

# The Rideau Township Historical Society

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

## March 2011 Newsletter

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

### ***Next Meeting,***

**Date:** Wednesday, March 16, 2011  
**Time:** 7:30 p.m.  
**Place:** Rideau Branch, Ottawa Archives  
6581 Fourth Line Road (Main Street)  
North Gower



***Topic:*** ***Log Fences***

***Speaker:*** ***Eugene Fytche***

Eugene L. Fytche was born in Fredericton, N. B., attended High School in New Carlisle, QC, and received a BSc in Electrical Engineering from the University of New Brunswick in 1947. He worked for electrical utilities in Canada, the United Kingdom and Brazil. He has a Certificate in Business from the London School of Economics (1962) and an M.B.A. from Mc Master U (1969). He retired from the Public Service of Canada in 1988, now lives at Almonte, ON. He is married, has four children and six grandchildren.

He operated a commercial sheep flock for twenty years, and wrote two books on protecting domestic livestock and poultry from predators, "...May Safely Graze" (1998) and "Wild Predators? Not in My Backyard!" (2002) His latest interest is heritage log fences, and his book "400 Years of Log Fences" is one of the few on the subject. He may be contacted at : efytche@xplornet.com

***Bring a friend***

***Light refreshments***

### ***From the Pen of the President***

Winters in Fort Myers are renowned for their pleasant weather, beaches and good fishing. One of the early residents to be attracted by these parameters was the brilliant inventor Thomas Edison who first visited and purchased land in Fort Myers in 1885.

Fort Myers was then a frontier cattle town accessible only by boat. In the next two years Edison built two winter homes and a research laboratory on his property. One of the homes was used as a guest house. The Edison property fronts on the Caloosahatchee River.

Edison was famous for his invention of the telephone transmitter, phonograph, motion picture camera, electric motor, storage battery, magnetic ore separator, fluorescent lamp, flouroscope, coal tar derivatives, synthetic carbolic acid, and a source of natural rubber that can be grown in the United States. His greatest contribution was the incandescent lamp, which he perfected on October 21, 1879. That first lamp maintained its incandescence for more than forty hours. Edison was granted 1097 patents in his lifetime. His main research laboratory was in West Orange, New Jersey. In 1928 he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor - the nations highest award in recognition of services rendered.

### ***This Month***

1. The February Bring & Brag
2. From the pen of the President
3. Coming events, Society presentations
4. News from the Rideau Archives
5. The Ottawa Heritage Day at City Hall
6. The Dickinson House

## *From the Presidents Pen (continued)*

Edison had a Canadian connection. His great-grandfather, John Edison, a loyalist during the revolution, was imprisoned and sentenced to death. His life was saved only through the efforts of his wife's prominent Whig relatives. The family migrated to Nova Scotia, where they remained until 1811, when they moved to Vienna, Ontario. Edison's grandfather, Captain Samuel, served with the British in the War of 1812.

In Ontario, Edison's father, another Samuel, married Nancy Elliot, a school teacher. The younger Samuel soon became involved in another political struggle, known as the Papineau-MacKenzie Rebellion. Upon the failure of this movement, he was forced to escape to the United States, where he settled in Milan, Ohio. Son Thomas was born in Milan in 1847.

Edison invited many friends to visit and stay in his guest house in Fort Myers. These included Henry Ford, Harvey Firestone and Herbert Hoover. Ford first visited in 1914,

and in 1916 purchased the adjacent property and home. Edison and Ford were lifelong friends. Edison spent his last season in Fort Myers in 1931 and Ford in 1934. Edison died in October, 1931.

Mrs. Edison, Thomas's second wife, deeded the Edison Estate to the City of Fort Myers in 1947. In 1988 the City acquired the Ford Estate. The two adjoining properties, now known as the Edison-Ford Estates are owned by the City of Fort Myers, and operated by a Foundation. Beaches aside, they are the major tourist attraction in South West Florida.

The Tupperts recently visited the "Estates", absorbing the history, the techniques used to tell the story, and the beauty of the gardens and buildings. The occasion reminded us of the potential for Dickinson Square and the tourist implications for Manotick and the City of Ottawa.

For more detail visit [www.efwefla.org](http://www.efwefla.org)

## *Coming Events:*

**Saturday March 19, 2011, 1:30 p.m.** – Please join us at the Stittsville Library for "Loyalist Settlements in Eastern Ontario". Our speaker is Brian Tackaberry, President of The Bay of Quinte Branch of the United Empire Loyalists.

Brian has Loyalists in his background and has done extensive research on the Loyalists and on early Ontario settlers and is very knowledgeable on this subject. He will explain the hardships Loyalists (and other settlers) endured during the American Revolution and while settling in Upper Canada. This presentation should be of interest to anyone with early ancestors in Ontario or anyone who enjoys history. Brian will be bringing a few Loyalist artefacts for display.

