

The Rideau Township Historical Society

Preserving and Promoting local history for the former Rideau Township

October 2014 Newsletter

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

The October Meeting

Date: October 15, 2014

Time: 7:30 p.m.
Knox Presbyterian Church
5533 Dickinson Street
Manotick, ON



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

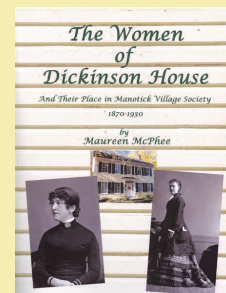
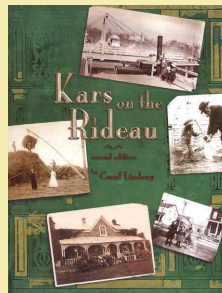
The Speaker: Brian Hull

Topic: The Currier Family of Manotick

This month, on Wednesday, October 15th, Mr. Hull will be making a presentation on the life and times of the Currier family of Manotick.

Brian is a direct descendant of the Currier clan and will surely enlighten us on the various stories and genealogy of this significant family in the history of the Manotick area.

The meeting will take place at 7:30 p.m. at Knox Presbyterian Church, 5533 Dickinson St., Manotick, Ontario. Bring a friend - hope to see you there!



Some RTHS books as Christmas presents? Why not?

See below.

This Month

1. Coral Lindsay
2. A letter to the members
3. The September Meeting
4. News from the Rideau Archives
5. The Dickinson House
6. Christmas shopping tips

Only about 70 shopping days to Christmas!

Thinking about Christmas shopping yet? If you are or when you do, think about the publications of your Historical Society. They make excellent Christmas Gifts for anyone interested in the area in which we live. We have a selection of recently published books.

Manotick Then & Now

This book is compiled from columns written by Dora Stamp, known as Manotick's historian during her lifetime. The book covers extremely well the development of the village from early days to the 1970's.

Kars on the Rideau, 2nd edition

This book is a 2nd edition of the book of the same name written by Coral Lindsay and published in the 1970's. The book has been extensively updated by Coral, side bars containing additional information and many pictures have been added as well as a name index.

Cheese Factories of Rideau Township 2nd edition.

This book by Iona Joy has also been updated from the first edition published in 1990. Side bars with more information and pictures have also been added along with updates to the main text. Cheese was an important commodity to the development of eastern Canada and the book tells the story of the 2nd or 3rd most important export from eastern Canada in the early 20th century.

The Women of Dickinson House, 1870 - 1930.

This book is new this year. It describes the two Dickinson daughters and their place in Manotick village society when they lived in the Dickinson House from 1870 to 1930. The book shows a side of the development of Manotick which has not been published before. Sources for the information included WI minutes of meetings and church records from that period of time.

Coral Lindsay

It's a sad time. We've all lost a treasure with the passing of Coral Lindsay this past week.

Coral lived a life that touched so many people in so many ways, all of them good. She was a friend to so many. You couldn't help but like her and enjoy her company. She could talk intelligently on almost any subject. Her sense of humour was wonderful. A lot of comedians would be quite envious of her timing telling jokes during her many talks. There was always laughter around her.



Coral during one of her many presentations.

I knew Coral for a long time. Her father and my father were both farmers and they, along with an uncle of Corals, traded work during the summers. But we go back even farther than that. I was 5 years old and going into grade 1 at SS No. 1, North Gower. Coral was in grade 7 and walked past our house on the way to the school. On my first day my mum took me down to the road and Coral took my hand and walked me to school. It was an auspicious start she gave me. After that I must have gone to school off and on for 25 years.

She was always doing things for other people; as a teacher, as a volunteer, as a colleague, as a wife, as a mother, and as a friend as already mentioned. Coral was good at all these things. She spent so much time in volunteer work, giving excellent and entertaining talks to local groups of all kinds, assisting and guiding the work of the Rideau Branch of the Ottawa Archives, organizing the furnishing and conducting tours of the Dickinson House, and many other activities..

