

The Rideau Township Historical Society

Preserving and Promoting local history for the former Rideau Township

September 2014 Newsletter

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

The September Meeting

Date: September 17, 2014

Time: 7:30 p.m.
Orchard View on the Rideau
1145 Bridge Street
Manotick, ON



Bring a Friend.

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

The Speaker

Maureen McPhee, Vice President of the Rideau Township Historical Society

Topic

Maureen will speak about her book, *The Women of Dickinson House*.

Moss Kent Dickinson and his 5 children lived in Manotick from 1870 to 1930. His wife had died of complications during childbirth. Maureen's book focusses on his daughters, Charlotte and Elizabeth. His third daughter, Lydia, died of consumption at the age of 15.

Unpublished sources suggest that Charlotte and Elizabeth Dickinson probably had a close relationship. Since Elizabeth, who was generally known as Bessie, lost her mother at the age of five months, it seems likely that Charlotte, who was ten years older, would have become somewhat of a replacement mother. But they also had shared friends, as demonstrated by their 1879 entries in the autograph book of Matilda Mansfield.

The book follows the lives of Charlotte and Bessie and in doing so paints a picture of the life of women in Manotick over that 60 year period.

This Month

1. The June Excursion
2. The Country Fair
3. News from the Rideau Archives
4. The Dickinson House
5. The Victorian tea and fashion show
6. Ottawa-Carleton Plowing Matches
7. RTHS Scholarships.

Its not all over at the Dickinson House

The Country Fair was a great success and due to the size of that project may seem to have capped off the 2014 summer season.

We'll don't be fooled. There is still much to see and experience at the house and on the front lawn. For instance we have the:

Gramophone Exhibit, Harvest Festival, Women's Day Victorian Tea, Local Heroes of the Great War, and Heritage Christmas Crafts.

The students have now gone back to school so we are only open on weekends and holidays, 11 a.m. to 4:p.m. Visit us on those days right through the fall and enjoy the many things we have planned for you.



Photo by Greg Newton

RTHS volunteers at the Country Fair

June Field Trip: Almonte, Past and Present

Article and photos by Lucy Martin

If it's June it must be time to board a bus and see more heritage-related sights. Twenty-eight of us participated in that annual exercise, this time to a number of worthwhile attractions in Almonte.

Once again, Brenda Rybiak provided cheerful driving as our group gathered at the Client Centre on Roger Stevens Drive. The day looked fair, but that proved deceptive. Conditions became cool enough to wear jackets with real appreciation.

Our first stop included a face familiar to Archive volunteers. Former summer hire Sarah Chisholm is now the Project Coordinator at the North Lanark Regional Museum. She and fellow staffer, Stuart Douglas, led us through diverse displays, which include:

- remembering the Almonte train accident of 1942
- toys and games of Mississippi Mills
- local history displays
- artifacts from life and work of yesteryear
- a pioneer cabin, circa 1850



Pioneer cabin at the North Lanark Regional Museum

There was pretty much something of interest for all. A number of the toys on display brought back fond memories. The pioneer cabin reminded the viewer of many modern comforts we sometimes take for granted.

Our next stop was the Mississippi Valley Textile Museum, where we were welcomed by Administrative Assistant Mathew Moxley. The Museum depicts Almonte's history as a mill town and showcases today's focus on fiber arts and crafts.

The original factory of the Rosamond Woolen Company has been converted into attractive private condominiums, near a scenic spillway. The Museum is sited in what had

been an annex for company brass and office staff. Rosamond Woolen operated from 1866 to 1985. At its peak, it was among the largest woolen mills in Canada, employing 400 of the town's 3,000 people.

The spacious ground floor includes the front office, an unusually tasteful gift shop (full of high-quality yarn and crafted items) and the Norah Rosamond Hughes Gallery, where changing exhibits are staged. June's showcase was: "A Collaboration" featuring weaving and fabric art by Jean Down, Pattie Dolan and Roberta Murrant.



Wool from many animals was used in the mill

The second floor's permanent display is called the "Fabric of a Small Town". Sequenced stations demonstrate taking wool from various animals to different end products. Attention is also paid to social history: what living and working in Almonte was like as a mill worker. That might be summed up as long hours in noisy, tedious — and sometimes dangerous — conditions, for very modest pay.

