

THANK GOD AND TAKE COURAGE

At our 17 February meeting we will hear archivist Paul Banfield tell us about the 50th birthday of Queen's College in 1889, when it was a staunchly Presbyterian institution. Above, we see Theological Hall as it appeared in the Queen's College Journal in January 1890. Paul Banfield was born in Dorking, Surrey, emigrated with his parents to Lethbridge, Alberta and took a B.A. (Hons.) in History at the University of Alberta at Edmonton in 1982. Moving to Kingston, he completed his Masters. After various archival and literary positions, he joined Queen's Archives in 1989. We look forward to his talk.

AT OUR ANNUAL MEETING

January 20 saw the election of our executive officers for the new year, our advisory council, and officers for our Murney Tower Museum. We are delighted that Frank Milledge will continue as president, but regret that Mary Patterson will retire from the treasurer's post, and Sharon Cadieux from that of secretary. They have both served splendidly. The complete line-up appears on another page of this newsletter. Please save it for future reference. First though, let me introduce two new members who will join our executive. Our new secretary

is Barbara Bonner, who is a fourth generation Kingstonian. Currently Director of Administration and Personnel at Providence Manor, she is an avid genealogist, calligrapher, monarchist and member of the board of Cataraqui Cemetery, not to mention a sometime accountant and mother of three! Our new Treasurer is Desmond O'Meara, who joined our Society last year. His wife Margaret was a volunteer in the Murney Tower Museum. They were born in Ireland, and came to Canada in 1958 where Desmond was a chemical engineer in the paper industry in Prince Rupert, B.C., Grand-Mère, Quebec and Montreal. They have six children. After retirement, they moved to Portsmouth for the sailing, settling in an 1840s stone house. During renovation, they discovered a small stream in the basement with two crayfish. All we ever gets is mice.

SHOW AND TELL

Our Annual Meeting was enlivened by a most intriguing collection of historical objects and comments from fifteen of our members. Frank Milledge showed the apprenticeship papers of his father, who had graduated from Conway Training Ship at age 14 and received his Masters Certificate in Sail and Steam in 1911. Nan Yeomans showed scrapbooks and newspapers from 1916-17. Wally Breck displayed a reproduction of the ancient

family seal of Angus Och, the original of which was discovered on Islay off the west coast of Scotland. Frances Smith showed an original sketch drawn by King George V for this mother in 1877, when he was 12 years old. Phil Quattrocchi showed a watercolour of the ice palace built in Kingston's Market Square in 1965. Margaret Davies presented a silver napkin ring of 1907, and a photo of a registered nurse in uniform and her graduation pin from 1910. Phip Nation showed us original long hand accounts of naval projects from the years 1815-1823, now available in book form. Virginia Martyn had a what-is-it, a decorative three-spoked brass wheel with a miniature painting in the centre and an easel prop behind. It remains a mystery. Gordon Smithson brought a crank-operated grinding wheel which reciprocated through an arc, for scythes or sickles, perhaps. Bogart Trumpour showed us the seal and 1962 corporate charter of our own Kingston Historical Society. Marjorie Simmons brought in three medals given posthumously to the family honouring her uncle who died in 1916. Patsy Fleming displayed an old duck decoy by Hutchings of Jones Falls. Shirley Gibson-Langille showed one of her larger canvases showing the burned-out streetscape of Brock Street between Bagot and Wellington after the fire of 1963. Finally, Lou Grimshaw showed us a grenadier-style military cap badge and button thought to belong to one of Kingston's early militiamen. It was one of the most interesting annual meetings of modern times and gave us newcomers a chance to get to know other members better.

