

The Rideau Township Historical Society

Preserving and Promoting local history for the former Rideau Township

May 2014 Newsletter

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

The Next Meeting

Date: Wednesday May 21, 2014
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Place: Ottawa Client Services Centre
2155 Roger Steven's Drive
North Gower
Ontario

The May Meeting

Topic: Various Subjects

The May meeting will feature three speakers from the Historical Society who will speak on a variety of subjects very much of interest from a historical point of view.

Speakers: Brandon Kassis, Susan McKellar, Colin Wright



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

At the May meeting Brandon Kassis will present a documentary on The Last Voyage of the Karluk. The Karluk was the flagship of the Canadian Arctic Expedition of 1913-1916.

Susan McKellar will describe a course, Write It Now (W.I.N.), that offers instruction and practice in writing one's life history; the RTHS is considering sponsoring one of these courses.

Colin Wright will talk about companies in North Gower that have been in business for fifty years or longer. They obviously know how to treat their customers.

Membership 2014 Membership fees are now due. \$10 for a single membership, \$15 for a family membership. Contact Mary Riley. Hope to see you at our meeting on May 21st.

**Bring a Friend,
Light Refreshments**

Really, Bring a Friend

The RTHS has experienced a drop in membership this year which we would of course like to reverse. The Executive has over the past three or four years discussed the subject of attracting more members and new blood from time to time and have come up with ideas on accomplishing this.

Suggestions have included things such as quality speakers, more excursions, etc. and these things we have implemented and we think have certainly helped.

This Month

1. The April Presentation
2. The June Excursion
3. News from the Rideau Archives
4. The Dickinson House
5. North Grenville Heritage Symposium
6. Minutes, last RTHS meeting.
7. Visit Watson's Mill

However these improvements need to be seen by people other than ourselves if we are to attract new members. An excellent way to get people to see us and what we do is to bring them to meetings.

So if you can, please think of the people you know who might have an interest in our history and bring them along. See if we can increase the membership and broaden the talents and interests of the Society.

Canada Cycle & Motor: the CCM Story 1899-1983

Presentation by: John McKenty

Article and Photos by Susan McKellar

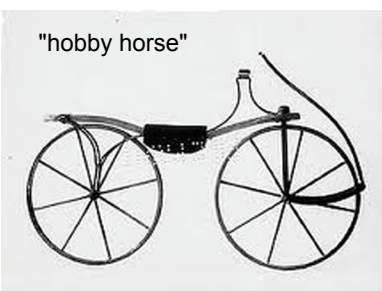
John McKenty, a retired educator and author who lives in Perth, shared some of the fruits of his labours with the RTHS this month in the form of an entertaining and very informative talk on this very Canadian company.

McKenty has always been a collector and interested in old things. He wondered who owned the first car in Perth – this led to Square Deal Garage: Sixty Years of Service to the Motoring Public. This book follows the early days of the motor car in Perth and the stories of those who sold and serviced it.

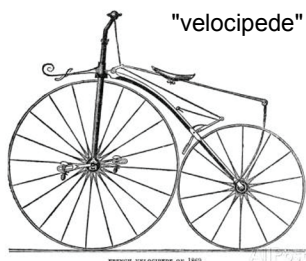
Then he found out about George and Laurence James who ran a hardware store in the middle of Perth for 75 years. They also were Ford dealers and Chev dealers, although not in the same building. Their story can be found in Follow the Crowd: the James Boys of Perth. They were also CCM dealers, which led McKenty to decide to learn more about CCM.

McKenty finds the most interesting part of doing research is the people you meet along the way. One of these was Gord Chard who is 85 years old but played hockey on the CCM team fifty years ago. He worked at CCM in Weston for thirty-nine years and was the manager of their tool and die department. When the company went bankrupt in 1983 Gord and a team were given two weeks to empty the place and shut it down – a sad task for the long-time employee.

Gord was there at the ending of the company, but who was there at the beginning? McKenty started his research by looking at early versions of bicycles, the origins of which are lost in the mists of time. In 1818 a contraption called a hobby horse, with two wheels and a board connecting them was developed in Europe in order to get around a very large garden more easily. The person sat on the board and propelled it with his feet on the ground.

