

The Rideau Township Historical Society

Preserving and Promoting local history for the former Rideau Township

March 2014 Newsletter

Newsletter Editor: Ron Wilson (rideauarchives@ottawa.ca)

The Next Meeting

Date: Wednesday March 19, 2014
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Place: St. Andrews Presbyterian Church
6810 Rideau Valley Drive South,
Kars, Ontario



Notice

Membership 2014 Membership fees are now due. \$10 for a single membership, \$15 for a family membership.

The March Presentation

Topic: *Saint Patrick's Day Celebration & Irish Heritage Month*

Speakers: Coral Lindsay & Gail Brooks

St. Patrick's story will be presented by Coral Lindsay. He was a Roman who brought Christianity to Ireland in spite of the Pagan Religion preached and enforced by the Druids.

So, be prepared to learn a lot about St. Patrick that you never heard before. As always Coral will have a display of Irish memorabilia to complement the presentation. Gail Brooks will show pictures of Ireland that will round out the evening and make it a presentation to be remembered.

Bring a Friend, Light Refreshments

This Month

1. Next Meeting
2. The February Presentation
3. News from the Rideau Archives
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5. Heritage Day
6. A Coming Event
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Heritage Day

Heritage Day is a nationwide celebration that encourages all Canadians to explore their local heritage, to get involved with stewardship and advocacy groups, and to visit museums, archives, and places of architectural significance.

Each February Heritage Day is celebrated at Ottawa City Hall on the Tuesday after family day. The general public and other interested parties are invited to browse informational displays, and mingle with over 45 exhibitors at this showcase.

Visitors can find out how heritage is being celebrated in our community; learn about services offered by local heritage organizations, public programs and special initiatives, as well as professional development and volunteer opportunities.

The RTHS takes advantage of this opportunity to advertise our services and books, meet other heritage organizations, and have discussions with a variety of clients and colleagues in our field of interest.



Jane Anderson, Maureen McPhee and Susan McKellar at the RTHS table at Heritage Day in the foyer of City Hall. Heritage Day is sponsored by the Cultural and Heritage Services Branch, City of Ottawa, in partnership with the Council of Heritage Organizations in Ottawa ([CHOO|COPO](http://CHOO.COPO)).

Tales of the One-Room School House.

Presentation by: Joy Forbes

Article and Photos by Lucy Martin

Go back far enough and there's probably a one-room school house in most family histories, particularly for those with rural roots. Indeed, the last school of that type in this region (in Griffith, near Renfrew) only closed in 1992.



Joy Forbes presenting findings from the research she carried out while writing her book.

For our February meeting 29 members and guests gathered in the basement of the North Gower United Church to hear speaker Joy Forbes on the subject of one-room schools in the Ottawa Valley.

Forbes is a Kanata resident who currently teaches grade school French at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School in Barrhaven. She has long been keen on using drama, dance, music and art as ways to enhance the learning experience.

Forbes also found time to write *Perseverance, Pranks & Pride: Tales of the One-Room Schoolhouse*, which has nearly sold out a press run of 2,000. The book consists of multiple entries from former pupils or teachers. It includes many photos of one-room schools as they were - or as they exist now, renovated into residences, or whatnot. Other photos depict the instructional material, furniture and recreational items of that period, along with some whimsical drawings of things that went on between teachers and pupils.

Forbes continues to share stories about the one-room school house experience through her talks and the extensive website she's developed:

<http://www.oneroomschoolhouses.ca/>

She is still collecting stories on the subject, in person or on the website.

Upon asking for a show of hands, we learned that several in the audience attended such schools. In addition, RTHS member Pat Earl was a student teacher in yet another one-room school. Coral Scharf Lindsay attended S.S. No. 1 North Gower with very fond recollections of her teacher, Miss Helen McLaren. When Lindsay became a teacher as well, her first position was the one-room schoolhouse at S.S. No. 4 Marlborough (Malakoff) School, as detailed in pages 139-140 of Forbes' book. ("S.S." stands for School Section.)

The schools were variously built of logs, clapboard, stone or brick. Many were modeled off plans bought from Eaton's, which accounts for the similar look. Each teacher would have to manage the building, which was usually a simple main structure with no running water, central heat or electricity. Washroom needs were met by an outhouse. Winters were kept semi-bearable with pot-bellied stoves which might be fueled by a levy of ½ cord of wood per child. Until recent decades, light would have come from windows or kerosene lamps.

Each teacher had to maintain discipline and convey an entire curriculum to students of widely divergent ages and abilities. Such women and men had to be resourceful and resilient. Forbes remarked many started young and cited the example of two women she met at a Quebec Heritage event who began teaching at age 15.

