

Nova Scotia



Department of  
Education

Nova Scotia Museum Complex

Curatorial Report Number 72

# The Edward Ross Store in New Ross, Nova Scotia, c.1835-1845

Nova Scotia Museum  
1747 Summer Street  
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada  
B3H 3A6

By Miles Russell  
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**Nova Scotia Museum *Curatorial Reports***

*The Curatorial Reports of the Nova Scotia Museum Complex make technical information on Museum programs, procedures and research, accessible to specialist audiences.*

*This report contains the preliminary results of an ongoing research program of the Museum. It may be cited in publications, but its manuscript status should be clearly indicated.*

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## Preface

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The 1830s and 1840s were busy decades in Atlantic Canada. The Napoleonic Wars were over and North America was enjoying an era of peace. Enticed by land grants to settle the interior of a huge continent, settlers had begun to open the forests. To fill their needs, large amounts of goods from around the world were being imported and traded, brought over the ocean by brigs and clippers, and along the coast by shallops.

Few packages of this period have survived. Although pieces of china and glass have been carefully cared for over the past 150 years, few crates, boxes, casks or containers that held this precious cargo were saved. Documentation of these everyday items is also scarce and one must scratch hard to find any information.

This report was made possible by the assistance of many kind people without whom it would not have been feasible to venture forward even this small step. The first to be mentioned are Marie Elwood, Chief Curator of History, and the staff of the History Section of the Nova Scotia Museum Complex—Deborah Trask, Scott Robson and Paul Collins—who aided in this project in many ways.

Today, as in the past, Nova Scotia has many connections with New England and, in particular, Massachusetts. Frank White, Assistant Director of the Curatorial Department of Old Sturbridge Village, was very helpful. Patty Todd of Colonial Williamsburg and the library there provided information that tied several clues together.

In the Canadian Parks Service, Judith Tulloch (Project Historian), and Margot Magee Sackett provided information on the late 1830s. A special thank you to Robert Burns for information on the wreck of the *William Salthouse*, which sank at Victoria, Australia, in 1841.

Many thanks are due to Harry Pietersma of Upper Canada Village for providing me with information about their site and library. Others in the Nova Scotia Museum Complex who helped in various ways are Ralph Getson of the Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic, David Flemming of the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, and Ken Gilmour of the Nova Scotia Museum.

Overseas help greatly appreciated came from Richard Thompson of the Worshipful Company of Coopers, London, Richard Foster of the National Museum of Merseyside, and Barbara Tomlinson of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich. I thank these three from England for taking the time to do research I could not have done myself.

Ross Farm Museum staff and directors are to be thanked for their help in this project, which has taken many hours over several years. To my wife and family for searching through items and for the time it took, to Douglas Beall for understanding and editing the text in a manner true to my intent, and to John Hennigar-Shuh for bringing this project to print, I also extend my thanks.



Special acknowledgements are made to the Ross family and descendants who kept the diaries of Edward Ross for so many years and told me what they remembered about the site. A heartfelt thanks is also extended to the staff of the Public Archives of Nova Scotia for their help with newspapers and journals of the period and for caring for the Ross Papers.

Finally we must thank Edward I. Ross for faithfully recording the everyday happenings of life in the early settlement of Sherbrooke, now known as New Ross.

This project was of special interest to me as I am a sixth-generation descendant of one of the original settlers of Sherbrooke. The Russell blacksmiths mentioned so often by Edward in his diaries were my ancestors.

The interest, suggestions and kindness of everyone who assisted in one way or another are appreciated. I have enjoyed this project, and offer to others my encouragement to carry on even when you find that one answer only leads to two more questions.

Miles D. Russell  
New Ross, 1989

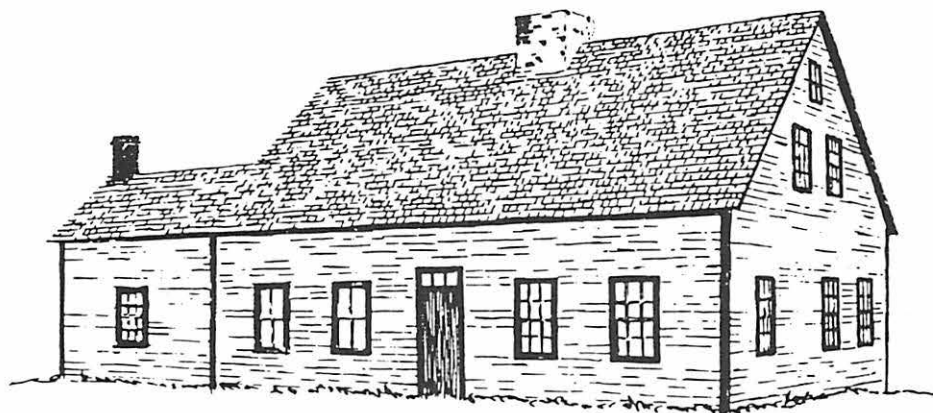


Figure 1. *Rosebank Cottage, Ross Farm (sketch by George Halverson, NSM)*



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## Introduction

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Ross Farm Museum started as a community project to mark Canada's 100th birthday in 1967. Those involved soon realized that a celebration was also in order for New Ross's own 150th anniversary on 7 August 1966. From the work of this committee came the establishment of a living agricultural museum, on the farm begun in 1816 by Lieutenant (later Captain) William Ross, leader of the disbanded soldiers who settled at Sherbrooke (renamed New Ross in 1863). This museum is owned by the Province of Nova Scotia and locally operated by the New Ross District Museum Society.

William Ross and his wife, Mary, of County Cork, Ireland, had six children. William died 2 May 1822 as a result of illness contracted while reblazing a trail near the settlement during a storm, but Mary carried on at Rosebank Cottage, on a drumlin farm overlooking Lake Lawson and Gold River, until she reached the golden age of 92. She had the aid of her five young sons and a daughter. William, the eldest son, born in South America, married locally and moved to the 100-acre mill lot across the lake. His sister Mary, born in Ireland, wed the former Quartermaster's son and farmed nearby. George, the second son, born in Quebec, married and remained home to farm, repair shoes, and help his mother as best he could. Charles, the fourth son, and James, the youngest, both born in the new settlement after their father's retirement from the 16th Regiment of the British army, left the area and travelled, mainly in the United States.

The third son, Edward Irlam Ross, was born in the town of Sunderland, England, on Sunday, 3 January 1813, and became the "learned son", leading a varied career with occupations ranging from clerk at a tobacco store in Halifax to Justice of the Peace and lieutenant in the militia before his death on 8 April 1894, at the age of 81. Edward kept a diary throughout his life in which he faithfully recorded weather and daily happenings (see Table 1). Fortunately, many of these books were saved in 1969 after being found in various places, such as behind boards in the walls of the haymow. Of primary importance are the diaries of the period 1835 to 1841, when Edward resided at the Ross farm. At age 26, he wrote of building a store to carry on a business.

When the farm became Ross Farm Museum, the presence of the store was noted, but because of its poor condition the small building was removed.

In 1980 a decision was made to reconstruct the store based on the diary and photographs. An exploratory "dig" was carried out to discover the foundation, and several features were revealed, including a doorstep stone.

When the building was rebuilt, hewed timbers were used, based on recollections of those who tore down the original structure, as well as on the example of other structures of this type. Shingles and finish were applied following a study of old photographs, which also indicated the proper scale of the building and location of its windows.

Table 1

Edward I. Ross diaries

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1835	September 6 to December 31*
1836	January 1 to August 15*
1837	February 26 to October 31*
1838	February 20 to November 21*, December 27, 28
1839	January 2 to October 9*
1841	February 21 to November 6*
1868	January 1 to December 31
1869	January 1 to December 31
1870	April 26 to September 26
1871	January 1 to December 31
1872	February 6 to 18, May 9 to 15
1874	January 9 to November 6
1881	January 1 to December 25
1882	January 1 to December 14
1884	January 4 to December 25
1885	January 7 to December 31
1886	February 8
1887	January 7 to December 31
1890	one page, no date
1891	January 1 to December 31
?	a few undated pages, various years

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Source: Ross Papers, Public Archives of Nova Scotia (PANS), MG1, 794 and 795

\* Entries for dates marked have been transcribed and printed in *The Ross Farm Diaries*, 1835-'41 (2 vol.); copy in the Ross Farm reference library, also in PANS and NS Museum.

A research project was then begun to establish when the store had operated, who had operated it, and what its sources of supply had been. These questions, as well as others about the customers and what goods were carried, had to be answered clearly enough to give a fairly accurate picture.

The period of operation was established from Edward's diaries, which also named most of the basic stock. Learning the nationality and needs of local farmers indicated what would have been required seasonally, also indicating goods that may have been sold and traded at the store. Information for the area's population came from original settlement records and later census figures. Newspaper advertisements from the period often mentioned the country of origin for items in the inventory.



Figure 2 Ross store and workshop, c. 1938 (Nina White, copy by N.S. Museum, N-14,208)



Figure 3 Ross store, c. 1958 (Nina White, copy by N.S. Museum, N-14,207)

This initial research brought forward many questions; therefore, a further search for information and facts about merchandizing and packaging during the period 1835 to 1845 was begun.

This further search began with Edward's diaries and local sources of community knowledge, and led to a study trip to Old Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts. Other research trips included visiting the Nova Scotia Museum Complex to study artifacts and records, and the Public Archives of Nova Scotia (PANS) to review newspapers and documents of the 1830s and 1840s. The Canadian Parks Service aided with their research files; for instance, in Australia they had located an 1841 flour barrel head with markings from its point of origin in Montreal.

Libraries at places such as Old Sturbridge Village, Colonial Williamsburg, and the Public Archives of Nova Scotia turned up references to broadsides and books on packaging and methods of retailing to the "country trade". Correspondence was received in response to inquiries sent to various institutions throughout Canada, the U.S.A. and Great Britain. Several disappointments were encountered, but a feeling of pioneering was realized as previously there had been very little information on this period collected for the Maritime Provinces.

No report ever ends with all the answers and, as new facts come to light, our understanding of the past for use in present interpretation will be updated for future visitors. It is hoped that this report will be one small step toward that end.

Note: Most of the words appearing in quotation marks in this report were taken directly from what Edward Ross called his "journal" or "log", and what we today refer to as his diaries.

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## Edward Irlam Ross: chronology of his life

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- 1813** Edward Irlam Ross was the third child of six born to William Ross (1783-1822) and Mary (Williams) Ross (1784-1876) on Sunday, 3 January 1813, in the town of Sunderland, England. (Information in the Ross family Bible, courtesy of Tom White)
- 1815**  
(age 2) William Ross was stationed in Fort Lateau de Lac, Quebec. Because George Ross was born there, it appears that the Ross family, including Edward, was living there too. (from research by Allen Penney)
- 1816**  
(3) On 7 August William arrived in Sherbrooke (later New Ross) with 172 disbanded soldiers and, apparently, with his wife and family.
- 1816-'34**  
(3-21) Diaries by Edward Ross do not date from before 1835, so we are uncertain of his whereabouts during this period. As a boy he worked as a clerk in Halifax and gained experience under a Mr. Foster of "the Micmac Tobacco Manufactory". It is noted that with the second grant of land to military settlers in 1822, Edward and his brother William were granted 100 acres of land each, on the west side of the New Ross to Kentville road and on the border between Lunenburg and Kings counties.
- 1835-'41**  
(22-28) Edward lived in Sherbrooke and often went to Halifax for supplies. At least as early as 1835, at age 22, Edward was dealing in goods bought outside of Sherbrooke and sold to residents of the area. In 1839 he mentions building a store during the summer, and in 1841 he was keeping store. His work as a clerk in Halifax may have influenced his decision to keep store in Sherbrooke and may have given him connections with dealers in Halifax.
- 1839**  
(26) Edward noted in his diary on April 20, "I got a recommendation from Mr. Walker to appoint me Justice of the Peace in Sherbrooke." On May 4 he noted, "I have learned that his Excellency the Governor was pleased to appoint me Justice of the Peace for the County of Lunenburg." In his diary on July 24, referring to activities of the militia, Edward noted a "meeting of the officers at Capt. Charles

Evans to decide upon a uniform. We agreed to get frock coats with standing collar and wings of gold lace." Edward was a first lieutenant for the 4th Battalion.

- 1842-'67**  
(29-54) Except for the facts listed below, during this period Edward's whereabouts are uncertain as there are no diaries. Edward married Maria 24 January 1844 (Edward stated in his diary for 24 January 1874, that the day was his thirtieth wedding anniversary). Maria had been born 27 January 1825. Mary, his mother, sold to Edward lot 8 in division H, of which 15 acres are now owned by the Museum. In October 1846, Edward bought Moses Peppy's lot 6 in division II, which was located on the north side of the Forties road just before the Lake Ramsay road.
- 1848**  
(35) On 20 November, George Ross applied to be Justice of the Peace; this was passed on 3 April 1852. This event would indicate that Edward had left or would soon leave New Ross, as he himself had held the post that George was to fill.
- 1852-'54**  
(39-41) Through correspondence, import records, and notations made in his later diaries (for example, 10 October 1869) it appears that Edward was in Boston.
- 1858**  
(45) An invoice indicates that Edward purchased hardware from Black, Brothers & Co. in Halifax, 13 January.
- 1860**  
(47) Because Edward signed a judgement for Kings County against Asaph Baltzer, he might have been in Kings County.
- 1860-'65**  
(47-52) Possibly in Kings County or Halifax. Letters George sent to Edward seem to indicate that Edward was within reasonable travelling distance from Rosebank Cottage.
- 1866**  
(53) An Absentee Drill notice to Edward was sent addressed to 118 Hollis Street, presumably in Halifax.
- 1868**  
(55) Edward's diaries place him in Port Medway.
- 1869**  
(56) Until late summer, Edward lived in Port Medway, and then moved to Boston.

- 1871**  
**(58)** Edward was in New Ross until the end of April, when he left for Boston, arriving there on 7 May.
- 1872**  
**(59)** The few diary pages from this year indicate he was in Boston.
- 1873**  
**(60)** No diary.
- 1874**  
**(61)** Diaries place him in Boston.
- 1875-'80**  
**(62-67)** No diary.
- 1879**  
**(66)** Goods were shipped to Edward at a Port Williams, Kings Co., address.
- 1881-'82**  
**(68-69)** Diaries place him in Kentville.
- 1883**  
**(70)** No diary.
- 1884-'87**  
**(71-74)** Diaries place him in Kentville.
- 1890**  
**(77)** The one page of diary written during in 1890 leaves Edward's location uncertain.
- 1891**  
**(78)** Diaries place him in New Ross.
- 1892-'94**  
**(79-81)** No diary available. We assume that Edward remained in New Ross until his death, 8 April 1894.



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## Edward's clothing

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Edward's diaries give clues to his dress and appearance at 25 to 28 years of age:

The air this morning was very keen in so much as to envelope George's and my whiskers and pendant hair in a sheet of hoar frost. (13 February 1841)

Bought of Schmitz in Chester some shirting cotton. (28 March 1837)

Bought some cloth from Mitchells to make a trouser and waistcoat.  
(12 November 1838)

Rachael was here all day making our coats and staid all night ... the next day and night ... went home with William late the 3rd day in the sleigh. (15 March 1841)

The rain poured in torrents so I rigged Mrs. Jones out with my top coat and boots.  
(22 September 1841)

I had gloves and double mittens on, a great coat and a share of Mr. Well's cloke.  
(19 October 1841)

George was mending my shoes. (23 August 1841)

I could not get my trunk up, therefore, dressed myself on board and sallyed forth dressed in black trousers and waistcoat and blue frock, the latter requiring a small sample of ink on the elbows to conceal the sundry breaches which old Time had made through the cloth thereby very unnecessarily exposing the white sleeve lining, the said coat being three or four years in use already. (28 April 1839)

The next day he wrote:

Called at Mr. Shannons where I got cloth for a coat. (29 April 1839)

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## Store construction and dimensions

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In June 1839, Edward Ross (aged 26) had Jacob Hiltz come down from nearby Fraxville to hew timbers for the frame of his store. Jacob, Edward, and William Ross helped, and in six man-days of work between Tuesday June 4th and Friday the 7th, the frame of the store was completed. On 29 June the same year, Jacob came back and again worked on the store, with George Ross also helping.

The store today, based as closely as possible on the original, measures 17 ft. 4 1/2 in. (5.3 m) in length from north to south and 12 ft. 4 in. (3.76 m) wide. A door facing west is 74 in. (1.87 m) high and 40 in. (102 cm) wide. This unusually large door was not just to allow easy entering but was a necessity. Molasses puncheons of 90-120 gallons, very large and cumbersome to move, measured 38 in. in diameter at the bilge and so a normal door opening of 30 in. would not have been big enough.

The door is flanked on each side by a window measuring 28 1/2 in. (72 cm) wide and 46 in. (1.17 m) high and located 27 in. (69 cm) from the floor.

During a small shallow "dig" for foundation stones in 1980, a doorstep stone was uncovered; the fact that it is made of stone and not cement would suggest that this might have been the original step.

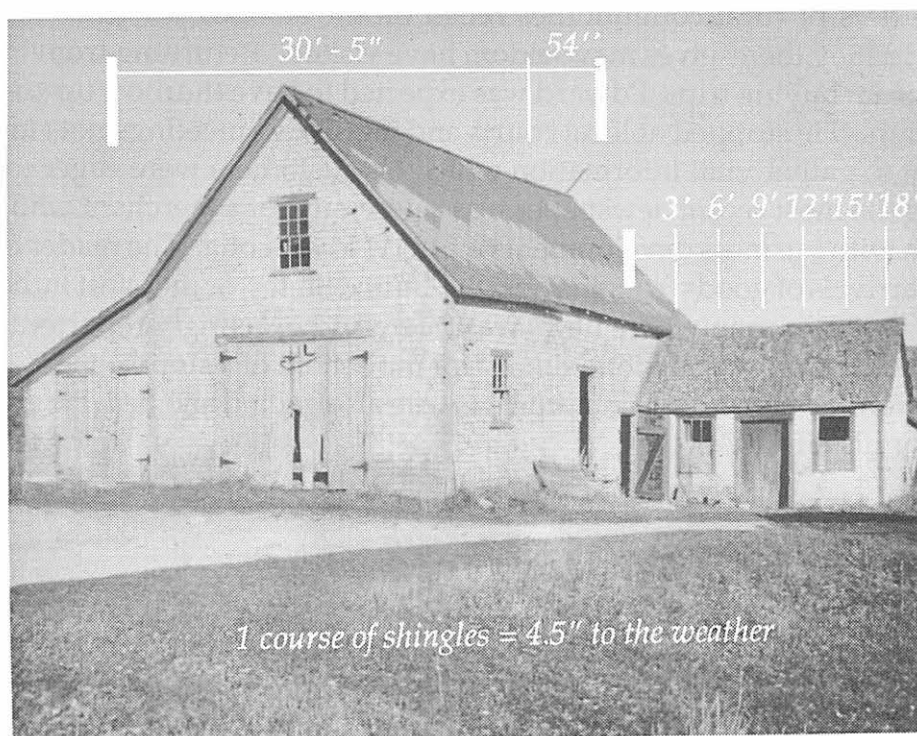


Figure 4 Ross workshop and store, with scale (N.S. Museum photo, 1969)

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## Storekeeping

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For a minimum of five years previous to the construction of his store, Edward was selling goods, including molasses bought by the puncheon. These goods were located on the farm site at an unknown location. Thus it may be concluded that not all goods were located in the store, but at a second location as well.

Edward's store perhaps operated for a 10-year period. We know it was built in the summer of 1839, and that he left Sherbrooke between 1848 and 1852 for Boston.

Because Edward would be away on buying trips and for militia drills, clearing and burning land in the back clear, and so on, he needed help to look after the store. Sometimes his mother would assist, but it was mainly his brother's wife Rachael, who also lived in Rosebank Cottage until 1841 when she moved with her husband to a home of their own near the mill lot.

The country storekeeper was often a person of some education and, as such, would be called upon to draw up deeds, letters and other written documents. Edward was no exception and also served as Justice of the Peace for many years.

The storekeeper also often held the rank of Lieutenant or Captain in the militia. This held true up and down the coast, with Lieutenant William Wine of Kennebunk, Maine, and Captain Moses Clement of Dover, New Hampshire, being only two examples.

