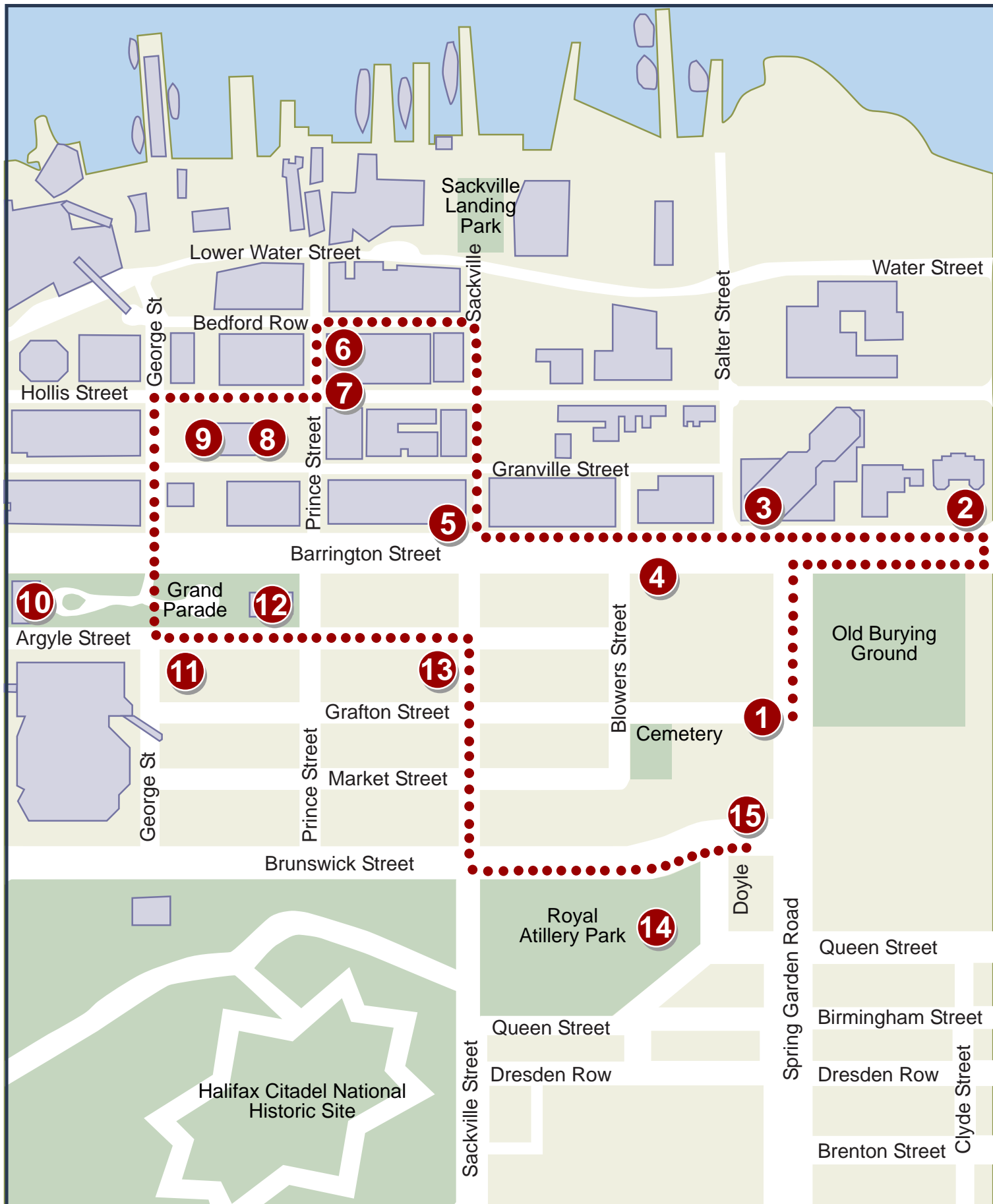


Halifax Literary Walking Tour



1. Philippe-Ignace François Aubert de Gaspé Jr.

Welcome to Grafton Park, home of the Spring Garden Road Memorial Public Library, a statue of Winston Churchill and Bud the Spud chip truck. Did you know that Grafton Park used to be the site of the 19th century Poorhouse cemetery? Underneath your feet lie Hessian soldiers, pirates, paupers and Canada's first French-Canadian novelist, Philippe-Ignace-François Aubert de Gaspé Jr.

