

# **Palliser Restaurant, Motel and Gifts site**

## **Historical Review**



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## 4 distinct time periods

### **Mi'kmaq Period (10000 BCE – 1500s)**

The Mi'kmaq are the indigenous people of Nova Scotia. Some groups have roots heading back thousands of years in the Colchester region. The Mi'kmaq provided the names for most of the geography in the area and had a large influence on the first European settlers. They taught the Europeans about the land. There was a strong relationship between Mi'kmaq and the Acadians; the first European group to settle in Lower Truro in the late 16<sup>th</sup> Century.

Not much is documented about the Mi'kmaq in the immediate study area, only that they would travel to use the Lower Truro area to hunt and fish centuries before the Europeans arrived. It is possible that Mi'kmaq activity happened where the Palliser stands today, however there is no hard evidence to support this claim. What is known is that these groups had summer camps with tents all along the Salmon River where they would live while hunting and fishing during the warmer months. Since they were semi-nomadic, they travelled inland to Stewiacke and Shubenacadie during the winter months<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> S. F. Creighton, *Colchester County: A Pictorial History: Revised Edition*. (Oxford, NS: Municipality of Colchester Recreation, 1979), p. 11.

The Mi'kmaq also made birch bark canoes for hunting and river crossings at the summer camps<sup>2</sup>. They laid the groundwork for travel and transport for the Europeans. They had footpaths that eventually turned into roads and were knowledgeable about waterways and sea travel. The canoes were the first example of a ferry in the area and possibly happened at the board landing. It is worth noting that it is a narrow point in the Salmon River yet still deep enough for a river crossing.

### **French Acadian Period (Late 16<sup>th</sup> Century – 1775)**

The Acadians arrived to the region at the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It is not known exactly where the Acadians initially landed, however it is recorded that they travelled as far up the Bay of Fundy as they possibly could, meaning that they probably landed somewhere around the Lower Truro area<sup>3</sup>.

By the early 17<sup>th</sup> century they had settled a small farming village. The settlement was known as Vil le Bourge/Vil la Bourg, or “Townsville” (located around present day Lower Truro), and was founded in 1714<sup>4</sup>. Another French Acadian settlement was located in Old Barns<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Creighton, S. F., *Colchester County: A Pictorial History (Revised Edition)*, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Mildred Pulsifer Burrows, *The history of Lower Truro, 1696-1999*. (Truro, NS: L & B Print, 1999). p. 37.

<sup>4</sup> Colchester County, *Central Colchester Communities: Lower Truro*, p. 1. Retrieved from <http://www.colchester.ca/communities-cc>.

<sup>5</sup> Colchester County, *Central Colchester Communities: Old Barns*, p.1. Retrieved from <http://www.colchester.ca/communities-cc>.

The village was burnt down by the British under control of Abijah Willard in 1755, and only two structures were left standing in the area by the British, which would eventually lead to the origin of the name of Old Barns<sup>6</sup>. The Colchester region remained desolate for around 10 years until the Loyalists arrived ten years later in 1761.

The French Acadians were successful farmers. They created dike systems that were built to turn salt marshes into farmland, and was used very effectively in Lower Truro. No fertilizer was needed due to the high organic content of the mud and water in the area<sup>7</sup>.

Agriculture is still in use in Lower Truro today and the fields and dikes are protected by the Agricultural Marshland Conservation Act (2000), showing how important these lands are to the Provincial Government. 17 thousand hectares of marshland surrounded by 240km of dikes constructed in the early 1700s in the Fundy region are protected<sup>8</sup>.

The “finest farms” of the region were located in Lower Truro, with agricultural operations including apple orchards, Indian corn stands and tobacco fields<sup>9</sup>. The French stuck to Lower Truro, not venturing into the forests where Truro is today, simply because they stayed where the best farms were<sup>10</sup>. Today the land around the site is labeled as Ac4/A soil, good for farming.

