

Paradise HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPRING 2025 NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the Spring 2025 edition of the Paradise Historical Society newsletter.

As we embrace the warmer seasons, we're excited to share more stories from the heart of our community, highlight stories from our website, and provide a sneak peek at the upcoming events and workshops you won't want to miss.

Our continued mission to preserve the history of Paradise remains stronger than ever, and we're grateful for your support in making it all possible. Here's to another season of learning, connection, and celebration of Paradise's rich heritage!

A Glimpse into Paradise's Past

The Bridges of Paradise

Never assume that the road or river or brook you see looks like the road or river or brook as it used to be. 225 years ago in Paradise, the landscape was different.

One change of the road in Paradise was the truncation of Leonard Road – the ancient route from North Mountain to the river. Once, this path, and later a road, ended at the “landing at the head of the tide.”

That part of the road was essential for the Mi'kmaq who travelled from the North Mountain to the river, for the Acadians who travelled up and down the river to sell products or visit friends and relatives, and for the Planter and Loyalist settlers who moved lumber and hay, merchandise and household goods, whatever needed moving, on “gondolas” or barges.



The almost-eradicated remains of the old Leonard Road that went down to the river and ferry landing.

Landings were an essential part of transport on the river. So were the ferries which were simple barges that could transport people or goods across the river to connect settlements, or the two parallel roads that went to Annapolis. We see the landings mentioned in the 1799 military order from Headquarters – that when “expresses go from Headquarters to Annapolis they are to be put over the river...at Leonard's by the party there.”

After some years of being “put over” on the ferry at this place, a petition went to the House of Assembly. It was time, the inhabitants said, for a bridge.

Their petition was composed and signed on June 26, 1801, by eleven men from both sides of the river, and submitted on behalf of “a number of the inhabitants of Wilmot [north side of the river] and “the upper part of the township of Annapolis” [the south side of the river] and “humbly sheweth that the great increase in the number of inhabitants of this County and that for the convenience of the province in general it is necessary that a bridge should be erected at or near the head of the tide over the Annapolis River.”

The advantages of such a bridge would be “plane to every disinterested person that is acquainted with the situation at the place at the present.” They note that there was no other way at that time to cross the river but by ferries which are “sometimes dangerous and at other times not profitable at all.” After careful examination by all the right people, they felt, three hundred pounds would be needed, though they sweetened the request by saying that they felt they could easily raise one hundred pounds by subscription and had already raised most of it.

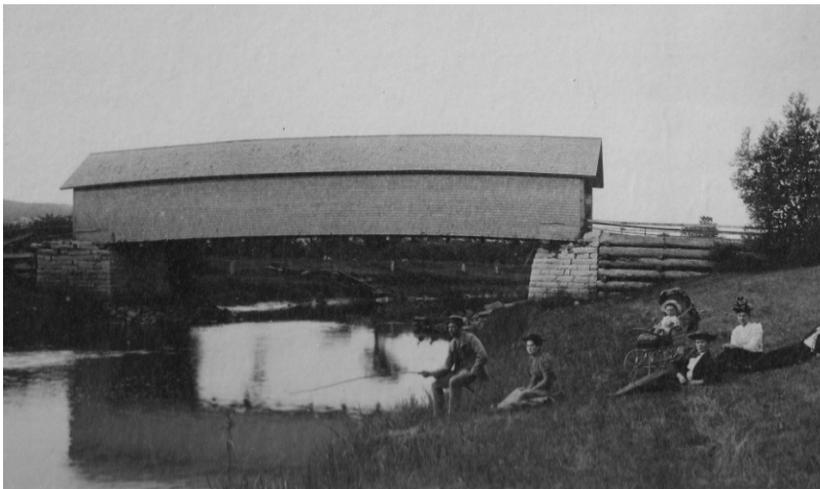
These petitions are interesting because we see the names and signatures of the people living in Paradise in the early 1800s.

