



What happened to our weather, it seems strange to be sending out a Winter Update when there isn't any snow on the ground and no icicles hanging from the trees. Most people have their Christmas decorations up which look lovely except for all those ugly extension cords lying all over the lawns which are usually covered in snow to hide them. The only good part is that we didn't freeze our tender body parts, stringing all those lights.

Archive Staff

We have a new volunteer to the Archives, Johanna Jensen. She is a wiz on the computer and has been working closely with Angela, understanding the mechanics of the archives and also adding her own ten cents worth. Johanna is now in a position to take over the reins when our PastPerfect Project comes to an end for our coordinator, Angela Beking.

However I know Angela will want to stay on as a volunteer, even if only to keep the rest of us in line. I am sure the volunteers will still have many ongoing questions as they move forward and we hope she will be available. No getting married and moving to Halifax, Angela, you hear!

Collections Committee.

This past Fall the Merrickville and District Executive Committee voted to form an Archival Collections Committee. The Committee membership currently comprises Angela Beking, Nina Donald, Ann Martin, Karleigh Pitura, Nancy Warr and Michael Whittaker.

The Committee has developed a new Collections Management Policy for MDHS, which formalizes the process of accepting items into the collection. The Committee will be responsible for accepting items on a case-by-case basis, and will choose only items that meet the criteria of the new Collections Management Policy. The Committee will also be responsible for evaluating any items already in the collection that might have to be de-accessioned (removed from the Archives due to e.g. severe deterioration) and either returned to the original donor, or disposed off in a proper fashion. This could include such items that have or might become a serious threat to the rest of the collection. In the past, all gifts and donations have been most gratefully received by the Society, but unfortunately the odd item should really not be in the archives. (A simple example is a small rather old bottle which contains oil - it has a stopper, but its contents are mostly dried up now and it is regarded as hazardous waste material which must therefore be removed.

PastPerfect Project

The PastPerfect Project has been progressing well thanks to the hard work and dedication of MDHS volunteers.

Training activities are now in progress to ensure that Society volunteers are comfortable with the new software. On November 18, 2015, Angela hosted a cataloguing training session for volunteers at the Merrickville Public Library. In addition to learning standards for preventive conservation, volunteers worked to catalogue a number of artefacts that were "found in collection" i.e. exciting items we didn't know we had!

With two months left on the project, we are almost ready to move to the “wrap up” stage. It is hard to believe it has gone so quickly, but we are very proud of all we have accomplished.

One way to keep up with what Angela is doing these days with PastPerfect is to take a look at the MDHS Web Page on Facebook. Twice a week she posts all sorts of information - it's really very interesting and informative and she also has a guessing game for everyone to figure out where and what the highlights are from. All of the subjects she finds are from the Archive PastPerfect system. Clever wouldn't you say!

Archive Items

A wall-to-wall inventory of the Archives in the basement of the Burritt's Rapids Community Hall is also being undertaken. This inventory builds on the hard work of Nancy Warr and the 2015 summer students, who previously conducted a wall-to-wall inventory of the Blockhouse Museum. It is time-consuming work but quite critical. We are finding items we didn't know we had, like a calf weaning collar and a banner from Carley's Corners S.S. No. 12 Wolford. Knowing the collection better has also helped us share items through Facebook and Twitter, which is proving quite popular. If you haven't checked us out yet, please visit www.facebook.com/MerrickvilleAndDistrictHistoricalSociety or on Twitter @MvilleHistSoc.

With the development of the new PastPerfect system, our volunteers are in the process of reviewing every item in the Archives Collections to verify first that it has been transferred from the old data base to into the new one. Each item location must match the recorded data (things have been moved somewhat over the years) and there should be a check of what is actually in each box and in what condition it is in. This brings us to the problem of some of the artifacts that have deteriorated but just might have a chance to be saved. Upon review of some items it was determined that a few of the textiles that had some “house guests” which were creating havoc but could perhaps be stopped in their tracks by placing them in tightly sealed plastic bags and stored in a freezer. Some items may only have to be stored a few months to kill off such vermin, others may take up to one year and, unfortunately, a couple of the Uniforms that belonged to the Merrickville Citizens Band may have to stay there permanently.

