

Rideau Township Historical Society

December 2016 Newsletter

(Editor Ron Wilson is temporarily under the weather, hence the simplified format)

Christmas Party



Our annual Christmas party will be on Wednesday, 14 December, at Knox Presbyterian Church, 5533 Dickinson Street in Manotick. It will be a full buffet supper, featuring stuffed pork tenderloin, with appetizers at 6:00 p.m. and dinner at 6:30. There will be traditional entertainments and some door prizes.

The cost is \$30 per person, payable on the evening of the dinner. Any guests are welcome. Please bring cash or a cheque - we cannot deal with cards.

To reserve your place please contact either Owen Cooke, 613-489-3962, or oacooke@gmail.com, or Susan McKellar, 613-489-3961, susanmckellar68@gmail.com, by **Sunday, 11 December**. If you signed the sheet at the last meeting, you are already reserved.

November Presentation

“Street Names in Old and New Ottawa”

Speakers: Serge Barbe and Georgie Tupper

Article by Jane Anderson, Photos by Owen Cooke

The subject was the origin of street and road names in Rideau Township and Ottawa. Both speakers are eminently qualified to speak on the subject. Serge, a retired City of Ottawa Archivist, is a History Graduate from Ottawa U. His career was spent in Ottawa, and he was Community Archivist, working at the Rideau Branch once a week. Street names have always been a special interest of his.

Georgie Tupper is a long time Rideau resident. She was a founding member of the RTHS, and has been a mainstay of the North Gower Branch of the City of Ottawa Archives since its inception. She was a member of the original Naming Committee for roads in Rideau, and also served on the Duplication Committee at the time of amalgamation with Ottawa.

Old Ottawa

Serge began with an overview of Ottawa street names. Many bear the name of pioneer Ottawans. Colonel By Parkway was inaugurated after the closing of the downtown Union Station. The parkway was created by using the old rail lines that led to the station and which also crossed the Colonel By estate. The beautiful

parkway which winds along the east shore of the Rideau Canal is a fitting tribute to the man behind it.

The following is a list of Ottawa street names, and the persons whose memory they honour.

Rideau Street area

Dalhousie Street – after Lord Dalhousie, the Governor General who gave his approval to the construction of the Rideau Canal.

Bolton and Bottler Street – both engineers who worked on the Canal.

Nelson Street – honours Lord Nelson, winner of the Battle of Trafalgar.



Lower Town

Bruyere Street recognizes the contribution of Mother Bruyere, founder of the Grey Nuns, who went on to found the first hospital in Ottawa which became the Ottawa General. She also established an orphanage, and founded a bilingual school which became the Sacred Heart Convent.

Guigues Street pays tribute to Bishop Guigues, who was a colleague of Mother Bruyere, and founded the College of Bytown which became Ottawa U. He also established the separate school system in Ontario.

Other civic leaders who were recognized for their leadership live on in street names in the heart of Ottawa: Heney, a volunteer firefighter, and Desjardins, councillor, photographer and public servant.

Friel Street - Henry Friel, councillor and mayor of Bytown and Ottawa, and co-owner of the Bytown Packet, Bytown's first newspaper and precursor to the Ottawa Citizen.

Bell Street - Robert Bell, MLA and co-owner of the Bytown Packet.

Nicholas Sparks was an Irish immigrant who came to work for the Wright family. Once settled, he purchased a large tract of land now covering a major part of downtown Ottawa. He became wealthy selling off tracts of land; he made generous donations to various churches and institutions such as the Court House off Nicholas Street. He cemented his social status by marrying the widow of Philemon Wright. He also served on the municipal council. Today, Sparks Street which partially bisects his holdings does him honour.

O'Connor Street - Daniel O'Connor - JP, Judge, Shop Keeper

Slater Street - James Dyson Slater - Engineer, Superintendent of the Rideau Canal, married Esther Sparks.

MacLaren Street- James MacLaren - Lumberman, established the Bank of Ottawa which merged with the Bank of Nova Scotia.

Blackburn Avenue - Robert Blackburn - Merchant, Mill Owner, Reeve of New Edinburgh

Sandy Hill

Louis Theodore Besserer purchased a tract of land known as the Besserer Estate, now known as Sandy Hill.

Besserer Street - Louis Theodore Besserer, subdivider of Sandy Hill
Stewart Street - William Stewart, agent of LT Besserer

Lebreton Flats

Captain John Lebreton - hero of the War of 1812. Purchased the land.

Booth Street - JR Booth 1827-1925, successful industrialist, lumber and railroad baron, philanthropist, having generously contributed to St. Luke's and County Carleton General Hospitals which were forerunners of the Civic Hospital.

Serge concluded by noting that the responsibility for street names generally falls upon owners and

developers.

Rideau

Georgie Tupper then took the floor to tell us about Rideau Township Roads.