At the young age of 23, Aubert de Gaspé Jr. wrote his one and only novel, *L'Influence d'un livre* (1837), a story set in Quebec featuring romance, a quest for gold and murder. He wrote it while hiding out from the Quebec authorities. Aubert de Gaspé Jr. was wanted for releasing an obnoxious substance in the Quebec Legislature. It was an act of having been imprisoned a month for defending the truthfulness of his parliamentary reports with a member of the Assembly.

Aubert de Gaspé came to Halifax in 1840 and briefly taught at the Poorhouse, which was located just up the road on Doyle Street. He later accepted a job as parliamentary reporter for the **Halifax Morning Post**. Unfortunately, he died soon after, on March 7, 1841, of "a sudden illness" and was buried in Grafton Park in an unmarked grave. The Poorhouse cemetery became Grafton park in 1883, for the rent of one peppercorn per year to Queen Victoria.

2. Thomas Raddall

Before you stands Government House, Nova Scotia's Lieutenant Governor's residence. It was built between 1800 and 1805 for Governor Sir John Wentworth, a Loyalist from New Hampshire. His wife, Lady Frances, is best known for her scandalous love affair with Prince William Henry, third son of George III, in the 1780's.

You can read all about the affair in Thomas Raddall's fictional romance, *The Governor's Lady* (1960). Raddall, a beloved Nova Scotian author, chose early Halifax for many of his novels, mixing real historical figures and events with fictional characters. He began his career in 1928, writing articles for **MacLean's Magazine**. Later, Raddall would receive two Governor General Awards for his historical fiction and one for his popular history, *Halifax: Warden of the North* (1948). The title of the book was inspired by a line in Rudyard Kipling's tribute to Halifax, called "Songs of the Cities", in the collection *The Seven Seas* (1896). Today, Raddall's works are still chosen favourites for fans of early Halifax history.

3. Oscar Wilde

"I have nothing to declare except my genius" announced Oscar Wilde to customs officials in New York City. Thus began his North American Tour in 1882 to promote the English Aesthetic movement and a new Gilbert and Sullivan Show, **Patience**. Born in Ireland in 1854, Wilde was widely known in London literary circles for his flamboyant personality and sharp witticisms.

Wilde arrived in Halifax on October 8th, 1882 and took to the stage, the next night, at the Academy of Music, which once stood on this site (Maritime Centre). Over 1500 Haligonians attended his lecture **The Decorative Arts** and 400 attended a lecture the next evening on **The House Beautiful**. His presence in Halifax sparked a war of words between the editors of **The Morning Chronicle** and **The Presbyterian Witness** newspapers over the value of the Aesthetic Movement and, of course, about the author himself. The most stinging criticism came from one member of the public, writing in a letter to the editor, describing Wilde as “narrow-headed, pindled-shanked, shakey, ungraceful specimen of manhood”. Many came to Wilde’s defense, and it was quite a few days later before the whole visit finally faded from public memory.

4. The Book Room

For over 165 years, The Book Room has been supplying Haligonians with their favourite reading materials. It all started in late 1839, in Rev. Charles Churchill’s living room. The Wesleyan minister took book orders from his friends and sent the requests with the first available ship sailing to England. The idea soon grew to be so popular that Churchill published a best sellers list in the **Wesleyan Newspaper**.

By 1876, the enterprise grew into a storefront retail business on Granville Street. In 1925, the store changed its name from The Wesleyan Book Room to The Ryerson Press Book Room to reflect the interests of a broader clientele. The store also began to heavily promote emerging Nova Scotian and Canadian authors. The book store has moved many times since the end of World War Two, becoming simply The Book Room. They moved to their present location in 1996 and still proudly boast being Canada’s oldest bookstore.

5. John Howe

The Howe family name has long been connected to the history of printing, both in Halifax and Boston. At the age of 20, John Howe apprenticed under the notable Boston printing family, the Drapers. The start of the American Revolution forced John, along with Margaret Draper, to escape to Halifax, dragging a wooden printing press in tow. Margaret Draper, publisher of the **Massachusetts Gazette and the Boston Weekly News-Letter** is now considered Canada’s first female printer.

