

Merrickville and District Historical Society

Archives Update - Fall 2014



Welcome to fall and how splendid it has been so far. The tree colours are spectacular, only one problem, the leaves just don't stay on the trees, they all seem to find their way onto our lawns. My poor old tractor is still working overtime as I ride around trying to mulch the leaves, rather than rake them. That is a thankless job and backbreaking if you have to rake, and although once the snow arrives you can't see them, they will still be waiting for you in the spring. I would much prefer to be working in the Archives.

Talking of which, we have two new volunteers in the Archives, Gale and Angela Beking. Mother and daughter make a great team.

Gale does the research, actually she loves spending time reading the articles and we have a job sometimes keeping her focused on collecting the right text that is to be catalogued. She is also not shy either about telling us all about just what she finds. She is certainly very enthusiastic about the whole project, and in fact the first day she was there she looked up some information about her family in one of many boxes of the Women's Institute, booklets and news items. Angela types all the information into the computer and thank goodness she has mastered the workings of the photographic equipment so we can now once again digitize the artifacts and add them to the files. Here we see them working on the old Ottawa Journal (1931) newspapers that were generously donated by Denis Faulkner as mentioned in our previous summer issue.

We have a lot of work ahead of us, with so many items still waiting to be catalogued. But it's fun.



Blockhouse Visitors and the Archives

While volunteering in the Blockhouse with Gillian Hammonds recently, we had a couple of ladies visit, one from Ottawa and her sister who was visiting her from Vancouver. They were certainly duly impressed with the whole exhibition and asked about the soon-to-be-completed Harry F. McLean Room. In particular they were interested in his residence at the end of St. Lawrence Street. It would appear that their family ancestry is Corbett, whose name is not unfamiliar to the village, and it would appear that some members of the family from way back lived across the road from the Manor.

I indicated that we did have an extensive file on the Corbett family along with photographs in the Archives, but unfortunately there was nobody available that day to allow them to visit the archives. I said I could make arrangements for them at another time, but the one sister was returning to Vancouver early the next day. They were extremely disappointed and tried desperately to find a way to get into the archives. They suggested all sorts of options which unfortunately were all impractical.

Well somehow or other it was sorted out with lots of persuasion from the ladies - they offered to be volunteers in the blockhouse and would sit upstairs to make sure any visitors were looked after, while Gillian greeted new visitors upon their arrival and took care of any enquiries they might have. I myself hopped in my car and high-tailed it to Burritt's Rapid's (the Archives) to retrieve the box and brought it back to the Blockhouse. We sat the ladies down at the Harry McLean desk downstairs and left them to it. I think they might have been a little disappointed as I am not sure they were the descendants they thought they might be - too many Corbett's, I guess! But they enjoyed looking at all the old photographs and took lots of notes on the family history that would allow them to continue their research at a later date. They left as two very happy people and they thanked us for all our help. It was the end of the day and they left in a bit of a hurry to get back to Ottawa, and I don't believe they left a donation. Oh well maybe next time I will charge for my gas (just kidding).

Some folk don't pay too much attention to the Archives as they are not up front and out in the open. But it warms the cockles of your heart to know that all the time, effort and money is not wasted, and all the material and artifacts are available for today's visitors and for future generations of visitors. The society should be proud of its efforts.

As a reminder, Society Members and the general public are invited and encouraged to view the Historical Society Archival Data Base in the Library and to dig a little deeper into Merrickville's history. Merrickville Public Library Librarian, Mary Kate Lapin, will be delighted to show you the Heritage Room in the library, and to assist you with accessing the Archives.

Merrickville Designated Properties.

Mary Kate Lapin at the village library receives many requests from people researching genealogy on their ancestors, folks of interest in the village and also people looking for information about their own or other designated properties that are located in Merrickville. She enquired if we had any material that would help her with these requests.

The Archives has on file two binders of the working copies of research material on the older homes in Merrickville. A study was conducted in 1977 by Mark Munroe on behalf of LACAC with Mrs. Virginia Martin as Chairman of the committee. Some 122 buildings were researched, complete with location, address, description and ownership. He sketched each property and took some photographs, but not of all of the properties, (photographs do not seem to be available at this time) and made his recommendation as to which of the properties might be designated. Copious hand written notes were taken by Mr. Munroe and it would appear that he took a number of courses and reviewed much literature to enable him to complete this project in a very professional manner.

