



## The Great Flood— 30 Years Ago This Spring



P322-M42

*The flood covered vast areas of farmland below Fredericton.*

**F**OR PEOPLE LIVING in the lower valley of the St. John River, the spring of 1973 began routinely enough. Although more snow than usual had fallen in the river basin during the preceding winter, farmers on the rich flatlands of the Maugerville-Sheffield area below Fredericton were nonetheless able to start seeding their fields by the second half of April. Then, on Friday, April 27, a

large storm system parked itself over the watershed and began adding big amounts of rain to the meltwater. By Sunday morning, when the storm finally moved on, more than four inches of rain had fallen in parts of the basin, and by then the St. John was in the midst of one of its greatest floods ever.

It would also turn out to be the best documented of the province's floods. In the holdings of the Provincial Archives of New

Brunswick are substantial amounts of CBC Television footage of the flood as well as tapes of numerous CBC Radio reports. The broadcasts include statements from Premier Richard Hatfield designed to reassure an alarmed public and live reports from the Flood Control Headquarters which the province's Emergency Measures Organization hastily established in the New Brunswick Electric Power Commission's building on King

Street in Fredericton. The Archives also has a large collection of flood photographs, a sampling of which appears on these pages, and records of provincial government departments that were involved with the flooding and flood relief.

Flooding occurred in several places along the St. John that spring—among them, Edmundston, Grand Falls, Perth-Andover, Hartland, Woodstock and parts of Maine. But by far the most dramatic effects were in the lower valley. In Fredericton, the river level reached 28.3 feet, or 25 feet above its normal summer level. Water spilled into older residential areas, lapped against newer subdivisions, and welled up around public buildings. It poured into the basements of the Lord Beaverbrook Hotel and the New Brunswick Legislative Assembly Building, where it threatened the destruction of valuable public documents (see related story). It forced the closure of the provincial government's principal office complex, the Centennial Building. Above the city, it swept over a million-dollar fish hatchery at Mactaquac and, at the other end of town, nearly obliterated an 87-unit trailer park in

*Among places residents had to flee was this 87-unit trailer park at Lincoln.*



P296-21C

Lincoln. On the side of novelty, it provided the sight of canoeists paddling past the stately homes of Waterloo Row and nearby streets, even sparked a rumour that an incorrigible angler had caught a fish on University Avenue.

Larger drama took place downriver in the Maugerville-Sheffield farm country, where the water's sudden rise surprised even people who were fairly accustomed to having the river wash over their lands in the spring. At first, many refused to budge, despite the implorings of various public officials. "We hate to go away as long as we can make it here," said one. "We're not going to let everything go to hell." But things almost

did, and it wasn't until cattle were standing in water in their barns that the farmers relented. As a result, the massive evacuation of livestock mounted by military personnel, agriculture officials and others became infinitely more difficult and dangerous. Nevertheless, some 1200 cattle, 400 hogs and 20 horses were moved by

barge and other river craft to higher ground, with the loss of only six animals. There was also a large human

evacuation from the various flooded areas; it eventually numbered at least 1450, of whom several hundred were accommodated at CFB Gagetown and the University of New Brunswick.

In an assessment of the flood published the following year, the Inland Waters Directorate of



P296-12C

*A man leaves his mobile home in a trailer park at Lincoln.*

Environment Canada reported that more than 2200 homes and cottages and nearly 370 businesses along the St. John River had been affected. Total cost in the whole province was estimated at almost \$12 million. That included about \$1.1 million in damages on other New Brunswick rivers, including the Restigouche, Miramichi and St. Croix. All of the rest was incurred on the St. John. In today's dollars, it would amount to a loss of at least \$50 million.

