



Preserving and Promoting Local History for the Former Rideau Township

### May Meeting Details

Rideau Township Historical Society

Presents

Allan Bartley

Author of

## The Ku Klux Klan in Canada:

*A Century of Promoting  
Hate in the Peaceable Kingdom*

Join us on May 19th at 7:30 via Zoom as Professor Bartley, currently on staff at Carleton University, and former intelligence analyst with the Canadian security community shares the fascinating and troubling history of the Klan in Canada, including eastern Ontario and the Ottawa Valley.

*"I have to regretfully conclude there is a seam of racism that runs through Canadian history very wide and very deep. It's not always on display. It's quite artfully hidden in many cases."*

Join Us Via ZOOM  
May 19th, 7:30 p.m.

To register, or for  
more information visit:  
[www.rideautwphistory.org](http://www.rideautwphistory.org)



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### Dickinson House Restoration

Brian Earl

The restoration of the exterior of Dickinson House is on schedule. The scraping of the loose paint, replacement of damaged wainscoting, trim and siding, caulking and filling of cracks and blemishes are all complete. New shingles have been installed on the canopy over the front door. New copper flashing has been installed at ground level on the Mill Street side and the false door replaced. The house is now ready for painting. When the weather co-operates, the painting crew is expected to take about two weeks to complete their task. Once painting is complete, the front and back doors, shutters and storm windows will be installed and the scaffolding removed.



New shingles on front door canopy



New copper flashing at ground level



Trim replacement



False door replacement

### Coming Events

Please join us on **June 16th** as we enjoy a virtual ride up the Ottawa River like you have never seen it before.

**Richard Van Loon**, noted local historian and President and Professor Emeritus at Carleton University will discuss 6,000 years of travel up the river and to points west.

Mark your calendars! More information to come.

### Membership Fees Reminder

Owen Cooke

A final reminder that 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.

## Ronald Potter Wallace (1927 – 2021)

Members of Rideau Township Historical Society are saddened to learn of the passing of Ron Wallace, one of our longest-serving members.

Ron was raised in Kars, the son of Roy and Gladys (Potter) Wallace. He found his vocation in teaching, and attended Ottawa Normal School, then taught in Brockville and Toronto. During those years he earned a B.A. from Queen's University and an M.Ed. from University of Ottawa. He became principal of several Ottawa elementary schools.

Upon moving back to Kars, Ron and his wife Marg became engaged members of the community, and played important roles in organizing the dog show originally part of the Kars Fair. They were early proponents of heritage in Rideau Township. Both were members of RTHS and Ron served on the governing board of Rideau Archives. As well, they donated books and papers to the Archives in its early days. Ron was particularly proud of his father's textbooks from his courses at Kemptville Agricultural College.

## Report on April's Special Presentation

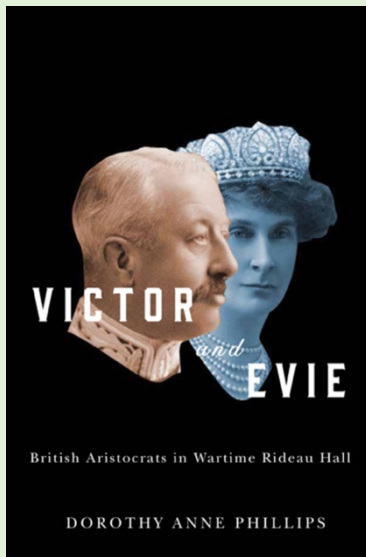
On April 21st members and friends of RTHS were treated to a talk by Dorothy Anne Phillips about her book:

### Victor and Evie: British Aristocrats in Wartime Rideau Hall.

Given that we are currently between Governors General, Ms. Phillips' talk could not have been more timely. And the lively question and answer period that followed the talk helped illustrate the relevance of the subject matter.

Interestingly, in 1916, when the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire were chosen to come to Rideau Hall, the Canadian Government was not even formally consulted! In 1916, in the midst of the First World War, the choice of a Governor General for Canada was of strategic importance.