For instance, the primary signator of this petition was William Bent, who would shortly after this petition purchase land or a house on the road extension, on the west side of it. The Bent family would live there for several generations. The impression of both the road and the Bent cellar where the family lived for several generations is still there beneath the overgrowth. Every spring drifts of snowdrops planted by one of the Bent women surface in the place that would have been a front or back yard.

The house is remembered in its own way. It was described in the 1890’s by a visitor who was quite enamored of Paradise. Elizabeth Mary Hunt-Morgan was on an evangelistic and fundraising tour and was hosted by the church in Paradise. She wrote: “We spent the earlier part of the evening with Mrs. Bent in her romantic little cottage in the midst of the universal apple-trees, beside a clear river rippling brightly on through sun and shade, carrying life and verdure everywhere with it.” She declared the whole village of Paradise to be “exquisitely beautiful.”

Ten other men signed the petition in most elegant handwriting: Mr. Bent’s neighbour, Jonathan Leonard of Leonard’s Tavern, Andrew Marshall, Abiel Leonard, William Marshall, Charles Whitman, Calvin Marshall, Isaac Longley, Daniel Farnsworth, Richard Banks, and William Longley.

Their request for two hundred pounds for the bridge was approved, the note on the cover of the petition stating that there should be a plan for the most suitable place for a bridge to be erected over said Annapolis River between Clark’s Ferry and the house of Jonathan Leonard. I am unsure of the site of Clark’s Ferry. There were Clarks in Paradise, perhaps on the south side of the river?



The Second Bridge on Paradise Lane was built in 1848

The project never happened. Jonathan Leonard, whose property was somehow involved, died in 1802 and perhaps that was the spanner in the works. He died indebted, and it took time for probates to be approved and decisions to be made so that his wife Sarah and the children could continue to live there and operate the Tavern, as she did. So, there is a gap, or silence, in the records.

But the idea of a bridge at the Landing was still in play and reborn in 1815 with even greater insistence. It was to be in the same spot, for the 1815 petition submitted by a new chief signator, Samuel Morse, and 48 or 49 other inhabitants proposed a bridge across the Annapolis River near the Head of the Tide at the east line of Isaac Marshall's front property. That east line was actually the Leonard Road. It was to connect to a road offered by Edward Whitman on the south side.

In the end, of course, the bridge was built right where it is now, on Paradise Lane. Samuel Morse and his family owned the mills near the Lane. The business centre of Paradise had moved, and the bridge was needed elsewhere. Landings mattered less as roads were improved. The new route made sense; there was already a road on either side of the river on the Lane, and the river would be crossed on ice in winter or forded at low tide in summer.



An iron bridge that was built in 1907.

The first bridge in Paradise was erected sometime after 1815, the date unknown. The second Paradise bridge was the lovely, covered bridge seen in old postcards or family photos and was built in 1848. In 1907 we had our third bridge, a steel bridge that lasted until it met its nemesis- a heavy tractor-trailer. And finally, today we have a not-so-lovely but functional bridge that allows us to cross the Lane unless, of course, the spring floods prevent us.



Looking up the Annapolis River from the current bridge on Paradise Lane in the summer of 2020.

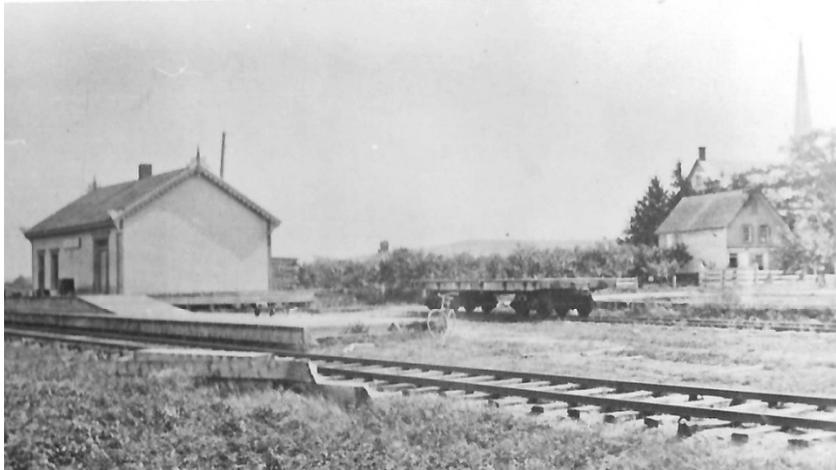
It is still a pleasure to stand at the bridge and watch the river that flows, day after day, as it did for William Bent and Samuel Morse and all the others.

