



Rideau Township Historical Society

Newsletter

April
2021

Preserving and Promoting Local History for the Former Rideau Township

March Meeting Details

Rideau Township Historical Society

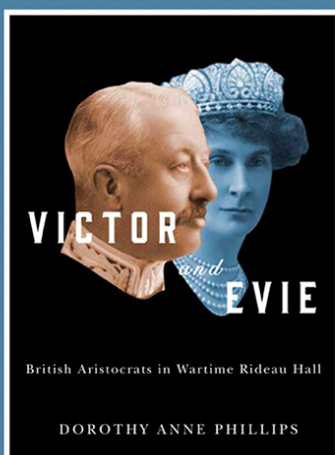
Presents

Dorothy Anne Phillips

Author of

Victor & Evie: British Aristocrats in Wartime Rideau Hall

Join us as Dorothy Anne Phillips shares the story of a remarkable couple: the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, the 11th Governor General of Canada and his wife, who served through 5 tumultuous years, from 1916 to 1921.



"No Governor General has come with a more comprehensive grasp of public questions as they touch not only this country and the United Kingdom, but the whole Empire."

Sir Robert Borden
Prime Minister of Canada
1911 ~ 1920

Join Us Via ZOOM
April 21st, 7:30 p.m.

To register
or for more information:
rideautwphistory@gmail.com



Preserving and Promoting Local History
for the former Rideau Township



Update on Dickinson House Facelift

Brian Earl

The external restoration of Dickinson House is proceeding as planned. The house is surrounded by scaffolding to allow access to all parts of the exterior. The entire structure has been wrapped in netting to keep the flakes of old paint from blowing around the neighbourhood.

The team from Madison Construction is starting at the top level to remove and replace rotted siding and trim and to scrape away damaged paint. Smaller areas of siding damage will be patched using wood recovered from the boards removed from the larger damaged areas. The larger areas will be covered with new hard Southern pine siding. The entire building will be repainted.

Meanwhile, the repair and rebuilding of the storm windows, shutters and exterior doors is underway at the company workshops. The house is still accessible for preparations in anticipation of opening in mid-May.



Membership Fees Reminder

Owen Cooke

A further reminder that we are now well into our 2021 program year and we still have RTHS membership fees outstanding. We have made it easier to pay this year, through e-transfer. Details on that or on how to pay by cheque and mail are on the membership form at the end of the newsletter. Receipts for paid memberships will be issued when we can again meet face-to-face.

RTHS on Social Media

Did you know that both RTHS and Dickinson House (DH) are active on Facebook (FB?) Beginning in 2013 (DH) and 2016 (RTHS) we have set up and maintained Facebook "Pages" on which we "Post" information, articles and photos we feel will interest visitors to our Pages. Over the years the

number of “Followers” (those who regularly receive our FB “Posts”) of both FB pages have grown continuously, and today stand at 204 (DH) and 562 (RTHS). While these are not huge numbers in the broader world of Facebook, they represent continuous and significant growth for a small Historical Society.

It is also worth noting that many of our individual FB Posts “Reach” (a FB term for the number of screens – desktop, laptop, tablet or mobile – on which a Post is viewed) much wider audiences. For example, a recent Dickinson House Post about the current renovations to the exterior of Dickinson House “Reached” 2,300 screens, while a March 30th RTHS post of a 1949 Ottawa Journal article describing the new suburb of Manotick reached 3,500 screens! Now, that’s pretty cool!



Your RTHS Executive and Communications Committees fully recognize the importance of Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) for connecting with and remaining relevant to Society members, potential members, as well as the public in general. It is, however, a labour-intensive task which, it should be noted, is undertaken entirely by Society volunteers.

In addition to our Facebook presence described above, RTHS also has Twitter and Instagram accounts, but unfortunately, we have not been able to take full advantage of the potential of these platforms for want of volunteers. If you, or someone you know would be interested in lending a hand in this interesting and important aspect of the Society’s endeavors, we’d love to hear from you. You can send us a Message through either of our Facebook Pages, links to which can be found at the end of this newsletter.

