

The Rideau Township Historical Society

Preserving and Promoting local history for the former Rideau Township

December 2015 Newsletter

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

The Christmas Party

Date: Thursday, December 17, 2015
Time: 6.00 p.m.

Place Cornerstone Wesleyan Methodist Church
6556 Prince of Wales Drive.
North Gower, ON

Bring a Friend. To arrange a ride call Brian Earl at (613) 692 2371.

Notice re Proposed Change to Constitution

The RTHS Executive proposes to bring forward to the AGM in January 2016 a change to the item on directors' terms in the Constitution (By-Laws, paragraph 1).

Currently this paragraph reads "No office shall be held by the same person for more than three years".

The proposed version would read:

"The offices of President, Secretary and Treasurer shall not be held by the same person for more than three consecutive years."

The reason for dropping the three-year limit for offices other than these three is the difficulty in finding people willing to fill these positions. However, the Executive agrees with the original intent of the item, to bring new people and new ideas to the leadership of the Society, so is proposing that the Society keep the three-year limit for these key positions.

Further, it is proposed that an additional sentence be added:

"Further, in general the President, Secretary and Treasurer shall be elected for three-year terms."

Previously there was no minimum term for any of the positions on the Executive Committee. The Executive feels that it is beneficial for those agreeing to serve as President, Secretary or Treasurer to commit to a three-year term, to give stability in the leadership. The wording does, however, allow for exceptions to the minimum, where that becomes necessary.

RTHS CHRISTMAS PARTY



Thursday, December 17, 2015
Cornerstone Wesleyan Church
6556 Prince of Wales Drive, North Gower

Home-cooked Ham Supper

with all the trimmings

Appetizers, Dessert, Punch

Tea or Coffee

\$25.00

6:00 p.m.

Afterwards, we are pleased to present:

A Video Tour of South Africa with Laura and David Tupper

If you plan to attend and have not already done so, please notify by Mon., Dec. 14 :

**Owen Cooke: oacooke@gmail.com or 613-489-3962 or
Ruth Wright: ruthbrianwright@gmail.com or 613-489-3886**

This Month

1. The Christmas Party.
2. The November book launch.
3. News from the Rideau Archives
4. Dickinson House
5. The RTHS book list.
6. Alan Prince
7. Change to constitution
8. Upcoming Program

The November Book Launch
“The Dickinson Men of Manotick”
Article by Owen Cooke, pictures by Ruth Wright

On Wednesday, 18 November 2015, Bill Tupper, our Society's Past President, spoke to about 65 members and guests at the Manotick United Church hall on the research that went into writing *The Dickinson Men of Manotick*. He began by paying homage to Georgie Tupper, who “did all the heavy lifting”. He also outlined the process by which he and Georgie came to write a book on members of a family who occupied the Dickinson House from 1870 to 1930.

First were a series of essays on each of the Dickinson boys, prepared in support of exhibitions and living history characters at the House. Then, the Dickinson ledgers were an invaluable source on the business and personal financial dealings of the Dickinsons. The publication of *The Women of Dickinson House* by Maureen McPhee under the auspices of our Society was a real catalyst for work on this book. Bill thanked the Society, Jane Anderson as its Publications Director, Ron Wilson as Editor, and Alison Cheung and Christian Joyce as researchers for their roles in the publication.