The settlers of rural communities relied on the storekeeper to be a link to the outside world they themselves may seldom have visited. Returning from Halifax and Lunenburg from buying trips, Edward was expected to have the most up-to-date news of world affairs. He stopped at local courts and legislative meetings not simply out of curiosity but to gather vital information which his customers were eager to hear.

Buying the most recent newspaper was a necessity for a merchant who wanted to stay in touch with business developments around Nova Scotia. The reader could learn of the latest arrivals of goods from Europe, the United States, or the West Indies and also feast on the social column where news was freely and exactly reported.

News collecting was not done simply for the benefit of a storekeeper's customers. Feelings of high social standing and prestige were also gained and became another kind of income for his efforts.

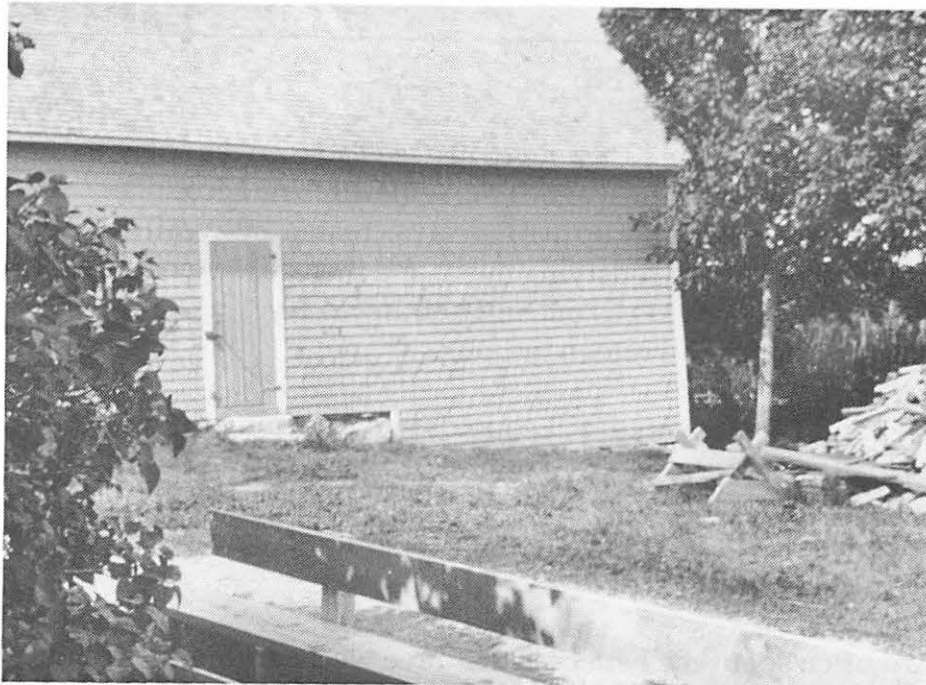


Figure 5 The store site in 1979 (photo by Miles Russell)



Figure 6 Store during reconstruction, August 1980 (photo by Miles Russell)

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## A Buying trip to Halifax

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### GETTING THINGS TOGETHER

A buying trip to Halifax in the 1830s and 1840s (see Table 2) was not without drawbacks, delays and disappointments. Edward had to settle his rural accounts, arrange shipment for his barrels and himself, put up with delays created by weather and people, face creditors with little means of satisfying them, and then get home again without loss of goods or life—not as easy a job as one might think today.

For example, Edward wrote in his journal:

George and I went over to W. Leopolds in the evening to try and get him to haul out a load of Barrels. He would not go. Every spring I have the same trouble about going to Halifax. I often wish that I never commenced business here. I have trusted out my Goods and now find the greatest difficulty in collecting money. (6 May 1841)

Edward often spent the better part of three weeks trying to arrange “freighters” (men with oxen and wagons) to haul more than 200 barrels. After approaching about eight different teamsters, and delays for wet weather, barn raising and finishing spring planting, four loads of 55-60 barrels each would be finally transported to Chester Basin, some 15 miles away.

An account of one such trip from Sherbrooke to Chester Basin was recorded in 1839:

George and I started from home pretty early put our Oxen to the load of Barrels with Cooney's steers and Mare in front but the Mare would not pull a bit and after fidgeting an hour or two we sent her back again and started with the steers in front of our cattle. We got round as far as Leopolds Mill when we saw at a glance that out to the Bason we would never get with that Team. I started back therefore and got Sam Walkers Team and overtook George at Russells and sent Cooney's steers back by Edward Kiens. We got along the rest of the way without much trouble... (22 April 1839)

The road conditions were sometimes described:

The road was not bad until I reached Bob Russell's but along there it was something of the consistence of mortar. (25 April 1841)

Accounts were settled if possible along the way:



Figure 7. Wagon load of barrels (sketch by G. Halverson, NSM)

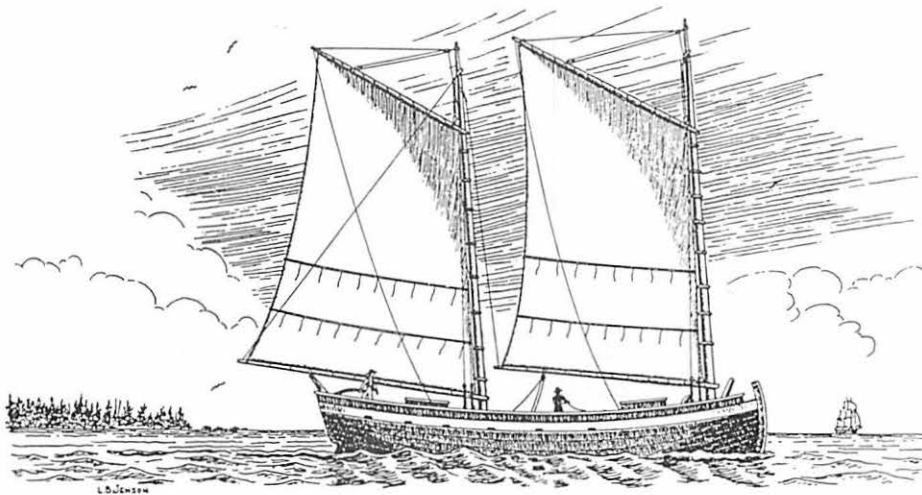


Figure 8. Chebacco boat, dogbody type (a large shallop), used in Nova Scotia, early 1800s (sketch by L.B. Jensen, courtesy of Petheric Press)

Table 2

Trips to Halifax made by Edward Ross, 1836-'41

Leaves Sherbrooke	Days of travel	Arrives Halifax	Days in town	Leaves Halifax	Days of travel	Arrives Sherbrooke	Total days
April 18, 1836 Monday, 9 am	3	April 21 8 am	13+	May 4 10 am	4	May 7 6 pm	20
April 21, 1837 Friday am	6	April 26 11 pm	3	April 30 7 am	7	May 6 pm	16
May 22, 1838 Tuesday am	13	June 3 6:30 pm	3	June 7 7 am	2	June 8 7 pm	18
April 22, 1839 Monday am	4	April 26 am	14	May 9 11 pm	3	May 12 pm	21
May 17, 1841 Monday am	5	May 21 pm	5	May 27 11 am	5	May 31 8 pm	15

Source: *The Ross Farm Diaries, 1835-'41*



Figure 9 Bundles and bales of dry goods (Pyne, 1806)



In the afternoon I went up to Cooneys and he came down and settled with me. He owes me upwards of Fifty pounds. I certainly am to blame for trusting him so much. (11 May 1841)

Sometimes he was not so lucky, as recorded one Friday:

I was disappointed very much by not getting some money that was due me at the [Chester] Grant. (21 April 1837)

And sometimes Edward was required to collect "an order" (the early equivalent of a check).

I had an order on John Hiltz from John Hininger and on calling on him he said he had no money but would get it from Edward Zwicker which he did, I going there with him. I then proceeded to Town. (22 May 1838)

#### CHESTER BASIN TO HALIFAX

Once barrels, furs, trunk and Edward himself finally arrived at Chester Basin, passage by coastal vessel to Halifax had to be secured. This could take as long as six days, until finally, as on Monday, 28 May 1838:

I jumped out of bed about 1/2 past 4 and to my great satisfaction saw the scud[?] flying to the Eastward. As the sun arose the Clouds cleared away and once more the glorious orb shed its benign rays over us poor sons of Mortality in somewhat of a cheering manner. I hurried up to my lodgings and put things to rights and got my breakfast. I walked down to the wharf but Barry had not yet got Thomsons cow on board. Richardson had gone. We left the wharf about 9 AM.

Two days later:

The wind still keeps to the eastward which forces us to remain in Dover very much against our will. I lived on board. The accommodations on board those Coasting Shallops are very indifferent. Miserable berths and worse beds, and as to the eating kind any one that cannot eat any thing at any time under the influence of any smell had better not go to sea. Our Cup Towel, hand Towel etc. was George Driscolls duck frock. (30 May 1838)

The passage from Chester to Halifax has often been done in less than one single day. However, six days from Chester, we read:

The morn was calm and cloudy with a light air from the SW. Thomsons cow was on shore and we had to wait until the tide rose to get her on board... We got the cow on board and left the wharf about 11 AM. Had a fine run down got to Halifax about 1/2 past 6 PM. I went ashore between sundown and dark. Called up to George T. Fillis's, Bedford Row. I knocked about 1/2 an hour no one came so I went down on board again got George Driscoll and Casper Millett to bring my trunk up. I knocked again but receiving no answer I got in through the yard and put my trunk in the house. I again went down on board and staid until 1/2 past 10 when I returned to Fillis's where I staid all night. (3 June 1838)

## IN HALIFAX

Edward tried to make the most of being in town. First was a haircut if needed before the most important purchase, a new hat. He sometimes bought a new pair of gloves, left his watch for repair and then set out on a walk around town. He would exchange greetings with businessmen, perhaps get several invitations to dinner and inquire at the docks for "the latest news from a Packet arriving after 47 days" (21 April 1836).

Chatting with old friends was important to Edward, and at the top of the list was his very good friend Hamilton, who was a clerk by profession. They spent many hours over the years smoking cigars at "the bridge", or playing whist, 45s, backgammon or forfeits for a drink of rum, wine, beer, brandy or whiskey punch.

When business activities were interrupted on Sunday, Edward faithfully attended church and often sat in the singers' pew. Afternoons were typically spent in the company of a young lady, picking mayflowers, walking, or enjoying a horse and wagon ride. Friends were often "called upon" in Dartmouth, by way of the scheduled ferry, for dinner or for tea.

Evenings would be spent visiting, going to the club and reading a lecture, attending the "Singing Society" or "the Junior Club where we heard a dissertation on happiness" or "stopping into the Mechanic's Institute". A play might be seen:

In the evening Mary Ann Fillis and I went to the Theatre. Rob Roy was performed with the farce of the Mayor of Garrets[?]. After the play was over we took a walk as far as the Bridge. (4 June 1838)

Edward's accommodations in Halifax were not always pleasant:

I cannot set my mind to reading or writing and in fact have no convenience to write, the room which I occupy as a sleeping apartment being so dusty and dark that it is almost impossible to write there. I never will board in this house again. (22 May 1841)

Other locations were no better:

My bedfellow turned out at daybreak and I saw no more of him. I woke somewhere about 6 o'clock threw back the bedclothes and the first thing that struck my attention was two bugs hastening across the bed to take their morning meal off my carcase I begged leave to differ in opinion with them as to the expediency of my affording them a breakfast tho the bleeding may be wholesome but I certainly should choose some other means of drawing blood from me than through the probocis of a bed bug. (26 June 1839)

## BUSINESS ACCOUNTS

As Edward went about his dealings in town he wrote of his reflections as well:

The rainy weather still continued. No Smith yet with my barrels and of course no business done I am beginning to get almost sick of the Town and long for the quiet scenes of my home. But my stay here has its good (although not in accordance with my feelings) which is that I mix in good society a thing which I am totally debarred from at home with the exception of my own family.  
(3 May 1839)

When his casks finally did land, all was not necessarily concluded in accordance with Edward's best hopes:

I could not sell my barrels for anything over 2/3 therefore concluded to let Fairbanks & Allison wharf and told Mr. I. C. Allison he might have them and "Mr. A." said I "Will you let me have a few goods" "I would with a little conversation with you in the office Mr. Ross" rejoined he. Down sunk my heart. Now thought I for a long story about accounts standing over. "I can't afford it Mr. Ross" "Ought to have been paid long ago" Rather not trust any more etc. But I called when he handed me a pensioners Draft that was not paid according to wish and requested me to rectify it. I took it away changed it at Blacks and brought him back the ac'nt when he gave me an order on Bernard O'Neil for what Crockery Ware I wanted and told me to bring a Memorandum of what things required. All right thought I. After dinner was over I picked out my Crockery ware at Bernard O'Neils. (7 May 1839)

## HOMeward BOUND

Casks were not the only means of transporting items that Edward bought for his store. Bundles, bags and sacks also were commonly used to move goods that came in bulk to the port. For example, salt and grains of wheat, rye, oats, barley, buckwheat and corn

were shipped in bags of two, three or four bushels. The bags, sacks and bundles often had handloops or tufts located on their corners that handlers could use to get a hold of them. Some also had string or twine wrapped around them, not so much to help in loading and unloading as to keep the goods inside from moving about.

From Halifax to Chester by land was a long trip taking close to a week. By sea the voyage could be done in two days if lucky, but as many as seven if the wind did not cooperate. Edward most often chose to go by sea, and one account shows how he fared:

I was aroused from my sleep by George Driscoll at the door telling me the vessell was about starting. I hurried down on board. The morning was very fine. We left the wharf about 7 AM but did not weather the Cape see[?] the fog came in so thick that we could not see 20 rods ahead. We did not see land from the time we left the Cape until we saw Ironbound. There was a heavy swell out. A pedlar who was fellow passenger on board was dreadfully sick. George Driscoll was also sick. I vomited once after I had taken a dose salt water but was not sick afterwards. It rained very hard on the passage and I was on deck all the time.  
(7 June 1838)

Once at Chester, Edward and his goods had to make the five miles to Chester Basin. Edward then had to unload and store in Chester Basin the goods that he could not haul on the first load, until they could be brought to Sherbrooke:

Breakfast was at Heckman's. I made Barry take my things round to the Basin in the vessell and I went with him. William met me at the Basin with the Horse and Waggon. I put all my things into David Crandall's store and we started for Sherbrooke where we arrived about 7 PM. The Russell's were all very glad to meet me once more back again. All the female part of them did me the honour to kiss me, and the men shook hands warmly with me. (8 June 1838)

## HOME AGAIN

After several trips by ox team and wagon to Chester Basin and back, the goods were uncrated, marked and put on the store shelves. The ladies were most interested in the new crockery and yard goods because these revealed the latest styles available from around the world. Many "country colors" were the direct result of a storekeeper's taste because he chose and thus made available to the countryfolk those goods he liked best.

Each year the buying trip was repeated under varying conditions. It was an exciting but disheartening time for Edward as he strived to make his mark. Being in his early twenties yet trying to reach the high level of living that he had been brought up to expect was not easy.

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## Goods and their sources

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Table 3 shows the trade goods Edward dealt in from 1835 to 1841.

Tables 4 and 5 list the sellers and dealers in merchandise of the time.

Tables 6 and 7 show items listed for sale in the Halifax paper from 1836 to 1839.

Table 8 provides examples of the goods Edward sold at his store in Sherbrooke.

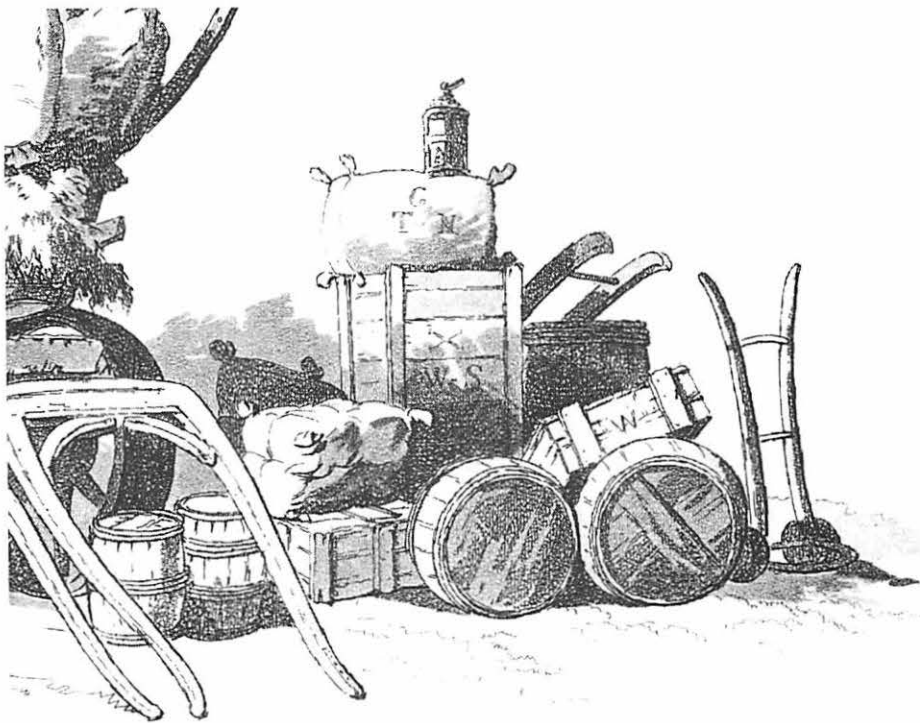


Figure 10 Crates, sacks and casks beside an English wagon (Pyne, 1806)

**Table 3**  
**Trade goods of Edward Ross, 1835-'41**

Item	Amount	Sold to	Location	Date	Diary transcript page
Butter	1 tub	Leopold	Sherbrooke	9 Dec. 1835	17
	2 tubs	Nat Kauldback	Lunenburg	15 Feb. 1839	172
Casks	58, empty (1 ox wagon load with ladders)	Fairbanks & Allison	Halifax	6 May 1839	189
	1 ox load	(both sent to Chester Basin and probably to Halifax)		30 Aug. 1839	221
	1 ox load			6 Sept. 1839	222
	220 (3 ox loads)	Fairbanks & Allison and Hunter & Co.	Halifax	22 May 1841	252
Eggs	45 1/2 doz.	—	Halifax	9 July 1838	132
	1 box	—	Chester Basin	23 Aug. 1839	220
	1 box	—	Chester	19 Sept. 1839	225
Furs	—	—	Halifax	11 May 1841	250
Hayseed	—	Jost	Lunenburg	15 Feb. 1839	172
Lambs, Sheep	£3	Mr. Moore	[Valley]	10 Aug. 1841	267
Meal	1/2 barrel	Jack Connell	Sherbrooke	31 May 1839	195
Mutton	—	—	Chester	12 Feb. 1841	239
	2 carcasses	Mr. Shreves[?]	Chester	29 Jan. 1841	232
Oats	12 bushels	—	Chester Grant	14 Mar. 1838	110
	6 bushels	—	Chester	9 July 9 1838	132
Pork	1 carcass	Schmitz	Chester	29 Feb. 1841	232
Potatoes	9 bushels	McInnis	Sherbrooke	25 Mar. 1841	241
	7 bushels	McInnis	Sherbrooke	26 Mar. 1841	242
Rabbit skins	—	—	Halifax	17 April 1837	68
Staves	3 ox loads	—	Chester	1 Feb. 1841	233
Staves and Shingles	2 ox loads	—	Chester	10 Mar. 1841	239

Source: *The Ross Farm Diaries, 1835-'41*

Table 4

Sellers/dealers mentioned in the Edward Ross diaries, 1835-'41

Seller/dealer	Location	Seller/dealer in	Edward purchased
Arthur Godfrey	Halifax	Books, school books, stationery, slates, crockery and dishware	School books and slates
Bernard O'Neill	Halifax	Crockery, china and glass	Crockery
Black	Halifax	Hardware	Hardware
Cahoun	Sherbrooke	Pedlar at Rosebank, 18 Sept. 1841	Not given (£3 worth)
Charles Fadir	Chester	Fish	Fish
Edward Curran	Halifax	Dry goods	Dry goods
Fairbanks & Allison	Halifax	Dry goods, hardware, sundries	Flour and meal in exchange for casks; sugar, scythes, sundries
Farrell	Sherbrooke	Pedlar at Rosebank, 12 April 1837	Fox scent
F. Kiens	Sherbrooke	Tobacco	Tobacco
Hamilton	Halifax	Dry goods	Violin strings, cards
Hayes	Lunenburg	Rum	Rum
H. Curzon & Co.	Halifax	Dry goods, crockery and dishware	Crockery
Hunter & Co.	Halifax	Dry goods	Flour, meal
James Black	Halifax	Dry goods	Dry goods
J.N. Shannon	Halifax	Dry goods	Dry goods
Joe Philips	Sherbrooke	Hides, moccasins	Hides, moccasins



Martin Hutt	Chester	Sauerkraut	Sauerkraut
Peter Nordbeck	Halifax	Dry goods, music supplies	Violin strings
Schmitz	Chester	Dry goods leather, oil	Cloth, shirting cotton,
Seabrightens	Chester	Tea	Tea
William Stairs	Halifax	Dry goods, crockery	Dry goods, crockery
W. Robinson	Robinson's Corner	Tar	Tar

Source: *The Ross Farm Diaries, 1835-'41*

**NEW GOODS.**

The Subscriber will sell by Auction, through  
the Agency of  
**MR. R. D. CLARKE,**  
On Tuesday next, at 12 o'clock, at the Store  
formerly occupied by Mr. John McNeil,  
Granville-Street,  
**12 Packages Fresh Dry Goods,**  
—COMPRISING—  
White and grey Sheetings, plain and printed  
Moleskins and Fustians, striped Shirting, Li-  
ning, Cambrics and Cottons, Bed Ticks, Fancy  
Stocks, Chintz, Printed Cottons and Cambrics,  
blue Nankeens, &c.  
Also - 4 cases useful and ornamental **SMALL**  
**WARES,** and 1 case Toys.  
Terms--All sums under £20, Cash; over  
that sum, approved notes with interest at three  
months.  
**PETER NORDBECK.**  
May 13, 1837.

