



Rideau Township Historical Society Newsletter

June
2021

Preserving and Promoting Local History for the Former Rideau Township

June Meeting Details

Rideau Township Historical Society
Presents

Richard Van Loon

*President and Professor Emeritus of Carleton University,
previously Assistant Deputy Minister of the former
Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, and Historian*

6000 Years Up the Ottawa River and into the West



Join us on June 16th at 7:30 via Zoom as Richard Van Loon will join us to discuss the travellers and traders who used the Ottawa River from the end of the last ice age to the 18th Century, including Champlain and the Algonquin Chief Tessouat!

Join Us Via ZOOM
June 16th, 7:30 p.m.

To register, or for
more information visit:
www.rideautwphistory.org



Preserving and Promoting Local History
for the former Rideau Township



Coming Events

Our June meeting and special presentation complete our monthly programming activities for the year 2020/21 – a year like no other! However, we invite you to check our website, rideautwphistory.org often, as we continue to add to and evolve our new site to tell the story of the people, places and events of the former Rideau Township.

And stay tuned for information about our 2021/22 programming plans!

Dickinson House Restoration Complete

Brian Earl



The screening and scaffolding that surrounded Dickinson House since April has been removed, revealing a pristine, vibrant and colourful renewed exterior. The project started in November 2019 with a complete laser scan of the exterior which allowed the staff of CSV Architects to map out all of the areas of deterioration and form a plan for restoration. Madison Construction Ltd. started work in January 2021 by removing all of the shutters and the storm windows. These items were taken to the company workshop for repair or rebuilding as required.



Scaffolding was erected in March of 2021. The construction team started at the top and scraped down all of the loose and damaged paint. Once the scraping was finished, the damaged portions of the trim and siding were removed. Useable portions of the siding were then used to repair smaller areas. The siding and trim boards had

originally been milled in Dickinson's own sawmill, but to a pattern not presently commercially available. Special cutters were made and replacement siding and trim were cut from Eastern pine, to match the original profile on the house.



Once the wood repairs were complete, all the small holes, cracks and surface blemishes were caulked and primed. The entire house was then painted. Visitors familiar with Dickinson House will notice that the walls are now a lighter shade of yellow and the shutters a somewhat softer green than previously. The major change is the pale green on the storm windows and certain other window frames. When asked about this change, CSV stated "Our rationale for revising the colour scheme is based on our review of historic photos of the house. We discovered that the storm windows were not always painted white. Using the pale green on the storm windows will give some variation and interest while allowing the detailing of the white window casings to shine. The white window frames behind the storms will still be visible from the exterior."

With regard to the shutters, CSV stated "The slight shift to a green with more olive undertones is in keeping with the spectrum of heritage colours of the period and is more harmonious with the house's current shade of yellow. Looking at the paint layers on the shutters, there were different shades of green used over time. We definitely wanted to keep the green, but a slightly softer tone."



The painting was completed on 21 May and the shutters, doors and storm windows were replaced. Final paint touch-up and detailing was completed by June 2. As of this date, Dickinson house stands ready to greet visitors, when COVID-19 restrictions permit, with a new, refreshed exterior which will last for many years to

come. Many thanks to the City of Ottawa, CSV Architects and Madison construction for a timely job well done.

Report on May's Special Presentation

Allan Bartley

Author of

The Ku Klux Klan in Canada:

*A Century of Promoting
Hate in the Peaceable Kingdom*

Mention of the Ku Klux Klan usually evokes disturbing images of white-robed, hooded figures and burning crosses in the Southern United States. But author Allan Bartley, currently a professor at Carleton University and a former intelligence analyst, has been both horrified and absorbed by his research which revealed that "the Klan" was very active in many provinces in Canada for over a century.

The Ku Klux Klan evolved amid the chaos of the post-Civil War Southern United States as a reaction to a crisis in public order. While it is now perceived as primarily a means to control the freed black population and protect the white citizenry, the Klan's broader interests were also political and economic in nature. But as the Klan's activities and intimidation tactics grew increasingly more racist and violent, its first Grand Wizard, Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest, disbanded the organization, and spoke out for racial tolerance. However, the Klan simply went underground.

In the early 20th century, the Ku Klux Klan had a startling revival, in large part because of the novel, and subsequent play, "The Clansman", by Thomas Dixon Jr., which evoked a very romanticized and attractive image of The Klan and its adherents as defenders of the population. Then Hollywood stepped up in the form of producer/director D.W. Griffith's early blockbuster spectacle, "The Birth of a Nation", an adaptation of the play. The film was a novelty in that it ran for two hours and was enormously popular. Sadly, it became a *de facto* recruiting film for the Klan, not only in the United States, but in Canada. The film premiered at the Royal Alexandra Theatre in Toronto in September 1915 and, in part due to the fact that Canada was at war, the realistic battle scenes greatly interested audiences. Canada's black population protested the movie's theme, and newspaper reviews were negative, but the outcry was ignored, except in Nova Scotia; that province banned the showing of the film because it was perceived to have the potential for national unrest, something to be avoided in war-time.