Howe returned to the States in 1777 to publish the Rhode Island **Newport Gazette**, but political tensions forced him to flee permanently to Halifax three years later. On December 28th, 1780, the first issue of John’s Howe’s weekly newspaper, **The Halifax Journal**, rolled off the press in a little house on the corner of Barrington and Sackville. It ran successfully until 1870. He also produced **The Nova Scotia Magazine and Comprehensive Review of Literature, Politics and News**, an early effort to promote literature in Nova Scotia. In 1801, he became the King’s printer, publishing the **Nova Scotia Royal Gazette**, thus dominating most of the publishing business in Halifax. Later in life, retired from the world of printing, Howe would write for his son’s newspaper, **The Novascotian**.

6. Lucy Maud Montgomery

Between 1901-1902, the world famous Anne of Green Gables author, Lucy Maud Montgomery, wrote a column called **Around the Table** for **The Daily Echo**, whose offices used to be in this fine red brick building. Her office was in the back, with a window overlooking the courtyard of Founder's Square. She was also employed to proofread the paper, and to assist in other newspaper duties, as they arose.

Lucy came to Halifax in 1895 to attend Dalhousie University and instantly fell in love with the city. Many who have read *Anne of the Island* (1915) will recognize parts of the fictitious town of Kingsport as Point Pleasant Park, the Public Gardens, Dalhousie University and Halifax Harbour. One of Lucy's favourite pastimes was to attend opera performances at the Academy of Music.

Over the years, more than 30 printers and newspaper publishers have established their offices within a two block radius of the provincial legislature. After the government adjourned for the day, reporters quickly returned to their offices to write, set type and publish the day's news for the following day's papers. Founder's Square, on the corner of Prince and Hollis Street, had 14 printing offices at one time. Today, inside the building, you can see portrait busts of some of Halifax's leading citizens of the day.

7. Joseph Howe

As you walk up Prince Street, you will notice a bronze plaque commemorating the offices of the Halifax newspaper **The Novascotian**. Perhaps no one shaped Nova Scotian politics, literature or freedom of the press more than its publisher, Joseph Howe, youngest son of John Howe. He expressed his love for the province in all he did, from the push for responsible government to his Halifax inspired poetry, such as the **Ode to the Town Clock** (1836).

The Novascotian was a spirited and popular newspaper, with commentaries on the day's events. Howe loyally promoted notable Nova Scotian literature, including the first of Judge Thomas Chandler Haliburton's Sam Slick series. Haliburton was a regular contributor to the paper, and would become one of Nova Scotia's greatest satirical writers. Both Howe and Haliburton were members of an informal literary group, known simply as "The Club". Today, Howe's printing press rests at the Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management building.

Howe is perhaps best known for his rousing speeches. In particular, his famous 1835 defense of free speech for the press. Howe had been accused of libel for comments found in **The Novascotian** towards the magistrates. He was called before the court, and as no lawyer would defend him, Howe represented himself. He spoke to the court for two days, and after a short deliberation, was acquitted of all charges. The event is commemorated on a statue of Howe located next to Nova Scotia Province House. At the base is a bronze plaque showing the newspaper publisher addressing the court.

Howe eventually became a member of the Legislature in 1836, then Premier from 1860-1863 and then finally, a federal cabinet minister. He was appointed Lieutenant Governor for a short time before his death in 1873 and now lies buried beneath a slab of Nova Scotian granite in Camp Hill Cemetery. Many of Howe's speeches, poetry and travel accounts were published after his death, much to the delight of his admirers.

8. Legislative Library

Inside Province House, home to the Nova Scotia Legislature, there is a fine example of the atmosphere and style of a 19th century gentleman's library. Now the Legislative Library, it houses important early broadsheets, the 1758-65 journals of Canada's first representative assembly, and a file of army lists. It also houses what is generally considered to be the first printed Canadian literary effort, **Universal Prayer** (1770), by lawyer William Doyle. The library opened in 1862 and its first librarian was Mr. Venables, who was also the building's janitor.