Inevitably, there was a certain



P296-17C

*Soldiers and a farmer pull cattle from the flood waters.*



*Centre: The scene in front of the New Brunswick Legislative Assembly Building (P296-15C). Clockwise from top left: Rising waters spilled into the residential streets of Fredericton (P296-11C); in today's dollars, the flood did more than \$50 million in damage (P296-19C); large logs washed up against a road at Barker's Point (P296-13C); this fish and chips stand on the Fredericton waterfront was among 370 businesses affected along the St. John. (P296-8C0).*

amount of finger-pointing during and after the flood. In particular, criticism was directed at the New Brunswick Electric Power Commission over why the commission had not done more to control river levels with its dams, especially the new Mactaquac Dam. But a report commissioned by the utility and written by James O. Dineen, an engineer and one-time president of UNB, pointed out the river flows were so great (they reached nearly 400,000 cubic feet, or 2.5 million gallons, of water going by every second) that the hydroelectric barriers

couldn't possibly mitigate a flood. The dams, wrote Dineen, while valuable for power generation "are of essentially no value in the control of a major flood."

So was the Great Flood of 1973 the largest ever experienced on the St. John? Almost certainly. In 1936, the water level at Fredericton actually rose to 29.2 feet, or nearly a foot higher than the 1973 flood. (A plaque on the provincial government's Departmental Building indicates the high water mark of the earlier flood.) But this resulted from an ice jam, and the waters quickly subsided when the jam was released. Then again, an

even earlier flood, in 1923, while reaching a height of 26.4 feet at Fredericton, was estimated to have caused \$13.3 million in damages (in 1973 dollars). But this estimate was based mainly on newspaper reports, without much solid data, and is therefore understandably suspect. Given the amount of development that occurred in the half century between 1923 and 1973, including a good deal of it on the flood plain, it is difficult to conclude anything other than that the more recent flood was not only bigger but also costlier. ■



the government records. He included Harold Holland, the only conservator in the agency's employ who was Conservation Supervisor at Kings Landing and who took the lead in the recovery effort. By midnight it was agreed that the immediate freezing of the collections was necessary to prevent the onslaught of mould until the wet materials could be dried. Over the next couple days the ad hoc committee would assess drying options, identify health and safety concerns and security issues, and determine space and equipment needs.

On Wednesday morning, May 2nd, the staff of the Provincial Archives adopted a recovery plan that focused on air-drying the documents in-house. Air-drying is an excellent option for drying flat documents although it is labour intensive. The other option, of freeze-drying, was rejected, as no commercial recovery facilities existed in Canada, and purchasing a freeze-drying of the scale required for this one-time application, would be financially unviable. By mid-afternoon, approval was received to rent the freezer trailer that was required to accommodate the large quantities of records and that would become a fixture in the Archives parking lot over the next nine months. A team of a dozen volunteers worked well into the evening, loading hundreds of boxes of records into the trailer, taking care to ensure boxes would not freeze together or tip over spilling their contents.

The air-drying process employed was fairly straightforward. One or two boxes of documents were removed from the freezer trailer daily and allowed to thaw overnight. Once thawed, pages were separated and placed between sheets of paper towel

or blotting paper. Stacks of about 15 cm in height were covered with a piece of plywood and weighted. For each stack, paper towels or blotters had to be replaced at least twice to ensure that the documents dried with a minimum amount of wrinkling and curling. Once dried, they were placed in new acid-free file folders ready for storage. While processing these documents other preservation needs, such as removing staples and steel paper clips that might rust, were addressed.

While the recovery process was uncomplicated, the logistics of implementing it were not. Purchasing rules and procedures made it difficult to gain timely approval for the rental of the freezer trailer required to head off mould development. Loss of the Archives research room and of staff reassigned to the recovery effort made it difficult to meet public service demands and normal work requirements over the better part of year. A staff of 93 was employed over the course of the summer and fall to complete the project.

In September dried sheets from five groups of records were sent for a conservation assessment to the recently formed Canadian Conservation Institute in Ottawa. Analysis of the documents suggested that the washing with river water was actually beneficial as the documents were neutralized. While most of the critical records were successfully recovered, impact of the disaster was great. Six record boxes of early and important Equity Court material on parchment still wait for development of a suitable treatment to recover this material. Of the records recovered many had inks that bled or faded badly. Many published materials printed on coated stock stuck together and items with badly distorted binding were



*Loading documents into trailer to freeze until recovery*

unrecoverable. The publications of the Legislative Library that were duplicated in the library of the University of New Brunswick, as well as all of the 3,000 law books, considered rare by many librarians, were sent to the dump.

