

The Rideau Township Historical Society

Preserving and Promoting local history for the former Rideau Township

January 2014 Newsletter

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

The RTHS Annual General Meeting

Date: Wednesday January 15, 2014
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Place: St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church
6810 Rideau Valley Drive South,
Kars, Ontario.



**Bring a Friend,
Light Refreshments**

RTHS January Annual General Meeting

As previously there will be an election and reinstatement of officers at this meeting and presentation of a proposed 2014 budget.

Topic: The History of Chocolate.

Speaker: Coral Lindsay

Our own Coral Lindsay is a former teacher and librarian. She is a lifetime resident of Rideau Township and a dedicated volunteer at the Rideau Archives. Her life-long love of history and amazing research skills have made her a popular speaker at various functions. Coral has graciously agreed to make a presentation to the RTHS, following our Annual General Meeting, on the **HISTORY OF CHOCOLATE**.

This Month

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|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. The AGM & Elections | 5. The AGM & Elections |
| 2. The January Program | 6. The Dickinson House |
| 3. The Christmas Pot Luck. | 7. The Twelve Days of Christmas |
| 4. News from the Rideau Archives | |

Nominations for the RTHS Executive for 2014

Would you like to take on a more active role in your historical society? Do you have some good new ideas? Or could you simply do it better?

If you would like to take up a position on the executive for 2014, or wish to nominate someone else for a position (with their permission, of course), please contact a member of the Nominating Committee:

Nominating Committee:

- **Bill Tupper** (presently in Fort Myers)
- **Owen Cooke** - oacooke@gmail.com - 613-489-3962
- **Pat Earl** - brian.earl@sympatico.ca - 692-2379

Please note that there will also be an opportunity to make a nomination at the annual meeting on Wednesday, 15 January.

Dickinson House

At a public meeting held on December 17, 2013, Councillor Scott Moffatt announced that the City of Ottawa did not sell Dickinson House under the Request for Offers process carried out in 2013. The City intends to renew the Licence of Occupation with Watson's Mill Manotick Inc. (WMMI), covering the Carriage Shed and Dickinson House; therefore, it will be the status quo for Dickinson House in 2014. Councillor Moffatt stated that decisions on a path forward, i.e. as to whether the two buildings will remain under City ownership, will likely be made in 2015. In response to question from the audience, the Councillor

commented that continuing City ownership would not come as a shock to him.

In light of this announcement concerning Dickinson Square, the RTHS Dickinson House Committee will be meeting on January 27 to begin the process of planning the 2014 program for the museum. Applications for funding to support the hiring of students for the coming season will also be submitted in January. It is anticipated that the Committee will be meeting with WMMI early in the New Year to discuss increased collaboration between the two organizations with respect to heritage programming in Dickinson Square.

The Christmas Pot Luck

Article and Photos by Lucy Martin

'Twas the season to be jolly, so forty members and guests gathered at North Gower's Cornerstone Wesleyan Church on December 12th for an evening of relaxed visiting and good food capped off with seasonal songs.

It's hard to remember the exact chronology, but this was at least the second time Kars residents Ken and Kathryn Holman provided leadership for an RTHS carol sing-along. Besides skilled musicianship, the two also came with an essential ingredient for a successful group-sing: lyric sheets. (I don't know about you, but I can't go beyond the first verse of most carols without such memory aids!)



Ken and Kathryn Holman provided the music for an excellent sing along.

The Holmans are frequently involved in these sorts of events, Ken in different choir activities and Kathryn as a lay minister. Here are some thoughts Ken shared with me by email:

(Ken Holman) We like to start with Jingle Bells because it is a classic secular tune that everyone knows the chorus to and few have ever heard the verses to. This prompts them to use the song sheets and it is the first one on the first page. And we like to end with the majesty of a religious hymn like O Holy Night because by then everyone has warmed up to the singing and to how I am trying to lead them, it has a lot of dynamics including a crescendo chorus, and we end the time hopefully thinking about the reason for the season. By the end of the time practically everyone is singing, and those who think they don't sing well can still do so with their voice lost in the voices of others.

Q) *Which songs seem to be crowd favorites?*

A) *Every crowd is different, and so every night ends up feeling different because of the selection and the order that we sing the tunes. Because we are leading, not performing (something we stress at the start), the*

crowd ends up making the programme interesting just by what is and what is not sung by the time we finish.

