

The Rideau Township Historical Society

Preserving and Promoting local history for the former Rideau Township

December 2009 Newsletter

Newsletter Editors: Coral Lindsay and Ron Wilson (rideauarchives@ottawa.ca)

Next Meeting

Dec. 9, 6:30 pm. The annual Christmas potluck dinner will be held in the

**North Gower United Church
2332 Church Street
North Gower, Ontario.**

Music, great food, great company, great conversation. Sing along with Stu Rogers. Please join us.



The Christmas Pot Luck Dinner

Food & Make Merry



Help with the Christmas Pot Luck Dinner

Ann Cronin has once again agreed to organize the RTHS Christmas pot luck dinner. Helpers are most welcome to contact Ann at (613) 692-6273.



Organizing Committee Web Site
www.manotick150.ca/

Bring a friend

Light refreshments

For a ride call Brian Earl

Features This Month

1. The November meeting.
2. News from the Rideau Branch, Ottawa Archives.
3. The Dickinson House this Summer.

An Invitation!!!

Have you a Victorian costume?

Members and friends of RTHS have been invited to join Glenn Brooks at the Manotick Legion Hall on Tuesday, December 8, 2009, at 7:00 p.m. in period costume.

Glenn will be reading excerpts from Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol and he has asked us, including Cam Trueman, to attend and add to the Christmas atmosphere. Please come.

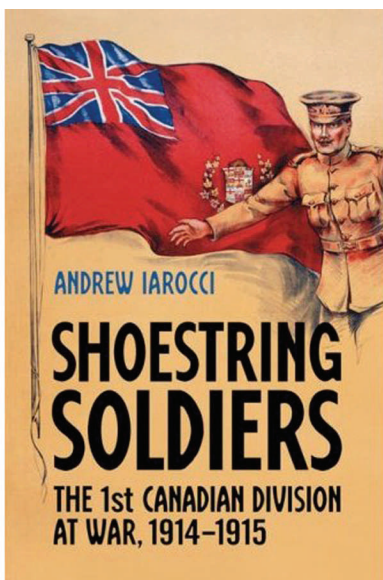
November Meeting

Speaker: Dr. Andrew Iarocci

Article by Owen Cooke

Twenty-eight members and guests met in the Carriage Shed, Manotick for our regular November meeting. Our featured guest was Andrew Iarocci, Senior Research Fellow at the Canadian War Museum as well as lecturer in military history at the Royal Military College of Canada. Andrew is the author of the critically acclaimed *Shoestring Soldiers*, a history of the 1st Canadian Division, 1914-1915.

Andrew chose to discuss not the book, but some signifi-



cant themes of Canada and the First World War. For instance, why did Canadians go to war? Although the South African War set a precedent for Canadian participation in an imperial war, conscious Canadian political decisions were taken as to the form of that participation in 1914.

He also discussed changing Canadian identity during the war, and considered some of the difficulties of deciding who was a Canadian then. He talked about Professor Jonathan Vance's ongoing research project of digitizing all

the Canadian attestation forms, filled out by individual Canadian recruits when they enlisted, and how that statistical tool will aid our understanding.

He looked at the operational side of Canadian participation to question whether Vimy was really when Canada matured. Was it only perhaps that Vimy, instead of the mud of Flanders, had the firm soil necessary to support Allward's soaring monument to both Canadian victory and the Canadian dead.



As well, he considered some less famous Canadian contributions to the war such as railway building and forestry in Europe. He fielded many questions, during the presentation, after, and on into the refreshment period.

Mark Jodoin thanked Andrew and presented him with a copy of Dora's book and a complimentary Society membership.

The Dickinson House Experience this Past Summer

General Overview

As reported last month 2009 was another banner year for the Dickinson House. When the figures were added up we have had 3820 visitors. We had not expected that many. With of the construction and the ubiquitous rain and mud we expected a much lower number. Instead we have seen more visitors than last year. And, we are open for two more days.

The total number of days open will be 55 counting the remaining two days. The DSHMI (Dickinson Square Heritage Management Inc.) supports the RTHS in its mission to the tune of \$75 each day the house is open. For this year the final total will be of the order of \$4125. The money is being put in the publishing budget to get more books published.

Coral Lindsay was once again responsible for the displays, the recruiting and scheduling of the volunteers, and coordination with the Watson's Mill events. She did her usual excellent job of it and the Society sincerely sends their thanks and congratulations to her for this.

The differences from last year were significant. The furnishings, pictures, old books, and artefacts were on loan from several people, the vast majority from Mark Jodoin's collection of Canadiana. The Society wishes to extend its thanks to these people, and Mark in particular, for their civic responsibility in loaning these items for display. Anyone who has not seen Mark's collection should try to get out to the house December 5 or 6. It is impressive.

List of RTHS Volunteers

The following is a list of the volunteers from the RTHS who hosted visitors to the Dickinson House this past summer. If anybody has been missed we apologize in advance. We're historical interpreters, not accountants.

Barbara Rhodes, Ben Guther, Betty Bartlett, Brian and Pat Earl, Cam Trueman, Coral Lindsay, Ellen Adamsons, Georgie Tupper, Jane Anderson, Jessica Reinbolt, Katherine Killins, Lucy Martin, Maureen McPhee, Melanie Hayes, Ron Wilson, Rosemary Hayes, Sandy Trueman, Sonia Vanek, Stephanie Cameron, Susan McKellar, Margaret Cameron, Scott Cameron, Sheila Percival, Stu & Marg Rogers.