Stronger than ever, the Klan became a significant political, economic and social force to be reckoned with in the United States, and not only the black population was victimized; Jews and the Catholic Church were also targeted. A number of State Governors and federal politicians owed their positions to the influence and wealth of the Klan.

The Klan found fertile ground in which to grow in Canada in the post-World War I era, thanks to three factors: tolerance to organizations such as the Orange Lodge which was a major political force, fiercely anti-Catholic and pro-white; bigotry directed at the black, French and Jewish populations; and the lure of monetary profit for recruiters ... there was handsome money to be made from membership fees and the obligatory purchase by members of robes and other Klan regalia.

The Klan made its Canadian headquarters in Toronto in January 1925 under the leadership of two American Klansmen, C. Lewis Fowler and John Henry Hawkins, who joined forces with a Torontonion, Richard L. Cowan, who became the frontman and first Grand Wizard, although the men agreed to split all the profits three ways.

The Canadian version of the Klan tried to distinguish itself from its American counterpart, while at the same time espousing its main principles of white supremacy and nationalism which required members to pledge that they were white, gentile, and Protestant. Organizers stated that the Ku Klux Klan was a Christian organization with "first allegiance to Canada and the Union Jack", disqualifying Jews from membership because they were not Christian, and Roman Catholics because their first allegiance was to the Pope in Rome. Robes were worn with a maple leaf insignia.

Thousands joined and large Klan rallies were held throughout Southern and Eastern Ontario, including London, Hamilton, Kingston, Belleville and Smiths Falls.

Klan activities were under scrutiny by law enforcement. OPP Inspector John Meller undertook an investigation of a bombing of a Catholic church in Barrie, Ontario and three Klansmen were convicted. A court case that drew national scrutiny was the March 1930 trial in Oakville, Ontario of three men who kidnapped and threatened what was perceived to be a mixed-race couple.

Although the KKK operated throughout Canada, it was most successful in Saskatchewan where, by the late 1920s, its membership was over 25,000. Two Americans, Hugh Finlay Emmons and Lewis A. Scott, toured the province promoting the Klan ... and then fled Canada with all the membership profits. John James Maloney, with support from John Hawkins, took over and it was during their leadership that the activities of the Klan became increasingly

anti-Catholic and anti-French. The entrenched Saskatchewan Liberal Party, which had held power in the province since its inception in 1905, tried to link the Conservative Party with the Klan during the province's 1929 election, and there is conjecture that the party failed to form a minority government as a result of Klan support of the Conservatives at Liberal election rallies.

John James Maloney, who felt rejected by the resulting Conservative government in Saskatchewan, moved on to Alberta, where he was instrumental in organizing a number of Klan chapters, especially in Edmonton, where its Mayor Don Knott was elected with the support of the Klan. But Maloney was convicted of fraud, related to Klan funds, and his departure from the scene led to the downfall of the Klan in Alberta.

Meanwhile, out in British Columbia, another American Klansman, Luther Powell, created the Kanadian Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, setting up quite an elaborate and stately headquarters in Glen Brae Manor in Vancouver, much to the dismay of neighbours. Powell did not last long; accusations of fraud had pursued him from Oregon and it is possible that this is why he was booted out of the chapter and, eventually, the province.

The Great Depression put an end to influence of the Ku Klux Klan in Canada. It became an ugly memory, especially during and after the Second World War. In the United States, David Duke revived the Klan to some degree, as the civil rights movement motivated a segment of the American population to violent incidents and an undercurrent of bigotry that can still be felt to this day.

This is not to say that there have not been Klan activities in Canada. James Alexander McQuirter revived the Klan and was involved in a number of violent incidents in in the 1970s and 1980s. In 1981, he was charged, along with Wolfgang Droege and other white supremacists, with plotting to overthrow the government of Dominica, and spent several years in prison. Wolfgang Droege founded the Heritage Front in 1989; this Canadian white supremacist organization disbanded in 2005.

Mr. Bartley's presentation was informative, enlightening ... and disturbing, as we can see evidence every day of racist ideology, fueled by the power and reach of social media. Mr. Bartley concluded by expressing his concern that, as Canadians, we tend to be made uncomfortable and, therefore overlook, glaring issues such as racism; he feels we must acknowledge and give credibility to organizations that promote hatred and violence. In so doing, we are taking steps to dealing with it. ~Margot Belanger

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.

