

The Rideau Township Historical Society

Preserving and Promoting local history for the former Rideau Township

November 2013 Newsletter

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

The November Meeting

Date: Wednesday, November 20, 2013
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Place: Holy Trinity Anglican Church
2372 Church Street
North Gower, Ontario



Local Heroes - Rideau Township Archives Memorial Project

Volunteers at the Rideau Branch of the Ottawa Archives have been researching the lives of the men and women who fought during World War 1 and unfortunately were killed in action. Come and hear about some of these brave heroes from Rideau Township who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our country.

Presenters: Owen Cooke, Dave Bullock, Georgie Tupper, Susan McKellar, Ruth Wright



This Month

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**Everyone is Welcome
Bring a Friend**

A Reminder re the Dickinson House

Please remember that there is one heritage event left for the present season. Come out and we will wish you a Merry Christmas.

- November 30-December 1: Heritage Christmas Crafts:
- December 7 and 8 will be the last weekend of the 2013 season at the Dickinson House. That will be on the Manotick's Old-Fashioned Christmas weekend.

Come out and enjoy these last weekends of a very successful season. More on the Dickinson House inside.



The dining room at the Dickinson House made ready for the Victorian Tea.

RTHS October Book Launch: “Cheese Factories of Rideau Township” (2nd edition) Article and Photos by Lucy Martin

It's a good thing the October book launch was held at North Gower's spacious Alfred Taylor Recreation Centre, because well over 70 people turned out for the event. Many had direct ties to cheese factories in the region, either through family history or because they live or lived in re-purposed factories.

The evening included a talk by *Cheese Factories of Rideau Township* author Iona Joy, the chance to buy signed copies, and an extensive display of photos and cheese-related items courtesy of Coral Lindsay. All rounded off by wine and – you guessed it – cheese!



Iona Joy signing copies of her book.

Publications Chair Jane Anderson remarked that producing a book is a bit like having a baby: great expectations and struggles that culminate in much post-delivery happiness. Anderson introduced Joy as a woman of many talents: an accountant and mother who later studied to be a historian and archivist.

Joy began her remarks with fulsome thanks for the many, many people who contributed to the first and second edition of her book. Once again, special acknowledgement was extended to book editor, Ron Wilson, for combining the second edition's main text with beautifully laid-out photos, side-bars and related material. The cover art was done by Richard Cronin.

Joy said it was Betty Bartlett who first suggested the project, back in 1987. Those involved in that initial discussion could only think of four or five existing regional cheese factories, off hand. By the time 12 had been identified the project was off and running. As material accumulated, it became too much for a mere pamphlet. The first edition of a full book was published in 1990. After it sold out Joy was urged to consider a second edition, which could include even more content. It's all a good story, part and parcel of what built this area's stable prosperity.



RTHS members examining a model of a typical cheese factory provided by Coral Lindsay.

Of course family farms had long made cheese to eat or sell on a casual basis. But in the mid 1860s a number of things happened that changed those informal arrangements. In 1866 the U.S. abrogated a trade reciprocity agreement. (The event that also hastened Canadian Confederacy in 1867, but that's a different discussion.)

Losing that free-trade agreement stifled cross-border sales of many agricultural products, and created a need for new markets and supplies. Canada actually imported cheese at this point, not yet making enough to meet domestic demand. Since there was plenty of good dairy land in Ontario and Quebec, why not develop cheese production at home and develop that as a profitable export?

As this was before electricity and easy refrigeration, cheese production would also turn large quantities of a highly perishable food (fresh milk) into a concentrated product with a higher value – more easily stored and transported. Small cheese factories had already been proven successful in New York State. Such factories were relatively simple and inexpensive to build. To top it off, there was room for lots of them as each one had to be close to a cluster of local farms for quick delivery of fresh milk in sufficient quantity.

It made good sense and readily caught on, with vigorous government support to provide training and improve quality. The new industry was also helped by the concurrent emergence of faster, cheaper shipping to overseas markets. In numbers, Joy says in 1863 Canada produced 63 million pounds of cheese. At the peak year of 1904, cheese exports had climbed to 234 million pounds, 95% of which went to Great Britain. For part of this period

cheese alternated with fish as Canada's 2nd or 3rd main export – after timber products.

