



## President's Message

### The Year in Review

The Society has been extremely busy during the past year. We have held events throughout the year at which members and guests met either virtually or in person, heard presentations and engaged in discussion of a range of heritage-related topics. These included:

- January 2022 “Truth Speaking in Art and History”: by Andrew King
- February '22 “Rhythms in Time”; by Chris Rodgers, an exploration of how history is told using music
- March '22 “What is History” Dr. D. Woolf
- April '22 History as a Story: Historical Fiction; by Ian McKercher
- May '22 “Sweeny’s Diary” by Susan Warren
- June '22 Excursion tour to Burritt’s Rapids
- Sept. '22 “Reconciliation and the Writing of Canadian History” by Ira Basen
- Oct. '22 “Reflections of an Island Born Woman.” Nye Samuels’ book launch
- Nov. '22 Excursion tour of Rideau Hall
- Dec. '22 Strathmere Christmas Social (upcoming)

A recurring theme this year was that history as we know it relies on an interpretation of past events that is contextualized by our current culture and our understanding of past “dominant” cultures. We understand that “our” perspective is not the only perspective of value.

RTHS published and launched the memoir of longtime local resident Nyamme Samuels. Entitled “Reflections of an Island-born Woman,” interest in the book has been so great that a second run has been printed.

Your Society was also out and about in 2022; we participated in heritage events such as Dickinson Days Manotick and the Kars Bicentennial. At both events, visitors were able to visit an RTHS table, where they could learn more about the history of the Rideau area and the Society. We were also able to offer heritage walking and boat

tours during the Kars celebration. Lastly, RTHS also contributed to the heritage experience in communities by adding downloadable “pdf” walking tours for Kars, Manotick and Burritt’s Rapids to our website.

The Society website was redesigned last year and continues to provide visitors with both a user-friendly and useful destination for all matters related to the history and heritage of the former Rideau Township. The site is updated at least monthly with current information, a newsletter, upcoming events and developments, as well as a new blog post on some dimension of Rideau heritage.

I would like to wish everyone a very festive season, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

*Doug Culham, RTHS President*

## December's RTHS Event



**Note:** Additional details, driving and site directions for Strathmere can be found on Page 5.

## Preview of January's Event

Our January gathering will see the return of the ever-popular “Bring & Brag” event. Members are encouraged to bring along and describe an item of personal historical significance. So, now is a good time to begin thinking about what you could “show & tell.” More details in the January newsletter.

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



## Report on October's RTHS Event

### An Outing to Rideau Hall



On Saturday, 12 November, one of our first really fall-like days of the season, eighteen members and guests of the Society undertook an outing to Rideau Hall, followed by lunch out. We are indebted to our President, Doug Culham, who hosted the event, and to Maureen McPhee, who not only organized the visit, but also recorded our outing in photos.

Arriving in small groups, we made our separate ways through the grounds, admiring the late autumn waning of the rose gardens and noting the trees planted by visiting Royals in years gone by. Meeting our guide Elizabeth, a University of Ottawa student, at the front of the Hall, she pointed out the Vice-Regal standard flying above the facade, indicating that Governor General Mary Simon was in residence.



*Photo Credit: Maureen McPhee*

Built by Thomas MacKay, stonemason turned mill owner and timber baron, in 1838, Rideau Hall, originally a much smaller eleven-room mansion, was leased as the residence for Governor Viscount Monck in 1865, then purchased in 1867 as the official residence of the Governor General of the new Dominion. As Elizabeth pointed out, Rideau Hall is now greatly expanded both as a residence and with working offices.

As we went indoors, Elizabeth emphasized both the architecture and artwork as we went from room to room. One staircase contained portraits, most very beautiful, of the spouses of the various Governors General. We continued on to the Queen's entrance, to the landing where many of the official portraits of the Canadian Governors General are displayed. We were all delighted by Karen Bailey's group portrait of Michaëlle Jean, shown with her family along with Canadian soldiers and indigenous musicians.