<sup>6</sup> Colchester County, *Central Colchester Communities: Lower Truro*, p. 1. Retrieved from <http://www.colchester.ca/communities-cc>.

<sup>7</sup> Creighton, S. F., *Colchester County: A Pictorial History (Revised Edition)*, p. 14

<sup>8</sup> Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, *Agricultural Marshland Conservation Act Introduced*, November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2000, p. 1. Retrieved from <http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20001107007>

<sup>9</sup> Creighton, S. F., *Colchester County: A Pictorial History (Revised Edition)*, p. 15

<sup>10</sup> Creighton, S. F., *Colchester County: A Pictorial History (Revised Edition)*, p. 14

It is possible that there are remaining Acadian *aboiteaux* located on or near the site. They are wooden drainage pipes built by the Acadians in the dikes with a flap at the end that would let water leave the pipe but not the high tide water enter. They are a symbol of the cultural heritage footprint of the Acadian community. Throughout the colonial period, the Acadians were the only people in North America who were able to cultivate the below sea-level farmlands in Nova Scotia<sup>11</sup>. The farms in Lower Truro were some of the most productive, along with the Annapolis Valley and the Cumberland region.

### **British Loyalist Period (1761-1786)**

Settlers arrived in 1761 from New England, Ireland and Scotland and landed near the Palliser site in Old Barns<sup>12</sup>. Savage's Island (Figure 1), named after John Savage, the man who was later granted the land, was the site of the original landing party<sup>13</sup>. The piece of land is less than a mile away from the Palliser site (Figure 2). Today Savage's Island is no longer an island, it is connected to the mainland north west of the treatment plant on Highway 236 in Lower Truro.

The group of people who arrived on Savage's Island are considered to be the founders of the town of Truro.

<sup>11</sup> Ronnie-Gilles LeBlanc. *Acadian Aboiteaux*. Encyclopedia of French Cultural Heritage in North America. Retrieved from [http://www.ameriquefrancaise.org/en/article-457/Acadian\\_Aboiteaux\\_\[Dike\\_and\\_Suice\\_Gate\\_System\].html](http://www.ameriquefrancaise.org/en/article-457/Acadian_Aboiteaux_[Dike_and_Suice_Gate_System].html)

<sup>12</sup> Town of Truro, *Truro's Past*. Retrieved from <http://www.truro.ca/truro-past.html>.

<sup>13</sup> Town of Truro, *Truro's Past*. Retrieved from <http://www.truro.ca/truro-past.html>.

It is disputed that the actual landing site of the planters of Truro may not have been Savage's Island. Possible locations could have been at Board Landing or Fort Belcher. However the site is not 100% certain and highly unlikely, according to members of the Colchester Archives.

The British Loyalists brought industry, hard work, religion (Protestantism) and social life to Colchester County<sup>14</sup>, and also lead the way to the boom of shipbuilding in the coming years.

### **Shipbuilding Period (1787 – 1890)**

The largest period of activity for the area around the Palliser property took place during the shipbuilding period. The Late 1700s to the mid-1800s was a time of prosperity in Nova Scotia due to the naval industry, and Lower Truro and Colchester County was no different.

The first ship built in the Cobequid Bay area was in Lower Truro<sup>15</sup>. The vessel was constructed where the Palliser stands today. The name of this area was nicknamed board landing, and has now been around for hundreds of years. The board landing had been used for the transport of goods, services shipbuilding and travel, but it was mostly a place for lumber products to enter or leave Truro over the years. The shipbuilding period was when the board landing experienced its busiest time.

<sup>14</sup> Creighton, S. F., *Colchester County: A Pictorial History (Revised Edition)*, p. 21-28.

<sup>15</sup> Mildred Pulsifer Burrows, *The history of Lower Truro, 1696-1999*. p. 34.

