

The Rideau Township Historical Society

Preserving and Promoting local history for the former Rideau Township

May 2009 Newsletter

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

Next Meeting

May 20, @ 7:30 pm at Knox Presbyterian Church, 5533 Dickinson Street, Manotick.

In the fall...

Sep. 16, 7:30 p.m., Pierce's Corners Hall: Talk by Glenn Wright on "Early Days of the RCMP"

Oct. 21, 7:30 p.m., St. Andrew's, Kars: Katherine Killins and friends will present "What they wore".

Nov 18, 7:30 p.m., Carriage Shed, Manotick: Talk by Dr. Andrew Iarocci on 1st Canadian

May Speakers Jane Anderson & Ron Wilson

Subject Reprinting Dora Stamp's Book

As a contribution to the Manotick 150th celebrations, the RTHS has updated and printed a second edition of Dora Stamp's book, Manotick, Then & Now: Reflections & Memories.

Jane Anderson and Ron Wilson will describe the process of republishing this book. There will also be a display of memorabilia for Dora to highlight her exceptional contribution to documenting the history of Manotick. Helen Stinson Wall will present a eulogy on Dora.

The Manotick 150th Anniversary

In April and May RTHS Members have appeared in period costume at several events. See page 3 for details.



Bring a friend

Light refreshments

For a ride call Brian Earl

Features This Month

1. The Manotick 150th.
2. The April meeting.
3. News from the Rideau Branch, Ottawa Archives.
4. The June program.
5. Early days of the Rideau Canal at Manotick.



The June Program

Saturday, June 27: Excursion to Vintage Wings of Canada in Gatineau.
Web Site: www.vintagewings.ca

- Travel by bus, leaving Manotick at 9:30 a.m. sharp from the Manotick Library.
- Tour of the vintage airplanes by Michael Potter, Dave O'Malley, and one other followed by lunch at a nearby restaurant.
- Returning to Manotick at 4:00 p.m.
- Estimated cost of the day is \$40 or less, depending on the cost of the lunch and the number of people taking the bus. This includes a suggested donation to the Vintage Wings of Canada organization of \$10 per head.
- Please register for the event by contacting Susan McKellar at 613-489-3961 or susan.mckellar@rogers.com. Please bring family, friends, and neighbours. So far we have about 17 people and three guests who signed up at the March meeting. Let's try to encourage prospective members, and guests so as to fill the bus!

Last Meeting

**April 15, 2009, St. Andrew's Church Hall,
6810 Rideau Valley Drive South, Kars, Ontario**

Speaker: Coral Lindsay, historian

Article by Ellen Adamsons

Coral Lindsay, our local historian, presented RTHS an entertaining, well researched and abundantly illustrated lecture about nine world famous children of the 1930's Great Depression. Although the talk centered on the Dionne Quintuplet's early years, the other four children Princess Elizabeth of York, Princess Margaret, Shirley Temple and comic strip character Little Orphan Annie were well represented on six display tables covered with charts, pamphlets, books and toys.

Coral explained that Canada was hit hard by the depression and men "rode the rails" seeking employment. There was no social safety net. Accepting relief implied the recipient was of bad moral character. At the height of the unstable economy, the Dionne Quintuplets were born into a French Canadian farm family near North Bay who already had five children.



News of the multiple natural birth of five babies hit the headlines around the world.

It was a miracle! Yvonne, Annette, Cecile, Emily, Marie and their mother survived rural home delivery.

The Chicago World Exposition promoters immediately contacted the father, Oliva Dionne, issued a cheque and sent electric incubators. Then the problems began. Once Canada Customs caught up with the news, they released the incubators they had originally seized. It was discovered that the farm had no electricity and no running water. A kerosene incubator was found to help four of the nine inch long babies breathe. The strongest child was kept in the farm kitchen warming oven. When the children started to turn blue Dr. Defoe diluted rum with water and gave each infant a few drops. It worked.

