

## Introduction

IT IS THE INTENTION of this book to portray something of the history of St. Andrews in pictorial form. This portrait comes courtesy, almost entirely, of the holdings of the Charlotte County Archives, a repository of about 15,000 photographs contributed mainly by local families over the last 25 years or so. In narrowing down such a collection to the 414 contained in this sample, I have opted for only the best pictures. With that as my first consideration, I have tried to touch on some of the most important events in the Town's history, such as the shipping and boatbuilding businesses, the railway, the rise of tourism and the summer people who made St. Andrews a notable resort town at the turn of the 20th century. I have inserted small family portraits of certain notable St. Andrews families such as the Mallorys, McQuoids, O'Neills, Cockburns and Keays, mainly because these families have left large contributions of very fine photographs to the Archives, making possible an interesting and dramatic window into ordinary town life. There are also many "views" of St. Andrews over the last 150 years, which collectively make for an interesting study in the evolution of dress, architecture and transportation.

The first public notice of a photographer visiting St. Andrews appeared in the *St. Andrews Standard* for May 4, 1843. John C. West and Co. had set up rooms in Paul's Hall, corner of King and Water Streets, where they were prepared "by magnetic electricity to gild silver watches and worn plated ware at a very low price, and also to take daguerreotype likenesses with late improvements in coloring." This was a year after the first photographic studio opened in Saint John, and still in the very

early development of photography. The daguerreotype, patented in 1838 by French scenic artist Louis Daguerre, recorded an image by exposing light to a metal plate coated with silver

chloride, which was then developed over iodine vapour. Because of prohibitively long exposure times, the process was unsuitable for portraits until 1840 when lenses became larger and developing techniques improved. Then there was a veritable daguerreomania. The invention was extremely popular in America. Thousands of daguerreotype saloons sprang up within a few years and St. Andrews, far out in the hinterland, shared in the fever. In 1845 Miss Holland was in town taking daguerreotype miniatures, plain and colored, in the latest style, guaranteed not to fade, and done up in a handsome case for 3 pounds. In 1847 Mr. Henry Seelye was taking daguerreian portraits in the highest perfection of the art. Prices from 12 shillings 6 pence to 22 shillings 6 pence. In 1852 a photographic artist had set up temporary shop at the home of David Mowat, opposite the Custom House, with a view camera also available for images of private residences and public buildings. In 1857 Davis Loring was taking ambrotypes, milainotypes and speculotypes in Paul's Hall. Ambrotypes and milainotypes were variations on the daguerreotype which involved weak exposures on glass or metal plates varnished

black. The areas of low exposure were transparent and showed the black background, so the picture was actually a negative which appeared positive. The cheap and sturdy tintype was simply another term for milainotype.

There was a problem with daguerreotypes and their spin-offs.



*Dugald Blair, c. 1850*

*The Blair house in St. Stephen was later purchased by Hugh McKay and was home to his two photographer sons, Hugh Dowling McKay and D. Will McKay. Hugh Dowling McKay had his studio in this house.*

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The photographs were opaque and could not be copied. About the same time as the daguerreotype was patented an Englishman named Henry Fox Talbot developed the calotype, which produced a negative image on light sensitized paper. Though the calotype was never popular in North America, it soon led to what became known as the wet plate process. A thin, sticky and transparent film called collodion impregnated with silver salts was poured over a glass plate and quickly exposed to produce a latent image which could then be enhanced, developed and fixed by various chemical processes. Though the procedure required photographers to carry a portable laboratory about with them, as the entire procedure had to be completed before the plates dried, the wet plate process, with the detail and character of daguerreotypes, and the short exposure time plus finished negative of calotypes, soon displaced both inventions. In the *St. Andrews Standard* the word “daguerreotype” no longer appears after about 1856.

One of the finest early local examples of the wet plate process appears in portraits of Colonel David Mowat and his wife Miriam Pagan Wyer. As Ms. Mowat died in 1869, aged 72, and does not appear more than about 60 in the picture, these artifacts may date to 1855 or so. These photographs are printed on paper, not metal, and chemical stains from the glass plate were transferred to the developing paper which was then cut out in an oval and mounted in a cardboard frame. The photographer caught Colonel Mowat’s character in striking fashion, showing that sturdy type of manhood so typically associated with the ancient Loyalist stock.

In the 1860s travelling photographers seem routinely to have been passing through St. Andrews, such as E. J. Russell, artist and photographer, in 1862, taking views to illustrate a historical and topographical work on New Brunswick, including

a panorama from Chamcook Mountain and the steeple of the Catholic Church, then located on Mary Street. Throughout the 1860s a certain M. Grant, of unknown provenance, was in St. Andrews taking ambrotypes, photographs (presumably wet-plate pictures), and the celebrated “Cartes de Visites.” In

1864 and 1865 Mr. Grant was busy taking images of two new churches – the Baptist and Methodist – along with the other churches, street scenes, “also a number of connected views from the Barrack Hill to the ship yard at Indian Point,” reported the *Standard*. Perhaps it was Mr. Grant’s camera that recorded the very important pictures of the Fenian scare of 1866. These show militia companies drilling at Town center, and are our only views of the old Market House, formerly the Town’s Courthouse and Jail, which burned in 1874, also of the Railroad Hotel, the original dwelling house of Colonel Thomas Wyer, which was destroyed in the same conflagration.