When North Gower and Marlborough Townships were originally surveyed, fourteen per cent of the land was reserved for the Crown and the Clergy. The remainder was available as grants to Loyalists, and sales to settlers. Theodore de Pencier surveyed Marlborough, making use of the surveyor's chain and John Stegman surveyed North Gower. During the survey, curves in the Rideau River had to be accounted for, hence the curves in the road. Fourteen per cent of the Townships were reserved for the Crown and the Clergy. The remainder was available as grants to Loyalists, and sales to settlers. A road was to be opened in front of the lot as a condition of the land grant.



There were no established roads for the early settlers; instead they had to rely on the rivers and streams, and Indian trails. From Lindsay's Wharf in Kars, the pioneers who settled North Gower travelled along Lockhead Road, or across Thompson's swamp by corduroy road.

For the early township councils, road building and maintenance was the first order of business. Pathfinders organized the landowners to build and maintain sections of the roads. Sowing and harvest times were taken into account; the farmers were given the opportunity to work on the land. The early wooden bridges required particularly high maintenance; the iron wheels and horses' hooves were destructive.

In 1973, Basil Parsons and Elijah Scharf of the North Gower Council asked Coral Lindsay and Georgie Tupper to form a road naming committee. The policy was to name the roads after early settlers. However, this was not accepted by Council.

In 1974, Rideau Township was formed, consisting of Marlborough and North Gower Townships and all of Long Island in Manotick. The Road Naming Committee was reactivated. "Jogs" were corrected. It was decided to keep the Concession and Line numbers. There was to be no duplication of street names in North Gower, Kars, Manotick, Carleton Golf and Yacht Club and Boucher Subdivision.

Roger Stevens Drive, the longest road in Rideau honours Roger Stevens, one of the pioneer settlers in Marlborough. He died prematurely of drowning in Rogers Stevens Creek.

In the case of a dispute amongst neighbours, over the line, it had to be resurveyed; this is known as a "proven line". 1977 saw the road names given official status; the green numbers for rural addresses were also distributed, making finding addresses much easier.

The Provincial Highway which goes through Rideau is known variously as Highway 16, the Prescott Highway, and particularly in Ottawa as Prince of Wales. The arrival of Highway 416 cut off existing roads; to compensate the roads were labelled east or west.

With the amalgamation of Rideau Township into the city of Ottawa in 2001, the issue of road names arose again. There was to be no duplications of road names within Ottawa. A decision had to be made as to which name was to be retained, and which was to be changed. Criteria for naming included the number of houses and businesses affected, and the historical significance. Resident participation was invited. Duplicate names were sometimes relived by adding an adjective for example Manotick Main Street.

In Kars, Wellington Street became Old Wellington Street (the City often accepted a description), Rideau Street became Rideau Street North and South, and Nelson became Lord Nelson.

In North Gower, Church Street, which was so named in 1852, retained the name over all the Church Streets in Ottawa. Craig Street was also retained. In Manotick, among the changes was Currier for Catherine, Clapp Lane for Church, Indian Road for Hartwell, and John Street for O'Grady east of Manotick Main, and Beaverbrook to the west. Bay Street became Herwig Place, and Henry, Firefly Lane. Colony Heights became Old Colony road. Dickinson Street remains in Ottawa, as it was named at the suggestion of Mayor Whitton.

In the question and answer session after her talk, when asked why road names change, e.g., Mitch Owens to Bridge Street to Bankfield to Brophy, Georgie replied that it is in response to requests by established families.

Georgie & Serge were thanked by the chair, Tom MacDonald, for a most informative talk.

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.

“... That dwelling house of three stories high ...”

John Thomson is locally renowned for raising the first barn in North Gower on his farm on the Third Concession in 1826, but of even greater concern to him -- and perhaps to the development of law in Scotland-- was a smaller and more distant building: a three-storey house on St. David's Street in the Scottish town of Dumfries. The house had been bought for Thomson's wife by her parents, Gilbert MacIntosh and Janet Johnstone. Gilbert was a Highlander who had come to the Lowlands penniless, finding work as a herd boy and farm servant to Janet's father Robert Johnstone, tenant of the extensive farm of Auchenfranco in Kirkcudbrightshire. Upon her father's death in 1779, Janet and her sister split his legacy. In 1800, Janet, now married to MacIntosh, used some of her inheritance to buy a house in nearby Dumfries for their only daughter, Janet MacIntosh. As was permitted under Scotland's feudal property laws, all three owned the house together, the parents as liferenters with full use of the property and the daughter as fiar with use and heritable rights to the place. Janet Johnstone died soon thereafter, in 1803, and her widower Gilbert MacIntosh married a second time, whereupon he tried to sell the Dumfries house, reportedly to the benefit of his new in-laws. As this would have disinherited her, his daughter Janet sought to legally overturn the sale but failed to convince the presiding Lord Ordinary, and the case was decided in her father's favour in 1809. Janet and her husband Thomson then petitioned the Lords of Council and Session, as the supreme court of Scotland, to overturn this decision against them. Their petition was written up in 1811 by John Archibald Murray, later Lord Advocate (essentially the Scottish Attorney

General), who stated that “the question, it cannot be disputed, is one of very great importance to the law.” The petition must have been effective, as Janet MacIntosh retained her possession of the property, with Thomson acting on her behalf.



