



The Rideau Township Historical Society

Preserving and Promoting local history for the former Rideau Township

November 2019 Newsletter

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

The November Meeting

Date: Wednesday, November 20, 2019
Time: 7:30 p.m.

Place Ottawa Client Services Centre,
2155 Roger Stevens Drive,
North Gower, ON

Fall Program

November 20, 2019, 7:30 pm
Forgotten Railways of Eastern Ontario
D'von Wallace Documentary Film Maker
Ottawa Client Services Centre, North Gower

December 11, 2019 (time to be announced)
Historical Society Dinner
Caterers: Crescent Chapter Order of the Eastern
Star, St. James Anglican Church, Manotick (to be
confirmed)

Request to Members

Looking for RTHS members to give presentations at the May 20, 2020 monthly meeting. Each presentation would be 20 minutes in length. That's a lot of 20s,

I know that many of you have information to share with the rest of the members. Please let me know if you would like to participate.

dorothygray@gmail.com

613-258-7034

The **Vimy Memorial** stands majestically over the plain in France where the battle of Vimy Ridge was fought. This battle has come to reflect the history of our country as it has been shaped by military events.



Please take time on Remembrance Day, November 11, to reflect on the sacrifices of the men and women of our Armed Services to whom we owe so much.

Speaker:

D'von Wallace, Eleuthville Media

D'von Wallace is a documentary filmmaker and President of Eleuthville Media Inc. D'von graduated from Confederation College in 2014 where he studied Film Production. Since 2014 to the present D'von has worked on numerous short films, 3 Feature Films, numerous corporate videos and numerous documentaries.

After producing his first documentary while in Film School called *Never too Young*, about a young woman battling cancer while pregnant. D'von fell in love with documentaries and the story telling aspect of it.

Subject:

Forgotten Railways of Eastern Ontario

Eleuthville Media was born from D'von's passion to tell stories that everyone can relate to, and appreciate. D'von's ongoing passion project is *Forgotten Railways in Eastern Ontario*. This project incorporates things that D'von and his kids love; history and trains.



Dickinson House

The end of the 2019 season at the house is nearing. However there are two remaining events that will be of significant interest to the membership and the public.

See the **Remembrance Day** poster on page 5.

See the **Dickinson Christmas Event** on page 6.

Also note the **RTHS Christmas Party** invitation on page 7

Book Launch

I am, Gentlemen, Your Obedient Servant

Presentation by *Andrew Narraway & Gail Anglin*

Article by *Susan McKellar, Photos by Owen Cooke*

The program of the October RTHS meeting featured lots of discussion about Joseph Currier. Bill Tupper introduced Andrew Narraway, author of the just-released book, "I am, Gentlemen, Your Obedient Servant": Joseph Merrill Currier (1820-1884), and gave some background on his academic career and subsequent jobs.



Andrew Narraway

Andrew then talked about how he came to write the book. He was hired by RTHS in the summer of 2018 to follow up on extensive research carried out the previous summer for RTHS by Hannah Blaine, and to write an essay. Andrew delved into it, and did more research at Library and Archives Canada, then started the process of writing. He

met with Bill Tupper weekly to go over his work. (He was in the middle of writing his master's thesis at the time.) He finished the essay that summer, then it became a book! (Ron Wilson subsequently edited the book, added illustrations and oversaw the printing process.)

