

## *News from the Board*

Hello to all FNHA members. As you are aware, it has been a difficult year for us to get together as usual. COVID has interrupted our normal programming, and just as we thought we might be able to hold monthly meetings again, our usual location became unavailable. (The St. Mary’s Church hall is currently undergoing renovations.) So, until we meet again, we have decided to try a regular bulletin to keep in touch and provide at least a glimpse into the past with some snippets of north side history. If you have suggestions for this newsletter, or would like to contribute an historical tidbit, please contact Bob McNeil or Diana Moore (see below for contact information)

**WANTED:** With the “retirement” of our long-time treasurer, Marjorie Hughes, we are in need of someone to fill this position. If you’d like to take this on, we’d be delighted to welcome you to the Board. Please contact Fred White for more information. (fgwhite223@gmail.com) A huge thank you goes to Marjorie for her many years of volunteering for the Association!

**AVAILABLE:** If you missed them the first time, our last few monthly presentations can be viewed on our Facebook page. Simply go to Facebook, search for “Fredericton North Heritage Association” and click on our page. Scroll down and you’ll find videos of our latest speakers, courtesy of our President, Eric Megarity, who not only does the filming, but also maintains the Facebook page. Enjoy a trip to the past without leaving the comfort of your own home.

**FOR MORE READING:** You can purchase the 2020 version of our Journal at Jean Coutu pharmacy (ask for it at the checkout counter). Enjoy articles on York Arena, prohibition on the Northside, growing up in Marysville, the Municipal Home, and others, as well as a tribute to Walter Long.

## *Feature Article*

Bob McNeil discovered the following article that was printed in the *Daily Gleaner* on January 17, 1953. It is a response to an editorial that appeared earlier in the newspaper.

### *Old Timers Recall Days of 'Boss' Gibson*

Two very old-timers in Marysville today heartily support a Gleaner editorial that something should be done to keep alive the memory of Boss Gibson.

The faces of 90 year-old Alfred Ernest White and 75 year-old John Perry became almost young again



*Alexander “Boss”  
Gibson circa 1870  
Photo: J.S. Notman*

as they recounted stories of the fabulous founder of the cotton industry in Marysville in the days when his vision determined the economic destiny of the province. Both men had worked for the millionaire lumberman and cotton tycoon for many years.

Jovial Mr. Perry who retired from Gibson Mill only five years ago after a lifetime (of work), was quick with his suggestion that a memorial of some description should be erected in the pioneer’s memory.

Thoughtful Mr. White, who is blessed with a remarkable memory, was as quick to agree with him. “What we need in Canada today is more bosses like

him,” he said. “He had imagination and feeling for his employees.”

The old gentleman pictured him as “a mild-mannered, friendly man despite his formidable appearance and stature of six- foot-six.”

### **Great Lumber King**

“He was a great lumber king when he built the cotton mill in 1883,” said Mr. Perry. “My father Andrew Perry, my mother, eight sisters and one brother came from Wigan, Lincolnshire and all of us worked for Boss Gibson with the exception of my sister, Lena.

“My father was a great friend of his,” he went on. “Boss Gibson saved him the tall, beaver hat which he wore to his wife's funeral.” Mr. Perry produced the hat, the most prized possession of the Perry family.

“This house in which we have lived for 52 years was built from bricks which came from the two brick kilns Boss Gibson started after he sold his first railroad,” reminisced Mr. Perry. “He built all these houses for his employees and father always said Marysville looked like a typical British industrial town even to Big Hill.”

### **Big Pay Then**

“In the old days I was a loom fixer and my father a weaver. We were paid about a dollar a day, less than these fellows get in an hour, he said. “We bought all of our clothing and food at Mr. Gibson's dry goods and grocery store. The Boss even had a butcher shop.”

“I can remember that Mr. Gibson who founded the Methodist church here, was death on liquor. He certainly didn't approve of hop beer. On Saturday the men bought a “square face” of gin for 50 cents. That's a quart bottle and in those days one drink made you talk plenty. Now it takes three or four, they say,” he winked.

“The Boss was a huge man with long grey whiskers

as I remember. He looked a lot like that Dr. Chase on the almanac.”

Mr. Perry shook his head and finished: “I understand that a lot of people rogued him and I remember that Wade, the grave digger, who is dead now, said that just as he was burying him in 1913. He died a poor man for him at the age of 94.”

