



The Rideau Township Historical Society

Preserving and Promoting local history for the former Rideau Township

January 2016 Newsletter

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

The January Meeting

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

The RTHS Annual General Meeting

The AGM will precede the Bring & Brag presentations. It is traditionally short but it is important because we elect our executive for the coming year.

The nominating committee will present a report listing a slate of candidates for the various positions as recruited by the present executive. At this point there will be a request for nominations for any position from the floor.

In particular there is an opportunity to join your 2016 Society executive as Director and head of the Grants Committee.

This fully-functioning ongoing committee needs a head to coordinate our grants applications. If this appeals to you, please contact Owen Cooke, oacooke@gmail.com, or at 613-489-3962, to put your name forward.

Speakers:

Speakers at the January meeting will be RTHS members themselves. Yes it is time once again for our annual bring and brag night with RTHS members **and/or their guests** presenting their treasures.

So if you or someone you know has something you think would be of interest to the society we will see you on the 20th.

Clean-up of Approval of Minutes

Although it is the practice of the RTHS to have a short business meeting at the beginning of each monthly meeting, occasionally this is omitted depending on the program or the presence of visitors. This can lead to the inadvertent omission of formal approval of minutes that have been published in our monthly newsletters.

There are three minutes in 2015 that need to be approved: for March, May and October (appearing in the April, June and November newsletters, respectively). We will be seeking approval of these minutes at the January 2016 meeting.

This Month

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| 1. Annual General Meeting. | 5. Change to constitution |
| 2. The 2015 Christmas party | 6. Upcoming Program |
| 3. News from the Rideau Archives | 7. 150th anniversary projects for RTHS |
| 4. Dickinson House | |

The RTHS Christmas Party

Article by Peter Satterly

Photos by Owen Cooke

The Christmas party was celebrated this year at the Cornerstone Wesleyan Church in North Gower. Thirty three persons enjoyed a ham/scalloped potatoes/carrots, cole slaw and dessert.



The caterers prepared an excellent meal. Nobody left hungry. Left to right are Joyce Wood, Gail Brooks, Eleanor Hodges, and Beth Brooks

The evening program was presented by Dave and Laura Tupper. Their presentation was called "Born Free: The Beauty and Challenges of South Africa."

The talk started with the history and geography of the peoples of South Africa. They talked about the early settlement of the country and that it was first visited by Giacomo Da Gamba in 1496, just a few years after Columbus had discovered the Americas. He pointed out that by the mid 1990's there were 50 million people living in South Africa, of which only 5% were whites and the overwhelming majority were black Africans. There were some peoples of East Indian extraction as well. In 1994, Nelson Mandela was elected President. However they pointed out that there was a difference between democracy and capitalism. The "Born Free" referred to Africans born since Mandela was elected.

Dave pointed out that of this population 25% of whites were unemployed while 50% of blacks were unemployed. There was simply no work available because South Africa's industry consisted of mines for diamonds and metals. He showed that the GDP for South Africa was \$11,500/person. Literacy there was 86% compared to 99% in Canada. He also pointed out that there were 11 official languages compared with 2 official languages in Canada.

Johannesburg is a city a mile high. It is the largest capital city not built on water. Dave spoke of some of the difficulties that a city that high brings: for example, the airport runways had to be three miles long to accommodate large airliners. His remarks reminded the writer of an article on the airport at La Paz, Bolivia, which is 13,500 feet above sea level. A jet taking off from such an altitude lumbers down a long, long runway and then slowly lifts off just clearing the mountains in the distance.

The reason for Dave and Laura visiting in South Africa was to attend a wedding of one of their friends at Dullstrom, northwest of Johannesburg. However they took advantage of the opportunity to tour the country for approximately two weeks.

After arriving in London Heathrow Airport from Canada, they boarded an Airbus A380 for South Africa. They showed us a photograph of the plane, which seats 800 people on two decks. The trip was an eleven hour, overnight, non-stop flight from London to Johannesburg, South Africa.

Their first trip from Johannesburg was to visit Victoria Falls which is on the Zambezi River on the boundary between Zimbabwe and South Africa. They mentioned that, although Zimbabwe had been considered the 'Garden of Eden' in the past, with government mismanagement, the country was now a basket case. They stayed in a 1st class accommodation with a thatched roof. Among the sites they saw, other than the Falls was a statue of David Livingstone, 1813-1873, the "Great Liberator" who arrived at Victoria Falls in 1855. Dave pointed out that one of the first things Queen Victoria had done when she became Queen was to abolish slavery. This was in the year 1837.