Hope to see you at the Library, March 19th at 1:30 p.m. As always, parking, admittance and refreshments are free.

**Wednesday, March 23, 2011, 2:00 p.m.** Burritt's Rapids Community Hall

"Martha Burritt" (Coral in costume) will tell her story as the Loyalist daughter of Roger Stevens and the wife of Stephen Burritt to the Burritt's Rapids New Horizons Club. For more information call Janet Glaves at 613-269-2737

**Friday, March 25, 2011, 7:30 p.m.**, North Gower United Church

The North Gower Fellowship Club will have Coral talk about (and sell) Kars on the Rideau. Refreshments will be served. For more information call Eric Field at 613-489-3915.

**Saturday March 26, 2011, 8:15 a.m.**, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 6810 Rideau Valley Dr. S., Kars

The Ecumenical Men's Breakfast committee has invited Mark, Coral, Ron and Sandy to present the post-breakfast power-point program featuring Steamboat Days on the Rideau Canal 1832-1935. The free will offering will buy bicycles for clergy in Malawi. For your reservation call Reverend Susan Clarke at 1-613-348-3088 by March 20.

**Wed, March 30, 7:00pm – 9:30pm** Watson's Mill Presents "Challenging Myths of 1492". Speaker, Stu Rogers. Carriage Shed--5524 Dickinson St., Manotick. Admission is \$5 per person, \$2 for Watson Mill members, in support of Watson's Mill programming.

**Saturday, April 2, 2011, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.**, Long Reach Restaurant, 116 County Road 44, Beckett's Landing

The Beckett's Landing Community Association will host a "Show and Tell" event. What would you bring? Coral may "tell" about the Elighs of Eligh's Wharf. Kars on the Rideau will be for sale. There will be soup and sandwiches on the menu in the restaurant. For confirmation call Bill Adams, 613-258-3087 or Coral at 613-489-2029.

# The Annual RTHS Bring & Brag

Article and Pictures by Lucy Martin

Everyone has items with some special qualities, history or story. Once each year we share treasures or trinkets. It's our own antiques road show in which we learn about unusual artifacts and how they came to be a part of our members' lives.

Here is a summary of what 36 attendees enjoyed February 16th in the nicely-renovated basement of Knox Presbyterian Church in Manotick.

Margaret Cameron told the tale of her great-great-great grandmother, Charlotte Craig. While sailing to Canada in 1840, Charlotte was wooed by the ship's love-struck captain, who promised her a life of comfort. But there must have been doubts about the match, at least on the part of her parents, who decidedly influenced the outcome when the sea captain pressed his suit once again. But Charlotte eventually opted to marry fellow settler and neighbor, Henry Mitchell instead. The couple built a flourishing 300-acre family farm on First Line Road, part of which remains in family hands today. (This story is also found on page 66 of *Kars on the Rideau*, 2nd edition.)



*Coral Lindsay's collection of cow creamers*

John Palmer mourned both the loss of historic material as it is discarded along with the suppression of dump diving. Before tightened liability and sanitation regulations, this long-cherished form of recycling continually demonstrated that one person's trash is another's treasure.

Palmer then shared numerous scrap books he rescued from Ottawa's Trail Road dump, most likely kept by someone from the Russell/Winchester area with high Tory leanings. Beginning in 1934, the over-sized books diligently compiled page after page of detailed articles and magnificent photos. Movie stars, the Dion Quints, British royalty – including the handsome, but feckless, Prince of Wales, who reigned briefly as Edward VIII (before famously abdi-

cating the throne for a woman deemed unsuitable), and his brother, the stalwart George VI (currently depicted in the highly-acclaimed movie "The King's Speech", with his supportive Queen and the young Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret). Other headlines foreshadowed the fearsome arrival of WW II. Truly, a fine way to better understand how such times felt to those who lived through them.

Jane Anderson had a charming collection of pitchers and measuring cups, often garnered as customer premiums from cereal companies (Corn flakes or Quaker Oats, etc.). Most came from her grandmother. Another came from her great uncle & aunt, and is actually made of pottery, though glazed as to appear metallic.



*Val Lister with her lamps*

Val Lister brought five more examples from her extensive collection of lamps. Lamp collecting involves different focuses (patterns, colour, miniatures, etc.). Lister specializes in the history of lighting across millennia. One was a Hoyt Lamp, with all the scarce parts (top collar, burner, original chimney). Another had two glass handles, for easy passing from hand to hand. Her Atterbury Lamp was called the Owl and Shield. Another was a kerosene (then called coal oil) lamp from 1868, the 'Neville', that Lister says might be called 'butt ugly' but it was a Canadian patent lamp, a rare thing. The tallest of the five had a metal statuette of a maid servant and practical match basket built on as decorative features.

