

The Rideau Township Historical Society

Preserving and Promoting local history for the former Rideau Township

February 2016 Newsletter

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

The February Meeting

Date: Wednesday, February 17, 2016
Time: 7:30p.m.

Place North Gower Client Service Centre
2155 Roger Stevens Drive
North Gower, ON



The Speaker: Christian Joyce.

Christian was a student this past summer researching the Dickinsons. This is a synthesis of his work.

Subject: Continuing Research on the Dickinsons and Sir John A. Macdonald

Mr. Joyce will speak on "Neighbouring Counties: the Activities of Sir John A. Macdonald, Moss Kent Dickinson and George Lemuel Dickinson in Carleton and Russell before the 1891 Federal Election."

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

The RTHS Executive for 2016

- President – Tom MacDonald
- Vice President – Brandon Kassis
- Secretary – Ruth Wright
- Treasurer – David "Sandy" McNiece
- Publications Director – Jane Anderson
- Membership Director – Patricia Pratt
- Communications Director – Maureen McPhee
- 3 directors - Brian Earl
Angela Beking
Bill Tupper
- Brian Sawyer automatically joins the executive as Past President.

The Spring Program

March: Hugh Halliday on Duelling in Canada, Knox Presbyterian, Manotick

April: Scott Cameron on the Picts, Orchardview, Manotick

May: Stuart Clarkson, on "Rideau through the Pages of the Ottawa Journal".

Backup for the Newsletter

Ron Wilson has been producing the newsletter for a number of years without someone to do it if he is away or can't do it for some other reason. So far it's worked out, but eventually our luck is going to run out.

So, if there is someone out there who would be interested in backing him up we would love to hear from you. The newsletter is prepared with Microsoft Publisher and Adobe Acrobat.

This Month

1. The January Meeting
2. The new RTHS Executive
3. News from the Rideau Archives
4. Upcoming Programs
5. Minutes of the January meeting

The January Bring & Brag *Article by Scott Cameron*

Along with being the Annual General Meeting of the Society, the January 2016 meeting featured our annual Bring and Brag night. Once again the members came through with a wealth of interesting and artistic items which were presented to the meeting and then laid out on the tables for inspection after the meeting.

John Palmer presented a seven foot long lithograph of what appears to be a 360 degree view of Halifax harbour possibly dating from 1813. Little is known about this piece as it was acquired at a garage sale. It is possible that this piece was sketched as its potential artist Auntie Jones is listed on the bottom corner of the piece. Mr. Palmer appealed to the membership for any further information on the origin of the piece.

Val Lister presented two lighting pieces. The first was a taper jack from the Victorian period. It was used to apply seals to letters with wax. The beehive shape allowed the hot wax to drip down onto the letter providing the seal. There wasn't a lip to hold the wax so it required a degree of skill. It was based on the models from French King Louis XIV. The second piece is known as a *go to bed late*; a British piece that allowed the owner to place matches inside it and light them. By the time the matches burned out the owner was to be in bed.

Brian Earl presented three items. The first was a menu from the Canadian National Railroad Children's dining car. Patrons had a choice of several breakfast items including cereal and bacon & eggs among other choices. All items were 75 cents.

The second piece was a war rations book from the Second World War that was not completely used. The final item was a trench art door stop made by an artillery officer from German Mauser shell casings for a seventeen pounder.



A beautiful Aspidistra pot shown by Dennis Osmond



Brian Earl presents his items while Brian Sawyer checks his notes.

Dennis Osmond brought two Aspidistra pots received as wedding gifts. The first a black pot was made in Longton in Stoke on Trent likely in 1927 by one of the pottery companies that were based out of that area. The second pot (blue) is porcelain and made by the Dow Pottery company before it was purchased by Derby. After much research it is estimated that the pot was made between 1747-1764.

Owen Cooke brought an Omamori from Sumiyoshi Taisha Japan a good luck keep sake. It is three marked stones that are taken from a Pre Buddhist shrine (estimated 2nd century BC) These stones are marked with powers and there are five; knowledge, wealth, fortune, long life, and physical strength. They are kept in a small pouch to protect them and if opened the owner is given bad luck by the gods.

Melanie Hayes brought a portrait of King Edward VII and Queen Alexandria that was purchased in Nova Scotia. What was fascinating was that underneath were several old newspapers that were still legible with headlines such as. Nuns and Monks interned in 1933 by the Nazis; several very old and unwell; 75 dead in motor car crashes over the weekend in the US; several hundred others injured, some serious; 11 pedestrians dead as they walked across streets or highways on April 28 1935; US planning air base near Canadian border; possibility of Canada being caught in Japan-US web.