They showed pictures of the falls, a 350-foot chasm. They pointed out that the falls were considerably larger than Niagara Falls (165 feet) and the thunderous sound of all of the water falling was deafening. They were given rain capes to help keep them dry. However the capes were no match for the amount of spray coming off the falls and so they were absolutely soaked by the time they got back to the visitor centre. They also showed aerial photographs of the falls and the gorge. The rather narrow gorge carved through large cliffs, makes it difficult to see the full extent of the falls.

After visiting Victoria Falls, they went on to visit Chobe Park, which is in Botswana. They showed us a lone elephant against some trees. They were very excited to see the elephant. However by the end of their stay they had seen some 250 elephants. Other animals that they showed pictures of were cape buffalo, giraffes, impala and kudu antelopes. One of the interesting observations they made was that, despite the tall necks of the giraffes, their markings made them blend into the background which made them surprisingly difficult to see. Impalas, which are quite small, only around 100 lbs. are often taken by lions. They commented on the kudu antelopes with their spiral antlers and that their meat was very tasty.

In connection with the elephants (and the rhinoceros) is the problem of poaching. Dave pointed out that poaching was a global problem with the ivory from elephants and horns from the rhinos being sold worldwide. Although these animals were quite common in the National Parks such as Kruger, Chobe, and the Serengeti, their numbers elsewhere in Africa outside the parks were considerably depleted.

The next park that Dave and Laura visited was Kruger National Park which was 400 km. from the wedding in Dullstrom. The park is on the boundary between South Africa and Mozambique. They stayed in 1st class accommodations on the southern boundary of the park, overlooking a river. They could enjoy time in the pool and other facilities and look over the valley and see and hear various animals as they came down to the water to drink and bathe.

While on safari, they showed us pictures of guinea fowl, hippos in the river, a white rhinoceros, a male lion lounging beside the road, and zebra, sable antelope, wildebeest and water buck.

On another day they visited the three Rondavels on the Mpunalanga Panorama Route, a spectacular outlook over the Blyde River Gorge. Shaped like South African beehive huts, the three Rondavels form three huge pinnacles of rock above the canyon below. Despite warnings not to go past the danger signs, visitors routinely went to the edge of the gorge.

The Tupperts then flew to Cape Town which is on the Atlantic Ocean some miles north of the southern tip of Africa. The waters coming up from Antarctica, are very cold, (about 12°C), so very little swimming is done off the beaches at Cape Town. The favourite pastime on the water was wind surfing and water kite flying; participants wore wet suits. There were also many sharks which were a constant danger for anyone who ventured on or into the water.

The Tupperts then embarked on a wine tour along the southern coast of South Africa between Cape Town and Port Elizabeth, several hundred miles along the Indian Ocean coast of South Africa. They mentioned sampling wines in Rouxville and Stillbaai. The place they stayed at in Stillbaai had many dead eucalyptus trees beside the house. The trees had died several years previous because of a eucalyptus blight, however, their hosts explained that they had left the trees there because owls roosted there at night and the guests liked to see them.

They also stayed at Plettenberg Bay, which was on the Indian Ocean. In each of these places, they sampled the wines and enjoyed the hospitality of the wineries. Pictures showed hills climbing up from the sea with grape vines and other crops, the fruit gardens of South Africa.

In Port Elizabeth, they commented on the casinos and hotels, one of the favourite places for sunbathing along the vast sandy beaches which extended for five miles along the coast.

They talked about the problems facing South Africans. They talked about the transfer of power from white Afrikaners to black people and the problems of leadership and expertise. Governing was difficult, with tribal problems. Democracy does not necessarily bring prosperity and many black South Africans were living in poverty.

However, Dave and Laura said that this was a experience of a lifetime. He encouraged any of us to venture to the country and enjoy all it had to offer.

[As an aside, the Father of the writer of this review also visited South Africa around 1970 for a World Geological and Metallurgy Congress. Dad had many stories of the places he visited. For Dad, it was interesting as he had worked in Southern Rhodesia back in the early 1930s after graduating in geology from the University of Toronto and Princeton University. He had many stories of his "exploits" while working in Rhodesia and South Africa



The party was well attended and everyone enjoyed the fellowship and comradery. All in all a good night to get in the Christmas spirit.

The Dickinson House

After a very successful season the Dickinson House committee is taking a short break. The committee will then begin meeting in mid February to plan for the 2016 season.

This is thus a good time for members to think about whether they could help out in the coming season. The experience is both enjoyable and educational. Learn about the early days of Manotick and the people who founded and developed our village.

