

The Rideau Township Historical Society

Preserving and Promoting local history for the former Rideau Township

November 2010 Newsletter

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

Next Meeting

Date: Wednesday, November 17, 2010
Time: 7:30 pm
Place: Carriage Shed
Dickinson Square
Manotick

December Meeting

As usual the December Meeting will be replaced by the **Pot Luck Supper**.

Christmas Pot-Luck Dinner
Location: North Gower United Church
Date: Wednesday, Dec. 8
Time: 6:30 p.m., to eat at 7:00
Limited seating, so sign up early
Sign up at the November meeting or call Ann Cronin at 613-692-6273

Speaker: Owen Cooke

Subject: Canadians Flying in North Russia, 1918

While Russia was in the midst of fighting the First World War with Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Bolshevik Revolution was aimed at taking the country out of the war.

To help prevent this, the Allied nations attempted to send aid to Russia, through the White Sea in the north, the Caucasus in the south and Vladivostok in Siberia. Scores of early Canadian fliers pioneered winter aviation in north Russia, eventually fighting the Bolsheviks with a variety of aeroplanes and seaplanes.

Owen Cooke will tell us some of their stories.

Bring a friend

Light refreshments

This Month

1. The October Meeting
2. Kars on the Rideau
3. Watson's Mill 150th
4. The Dickinson House
5. News from the Rideau Archives
6. Why read Kars on the Rideau?
7. From the Pen of the President

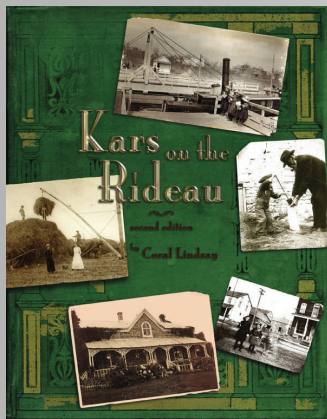
From the Pen of the President

Dickinson House has enjoyed a very successful season. Early October saw more than 4000 visitors go through the house. We provided our visitors with an informative educational heritage experience as our hosts and raconteurs guide them through the house while sharing with them how the Dickinson, Spratt and Watson families influenced the social and economic development of Manotick.

Our visitors are from the greater Ottawa area who commonly have out of town guests with them. The Ottawa hosts are in part entertaining their guests with a visit to Watson's Mill and Dickinson House. This heritage experience will consume at least two hours. The guests are generally Canadian, but may be from the USA, Europe or beyond.

About twenty-eight individuals have worked as volunteer hosts this summer, with about twelve persons doing the great bulk of the work. Hosts are encouraged to be in period dress, and in fact most are attired in beautiful Victorian costumes, especially the ladies. These costumed hosts greatly enhance the ambiance of the historical experience. Photos with hosts and visitors are frequently requested.

This summer we had the use of most of Dickinson House, the exception being the Manotick Room which was used by the Mill staff for Costume storage. While we lamented the loss of this space, it was offset in part by the opportunity to get to know the talented group of students who worked at the Mill as they came



and went in their costumes. Their youthful outlook was contagious, and they extended many courtesies to us.

Dickinson House is furnished with Victorian and early Canadian furniture typical of what would have been in the house when occupied by the Dickinsons. The quality and diversity of the furniture, the atmosphere of this great old mansion, and the story shared by our hosts, provided our visitors with some special moments. For all of this we must thank our Curator, Coral Lindsay and her volunteers for creating the atmosphere of yesteryear.

Plans for 2011 are currently being developed. Our goal is to work with our senior partner, Watsons Mill Board, to make Dickinson Square a heritage destination. Consider helping make this possible next summer by being a host. It can be fun.



The October 2010 Meeting

The Launch of "Kars on the Rideau"

by Lucy Martin

Smashing success: "Kars on the Rideau" book launch with Coral Lindsay, Ron Wilson and Archeologist Ken Swazye

Nearly 200 people connected to the village of Kars filled the RA hall for the October 20th meeting, to share in a fine evening of community spirit. Long rows of tables on both sides of the hall were decked out with displays about Kars and its people from the early 1800's, to present times. It was great fun to look and learn, as long-time residents shared even more details about a particular house, or recalled relatives and neighbors from old photos.



The meeting was led with appropriate enthusiasm by Kars resident and RTHS President Bill Tupper, who thanked the Kars RA for graciously hosting the event.

Author and honoree Coral Lindsay opened the evening with brief remarks and characteristic humor. Lindsay recounted how she and Ron Wilson both grew up on farms in the Manotick area before she married into a founding family of Kars, which took her to a stately stone house

and working dairy farm overlooking Lindsay's wharf. This cemented her connection to the village and its history.