The Library used to be a courthouse and was where the famous Howe libel trial was held. It was also the scene of a more notorious trial, the mutinous Saladin Pirates. In 1844, the entire crew of the barque, Saladin, save a cook and a cabin boy, were murdered by a passenger and a few mutineers. While attempting to flee, their ship was thrown by rough seas into Nova Scotia waters where they were rescued. Authorities soon became suspicious of the remaining crew's story, the last passenger was also murdered, and in no time, the cook and cabin boy spilled their hostage story. Fingers pointed in every direction, and soon the whole tale unfolded before the Nova Scotia Courts. The Honourable William Young defended the crew and blamed the dead passenger. Judge Brenton Halliburton thought otherwise, and all, except the innocent cook and cabin boy, were sentenced to hang. Their bodies now lie in the poorhouse graveyard, at the site of Grafton Park and the Spring Garden Road Memorial Public Library.

9. Charles Dickens

For one day, on January 21st, 1842, Joseph Howe hosted notable author Charles Dickens on his first visit to Canada. Dickens was already a popular English author for his work *The Pickwick Papers* (1837) and would soon start on his classic, *A Christmas Carol* (1843). Favourable accounts of his visit are noted in his work *American Notes* (1842), however a more telling opinion emerged in private letters with an acquaintance. While Dickens enjoyed the Georgian features of the Legislature building, he was less impressed with the opening session of the General Assembly, stating "...the commencement of a new Session of Parliament in England were so closely copied, and so gravely presented on a small scale, that it was like looking at Westminster through the wrong end of a telescope". It is not known if Dickens ever returned to Halifax for another opportunity to witness provincial politics.

10. Citizens' Free Library

On February 19th, 1864, the Honourable William Young, defense lawyer of Saladin pirates, purchased the old debt-ridden, subscription-based Halifax Mechanic's Library. In an act of goodwill and love for his city, Young donated the collection to establish the city's first free public library, The Citizens' Free Library. Anyone "above the age of 18 who were of a known and respectable nature" could borrow one book at a time. Ratepayers, professionals, clergymen, teachers and their pupils were also patrons. Overdue fines were set at two cents a day. Visitors could use the facilities and borrow if registered in the "stranger's book".

For many years, The Citizens' Free Library moved around the city until it found a permanent home in 1890, on the second floor of City Hall, now the official office of the Mayor of Halifax. The Library closed in 1949 to make way for the new Halifax Memorial Library and its long serving Librarian, Miss Elizabeth Barnaby, finally retired to read all her favourite books.

11. Anna Leonowens

The building on the corner of Argyle and George once housed an art school, called the Victoria College of Art and Design. It was founded and run by the world famous author Anna Leonowens. You might recall her life story as governess and tutor to the King of Siam's 67 children, which later was turned into a classic film *Anna and the King of Siam* (1946), and the even more popular Broadway musical *The King and I* (1951), starring Yul Brenner. Both are based on her autobiography, *The English Governess at the Siamese Court* (1870).

For almost two decades, Anna Leonowens lived in Halifax with her daughter Avis and son-in-law, Thomas Fyshe, general manager of the Bank of Nova Scotia. Anna was an active supporter of the arts, education and literature in Halifax. She even formed a literary club, called the "Pioneer Book Club", comprising of twenty-two leading community members. Anna, herself, was the only female member of the Club. She left Halifax in 1897, but her name and memory live on in an art gallery connected to the art school she began, the Nova Scotia School of Art and Design.

12. Hugh MacLennan

Imagine, as you walk towards St. Paul's Anglican Church, that time is spinning backwards. You are now alive in the year 1917, December 6, 9:05am, to be exact. Suddenly, all around you the city begins to shake from an immense explosion. Debris is flying all around you. Hot metal and burnt wood are impaled in the foyer of the Church. A second floor window suddenly shatters into an eerily-shaped profile of a man.

You've just experienced the world's largest man-made explosion prior to World War Two. Halifax author Hugh MacLennan was also captivated by this real life disaster and drawing upon his own personal childhood explosion experiences, created a story about war in a Canadian city called *Barometer Rising* (1941). The book was an instant success, selling more than 100,000 copies by 1945. MacLennan achieved many literary landmarks, winning a total of five Governor General's Awards for fiction and collections of essays.

13. Halifax Newspapers

Beside you stands one of Halifax's two contemporary newspaper offices, The Herald. The newspaper business in Halifax has always been a prominent part of the city's landscape and economy. The first printing press in Canada was located on Grafton and Duke streets, where the large office building, Duke Towers, now stands. John Bushell printed the very first issue of the **Halifax Gazette** newspaper on Monday, March 23rd, 1752. News of the day included an announcement that the British Government had officially adopted the Gregorian calendar and that a madman had thrown a stone at the Pope's head. Local news often consisted of government notices or advertisements of goods for sale.

