



Rideau Township Historical Society

*Preserving
the Past
to Enrich
the Future*

April

Newsletter

2023

April Event

Rideau Township Historical Society

Presents

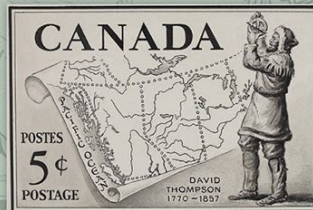
David Thompson

*An exploration of the life and achievements of
Canada's greatest land geographer*

featuring

Richard Van Loon

At the turn of the 19th century David Thompson covered and mapped, with astonishing accuracy, more of Canada and the American Northwest than any other European. And while less well known than our previous subjects, Samuel Champlain and Alexander Mackenzie, he was at least as important to the development of Canadian nationhood as they were.



Canada Post issued
this David Thompson
commemorative stamp in 1957

Thompson had a particular interest in observing and recording the culture, language and beliefs of Aboriginal People, and was fluent in several First Nations languages. His marriage to Charlotte Small, a woman of mixed Cree and Scots heritage was the longest wedded union in pre-Confederation Canada.



Richard Van Loon, former President of Carleton University and federal public servant, has previously engaged and enlightened RTHS members and friends with presentations on the excursions and accomplishments of Samuel Champlain and Alexander Mackenzie. His review of the life and times of David Thompson promises to further expand our understanding of and appreciation for Canada's early explorers.

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

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



Preserving the Past to Enrich the Future

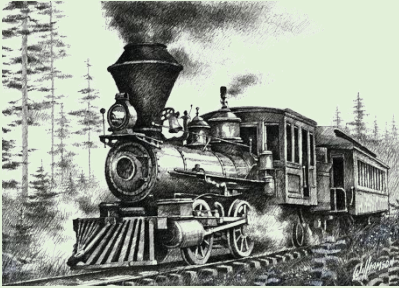


The RTHS gratefully acknowledges the financial support received from the City of Ottawa.

Report on Our March Event

No Railroads for Rideau:

How and Why Rideau Township Missed Out on the Railway Boom



A Zoom Presentation by Doug Matheson

A transplanted westerner, since 1974 Doug Matheson has lived with his wife Barbara on River Rd. in Osgoode Township. A model railroader since he was old enough to say “train”, Doug has published numerous articles on the subject. He is also an amateur railway historian, and has recently published articles on the architects who worked for the CNR (and its predecessors) in creating a legacy with their railway station designs.

In his introduction, Doug made mention of two individuals who have made important contributions to the understanding of railway history in eastern Ontario: Brian Gilhuley and Colin Churcher, whose historical maps and collections provide a clear visual and written record of the chronology of railway development, and whose work is accessible from the Craig Memorial Library at the City of Ottawa Archives. Doug also referred to Colin’s website: [Colin Churcher’s Railway Pages](https://colinchurcher.ca/railway), which contains an extensive collection of railway-related history, with a particular emphasis on eastern Ontario.

Railway Building in Canada

Doug noted that in 1836 there were no communities of significant size in eastern Ontario, and certainly not in the area that would become Rideau Township (North Gower and Marlborough Townships). The lack of practical roads or trails hampered settlement distant from the waterways, principally the Rideau River. It was acknowledged that means of transportation would have to expand and improve if settlement was to prosper. And while there was a general awareness of railway developments in Britain (over 2,000 km of railway by 1844) railway fever came a little later to British North America.

It was not until 1849, with the passage of the *Railway Guarantee Act* that railway building really got started in the Province of Canada. The “Act” stated that chartered railways longer than 75 miles (120 km) were eligible to receive a government grant that guaranteed interest of up

to 6 per cent on half its bonds once half of the railway had been completed.

