

Halifax Explosion 100th Anniversary: Award Recipients

Halifax Explosion 100th Anniversary Grants Program 2015 and 2016

Archdiocese of Halifax-Yarmouth. The *Lost-Not Forgotten: Victims of the Halifax Explosion in Catholic Cemeteries Project* honors the memory of persons killed in the Halifax Explosion interred in two historical burial grounds: the Mount Olivet Cemetery (c.1896) and Holy Cross Cemetery (1843) both located in Halifax. The project began in 2014 by identifying persons known to have died as a direct result of the explosion and listed in the *Halifax Explosion Remembrance Book* (on permanent display at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic). To commemorate the centennial outdoor interpretation panels will be fabricated and installed in both cemeteries and a commemorative mass hosted at Mount Olivet. The research will be of interest to historians, genealogists, and descendants of the deceased. **A commemorative mass will be held September 9, 2017, Mount Olivet Cemetery, 7076 Mumford Road, Halifax. Holy Cross Cemetery is located at 1259 South Park Street, Halifax.**

Army Museum Halifax Citadel. The exhibition *The City Regiments Response to the Halifax Explosion* recognizes the contribution of military personnel stationed in the Halifax region in search and rescue efforts and medical care immediately following the Halifax Explosion. The immediate deployment of military personnel, equipment and supplies in advance of a coordinated civic response is credited with reducing the number of fatalities. **Anticipated display to be ready for May, 2017, Cavalier Building, Halifax Citadel National Historic Site, Rainnie Drive, Halifax. Admission to the museum is free and Parks Canada has waived admission to Halifax Citadel in 2017 to recognize the 75th Anniversary of WWII.**

Atlantic Book Awards Society. *Halifax Explosion: Writers' Perspectives* presents insight into a writer's approach in the creation and publication of a fictional or non-fictional book based on the Halifax Explosion. Jacqueline Halsey (*Explosion Newsie*), Steven Laffoley (*The Blue Tattoo*) and Janet Maybe (*Aftershock*) and answer questions moderated by Jon Tattrie. HRM Poet Laureate Rebecca Thomas will perform a spoken word work commissioned by the Society. **April 5th, 2017, at 7pm, Alderney Landing, 2 Ochterloney Street, Dartmouth. www.atlanticbookawards.ca. Admission Free.**

Atlantic Filmmakers Cooperative. *The Halifax Explosion Commissioning Project* supports the creation and presentation of five short animated films by local independent filmmakers that commemorate, educate or explore the diversity of communities impacted by the disaster. The films will be presented at a screening at the Halifax Central Library and televised by CBC Television. The filmmakers will be present to talk about their film and answer audience questions. **Anticipated screening of the films; late fall 2017. Halifax Central Library, Corner of Spring Garden Road and Queen Street, Halifax. Free Admission.**

Grace United Church. The Grace United Church was severely destroyed in the Halifax Explosion and its replacement re-opened in the same location in 1920. This historical legacy will be remembered within the broader context of the disaster's impact on Dartmouth and how people overcame a sense of

disconnection created by the loss of communication, transportation, and human life. An interpretive multi-media installation by visual artist Nick Iwaska will be presented in the church sanctuary with a “history fair” featuring local historians, researchers and non-profit organizations. **The first presentation is scheduled for *Nocturne Art at Night*, October, 2017, Grace United Church, 70 King Street, Dartmouth. Free Admission. www.graceunited.ca**

Halifax Camerata Singers. The concert *Halifax, 1917: From Dreams to Despair* is a program of music reflective of daily life preceding the Halifax Explosion performed by the Halifax Camerata Singers and the Rhapsody Quintet with an original narrative written and performed by actor/director Jeremy Webb. The concert culminates in the inaugural performance of a commissioned choral work, *Halifax 1917*, by musician/composer Christopher Palmer based on a poem written by Duncan M. Matheson and published in 1918 in *Elegy of Richmond and Other Poems*; the original publication is in the Halifax Central Library and National Library of Canada collection. Matheson was a teacher at the Alexander McKay School, Halifax, destroyed in the Halifax Explosion. **March 25th, 2017. Paul O’Regan Hall, Halifax Central Library, Corner of Spring Garden Road and Queen Street, Halifax. June 2nd, 2017, Edmonton International Choral Festival. www.halifaxcamerata.org**

