

The Rideau Township Historical Society

Preserving and Promoting local history for the former Rideau Township

October 2008 Newsletter

Newsletter Editor: Coral Lindsay (rideauarchives@ottawa.ca)

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Society will be held October 15 at the Rideau Branch, Ottawa Archives, North Gower at 7:30 pm.

The address of the Archives building is 6581 Fourth Line Road (Main Street) North Gower.

Speakers: Sherry Guild and Amanda Gould of the Canadian Conservation Institute


•Topic: Restoration of the Wallings 1863 Map of Rideau Township

Lifelong North Gower resident Bessie Gray, 90, donated the map, which had belonged to her father, James A. Wallace (1872 - 1955), who was auditor for North Gower Township for 40 years in the early 1900's and secretary treasurer of North Gower Public Continuation School from 1921 to 1947.

Gray doesn't recall how it came into her possession, but was glad it did. "It was stored when I was growing up," said Gray, "so we never saw it in the house - it was rolled up. I liked looking at it and displayed it at the official opening (of the Rideau Archives) in 1990."

The speakers will describe the methods and techniques used to restore the map.

2008
— Haunted Harvest Festival —
Saturday, October 25, 11:00-4:00



Manotick
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA
MBIA

Costume Prizes
Dress up in your most outrageous Harvest or Halloween costume and win a prize.

Dickinson House
Come visit Dickinson House and learn about its History and Spirits. Mill St., 11am-4pm

Visit Watson's Mill
Experience some Manotick history. You can also learn about the ghost of Anne or maybe even catch a glimpse! 5525 Mill St.

Bring a friend

Light refreshments

**For a ride call Brian Earl
613-692-2371**

Pat de St. Croix, RTHS treasurer and valued member, passed away in September after a valiant struggle with cancer. Pat was a Montreal girl who taught high school, married, became a mother and grandmother and travelled around the world. Pat's sense of humour included even the monthly RTHS treasurer's report. We're still laughing. We miss you Pat.

There will be a Celebration at the Carleton Golf and Yacht Clubhouse on Saturday October 11, 2008, 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. Dick and the family will be pleased to see you.

Features This Month

- A special RTHS meeting in November
- News from the Archives
- Susan McKellar's book on St. Andrews Church

Notable Items This Month

1. The count of visitors at the Dickinson House has passed 2700 since it opened on Dickinson Day this summer.
2. Extra, Extra, we have now passed 2800

The November Meeting

The November 19th meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. in the Carriage Shed, Dickinson Square, Manotick. This will be hosted by the IEC (Interpretation and Education Committee), Watson's Mill for the RTHS and Watson's Mill membership. Visitors welcome.

The topic will be **FLEETS AND FORWARDERS: Steamboat Days on the Rideau Canal**, COMMERCIAL NAVIGATION 1830's – 1930's

The forwarding companies with their steamboats made an indelible impact on settlement, commerce, industry and agriculture in the Rideau Valley and beyond for more than a century. Moss Kent Dickinson and his partners competed in the forwarding trade from 1844 until 1869.

The Carriage Shed doors will open at 6:30 p.m. for viewing the displays of steamboat photographs, posters, ads, maps, Power Point slides and other memorabilia. Ron Wilson's DVD has toe-tapping music as well.

Coral Lindsay and RTHS president Mark Jodoin will present an overview of some of the more than 25 companies which were dominated by Macpherson and Crane, Canada's and Rideau's largest forwarders.

The collection of photos, facts and folklore has expanded (like rising bread) since this topic was showcased for RTHS September 15, 1982. Were you there? Where were we?

Light refreshments will be served after the meeting.

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Coming Events

Sept—Xmas

Visit the **Dickinson House** any Saturday, Sunday or holiday until October 26. With luck and good management we hope to be open for Manotick's "**Old Fashioned Christmas**", December 6-7, with carols, cider, gingersnaps and a Christmas tree! Watch for further announcements.

2009:

The **Manotick 150th Anniversary** committee, chaired by Peter Peers, Manotick Messenger, is proceeding with plans for 2009 celebrations. Brian Earl represents the RTHS on the Dickinson Square committees.

