

Dear Cris,

Remember that three-day road trip we went on in Nova Scotia in 2017 for the Archibald reunion? We were excited to look for where Grandpa and your grandmother met and where Grandpa's parents lived. We stopped at a graveyard in Dartmouth and after searching the lower part of the cemetery we found a huge monument on the hill where your great-grandmother and great-grandfather and family were buried. It was so quiet there in the old neighbourhood, it was like being there in 1904 when Ethyl and Grandpa were married.

I didn't realize that your great-grandmother's family lived so close to where the Halifax Explosion happened in 1917. They lived right by the waterfront of Halifax Harbour on Windmill Street. We could hear the horns of the barges and tug boats in the harbour.

Henry and Joanna, our Great-grandfather and Great-grandmother were farmers who lived in Eastern Passage. We found where Texico expropriated their land. There are still big refinery tanks there, but no activity, we heard the rusty signs blowing in the breeze from the ocean.

Not far away was a lovely restaurant at Fisherman's Cove Heritage Center. We ate a nice lunch and went on a walk on the boardwalk along the ocean. There were colourful fishing boats and boat houses from days gone by and a monument that honours fishermen lost at sea. I could just imagine my grandfather, in his younger days, fishing nearby maybe with his girlfriend, Ethyl, laughing.

We had to move on in order to make it to the reception in Truro. Middle Musquodoboit was our next stop. This is like being in the middle of Archibald territory. Many of them who came from New Hampshire had land granted to them in the 1760s, before the American Revolution. Remember the fellow in the park selling vegetables? He was so informative, he was even related to us. Remember I showed you the Bed and Breakfast on Archibald Brook Lane where I stayed at the last reunion?

We were on our way to a reception at NSCC Truro Campus. We could hear the chatter of people as we entered. We were asked what brother we were most closely related to back in 1763 when they came from New Hampshire. You told them it was Samuel, and we got the appropriate nametag.

The next day we attended presentations that Allen Marble organized of famous or important Archibald's like George Archibald who dedicated his whole life to save the Whooping Crane from extinction.

Back to our road trip. We visited the Archibald houses and the Presbyterian Church they built in Truro. We drove down back country roads near North River and East Mountain. It started to rain and we had to turn back. We didn't find the two graves we were searching for. The land looks much like it would have when they lived here, but with fewer trees.

Meanwhile, the reunion was still going on. There was a banquet to attend and a pancake breakfast the next morning at my distant cousin Karen's farm at Old Barns. We also attended the Archibald Dairy Farm tour near Sherbrook, Nova Scotia. We had come full circle. Sherbrook was on our way back to Halifax where we had booked for the night.

One more day to visit our cousins Catherine and Margeret. Catherine fixed a beautiful dinner made from her garden vegetables and Margaret brought an apple pie. They took us up to Victoria Vale where our grandparents and great-grandparents lived just before Ethyl died. Her death and the death of her baby was is still a mystery. We walked around the graveyard but there was no sign of the mother or baby. The death certificate does not list the cause of death. I can still remember the crunch of the leaves beneath our feet and the wind rustling the leaves, as we plodded our way across the graveyard.

From there we visited our cousin Faye who had polio as a young woman and has been in a wheelchair ever since. We met her granddaughter.

Cris, remember we stopped at Peggy's Cove where we sat on the rocks listening to the waves crash up against the rocks and watching one of the most beautiful sunsets we have ever seen. We had to drag ourselves away in order to get the car back to the airport on time.

Hopefully, there will be another reunion soon.

Your Cousin, Nancy