The Duke of Devonshire arrived with his wife the Duchess known as Evie and two of their seven children - the daughters who were the most marriageable - Maude who was 20, and Blanche who was 18. The four youngest children would follow later; the eldest son "Eddie" was stationed in Paris after having been wounded on the battlefield.



Like all families who leave home, even if only for a limited period of time, the Devonshires left unfinished business. Both Victor's and Evie's parents were elderly, four of their children were left behind for the time being, and the business interests of the family would have to be managed remotely. Additionally, while the assignment in Canada could be a career making move for someone such as the Duke, Canada, if not handled properly, could also derail it. Evie did not want to come; but like a dutiful wife she made the best of it - and she had the added good luck of having lived in Canada as a child, while her father (Lord Landsdowne) had been the Governor General from 1883-1888.

When the new Governor General arrived in 1916, he was confronted almost immediately with the issue of how the semiannual honours list was to be composed. There was a strict communications protocol and strict guidelines as to who could be recommended; unfortunately, by the time Devonshire arrived, both the communications protocol and the selection guidelines had been circumvented so that Sir Hugh Graham could be given a baronetcy. To his credit, the new Governor General realized that the ship of the baronetcy had mostly sailed, and while the end result was not completely satisfactory for any of the parties, it was a decent compromise, and the Duke and Sir Robert Borden were able to work well together for the entire five year term.

The story of the honours, well-illustrated by Ms. Phillips in her talk, shows us the delicate dance that was the every day life of the Governor General in wartime Canada, as Canada moved closer and closer to full independence.

While Victor was astutely threading the political needle, Evie, who was as reserved as Victor was outgoing, was making a home for her family in Rideau Hall and assuring her daughters' future happiness. By April 1920, three of the daughters were married: Maude had married Angus Mackintosh, one of the original aides de camp, Blanche had married Ivan Cobden in England, and Dorothy had married one Harold MacMillan. In each case it was Evie who negotiated the marriage agreements.

The family loved the outdoors. And this is where the story of the Devonshire family and that of our author come together. In 1918/19 the family was looking for a place to build a summer home and found Blue Sea Lake in the Gatineau. Many many years later, Ms. Phillips was staying with friends at that very same lake and heard the story of the summer home built by the Governor General and his family. Her curiosity was piqued. Today the 92 acre property that the Devonshires bought and sold has been divided and the house no longer stands.

What remains are the remnants of the train station, a blue church, and a path. And memories and stories. Personal and political... Affairs of the heart and affairs of state.

It was that visit to the lake that led Ms Phillips on her journey of discovery, to our own Library and Archives of Canada, and to the archives at Chatsworth the seat of the Devonshires, not to mention a series of local and provincial archives. Dorothy found family letters and got to know Victor and Evie and their relations. Through those letters she was able to understand how the personal and the political merged to create what is really a very Canadian story.

Thank you Dorothy Phillips for all your work, your wonderful talk, and we can't wait to see the next book. We will be patient. ~ Myra McFarlane

### 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.

## John Trott, Farm Help

In 1914, Robert Frost published a long poem entitled "The Death of the Hired Man," about a farm labourer who returned home to work for a farmer he had abandoned. Instead, here is a look at the life of a young man who, around that same year, left his home in England and tried his hand at working on a farm across the sea in North Gower Township, in the end only to be carried back home to England by the tide of worldwide events.

John Trott was born in Robertsbridge, Sussex, England on 11 October 1894 to Joseph and Sarah Elizabeth Trott, one of the younger of their many children. John, like his father, worked as a farm labourer, starting at age sixteen. His elder brother William had become a florist. But times were difficult then for rural labourers in England – it was the end of what has been called the Great Depression of British Agriculture. William left on the SS *Lake Manitoba* in 1910 to try his chances in Canada, living in Berlin [now Kitchener], Ontario until 1912. He then returned to his family in Sussex and, with the help of the Salvation Army, which assisted less-well-off emigrants, William and his brother John boarded the SS *Ascania* at Southampton on 3 April 1913. Disembarking in Portland, Maine, they headed for Toronto on the Grand Trunk Railway, proposing to look for general labouring jobs.