Stuart Rogers began his turn by expanding on the greatly-missed pleasures of dump 'recycling'. He recalled an amazing visit to the dump where he and his daughter Heather sought a long and odd list of items needed to light their river skating rink, all of which presented themselves as if by magic. As they departed it began to rain and they rescued discarded texts for courses at Trent University. About three days later, Rogers' nephew stopped

by and discovered most of the tossed-aside books were just what he would need, when he headed off to Trent!

Rogers then expanded on the interest he and wife Marguerite have in native culture and evidence of explorers who arguably pre-date Columbus. Touring the U.S., they encountered the Kensington rune stone in a museum in Alexandria, Minnesota. Proof, some say, of extensive Vikings exploration in North America. (Author's note: there is a long article on this rune stone in Wikipedia, including protracted debate on the item's authenticity.) The Heavener Rune stone in Oklahoma and items discovered at other sites offer additional points of discussion. Stu plans to lecture on this still-evolving topic March 30th as part of the Watson's Mill Presents lecture series.

Brian Sawyer carried up a large box and proceeded to pull out an amazing array of Victorian gadgets. The audience was invited to guess what each was. We saw: mustache cups, shaving cups, an invalid cup (for sipping in bed), a collar box, grape scissors, crumb sweeper, eye (wash) cup, measuring cups for liquids (guaranteed accurate), a fitting to make a cup into a mustache cup (!), fish forks, fancy ash trays, a match box, a nut cracker in the shape of a dog, a shell case cut down from armaments, brass knuckles, a bulk mail weight scale (a puzzler at first) and a still-unsolved mystery object, thought to be a bun warmer. Fun!



*Brian Sawyer with his gadgets*

Scott Cameron brought a 'scribbler' tablet, courtesy of his grandmother's collection. Inscribed "Nora Morrow", this was a typical school item up until perhaps the 1950's. (Clues – like Queen Victoria on the front – suggest this tablet may date from the 1890's) Besides blank pages it provided handy tables for sums and such, some of which have fallen out of use like the "arithmetic table", units of measurement for cloth, land (rod, link, chain etc.) and the English currency table. (Metric does seem easier!)

Will Pearl shared a diminutive gold-topped cane used by his grandfather, a bread man by day and vaudeville performer at night, sometime around the 1930's in Detroit. The performer was a Mason as well. Penny often won-

dered if the marks on the cane's head had secret code or symbology worth deciphering, but an uncle told him nope, it's just a cane.



*Joan Bakker Stark with "Mary Sheean"*

Joan Bakker Stark brought her childhood doll, called "Mary Sheean" with china head, hands and feet, 1850 vintage, with original pantaloons and wool socks – and a newer dress she made herself. This doll was a favorite childhood companion, and a great listener. It originated with her great-grandmother, the real Mary Sheean, who came from a well-to-do Catholic family in Ireland. Sheean was disowned for running away to marry a Protestant. Great-grandmother had three daughters before being widowed and becoming a cook in a lumber camp at Otter Lake. The doll – and all the stories – came to Joan from her beloved Aunt Dela, described as a prim and proper, hardworking farm lady. ("Mary Sheean" usually observes life from a shelf, beside her beau, Charlie Chaplin.)

Brian Earl brought artifacts that "date from the mid 1900's", including a wall map, Sinai desert sand, titanium ID tags, patches & hats, Arab headdress, abandoned ammunition cans, minefield markers, first aid kit, etc. All from his tour in Jan-Aug 1977 as a military observer in the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) in Palestine. He lived in Jerusalem and worked in southern Lebanon or in the Sinai Desert. Earl recalled his favorite part: "I got paid to drive up these dunes in a jeep, tip over the top, slide down! And they paid me for that! I should have been paying them!" Other duties in the 100-degree heat were far less exciting, such as monitoring a radio or dead-slow check points.

Ellen Adamsons brought artifacts and information gained during her time in the Caribbean, specifically from the Wayana people of Suriname (or Surinam), in South America, much of which is only accessible by dugout canoe. Adamson's main display item was a large round board, "maluana" – the center piece of traditional communal round house. It was colourfully inlaid with the important creatures symbolizing Wayana heritage. It is difficult to

summarize an entire culture, or country, in a short presentation, but Adamsons presented an educational overview of this little-known area.

Susan McKellar shared a lovely large, rectangular, wood-strip basket, made by North American aboriginal people. She received it from her mother-in-law, and family memory dates it to sometime prior to 1889. It was coloured at one time, but has faded back to more natural hues. It was probably made in, or near, south-western Ontario. It spent long service as a sewing basket. It was once quite common for aboriginals crafters to sell such items door-to-door.



*Susan McKellar's wood strip basket*

There's a cabin near Lake Simcoe that's been in Peter Satterly's family since 1910. With better planning Satterly said he could have brought many interesting items from there. He shared two small metal devices that turned out to be cherry pitters. He recalls his mother hand-pitting cherries for the pies she used to bake.