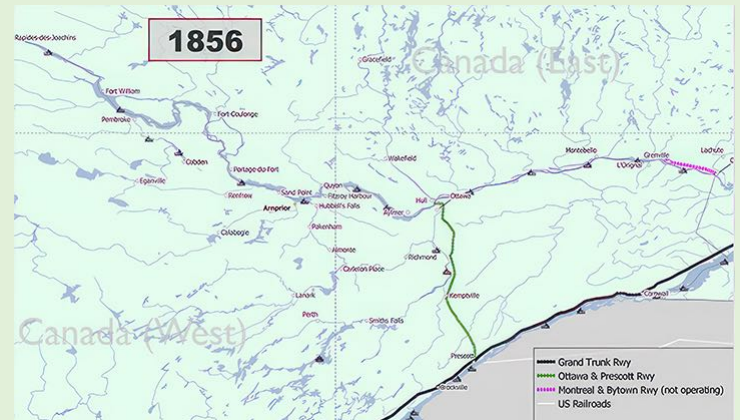
As communities came to believe that having a railway nearby was essential to ensuring long-term prosperity (and, conversely, that lack of a railway put your community at a disadvantage) interest in attracting railways increased. However, crises in the financial sector in Britain and beyond severely restricted the availability of investment money in the late 1840s. But when the Province of Canada introduced the *Municipal Loan Fund* (1852), enabling municipalities to borrow on the province’s credit to invest in “important works” (as it turned out almost exclusively railroads), railroad “fever” was unleashed.

A Chronology of Railways Built in Eastern Ontario

Note: To conserve space, not all maps displayed in the presentation are included in this report. To view the report with all maps included, please visit the RTHS website: <https://rideautwphistory.org/>

1854: Bytown & Prescott Railway (B&P) is constructed (more on this railway later)

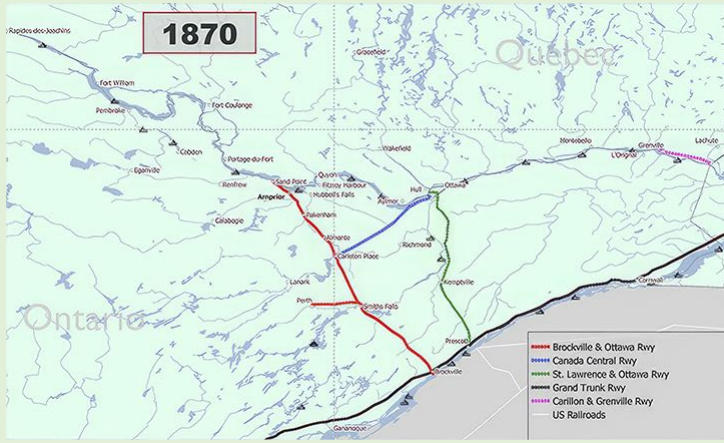
1856: Grand Trunk RR (GTR) is built from Montreal to Toronto and on to Sarnia, and eventually Chicago. This was to be the main carrier for almost 50 years in the absence of serious competition.



1859: The Brockville & Ottawa (B&O) RR is under construction. The constructed route is from Brockville to Smiths Falls (with a branch line to Perth) to Carleton Place and Almonte. (more on this railway later)

1865: The Brockville & Ottawa (B&O) RR reaches Sand Point, on the Ottawa River near Arnprior with a view to capturing trade (largely timber) in the Upper Ottawa Valley.

1870: The Canada Central (CC) RR is built from Ottawa to Carleton Place.



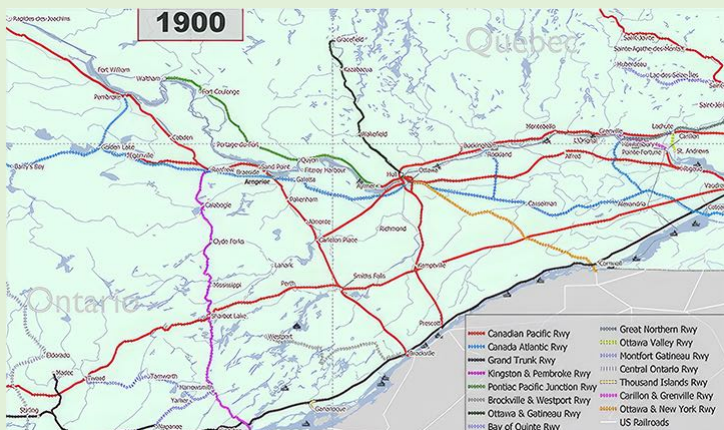
1872: Due to financial and management problems on the B&O, the CC assumes control of the Carleton Place to Sand Point portion of the B&O.