Generous Donation to Dickinson House

Debra Buffett-Riddell, a recent and welcome addition to the Dickinson House Committee has generously donated two heritage-appropriate light fixtures to Dickinson House in memory of long-time Manotick resident Ralph Trafford.

Debra’s tribute to Ralph Trafford, and a picture of one of the light fixtures (the two are identical) follows:

When Ralph Trafford, his wife Alice, their four children and their dog Opey arrived in 1965 to take up residence at their new home on Bankfield Road, the house faced a dirt road and cows grazing in the fields. Manotick was their home for more than 50 years. Ralph’s involvement in the community included over 40

years with the Manotick Kiwanis, and later, the Probus Club and the Manotick Legion.

Born in New Brunswick in 1919, Ralph joined the Canadian Army in January 1941. He was part of the Royal Canadian Artillery, Canadian Army, Survey Unit, and he served in the south of England throughout the Second World War. Ralph was a talented musician who loved entertaining. From the age of 16, he played in dance bands, including during his war service, to entertain the troops. Upon his return from overseas, Ralph finished his university education, graduated and worked as a chemical engineer until 1984.

Ralph died in his 100th year, on December 23, 2018. It is an honour to make this memory donation to Dickinson House in Ralph’s name. He is greatly missed”



Report on February’s Special Presentation

The River Road Kellys: A Story of Hard Work, Love, Real Estate and Good Luck

On March 17th, 28 lucky souls were fortunate to meet Theresa Kelly, of the River Road Kellys, who shared with us the story of her family. Ms Kelly held our rapt attention on zoom for the better part of 30 minutes and patiently answered our questions in a lively Q & A.



The story begins in Ireland, on the Loftus Estate, County Kilkenny, Ireland, in 1802, when young William Kelly is born. By 1822, a mere twenty year old has done the long walk, and the “living wake” to New Ross, where he embarks on the voyage to Quebec and the New World, never to see the home of his birth again.

By 1827 he was ready to bring a bride to Upper Canada, and he was married to Margaret Kilfoy (Kilfoyle) in the Quebec City Cathedral in October of that year. And then their adventures began.

William, who was literate and had a trade, worked for Philemon Wright for five years. For reasons unknown, he quit his employment with Wright, and signed on as a stone cutter for the building of the Rideau Canal in 1827. By 1837 he had saved enough money to buy his first property, where Vernon is today.

Ms Kelly, who is a retired high school English teacher and academic coach for our own Ottawa 67's, was careful to contextualize William's achievements. Until 1829 education of Catholics was forbidden in Ireland. As any good storyteller would, Ms. Kelly paused to let that sink in.

How did William manage to learn to read and write, (beautifully - we have samples of his handwriting) and how did he learn his trade? You had to be there to hear the speculation!

Between 1837 and 1850, William and Margaret had bought and sold several properties, moving from Vernon to the River Road, where he bought his final property in November 1850. (Lot 17, Concession 1, a parcel of 44 acres). William died in 1870, and is buried in St. Brigid's cemetery, along with many other Kellys.

William and Margaret had four children: Patrick, John, David and Mary. We know very little about Mary, except that she inherited almost nothing on her father's death. John died in 1866, and the river road properties (there were two by 1870) were willed to Patrick and David.

Ms. Kelly is descended from Patrick Kelly and Catherine McEvoy. Patrick and Catherine had had thirteen children, among them *John*, who married Teresa Daly, our own Ms Kelly's very spirited grandmother! The house that Ms Kelly lives in now was built as a cottage for Mrs. Daly in 1932, not the original Patrick/Catherine house, which is no longer in the Kelly family.

John Kelly and his wife Teresa had 13 children, and number 9 was Ms Kelly's father Dominic, who married Mary Quigley and they were blessed with our own Ms Kelly!