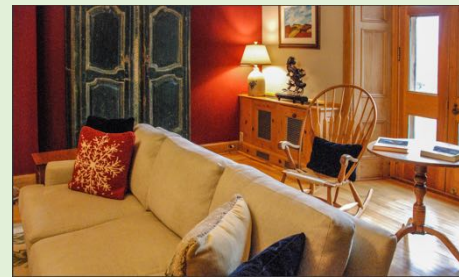
*Official Portrait of Michaëlle Jean, Rideau Hall, by Karen Bailey. Photo Credit: Owen Cooke*

We passed into the fantastic Tent Room, painted pink and white stripes with a ceiling seemingly of tent fabric. This was designed by Lord Dufferin in 1876 to provide



*Photo Credit: Maureen McPhee*

room for extra guests in a festive atmosphere. As well as being an indoor tent, it has also been an indoor tennis court. In here hang portraits of the British Governors General after Confederation, including a charming informal likeness of Lord Lorne, and a chronology of all the Governors and Governors General from Champlain in 1632 until the present day.



*Photo Credit: Maureen McPhee*

Among the rooms we visited was the small study inspired by Madame Vanier to reflect a more Canadian atmosphere from all the British values surrounding her in the 1950s. With its

Québécois furnishings, Emily Carr painting and two rocking chairs it is informal and charming. This is where Canadian Prime Ministers meet the Governor General to ask to dissolve Parliament and call an election.

The last room we visited was the most imposing - the ballroom, also designed by Lord Dufferin to host his guests. At the head of the room is hung Jean-Paul



Riopelle's "Pointe de rencontre". The painting has been presented to France, but is loaned back to Canada. The chandelier, a gift from Britain to acknowledge Canada's contributions in the Second World War, weighs a ton, we were told, but it is dwarfed by the four-ton carpet in the room. At the other end of the room are three photographs of Meryl McMaster's "Murmer", evoking a flight of starlings around her head. As well, at one side of the entrance is Glenn Gould's practice piano, which he bequeathed to Canada. We recognize this room as the backdrop for photographs of new Canadian cabinets, and where the Governor General presents decorations and honours such as the Order of Canada.



Photo Credit: Maureen McPhee



Re-emerging into the cold afternoon, we continued on to the Canal Ritz for a group lunch and discussion of all that we had seen.

Owen Cooke



## Christmas Memories of Early Rideau Township

The items in this article are drawn from the Tweedsmuir histories of Kars, North Gower and Manotick, and used here courtesy of the Rideau Branch, City of Ottawa Archives, North Gower.



This (coloured, b&w) photo, titled "Rural Christmas" appeared in the Ottawa Citizen on December 26, 1975. The full caption read, "Dashing through the snow in a two-horse open sleigh is as much fun as the one-horse kind as Tom Panagiotopoulos and his son Mike discover. Keeping a tight rein on the team is Morris (Sundance Kid) Smith of Manotick." Clearly visible in the background is Manotick United Church.

"Christmas was a time we all looked forward to. We always went to Grandpa's house in Merivale on a flat sleigh, with straw on the bottom. Bricks that had been heated in the oven and wrapped in paper were placed to keep us warm. A lantern was placed under the driver's knees to keep him warm.

We always hung up our stocking and we always got only one toy, maybe a stuffed homemade doll. I can't remember ever having a bought doll. We dressed the stuffed doll in our own baby clothes. We also received an orange, apple and candy.

We had goose and turkey, as Grandpa liked both, and since the whole family went for Christmas, I guess the extra poultry was needed.

I remember going over to the slide at W.J. Craig's; Mrs. Craig was baking pies, and we went in and took some of her agate pie plates to slide on as we had no sleds. She wasn't too happy about this.

We had a wonderful dad, and I'm sure if our children did some of the things we did, we would be crazy."



