



# The Rideau Township Historical Society

*Preserving and Promoting local history for the former Rideau Township*

## June 2012 Newsletter

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

### *June Excursion*

**Date:** Saturday June 16, 2012  
**Time:** 9:00 am  
**Place:** Client Centre,  
2155 Roger Stevens Drive,  
near North Gower

### *This Month*

1. The May Presentation
2. Dickinson House
3. From the Pen of the President
4. News from the Rideau Archives
5. Watson's Mill some events
6. Donation of rare books
7. Ellen's book "With Only a Suitcase"
8. Minutes of the May meeting
9. The Dickinson Monument re-dedication

### *Bus Excursion to Fort Wellington and Other War of 1812 Sites in the Prescott Area*

The excursion will take place on Saturday, June 16th. The cost of the trip (bus transportation included) is \$30.00, and includes:

- Tour of Fort Wellington and visit to The Battle of the Windmill site
- Lunch at the Red George Public House
- Visit to Grenville County Historical Society Archival Resource Centre
- Stopover at the Little Blue Church

We will gather at the Client Service Centre on Roger Stevens Drive at 9:00 a.m. and should be returning around 4:00 p.m.

Please notify Ruth with regrets or for confirmation

- Ruth Wright: 613-489-3886 or [ruthbrianwright@gmail.com](mailto:ruthbrianwright@gmail.com)

***Bring a Friend, Light Refreshments***

### *From the Pen of the President*

The future of Dickinson House, the Carriage Shed and other heritage buildings around Dickinson Square is uncertain and worrisome. Let me explain - In 2007 Ottawa City Council purchased Dickinson House, the Carriage Shed, the Weaver's House, the Ayres Building (old Bank) and Watson's Mill from the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority. The City sold Watsons Mill to Watsons Mill Manotick Inc., for the sum of \$1.00. At about the same time the City purchased the Clapp House and property as well as the Holloway Property. The city transferred the ownership of the above buildings (except the Mill) in 2009 to the Manotick Mill Quarter Community Development Corporation (MMQCDC) with instructions to develop a plan for Dickinson Square, to repay the City all costs associated with acquisition (2.44M), and to sell, lease, or otherwise dispose of all or part of the Corporation sites.

On May 24th, 2012 the City held an open house in Manotick where the MMQCDC presented their plan for

the future use of their holdings ( Dickinson House, Carriage Shed, Clapp House, Weavers House and the Ayres Building). In summary the Clapp House is to be replaced with a large 3 - 4 story multi use building, the zoning of the other buildings is to be upgraded to provide for a wider range of uses than what the present zoning permits, the lot lines for the Weavers House are to be adjusted, the Carriage Shed can be expanded to its original size, Weavers House and Ayres Building can expand their footprint by 30 percent, and a heritage easement is to be placed on the lands occupied by Dickinson House and the Carriage Shed which would permit all activities which presently take place on those lands to continue indefinitely. Finally, my interpretation is that all subject lands and buildings are to be placed on the market for sale.

The RTH Society in developing its business plan for Dickinson House envisioned it developing into a living museum depicting the powerful role the Dickinson family played in the social, cultural, and economic history of Manotick, while working with the Mill Board to have Dickinson Square declared a National Historic site, and with

the Mill Board develop the Square into a National Heritage Destination. Recognizing the Square is adjacent to a World Heritage River, you have a development and marketing opportunity that is truly remarkable.

This vision is under a threat! What should be the Society's response?

## ***Presentation by Robert Henderson at the May Meeting The War of 1812 on the Upper St. Lawrence River***

***Article and Pictures by Lucy Martin***

This is, of course, an important bicentennial year for an event that shaped Canadian history in general and this region in particular. All sorts of lectures, displays and re-enactments are on tap, on both sides of the border. RTHS pays heed to the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812 with our May lecture and June's field excursion to Fort



*The meeting was well attended, the talk interesting and the questions many. Robert Henderson gave a fascinating account of the War of 1812 on the Upper St. Lawrence that covered the politics, technology, and human aspects of that important conflict.*

Wellington. With all that in mind, thirty-eight members and guests eagerly gathered at Pierce's Corners to hear Manotick resident Robert Henderson speak about how that war played out along "our" stretch of the St. Lawrence River.

Henderson grew up along the river in the Prescott area before majoring in history at Carleton University. He's a former Military Curator of Parks Canada for Ontario, and worked as an archival professional at Library and Ar-

chives Canada. He is responsible for the most visited internet site on this subject (Warof1812.ca). Henderson has authored many articles and has a book coming out in English and French later this year: "Desperate Bravery: The Last Invasion of Quebec, 1814". His business and consulting venture, The Discriminating General, provides heritage material and equipment for museums, re-enactors and collectors around the world.