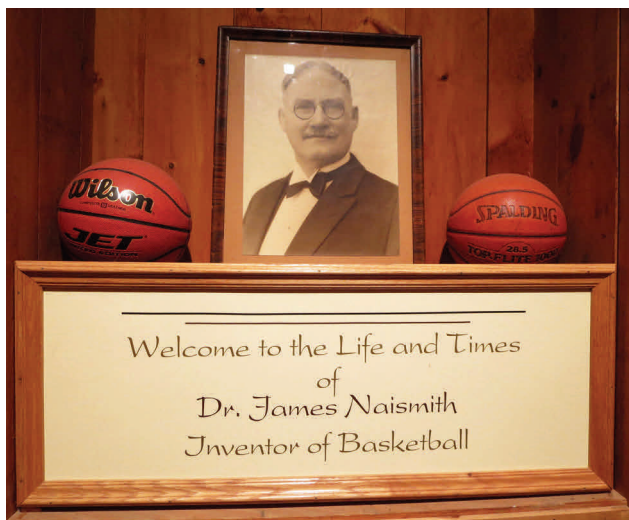
Please note the Museum is hosting their 19th Annual Fibrefest Sept 13-14. More info at:

http://mvtm.ca/mvtm/?page_id=2675

For lunch we gathered at the Barley Mow, housed in yet another lovely stone building, so typical of Almonte's core. (Full marks to Rybiak for figuring out how to get us there in a somewhat confusing section of streets.) In warmer weather, the patio would offer an idyllic view. Instead we huddled inside, grateful to be out of the elements. The meal was devoured with gusto.

Our last stop combined multiple attractions. The Mill of Kintail Conservation Area is well worth seeing in and of itself. Within the mill is a small, but lovely gallery, detailing the art of Dr. Robert Tait McKenzie (1867-1938) a renaissance man of many talents. The basement is devoted to displays on the life and contributions of another Almonte

native son, Dr. James Naismith (1861-1939) the inventor of basketball.



As described in this excerpt about "the joy of effort", from the Virtual Museum.ca, both men hailed from Ramsay Township (now Mississippi Mills):

"When he was only three or four years old Robert would meet James Naismith at the farm of Robert Young. They would remain friends their entire lives. McKenzie spent a good deal of his childhood and youth on the Young farm.

"On the farm the spirit of competition found its outlet in the daily task of the harvest field and in them Jim Naismith, the eldest, was the hero. Our heroes were such men who could make their team of horses pull a load where another had failed, who took pride in lifting the heavy end of the log, who could tame a wild colt, run a straight furrow with his plow, handle a canoe, shoot straight, or make a tree fall where he wanted it to lie."

McKenzie went on to be a noted athlete, physician, surgeon, soldier, philosopher and sculptor. He and his wife, poet and musician Ethel O'Neil, bought the debilitated mill in 1932 and restored it to striking beauty as a summer home and artist's retreat. Their spirit of inspired hospitality

continues with the site's current role, as host to many local events and activities.



There is an excellent display of the sculptures of Robert Tait McKenzie in the Mill of Kintail.

For his part, Naismith took a degree in physical education at McGill before moving to the U.S., where he invented basketball at a YMCA in 1891, as a way to combat being cooped-up in winter. (Some concepts of basketball are said to be inspired by "duck on a rock" a tossing game played in the schoolyard of Naismith's childhood.)

Naismith spent most of his adult life in America as an educator, coach, athletic director, minister and military chaplain, eventually taking up U.S. citizenship. This helps explain why, growing up in the U.S., I never heard that the inventor of basketball was Canadian. Both nations are happy to claim his accomplishment!

Having lived in this region for 15 years now, it is embarrassing to admit that was my first visit to the Mill of Kintail - proving yet again the value of RTHS exploratory expeditions. If you've never been to these attractions, or have not gone in some time, they are well worth seeking out.

Thanks to Ruth Wright for making trip arrangements and organizing a very successful day. We hope to see you on next June's adventure of exploration and appreciation.

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 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.

Dickinson House Heritage Country Fair

Article and photos by Maureen McPhee

There was something for everyone at the Dickinson House Heritage Country Fair held at the museum on Saturday, August 30. Making use of both Dickinson House and the surrounding grounds of historic Dickinson Square, the fair sought to recreate events similar to those that took place in Manotick in time past.



