

The Rideau Township Historical Society

Preserving and Promoting local history for the former Rideau Township

November 2014 Newsletter

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

The November Meeting

Date: **Thursday, November 20, 2014**

Time: **7:30 p.m.**
Alfred Taylor Recreation Centre
2300 Community Way,
North Gower, ON

Please note the meeting is on a Thursday night due to the availability of the speaker.



Bring a Friend.

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

Dickinson House

Remembrance Day

Note that Dickinson House will be open on Nov. 11 as we were last year. We will have a special exhibit relating to the day also as we did last year. We will open at 10:00 a.m., just in case anyone wants to drop by on the way to the cenotaph. See the poster on page 6.

Victorian Tea

A very successful Victorian Tea was held in Dickinson House on Nov. 1 as part of Women's Day in Manotick. The contribution of our classical guitarist, Neil Bateman, was much appreciated by all. Some of our guests got right into the spirit by dressing in period costume

The Speaker:

Mr. Jonathan Moore

Mr. Moore is a Parks Canada Senior Underwater Archaeologist.

Topic:

In November Mr. Moore, an underwater archaeologist with Parks Canada, will speak, on four years of work in the Arctic and the discovery of the ships HMS "Investigator", and HMS "Erebus",

Franklin's expedition, led by Captain Sir John Franklin, departed England in 1845. The expedition was undertaken to traverse the last un navigated section of the Northwest Passage. After a few early fatalities, the two ships became icebound in Victoria Strait near King William Island. The entire expedition including Franklin and 128 other men, was lost.

The search began in 1850 and at one time involved eleven British and two American ships. The search continued off and on through much of the rest of the 19th century. It found graves, bodies and artifacts but not the ship itself.

HMS "Investigator" was a ship sent to look for the Erebus. It was also trapped in the ice and lost but the crew were rescued.

The talk will be particularly timely with the recent discovery of the Erebus, ending a very long search over many years.

This Month

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. The October Meeting | 4. Remembrance Day |
| 2. News from the Rideau Archives | 5. Christmas Party |
| 3. The Dickinson House. | 6. November Programme |
| | 7. Victorian Tea |



Music for the Victorian Tea was provided by a classical guitarist. Neil Bateman, and the Dickinson house Victrola.

RIDEAU TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Invites you to a presentation featuring

Mr. Jonathan Moore

Parks Canada Senior Underwater Archaeologist



**“A Look at Three Arctic Shipwrecks: HMS Investigator,
HMS Erebus, and the Breadalbane”**

Thursday, November 20

Alfred Taylor Recreation Centre, North Gower

7:30 p.m.

All are welcome to come and hear Jonathan Moore talk about four years of underwater exploration in the Arctic culminating in the discovery of Sir John Franklin’s ship, HMS Erebus, this past summer. Learn about this amazing project and what the future holds for this incredible research team.

The October Presentation

The Carriers of Manotick

Brian Hull

Article and photos by Susan McKellar

Brian Hull, speaking as Joseph Merrill Currier (1820-1884), spoke about his life and his family, with lots of anecdotes and stories, even a little scandal. Judging from the questions and discussion during and following the talk, he kept his audience enthralled. Three wives, children, several occupations, and a roller-coaster life made for an interesting life.

Side note: Currier's ancestor Richard Currier arrived in North America from England and was indentured to the man who signed the death warrant of Charles I. This may be why a painting of the death of King Charles ended up in one of the Currier houses.



Brian Hull is a descendant of Joseph Currier, who in partnership with Moss Kent Dickinson, built Watson's Mill.

Joseph Currier began life in the town of North Troy, Vermont. Interestingly, the layout of Manotick is very similar to that of North Troy, including a mill. Currier, the youngest of 7 boys in his family, left home at the age of 17 and after some travels ended up in Thurso, Quebec. An influential family friend in the Ottawa Valley who was originally from the U.S., Horace Merrill (1809-1883), got him his first job on the Bigelow mill in Buckingham where he worked for several years, learning on the job. Following the sale

of the mill Currier took over the lease of the Rideau Falls mill with Moss Kent Dickinson. In the late 1850s and early 1860s he set up a sawmill and grist operation in Manotick with Dickinson.

Currier had three children with his first wife, Christine Wilson from Cumberland. But then two of these children died of typhoid and Christine died in 1846 of grief. Currier met his second wife, the wealthy Ann Crosby, when she was very young, and her parents wouldn't let her marry until she was 20. After their wedding in 1861 they went to Bermuda for their honeymoon and returned to Manotick. Currier's old friend Merrill was showing Ann around the mill when her skirt caught in the mill shaft and she died of her injuries. Grief-stricken, Currier sold both the little cottage (with French doors) that he had built for her, and his interest in the mill, and left Manotick.