Henderson expressed his pleasure in exploring the broad picture of those times along with details of ordinary life



*Robert Henderson showing one of the artefacts from his display table.*

that would have been experienced by soldiers and civilians – "the human side of heritage". His interest extends to championing how participants of that conflict are remembered today. (Learn more about one aspect of that cause at: <http://www.warof1812.ca/heroes/summary.htm> )

But back to the presentation. Besides lively historical slides, Henderson brought some goodies: a fairly useless straight sword, a more-effective curved sword and a replica of an 1812-era musket. Attendees enjoyed the opportunity to handle all three items at talk's end.

Henderson began by passing around a bag of replica coins (circa 1787, depicting George III). Everyone was invited to keep one as a souvenir. "Taking the King's shilling" was, of course, a ritual associated with military enlistment at that time – a recruitment contract that was sometimes accomplished through trickery, or through force, in the navy's case, with press gangs. (Most of us were gullible enough to take the shiny bait – does it mean we are now enlisted in Henderson's army?)

Side note/personal spin: Trade blockades and the touchy issue of impressment were irritants that contributed to the War of 1812. Off-and-on war with Napoleon in Europe left Great Britain in desperate need of sailors. The British held that anyone born a British subject was still British – liable to be “pressed” into service. American ships were forcibly stopped and searched at sea resulting in thousands of U.S. nationals (or actual British deserters) being dragged off to serve under harsh conditions on British warships. The practice was detested in the young United States, as reflected in an American pro-war motto of the time: “Free trade and sailors’ rights”. (Full disclosure: As many readers will recall, I am American born and raised. These affronts to personal liberty and national sovereignty have long been taught in the U.S. as justifications for the War of 1812.)

Henderson cautioned the audience that the press tends to add “spin” to covering the war, so I thought I’d prove his point in the paragraph above! He suggests going to historians and historical sources for the real picture. Sound advice!

The U.S. officially declared on June 18th of 1812. Although some action took place from coast to coast, the watery front lines – the key routes of transportation, commerce and communication – were along the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes. Those of us accustomed to the modern tranquility of the St. Lawrence Seaway need to bear in mind that in 1812 untamed rapids made portions of the



*The trigger and firing mechanism of the period musket displayed at the meeting.*

river tricky and arduous. Military control of certain sections was essential for the war’s over-all outcome.

The conflict also set the stage for Ottawa’s eventual rise to prominence. The Rideau Canal was built to remedy Upper Canada’s dependence on the vulnerable boundary waters. Considering there had already been two wars between the neighbours in just 30-odd years, who could tell if hostilities might break out again?

By and large, the war wasn’t started (or welcomed) by residents of both sides of the river in our region. Settlers shared commonalities of frontier hardship and interdependent need. Frustrating trade restrictions hurt this

region’s economy. Consequently, smuggling was common and widely accepted by the locals – who resented laws and taxes designed to suit the squabbles of Washington London or Paris. In addition, certain areas of Upper Canada were settled by American immigrants, “Late Loyalists” ( a term Henderson dislikes), whose loyalty actually was in some doubt.

The strategic importance of the St. Lawrence brought the war here nevertheless, particularly to the cross-river communities of Prescott and Ogdensburg.

In the body of his talk and the lengthy question period that followed, Henderson detailed many of the notable events and personalities that made the annals of history, including: Ogdensburg’s David Parish, U.S. Captain Benjamin Forsyth, British Lt.-Col. ‘Red George’ MacDonnell, Fort Wellington Commandant Thomas Pearson, U.S. General James Wilkinson (whom Henderson calls “a narcissistic sociopath”), Canadian regiment Major Francis Cockburn, Major General Isaac Brock, Tecumseh, and some names that should be better-known, such as John Norton.

What about the role of Native peoples? Henderson called that a fascinating topic. Of the four groups involved (Americans, Canadians, Native peoples and the British ) Natives divided into three factions: pro-American, pro-British and neutral – with good reasons for taking different sides.

Henderson observed that Britain, Canada and the United States all have their own nationalistic slant on the war and he opined that the U.S. is prone to “cherry picking” what it chooses to recollect. Henderson also observed that most of the fighting in that war involved New York State or its troops, but Governor Cuomo largely cancelled state funding for commemorative events due to budgetary troubles. Henderson added that this period has so many myths one could spend all their time whacking them down like carnival moles.