Resides at the Rectory, North Gower, Ontario

Today she is virtually unknown. Yet in 1893, only two years before taking up residence at the old Anglican Rectory in North Gower, Mary Anne Bessy Fowler Rothwell Christie was named a “woman of the century” by the American editors of *Woman of the Century: Fourteen Hundred-Seventy Biographical Sketches Accompanied by Portraits of Leading American Women in all Walks of Life*, appearing in the prestigious company of Susan B. Anthony, Madame Blavatsky, Lady Randolph Churchill and George Washington’s mother, among a scattering of Canadians including E. Pauline Johnson.

Rothwell Christie earned her place as a celebrated literary figure in Canada, for whom numerous short biographies have been printed over the years, including one printed in 1900 in Theodore H. Rand’s *A Treasury of Canadian Verse*:

“Mrs. Annie Rothwell Christie, b. in London, England, 1837. Came to Canada when four years of age, living with her family on Amherst Island, near Kingston, Ontario. Some of her best poems are to be found in the *Magazine of Poetry* ... She has published no volume of poems, but is the author of four novels of much interest. Resides at The Rectory, North Gower, Ontario.”

The biography produced for O’Hagan’s *Canadian Essays* (1901) expands somewhat more on her qualities:

“Annie Rothwell-Christie, of North Gower, Ontario, is the author of four novels: *Alice* [Avice] *Gray*, *Edged Tools*, *Requital*, and *Loved I Not Honor More*. Mrs. Christie’s claim to literary recognition among Canadian women writers rests chiefly on the excellence of some of her verse. A fine spirit of Canadian patriotism permeates all her poetic work. She is perhaps strongest as a writer of war songs ...”

Born Mary Ann Bessy Fowler, the daughter of renowned English-Canadian painter Daniel Fowler, RCA, she was brought from England in her early childhood to Amherst Island. Her contemporary Ethelwyn Wetherald later represented Miss Fowler’s privileged youth well, as part of a review of Canadian literary women appearing in the Toronto

magazine *The Week* dated 28 June 1888: “A large library with uncalculated leisure to spend in it, and a quiet country life within reach of the security and influence of an old and refined city [Kingston] – these are among the chief things that make a literary life worth living.”

Mary Ann Fowler was married in 1862 to Anglican minister Richard Rothwell. By 1871 the couple had settled back on Amherst Island, Richard now retired to life on a farm. He died in 1874, and this may have prompted Annie Rothwell to begin novel writing in earnest, which she did around this time.

Here, in her novels, is perhaps Annie Rothwell’s greatest legacy, despite O’Hagan’s prognostications about her value as a poetess. The 1880s were a boom time for Canadian publishing. Annie Rothwell, as she was known at that time, produced domestic romance novels that sold well in Canada alongside more well-known American and British authors. Her Toronto-published books, in the newer cheap “dime” paperbacks or the traditional and more expensive cloth-bound volumes, were sold by booksellers as far afield as Liverpool, Nova Scotia, transported by Canada’s expanding railway system. It is on the popularity of her novels that she is today most remembered, and her role as a successful Canadian novelist during the 1880s cannot be overlooked in contributing to the history of Canadian publishing.

And then, putting her novel-writing days behind her in the 1890s, she turned to poetry, with a tendency, as noted by her biographers, toward the patriotic and militaristic. Wetherald stated in her article in *The Week* that Rothwell “would rather witness the movements of a battalion in the drill shed than go to the opera” -- a preference evident in her succinct writing style, which perhaps did not suit novel writing as well. Some of her poetry was published in religious magazines, such as *Canadian Presbyterian*, giving evidence of her strong Christian faith.