Before university degrees were readily available, or required, such teachers often took the job with just a high school education and a 6 week course in teaching. Forbes explained that wages were low, sporadic and biased in favor of men. All teachers were governed by strict moral codes. How strict? Well, consider this, from page 189 of Forbes' book:

Rules for "Bytown" Teachers 1872

- 1. Teachers each day will fill lamps, clean chimneys.*
- 2. Each teacher will bring a bucket of water and a scuttle of coal for the day's session.*
- 3. Make your pens carefully. You may whittle nibs to the individual taste of the pupils.*
- 4. Men teachers may take one evening each week for courting purposes, or two evenings a week if they go to church regularly.*
- 5. After ten hours in school, the teacher may spend the remaining time reading the Bible or other good books.*



Joy with a copy of her book, which was for sale at the meeting. She has sold about 2000 copies to date.

6. *Women teachers who marry or engage in unseemly conduct will be dismissed.*
7. *Every teacher should set aside from each pay a goodly sum of his earnings for his benefit during his declining years so that he will not become a burden on society.*
8. *Any teacher who smokes, uses liquor in any form, frequents pool or public halls, or gets shaved in a barber shop will give good reason to suspect his worth, intention, integrity and honesty.*

Note: the teacher who performs his labour faithfully and without fault for five years will be given an increase of twenty-five cents per week in his pay, providing the Board of Education approves. (Credit: <http://www.bytown.net/visitation.htm>)

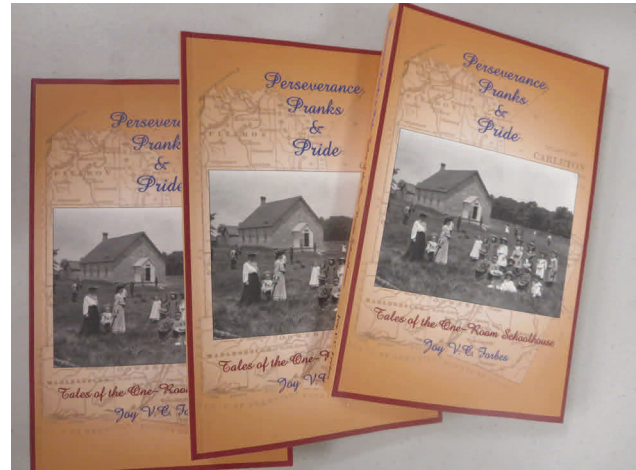
None of that will surprise older readers, or those familiar with the historical reality of more straight-laced times. But young men and women raised in an environment of individual freedom, non-discrimination and equal pay may be surprised to realize how different that picture used to be.

The Dickinson House

This year the Dickinson House opening day will be May 17, 2014. The opening exhibit will be a display of heritage toys, entitled "Playtime Past". The house will be open daily until September 1 from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Thereafter and until December 7, it will be open weekends and holidays from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., or by appointment.

We are looking forward to an exciting year with some new weekend heritage activities and some old favourites, all being planned now by the RTHS Dickinson House Committee. This year we are working to coordinate more closely with the Mill to provide a more complete experience for our visitors. Please come and see us this summer and think about volunteering to help out with the variety of jobs that will be available.

Discipline was another thing that has changed considerably. Corporal punishment was common. Three in our audience recall being strapped. (Side note: I recall getting the stick in first grade for "taking too long" to brush my teeth after lunch. What made me angry at the time was the fact corporal punishment was against policy by then, but some teachers wouldn't give it up. How come students had to obey authority, but adults could do as they pleased? Of course it wasn't particularly wise to try to make that point to a stick-swinging teacher!)



The book is in its final printing. If you want a copy it can be ordered online through

<http://www.oneroomschoolhouses.ca/order-a-copy.html>

or email Joy at joy.forbes@sympatico.ca

While the curriculum of the one-room school house may seem dull and repetitious, it was sufficiently rigorous that many today would have trouble passing the standardized 8th grade test of yesteryear. Forbes noted that the emphasis in education is quite different now. Teachers are expected to teach "big ideas" with a greater focus on how to learn instead of simple memorization of facts.

At the conclusion of her presentation, Forbes was thanked by Stu Rogers, who taught in (modern) schools for 35 years.

Coming Events

March 27- Digitally Preserving the Past for the Future –A Video Tour.

Join the Smiths Falls & District Historical Society and Heritage House Museum at 7:00 pm for a special video oral history presentation by Sarah (Bennett) Chisholm of the North Lanark Historical Society.

Local history is the essence of our communities and our country. In 2012 the North Lanark Historical Society initiated an oral history project to capture the fading memories of Mississippi Mills. Two years later the Historical Society has completed over 25 videos and has several more lined up for 2014. They have recorded information on lo-

cal schools, farms, mills, military experiences, and on the Almonte Train Accident of 1942.

The presentation will discuss project successes, lessons learned, tips & techniques along with Q&A. Please RSVP by March 26 at (613) 283-6311. Admission to the event is \$5 per person or FREE to members of the SF&D Historical Society or Museum Members. Heritage House Museum is located at 11 Old Sly's Rd. in Smiths Falls. Doors will open at 6:30 p.m. All are welcome.