Figure 11 Goods advertised by Peter Nordbeck (*Acadian Recorder*, 13 May 1837)

**Windsor.**  
**NEW GOODS.**

**T**HE SUBSCRIBER returns thanks to his numerous friends in Windsor and the adjacent Townships for the liberal encouragement extended to him since his commencement in business, and begs to inform them that he has now received his

**Spring Supply**  
**OF FASHIONABLE GOODS,**

which he will offer at prices as low as any in the market, among which are,  
Broad Cloths, Buckskins, Moleskins, Cantons, Drills, Valencia and other Vestings, plain and fig'd. Gros de Naples, plain and fancy Ginghams, white, grey, printed, furniture and lining Cottons, a variety of muslin and cotton dresses, newest patterns; jaconet, crossbarred, and book muslin, Thibet, worsted and cotton SHAWLS, Crape, Gauze, & silk handkerchiefs, gloves and Hosiery, Tuscan, Dunstable and Tissue Bonnets, Bonnet frames, Quilling and Edgings, SLOP CLOTHING, Prunella Boots and Shoes, women and children's kid, morocco, and leather do. Holland, twilled lining cottons, plain and figured Persians, Bobbinets, Ribbons, Combs, silk, worsted, and cotton braid, beaver, glazed, and palm leaf Hats, silk and threads of all description, shoemakers' nails and threads, lines and twines, cotton Warp, Corn Brooms, jack and pen Knives, and a variety of small wares.

—ALSO—

Tea, Sugar, Soap Candles, Rice, Tobacco, Cigars, Raisins, Currants, Starch, Blue, Indigo, Spices, Dye Stuffs, Hard Bread, Wine Biscuit, Oranges, Lemons, Filberts, Walnuts, Cotton Wool, Stationary, and a number of other articles too tedious to mention.

Store opposite Mr Benjamin Wilson's.  
**EDWARD CURRAN.**  
Windsor, May 26, 1838.

Figure 13 Cloth advertised by Edward Curran, Windsor (Acadian Recorder, 26 May 1837)

**Cargo of Brig Sarah Fleming**  
**from Newcastle!**

BY WILLIAM M. ALLAN,  
At Fairbanks's wharf, on Tuesday next, at half past eleven o'clock, the Cargo of the above vessel, consisting of,

**4500** bushels WHEAT, of excellent quality, in bags of 2 and 4 bushels each,

100 gross Wine Bottles,  
100 do Porter do  
15 boxes of Mould Candles,  
50 casks Lamp Black, 37 do Whiting,  
25 bbls. Coal Tar, 07 coils Cordage,  
9-sifted Hawsers, from 2 1/2 to 3 inch,  
100 boxes Glass, 7x8x10 10x12 & 12x14,  
40 casks Epsom Salts, 4 casks Alum, 50 kegs best WHITE LEAD, 50 lbs each, 50 do do 28 lbs each, 10 casks Raw LINSEED OIL, 5 do Boiled do, 1000 pieces Brown Ware, consisting of Milk Dishes, &c. &c. &c. EARTHEN WARE, among which are, Bowls, Plates, &c. Terms at Sale.

June 7, 1837.  
The above Sale was postponed on Saturday in consequence of the state of the Weather.

Figure 12 Cargo of Brig Sarah Fleming (Acadian Recorder, 10 June 1837)

**Table 5**

**Seller/dealers advertising in the *Acadian Recorder*, Halifax, 1836-'39**

**Seller/dealers mentioned in the Edward I. Ross diaries**

Bernard O'Neill: 1836, Dec. 24; 1837, May 6, May 27, Aug. 5, Sept. 23; 1839, Jan. 26, Feb. 2, Feb. 9, March 23

Edward Curran: 1838, May 26

Fairbanks & Allison: 1839, Jan. 19

H. Curzon & Co.: 1837, May 20

James Black: 1836, Dec. 17; 1837, May 6, May 27, Aug. 5, Sept. 23

J.N. Shannan: 1839, May 6

Peter Nordbeck: 1837, May 13

William Stairs: 1838, May 5

**Other seller/dealers**

**Dealing in**

Allan McDonald & Co.: 1837, Aug. 5

Tobacco

Charles P. Allen: 1838, May 12

Furniture

Charman & Co.: 1837, May 20, June 10; 1838, May 26

Flour & meal

D. & E. Starr & Co.: 1838, May 12; 1839, Feb. 2, March 23

Dry goods

David Hare: 1836, Dec. 17; 1837, May 27

Clothing

Deblois, Mitchell & Co.: 1837, May 13, May 20

Yard goods

Edward Lawson: 1837, March 25, May 20; 1838, May 26, Oct. 27

Liquor & Dry goods

George P. Lawson: 1837, June 3, Oct. 14; 1838, May 5, May 12

Flour & meal

Hunter & Chambers: 1837, July 1

Flour & meal

J. Leander Starr: 1837, June 10

Insurance, Hardware  
& Dry goods

J.M. Chamberlain: 1836, Dec. 17

Stoves & Dry goods

James F. Avery: 1838, May 12

Seeds (Garden, Flower)

Jenkins & Saxton: 1838, May 19	Boots & shoes
John Albro & Co.: 1837, June 17, Nov. 4, Nov. 14; 1838, Oct. 27	Ironmongery, Hardware
John Duffus: 1836, Dec. 17	Yard goods
John H. Braine: 1837, Sept. 16; 1839, Jan. 19, March 23	Flour & meal
John R. Glover: 1837, Sept. 23	Shingles
John U. Ross: 1838, May 26; 1837, Nov. 14	Sugar, Fish, Pork
Joseph Breck & Co.: 1838, Feb. 3	Agricultural supplies & Seeds
McNab (Fairbanks &): 1837, June 10	Dry goods & Hardware
McNab, Cochran & Co.: 1837, June 10, July 1, Nov. 4	Hardware & Groceries
Mignowitz & Geetham: 1836, Dec. 17; 1837, Nov. 14	Yard goods (British)
Robert D. Clarke: 1837, May 27, Dec. 20	Dry goods & Jewelry
S. Cunard & Co.: 1837, May 27	Teas
Samuel Head: 1837, June 3	Drugs, Medicines, Spices
W.B. Hamilton: 1837, Oct. 14, Nov. 4	Molasses, Rum, etc.
Wier & Woodworth: 1838, Feb. 3, April 28	Meal, Cider & Stoves

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**Acadian!**

*New landing, from on board the Barque  
ACADIAN from Greenwich, and for  
sale by the Subscriber.*

**C**ANVAS of the most approved quality,  
CORDAGE, HAWSE PIPES, Saw-w  
Augers, Iron Pots, Bake Ovens, Frying Pans,  
Glue, Alum, Ochres, Copperas, Sulphur,  
Saltpetre, PEPPER, Brushes, Wool Cards,  
Weavers' Reeds, and Gunpowder,

"ALSO,

Fifty Crates **EARTHENWARE**, well  
adapted for the Country trade, which will be  
sold at the lowest prices.

April 28, 1838      **WILLIAM STAIRS.**

Figure 14      Dry goods advertised by William Stairs, Halifax  
(*Acadian Recorder*, 5 May 1838)

## Herald from St. Petersburg.

The Subscribers are now landing and  
offer for Sale,

The Cargo of the above vessel,

—consisting of—

**2500** Bushels prime **WHEAT**,  
140 bags Cabin & Ship **BREAD**,  
63 tons first quality Patent **CORDAGE**,—  
including Hawser, Shrouding, Bolt-  
rope, Spun yarn, Man line, &c.  
100 pieces Russia **SAIL CLOTH**,  
500 boxes Mould Candles, short 6's  
20 bundles polished **SHEET IRON**,  
1 cask Brushmaker's Hairs,  
2 bales black grain Skins,  
1 cask leaf Isinglass,  
4 bales contg. double and single Hair  
Mattresses,  
6 boxes Sausages,  
1 do Reindeer's Tongues,  
1 case **FURS**, consisting of Gentlemen's  
Cloaks, Ladies, and Gent's Gloves,  
and Cloak Linings.

**FAIRBANKS & ALLISON**

December 22, 1838. 3w

Figure 15 Wheat advertised by Fairbanks & Allison, Halifax  
(*Acadian Recorder*, 19 January 1839)

**WHEAT, FLOUR, &c.**

The Subscriber offers for sale, landing  
ex. John Porter, from Liverpool:

**1775** Bags prime Rostock Wheat  
3 bushels each;

**IN STORE**

550 barrels Canada Fine FLOUR, from  
Canada wheat, and latest inspection,

700 do. Dantzio Sup. do. Québec inspection

350 do Hamburg do superfine and extra  
Superfine

50 do CORN MEAL,

55 do Irish Prime Mess PORK,

75 hhds. Bright Muscovado SUGARS,

140 chests Bohea, Congo and Twanky  
TEAS,

200 pieces bleached Canvas and Ducks,

175 boxes Window Glass,

200 hhds. Liverpool FISHERY SALT,

50 bags CORKS,

Loaf Sugar, Wrapping and Printing Paper,  
&c! &c. &c.

ALEX. MURISON.

October 21: 57

Figure 16 Wheat, flour and other goods advertised (*Acadian Recorder*, 4 November 1837)

**Table 6****Items advertised for sale in the *Acadian Recorder*, Halifax, 1836-'39**

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<b>Boots/Shoes:</b>	1838, May 19
<b>Canvas:</b>	1838, May 5 (see also Clothing/Cloth)
<b>Cheese:</b>	1837, May 20
<b>China/Earthenware:</b>	1836, Dec. 17, Dec. 24; 1837, May 6, May 27, June 10, Aug. 5; 1838, May 5; 1839, Jan. 26, Feb. 2, Feb. 9, March 23
<b>Clothing/Cloth:</b>	1836, Dec. 17 (4x); 1837, May 13 (2x), May 20 (3x), May 27 (2x), June 3, June 10 (2x), July 1, Nov. 4, Nov. 14 (2x); 1838, May 5, May 12, May 26, Oct. 27 (2x), Nov. 3; 1839, Jan. 19
<b>Cutlery:</b>	1837, June 17, Aug. 5, Sept. 23, Nov. 4, Nov. 14 (2x); 1838, May 12, Oct. 27
<b>Drugs/Medicines:</b>	1837, June 3; 1838, May 5, May 19
<b>Fish/Oil:</b>	1837, June 3, Oct. 14; 1838, May 26, Nov. 24
<b>Floor cloth:</b>	1837, June 10
<b>Furniture:</b>	1836, Dec. 17; 1837, May 20, Oct. 14; 1838, April 28, May 12
<b>Groceries:</b>	1837, March 25, June 3, June 10, Nov. 4; 1838, May 5, May 12, May 26, Nov. 3
<b>Jewelry:</b>	1836, Dec. 24; 1837, May 20, May 27, Aug. 5, Sept. 23
<b>Leather:</b>	1837, May 20, June 3, June 17, July 1, Nov. 4, Nov. 14
<b>Livestock:</b>	1837, May 6, Sept. 16
<b>Paint:</b>	1837, June 10
<b>Piano fortes:</b>	1836, Dec. 17
<b>Plants/Seeds, etc.:</b>	1837, Jan. 28, Feb. 4, June 3, June 10, Nov. 4, Nov. 14; 1838, April 28, May 5 (2x), May 12, May 19 (2x), Oct. 27; 1838, Nov. 3
<b>Room paper (Wallpaper), Stationery:</b>	1837, March 25, Nov. 14; 1838, May 12
<b>Shingles/Lumber:</b>	1837, June 10, Sept. 23; 1838, Nov. 3



Spices/Salt:	1837, May 13, May 20, June 3
Stoves:	1836, Dec. 17; 1837, June 3, Oct. 14, Nov. 4, Nov. 14; 1838, Feb. 3, Oct. 27, Nov. 3
Sugar/Molasses:	1837, June 10, Oct. 14, Nov. 4; 1838, May 5, May 16, May 26; 1839, March 23
Teas:	1837, May 27, June 10, Sept. 23; 1838, Nov. 24
Tobacco:	1837, June 3, Aug. 5
Toys:	1837, May 13, Aug. 5, Sept. 23
Wheat/Flour:	1837, May 13, May 20 (2x), July 1, Nov. 4 (2x); 1838, May 5, May 12; Oct. 27, Nov. 24; 1839, Jan. 19
Woodworking tools:	1836, Dec. 24; 1837, Nov. 14; 1838, May 12, Nov. 3

**Potatoes ! Potatoes !**

**300** Barrels Prime Lunenburg POTATOES, in good barrels and ready for Shipping. For sale by **TOWNSEND & BENNETT.**

January 4.

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**Curacoa ! Curacoa !**

A Few Dozen Pint Bottles of the above article, warranted genuine. For sale low by **TOWNSEND & BENNETT.**

January 4.

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**Porto Rico Sugars.**

The Subscribers are landing from on board the schr. Armida from Ponce :

65 Hogsheads } First quality  
37 Barrels } **SUGARS.**

For sale low, by **N. L. & J. T. WEST.**

June 22..... tf.




Figure 17 Lunenburg County exports and imports  
(Acadian Recorder, 11 January 1845)

**DOMESTIC MANUFACTURES.**

The Subscribers have on hand, at reasonable prices :

**1000** REAMS, consisting of Brown, grey and blue WRAPPING and TEA PAPER.

A large quantity of Roofing and Sheathing Paper.

CORDAGE & BOLT ROPE, of all sizes, 100 dozen 18 thread Coal Lines, An assortment best Manila Rope.

—ALSO—

40 Reams PRINTING PAPER.

T. & L. PIERCE.

March 17.

Liberal prices will be given for old Canvas, Rope, Cotton, Linen and Woolen Paper Stuff.

Figure 18 Advertisement for paper  
(Acadian Recorder, 12 May 1838)

# Halifax Prices Current.

Fish.		DUTY PAID
Codfish, Mors	.....qtl.	18s a 18s 6d
Tolquait (shore)	.....	16s 6d a 17s
Labrador	.....	12s a 12s 6d
Haddock	.....	11s a 11s 6d
Alewives No. 1	.....bbl	27s 6d
Herring 1	.....	22s 6d
" Spring 2	.....	17s 6d
Mackerel 1	.....	55s
" 2	.....	47s 6d
" 3 (small)	.....	37s 6d a 45s
Salmon 1	.....	£18
" 2 scarce	.....	£17
" 3	.....	£16
Pork and Beef.		
Quebec Pork prime	.....	none
Nova Scotia do. fresh 6 a 7d	.....lb	110s
Quebec, do Beef prime	.....	70s
Nova Scotia do	.....	70s
Beef, fresh	.....	6d a 7d
Hams	.....lb.	10d
Flour, Grain, &c.		
Flour, A or sup. in bond	.....bbl	46s 3d.
" fine in bond	.....	none
Quebec fine	.....	50s a 52s 6d
Middlings	.....	47s 6d
" N. S. Mills	.....	45s a 47s 6d
Hamburg (old)	.....	45s
Am Rye	.....	32s 6d
Meal In. bbl	.....	25s
Oatmeal	.....cwt.	18s a 18s 6d,
Rice	.....	32s 6d
Corn In.	.....	5s. a 5s 3d.
Bread, ship	.....cwt.	32s 6d
" cabin	.....	35s.
Oats	.....bush	2s 6d
Barley bush of 52 lb	.....	5s
Rye do 54	.....	none

## Wines and Liquors.

Wine, Madeira	..... gal.	9s. a 15s
" Port	.....	9s a 11s 6d
Brandy	.....	6s 6d a 8s 6d
Gin	.....	5s 6d a 6s.
Rum, Jam	.....	5s 9d a 6s 3d
Rum, W. I.	.....	4s 6d a 4s 9d
Rum, Dem.	.....	4s 10a 5s 2d

## Fruits.

Currants	.....lb	8d a 9d.
Figs	.....	3d a 4d.
Raisins, Mus. box	.....	12s.
" bloom	.....	8s a 10s.
Apples, Am. good	.....	17s 6d
" N. S.	.....	10s

## Oils.

Seal pale	.....tun	£44.
" br	.....	£30.
Cod	.....	£32 10s
Dog	.....	£30.
Olive	.....gal	5s a 6s.

## Tears.

Bobea	.....lb.	1s 6d.
Congo	.....	2s a 2s 6d
Twankay	.....	2s 4d
Soucioung	.....	2s 9d a 3s
Hyson	.....	3s 9d

## Tobacco.

Leaf	.....lb.	none
Manufactured	.....	1s a 1s 1d

## Lumber.

Boards pine	.....M.	60s
" spruce	.....	45s a 50s
Staves, Am. n. o. hhd.	.....	£7 10s
" w o.	.....	£12 10s
" N. S. n o.	.....	£14 a 16
" Ash	.....	£10 a 12
Cordwood	.....	18s a 19s

## Coals.

Pictou	.....chal.	} 300
Hridgeport	.....	
English	.....	none
Sydney	.....	32s 6d

Coffee	.....lb.	9d a 11d
Soap	.....	4 1/2 d.
Onions	.....	1 3/4 d.
Candles, N. S.	.....	1s
" London	.....	1s 3d
Cheese, Eng.	.....	1s 1d
" N. S.	.....	6d a 8d
Butter	.....	10 1/2 a 11d
Lard	.....	10d
Tallow	.....	9d. scarce
Beans	.....bush	8s a 10s
Peas	.....60lbs	6s a 7s
Hides (dry, salted) Brazil	.....	7 1/2 d.
" green	.....	3d
Feathers	.....	11d a 1s 6d
Sugar	.....cwt.	37s 6d a 42s 6d
Molasses	.....gal.	2s a 2s 3d
Salt, fine hhd.	.....	12s
" coarse	.....	11s a 12s
Potatoes	.....bush.	2s 9d
Hay	.....tun	£3 a £3 10s
Pitch	.....b'al.	16s a 17s
Tar	.....	16s a 17s
Cardage	.....	70s a 75s
Canvas, No 1	.....	2s

Figure 19 Halifax prices for goods on 13 April 1839 (Acadian Recorder)

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## Comments on Edward Ross's inventory

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Edward mentions in his diaries the goods he bought for his store but gives no indication of how much they cost him or for what price he sold them. The *Acadian Recorder* (Halifax) in this period also lists goods available from various merchants, but without indication of price. (Figure 19 does, however, show "Halifax Prices Current" on 13 April 1839, giving a list of major commodities sold.) In 1837, \$1 American = 4s 4d English money.

### BOOKS AND SLATES

Edward purchased a "few school books and slates" from Arthur Godfrey's store in Halifax, 25 May 1841. Given the size of the Sherbrooke settlement and the financial capabilities of its residents, one would expect Edward to buy only a small number of these items, but his purchase does indicate the presence and importance of schooling.

Other small books were sold for use as journals, ledgers and record books. The covers of these blank books and journals were often decorated with marblized or mottled drop colorations (Figure 20).

