

The Rideau Township Historical Society

Preserving and Promoting local history for the former Rideau Township

January 2015 Newsletter

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

The RTHS Annual General Meeting

Date: Wednesday January 21, 2015
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 2015 budget.

Topic: The Annual Bring & Brag

Speakers: Members of the Society

That is when the members scour their basements, attics, sheds and maybe even the living room walls to find those precious artifacts and treasures that have been handed down through the generations or collected over the years. The members then bring them in and share their history with us. It has always been a fun and interesting night at the Society.

The projector & screen will be available if your artifact is a picture in electronic form.

This Month

1. The AGM & Elections
2. The January Program
3. The Christmas Party.
4. News from the Rideau Archives
5. The Dickinson House

Nominations for the RTHS Executive for 2015

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 2015, 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

The Dickinson House

The year 2014 was very successful at Dickinson House. Approximately 6,800 people visited the museum during the season, which extended from the May long weekend to the first weekend in December.

Highlights included:

- a Victorian Tea and Fashion Show in July,
- the first annual Country Fair on the Labour Day weekend, and
- collaboration with Watson's Mill on the popular Harvest Festival during the Thanksgiving weekend.

Four special exhibits were mounted.

- Heritage Toys,
- Heritage Chair Styles,
- Gramophones, and
- "Local Heroes of the Great War, 1914-1918".

Planning is underway for another busy year in 2015.

See later pages for more pictures.

The Christmas Dinner 2014 **Article and Photos by Lucy Martin**

Ah, the holidays! For many, it's a busy, hectic time. Still, the season just feels better when friends can be together. This year's December gathering saw 48 members and guests meet at the Cornerstone Wesleyan Church in North Gower. Happily, the night lacked deep cold or troublesome snow.

The Rideau Township Historical Society lost at least three current members in 2014: Lynne Webb, Joan Bakker and Coral Lindsay. All will be missed, but Lindsay's death feels like the passing of an era. She helped found our society in 1974 and made immense contributions across many decades.

Knowing all that, outgoing Program Director Ruth Wright opened the evening by reciting a poem that reflected Coral's legacy:

(Author unknown)

*Do not judge a song by its duration
 Nor by the number of its notes
 Judge it by the richness of its contents
 Sometimes those unfinished are among
 the most poignant...*

*Do not judge a song by its duration
 Nor by the number of its notes
 Judge it by the way it
 touches and
 lifts the soul*

*Sometimes those unfinished are among
 the most beautiful...*

*And when something has enriched your life
 And when its melody lingers
 on in your heart
 Is it unfinished?
 Or is it endless?*

Wright shared the text with me by email, saying her fellow teacher's versatility and dedication made Lindsay a "... true face of RTHS, and she certainly did enrich our lives and touch our souls."

But back to the night itself. On behalf of Dickinson Square Heritage Management Inc. (DHSMI) Brian Earl presented RTHS a cheque for \$200 in tribute to Coral Lindsay's tireless work for heritage preservation in her birth village of Manotick.

Then it was time for the serious business of eating. While some miss the special diversity of a pot luck supper, the ease of sitting down to a reasonably-priced, catered meal was a real relief for those frazzled by a busy season.

We chatted over crudites before dining on turkey and ham, with potatoes, hot vegetables and salads. Dessert was fresh fruit, tarts and layered cake - with coffee or tea. Our caterer was Becky Russell, from North Gower. She had help from her mother, Hazel, and an Aunt. (In the

"small world" department, Russell attended North Gower/ Marlborough Elementary School and had Wright as a teacher.)



The buffet line. This is the first time we have had the Christmas party catered and it was excellent. Becky Russell and her helpers did a wonderful job.

Once all were good and full, it was time for the night's entertainment: a play and a carol sing-along. The play was written some time ago by Coral Lindsay. It is loosely based on real experiences from area settlers back in 1848. (Described in the first edition of Kars on the Rideau on page 61, as told by James McNiece of Kars.)

Master of Ceremonies, RTHS President Brian Sawyer, sported a traditional hat from far-away Kyrgyzstan. Sometimes called "the Switzerland of Asia" that mountainous, land-locked country is bordered by Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and China. (Note: Sawyer's hat foreshadows January's meeting: the annual "bring and brag" night. It's not too early to start looking for your show and tell item.)



Brian Sawyer, sported a traditional hat from far-away Kyrgyzstan

“Christmas on the Rideau” featured a large, enthusiastic cast. Unable to rehearse at length, scripts were on hand to keep the dialog moving. The basic plot concerned the plight of a family just arrived from Ireland, adjusting to a rough new land and the unexpected absence of their husband/father, who had gone on a trip to New England, not expecting his wife and many children would arrive so swiftly.



Photo by Sandy Wilson

Rowena Pearl on the keyboard and leading the sing along



RTHS members performing the play written by Coral Lindsay. The children (Owne, Rylee and Wilson Pearl) participated enthusiastically and added much to the performance.

Happily, Noel Watterson did return to his family, safe and sound. They all settled near the future Watterson's Corners, so named after a post office was established there.

After a quick change from her play's period costume, Rowena Pearl played her keyboard and lead the hall in a pleasant carol sing-along.

The Aural History Project

There will be a meeting of the Publications Committee to discuss how best to proceed with this project. The time and date will be announced shortly.

Any member of the Society who has an interest in this project is invited to join us for this meeting to contribute ideas and names of those to be interviewed. The committee would appreciate any help you can give us.



