

# The Rideau Township Historical Society

*Preserving and Promoting local history for the former Rideau Township*

## December 2008 Newsletter

Newsletter Editor: Coral Lindsay (rideauarchives@ottawa.ca)

### *Next Meeting*

The next meeting of the society will be the pot luck supper at the North Gower United Church, 2332 Church Street, North Gower.

Date and time are December 10, 6:30 pm to eat at 7 pm. *Please note the time.*

Entertainment will be provided by Brian Earl and friends. Hope they do "Grandma got run over by a Reindeer".

### *Speakers: (Jan & Feb 2009)*

The first two speakers for the new year will be as follows:

#### **January 21, 2009.**

Cam Truman will talk about the Watson's Mill Student Guided Walk program. The meeting will be in the Carriage Shed on the Mill Square, Manotick.

#### **February 18, 2009.**

Greg Newton, the new chair of the Manotick 150 Committee, will give us an outline of the program for the year.

**Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year**

***Bring a friend***

***Light refreshments***

### *Features This Month*

- Coming Events
- Fall at the Dickinson House
- The November meeting.
- News from the Archives
- Archiving Photo Albums
- Mining the Archives Records



Christmas Tree at the Dickinson House

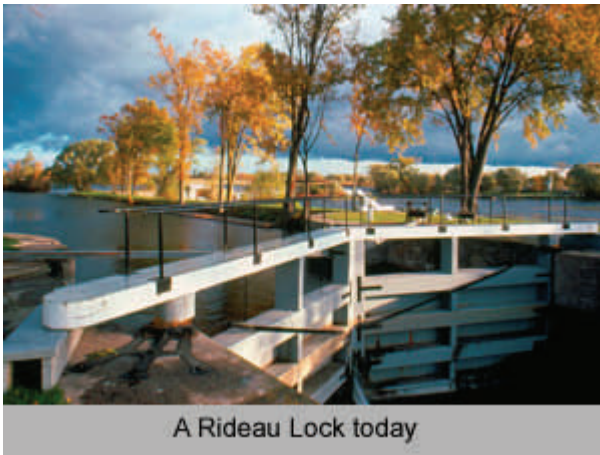
# ***November 2008 Presentation—***

## ***Coral Lindsay presented Fleets and Forwarders Steamboat Days on the Rideau Canal, 1830's – 1930's***

***Article by Lucy Martin***

For November's meeting life-long area resident Coral Lindsay spoke on a subject near and dear to her heart: steamboats and the Rideau Canal. Her talk was offered twice at Dickinson Square's Carriage House, where displays of photos, books and details filled tables along three walls.

The first presentation, organized by Watson's Mill, was given a week before the November meeting to all comers.



Today we know the Rideau corridor as a beautiful setting for residents, tourists and recreational boaters. But before highways and airports, most trade, travel and regional development depended upon these essential waterways and the power of steam-driven engines.



Coral grew up on her family's farm south of Manotick. She jokes she was forced to safeguard the lore of that lost era after she married Hugh Lindsay, whose great-grandparents helped settle Kars in 1829. Lindsay's Wharf



was part of river commerce for the next 100 years.

A slide show with music, prepared by Ron Wilson, gave listeners a good look at different boats and the communities they served. With regular dredging, steamers with drafts of just 6-7 feet could haul lumber, produce and people up and down the Ottawa to Kingston route, including connections to Toronto and Montreal, or the inland waterways and marketplaces of the US Northeast.

The audience had plenty of questions and their own river stories to share. Many wanted to know what became of all the boats. Changing times turned them into problematic junk - a disposal challenge like today's obsolete computers, only bigger! A few were intentionally sunk and can still be seen as submerged wreckage.

Coral Lindsay described being called over by her mother to watch as The Ottawan make its last trip past Manotick in the fall of 1935. Eric Field said he could just remember traveling from Prescott to Toronto by steamboat. He got the night's biggest laugh by recalling the somewhat alarming adventure of being held over the rail by his heels, in the strong grip of his father, who thought little Eric might enjoy a better view of the anchor going down. December's meeting will be our annual Christmas potluck and we hope to see you there!