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News from the Rideau 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 Wallace Family Albums

Ron Wallace has donated a number of family albums to the Archives. All have been scanned to digital form and are being fixed up to increase the size and make the face clearer for easier recognition.

The North Gower Discovery Tour:

The Archives were opened for the North Gower Discovery Tour as usual. It was a very successful weekend for the Archives with lots of visitors and interest.

The Archives Building:

Several repairs and improvements have been made to the building to improve access, increase safety, and address maintenance problems.

The roof has been painted, and an ice guard installed over the front door. The entrance walk has been rebuilt to accommodate wheelchairs.

Book Corner

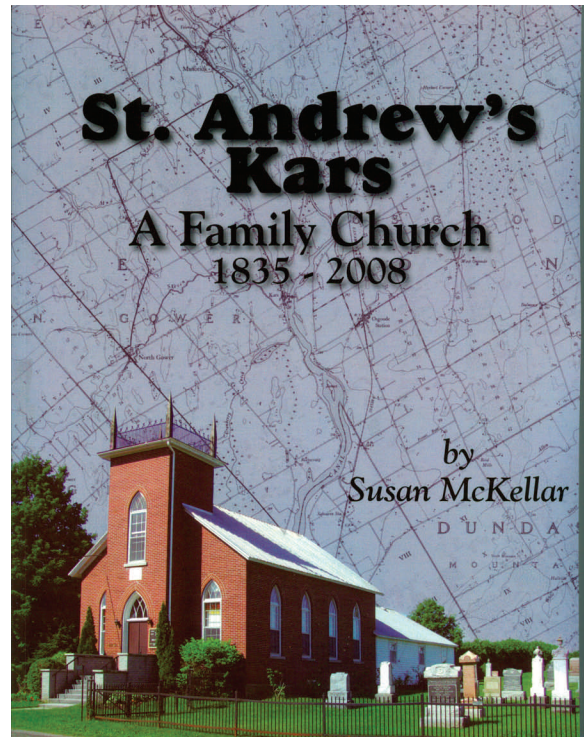
by Jane Anderson

Susan McKellar is leaving a lasting legacy to a local Presbyterian congregation in her recently published book, "St. Andrew's Kars: A Family Church, 1835-2008". This book, with its eye-catching cover, will also be of interest to the citizens of Kars and surrounding communities. It includes information on the early Presbyterian churches in North Gower and Osgoode that were forerunners of the United churches in those villages. St. Andrew's has also had strong ties to the Presbyterian churches in Manotick and Vernon as well as the Kars Anglican church.

The book is beautifully illustrated with photos of clergy, families and memorabilia from over the years, and will serve as a valuable reference tool for now and in the future. It is crammed with biographies of the families and clergy from 1835 onwards. As a bonus, there is a CD included in the price, filled with pictures of members of the congregation past and present. McKellar is to be complimented for her meticulous research and fantastic photography.

"St. Andrew's Kars: A Family Church, 1835-2008" costs \$40 and is worth every penny. What a wonderful Christmas gift to anyone with any connection to St. Andrew's. The book will be formally launched at a book-signing on October 19 (11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.) at St. Andrew's, but cop-

ies are also available now at the Kars General Store and the Manotick Office Pro.



The New RTHS Website

A new version of the RTHS web site has been under development for something like a year and a half now. It is now getting to the point where enough material has been written that version 1 can be put up on a server and made available to the public. Why so long? Developing a web site is lot of work.

Why a New Web Site?

A major goal of the Board elected in January 2007 was to revitalize the Society. The membership was aging and we weren't attracting many new or younger members. History is too important to let it die out because the membership was not growing enough to sustain the endeavour. Therefore the revitalization project.

Early on the development of a new site was identified as an important element of this revitalization. There was and is a need to increase the visibility of the Society and what it is doing.

A web site is a way to reach a wide audience. In particular the search engines will present your site to people who don't know you exist and were not actually looking for you.

What Are We Trying to Accomplish With the New Web Site?

1. **To increase the awareness of the work of the Society and to attract new members.**

We have been aware that with our newsletter we are basically talking to ourselves and not reaching the general population of Rideau. The web site can help reach that general audience if it is an interesting site that shows we do interesting and enjoyable things.