April 16 History of the CCM Bicycle Company

Join us at the April meeting of the RTHS at the Client Service Centre on Roger Stevens Drive to hear Bill McKenty talk about the CCM Bicycle Company. Find out whether the bicycle rode by Murdoch was a CCM. More information in the April newsletter.

News from the Rideau Branch, Ottawa Archives

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

Resources and Services of the Rideau Township Branch of the City of Ottawa Archives: a monthly feature in this newsletter, celebrating the services and holdings preserved in your community's archives resource centre.

I recently attended the local Seedy Saturday event. These flower and vegetable seed exchanges have been popping up across the country every spring ever since the first event was held in British Columbia in 1990. The Ottawa event is organized by River Road resident Greta Kryger.

Horticultural exchanges of this kind are, of course, nothing new. In the late 1950s, an annual spring plant exchange was hosted by the South Carleton Horticultural Society, which was active between 1947 and 1966. Among the Society's other events was a sugar bush party at the maple bush of Algy Wallace, hosted in the spring of 1948 for

visiting members of Ottawa's Kiwanis Club, who reciprocated with a gift of clover seed.

If you would like to learn more about seed and plant orders, flower shows, or other Society business, come to the Archives to have a look at the South Carleton Horticultural Society records (MG058). And while you are at it, you can see some recently donated spiles for maple sugaring - though they probably aren't the ones Algy Wallace used.

Stuart Clarkson

Some Watson's Mill Events

The Mill is located at 5525 Dickinson Street, Dickinson Square, Manotick. Free parking on-site.

Web Site: www.watsonsmill.com

The Carriage Shed Office at Watson's Mill is open: weekdays, 10:00 a.m.-4:00.p.m. . Please visit www.watsonsmill.com for a complete calendar of events.

Please note that the Mill is not open from January through April. Please visit their web site (above) for information on other winter events & the upcoming season's programs.

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

Minutes of the Rideau Township Historical Society February Meeting

February 19, 2014, North Gower United Church Hall

Opening: The Rideau Township Historical Society met in the hall of North Gower United Church, North Gower, Ontario, for the regular monthly meeting and a presentation on one-room school houses by Joy Forbes, with 29 present. President Brian Sawyer called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Finance: Sandy McNiece, the auditor for 2013, read his report which indicated that he found the accounting records in good order. He also presented the Statement of Receipts and Expenditures for 2013, with Receipts of \$38,483 and Expenditures of \$32,747, and explained the specific reserves of \$4,500 for Publications and \$10,500 for Dickinson House. Moved by Ron Wilson, seconded by Brian Earl, that these reports be accepted. Carried.

Sandy then presented the budget for 2014 which predicted Receipts of \$50,685 and Expenditures of \$52,994. This had been based on the submission to City of Ottawa Heritage Funding Program, but Tom MacDonald just found out that the City grant was only for \$9,500 which is the same amount as last year, and less than the request. So the executive will have to adjust the budget accordingly at the next executive meeting.

Membership: Mary Riley reported that currently there are 12 life members, 1 complimentary member, and 54 paid members.

Program: Ruth Wright reminded us that next month's program, on March 19, will be on Irish Heritage with speakers Coral Lindsay and Gail Brooks. She also pointed out some pictures of local soldiers from the World Wars at the rear of the hall (related to the November 2013 program).

Communications: Ron Wilson, the new Communications Director, announced he will have a meeting around the end of April to plan communications for the summer, then another in the fall to review. He had a problem with updating the web site recently, but it is now corrected.

Publications: Jane Anderson reported that Maureen McPhee has completed the manuscript for The Women of Dickinson House, and that Ron is currently formatting it in preparation for printing. Plans are to have it printed by early May, then launch it during Dickinson Days in June. Planning is underway on the Oral History Project. Jane, Maureen and Susan set up a display on the RTHS at Heritage Day at City Hall. And a group will be at Gene-O-Rama in March to sell books. Jane is also investigating selling books at country fairs.

Dickinson House: Maureen McPhee and the committee are working on a program for the summer, and are waiting to hear about funding for students.

Youth: Brian Sawyer mentioned that the new Youth Director, Brandon Kassis, will be bringing ideas to the next executive meeting.

Minutes: It was moved by Maureen McPhee and seconded by Ruth Wright that the minutes of the January 15, 2014 meeting as published in the January Newsletter be approved. Carried.

Evening Program: Ruth Wright introduced Joy Forbes, who presented an illustrated talk based on her book, Perseverance, Pranks and Pride – Tales of the One-Room School House. Former teacher Stu Rogers thanked Joy for her entertaining talk.

Adjournment: The meeting then adjourned, followed by a social time with refreshments provided by Sandy Wilson and Jane Anderson.