

Chapter 9
TIMELINE:
19th, 20th, & 21st CENTURIES

Problems with the Past

Elliston has a history that encompasses two entire centuries. Unfortunately much of the community's history has been lost or never recorded. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the chores of everyday life were a priority rather than record keeping. Research becomes even more difficult when a person wishes to research specific events or people a century or more in the past. For example, I have only been able to trace my family line on both my parents' sides to the beginning of Elliston/Maberly, or, considering the time period, it would be more correct to refer to the settlements as Bird Island Cove/Muddy Brook. To date, I have not been able to uncover any direct information on my family that predates life in Newfoundland.

Nevertheless, pieces of information do exist from a variety of sources. Even when you are dealing with events that occurred seventy or eighty years ago, precise dates are difficult to arrive at with a degree of certainty. For instance, I noted that Elliston first received electricity in 1925 in the first edition of this book, but upon further research I discovered the date was actually 1929 which I have since corrected. Although this is a minor point it does illustrate the problems faced with a project of this magnitude.

The following collection of highlights is adapted from several sources. These include a heritage development plan completed for Tourism Elliston, *The Elliston Adventure*; the N. C. Crewe Elliston File and Tilley Collection at the Provincial Archives of Newfoundland & Labrador; minutes from the Elliston Town Council; a variety of general facts; and personal knowledge. This list offers an intriguing glimpse into the events of the past.

The Nineteenth Century



North & South Bird Island as viewed from the sea

- 1806 Settlers move to Bird Island Cove and establish a continuous fishing settlement. Several of these settlers relocate from Bonavista. The original families are mainly Anglican.
- [Note: An attempt to settle was made by group of Irish Catholics, in the 1770's, however, they were driven out by order of the Governor of Newfoundland in 1774.]
- 1811 First male born at the settlement is Robert Tucker.
- 1813 Robert Slade and Company establish the first mercantile business at Bird Island Cove.
- 1814 Rev. William Ellis holds Bird Island Cove's first Methodist service at the home of George Crewe. At this time there are only three Methodist Ministers in Newfoundland.
- 1822 There are three Methodist converts at Bird Island Cove. They are George Crew, Elizabeth Crewe, and George Brown.

- 1825 Population: There are more than 200 residents at Bird Island Cove and area.
- Conversion to Methodism begins under Rev. James Hickson and the Methodists share a small church with the Anglicans.
- According to Slade and Company records, the pioneering families of Bird Island Cove are Baker, Burt, Chant, Chard, Chaulk, Clouter, Cole, Coles, Crewe, Flinn, Gough, Hill, Hobbs, Hollahan, Martin, Minchiner, Miles, Minty, Murphy, Oldford, Pearce, Porter, Randell, Sanger, Stead, Trask, Tucker, and Way.
- 1825-29 The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts and the Methodist Missionary Society operate Sunday schools periodically at Bird Island Cove.
- 1827-29 The construction of an Anglican Church is underway at Bird Island Cove.
- 1830 The community's first Methodist Church is complete and opens on January 1st.
- A diphtheria epidemic occurs at Bird Island Cove, and a petition is made by residents seeking Government relief because they are destitute of food with the exception of potatoes produced in their own gardens.
- 1830/31 The community is gripped in terror for more than a day by the *Thunder Growl* of unknown origins. It is heard throughout both Bird Island Cove and Bonavista.

- 1832 The fishery is a failure at Bird Island Cove.
- 1833 Newfoundland obtains Representative Government.
- 1836 Population: There are approximately 338 residents at Bird Island Cove and area.
- 1837 Rev. William Ellis, for whom Elliston is named, dies and is buried at Harbour Grace. His obituary appears in the Minutes of the 1838 Conference as printed for the Methodist Magazine for September 1838:
- WILLIAM ELLIS: who died in peace at Harbour Grace, Newfoundland, September 21st, 1837, in the fifty-seventh year of his age, and in the thirty-first of his itinerancy. He was born in the north of Ireland, and was converted to God when about sixteen years old. He was appointed to Newfoundland about the year 1808. He twice narrowly escaped being drowned while visiting the different parts of his extensive field of labour; and the injury which he sustained while in the water affected his head so much, that close application to study was ever afterwards exceedingly painful. But through much afflicted, he continued his ministerial labours till within a few months of his decease. His natural abilities were good; and had not affliction, and somewhat desultory habits, induced by a very extended itinerancy, prevented their full development, he might have attained to a considerable eminence as a Minister of the Gospel. He laboured with great zeal, tenderness, affection, and success, in the cause of his Lord and Master; particularly during the first years of his ministry.
- 1838 Population: There are approximately 329 residents at Bird Island Cove and area.
- Residents petition the Government to fund a day school in the community.