White spots on a background of pink or blue created a pleasing effect. When these books were made, a large single sheet of paper would be folded twice, bound and then cut to create four leaves.

Pasteboard, which was formed by pasting several sheets of paper one upon the other or by macerating paper and casting it in molds, was used for book covers, bonnets and other items.

### CAP

In October 1838, Bob and Fred Kiens, Frank Russell and Bill Kiddy came up "to indulge in their propensity for drinking. They staid pretty late and went home bareheaded for they tore up each others hats just by the way of sport. Bill Kiddy's hat shared the fate of the rest. He had to buy a new scetch [?] cap to go home with" (22 October 1838). This story provides an example of how some goods that Edward sold are mentioned only in casual reference rather than in his listings of goods and "sundry items".

### CLOTH AND DRY GOODS

In his diaries, Edward mentions only one purchase of "some cloth and shirting cotton". However, *dry goods* normally included cotton, linen or other cloth. The term occasionally used more generally, to refer to anything that was shipped in a dry, non-liquid form, such as food stuffs or hardware. Five references to "dry goods" are made with one



Figure 20 Book cover, c 1840, lined with marbled paper



Figure 21 Bernard O'Neill, dealer in china, glass and earthenware, at 23 Bedford Row, Halifax (N.S. Museum, copy neg. N-9539 )

Ask yourself, if you want  
China.

**BERNARD O'NEILL**

**H**E DESires to acquaint his numerous friends in  
Town and Country, that he has removed  
his China and Earthenware establishment to the  
**NEW STORE** adjoining the North Corner of  
the Ordinance, head of Marchinton's Wharf,  
Upper Water Street, where, in addition to his  
present stock, he has just received, per Barque  
Tory's Wife, from Liverpool, 46 **CRATES**, in  
all forming a general assortment of

**China, Earthenware, &c.**

which will be sold wholesale and retail, at his  
usual low prices, viz.:

Gold Burnished China Tea and Coffee Sets				
White and gold do do do do	do	do	do	do
Enamelled do do do do	do	do	do	do
Gold burnished Dinner Services				
Fancy painted do do	do	do		

Tea, breakfast and toilet sets, and a large and  
general assortment of Printed and Common  
Earthenware. Also—40 crates of well assorted  
Earthenware for sale at a small advance. Metal  
saucepans, tea kitchens, tea and fish kettles,  
round and oval boilers, Digesters, coffee mills,  
Japanned and brass candlesticks, snuffers and  
trays, Britannia metal and iron spoons, German  
silver fish and butter knives, soup, taddy and  
sauce ladles, double and single barrel guns, and  
a variety of other articles in the Hardware line.  
too numerous to mention.                      January 26

Figure 22      Crockery advertised by Bernard O'Neill, Halifax  
(*Acadian Recorder*, 2 February 1839)

purchase as high as £30 from J.N. Shannon, Edward's preferred dealer in these items.

A large variety of cloth was imported from all over the world and, as Halifax was an important port, these linens, cottons, silks and woollens, calicoes, muslins and gingham were available in many checks or stripes, and various colours and textures. *Cambric* was a very fine white linen or cotton, said to be named after the town of Cambray in northern France known for producing it. Heavy thread came in a small skein called a "stick-twist", which is similar to the way embroidery floss is sold today.

After assembling his choices, Edward would do them up into a "bale" with whatever else of small size might be bought and then would pad them with other material for the rough and rocky journey back home.

## CROCKERY

Edward usually bought one crate of crockery, or earthenware, per year. Its arrival was a big event for the ladies, especially William's wife, Rachael, and Edward's sister, Mary, who would both come from across the lake to help "open the crate of crockery ware". These goods were shipped in hogsheads and crates that usually contained "well assorted Earthenware of bowls, plates, etc." very suitable for "the country trade".

The crates were open-poled, crib-style, straw-packed containers that allowed a limited visual inspection of the merchandise. Straw was commonly used to safeguard breakables such as crockery and glass in transit and also to display these goods on store shelves.

Several everyday wares from England, suitable for the country trade, were imported to Nova Scotia. Earthenware or ironstone tablewares were painted or transfer-printed. And there were pottery containers for storage, preparation and serving of food; stoneware containers for vinegar and molasses; crocks for butter and preserved meat; and pans for milk and cream. Flawed pieces were also sold, so as to keep the price in the "everyday" usage range.

## FISH

Fish was common in Nova Scotia diets of the 1800s. Edward usually bought two barrels in Chester in October. He refers to herring but does not mention any other kind of fish.

From 1762, pickled fish barrel regulations were imposed in Nova Scotia from 1762 to enforce standards and to help develop export trade and the demand for Nova Scotia products. Variation is noted in the way casks were marked, as coopers who produced 20 or more barrels were required to place a brand, with the producer's first initial and full surname, on the head of every cask.

PLANES

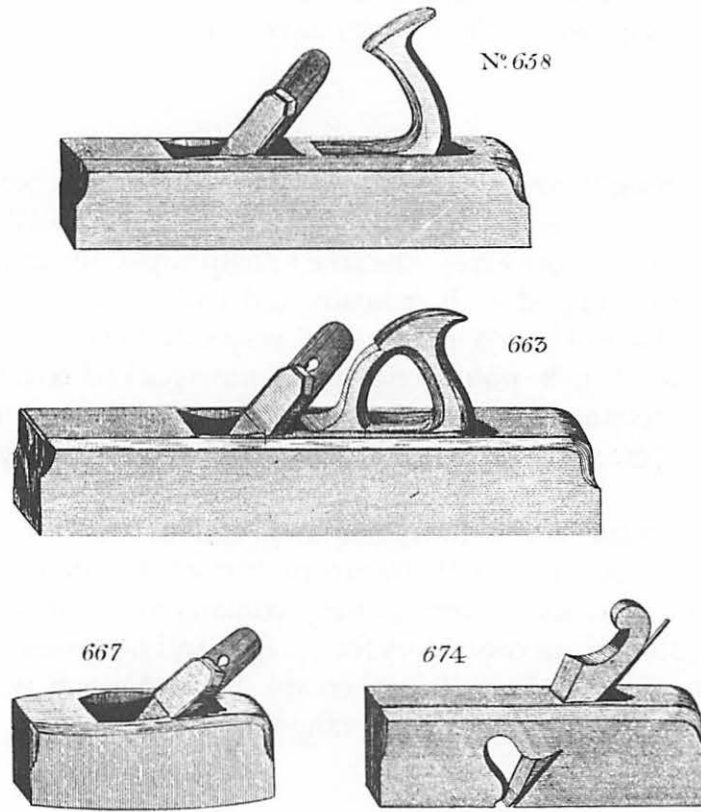


Figure 23 Basic planes (Smith, 1816)



Jan<sup>y</sup> 1858 (42)

Corner of Cheapside and Bedford Row.  
MARKET SQUARE,  
Halifax, N. S. Jan<sup>y</sup> 13 1858

*Edward J. Ross Esq.*

**Bought of BLACK, BROTHERS & CO.**  
DEALERS IN  
HARDWARE, CHAINS, ANCHORS, CORDAGE, NETS, LINES & TWINES,  
LONDON PAINTS AND OILS, &c.

✓ 1 Doy Brass Iron Knaps	=	1	5
✓ 1 <sup>st</sup> Iron do do			11
✓ 1 <sup>st</sup> Rabbit Wine	2/		1 2/4
✓ 5 <sup>th</sup> Zinc Head Bills	10		4 3/4
1/2 Doy Plates	4/6		2 1/2
✓ 1 Stone Bleeking			5 1/2
✓ 1 Gloe do			11 3/4
			£ 16 9

*Rec<sup>d</sup> Payment  
Wm. Black*

Figure 24 Edward Ross purchased goods from this Halifax company for more than 20 years (Ross Papers, PANS)

**JAMES BLACK.**

**H**AS RECEIVED by the Ships Westmorland, Thalia, and Jean-Hastie, a variety of

**SEASONABLE GOODS,**

Amongst which are—Rich figured and plain black and colored Ducapes and Gros de Naples, plain and embroidered China Crapes, Shawls and Handkerchiefs, Thibet and filled silk and cotton do.; do black and col'd silk Handkerchiefs, Lutestrings, Satin and Gauze Ribbons; lace; silk, kid, beaver, Berlin and lambswool Gloves; a variety of Hosiery; 3-4 and 6-4 colored and black Merinos; silk Valencia and Swanedown Vestings; white and grey Shirtings and Sheetings, striped and fancy Shirtings, Checks and Homespuns, Prints and Furniture, Sealotts and Scotch Capes, Flannels, Serges, Hosiery, Blankets, &c., &c. which he offers for sale at his store, No. 103, Granville street.

October 21.

Figure 25 Dry goods advertised by James Black, Halifax (Acadian Recorder, 18 November 1837)

## **FLOUR**

The best-selling item in Edward's store was flour. Even in a community that had been settled for 20 years, with its own grist mills, and where grain production was second only to potatoes, Edward sold as many as 10 barrels of flour in one week of July 1837. Each year he bought 12 to 20 barrels of flour at Fairbanks & Allison in Halifax. These were then shipped by small vessel to Chester Basin, stored in Chester, Chester Basin or Chester Grant, and then freighted by oxen to New Ross. Usually five or six barrels were hauled at a time, with as many as three ox teams needed to move these 196-lb containers over the weather-beaten dirt road.

In the store, flour was sold to customers who waited with bags to purchase up to 50 lb. of this staple.

As with fish barrels, government regulations were imposed in Lower Canada after 1758 to provide uniformity. Wheat grain was advertised for sale in one-, two-, three- and four-bushel bags. Wheat flour was sold by the pound.

Edward mentions purchases of as many as 18 ox loads of flour in a five-year period.

## **HARDWARE**

The hardware purchased from Black, Brothers & Co. in Halifax in April 1837 is all that Edward mentions. By all indications, Edward's store was one of basic staples, and only a few other items were carried.

Hardware needed in the New Ross area was usually made to order by local blacksmiths, such as the Russells, and thus only lower priced factory-made items, new designs, or improved items would be carried at the store.

One would expect Edward to carry axe and hatchet heads, a few planes, a spokeshave, nails, brads, files, cobbler tacks and perhaps a new brace, all for the never-ending repairs and mending that are carried out on farms year-round.

Illustrations for advertisements of the mid-1800s show hardware and cutlery done up in small bundles of paper and string. One item was put on the outside of the bundle to identify the articles contained and allow customer examination.

## **HAYSEED**

The hayseed transactions described by Edward provide insights into the commerce of the period. Three bushels of hayseed were bought 23 October 1838, from the Walkers of the nearby settlement of Dalhousie and were then sold to Joseph of Lunenburg 15 February 1839, nearly four months later.

This tells only half the story, however. More is revealed by Edward's diaries:

I put the saddle on the mare and started for Dalhousie for the purpose of buying Butlers steers. I left the mare at Thomas Browns and walked through the woods. Went as far as Walkers bought three bushel hayseed returned to Butler where I got dinner. As usual he charged such a price for the cattle as precluded all idea of my purchasing them. When I returned to Browns it was sundown. I got home about 1/2 past 7 PM. (23 October 1838)

Edward may have used the excuse of buying Butler's steers to get him close to Walkers in order to obtain trade for goods previously bought on account. He wrote later:

After breakfast went about town to try and sell our load. This is the most hateful part of the business hawking about the butter and hayseed, some that want to buy are loath to part with their money and cut us down in the price. At last we sold butter at 9s 10d[?]. Hayseed at 13/ to Jost to be paid on the 1st April. (15 February 1839)

After finding a buyer for the butter, Edward had to store the seed until February of the following year, at which time it was delivered, with payment not to be received until the first of April. Edward thus had to wait almost a full year to regain his investment on goods bought in Halifax in the spring of 1838, and this was just in time for his annual trek in the spring of 1839.

## MEAL

For every two or three barrels of flour, Edward also bought one of meal. The meal was shipped and stored just like flour but was mentioned in Edward's diaries only twice in 1836 (four barrels on each occasion) and once in 1838 (when five barrels were purchased).

Meal was undoubtedly considered less important than flour and was consumed at breakfast or as a corn meal cake which is still known today as "Johnny Cake".

Both corn meal and oat meal were called meal, but corn was the principal one. There was also buckwheat meal. Corn meal was usually labelled "Indian Meal".

## MOCCASINS

Edward's diaries make only one reference to the purchase of moccasins, in October 1837. This reference is important because it refers to "tanned moccasins", probably made from beef hide. Caribou or moose hides, as furs, were sold and often bought by Edward for trade in Halifax. We are unable at this time to describe the particular style of construction but can conclude that the moccasins would have been brown in colour, and not white like some now available.

## MOLASSES

We know from molasses puncheons still surviving that these coopered vessels were reused several times and upon each filling were marked with the volume of sweet black molasses they contained. Drawn off as weather permitted (it ran better when warm), the rich liquid would be sold in buckets, bottles or crocks.

Edward bought a puncheon in Halifax that, perhaps because of its weight and value, was brought back to Sherbrooke during a special trip made by James after current supplies had dripped dry.

A molasses puncheon must have created a certain atmosphere in the store. It would have been laid on its side on a rack high enough for a container to be put under the gate (a sort of valve) and close enough to the door so as to be handled most easily in a small store the size of Edward's. The flies that would gather around the sticky drippings and the aroma left by the molasses on the floor are easily imagined.

George P. Lawson of Halifax advertised in the *Acadian Recorder*, 5 May 1838, that he had for sale "100 PUNS PORTORICO MOLASSES". The country of origin was important to customers for goods such as molasses because it indicated a certain flavour, thickness and colour.

## POWDER

The powder being discussed here was not for ladies' noses but for the important musket (without grooves in the barrel) that supplied not only meat for the table but protection against possible aggression. Sold in kegs by the wholesaler and regularly rolled about to maintain proper mixture and to prevent caking, gunpowder would be weighed out, carefully handled, and placed in another moisture-proof container such as a leather powder pouch or a small glass bottle with a cork.

Powder and shot would be kept in the hardware corner of a store, not too close to any heat source, but high enough to keep it dry.

One can picture a small and flat, corked powder bottle whose shape gave it as little a chance of breakage as possible while being carried in a pocket, but whose material allowed its holder to quickly surmise the amount and condition of its important contents.

## RABBIT SKINS

On Monday, 17 April 1837, Edward wrote: "Packed up my rabbit skins for Halifax." We do not know the number but suspect it must have been a fair one to merit being recorded in his diary.



Figure 26 Molasses puncheon, 90-120 gallons (sketch by Miles Russell)

**Rum, Molasses, Wine, &c**

**DEBLOIS & MERKEL,**

**Offer at Private Sale,**

**R**UM—Demerara, in puncheons and hhds.

Do.—Halifax Manufacture,

**MOLASSES**—in puncheons, in bond or duty paid;

**WINES**—in hhds. qr. casks and cases, viz: Madeira,  
Port, Sherry, Champagne and Claret;

**CHERRY BRANDY** and other Coddies;

**BRANDY**—in cases,

**VINEGAR**—White Wine in hhds. and barrels,

**TEA**—Congo and Souchong, in chests; half chests,  
and boxes,

**BOTTLES**—New, pints and quarts,

Figure 27 Rum advertisement (*Acadian Recorder*, 30 January 1847)

The Rev. Kennedy B. Wainwright (1953) records the following in his study of merchants in Kings County between 1788 and 1872:

Date	No.	Item	Price	Total
Feb. 22, 1793	4	Sable skins	@ 1/6	6/
	88	Rabbit skins	@ 2d	1 4/6
July 27, 1801	3	Calf skins	@ 4/6	1 3/6
	1	Cow hide		1 2/6

He comments that "rabbit skins were often dyed and used to imitate 'beaver' and 'seal skin', just as they are today[1953]. But they were also used for the baby buntings of the nursery rhymes. Rabbit blankets were made from quarter-inch strips of skin sewn end to end, the resulting strands then plaited, and after that woven. People of older generations maintained that these blankets were superior even to the lamb's wool puffs of country fame."

Rabbit skins were also used in making glue. If the hair was removed and the remaining skin boiled, it produced a natural glue that was strong yet flexible, and often used by farmers and cabinet makers for gluing wood.

## RUM

Rum was bought by Edward in as many locations as there were sizes of measures to buy it in, from gill to puncheon. Four gallons were bought in Chester Basin, a keg in Halifax, a puncheon in Chester—rum was bought often and consumed almost daily.

In a store such as Edward's, one could buy and consume a mug or flask on the spot and still be thought a gentleman as long as money was paid for the refreshment. Rum was mixed as grog with water or taken straight. When travelling in the winter, a bottle or two was often carried by men to help warm the body and keep spirits high. Often the wagers on a card or backgammon game were pints or mugs of rum consumed by both winners and losers.

Rum was usually handled in five-gallon kegs, but these were not always full, and you could buy all the remaining contents if the keg were purchased as well. The keg would not only be used for storing rum. Other liquids such as water, cider and vinegar were later also stored in these handy, used, three- and five-gallon containers. Another common use was to hold a family's winter store of molasses, which was drained from the keg with the aid of a small air hole drilled in the head above the existing tap hole, both holes being closed for storage by hand-whittled pine plugs.

Three kinds of rum are found in the list of "current prices" of goods sold in Halifax published in the *Acadian Recorder*, 13 April 1839 (Figure 19), again indicating rum's common usage in the life of the first half of the 1800s. Jamaican rum was the highest priced, with Demerara and West Indian bringing up a distant second and third, respectively.

## **SALT**

In July 1841, Edward brought in from Chester an "ox load of salt". Salt was very common in Nova Scotia for the fishing industry and was imported by packet from the West Indies in hogsheads (150 to a load) or in bulk. Turks Island salt was preferred because of the known magnesium content in the solar-dried salt and because of the larger size of the granules, which seemed to produce a better and faster salting process.

Salt would be put into bags or hogsheads for sale to local merchants and then subdivided by weight as the customer wanted it. Table salt was refined and sold in circular wooden boxes by people such as N. Woodruff of Salina, New York, but was then more expensive to buy. Usually, large bulk salt would be ground at home with mortar and pestle.

Some domestic economy books suggested that salt be used for melting ice on doorsteps, but this was probably not a widespread practice.

## **SAUERKRAUT**

A barrel of "kraut" bought by Edward in June 1841 could have been for sale or for use in the Ross household. Most families in the area would make their own and only a family such as the Ross's, which received larger numbers of travellers, might run out.

## **SCYTHES**

In July and August 1837, 1838 and 1841, Edward would customarily buy a dozen scythe blades for the haying season that had just started. These blades were of iron and sharpened by hammering an edge. Although well fashioned, they were very susceptible to being cracked and broken amongst the stumps, rocks and other obstacles of a newly sowed drumlin field or bush-ridden meadow.

Scythes came to Nova Scotia from Germany via Liverpool, England. Although steel crosscut saws 4 1/2, 5 and 5 1/2 ft. long and advertised as "German Steel Mill and Pitsaws" were being imported at that time, it seems the "country trade" preferred cheaper scythes. Edward record "grinding" scythes on several occasions.

## **SHOT**

One bag of shot was purchased by James in Chester on 13 February 1841. The preferred sizes were then and still are #6 and BB. Imported from Liverpool, England, shot and "sheet lead" were used for projectiles and were often displayed under a glass-covered countertop. The customer would purchase the shot by weight.

Both sizes of shot were often mixed together in the same container or pouch, as artifacts in the Ross Farm collection show. As the forests around the homesteads



contained many birds and animals, ranging in size from rabbit to moose, it would have been logical to load a shot gun with both sizes of shot.

The sheet lead would be melted down at home and made into balls by being poured into a hand mold to produce uniform pieces of the proper calibre, again illustrating how the average person would choose the least expensive way, making their own.

## SOAP

Edward bought soap by the box. In May 1836 he obtained one box from Fillis of Halifax and in 1838 he bought two from his major wholesaler, Fairbanks & Allison, also of Halifax. This soap would have come to Halifax from Liverpool, England, aboard a vessel such as the "*Brig Stormont* from London".

Some of the first soaps were made from lye (produced from wood ashes) and animal fats, leaving an unbearable smell according to the type of animal fat used. By the 1700s, soaps were much improved by the use of vegetable oils instead of animal fats, and by the addition of oils taken from cloves, lemons, roses, and other flowers and herbs.

Soap was also made more agreeable by being coloured red, black, green, brown, white, marbled, purple, blue or speckled. Soap was cut into cakes with wires or wedge-shaped blades, or rolled into balls of "a size agreeable to your mind". Like butter, the better quality soap was stamped or marked with trademarks—suns, lilies, crescents, bear claws—giving assurance of a good quality product.