Theresa's memories of growing up on River Road centre on religion, education and the family and larger community. The family were active parishioners of St. Brigid's Church,

and the “new” part of the cemetery is on land donated by the Kelly family.

The Kellys were also instrumental in the establishment and maintenance of the first Separate School in Osgoode TWP, which was built in 1874, and expanded in 1902 to a larger one room schoolhouse. Theresa's memories of this school, and of the community commitment to Catholic education are personal, as both her parents were teachers. Mary Kelly, Theresa's mother, taught in that very school for many years, until our own Ms. Kelly graduated. This was unusual in those days, as most female teachers were asked to retire when they got married. This writer thinks that Theresa is too modest on her mom's behalf to say that Mrs. Kelly was asked to first fill in and then stay on because she was a great teacher!

Other memories revolved around the neighbourliness of the families on the River Road. Although by tradition most Catholic and Protestant families did not socialize, when there was a need everybody pitched in. Ms Kelly's father Dominic had a wonderful memory of his first “bee” and the very good advice he was given by his uncle, for the mealtime that came at the end of the work. “Try to sit near the end of the table. If you sit in the middle, you will spend most of your time passing food to the others.” Great advice for anyone!

If you drive up and down the River Road today, you will find 18 Kelly households, all descendants of the remarkable William Kelly, born just two years into the 19th century in Kilkenny Ireland.



While Ms. Kelly drew on many of her own memories and family sources, there are two texts available for loan at the North Gower Archives: **The William Kelly Story (1802-1870)** by Lorne Kelly, and the parishioners of St. Brigid's Church and St. John the Evangelist,

who created the wonderful church history entitled **150th Anniversary - 1854-2004**. You could borrow them if you wanted to know more - I certainly did!

Thank you, Ms Theresa Kelly, and we look forward to seeing you again on the River Road!

From the Rideau Archives

Each month RTHS is pleased to include a column highlighting the collections and resources at our community's heritage hub, the Rideau Archives.

Gifts from China

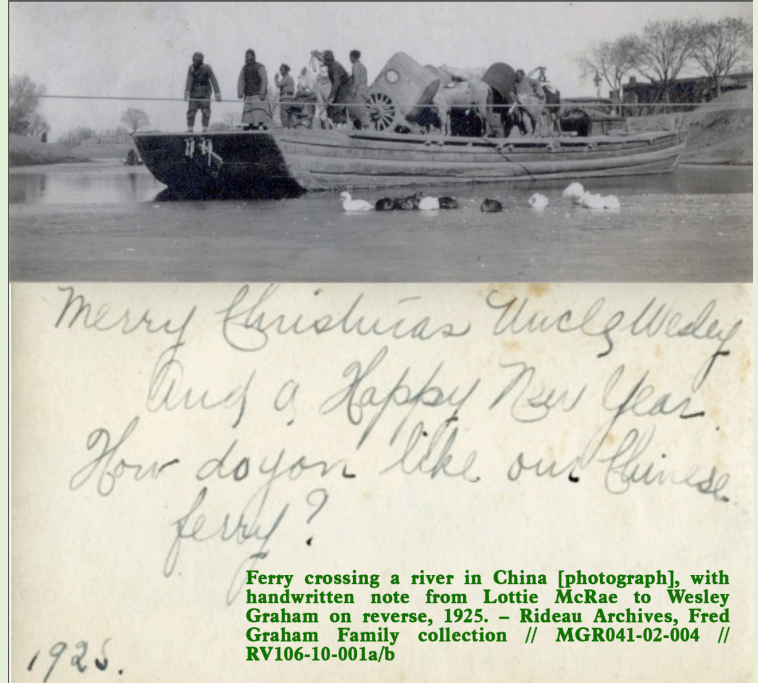
Lydia Trimble's successful Hwa Nan College (the subject of last month's article) was just gaining momentum when another link between North Gower and China was established through the missionary work of Lottie Susannah McRae.