She was a lifetime teacher. She went to the normal school in Ottawa and then taught at many schools in the area. Hers was the time when the teacher most often boarded with a local family as they didn't have the means of transportation to do otherwise. That was also when she began to accumulate the vast number of friends and acquaintances she eventually knew.

By any measure Coral was a very good teacher. Her files at the archives contain examples of letters of thanks from students having to do with outings and field trips she arranged and appraisals of her abilities and performance as a teacher. A couple of examples of appraisal comments are included here to illustrate her dedication and professionalism. They serve to demonstrate the Coral we all knew.

Rated in Category of School Involvement

EXCELLENT Coral varied her half-time teaching on Monday and Friday in order to teach a grade 5 remedial reading programme. She supervises girls floor hockey when requested. The grade 5 teachers have been assisted in the planning of a local history topic for environmental studies by Coral. Coral has organized a group of parents to assist in the library every Thursday morning. Accomplishments derived from this are book repair, lamination of many pictures and teaching aids.

Rated in Category of Professional Qualities & Achievements

EXCELLENT Mrs. Lindsay although employed on a half-time basis spends an average of three-quarters of her day at school. This alone speaks for her professional qualities. Coral is a most considerate individual who conducts herself in a professional manner at all times. Her ability to relate to people is evident by the number of parent volunteers who assist in the library every Thursday morning.

An incident that illustrates Coral's dedication and professionalism happened when she was teaching early in her career in Marlborough Township. A man came to the door of the school and expected to come in. Coral refused to let him in without someone to vouch for him. It turned out he was the provincial school inspector who came to local schools to make sure the proper curriculum was being taught in a proper way.

As a colleague Coral was a joy to work with. She would help out anyone with a problem with a project, anytime. We worked together on preparing and publishing some books. I was the editor and she the author. We enjoyed very much doing the research, telling the stories, hunting down the pictures, etc. It was a lot of work, but also a lot of fun. I wouldn't have missed it for anything. As a bonus we came out of it still as fast friends, which I'm told is not always the case with an author and editor.

She lived a life devoted to family and service to the community. She thought of herself last.

Her accomplishments were recognized by the receipt of the following awards:

- the Manotick Citizen of the Year Award (2009)
- the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal (2002),
- the Ontario Heritage Foundation Citation (1997).
- the Phi Delta Kappa Exemplary Teacher Certificate (1996).
- the Canada 125 Volunteer Award (1992),
- the Teacher's Federation of Carleton County Silver Pin (1987),
- the Ontario Bicentennial Medal. (1984) and
- the Lady Tweedsmuir Trophy (1964) for her role as curator of the Kars Tweedsmuir History.



Part of one of the wonderful displays that Coral constructed to accompany her talks. This one was on the history of chocolate.

Coral, we will all miss you for a long time.

Ron Wilson
October 2014

The September Presentation ***The Women of Dickinson House and Their Place in Manotick Village Society, 1870-1930***

Maureen McPhee

Article and photos by Lucy Martin

After a summer break, the September meeting sometimes feels like the start of a new year. This meeting also took place in a completely new venue: Orchard View on the Rideau, on Bridge Street in Manotick. One surprise was how much larger it feels from within than it looks from without. We enjoyed the use of a very sizable basement meeting room that easily accommodated the 39 people in attendance, including several Orchard View residents.

Our speaker, Maureen McPhee, is familiar to many as a very active volunteer, board member and officer at RTHS and Watson's Mill. Indeed, McPhee said it was volunteering at Dickinson House that generated the book. Visitors had questions about the Dickinson family and their era that volunteers could not answer. McPhee took to scouring archival records, including church histories and the minutes of the Manotick Women's Institute, to discover more about the women of Dickinson House.

McPhee says the hunt turned up more about all the Dickinsons, including a wealth of photos in the collections of Library and Archives Canada. It only made sense to share those findings with the public. She added that others in RTHS may produce a companion book about the male Dickinsons at some future date.