Castile soap, also known as "castle" or "Spanish" soap, was from Spain, but most advertisements in the *Acadian Recorder* show imports of Liverpool soap. One could even get what appears to be the best "barrel top quality" London White Scented soap from Edward Lawson of Halifax, which he brought in at a rate of only 1 box to every 10 of common soap.

Once again, as with other products, the soap sold most in Nova Scotia during the first half of the 1800s, especially in a rural area such as Sherbrooke, was slightly better than homemade but not top-of-the-line.

## SUGAR

As with molasses, sugar advertisements by Halifax merchants showed that the product was imported from Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and the colony of Demerara (now Guyana) in northern South America, usually in hogsheads, but some coming in smaller barrels. "Jamaica" sugar, which received small letters in advertisements, was known for its lower quality and dark brown colour, but "Demerara Muscovado" was proclaimed in the *Acadian Recorder* in bold letters by J. Leander Starr of Halifax on 10 June 1837. Muscovado appears most often in the lists of goods for sale in that paper in the late 1830s.

901 SOAP is not liable to injury either from heat or cold ; marine soap is more liable to injury from salt-water than household soap. Soap boxes being square, should, if possible, be all packed together ; they are strong enough to carry their contents from one port to another, but will not bear a blow from the end of a cask, neither will they bear such casks or other heavy goods, to be rolled over or rested on them. For Australia, the boxes are usually strengthened, and for toilet soap, they are sometimes lined with tin. In the spring of 1862, two vessels went from London to the West Indies, having general cargoes including several boxes said to contain soap. During the passage, the contents dissolved, leaked out, and damaged and impregnated other goods, causing a claim on the masters

which they paid under protest. There is no rule regarding the [SOAP] size of chests of soap ; in London they contain 4 cwt. and 5 cwt. each ; in other manufactories the sizes are confined to 1 cwt, 2 cwt, and 3 cwt. each, the larger chiefly for home consumption, and the lesser for exportation. Seven chests of 3 cwt, sometimes go to a ton.

**Sizes.** The sizes of boxes are : 1 cwt, 24 x 16 x 12 in ; 2 cwt, 2 ft. 9 in. x 16 in. x 16 in ; and 3 cwt, 3 ft. 9 in x 1 ft. 4 in. x 1 ft. 4 in.

**Tonnage.** The Admiralty allows 12 half-hogsheads of soap, 24 small casks, or 24 small casks second size and barricoes, to a ton. Bengal, Madras, and Bombay ton 50 cubic feet in cases ; Bengal and Madras 20 cwt. in bars, 15 cwt. in bags. In computing the freight of boxes of soap at Baltimore, gross net weight are considered equal to a barrel of 5 cubic feet. For the Admiralty weights of barrels of soap, see the tables at the commencement. Ordinarily a firkin of soap is 7½ gallons, a barrel 250 lb.

Figure 28 Selection from the standard English work on stowage by R.W. Stevens, late 1860s



Figure 29 Advertisement showing box of soap and other packaging (McAlpine's *Halifax City Directory*, 1873-'74)

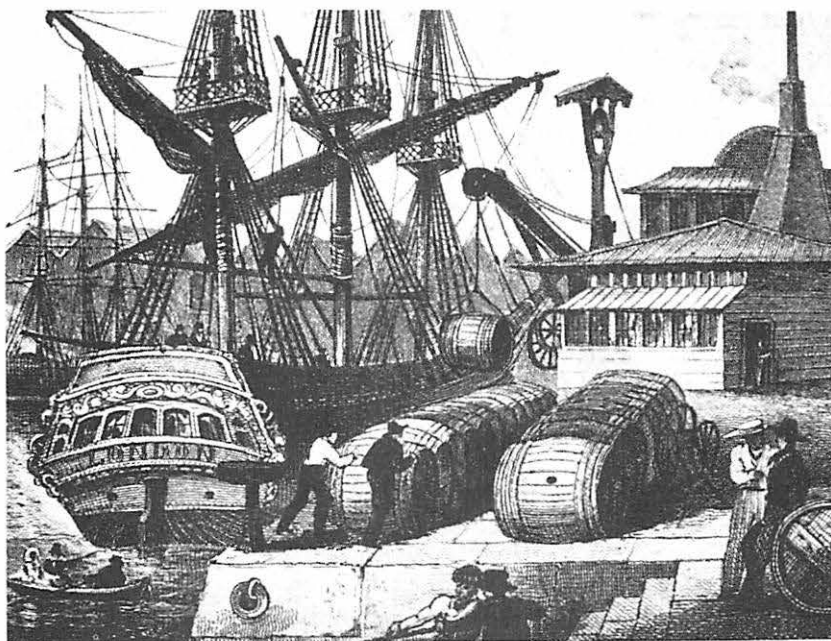


Figure 30 Sugar trade at London docks (Kilby, 1971). To provide an idea of volume in the port of London, Kilby relates that during a strike of dry coopers between 4-23 August 1821, "very soon there were 95 ships of sugar held up in the docks".

Sugar was available in several grades. Muscovado was the damp unrefined residue left over from producing refined sugar and molasses. Brown, or strained, sugar was refined the minimum number of times and differed very little from raw or crude sugar. Single-, double- or triple-refined sugars were the most expensive. It appears that while brown sugar was most often used in the New England colonies for cooking and baking, candying, preserving, and in remedies for coughs and hoarseness, Muscovado was more common in Nova Scotia.

Refined white sugar like that most used today was boiled, skimmed and done up in a loaf or cone (determined by the way it was left to dry after being refined), usually wrapped in blue paper and, weighing from 5 to 50 lb. (5 to 10 lb. most commonly), shipped in hogsheads from England.

Edward's two records of sugar purchases were orders in July 1837 from Fairbanks & Allison for barrels of sugar, ordered one at a time, which would have been cheaper per pound and more in demand by his customers than was loaf sugar, which he never mentions, although it was available.

## SUNDRY ARTICLES

We do not know what Edward classified as "sundry articles". We can only guess. His four references made in 1836, 1839 and 1841 make it appear that these items were necessary or specially requested items rather than just for impulse buying.

On 10 May 1836, he wrote: "proceeded on our journey with 4 barrels, 1 chest tea, 1 box sundries, 1/2 keg tobacco and my travelling trunk." This passage could indicate that the sundries mentioned were not expensive, or else they might have been packed away in his trunk for safer keeping. The other items listed here are what one would call "purchasing necessities" of the earlier settlements. Thus one would assume that Edward placed basic and small items in this "sundry articles" category.

Edward does not mention any purchase of "patent" or other drugs and medicines, yet one would assume he made a small number of sales of these commodities.

Spices are also absent from Edward's notes, but cinnamon sticks, mustard, pepper, and saltpeter for corning meat must surely have been sold.

## TAR

On 9 May 1837, Edward purchased "some tar" from W. Robinson near Chester. Tar could have been used to patch his boat and to mend his boots, and some would be sold in his store. Although imported in barrels, his purchases and sales of tar would have been in small bottles and wooden casks.

## TEA AND TEA PAPER

Tea was purchased quite often by Edward, not only in Halifax but at Seabrighten's in Chester as well. The number of chests of tea he sold indicate that tea drinking was a very well established custom, and Edward endeavoured not to be sold out of this commodity. One chest was bought on 10 May 1836, and another on 10 August, just three months later.

The Dutch were the first to ship tea to Europe early in the 1600s from a region in China where the word was pronounced "tay". The first reference to tea in England was in 1598, called "chaa" and used as a medicine. It was later called "tay" and, by the 18th century, pronounced as we do today.

Black tea and green tea come from the same plant but differ in preparation. Black tea is fermented and roasted, while green tea is steamed and dried but not fermented. India was known for black tea, and China for green tea. Halifax-advertised teas were Bohea, Congo, Twankey, Souchong and Hyson, in order of increasing price, with Bohea at 1s 6d and Hyson at 3s 9d per pound.

Tea was sold in round or square tin canisters or, more commonly, measured out loose in small amounts and folded up in paper packets bound with string. Edward probably bought a canister or two at one time and sold his tea from these after refilling them from his bulk supply, in chests. The paper for packets was brown, grey or blue, advertised as "Wrapping and Tea Paper" and sold in reams of 500 sheets. Quires of paper (24 or 25 sheets, or 1/20th of a ream) could be bought in smaller stores for those who only required these amounts or wanted more than one colour.

As the woodcut advertisement for H. Wetherby & Co., Halifax, (Figure 31) shows, tea came in cases or wooden boxes and was sold at store counters from tin canisters. Sugar cones are shown in the advertisement in reference to the accepted practice of adding sugar to tea before drinking. "Young Hyson" is shown on top of the tea pile to indicate its premier ranking in price.

## TOBACCO

Edward bought tobacco by the keg or half keg, usually at Chester Basin. Fig tobacco was sold in kegs, leaf tobacco in hogsheads, and lump tobacco and cigars in boxes. Twist was sold from boxes, as requested, and snuff from bottles or animal bladders.

Fig tobacco was the most common and came in grades of #1, #2 and #3. Fig tobacco was made by pressing 12 or 16 leaves together, with 16 in greater demand and fetching a better price. Fig tobacco often had honey, molasses or both pressed in, with the common name "honey dew" used to promote it.

Fig tobacco then as now was strong and sweet, with the fig decreasing in size as time went by to gain "more money for less". Figs were often cut into smaller portions.

**Reduction on Tea.**

**H. WETHERBY & Co.,**  
 NO. 205 BARRINGTON STREET,  
 NEAR GODY'S MARKET, HALIFAX, N.S.  
 And No. 15 Brunswick Street,  
 OPPOSITE THE PAVILLION BARRACKS

The subscribers can and will sell the  
**BEST & CHEAPEST**  
**FAMILY GROCERIES**  
 IN NOVA SCOTIA.  
 Comparison of Price and Quality parti-  
 cularly requested.

**HALF DOLLAR TEA, in lots of not less than six pounds, will be  
 CHARGED 2s 4d PER POUND.**

**H. WETHERBY & Co.**

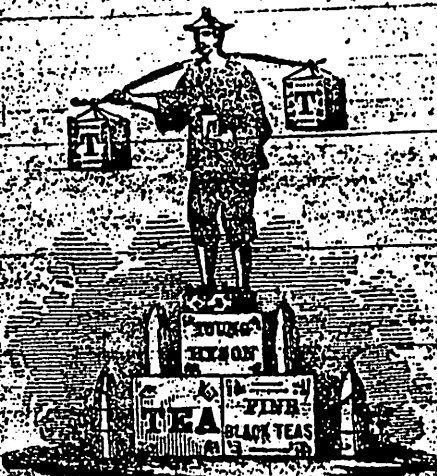



Figure 31 Typical advertisement for tea, Halifax (*Business Directory*, 1864-'65)

*Hyson and Souchong Teas.*



**A FEW** Chests of fine flavoured Hyson and Souchong TEAS may be had low of Temple & Lewis Piers.  
 october 5.....1822

Figure 32 Woodcut illustration of a tin tea canister (*Acadian Recorder*, 9 November 1822)

**TOBACCO.**



**The Subscribers offer for Sale,**

<b>200</b>	Kegs, FIG TOBACCO, No. 1
	130 do do do " 2
	35 do do do " 3

Also, Twist and Cut Tobacco, Cigars and  
Snuff, manufactured by them in Halifax.

*IN ADDITION TO WHICH*

They have just received ex. schr. America,  
from Richmond:


	109 Hubs LEAF TOBACCO,
	52 Kegs Fig Tobacco, 10 hands,
	71 boxes Lump do.—pound; part of which is honey dew,
	52 do do do 12 to the pound
	59 do do do 16 do do

Which will be sold in Bond or duty paid,  
The above having been selected with great care,  
can be recommended as worthy the attention of  
dealers both in Town and Country.

**ALLAN McDONALD & CO.**  
Halifax, July 29, 1837.

Figure 34 Tobacco advertised by Allan McDonald & Co., Halifax (*Acadian Recorder*, 5 August 1837)

**Tea ! Tea ! Tea !**



**C**hests CONGO TEA,  
(warranted good)

Chests and half chests very fine ditto, for  
family use

For Sale by  
**COCHRAN & CO.**

January 30, 1847.

Figure 33 Tea chest (*Acadian Recorder*, 30 January 1847)

Edward himself used snuff while in the company of ladies or in church, but he does not mention any sales or purchases of this tobacco.

A flint, steel and char cloth were not carried everyday. Matches were expensive, so one quickly realizes why chewing tobacco was common and why cigars and pipes were used near the hearth of the kitchen.

Tobacco was brought from Richmond, Virginia, by importers such as Allan McDonald & Co., who advertised that they "recommended [it] as worthy the attention of dealers of both town and country".

Women were not left out, as "Boxes [of] Ladies Twist Tobacco" were advertised for sale and consumed in "chaws" or in the clay pipes that rested on the mantel above the fires the women worked near every day.

Edward's early connection to the tobacco trade is made apparent by his diary entry of 28 April 1837, when he wrote: "Called at the Micmac Tobacco Manufactory to see my old employer Mr. Foster."

## **VIOLIN STRINGS**

Edward purchased violin strings in December 1835 and April 1837. Music played an important part in the weddings, frolics and other celebrations. Alone or combined with a piano or jaw harp, a violin provided the basis for a musical event.

A pack of cards was also received along with violin strings from his good friend Hamilton of Halifax. These items had most likely been requested by Edward in one of his ongoing communications with Hamilton.

When work was done they might work hard from daylight till dark. Other days they did little but enjoy themselves. A frolic combined work and entertainment, with great enthusiasm put into both in the same day.

## **WARP**

In October 1838, Edward received from Halifax nine bundles of warp for weaving. It appears that some were for sale and others were put out to weavers in the community by himself and then the cloth sold or traded in Halifax for other goods.

October seems to have been the start of the weaver's season. In October 1841, when Edward and his mother "went up the road in the horse and waggon to take some yarn to the weavers, called at George Hiltz's but she could not do it. We gave it to Mrs. Edmund Hiltz..." (28 October 1841)

The Rosses also had a loom which the carpenter Jacob Hiltz would set up, but no other mention is made in Edward's diaries and we do not know who was the weaver.

Mills in the United States supplied most of the cotton that reached the Maritime Provinces. It usually arrived in skeins of single (unplied) thread, z-twist, that measured about 8,400 yards to the pound, and was used for warp. Singles had to be sized with starch before weaving (Burnham and Burnham, 1972).



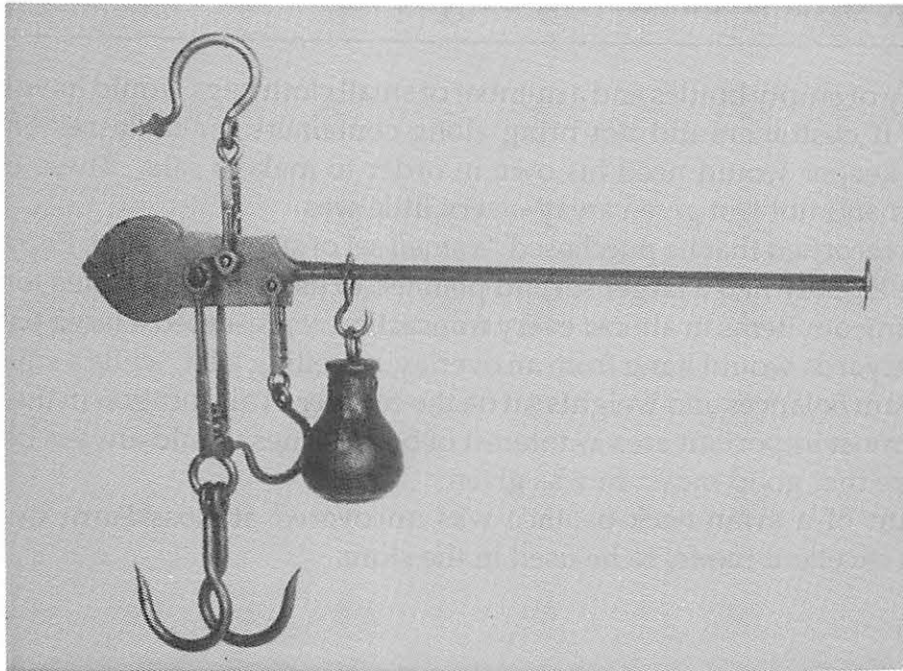
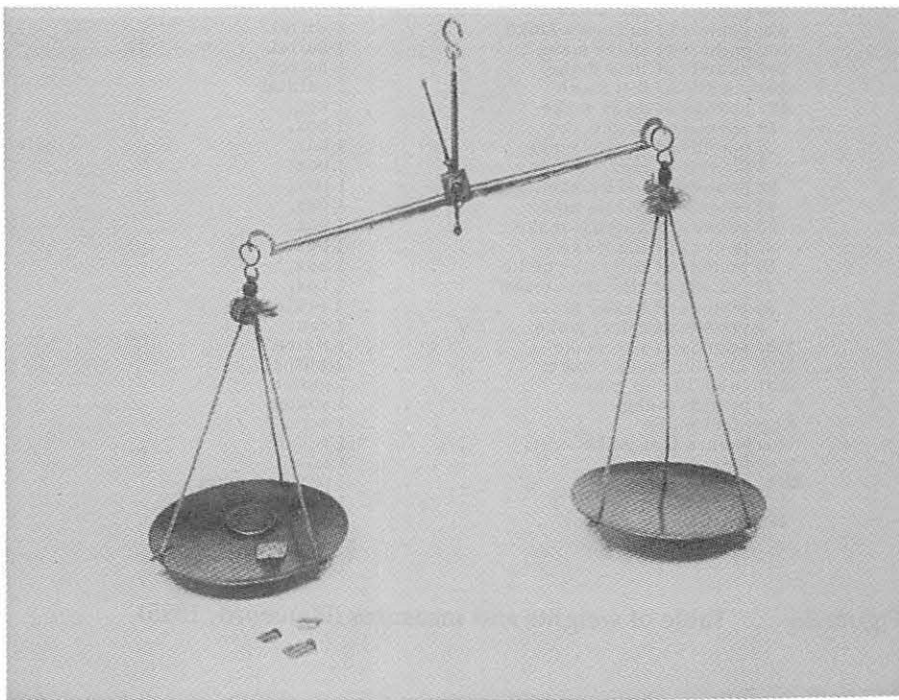


Figure 35 Reversible steelyard, and a swan-neck beam balance (Graham, 1981)



## Weighing and measuring of goods

A small supply of empty bottles and a number of small cloth bags would have been kept in the store. If customers did not bring along containers for molasses or shot, for example, the keeper would need his own in order to make a sale. These containers would be sold and not just given away—very little was.

Edward recorded that he purchased “a small set of steelyards from Pepy” in 1838. He must have already had a larger set and planned to use the smaller size for medium tasks. Weighing out items in almost every transaction represented a large part of store time. The steelyards would hang from an overlay, or ceiling joist, while a smaller set of swan-neck beam balances and weights sat on the counter. This location in the store was perhaps “the most important area as interest of both parties would always be centered here” to assure that good measure was given.

The beam of a swan-neck balance was uncovered at Ross Farm in 1984 and represents an excellent model to be used in the store.

### MISCELLANEOUS TABLE.

12 things make	1 dozen.
12 dozen make	1 gross.
12 gross make	1 great gross
20 things make	1 score.
196 pounds of flour make	1 barrel.
200 pounds of beef or pork make	1 barrel.
135 pounds of potatoes or apples make	1 barrel.
280 pounds of salt make	1 barrel.
400 pounds of molasses make	1 barrel.
200 pounds of sugar make	1 barrel.
240 pounds of lime make	1 barrel.
100 pounds of fish make	1 quintal
100 pounds of nails make	1 keg.
50 pounds of soap make	1 box.
20 pounds of raisins make	1 box.
2 pounds of cigars make	1 box.
20 pounds of soda make	1 box.
40 pounds of cheese make	1 box.
25 pounds of tobacco make	1 box.
63 pounds of tea make	1 box.
60 pounds of saleratus make	1 box.
25 pounds of chocolate make	1 box.
56 pounds of butter make	1 firkin.
5 pounds of spices make	1 can.
1100 pounds of rice make	1 tierce.
2150 42 cubic inches make	1 bushel.
231 cubic inches make	1 gallon.
14 pounds make	1 stone.
43760 feet make	1 acre.
100 square feet make	1 square.
5280 feet make	1 mile.
24¾ cubic feet make	1 perch of stone.
128 cubic feet make	1 cord.
140 lbs. of lime make	1 cask.