But on their way the brothers made a change, probably at the train station in Montreal, and headed to Ottawa instead. It is quite likely that the brothers boarded on Creighton Street with the family of Dennis Awcock, who

had travelled with the Trott brothers from Sussex. William Trott married Eva Bessie Awcock in Ottawa in 1914 and remained living with her family until he enlisted to serve in the First World War in 1916. Meanwhile John Trott had taken a position in North Gower as a farm hand, with either the Fennells or Mackeys, probably to help with the harvest season in 1913. But John did not stay on the farm for long, and he seems to have left sometime in 1914, moving to Guelph.

John was there working as a box-maker at the time of his own enlistment in the Canadian Expeditionary Force on 18 January 1915, at the age of twenty. Before reaching France, he moved between 108th Regiment, 34th Battalion, 23rd Battalion, and 3rd Brigade Signallers (attached to the 39th Reserve Battalion), finally joining 13th Battalion in the field on 31 July 1916. Just eleven days later, on 11 August 1916 he was admitted to No. 8 Stat. Hospital, Wimereux suffering from shell shock. North Gower folk who remembered him might have read the announcement of his wounding in the *Ottawa Journal* on 21 August. He moved between convalescent depots until arriving at Base Depot in Harfleur on 17 September 1916. Having complained about his feet since arriving in the field, due to long route marches on the Somme, he was found to have flat feet and was transferred back to England for the remainder of the war, serving with 1st Quebec Regiment and 53 District, Canadian Forestry Corps.

Meanwhile, on 26 December 1917, he received approval to marry Emily Elizabeth Ide. Discharged in England on 13 May 1919, he joined his wife in Worthing, Sussex, where he stayed until at least 1936, later dying in Brighton in 1950. At some point during the Great War, though, he had gotten a "hands across the sea" tattoo, bearing it thereafter in memory of his short stint in Canada, helping on the farm in North Gower, and leaving for us here today one photograph.

*John Trot [Trott], farm help,  
[1914?]*

*Rideau Archives, MGR007-  
01-037 / 2004.47 / RV 229.1*

*Photographed at the Panel &  
Ping Pong Studio, 164 Sparks  
Street, Ottawa.*

Note the lack of decoration in the studio scene and the careless inclusion of the scene edge at the



photograph's right side – indicating perhaps that Panel & Ping Pong was affordable for low-income wage earners like John Trott but also that it was not professional enough to remain long in business. Like Trott, Panel & Ping Pong Studio seems to have appeared in Ottawa in late 1913, taking over Donaldson's Studio, but, again like Trott, it had moved on after only a year or so.

*Stuart Clarkson,*

Community Archivist at Rideau Archives

Sources: Canadian and American immigration records [via Ancestry]; British emigration records [via Ancestry]; English census records [via Ancestry]; CEF military personnel records [LAC]; *Ottawa Journal*; Ottawa City directories.

### **We Want to Hear from You**

What kind of programming would you like to see RTHS deliver? How would you like it delivered? How would you like to participate in RTHS programming?

Watch the newsletter for the beginning of what we know will be a fruitful dialogue! More to come.

### **How to Connect with RTHS**



[www.facebook.com/rideautownshiphistory](http://www.facebook.com/rideautownshiphistory)



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[dickinsonhousemuseum@gmail.com](mailto: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](https://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](mailto:rideautwphistory@gmail.com) and email a scanned copy of the form to the same email address.

Name:

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Address:

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City & Postal Code:

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Date:

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Are you a new RTHS member?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

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Individual Membership \$15 \_\_\_\_\_

Life Membership \$100 \_\_\_\_\_

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

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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!**