1876: The CC RR has built up the Ottawa Valley almost to Pembroke.

1880: The CC takes over the remainder of the B&O and extends further up the Ottawa Valley.

Note: Construction of the transcontinental Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) had begun in 1875, following delays precipitated by the Pacific Scandal that saw Sir John A Macdonald's government removed over fraud charges related to the election of 1872. Although the principals of the Canada Central Railway were associated with the government, they were not "contaminated" by the fallout of the Pacific Scandal.

1884: The Canada Atlantic (CA) RR is constructed from Ottawa to Coteau Landing on the St. Lawrence. The Canadian Pacific enters eastern Ontario in a big way. CP had followed the north shore of the Ottawa River to Ottawa. It then purchased the Canada Central and the Bytown & Prescott, which had been reorganized as the St. Lawrence & Ottawa RR. CP completes the transcontinental and runs its first trains from Vancouver to Montreal.



1890: The CPR runs a line from Montreal through Kemptville, Smiths Falls and Perth, and on to Toronto to compete with the GTR.

1893: J.R. Booth, who also owns the Canada Atlantic RR has completed his Ottawa, Arnprior & Parry Sound (OA&PS) RR through Arnprior as far as Eganville.

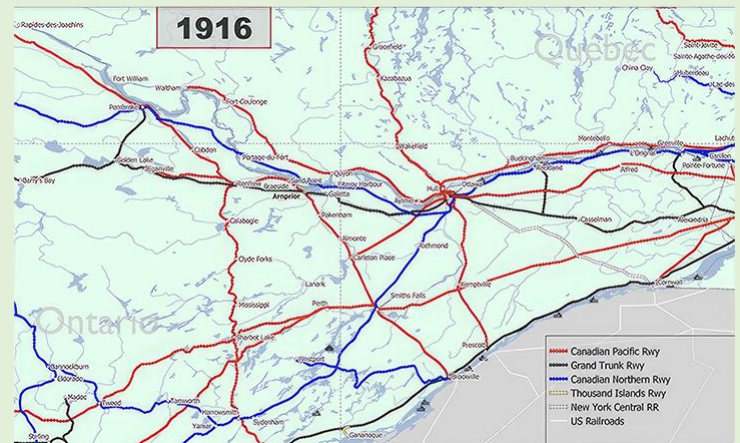
1896: The OA&PS reaches Parry Sound. The CA and OA&PS are consolidated.

1900: The New York Central RR constructs the Ottawa & New York RR, with connections through Messina, NY to US markets.

1905: The GTR buys the Canada Atlantic.

1910: The Canadian Northern Railway (CNoR) enters eastern Ontario by purchasing the Great Northern Railway, which had built from Montreal to Hawkesbury, and extended the line to Ottawa by 1916. The CNoR, which had transcontinental plans of its own had also bought up other smaller railroads in Ontario.

1916: The CNoR builds from Ottawa to Smiths Falls. This line does, in fact touch Marlborough Township near Dwyer Hill Rd., so while the claim of "NO" railroads in Rideau is not technically true, there was no station stop or other facilities built in this section.



1923: Full consolidation of eastern Ontario railways with either the Canadian Pacific OR Canadian National, which assumes control of the bankrupt CNoR and GTR railways.

Eastern Ontario Railroads Chartered (Approved) But Not Built

Three railroads received government charters/approval to build; two of the three had specific plans to pass through Rideau Township.

Perth & Kemptville RR (Chartered 1852): Intended to connect Perth with a) Ottawa via a connection with the Bytown & Prescott RR near Kemptville; and b) either Belleville or Peterborough.

Brockville, Merrickville & Ottawa (Chartered 1885): Intended to connect Brockville with Ottawa via Merrickville. Line was to run through both Marlborough and North Gower Townships.

Ottawa, Rideau Valley & Brockville (Chartered 1910): Intended to connect Brockville to Ottawa via Nepean, North Gower and Marlborough.