Joy's talk continued with slides and a brief history of individual cheese factories in this region. All of that is fully detailed in her book, which can still be purchased at the Rideau Township branch of the city archives (during regular Tuesday hours) and at a few other locations around the area.

At the conclusion of Joy's remarks Linda Reasbeck shared cheese-related aspects of her 30-year career at Kemptville Agricultural College. Established with federal funding in 1916, Kemptville College's mission was to provide a readily accessible education in agriculture and domestic science at minimal expense to students.

By 1936 Kemptville College also offered the Eastern Dairy School, largely due to being located between Kingston/Montreal and Ottawa/Prescott, on train routes. Reasbeck said that by 1940, the campus has a nice new building and laboratory to support training in cheese and butter making. That training typically lasted 3 months with enrollment of about 60 students, at the program's height.

Reasbeck explained that small cheese factories faded away in the post-war era due to tougher standards for equipment and the rise of industrial-style cheese factories, such as those established by Kraft or Black Diamond. In response to those changes, Kemptville College's focus shifted toward more dairy research and less practical training for small scale cheese production. Kemptville staff most responsible for the cheese making and dairy program during Reasbeck's tenure included Owen Irvine, Martin Beech and Ken Burnett. Although the heyday of the small cheese factory was largely over by Reasbeck's time, cheese production still came her way. Reasbeck was head of the Food Science and Technology program



The subject of the evening. Didn't it look good and taste good.

and at some point dairy processing was moved to her department. She had to find and supervise appropriate staff for those functions. At one point a goat cheese factory burned down. With no better place to handle the displaced goat milk, it was sent to the college. (1200 liters per week!)

With the help of a retired cheese maker and a new, state-of-the-art pasteurizer, Reasbeck recounted learning to make every imaginable variety of goat milk cheese – which was not especially in vogue then! Although her department was not authorized to sell any of it, a practical solution was found. That goat cheese went to the Shepherds of Good Hope program in Ottawa.

At this point those in the audience associated with cheese factories in some way or another were invited to stand and share any comments. We heard from: Jason Anderson who lives in a cheese factory on a very pretty section of creek along First Line Road; Dorothy Laplante who lives in the cheese factory in Kars across the creek from the Kars General Store; Marilyn Murphy the owner of the cheese maker's house across the road from the store beside the creek; Stephen Burt who lives in North Gower, and grew up across the creek from the cheese factory; Ian Stackhouse who lives in the Goodstown cheese factory at Harbison and Malakoff Roads and Ulrich and Christiane Bollinger who built and ran a modern cheese factory on Pollock Road in North Gower from 1993-2003. Bollinger says everything needed to be operational is still there, "mothballed", should there be interest in reviving production later.

The evening concluded with more book sales and visiting while partaking of cheese and wine. From a press run of 200 copies, 39 books were sold that night. As always, the books are sold at cost for a self-supporting cycle that funds current and future local history publications.

Coral Lindsay, as she so often does, provided an excellent display of pictures, artifacts, posters, and the model of the cheese factory. Her displays add both interest and breadth to the presentations and attract a good crowd both before and after those presentations.



The wine was provided courtesy of Domaine Perault Winery from Navan, Ontario. This is the vineyard we visited for the June excursion. Our thanks.

It was a splendid evening exploring the things that made Rideau Township what it was and is. Besides all due credit to author Iona Joy and editor Ron Wilson, additional thanks are extended to Program Director Ruth Wright, Publication Director Jane Anderson and Ellen Adamsons for coordinating a very successful evening.

Coral's display of pictures, artifacts and documents



December Christmas Party

As voted on at the last meeting, this year we will be having a Pot Luck Dinner. It will be held on Thursday, December 12th, at the Cornerstone Wesleyan Church, 6560 Prince of Wales Dr., North Gower. Entertainment and Carol Sing: Ken Holman.