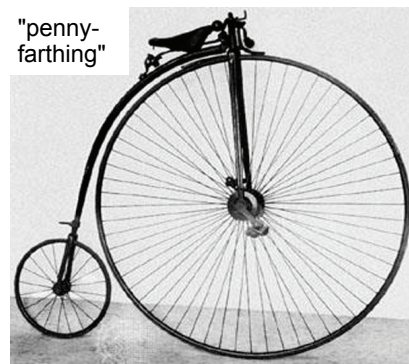


In 1869 the velocipede ("fast-foot") was developed in France; its improvement was pedals on the front wheels, but it still had no brakes.

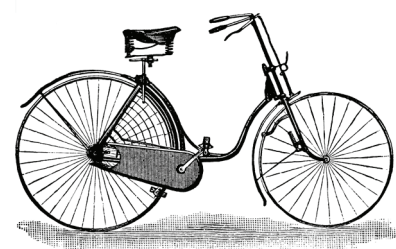


In Coventry, England in 1874 the much-faster (but still danger-

ous) high wheeler ("penny-farthing") was popular among young men who formed clubs and went on tours.



In 1888, J. K. Starley built a bicycle with two wheels the same size and pedals attached to the back wheel by a chain and sprocket. Also around this time Dunlop developed the first pneumatic rubber tire, and coaster brakes were invented. These bicycles were safer, and ladies began riding them. They still were priced for, sized for, and sold to adults, not children.



With the dawning of the 20th century and the age of motor cars things changed.

Adults progressed to travelling in cars rather than on bicycles. Manufacturers trying to find new markets targeted young people. The CCM company made that transition successfully. CCM went to schools and handed out scribblers which had advertising on the covers.



A CCM Scribbler

Through it all CCM was nothing if not inventive in their sales strategies. For example they advertised heavily to schools and parents that a bicycle was a very good present for their son or daughter for passing at the end of the term. Then they went a step further. The parent could buy the bicycle before the end of term as an incentive and

if the student did not pass they could return the bike and get their money back. Wow, the pressure all around!

The origins of the CCM company lie with Daniel Massey, a farmer in Newcastle, Ont., who began building and importing farm equipment in 1847. He sold them to his neighbours then began selling them out west as farmers moved from Ontario to the Canadian west. His company was called Massey Agricultural Works.

After his death his son Hart Massey moved the company to Toronto around 1879 and changed the name to Massey Manufacturing. In 1891 this merged with its largest competitor and became Massey Harris, the largest such company in the British Empire.

In 1896 Hart's son Walter Massey took over the company. He was interested in bicycles and started producing them using an American design. But then a large American company moved into Canada and became the leading competition. Massey looked around for a partner to fight back, and found several wealthy businessmen, some from his Methodist church, including George Cox and Joseph Flavelle. They decided to buy up the four largest Canadian bicycle companies and merge them with Massey Harris – the new company, launched in 1899, was called Canada Cycle & Motor. Unfortunately the market was in decline; they also had a PR problem as none of the owners were bicycle riders or mechanics. Thus they lacked credibility with potential customers.

In 1903 Massey hired Thomas Russell to run the company. Russell was a farm boy from Exeter, Ontario who knew equipment, knew how to fix it, and also rode a bicycle himself, thus generating trust in customers. He consolidated the bicycle plants and also started building cars – the Russell (one of which survives and can be viewed at the Canadian Science and Technology Museum). They made cars from 1905-1915, but couldn't compete with the cheaper Fords.

Russell wanted to keep his employees working all year, so started making skates for the winter market. At first they made and sold only the blades, following common practice (the boots were made by different companies and sold separately). Later CCM obtained kangaroo leather boots from Tackaberry in western Canada and sold boots and blades as one unit – very popular.

