

The Rideau Township Historical Society

Preserving and Promoting local history for the former Rideau Township

April 2014 Newsletter

Newsletter Editor: Ron Wilson (rideauarchives@ottawa.ca)

The Next Meeting

Date: Wednesday April 16, 2014
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Place: Ottawa Client Services Centre
2155 Roger Steven's Drive
North Gower
Ontario

**Bring a Friend,
Light Refreshments**



Owen Cooke, Dave Bullock, Ruth Wright, and Susan McKellar attended, and I would judge, immensely enjoyed Gene-O-Rama 2014, See below.

Gene-O-Rama 2014

RTHS had a table at the Gene-O-Rama Conference at the Confederation Education Centre on March 21 & 22. The table was manned by Susan McKellar, Lucy Martin, Ellen Adamsons and Jane Anderson, and featured a selection of our publications for sale, as well as information about the society and its activities.

We donated one copy of Cheese Factories as a door prize, and sold one copy as well as four other books.

As part of the program of Gene-O-Rama our Rideau Archives team presented a version of the talk they did at the November 2013 RTHS meeting.

The April Meeting

Topic: *The CCM Bicycle Company.*

Speaker: *John McKenty*

With its bikes in summer and skates in winter, CCM was a large part of what it meant to grow up in Canada. Mr. John McKenty will give us a lively look at the history of this iconic Canadian company from its foundation in 1899 until its eventual demise in 1983

While there, browse around the room and see the fabulous historical display of past Mayors and Council Members of Rideau Township and the former Marlborough and North Gower Townships. Hope to see you there



This Month

1. The March Presentation
2. News from the Rideau Archives
3. The Dickinson House
4. Gene O Rama
5. The new Watson's Mill Board
6. Summer jobs at Dickinson House & the Mill
7. Some Coming Events

We described our efforts to identify the First World War dead from the Rideau Township area, and to discover more about these young men who joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force and served their country.

The CEF was the field force created by Canada for service overseas in the First World War; it fielded the Canadian Corps, arguably the greatest field army Canada has ever produced, for service in France and Flanders.

The talk was well-received by the audience, and we have subsequently answered some follow-up questions.

Susan McKellar

Saint Patrick's Day Celebration & Irish Heritage Month

Presentation by: Coral Lindsay and Gail Brooks

Article and Photos by Lucy Martin

For our March meeting 27 members and guests gathered at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Kars to learn a little more about St. Patrick and Ireland – most wearing some shade of green.

The traditional date to honor St. Patrick, March 17, is celebrated with more enthusiasm – often involving a drink, or three - than many statutory holidays. Before introducing the evening's speakers, Ruth Wright shared an Irish tea towel which mused in rhyme about a possible relationship between longevity and consumption of alcohol.



Ruth presenting her tea towel

Coral Lindsay's presentation helped us to learn more about St. Patrick's noteworthy life and sort fact from legend. It turns out St. Patrick was not even Irish, nor did he drive the snakes out of the Emerald Isle. (Post-ice age Ireland had no snakes to begin with.) Lindsay raised a few eyebrows with an assertion that Leprechauns were real people. That is, Leprechaun stories are likely based on Ireland's pre-Celtic inhabitants, a shorter group that was driven inland and westward by different groups of colonizers. With at least four such waves, it isn't surprising that stories based on other, little people with secretive ways emerged and endured.

But back to St. Patrick. According to Lindsay, he was probably born in early March (not the 17th) in the year 387 and may have died in 460 or 463 at age 75 or 78. (Accounts differ.) Various sources say his birthplace was in modern-day Scotland and his birth name was Maewyn Succat. (For simplicity's sake, this article will stick with the name Patrick.) His people were Christianized Romans, leaders in their community. Patrick's father was a deacon and a city councilor, his grandfather had been a priest.

All Patrick knew of that more-genteel life was upended at about age 15-16 when he and two sisters were captured at a family villa by coastal raiders. He never saw those sisters again. For the next six years Patrick was enslaved and endured a sparse, cold life as a shepherd - probably in a remote part of western Ireland. Difficult as all that must have been, Patrick credited the experience with awakening his spirituality.