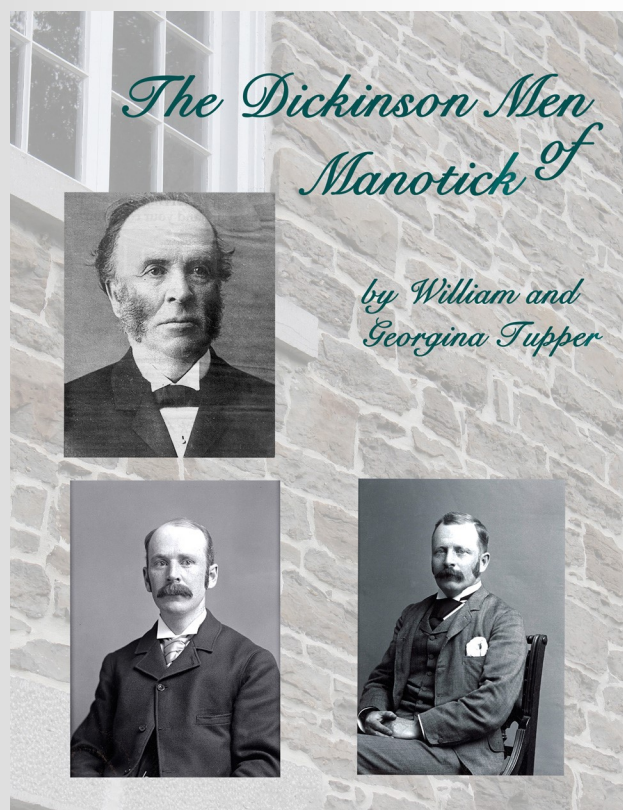
Bill examined the lives of Moss Kent Dickinson and his sons George and William and, to a lesser extent, his father Barnabus. All the Dickinsons, he noted, were entrepreneurs, and were concerned with governance, community planning and community education, and were involved with the militia. They overcame deep personal tragedies and all were compassionate men. The Dickinson connection to Canada began in 1816, when Barnabus and his brother got the contract to deliver mail from Montreal to Kingston by stage line. By 1818 only Horace had the contract and he moved to Montreal from the family home in Denmark, N.Y. He also obtained the mail contract from Quebec City to Montreal.

By 1830 Horace and Barnabus were thriving in Canada, but then both died of cholera in 1832, within six weeks of each other. As a result their commercial empire disintegrated. He also noted that Hiram Norton, an orphan who had been taken in by the Dickinson family in Denmark, actively worked in the Dickinson enterprises, and became a Reform member of the Legislative Assembly of Upper Canada.

Moss Kent Dickinson was born in Denmark, N.Y., in 1832. He worked in Prescott and Kingston, where his real professional life began when he purchased his first steamboat. He was a forwarder who built a large commercial empire over the next few years, mostly in partnership with others.

Early on Moss recognized the potential of the sawn timber market in New England and partnered with Joseph Currier, a local lumber baron, to tap into it. Currier and Dickinson had a lifelong partnership, and Currier went on to build the house at 24 Sussex Drive which eventually became the residence of the Canadian prime ministers.

Dickinson moved to Ottawa, where he was Mayor for three terms 1864-1866. He purchased the house at 5



Rideau Gate which is now the South African Embassy. He sold his forwarding business in 1870 and brought his family to live in Manotick.

Dickinson's interests in Manotick had begun a decade earlier when he and Currier leased the water rights at the new bulkhead which was built when earlier weirs failed. Over the next three years they built a sawmill, gristmill carding mill and bung mill at the site. Unfortunately, Dickinson soon was in debt for his enterprises and in 1879 he lost ownership of his Manotick properties, although his son George held a lease on the mills, lands and house. In 1903 George and William were able to buy the lands back.

In federal politics, Dickinson won the riding of Russell for the Conservatives in 1882. Bill noted that he was a great constituency politician, but not a strong parliamentarian. He decided not to run again in 1887. In the 1891 campaign he won the nomination in the same riding, but lost the election.

Meanwhile, George managed the bung and spile mill, which consistently made money. As well, he was the Manotick postmaster 1868-1888, a school trustee, then Deputy Reeve of the Township of North Gower 1877-1878 and a member of Carleton County Council for the same year. He was a bridge builder in Manotick and a Justice of the Peace. He was Member of Parliament for Carleton 1888-1891, but lost the 1891 election in a recount after a tight race.

His brother William was also a mill operator, a bookkeeper and weir manager. He was Postmaster 1888-1897, in succession to his brother, and also a Justice of the Peace and probably the village telegrapher.

The brothers, and their sisters, never married. The Dickinson era ended in 1930 with George's death without direct heirs.