The name *board landing* may have originated from the fact that the location was first used by the Acadians as a quasi-seaport to acquire lumber and boards to make their houses<sup>16</sup>. The banks of the Salmon River were also muddy and some of these boards were used to make landing/disembarking or getting on to a boat easier<sup>17</sup>. Both of these factors could have led to the name *board landing* being common and popular enough to last until the present time.

Transportation by sea, even though it was the most popular form of travel in this area until the mid-1800s, was extremely dangerous. In 1762, Charles Morris, the Surveyor for the Truro Township, described the hazardous conditions of the area. The immense speed of the tides, the lack of water in the channel for 9 hours per day and impassable ice for three months every winter<sup>18</sup>. Even so, travel by sea was still the most popular, and convenient, form of travel, even for people who lived in this part of Nova Scotia.

Board landing was a location where ships were built and where goods and services were exchanged. It was first used as a port and then became a centre for building ships.

<sup>16</sup> Mildred Pulsifer Burrows, *The history of Clifton & Old Barns, 1696-1999*. (Truro, NS: L & B Print, 1999). p. 37.

<sup>17</sup> Colchester Archives, 2015.

<sup>18</sup> M. Burrows, *The history of Clifton & Old Barns, 1696-1999*. p. 29.

The first boat constructed at this location was a schooner named *Charles* after its builder, Charles Dickson<sup>19</sup>. The boat was built in 1787 on the land that was known as Dickson Yard. Dickson had his own shipyard where he launched several ships. He was a celebrated public figure in Truro. He was not only a shipbuilder, he worked as a politician in The House of Assembly representing Onslow, Justice of the Peace and Registrar of Deeds for Colchester and Pictou Counties, a merchant who had a general store with his sons, and was a powerful landowner. Charles Dickson was touted as “the most influential businessman of his day”<sup>20</sup>.

The site for shipbuilding was selected at the mouth of Moose Creek (Figure 3), behind and to the right of the current Palliser restaurant<sup>21</sup>. There was soon a shipyard on both sides of the Salmon River when one was built on the Onslow side a few years later<sup>22</sup>. The Onslow shipyard became much larger than the Lower Truro shipyard over time. In the year 1864, the land where the larger shipbuilding operations was located was sold by Dickson and belonged to a Captain Robert Merriam<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> Burrows, M., *The history of Lower Truro, 1696-1999*. p. 34.

<sup>20</sup> Thomas Miller, *Historical and Genealogical Record of the First Settlers of Colchester*. (Halifax, NS: A. & W. MacKinlay, 1873). p. 384.

<sup>21</sup> Wade Yorke, *Old bridge's fate is unknown*. (Truro Daily, September 25<sup>th</sup>, 1970). p. 1.

<sup>22</sup> Burrows, M., *The history of Lower Truro, 1696-1999*. p. 34.

<sup>23</sup> Burrows, M., *The history of Lower Truro, 1696-1999*. p. 34.

The operations at the board landing were very primitive. There was no wharf for goods to be unloaded, so depending on the height of the tide, the process of loading and unloading would differ. During high tide, the ship could travel up to the banks. During low tide, the ship would load the cargo on the mudflats and the goods would be hauled to shore by ox-carts and locals<sup>24</sup>. The channels in the mud would also change year to year, meaning that the navigable waterways when the water was lower would annually alter the pick-up and drop-off points<sup>25</sup>.

The board landing was not the busiest port in the area. The principal Nova Scotian port at this time in the Bay of Fundy was Maitland in Hants County, a village built by shipbuilding. There were about a dozen shipyards in the vicinity of Maitland in its heyday, and hundreds of wooden ships were constructed<sup>26</sup>, however there were a few villages in the Colchester area that had shipbuilding activity as well. The board landing was the third largest seaport in the area in its day; after Yuill's Island in Clifton and McNutt's Creek in Old Barns<sup>27</sup>. These ports in the Bay of Fundy were not similar to the ones in Halifax and the South Shore, they were much smaller and the operations were very basic. The main entry point to the region, in Clifton, did not get its own wharf until 1886, 38 years after the local community petitioned the House of Assembly to build one<sup>28</sup>. The shipyards in Colchester were numerous but very small.