Prompted by a vision, at about age 21 he fled captivity, making a long trek as a fugitive runaway to the shore. There he managed to join the crew of a boat going to Northern Gaul (France). The cargo was Irish wolfhounds which had to be delivered overland to Italy. Only after that was done was Patrick free to slowly make his way back to his own family in Scotland, who had not seen him for 10 years. (Note: accounts of his escape from Ireland vary, some have him going from Ireland straight back to Britain.)

It is generally agreed that Patrick then went back to Rome in hopes of becoming a missionary who could serve in Ireland. That path required more education and training as a layman, deacon and priest. By 432 he was made a bishop with the Latin name Patricius, (from which we get Patrick) a position from which he could ordain other priests and represent the church. He could finally embark on his long-held dream.

As Lindsay explained, the dominant religion in Ireland at that time was complex paganism. This was maintained by priests of both genders, called Druids, who studied for up to 20 years to be worthy of that role. Lindsay says in some respects Patrick's goal of converting that population to Christianity was made easier by the coincidence that the Irish already had the concept of a single god and eternal life.

As with other places, the Church had enough flexible wisdom to merge their teachings with older, deeply-held local customs. For example, the circle element of the Celtic cross popularized by Patrick and used to this day was a sacred symbol of eternity to the Druids. The three-leaved shamrock, which was also important in the pagan belief,

was used by Patrick to teach and represent Christianity's Holy Trinity.

Lindsay said at the time of Patrick's return there were about 150 distinct tribes, clan and/or kingdoms in Ireland, each ruled separately. So mass conversion was bound to be a very laborious task. Undaunted, Patrick and his followers traveled widely to do their work, with few resources and at great personal risk.

For all that we think of him as having come to convert the Irish, Patrick felt his first responsibility was to minister to those there who were already Christian, either slave or free. He also preached wherever that was possible or permitted. Presented with a clash of religious offerings, many listeners ended up practicing both, just to be safe.

Patrick spent decades trying to bring Christianity to as many as possible. Those efforts included establishing the Hill of Armagh as a monastery and school, which is still recognized as the ecclesiastic capital of Ireland. Although Irish culture at this time already valued intellect and education, that was based on oral traditions. The introduction of education based on writing helped Ireland become a beacon of learning and a sanctuary for knowledge at a time when the rest of Europe underwent what we call the dark ages.

Consider the standard curriculum taught at Armagh: grammar, literature, law, history, geography, mathematics, astronomy, logic, philosophy, military science, rhetoric, music, art, metalwork, Irish Gaelic, Latin and some Hebrew and Greek. (After reeling off that impressive list Lindsay quipped "medicine was taught at home".)

The educational milieu that resulted - of art, intellect and deep spiritual devotion - eventually gave birth to what some call Ireland's national treasure, the Book of Kells. Which Wikipedia says is "...a masterwork of Western calligraphy and represents the pinnacle of insular illumination."

Because of his key contributions in Ireland, and of the role Irish immigrants played across the world, many places have been named for Patrick at home and abroad. The precise time and place of Patrick's death is unknown, though it was probably around age 75. He is reputedly buried in Downpatrick.

Here is Lindsay's summation: "His story is amazing because he went from being a wealthy son, to being a slave, where he was lonely, he suffered brutality and pain. He suffered self-doubt and sorrow and struggle. But, ultimately, he persevered with hope and faith."

Following Lindsay's expansion on the life and times of St. Patrick, RTHS member Gail (Wallace) Brooks shared slides from a 3-week trip she and her husband Glenn Brooks took across Ireland in May of 2004. The first week was on a guided tour, the last two were undertaken independently in a rented car. "We got lost a lot" Brooks said, adding that road signs at the time left something to be desired.

They stayed in various B&Bs, new and old. Brooks recounted that their hosts were invariably kind and helpful, the people they encountered were most welcoming and Ireland itself is quite beautiful.