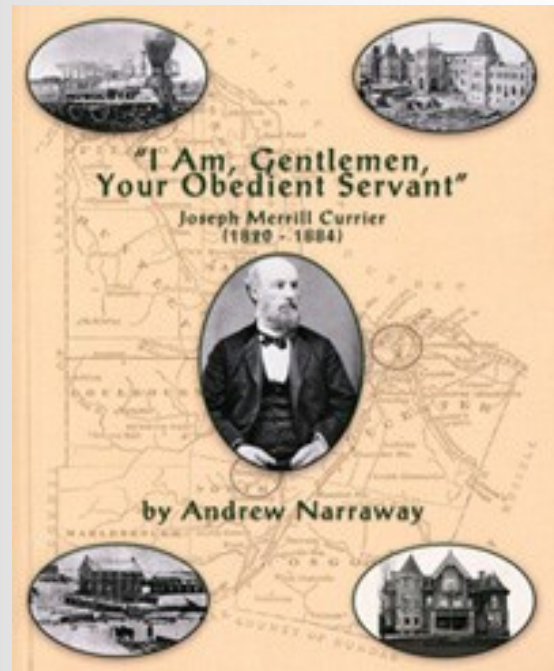


Gail Anglin

Bill then introduced Gail Anglin, a member of Ottawa Storytellers, who was in appropriate costume, complete with guitar. She proceeded to tell the story of Currier's life, interspersed with several songs from the era that added greatly to the atmosphere.

Briefly, Joseph Currier was born and grew up in Vermont, U.S.A. As a young

man in search of adventure and work, he came to Buckingham, Quebec, and found work at a sawmill there through Horace Merrill, a family friend. Gail set the scene with the Logdriver's Waltz. Currier managed Bigelow's sawmill for ten years, then Thomas Mckay asked him to come to Ottawa to manage his mill, which he did. He was married by that time, with two children. He took on more work, managing other mills and running businesses. He



also became involved in community organizations and boards, etc.; by now he had four children.

The song Swamp Fever foreshadowed Gail's telling of the death of three of his children of fever. Only his second son, James, survived, and within three years his wife Christiana died, supposedly of a broken heart.

Currier decided to leave Ottawa and came to Long Island where he and Moss Kent Dickinson built a sawmill; they expanded their business with other partners and built a grist mill and carding mill. Currier also built a lovely cottage for himself. Another song, A Frog He Would A-Wooing Go, preceded the story of Currier's courting of Ann Crosby of Lake George, New York, and their marriage. Tragically, she died of an accident in the mill while still a young woman.

A distraught Currier left Manotick and went back to Ottawa, where the elites welcomed him back into society. He was elected as a Member of Parliament and was also active in Ottawa life. He married Hannah Wright and built the house at 24 Sussex Drive for her. 500 people attended their housewarming party! He established Beechwood Cemetery and continued in business, but after a scandal his businesses took a downturn and he became destitute (MPs were not paid at that time). He then found a paid position as Postmaster General of Ottawa. He died of tuberculosis at age 64, and was buried in Beechwood Cemetery.

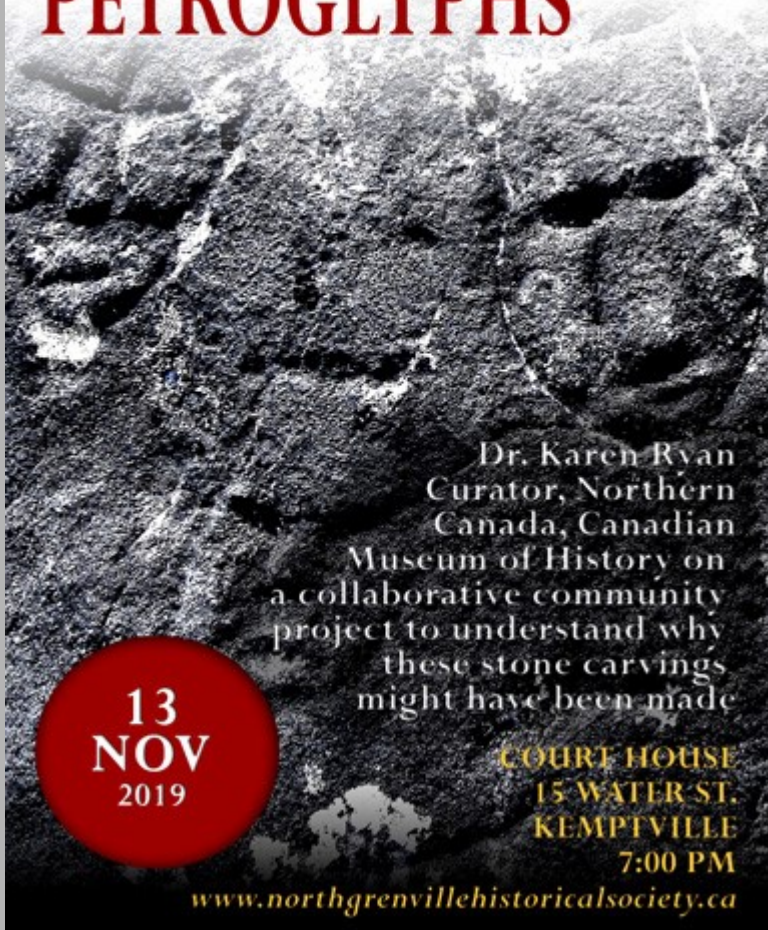
Gail restored our spirits with the rendering of The Night John Willie Took His Ferret To A Do; the lyrics started with the line "I was there, so were you, the mayor and the vicar, all the council too". Her story was followed by several questions and discussion, including the Ottawa Storytellers' activities, and the introduction of two Currier descendants present, Brian Hull and Barbara Armstrong. Bill then thanked Andrew and Gail for an interesting, entertaining evening, and the crowd enjoyed refreshments while several purchased copies of the book, signed by the author of course.