Figure 36 Table of weights and measures (Hansford, 1895)

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## Competition

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It appears that there was some competition in the area. Edward mentions "going up to Burke Savage & Co." but does not mention any purchase. However, the name implies goods for sale.

Some special purchases were made in the community, such as one dozen scythe blades from F. Kiens, who lived not far away, on the road to Chester Basin.

Customers came down to the Ross store from as far as Dalhousie, 10 to 15 miles away, suggesting no other source of supply in between.

No other reference is made to competitors. It is not known who would have taken up the slack when Edward left for Boston. It is not thought that any other family member carried on with Edward's little store.



# WILLIAM COATS,

Takes this method of acquainting the PUBLIC in general, and his FRIENDS in particular, that he has for SALE, at his STORE, at the sign of the SUGAR-LOAF, contiguous to the PUBLIC WHARF, in FRONT-STREET, and near POOL'S BRIDGE, WHOLESALE and RETAIL;

**W**EST-INDIA and PHILADELPHIA RUM, Jamaica spirits, brandy, geneva, anniseed, cordials; Madeira, Lisbon, and Teneriff WINES; lamp oil; loaf, lump and muscovado SUGARS; molasses; green, fouchong, and bohea TEA; chocolate, rice, oatmeal, starch, indigo, pepper, ginger, allspice, cloves, mace, cinnamon, and nutmegs; cotton; 3d, 4d, 8d, 10d, 12d and 20d, nails; powder and shot, soap and candles, brimstone, allum, salt-petre, copperas, raisins, currants, madder, red-wood, fine and coarse salt, WESTON'S SNUFF, mustard, Florence Oil, &c. &c. &c.

Sea stores, shallop-mens bills, &c. put up with care, and all orders from Town or Country thankfully received, and carefully executed.

PHILADELPHIA, Printed by JOHN DUNLAP, at the *Newest* Printing-Office, in Market-street.

Figure 37 Store interior, late 1700s, from advertising card of William Coats, Philadelphia (Colonial Williamsburg)

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## Recommendations for presentation of Edward's store

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1. A photograph of the store before restoration (Figure 2), taken by Mrs. Mark White in about the late 1930s, shows no corner boards on the building. A later photograph taken after restoration (Figure 3), also by Mrs. White, does show corner boards. It seems appropriate, if the store is to be properly presented as it was in 1839-'49, that the corner boards be removed and the walls entirely shingled.
2. Edward states that on 7 June 1841, "Mama, Rachel and I marked and put away the goods on the shelves." Oral history research tells us that shelves were located in the store on both the south and north walls. Therefore it is recommended that two sets of shelves 12 in. wide, one at eye level and one at waist level, should be located on both the south and north walls going the full width of the store and should be braced by wooden brackets, similar to those still in the pantry of Rosebank Cottage. Another shelf should be placed at eye level on the east wall.
3. A small counter should be located in front of the east wall of the shop with a ledger book, pen and ink, twine, and 21x24-inch squares of wrapping paper of brown, grey or blue colour located on top.
4. Bundles and bolts of suitable yardage should be placed on the north wall shelves to act as storage for the period clothing program.
5. Barrels of flour, meal, etc., and boxes of soap, hardware, etc., should be located along the north wall of the store, with removable heads in most.
6. Some small items should out of necessity be located in a locked display case on one of the shelves.
7. A puncheon of molasses, with gate, should be placed on its side on a 12 to 16 inch cradle base located near the door.
8. Talcum powder is recommended in place of flour in the store to eliminate insect and rodent problems as much as possible.
9. Items such as a bag of hayseed will be hung from the overlays (ceiling joists), giving a fuller appearance to the store.
10. The steelyards will be hung from the overlays as well, for weighing out heavier quantities of goods.

11. Empty barrels of flour, meal, etc. should be stored on the overlays, once again to give a full feeling to the store and to lend the appearance of a "reasonably brisk trade".
12. Some of Edward's "trade goods", such as rabbit skins and butter tubs, should be stored in sight on the overlays so as to represent and allow discussion of this part of a storekeeper's business.

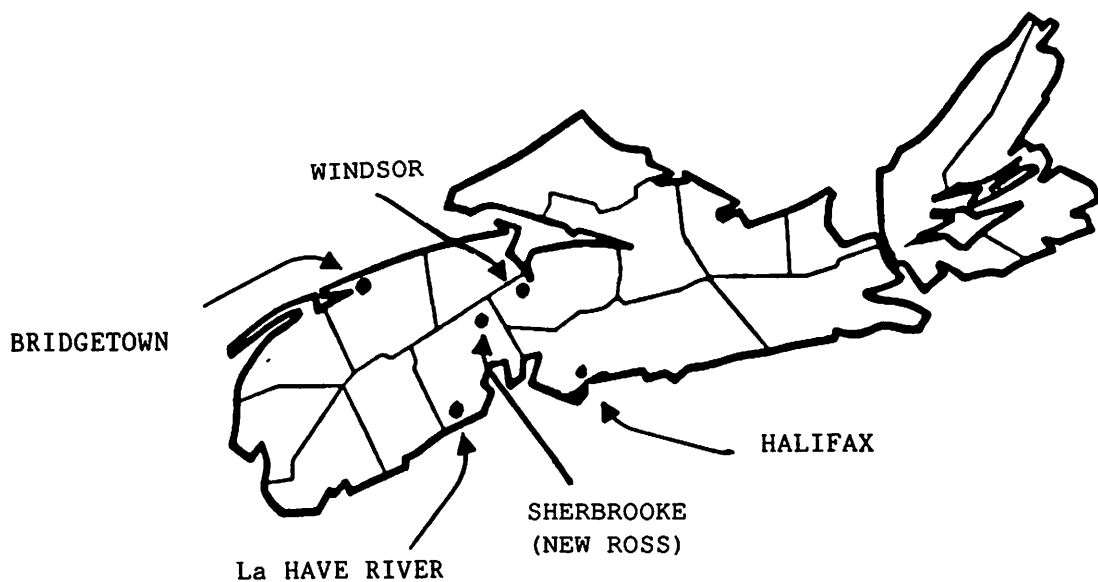


Figure 38 Location of the Nova Scotian country stores studied (sketch by Miles Russell)

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## Appendix A: Comparison of Nova Scotia country stores of the early 1800s

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The records of some stores and keepers from the same time period were examined for the sake of comparison: those of (1) Alexander Fowler of Bridgetown, N.S. (day book, 1837-'42), (2) William O'Brien of Windsor, N.S. (account book, 1842-'47), and (3) Joseph Rudolf of LaHave River, N.S. (account book, 1825-'32). These merchants were located in a circle around New Ross in areas with larger populations, but they also dealt with rural customers.

### Transactions of Alexander Fowler, Bridgetown, 1837-'42

Most goods bought by rural customers were put on account at date of purchase and then were paid for, or "settled", in cash through the year as money was received or saved up from sales of a farmer's goods. Not all accounts were paid in this manner, but unlike the records of most New England storekeepers, also paid in trade, Nova Scotia records clearly show a fair cash flow around settlements that was larger than one might perhaps expect in the 1830s and 1840s.

However, understanding the prevalence of cash payment, it is still interesting to note some of the trade (rather than barter) items used for payment of accounts (see Table 9) because they often provide insight into the customers' occupations and ways of life. These trade items are not listed here by any order except as they were noted in the various accounts. Original spellings of items have in some instances been preserved as recorded.

The prices of goods sold by Alexander Fowler are shown in Tables 10 to 14, with comparisons between prices in 1843 and earlier years.

#### BARRELS

One of the major trade goods of Edward Ross was barrels. For 19 May 1841, Edward wrote, "Barry took in 220 barrels [on board his ship] and went on to Town". For 6 May 1839, Edward wrote, "At last was offered 2/3 each by Fairbanks and Allison as a 'dernier resort' in case I could not do better." Poor Edward could not do better and they were sold. These barrels had been freighted some 20 miles by land, transported up the sea coast to Halifax by shallop and then unloaded at the wharf, all for just 2 shillings and 3 pence each.

One can compare this price to 16 cider barrels bought by Alexander Fowler in Bridgetown on 18 October 1843, for 2s 6d. This price was about equal to one day's labour at the time, which makes Edward Ross's feelings of frustration more understandable, as his shipment of 220 barrels represented a large part of a year of labour.

#10	To 1 pair shoes of St. Thomas	13 1/2	10 1/2
#11	To 2 1/2 yds factory Cotton	113	
#11	By 1 months work		126
#12	Asaph Thomas Dr		
#12	To 1 yd factory Cotton		13
#12	Mary Dyer		
#12	To 1 oz Snuff		3
#12	" 2 lbs thread & cotton ball		5
#13	William Parker Dr		
#13	To 1 Cake Soap		5
#15	Henry Pitcher Dr		
#15	To 1 pair side Combs		7 1/2
#17	Charles Ristone Dr		
#17	To 1/2 lb Tobacco		10 1/2
#17	" 1 pipe		
#17	" 1/4 lb Tobacco		27
#17	Joseph Wall Dr		
#17	To 1 lb Tobacco		18
#17	James Hall Dr		
#17	To 1/4 lb Indigo		
#17	" 1 paper of paper		46
#17	Asaph Thomas Dr		
#17	To 1/2 yd Ribbon		
#17	" 1/2 Tea Ball		3 1/2
#17	Richard Cunningham Dr		
#17	To 1 Molass for Daughter		8 1/2
#17	Elizabeth Foster Dr		
#17	To 1/2 lb Tobacco		10 1/2
#19	Benjamin Low Dr		
#19	To 4 sheets paper		4
#19	Daniel Langley Dr		
#19	To Writing your half of agreement		7 1/2
#19	Blonzeri Steppinger Dr		
#19	To 1 lb Salmon		3 1/4
#19	Wellington Marshall		
#19	To Paid William Ristone		
#19	William Ristone Dr		
#19	To 1 att for 2 1/2 lb		26
#19	By Wellington Marshall		100
#19	William Ristone Dr		



**Table 9**  
**Goods taken in trade by**  
**Alexander Fowler of Bridgetown, N.S., 1837, 1838 and 1843**

Item (amount)	Measure	Date	Cost of measure			Measure sold		
			(£	s	d)	(£	s	d)
Eggs (1)	doz.	22 Sept. 1837	-	-	9	-	1	-
Butter (11)	lb.	20 Sept. 1837	-	-	10	-	1	-
Tallow (12)	lb.	14 Oct. 1837	-	-	9			
Potatoes (6)	bushel	19 May 1837	-	2	-			
Apples (1) (barrel not included)	barrel	10 Nov. 1837	-	8	-			
Oats (5)	bushel	15 March 1837	-	12	6			
Flour (64)	lb.	2 Jan. 1838	-	16	-			
Cheese 1/4 (25)	lb.	29 Aug. 1837	-	-	6			
Cloth (twilled) (4 7/8)	yd.	30 June 1843	-	3	6	-	4	3
Turnip (1)	bushel	1 Nov. 1843	-	1	3			
Wood (6) (part of a cord to 8 ft.)	ft.	31 Jan. 1837	-	1	-			

Hay (4)	Cwt	24 April 1837	- 3 6	
Salmon (1)	each	19 June 1837	- 3 4	
Geese (2)	each	23 Dec. 1837	- 1 9	
Lamb (7 1/2)	lb.	24 Aug. 1837	- - 3 1/2	
Hay rake (2)	each	18 July 1837	- 2 -	- 2 6
Barrels, empty (25)	each	27 Sept. 1837	- 1 -	- 25 -
Barrels (16 flour)	each	28 Oct. 1837	- 1 -	
Barrels (12 cider)	each	18 Oct. 1843		- 2 6
Sewing, cotton frock coat (2 days)		14 March 1843	- 8 -	
Dress (second-hand)		16 May 1843	- 5 -	
Shingle (spruce/m)	1/4 square (thousand)	28 Nov. 1837	- 3 6	
Lumber (pine/m)	thousand ft.	8 July 1843	- 35 -	
Lumber (spruce/m)	thousand ft.	25 Nov. 1837	- 40 -	
Hemlock (lathe/m)	thousand ft.	22 Nov. 1843	- 30 -	
Grass hat (2)	each	8 April 1843	- 1 6	- 2 3

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Source: Fowler, *Day Book*, 1836-'43, PANS MG 3, #20.

Table 10

Price of items for sale in 1837 and 1843 by  
Alexander Fowler of Bridgetown, N.S.

Item	Measure	Date	Price £ s d
<b>1837</b>		<b>1837</b>	
Corn broom	one	Jan. 7	- 2 6
Gimlet	—	Oct. 14	- - 3 1/2
Scythe stone	—	July 11	- - 7 1/2
Plates	doz.	May 28	- 3 6
Knife & fork	1/2 doz.	Sept. 12	- 7 3
Cup & saucer	1/2 doz.	Sept. 25	- 2 6
Tea pot	—	March 7	- 1 7
Snuff	1 oz.	Jan. 17	- - 3
Cloth, twilled	yd.	Feb. 11	- 3 9
Raisins	lb.	March 3	- - 9
Nutmegs	—	March 2	- - 1 1/4
Penknife	—	March 23	- 5 11
Cinnamon	oz.	Aug. 28	- - 6
Glass (square)	7 x 9"	June 30	- - 5
Ribbon, white	yd.	Nov. 8	- 1 -
Ribbon, blue	yd.	Nov. 8	- 1 6
<b>1843</b>		<b>1843</b>	
Jack knife	—	April 4	- 1 6
Ink powder	paper	April 27	- - 9
Paste board	each	Feb. 21	- - 4 1/2
Moleskin cloth	yd.	June 30	- 2 6
Cider barrels	each	Oct. 18	- 2 6

Source: Fowler, *Day Book*, 1836-'43.

Table 11

Saleratus prices charged by  
Alexander Fowler of Bridgetown, N.S.

Date in 1837	Purchase amount (lb.)	Cost for 1/2 lb. (£ s d)	Date in 1843	Purchase amount (lb.)	Cost for 1/2 lb. (£ s d)
Feb. 11	one	- - 6 1/2	Jan. 19	1/2	- - 5 1/2
Feb. 20	1/2	- - 7 1/2	Jan. 27	one	- - 4 1/2
Feb. 27	1/2	- - 8	Feb. 22	2	- - 4 1/2
May 10	1/2	- - 7 1/2	March 11	1/2	- - 5 1/2
July 3	1/2	- - 9	June 5	1/4	- - 5
Aug. 3	1/2	- - 8	Sept. 16	1/2	- - 4 1/2
Aug. 7	one	- - 8			
Aug. 15	one	- - 8			
Sept. 1	1/4	- - 8			
Sept. 18	1/2	- - 7 1/2			
Sept. 28	one	- - 7			
Oct. 3	1/2	- - 6			
Nov. 5	1/2	- - 7			
Nov. 10	one	- - 7			
Dec. 8	1/2	- - 7			
Dec. 22	one	- - 6			

Source: Fowler, *Day Book*, 1836-43.

Note: Saleratus is a leavening agent like baking powder (spelled "salaratus" by these 19th-century storekeepers). Prices show a clear seasonal change from a low of 6 pence in December to a high of 9 pence in July. Prices also show a clear drop from 1837 to 1843.

Table 12

Comparison of goods sold by  
Alexander Fowler of Bridgetown, N.S.,  
in 1837 and 1843

Item	Measure	Date, 1837	Price			Date, 1843	Price		
			£	s	d		£	s	d
Molasses	gallon	Aug. 5	-	1	4 1/2	Feb. 23	-	1	4 1/2
Tea	lb.	Mar. 18	-	4	3	Feb. 22	-	5	-
Saleratus	1/2 lb.	Feb. 20	-	-	7 1/2	Feb. 22	-	-	4 1/2
Soap	cake	Dec. 16	-	-	3 1/2	Nov. 7	-	-	4 1/2
Soap	lb.	Dec. 13	-	-	7 1/2	April 1	-	-	8
Paper	1/2 quire*	Nov. 8	-	-	9	Nov. 24	-	-	9
Shovel (barn)	one	Jan. 10	-	5	9	Jan. 4	-	5	-
Turnip seed	1 oz.	July 8	-	-	6	June 30	-	-	6
Tobacco	fig	June 1	-	-	1 1/2	March 4	-	-	1 1/2
Tobacco	lb.	Jan. 17	-	1	6	March 9	-	1	7 1/2
Sticks	twist	Feb. 10	-	-	4 1/2	Jan. 5	-	-	4 1/2
Cotton reel	spool	May 13	-	-	4 1/2	March 22	-	-	5
Clay pipe	one	Jan. 17	-	-	1/2	April 29	-	-	1/2
Slate	one	Jan. 17	-	1	6	April 9	-	1	5
Slate pencil	one	Jan. 17	-	-	1/2	April 9	-	-	1/2

Shoe nails	1/4 lb.	Dec. 13	- - 2 1/2	April 14	- - 2 1/2
Scythe (blade)	one	Aug. 5	- 7 -	Aug. 7	- 6 10 1/2
Printed cotton	yd.	Jan. 2	- 1 3	March 18	- 1 -
Factory cotton	yd.	Jan. 2	- 1 3	Jan. 19	- - 11
Cambric lining	yd.	March 8	- - 8	March 22	- - 9
Ribbon (black)	yd.	Nov. 8	- 1 5	July 30	- 1 5
Saltpeter	1/2 lb.	Jan. 10	- - 9	Nov. 8	- - 6
Iron buttons	doz.	Feb. 9	- - 5	July 7	- - 4
Sugar	lb.	Sept. 12	- - 7 1/2	Feb. 13	- - 7 1/2
Sugar loaf	lb.	July 1	- 1 -		
Indigo	2 oz.	Aug. 5	- 1 7 1/2	Jan. 23	- 1 6
Shot	lb.	Sept. 14	- - 6	April 10	- - 6
Powder, gun	1/2 lb.	Dec. 27	- - 9	April 10	- - 9

Source: Fowler, *Day Book*, 1836-43.

\* Note: A quire of paper was 25 sheets, or 1/20th of a ream.

Table 13

Buttons and prices, 1837, as sold by  
Alexander Fowler of Bridgetown, N.S.

Date	Number	Style	Price per dozen		
			£	s	d
Jan. 2	1 doz.	Iron	-	-	6
Feb. 9	2 doz.	Iron	-	-	5
March 8	1 doz.	Black iron	-	-	5
Jan. 14	2 doz.	Dead eye	-	-	4 1/2
Dec. 13	3 doz.	Iron dead eye	-	-	3 1/2
June 7, 1843	1/2 doz.	Iron	-	-	4
Jan. 30	1 doz.	Pearl	-	-	6
July 10	1 doz.	Pearl	-	-	5
July 7, 1843	1 doz.	Pearl	-	-	5
June 7, 1843	1/2 doz.	Pearl	-	-	5
March 3	1 doz.	Gilt	-	1	4 1/2
Sept. 19	1 doz.	Gilt	-	1	4
Oct. 9	1 doz.	Gilt vest	-	-	9
Jan. 1, 1843	1 doz.	Gilt	-	-	10
March 6	13	Lignum vitae	-	1	6
May 6	16	Covered	-	1	4
Oct. 2	16	Covered	-	1	4
May 8	1 doz.	Small	-	1	-
Oct. 2	4	Small	-	-	6
July 8	2 doz.	—	-	-	4 1/2
July 18	1 doz.	—	-	-	4

Source: Fowler, *Day Book*, 1836-'43.

**Table 14**

**Flour sales of Alexander Fowler of  
Bridgetown, N.S., 1837 and 1843**

Quantity and Kind	Date	Price £ s d
<b>1837</b>	<b>1837</b>	
One bag flour	April 20	- 29 4 1/2
<b>1843</b>	<b>1843</b>	
One bushel wheat	May 8	- 7 9
	Oct. 20 (short measure)	- 6 8
	Oct. 24	- 7 6
	Dec. 22	- 7 6
One bushel corn meal	Feb. 4	- 5 6
	Feb. 10	- 5 6
	May 18	- 5 6
	July 19	- 6 -
	Oct. 24	- 5 6

Source: Fowler, *Day Book*, 1836-'43.



## HOURLY COST COMPARISON

As shown in Table 15, an average worker for Alexander Fowler would earn 2 shillings and 6 pence for a day of labour in 1837. As there are 20 shillings in a pound and 12 pence in each shilling, this gives us 30 pence for a day of labour. Comparing the price of a corn broom in the same year, we see that it sold for 2/6, or one full day of labour.