Henderson says there are new War of 1812 exhibits worth seeing at Fort Wellington, Upper Canada Village and the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa. War Museum volunteer Brian Earl confirmed that the display will include the very tunic Major General Brock wore when he was fatally shot at the Battle of Queenston Heights.

In Henderson’s view, Ontario is so large and diverse that in some respects there is no such thing as an Ontarian. In fact, the war was experienced quite differently in various areas. Henderson feels this pronounced regional diversity increases the importance of local historical societies in understanding and sharing the heritage of different communities. We owe him thanks for helping our local group gear up for an anniversary that’s about to go into full swing.

## ***Re-dedication of the Dickinson Monument***

One of the more important projects undertaken by the RTHS this year was the restoration of the Dickinson Monument in Beechwood Cemetery. Members will recall seeing the monument during our excursion to Beechwood in 2011 and its less than sterling state of repair. The top was broken off and many of the inscriptions were no longer readable. Our project involved replacing the top, a light cleaning, and placing a boulder with two granite plaques near the monument. The granite plaques are being inscribed with the names of the family members and their many achievements in Manotick, Ottawa, and the Parliament of Canada

This work is nearing completion and you are invited to attend the re-dedication and the unveiling of the new family plaques at Beechwood Cemetery, Section 22, Plot 57, on Saturday, 30 June 2012 at 11:00 a.m. Period Costume would be appropriate. Should plans change, you will be notified via the RTHS website. The ceremony will take place rain or shine.

Questions to Brian Earl, 613-692-2371.



## ***“With Only a Suitcase” in Latvia***

Ellen Adamsons recently visited Latvia where she and her book were acclaimed by local officials, community groups and relatives. Ellen and Karlis visited several areas, including the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia in old Riga. Officials at the museum were impressed with the design Ron Wilson had done on the book, particularly with the photographs, and are planning on using it as an example of how to present family stories. On her return Ellen presented Ron with a book on Latvia in recognition of his creative contribution to “With Only a Suitcase”.



## ***Watson’s Mill Events***

The Mill is located at 5525 Dickinson Street, Dickinson Square, Manotick. Free parking on-site.

Web Site: [www.watsonsmill.com](http://www.watsonsmill.com)

Watson’s Mill hours of operation: by appointment. Office hours: weekdays, 10:00-4:00. Watson’s Mill: starting Saturday, May 5th: open to visitation daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Please visit [www.watsonsmill.com](http://www.watsonsmill.com) for a complete calendar of events. Below are some highlights.

Mini-Wheats Summer Camp: Monday to Friday, July 9th to 13th, July 23rd to 27th, and August 6th to 10th: daily 9:00-4:00: Advance registration is required. Registrations are currently being accepted. See the Watson’s Mill website for more information and to register.

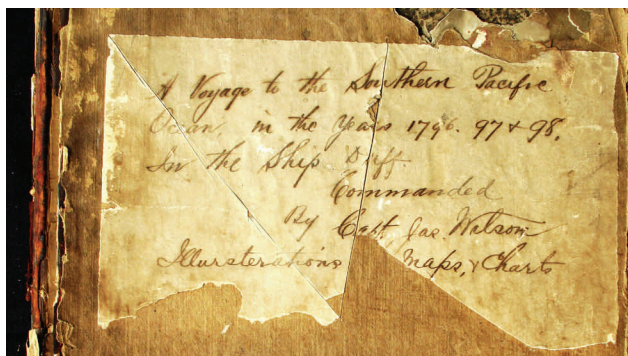
Strawberry Social: Sunday, June 24th, 1:00-3:00 pm at the Mill: Tickets on sale now: \$10/adult, \$5/child (under 12 years). There will be fresh strawberries, lemonade and music from the Swamp Water Jazz Band.

Raise the Roof” Concert: featuring Trevor Alguire: Sunday, June 24th: Doors open at 6:30pm; Concert starts at 7:00pm. Tickets \$20/person, or \$50/family package (2 adults & their children or grandchildren under 14 years). At Watson’s Mill, 2nd floor. Please note: this is an alcohol free, family friendly event. Light refreshments served. In support of Watson’s Mill’s “Raise the Roof” campaign.

