



Vol.25 No.6

1 September 1998

Editor

James Warren

WHO SAVES HISTORY?

First, welcome back from summer and wasn't it a short one? To introduce the Fall season we welcome Prof. John Fielding of Queen's who brings happier news about the prospects for more vigorous history education in our schools. His talk is entitled, Who is Trying to Save Canadian History?

An Honours History graduate of the University of Western Ontario, John was a secondary school teacher for 24 years, Adjunct Professor of History Curriculum at Queen's for eight, Co-Chair of Kingston's Heritage Fair and most recently, Co-Project Manager of a team writing the new Ontario curriculum for Canadian and World Studies. Your spirited response is encouraged.

When? Wednesday 16 September at 7:30 pm. Where? Upstairs in the Wilson Room, Kingston Frontenac Public Library, 130 Johnson Street. Visitors are always welcome, no charge including drink and cookies after. Why not bring an interested friend?

Executive meeting is Thursday 10 September, 7.30 at Ongwanada.

HISTORY BOOKS

"Who Killed Canadian History?" by J.L.Granatstein is a lively critique of what passes for history in our schools, 1998 Harper Collins \$22.

"My First History of Canada" by the late Donald Dickie is an

enjoyable read for kids, illustrated by Lloyd Scott. In its 1997 2nd edition from Red Leaf Press \$17.95, it would make a good gift for a child's stocking.

"A First Book of Canadian History" by W.Stewart Wallace, illustrated by C.W.Jefferys, published by Macmillan Co. for 30 cents. From 1928 to 1934 it was the authorized history textbook in Ontario public schools, including my 1875 country schoolhouse which was demolished to build a highway intersection in Mississauga. The fir trees around our schoolyard still stand.

HUGH SEGAL AND SIR JOHN A.

At our annual celebration of the life of Sir John A. Macdonald on 6 June we heard an interesting and refreshingly non-political address from Hugh Segal, contender for the leadership of Sir John's old party. Enriching the occasion were the Parr Christie Singers and the Fort Henry Guard. There were 104 in attendance.

In his will, signed 4 September 1890, Sir John wrote: "I desire that I shall be buried in the Kingston Cemetery near the grave of my mother, as I promised her that I should be there buried." Eight months and four days later, he joined her.

KINGSTON'S HERITAGE FAIR

On 21 and 22 May, the fourth annual Kingston Regional Heritage Fair took place at the Royal Military College, attracting its usual crowd of students with their models, posters, videos,

and parents. Our exhibit was effectively attended by Evelyn Bishop, Bruce and Audrey Cossar, Ted and Amy Storey, Desmond O'Meara, Bill and Barbara Fittell, Margaret and Bernard Burdsall and your humble servant. Through the sale of our publications and sesquicentennial coins, we raised \$92. Our thanks to all who participated.

MURNEY TOWER BLOSSOMS

Our museum, the stout, round 1846 Murney Tower, enjoyed its summer success while the rest of us holidayed. Its Open House for members was held 28 May with vegetarian goodies but moderate attendance. On 15 August, it was Defending the Decades Day with Joseph Auger of the 1730 Dit Tauefer, Stephen McGaughey of the 1812 Rifle Militia, Adam Lucas of the WWII Perth Regiment and Richard Parks of WWII Royal Canadian Signal Corps. Our Murney Tower committee and staff are to be commended for their dedication.



AN GORTA MOR

On 15 August, the first annual commemoration service was held at the Celtic Cross, recently raised in An Gorta Park to honour the memory of some 1400 Irish immigrants who died in Kingston of typhus and starvation in their 1847-1848 flight by sea from the great famine in Ireland and the

nearly 300 compassionate citizens of this area who died while caring for them. A wreath was laid by our Bea Corbett on behalf of this Society.

NEWS OF OUR MEMBERS

We warmly welcome three new members to our Society, making 13 new members this year:

J. Marc Auger, 2102 Rutledge Road, Sydenham ON K0H 2T0

Capt. John R. Grodzinski, 50 Wingfield Crescent, Kingston K7K 6G2

Richard Corsi-Johnson, 4-235 Johnson Street, Kingston K7L 1Y2

Sadly, we say farewell to four good friends of our Society:

Brig. Gen. Frank Wooten, 14 August

Ms. Carmel Conley, 13 August

Ms. Edna Barrett, 25 June at 76

Major Edward R. Friel, 22 April at 78

Our deepest sympathy is extended to their families. We shall miss them.

HISTORICAL ART AT THE AIRPORT

Back in September 1992, aviation artist (and former RCAF navigator) Don Connolly presented a most interesting slide show to our Society tracing the highlights of historic aviation in Kingston. Don has since founded the Canadian Aviation Artists Association and, with his colleagues, has suggested that an exhibition of historic aviation art be displayed at Kingston Airport. It is an excellent idea, strongly supported by airport

manager Brad Finch. Your Executive Council has whole-heartedly added its moral support and will keep you posted on the progress of the project.