Maureen McPhee and Georgie and Bill Tupper prepare for the signing of their books. Maureen McPhee's book "The Women of Dickinson House" is a companion volume which was also being sold.

Bill answered questions about the Dickinsons and about the book. The evening ended with refreshments and a booksigning.

The book is a very interesting in depth look at the development of the society, governance, and commercial aspects of Eastern Ontario in the late 1800s and the early 1900s. It is for sale at the Dickinson House, the Rideau Branch of the City of Ottawa Archives in North Gower, the Manotick Office Pro, and the Kars General Store.



The cake was in honour of the completion and printing of the book, always an occasion that brings great relief and a joyful sense of accomplishment to all involved.

Dr. Alan T. Prince

Alan Prince, a resident of Manotick, and an internationally renowned earth scientist, died in Ottawa on October 2 at age 100. Alan was blessed with good humour, a wonderful singing voice and good judgement. One of his colleagues at the Atomic Energy Control Board (AECB) described him as "industrious, honest, cordial, and with great leadership skills. He had all the finest qualities of the human species."

Prince was born February 15, 1915, in Toronto, where his father owned a hardware store. Late in his high school career he had a difficult choice. Would he develop a career as an opera singer or a scientist? Science won out. He graduated from the University of Toronto in earth sciences with a B.Sc. in 1937, an M.Sc. in 1938, and received his Ph.D from the University of Chicago in 1941. He enlisted in the armed forces but was assigned to the National Research Council to undertake research in toughening of armour plate.

In 1946 he became head of the Ceramics Section at the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys. His team pioneered research into tricalcium phosphate which is now used in dental fillings and as a substitute for bone powder in bone china. In 1965 he became Director of the Water Research Branch, EM&R and in 1967 the Director General of the Inland Waters Branch of the Department of the Environment. He was responsible for creating the Canada Centre for Inland Waters in Burlington which did some of the best water studies and water measurement programs ever undertaken in Canada, resulting in a

cleaner Great Lakes System. In 1973 Alan became Assistant Deputy Minister, EM&R.

In 1975, Prince was appointed President and Chief Executive Officer of the Atomic Energy Control Board (AECB), the agency responsible for licensing nuclear reactors and Canada's watchdog for nuclear safety. On January 24, 1978, Cosmos 954, a Russian nuclear powered surveillance satellite descended into the atmosphere above the Queen Charlotte Islands, burned up and scattered radioactive debris over more than 120,000 square kilometers of Canada's north. Prince and his agency were put in charge of the cleanup. Over the next 10 months some 4,000 pieces of radioactive debris, amounting to some 65 kilograms were recovered from the Northwest Territories and northern Alberta and Saskatchewan. Prince faced a challenge which surpassed anything else associated with this defining era in the history of Canada's nuclear industry.

Prince retired in 1978. In retirement he consulted on the treatment of uranium tailings, on the Chernobyl reactor disaster, and on Ontario Hydro's emergency plans for its reactors. Science and government aside, Prince was known for his fine singing voice. He once sang with the Chicago Lyric Opera. In 1942 he married his wife Virginia and they had two daughters, Mary and Linda. Virginia died in 1999. Prince later married Eleanor Aass, a neighbour and friend, who had been recently widowed. Eleanor is a long time member of RTHS.

W. M. "Bill" Tupper

Dickinson House has Record Breaking Year

The Dickinson House Museum completed its 2015 season by welcoming over 450 visitors during Manotick's Olde-Fashioned Christmas weekend on December 5 and 6. Guests enjoyed touring the house, which was all dressed up in its Christmas finery. Both the young and young at heart took the opportunity to make their own Victorian tree ornament at our very busy craft table. Thanks are due to Pat Earl who organized an enticing array of craft options. She was ably assisted by Brian Earl who helped to search out and prepare supplies.



Melanie Hayes created a welcoming scene in the dining room with the table set for a Dickinson family Christmas dinner.



The parlour, with its Victorian-inspired Christmas tree and display of local history books.

