

The Rideau Township Historical Society

Preserving and Promoting local history for the former Rideau Township

June 2014 Newsletter

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

The June Excursion

Date: Saturday, June 14, 2014
Time: 9:00 a.m.
Bus departs Ottawa Client Service Centre, 2155 Roger Steven's Drive, North Gower

The June Excursion

Historic Tour of Mississippi Mills

The tour will include visits to the North Lanark Regional Museum, the Mississippi Valley Textile Museum, and the R. Tait McKenzie Museum & Naismith Museum at the Mill of Kintail Conservation Area. Lunch will be at the Barley Mow Restaurant in Almonte

The cost will be \$10.00 per person.



The Mill of Kintail Conservation Area, one of the sites we will visit during the June Excursion.



The Mississippi Valley Textile Museum "Fabric of a Small Town Exhibit" is the centerpiece display of the museum.

Membership 2014 Membership fees are now due. \$10 for a single membership, \$15 for a family membership. Hope to see you at our meeting on September 17th.

Bring a Friend

This Month

1. The May Presentation
2. The June Excursion
3. News from the Rideau Archives
4. The Dickinson House
5. Minutes, last RTHS meeting.
6. Book Launch
7. Dickinson Day



North Lanark Regional Museum

The North Lanark Regional Museum is owned and operated by the North Lanark Historical Society with the goal of collecting, preserving and displaying the history of Mississippi Mills. The museum features several exhibit spaces including seasonal exhibits, permanent local history exhibits, and a pioneer log cabin. The museum is the perfect destination for families with young children, retirees and history buffs in general

R. Tait McKenzie, the Last Voyage of the Karluk, Write Your Own Life History, and Historic North Gower Businesses
Presentations by: Dennis Osmond, Brandon Kassis, Susan McKellar, and Colin Wright

Article and Photos by Susan McKellar

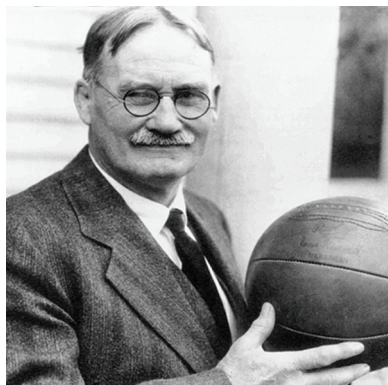
It was an evening of foretastes – Dennis Osmond gave us a taste of the Mill of Kintail which we will be visiting on our June excursion, Brandon Kassis gave us a taste of Arctic expeditions of which we hope to hear more in the fall, Susan McKellar gave us a taste of learning to write your life history, and Colin Wright tantalized us with snippets of history of the businesses in North Gower – a precursor of a book?



Dennis Osmond presented a very good overview of the career of R. Tait McKenzie, an extremely interesting Canadian.

The RTHS June excursion is a trip to various museums in the Almonte area, including the R. Tait McKenzie and James Naismith Museums at the Mill

of Kintail. Dennis Osmond gave us some background on McKenzie and Naismith, who were friends, and the Mill, which was built in the 1830s, fell into disrepair, and later was restored by McKenzie. Naismith is well-known as the inventor of the sport of basketball in 1891. McKenzie was a heart surgeon and gymnast, and combining these interests became the medical director of physical training at McGill in 1894. He also was a well-known sculptor, mainly of the human body, and produced statues, friezes, and medallions. Osmond worked for 35 years in the McGill Medical Building as a researcher, and became familiar with McKenzie's work there.



James Naismith, inventor of basketball

Brandon Kassis, the RTHS Youth Director, is also a history student at Carleton University and works as a guide at Dickinson Square during the summer. He worked on a group school project last year that researched and produced a very professional short video entitled "The Last Voyage of the Karluk".. Not only did it garner an A,



"The Plunger", a sculpture by R. Tait McKen-

it won the Frank Underhill Undergraduate Award at Carleton. And it may be shown on CBC this summer.

The team combined original images, both still and movie, with commentary, interviews, sound track

and original music to capture our interest. The Karluk, originally a wooden whaling vessel, was used for a Canadian Arctic Expedition in 1913 to map the Beaufort Sea in an effort to establish Canadian sovereignty in the north. It sailed north from Victoria, but became locked in sea ice in the Beaufort Sea, pushed by the ice over several months to Siberia, then crushed. The crew then travelled by dog sled to the nearest land, Wrangel Island, weeks away, where they spent many months. Captain Bartlett set out for help, again by dog sled, travelling 1200 km. over six months, eventually sending a ship back for his crew, several of whom had perished by then. The film closed with this quote, "Man has not conquered the Arctic, but merely survived her harsh embrace."



The Karluk

Those who enjoyed this look at an Arctic adventure will be looking forward to a program this fall on the discovery of the Investigator, hidden beneath the ice for 150 years. A speaker from Parks Canada will describe the search.