Q) *What are the hardest ones to sing?*

A) *The two with the Glorias in them because of the range from high to low and how it is sometimes hard to sing low notes when at the end of your breath. Actually, breathing dictates the hardest ones, but those end up with the most smiles when done: the Twelve Days of Christmas and Must Be Santa are examples. The effort makes it worthwhile when there is a lot of laughter when all is done. Some tunes have challenging chord progressions with changes on every syllable, but that just takes practice and focus. Some tunes have distinctive strumming rhythms.*

Q) *There must be some songs you dislike, or have tired of. What's your strategy for getting through them?*

A) *We haven't really tired of any of them, yet! We produced the song sheets ourselves 20 years ago and we only put in what we enjoy. The long ones are sometimes tiring, but never tiresome. It never feels like "getting through" - we always need someone to tell us to stop as we would likely end up playing every one on every page if no-one reined us in. It will be a long time before we tire of these events. And, again, every time the programme ends up being different, so it doesn't get boring.*

Many attendees at the pot luck remarked on the spacious, accommodating facilities at Cornerstone Wesleyan - easily reached with ample, accessible parking. Very nice! We thank church staff and the congregation for sharing all that with us.



The pre-dinner visiting and conversations were a big part of the evening. We certainly have a broad cross section of experience and knowledge in the Society.

A few closing thoughts: this correspondent would like to acknowledge RTHS President Brian Sawyer and his fellow board members for taking the society through another good year of activities and accomplishments.

Also, seamless as they may appear, Christmas pot lucks don't just happen! Behind each one is a handful of selfless

volunteers who took charge of organization and set up. Please thank Ruth Wright and Susan McKellar for this year's party. Take a bow yourselves for the wonderful food and the swift post-party clean up. And thanks once again to Ken and Kathryn Holman for their generosity in leading the sing-along. A belated Happy Holidays and a very Happy New Year to one and all.

Serge Barbe

One of the many advantages to the former Rideau Archives of amalgamation with the City of Ottawa has been the support given to our program by the City Archives. One of the major elements of that support has been the provision of a staff member one day a week at the office in North Gower on Tuesdays when we are open to the public. For the past few years that staff member has been Serge Barbe.

We would like to express our appreciation for Serge and the work he has done and the help he has given us over those years. Not only has he been professional, inventive, and dedicated, but he has a phenomenal memory which has been a terrific asset in helping with our research projects.

Beyond the work side of the arrangement, Serge has been a really good contributor to the lunch time and hockey conversations at the Rideau Archives due to his broad general knowledge and his impressive knowledge of the sport of hockey and its practitioners.

So good luck Serge and let's not lose touch.



Serge Barbe and Dave Bullock at the Rideau Archives Christmas Party, 2014. Dave is a former City of Ottawa Archivist who now volunteers at the Rideau Branch in North Gower.

The Twelve Days of Christmas

We had a really great sing along at this year's RTHS Christmas Party. As we progressed through the song sheets we came across the "Twelve Days of Christmas". This led to questions about what did it all mean. There were few answers. Well this proved to be a challenge that our intrepid resident historian, Coral Lindsay, could not but take up. The result...

Of unknown origin, this song may date from the pre-Christian era or the Pagan yuletide celebrated in northern Europe during the winter solstice, while waiting for the return of the sun.

The familiar melody, 1700s, originated in France and the lyrics have been used as a Christian catechism, a singing game and a memory game. One must pay a forfeit if one makes a mistake.

Some people expect a gift for each of the twelve days, December 25 to January 6.

This is one interpretation of the words:

- a partridge in a pear tree = God in Heaven;
- two turtle doves = the Old and the New Testaments;
- three French hens = the Trinity;

- four colly birds = the four evangelists (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John);
- five gold rings = the five senses;
- six geese a-laying = the six work days of a week;
- seven swans a-swimming = the liberal arts;
- eight maids a-milking = Noah, his wife and family in the Ark;
- nine drummers drumming = the nine Muses;
- ten pipers piping = the Ten Commandments;
- eleven ladies dancing = Christ's faithful apostles;
- and twelve lords a-leaping = Christ's twelve apostles

Note: colly (not calling) birds means blackened with coal dust, i.e blackbirds

Also: the song "Green Grow the Rushes – Ho" has a similar history

Gosh! It was so obvious.

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.

Care to guess how many dogs were kept by residents of Marlborough Township in 1963? The answer is 122, but perhaps even more interesting is the fact that we know this from a rather unexpected source.

As last year was drawing to a close, the Rideau Township Archives received a large cloth-bound book containing the Assessment Roll for Marlborough Township for the year 1963, for taxation purposes in the following year. Assessment rolls are well known for their use for linking people with the lot and concession, number of acres, value, and the amount of tax assessed for the properties they owned or rented.

Additional information, not required by the Assessment Act, was added from time to time on blank spaces – in this volume, a rough map of certain properties annotated with names has been sketched on the front endpapers. But the printed assessment sheets also specifically included a column for recording the number of dogs owned, a requirement of the Assessment Act since before the First World War.

Come to the Rideau Township Archives, open each Tuesday, to view this assessment roll and other local municipal records.

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 the upcoming season's programs.