THE INFORMER

November 2025 Issue # Nineteen imhs.ca

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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.

From the Desk of the Editor

S. Marchand - Terrio

Fall has arrived and with it all the tasks we must preform in order to wrap up the 2025 season! As I work on my to-do list, I must reflect on the past season. Our summer staff, Victoria Bowen, Emily Samson, Ava Richard, Ciarán Llachlan Leavitt and Ginette Therrien were busy taking care of the needs of our visitors. They cleaned, weeded gardens, researched topics, catalogued artifacts, scanned photos, gave tours, and carried out programming schedules. They greeted visitors, answered questions, gave directions, and assisted researchers with genealogy questions. We are so grateful for the professionalism and energy that they brought to the museum every single day!

I would be remiss if I didn't mention and give gratitude to the board members and volunteers who supported our fundraising efforts, attended events, provided food for tea and answered the call when we needed help. The gift of your energy and time was appreciated.

This season with the help of a Facility Improvement Grant from the Nova Scotia Government, and funding from St. Joseph's Credit Union and the Municipality of the County of Richmond along with our own fundraising efforts we were able to re-shingle the north facing roof on the Lorenzo Building. Thank you to Raymond Boudreau and his crew for getting the job done!

With financial support from Destination Cape Breton our "Living History" program took place during Acadian History Month in August. This event was created to bring our local history to life by featuring community interpreters taking on the personas of former residents of Isle Madame. Different areas of the museum were set in different time periods, allowing us to tell stories that we don't often have a chance to tell during a regular interpretive tour. The forge was set in 1967, which is the year it became a museum. The kitchen was set in 1911 West Arichat and featured Sophie Goyetche Babin who spoke about her life growing up in Cap Auguet, her knowledge of medicinal plants and natural remedies and her life as a mid-wife. The school room was set in 1937 Little Anse, the teacher Louise Sampson discussed the Antigonish Movement, teaching night classes to adults and the beginnings of St. Joseph's Credit Union. The General Store was set in 1895 Arichat with Catherine Babin Samson, who along with her husband Albert, owned A.D. Samson's store. She discussed the issues surrounding a commercial enterprise such as supply chains, extending credit, and working with the public. She also gave the interpreter the opportunity to discuss community customs such as "La Mi-Carême".

Soon the museum will be put to bed for the winter! On behalf of the Board of IMHS we wish you a beautiful fall and a Happy Christmas!



West Arichat 1903 IMHS.WAO-001



Petit de Grat IMHS.PDGO-029



D'Escousse 1928, IMHS, DO-011

Photos: IMHS Archives

The Gale of 1974
By: Jeanne Joyce Stone
Isle Madame A Place to Call Home



One of the most devastating windstorms to ever hit Isle Madame occurred on October 20th, 1974. That Sunday, the staff of LeBrun's Hardware, had agreed to work in preparation for the coming Christmas Holidays. We were hauling out boxes of goods to place on the shelves and make Christmas displays. Sometime in the early afternoon we noticed the old building was shaking whenever there was a gust of wind. Paul Tyrrell motioned me over to the window in the back of the store to show me what should have been the lumberyard. There was water right up to the building and the loose lumber was hitting against the store.

This prompted me to call home and see how things were going up there. My husband Johnny reported the shingles were coming off the roof, but everything else was fine. I went back to work, but not for long. The gusts were getting stronger and my gut was telling me to get out. When I called home again, this time the TV antenna tower was crumbled on the ground and the selkirk chimney went rolling down the field. "That's it! I'm coming home!" "No" says Johnny "You're safer there! We're alright, stay in that store!" When I called back a few minutes later, I couldn't get an answer. No way could I stay in the store. I asked Paul to follow me in his car and we set out for home. Paul lived just up the road from me and he was concerned for his own family. The rest of the staff decided to follow suit.