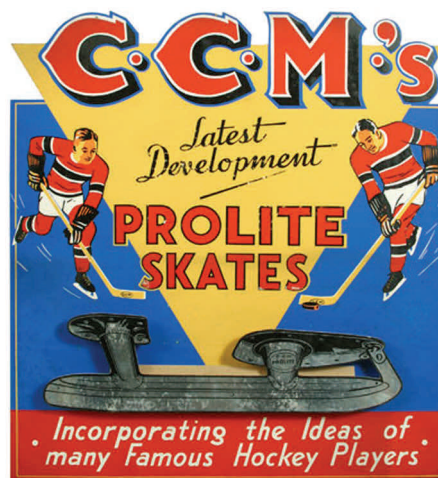
Russell's philosophy was expressed as follows:

Shared Responsibility - to give to the public a good article at a fair price, and give to the working man (and woman) the fullest share possible of the return which they helped produce.

Tommy Russell, 1922

McKenty postulates that the company lost sight of this goal in the 1970s and 1980s, and that this contributed to its eventual decline and bankruptcy. The company was broken up and sold, but in its heyday it was a thriving concern. Many people, famous in their day, were associated with the company and its products, including Willie Spencer, a professional bicycle racer in the early 1900s (the fastest man on two wheels); "Torchy" Peden, arguably Canada's best cyclist, king of the Six Day Race in the 1930s, who was presented with a gold-plated CCM bicycle; George Parsons, an injured NHL player who subsequently worked for CCM and developed safety sports equipment; Bobby Hull who had a rich endorsement deal.

McKenty has written this story in *Canada Cycle & Motor: the CCM Story*. For more information, visit VintageCCM.com or wheelsgonebye.com.



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, Ma-notick. 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.

North Grenville Heritage Symposium

On May 9 the North Grenville Heritage Advisory Committee hosted a very successful Heritage Symposium, with four speakers and several exhibitors. 63 individuals from 35 different organizations participated. The RTHS was a presence there, with a display table at which we sold books, and four members attending. We enjoyed meeting people from mainly rural areas in Eastern Ontario and listening to their stories.

The speakers were excellent, and talked about very different aspects of heritage, preserving the past and bringing it to light. Heather Thomson from Parks Canada presented three examples of local heritage initiatives (including the Rideau Canal) and the ripple effects of this local work. Marcus Letourneau, a cultural heritage specialist, talked about rural heritage planning. Paul Thibaudeau described some archaeological assessments he has carried out in this area. Stephen Brathwaite has been very involved in heritage redevelopment and preservation in Almonte, and described his work there.

For more details, please visit the symposium web site: http://www.northgrenville.ca/heritage_symposium.cfm



Jane Anderson, Susan McKellar, Sandy McNiece and Georgie Tupper attended the North Grenville Heritage Symposium in Kemptville

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).

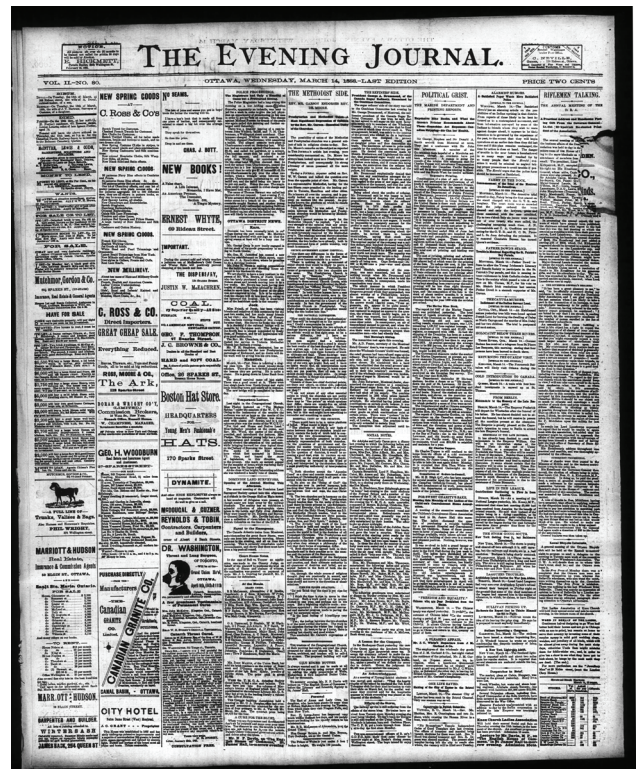
Resources and Services of the Rideau Township Branch of the City of Ottawa Archives: a monthly feature in this newsletter, celebrating the services and holdings preserved in your community's archives resource centre.