If one uses eight hours of labour for a day's work (and it was often more) and divides this into 30 pence for the day, the wage would be almost 4 pence per hour.

Table 16 shows the cost of goods in 1837 based on this rate. Table 17 compares goods produced on the farm with the cost of labour to indicate the relative value of the goods produced.

**Table 15**  
**Labour bought by**  
**Alexander Fowler of Bridgetown, N.S.**

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Amount paid</b> <b>£ s d</b>
Mowing day	7 Aug. 1837	- 3 6
Chopping day	17 Feb. 1843	- 2 6
Poles day	7 March 1843	- 2 6
Fencing day	17 April 1843	- 2 6
Picking apples day	6 Oct. 1843	- 2 6

Source: Fowler, *Day Book*, 1836-'43.

**Table 16**  
**Goods sold vs. labour, 1837:**  
**an hourly cost comparison**

Item sold	Measure	Hourly cost (hr:min.)
Corn broom	each	8:00
Molasses	quart	1:00
Tea	1/2 lb.	12:45
Soap (cake)	1/2 lb.	:45
Paper (sheet)	each	:10
Shovel (barn)	each	17:15
Tobacco fig	each	:20
Clay pipe	each	:07
Cotton (spool)	each	1:07
Stick twist	each	1:07
Slate pencil	each	:07
Printed cotton	yd.	3:45
Twilled cloth	yd.	11:15
Ribbon, blue	yd.	4:30
Ribbon, white	yd.	3:00
Raisins	lb.	2:15
Sugar (rough)	lb.	1:52
Sugar loaf	lb.	3:00
Cup	1/2 doz.	7:30
Plates	1/2 doz.	5:15
Salt	bushel	8:00
Eggs	doz.	3:00
Butter	lb.	3:00
Hay rake	each	8:00
Wheat	bushel	22:30
Corn meal	bushel	16:30

Source: Fowler, *Day Book*, 1836-'43.

Table 17

Value of trade goods vs. labour, 1837

Item bought	Measure	Hourly cost (hr:min.)
Eggs	doz.	2:15
Butter	lb.	2:30
Hay rake	each	6:00
Potatoes	bushel	6:00
Apples	barrel	24:00
Cheese	lb.	1:30
Cloth, twilled	yd.	10:30
Turnip	bushel	3:45
Dress (second-hand)	each	15:00
Hay	Cwt	10:30
Wood	1/8 cord	3:00
Lumber, pine	1 m. [thousand]	105:00
Lumber, spruce	1 m. [thousand]	120:00
Lamb	lb.	:52
Goose	each	5:15
Flour	lb.	:45
Oats	bushel	8:00

Source: Fowler, *Day Book*, 1836-'43.

## William O'Brien's account book, Windsor, 1845

William O'Brien's records show a fair trade, with goods coming from Boston, a short sea trip away. These goods were of a basic nature, largely flour, cloth and tea; farm hardware such as water pails, scythes and shovels; and household items such as corn brooms.

The area served by O'Brien was similar to that served by Edward Ross. O'Brien's goods were sold in slightly larger amounts, but were similar items. The number of customers was also slightly larger, but their livelihood was also based on farming and rural life.

O'Brien would discount by volume as the following examples show:

3 June 1845	J. Kindmond	1 water pail	@ 1s6d
3 June 1845	S. Chambers	2 water pails	@ 1s3d
2 July 1845	J. Irons	4 hay rakes	@ 2s
17 July 1845	J. Irons	6 hay rakes	@ 1s3d

Most accounts at O'Brien's store were paid in cash on an average of 1.7 times per year (see Table 18). This figure shows that most people who bought on time were employed in occupations that only provided cash income in one season of the year. The largest percentage of these people paid off their accounts in September (nearly one quarter of all receipts for the year). The second and third best months for cash payments were June and July, with 19% and 14% respectively. The remaining months of the year, excluding November at 11%, were very weak for receipts, revealing only a modest flow of cash in the area.

### FLOUR SALES

O'Brien sold Judge Haliburton a barrel of superfine flour on the average of one per month from April 1844 to May 1845 at a price of £1 17s 6d. The only exception was one barrel at £1 15s on 1 July 1844.

Because of government regulations at the time, we know that a barrel of flour was to hold 196 lbs. This meant that one pound of flour at the retail level cost roughly 2.25 to 2.30 pence.

Perhaps the most traded, bought, dickered and talked about commodity at that time was flour. It is not surprising, being such a daily necessity, that flour would have been priced at the lower end of the scale in comparison to other goods. The more expensive grade of flour works out to cost approximately one hour of labour for each pound of flour. This compares to 3 pence per pound of flour on 15 March 1837, when W. Chute sold home-grown, ground flour to storekeeper A. Fowler in Bridgetown.

85

Cash		Dr.		Cr.	
6	To Am <sup>t</sup> from Page 84	£ 795	1 0	July 26 By Am <sup>t</sup> from Page 84	£ 353 17 5
5	do. from W. Sharp	0	13 6	Landed at Windsor	
"	do. from E. O'B	0	7 6	There was a fine Burguente	
6	do. from F. O'Brien	1	15 0	Landed here on Sunday the	
"	do. from Judge Wilkins	1	17 6	5 <sup>th</sup> of June 1875. from Messrs	
"	do. from J. Kilcup	1	0 0	Holt & O'Brien shipward	
8	do. from Ed. Wilson	1	16 3	F. J. Hoyt Windsor Nova Scotia	
9	do. from G. S. Black	3	7 6	James O'Brien	
"	do. from Ed. Allison	1	18 9		
10	do. from W. Chaudley	2	0 0		
"	do. from F. Phand	0	11 6		
"	do. from J. Albocker	1	16 6		
"	do. from Mrs. Wilson	4	6 3		
"	do. from H. H. Hewell	0	5 0		
11	do. from E. Jenkins	1	15 0		
"	do. from S. A. Fitzmaurice	3	0 0		
"	do. from D. Taylor	1	0 0		
"	do. from J. Allison	0	10 0		
"	do. from J. Lynch	4	2 6		
"	do. from J. Wilson	3	0 0		
"	do. from J. Smith	0	11 5 <sup>2</sup>		
"	do. from J. M. O'Connell	3	2 6		
12	do. from J. P. Brown	2	0 0		
"	do. from Mrs. Mary Smith	1	11 3		
"	do. from P. Mulrady	1	15 0		
"	do. from M. Greene	1	10 5		
"	do. from W. Evans	20	0 0		
"	do. J. E. Taylor	2	0 0		
13	do. from J. Palmer	3	0 0		
"	do. from P. Bondworth	1	12 6		
"	do. from Simon Black	1	14 1		
"	do. from Ed. Smith	0	10 5		
"	do. from J. P. Burgess	1	0 0		
"	do. from J. P. Smith	0	11 0		
15	do. from L. M. Wilkins	1	15 0		
"	do. from W. Smith	2	0 0		
16	do. from G. Leavold	1	15 0		
17	do. from J. Benedic	0	10 5		
18	do. J. Davison	1	15 0		
19	do. from J. O'Brien	1	15 0		
"	do. from J. Elliott	1	10 0		
		£ 881	17 4		

Landed at Windsor  
 There was a fine Burguente  
 Landed here on Sunday the  
 5<sup>th</sup> of June 1875. from Messrs  
 Holt & O'Brien shipward  
 F. J. Hoyt Windsor Nova Scotia  
 James O'Brien

MG 3 # 337  
 WILLIAM O'BRIEN  
 WINDSOR, N.S.  
 ACCOUNT BOOK  
 1842 - 1847

Carried to next Page  
 Carried to next Page  
 Carried to next Page

Figure 40 William O'Brien's account book, Windsor, September 1845 (PANS)

Table 18

William O'Brien's cash receipts, 1845

Month	Amount			Number of Receipts	Percentage of total	Average receipt		
	£	s	d			£	s	d
January	28	-	8	18	8%	1	8	-
February	28	19	8 1/2	15	7%	1	14	-
March	8	8	9	4	2%	1	15	-
April	25	15	8	18	8%	1	9	-
May	26	2	7 1/2	18	8%	1	8	-
June	95	2	5	27	11%	3	12	-
July	70	19	10 1/2	25	11%	2	15	-
August	16	0	0	7	3%	2	7	-
September	121	0	0	58	26%	2	1	-
October	7	1	3	6	3%	1	3	-
November	59	10	3	20	9%	3	-	-
December	<u>12</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>4%</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>16</u>	-
Total	498	16	5 1/2	225	100%	2	4	-

Source: O'Brien, *Account Book*, 1842-'47.

One would assume quite quickly (knowing the area and its history) that the major sources for cash flow in rural agriculture would be from forest products in June and July when wood and timber accounts were settled, from agricultural products of the summer season harvested and sold in September, and from cattle and fruit as surplus cash crops in November.

## **Accounts of Joseph Rudolf of LaHave River, 1825-'32**

A sample of the Rudolf account book is shown in Figure 41. Note the preponderance of rum sales.

### **Conclusions and observations**

By comparing all four merchants, several conclusions can be drawn:

1. All were men of learning with part of their income derived from writing deeds, wills, letters, etc.
2. It was common practice to accept labour or services, in payment for goods that had been taken on account.
3. Goods were brought to the stores seasonally from all parts of the world.
4. One item was the major commodity at each store, with all others second in importance. This item was usually flour, but rum appears as the most purchased item in LaHave River.
5. Although many items appeared to remain unchanged in price, the price of manufactured goods such as shovels and yard goods clearly decreased between 1837 and 1843.
6. Purchase of a quantity of an item often resulted in a lower unit price. Buttons, for example, bought by the dozen instead of half dozen resulted in a small saving or discount.
7. Some items appear as seasonal goods required in farming activities. For example, salt was sold more often and in the largest quantities in late August and early September.
8. Although goods sold could be considered expensive in terms of cost for time, they are not to be considered as such for the period since goods sold from the farm brought a much higher return than one might now expect. Thus the relationship between the two must be considered carefully.
9. The value of a day's labour in that period appears to have been about 2s6d, very low by today's standards and in comparison to the value of goods bought and sold in the first half of the 1800s.





10. Although sugar was purchased often in most locations, it is noticeably absent in the accounts of Alexander Fowler of Bridgetown.
11. Containers such as sacks and barrels were clearly recorded as part of the cost and were considered a commodity in themselves.
12. Paper bags were not invented and patented until 1860, so most storekeepers kept a supply of bottles, sacks and coarse paper to hold and protect store-bought goods.
13. The term *general store* does not apply to this time period. It was not until later, when specialty stores appeared, that the term appeared to show that some stores carried a wide variety of goods.
14. On most occasions the head of the household made the purchases from the storekeeper. Purchases were carefully recorded as to who received the goods, probably to supply evidence for goods bought on credit when it came time to settle accounts.
15. No special day of the week appears as the busiest, nor does one day appear slower. On Sunday no transactions are recorded.
16. Three and four customers per day seems to be the average number at the stores reviewed, with highs of nine to ten occasionally. However, many days passed with only one or two customers purchasing smaller items such as tea or tobacco.
17. Customers usually purchased one and two items at a time, or bulk supplies which would amount to six or seven items. One would suspect that those who lived closer to the store would purchase smaller amounts more often, and that those further away would buy not necessarily larger quantities of an item but more items at a time.
18. Storekeepers were often bankers of a sort in that they would act as the third person in many transactions. If farmer Brown was in debt to farmer Black, Mr. Brown might settle with a note to be paid by the storekeeper. Mr. Brown would pay off his note when he had goods to sell to the merchant. The merchant would trust that Mr. Brown was honest and "good" for the note and that he would get his money back. The benefit to the merchant was that farmer Black might need the amount owed to him from Mr. Brown to settle his account with the storekeeper. All of these transactions could be made without any cash changing hands.
19. Most storekeepers made annual or bi-annual treks to larger communities to purchase stock for their stores. These were still fairly rough times and one did not want to carry a large sum of money on a lonely road over distances of 15 miles or more. One

way to avoid this was to buy community-produced goods such as shingles, lumber and barrels and sell them in town for the best price possible. Thus goods would be carried instead of bank notes or gold pieces. Two other reasons for this procedure were important as well: (1) goods from a customer were sometimes the only way to receive payment and (2) one had a good chance of making money by buying low from a rural producer and then selling high in the city.

20. A general rule of thumb for markup in Edward's day seems to have been one-third of the cost of most items. By today's practice this would be called a 25% markup, quoted on the selling price of goods and done in that way to seem like less to the unknowing. Examples of markup found in these account books range from 20% of cost for local butter to 50% for grass hats. As most markups were one-third, variations high and low are presumed to have been made for quality, demand and quantity. The English currency of the time lent itself to a one-third markup. Twelve pence to a shilling made calculation of the selling price relatively easy. One dozen eggs, for example, might be purchased for 9 pence. A one-third markup adds 3 pence, giving a selling price of 12 pence, or one shilling.
21. Volume played an important part in the storekeeper's livelihood. Edward Ross noted in his journal of 1838 that he purchased nearly £60 of goods in one week in Halifax. This trip alone could provide a £20 profit, or the equivalent of 160 days of common labour. This profit added to others for the year, plus profits from cattle, sheep, furs and barrels, may not have made him rich but did allow him to lead a more elevated style of life.

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## Appendix B: Casks

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Coopered vessels have a long and important history. The making of these containers dates back as far as 2690 BC to the tomb of Hesy-re, in Egypt. Since at least that time the need to hold and transport goods has led to the development of the coopering trade.

Casks had advantages over crates and boxes that made them the ideal means of packaging in the 18th and 19th centuries. Casks were not costly to make and could be made without expensive machinery. They are reasonably stable, and durable enough to withstand travel over rocky roads and stormy seas. They are easily opened, filled, emptied, and sealed again with just a hammer. Casks are capable of keeping liquid either properly contained or repelled to ensure safe transportation of goods.

Casks are repairable with basic tools and readily available materials and are reusable for various needs. With level tops and bottoms, casks can be stacked on end to save space in shipping. Identification of contents was easily done by branding, painting or carving on the heads and staves. Sealing the contents was accomplished by branding the bung and bung stave with a single iron.

Casks can be handled by one man by being rolled. Heavy molasses puncheons and tobacco hogsheads were handled on land and loaded onto carts and ships with an ease that no other package could provide. With one of the oldest and simplest tools, an inclined plane, casks were elevated in much the same way as the stones for the great pyramids of Egypt.

The design of coopered vessels grew with the requirements of people for containers and shipping devices and not out of a desire to create a new and originally shaped item. Such a diverse array of casks grew that a certain expertise is required to fully comprehend the assortment constructed over the centuries. Even within the trade, a "barrel" is not simply a barrel, because one must always consider what it was meant to hold.

Most casks today are incorrectly referred to as "barrels". In the language of the cooper's trade, a barrel is but one of the many sizes of casks produced. In addition, its capacity varies with the kind of materials it is meant to hold, the common practices of the country, government regulations and the time period. Thus, a Roman "barrel of monkeys" would probably have been far different than one of today.

Three main branches of coopering developed, which implies varying degrees and types of skills on the part of coopers. Kenneth Kilby (1971) describes the three types of coopering as wet, dry, and white, with overlaps such as "dry-tight" coopering. Wet-coopered casks with a bulge hold liquids, and dry vessels with a bulge hold a large variety of dry commodities. The white cooper made straight-sided, splayed vessels such as buckets and butterchurns and was a practitioner of the oldest branch of the trade.

Casks were made with varying life expectancies. At the top of the scale were spirit vessels of great size and strength meant to last many years and to be used many times. At the bottom were dry slack vessels such as apple barrels which were meant to last for

only one filling or trip.

In rural areas such as Sherbrooke, many farmers supplemented their livelihoods by producing casks in the slower seasons of farming. These were usually casks on the lower end of the scale for goods such as apples or fish. Most if not all of a farmer's stock of staves, heads and hoops came from his woodlot with no cost except time. The tradition of making fish barrels, found in the early 1800s, and apple barrels, found in the late 1800s and early 1900s, has now all but vanished today from the area.

One size of cask often used in dry and wet coopering was the "barrel". The size of the barrel tended to decrease in size over time but was generally from 30 to 26 in. in height, with a head diameter of 24 to 17 in. and varying stoutnesses at the bilge.

The contents of a barrel averaged 200 lb. and could include the "tare weight" of the cask. This measure of both dry and wet casks was a measure of the weight of the contents contained. A flour barrel in 1840 held 196 lb. of flour, while a pickled fish barrel of herring held 200 lb. of fish. A test of 30 gallons of liquid was often used as a measurement of accuracy for coopered fish barrels. One cannot define a "barrel" more exactly without referring to specifications of year, country of origin, and its intended use.

The number of hoops on a cask increased with the demands of its contents. Metal and wood were both used at one time or another, with hardwoods, iron and copper most often used. Wooden hoops were used as stabilizers for rolling casks so that the cask touched the ground not only in the middle but on each bilge as well. Not only did the cask roll more straightly, but the staves were better protected from being disaligned and causing the cask to lose its contents. Wooden hoops were sometimes substituted for metal hoops to lessen the cost of manufacturing. Wooden hoops were also used to protect the main binding metal hoops and to protect and reinforce the head by increasing the effect of the croze.

A rule of thumb, if there is one for casks, is that there was usually one more wooden head hoop than bilge hoop on each half of a cask. One reason for this is that a barrel or cask is weaker at the head and can stand less stress there than at the bilge. The slack dry apple barrel is an example, with only one bilge hoop and two head hoops.

Many cask sizes are multiples of two, three and four. The 12-based English systems for weights, measures, volume and currency all have this in common. Sizes smaller than a barrel were the half barrel and quarter barrel. In the brewer's work, as tradition has it most often, a barrel held 36 gallons, a kilderkin held one-half at 18 gallons, a firkin one-quarter at 9 gallons, and a pin one-eighth at 4 1/2 gallons.

The key to cask sizes is the barrel. Kegs at 3, 4 and 6 gallons all carry back to the almighty barrel. Larger than a barrel, one finds the hogshead at 54 gallons, or one and one-half the size of a barrel; the puncheon at 72 gallons, or two barrels; and the butt at 108 gallons, three times the basic barrel.

The same principle applies to dry coopering, but there are exceptions that arose from the contents as well as from influences outside the trade. Gunpowder casks, for

example, were purposely underfilled to allow a remixing of the contents by rolling the cask, helpful because the powder tended to separate into its three basic components. Government regulations were imposed on casks for many commodities to encourage uniformity in exports and improve their potential in world markets. For example, the three-bushel apple barrel was regulated to very specific dimensions.

One could say that the world as we know it came out of a cask. Flour, salt, sugar, gunpowder, fish, molasses, spirits, china, wood finishes, tobacco, pork bellies, and other commodities that have influenced the world have all been transported in casks. Name any commodity common to pre-1900 and one can be sure that at one time or another it was moved or stored in a cask. Although ships, wagons, carts, trains and other conveyances moved from site to site and port to port, it was the cask that held the results of the precious labours of mankind.