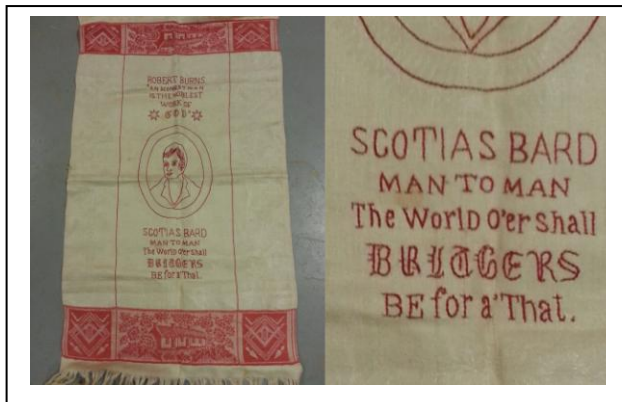
This brings us to the Archive's new acquisition, a freezer – it's a small Energy Saver unit which will be inexpensive to operate and will probably only be opened about twice a year to check on how things are going.

While going over the open shelves, these two items were found, both without accession numbers so could not be identified or even figured out as to just what they might be. I am going to leave it to you to let us guess. (Actually we do know now but that would spoil the fun!) They would both have been used on the farm, one with crops and the other livestock. In the first picture they are extremely heavy and the second as light as a feather.



There is no first prize for the correct answer but let us know what you think they are, and let the other members of the Society know just how smart you are. One of the photographs was actually mentioned in the article on PastPerfect so you should have been able to figure it out, providing you read the article!

This interesting piece was located in one of the many boxes listed as textiles.



It is registered in the archive data base as follows:

A red and white linen cloth with a design woven in the fabric. Some of the design has been outlined by hand in red embroidery cotton.

The following is embroidered "Robert Burns" an honest man is the noblest work of God Scotias Bard. Man to man the world o'er shall bri??ers be for a' that`.

It measures 95cm by 48cm, in good shape and is properly stored in a correct archival manner for future preservation.

Donated to the society by Mrs. E. K. Standforth, Lakefield, Ontario.

Our question would be; what would those two missing letters be or even what would the complete correct word be. This time we volunteers are pressed for a correct answer.

Again while working in the archives we came across another box entitled Textiles. (There are many of them) Unfortunately when we opened it up we found a number of the items that were in pretty poor shape, and after checking each individual item for deterioration etc. it was decided that the whole box should be placed in the freezer. This is due to the fact that once the little critters have invaded the box, even those items that show no signs of deterioration have to, shall we say, be quarantined. Each item was separated, wrapped in tissue and notations were made in the data base as to their condition and their now new location in the freezer. One of those items was a little baffling at first, but research and perseverance pays off.



The first photograph shows one of the volunteers in the archives holding up what looks more like a fishing net than what it actually is. Before sneaking a look at the second photograph, can you guess what it is? You peeked!

Your answer should have been - a horse fly net or drape.

These nets were placed on the horse so that while the horses were moving the webbing moved with them, thus dislodging any flies that had settled and were irritating the horse. These nets could be quite simple for the everyday use on the working farm animals or for the family horse and buggy. They were also made especially decorative with tassels and were called “caparisons”, for those special trips to family or church. There are many different varieties today made to protect our animals from those pesky creatures, but simple netting would have made our horses’ lives a lot more comfortable in days gone by.

Accession 968.4.1 - Beige fly net for horse - criss-cross string with tassels.
Donated - Estate of Mrs. Claude Ferguson donated by Mrs. Lloyd (Alice) Hughes, Merrickville

Recently I found this notice in one of our archive files. It would appear that in the past notices were sent out to the membership by mail. (Before computers, I guess!) And one of these notices I found rather interesting. It reads:

*“The ANNUAL DINNER MEETING will be held in the LEGION HALL,
Merrickville, at 6p.m., on TUESDAY, the 29th of APRIL. Full course Dinner \$6.00
Regular meeting following the Dinner.”*

What’s so interesting you say - where can you get a full course meal these days for only \$6.00? Maybe still at the Legion - we have had a few pretty good Annual Spring dinners of recent years, maybe we should see if next time they can replicate the price. (Sorry Randy!)

At this point we would like to thank all the volunteers who have been working so hard along with Angela to oversee the transfer of all of our archives to the new system, plus some other additional tidying up. Thanks, Nancy Warr, Johanna Jensen, Nina Donald and Ann Martin. We look forward to working together again in 2016.

Seasons Greetings to one and all and a Happy New Year

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