The Country Fair at the Dickinson House was very well attended and was enjoyed by all. In particular the three bands that played were much appreciated.



The Heritage Toys display on the third floor of the Dickinson House featured this display of toy soldiers provided by Brian Earl.

Some Highlights of the 2014 Dickinson House Season

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.

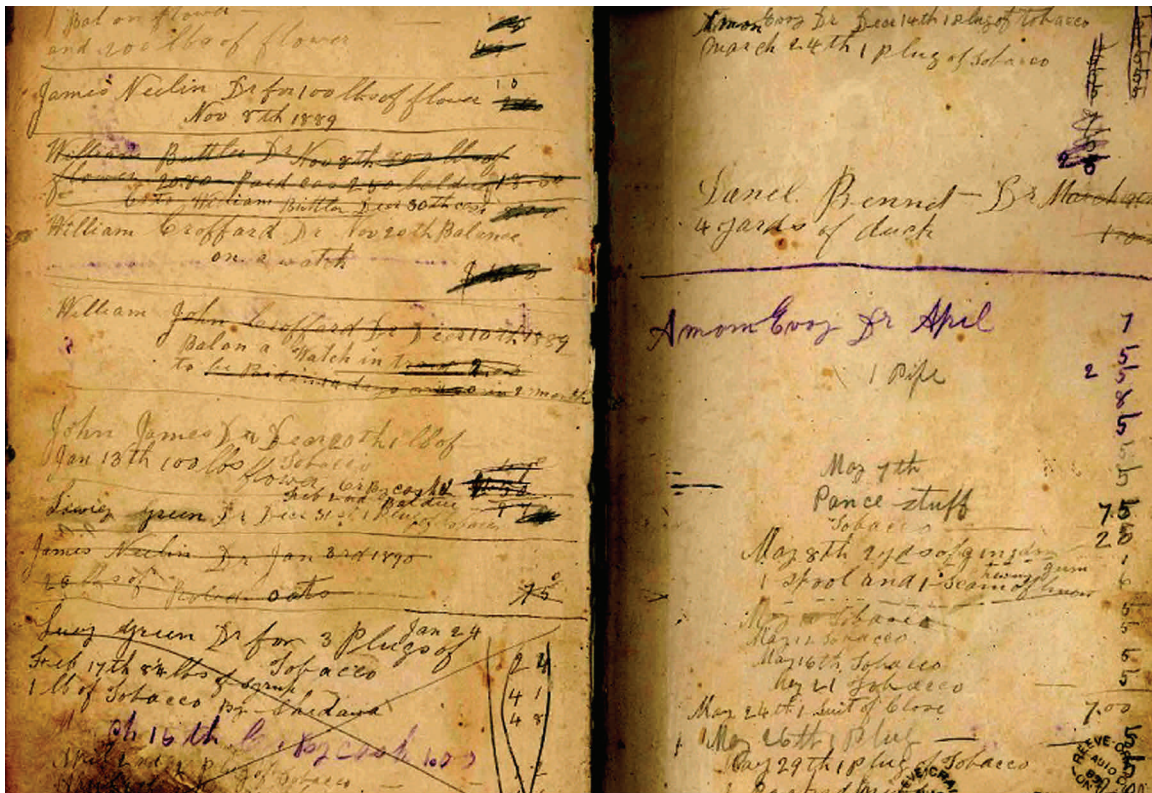
The upcoming RTHS display on Main Streets of Rideau Township for the City of Ottawa's Heritage Day (17 February at City Hall) brings to my mind the old general stores that occupied a central location in the small communities of bygone days. We can easily imagine the vast array of goods that these stores made available to their communities: biscuits, stomach medicine, boots, nails, nutmeg, machine oil, tea, stove polish, wallpaper, sugar, books, soap, buttons, harmonicas, carrot seeds, moccasins, cordwood, and endless plugs of tobacco – a far wider assortment even than the modern dollar stores that have to some degree taken their place.

Thomas Salter's account books (MGR054) show that he sold all of these and much, much more at his store in Reeve Craig around the turn of the twentieth century. Sometimes the items he sold reflected the changing times: the nun's veiling he sold to William Beggs in 1894, for instance, had only become fashionable in the 1880s; the pink pills purchased by Augustus Arcand were more than likely Dr. William's Pink Pills for Pale People, a prod-

uct from Brockville, Ontario first produced in 1890 later to be distributed throughout the Commonwealth; and Paris green, made from copper acetate and arsenic trioxide, was a common insecticide in those days. And Salter's store, as was frequent for general stores, also served as the local post office, as the cancellation stamps on the flyleaf of one account book testifies. So there are records of postage paid on registered letters too. Ready money was rare, with credit being the primary means for making purchases, but the books also make note of some instances of bartering: Henry Keys got an American Waltham Watch in exchange for seven cords of green tamarack.

To get the goods on general stores, drop by the Rideau Township Branch to check out our wares, and, for a glimpse at the Main Streets in the area's history, drop by the RTHS booth at Heritage Day.

– Stuart Clarkson



A couple of pages from one of Thomas Salter's account books. No Excel spreadsheets in those days

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. to 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.

More Dickinson House Highlights



Bill Tupper escorts Barbara Barkley at the Victorian Tea and Fashion Show last July.

Part of the display in regard to the "Local Heroes of the Great War, 1914-1918", which was prepared for Remembrance Day.



The gramophone exhibit was another popular display at the Dickinson House this past summer.



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