# *Manotick Resident Donates Rare Book and Artefacts*

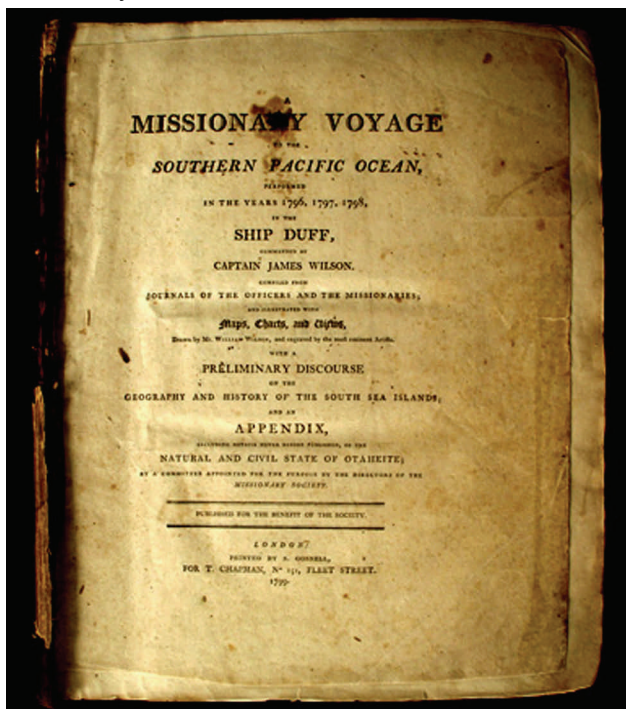
**Article by Owen Cooke**

RTHS members Mary Riley and Barbara Humphreys recently travelled to Picton, Ont., to the “Naval Marine Archive - the Canadian Collection” to meet with Director Dr. Paul Adamthwaite and donate a rare 18th century book and some marine artifacts which belonged to Captain James Johnston Riley, a great uncle of Mary’s late husband.



*The badly damaged front cover of the 1799 book*

The book, titled *A Missionary Voyage to the Southern Pacific Ocean Performed in the Years 1796, 1797, 1798 in the Ship Duff, Commanded by Captain James Wilson*, was published in 1799. This three-year voyage was one of the first endeavours of the London Missionary Society, which transported seventeen missionaries to Tahiti, where they arrived only ten years after the infamous expedition by HMS *Bounty*. Their success was mixed - most of the



*The title page of the 1799 book*

missionaries returned to England by the first available ship, although Henry Nott (1744-1844) spent most of the rest of his life in Tahiti and translated the Bible into Tahitian.

Although Mary’s book is a rare first edition, with intact folding maps of the island groups the ship encountered, the book has since been reprinted several times into the modern era, and is now available as a e-book.

Among the other items Mary donated to the Naval Marine Archive were Captain Riley’s Master’s Certificate, issued by the Board of Trade in Liverpool - his “Liverpool Ticket” to captain a ship - as well as a letter signed by Captain Joseph-Elzéar Bernier (1852-1934), one of Canada’s pioneering Arctic navigators and explorers.



*Mary Riley and Dr. Paul Adamthwaite examine artefacts at the Naval Marine Archive in Picton*

The “Naval Marine Archive - the Canadian Collection” is a foundation dedicated to marine history, research and education, and holds a quarter million documents, books, images, charts, journals, and ships’ plans, with strong collections in maritime art and yachting. It is housed in Picton’s former customs house and post office.



*Dr Paul Adamthwaite and Barbara Humphreys examine Mary Riley’s artefacts in the reading room.*

## *The Dickinson House*

The Dickinson House opened for the 2012 season on the weekend of May 5 & 6. As was reported earlier it was a successful weekend, with 52 guests visiting on Saturday and 48 on Sunday. Since then we have expanded our open days to Wednesday through Sunday plus holidays and our open hours from 10 am to 5 pm. We were able to do this because we were successful in getting grants and recruiting 3 students to help us out. This happy state of affairs will continue until September 1 after which we revert to the old schedule.

In any case we have had a quite successful beginning of our summer with 700 visitors in May and another 700 in June by the end of the Dickinson Day/Open Doors weekend.

Members are reminded that we now have a display on etiquette and social activities on loan from the Goulbourn

Museum. This display has been set up in the yellow room on the second floor. Come and see it to see the role these activities played in the lives of the settlers.



Dickinson House Web Site

[www.rideautownshiphistory.org/dickinsonhouse](http://www.rideautownshiphistory.org/dickinsonhouse)

Dickinson House email

[dickinsonhouse1863@gmail.com](mailto:dickinsonhouse1863@gmail.com)

## *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).***

Last month, the Rideau Township Branch of the City of Ottawa Archives announced the return of former City Archivist Dave Bullock as a volunteer. A pleasant trend is developing as we announce the return of Iona Joy, an alumni of the Rideau Township Archives, who has been working on an update of her book on Cheese Factories of Rideau Township, originally published by the RTHS in 1990. Iona has been working on this project from home but she drops by regularly at the RTB to consult new documentation and consult with members of the Publications Committee.