<sup>24</sup> Burrows, M., *The history of Clifton & Old Barns, 1696-1999*. p. 29.

<sup>25</sup> Burrows, M., *The history of Clifton & Old Barns, 1696-1999*. p. 28.

<sup>26</sup> Maitland Heritage Conservation District Plan & Bylaw. October 1994. p. 3

<sup>27</sup> Burrows, M., *The history of Clifton & Old Barns, 1696-1999*. p. 28.

<sup>28</sup> Burrows, M., *The history of Clifton & Old Barns, 1696-1999*. p. 29.

The some of the more common cargo that left the ports in the region was grain, plaster and potatoes, but lumber was by far the main export (especially at board landing). Ships would mainly travel to the West Indies and the United Kingdom with their cargo, and return with goods such as rum, sugar and tea for consumption in Truro<sup>29</sup>.

The beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century brought about the most prosperous time for shipping and shipbuilding in the Colchester region. This period in time also brought about the most stories and tales.

Charles Dickson was still an active shipbuilder at the turn of the century. He was a major figure in the early shipbuilding period in Colchester County. The main reason he built ships was for his vessels travel to Commonwealth colonial settlements in the West Indies or to Britain for trade opportunities.

Some of his ships were not only used for trade, however. It has been documented that some of his ships were a part of world history in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Three of Dickson's ships were chartered by the Nova Scotian government under command of Lieutenant Governor Sir John Wentworth in an effort to resettle Jamaican Maroons in Freetown, Sierra Leone from Nova Scotia<sup>30</sup>.

<sup>29</sup> Burrows, M., *The history of Clifton & Old Barns, 1696-1999*. p. 30.

<sup>30</sup> Mildred M. Chang, *The Jamaican Accompanying Maroons: Continuities and Transformations* (Ann Arbor, MI: ProQuest, 2008). p. 59.

This group, referred to as Jamaican Maroons, were Jamaican freedom fighters and ex-slaves, rebelling against the British government who had colonized the Caribbean island. They specialized in guerilla and jungle warfare, and were successful in fighting back against the British for several years. In 1795, the British were able to get the Maroons to surrender after a five month siege. British Generals Walpole, Montague and Balcarres said that if all the rebels came to Spanish Town (a suburb of Kingston) to surrender to the British three days after the treaty was signed, the Maroons would be allowed to stay in Jamaica<sup>31</sup>. This was an impossible request for most, since many Maroons lived far in the mountains. The Maroons were accused of a *breach of bad faith* by the British, and were rounded up and expelled from Jamaica and sent to Nova Scotia<sup>32</sup>.

In 1796, three ships, the Anne, the Mary and the Dover, carried 568 deported Jamaican Maroons from Jamaica to Halifax<sup>33</sup>.

<sup>31</sup> Chang, M., *The Jamaican Accompong Maroons: Continuities and Transformations*. p. 79.

<sup>32</sup> Chang, M., *The Jamaican Accompong Maroons: Continuities and Transformations*. p. 80.

<sup>33</sup> John Grant. *Black Nova Scotians: the Maroons in Nova Scotia*, (Formac Publishing, October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2002) p. 15 & 16.

The Maroons settled in Nova Scotia and were used as low-paid labourers. They helped to re-build the Halifax Citadel and construct Government House, and were some of the first inhabitants in Preston, Lower Sackville and Tracadie<sup>34</sup>. Life was hard in the few years that the Maroons spent here. They did not like the cold weather or the attempts at education and the introduction of new religions or lifestyles. They were also a burden on taxpayers. Lt. Governor Wentworth finally concluded that the best solution would be to send the group to Sierra Leone<sup>35</sup>.

