

The Rideau Township Historical Society

Preserving and Promoting local history for the former Rideau Township

June 2010 Newsletter

Newsletter Editors: Coral Lindsay and Ron Wilson (rideauarchives@ottawa.ca)

Date: Wednesday, June 16, 2010
Time: 7:30 pm
Place: Knox Presbyterian Church
5533 Dickinson Street
Manotick



150th Anniversary of the Mill

Watson's Mill celebrates its 150th anniversary in 2010.

Isabelle Geoffrion and the Watson's Mill Team have announced a year-long celebration to commemorate this anniversary. Stay tuned to their e-news at www.watsonsmill.com and celebrate with them throughout the year.

Speakers

Glenn Brooks
Brian Earl
Ron Wilson

Subjects

Glenn Brooks will speak on the work of the Mill Quarter Board in regard to the role of this board, the status of the work, and the plans for the future.

Brian Earl will speak about the model railroad hobby and will include pictures and perhaps a short movie.

Ron Wilson will show some photos and discuss the program at Steamtown USA in Scranton Pennsylvania.



Bring a friend

Light refreshments

For a ride call Brian Earl

This Month

1. The June Meeting
2. The May Excursion
3. News from the Rideau Archives
4. The Dickinson House
5. Beckett's Day, a report
6. Presentation to the Ottawa Genealogy Society

History in Arnprior

The Prince and the "prior"

This year is the **150th anniversary of the visit of the Prince of Wales** to Arnprior in 1860. It was the first official visit of a senior member of the British Royal Family to North America, with Queen Victoria's eldest son, Albert Edward (the Prince of Wales) representing the monarchy.

To mark this historic event, a group of enthusiastic people dedicated to

creating a re-enactment of the visit on July 3, 2010 has been formed. There will be many attractions throughout the day.

Residents of Arnprior and area can be part of this as spectators and as participants. Volunteers (animators) are still needed. To learn how you can be part of this historic event, visit www.princeandtheprior.ca. Help history come alive! Contribute your enthusiasm! Absolutely everyone is welcome! Absolutely no experience is needed!

The RTHS May 2010 Excursion Beechwood Cemetery

Article by Lucy Martin

The weather was perfect for a field trip – neither too hot, nor too cold – as we gathered at Beechwood Cemetery, arriving by carpool or on our own.

Our group was met by Ian Guthrie, who serves on the cemetery's board and delights in conducting tours. Guthrie proceeded with a splendid homage to a place he called “a living landscape”.

The core of Beechwood was a 100 acre farm purchased by Hector and Mary McPhail in 1834, after coming to Canada from Scotland to construct the Rideau Canal. In 1873 that property, along with land from the MacKay/Keefer estates, became today's 160 acre cemetery. A visit to Beechwood was once an excursion to the country. Now surrounded by city, Beechwood's urban forest remains a serene oasis for this region's one million inhabitants.

According to Guthrie, the cemetery is maintained by 11 full-time staff, assisted by 18 seasonal employees. There is an active “Friends” group, numbering around 300. Although nearly 76,000 have been laid to rest at Beechwood, it is only half-full.

The past decade has brought a number of distinct designations: in 2001 Beechwood was made the National Military Cemetery of the Canadian Forces, and in 2002, a National Historic Site. In 2004, the RCMP National Memorial Cemetery was established. In 2007, the Veterans Sections were amalgamated with the National Military Cemetery. Beechwood was designated as Canada's National Cemetery in 2009.

Like death itself, Beechwood does not discriminate. There you will find headstones reflecting prestige and family devotion near orphans and so-called 'friendless women' laid to rest in graves provided by local churches. Guthrie said the last such burial took place as recently as the 1970's.

The many religions, cultures and customs that found their way to Ottawa are well-represented. We walked among numerous Celtic crosses (Guthrie's favorite), headstones inset with photos in the Portuguese plots, the geometric precision of the military section and more headstones rendered in graceful Chinese calligraphy. Monuments grand and humble, commemorating universal values of family, culture, community – all leaving some mark of a life gone by.

Guthrie jested that half the world seem to think society doesn't change fast enough and the other half thinks it changes too fast. Beechwood offers evidence in support of both views.

We stopped at a number of notable graves, including:

Governor General Ramon John Hnatyshyn (an old friend of Bill & Georgie Tupper)

Thomas G. Fuller (decorated WW II naval officer, nicknamed the “Pirate of the Adriatic”)

Moss Kent Dickinson (founder of Manotick) (below)



Joseph Currier (Dickinson's partner in building what we now call Watson's Mill)

Sir Robert Borden (Prime Minister during WW I)

Sir Sandford Fleming (inventor of standardized time)

Premier Tommy Douglas (CBC's pick for 'greatest Canadian' for pioneering medicare)

The graves of Dickinson and Currier were of particular significance to our group. It was noted with some concern that the decorative pillar of the Dickinson monument stands in need of repair.

Guthrie has his own connections to Beechwood. Some of his wife's relatives are buried there and the long-time volunteer delights in commuting there by bike, calling the 20 km round trip his minimum exercise for good health. In Guthrie's view, the site is ideal for recreation in the sense of re-creating the joys of life, while paying respect to the dead.

