 at 2:00 p.m.

New Glasgow Library Community Room

610 East River Rd. (Aberdeen Business Centre)

www.pictoucountyroots.ca



JANET CAMPBELL OBITUARY

DEATH OF AN AGED ATHOL WOMAN IN NOVA SCOTIA. – An aged lady, Janet Campbell, widow of Colonel Robertson, died in Nova Scotia at Barney's River, on the 12th of last month, after a few days' illness, in the 102^d year of her age. The Halifax Presbyterian says she was born in Blair-Athol, Perthshire, Scotland, in October, 1769, immigrated with her husband, a son, and two daughters to this country in the year 1800, and settled at Merigomish, in the County of Pictou. The little boy died on the passage out, and was buried at sea. All her children except this one still survive. Soon after their arrival at Merigomish they purchased a farm about five miles up river from the mouth of Barney's River, and one mile down the river from Rev. D. B. Blair's church. Many years ago Mr Robertson died, leaving a widow, six daughters and two sons. Since then until a week before her death the good old woman enjoyed excellent health, and to very last she retained all of her faculties. Just before her death, she asked her daughter-in-law what time it was, and when told it was six o'clock, she said "Well, well," and breathed her last. Not long since she the writer she distinctively recollected, when a little girl in Scotland, of her grandfather, John Campbell, taking her on his knee and telling her that at the age of twenty-one, he fought in the Battle of Culloden, under Prince Charles. She lived to see seven generations. Four of these are still living. She has left eight children, fifty-five grandchildren, fifty-five great grandchildren, and four or five great-great grandchildren. She was remarkable for her beauty, and strange to say she retained her rich rosy complexion to the very last, and her hand was as soft and smooth as a child's.

*Obituary found in **The Perthshire Advertiser**, Perth, Tayside, Scotland. Thursday, December 29th, 1870 on page 3.*

JANE SUTHERLAND

Pictou County, Nova Scotia has a woman Mrs. Jane Sutherland – familiarly known as "Big Jean" – living in Upper Barney's River, who is now aged 130 years. She was born in the parish of Clyne, Sutherlandshire, Scotland, and since her emigration to this country has resided in her present place of abode where she reared a large family, the younger member of which is now an old man. Mrs Sutherland can still readily converse in the good old Gaelic tongue, and her hearing is but slightly impaired. She still plies her daily labors on the old Scotch spinning wheel, and is as good as many a woman a century younger. Longevity seems a prominent trait in her family, for her brother, John Sutherland, Keltie, who died about seven years ago, was over 115 years old, and his wife, who died a little after, wanted but a short time to have the same lengthened existence. The united ages of this couple were 230 years.

*Found in **The Daily Expositor** Brantford, Ontario, Canada. Thursday, December 2, 1875. Page 2.*

COMING HOME BY THE SCORES

(From the New Glasgow Chronicle).

As we are accredited with punctuality in recording the exodus of our people to the U.S. and elsewhere, we take pleasure to announce the return of a number of our young men. William MacKinnon, who returned from Moose River, after a stay of some years in Oregon, is now busily engaged in building a new house of superior style, and is progressing rapidly. We have also had more recent arrivals, viz: James Cunningham and Laughlan McFarlane, of Blue Mountain, Alex W. Meikle and John A. Ross, of Meiklefield.

*Found in **The Halifax Herald**, Halifax, NS. Friday, September 7, 1888, page 3.*

Contact Us!

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Phone: 902-752-9543

Message Board:

<https://pcrsns.proboards.com/>

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/pictoucountyroots>



Heritage Room Updates

Heritage Room:

The display for September is on the ship *Hector*, with useful books to trace the history of the ship and passengers.

A book was added to genealogical reference section, *Truro: Our Enduring Past* vol. 1. The book features histories of buildings and homes in Truro, along with a glossary of house styles and features.

Our summer student Emma returned to St. FX for her BEd program. She finished scanning issues from the years 1999–2001 of the *Evening News*, which will eventually be available on NovaStory.