Mary Kate was entrusted with the one binder which contains all of the individual properties and she will be asking one of her volunteers to scan the entire contents which she will then keep on file in the Heritage Room of the library as reference material for the enquiring public. Mr. Munroe did an exceptional job and it is well worth taking a look at this binder either in the library when completed or in the Archives when it is returned. Maybe you might want to take a look and see if your own property was on the list.

["Merrickville Remembers"](#)

We had another very interesting donation this past month from Mrs. Joyce McKay. Some may recall seeing this publication "Merrickville Remembers" A tribute to the men who gave their lives for our freedom. It was published back in the fall of 2002 but we have to step back to when the idea of producing a book to honour the men whose names are inscribed on the Merrickville Cenotaph originated with Jack Jessop and Peter McKenna in May of 2002. Soon other residents, Jack Wilcox and Joyce McKay, joined to form a Committee with Jack Jessop as Chairman and, as described by Joyce "by the time I joined, Peter and Jack had already collected the names from the cenotaph, all men, no women, and they had also done a bit of research on a couple of the names involved". Subsequently Joyce did most of the research and ads were placed in the local newspapers seeking information on the names. Although there were many responses, four of the names generated no response from either local residents or from Veterans Affairs. There were possibly some errors made when the names were inscribed. Also it was discovered that not all of the men were from Merrickville; some were from the surrounding areas such as South Mountain, North Augusta, Jasper and Easton's Corners. The decision was made to go ahead with what they had started to do and honour the names inscribed on the Merrickville Cenotaph. Jack Wilcox did the editing and publicity, Jack Jessop was the fund raiser (and apparently a very good one at that); and Tom Graham and Linda Myers of TD Graham & Associates took care of the design and publishing. Peter liaised with the printers and it appears he was the glue that kept them all together.



Although the book indicates that it was published in the fall of 2002 which was the original intent, it was not actually available until 2003 due to publishing issues. In attendance at the launching was then MP Bob Runciman,

Catherine Tremblay from Veterans Affairs, Merrickville Mayor Doug Struthers, the working committee of Peter McKenna, Jack Wilcox, Joyce McKay and Jack Jessop and many friends and relatives. 1,000 copies were distributed to friends, relatives of the soldiers, airman and one seaman as well as the local schools, girl guides and scouts. Further information is now available at www.virtualmemorial.ca

As this year marks the 100th anniversary of the beginning of WW1 it might be a fitting tribute to those serviceman to arrange for a reprinting of this wonderful booklet as it is now out of print and unavailable to those seeking information on their family and loved ones.

Mrs. McKay also donated the original documents to the Library should they be required for a reprinting.

Did you Know

A couple of interesting items from Mr. Monroe`s research, "Council Minutes, Wolford Township":

- 1853 - David Forbes was an innkeeper (laid 100' of plank sidewalk in front of his lot that year)
Town had some dealings with the Brockville and Ottawa Railroad - they were paying them certain amounts of money in order to attract a branch line. They loaned, by way of guarantee, 25,000 pounds – money obtained from the Consolidated Municipal Loan Fund for Upper Canada.
- 1854 - 16 Jan. 1854, the council voted to pay 1 pound, 6 shillings and 6 pence to repairs to damage done to the stone school house from the elections.
Samuel Jakes was appointed auditor in this year and also council clerk
- 1855 - John Brislin agrees to plank 100' of side walk in front of Mr. Whitmore`s blacksmith shop.
Samuel Jakes was given permission to continue selling under his present licence.
The first Roman Catholic School Board for the township was authorized – Michael Kelly was authorized to call the first meeting.

Just as a reminder, should anyone have any items that the society might find of interest for the archival collection, please contact us at ndonald@growthconnections.com; we would be only too happy to pick them up.

Also the archives are open to the public by appointment, again just contact us and we will be happy to meet you at the archive premises in Burritt`s Rapids and help you with your enquiries or just show you around.

Also don't forget to renew your membership this November. The annual membership runs from November 1st to October 31st, \$10 for single, \$15 for family, \$100 for a single life and \$150 for a family life membership. This can easily be taken care of when either visiting the Archives, or when attending the monthly lecture meeting where our membership committee member Art Hackett will be only too happy to take care of you. Or just send your cheque to the Merrickville and District Historical Society, P.O. Box 394, Merrickville, Ontario. K0G 1N0