Generally, these lines were not built due to lack of funding, often arising from the narrow interests and/or small populations to be served by the proposed RR.

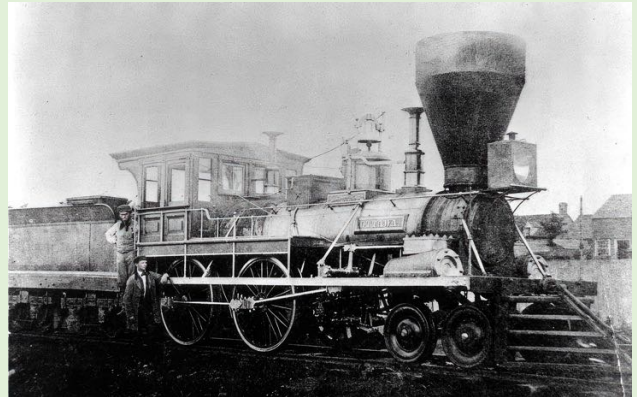
Why Not Rideau?

The avoidance of Rideau Township by *constructed* rail-ways was largely a function of geography. The larger rail-ways were focused on connecting the major centres of Montreal, Toronto and Ottawa and built their lines accordingly, generally forming a triangle linking the three centres. Rideau Township is essentially in the middle of that triangle, and therefore not on the shortest routes to the triangle's corners. Had there been a compelling business case for more direct north-south connections between Ottawa Valley and the St. Lawrence, building through Rideau may have been justified.

The North-South Railroads – a Closer Look

The Brockville and Ottawa RR: The businessmen of Brockville felt that if they could forge a railway connection with the Ottawa Valley west of Ottawa, Brockville could become a hub for distributing the productivity of the upper valley (largely logs & lumber), and for providing the goods needed for the prosperity of that region. The plan faltered when the lumber barons who held the cutting rights to the forests built their sawmills in Ottawa, combined with the financial and management problems mentioned earlier. Completed to Sand Point in 1870, by 1876 the Canada Central RR had purchased the section north of Carleton Place, and by 1880 the CC had the complete B&O line.

floated to Quebec City) intended for the US markets. The rails themselves were constructed to match the gauge of the US lines to facilitate interchange of rolling stock across the border.



The Bytown & Prescott Railway Locomotive "Ottawa" 1862. (Public Archives of Canada C5288)



BYTOWN & PRESCOTT RAILWAY

WINTER ARRANGEMENT.

ON and AFTER MONDAY, the 25th instant, PASSENGER TRAINS will run as follows, viz:

LEAVE BYTOWN
At SIX, A. M., *Railway Time*, — stopping at GLOUCESTER, OSGOODE, KEMPTVILLE, OXFORD and SPENCERS, and arrive at PRESCOTT at NINE, A. M., in time to connect with the Ogdensburgh Railroad Train going East.

LEAVE PRESCOTT
At 5.30, P. M., (*Railway Time*), or on the arrival of the Train on the Ogdensburgh Railroad, stopping at the Way Stations above mentioned, and arrive at Bytown at 8.30, P. M.

PASSENGERS for MONTREAL, BOSTON, and NEW-YORK can proceed via OGDENSBURGH RAILROAD, ARRIVING in Montreal the SAME EVENING or Boston and New York the Day following.

R. HOUGH,
Supt. B. & P. Railway.

B. & P. Railway Office, }
Bytown, 22nd December, 1854. } (45u)

Brockville and Ottawa Railway.



SHORTEST ROUTE TO
The LUMBER DISTRICTS

—AND—
Hunting Grounds of the Upper Ottawa!

Enter a Villain – Walter Shanly

The Bytown & Prescott RR: The first railway in eastern Ontario, the road was promoted by business interests in both Ottawa and Prescott who felt the line could capture the sawed lumber trade (whole logs were most practically

From the perspective of Rideau Township, Walter Shanly was the person who determined that the Bytown & Prescott RR should NOT pass through Marlborough and/or North Gower Townships.