Unfortunately, however, neither this victory nor her father’s death in 1827 were to spell the end of the family’s troubles relating to the house. A Dumfries man named Christopher Smith, executor of the estate of Ebenezer Rodan in Kirton of Kirkmahoe, sought to recover £110, due for certain rents owed by Thomson before emigrating, by stopping Thomson’s own tenants rent payments for the St. David’s Street house in November 1830. His money withheld, Thomson engaged Dumfries writers Thomsons & Jackson as his legal representatives and even returned to Scotland in October 1831. He declined Smith’s initial offer to accept a settlement but was then apprehended and jailed in April 1832 on a warrant to prevent him from leaving the country without paying his debt. Thomsons & Jackson then found an extract of Rodan’s testament which seems to have resolved the matter. A minute of agreement between Thomson and Smith was signed on 25 April 1832 such that Thomson would pay £105 and Smith would discharge the case against him. Thomson was released from jail that day, and immediately he set to collecting rents from his six tenants in order to pay the settlement. He and Janet also decided to sell the troublesome St. David’s Street house, but advertisements placed in May found no traction. They therefore planned to sell the house by public roup (auction) on 28 June 1832. That very day, though, they accepted a private offer for £308 by John McKune, just a few weeks shy of 32 years after Janet MacIntosh’s parents had first bought the ill-fated house for her.

Originals of the 1811 petition by Thomson and MacIntosh, Smith’s 1832 discharge, and their agreement to settle, along with Thomson’s account with Thomsons & Jackson, are all held at Rideau Branch Archives in MGR042 Colin Thomson Family collection [box RV 107], along with the Thomson store’s tokens and other family materials. Copies of registrations of sasines, inventories and other documents at the Scottish Records Office concerning the initial MacIntosh & Thomson v. MacIntosh cases are also located in MGR009 Virginia S. Hehl (nee Thomson) fonds [box RV 235].

Minutes of last meeting

Wednesday, November 16, 2016, City of Ottawa Client Centre, North Gower

President Tom McDonald opened the meeting by welcoming approximately 30 members and guests. Moved by Tom MacDonald that we adopt the minutes of the October meeting as published in the Newsletter. Seconded by Ron Wilson. Carried.

Finance: No Report

Membership: Director Patricia Pratt reported that we have one new member this week, and he was introduced and welcomed to our meeting.

Program: Director Bill Tupper outlined the upcoming meetings. Our Christmas party will be held on December 14th at Knox Presbyterian Church Hall in Manotick. It will be a catered buffet meal consisting of an appetizer, punch, soup or salad, pork tenderloin entrée, dessert, tea and coffee. The cost will be \$30.00, payable at the door. A signup sheet was circulated. January's meeting will be the AGM and 'Bring & Brag', to be held at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church Hall in Kars. In February Meredith Quaile will speak on *The Role of Women in Agriculture*. March will be a presentation of research by summer student Hannah Blaine on Joseph Currier. In April mother & daughter team Ruth Stewart Verger and Donna Verger will converse on *The Famous Five Women*. May meeting is yet to be finalized and June will feature an excursion to the Polish Museum in Wilno.

Communications: Director Maureen McPhee reported Facebook & Twitter accounts are up and running. The addresses were on a card which she made available, and she invited everyone to visit the sites. Let Maureen know if you have something which you would like to post on either account. She is presently working on a collage of pictures featuring RTHS events which she will post on Facebook.

Publications: Another 100 copies of 'Manotick Then and Now' is to be reprinted. The book on World War I War casualties is on track for being published in 2017 and the History of North Gower is being researched with the goal of being presented in 2018.

Dickinson House: Director Brian Earl reported that the Victorian Tea and Remembrance Day weekend display were both very successful. There will be a small Tea & Tour on November 17th for the Ravines Retirement Home residents. The annual Christmas craft weekend will be held on December 4th & 5th, and there will be a special reading of Dickens' A Christmas Carol on December 11th and 18th. Tickets are available for this event at a price of \$5.00, and children under 12 are free.

Grants: The Application for the City of Ottawa grant has been submitted and we are awaiting the remainder of the grant money for 2016.

Youth: No Report

Owen Cooke then introduced Serge Barbe who outlined the naming of roads in Ottawa, and Georgina Tupper who told us the history of the naming of roads in Rideau Township. Following a question and answer period, Tom MacDonald thanked our speakers for their enlightening talks.

The meeting was adjourned by Tom MacDonald followed by snacks and a social gathering.

[The RTHS gratefully acknowledges the financial support received from the City of Ottawa.](#)