Participants in the flower show holding their entries for the "Afternoon Tea" class. From left to right, Alison Whitlock, Manotick Horticultural Society President, Wilma Gerroir, Flower Show Convener, and show entrants Heather Flynn, Nicole Tomkins and Lee Davies.

Features of the event included a beautiful Flower and Vegetable Show organized by the Manotick Horticultural Society and an Art Contest staged in partnership with the Manotick Art Association.

Sheila King took home the prize for the best artistic rendering of a Manotick scene, and Jane Anderson was awarded the ribbon for Best in Show at the flower and vegetable display.



Best in Flower Show by Jane Anderson

While the size of the fair site would not allow the livestock shows typical at country fairs, animals played a starring role in both the Family Dog Show, won by "Dozer", and the very popular Horse and Carriage Rides.

The day was rounded out with an old-fashioned photo booth where guests could dress in period costume, a silent auction baking contest, food vendors, a lemonade stand, heritage games and an afternoon full of traditional music concerts, with even a little dancing. The event was carried out in full partnership with the Manotick Farmers'



The dog show provided a variety of interesting and well behaved dogs, that were enjoyed by all dog lovers. The winner was "Dozer" shown here on the far left.



The ever popular horse and carriage rides once again were a hit with the visitors to the square.

Market which remained open throughout the day providing food and refreshments for everyone.

We were blessed with perfect weather for this inaugural event and given the very positive response and the smiling faces all around, the Heritage Country Fair is very likely to become an annual event.



Scott Cameron, Brandon Kassis and many other volunteers assisted to make the Fair happen. Our thanks also to the people in Manotick and beyond who visited the Fair and made it such a success.

Awarding of the RTHS Annual Scholarships for 2014

The Rideau Township Historical Society awards a scholarship of \$250 to a student at St Mark High School and one to a student at South Carleton High School. The recipients are selected by each school. The presentations were made by Brandon Kassis for South Carleton and Brian Sawyer for St. Mark. Their reports are given below.

It was an honour to represent the RTHS at the South Carleton High School award ceremony and to present Liam Wadsworth with the \$250 scholarship. Accepted into the University of Toronto, Liam is heading into the field of archaeology, in which I am sure he will thrive.

The award ceremony was a new and unique experience for myself as well as everyone else present as it was the first annual award specific ceremony for the high school. In years past the awards were presented to the students in the presence of all graduates at a large ceremony. This year however, the school decided upon having a smaller more personal award ceremony early in the afternoon and the major graduation ceremony later on in the day.

It was a pleasurable event held at St. Phillips Church in Richmond. With about thirty students in attendance with their parents the event had a very personal feeling to it. After the awards were presented and the presenters went back to the tables of the respective students we were served with desserts as well as tea and coffee. In the end I believe that the ceremony was quite the success. Liam is a gentleman and a top scholar, winning numerous awards at the event, and I am sure that he will go far in this world.

Brandon Kassis

The St. Mark scholarship was given to Kristina Pantalone at the 2014 Graduation Commencement Ceremony on June 26. It was held at the Metropolitan Bible Church, a spectacular location, and was well organized by the school. Kristina has completed her history courses in French Immersion Canadian History and grade 12 International History.

She hopes to attend Ryerson University, Toronto to study communications, with a history minor. She said she has been interested in history from the age of 8 and this has strengthened with time as can be seen from the comment quoted below of the importance of History.

"The study of history is important for many reasons. Firstly, the history of generations past prepares the future generations and better equips them for struggles to come. We learn from our previous mistakes and take care not to make the same ones"

Brian Sawyer

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 North Gower—Kars Discovery Tour is being held this year on September 13th and 14th. Number 5 on the tour is the Rideau Township Branch of the City of Ottawa Archives.

The Rideau Branch is located at 6581 Fourth Line Road and will be open both days from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The main display at this time is of the cheese factories of the former Rideau Township. Included in the displays are pictures of the factories at various times in the past, information on the making of cheese, and of the cheese making business.

See also our books that are for sale and the vault in which our files are stored.



Discover the hospitality of rural south Ottawa – North Gower/ Kars area

Enjoy the scenery of farms, forests and the Rideau, sample award winning restaurants, and learn about the diverse art and farm products that come from the area. Visit studios where artists work - many will be doing demos, walk in a pumpkin patch, pat an alpaca or take in a bit of history. All in a day - just a half-hour drive from downtown Ottawa!