Donors and Loaners

The following people have donated or loaned artefacts to be displayed in the Dickinson house this past summer. Once again we apologize for any oversights.

Audrey Boyd McIntyre, Betty Bartlett, Bonnie Grey & Ted Ross, Brian Earl, Sheila King, Coral Lindsay, DSHMI, Eleanor Prince, George MacFarlane, Georgie Tupper, Jack Watson, Larry Ellis, Mac Beach, Maija Adamsons and Jake, Mark Jodoin, Melanie Hayes, Rideau Township Archives, Ruby Denison, Stuart Rogers, Susan Rosidi.

The Big Days

Dickinson Days June 5,6 - 1232 visitors.
Homecoming - 236 visitors
Summer Camp & School Tours - 225 visitors
October 3, Stroke Survivors House Tour, - 185
October 10, Harvest Festival - 499 visitors.

Mix of Visitors & Comments

The following are a few of the comments that visitors put in the guest book. The exclamation mark was used gratefully often to end the comment. There were no negative comments.

- *Thank you so much!! Wonderful house and a wonderful tour.*
- *Great interpreters!*
- *I finally saw the inside. It was magical. Great to visit the house again.*
- *Nice to see such community pride – Bravo!*
- *Great ideas, nice furniture*
- *A treasure as are the volunteers.*
- *Keep it authentic.*
- *Reminds me of my own family. I love hearing about the past.*
- *I loved the cinnamon ice cream.*

This is the end of the second summer for the volunteers and we are still surprised at the deep interest of the community in the house. It is not unusual at all for a group to stay for two hours. The discussions with many of the people become two way with stories exchanged and additional information on the area passed to the volunteers as well as to the visitors. It is a truly rewarding experience for the volunteers to meet and talk with these people.

The following list is a selection of the cities and towns from which we had visitors. Clearly they did not all come the long distances just to see the mill and the house. But it is a good indication of the world wide interest in historical sites.

Aylmer, PQ, Athens, Greece, Barrhaven, Bedford, NS, Burlington, Casselman, Columbia, South America, Cookstown, ON, Coquitlam, BC, Dallas, TX, Embrun, Gatineau, Geary, NB, Halifax, Hamilton, Kanata, Kemptville, ON, London, Ont, Montreal, Moscow, Russia, Nanaimo, Newcastle, UK, Newfoundland, Niagara Falls, Ottawa, Perth, San Antonia TX, St. Catherines, Sudbury, Switzerland, Thunder Bay, Toronto & environs, Vienna, Austria.

As well as the compliments from tourists and other travelers we were pleased with the response from the teachers and parents who accompanied the school tours. The Manotick Public School parents were enthralled to find the interior so fascinating.

Visitors from other historical sites and their comments

Another class of visitor was people who worked at other historical sites. The discussions that inevitably came during the tours were both informative and helpful to us. The problems faced by other sites in preserving historical sites echoed our own. It was gratifying that our approach to live interpretation rather than static displays was a goal that others believed in and strived for.

From the Rideau Archives

Rideau Township Branch, City of Ottawa Archives 2009 Report to the City of Ottawa Archivist

by Georgina M. Tupper, Head Volunteer

The Rideau Township Branch has enjoyed another successful year. This success is due to

- *The dedication and determination of the volunteers to make Rideau Branch work as the Rural Branch of the City of Ottawa Archives;*
- *the support received from the main Branch, especially Serge Barbe, the Community Archivist; and*
- *the inclusion of Rideau Branch representatives at the monthly staff meetings of the City Archives.*

On any given Tuesday, the number of volunteers varies from six to twelve, depending on family, seasonal holidays, and other personal commitments. Each volunteer has accepted on-going projects at the archives and at heritage community events. Typically Tuesdays are occupied hosting researchers, assisting visitors, receiving donations, and managing staff projects.

The community sees the Rideau Branch as the keeper of its heritage and generously donates large and small treasures for safekeeping. Increasingly the Branch is receiving donations from neighbouring rural communities and former residents.

Rideau Archives Round-Up

By Owen Cooke

November marks the annual meeting of the Rideau Archives volunteers with the management team from the

City Archives and the presentation of our annual report. Highlights for 2009 include:

- some improvements to our heritage building (improved disabled accessibility and a snow guard over the front door);
- the acquisition of important groups of records, especially material from the estate of Dora Stamp; the Craig-Pratt fonds, donated by Margaret Howard; and the Jim McNiece fonds, donated by his children;
- 102 new additions to the Reference Library, including 12 to our growing heritage cookbook collection and a further 11 agricultural textbooks used at an early class at the Kemptville College of Agricultural Technology by Ron Wallace's father;
- a new exhibit, "Worship in Rideau", which debuted at the North Gower Discovery Tour in September. It's coincidence that the Ontario Heritage Federation chose the same theme for their recent online exhibition.
- answering of research requests, including those related to award drains in the former Rideau Township and those relating to Dickinson House and its summer exhibition.

Two new volunteers have joined us over the year - Peter Satterly and Maureen McPhee.

As well, the Archives had two students during the summer, Sarah Bennett employed under the Young Canada Works programme, and Sarah Davies, completing her high school volunteer hours requirement. The enthusiasm of both was a great encouragement to all of us.

Help Needed at the Dickinson House

Don't forget that volunteers are still needed for Saturdays, Sundays and holidays to act as hosts and interpreters for visitors to the Dickinson House.

On-the-job training is provided and period costumes are appropriate. Last year the 25 volunteers welcomed almost 4,000 visitors.

Please call Coral Lindsay, 613-489-2029, if you can help. The House will be open December 5-6.

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