There is a sign over a bridge on Queen Street in Toronto that says, "The river I step in is not the river I stand in." The river flows, as does the history of all places and people.

Written by Barbara Bishop

A Look Back in Time

Originally built by the Windsor & Annapolis Railway, Paradise station measured 40 by 22 feet with a 200-foot passenger platform. It was later replaced with a standard CPR branch line station, finished in stucco. Paradise remained a flag stop until 1980 until the railway service ended in 1990.



Would you like to learn more about the evolution of the railways in Annapolis County?

If so, please join us May 23-24th at our History Conference.

Please visit: <https://paradisehistoricalsociety.ca/event/history-conference-2025/> to learn more.

Upcoming Events

Spring and summer are shaping up to be full of great events in Paradise. From an Artist's Workshop, Strawberry Tea, to our much-anticipated History Conference (and more!), there's something for everyone.

Take a look at what's coming up—we'd love to see you.

MAY 2025



***“It Changed Everything”* History Conference**

Explore the moments that shaped Annapolis County at our Spring History Conference. Our keynote speaker, Larry Powell, will present *“Moments That Shaped the Future,”* alongside engaging talks from guest speakers on railways, democracy, and community healthcare.

When: Friday, May 23rd in the evening and Saturday, May 24th all day

Cost: \$60

Don't miss this chance to connect, learn, and dive into the pivotal events that changed everything.

For more information, or to register to attend the conference please contact Barbara at barbarabishop84@gmail.com.

JUNE 2025

Plants & Pies Sale

Come check out the selection of house plants, garden plants, and delicious pies.

Your purchase will help support the Paradise Historical Society and our Heritage Centre.

When: Saturday, June 7, 2025 from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm.

If you can donate a plant or pie to our sale, please contact Barbara at 825-9198.

Genealogy Group

Are you curious about your family history? Want to learn how to start researching your roots or dig deeper into your ancestral story? Join us as we launch our brand-new Genealogy Group this summer!



We're excited to kick things off with a special guest: local genealogist Denise Rice, who will be sharing her expertise in our first session. Denise will guide us through some essentials that every genealogist—beginner or experienced—should know.

When: Tuesday, June 10, 2025 at 6:30 pm

The Genealogy Group will meet regularly at the Heritage Centre to learn, share discoveries, explore local resources, and support one another in uncovering our pasts. All are welcome and no experience needed.

We hope you can join us!

JULY 2025

Artist's Workshop

Remembering the Past with Paint and Pencil

We are pleased to offer a three-day workshop in Paradise with artist Janice Leonard.

The workshop will be *en plein air* painting of historic sites with studio work inside our wonderful Heritage Centre. The workshop ends with an art exhibition and public Strawberry Tea.

When: July 3-5, 2025

Cost: \$60.00 (includes Strawberry Tea)

To register:

<https://paradisehistoricalsociety.ca/event/artists-workshop/>



Art Exhibition and Strawberry Tea

Please join us for a public art exhibition, strawberry shortcake and tea after our Artist's Workshop.

When: July 5, 2025

Cost: \$15.00

To purchase your ticket: <https://paradisehistoricalsociety.ca/event/strawberry-tea/>

ALL SPRING & SUMMER

Weekly Drop-In Mornings

Join us for a relaxing morning at the Heritage Centre. Enjoy a cup of coffee or lemonade while browsing through historical artifacts, books, and records from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon every Wednesday morning starting May 7th through November 12th, 2025.

Discover old school photos, our spinning wheel, and the "Paradise Gazette," a newspaper created by local schoolchildren in 1936. Also, explore local history books, genealogy resources, and historical minutes from the Paradise Women's Institute dating back to 1918!