Did they both kiss the Blarney Stone? Gail said that happens to be quite awkward. She was content to just take Glenn's photo as he did the necessary contortions.

The informative lecture combined with (relatively) modern photos helped convey a better feel for Ireland as a place of people and culture, an excellent topic for March.



Coral Lindsay and Gail Brooks provided a very enjoyable evening.



As a further enhancement to the evening the refreshments after included some Irish baked goods. This Irish Soda bread left many of us longing for more.

Accepting Summer Job Applications, Dickinson House & Watson's Mill

The Rideau Township Historical Society, in cooperation with Watson's Mill, is now accepting applications for summer employment at both Dickinson House and Watson's Mill in the Village of Manotick. Youth are welcome to submit their cover letter and resume c/o: The Education and Interpretation Officer, Watson's Mill, by email at: watsonsmillprograms@rogers.com; by mail: PO Box 145, Manotick, ON K4M 1A2; or in person at: the Carriage Shed office, 5524 Dickinson St., Manotick. Office hours are Monday-Friday, 10:00-4:00. Deadline for applications is Monday, April 21st at noon. For additional information, see rideautownshiphistory.org/dickinsonhouse and www.watsonsmill.com.

Candidates for all following positions should:

- Register with Young Canada Works: past participants must create a new 2014 account—go to www.youngcanadaworks.ca
- Get: a 2014 police record check (children's programming position will require the police record check with the vulnerable sector)
- Submit: a cover letter and resume by Monday, April 21st, 2014, with preferred position of interest.

Selection of those candidates to be invited for interviews will be completed during the week of April 21.

Confirmed positions: target start date is May 5th (will be confirmed based on funding results).

- Special Events Assistant. Wage is \$11.50/hour, 5 days/week for 18 weeks.
- Children's Programming Assistant. Wage is \$12.00/hour, 5 days/week for 18 weeks.

Anticipated positions: start date will be confirmed based on funding results. Wages would be: \$11.00/hour, 5 days per week. Number of weeks dependent on funding results (10-18 weeks).

- Heritage Interpreters (number of positions based on funding).

RTHS and WMMI thank all applicants for their interest, however, only those selected for an interview will be contacted. RTHS and WMMI are equal opportunity employers.

The Dickinson House Museum and Watsons Mill are located at 1127 Mill Street and 5525 Dickinson Street in Historic Dickinson Square, Manotick. Free parking is available on-site.

Digitally Preserving the Past for the Future

Jane Anderson and Susan McKellar attended this excellent presentation by Sarah (Bennett) Chisholm on March 27 at the Heritage House Museum in Smiths Falls. This was part of the meeting of the newly-revived Smiths Falls & District Historical Society.

Sarah (a former summer employee at the Rideau Archives) is now working at the North Lanark Regional Mu-

seum in Appleton. She described an oral history project of the North Lanark Historical Society, intended to capture the fading memories of Mississippi Mills.

In two years they have completed over 25 videos and plan to do more in 2014. They have recorded information on local school, farms, mills, military experiences, and on the Almonte Train Accident of 1942.

Sarah showed some clips from interviews, and discussed in detail how they organized the project and conducted and filmed the interviews. We found it very helpful indeed!

Notice

Membership 2014 Membership fees are now due. \$10 for a single membership, \$15 for a family membership. Contact Mary Riley. Hope to see you at our meeting on April 16th.

Symposium “Rural Success in Heritage Conservation”

The Heritage Advisory Committee of the Municipality of North Grenville is pleased to announce the date for its first Heritage Symposium. Rural Success in Heritage Conservation will be taking place on Friday, May 9, 2014 at the North Grenville Municipal Centre (285 County Road 44) from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. This is an exciting opportunity to enjoy expert presentations from accomplished professionals.

A note to all historical societies, municipal heritage committees, companies or private individuals that specialize in heritage restoration or heritage reproduction - display space can be made available for you to advertise your events and skills. Other than the registration fee, there is

no fee for display space. Please contact Phil Mosher to book your display space by April 15, 2014.