Indeed, Beechwood's many trails are well-used by the living: walkers (with and without dogs) bikers, families, painters, photographers and relatives who come to decorate graves and remember their loved ones. A local school even has nature studies there, making good use of

the wildlife and pond biology at ready display. The grounds include Dr. J. David Roger Canadiana Gardens featuring native plants and flowers. There is also a tree-shaded hosta garden with one of the largest collections in Eastern Ontario and Western Québec (over 300 varieties).

A wind storm in late April last year caused significant damage to Beechwood's important urban forest, but Guthrie feels the grounds are recovering reasonably well. Stu-

art Rogers recalled Beechwood was once a good spot for harvesting downed limbs for firewood. At present, measures to combat the invasive emerald ash borer mean no wood may be removed.

Beechwood is a grand, expansive experience on many levels, well worth seeing for yourself. We thank Ian Guthrie and Beechwood's gracious staff for a lovely and informative tour.



Presentation to the Ottawa Genealogical Society

On May 18 volunteers from the Ottawa Archives, Rideau Branch presented the story of the Monaghan/Monahan family to members of the Ottawa Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society. Georgina Tupper explained the Archives collection, Owen Cooke told the group about

Thomas Watterson, a soldier in the Second World War and Coral Lindsay spoke about the Monaghans of Montreal, North Gower and Greely. Ron Wilson operated the power point projector while President Bill Tupper and Past President Mark Jodoin led the cheering section.

Beckett's Day

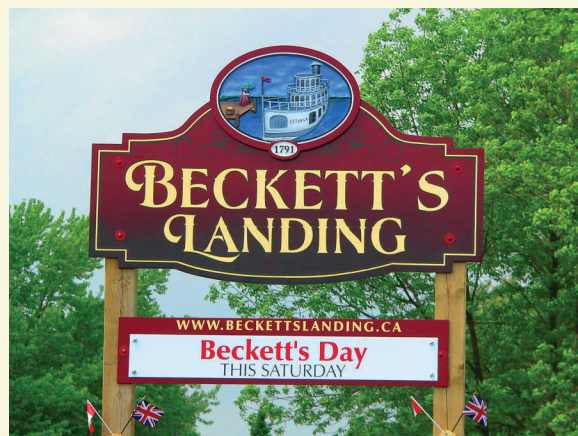
Beckett's day, May 22, 2010, was a great success and the organizers of this "first" are to be congratulated. The light rain showers passed quickly.

Maps, photos and documents about the Landing, both sides of the Rideau, from Ottawa Archives, Rideau Branch and volunteers Shirley Adams and Coral Lindsay, were on display in the Rideau Restaurant.

A number of RTHS members including Robyn and Elizabeth Galway attended and the Galways provided some of their photos for this newsletter.

The unveiling of the new sign caused dismay for some and amusement for others. When the shroud finally let go there was a spontaneous cheer from the road-side crowd!

Many Becketts travelled from across the province and all had stories to share.



The Dickinson House, Summer of 2010



Bill Tupper, president of the RTHS and Bill Schaub president of WWMI at the signing of the agreement for the RTHS to operate the Dickinson House for the 2010 season.

As we begin our third season we are learning more about the Dickinson family and the house, built as commercial – residential, perhaps as early as 1863.

Thanks to our volunteers we have welcomed 1,319 visitors in the first thirteen days. R.T.H.S. President Bill Tupper and W.M.M.I. President Bill Schaub signed a letter of occupation (LOO) on June 5.

Our thrifty shopper and seamstress, Katherine Killens, continues to dress and drape the twenty-two windows. Well done, Kathy.

We have ten rooms this year and we have set up a spinning and weaving exhibit on the third floor. More artifacts, 1860 – 1920, would be welcome.

The house is open Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, 11:00 – 4:00. Training is provided and some costumes may be available. Be a good sport and help us. Call Sandy Trueman, 613-491-4663.

Coral Lindsay



Brain Hull, Bill Tupper, Dick Spratt, son and grandson of Dick. Dick is a direct descendant of Alex Spratt who owned the mill 1929 to 1946. Brian is a descendant of Joseph Currier.

News from the Rideau Branch, Ottawa Archives

Hours: *The Archives is open every Tuesday from 9:30 am to 4:30 p.m., and at other times by appointment. (613-489-2926).*

Sarah Bennett

Sarah Bennett has returned to the Rideau Archives to carry on more of the fine work she had started last summer. Her tasks include the electronic cataloguing of the rich and varied collection of documents acquired by the Rideau Archives since its early days. Sarah has earned an Honours degree in History from Bishop's University and will go on to pursue a Masters in Public History at the University of Western Ontario in the fall.

Doors Open Ottawa June 5 & 6

Rideau Township Branch, City of Ottawa Archives has participated in this event since the beginning. It is an opportunity to increase profile and introduce visitors to the rural archives

Why not join the RTHS?

- attend the meetings and enjoy the presentations
- meet other people interested in local history,
- find fascinating projects to volunteer for
- get assistance and advice with genealogical and historical research
- learn more about local history

Meetings are held monthly (except for July and August) at various locations in the former Rideau Township including Manotick, Kars, North Gower, and Carsonby. We also do excursions to historical points of interest.

Yearly membership costs are \$10 for a single & \$15 for a family.

Contact the [Membership Director](#)

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