Walter Shanly was born in Ireland and immigrating to Canada with his family in 1835. He began working on canal construction at age 23 and became an accomplished, respected – and self-taught – engineer. A man with a large ego and strong opinions who commanded respect rather than friendship, when Shanly was retained by the B&P RR he felt the company’s Directors should “conduct themselves with wholesome awe of me, and with becoming humility.” With all this he still demanded – and received – an exorbitant sum for his services!



Walter Shanly

Shanly’s contract was to survey and recommend a route for the railway among four options, only one of which would have passed through Rideau Township. Shanly ultimately chose what was known as the Middle or Direct route. His rationale against the western route (WR) centred on two points:

1. The WR would put the northern terminus near the Chaudiere (Lebreton Flats) or the Parliament Hill cliffs. Shanly stated that the engineering challenges and construction costs of providing railroad facilities and a depot at the foot of Parliament Hill would be prohibitive.

Interestingly, Shanly felt the terminus should be near the canal basin in Lowertown, even though the transport of lumber was expected to be the major businesses of the railroad, and the mills producing the lumber were located principally around Lebreton Flats! Other than the cost of building terminal facilities, the historical record sheds no further light on the reasons for Shanly’s recommendation.

2. The WR would require a swing bridge across the Rideau Canal, creating both inconvenience to river traffic and substantial increased cost of construction and operational costs.

In his report to the Directors, Shanly stated that although he had given the other routes only a “ cursory ” examination, he was so certain of his recommendation, that no further consideration of alternate routes was necessary. The Directors apparently agreed, and the railway was built into Bytown/Ottawa to the east of the Rideau River, crossed the Rideau via the Bytown and Prescott Railway

bridge (the first bridge to cross the Rideau River.) The terminal depot and freight handling facilities were located on Sussex Avenue approximately where the Embassy of Japan sits today.

Consequences

By the 1860s the B&P RR was insolvent due to lack of traffic, and was foreclosed in 1865; in 1867 it was reorganized as the St. Lawrence & Ottawa RR.

In 1870, the Canada Central RR completed a line from Carleton Place to Lebreton Flats, which had become the industrial heart of Ottawa. In an effort to keep up, the St. Lawrence and Ottawa RR completed a spur line to the Chaudiere from their main line at Ellwood Station (near the current LCBO warehouse on Bank St.). It crossed the Rideau River via a new bridge built on the current lands of Carleton University, and crossed the canal via a swing bridge at Dow’s Lake. The route adjustment to the St. Lawrence & Ottawa RR occurred just 20 years after Walter Shanly recommended against such a route into Ottawa.

Hindsight

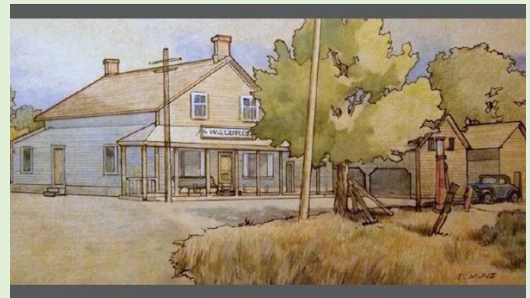
In hindsight, it may have been a better choice to adopt the western route for the Bytown & Prescott, crossing the Rideau River at or near Kemptville (eg. Beckett’s Landing). Doing so would have likely have had significant impact on the development history of Rideau Township in late 1800s and early 1900s.

Report by Rod Brazier

Book Review

Graham, Tom. *Tales from the General Store: The Untold Story of Bishop’s Mills*. Kemptville: Habit Five Publishing, 2019. 184 pages.

Reviewed by Shannon Jaspers-Fayer



The Rideau Archives Library is proud to present a series of reviews on some of the newer books available on its shelves. Members of Rideau Township Historical Society are invited to borrow these and other books from the Rideau Archives Library and members of the public are welcome to come visit any Tuesday to consult the library materials.

Shannon Jaspers-Fayer is completing a work term assignment at Rideau Archives. She is a senior student at Redeemer Christian High School in Nepean, and her family lives near Kars. Shannon's theatre reviews of Cappie productions have already been published in the Ottawa Citizen.