Charles Dickson had some of his vessels, built at the board landing in Lower Truro and Onslow, contracted by the Nova Scotian government to be used to sail all willing Jamaican Maroons to Freetown, Sierra Leone, from Halifax, in 1800. Nearly all the settlers left the province<sup>35</sup>.

This was not the first time that some of Charles Dickson's ships may have been used for the transport of people to Sierra Leone. In 1792 and 1793, 1200 free black loyalists left Nova Scotia for Africa due to racial violence and lower pay<sup>36</sup>. It is possible that Dickson had some of his vessels used to transport the loyalists back to Africa.

<sup>33</sup> Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia: African Nova Scotian Museum. *The Jamaican Maroons Arrive* (April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015). Retrieved from <http://www.bccnsweb.com/web/our-history/the-maroons/>

<sup>34</sup> Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia: African Nova Scotian Museum. *The Jamaican Maroons Arrive* (April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015). Retrieved from <http://www.bccnsweb.com/web/our-history/the-maroons/>

<sup>35</sup> Harvey Amani Whitfield, *The Development of Black Refugee Identity in Nova Scotia, 1813-1850* (Toronto, ON: York University, 2005.) p. 11.

<sup>36</sup> Whitfield, H., *The Development of Black Refugee Identity in Nova Scotia, 1813-1850*. p. 11.

In the year 1796, Dickson built his last ship, a 500-ton barque launched from Dickson Yard, an event watched by the whole town. The ship was in full sail, packed with people on the top deck, including a band playing music. This is obviously not proper launch technique (for safety reasons). When the ship hit the water, it came very close to sinking. The ship almost rolled over into the Salmon River<sup>36</sup>. Some say that launching a ship with people aboard is bad luck, and later that year, after Dickson had travelled to the West Indies on his new ship, he died 3 days after returning to Nova Scotia of yellow fever<sup>37</sup>.

James Crowe was a shipbuilder and politician from Old Barns who was active in the industry from 27<sup>th</sup> August 1815 when he built his first ship to the last on 31<sup>st</sup> October 1890<sup>38</sup>. His ships set sail at Board Landing and Dickson Yard.

A total of 26 ships were constructed at Board Landing, however an estimated number of around a hundred were christened and first set sail at this location<sup>39</sup>.

<sup>36</sup> Carol Campbell & James F. Smith. *Planters of Grantees of Cobequid, Nova Scotia, 1761 – 1780, Volume 1 (A-K)*. (Truro, NS, 2011). p. 261

<sup>37</sup> Campbell, C. & Smith, J., *Planters of Grantees of Cobequid, Nova Scotia, 1761 – 1780, Volume 1 (A-K)*. p. 261

<sup>38</sup> John M. Blaikie & William Thomas Hill, *Shipbuilding in Nova Scotia. Canada, 1859-1891: Some vessels built on the Colchester County, Bay of Fundy shore, Nova Scotia, Canada*. p. 1

<sup>39</sup> Burrows, M., *The history of Lower Truro, 1696-1999*. p. 34.

The shipbuilding period only lasted for around 150 years but was incredibly influential for the local economy at the time. Shipbuilding in this area declined when shipping technology advanced and when new, iron ships were introduced. The period of shipbuilding ended with the age of steam; when rail travel became the most popular form of travel.

The shipyard at board landing declined in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There were not many ships built here after 1850. On a map of Colchester County in 1871 collected from the Colchester Archives, the land around board landing is still listed as the “*SHIPYARD*”. The Forest Princess, launched from board landing in 1873, was the only ship of any importance launched in 15 years<sup>40</sup> and was the last ship from board landing to receive media attention in Nova Scotia newspapers<sup>41</sup>.

After the Onslow shipyard became unused on both sides of the river in the mid-1800s, the piece of land became better known to the people of Truro as the part of the upland farm of John Bishop. The land was then was owned by John Dixon, where a large area of “splendid” marsh had been reclaimed from the Bay for increased farming operations<sup>42</sup>.