Halifax Community Planning & Design Association/PLANifax. A 15-minute video and 30-minute podcast on how the Halifax Explosion shaped urban planning. Key themes include: the scale of physical devastation, how the community response took place, how a vision was formulated, and how the planning and re-building for the area shaped Halifax at that time and continues today, the role of Thomas Adams and other city-building leaders with an emphasis on the Hydrostone district as an example of the Garden City Movement. Content will include archival maps and newspaper excerpts, reconstruction plans, archival photographs and maps, and interviews with subject matter experts. **Anticipated release date December 6th, 2017. www.planifax.ca – www.pdcentre.ca.**

Halifax Theatre for Young People. The development of an original script, *No Safe Harbour*, an adaptation of the fictional children’s book by Canadian author Julie Lawson augmented by a selection of monologues by school students about their imagined experience of the Halifax Explosion. The play was performed at the Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 November 8th-13th, 2016. The audience entered the performance area through a train as though taking a journey through time and the play was staged on a large ship-like structure. School performances were also staged November 21st to December 1st reaching a total of 900 students. Audience feedback suggests that actively engaging students made the story relevant, encouraged empathy, and animated local history.

Dalhousie University Art Gallery. A centennial exhibition incorporating the commission of a digital photo-essay, *The Hydrostone Project*, by Claire Hodge that engages residents in an examination of the historical significance of the neighbourhood in relation to the Halifax Explosion. The work will be exhibited with *The Footsteps of Art: Arthur Lismer and the Halifax Explosion*, an overview of the artist’s work from the gallery’s permanent collection and *Walking the Debris Field: Public Geographies of the Halifax Explosion* a multi-year project of the Narrative in Space and Time Society. The project is scheduled to commence in **October, 2017, Dalhousie Art Gallery. Dalhousie Arts Centre, 6101 University Avenue, Halifax. Free Admission. www.artgallery.dal.ca**

Fort Sackville Foundation. The production of a video based on the retrospective personal account of Evelyn M. Richardson (1902-1976). At the time of the explosion, 15-year old Evelyn lived in Bedford and commuted to Halifax on the Intercolonial Railway to attend the Halifax Academy on Brunswick Street. Her father was the Principal of the Alexandra School. Both father and daughter escaped the explosion unharmed and Evelyn's story follows their path through the devastated area as they walked home. The video will form part of a temporary exhibition and available on-line. **Date of exhibition anticipated Fall of 2017, Scott Manor House, 15 Fort Sackville Road, Bedford.** www.scottmanor.ca

Neptune Theatre Foundation/Eastern Front Theatre Society. An original script *Lullaby: Inside the Halifax Explosion*, by playwright Karen Bassett explores the impact of the disaster on diverse ethno-cultural communities as three survivors share their stories and come to terms with not only the situation they find themselves in, but who they are stranded with and their differences and commonalities. The play is a story of survival and growth, destruction and hope. The main gallery of the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic will be converted into a 120-seat theatre and performances scheduled for November 24th-December 10th, 2017, followed by a tour to regional theatres and high schools. **Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, 1675 Lower Water Street, Halifax, November 24th to December 10th, 2017** (maritimemuseum.novascotia.ca). See: www.neptunetheatre.com or www.easternfronttheatre.com for details.