Enjoy working with the other volunteers, meeting the students we hire in the summer, and meeting lots and lots of the interesting visitors who tour the house.

Think about it, talk with members of the committee such as Brian Earl and Maureen McPhee. Investigate the various tasks by visiting the web site at

<http://www.rideautownshiphistory.org/dickinsonhouse/index.html>

150th Anniversary of Confederation

This fall the RTHS directors have been discussing ways in which the RTHS could mark this significant anniversary in Canada's history. Several suggestions have been made. Possible products could be stories, exhibitions, presentations including theatrical presentations or documentaries, or written documents. The end products could be either hard-copy or online presentations or exhibitions.

Distinctions were made between two types of possible projects: ones that require funding, and volunteer projects that members could take on. Directors agreed that the new board could review the suggestions in January, and decide on possible action, including doing further research on Canada 150 and other available grants such as City Heritage Grants and city grants for writing books. The board encourages the participation of RTHS members.

The Dickinson House Committee has discussed possible projects at the house as well; one proposal is to seek funding to recreate the Dickinson general store in the foyer.

Suggestions for RTHS projects include:

- publish a booklet on Dickinson Square, using material prepared for the request for designation of the Square as a National Historic Site
 - investigate the possibility of hiring Mr. Porter, the actor who portrays John A. Macdonald, for an appearance on July 1, 2017
 - construct a model of Rideau Township as it would have existed in 1867, that could be moved from one location to another
 - build an app to compare historic and modern photos of the same location
 - review the Rideau Chronological List of Important Events, 1867-2017, prepared by Rideau Archives volunteers. (Some of the items on this list will be used for a virtual exhibit for the City Archives.)
 - compile information from people with extensive local knowledge
- write a history of fire protection in North Gower
 - write short histories of senior/founding families in the area, or of key people in the area 150 years ago
 - write a description of Rideau Township in 1867
 - write a description of houses that existed 150 years ago, possibly including photos or paintings
 - describe key operations in the area 150 years ago, including:
 - ◆ agriculture
 - ◆ logging
 - ◆ commercial enterprises such as stores and the hotel business [Mitchell's Directory, 1864 is a possible source on township administration, villages, trades, people; also Belden's 1879 county atlas]
 - ◆ transportation (e.g., canoes, ice roads, the Rideau, trains, the development of roads)
 - ◆ military preparedness when Canada was being threatened by the Fenians
 - create a snapshot of what was happening in each community in 1867
 - use previously-collected oral histories and local history books stored at the Rideau Archives
 - appoint an individual to champion and encourage the making of a decision upon a project for each community; possible topics suggested include Manotick's Dickinson Square, Lindsay's Wharf in Kars, and North Gower as a centre of local government.

Help!

The RTHS Executive would welcome any comments, additional suggestions, or volunteer help for a local 150th Anniversary of Confederation Project; if you are interested please contact Vice-President Tom MacDonald at 613-692-4197 or tandlmacdonald@rogers.com. We need to start planning soon particularly if funding is required for the project.

The February Meeting

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

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.

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.

An Interesting Story from Marlboro Township

It was, appropriately enough on 6 January 1900, the feast of Epiphany, that Ottawa newspapers began to report her claims: Lizzie Baxter had been visited twice by apparitions of the Virgin Mary. Within a week, the news that the Madonna had appeared to her at a well on the Marlborough Township farm of Mr. B. Baxter, where she lived, had spread to Winnipeg.

Knowing her to be a devout Catholic, Mr. Baxter and his wife believed to such an extent (said the papers) that they placed a cross to mark the spot, though his relative in Hintonburgh, Patrick Baxter, whose family Lizzie had gone to visit for the holidays, disapproved of her story going public so soon.

Apparently a visit to Archbishop Duhamel was planned. Indeed, an interesting story. But just as interesting as why St. Mary would choose to visit the Baxter farm is why Liz-

zie Baxter was living there at all and why she continued to live there until at least the spring of 1901.

If a recent Baxter genealogy is correct, Barnie and Katie Baxter of Marlborough had no children, and this is probably true, as they both married rather late in life. And the reporter was particularly careful not to assert any relationship between them and their tenant Lizzie Baxter. But she clearly had some family connection with Barnie and his brother Patrick Baxter, two sons of canal worker Thomas James Baxter, who had settled in Marlborough in 1832 at Baxters' Corners.

Let us know if you have a sudden flash of insight into this genealogical mystery, but even if not, please drop by any-ways to learn more about Baxters' Corners and other local crossroads communities before the Rideau Corners exhibit is wrapped up later this year.

Stuart Clarkson