Hundreds of wooden ships were produced in this part of the Bay of Fundy. Shipbuilding was more important than farming at the time, and gave everyone in the County employment and opportunity. During the heyday of the shipbuilding industry, the logging industry was also a flourishing business in the region.

<sup>40</sup> Burrows, M., *The history of Lower Truro, 1696-1999*. p. 34.

<sup>41</sup> Halifax Evening Reporter, December 28<sup>th</sup>, 1872.

<sup>42</sup> Miller, T., *Historical and Genealogical Record of the First Settlers of Colchester*. p. 384.

## Timeline of the Palliser property

The history of the immediate site begins with the indigenous people of Colchester County. There had been a ferry used on the site, dating back all the way to the time of canoes, before the Board Landing Bridge was constructed in 1860<sup>1</sup>. The bridge was an important road connecting not only Truro and Onslow but from Amherst to Halifax as well that travelled right through the Palliser site. It was the route across the Salmon River on the original Nova Scotia Highway 2. The replacement bridge was torn down in the 1970s<sup>2</sup> and has not been rebuilt since the newly built Highway 102 bridge crossing opened. The existing bridge could not be properly maintained and was torn down. The plan was for a replacement to be built to serve the local traffic of Onslow and Lower Truro, however the plan never came to fruition and the replacement was never built. The Highway 102 Bridge is the only way for people to cross the river for several kilometers (until Bible Hill to the east), and has no sidewalks or bike paths.

The earliest known land owner of the site, Andrew Gammel, was a native of Massachusetts. Gammel was granted the land where the Palliser stands today and was first recorded as the landowner in 1763, as per the Colchester Archives. He was an original loyalist settler of Truro. He was killed by a falling tree on the 8<sup>th</sup> of March 1769, and his sons Archibald and Robert Gammel took over the property<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> E.M. Nelson, *Cobequid Bay Bridge: Seen As Important Link 100 Years Ago*. (Truro Daily News, April 30<sup>th</sup>, 1960). p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Yorke, W., *Old bridge's fate is unknown*. p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Burrows, M., *The history of Clifton & Old Barns, 1696-1999*. p. 14.

The brothers sold 1000 acres of the land to David McKeen in 1789, 20 years after their father's death, but did not include the land designated as the board landing in the sale<sup>3</sup>. A year later, in 1790, the land was sold to Robert Johnson for £9<sup>4</sup>. Archibald moved to Salmon River and Robert moved to Middle Stewiacke<sup>5</sup>.

Shipbuilding, sailing and logging were very important industries for the community during the age of sail in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, especially around the time the Johnson family owned the Palliser land. Even though Colchester County is not as well-known as some other shipbuilding communities, such as Lunenburg, some of the most important ships to set sail in Nova Scotia were launched here. One example is the *Charles* (1787), the first ship built in Colchester County, because the builder received a government subsidy to start a business<sup>6</sup>. It started the building boom in the Bay of Fundy area that provided industry to the area for the next Century. Another example is the *Lady Strange*, a ship built for Samuel Cunard in 1827, the Canadian shipping magnate from Halifax<sup>7</sup>. Cunard was part-owner of many ships that were used as trade vessels around this time, and the *Lady Strange* was likely a wooden ship that would periodically travel to the West Indies for goods. Cunard would then receive a portion of the money received for the load when it got back to Nova Scotia because of his investment.

<sup>3</sup> Colchester County Archives. *Colchester Registry of Deeds Book 2*, 1891. p. 531

<sup>4</sup> Colchester County Archives. *Colchester Registry of Deeds Book 2*, 1891. p. 449

<sup>5</sup> Burrows, M., *The history of Clifton & Old Barns, 1696-1999*. p. 14.

<sup>6</sup> Burrows, M., *The history of Lower Truro, 1696-1999*. p. 34.

<sup>7</sup> Burrows, M., *The history of Lower Truro, 1696-1999*. p. 34.