Narratives in Space and Time Society. *Walking the Debris Field: Public Geographies of the Halifax Explosion* is a series of interpretive walking tours incorporating mobile devices, text, photographic material and animation in exploring neighbourhood landscapes in areas of Halifax and Dartmouth impacted by the explosion. The series concludes in 2017 with a web-based repository and an exhibition at Dalhousie University Art Gallery. **Information on walking tours see:** www.narrativesinspaceandtime.ca. **October, 2017, Dalhousie Art Gallery. Dalhousie Arts Centre, 6101 University Avenue, Halifax. Free Admission.** www.artgallery.dal.ca

North End Business Association.

A temporary display of "before and after" photographs in outdoor and storefront locations in the business district and an on-line map application. Placed "in situ" images of buildings and sites pre-and post the Halifax Explosion help viewers comprehend the scale of neighbourhood destruction and extent of reconstruction. Linking these locations visually demonstrates their connectivity both to the event and to each other to present part of a larger story. Exhibits commencing September 6th, 2017 to December 6th, 2017.

Nova Scotia Cultural Society of the Deaf. A documentary film, *The Halifax Explosion: The Deaf Experience*, that tells the story of Deaf and Deafblind students attending the Halifax School for the Deaf, Gottingen Street, Halifax, at the time of the Halifax Explosion and in particular the role of school Principal James Ferron who is credited with ensuring the children's safety and relocation to Wolfville while repairs were undertaken with financial aid provided by the Halifax-Massachusetts Relief Fund and

the Province of Nova Scotia. The film is to include interviews with living descendants and older members of the Deaf community who recall traditional stories of survivors, archival film and still images. The film premiered at the Toronto International Deaf Film & Arts Festival May 26, 2017 and the Society is seeking venues in Halifax for the film to be presented in the fall of 2017.

Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children/Voices Black Theatre Ensemble. Historical research and the development of an original script, *Extraordinary Acts*, by David Woods that explores the Home for Colored Children's historical link to the Halifax Explosion using the biographical story of local lawyer James R. Johnston who advocated for the establishment of a Normal and Industrial Institute and an orphanage for Black children that was destroyed on December 6, 1917, just prior to its opening. The play's other central characters are Dr. Clement Liguore who operated a small private hospital that aided people injured by the blast and fires and artist Edith MacDonald-Brown a resident of Africville.

Photopolis Society. *The Turtle Grove Project* engages Mi'kmaq youth in an art-making/self-representation process mentored by Mi'kmaq visual/performance artist Ursula Johnson and photographer Jayme-Lynn Goade. The project explores the impact of the Halifax Explosion on the Mi'kmaq community of Turtle Grove, Dartmouth, using archival and archaeological resources at the Nova Scotia Archives and the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History assisted by educators and elders from the local Mi'kmaq community. Based on their discoveries and interpretations, participants will produce a photographic record to be displayed at the annual *Photopolis Festival of Photography* at assorted exhibit venues in Halifax and Dartmouth. **Photopolis Festival of Photography, October 1st to 31st, 2017. Various locations. See: www.photopolis.ca for event details.**

Second Chance Community Band

Composer and conductor Robert Buckley has been commissioned to develop an original musical score for the Community Band. Once produced the Band will invite various high school bands to co-perform the score annually to commemorate the Halifax Explosion.

St. Joseph's A. McKay Home and School Association. *The Children of the Explosion: Remembrance, Resilience and Pulling Together* is a collaborative community art project that actively engages students of all abilities in the development of visual or written content for clay tiles that will be produced by artist Andrea Puszkas and incorporated into a permanent mosaic displayed on the school premises. A short video documenting the process will be screened at an official unveiling; 5389 Russell Street, Halifax, NS.