The silver lining of the 1973 flood was an increased awareness of the fragility of New Brunswick's printed and documentary heritage. The Legislative Library was given \$100,000 to help rebuild and expand its collection of New Brunswick material, and to add publications on health, the environment, social issues, management, and other subjects. There was increased willingness on the part of government departments to transfer their records to the Archives records centre for semi active storage, and pressure for the relocation of that function to an appropriate space on a secure site. This was accomplished in 1978. The impact of the disaster also contributed to the effort to gain approval of a conservator's position at the Provincial Archives. This was accomplished 18 months after the flood making New Brunswick the first province to appoint a qualified archival conservator. ■

# News from the Associates

**T**HE ASSOCIATES Board of Directors held meetings on Nov. 4, 2002 and April 3, 2003. Gwen Davis agreed to serve again as President and Bill Spray accepted the nomination of Vice President. Both were elected unanimously. The Associates passed a vote of thanks to Fernand Levesque who is leaving the Board. He became an Associate in 1994 and was involved in a number of initiatives including the development of the by-laws and of the agreement

that the Associates have entered into with the Minister of Supply and Services.

On-going projects of the Associates include fund raising to support the acquisition of the original editorial cartoons of Josh Beutel and the purchase of a reader-printer equipped with scanner to permit digitization of records on microfilm. A donation of \$2500 has been received from the Viscount Bennett Trust Fund and commitments totaling \$2000 have been made toward the acquisition of the editorial cartoons. Betty Sewell and Frank Morehouse

have been active in encouraging the support of the New Brunswick Genealogical Society and its branches for the reader printer purchase. Directors also discussed ways of increasing membership, outlets for PANB products, and ways of extending the cemeteries database project. The Conservation Coop reported on treatments undertaken for UNB, the Saint John Free Public Library and the Water and Sewage Department of the City of Saint John.

The Associates welcomed Alfred Chiasson of Lamèque to the Board. ■

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## Report on the Provincial Archives

**T**HE MAJOR preoccupation of the Provincial Archives over the fall and winter has been preparing for the transfer of records to the new repository.

Contents of boxes have been confirmed, labels have been verified, and records put in new protective boxes and containers. Approximately 1200 boxes, folders and enclosures were produced by project workers under the direction of conservator Dean Lund, and 6000 films and videos were placed in new cans. Not only will records be safe for the move, but for the first time in the history of the Archives, the majority of archival records will be housed in appropriate containers as they move

to new storage in exacting environmental conditions.

Also related to the move is the challenge of planning the logistics of transferring approximately 40,000 ft. of records to the new repository from the six locations where they have been in temporary storage. Another critical task was enhancing the data base controlling holdings to accommodate the new storage locations and to track records. Changes are also planned for operations and public service during the move and once the new storage and retrieval system is on line. It is hoped that inconveniences can be kept to a minimum for researchers

The Archives has experienced significant growth in research use by university students. There have been a number of sessions offered to orient them to archival research and the procedures of the Provincial

Archives and a number of projects have been undertaken investigating the history of volunteer organizations, criminology, the history of medicine, and post World War II immigration.

Staff has been busy giving addresses and presentations on the archives to a number of community, seniors and genealogical groups who are especially interested in the new repository and its impact on researchers.

Regular Archives activities have not slowed. The National Archival Appraisal Board and several external experts came to the Archives in February and March to appraise a number of acquisitions made in the last several years for which donors have requested a receipt for tax purposes. ■

# Tribute to Janet Toole

**I**N DECEMBER 2002, Janet Toole was honoured by colleagues and friends to mark the culmination of her work as oral historian at the Provincial Archives. She worked on two major oral history projects before coming to the Provincial Archives in October of 1987, one interviewing maritime politicians and bureaucrats on the formation of the Council of Maritime Premiers; the other interviewing professors and administrators at the University of New Brunswick on the history of the university.

