

The Rideau Township Historical Society

Preserving and Promoting local history for the former Rideau Township

May 2017 Newsletter

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

The May Meeting

Date: Wednesday, May 17, 2017
Time: 7:30 p.m.

Place Carsonby Community Hall
6047 Prince of Wales Drive
North Gower, Ontario



**Bring a Friend. To arrange a ride call
Brian Earl at (613) 692 2371.**

Subject:

How to Start up and Maintain a Museum

Jim Witham will discuss the subject of starting and maintaining a museum. His credentials include 21 years at the Canadian War Museum so he will have some great stories to tell.

The Speaker:

Jim Witham, the Retired Head of the War Museum

Jim held the museum's most senior position as director general for three years but decided to move one step down the corporate ladder to his previous post in collections.

Witham's 21 years at the museum were mainly spent dealing directly with artifacts. As an example he spent two whole years restoring one old army tank. In his job as director general he found he missed that hands-on approach and as a result, asked for his old job back.

He has already prepared a list of more gems he hopes to acquire, including an old tank in Belgium and an armoured snowmobile in Italy. Administration just wasn't his cup of tea.

The June Excursion:

On Saturday, 24 June, we will have an excursion to the Wilno Heritage Village to explore our Polish roots and have lunch at the Polish buffet at Wilno Tavern.

RTHS will cover half the cost of the coach bus, and the cost to attendees will be approximately \$20/\$25, plus the

cost of lunch. A stop on the way home may include a visit to The Holy Well at St. Patrick. A sign-up sheet was circulated.

The bus will leave the North Gower Client Services Centre at 2155 Roger Stevens Drive at 9 a.m. To sign up, if you haven't already, call Owen Cooke (613-489 3962) or Bill Tupper. (613-489-2792)

The Sovereign's Medal for Volun- teers

Congratulations to Georgina Tupper on receiving the Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers on Friday, April 28th. The Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers recognizes living Canadians who have made a significant, sustained, and unpaid contribution to their community in Canada or abroad. The Sover-

eigns Medal is awarded by the Office of the Governor General.

Georgie has certainly met all these criteria and we thank her for her dedication and extraordinary contributions to the Rideau Archives, the Historical Society, the Kars community and many other organizations in the area. This award is well-deserved and Georgie's contributions and effort are very much appreciated.

On the left, Georgie receiving her award



The April Presentation on “The Famous Five Women”

Speakers: Ruth Stewart Verger and Donna Verger

Article by Maureen McPhee

Photos by Maureen McPhee and Owen Cooke

Donna Stewart and Ruth Stewart-Verger approached the April presentation not as the making of a speech, but rather as storytelling. Both have extensive experience in telling stories from Canada's history.



Donna Stewart and Ruth Stewart-Verger were our speakers for the night. They told a story about the famous five women who contributed mightily to the social development of both Alberta and Canada. The story opened the eyes of most of the attendees to a part of Canadian history they had not fully appreciated or even known.

They began the evening by asking members of the audience to close their eyes and travel back to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a world far apart where women wore long dresses and the work was hard.

In 1868, three babies were born who would become associated in later life. They were Irene Marryat in London England, Louise Crummy in Frankville Ontario, and Emily Ferguson in Cookstown Ontario. Louise was born into a wealthy British family, whereas Louise was a member of a strict Methodist farming family. Emily was influenced by her father who believed that his daughter should be tutored just like her brothers and allowed to sit in the parlour to listen to the men talk politics.

The other two women who were later among the Famous Five were Henrietta Muir, born in Montreal in 1849, and Nellie Mooney, born in Chatsworth Ontario in 1873. Henrietta was an accomplished artist and when she sold her first painting, she established a reading room for poor, working women. This was a forerunner to the YWCA. Nellie moved to Manitoba with her family searching for a better farm and life.