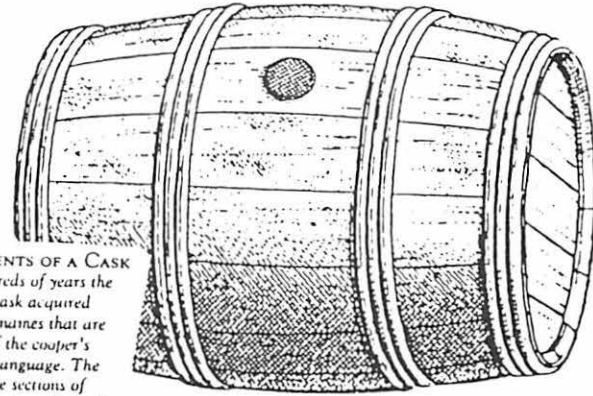
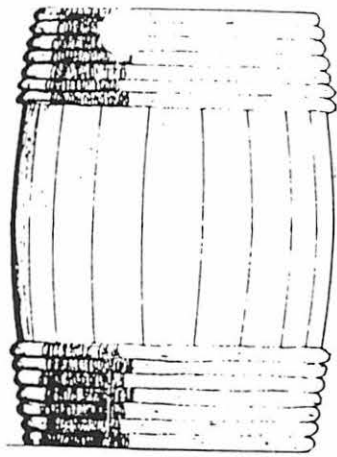


*William Dalley, of Tuning, ploughwright, cooper, and carpenter;  
- drawn from life April 1839. He having worked for the writer  
thirty four years.  
06. April 16<sup>th</sup> 1837.*

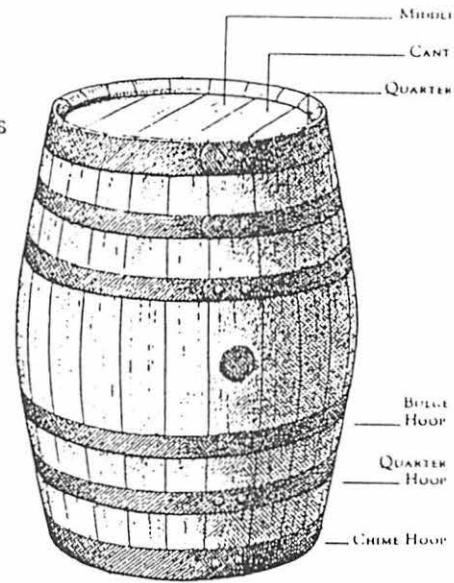
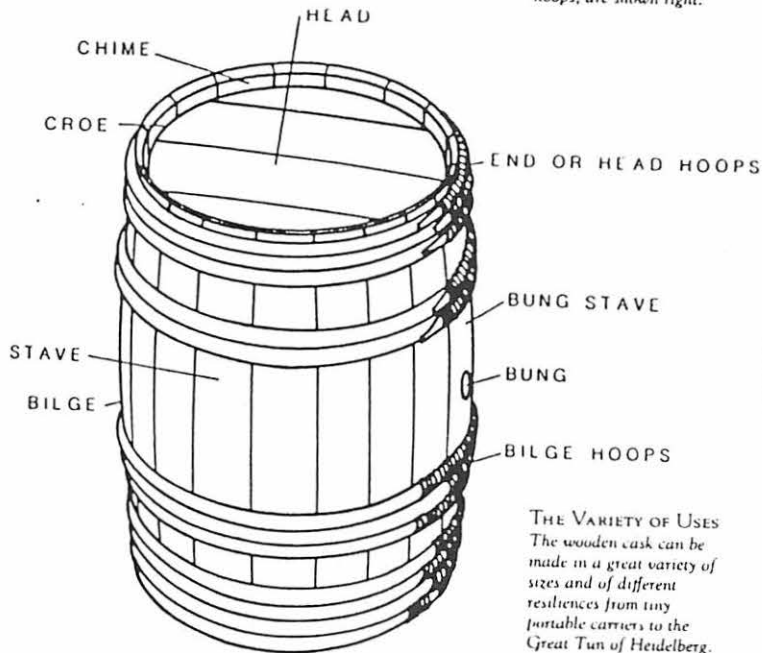
Figure 42 Travelling cooper in the 19th century (Kilby, 1971)

## Meanings from Noah Webster's *Dictionary*, 1828

- Barrel** (Welsh and French *baril*) A vessel or cask, of more length than breadth, round and bulging in the middle, made of staves and heading, and bound with hoops. The quantity which a barrel contains. Of wine measure, the English barrel contains 31 1/2 gallons; of beer measure, 36 gallons; of ale, 32 gallons; and of beer-vinegar, 34 gallons.  
Of weight a barrel of Essex butter is 106 pounds, of Suffolk butter, 256; a barrel of herring should contain 32 gallons wine measure, and hold 1,000 herrings; a barrel of salmon should contain 42 gallons; a barrel of soap should weigh 256 lb.  
In New-York, a barrel of flour by statute must contain either 196 lb. or 228 nett weight.
- Butt** A cask whose contents are 126 gallons of wine, or two hogsheads; also called a pipe. A butt of beer=108 gallons.
- Firkin** (pronounced furkin) From Danish *fire*, or Dutch *vier*, for a measure of capacity, being the fourth part of a barrel. It is 9 gallons of beer, or 8 gallons of ale, soap or herring. In America, the firkin is rarely used, except for butter or lard, and signifies a small vessel or cask of indeterminate size or of different sizes, regulated by the statutes of the different states.
- Hogshead** (Dutch *oxhoofd*, German *oxhoft*) (1) A measure of capacity containing 63 gallons. (2) In America, this name is often given to a butt, a cask containing from 110 to 120 gallons; as a hogshead of spirit or molasses. (3) A large cask of indefinite contents.
- Punch'oon** (French *poinçon*) A measure of liquids, or a cask containing usually 120 gallons. Rum or spirits is imported from the West Indies in puncheons, but these are also often called hogsheads.
- Keg** (French *caque*) A small cask or barrel; written more correctly *cag* (usually of less than 30-gallon capacity).
- Cag** (French *caque*, Danish *kag*; meaning to hold) Generally written *keg*. A small cask or barrel, differing from the barrel only in size and containing a few gallons, but not of any definite capacity.



**COMPONENTS OF A CASK**  
 Over hundreds of years the parts of a cask acquired traditional names that are now part of the cooper's mysterious language. The names of the sections of the top or bottom of a cask - the heads - and of the hoops, are shown right.



**THE VARIETY OF USES**  
 The wooden cask can be made in a great variety of sizes and of different resiliences from tiny portable carriers to the Great Tun of Heidelberg.

**TRADITIONAL CAPACITIES**

In cooper's language, a barrel is a cask that holds 36 gallons. Smaller casks are the kilderkin, the firkin - the *pin*. Larger casks are the hogshead, puncheon and butt.



BUTT  
108 GAL



PUNCHEON  
72 GAL



HOGSHEAD  
54 GAL



BARREL  
36 GAL



KILDERKIN  
18 GAL



FIRKIN  
9 GAL

Figure 43 Casks. Note various sizes, and numbers of hoops (Burns, 1983; Seymour, 1984)



Figure 49 Interior of the Ross store, 1980 (photo by Miles Russell)



**Commodities transported in barrels in British North America, 1758-1867**

apples	cider	pork, pickled
ashes, pot and pearl	coal tar	pitch and tar
beef, pickled	fish, pickled	salt
beer	fish oils	sugar
bees wax	flour and meal	tallow
biscuits	lard	tobacco
butter	liquor	vinegar
cheese	molasses	wines

**Glossary**

**Barrel.** Standard size cask in nineteenth century British North America, with a capacity of approximately 30 gallons or 200 lbs.

**Bilge.** Bulging, curved portion of a barrel equidistant from each head.

**Bung stave.** Stave containing in its centre the bung used to fill or empty liquids from a tight barrel.

**Cask.** Generic term for barrel-shaped containers of various sizes.

**Chime.** The part of a stave between the croe (croze) and the end of the barrel.

**Croe (Croze).** Groove near the ends of the staves into which the head of the barrel fits.

**Firkin.** A small barrel containing approximately nine gallons or 55 to 65 lbs.

**Head.** Circular end portions of the barrel which fit into the croe (croze) cut in the staves.

**Hogshead.** Large barrel containing more than 60 gallons.

**Hoop.** Circular band, usually of wood in British North American statutes, used to hold staves in place.

**Keg.** Small barrel of less than 30 gallons capacity.

**Stave.** Arched piece of wood forming the sides of a barrel.

**Tare.** The weight of a barrel when empty.

**Tierce.** A cask with a capacity one and a half times that of a barrel.

Figure 45 Cask uses and terminology (Burns, 1983)



FINDING THE CONTENTS OF A BARREL.

In measuring cisterns, reservoirs, vats, etc., the barrel is estimated at  $31\frac{1}{2}$  gallons, and the hogshead at 63 gallons.

A gallon of water, imperial measure, weighs 10 pounds.

30 imperial gallons are equal to nearly 36 American gallons

#### How to Find the Contents of Barrels or Casks.

*Rule.*—Add together the diameters of the bung and head in inches, and divide the sum by 2, which equals the average diameter. Then multiply the average diameter by itself in inches and again by the height in inches, then multiply by 8, and cut off the right hand figure, and you have the number of cubic inches. Divide by  $277\frac{1}{4}$  and you have the number of gallons. To find the number of bushels divide by 2150.4.

**Example :** What is the contents of a barrel in gallons, whose middle or bung diameter is 22 inches, and end diameter 18 inches, and 30 inches in height ?

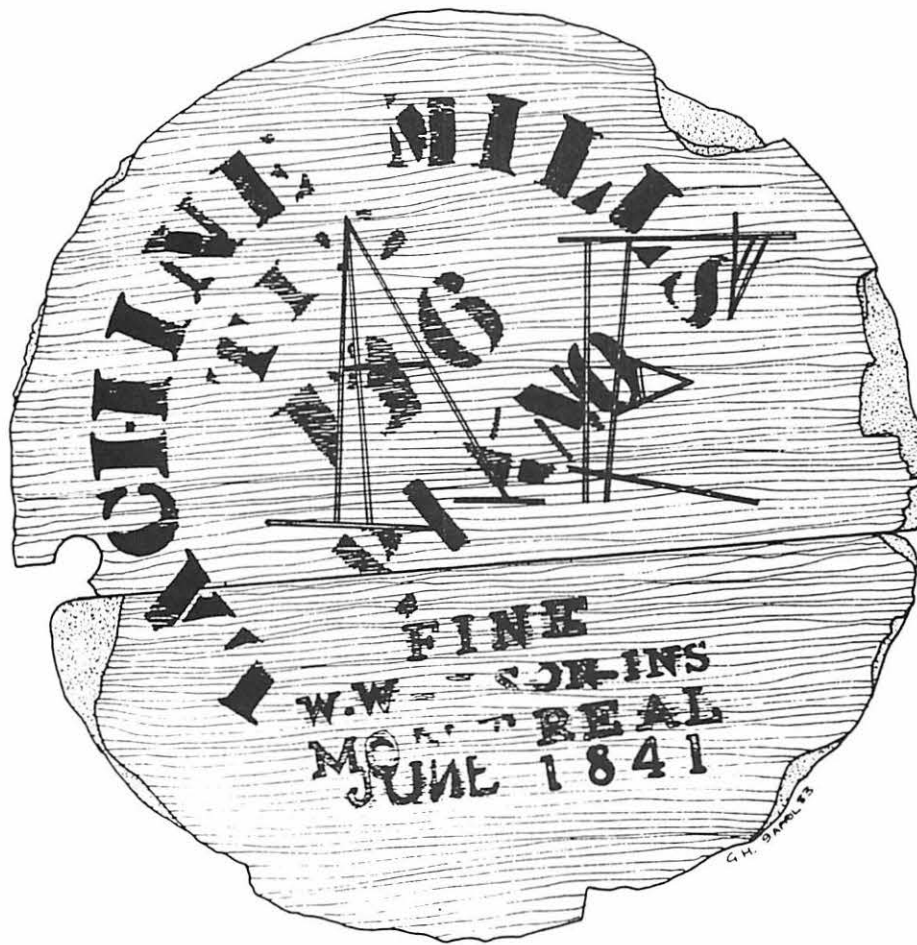
**Solution :**  $22 + 18 \div 2 = 20$  average diameter.

$20 \times 20 \times 30 \times 8 = 9600.0$ .

$9600 \div 277\frac{1}{4} = 34\frac{3}{4}$  gallons. Ans.

**NOTE.**—Barrels used in commerce are made in various sizes, from 80 to 50 gallons. There is no definite measure called a hogshead, they are usually gauged, and have their capacities in gallons marked on them.

Figure 46 Finding the contents of a barrel or cask (Hansford, 1895)



WS 63 104

Figure 47 Head of a cask from the *William Salthouse*, found during a test excavation and preliminary site survey in 1983. This vessel, the first trader to attempt the journey between British North America and the Australian colonies, sank in 1841. In her cargo were nearly 1,000 assorted casks of beef, pork, flour, fish and spirits, probably loaded in Canada. (Victoria Archaeological Survey, 1984)



Figure 48 Flour barrels, reconstructed to c1840 (sketch by Miles Russell)

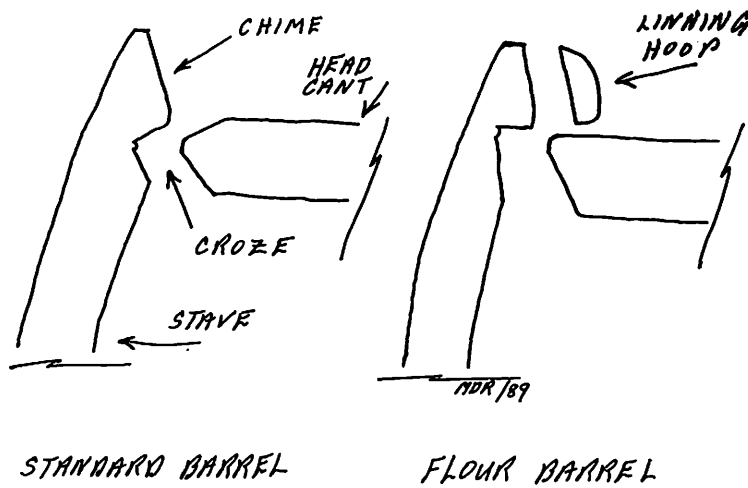


Figure 49 Standard barrel croze (left) compared to flour barrel croze (sketch by Miles Russell)

## Flour barrels

Flour barrels held wheat flour, rye flour, corn meal, buckwheat meal and other flours and meals.

By 1840, Montreal and Quebec were milling and exporting flour in fair quantity. The price of this product was well below the price of imported flour and thus well suited to the country trade. This was labelled "Fine Flour" while imported brands from Hamburg and Philadelphia were "Superfine" and "Extra Superfine".

After inspection in Lower Canada, which meant a hole was drilled in the head to permit sampling, the barrels were branded on the top and the tare weight was branded on the bottom.

Upon arrival in Nova Scotia the casks were inspected again and the inspector's initials were double-cut on the head.

Flour and meal casks were crozed like no other casks (see Figure 49). To open the cask, the head had to be knocked inward with a sharp thud to break the dowling holding the head cants together while assuring little spillage. The lower lip of the croze was mostly cut away, not only allowing the implosion of the head but also allowing the cask to be headed from within.

## Herring casks

Although referred to as "herring casks", these also held mackerel, salmon, shad, herring, gaspereau or other fish. Herring casks, as one can easily imagine, were quite common in a colony where fishing was as big an industry as it was in Nova Scotia.

Government regulations of 1828 allowed local consumption of salted fish without government inspection. Edward Ross most likely would have been selling this local product bought from seaside residents of reputable account and known for putting up good, well salted fish.

These casks, being of local construction, were most likely made of softwood with the required hardwood bung stave.

## Powder kegs

Powder kegs produced during the first quarter of the 20th century by Acadia Powder Company of Waverley, Nova Scotia, very closely match the size and shape of the Navy quarter barrel regulations of 1821. These had a height of 12 in., a pitch of 10 in. and a head of 9 in. The bung was located in the top head, one inch away from the edge of the croze, and by this time had wooden threads instead of just a tapered edge on the bung.

Four hoops on each half were standard (all located together on the chime of the keg), these being hardwood saplings split and shaved to a width of 1/2 to 5/8 in. with half-lap joints.

Of interest are the wooden nails (cobbler-like lasting pegs) set in around the top hoops. These pegs were three in number, with one located in the laps of the hoops to

help keep the joint secure. In one location two pegs were placed as a set; apparently the first peg had riveted, thus a second was required.

Eleven staves were used, with a small bilge resulting. Heads were made of one or two pieces and the entire barrel had a fairly smooth finish. The stencilled marking or label was located on the bottom head opposite the bung.

## **Salt barrels**

The salt barrel was used to transport common salt inland from ports, but it is not known if salt was actually shipped from the West Indies in barrels. Most salt coming into Nova Scotia was brought in bulk by the shipload from Turks Island, where solar salt was collected from evaporated sea water.

Because of the large salt fish industry in the province, shiploads of salt could be found up and down the coast at ports, and inlanders commonly came for wagon loads or just a barrel or two for their use. With just a few poles laid on the farmer's wagon, barrels were easily loaded and carried in two rows upright, slightly tilted from a centre pole to the stake within a nearly triangular arrangement of poles. Any barrel could be used for this purpose, because salt crystals were large enough to be easily contained, while flour or meal could escape from a barrel which was not tight.

Flour Barrel Requirements

1839-1848

- Staves - 27" croe to croe  
oak or ash only
- Heads - 16 1/2" to 17" in diameter  
Heads of oak or ash only
- Hoops - at least 10 wooden hoops  
3 at each end with a lining hoop within the  
chimes.  
the whole (hoops) well secured by nails.
- Barrel size - contain's 196 lbs. flour  
(new barrels used only)

Figure 50 Specifications for reconstructed flour barrels, 1839-'48 (Burns, 1983)

Fish Barrels Requirements

1828 - 49

HERRING

Staves 27" long                      hardwood bung stave \* overall length

Staves of hardwood not less than 1/2" at thinnest part.

or

Staves of softwood not less than 3/4" at thinnest part.

Heads not more than 1" thick, to be planed or shaved smooth on outside & to have 1/3" of the thickness at the edges cut from the outside.

17" between chimes

Hoop - 4 at least on each bilge & chime.

NOVA SCOTIA HERRING

Barrel size     - 200 lbs.  
                  - 30 gallons

Figure 51     Specifications for reconstructed fish barrels, 1828-'49 (Burns, 1983)



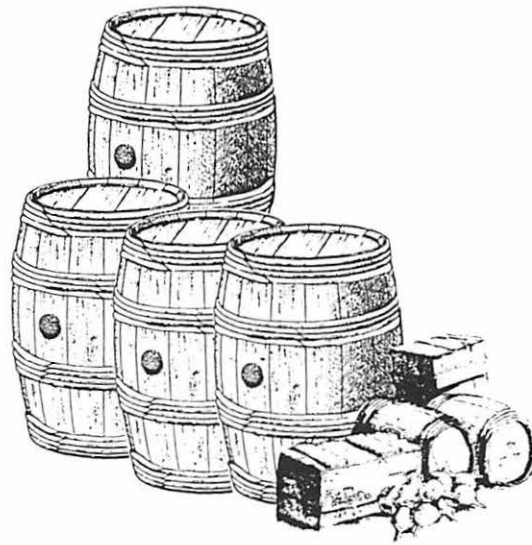


Figure 52 Fish casks

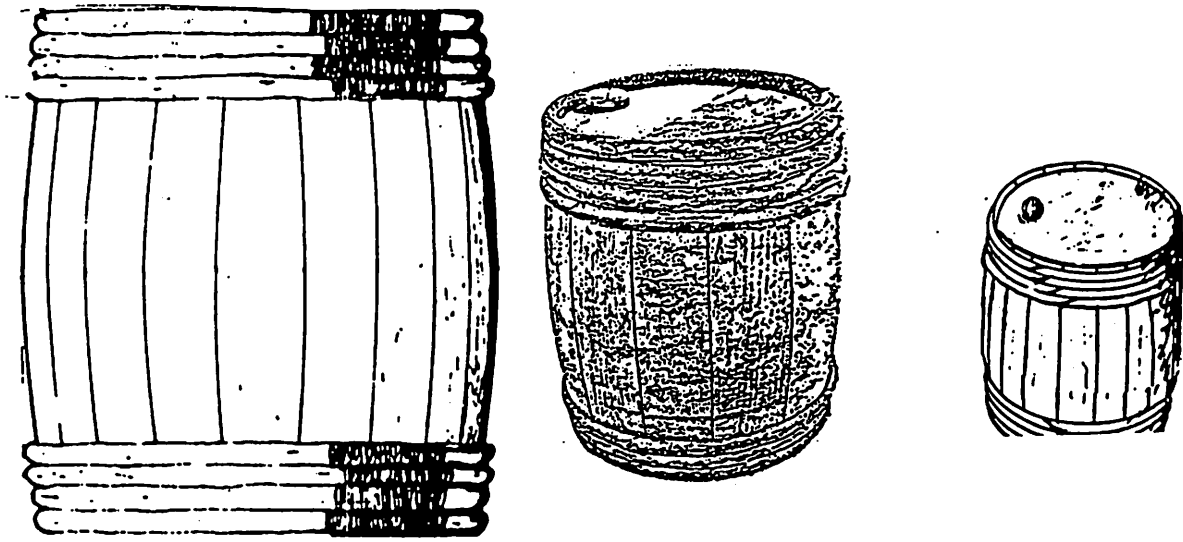


Figure 53 Typical powder keg construction, c. 1770-1860 (Neumann, 1975)



Figure 54 Salt barrel, c. 1759-1820 (Neumann, 1975)

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