Janet holds both a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Bachelor of Education degree from the University of New Brunswick. Her first employment was with CBC, followed by a variety of positions that included teaching and managing the Brunswick String Quartet.

Janet's knowledge and experience provided a strong background, in particular for political interviews and issues surrounding women in society, but her broad interests, research abilities and curious mind have made her a successful interviewer in many subject areas. New Brunswick politicians including premiers Richard Hatfield, Charles Van Horne, and Louis Robichaud; Deputy Ministers and other civil servants, NB Power senior management, entrepreneurs, labour leaders, immigrants, feminists, and community leaders are among the people she has interviewed.

In a time when increased travel and use of the telephone and internet have changed methods of communication, and letter writing and diary keeping have become less common, Janet used oral history to great effect

to help preserve the voices and thoughts of those who were part of significant events, developments and trends in New Brunswick political, social, and religious history. Equally important she captured the experiences and memories of individuals for whom recording in written form was not a regular activity.

As well as compiling a large collection of oral histories herself, she gave workshops, and made presentations on oral history and her work at the Archives to historical societies, church and community groups and university classes. She encouraged and supported students and other individuals and groups in doing oral history. The Association of New Brunswick Land Surveyors and the Base Gagetown Community History Association oral histories are only two of such projects.

Her interviews frequently led to the acquisition of valuable papers, photographs and collections. The papers of Dalton Camp, journalist and political pundit; Senator Muriel Fergusson; Kelsey Jones, composer and founder of Symphony New Brunswick; and suffragette Gertrude Harding, are a few of the significant groups of records that came to the Archives as a result of Janet's activity. Her familiarity with the content of interviews and the background study that supported her interviewing have enabled her to provide a high level of service to researchers working on topics related to the oral histories she has done.

Janet also assisted in fund raising for oral history and acquisition initiatives of the Archives. She has



*l-r Marie Resmer, Vetta LaPointe Faulds, Barry Toole, Janet Toole, Marion Beyea*

experience in public relations and has been involved in fund raising for a number of causes including a new building for The Pre-School Centre on Windsor Street, International Women's Year projects, UNICEF, and a series of books on life in Restigouche County by Vetta LaPointe Faulds.

Janet has researched and written on her own interesting New Brunswick origins. Her grandmother came as a young Norwegian immigrant to Chamcook in 1912 to work in the sardine cannery of Sir William Van Horne. She married (Charles Wallace) there and had two daughters. Delphine Wallace Maclellan, Janet's mother, worked at the St. Andrews Biological Station and went on to have an outstanding scientific career. Janet is married to Barry Toole and has two daughters and two grandchildren. She loves to travel and lived for a period in Africa. She has visited family in Norway pursuing her roots in that country. She plans to continue her work in oral history and will, no doubt, pursue her many other interests, including friends, politics (self-declared political junkie), honing her French language skills, singing in the choir, activism, and Grand Manan. ■

# Fund-raising Campaign for Reader-Printer Nears Target

**T**HE NEW BRUNSWICK Genealogical Society, Inc. recently presented a cheque for \$1500 to The Associates of the Provincial Archives. The funding is for the acquisition of a reader-printer for the use of researchers at the Archives. It will be equipped with a function that permits scanning of documents on microfilm for transfer to computer in digitized form as well as production of regular paper print outs. Stan Balch, president of the NBGS presented the cheque to Betty Sewell, member of the Board of Directors of



*l-r Ivan Edgett, NBGS member, Betty Sewell, Board of Directors of the Associates, and Stan Balch, President of the NBGS.*

the Associates who accepted on behalf of the Associates. ■

## Genealogy Fair

Saturday, May 10, 2003  
10:00 am to 4:00 pm

Fredericton High School  
Cafeteria

Features include research material from the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick and an Associates sales table with genealogical and historical publications. As well, genealogists can get advice on starting a family history, answers to questions from experienced family historians, and visit displays by genealogical and historical societies and researchers.