The cost to attend the event is \$15 per person and reservations can be made by contacting Phil Mosher. Invoices can be prepared for your organization if more than five individuals are planning to attend.

If you have any questions regarding the event, please contact me.

Cheers

Phil Mosher
Planner
Municipality of North Grenville
pmosher@northgrenville.on.ca
Tel: 613-258-9569 x 118

News from the Rideau Branch, Ottawa Archives

Hours: *The Rideau Archives is open every Tuesday from 9:30 am to 4:30 p.m., and at other times by appointment. (613-489-2926).*

Resources and Services of the Rideau Township Branch of the City of Ottawa Archives: a monthly feature in this newsletter, celebrating the services and holdings preserved in your community's archives resource centre.

This is National Volunteer Week, and it is my pleasure to extend a heartfelt thanks to the Rideau Township Historical Society members and other volunteers who contribute so much of their time and energy to collecting the documents and materials that constitute the heritage of this community at the Rideau Township Branch. As the new Community Archivist for the City of Ottawa Archives, I am privileged to work alongside the volunteers at the Rideau Township Branch each Tuesday. I witness directly each

week their many hours of diligent research and am amazed at the depth of their knowledge about this community, always generously shared with visitors. It is the volunteers who make the Rideau Township Branch such a successful model of participatory archives and such a valued part of the City of Ottawa Archives.

Stuart Clarkson

Some Watson's Mill Events

The Mill is located at 5525 Dickinson Street, Dickinson Square, Manotick. Free parking on-site.

Web Site: www.watsonsmill.com

The Carriage Shed Office at Watson's Mill is open: weekdays, 10:00 a.m.-4:00.p.m. . Please visit www.watsonsmill.com for a complete calendar of events.

Please note that the Mill is not open from January through April. Please visit their web site (above) for information on other winter events & the upcoming season's programs.

The RTHS gratefully acknowledges the financial support received from the City of Ottawa

The Dickinson House 2014 Season

Each summer the Rideau Township Historical Society offers heritage programming in and around the Dickinson House in Manotick. The activities planned for the 2014 program will reflect the period when the families of the millers were in residence, - the Dickinsons, the Spratts, and the Watsons.

Dickinson House will be open from May 17 to December 7. Hours will be 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. until September 1; thereafter the house will be open on weekends and holidays, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Special tours will be available outside these hours, upon request. On the weekends and holidays, there will be a number of special exhibits, as described below.

See below and to the right the displays and demonstrations that are being planned for this summer.



The Dickinson House has been opened to the public each summer season since 2008 by the Rideau Township Historical Society. We're doing it again this summer.

Plan on coming more than once. We have new exhibits, demonstrations, and concerts as the summer progresses so it is definitely worth more than one visit.

Schedule of Special Displays, and Exhibits

- May 17**, Opening Day, Heritage Toy Exhibit
 - Jun 7**, Dickinson Day & Doors Open Ottawa
 - Jun 8, 2pm**, Book Launch Social: The Women of Dickinson House
 - Jun 15, 2pm**, Concert: Musical Thoughts Studio
 - Jun 29, 2pm**, Keyboard Concert: Rowena Pearl
 - Jul 12-13**, Heritage Garden Tours
 - Jul 26, 1pm**, Victorian Tea & Fashion Show
 - Aug 2**, Opening Day, Heritage Furniture Styles Exhibit
 - Aug 10, 2pm**, Concert: Manotick Brass; Lawn Social
 - Aug 23-24**, Heritage Games
 - Aug 30, 10am**, Country Fair
 - Sep 20**, Opening Day, Gramophone Exhibit
 - Oct 11**, Harvest Festival
 - Nov 1, 1pm**, Women's Day Victorian Tea
 - Nov 8, 9, 11**, Exhibit: Local Heroes of the Great War 1914-1918
 - Dec 6-7**, Heritage Christmas Crafts
- See the 2014 Dickinson House Rack Card for more information***

This 'n That

Book Launch Social Maureen McPhee has completed her book on the Dickinson daughters and their place in Manotick society. The research for this book drew heavily on the records of their churches, the Manotick Womens Institute and other sources. It is an exciting addition to the history of Manotick. See us June 8 at 2 p.m.

