

Merrickville and District Historical Society

Archival Update, April 2013



WOW! We certainly got a response to our question of just what a Flax Hakle was. First there is the question of the exact spelling of the word Hakle. There were earlier versions, such as Hakell, Hatchel, Hetchell, Hechele, Hekele and the present day version of Heckle, or Hackel either of which are widely used. Our particular artifact was originally catalogued as a Hakle. And what does a Flax Hakle do you say?

In a nutshell - **Heckling** splits and straightens the flax fibers, as well as removing the fibrous core and impurities from flax. Heckling is done with heckling combs by pulling the flax through the combs. This parts the locked fibers and makes them straight, clean, and ready to spin. After heckling, the flax is ready to spin. After spinning, the flax is then suitable for weaving into linen. You can learn more by going to Google . [Images for flax hackle](#) or Heckling Flax.

Smoking Pipes

We have a selection of very interesting pipes on display at the Archives.

Over the years pipes have been fashioned from an assortment of materials including clay, ceramic, Meerschaum, wood, stone, gourd, briar and even metal.

A number of Native American cultures had pipe-smoking traditions long before the arrival of Europeans. Tobacco was often smoked, generally for ceremonial purposes, though other mixtures of sacred herbs were also common. The narrow calumet (called "peace pipe" by the Europeans), was smoked in ceremonies to seal covenants and treaties.

Tobacco was introduced to Europe from the Americas in the 16th century and spread around the world rapidly.



Sword-Bayonet.

The Sergeant at Arms would have had this in his Garrison. Engraving on the blade of the Sword is "Mre d'Armes de Chat" 11th Fbre 1874. The serial number on the handle is AC 30757, and the handle is ribbed for grip. The blade is a yataghan design and has a large wide blood groove which does not travel to the tip to prevent it from sticking in the body when stabbed with the force of a bayonet.

To permit use as a bayonet, there is a groove in the handle which has a locking ring on the top. The blade tapers to a fine point for stabling but also has a cutting edge for slashing and cutting. For use as a sword, it has a cutting edge and point.

Two silver metal stamps in the marker have been put close to the handle, one is an "M" placed in a circle and the other an "S" placed within a diamond. On the opposite side of the blade a "3" has been stamped into the metal. Another metal marker's mark (LMC) has been stamped into the handle. The bayonet groove (where the bayonet is attached to rifle) is stamped CN291. The sheath covering this sword is a little tight and difficult to remove, but it has been removed previously to allow for cataloguing.



Library

As you can see from the photographs below, we have begun to assemble a small library of books, written by both local and Canadian historians. Our library includes a wide range of historical documents including:

- Copies of monthly publications from other Canadian Historical Societies, including one series of “The Ontario History”, Ontario Historical Society, dating from 1957-1988 inclusive;
- Binders of research material for the “Merrickville Designated Properties Project 1977”;
- Manuscripts from previous lecture series;
- Books of a historical theme including biographies, restoration manuals, archival and Museum management;
- CD's from the files of the Merrickville and District Historical Society.
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There is also a complete collection of books and research material used in the writing of the biography of Harry McLean, “Building and Empire” which has been donated by the author Teresa Charland.

All of this material was previously hidden away in old filing cabinets and since the move to our new location where we have a little more space, we have had the opportunity to retrieve them, dust them off and catalogue them to facilitate access by researchers as well as viewing by the general public.

We still have on display the art work of the winning students of the Blockhouse Opening Art Contest for 2012. These will now be returned to the artists as we get ready for our 2013 contest. There are also copies of the submissions of all past student essay contest winners in our Archives and at the Village Library.

We encourage those interested in visiting the MDHS archives for general interest or research to contact Nina Donald at ndonald@growthconnections.com since the archives are currently open by appointment only.

Masthead

So as not to create too much confusion to our readers with the same masthead as the Society Newsletter we have changed the appearance of the Archive Update masthead to reflect the two separate publications.

Post Script

Unfortunately we haven't yet received any response to our plea for filing cabinets. However, perhaps over the summer someone might be just clearing out the basement or storage room and find they have one or more surplus. If you hear of any of your friends or neighbours who might have one available, please contact us and we will arrange for them to be picked up. And of course there is always the village sidewalk sale in May; you might just find us out there combing the streets for a bargain.

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