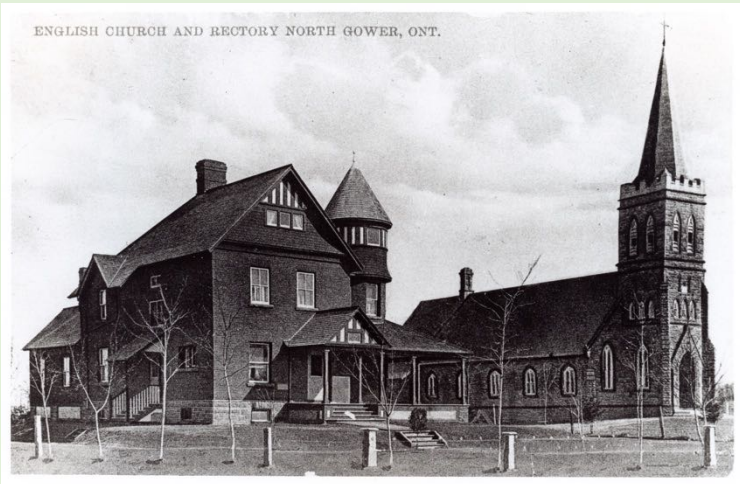
As further indication of that faith, when Rothwell married on 24 April 1895 for a second time, it was to a second Anglican clergyman. Rev. Israel James Christie had just taken up the post as rector of North Gower earlier that year. Adding another surname to her collection, Annie now appeared in social columns in the *Ottawa Journal* as Mrs. I.J. Christie. If nothing else, Mary Anne Bessy Fowler Rothwell Christie’s experience with name changes highlights the fact that even privileged and successful female authors in late-Victorian Canada still had a long way to go in terms of showing and preserving their own identity. Encountering this quandary soon after her marriage, the Women’s Canadian Historical Society of Toronto listed her name in February 1896, among its inaugural corresponding members, as “Mrs. Christie of North Gower” but then added

parenthetically, for readers familiar with her novels, “(Annie Rothwell).”

After marrying Annie Rothwell, Rev. Christie represented North Gower at the synods of the Diocese of Ottawa for the next two years. Then, after only this short time, the Christies left the North Gower Rectory, when Rev. Christie was reposted to St. Matthias in Hintonburg in 1898. He served there until 1903, when he was moved to St. Luke’s. Israel James Christie died in 1905, leaving Annie a widow in the suburbs of Ottawa.

Confusingly, though, contemporaries still reported Annie Rothwell Christie as living at the North Gower Rectory. This includes both of the excerpted biographies above, written only a few years after her departure from that place, and even notices as late as 1915 – when she served as a corresponding member of the Ontario Historical Society, she was still listed under her old North Gower Rectory address, even though, at that time, she was in fact living at 559 Gilmour Street, Ottawa. She remained at the house on Gilmour Street until 1920, then she left Ottawa. Annie Rothwell died 1927 in New Liskeard and was buried on Amherst Island.

By then, the Rectory had long been abandoned not only by the Christies, but also by the Anglican Church. A new Rectory had been built in North Gower in 1903. This building still stands, at 2368 Church Street, beside the Church itself.



English Church and (new) Rectory - North Gower, ON (c.1904)

The old rectory, on a plot of land separate from the church and closer to Stevens Creek, had been abandoned as too swampy and was sold off in 1910, and currently there are two modern homes, numbered 2344 and 2348 Church St., on the old rectory property.

Stuart Clarkson,

Community Archivist at Rideau Archives

Sources: Rand, *A Treasury of Canadian Verse* (Good Press, 1900); O’Hagan, *Canadian Essays* (Briggs, 1901); *Woman of the Century: Fourteen Hundred-Seventy Biographical Sketches Accompanied by Portraits of Leading American Women in all Walks of Life* (Charles Wells Moulton, 1893); Morgan, *The Canadian Men and Women of the Time: A Handbook of Canadian Biography* (Toronto: Briggs, 1898); D.W. Bartlett (ed.), *Inventory of Heritage Building Records: Volume 1 - North Gower Village and Area* (1990); *Ottawa Journal*; *Liverpool Times*; *Ottawa City Directories* (online via Ottawa Public Library); Ontario birth, marriage and death registrations (via Ancestry); Canadian census (via Ancestry)

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



rideautwphistory@gmail.com



<https://twitter.com/RideauTpHS>



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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:

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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!

Rideau Township Historical Society Minutes

Wednesday, May 19, 2021
ZOOM Virtual Meeting

President Susan McKellar opened the meeting by welcoming approximately 30 members and guests.

Monthly Reports

Financial : Sandy McNiece

Activity this month has been limited, and we are in good financial shape.

Membership : Owen Cooke

There has been one new member since last month, with about 40 in total. Owen will send reminders to those in arrears.

Program : Myra McFarlane

The June speaker will be Richard Van Loon who will make a presentation on explorers on the Ottawa River.

Publications : Susan McKellar

No new developments. Work continues on the North Gower book.

Dickinson House : Brian Earl

Renovations on the exterior of DH are progressing nicely, and should be completed shortly.

Communications : Margot Belanger

The new website is now operating, with a connecting link on the old website.

Myra Macfarlane then introduced our guest speaker, Allan Bartley, who gave a very informative and interesting presentation on The Ku Klux Klan in Canada. Following a question and answer period, Myra thanked Mr. Bartley for his enlightening talk.

Meeting adjourned.