Victorian Tea and Fashion Show This tea and fashion show builds on the success of the wedding dress display that was on the third floor last summer. The costumes of the time certainly were decorative, colourful and intricate in design. Come on July 26 for a real treat.

Heritage Furniture Styles Exhibit This is a new type of exhibit for us. Although we have a considerable range of furniture styles already in the house we will be displaying other artifacts on loan from members of the RTHS and the local community. August 2.

Country Fair The country fair will be our major event for the season as was the Victorian Wedding last year. We will be providing displays and entertainment typical of country fairs going back to the days of the Dickinsons in Manotick. August 30, 10 a.m.

Local Heroes of the Great War. 1914 - 1918 Our Remembrance Day displays for 2014 will concentrate on local families and individuals and their service in the Great War.

Minutes of the Rideau Township Historical Society

FEBRUARY Meeting: March 19, 2014, St. Andrew's Kars

Opening: The Rideau Township Historical Society met in the hall of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Kars, Ontario, for the regular monthly meeting and a program on Irish Heritage by Coral Lindsay and Gail Brooks, with 27 present. President Brian Sawyer called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Finance: Sandy McNiece, treasurer, presented a financial report for 2014 to date, with receipts of \$1,200 plus an additional grant of \$9,500 from the City of Ottawa. Expenditures were \$500, leaving a net balance of \$13,700 after reserves.

Membership: Mary Riley reported that currently there are 12 life members, 1 complimentary member, and 60 paid members.

Program: Ruth Wright reminded us that next month's speaker will be John McKenty, speaking about the history of the CCM Bicycle. This will be on April 16, at the Client Service Centre.

Communications: Ron Wilson mentioned that he had encountered some technical problems with the web site due to a change in the supplier's procedures but that he has solved them and the web site is again functioning.

Publications: Jane Anderson reported that we are anticipating publication of The Women of Dickinson House in April, and the start of the Oral History Project in late April. She will have a display and book sale at Gene-O-Rama March 22, and will attend a talk on oral histories in Smiths Falls in March.

Dickinson House: Maureen McPhee and the committee are preparing for the season; a highlight will be a Country Fair on Aug. 30.

Grants: Maureen reported she is awaiting word on the status of her application for grants for hiring students, and will apply for an additional grant for the Country Fair.

Youth: Brian Sawyer mentioned that the executive will decide whether to continue the student awards once revisions to the budget have been made. Other issues include funding for the oral history project as well as research on Sir John A. MacDonald.

Announcements: Stu Rodgers reminded us of the talks at the Carriage Shed in Manotick on the last Wednesday of each month; John Palmer will be talking about the History of Jazz, and Stu will talk about the Vikings.

Scott Cameron passed on a comment from his history professor at Carleton University that the RTHS web site is the best she's seen of local historical societies.

Ellen Adamsons will speak to the Ukrainian Genealogy Group on March 25 on her publication, "With Only a Suitcase: a Latvian Immigrant Family History".

Minutes: It was moved by Susan McKellar and seconded by Maureen McPhee that the minutes of the February 19, 2014 meeting as published in the March Newsletter be approved. Carried.

Evening Program: Ruth Wright introduced Coral Lindsay, who spoke about the life of St. Patrick. Then Gail Brooks showed beautiful pictures of Ireland from a trip she and her husband Glenn took several years ago. Marg Rogers thanked Coral and Gail for an entertaining and enlightening evening.

Adjournment: The meeting then adjourned, followed by a social time with refreshments provided by Sandy Wilson, Ruth Wright and Jane Anderson. This gave people more time to peruse the extensive display on Ireland and St. Patrick.