All of the women married and moved west. Louise Crummy McKinney settled in Alberta where she was very active in the temperance movement. Henrietta Muir Edward's husband did work in relation to Indian reserves and Henrietta wrote and read widely. In addition she worked with Lady Aberdeen to found the Victorian Order of Nurses (VON). She helped to establish YWCAs across the country. Emily Murphy married an Edmonton preacher and became the perfect housewife, a pillar of her church and a member of many organizations. Irene Marryat Parlby shocked London society by travelling to North America, where she met her husband Walter and settled on an Alberta homestead. Nellie Mooney McClung married and lived in Winnipeg, subsequently moving to Alberta.

Emily Murphy liked to ride a pony around her area and introduce herself to other farm wives. One such day she met a woman whose husband had sold their farm. She thus learned that the property was owned entirely by the husband. Emily wrote to Henrietta Edwards saying that this was not right and something had to be done about the law. Emily went on to research the issue, write papers and talk to the holders of power. Working with Louise McKinney, she helped to establish the *Dower Act* which recognized the property rights of married women.

Over the years, these five women became involved in each other's activities. Emily, for example, wrote about Henrietta's work in founding the VON. Emily also wrote about hospitals and health care. When the Hospital Board for Edmonton did a brief hospital tour and then adjourned for refreshments, Emily continued to tour on her own and wrote a report for the newspapers telling of waste, dirty conditions and patient mistreatment.

Nellie, who was still in Winnipeg at the time, wrote to Emily commending her on the article and stressing the importance of fighting for good working conditions for women. Nellie invited Premier Roblin to tour a garment factory in Winnipeg. The Premier cut the tour short when faced with the smell of an overflowing toilet. When Nellie asked him on the journey back if a woman would be hired to investigate such working conditions and propose legislation, the Premier said no, as it would be too costly for employers.

The Famous Five cared deeply about the vote for women and organized rallies, marches and events, such as pink teas. Women would gather wearing pink dresses or bows, eat pink sandwiches, drink tea and talk politics. Emily and Henrietta asked to speak to the Alberta legislature about the vote, but when they arrived there, Louise and Irene also walked in with them, followed closely by many more women who filled the legislature. The women gave speeches while the men heckled, Louise talking

about politics being housekeeping on a national scale. Three years later, in 1916, women in Alberta received the right to vote. Emily and Nellie celebrated by walking down the main street in Edmonton, buying new hats and having their pictures taken. Louise ran for the Alberta legislature and was elected in 1917, becoming the first woman in the Commonwealth to hold a legislative seat. Both Irene and Nellie were elected to the Alberta legislature in 1921, though they represented different parties. Many pieces of legislation were influenced by their work. Irene went on to become a Cabinet minister.

Women now had power and at a meeting of the National Council of Women, it was decided that something needed to be done to fill gaps in legislation affecting women. Henrietta compiled a list of provincial laws affecting women and children and was soon asked to also look at federal laws. Her work was soon on the desk of every lawyer.

Emily wanted to become a Senator; however, section 24 of the *British North America Act* spoke of persons of good standing being invited to serve, and women were not viewed as being persons. Irene determined that with five signatures, it would be possible to request that a federal law be passed allowing women to be appointed to the Senate. She wrote to her four friends seeking their support and they all agreed to sign such a letter. They met for a tea party on Emily's veranda where they worked on a draft letter that she had prepared. The letter was sent, but the answer was a clear no.

The five friends then decided that an appeal should be made to the Supreme Court of Canada. They hired a lawyer and after several months work, they learned that the Department of Justice had changed their question to the court to: "Does the word persons apply to female persons." Once again, the answer was no, a woman is not a person with rights or privileges.

The next step was an appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council of Great Britain. Their lawyer took the case to London. Emily had wanted to go but it was decided that they should all stay home. Nevertheless, Emily wrote to the lawyer every day with suggestions. On October 18, 1929 at midnight, Emily received a phone call in which the lawyer said: "Mrs. Murphy, you are a person." She then called the others with the news.