Stay in the Loop

Don't miss out on upcoming events, workshops, and Heritage Centre open days. Follow us on Facebook and visit our website regularly for the latest updates.

Events Calendar: <https://paradisehistoricalsociety.ca/events-calendar/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Paradisehistory>

Recent Events



Volunteer "Thank You" Potluck

In early November 2024, the Paradise Community Hall and Paradise Heritage Centre co-hosted a "*Thank You to Volunteers*" potluck. It was a wonderful time of reconnecting and celebrating the hard work of our volunteers.

A special thank you was extended to Carolyn and Arthur Phinney, whose dedication has made Paradise such a vibrant community. Over the years, they've contributed in countless ways—from hosting events and maintaining the Heritage Garden to serving in leadership roles and supporting local initiatives like the Community Sign.

We're grateful for the commitment of all of our volunteers, both longtime and new. Your contributions are invaluable, and we truly couldn't do it without you. Thank you to everyone who helps make Paradise a better place to live!

Our Wonderful Workshops

Our workshops are always a big hit!

By popular demand, Linda Hankinson returned to teach her *Basket Making* workshop, where participants learned to weave a practical and beautiful basket that they could use for years to come. It was a focused and convivial day, with everyone leaving with a handmade creation. We're so happy to see people gathering at the Paradise Heritage Centre to keep these traditional arts alive.



Also, back by popular demand was *Rug Hooking*, where attendees learned everything from pattern drawing to finishing edges, with expert guidance from Monica Bailey, Linda Hankinson, and Stephanie Duggan-Haggan. A huge thank you to our talented instructors and all who took the plunge to learn something new! We love celebrating these timeless crafts and sharing them with our community.

Do You Know the History of Rug Hooking in Nova Scotia?

Rug hooking has a rich tradition that dates back centuries. Would you like to learn more about its origins in Nova Scotia and how it evolved?

Read the full story on our website at: <https://paradisehistoricalsociety.ca/history-of-hooked-rugs-in-nova-scotia/>

How You Can Help Us

Support Our Fundraisers

Our fundraisers play a vital role in helping us preserve and share the history of Paradise. Your support makes all the difference, and we're grateful for every contribution. Here's how you can help!

Quilt Sale

Stay tuned! We are planning a pop-up auction of our beautiful queen-size quilt, crafted in the classic "Nine Patch" pattern with rich shades of deep blue. The quilt is valued at \$1,000 and we'll be starting the bidding at \$750.

To see the quilt in person, feel free to visit us during our Wednesday morning drop-in hours or visit our website at: <https://paradisehistoricalsociety.ca/quilt-sale/>



2025 Raffle

Our prizes this year are:

- A hooked wall hanging by Viola Doucette
- A 12”x 16” painting by local artist, Janice Leonard, titled “Annapolis River, Paradise 6:29 pm August 1, 2017”.
- A handmade quilt – can you guess the theme of this year’s quilt?

Please keep an eye out for us selling tickets on these wonderful prizes through the summer. We’ll be at local markets and the Annapolis Valley Exhibition.



Congratulations to Our 2024 Fundraiser Winners!

A huge thank you to everyone who participated in our fundraiser! We’re excited to congratulate the winners of our 2024 prizes. our support helps us continue our mission to preserve the history of Paradise. Enjoy your prizes and thank you once again for being part of our community!



Become a Volunteer

Many hands make light work. Please consider volunteering your time, whether on the board of directors, or on a per-project/need basis. We’d love to have you join our team of volunteers! Please call Barbara at 825-9198 to express your interest and learn more.

Our immediate needs for help are:

- Heritage Garden Spring Clean Up and Summer Maintenance and Mowing
- Pies and/or Plants for our fundraiser in June

Thank you for reading this edition of our newsletter!

We hope you have enjoyed learning more about our community’s rich history, upcoming events, and recent accomplishments. Your ongoing support makes all our efforts possible, and we’re grateful to have you as part of our journey in preserving Paradise’s heritage.

Stay tuned for more stories and opportunities to get involved—we look forward to seeing you at our upcoming events!