Susan McKellar then described an organization, W. I. N. (Write It Now), which sponsors courses that teach people

how to write their life history. The RTHS is proposing a two-year course, with spring and fall sessions, starting in the fall of 2014. She encouraged members to spread the word as the optimal size of such a group is 15-20 persons.



The Write it Now Logo

Colin Wright talked about several businesses in North Gower with a 50-year history. Many of these have changed hands and/or locations over the years, and many owners have had multiple businesses. He also showed copies of photographs of some of the old buildings. One example was the Cummings Funeral Home that began in 1942 and has just been sold. The last owner, Lee Cummings, was a fourth generation undertaker. An earlier pro-

prietor, J. A. Cummings, had several businesses including a store, an oil business, a butcher shop, and used a slogan that he looked after you from the cradle to the coffin. The store burned in 1977 and the space now houses a mall.

Colin stressed the fact that the owners of these long-time businesses also participated in the life of the community, including serving as volunteer fire-fighters. They were the town fathers, and met informally to discuss local issues.

Some of these businesses, with recognizable names, are still operating – H. L. Perkins, P. O. Sadler, Edgar Leach insurance, Harrison's Garage, H. O Wright & Sons, the Co-op. Others have passed out of existence – Charles B. Craig farm machinery, Leach's store, Stinson's garage. Some like the Marlborough Pub have gone through various incarnations.

It was obvious that Colin has an encyclopedic knowledge of many aspects of the village of North Gower, lots of stories, and a loving interest.

The Dickinson House

June 6 to 8 was an extremely busy and very successful three-day period at Dickinson House with 1,127 people visiting as part of the Dickinson Days festival and Doors Open Ottawa.

RTHS representatives started the weekend off by taking part in the Friday evening Dickinson Days parade on a joint float for Watson's Mill and Dickinson House. It was such a pleasure to see all the smiling faces as we rolled by with our fiddler and banjo players making everyone tap their toes. A big thank you to Bill Tupper for organizing our wagon transport and for Dave Tupper for pulling the float.

House and Their Place in Manotick Village Society, 1870-1930. Attendees at the event had the opportunity to enjoy tea, treats and each other's company on a wonderful sunny afternoon in Dickinson Square.



The Dickinson Day float entered by the the Mill and the RTHS.



Jane Anderson introducing Maureen McPhee, the author of "The Women of Dickinson House and Their Place in Manotick Village Society"

On Sunday, we successfully launched RTHS's latest publication – Maureen McPhee's *The Women of Dickinson*



The book launch was held on the back lawn of the Dickinson house on a very nice day.

Tentative Plans for the Fall Meetings

The executive has been working on the lineup for the fall programs and would like to present you with our preliminary plans. Please note that these events may change as we approach fall and people are more certain of their plans.

In September Maureen McPhee, author of RTHS book, "*The Women of Dickinson House*", will speak about the book and its preparation.

In October Charlotte Gray, a Canadian author and historian, will speak on "*The Massey Murder: A Maid, Her Master, and The Trial That Shocked a Country*"

In November Ryan Harris, an underwater archaeologist with Parks Canada, will make a presentation on his work in the Arctic and the discovery of the ship "The Investigator"

In December, as always, **the Christmas party.**

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.

A century ago, book purchases were often made by local residents from booksellers in Ottawa or some other large town nearby. And certainly some bought used books from their neighbours. But another popular method of buying books at that time was by subscription.

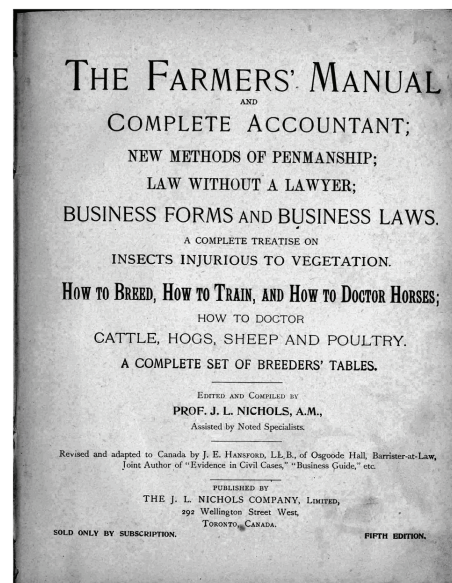
Subscription books could be bought through the mail or through a travelling book agent, who would visit the farms and homes of prospective buyers with a case full of samples and take subscriptions for books. These books were produced by subscription publishers, located off in distant and larger urban centres. One publisher, Bradley-Garretson of Brantford and Toronto, was said to have had two to three thousand agents throughout Canada in the 1880s.

Another subscription publisher was The J.L. Nichols Company, Limited, of Toronto, who published, among other books, *The Farmers' Manual and Complete Accountant*. It is an encyclopedic book that gives advice on veterinarian practices, penmanship, writing contracts, accounting, and similar topics.