The large turnout for Olde-Fashioned Christmas contributed to Dickinson House achieving a 20 percent increase in visitorship in 2015, for grand a total of 8,233 guests. This milestone is a credit to the hard work of our dedicated volunteers who provide guided tours, organize events and serve on the Dickinson House Committee. Everyone is looking forward to another successful year in 2016.

Upcoming Meetings in 2016

January 2016:

Our Annual General Meeting, to be followed by "Bring and Brag". Search your closet or basement for something to mystify or entertain our members.

Wednesday, 20 January 2016, at 7:30 p.m. at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 6810 Rideau Valley Drive South, Kars.

February 2016:

Christian Joyce on his research on Sir John A. Macdonald, the Dickinsons and Carleton County.

Wednesday, 17 February 2016, at 7:30 p.m. at the North Gower Client Service Centre, 2155 Roger Stevens Drive, North Gower

News from the Rideau Branch, Ottawa Archives

Hours: *The Rideau Archives is open every Tuesday from 9:30 a.m. 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.

The Season of Giving ... Give or Take

8 December 1954, and the village of North Gower is busy with preparations for the approaching Christmas season. Jack Pratt drives his tractor to the Royal Bank on Main Street to make a deposit and gets there just before it closes at 3:00 pm, but he finds the door locked anyway.



Royal Bank hold up at North Gower (City of Ottawa Archives/MG393/CA03112 Photographer Cliff Buckman)

Watch must be slow, he thinks. Looking in, he sees bank manager Nickerson speaking with a man but cannot get the manager's attention. So Pratt leaves, unaware that he has just witnessed a bank robbery. Three thieves flee with \$33,000 and make their getaway in an Oldsmobile 98 with Montreal plates, which police find abandoned the next

day on Lorne Avenue in Ottawa, bank bonds still littered on its seats.

Left behind, too, are sparse but intriguing details and photographs of this event, recorded at the time by the Ottawa Journal and available now to researchers through the City of Ottawa Central Archives. The building where the bank was located has also not disappeared. It still stands, now as a private residence, on the southeast corner of Roger Stevens Drive and Fourth Line Road. But here at Rideau Branch there are no archival records relating to this interesting local historical event. We are always looking to receive deposits, and donating documents of historical interest is a gift to the whole community. So please consider wrapping up something for the Rideau Branch vaults this holiday season. Or bring your research questions to the Branch and let us do the giving, as our volunteers are always very willing to help out.

Stuart Clarkson



North Gower robbery car (City of Ottawa Archives/MG393/CA03117)

Rideau Township Historical Society Books for Sale

www.rideautownshiphistory.org

A History of Long Island, Manotick, 1827-1997, Carroll & Humphreys	\$10.00
Buildings of Old Rideau: A Driving Tour, Betty Bartlett	10.00
Carsonby: A Community History, 1969	10.00
Cheese Factories of Rideau Township, Iona Joy, 2013	20.00
The Dickinson Men of Manotick, Tupper & Tupper, 2015	25.00
Followin' the Furrough, Georgina Tupper	25.00
Kars on the Rideau, Second Ed., Coral Lindsay, 2010	35.00
King of the Rideau, Catherine Carroll, 1998	10.00
Manotick Then and Now, Second Ed., Dora Stamp, 2009	20.00
Manotick 108 Years, 1859-1967 (souvenir pamphlet)	5.00
Manotick Centennial, 1859-1959	20.00
The Women of Dickinson House, Maureen McPhee, 2014	15.00
Package: The Dickinson Men of Manotick & The Women of Dickinson House	35.00

Other Books (on consignment)

Capital Lives, Knowles	\$20.00
Capital Lives, Volume II, Knowles	20.00
Growing Up on the Castor River, Dempsey	8.00
Shadow Soldiers of the American Revolution, Jodoin	25.00
St. Andrew's Kars: A Family Church, 1835-2008, McKellar	30.00
Win, Tie or Wrangle: The Old Ottawa Senators, Kitchen	30.00
With Only a Suitcase, Adamsons, 2011	30.00

Potential Future Publications

World War I and World War II Rideau Township Memorial Volume