POSTAGE STAMPS OF THE RIDEAU

The volunteer group Friends of the Rideau, the Kingston Historical Society and Canada Post launched two new stamps in a series of ten celebrating Canadian canals on 20 June. One featured the locks and the spectacular dam at Jones Falls. The other, a winter skating scene along the canal in Ottawa. Master of ceremonies at the unveiling was Brian Osborne of Queen's geography department. To learn more, speak to Ed Beebee, Chairman, Friends of the Rideau at (613) 741-7836.

FROM PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY

The new Municipality of the County of Prince Edward (sic) has created the Prince Edward Heritage Advisory Committee. This committee will carry out the responsibilities of the former County and Picton Local Architectural Advisory Committees (LACACs). It will also maintain the existing municipal register of approximately 60 designated buildings in the county. Court Noxon was voted in as Chair.

DEFENDING FORT HALDIMAND!

Old Fort Haldimand, the abandoned British fort on Carleton Island, was defended from invaders once more on 13 June and 23 August. This time, modern weapons were used: chain saws, branch loppers and bow saws. The enemy: Sumac trees which, like the Triffids, attempted to complete the destruction of this historic bastion of British influence in revolutionary America. While the sumacs were

vanquished, the island is the better for the efforts of Aaron Vogel and his American volunteers in the 1000 Islands Land Trust, Box 238, Clayton, New York 13624.

FALL PROGRAM SCHEDULE

To assist you in completing your Fall social calendar, here are the Society's programs for the remainder of this year:

- Sep. 16: Prof. John Fielding
Who is Trying to Save
Canadian History?
- Oct. 21: Panel Discussion:
Should Historical Groups
Work More Closely Together?
- Nov. 18 James Warren
An Aerial View of 19th Cent.
Portsmouth Shipyards
- Dec. Annual Awards and
Christmas Party
Details to be announced.

Do join us for all these meetings and bring your friends for spirited discussion, drinks, snacks and conversation.

OUR SOCIETY GOES ELECTRONIC

Your executive Council has bitten the bullet as history makes way for the electronic age. We have bought a computer. In summer, it will serve the many functions of the Murney Tower Museum: to record attendance, gift sales, revenue from admissions and periodic reports to our Society.

In winter it will serve the Society itself, permitting disc manuscripts for Historic Kingston, agendas and minutes of meetings, correspondence by E mail or snail

mail and word processing the newsletter. The tentative budget for the system is \$2000.

HISTORY OR HERITAGE?

Historian Desmond Morton is director of the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada. In a Toronto Star article of 15 January 1998, he comments on the book: *Possessed by the Past* by American scholar David Lowenthal, who distinguishes between *history* and *heritage*.

History, he says, is a study of the past, pursued by those who try to get things right, even if they almost never succeed.

Heritage is our attempt to exploit the past for present tastes and, therefore by definition, has nothing to do with what actually happened.

While his definition of the words does not agree with my dictionary, his distinction is perfectly valid as we persist in political correctness.

RIDEAU PUBLIC SCHOOL IN 1907

We are indebted to Marjorie Simmons for this nostalgic look at a classroom of 1907, the earnest faces, the innocent flirtations, the formal dress. Cast iron desks with initials carved on their oaken tops and the prim teacher in the background, determined that the photograph will reflect favourably upon her ministrations.

One of the advantages of old age is that one can look at children and see what they will look like in years ahead. One can also see in older colleagues how they appeared as children. Photo captions on next page.



1907 RIDEAU PUBLIC SCHOOL Nelson and Princess Streets, Kingston ?

Right Row
Front to Back

- Seat 1 Fred Veale
2 Elma Freeman and Lila McCammon
3 Beatrice Davidson and Rebecca Conley
4 Earl Reynolds
5 Barnie Ritchie
6 Lawson and Helen Cullen
7 Ila Reid

Second Row
Front to Back

- 1 Jim Dumbleton and Jim Dumbleton
2 Gertie Peters and Annie Patterson
3 Janet Weaver and Helen Gunn
4 Eddie McKegg and Freddie Davey
5 Jennie Ritchie and Ethel Lokes
6 Eva Reynolds and Marion Gunn

Third Row
Front to Back

- 1 Clifford McKane and Delmer McLean
2 Percy Weldon
3 Laura Richardson and Ethel Lawson
4 Evelyn Freeman and Gertrude McCaugherty
5 Beatrice Wiltshire and Alice Metcalfe
6 Kenton McAdoo and Richard Grimshaw
7 Ethel Moncrieff and Mildred Compton

Fourth Row
Front to Back

- 1 Edna Little and Florence Godman
2 Willie Mackenzie and ?
3 Mary Peters and Rose Ann Edwards
4 William Perryman
5 May Riley
6 Fred Ward