As many readers already know, construction began on the large house across from Manotick's grist mill in 1867.



Maureen McPhee discussing her book at Orchard View on the Rideau this past month. The room at Orchard View is an excellent venue for such a meeting.

In 1870, mill owner Moss Kent Dickinson (1822-1897) and his five children moved from Ottawa to that new home. The children were: George L. Dickinson (1848-1930), Charlotte E. T. Dickinson (1851-1929), William B. Dickinson "Willie" (1853-1930), Lydia M. Dickinson (1857-1872) and Elizabeth H. Dickinson "Bessie" (1861-1933).

Moss Kent Dickinson's wife, Elizabeth Trigge Dickinson (1821-1861) died shortly after giving birth to Bessie. An infant son, Alpheus M. Dickinson (1855-1856) also predeceased the period covered in the book. Lydia lived at Dickinson House for only two years before dying of tuberculosis at age 15.

As the oldest daughter in what became a motherless family, Charlotte spent most of her life running Dickinson House for her father and siblings, none of whom married. The youngest in the family, Bessie, seemed to have more time to engage in community activities. McPhee deduced that Bessie, in particular, seems to have been broadly skilled and informed. It can be surmised the sisters had a close relationship. In terms of personality, or the tone of their lives, it would appear that Charlotte focused on work and (perhaps) appearance. Bessie seemed more demonstrative in terms of emotions like love and joy.

Historians frequently give scant attention to the domestic side of life, or the pursuits of churches and community organizations, easily dismissed as "women's work". But McPhee agrees with British historian G.M. Trevelyan's statement: "Without social history, economic history is barren and political history is unintelligible."

The best details regarding the lives of Charlotte and Bessie came from church records (including the St James Anglican Ladies' Guild and the Women's Auxiliary) and the Women's Institute. Bessie often served on the executive board of the organizations. As was deemed proper for that period, most of the activities undertaken by those groups consisted of fund-raising for charitable or missionary causes, and constructive contributions to the comfort and welfare of others. In this same period, the First World War is credited with expanding the role of women as wider ways to support the war effort were encouraged.

If that sounds somewhat dull and sedate, keep in mind there was also a household to run and practical support for two generations of business life conducted by the male Dickinsons. Besides various mill operations to oversee, portions of Dickinson House were (at times) a general store, a post office, a telegraph office and meeting place for local organizations, including the women's clubs. Dickinson House is also believed to have served as campaign headquarters for Sir John A. MacDonald when he ran for Parliament in the Carleton Riding in 1887. There was enough going on to keep all the siblings quite busy!

The records McPhee searched included details and surprises, such as the revelation that Charlotte and Bessie attended different churches (Presbyterian and Anglican, respectively). A pleasant discovery was how cordial relations seemed to be between different denominations and congregations in the area.

Bessie lost all of her adult siblings in a short period between 1929-30. With their passing, and in ill-health herself, she relocated to Ottawa somewhere between 1930-31. She died there in 1933. The mill was sold to the Spratt

family in 1929, who purchased Dickinson House as well in 1930.

There were a number of post-talk questions. Did the Dickinsons have connections with the Orange Lodge? No connection was found. McPhee did discover evidence the Dickinsons and the Manotick Women's Institute could have taken up the cause of temperance, but declined that opportunity.

Although Charlotte and Bessie were clearly educated, literate women, it has yet to be discovered where they went to school - if they attended formal school at all. Some women of that class attended a Ladies College in Ottawa, but no such evidence was uncovered regarding the Dickinson daughters.

Did McPhee come across any signs of romance in the lives of Charlotte or Bessie? No, but that's not surprising as church records and W.I. Minutes are not where that would normally come up.