Eleanor Aass brought in a horse snowshoe that was given to her as a birthday gift from a retired officer in the Norwegian military. These horse snowshoes were developed in Newfoundland.

Jane Anderson brought in vases that were her mothers' she didn't know anything else about them.

Brandon Kassis brought in a Brownie Hawkeye camera from 1953. It was the first camera in his family and he managed to clean it and restore it to working order. He also brought in some pictures that he was able to develop from the camera.

Scott Cameron brought in a map that was purchased at a pawn shop in Toronto. It is double sided with one side outlining the Western Front of WW1, along with the casualties of every battle involving Canadians and a redrawing of the map of Europe post war. On the other side was a map of the world with all the shipping lines marked and the capital cities outlined. It was confirmed to have been produced in the United States in 1920.

Susan McKellar brought in her father-in-law's medals that he earned from service as a Lancaster Bomber navigator. From Glencoe Ontario John McKellar successfully flew 30 bombing missions with the RCAF mainly over France and Germany.

Brian Sawyer brought in three items. The first was a Welsh loving spoon which is a traditional spoon hand carved by male suitors for their girlfriends or fiancés. The

second piece was a carriage clock from the 1840s. These clocks were designed to allow the owner to tell time while on the road or away from home and were commonly used in carriages (hence the name). This clock is still working and is very durable.

The third item was "an Ookpik, which is a popular Inuit hand-craft toy. It is a small, souvenir owl with a large head and big eyes, a beak, and small black talons. They are often made from wolf fur, sealskin and other traditional materials." (Courtesy Wikipedia).



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.

A Letter Home

Jack Higgins of Clondalkin, Dublin, Ireland, sent a letter home last December, but it wasn't one he had written himself. It was instead a letter, dated 1855, that he had found among his grandmother's papers, addressed to Miss Elizabeth Wall, 17 Great Brunswick Street, Dublin.

In it, her brother Michael Wall of North Gower Township, who had emigrated in 1841, confessed that he had given up writing home, thinking that his family did not wish to answer his letters. His despondency no doubt was deepened by the tragic misery that he had experienced since arriving:

"I may also mention that I have had a great deal of trouble myself I have 2 children alive out of 10 ..." In then providing instructions for his sister to join him in North Gower, he directed her to Peltier's Wharf, 21 miles up the Rideau from Bytown. It would seem Miss Elizabeth declined to join him here -- understandable, given her brother's terrible misfortune -- and she evidently remained in the Dublin area.

But Michael Wall's letter did make the trip back to North Gower, thanks to the generosity of Jack Higgins, who donated it to Rideau Branch through the assistance of the Rideau Township Historical Society.

Stuart Clarkson

(The letter is on the following page.)



The address on the envelope containing the letter.

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

Dear Sister North Gower April 20th 1855
I take the opportunity of
writing you a few lines to inform you
that I received your letter on the 16th of
April dated December the 8th and was
happy to hear of you being in good health
as this leaves me at present thanks be
to God for it but was sorry to hear of such
a change in the family but Death is the
lot of us all God prepare us for it Dear Sister
I wrote 3 letters after my fathers Death
but received no answer only one from James
as for my Aunt I heard nothing from
them these 14 years so I give up writing to
you all as I thought you did ^{not} wish to
answer ~~me~~ my letters Dear sister as for me
to grant your request in sending you
money to bring you out is what I cannot
do at present but I think James and your
sisters ought to do that for you and if
they do I will do for you when you
come here write to James and tell him that
I think it no compliment for him to pre-
pare you to Montreal and tell your sisters to prepare
your necessaries for the journey I think it
is only their duty write as soon as you
receive this and let me know what James is

This letter dated 1855, that Jack Higgins of Clondalkin, Dublin found among his grandmother's papers, was addressed to Miss Elizabeth Hall, 17 Great Brunswick Street, Dublin.

Minutes of the Rideau Township Historical Society January Meeting

January 20, 2016, St. Andrew's Church Hall, Kars

Opening: President Brian Sawyer called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. About 24 members were present. The minutes of the March 18, 2015, May 20, 2015 and October 21, 2015 meetings, previously circulated in the April, June and November newsletters respectively, were approved on a motion by Jane Anderson, seconded by Owen Cooke. Brian then called on various directors for reports.

Finance: Sandy McNiece, treasurer, reported that 2015 was a good year financially, with both revenue and expenditures being close to budgeted amounts. Expenditures for the year (\$44,300) were approximately \$1,100 over revenue (\$45,400), due to an outstanding grant that we're still expecting to receive. The bank balance aside from reserves is \$4,600. Sandy has turned over the financial records to the auditor to be checked.