- Free Admission
- Enter a Draw to win a Gift Certificate
- Donations accepted in support of the North Gower Food Bank.

The 2014 Fall Program





Ruth Wright has been working on the fall program and would like to present you with the result.

In September Maureen McPhee, author of RTHS book, "*The Women of Dickinson House*", will speak about the book and its preparation.

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, will make a presentation on his work in the Arctic and the discovery of the ship "The Investigator"

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

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| <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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Ottawa-Carleton Plowing Matches a brief history

G.M. & W.M. Tupper, August 2014

The first recorded local plowing match was held in Bytown (Ottawa) in 1852 as part of the Carleton County Agriculture Society's annual exhibition. These early matches provided the plowmen with the opportunity to display their plowing skills, enjoy a family outing with friends and neighbours, and to learn about new equipment either imported from Europe or crafted by local blacksmiths. Prior to 1852 early matches were held in conjunction with the Provincial Exhibition.

In the 1880s the Province of Ontario was divided into five sections to host Provincial Matches on a rotational basis. Ottawa hosted one such match at the Experimental Farm in 1900. In 1924 the Marlborough-North Gower Plowman's Association was formed. This area would become a hotbed of plowing competition. This Township organization grew into the present Ottawa-Carleton Plowman's Association. These organizations have hosted annual plowing matches since 1924, and provide the foundation for the 2014 competition and match.

The Provincial Matches noted above eventually led to the formation of the Ontario Plowman's Association. They assumed responsibility for hosting the Provincial Matches which are held annually across the Province. These matches have become known as International Plowing Matches. Ottawa-Carleton has hosted four such matches in 1932, 1952, 1983, and 2001. To give the reader some feel for the magnitude of the International Plowing Matches some 120,000 paid visitors attended the 1983 Match. Each of these matches have left a lasting legacy in the community. For instance the 1983 Match resulted in the creation of endowment funds at Kemptville College and Guelph University to provide scholarships and bursaries for local students in agriculture and related subjects. It should be noted that in the autumn of 1918 Ottawa was scheduled to host its first International Match. That Match was cancelled the day before it was scheduled to open by the Mayor of Ottawa and the Federal Minister of Agriculture because of the threat of the flu epidemic.

Ottawa-Carleton, known as a hotbed for competitive plowing, has produced two world plowing champions. In 1952 Algie Wallace won the World Horse Plowing Championship, and in 1953 and 1954 Colin Thomson won the World Contour Tractor Plowing Championship. Both were neighbours.

Over the years persons from Ottawa-Carleton have contributed enormously to the development of competitive plowing not only locally, but in Ontario and at the National and International level by providing Presidents, Directors, Judges, and Stewards.

In 1952 the organizers created a "VIP" plowing class. It began when then Mayor Charlotte Whitten issued a challenge to all Mayors in Ontario to compete against her. Nine responded. Eight competed. This "VIP" class continues locally as one our most significant events.

In 1960 the Ontario Plowman's Association initiated a "Queen of the Furrow" competition to act as ambassador for the Association. In 1977 the Ottawa-Carleton Plowman's Association held their first Queen of the Furrow competition and have done so annually since then. These young women have been wonderful Ambassadors for our Association. In 1988 Jill Patterson of Metcalfe became the Ontario Queen of the Furrow.

The Victorian Tea & Fashion Show

A heritage Victorian tea and fashion show was held at Dickinson House and Knox Presbyterian Church as part of the RTHS summer program. Both were well attended and considered a success.

The Victorian tea was hosted in the house, serving a variety of of baked goods along with the tea. All the tickets were sold in advance. The food was much enjoyed. The event was organized and overseen by Melanie Hayes. Our thanks to Melanie.

The fashion show was held in the basement of Knox Presbyterian Church. It was organized by Barb Barkley. Not only did she organize it but she also made most of the costumes, coordinated the outfits and participated as a model. Our thanks also to Barb.

The surrounding pictures are from the tea and fashion show.



Photos by Claudette Avery

Bill Tupper escorting Barb Barkley on the "runway" at the fashion show.

Melanie Hayes organized and looked after the tea.



Summer students and volunteers helped out and modelled at the Victorian tea and fashion show.

