

# The Rideau Township Historical Society

*Preserving and Promoting local history for the former Rideau Township*

## October 2018 Newsletter

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

### ***The October Meeting***

**Date:** Wednesday October 17  
**Time:** 7:30 p.m.  
**Place:** Harry Craig Community Centre  
6045 Prince of Wales  
Carsonby.



### ***Speaker:***

***Rick Henderson, author***

### ***Subject:***

***Walking in the Footsteps of  
Philemon Wright***

The book "Walking in the Footsteps of Philemon Wright" was authored by his 4x great-grandson Rick Henderson.

Philemon Wright was the pioneer of the first settlement in Canada's National Capital.

His settlement, carved out of the wilderness of Lower Canada in 1800, is truly emblematic of Canada's early development. His dreams, his successes and his failures are captured in this intimate snapshot of the man and his family.

### ***The Tea That Almost Wasn't***

On September 22, Dickinson House was to host a Silver Tea, featuring our volunteers' silver tea services along with our usual Victorian Tea treats.

Due to the major storm of the night before and the resulting power outage, the tea had to be cancelled. Many of our planned guests were able to switch their tickets to our upcoming Women's Day Tea scheduled for November 3, but for those who couldn't, we held a mini Silver Tea in the dining room on September 29. Our guests were very appreciative and a lovely time was had by all.



*The dining room at Dickinson House set up for the Silver Tea. On the right, one of the beautiful tea services used in the event*



### ***Dickinson House***

Note that Dickinson House is open only on weekends until December 2nd. There are 2 Victorian Teas scheduled for the fall,

The first one was sold out but there are still tickets available for the next one on Nov. 3. There was a Harvest Festival on October 6, and a Xmas reading is scheduled for December 9th with possibly a dinner at The Miller's Oven afterwards.

## ***RTHS September Presentation***

***Article by Peter Satterly***

***Photos by Maureen McPhee***

This report is about the meeting of the Rideau Township Historical Society at the Community Hall at Burritt's Rapids on Wednesday, Sept. 19, 2018

The speaker was Claire Smith, a former equestrian injured during a jump race in England. She spoke about her passion for horses and the aftermath of her accident.

Claire grew up in the Burritt's Rapids area, on the south shore of the Rideau River. She had a real passion for horses, even at a very young age. At 7 years old, she had her first pony, Cricket. At a very early age, she was already doing cross country horse riding and entering events at local fairs.



The sports she knew and loved continued to be horseback riding, jumping and racing.

She progressed into local competitions, including Bromont, QC., to the United States, eg. Kentucky, and ultimately going on the competitions in England. She went on to explain to us about how horse racing/jumping contests are run. She told us that the rider gets to walk the course and see where the jumps are, etc. as often as he/she wants, but that the horse does not see the course until it is actually beginning the competition.

On the fateful day, September 15, 1997, she was the only Canadian competitor in a horse jumping contest in Nottingham, England. She had walked the course and knew it. As she started in this competition, she and her horse were navigating the course when they came to one jump and the horse hesitated. She was catapulted over the horse and over the jump, landing on her head. She sustained multiple injuries which left her with a severe head injury, including major damage to her brain. She was taken to the hospital at Nottingham.

She was diagnosed with post traumatic amnesia as she remembered nothing about the accident. By the end of October, she was back in Canada and in the Ottawa Hospital where she continued to recover physically. By mid-January, she was beginning to get her memory back. She then proceeded to St. Vincent's Hospital, which was the only hospital dealing with head/brain rehabilitation. She was there from mid January to the end of March.

When she was discharged, she went to North Carolina with her horse, Phoenix. She went, hoping to be jumping again, but found that she could not, even after 2 years.

She told us that she wrote her book as a way of evaluating her enormous loss. Who was she? She had multiple identities. She wanted to evaluate her struggles with identity, to identify with others who had had incredible injuries.

Like many people with physical handicaps she was still a great goal-oriented person. In just 2 years after injury, she entered a Masters program at Carleton University and her Masters thesis was *Creative Rehabilitation and Self Esteem*, which she finished in the spring of 2004. In the fall, she entered her PhD program. Her thesis: *Journeys of Identity Construction after Traumatic Brain Injury: Athletes Perform their Stories of Healing*.

Speaking about her book, she told us that she wrote the book to evaluate her enormous loss. Who was she? She had multiple identities. Her whole life had been focussed on horse riding/jumping and now, with these serious injuries, she was left to carve out a new identity.

Her message to the meeting was:

- *Choose the life you will live so it gives you opportunity to choose life you will lead;*
- *No-one can decide that you will be happy except you.*

She discovered that she didn't need horses to have an identity.