Lindsay expressed her gratitude to all who made her work possible, too many to list here.



The editor and the author. Ron Wilson and Coral Lindsay (They're still speaking).

The first "Kars on the Rideau" was based on the work of the Kars Women's Institute and their prize-winning nine volume Tweedsmuir History of Kars. Coral Lindsay authored that initial book back in 1972. Twelve hundred copies were published by the WI, at a cost of \$6 each, a substantial financial undertaking at that time. It took three years to sell them all, but eventually that did happen, turning the small, green volumes into collector's items.

Over the years, Lindsay was encouraged to undertake an updated, second edition. She's never stopped collecting more scraps of information and photos, but much toil was required to render decades of additional research into revised book form.

The second edition would not exist without herculean editing from the broadly-talented Ron Wilson. Much has changed since the 1970's, including a preference for submissions on computer files. Text, photos (old and new) and lay-out all had to be digitized. Then came editing, adjustments, and proof-reading. Faithful helpers spend many months assisting with those necessary tasks until, finally, the richly-detailed second edition was done.

Behind-the-scenes anxieties



Coral Lindsay, Georgie Tupper, and Councillor Glenn Brooks. Glenn made \$1000 available from his discretionary budget to help finance the book. Thanks very much Glenn.

The holder of the original copyright, the Kars Women's Institute, granted RTHS permission to publish the second edition, and we owe deep thanks to the WI for that essential support. RTHS's practice is to sell books at cost, to assure funds will be available for future publications. Even with a supplementary grant from Councilor Glenn Brooks, a small press run of this type (211 pages, including over 300 photos and images) came in at slightly under \$35 each, with some volumes to be donated to local schools, archives and libraries. Would that no-profit cost seem too expensive? How many could be ordered, without putting the publication fund into distress? It was decided to start with 200 and see how that went.

Well, advance worries melted away as throngs lined up at the October 20th launch to buy copies and get personal inscriptions from Coral and Ron. More than half sold that very night. Within a week the entire press run was gone, with a healthy waiting list awaiting the next printing.

RTHS is making every effort to have more copies available as soon as possible and certainly before Christmas. (Yes, that is an unobvious shopping hint!) Once additional copies are available, they will be sold at the Kars General Store and the Rideau Archives in North Gower, during their regular Tuesday hours. It is expected it will be sold in a few more locations as well. They will be announced in a later newsletter and on the RTHS web site.

Kars used to be a really cool place!

Featured guest speaker Ken Swayze then took the hall on an amazing journey through time.

Before major construction commenced at the Riverwood subdivision (near the corner of Roger Stevens and Rideau Valley Drive North) archeological finds were made that brought Swayze to the scene. Subsequent excavations, conducted between 2006-2008, revealed probable evidence of Early Archaic Indians in that area.

Basically, Swayze found signs of human activity back when Kars was more or less along the Atlantic coast. At that time, the climate and setting was more like modern Labrador, featuring ice cold water and stunted vegetation. The artifacts were found at a depth that prompted Swayze to state these people were "literally older than dirt", most likely from the early post-glacial age, ten to eleven thousand years ago.

It was stunning to imagine how much change has occurred in natural environments and the level of human adaptability required along the way. (Prior to this discovery, it was believed human habitation in this area dated from 4500 years ago.) Swayze can't tell if these far-older camps were permanent or temporary – he suspects they were short-term – but the stone tools he collected were foreign to this area.

Have you ever watched a professional read an x-ray, pointing without hesitation to a murky blur, saying it clearly showed a cavity, or a fracture? Well, along those lines, I confess many of the items shown in Swayze's slides just looked like rocks, to my untrained eye. But archeologists know better and can explain how such tools were made, and why they were vital at that time, even though other organic artifacts, like clothing or anything made from bone, have long since rotted away.



Bill Tupper, President of the RTHS introducing Ken Swayze to the audience.

Swayze believes these people would have used some type of boats or canoes and worn fur clothing that was sewn and fitted, using tools of stone, bone or antler. Food would have come from hunting and gathering, including fish, small game and caribou. Evidence of beluga whales, seals and, yes, even mastodons have been found in the Ottawa Valley, all good eating, if found or killed by humans.

Though the discoveries seem crude, Swayze says it would be quite mistaken to assume those tool makers lacked sophistication. Survival would have required specialized knowledge and skills we have lost along the way. Swayze theorizes there must have also been a very different concept of time, citing the fact that many hundreds of hours went into making some tools, an activity that seem excessive to us today. (In the it's-all-relative department: might making the perfect awl be the post-glacial equivalent of mastering a golf swing or a challenging video game? With social status to match?)