Mr. White whose home also commands a view of the cotton mill which dominates the Nashwaak and the lives of the townspeople, said: “Boss Gibson came here an Irishman, in '62 and bought the timber lands on the Nashwaak from the Rankine Brothers of Saint John.

### **'83 Saw Beginning**

“That was the year before I was born and he started building the cotton mill in '83. The next year he installed the equipment and on May 1<sup>st</sup>, '85 he began manufacturing cotton.

“Then he decided he needed a railway into Marysville and built one from Devon through to Newcastle on the Miramichi so that he could import raw materials and export manufactured goods.

“In the end his lumbering and cotton businesses were bought out. Yes, he was a temperate man and a great churchman.”

In the same breath Mr. White said, “I can remember one year when 400,000,000 logs were cut in New Brunswick.” To Mr. White that kind of achievement and Boss Gibson were synonymous.

### ***Who were those “Old Timers”?***

The gentlemen interviewed for the above article were long time residents of Marysville. Albert Ernest White was born in 1863 to Elias and Nancy (Peterson) White. Albert started lumbering with his father, was at one point a teamster, and later worked for Canadian Cottons, in charge of their lumber holdings. In 1895 he married Minnie M.



*Marysville in the early 1900's*

Scott and they had at least three children: Ernest, Selena, and Bertha. In 1921 the family was living on Water Street and Alfred's parents lived there with them. Alfred died in 1954 of a stroke. His obituary noted that he had been born on the site of the cotton mill (the White family sold the land for the mill to Boss Gibson); that "he grew up with the town"; and that he was highly regarded as an expert on the history of Marysville. At the time of his death he lived on Church Street. He was buried at the Maryville United Baptist Church.

John Perry was born in England in 1878 and immigrated to New Brunswick with his family in 1889. He had nine siblings. In 1911 he was still living at home with his parents at 24 George Street. He worked at the cotton mill as a weaver. In 1912 he was living at St. Mary's Ferry and that year he married Agnes DeForest of Saint John. Agnes died of heart disease a year later and by 1921 John was back living with his parents. He died in 1958, apparently of kidney disease, and is buried at All Saints Anglican church (Canada Street). At the time of his death he was still living at the family home on George Street. He was known for having run the first passenger service between Marysville and Fredericton – first with horses, and later, cars.

## ***Two Northside Monuments Relocated***

The City of Fredericton has recently found new homes for two northside monuments. They are now both in more appropriate settings and should attract

more attention. The FNHA played a role in this: President Eric Megarity advocated for these changes on behalf of the Board. Thanks to City staff for protecting these important reminders of our past.

### ***Lest We Forget***

The Barker's Point cenotaph has recently been relocated to a more spacious and easily accessible location. Formerly the memorial sat by the side of the road near the mouth of the Nashwaak. The new location is just up the street at the corner of Watters Drive and Carmen Avenue, with easy access and ample parking.

Work on the site, which is a former gas station turned greenspace, involved the refurbishment of the stone cenotaph, as well as landscaping around existing trees, the installation of new brick pathways, and the planting of new shrubs and four oak trees – a common symbol of strength and endurance.

The war memorial was erected in 1973, just before Barker's Point amalgamated with Fredericton, and it was the last project of the town council. It records the names of six young men who lost their lives: in WWI: Cecil Carman, Arthur Eatman, and Carl Watters; and in WWII: Kenneth Corbett, Charles Douglas, and Justus McKay. Although this year's Remembrance Day ceremonies have been somewhat curtailed, why not take time to visit the new site and pay respects to the fallen?





### ***The Fort Nashwaak Site Marker***

This is the third location of the Fort Nashwaak monument and it now overlooks the actual site of the Fort. Placed by the National Sites and Monuments Board of Canada in 1927, it was originally located further up Gibson Street (near Joe's Diner) and was commonly referred to as "the cairn". The bronze tablet on its front records a brief history of the Fort. It was later moved to a spot near the entry to Carleton Park, and just recently was relocated to the east side of the north entry to the Bill Thorpe walking bridge.



*At the original location in 1955. (Historic Sites and Monuments Board)*

### ***Can you tell us something we don't know?***

The 2021 Journal is currently under construction. At the moment we are looking for more information on musician Fred McKenna, as well as the famous hunting guide Henry Braithwaite. If you have anything to share, please contact one of the editors: Bob McNeil or Diana Moore (see below)



*Fred McKenna*

### ***Want to contact us?***

For comments or suggestions for the *Journal* and this newsletter:

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