*The September meeting was well attended (60) as the speaker is from the area. Thanks to the programme committee for thinking of that.*

# Rideau Township Historical Society

Wednesday, October 17<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 p.m.

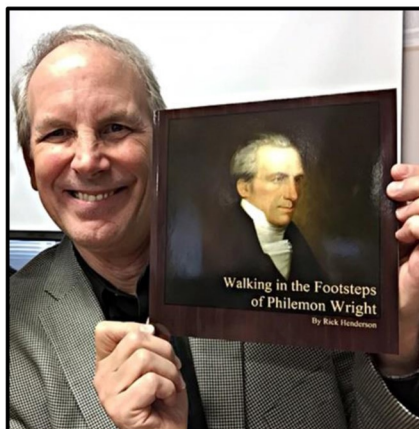
Carsonby Hall,

6045 Prince of Wales, Carsonby

## “WALKING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF PHILEMON WRIGHT”



*Portrait by John James*



*Photo provided by the author*

Guest Speaker

**Rick Henderson**

is a direct descendent of  
Philemon Wright,  
founder of Hull

*“Walking in the Footsteps of Philemon Wright”*  
will be available for sale on October 17<sup>th</sup>.

## *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.

### *A Poet of the Land*

*Article by Stuart Clarkson*

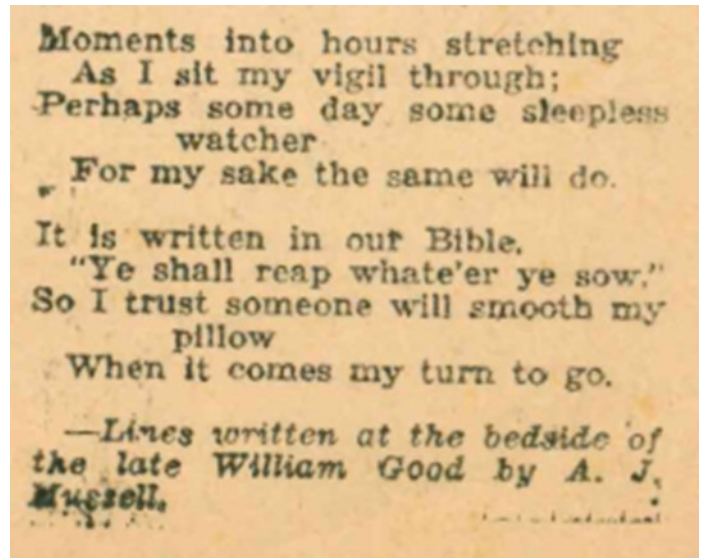
As the summer of 1932 got underway, 82-year-old William Good lay on his deathbed at his farm on the Fourth Line in North Gower Township. He had been suffering for over a year with cystitis. Keeping vigil beside him was a man half his age, another farmer who was quietly writing an elegy to give a sense of the character of the ailing man and to muse on his own mortality:

*His name has ne'er been mentioned  
Among the famous of the land;  
You can tell he's been no shirker  
By the callous on his hand.*

The poet who crafted these verses was Arthur Joseph Mussell. He had been born in Osgoode Township on 24 May 1889 to Solomon Mussell and Maria Ann Vaughan. His elder sister Luella Mussell had married John Good, the dying man's son. From the tenor of this poem, it is no surprise that Arthur was active in the Bible Society at the Anglican Church in Kars. He was also a member of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows and served as chairman of the Carleton County Board of Trustees and Rate-payers.

Art continued with poetry as well. Well into his eighties, he put together fifty of his poems in a book entitled *Fond Memories*, printed by Waterway Press of Brockville in 1975. In the same way that his earlier poem had captured the character of William Good, his down-to-earth book of poems conveys to us now a lot about what life was like in south Carleton County, and about Mussell himself.

His verses portray personal memories from life growing up on the farm or working in lumber shanties, like the time his younger brother was almost stepped on by Old Fred the colt. He also recorded local lore that he claimed to



have known from neighbours, like the story of the Kemptville drover, whose lost \$10 bill was found in the snow stuck under his horse's shoe.

When it was his own "turn to go" in 1976, more than forty years after composing his bedside poem, Art Mussell was buried not far from William Good in Elmview Cemetery, Kars. But his poetry is still with us. The ten-verse poem was at some point set in type and printed as a small handbill on thin newsprint, and a copy was deposited in Rideau Branch among the Cryderman family papers.

Nellie Bell's copy of Mussell's anthology *Fond Memories*, signed simply "AJ," is in the Branch Reading Room -- and in it is to be found one last thought from Art Mussell: "*Grandad's dearest wish: What wouldn't I give to be one half as wonderful as my grand children thought I was when they were small or only one half as stupid as they as teenagers think I now am.*"

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