Bill Tupper conceived the idea for this book and led the project to get it written and published. We thank Bill for this excellent contribution to our local, provincial, and national history.



NORTH GRENVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PUZZLING ARCTIC PETROGLYPHS



Dr. Karen Ryan
Curator, Northern
Canada, Canadian
Museum of History on
a collaborative community
project to understand why
these stone carvings
might have been made

**13
NOV
2019**

**COURT HOUSE
15 WATER ST.
KEMPTVILLE
7:00 PM**

www.northgrenvillehistoricalsociety.ca

Presentation

In 2017 the Canadian government nominated eight candidates for future UNESCO World Heritage designations. That list includes a petroglyph site, Qajartalik, near the community of Kangiksujuak, Nunavik.

Dr. Karen Ryan, Curator, Northern Canada exhibit at the Canadian Museum of History, will talk about her 2019 field work at Qajartalik and other sites as part of a new programme of collaborative and community-initiated research seeking to better understand why the petroglyphs might have been made.

All welcome.

November 13, 2019
Courthouse, 15 Water Street,
Kemptville, ON

Refreshments. Doors open at 6:30 pm.
Talk starts at 7:30.

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.

Showpieces: Texts from the Craig Family Library

Among the Craig family materials at Rideau Branch Archives are portions of two very worn books, dating to the decades after Confederation, which give some insight into American books sold and bought in Eastern Ontario at that time.

The first is a book of song lyrics published in 1867 in New York, *The Pretty Little Sarah Songster*. A songster was a printed collection of at least three songs printed on at least four pages. In this case the original book had 72 pages, though only pages 6-56 of the Craig copy remain.

An alternate form for publishing lyrics to the broadside – a large sheet printed on one side with the lyrics of only a single song -- songsters had first appeared in the early eighteenth century but remained less popular than broadsides until the American Civil War. By then, songsters had become cheaper to produce through the use of inexpensive materials and bindings, so it is not to be wondered that the covers and some pages of this songster are now missing. It bears the title of the first song in the collection, a song originally printed as a broadside, and the book as a whole may have drawn heavily on broadsides for its content.