## *Fall at the Dickinson House*

The Dickinson House has been open to the public November 22-23, 29-30. The RTHS volunteers have had a steady stream of visitors during those four days. Of interest is the fact that these hardy types, most of whom also shopped the craft fair at the mill, have shown a deeper interest in the house. Groups have generally stayed longer (some for an hour or an hour and a half) and asked more questions. It has been both interesting and rewarding for the volunteers who worked those days.

Still to come is the Olde-fashioned Christmas December 6-7 from 10 am to 4 pm. Come visit. It will be fun. There will be caroling, cookies, and juice for everyone.

Close to 3500 visitors have toured the House, June 6 to the present. Another "thank you" to the volunteers.

\* \* \*



## *Coming Events*

**Dec 6-7** Manotick's "Old Fashioned Christmas", December 6-7. *Don't forget the Dickinson House is open those days.*

**Jan 28** There will be a 2-part workshop, "Fashions of the Nineteenth Century" held January 28, 6:30 to 8:30 in the Carriage Shed, Dickinson Square, Manotick.

Edwina Richards will conduct the presentation (January) and the workshop Febru-

ary 7, 1:00 to 4:30 pm.

Admission is \$5.00. For more information call Cam Trueman, 692-6455

### **2009:**

The **Manotick 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** committee, now chaired by Greg Newton is proceeding with plans for 2009 celebrations. Brian Earl represents the RTHS on the Dickinson Square committees.

\* \* \*

## *News from the Rideau Archives . . .*

### **Hours:**

The Archives is open every Tuesday from 9:30 am to 4:30 p.m., and at other times by appointment. (613-489-2926).

### **Photograph Albums**

Recent acquisitions at the archives have included a number of family photo albums, some dating back several decades. In other cases albums and photos have been provided on loan for a period of time to allow them to be copied for archival. Whatever the method of acquisition there is a growing collection of photographs becoming available to us.

A method of building and maintaining this collection is under development. There are a number of technical as well as information gathering problems that have to be addressed. Do we keep the albums and require clients to come in and view these original pictures? Do we scan them and make them available electronically? What about those needing restoration. Do we archive landscapes or pictures taken in places other than say Ottawa?

We can and do keep the original photos that are donated. That has been the practice right along. However if there are photos of people who reside or resided in Rideau or of Rideau buildings, we are scanning these pictures to digital form and developing an electronic library for them. For those pictures that are faded or damaged restoration using Photoshop is attempted. It is clear that any amount of work can be dedicated to a single picture to restore it. Thus we don't have the time to do a perfect job on all pictures. Our goal is to improve the photos so that faces can be recognized or the main features of a building or object can be seen.

The two most difficult problems of course are getting the names of people in the pictures, and developing an index so we can find the individual pictures when we want them.

\* \* \*

## ***Mining the Rideau Archives***

### **The Tweedsmuir Histories**

The Tweedsmuir Histories are a series of three books that were written by local women's institutes. The idea was proposed by Lady Tweedsmuir, wife of one of our Governors General. It was her opinion that local history should be written by local people. It turned out to be a very good idea.

There are two sets of three multi-volume books, for Kars, North Gower, and Manotick. The women participating certainly had the necessary local knowledge and their older relatives to fill in the earlier parts.

The books also contain many good pictures of the people of earlier times and of threshings or other local events that were a feature of the times.

These books are available at the Rideau Archives for clients to review.

\* \* \*

## ***More on the "Fashion Trends" Workshop***

Begin the Manotick 150<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration with this stunning visual presentation of the fashion trends and tragedies of the 1860's. From bodice to brocades, this evening lecture series will highlight the remarkably quick changing fashion patterns in the Mid Victorian era. Guest speaker Edwina Richards, will enchant audience with pictures and fashion phrases guaranteed to reveal a deeper understanding of Victorian deportment.

Edwina Richards is a local dress maker, costume designer who has had more than 25 years of experience of designing and producing exquisite custom clothing for museums around the globe. Her recent work includes the production of Colonel By and Lady By's costume for the Rideau Canal designation as a UNESCO world heritage site.

The workshop will be in two parts. The first will be held January 28, 6:30 to 8:30 in the Carriage Shed, Dickinson Square, Manotick. The second February 7, 1:00 to 4:30 pm also in the Carriage Shed..

Admission is \$5.00. For more information call Cam Trueman, 692-6455

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