## ACQUISITION OF NEW MATERIAL

### Government Records

#### RS141 **New Brunswick Vital Statistics, 1908, 1953.**

Represents newest release of vital statistics information: A1b/1908 Late Registrations of Births; A5/1908 Provincial Returns of Births; B4/1953 Provincial Returns of Marriages; C5/1953 Provincial Returns of Deaths. 15 microfilms.

#### RS169 **Legislative Library Records, 1854-1995**

Subjects covered: Acadia (Archives de Paris material), early New Brunswick history, House of Assembly, Libraries, Territorial boundaries, Legislative building. 2 metres textual, 10 microfilms.

### Private Records

#### MC2333 **Earliest Church Register of St. George's**

**Anglican Church, Saint John (Parish of Carleton), 1826-1865.** Includes Baptisms, Marriages, Burials & Confirmations. F22300.

**MC3074 Business and Professional Women's Clubs of New Brunswick fonds.** Includes Biennial Conferences, scrapbooks, clippings & club histories. 1952-1996. 20cm.

**MC3091 The Currie-Huestis Striped Stocking Case, 1885.** Printed précis of testimony and verdict of slander case held in York Nisi Prius Sittings. The Rev. Stephen E. Currie accused Charles Huestis of slander. In addition to the details of the case, there is evidence of the division between the Free Christian Baptists and NB Free Baptists (Orserites) 15 pages.

**MC3099 Alice Beatrice Wiggins diaries, 1903-1908, 1911.** B. Dec.14, 1888; d. October 13, 1972. Native of Lower Hainesville, York County until her marriage to William Tyler Reed on September 20, 1916. Attended Normal School in 1911. Diaries and a photo of her class.

**MC3102 John Wesley Steeves fonds, 1908-1909.**

Farmer in Boundary Creek, Albert County. Journals provide an interesting record of the life and work of a typical New Brunswick farmer. The journals are being transcribed by Steeves' great-granddaughter, Jane Wood of Riverview; 1908-1909 are currently available, journals continue to the 1950's.

**MC3103 The Railway Record, Moncton railway newspaper, April-May 1905,** published in Saint John.

**Photographs.** Significant additions to the photo collection include images of the Entomological Building on the UNB campus and collection of Saint John photographs.

## New Finding Aids

**MC223 Q1 Anglican Parish of Queensbury fonds.**  
Parish Registers. 1846-1960. F22327.

**MC3028 John Browne fonds, 1843-1849.** Immigrant from County Clare to Bathurst, probably in the early 1820's. Three letters written by Browne to his friend Michael Studdert in County Clare, Ireland. Browne discusses various aspects of colonial life in NB – trade, economic depression, poverty, manufactures (grindstones, railroad sleepers), industry (agriculture, lumbering, shipping, fishing), railway construction, weather conditions, the onset of the famine Irish, out-migration to the USA, the state of the colonial press and the collapse of Joseph Cunard's business in 1847. He also comments on provincial, North American, and colonial politics, particularly Gloucester County politics. Photocopies. 12 p.

**MC3075 Meahan fonds, 1860, 1877.** Bathurst family, NB. Two letters: September 27, 1860 letter from M. O'Kane of County Omagh to John Meahan, the ship-builder, thanking him and his friends for contributions made towards the establishment of schools in Omagh, Ireland, under the care of the Christian Brothers; December 21, 1877 letter from student John C. Meahan, St. Joseph's College, Memramcook to his parents, thanking them for their gift to him of an "excellent education."

**MC3079 King Edward Lodge, Protestant Association of 'Prentice Boys of America No. 30 fonds. 1928-1937.** Fraternal organization, established in 1850 to honour the

Protestant apprentices who successfully defended Londonderry, a Protestant stronghold in northern Ireland, against the Catholic forces of James II during the revolution of 1688. King Edward Lodge, Protestant Association of 'Prentice Boys of America No. 30 was first organized in West Saint John, NB probably about the turn of the 20th century. Minute Book dating 1928 to 1937. 4 cm.

**MC3080 Grand Lodge of 'Prentice Boys of America fonds. 1889-1972.** The Grand Lodge of 'Prentice Boys of America was the administrative unit of the Protestant Association of 'Prentice Boys of America. Constitution and laws, printed copies of rituals & mysteries, reports of proceedings, financial records. 11 cm.