1878 was an epochal year in the history of photography for now the old wet plate collodion process was abandoned in favour of a gelatin based dry plate which had the light sensitivity of the former process but didn’t need to be developed immediately after exposure, freeing the photographer from having to carry a dark room about with him. The first photographer

who seems to have had a permanent studio in St. Andrews, John H. Hall (about whom nothing is known except that he is noted as early as 1879 to be taking views of the new Hotel, the Argyll, still under construction) would doubtless have used the new process. An important but undated and anonymous picture of the Argyll included in this book may well be his work. In this year and the next George Thomas Taylor, Fredericton photographer, was noted to be in St. Andrews “taking negatives of the many points of scenic beauty in the vicinity of St. Andrews and Passamaquoddy Bay.” Today Mr. Taylor’s large collection



*D. Will McKay*

*This self-portrait appeared in an 1889 souvenir photograph album.*

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of glass negatives illustrating people and scenery from around New Brunswick forms an important part of the photographic collection of the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick.

When all is said and done, though, the pictorial history of St. Andrews before 1889 is more notable for its gaps, at least as concerns the holdings in the Charlotte County Archives. Of course there is nothing before 1843, the period when the timber and shipbuilding businesses of St. Andrews and Charlotte County boomed, and when the Town was filled with poor Irish fleeing the famines. There is also next to nothing of the beginning of the St. Andrews and Quebec Railroad in 1847. The various family collections donated to the Archives are full of ancient tintypes and “cartes de visites,” but these individuals are largely anonymous and without any clear reference to local history could not be included in this book.

All that changes with D. Will McKay. A St. Stephen native, Mr. McKay set up his first studio there, also a studio in St. Andrews in May of 1889, a small building on King Street next to the County Records Office. 1889 was an exciting and eventful year for St. Andrews. The St. Andrews Land Company had been formed the year before, and in two months after Mr. McKay’s arrival, had completed construction of the Algonquin Hotel, with plans for a golf course, cottage development at Indian Point, complete with running water and electricity for both it and the Town. The Canadian Pacific Railway was about to lease the running rights for the New Brunswick Railway system, and it seemed as though fortune was about to smile on the long-suffering economy of St. Andrews, for it bid fair to become not

only a watering place of the first order on the east coast of North America, but also a terminus of the CPR. Though neither future panned out as gloriously as many hoped, the course of the Town’s fortunes took a turn for the better and Mr. McKay was

on hand to record these changes in some very handsome photographs. In 1889 he published a souvenir booklet of the town featuring the Algonquin Hotel, churches and streets, some local personages of note, the military encampment, views of the blockhouse and waterfront. Other pictures still extant were taken apparently at the same time but not included in the published work. A good sampling of this booklet, drawn from the best copies, is included in this book. Taken together these pictures convey an excellent sense of St. Andrews at this particular point in his history, a time when the Town was drawing vacationers interested in a rustic get-away not too far from the madding crowd.

Mr. McKay was a prolific photographer. Another souvenir booklet came out in 1896, and again a good sampling of this work is given here. Many locals were photographed in his studio, including the Town band, the Glee Club, the Andraeleo Club. Not all of his work has been identified, and probably a good deal of it has been lost. I attach his name to

only those photographs which are certain or reasonably certain to be his, but there are many anonymous pieces included here which probably belong to him. McKay’s work, both studio and field, is high quality, and he continued to photograph well into the next century. The *St. Andrews Beacon* summed up things nicely in an 1894 remark: “The secret of Mr. McKay’s photographs,” wrote Editor Robert Armstrong, “is to be found in the fact that



#### *Kodak Fiends*

*This photograph from an album recording a trip around Passamaquoddy Bay, 1906. Handheld cameras date to 1890 but did not have viewfinders and were often shot from the hip. These photographers sport more up-to-date models.*

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*Olive Hosmer, c. 1912*

*Taken during a trip to St. Andrews. Ms. Hosmer was the daughter of C. R. Hosmer, Head of CPR's Telephone and Telegraph Division.*

COURTESY JENNIFER PATERSON

they are true to Nature, as well as being artistically finished.” McKay died in 1937, aged 67. Without his camera, the history of St. Andrews would be a great deal poorer.

His successor, A. A. Shirley, produced a similarly rich record from approximately 1910 to 1960, the date of his death. He was the son of James A. Shirley, a St. Stephen native who took over the Robert Glenn dry goods business in St. Andrews after

managing it for some years. It isn't known if Mr. Shirley had a studio as such; in fact, there are no surviving photographs of the man himself, at least in the Archives holdings. He seems to have specialized in public events such as coronations, Royal Jubilees and visiting dignitaries and other news-type occasions, such as the visits of battleships, raising of new arenas and such. He and McKay seem also to have had a partnership of sorts with local druggist T. R. Wren. Much of McKay's work has been preserved in the Wren collection, which was donated to the Archives by his daughter Freda. Wren's drugstore sold souvenir postcards in large numbers and a good deal of Shirley's work survives only in this format. Fortunately, these are high quality post-cards, not cheap half-tones.

This book focuses mainly on the work of McKay and Shirley, but honorable mention should be made of Dorothy Meigs Eidlitz. Ms. Eidlitz, a New York native, was a New York socialite and photographer who was a Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society and the American Photographic Society. She spent many summers in St. Andrews, founded Sunbury Shores Arts and Nature Center in 1964 and among other things was responsible for enticing to St. Andrews Elsa de Brun, aka Nuala, a celebrated New York artist, who became the center of a prominent art colony in 1954. Not many of Ms. Eidlitz's photographs survive, but they are dramatic and strikingly composed views of the shore and a few local buildings such as the Greenock Church.

In making this selection, I have aimed for the best pictures and avoided the unknown, as well as the merely quaint and old. That said, there is some room for snapshots, as some of them, though perhaps not stellar in quality, fill in a gap not covered by professional work. In some cases these are my own pictures, and in others those of unknown photographers, mostly taken from family albums. These pictures appear more frequently towards the end of the work and include pictures for instance of Andraeleo Hall and the Marina theatre, as well as certain significant individuals who have no studio equivalents. In some cases these snapshots have a charm and composition which rescues them from the merely personal.