Credited with great medical skill, Dr. Defoe became a member of the Board of Guardians, when the Ontario government passed legislation to gain custody of the quintuplets, making them wards of the department of

Health. The parents were deemed unable to look after the children. Coral presented contrary evidence. The Dionnes were capable, industrious, hard working and prosperous farmers even during the depression. However the family did win the battle of maintaining French as the girl's first language.



Being only 9 inches long, the five babies fitted comfortably into a not very large basket like these dolls.

Quintland, the hospital, where the healthy quintuplets lived for nine years became a tourist industry for the North Bay area. In 1935 over a half million visitors paraded through the one way glass viewing stations to see the quints, at play in the morning and afternoon; by 1936 there were one million visitors. Local roads were paved. Forty companies, such as Carnation Milk, Life Savers and Quaker Oats featured the children in advertisements. Coral explained that historians now question whether there was exploitation of the quints as well as improper accounting and distribution of their assets.

Once the girls got over the cute stage, tourism fell off and the economy also began to improve. Unfortunately the girls were not happy when they moved back home because they had not been taught how to milk cows or to do farm chores. They did not fit into rural life. Also there was resentment towards them among the older siblings. At eighteen the girls left home and moved to Montreal to live their lives privately.

Like many Canadians, Coral's mother cut out every news item about the world's five most famous children. Thus a life-long interest began for Coral who was three years old when the Quintuplets were born. Coral expressed thanks to Shirley Adams for the use of her Dionne scrapbook. If you want to know history, get to know Coral!

The Manotick Art Show, May 1 – 3, 2009, was held at the Curling Club. The RTHS was invited to set up a display for the 150th. It was entitled “May in old Manotick”. Thank you to Ed and Jane Anderson, Lucy Martin and Coral Lindsay, at right.



Probus Club, May 6, 2009. Coral Lindsay presented Sir John A. Macdonald, Canada’s First Prime Minister, to an audience of 75. Ellen Adamsons and Sandy Wilson accompanied Coral in period costume at St. James Church, Tompkins Hall on Clapp Lane.



Watson’s Mill hosted a Nin Fashion Show at the Mill, May 3. RTHS ladies and kids appeared in period costume after the show.

Models included Ellen Adamsons and Lucy Martin, Jane Anderson, Coral Lindsay with Margaret Cameron, Jessica Reinboldt, Sandy & Wynter Trueman. Left to Rt above: Ellen Adamsons, Jane Anderson, Cameron Trueman, Coral Lindsay and Lucy Martin.

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)

This Summer:

As in previous years the archives will be open for both days of Doors Open in June. It will also be open for the North Gower Discovery Tour in September.

Want a Costume for the Manotick 150th ?

If anyone is interested in acquiring a period costume for the Manotick 150th there is a local source. Rosemary Hayes is a seamstress with skills in making vintage reproductions. She can be contacted at rmmhayes@hotmail.com or by telephone at (613) 485-1822. Rosemary advertises reasonable rates and a variety of patterns, including a small selection of menswear.

The Rideau Canal at Manotick, Early Days

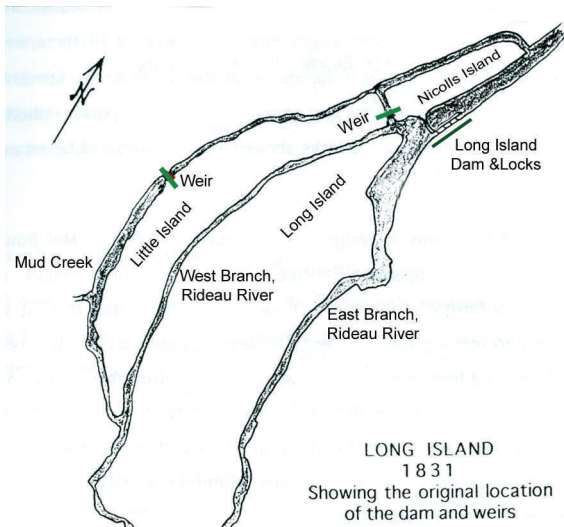
By Ron Wilson

The Rideau Canal opened in 1932, but the bulkhead dam at Watson's Mill was not built until 1858. This raises the question of how the canal worked in the Manotick – Long Island area in the intervening years.