It was always difficult for newspaper publishers to get a jump on the news of the day. The publishers would employ all kinds of schemes and gimmicks to scoop each other. None were more cutthroat than the competition between the Boston and New York newspapers. In 1849, six New York publishers decided to band together and establish the Associated Press, an agency to gather and distribute late and breaking international news. Halifax played a large and scarcely known role in this new line of business.

The first "foreign correspondent" for Associated Press was D.H. Craig. He set up an office in Halifax to gather incoming reports sent over on the Cunard ships. Craig began to use carrier pigeons on the final leg of the ship's Boston/New York journey, flying ahead to the AP offices. This worked well until a telegraph line from the United States reached into Canada's Saint John, New Brunswick. For a short while, stories were rushed, via Pony Express from Halifax to Digby, where a ferry would transport the information to the telegraph office. Canisters containing the news of Europe were tossed overboard to awaiting messengers in rowboats, who would then transport the package to an awaiting pony express messenger. This saved nearly 35 hours off the time it would take for the news to sail from Halifax to the United States. Locals would often partake in a friendly wager on the arrival time of the ponies to Digby. By November, of the same year, the telegraph arrived in Halifax, and was operated by none other than Halifax's own D.H. Craig.

14. Cambridge Military Library

As you head back to Grafton park, notice on your right, in the far corner of the Royal Artillery Park, a diminutive red brick building. You are looking at the Cambridge Military Library, which, in its heyday, was the social and literary centre of military Halifax. The Library opened in 1817, as an alternative to the more notorious choices of city entertainment. It moved to its present location in Royal Artillery Park in 1886 and was renamed Cambridge Military Library in 1902. If you have time, call ahead to tour this wonderful little library complete with fireplace, glass encased bookshelves, leather chairs and an extensive book collection of military history. The library was funded in part from Customs receipts gathered during the War of 1812. It also contains about 6,000 volumes of reading material from the Corfu Garrison Library, a Greek island under military occupation until 1864.

15. Adèle Hugo

Your final stop is a tragic tale of love, madness and despair. Adèle Hugo was the youngest daughter of Victor Hugo, author of such famous works as *Les Misérables* (1862). Known for her beauty and musical talent, Adèle was also prone to fits of mental anguish and obsession. While living in exile on the Channel Islands, Adèle met a young English ensign, Albert Andrew Pinson. She immediately fell in love with him, though he showed himself to be a womanizer, ill-tempered and debt-ridden.

Shortly after their meeting, Pinson departed to Halifax with the English Army, but kept in touch with Adèle through letters. When he was promoted to Lieutenant in 1861, Adèle announced to her mortified father that they were to be married. It is not clear, however, if Pinson actually proposed to Adèle, or if this was a creation of her own vivid imagination.

By 1862 Pinson was stationed in Halifax. A year later, Adèle escaped her family's watchful eyes and secretly followed her love to his new location. She registered at the Halifax Hotel under the assumed name of "Miss Lewly". No one knew her true identity. Funds soon got scarce, so she rented rooms with local Haligonians, close to the army barracks. Adèle's imagination took the better hold of her while in Halifax, for she announced to her family that she was now married, though Pinson maintained they were not.

For two years, she spied on Pinson all over Halifax under the cover of mystery. She often wore black, or donned men's clothes, peering at him through windows during social visits or from carriages parked nearby. One night, she stalked him outside Bellevue Mansion on Spring Garden Road. Pinson discovered her guise and dragged her to the Poor House cemetery, now Grafton Park, where they exchanged heated words. It is not known if they ever met face to face again. Throughout her stay in Halifax, Adèle was feverishly chronicling her activities in a journal, buying paper at James Gossip, Stationer.

Pinson was transferred to the Barbados in June of 1866. Adèle followed, where she was seen wandering the streets in rags. Eventually she was taken under the wing of Madame Celine Alvarez Baa, who brought her back to Paris, where Victor Hugo was living. Adèle spent the rest of her life in a comfortable middle class institution, and died there in 1915.

We hope you have enjoyed your virtual literary walking tour of Halifax. To read more on any of these topics, please consult the **Literary Walking Tour** and the **Literary Firsts** reading lists.