Membership: Patricia Pratt, membership director, reported that she was receiving 2016 memberships during the meeting, but had no formal report at this time.

Program: Owen Cooke, co-chair, gave a brief notice of upcoming meetings, including:

- February: Christian Joyce on his summer research on Sir John A. MacDonald and the Dickinsons
- March: Hugh Halliday on Duelling in Canada
- April: Scott Cameron on the Picts
- June excursion: the Diefenbunker and the Bell House

Communications: no report

Publications: Jane Anderson, publications director, said the highlight of the year was the publication of The Dickinson Men of Manotick, by Bill and Georgina Tupper. She has sold three copies to the Ottawa Public Library; sales of all publications have been good. Planned future publications are Rideau Township and the Great War: Sacrifice and Service, by Owen Cooke and others, and a possible history of North Gower. Jane expressed appreciation for the generous donation from the Kiwanis for the Oral History Project. She and Brandon have done one interview and have another planned, and she is seeking suggestions from members for others.

Dickinson House: Brian Earl, committee member, reported on a great year at Dickinson House, with over 8,000 visitors. Over the winter the committee has been working on rearranging furniture, building a bookshelf for publications, and repairing the organ. The rack card for 2016 will be a joint one with Watson's Mill, on events in Dickinson Square. The special display for 2016 will be on Trades of Rideau Township, curated by Melanie Hayes. Brian also asked for more volunteers from the Society to work at the House in the summer.

Grants: No report.

Youth: Brandon Kassis, youth director, is seeking input from the two local high schools on our decision in 2015 to reduce the awards of merit to \$250 each, and to give a donation of \$250 to each history department. A decision for 2016 will be based in part on this input.

Nominating Committee: Owen Cooke presented the report on behalf of the committee (which also included Bill Tupper and Susan McKellar). The following recommendations were made:

- President – Tom MacDonald
- Vice President – Brandon Kassis
- Secretary – Ruth Wright (nominated for a three-year term)
- Treasurer – David "Sandy" McNiece
- Publications Director – Jane Anderson
- Membership Director – Patricia Pratt
- Communications Director – Maureen McPhee
- 3 directors - Brian Earl
Angela Beking
Bill Tupper
- Brian Sawyer automatically joins the executive as Past President.

Owen then asked three times for further nominations from the floor. Having received none, he moved and Brandon Kas-sis seconded that nominations be closed; carried.

Moved by Owen Cooke, seconded by Sandy McNiece that Paul Downey be appointed examiner; carried.

Owen thanked both the outgoing directors and the incoming ones for their willingness to serve.

Evening Program: At this point the newly-elected president, Tom MacDonald, took over as chair and made a couple of announcements regarding the Feb. 1 Watson's Mill meeting and the wish of the RTHS to involve members in a project to mark the 150th anniversary of Confederation. Members then spoke about the artefacts they had brought for Show and Tell, and Tom thanked everyone for an interesting evening.

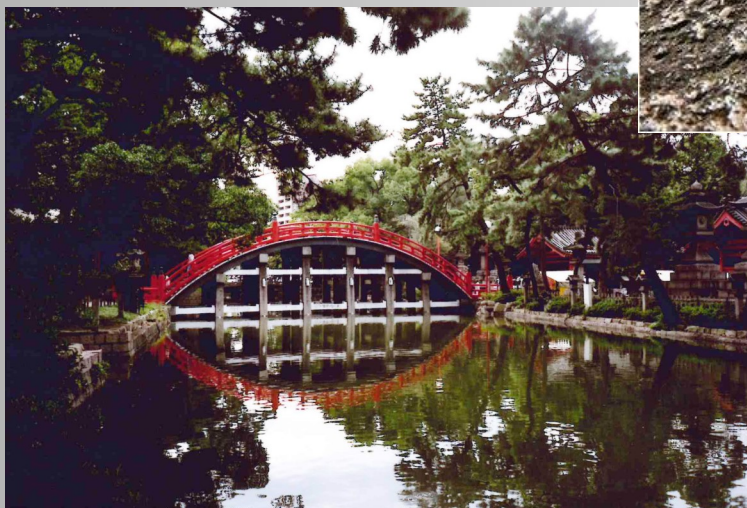
Adjournment: The meeting adjourned about 9:00, followed by a social time with refreshments provided by Melanie Hayes and Jane Anderson.



More Bring & Brag

A view of some English potteries shown by Dennis Osmond.

Owen Cooke brought an Omamori from Sumiyoshi Taisha Shrine, Osaka, Japan a good luck keep sake. Inside are three marked stones from a Pre-Buddhist shrine



Drum bridge, Sumiyoshi Taisha Shrine, Japan. Shown by Owen Cooke.