The audience peppered Swayze with questions, as people tried to imagine living here when conditions were so very different. Swayze said the Ottawa Valley has not been the subject of much archeological research and suspects finds like this would be plentiful, if more studies took place. Items he collected have gone to the Algonquins at Golden Lake. Photos and a short summary of this topic can be found on pages 14-17 of "Kars on the Rideau, second edition". A full copy of Swayze's work is also available at the Rideau Archives in North Gower.



Coral signing copies purchased at the launch.

We thank Coral Lindsay, Ron Wilson and Ken Swayze for

Why not join the RTHS?

- attend the meetings and enjoy the presentations
- meet other people interested in local history
- find fascinating projects to volunteer for
- get assistance and advice with genealogical and historical research
- learn more about local history

Meetings are held monthly (except for July and August) at various locations in the former Rideau Township including Manotick, Kars, North Gower and Carsonby. We also do excursions to historical points of interest.

Yearly membership costs are \$10 for a single & \$15 for a family.

Contact the [Membership Director](#)

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

150th Anniversary of the Mill

Watson's Mill celebrates its 150th anniversary in 2010.

Isabelle Geoffrion and the Watson's Mill Team have announced a year-long celebration to commemorate this anniversary. Stay tuned to their e-news at www.watsonsmill.com and celebrate with them throughout the year.

[Events for Fall 2010](#)

Why Read Kars on the Rideau, Second Edition?

If you want to know where Canada came from then the second edition of *Kars on the Rideau* by Coral Lindsay would be a good place to start. This book builds on the already significant body of material in the first edition and fleshes out the picture of life in an Ontario village from inception to the new millennium. It does so with the addition of close to 300 pictures and maps and stories from observers and writers that lived there in the 1800s to historians from the present.

James Smythe Jamieson was born and grew up in Kars. He became a teacher and educator and eventually the principal of the Morrisburg Collegiate. As a gift to his family he wrote extensively about his life in Kars in a manuscript which his great granddaughter made available to us. His stories have added another dimension to the history of the village; the day to day work, thoughts and hopes of those pioneers.

The second edition also contains information about an archaeological dig near the corner of Rideau Valley and Roger Stevens Drives which suggests Early Archaic Indians used the location 10,000 or more years ago. That would have been shortly after the last ice age when the Champlain Sea was in retreat. The find certainly allowed us to add a length of time to the history of the village.

The means of settlement and development of Kars would have been repeated in communities across the country.

The settlers did not have to start from absolute zero when they arrived as it might seem at first glance. From 1832 on they had some infrastructure in place. They had the Rideau Canal for transportation and not that much later the telegraph for communications. They had the tools of the industrial revolution in Europe, the steam engine being one very important one. They also had the administrative models of the British Empire to draw from in building a society. And probably of the most significance they had resources and a market for them. England, Europe, the U.S. and others needed lumber, cheese and potash for starters.

The community also had a social conscience and took their responsibilities therein seriously. They helped and respected each other and acted in a fashion that built a functioning community under circumstances that would not have allowed success otherwise. They took education and their religions seriously and built and operated the schools and churches to facilitate these needs of their community.

Thus it would seem to me that this history of Kars represents where Canada came from. The model must have been repeated across the land as the country journeyed from the early settlers to where we are today. Enjoy the book.

Ron Wilson, Editor

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).

The Canadian Conservation Institute maintains a web site that provides information on ensuring the future of your important family records and treasures. Please consider their suggestions below and visit their website.

Tips from the Canadian Conservation Institute Web Site (<http://www.preservation.gc.ca/>)

Not only is your home your castle, it is also your own personal museum of family treasures. Books, paintings, watercolours, china, crystal, christening gowns, wedding dresses, statues and sculptures, musical instruments, old tools and utensils, toys, baseball and hockey cards, family documents and photographs, records, tapes, cassettes, furniture, rugs, tapestries and embroidery. The list is nearly endless and so are the things we collect for personal interest or for family historical reasons.

Our "How To Care For" section is intended to help you preserve your personal collections. It contains practical information for steps you can take at home. When it comes to technical and complex treatment, we recommend you consult a professional conservator for advice on the best possible treatment.

You need to be a little philosophical about your heirlooms. Generally, the objects you have at home are used, not stored away in display cases. While you can determine, to a degree, how family members treat your treasures, it is inevitable that, over time, some wear and tear will occur. In many instances, this is perfectly acceptable and is an important part of the item's history and character. As temporary custodians, the goal is to extend the life of your collection so that future generations can enjoy it just as much as you — and past generations — have.