



# Merrickville and District Historical Society

# Newsletter

## President's Message

After a successful summer celebrating Merrickville-Wolford 225, we're solidly back into fall mode. The Blockhouse has been "packed up" for another year and all of our tender items have been stored in our offsite Archives facility in the Burritt's Rapids Community Hall. We haven't been the only folks working in the Blockhouse this October, though. Parks Canada is continuing its structural inventory of all the buildings along the Rideau Canal and the engineers have been seen with their measuring tapes, cameras, and masonry hammers examining the Blockhouse inside and out.

MDHS executive members met with Parks Canada's contractors in the summer to voice our concerns regarding the integrity of the building. The last time this work was undertaken was 1984, so there are a number of things on their "to be addressed" list. It is Parks' intention to have the report completed by March 31, 2019. We look forward to hearing how our Blockhouse is doing in spring of 2019.

In the meantime it's time to check in on our own organization. November 27, 2018 is the date of our Annual General Meeting (documentation should be available the first week of November with the exception of our financial statements). We'll keep the AGM short, so we can enjoy a sumptuous dinner provided by the Merrickville Legion and a fascinating talk by our after-dinner speaker. We're finalizing the details now, but you can reserve your place by calling Gillian Gray at 613-269-4236.

Our speaker will be Mags Gauden, who I had the pleasure of meeting last week. Mags is a professional genealogist specializing in genetic genealogy and is the founder of Grandmas Genes in Ottawa. Whether you're curious about how DNA tests work, or you've already got your results from the "Big 3" (23andMe, AncestryDNA, or Family Tree DNA) Mags will be able to shed some light about the world of DNA testing and where it can lead.

I do hope to see you at either our October lecture or our November AGM—there's lots going on to talk about.

An Martin



# UPCOMING EVENTS

## October Lecture

Bolton Road began as a trail linking the Rideau River to the St. Lawrence, but did not see settlement until the early 1840s. **October 27, 2018** at **7:00 pm** at the **Merrickville Legion**, Michael Whittaker, president of the Rideau Valley Archaeological Society, will look at some of the physical remains and locations of farmsteads, schools, mills, and a railway station south of County Road 43, with side trips to Deek's Quarry on the Scotch Line Road, and into Bishop's Mills. He will cover what the curious amateur should look for to identify a site, and the regulations governing archaeology in the Province of Ontario. The Rideau Valley Archaeological Society has just begun to explore our area, and delve into the science of archaeology.

## Annual General Meeting

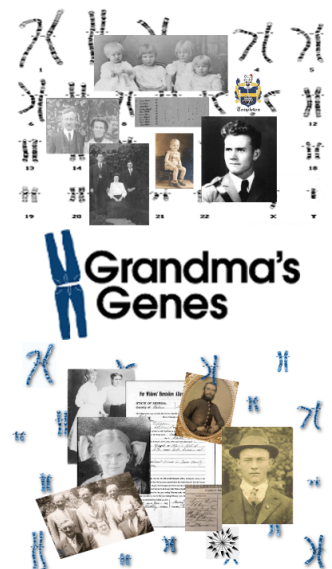
On **November 27, 2018** MDHS will hold the Annual General Meeting at the **Merrickville Legion**. Drinks are at **5:30 pm**. A sumptuous roast chicken dinner will be served by the Legion at **6:00 pm**. Our after-dinner speaker will be Mags Gauden, of Grandma's Genes.

Tickets for dinner are available from now until November 20, 2018 for \$25 per person. Please contact Gillian Gray at 613-269-4236 to book your tickets.

## Grandma's Genes

After earning her Bachelor's degree from Columbia University, Mags Gauden began to work on genealogy as a "hobby" - which led to her leadership roles with WikiTree, where she currently leads the DNA Project, the US Southern Colonies Project, the United Empire Loyalist Project, and the British Home Children Project. Mags is also a member of the Canadian government's Canadian Casualty Identification Team which identifies newly found remains of missing Canadian war dead prior to 1970 and gives them proper burials.

Currently, Mags is preparing to teach a course in genetic genealogy at the Centre for Archives and Information Studies at the University of Dundee in Scotland. At the **Annual General Meeting on November 27, 2018** she will shed light on the world of DNA testing and what to do with the information it provides.