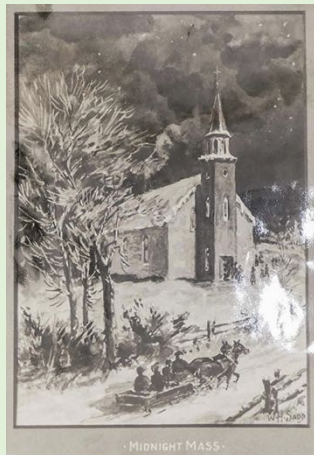
Photo credit - public domain

"Christmas Day was celebrated much as it is now but with a lesser variety of foods and gifts. I have not found one person able to remember the last part of the 19th century or even the first few years of this 20th century who remembers eating turkey at Christmas time . Few families raised geese, but if they did then a goose was the fare at Christmas time. Most people remember Christmas dinner as follows:

- Roast or boiled chicken
- Potatoes, boiled and mashed
- Carrots or turnips or both
- Gravy and stuffing
- For dessert, mince pies and homemade candies sometimes .

Many I have spoken to remember only the Christmas treats they were given, but very few received gifts. The treats were usually an orange, apple, sometimes nuts or candies. Christmas trees were not put up in the houses until about the second or third decade of the 20th century. The family made paper chains and paper decorations . The pretty delicate glass type decorations came much later on."

"Midnight Mass" by Manotick artist W.H. Sadd. Circa 1920, the image features St. Brigid's Roman Catholic Church on River Road.



The story below, brought to us by Karen Craig, is from "Christmas in Canada: Heartwarming Legends, Tales and Traditions" Edited by Jill Foran. Copyright 2004.

### Ontario's First Christmas Carol

On Christmas Eve 1668, a 14 year old girl lay fighting for her life at La Jeune Lorette, near Quebec City. Thérèse was a member of the Huron, a nation that was pushed out of their traditional homelands near eastern Georgian Bay by the Iroquois.

To mark the approaching holiday she sang Jesus Ahatonhia, a carol which described the birth of Christ in a setting which closely resembled Ontario.

Father Pierre-Joseph Chaumonot who administered the last rites, heard the song in passing. When Thérèse died on Christmas day, he mentioned it. This was the first written reference to the "Huron Carol". Later transcribed and preserved for posterity, young Thérèse's favourite song was the first Canadian Christmas Carol and probably the first carol written in North America.

The Huron Carol, or 'Twas in the moon of Wintertime' was probably written in 1642 by Jean de Brébeuf, a Jesuit Missionary. Somehow the song survived in the Huron language until it was written down by Father Étienne de Villeneuve. A Huron lawyer named Paul Picard later translated it into French. In 1926, poet Jesse Edgar Middleton translated it from French into English.

The song was released on Burl Ives 1952 album: 'Christmas in the Morning', then once again released as a Burl Ives single under the title 'Indian Christmas Carol'.

It was also recorded by both Bruce Cockburn and then in 2009 by the Tenors.



Canada Post stamp, issued Oct. 26, 1977, based on explorer/priest Father Jean de Brébeuf's 1641 Huron Confederacy carol 'Jesus Ahatonhia'



## RTHS Christmas Party at Strathmere

### Address and Directions for Strathmere

Strathmere  
1980 Phelan Road West  
North Gower, Ontario. K0A-2T0  
Telephone: (613) 489-2409

At the marked entrance to Strathmere from Prince of Wales Drive, turn on to Phelan Road West. Take the fifth turnoff to the right (they are quite close together.) That driveway will take you into the parking lot. From there, you will see the back of the Farmhouse venue. Its main entrance is at the side of the building, as shown in the picture below. Guests with mobility requirements can be dropped off right in front of the main entrance.

5:00 p.m. – Hors d’oeuvres  
6:00 p.m. - Dinner



### How to Connect with RTHS



<https://rideautwphistory.org/>



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



[rideautwphistory@gmail.com](mailto:rideautwphistory@gmail.com)



<https://twitter.com/RideauTphs>

THE RTHS EXECUTIVE TEAM  
WISHES YOU A HAPPY, HEALTHY  
CHRISTMAS AND HOLIDAY SEASON,  
AND LOOKS FORWARD TO CONTINUING  
OUR EFFORTS TO  
“PRESERVE THE PAST TO ENRICH THE FUTURE”  
IN 2023!



Photo & Photoart Credit - Rod Brazier

# 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://rideautwphistory.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](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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Telephone:

Email:

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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!**