In the course of her talk, McPhee mentioned she had not envisioned writing a book as part of her retirement plans. More proof that RTHS members are lured into unexpected adventures and contributions! (Her book may be purchased at cost for \$15 at Dickinson House or at the Rideau Branch of the City Archives in North Gower, open each Tuesday.)

Thanks as well to Orchard View on the Rideau for their hospitality. Indeed, the Mill Quarter continues to serve as an important social hub for Manotick and beyond.



Maureen signing books for members and residents of Orchard View after the meeting.

Letter to Members of the Rideau Township Historical Society (RTHS)

Re: Dickinson Square

In 2013, the City of Ottawa put in place a process to divest themselves of 5 buildings in and around Dickinson Square in Manotick. Three of the heritage buildings concerned have been sold; however, there were no acceptable bids received for Dickinson House and the Carriage Shed.

As you know, Watson's Mill Manotick Inc. (WMMI) currently owns Watson's Mill and has an annual Licence of Occupation for the Carriage Shed, the Dickinson House and the surrounding green space. Through an annual Operation Plan signed by WMMI and RTHS, the Society provides heritage programming in the house and the square. This arrangement between RTHS and WMMI has been in place for a number of years and is serving the community very well. Working together, the two organizations have been able to develop a large number of social and cultural community events while also restoring Watson's Mill.

However while Watson's Mill is owned by WMMI and will not be sold, the other two remain the property of the City and can be sold. At present, there is a concern that the City of Ottawa may seek to do just that; sell Dickinson House and the Carriage Shed to outside parties who will have more commercial interests in mind rather than preservation of historic Dickinson Square.

The joint vision of WMMI and the Rideau Township Historical Society is to retain and operate all three buildings as the historical and cultural heart of Manotick. All three, the Mill, Dickinson House and the Carriage Shed are vital to the preservation of the Square as a community focal point. Without the Carriage Shed to house the WMMI's administrative staff and provide public washroom facilities, the operation of the Mill and Dickinson House and their contribution to the community will be severely curtailed.

We also seek a National Historic Site designation for the square and all three buildings are essential for this application. Divestiture of both or either of the properties will preclude any ability to obtain this designation, which would greatly enhance the future development of the Square.

Sale of the buildings would also severely limit any opportunities for legacy projects associated with Canada's 150th birthday celebration. Should the two properties be sold to a for-profit organization, the opportunity to maintain a historic square could be lost forever.

If you share these concerns, I encourage you to email Councillor Scott Moffatt at scott.moffatt@ottawa.ca and Mayor Jim Watson at jim.watson@ottawa.ca to remind them of the importance of preserving historic Dickinson Square by keeping Watson's Mill, Dickinson House and the Carriage Shed together as the historic core of Manotick.

Sincerely,

Brian Sawyer
President,
Rideau Township Historical Society

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.

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 entire staff of the City of Ottawa Archives share with deep sympathy the heavy loss to the people, traditions and history of Rideau Township with the passing of Coral Lindsay.

Through her many representations of the past, be it through published book or public address, she was very much like the Township Archives she has helped to build, achieving all by herself its primary goals of preserving local knowledge and connecting the people of the area with their past.

Now missing such an important historian and storyteller (and perhaps even yard-sale archaeologist), the past grows increasingly dim and our lives less rich.

Although only recently appointed Community Archivist, I now feel just as keenly as the Rideau Branch volunteers the lack of her gentle mirth and sparkling wit in the diminished old Town Hall at North Gower, and I cannot imagine henceforth hearing the Archives' clock strike twelve and moving to gather with the volunteers at the lunch table without fondly remembering how Coral, ever the foresighted teacher, would at the very first sound of the bell promptly call our full attention to the matter at hand so that the meal could begin before the clock fell as silent as she herself, to our great sadness, now lies.

-- Stuart Clarkson





The 2014 Fall Program

Our fall programme is described on the bookmark on the right. We have already had the presentation on the Women of Dickinson House. It was held at Orchard View on the Rideau, which is an excellent venue for such meeting. We thank the staff there for their help and for the refreshments after the meeting.