William Whiting, farming on the first Concession in Marlborough Township, recorded on 4 March 1904 in the blank Weather Notes section of his copy of *The Farmers'*

Manual that he had paid W.H. Percival of Kemptville \$1.75 for it. Whether Percival had himself bought the book through subscription or he was selling copies as a book agent for J.L. Nichols Company, Limited is unknown. Nevertheless, Whiting's copy, held by the Rideau Township Branch of the City of Ottawa Archives in the Ruth Armstrong fonds (MGR020), provides a connection between subscription publishing and the Rideau Township area just at the end of its popularity. By the time of the First World War, this method of book buying was in the decline.

– Stuart Clarkson



Don't Forget to Visit Dickinson House and Watson's Mill

Dickinson House is located at 1127 Mill street and the Mill is located at 5525 Dickinson Street, Dickinson Square, Manotick. There is free parking on-site.

Web Sites: rideautownshiphistory.org/dickinsonhouse and www.watsonsmill.com

The Dickinson House is open from May 17 to September 1 from 10:00am to 5:00 pm.

The Carriage Shed Office at Watson's Mill is open: weekdays, 10:00 a.m.-4:00.p.m. .

See the web sites above for information on the events coming for this season.

Minutes of the Rideau Township Historical Society

May Meeting

May 21, 2014, Client Service Centre, North Gower, Ont.

Opening: The Rideau Township Historical Society met once again in the meeting room of the Client Service Centre for the regular monthly meeting and a varied program. President Brian Sawyer called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. with 32 people present.

Minutes: It was moved by Maureen McPhee and seconded by Marguerite Rogers that the minutes of the April 16, 2014 meeting as published in the May Newsletter be approved. Carried.

Finance: Sandy McNiece, treasurer, gave a financial report for the first four months of 2014. Revenue was \$11,900. Expenditures were \$3,600, leaving a net balance of \$8,000 after reserves. The current bank balance excluding reserves is \$11,700. Sandy then summarized the revised budget that had been approved at the last executive meeting, which projected revenues of \$36,100 and expenditures of \$37,900, with a shortfall of \$1,800 which the executive thinks is manageable. Moved by Bill Tupper, seconded by Brandon Kassis, that this 2014 operating budget as approved by the executive be accepted; carried.

Publications: Jane Anderson reported that our newest book, *The Women of Dickinson House*, due to be launched in June, will have a selling price of \$15 due to changes with the printer. Other books are selling well, and she thinks we are down to one box of *Manotick Then and Now*. The committee is working on preparations for the Oral History project.

Communications: Ron Wilson was delighted to report that his computer is fixed, and everything is up-to-date.

Youth: Brandon Kassis is organizing a bus trip for local students to visit local historic sites. The RTHS Awards of Merit in History have been reduced to \$250 each this year; one will go to a student at South Carleton High School and the other to a St. Mark student.

Grants: Tom MacDonald has spoken to Angela French about the upcoming provincial grant; they are expecting the application soon which is to be completed and submitted online.

Dickinson House: Maureen McPhee announced that the Dickinson House is now open, and that 10 students have been hired to work in it and Watson's Mill on a rotating basis. Two more will be hired for July and August. New costumes have been purchased. There will be one float representing both buildings in the Dickinson Days parade; also that weekend they will be participating in Doors Open Ottawa. The launch of *The Women of Dickinson House* will be on Sunday June 8. Upcoming events include a concert on June 15 and a Country Fair on Aug. 30. The City of Ottawa has contributed a grant of \$1,000 to the Country Fair which will help defray expenses of the different activities.

Membership: Brian Sawyer told us that Mary Riley has been ill, and will not be able to continue as Membership Director. He has picked up the papers from her, and will be looking for a replacement. In the meantime, two more members have paid their dues since last month.

Announcements: Brian Sawyer and Marguerite Rogers passed on information on upcoming Probus meetings with programs of historical interest.

Program: Ruth Wright talked about the June 14 excursion to the Almonte area. We will visit the North Lanark Regional Museum in Appleton, the Mill of Kintail and the McKenzie Naismith Museum, the Textile Museum in Almonte, and will have lunch at the Barley Mow restaurant in Almonte. The cost for entry fees will be \$10 and the RTHS will pay for the bus. The trip will start from the Client Centre at 9:00 a.m.

Evening Program: Brian then introduced Dennis Osmond who spoke of McKenzie and the Mill of Kintail. Brandon showed his film, *The Last Voyage of the Karluk*, and answered several questions. Susan talked about Write It Now (W.I.N.), a program to help people write their life stories; the RTHS is planning to start this program in the fall. Colin described several long-time North Gower businesses. Brian then thanked the speakers.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 9:15, and was followed by a social time with refreshments provided by Sandy Wilson.