# AT THE ARCHIVES

The Archives is like a mini treasure hunt. Every drawer or box opened is a surprise and brings new and interesting items to our attention. Some require research and/or surfing on the internet to identify, such as a “fid” and a “gig”. We continue to digitalize our records for public viewing at the Library and produce updated artifact condition reports at both the Archives and the Blockhouse. Since the beginning of 2018, we have accessioned at least 360 artifacts/documents and 46 pictures/photographs.

The Collections Committee meets frequently to assess new artifacts/documents received for inclusion to the Archives. Many artifacts/documents have been accepted and we are currently assessing an additional 100+ documents received in the last 3 months for their historic value. Some examples of recent accessions can be seen below.

The Collections Committee also works to find the best homes for all of the artefacts and documents which are donated to MDHS. Most recently, the Collections Committee approved the repatriation of the *Voltigeur Uniform, belt, cartridge box and plumed hat (kepi)* to the Voltigeurs de Québec Armoury, Quebec City with a ceremony on the Blockhouse Opening Day June 23, 2018. It was wonderful to see these beautiful artefacts returned to their proper home.

Nancy Warr



John McGrath with his dog ca. 1950, with large grindstone from the Wickwire Tannery.



John Mills in his furniture shop on Brock Street, circa 1920.



Repatriation of Voltigeur Uniform, Blockhouse Opening 2018.

## SUMMER 2018

Through the Merrickville-Wolford 225th Anniversary events, and through regular Blockhouse museum operations, MDHS worked to improve community engagement throughout the summer. A strong team of interpreters at the Blockhouse allowed the museum to run smoothly while the focus was on the anniversary events. The Merrickville-Wolford 225th Anniversary series was a success, with 15 events held between June and September. MDHS had great publicity over the summer through social media, the North Grenville Times, the Merrickville Phoenix, and our own publications. A huge thank you goes out to the interpreters, members, volunteers, businesses, and community members who made the summer of 2018 such a resounding success!

Elizabeth Robinson



# Get Involved

Our band of “regulars” has been busy this year opening the Blockhouse Museum, hiring and supervising summer students, and managing a series of Merrickville-Wolford 225 presentations.

Work has also been continuing off-site as we catalogue and update our information in the Archives, respond to inquiries, and supervise the work of our Young Canada Works Building Careers in Heritage intern. With the ebb and flow of life and other commitments, though, some of our volunteers need to step away, and so we do need some additional volunteers. We’d love to hear from you if you are interested in helping out by

- coordinating volunteers
- working at the Blockhouse Museum
- managing our membership list
- submitting a grant application
- editing a newsletter
- managing a Facebook page
- helping out in the Archives

Please contact Ann Martin at 613-269-2042 to learn more about how you can help our volunteer-run Society.

# Who We Are

The current Merrickville and District Historical Society Executive Committee:

- Ann Martin: President
- Nancy Warr: Secretary
- Jeffrey Murray: 1st Vice-President
- Michael Phillips: Treasurer
- Angela Beking: 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President
- Andrew McKay: Past President

# Membership

Our membership year starts in November—so it’s time to pay your dues. Being a member of MDHS means that you can sleep at night knowing that people who care about keeping the Blockhouse open and providing year-round history and heritage programming to our community can continue to do their work. We think it’s a bargain!

- Annual Membership (Individual) - \$10.00
- Life Membership (Individual) - \$100.00
- Annual Membership (Family) - \$15.00
- Life Membership (Family) - \$150.00

You can pay for your membership at any monthly meeting, or send a cheque payable to the Merrickville and District historical Society to:

Merrickville and District Historical Society  
 PO Box 294  
 Merrickville, Ontario  
 K0G 1N0, CA

# Contact Us

Do you have questions, want information, or have an idea for a display? To get involved, please contact us:

Email: [info@merrickvillehistory.org](mailto:info@merrickvillehistory.org)

Website: [www.merrickvillehistory.org](http://www.merrickvillehistory.org)

Facebook: Merrickville and District Historical Society



Thank you to the contributors of this issue of the MDHS Newsletter; Ann Martin, Nancy Warr, and Elizabeth Robinson.