In fact Colonel By's design of the canal in the Manotick – Long Island area did not contain a dam at the Watson's Mill site. He used weirs elsewhere.

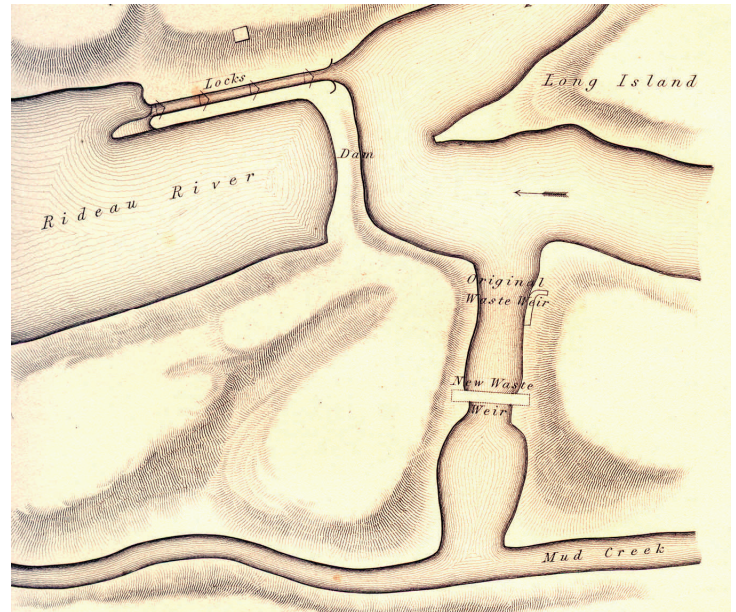
A weir is a low head dam used to increase the depth of water in a channel for some purpose. For example a weir could be used to create a mill pond to run a water wheel or yield a section of river navigable. Its not clear when a weir becomes high enough to become a dam.

Before the canal the water flow in the Manotick area was different than now. There were 3 channels instead of two, and there were three islands instead of two. The islands were Long Island, Nicolls Island, and Little Island. The map below shows the area in 1831. (Map from "A History of Long Island, Manotick, 1827 to 1997 by Catherine Carroll & Barbara Humphreys.) Little Island existed because the water levels were higher in both the west branch and Mud Creek before the dam was built at the Watson's Mill site.



At present there is little water in Mud Creek. It empties into the Rideau in two places. In the process it crosses Rideau Valley Drive in two places where its remnants can be seen. The first place is at the little bridge about half a km. north of Bankfield Road, and the second at the junction of Rideau Valley and Barnsdale Road. Thus before the canal, the sites of the City Yard and Sand Shed, the Veterinary building, and the Guide Dogs were all on Little Island.

During canal construction a weir was installed between Nicolls Island and Little Island, and another across Mud Creek somewhere behind the Guide Dogs building. The purpose of these weirs was to deepen the water in the east and west branches of the Rideau River and prevent



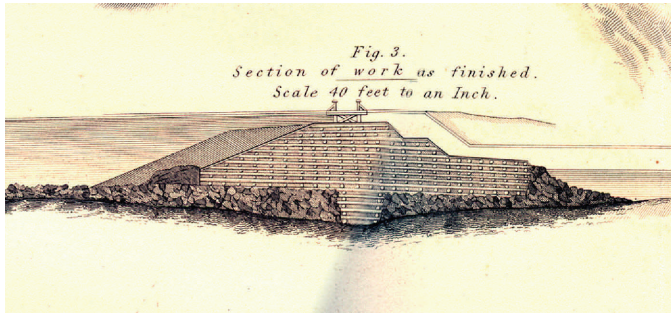
Mud Creek from draining water from the west branch around the weir at Long Island. This was the configuration when the canal went into service in 1832.