It was an exciting time, as women were not considered persons anywhere else, including England. At a press conference, Emily Murphy said women must now take responsibility and step forward to become one half of the members of legislatures. Nellie said that she had always wanted to be a person and now she knew for sure that she was. Henrietta noted that everyone must remember the men who helped to move the issue forward and the fact that the Government of Canada had paid for both of the appeals.

Louise and Henrietta were persons for two years, as they both passed away in 1931. Emily was a person for four

years until she died of a heart attack in 1933. Nellie was active for 22 years, working on issues such as pensions, Medicare, education and the formation of the United Church of Canada. Irene was a person for 36 years, until she passed away in 1965 at the age of 96. She had retired from the legislature in 1935, moving back to the farm. She served as Canada's representative to the League of Nations.

A Senator was once asked why none of the Famous Five were appointed to the Senate. He responded that the only one who had wanted to be appointed was Emily Murphy, but "she would have made too much trouble."



Donna and Ruth were true story tellers. No computer.. No screen. No PowerPoint. They had both their own and their co-presenters parts memorized and thus could prompt each other if necessary. It was only necessary once. It was an excellent presentation. They have many other stories and more than a few of us are hoping for a return visit.



We had a good turnout for the meeting. A group of residents of Orchardview came down and enjoyed the evening. Remember guests are always welcome at the RTHS monthly meetings.

News from the Rideau Branch, Ottawa Archives

Hours: *The Rideau Archives is open every Tuesday from 9:30 a.m. 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.

Regional Resources in the Rideau Branch Reference Collection

Rideau Branch's archival and reference collections support local heritage researchers with their research objectives, which are not always limited to the Rideau Township area but often spill over to nearby areas. While strongly focussed on local matters, the regional scope of the Branch's reference collection is evident, easily spotted in the Reading Room, where a restored Walling's large 1863 map of Carleton County hangs on the south wall.

The 1879 Belden atlas of Carleton County includes more detailed maps, presenting a snapshot of rural landholders across the county. And the Reading Room collection includes other local maps, genealogies, histories, etc. with breadth to cover the county. This includes the Branch's military reference collection of books and other materials.

One important resource for locating people and places are directories. The Branch's collection of directories spans the years between 1864 and 1971. The earliest, donated by Jean Hamilton, is the County of Carleton and

Ottawa City Directory published by Mitchell & Co for 1864-1865.

This volume bears the signatures of James E. Craig of North Gower and Charles Johnston of Perth. Sutherland's City of Ottawa Directory for 1868 provides the names of the farmers in the counties of Carleton and Russell, and the 1872 directory likewise has a County of Carleton directory added. These last two directories, along with over thirty later volumes, have been transferred from the City of Ottawa Central Archives, with many coming from a collection first gathered by the Historical Society of Ottawa.

Three volumes (1900, 1904, and 1908) bear on their covers the signature of M.J. Gorman, an Ottawa lawyer whose practice was located at Carleton Chambers on Sparks Street. Others had formerly belonged to the Secretary of State departmental library and the Senate Post Office. Many are in poor condition and require extra care in use. But Rideau Branch is nevertheless happy to provide these directories for researchers in the Reading Room.

Stuart Clarkson



The reading room at the Rideau Branch of the City of Ottawa Archives in North Gower



The Walling's large 1863 map of Carleton County

Dickinson House

Our 2017 Season opens on 20 May. The special exhibit for this year is "A Walk Through the Decades" and is ready on the third floor. There was a cleaning bee on April 26th so everything is polished and dusted, ready for visitors. Many thanks to those who came out to help. We are

in the process of hiring student heritage interpreters. We are most pleased with the quality of the applicants this year. As always, there is a need for volunteers to help not only with regular operations, but also with special events such as the tea and fashion show on June 10th. If you can help, contact Maureen McPhee (Curator) (613)-692-8260 or Brian Earl (Committee Chair). (613)-692-2371

[The RTHS gratefully acknowledges the financial support received from the City of Ottawa.](#)

Help Choosing our Speakers

Our Programme Committee labours long and hard to find ideas and people to speak at our meetings. They do a very good job. However members may have some ideas on subjects or speakers that we might invite. Please don't be shy. We would appreciate any suggestions.