- 1839 The Newfoundland School Society establishes the first day school, in the community, as a branch school of the Bonavista District of the Society.
- 1843 Bird Island Cove residents, led by Philip Tocque, petition the Government to establish a public school in the community. As a result a public school is established with fifty pupils that year and ninety-one in 1845. By 1845 the Newfoundland School Society discontinues support for its day school.
- 1843-44 Residents petition the Government to construct a road to Bonavista. A road to Catalina is recently opened.
- 1845 Population: There are approximately 336 residents at Bird Island Cove and area.
- A petition from Bird Island Cove asks for a grant of 250 pounds for road construction.
- 1846 Philip Tocque, a resident of Bird Island Cove, publishes his book *Wandering Thoughts or Solitary Hours* that is written during his time in the community.
- 1847 William Minty is the police constable at the settlement and retains this position until his death in 1876.
- 1849 The Klondike road/trail to Spillars Cove/Bonavista is in general use.
- 1853 Slade and Company provides space for a day school to operate. The teacher is William Minty, and this school is under the jurisdiction of the Catalina

Education District.

Robert Tilly, a Bonavista-born teacher, establishes a business using a legacy from his deceased Bird Island Cove grandmother, Mrs. Susannah Cole. He is Bird Island Cove's first resident supply merchant. At the time of his death in 1872 he had every fisherman in the Town as a dealer.

- 1854 A petition by Robert Tilly and others from Bird Island Cove requests that the Government improve road conditions. It is read into the record on May 1st. This petition is significant because it states that community was settled forty-eight years prior, and therefore clearly indicates the community's date of settlement as 1806.
- 1855 Newfoundland obtains Responsible Government.
- Another Methodist revival takes place, which strengthens Methodism in Bird Island Cove.
- 1856 Construction of a replacement Methodist Church begins.
- 1857 Population: There are approximately 523 residents at Bird Island Cove and area.
- 1858-60 Construction on the Tilly House is underway at Bird Island Cove, and it is used as a retail outlet by Robert Tilly and later by his son Arthur Tilly.
- 1862 The court case of the Queen vs. Patrick Casey takes place. Casey's wife Kitty Casey commits suicide and is buried in a droke near Sandy Cove.

- 1863 The vessel *Thomas* sinks and the shipwrecked crew makes their way to Bird Island Cove.
- 1864 The community's second Methodist Church officially opens on January 9th. It contains a gallery on either side and can seat about 400 people.
- 1868 The vessel *Mary* sinks near Bird Island Cove.
- 1869 Population: There are approximately 677 residents at Bird Island Cove and area. This includes fifteen widowers, seventeen widows, and sixty-one orphans. Northern Bight has four residents.
- 1870's Robert Tilly establishes a farm near Sandy Cove.
- 1872 Construction of a new Anglican Church, St. Mary's, is underway and it is still in use. It is built on the site of the previous Anglican Church.
- 1874 Population: There are approximately 722 residents at Bird Island Cove and area. This includes 113 married couples, eleven widowers, and nineteen widows. Muddy Brook has thirty-two residents, while Northern Bight has three families with a population of ten.
- Bird Island Cove has a road board in place.
- 1877 Construction of a Methodist school is underway replacing the one then in existence on the Point.
- 1878 The wreck of the sealing vessel *Eric* occurs during a storm. Several Elliston men are awarded Royal Humane Society Medals for their actions in saving the vessel's crew. A beam from this wreck is later

used in a root cellar and is still visible today.

- 1881 The Newfoundland Railway starts at St. John's and the line (narrow gauge type of 3' 6") reaches Port-aux-Basques in 1897.
- 1883/84 First use of cod traps in the Bird Island Cove area.
- 1884 Population: There are approximately 870 residents at Bird Island Cove and area. There are 138 married couples, eleven widowers, and sixteen widows. 8% of the population is Anglican and 92% is Methodist. Muddy Brook has eight families with seventeen people involved in the fishery using two fishing rooms. Two-thirds of Muddy Brook's population is Anglican and one-third is Methodist. Northern Bight has two families and nine residents.
- 1887 The Salvation Army holds its first service in the spring with Capt. F. Grey. The old Slade property and a store owned by the Clouter family is utilized for these early meetings.
- 1889 The *Brothers* disaster occurs and five men from Bird Island Cove drown.
- 1890's James Ryan establishes a branch store in Bird Island Cove during the latter part of the nineteenth century.
- 1890 A Methodist school chapel is in operation at North Side. The first record of a teacher being appointed to the school is 1896.