"Manotick. March 13 ...The grand carnival came off last night. There was a good crowd at it. There were four sleigh-loads from North Gower and eight loads from Bog-town and nearly all in costume."

As I read out this notice from the Ottawa District News column on the front page of The Evening Journal, dated 14 March 1888, to RTHS volunteers at the Rideau Township Branch, they were astounded. They had not heard of a carnival at Manotick before, nor had they heard of Bog-town. Looking through old newspapers, one can often find interesting facts like this, facts which are now a lot easier to locate. The Rideau Township Branch volunteers are now able to search the full run of The Ottawa Journal, from 1885-1980, electronically, thanks to an arrangement by the City of Ottawa Archives for the digitization of that newspaper by Ancestry.ca. Searching the Journal is another service the volunteers at the Rideau Township Branch can provide to anyone interested in researching the history of the area.

The Manotick notice ended with another interesting fact from 1888: *"The new bridge will be completed by Saturday."*

– Stuart Clarkson



Minutes of the Rideau Township Historical Society

APRIL Meeting

April 16, 2014, Client Service Centre, North Gower, Ont.

Opening: The Rideau Township Historical Society met in the meeting room (formerly council chambers) of the Client Service Centre (formerly township hall) for the regular monthly meeting and a program on The History of the CCM Bicycle by John McKenty, with 29 present. President Brian Sawyer called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Minutes: It was moved by Ron Wilson and seconded by Pat Earl that the minutes of the March 19, 2014 meeting as published in the April Newsletter be approved. Carried.

Finance: Sandy McNiece, treasurer, gave a financial report for the first three months of 2014. Revenue was \$2,100 plus the City of Ottawa grant of \$9,500. Expenditures were \$1,100, leaving a bank balance of \$14,000 after reserves.

Membership: Mary Riley reported that currently there are 13 life members, 1 complimentary member, and 55 paid members.

Program: Ruth Wright outlined the May meeting, which will include a documentary and talk by Brandon Kassis on The Last Voyage of the Karluk. The Karluk was the flagship of the Canadian Arctic Expedition of 1913-1916. Susan McKellar will also describe a course, Write It Now (W.I.N.), that offers instruction and practice in writing one's life history; the RTHS is considering sponsoring one of these courses. The June excursion will be to the North Lanark Regional Museum in Appleton and perhaps others in the Almonte area.

Grants: Tom MacDonald reported he has started working on applications for grants for next year.

Communications: Ron Wilson has had computer problems and thus was unable to update the RTHS web site in the past week, but will do that as soon as possible.

Dickinson House: Brian Sawyer announced that the 2014 rack cards are available now, and that Dickinson House opens for the season on May 17.

Announcements: Susan McKellar passed on information she had received on the War of 1812 Heritage Talks April 25-26 in Ogdensburg, NY, and reminded people about the North Grenville Heritage Symposium on May 9. Stu Rodgers reminded us of the talks at the Carriage Shed in Manotick on the last Wednesday of each month; Stu will talk about the Vikings on April 23.

Evening Program: Ruth Wright introduced John McKenty, a retired teacher from Perth, who gave an interesting presentation on the CCM Story. Brian Sawyer thanked John for his excellent talk. Following this, our local councillor Scott Moffatt welcomed people to this municipal building, and talked about the display on the walls related to municipal government and officials. It includes maps, photos and lists of names. He reminded us that the building is open to the public on Thursdays.

Adjournment: The meeting then adjourned, followed by a social time with refreshments provided by Sandy Wilson and Ruth Wright. People were able to purchase copies of Mr. McKenty's book and have a closer look at his display and the municipal display on the walls.