Like her earlier counterpart, who had Trimble, Hill, and Brownlee ancestors, Lottie McRae represented several intermarried families with roots along the Cavan-Fermanagh border in Ireland who came to settle in Marlborough and North Gower Townships – in her case, Moffatts, Craigs, and Grahams. But McRae herself was born, in April 1891, in Carberry, Manitoba. Her mother Lelia Bertha Moffatt had left North Gower with her parents William Moffatt and Ann Craig and migrated to western Canada. Lottie began teaching school in 1910 in a town called Rivers, Manitoba, but her family thereafter resettled in an expanding Vancouver. McRae graduated from normal school in British Columbia in 1912, following this up with a first-class teaching certificate.

But a treasured childhood memory – seeing Chinese traditional clothing depicted in a school geography book – prompted McRae to depart from Vancouver in December 1918, with only a few weeks' preparation, to begin teaching with the Canadian Methodist Mission in China's Sichuan province. Arriving in Shanghai, her party made it only as far as Yichang before being forced by low water levels to wait three months. She did not reach her destination, Jiading, until the end of May, five months after leaving Canada. As with Trimble, Lottie's new career was to include quite a few oceanic crossings, including a voyage in April 1924 from Shanghai to Vancouver aboard the *Empress of Russia*. During this furlough, she went to Gregg, Manitoba to visit relatives there.

Lottie returned to China later in 1925 and seems to have stopped off at the Methodist Episcopal Church's Christian Book Room in Shanghai on her way to purchase Christmas gifts. A package including photographs of daily life in China soon came to her relatives in North Gower, with one photograph addressed to her cousin Archie Graham, son of her aunt Priscilla Moffatt and husband William James Graham. Another was for "Uncle Wesley" Graham, not in fact her uncle but brother of her uncle William Graham – though Wesley Graham was the first cousin of Lottie's

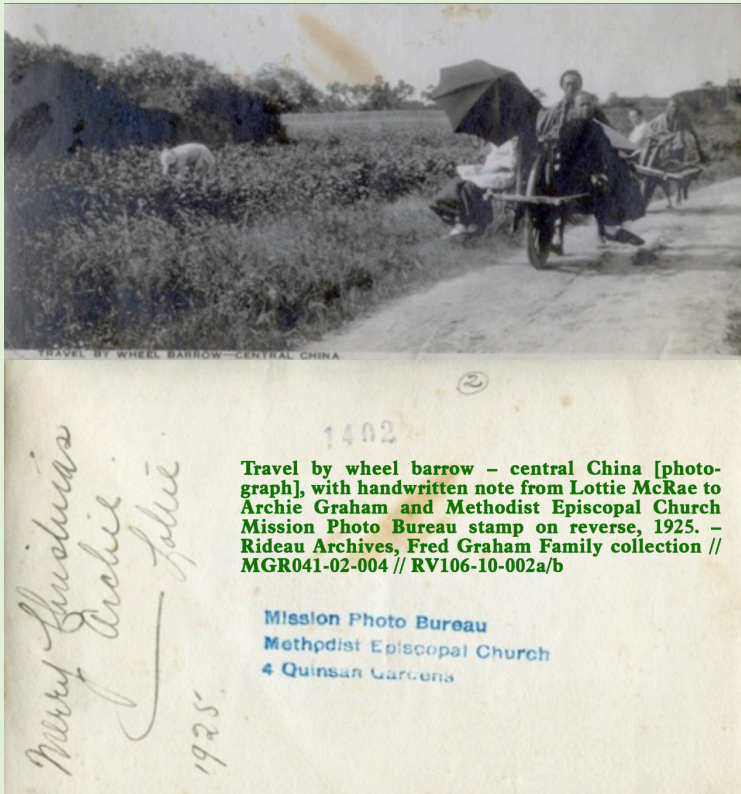
grandfather William Moffatt too! Her connection back to North Gower was deeply layered.