The Band of Hope is active at Bird Island Cove.

1891 Population: There are approximately 951 residents at Bird Island Cove and area.

Bird Island Cove (proper) - 455

North Side - 292

Northern Cove - 39

Muddy Brook - 65

Neck - 56

Sandy Cove - 36

Northern Bight - 8

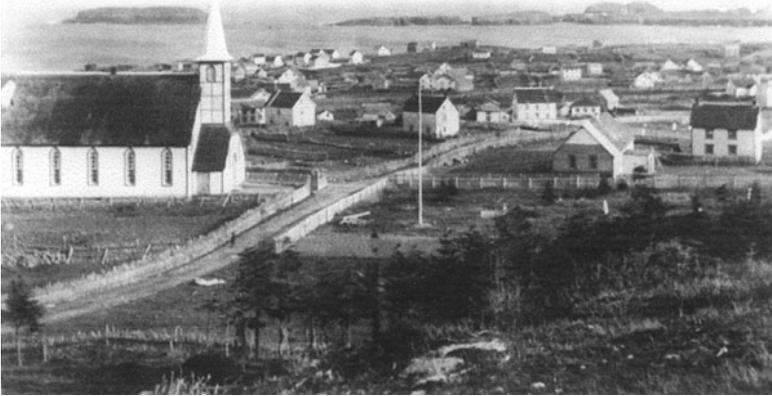
Bird Island Cove becomes a separate Methodist mission distinct from Bonavista with Rev. S. J. Russell as its first pastor, with 150 Methodist families in the community. It was allowed as its own Methodist Board of Education at this time. Previously it was under the jurisdiction of the Bonavista Board of Education.

The way station becomes a post office. Since the early 1880's Arthur Tilly had provided postal services from his store with mail couriers dropping mail off there on their way to Bonavista from Catalina and Trinity.

1894 The Tilly business becomes insolvent as a result of the bank crash of 1894. Since Robert Tilly's death in 1872, his son Arthur has operated the business. After 1894, Arthur concentrates on farming.

1899 A Methodist congregation makes the decision to build a new church.

The Twentieth Century



Photograph of Elliston in 1908

- 1900's J. T. Swyers establishes a branch store near Norder Cove Brook during the early part of the century.
- Philip Templeman establishes a store with Arthur Tilly's brother, Robert, in charge of the branch store, which Arthur had previously used for his own business.
- 1901 Population: There are approximately 941 residents at Bird Island Cove and area.
- Bird Island Cove - 451
 - (62 Anglicans, 363 Methodists, 25 Salvationists, and 1 Baptist/other)
 - North Side - 304
 - (2 Roman Catholics, 2 Anglicans, 293 Methodists, and 7 Baptists/others)
 - Muddy Brook - 75
 - (52 Anglicans and 23 Methodists)
 - Neck - 75
 - (65 Methodists, 2 Anglicans, and 8

Salvationists)

Sandy Cove - 36

(33 Methodists and 3 Salvationists)

The final service at the old Methodist Church is held on February 10th by Rev. Lench, and it takes five days to tear it down.

On March 21st, a representative lays the foundation stone for the new Methodist Church.

- 1901/02 Abraham Kean donates a bell to the new Church which later tolls for the dead of the Newfoundland Disaster in 1914.
- 1902 Under the leadership of Rev. Charles Lench, residents petition the Government to change the name of their community from Bird Island Cove to Elliston on February 17th. The request is approved a few weeks later.
- The dedication of the third and current Methodist (now United) Church takes place on May 18th, and it is still in use. The first girl to be baptized is Emma Hill and the first boy is Adam Tucker
- 1904 Moose are successfully introduced to Newfoundland and multiply all too well.
- 1905 Rev. A. G. Bayly successfully campaigns to rename the settlement of Muddy Brook to Maberly.
- 1906 Philip Templeman acquires land and builds a store.
- 1908 Work commences on the construction of a Methodist school located at the Neck. Construction

is sporadic and it is not completed until 1920.

William Ford Coaker establishes and leads the Fisherman's Protective Union (FPU).

1909 Elliston's first telegraph is operational with Theresa White as the first operator.

1910 A local of the Fishermen's Protective Union forms at Elliston under the leadership of William Tucker.

Methodist women form the Willing Workers and conduct social activities for the Methodist Church.