Library Events:

An obituary writing workshop will be held on October 14th at 6pm, with Kate Phillips-MacDonald, an apprentice at the Arimathea Funeral Co-op. Learn how to get started, what to write, and more.

A talk will given by Susan on dark/cemetery tourism the following day, October 15th, at 6:00pm. Hear about the lure of cemeteries and tragedies in tourism along with some interesting cemeteries and tombs from around the world.

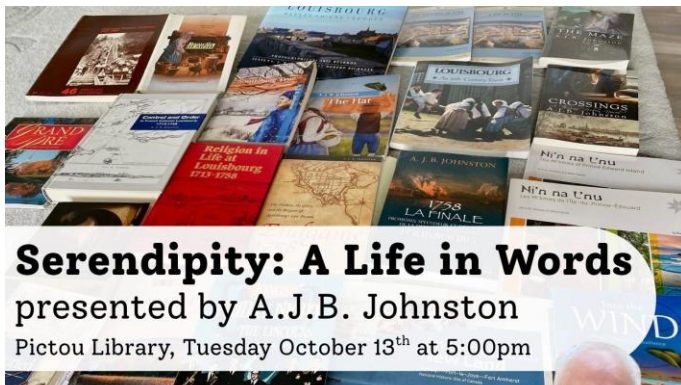
A new stationary program is starting in September. Drop in Thursday, September 24th between 6–7:30pm to work on any paper-based project, such as a journal, scrapbook, or a hand-made family tree.

Genealogy Updates:

August was quieter for Roots requests, but there is a researcher looking for information on the Cruickshank family from Sunnybrae.



Other upcoming events of interest:

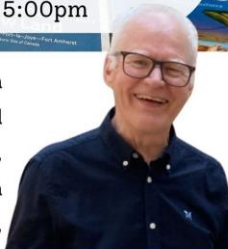


Serendipity: A Life in Words

presented by A.J.B. Johnston

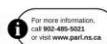
Pictou Library, Tuesday October 13th at 5:00pm

A.J.B. Johnston reflects on growing up in Nova Scotia in the '50s and '60s and shares how those experiences, particularly his time in Pictou and as a historian at the Fortress of Louisbourg, inspired his writing career.



Over the decades, Johnston has written 16 history books, six novels, and numerous museum exhibits, and remains active in all three fields.

We acknowledge the support of the Canada Council for the Arts through the Writers Union of Canada



Let Them Eat Cake

ALL YOU CAN EAT CAKE!
WITH DOOR PRIZES AND GAMES
Saturday, September 19th, at 6:00 P.M.
SUMMER STREET INDUSTRIES
72 Park Street, New Glasgow, NS

The Pictou County Historical Society is proud to present our fourth annual **Let Them Eat Cake** event.

Doors open at **6:00 P.M.**, the parade of cakes at **6:20 P.M.**, and the buffet of cakes at **6:30 P.M.**

Tickets are **\$20**
 We accept cash, credit, or e-transfer to carmichee@eastlink.ca. Include your name and email in message.
 Ticket pick up at the Pictou County History Museum or the night of event.

86 Temperance Street, New Glasgow, Nova Scotia
 Telephone: 902-752-5583 Email: carmichee@eastlink.ca

PICTOU COUNTY HISTORY MUSEUM

YOU ARE INVITED TO A BOOK READING

with Halifax author donalee Moulton

Listen to an excerpt from donalee's first paranormal mystery *Cardinal*.

Private detective Em Montgomery heads to Pictou in search of a missing woman. She expected dead ends. She did not expect a dead girl who refuses to stay buried. Now Em is knee-deep in fog, small-town secrets, and the uneasy sense that she's being watched by more than wildlife.

Buy a copy and get it personally signed.

MCCULLOCH MUSEUM & GENEALOGY CENTRE
 86 Haliburton Road
 Pictou, NS

DATE: September 10, 2026
TIME: 6:30PM to 8:00PM

With financial assistance from:

Canada Council for the Arts / Conseil des arts du Canada

THE WRITERS' UNION OF CANADA