THE INFORMER

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From the Desk of the Editor
S. Marchand - Terrio

Greetings to our members near and far! 2023 already has one month complete and we look forward to May when we start welcoming patrons back to the office, archives and bookstore. The museum opens June 1, 2023. We will be welcoming school classes and visitors to experience our collection through tours and programs.

2022 was a busy year as they all seem to be! We continued with our renovations of the Lorenzo building replacing two retaining walls and the lower deck with cement structures removing the previous wooden walls and deck. The new stairs will be installed later this spring and the landscaping around the deck will be completed. The bathroom floors were refurbished and received an epoxy finish which should last for a long time and make cleaning easier! We are grateful to our partners Development Isle Madame Association, St. Joseph's Credit Union, the Municipality of the County of Richmond and the Province of Nova Scotia's Department of Community, Culture, Tourism and Heritage for the financial support we received to assist with the cost of these renovations.

During the summer and fall of 2022, we saw an increase in the number of visitors to the site. We are still not at our pre-covid numbers but it is a pleasure to say we were busy. We had increased attendance at our children's events, Tea in the Museum was a success, our Summer Learning Series was well attended, enrolment in our blacksmithing classes grew, and our summer shed party was great fun for all who attended.

Our two summer students Victoria Bowen and Grace Hass were kept very busy welcoming visitors, giving tours, cataloguing artifacts, weeding gardens and a plethora of other tasks! Our site manager Rhea Boudreau kept everyone on track and we are so grateful to all three for their commitment and dedication to the society and the running of the museum.

As always we wish you a safe and happy spring, keep a look out for our next newsletter which will contain plans for the summer season and a schedule of coming events!

The Isle Madame Historical Society's mission is to collect, preserve and exhibit artifacts and documents relating to the social, cultural and natural history of Isle Madame for the education and enjoyment of present and future generations.



Arichat IMHS Ref. # AO-239



Petit de Grat IMHS # JAMC-697



Pondville, IMHS, PL-012

Photos: IMHS Archives

History Tidbits by Anne Leavitt

Just about anyone connected with Isle Madame is familiar with the "Forge". Operated by the Isle Madame Historical Society as a museum and blacksmith's shop since 1967, it is one of very few free-standing, stone buildings in Cape Breton.

The story told of the "Forge" goes something like this. Back in 1793, Thomas LeNoir and his brother, Simon, both blacksmiths born in France, emigrated from the Island of St. Pierre to Arichat where, within a year, they built the "Forge" to carry on their business. Some of this story is disputed. For one thing, while many historical records exist confirming the details of Thomas LeNoir's life, no record has ever been found confirming the existence of a Simon LeNoir.

A Report commissioned in 1989 by IMHS did raise some questions as to whether one could be sure, that story was true. For one thing, the Report includes the record of a sale of a piece of land by two brothers, Simon and Michael Forest, to Thomas LeNoir, in 1826. The land in question was half of a lot on the Arichat harbour where LeNoir Landing is located. The full lot included a "stone house" that was already situated on the property. The Report assumed that the half of the lot acquired by Thomas LeNoir in 1826 included the "stone house", and it speculated that Thomas LeNoir had built the "house" (which became known as the "Forge") on land he rented from the Forest brothers before he purchased it in 1826.

I have to confess that I found these speculations very puzzling. I noted how odd it would be for someone to build an expensive stone structure which housed one's primary business on someone else's property, wait 30 years to purchase that property, and make that purchase when one was 72 years old.

I also noted, if one actually drew a picture of the half lot of land that Thomas LeNoir bought in 1826, one could see that the land he purchased did *not* include the "stone house" owned by the two Forest brothers. Rather, the land LeNoir purchased was immediately to the west of it. And there was also Simon Forest's will. Probated in 1829, it clearly showed that Simon Forest had left his share of the property with the "stone house" to his wife, Barbe (LeNoir) Forest, their children, and his brother, Michael. Remarkably, in his will, Simon Forest describes the "stone house" as having been "purchased from the Messrs. Ph. & Fr. Janvrin & Co.", a large Jersey fishing and shipbuilding company operating in the area at the time.

My research turned up a few more surprises. The land on which the "Forge" was built was granted to members of the Forest family in 1788. Acadians, they had come to Arichat from exile in Massachusetts in 1763. When Simon and Michael's father, Simon Jr., died in 1809, the land came into their hands. Their parents had run a tavern on the site, and the two brothers had extended that business into a highly successful ship victualing enterprise. Simon owned a number of wharves and warehouses, and the two brothers were full owners of at least three schooners. It is likely that it was they who had the "stone house" built by the Janvrin Company sometime before 1826. In fact, Simon had another one built about a quarter of a mile east, on the other side of the Lower Road, in about 1823.