Arthur Tilly converts the second floor of Tilly House into a residence. William Tilley later converts the first floor into a home where he lives the remainder of his life and dies in 1956.

1911 Population: There are approximately 907 residents at Elliston and area.

Elliston North - 304
(2 Anglicans, 284 Methodists, and 18 Salvationists)

Elliston South - 463
(73 Anglicans, 355 Methodists, and 35 salvationists)

Maberly - 64
(49 Anglicans and 15 Methodists)

Neck - 76
(9 Anglicans, 59 Methodists, and 8 Salvationists)

A branch line of the Newfoundland Railway reaches Bonavista.

- 1912 Residents petition the Government requesting a spur railway line to Elliston.
- 1914 The Newfoundland Sealing Disaster occurs, which many blame on Abraham Kean, with eight residents from Elliston dying on the ice.
- The Great War (1914-1918) begins and several men from Elliston go to fight.
- 1915 In June, Abraham Kean speaks uninvited and unwelcome at the Orange Hall.
- 1917 FPU members discuss the establishment of a union store for Elliston. In December the foundation is laid.
- 1919 Rev. A. G. Bayly of Bonavista becomes a Canon on January 12th.
- Rev. C. Lench publishes the *Story of Methodism*. A public meeting takes place at Elliston on November 24th to request a railway spur line to Elliston. A spur never reaches the community.
- 1920 On September 16th, 1919 the Methodist Board of Education decided to build a memorial school under the leadership of Rev. Walter W. Cotton. The laying of the foundation occurs on October 4th.
- 1921 Population: There are approximately 933 residents at Elliston and area.
- Elliston - 850
(61 Anglicans, 743 Methodists, and 46 Salvationists)

Maberly - 83
(62 Anglicans and 21 Methodists)

1922 Clarence Tilly establishes a retail store, and by 1927 it is exporting its own fish.

1923 The Fishermen's Union Trading Company opens a branch store. In the late 1920's the store is run as a credit business.

Simon Trask, a survivor of the *S.S. Newfoundland* sealing disaster of 1914, becomes the mail courier.

On June 30th, Elliston Memorial School opens to honour local residents killed during the Great War.

Clarence Tilly hangs a blind in his shop window with his name misspelled as Tilley. From this time onward, Tilley becomes the predominant spelling for all Elliston Tilleys.

1924 The legendary Elliston strongman Jimmy Chant dies at age thirty-eight and is buried in the Methodist cemetery.

William Tucker succeeds Benjamin Baker as Justice of the Peace and serves until 1932 when Robert Clouter succeeds him.

1925 Methodism unites with the Presbyterians and a portion of Congregationalists to form the United Church of Canada.

1927 Edwin Baker becomes Deputy Sheriff for the area, and serves until 1950 when the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) assumes policing

responsibilities.

- 1928 An interdenominational group, The Newfoundland Girls in Training forms. This is one of the first groups of this type to be formed outside of St. John's.
- 1928-29 The United Church builds a school on the North Side of Town. Another school is built there about 1965.
- 1929 Electric service becomes available at Elliston.
- 1933 The Newfoundland legislature votes itself out of existence, and Newfoundland is governed by a commission from 1934 until confederation with Canada.
- 1935 Population: There are approximately 863 residents at Elliston and area.
- Elliston - 639
(40 Anglicans, 548 United Church, and 51 Salvationists)
- Maberly - 97
(64 Anglicans, 32 United Church, and 1 Salvationist)
- Neck - 99
(10 Anglicans, 86 United Church, and 3 Salvationists)
- Sandy Cove - 28
(3 Anglicans and 25 United Church)
- 1936 Lewis Clouter is the manager of a branch firm of James Ryan Ltd. with Robert Clouter as the clerk.

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- 1939 The Second World War (1939-1945) begins, and Newfoundland becomes an important and strategic location in the North Atlantic.
- 1942 The United States Military establish a station at Mark's Path that is operational by early 1943.
- 1944 In November, Canadian forces relieve American personnel at Mark's Path. The station closes on October 1st, 1945.
- 1945 Population: There are approximately 591 residents at Elliston.
- 1947 Residents petition the Government for harbour improvements.
- 1949 Newfoundland enters Confederation and becomes Canada's tenth province just before midnight on March 31st.
- 1950's Early in the decade telephones are installed in Elliston.
- 1951 Population: There are approximately 574 residents at Elliston.
- Clarence Tilley Ltd. builds a modern two-storey department store. This structure no longer exists.
- 1952 Workers surface and condition the road through Maberly. The bridge is replaced and about 35 yards of new road is built along a dangerous cliff.
- 1953-59 Tucker's Taxi operates out of Elliston, and for a time is the only taxi to regularly transport

passengers to Clarendville. The taxi is principally driven by owner/operator Peter Tucker.