That same year had seen Church Union in Canada, which brought her work under the control of the newly designated United Church Mission. On her return in 1925, she was one of thirty missionaries in Sichuan, the new church's largest mission. Very soon, however, their work was challenged by political turmoil due to the uprising of protectionist forces, the start of the Nationalist Revolution, also called the Chinese Civil War. Most missionaries in Jiading, including McRae, fled to Shanghai and then made her way to Hong Kong, where the *Empress of Asia* set sail in March 1927, headed to Vancouver with many other displaced missionaries.

Unlike some, who abandoned their missions, McRae returned to China, in 1930 transferring from Jiading to Rongxian, also located in Sichuan. By June 1936, there were plans for her to return to Canada yet again, this time accompanied by Pearl Chiang, who was headed to Toronto to pursue post-graduate study. Similar to Lydia Trimble's experiences, McRae saw a shift in the emphasis of her mission work from primary education to more advanced schooling, though always underlying this was the goal of attracting converts to Christianity. During this furlough, McRae very probably paid a visit to the Grahams in North Gower, since she gave a talk in April 1937 to the Merivale-City View Women's Missionary Society.

Once more back in China the next year, McRae was reported to be ill, but she remained committed to her mission. She wrote for the *West China Missionary News*, including "My Temptations" for its December 1939 issue and "East Gate Chapel, Chengtu" for the May-June 1941 issue.



In 1942 (ironically, the same year that Lydia Trimble died in China), Lottie left for Canada on early furlough due to health concerns. It was at this time, during the Second World War, that Japan was bombing the areas around Chongqing in preparation for an invasion of Sichuan. Accordingly, McRae had to fly out through India and, as Moffat family records indicate, later took the *Capetown Castle* from Capetown, South Africa to New York, not arriving there until June 1943. Although pressed to return to China, and indeed although her health problems turned out not to be grave, she did not go back. Lottie McRae lived almost 50 more years in Vancouver, dying there in 1990. But she has left a few images that continue to represent her fond affection for both her family in North Gower and for the people of Sichuan.

Stuart Clarkson,

Community Archivist at Rideau Archives

Sources: G.F. Barker *The Story of Rivers*; *West China Missionary News*, April 1930; United Church of Canada Archives finding aid *Research Guide to West China Medical Missions (1850-1950)*; *Clan Moffat Genealogy Online*; Canadian immigration records; Yunjun Fang, "Girls' Mission Schools by the Canadian Woman's Missionary Society in Szechwan (Sichuan), 1894-1952"; *The Vancouver Sun*, 6 March 1976, p. 99; Carleton University, MacOdrum Library Archives and Special Collections exhibit "John William Foster Fonds Lantern Slides"; *Ottawa Journal*, 12 April 1937, p. 8

How to Connect with RTHS



www.facebook.com/rideautownshiphistory



rideautwphistory@gmail.com



<https://twitter.com/RideauTpHS>



www.facebook.com/Dickinsonhousemuseum



dickinsonhousemuseum@gmail.com

Sign me up as a member of RTHS



Members of the Society enjoy:

- Monthly meetings featuring engaging presentations, followed by refreshments
- Group excursions to historical points of interest in Eastern ON
- Local books published by the Society, and a monthly newsletter
- Opportunities to participate and contribute as volunteers

For more information visit <https://rideautownshiphistory.org> and facebook.com/rideautownshiphistory.

Please mail this form with a cheque for membership dues payable to: Rideau Township Historical Society, Box 56, North Gower, ON, KOA 2T0, OR pay by e-transfer to rideautwphistory@gmail.com and email a scanned copy of the form to the same email address.

Name:

Address:

City & Postal Code:

Telephone:

Email:

Date:

Are you a new RTHS member?

Yes _____ No _____

Individual Membership \$15 _____

Life Membership \$100 _____

Family Membership (2 adults & school-age children) \$20 _____

Donation \$50 _____

Other Donation \$ _____

Receipts for paid memberships will be issued when we are able to meet face-to-face, but tax receipts for donations will be issued at the end of the year.

Thank you for supporting RTHS!