His surviving son from his first marriage, James, was at a military academy in Poughkeepsie, N.Y. Currier went to visit him and was impressed with an estate there on wooded grounds. When he returned to Ottawa he found land available south of Rockcliffe Park which was a similar forested environment. He became a partner in the company which purchased the land and turned it into Beechwood Cemetery.

Ann had been buried in a cemetery north of the Rideau River, but Currier had her grave relocated to Beechwood. There is also a memorial to Ann Crosby in Lake George, N.Y.

Currier married his third wife, Hannah Wright, in 1868 when he was a member of Parliament. She wanted a fancy house, so that's when he built the large house at 24 Sussex Dr., across the street from Dickinson. The architect was a cousin of Currier who had the same initials (J. M.).

His son James became a civil servant and married Florence Slater; he lived opposite the West Block on Wellington Street in Ottawa. The top floor had a large, well-used billiards room, and there was lots of accompanying drinking. Florence ran off with another man, and later James married Sarah Pratt from Marlborough and lived at 196 Carling Ave.

As a child James was neglected by his family, and was brought up by Alonzo and Mary Wright. Ironically, James' son Cyril and his brother were also brought up by Mary

(Sparks) Wright. Cyril (Brian Hull's grandfather) went to Ashbury (which was then on Wellington St.) and one day he skipped school and went swimming in the canal. So his father thought he didn't take education seriously, and didn't let him go to McGill. So Cyril became a bank clerk.

Later he was administrator of Nicholas Sparks' estate. [Ron Wilson remembers his dad meeting with Cyril about the farm mortgage.]

Brian had so many stories we didn't want to stop listening, and we asked him if he was going to write this history down. He does have a couple of books in mind that he would like to write, The Curriers of Sussex Street, and Nicholas Sparks of Ottawa. His great-aunt used to tell him lots of family stories, so he seems to have a deep well to draw from. Thanks for an interesting evening, Brian! Those of us who work at Dickinson House and Watson's Mill have new material!



Discussions continued after the meeting. Brian is a friend of Tom MacDonald, in the foreground.

RTHS CHRISTMAS PARTY

Thursday, December 11, 2014



Cornerstone Wesleyan Church, North Gower

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Cost - \$20.00 (Catered buffet supper)

Please join us as we offer a special tribute to Coral Lindsay as part of our festivities.

Would you please notify Ruth Wright by December 5th if you are planning to attend.

Phone Ruth at 613-489-3886 or e-mail ruthbrianwright@gmail.com

Hope to see you there for an evening of fun, fellowship and camaraderie!

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.

On 6 and 7 December 1895, meetings were held, at North Gower and Manotick respectively, of the County of Carleton Farmers' Institute, founded ten years previously. Edward Kidd, president of the local Institute, was present, as was County Warden Charles Mohr, along with a host of representatives of families prominent in the local farming communities: Bradley, Brownlee, Craig, Callander, Dickinson, Fennell, Montgomery, Pettipiece, Spratt, Wallace, Waterson, and others.

They were gathered to hear Prof. H.H. Dean of the Guelph Agricultural College and, as was the custom of the College, also a practical farmer, selected from the Guelph area. On these two occasions, that role was filled by David McCrae, my great-grandmother's uncle, speaking about grasses and clovers and, at times humorously, about farm life in general. According to reports in the Ottawa Journal, he seems to have had, like my great-grandmother, the ability to command attention in a room – unfortunately not a trait, unlike the asthma and the short-sightedness and the love of books, passed down to me.

A few of the local farmers probably knew McCrae or at least of him, as they had attended many fairs and exhibitions together for some time, competing in some of the same classes. At the Provincial Exhibition, held in Ottawa in 1884, James Callander of North Gower and McCrae of Guelph Township both fared well in a number of classes. In the Woolens class, Callander scored with best woven counterpane and best stair carpet, placing second in the rag carpet competition, while McCrae took home the Dominion Silver Medal for three best yarn collections. Callander also had the best coarse handmade mitts. McCrae won best cardigan jackets, drawers and shirts (plain and ribbed), half hose and hose. Callander also took first prize for dairy cheese over eight pounds that year and received \$15 for Dominion Special Prize, second place, for cow of any breed for milking purposes.

The Rideau Township Archives does hold many ribbons and other records of Kars and other local fairs, which we invite you to come and judge. But we have no records of the Carleton County Farmers' Institute (though we would gladly accept them) and only two histories of the Callander family, whose name even by 1936 had all but disappeared from this area.

Next month:
Rideau Township
Archives and the
genealogy of your
ancestor's farm
animals.

– Stuart Clarkson

On the right is a part of an article from the Ottawa Journal, Tuesday December 10, 1895 about the meetings. Note that George Dickinson, son of Moss Kent attended the meeting.

FARMERS' INSTITUTE MEETINGS.