The drive home was horrendous. Debris was everywhere and flying about. I kept swerving to miss obstacles on the road. When I drove passed U.J. LeBlanc's lumberyard pieces of lumber kept hitting the side of the car. When I finally got to the hill by the bank I cut my wheels to go up but soon realized I would not be getting home that way. One of Arichat's oldest trees was lying across the road. The wind was fierce so close to the water, but I was determined to get home with my family. Driving past the funeral home was hair-raising when all four wheels of the car lifted off the road and I felt myself floating. I landed with a bang but it did not slow me down. "One more hill and I'm home! Dear God, don't knock down any more trees!"

I didn't know what I would find when I reached home, but I wasn't prepared for what stood before me. Our new home was ripped apart! The TV tower had crumbled like match sticks. Most of the shingles were gone exposing the bare roof. The siding on the house were ripped off and nowhere to be seen. After several tries I made it to the front door. The wind was making a howling sound. Johnny, Lisa and Dean had spent the last hour in the basement, but I felt we should get out of the house altogether. We opted for his mother's house across the road and headed out. We had just gotten in when I looked out the window and saw the roof of the liquor store rip off and float to the ground.

By late afternoon the winds finally died down and people started coming out of their homes to check the damage.

The drugstore that was due to open that week was reduced to a pile of rubble. The liquor store was splattered in the front parking lot. Almost every mobile home on the island was completely demolished, spreading their contents all over the fields. Power lines were down everywhere and it would be days before everyone got their power back. People were devastated by the loss of all of our old trees, however, the worst news was yet to come. Two lives were lost when two men in their dory were swept out past the point and never seen again.

That night Arichat was covered in darkness. The people of Isle Madame were rattled to their souls. Never had anyone witnessed such a force of nature. It was later learned the winds had reached a peak of 120 miles an hour. Eventually the power was restored, a new drug store was built and mobile homes were replaced with conventional ones. But Arichat was changed forever.



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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.

If you are interested in a volunteer position please contact our office 902 226 9364 or 902 226 2880



IMHS PDG JAMC-637



IMHS PDGO-081



IMHS DO-327

Letters from the War

Letters From Johnie Mauger, Sent To His Family While Serving in World War II
Second Edition



Pte. John Mauger,
North Nova Scotia
Highlanders
1939-1945

January 30, 1945

Dear sister Ina,

Received your very welcome letter a few days ago. My blood poison is all better. It must have set in from a desert sore. I can't seem to remember who the fellow is I helped carry off field, after the battle, there's always lots to be carried off. Try and find out his name, I may know him.

You people are doing a fine job sending me parcels. I'll sure be glad to get the one with the pumpkins, I got a nice parcel from Jean Olsen. Jean's a good type. I also got a nice box of fudge from Esther, and a purse and film.

I'm terrible sorry I lost my camera. I lost it on the battle field. Someone likely found it, but I'll never see it again. Have you heard from Earl yet? Don't worry about him, he's in a pretty good place and a good job. Oh! About the children's pictures Ina, I got them quite a while ago; they're very nice. They didn't change much in looks, but they sure did in size. Marion will soon be a young lady! I also got the lovely socks you sent me in Aunt Clara's box. Many thanks. I wrote to Aunt Clara and I don't know if I thanked her for the lovely parcel. Ina, I'm getting so forgetful I'll soon be as bad as Danny Campbell. Well Ina old dear, I hope you're getting along ok. Suppose by the time you get this you'll have another baby. More power to you old kid. Please remember me to Marsh and his father. Take care of yourself. Say Hi! To mother for me, tell her I'm fine and will write real soon.

Loving Brother Johnie xxxxx

Isle Madame Veterans

Photos:
Top Left:William Boudreau, Petit De Grat

Middle: Unknown, Lawrence Marchand, Alfred Boudreau PDG

Top Right: Cpl. ArthurTerrio, Edinburgh







Summer 2025

Top left: New Roof
Top Middle: New Panel
Top Right: Blacksmith C. L. Leavitt

Middle: Tea In The Museum

Bottom Left: Summer Staff: *Ava, Emily, Victoria, Ciarán Llachlan, missing Ginette.*

Bottom Right: Living History Afternoon