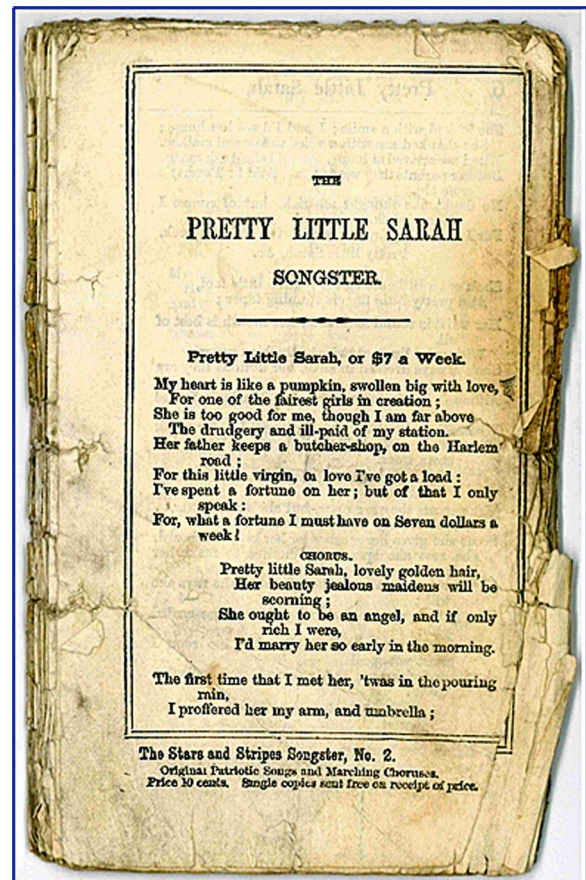
By appearances, it looks as though it also “borrowed” a portion of its content directly from at least one other songbook, the third volume of *The Red, White and Blue Monster Song Book*, edited by J. Diprose (1860). We are left in the dark as to exact sources largely because the publisher of *The Little Sarah Songster*, Robert De Witt, left every song but Tom Hood's poem “*The Lost Child*” uncredited. Pirating copyrighted works, including song lyrics, was part of what made the cheap literature of 1860s North America cheap.

Also to be numbered among the cheap literature of the day was the *Dime Ludicrous Speaker*, another performance work. Beadle & Adams published it in New York in 1872 in their *Dime Speakers* series of comic or burlesque oration collections, including titles such as *Eloquent Speaker* and *Patriotic Speaker*, marketed not only to families but also to schools. The Craigs kept only one folded leaf, printed as four pages of this book, which seems to have come from a later printing.

These pages provide a complete reading of “*The Ass and the Violinist, A Fable*” by American poet John G. Saxe, its musician hero in keeping with the Craigs' musical proclivities. This tale was one of the more credible entries in a

book which generally relied for its comedic value on unkind stereotypes. The original cover of the *Ludicrous Speaker* depicted a low-brow hobo delivering a monologue on a candle-lit show stage, reminding us that these cheap books were produced with the primary intent of supporting performances, though more likely in parlours at home rather than in a show hall.

In all, these book fragments indicate the Craigs' interest in performing arts and their acquisition of printed materials to support it at a time when the increasingly affordable (but not always legal or durable) books of American publishers were sought to meet the demands of a growing Canadian reading (and performing) population.



The Pretty Little Sarah Songster (New York: De Witt, 1867), p. 5

Dickinson House Museum *Special Remembrance Exhibit*

**A Display of
Images, Artifacts
and Documents
Reflecting Local
Wartime Experience**

**FREE
Admission**

*With a
Special Tribute to
Rideau Township's
Scobie Families, for
their Legacy of
Wartime Service
and Sacrifice*

**November 9 & 10
(11 am - 4 pm)
November 11
(10 am - 4 pm)
November 16 & 17
(11 am - 4 pm)**

1127 Mill St., Manotick



Dickinson House Museum and the Miller's Oven present

A Dickinson Christmas

December 14, 2019

A Storytelling & Dining Event

Featuring the re-telling of a seasonal classic:

The Victorian charm of Dickinson House provides the ambiance for the tale of Ebenezer Scrooge's journey through darkness to light and new beginnings.

followed by a...

*Festive
Roast Beef
Dinner*

lovingly prepared by our friends
at the Miller's Oven

Tickets - \$40 (reserved seating only)

Available at Office Pro, Miller's Oven,
or by calling Brian Earl
(613-692-2371)

Charles Dicken's
*A
Christmas
Carol*

Storytelling at
Dickinson House
1127 Mill St, Manotick
4:30 pm

Dinner at
the Miller's Oven
1137 Mill St, Manotick
6:30 pm





Rideau Township Historical Society

Christmas Dinner and Entertainment

Wednesday December 11, 2019

5:30 p.m. for Dinner at 6:00

St. James Anglican Church

1138 Bridge Street,

Manotick, Ontario

Tickets \$25.pp Come and Bring Friends

Contact dorothyhgray@gmail.com

613 258-7034

Before December 3rd