There will be a sign-up sheet at the next meeting (Nov. 20th), so you can be thinking about what you would like to bring. If you are unable to attend that meeting but would like to come to our Christmas party, please phone: Ruth Wright at 613-489-3886 or email at ruthbrianwright@gmail.com

We will also need volunteers to assist with set up and cleanup afterwards. ***Hope to see you all there!***

The Dickinson House Report

Article and Pictures by Maureen McPhee

As part of Women's Day in Manotick on November 2, the staff and volunteers at Dickinson House pulled out all the stops to present a Victorian high tea. The house was dressed up with beautiful linens and fine china, organized by Melanie Hayes. A total of 41 guests were served scones with jam and cream, tea sandwiches and baked goodies, all accompanied by a choice of teas. We received numerous positive comments about our "lovely tea" presented in a delightful nineteenth-century environ-

working meetings to knit socks, sew nightshirts and prepare Christmas parcels for local soldiers serving overseas. A series of panels in the foyer tells the story of the participation of the members of the Spratt family in the Second World War and the Korean War. The Spratt's were the second of three families who lived in Dickinson House and operated what is now known as Watson's Mill.



Serving Guests at the Victorian Tea.

ment. The event was sold out and many have encouraged us to do it again in the future.

For the weekend culminating in November 11, and continuing throughout the month, a two part special exhibit is on display entitled: "Dickinson House in Times of War". The exhibit is in two parts. The parlour features a re-creation of what the room might have looked like during the First World War, when the Manotick Women's Institute held



Richard Spratt viewed the war displays on the weekend. It was a pleasure to have him there for this occasion.

On the Nov. 9 to 11 weekend, there were 129 visitors, including many members of the Spratt family.

Manotick's Old-Fashioned Christmas on December 7 and 8 will be the last weekend of what has proven to be a very successful season at Dickinson House. We wish to thank our excellent summer staff and dedicated volunteers for all of their efforts in 2013.

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.

The Rideau Township Branch of the City Archives is in the midst of a transition. As the archivist now responsible for the Community Archives acquisitions, Stuart Clarkson takes over from Serge Barbe. We look forward to working with Stewart.

Stuart has been with City Archives since 2009 working for the most part in the corporate records portfolio. He brings a wide and varied career experience from working at the Dalhousie University Archives, McMaster University Archives and the Archives of Ontario prior to coming to the City of Ottawa Archives.

Stuart looks forward to the challenges offered by the responsibilities attached to the Rideau Township Branch.

Serge Barbe is retiring later this year. He has been our community archivist at the Rideau Branch of the City of Ottawa Archives since 2006 and also a member of our Historical Society. Serge has been a great help to us and will be sorely missed. We wish him every success and enjoyment in his retirement.



Some Watson's Mill Events

The Mill is located at 5525 Dickinson Street, Dickinson Square, Manotick. Free parking on-site.

Web Site: www.watsonsmill.com

The Carriage Shed Office at Watson's Mill is open: weekdays, 10:00 a.m.-4:00.p.m. The Mill is open November 1st to December 2nd: Saturdays & Sundays, 10am to 4pm. Please visit www.watsonsmill.com for a complete calendar of events.

- **Mystery Camp:** Fri, November 15, 9am – 4pm, Watson's Mill Carriage Shed, PD Day camp featuring the theme all things mystery. \$20/child for members, \$25/child for non members 9am-4pm.
- **Christmas Market and Fine Art Sale** Saturday, November 16 10:00am, Sunday, November 17 10:00am, Saturday, November 23 10:00am, Sunday, November 24 10:00am, Saturday, November 30 10:00am, Sunday, December 1 10:am, Saturday, December 7 10:00am, Sunday December 8 10:am.
- **Annual Carols at Sunset** 4:30pm & 5:30pm Sun, December 8, Watson's Mill. Join us and the Manotick Brass Ensemble for a great season finale! This is a traditional sing-along of Christmas Carols, wonderful for all ages. Please dress warmly.
- **Drop 'n' Shop** at Watson's Mill Carriage Shed Sat, December 14, 10am – 4pm, .and December 21, 10am - 4pm. Drop your children off at Watson's Mill to play games and make crafts while you shop in Manotick for the Holiday Season. Story Time for Drop and Shop in conjunction with Dickinson House

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