Rideau Township Historical Society Minutes Wednesday, April 19, 2017 Orchardview-on-the-Rideau, Manotick, ON

President Sandy McNiece opened the meeting by welcoming approximately 45 members and guests.

It was moved by Doug Culham and seconded by Brian Earl that we approve the minutes of the March meeting as circulated. Carried.

Finance: Financial Director Sue Gibson reported that we have a total of \$29,373 in the account which includes a \$15,000 GIC, \$209 in petty cash, and \$14,164 in operating cash.

Membership: Director Patricia Pratt reported that we have 50 members this year with another 6 registered this evening.

Program: Bill Tupper informed us that the next meeting on May 17th will host Jim Witham, the retired head of the War Museum, who will speak on how to start up and maintain a Museum, and will be held at the Carsonby RA. Plans are being finalized for the June 24th excursion to the Polish Museum in Wilno. RTHS will cover half the cost of the coach bus, and the cost to attendees will be approximately \$20/\$25, plus the cost of lunch. A stop on the way home may include a visit to The Holy Well at St. Patrick. A sign-up sheet was circulated.

Communication: No new report at this time.

Publications: Jane Anderson confirmed that the War Memorial book will be published next year and that plans are underway for a book about the history of North Gower. So far, they have conducted 6 interviews under the oral history project. Books are available for sale at the Manotick Stationery Store, the Rideau Archives and during the summer at Dickinson House.

Dickinson House: Brian Earl informed us that Dickinson House will open on May 20th. They are presently interviewing students for summer jobs. A request was made for volunteers to come out and assist with the spring cleaning of Dickinson House on Wednesday, April 26th at 10:00 a.m.

Grants: We have received the City of Ottawa grant for 2017 and are awaiting confirmation about the Young Canada Works grant which is used to pay the summer students.

Youth: No new report.

Susan McKellar then introduced our guest speakers, Donna Stewart and Ruth Stewart-Verger, a mother and daughter story-telling team who gave a very entertaining and informative rendition of the exploits of the Famous Five Women who were instrumental in getting Canadian women recognized as 'persons'. Following questions and discussion, Bill Tupper graciously thanked the women and presented them with a copy of our book "The Women of Dickinson House".

Stu Rogers then invited all to hear his presentation on the accomplishments of the Mound Builders, which is to take place next Wednesday (April 26) at Highfields Retirement Home at 1:30.

Following the meeting's adjournment, a social time was enjoyed along with some delicious refreshments kindly provided by Orchardview-on-the-Rideau.

If at any time you would be interested in joining the RTHS or making a donation please use the form below. Your address is requested so that we can mail you a receipt.

Sign me up as a member of RTHS



Rideau Township
Historical Society

Members of the Society enjoy:

- Monthly meetings featuring engaging presentations, followed by refreshments
- Group excursions to historical points of interest in Eastern Ont.
- Local books published by the Society and a monthly newsletter
- Opportunities to participate and contribute as volunteers

For more information visit www.rideautownshiphistory.org,
[facebook.com/rideautownshiphistory](https://www.facebook.com/rideautownshiphistory), and twitter.com/RideauTpHS.
Please send this form with a cheque for membership dues payable to:
Rideau Township Historical Society, Box 56, North Gower, ON, K0A 2T0.
A tax receipt will be issued for all membership dues and donations.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City & Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Individual Membership \$10 _____

Life Membership \$100 _____

Family Membership \$15 _____

Donation \$50 _____

(2 adults & school-aged children)

Other Donation \$ _____

Thank you for supporting RTHS!