The property with the "stone house" was to remain in the hands of the Forest family until 1891. It passed from Barbe (LeNoir) Forest (Simon's widow), to her daughter, Amelia, who married Captain Constant Terrio. It wasn't until 1891, when her son, Simon Terrio, sold the land, that the "stone house" passed out of the hands of the Forest family.

In addition to his partnership with his brother, Michael, Simon Forest was also a close business partner of Thomas LeNoir Jr., his brother-in-law, and son of the Thomas LeNoir who arrived in Arichat in 1793. In fact, when the Forest brothers sold the piece of land beside the "stone house" in 1826 to "Thomas LeNoir", it was Thomas LeNoir Jr., and not his father, who acquired the property. Thomas LeNoir Jr.'s interest in that property was no doubt due to the fact that, in 1818, he had purchased the property immediately to the west of it. And the records state that on the property he purchased in 1818, he had built a house and his forge. The property he acquired in 1818, enlarged by the property he purchased from the Forests in 1826, continued as the site of his son's, Charles LeNoir's, forge. It remained in the LeNoir family for many years, passing to Thomas LeNoir Jr.'s great grandson, Alva Malzard, in 1903.

While the "stone house", known since the 1960s as the "Forge", was never built or owned by either Thomas LeNoir Sr. or his son, Thomas Jr., it turns out that the actual site of Thomas LeNoir Jr.'s forge remains part of the land occupied by The Landing/The LeNoir Forge Museum.

Hence, the remarkable story of the LeNoirs is a tale that the IMHS will continue to tell.

But IMHS looks forward to broadening that story with what has been discovered about the Forests, a closely-related and equally fascinating family. The stone architecture of the Channel Islands will certainly deserve a mention as well.



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" Volunteers Corner"
Why should you become a volunteer with the Isle Madame Historical Society:

* You are needed.
* You love history.
* You want to see the Isle Madame Historical Society offer great exhibits that tell our visitors the story of Isle Madame.

Volunteer opportunities are available in many areas.







Photos: IMHS

Intimate Conversations: A Century of Lives Lived on Isle Madame & Vicinity

In the summer of 2022 the Isle Madame Historical Society edited and published a wonderful book by Bernice Boudreau **"Intimate Conversations: A Century of Lives Lived on Isle Madame and Vicinity"**

Between 1996 and 1998 Bernice interviewed 18 people from Isle Madame and Vicinity. All of those interviewed were seniors and had been born in the early 1900's. The people interviewed were known by the author or were suggested by people she knew. They were fisherman, housewives, dressmakers, farmers, railway workers, and house keepers. Most of them did a little of everything to get by. Many came from large families and went on to have large families of their own. These intimate conversations about their lives in rural Nova Scotia that Bernice recorded allows the reader to experience some of the tremendous changes that were encountered by this generation.

As Anne Leavitt mentions in her forward for *Intimate Conversations* they lived through such an amazing time of change.

"They were among the first human beings to experience the introduction of the automobile, the radio, television, refrigeration, air travel and countless other modern technologies that we now take for granted as part of the fabric of ordinary life. They also lived through two World Wars, a global and deadly influenza pandemic, the end of four Empires, the Great Depression, and the enormous social changes that occurred with the arrival of the consumer-oriented economy of the 1960s."

Bernice has captured a window into the domestic lives of the people interviewed, the reader gets to witness what their lives were like, the joys, the sacrifices, and the struggles.

Intimate Conversations was launched at the museum in August of 2022, it was a celebration that marked a manuscript becoming a published document. It has been for sale since August of 2022. It is available by contact the Isle Madame Historical Society by email during the winter season or can be purchased locally at Telile.

Winter 2023

Photos:

Top Left: Poster from Book Launch

Middle: Intimate Conversations: A Century of Lives Lived on Isle Madame and Vicinity

Top Right: Book Signing Summer of 2022





Snapshots of the Summer & Fall

Top Left: Tea in the Museum (IMHS)
Top Right: Local Cadet Troop *Helping with Spring Clean Up* (IMHS)
Middle: Arial View of LeNoir Landing
Bottom Right: Victoria - Summer Staff (IMHS)
Bottom Middle: Grace - Summer Staff
Bottom Left: Blacksmithing Class (IMHS)