Brian Booth shared his grandmother's Bible. It originated in Yorkshire, England and demonstrates an example of chain migration. Her fiancé, John Shaw had gone ahead to Canada a few years earlier and got established after finding employment at a paper mill near Trois Rivières along the St. Lawrence. The Bible was inscribed: *Presented to Mary Broadhead, on the occasion of her leaving for America, with sincere love from the teachers and scholars of the young women's class the Wesleyan chapel, Meltham, May the 21st, 1903.*

Mary came, married her sweetheart, and they established a new family line in Canada.

Linda Reasbeck brought a pretty Paragon china cup & saucer from her late friend and mentor Ruth Shaver. It commemorates the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway, a momentous event from 1959. At that time, Reasbeck was a high school student in Alberta who knew about the



*Linda Reasbeck's china cup & saucer*

grand project, but could hardly imagine the reality, or that one day she would live near the Seaway herself.

Coral Lindsay brought a selection of cow-shaped dairy creamers, a hobby shared by Katherine Killins as well. Some were from thrift stores, others from friends or relatives. They may be difficult to clean, but gosh are they cute! Asked who else collects cow creamers, Joan Bakker Stark allowed that she has a cow telephone, that goes "mooo" instead of "ring". John Palmer said in the Pontiac area, cow clocks and cow salt and pepper shakers are quite popular.

As always, it was a fun and educational event. What might you bring to share next year?

## ***Calling All Home Children Again***

Last month the RTHS expressed an interest in hearing from members that knew of persons that came to Canada as "home children". Between 1869 and the early 1930s, over 100,000 children from Great Britain did so.

Shipping them overseas through "homes" or agencies was a solution to the twin problems of too many children in the streets in British cities, and a need for cheap labour in Canada. Generally the boys worked as farm labourers and the girls as mother's helpers.

The Government of Canada has declared 2010 to be the Year of the British Home Child, and Canada Post has released a commemorative stamp.

The RTHS want to hear their stories, and are planning a program on this topic for May 2011. So if you have a family member who was a home child, or if you know of one, please contact Susan McKellar and share your story.

([susan.mckellar@rogers.com](mailto:susan.mckellar@rogers.com) or 613-489-3961)

## Dickinson House

Would you come to the House on April 7 to help with some spring housecleaning? We hope to start at 9:00 a.m.

There will be a recruiting session on May 1 and training sessions on May 9, 7:30 p.m. and May 14, 10:00 a.m., all at the Dickinson House We need more volunteers to host our visitors. It is an enjoyable experience.

### Heritage Day

The RTHS once again attended the City of Ottawa heritage day held on Tuesday, February 22, 2011 in the Lobby of City Hall.

Attending were Coral Lindsay, Lucy Martin, Ellen Adamsons, and Ron Wilson. Coral and Ellen were in costume and participated in the parade into council chambers for the ceremonies.

We went prepared to sell some of our books but it turned out that it not an event at which people are in a frame of mind to buy. We didn't sell anything.



*Ellen Adamsons, Coral Lindsay, Scott Moffatt, Kristine and Michael Schultz at the celebrations.*

However it is an event to make contact with other heritage organizations. On the far right is the program for the Goulbourn Historical Society for 2011. We provided them with a copy of our spring program.

Perhaps next year we should take more advantage of the opportunity to talk to the other historical societies about mutual interests.

The event was well attended by the public and is worth attending for the RTHS.



**Goulbourn  
Township Historical  
Society  
Programs 2011**

**February 19: Heritage Day**, at the Stittsville Library

**March 19: Loyalists in Eastern Ontario**, at the Stittsville Library

**April 16: April Foolishness with Mary Cook**, at the Stittsville Library

**May 21: Museums**, at the Goulbourn Museum, Stanley Corners

**June 18: Pot Luck Picnic**

**September: Possible Bus Trip**

**October 15: Emigration of the Irish**, at the Stittsville Library

**November 19: St Andrew's Day**, at the Stittsville Legion

**December 17: Traditions of the Season**, at the Stittsville Library

Visit our website at [goulbournhistoricalsociety.org](http://goulbournhistoricalsociety.org)

### 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).*

The Rideau Township Branch of the City of Ottawa Archives is in the process of acquiring a series of records created by Dr. David Wardrope Wallace in the late 19th and early 20th century. Dr Wallace was born in North Gower in 1850, the third and youngest son of James Wallace and Agnes Adam. The records consist of ledgers kept by Dr Wallace documenting his professional activities in his practice in Metcalfe and later in Kemptville. His great-granddaughter Catherine Gallagher, residing in Surprise, Arizona has offered to donate these records to be shipped by courier sometime this spring.

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