According to the record of deeds, George Scott Dickie (son of Thomas Dickey of Stewiacke and grandson of David Dickey, an original planter of Truro), bought land from the Johnson family on April 13<sup>th</sup>, 1831. The lot was 2 acres, and was purchased for £21. His wife Ester signed the deed. Dickie was a farmer and wanted to use the land for farming<sup>8</sup>.

The popularity of the shipbuilding industry in the Colchester region declined in the mid-1800s, especially the shipbuilding operations that occurred around board landing. The site at Moose Creek, on the eastern side of the site, were extremely on-again, off again. Both farming and shipbuilding took place here. Research shows the bulk of the shipbuilding took place across the Salmon River on Charles Dickson's, and later Robert Merriam's land. There was more available land for shipbuilding on the Onslow side of the river, possibly explaining why it lasted longer than the Lower Truro side.

In 1845, George Scott Dickie moved with his family from a property on Queen St. he inherited from his late father to the property he had purchased from the Johnsons 14 years earlier in Lower Truro<sup>9</sup>. He died in Lower Truro on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1864 at the age of 74<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> Burrows, M., *The history of Clifton & Old Barns, 1696-1999*. p. 12.

<sup>9</sup> Miller, Thomas, *Historical and Genealogical Record of the First Settlers of Colchester County*. (Mika Studio: Belleville, ON, 1972). p. 132.

<sup>10</sup> Gene Jane, *George Scott Dickie: 1790-1864* (Truro, NS: 2012).

It is believed that the widowed Ester Dickie and her son Thomas continued to live on the property. They were listed in the Canadian-wide census of 1871 as residing in Lower Truro<sup>11</sup>. Thomas also worked as a farmer, according to the census.

Thomas married Elizabeth Baillie in summer of 1876, and had two children on the land in the next 10 years<sup>12</sup>. The mother died in summer 1894<sup>13</sup> and Thomas became owner of the property.

This part of town was a very busy spot at this time, since the area was home to farms, Truro's first inn, a shipbuilding hub, and the nautical entry point to the town (a quick and popular form of travel at the time since it would take a minimum of 3 days to get to Halifax by horse<sup>14</sup>). It was much easier for the transportation of goods by sea than on land<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> Gene Jane, *George Scott Dickie: 1790-1864* (Truro, NS: 2012).

<sup>12</sup> Gene Jane, *Thomas Dickie: 1835* (Truro, NS: 2012).

<sup>12</sup> Gene Jane, *George Scott Dickie: 1790-1864* (Truro, NS: 2012).

<sup>14</sup> Campbell, C. & Smith, J., *Planters of Grantees of Cobequid, Nova Scotia, 1761 – 1780, Volume 1 (A-K)*. p. 261

<sup>15</sup> Burrows, M., *The history of Clifton & Old Barns, 1696-1999*. p. 28.

Stephen Gourley was the owner of the first inn in Truro, located on the property<sup>6</sup>. It is not known when the inn was in operation, or if the inn is the current Motel Office structure. The Palliser's website says it was built in the late 1700s<sup>16</sup>, while members of the Colchester Archives say it is possible that the structure was built in the mid to late 1800s. It is likely that the motel office building was built by Thomas Dickie or his father.

The first piece of what was to become the motel site we see in 2015 happened in the 1940s when the current sections 11-25 and 26-40 of the motel were built as roadside cabins for travellers. They were then turned into motel rooms ten years later when the site became the Tideview Motel in 1953. The first noted addition to the motel site was the construction of section 1-10 and then the dining room, the banquet room and the gift shop all being built in the same year as the opening of the Tideview Motel. The motel became the Palliser Restaurant, Motel and Gifts when the property was purchased by Allan Bruce in the late 1960s. The operations expanded with the last motel section, section 41-42 was built in the 1970s<sup>17</sup>. The previous owner had owned the land for 42 years before selling the property to the County of Colchester.