St. Paul's Anglican Church. *The Lost Memorial Project* is a re-creation of a memorial service for victims of the Halifax Explosion that took place at St. Paul's on January 1st, 1918. The event will feature a 90-minute program of music, prose, archival images and church records, a commissioned work for choir and pipe organ by David Christensen, and a temporary outdoor multi-media projection by visual artist Ian McKinnon. Anticipate memorial service date the evening of **December 6, 2017, St. Paul's Anglican Church, 1749 Argyle Street, Halifax. www.stpaulshalifax.org.**

Symphony Nova Scotia Foundation. Commissioning of a commemorative work by musician/composer Derek Charke to be performed at a *Halifax Explosion Commemorative Concert*. The piece for orchestra and solo soprano will include text from poems or letters of the period. The program also includes invited musicians who will create and perform an original work written in the first person to suggest the experiences of those who survived the disaster. These individual pieces will be linked to form a larger narrative culminating in group composition performed collectively under the direction of composer Scott MacMillan.

Zuppa Circus Theatre Society. The development and presentation of an original play, *The Halifax Explosion Inquiry*, based on the book *Aftershock: The Persecution of Pilot Francis MacKay* by author Janet Maybe. The play is based on MacKay's testimony at the formal inquiry that followed the explosion and draws parallels between the post-explosion climate of public anxiety and contemporary cases in which public anger incites a desire for vengeance or blame. One performance will be live-streamed to expand audience participation. **Anticipated performance fall/winter 2017, The Provincial Courthouse, 5250 Spring Garden Road, Halifax.** <https://zuppatheatre.com>

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Calvin Presbyterian Church. *The Halifax Explosion Anchor Monument* is a remnant of the *Mont-Blanc* anchor which landed 2km away from the Halifax Harbour on the grounds of what is now the Calvin Presbyterian Church. To recognize the 100th Anniversary the congregation re-mounted the artefact, installed an interpretation panel, new walkway and landscaping. A dedication service was held December 4, 2017. Calvin Presbyterian Church, 3311 Ashburn Avenue, Halifax.

Friends of Barra Society (Craidean Do Bharraidh). Commemorative markers will be placed in Fairview cemetery and on the Isle of Barra, Scotland, to recognize five crew members from this remote island in the Hebrides who were killed in the Halifax Explosion. The men were working aboard the *S.S Curaca* at Pier 8 when the ship was struck by the blast. Next of kin were notified by the Halifax Relief Commission but had to await months until someone visiting the island could translate the letters and finally inform them of the tragic event. The monument will be unveiled in Fairview Cemetery on the 100th anniversary of the Halifax Explosion on December 6th; 3720 Windsor Street, Halifax.

St. Mark's Anglican Church. Constructed in 1866 at the intersection of Barrington and Russell Street St. Mark's Anglican Church was destroyed in the Halifax Explosion. Despite extensive loss of life among its congregation those who survived assisted relief efforts in temporary first aid and feeding stations. The *Halifax Explosion Commemorative Concert and Memorial Garden* project pays tribute to survivors of the disaster and enhancements to the church grounds will represent a permanent memorial. The memorial service will be held at St. Mark's Sunday, November 5th, 2017, 2:00 p.m. The commemorative concert will be held on Wednesday, December 6th, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. Location: 5522 Russell Street, Halifax. www.stmarkshalifax.ca/

Union Fire Club Pipes and Drums. The 100th anniversary of the Halifax Explosion holds special significance to current and former members of the fire service and first responders. On December 6, 1917, the Halifax Fire Department lost nine members in the line of duty. In 2017 members of this community band will perform at various commemorative events including the *Royal Nova Scotia International Tattoo*, the *Canadian Fallen Firefighters Memorial Ceremony* in Ottawa, and the annual *Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service* at Station #4, Halifax. **Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service, December 6, 2017, 5830 Duffus Street, Halifax.**

Veith House/Halifax Children's Foundation. *Halifax Children's Memorial Garden Project* includes a painted mural depicting the site's relationship with the Halifax Protestant Orphanage (c.1857) destroyed in the Halifax Explosion with the loss of fifteen lives. The facility was re-built and when it closed in 1969 the property was transferred to the Halifax Children's Foundation to serve as a community centre. **Veith House, 3115 Veith Street, Halifax.**