In October Brian Hull will speak on The Curriers of Manotick. Joseph Currier was of course, the partner of Moss Kent Dickinson when the mill was built.

In November Ryan Harris, an underwater archaeologist with Parks Canada, was scheduled to speak, on his work in the Arctic and the discovery of the ship "The Investigator". Unfortunately Ryan has had to cancel. We are searching for a replacement speaker and will announce the result when we find one. We are also attempting to reschedule Ryan for later as his talk will be particularly timely with the discovery of the Erebus.

In December, as always, **the Christmas party.**

<p>Rideau Township Historical Society</p> <p>Web site: rideautownshiphistory.org</p> <p>Monthly Meetings 3rd Wednesday, 7:30 Various locations</p> <p>Contacts</p> <p>President: Brian Sawyer</p> <p>Vice-president: Maureen McPhee</p> <p>Publications Available at Rideau Archives, North Gower</p> <p>Dickinson House Museum, Manotick</p> 	 <p>September 17 The Women of Dickinson House</p>  <p>October 15 The Curriers of Manotick</p>  <p>November 19 Parks Canada Discovery of The Investigator</p>
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Minutes of the Rideau Township Historical Society

September 17, 2014, Orchard View on the Rideau, Manotick, Ont.

Opening: The Rideau Township Historical Society met for the first time in the Multi-Purpose Room of the Orchard View on the Rideau residence. The 39 participants included several Orchard View residents. President Brian Sawyer called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and welcomed guests. Lucy Martin described her pleasant visit that day with Coral Lindsay who is currently in Saint-Vincent Hospital; Lucy suggested others might also enjoy visiting Coral.

Finance: Sandy McNiece, treasurer, reported that we have \$34,700 in receipts so far in 2014, and \$30,300 in expenditures. There is currently \$7,800 in the bank account, and he expects a balanced budget for the year.

Dickinson House: Maureen McPhee reported on the successful season this year, with a very successful first annual Country Fair in August, the current Gramophone exhibit, and the Victorian Tea in November. Bill Tupper enthusiastically promoted the upcoming Harvest Festival.

Membership: Susan McKellar offered to sell 2014 memberships to anyone who was interested – one person later took her up on this offer, bringing our total current membership to 87.

Other: Susan talked about the response to the W.I.N. program, which helps people write their memoirs. Members agreed with her proposal to leave this until spring, and try to promote it more at that time. She also informed members about the RTHS table planned for the coming weekend's BIFHSGO conference, and invited people to assist.

Communications: Ron Wilson reported that, as usual, the newsletter was written, compiled, edited and distributed, and that the web site is up to date, including the report on the Country Fair on the Dickinson House site.

Grants: Tom MacDonald reported that work has begun on the application for the City of Ottawa grant.

Rides: Brian Earl is coordinating rides; if anyone is willing to offer a ride, or needs a ride, they are asked to contact Brian whose phone number is in the newsletter.

Program: Ruth Wright described the fall programs. On October 15, at Knox Church Manotick, Brian Hull will talk about the Curriers of Manotick on November 19, at the Alfred Taylor Community Centre in North Gower, Ryan Harris from Parks Canada will talk about the Discovery of the HMS Investigator. The annual Christmas party is planned for December 11 at the Cornerstone Wesleyan Church in North Gower; Ruth is investigating catering possibilities so we wouldn't have to cook!

Evening Program: Ruth then introduced Maureen McPhee who described the process she went through in researching and writing her book, The Women of Dickinson House And Their Place in Manotick Village Society, 1870-1930. She was thanked by Marguerite Rogers.

Minutes: It was moved by Maureen McPhee and seconded by Brian Earl that the minutes of the May 21, 2014 meeting as published in the June Newsletter be approved. Carried. It was noted that there were no minutes for June as we went on an excursion and had no business meeting.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:20, and was followed by a social time with refreshments graciously provided by the residence.