Tucker's Taxi

1955 CJON-TV goes on the air in August.

The United States Military builds a gap filler radar station at Elliston Ridge.

Elliston residents plan construction of a new school, and the construction of a modern garage begins.

1956 Population: There are approximately 699 residents at Elliston.

The Federal Department of Public Works plan the construction of a new wharf but upon completion, it is considered inadequate by many residents.

The gap filler radar station at Elliston Ridge provides a great deal of employment in the Elliston-Bonavista area. A road is built to the top of the ridge where construction of large buildings is going ahead. Many men from Elliston and Bonavista are working with the Terminal Construction Company who are contracting the job. For a period of time work is carried out on a twenty-four hour basis.

- 1957 A school consisting of five classrooms is built and opens in February of 1958. It is now used as the local recreation centre.
- 1960's CJON-TV places a television repeater on the Ridge.
- 1961 Population: There are approximately 678 residents at Elliston.
- On June 28th operations cease at the gap filler radar station. The Americans close the Town's last military installation at Elliston Ridge.
- 1963 In October, electricity comes to the Neck/Maberly area and about twenty homes are serviced.
- 1964 Work starts on construction of a new post office for Elliston. The one story structure measures approximately 25 feet, and the post master is Cecil Porter.
- 1965 The Town of Elliston is incorporated on June 15th.
- The site of the previous post office, the home belonging to the Porter family, is destroyed by fire in March.
- 1966 Population: There are approximately 691 residents at Elliston.
- Elliston's first Town Council is composed of the following: Gerald Tilley, Mayor; Richard Hobbs, Deputy Mayor; Arthur W. Coles, Roy Tilley, Samuel White, William J. Goodland, and Douglas Tilley, Councillors.



Elliston's first
Town Council

On March 31st, the community's first thirty-five street lights become operational.

- 1970/71 High school students are transported to Bonavista by bus.
- 1971 Population: There are approximately 551 residents at Elliston.
- 1972 Elliston has fifty street lights in operation.
- 1973 Roads throughout Elliston are paved.
- 1976 Population: There are approximately 540 residents at Elliston.
- In July, a humpback whale becomes tangled in a net on North Side and draws many scientists to the area.
- 1977 The Ryan's Building at Elliston closes.
- The Government establishes a two hundred mile conservation limit off the coast of Newfoundland.
- 1981 Population: There are approximately 527 residents.

- 1982/83 All terrain vehicles (ATVs) or trikes are in use at Elliston making many remote wilderness areas much more accessible.
- 1985 The Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador declares the Tilley House to be a Registered Heritage Structure in December.
- 1986 Elliston's last school closes, and all students are transported to Bonavista by bus.
- 1987 Restoration work is complete at the Tilley House. Since William Tilley's death in 1956, the house remains vacant until 1984 when his son Robert commences restoration work on the building.
- 1988 The Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador declares St. Mary's Anglican Church to be a Registered Heritage Structure.
- 1990's Early in the decade, Elliston has its own fire truck housed at the school that closed in 1986, however, its presence in the community is short lived.
- 1991 Population: There are approximately 533 residents at Elliston.
- 1992 The Government declares a cod moratorium effectively ending a way of life that had been ongoing for nearly 500 years.
- 1994 On September 29th, the Town Council decides to extinguish all remaining street lights because of severe financial difficulties.
- 1996 Population: There are approximately 461 residents.

1997 A volunteer group, Tourism Elliston, forms in November to promote tourism development in the area.

1998 On February 24th, the Town Council decides to restore fifteen to twenty street lights.

During July, Elliston holds its first large scale festival, which becomes a very popular annual event, called the Bird Island Puffin Festival.

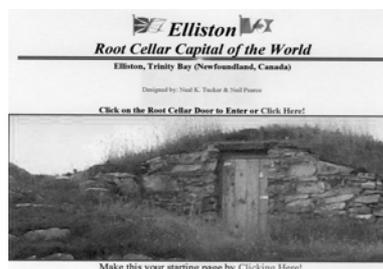
1999 Tourism Elliston, which became incorporated on September 2nd, declares 1999 a Come Home Year and holds the second annual Bird Island Puffin Festival.