1. **To develop an interest in the Society by younger people.**

The members of the society at this point are the older generation with only a few exceptions. If we can interest and attract younger members it can bear fruit in several ways.

It can, of course, increase the membership which would lead to diversification and broader interests in local historical matters, and provide more hands for more local projects.

If we can promote interest in local history at an earlier age, some people will recognize the importance of it, and save things and/or talk to older relatives before it is too late.

It will also raise the general consciousness of history in the area.

3. To dispense more local, national, and international history to a wider audience.

Archives are more than dead storage for historical information and artefacts. Such things need to be used. The web site will provide a means to find and acquire information on what is available in archives in Canada and indeed internationally so that users can take advantage of its availability.

1. Approve the content and look of the site and build/modify the last few pages as required. Mark Jodoin, Lucy Martin, and Ron Wilson will be doing that this month.
2. Register a domain name, find an Internet service provider to host the site, and install and test the site for correct appearance, find and repair missing links, and test all functionalities.
3. Establish operational responsibilities for further development and maintenance

(We have registered the domain name "www.rideautownshiphistory.com" for now. RTHS was already taken.)

These past few items are being addressed with help from Mark Jodoin and Spruce Riordon. Spruce has operated the present site for us (which we greatly appreciate), and has lots of experience in setting up such web sites.

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What is Left to Do?

There are essentially three tasks to complete before version 1 can be implemented.

The New Website Look

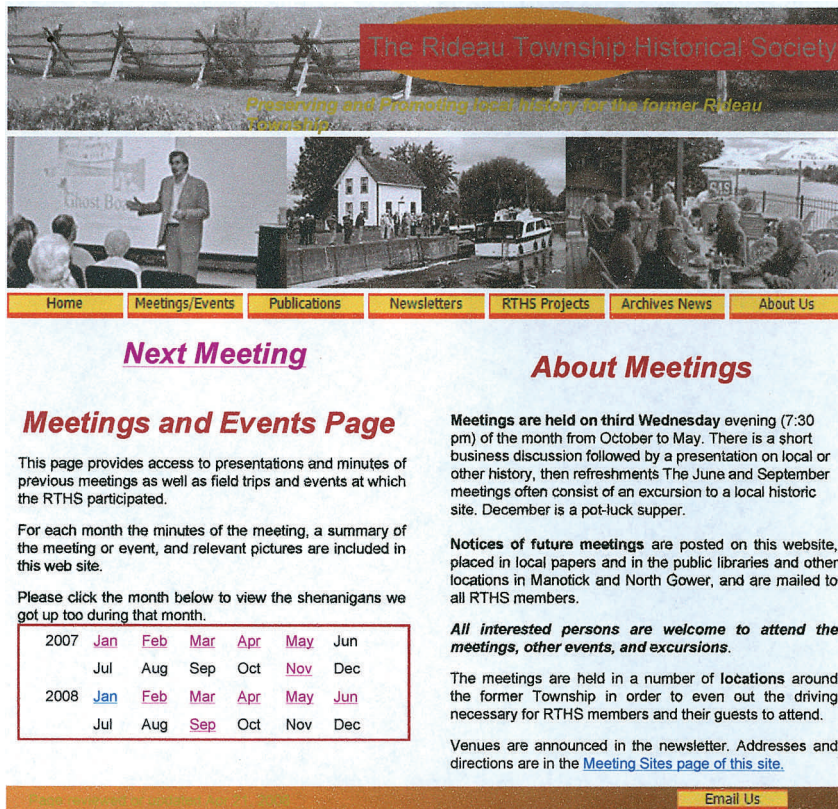
The image on the right is one of the pages from the new web site. The colors are not bright and the writing appears blurry on this image. This is not a problem when viewing a page on a computer display.

The pages feature a top banner that is the new icon for the Society. Each page has a series of three pictures below the banner. This is an idea adopted from the Vancouver Historical Society web page.

Below that is the menu for the various pages on the site. Following the links leads to pages for the newsletter beginning in 2005 and summaries of the presentations at the meetings beginning in 2007.

Various other pages provide notices of meetings, locations of meetings information on Rideau Township, the executive, etc.

The new site clearly includes more graphics. This can be a problem with users with low speed connections to the Internet. More work is required to investigate and find solutions for that problem.



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