F. W. Hodson, superintendent of Farmers' Institutes for Ontario has arranged for farmers' meetings throughout this section at North Gower, Manotick and Metcalfe, to be addressed by Prof. Dean and Mr. David Macrea of the Guelph Agricultural College. These speakers will address meetings at North Gower Dec. 6th, Manotick Dec. 7th, Metcalfe Dec. 9th and 10th.

Above is an announcement of the meeting described in the first paragraph above. (from the Ottawa Journal, Monday, Nov 4, 1895.

Professors from the Guelph College Give the Result of Experiments and Study—Hints About Cloves, Dairy Cows, Butter Making, etc.—Local Men Present

The County of Carleton Farmers' Institute met on Friday and Saturday last and the meetings held were among the most successful since the establishment of the Institute. On Friday afternoon and evening meetings were held at North Gower and on Saturday meetings were held at Manotick in the morning, afternoon and evening.

Among those at the meetings were Warden Chas Mohr, Dr. Bell, V.S., W. Johnson, E. Kidd, W. Henderson, Thos. Kerr, Newton Brownlee, Jas. Craig, Jas. Callander, John Spratt, H. Wallace, W. Moffett, Dr. McCordick, J. D. McPhail, R. Campbell, David Carson, W. Fennell, Dr. Harkness, Thos. Pollock, N. Craig, A. Thompson, H. Montgomery, A. Bradley, Wesley Campbell, Thos. Geddes, Geo. Pettipiece, O. Harris, F. Caldwell, J. Cundie, Geo. Bradley, Geo. Akers, W. Brown, Rev. J. Emperham, R. Waterson, W. Meredith, J. E. Craig, J. Chambers, and Geo. L. Dickinson.

The Dickinson House Museum

Presents a Special Exhibit

Local Heroes of the Great War

1914 – 1918



Canadian Soldiers at Vimy Ridge, Library and Archives Canada, MIKAN # 3521877

**Nov. 8, 9 and 11
1127 Mill Street
Manotick
10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

The Rideau Branch of the Ottawa Archives has been researching some of the brave men and women from the former Township of Rideau who served during the First World War and lost their lives in service to their country. This exhibit commemorates the sacrifices made by some of these courageous individuals.

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, Manotick. There is free parking on-site.

Web Sites: rideautownshiphistory.org/dickinsonhouse and www.watsonsmill.com

The Dickinson House is open weekends and holidays from now to December 7 from 11:00am to 4:00 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.

Minutes of the Rideau Township Historical Society October Meeting

October 15, 2014, Knox Presbyterian Church, Manotick, Ont.

Opening: President Brian Sawyer called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and welcomed the 22 members present. He asked members to think about ideas for a suitable memorial for Coral Lindsay, who passed away this month. The executive will be discussing this at their next meeting.

Minutes: It was moved by Marguerite Rogers and seconded by Ron Wilson that the minutes of the September 17, 2014 meeting as published in the October Newsletter be approved. Carried.

Finance: Sandy McNiece, treasurer, had sent a report with Susan McKellar that as of Sept. 28, 2014 our total receipts were \$35,100 and total expenditures were \$30,500. The RTHS bank after reserves as of Sept. 28, 2014 was approximately \$7,500.

Membership: Susan McKellar reported no changes to the membership total of 87.

Dickinson House: In Maureen McPhee's absence, Bill Tupper enthusiastically reported on fall events including the Country Fair at the end of August and the Harvest Festival on the Thanksgiving weekend. An estimated 1200 people were in the Square on Saturday, and 350 of them visited Dickinson House. There was a good cross-section of entertainment and education, with music, pie-eating, etc. About half that many were in the Square and the House on Sunday, when the wooden toys exhibit continued in the House. The next event is the Victorian Tea on Nov. 1.

Publications: Jane Anderson anticipates publishing two books next year, The Men of Dickinson House and Rideau Township and the Great War: Sacrifice and Service. As book sales have been slow lately, she encouraged members to consider purchasing books for Christmas presents.

Communications: Ron Wilson reported that everything is OK.

Program: Ruth Wright has had to change the date of the November meeting, to the 20th, a Thursday, as that's when a representative of Parks Canada, Jonathan Moore, is available. She circulated a sign-up sheet for the Dec. 11 Christmas dinner which will be at the Cornerstone Wesleyan Church in North Gower with a caterer.

Grants: Tom MacDonald reported that work is progressing on the application for the City of Ottawa grant, and he anticipates it will be submitted before the deadline of Nov. 4.

Evening Program: Tom introduced our speaker for the evening and a childhood friend, Brian Hull, a descendant of J. M. Currier. Brian told us about Currier's life and family, enlivening his talk with lots of stories and a few scandals. Jane thanked Brian for his talk.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:30, and was followed by a social time with refreshments provided by Jane Anderson and Sandy Wilson.