Elliston's first official shooting event, the Elliston Sport Shoot, takes place on Catalina road. This location later becomes the site of a shooting club.

2000 The Millennium Bird Island Puffin Festival (third annual) takes place. The Durdle family establishes The Ray Durdle Memorial Dart Challenge. On July 17th, Elliston obtains the official title of Root Cellar Capital of the World.

The CBC television program *On the Road Again* with host Wayne Rostad films an episode at Elliston.

On September 25th, the community goes online at www.rootcellars.com



The Twenty-First Century



North Side being resurfaced on August 26th 2005

2001 Population: There are approximately 360 residents at Elliston.

The fourth annual Bird Island Puffin Festival takes place. The Tucker family establishes The Peter Tucker Memorial Shooting Challenge, and the Mouland family establishes The Uriel Mouland Memorial Bowling Challenge.

In August, *Attractions Canada* films a public announcement segment on Elliston's root cellars for broadcast in both English and French.

On August 18th, 2001 the musical group *The Fables* performs at Elliston Municipal Park.

On December 6th, the Province of Newfoundland officially become the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

- 2002 The fifth annual Bird Island Puffin Festival takes place.
- A cruise ship *Le Levant* visits Maberly on May 29th.
- The Town Council erects street signs displaying the names of the various roads and lanes.
- The Discovery Shooting Club & Sporting Range opens on December 1st.
- 2003 The sixth annual Bird Island Puffin Festival takes place introducing the popular Peninsula Idol contest. The Pearce family establishes The Norman Pearce Memorial Horseshoe Challenge.
- Tourism Elliston begins erecting heritage signs depicting the history of Elliston throughout the community and it is completed in 2005. A visitor information point opens, and the restoration of the historic Orange Hall begins.
- The local wharf, which was severely damaged in a 2002 winter storm, is torn down.
- 2004 Tourism Elliston is awarded the 2003 Doug Wheeler Tourism Award on February, 6th. It was presented by Mr. Paul Shelley, Minister of Tourism, Culture, and Recreation, who publically acknowledged the group's contribution to the provincial tourism industry.
- The first edition of A Measure of Success: The Story of Elliston 1806-2003, by Neal Tucker, is published becoming the first book ever to be published in the community.

The seventh annual Bird Island Puffin Festival takes place, and the Town of Elliston adopts its first town flag designed by Myron Coles.

In the fall the work commences on three projects: stabilization of the Ryan's Building, construction of permanent game booths at the park, and fish flakes at Maberly/Coles' Gulch. Work is completed in 2005.

2005

On June 17th, 2005 the musical group *Shanneyganock* performs at Elliston Municipal Park.

Also in June, the CBC television program *Land & Sea* with host Pauline Thornhill films an episode at Elliston. It airs on February 27th, 2006 under the appropriate title of *Root Cellar Pride*.

The eight annual Bird Island Puffin Festival takes place, and North Side road is completely resurfaced for the first time since initially being paved in 1973.

The Orange Hall is restored and the restoration of the Ryan's Building begins in earnest with the exterior being completed in early 2006.

The Discovery Shooting Club & Sporting Range launches its own website on September 15th at www.discoverys shootingclub.com.

On September 27th Elliston elects a new Town Council composed of the following: Gary Baker, Mayor; Derek Martin, Deputy Mayor; Alfred Chaulk, Ray Childs, and Myron Coles, Councillors.

2006 Elliston has been a permanently settlement for two centuries and retains a population of approximately 350 residents.

Plans are finalized for the Town's Second Come Home Year Celebrations and ninth annual Bird Island Puffin Festival including the grand prize of a new car, a Chevrolet Cobalt.

The Tourism Elliston committee is composed of the following: Marilyn Coles-Hayley, Chairperson; Myrtle Stagg, Vice-Chairperson; Calvin Hayley, Public Relations Chair; Betty Goodland, Secretary/Treasurer; Neal K. Tucker, Webmaster/Director; John Grant, Jonathon Joy, Winston Porter, Charlotte Ritman, Samuel Ryan, and Marsha Stead, Directors.

In the spring, Nanny Hayley's Root Cellar Kitchen, opens at the Orange Hall and is the only restaurant operating in the community.

A revised second edition of this book, A Measure of Success: The Story of Elliston, is published specifically to commemorate Elliston's Come Home Year encompassing a full 200 years of local history.