

Wheaton Covered Bridge, High Marsh Road – Vanessa Bass

When I first arrived in Sackville I stared sullenly at the marshes. My research on Sackville had indicated that Sackville was at the head of the Bay of Fundy and the Bay “lapped its shores”. The information that I had read said nothing of the temperature of the Bay’s waters nor of its chocolate mud. I had anticipated blue sea and yellow sand.

After several years of living on a street where the Tantramar Marsh could not be seen I moved to a house on the marsh’s edge. “A year”, I thought, “I’ll give it a year” and then I’d move back to the neighbourliness of Maple Avenue.

I saw the Marsh as a boring place, lacking excitement and activity. How wrong I was. In the fifteen years I’ve lived in this part of the Town I have realised that every day there is something to see...perhaps an eagle flying over our house towards lunch at Silver Lake, or a small fox running across the grasses maybe with some mischief in mind. Every day we see clever crows that recognise our calls. Daily too, we appreciate the company of regal, beautifully coloured pheasants who provide high drama with their impassioned duels when they are trying to impress a coy female who is feigning disinterest some distance away. We watch herons land on the bank of the pond to stand, sentry-like, watching for the small fish there or hoping for a frog snack. Sometimes an armada of Canada Geese will arrive and stay for a few days and then leave in a noisy flurry. Each spring the pond has families of mallards and other ducks. In due course their babies are proudly paraded for us, the visitors, to admire. We look across from the pond towards the Wheaton covered bridge. It is particularly handsome when the sky above the Marsh is pewter and the sun hits the Marsh in tracts of golden mustard sunlight.

It is the Wheaton Covered Bridge that I would like to nominate. When we travel through it our car mysteriously always slows and stops and I get a kiss from my other half. Exiting from the other end of the bridge is magical too. It is as if an entry has opened on the Tantramar Marsh - that wonderful landscape. I am like Alice in Wonderland going through a door to an amazing place. I imagine I can see men loading hay carts in years gone by and they’re thirsty from the heat, their faces shining with sweat. In my mind’s eye I see them wiping their mouths with the sleeves of their collarless shirts after slaking their thirst with a drink of cold water. Or I see young sweethearts on the High Marsh Road on a sunny evening stroll. I see Douglas Lochhead once more in his red Jeep, crossing the bridge to his favourite place...the Tantramar Marsh, another poem being forged in his wordsmith mind. I see covered wagons heading out of the bridge and going towards the Cumberland Ridge for an evening of camping and fun, the horses looking as excited as their riders to be part of such a gathering.



Photo by Michael Copp

The Bridge is on many a post card or photo of the Town. It is the gateway to a marvellous Marsh that has stories to tell and is an icon for a great town. “When I am old and grey and full of sleep” and I remember the Marsh I’ll remember the Wheaton Bridge.