If you drive to Kemptville, Ontario, and take County Road 18 south, through Oxford Mills and past Hutchins Corners, you will arrive at a little village called Bishop's Mills. It is a small community with a rich and beautiful history. Not a flawless history, of course, scars from various tragedies are sprinkled throughout, but it is still vibrant. Tom Graham's book *Tales from the General Store: The Untold History of Bishop's Mills* tells the delightful story of this community.

Tom Graham joined the Bishop's Mills community in 1975 when he and his sister bought the General Store from Norman and Mildred Adams. Over the years, they became fixtures in Bishop's Mills. As they joined the community and began hosting events for the village, they learned to love the community so carefully and lovingly described in this book. Tom Graham uses stories, interviews, newspaper articles and research collected over years of working in the store and brings them together into a comprehensive history of Bishop's Mills.

Tom Graham clearly wrote this book out of great love for Bishop's Mills. Even as he describes the changes the village went through over the years—a modification made, a building torn down, a store that closed—his tone is not forlorn as he describes the adjustment, but rather he presents it as just that: an adjustment. None of these changes have destroyed Bishop's Mills. This is evident in the way he begins his book, long before Bishop's Mills was ever a settlement, painting an image of the majestic glaciers receding across Ontario and the traditional paths the Algonquin and Iroquois people used, now roads in Bishop's Mills.

Graham next describes the arrival of Chauncey and Ira Bishop and the building of the mills that gave Bishop's Mills its name. He continues to narrate the history of the village, right up to the present day. Tom Graham describes the end of the mills, the tragedy of the cheese factory explosion and the great fire that swept through the area. He chronicles the rise and fall of the public schools, the different churches that served the community, the story of the General Store, the post office, the Community Hall and the cemetery.

Historical maps are delightfully scattered throughout the pages. Original surveyor's maps from the 1830s and layouts of the settlement from the late 1800s are printed between intricate explanations. Graham's personal sketches of unphotographed buildings are similarly pleasing, with

great attention to detail. Indeed, throughout his book Graham takes great care to make all aspects of the book clear to the reader, to elucidate the way things were. Photograph and document captions are detailed, including dates, descriptions and names when applicable. Even the inner workings of the water wheel are sketched out in both drawings and words.

The book makes use of a variety of sources including research from previous historians. A large quantity of the research comes from his own experience or from interviews and conversations with the "old-timers" who frequented the General Store. The book is filled with pertinent photographs, drawings, newspaper articles and documents, each dutifully explained, transcribed when difficult to read, and related to the overall story.

My recommendation is taken from the closing words of Tom Graham's prologue: "So, here's to the pioneers, and to their descendants. Here's to the newcomers: to all of those who've chosen, and will continue to choose to make Bishop's Mills their home... to all those who came before us, to those who are here, and to those who will come after... this book is for you."

Members of Rideau Township Historical Society are welcome to borrow *Tales from the General Store: The Untold History of Bishop's Mills* from Rideau Archives Library, and it is available for public research at the Archives any Tuesday.

RTHS Online

The latest update of the RTHS website includes the description of our April event "David Thompson" presented via ZOOM by Richard Van Loon.

The RTHS Facebook page continues to add new posts daily (Monday to Friday). A sampling of posts this past month include:

- The Kars Continuation School baseball team (1939)
- Manotick's historic hotels
- North Gower S.S.#5 (Arbourdale) (1951)
- Barges hold up traffic at Beckett's Landing (1932)
- A history of mail delivery in Kars (part 1 & 2)
- North Gower S.S.#6 (North Gower Village) (1946)
- North Gower choir (1956/57)
- The Kars Tannery
- Carsonby general store and post office

[Click here to check out the RTHS Facebook page](#)

or go to:

<https://www.facebook.com/rideautownshiphistory>

Membership Reminder

Members are reminded that the membership year began in January. If you have not already done so, please complete the renewal form on the last sheet of this newsletter. You can submit the form by e-mail (rideautwphistory@gmail.com) or regular mail, and pay by e-transfer or by sending a cheque to the address indicated. Thank you.

Owen Cooke, Membership Director

How to Connect with RTHS



<https://rideautwphistory.org/>



www.facebook.com/rideautownshiphistory



rideautwphistory@gmail.com



<https://twitter.com/RideauTpHS>

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 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!