The Tidal Bore Tourist Center that is on the site was built in the last 20 years. It has no historical value.

<sup>16</sup> Palliser Restaurant, Motel and Gifts, History, p. 1. Retrieved from <https://web.archive.org/web/20130212070525/http://www.palliserrestaurantmotelandgifts.ca/>

<sup>17</sup> Palliser Restaurant, Motel and Gifts, History, p. 1. Retrieved from <https://web.archive.org/web/20130212070525/http://www.palliserrestaurantmotelandgifts.ca/>

# **Ships built at board landing in Lower Truro and Onslow**

1780s

- Charles (1787)

1790s

- No recorded ships were built
- The 3 unnamed ships built by James Crowe for the deportation of the Jamaican Maroons would have been around this decade (possibly the Dover, Mary and Anne – however this is unlikely).

1800s

- No recorded ships were built

1810s

- Leod (1818)

1820s

- Huntly (1825)
- Esther (1825)
- Jane (1826)
- Martha (1826)
- Mary Ann (1827)
- Lady Strange (brigantine, 1827)
- Hylas (1828)
- David Higgins (1828)

1830s

- Seven Sons (1833)
- Herald (1833)
- Charlotte (1834)
- Union (1834)
- Margaret (1837)
- Countess Durham (1838)
- Magnet (1839)
- Corsair (1839)

#### 1840s

- Sophia (1840)
- Helen Anna (1841)
- Mary Ann Henry (1841)
- Trial (1844)
- Unnamed barque built by James Crowe for Jacob Freize (1845)
- Watchman (1846)
- Morning Star (1847)
- Viceroy (1848)
- Unnamed barque built by James Crowe (1849)

#### 1850s

- Cobequid (brigantine, 1852)
- Dove (brigantine, 1852)
- Susan E. (schooner, 1853)
- Crimea (443-ton barque, 1854)
- Franklin (barque, 1855)
- Antelope (schooner, 1855)
- Planet (1856)
- Spartan (brigantine, 1856)
- Harriet (brigantine, 1857)
- Truro (schooner, 1857)

#### 1860s

- Julia (schooner, 1860)
- John Congdon (schooner, 1861)
- J. Crowe (brigantine, 1862)
- Blanche (brigantine, 1862)
- Lillian (500-ton barque, 1863)
- Sharon (brigantine, 1863)
- Salina (1864)
- Clara (brigantine, 1865)
- Ottawa (brigantine, 1865)
- Acadia (1866)
- Dominion (brigantine, 1867)
- Sophena (326-ton brigantine, 1868)
- Rhine (brigantine, 1869)

1870s

- Emma (475-ton barque, 1870)
- Forest Princess (1873)
- Harry Bushman (528-ton barque, 1873)
- Unnamed 500-ton barque built by Captain Robert Merriam (1874)
- Kate Melick (brigantine, 1874)

1880s

- Linden / Sinden (925-ton barque, 1881)
- George R. Crowe (542-ton barque, 1886)

1890s

- Hattie May (160-ton schooner, 1890)

**26 recorded ships were built at Board Landing Bridge**  
(according to various naval records)

**58 recorded ships were built in Lower Truro and area**  
(Possibility of 100+ ships being built and/or launched at board landing)

#### **NOTES**

Barques and brigs seem more commonly built than schooners at board landing, however the heavier ships were simply better recorded. This is because they were contracted for construction by business owners looking to expand into maritime trade. Goods coming from the West Indies were an enticing prospect at the time and a project such as these would have multiple investors involved. Schooners were mainly used for personal use; commonly for fishing or racing, and they were faster to build. They would have been more popular, yet not as well documented.

Almost all the documented ships were built by James Crowe of Onslow, Charles Dickson of Onslow, and Captain Robert Merriam of Onslow & Truro. It is known that Robert Johnson was also a shipbuilder around the beginning of the 1800s.

## References for ships records

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