The above map is from an 1840 report from the Royal Engineers that describes the rebuilding of the weir across the waste channel between Nicolls Island and what used to be "Little" Island, now the mainland west of the west branch. (Report courtesy Mark Jodoin)

As can be seen from the map above, the east and west branches of the Rideau join at the northern tip of Long Island in front of the dam and locks. What is referred to as the waste channel (gets rid of excess water), joins with Mud Creek to form the branch of the Rideau that flows west of Nicolls Island and rejoins the main channel near the entrance to the Jock River. The map was made to show the location of a weir replacing one that had failed.

Although these weirs were substantial assemblies (see picture next page) with considerable stone ballast both in and around the log parts of the structure, mother nature often proved stronger. One or other of the weirs failed in 1836, 1841, and 1847.

The causes of failure would seem to have been the spring freshets bringing ice and eroding the soft clay bottoms around the base of the structures



On the original drawing of this weir the length measured 4 inches. With a scale of 40 ft per inch, the length was about 160 ft. (50 meters) in the along-stream direction..

The picture below, donated to the Rideau Branch, Ottawa Archives by George MacFarlane, shows the weir at the mill site prior to the bulkhead being built. The structure on the left side is probably the first sawmill.



Once the new configuration was implemented and the bulkhead dam was built, Mud Creek dried up and Little Island disappeared.

At one point in the struggles to find a solution to the problem of the failing weirs, they were both relocated. The one at the waste channel at Long Island was relocated to the gap between Nicolls Island and the tip of Long Island, the site of the present dam. The weir on Mud Creek was moved to approximately the site of today's bulkhead dam at Watson's Mill. The bulkhead was built in 1858.

The picture below, from Google Maps, shows the route of Mud Creek and henceforth the site of Little Island. The yellow dots show its path.



Civic Appreciation

Cathy McClure submitted my name in the Citizen of the Year category for a volunteer senior who helps other seniors. I was unaware of this but I would like to thank Cathy and those who were asked to send letters of support, i.e., Glenn Brooks, Barbara Humphreys, Mark Jodoin, Susan McKellar, Cameron and Kathy Minor, Marg and Stu Rogers and Bill and Georgie Tupper.

Ninety-year old Alice Cameron, the winner, has been helping seniors for 35 years. I was greatly relieved since I do very little for seniors and I continually forget that I am one. *Coral Lindsay*

Also at the May Meeting

Katherine Killins reported on the Manotick Saturday Night ball to be held October 3rd in Harmony Hall. She described it as a fun party for everyone with the costumes the major feature. The music will be provided by the John Miller fiddlers who want to come and have offered to play for free. Also the ladies of the legion are thinking about making sandwiches for the do.

Other events this summer for the 150th include the Art Show May 1, the Victorian tea June 20, Dickinson Day, and the Homecoming Weekend. Whether we will be volunteering at the Dickinson House this summer will depend on governance issues which are being addressed at this time.

Ellen Adamsons put on a very enjoyable demonstration of costumes appropriate for the summer events with the help of a number of models from the Society. Ellen herself modelled her costume showing the bits that made up the complete outfit. At one point she was demonstrating



the undergarments and the men in the front row were rewarded by seeing her ankle.

Rosemary Hayes presented some of the costumes she makes and how she goes about it.

Notice

The Dickinson Square Heritage Management Inc. Annual General Meeting

The Dickinson Square Heritage Management Inc. Annual General Meeting. will be held in Knox Church Hall, Manotick, on Wednesday, May 27th at 7:00 p.m. Brian Earl has represented RTHS on the DSHMI Board. Everyone is welcome.

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