## *Its Summer*

Its summer and there will not be another newsletter until September. We have been working on the fall program and it is looking good. However we have not settled all the venues and speakers as yet.

We can say that the September speaker will be Catherine Gallagher and her topic will be Genealogy and the Wallace and Eastman families. The meeting will be held in the Carsonby Community Centre, Wednesday September 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m.

Have a good summer.

## *Minutes of the May 16, 2012 Meeting*

Opening: The Rideau Township Historical Society met at Pierce's Corners Hall, 3048 Pierce Rd. (at Malakoff). The President, Bill Tupper, opened the meeting at 7:34 p.m. and welcomed guest, John Newman who will be inducted into the Agricultural hall of Fame, June 12. There were 38 members present.

Minutes: Moved by Ellen Adamsons standing in for secretary, Bill Adams, and seconded by Brian Sawyer that the minutes of the April meeting as published in the newsletter be adopted. Carried.

Finance: The Treasurer Colin Wright announced that the bank balance was \$24,341.80. The treasurer moved acceptance of his report and seconded by Georgina Tupper. Carried.

Membership: Patricia Earl reported that there are now 12 life members, 1 complementary member and 94 paid members.

Program: Ruth Wright, program co-ordinator provided details about the June 16 excursion by bus to Prescott. There will be a guided tour of Fort Wellington and the Battle of the Windmill site; Lunch at the Red George Public House; the afternoon includes a visit to the Grenville Historical Society Archival Resource Centre housed in the Old Grand Trunk/ CN railway station; ending with a visit to the Little Blue Church. Cost of the excursion by bus is \$30.00. A sign-up sheet was circulated.

Dickinson Memorial: Brian Earl said that the Dickinson Family Memorial is ready for mounting of the plaques. The re-dedication of the memorial is planned for June 30. Bill Tupper reminded members that RTHS had set aside \$3,000 to pay a portion of the memorial cost at an earlier meeting.

DSHMI: Brian Earl reported that the Mill Quarter Board has arranged a public meeting May 24 at 6:30 pm, Manotick Arena in the upstairs meeting rooms. City guidelines for the development of Clapp House, Carriage Shed and Ayers House will be presented. The public is invited to attend and comment.

Communications and Digital Applications: The DH "rack cards" will be completed this week and distributed to stores and libraries as advertising. The DH web site is up and working. Bill Tupper stated that RTHS is fortunate to have two outstanding web sites. Membership gave a round of applause.

Publications: Ellen Adamsons reported that the "Memorial Volumes project" spearheaded by Owen Cooke and the Oral History project committee have had initial meetings.

Having completed all the foot notes, Iona Joy is working on the sidebars for the second Edition of "Cheese Factories of Rideau Township". Ellen requested volunteers to help with the RTHS exhibit table at the British Isles Family History Society conference, Library and Archives, Canada, September 14 – 16.

Tricia Pettapiece Snyder from Maine, USA, sent a donation of \$50.00 and a thank note in "appreciation of keeping history alive in Kars". Ellen Adamsons moved seconded by Marguerite Rogers that the report be accepted. Carried.

Youth: Bill Tupper standing in for Cam Trueman stated that two scholarship sponsored by RTHS for Outstanding Achievement in History will be awarded at graduation exercises, one at South Carleton High School and one at St. Mark's High School.

Dickinson House: Bill Tupper announced that DH is open for the season, Wednesday to Sunday 10am to 5pm. Funding budget is for two students for fourteen weeks and one student for seven weeks. Sarah Davies, Brandon Kassis and Kyle Trudel are all part of the history program at Carleton University. The new display on etiquette is enhanced by the period dress costumes made by Barbara Barkley. Brian Sawyer will display his "Guess what it is?" heritage items. Special weekends are planned. Volunteers continue to be welcome.

Evening Program: The War of 1812

Robert Henderson, scholar, noted historian, military curator and prolific writer presented the human side of the War of 1812 on the upper St. Lawrence River. He spoke about how settlement of the Rideau area was affected and that the building of the Rideau Canal was initiated in response. Photographs of the river system with villages and battle sites and vignettes about Benjamin Forsythe, Red George, Colonel Thomas Pearson and James Wilkenson made for an engaging presentation. Each member of the audience had earlier been pressed into the service of Robert Henderson's Army by accepting a reproduction 1787 George III coin.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 9:14 p.m. for continued discussion and refreshments organized by Melanie Hayes.

*Minutes prepared by Ellen Adamsons, on behalf of the RTHS Secretary*

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