**MC3081 Queen Alexandra Lodge, Protestant Association of 'Prentice Boys of America No.34 fonds. 1904-1948.** Established at Lorneville, NB. Minutes of the 'Prentice Boys Degree, of the Royal White and Blue Degree, and of the Royal Crimson Chapter Degree as well as roll books. 8 cm.

**MC3082 Florenceville United Church Pastoral Charge fonds. 1862-1998.** Church Registers, 1862-1960; Quarterly Official Board Minutes, 1862-1981; minutes of Session, Trustees, Congregational meetings, Women's, Men's and Youth Groups of the Methodist and Presbyterian congregations in this area that have united over the years to form the Florenceville Pastoral Charge of the United Church of Canada. Microfilms F22232-F22234.

**MC3083 Peter R. McMonagle fonds. 1859-1886.** Medical doctor, Parishes of Brighton and Peel in Carleton County. Daybook recording dates of medical visits, names of patients, medicines prescribed or services performed, sums charged and payments received. 4 cm.

**MC3084 Sunbury County merchant and trader fonds. 1834-[1875].** Cashbook recording the daily activities of a general mercantile business located in the parish of Burton, NB. Notes monies received from sales of merchandise and for payments on notes, loans and accounts, monies paid out on notes and for supplies, postage, freight, advertising, rent, household expenses and servants' wages. Beginning about August 1835, entries were made in connection with a shipping or trading business. 7 cm.

MC3088 **Presbytery of Saint John, Presbyterian Church in Canada fonds. 1925-2002.** Minutes of St. John Presbytery from its re-establishment (or continuance) after the formation of the United Church of Canada in 1925. Microfilms F22302-F22304.

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MC3089 **E. Bertha Jones Diary [1893-1895].** Widow, Greenwich, Kings County. Diary of E. Bertha Jones highlighting the difficulties faced by widows in supporting their children, their reliance on neighbours and family for emotional and material support. Records her business and financial transactions, routine household and farm activities, and social events, local deaths, the arrival & departure of boarders and travelers and visitors, church attendance, communications from family members. Microfilm F806.

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MC3092 **Celebration of Women Millenium Project 2000.** Records of the project and listing of notable women with their biographies. 30 cm.

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MC3094 **Ouigoudi District, Women's Institute. 1930-2002.** Minutes of the Ouigoudi District Conventions, Queens County Women's Institute, from their organizational meeting in August 1930 to the seventy-first annual meeting in September 2002. Microfilm F22333.

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## Additions to Archives website

### RS141A5 Births

Index to 1907; digitized originals 1900-1903.

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### RS141C1 Deaths

Victoria County Death Registers, 1888-1920.

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## CEMETERIES

**CFB Gagetown cemeteries.** Searchable database with a digitized image of each tombstone.

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**NB Cemeteries** main database is regularly updated and now contains over 61,000 records.

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**EXTRA!EXTRA!** is published twice yearly. Inquiries about the newsletter should be addressed to Paula Glendenning  
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**THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS of The Associates of the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick** are members of the public who have volunteered to support the activities of the Provincial Archives. They come from many walks of life and have diverse cultural interests. In some way all had some connection with the Archives before this appointment. All have experience using the documentary holdings of the Archives. The Associates for 2002/2003 are: President, Gwen Davies, Alfred Chiasson, John Corey, Joseph Day, Cyril Donahue, Ernie Forbes, Joe Knockwood, Jocelyne LeBel, Frank Morehouse, Mark Pedersen, Elizabeth Sewell, and Bill Spray.

**ARCHIVES WEBSITE** <http://archives.gnb.ca> provides general information on the Archives, its holdings, hours of operation and its programs as well as information on the Associates of the Archives. Also available are some general guides to holdings and genealogical guides for each county. Additional information continues to be added and existing information is updated to reflect changes in publications dealing with records management and electronic records, information on exhibits and finding aids, and growing databases.

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If you wish to become an Associate, please complete the enclosed form. Contributions are welcome and tax receipts will be provided.