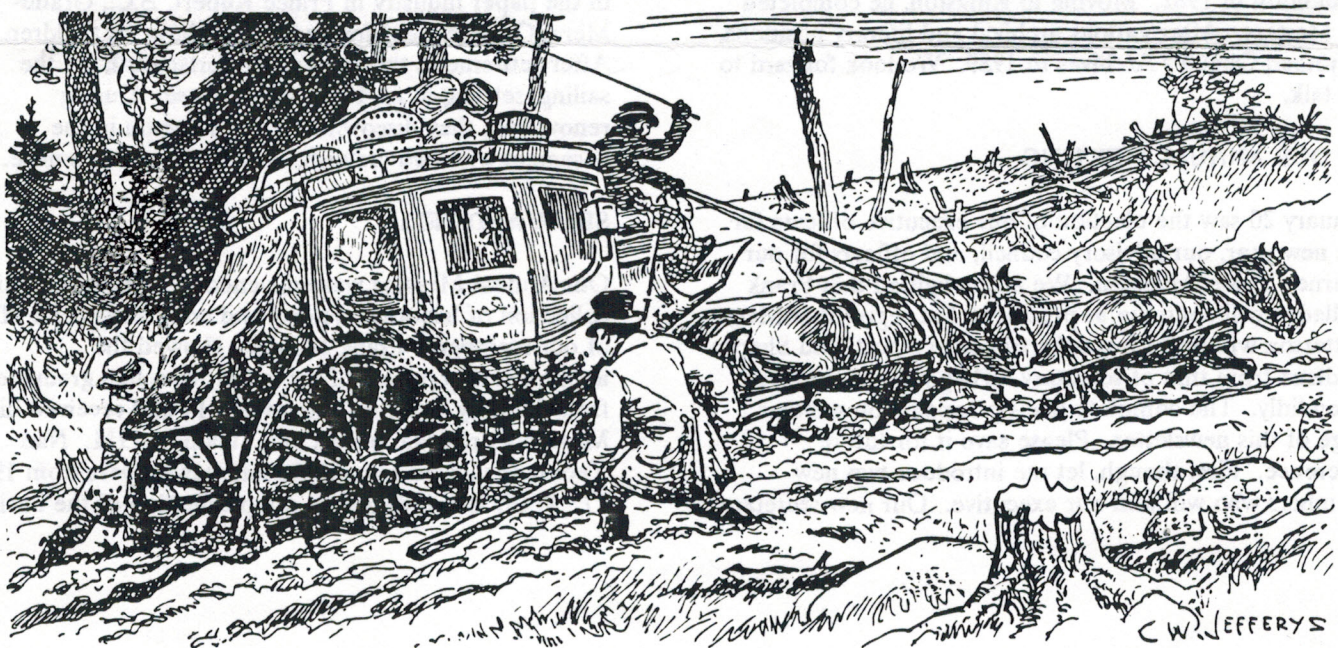
POOR MURNEY TOUR

Beverly Lazier presented a bleak report of the financial state of our Murney Tower Museum. Despite the noble efforts of her committee, the excellent work carried out by the modestly paid summer staff and many volunteers

from our Society, the museum is in trouble. Increasing costs and declining attendance suggest that drastic action will be needed to keep it alive. Bev will remain as treasurer, turning the chair of the Museum over to Ken Rutherford. In doing so, she presented the annual meeting with three proposals requiring urgent consideration:

1. Close the museum until our present indebtedness is resolved. (A Motion at the Annual Meeting that the Society pay off the Museum's shortfall was carried, subject to examination of the books.)
2. Recruit a volunteer curator and discontinue the employment of summer students with all the costs and attendant paperwork.
3. Shut down the museum permanently and turn the entire responsibility for the site over to Parks Canada, which owns it.

It was noted by one member that important sources of revenue for museums are large gift shops and food service, while parking and washroom facilities are important for tourists. Our museum has no washrooms (indeed no running water except the condensation on the walls), little parking, no food service except home-made cookies and a gift shop severely limited by the available space. Since 1925, members of our Society, often as volunteer curators, have invested much of their time and energy in attempting to make an 1846 relic into a viable museum. Most have given up, writing lengthy recommendations for change which are either beyond our resources or impractical because of the nature and historical inviolability of the place. While the Society can undoubtedly continue to keep its elbow in the leaking dyke, the need for a better museum seems obvious, at least to this observer.



MEMBERSHIP FEES

Membership Chairman Joe Boucher hit upon the brilliant idea of enclosing an invoice in the last newsletter. The results brought sunlight to his face. Almost half our members paid our pound of flesh promptly, immediately bolstering our bank account. If you are in the other half, would you send him your cheque for 1993 fees, please? Joe would be so happy and all of us would be grateful.

HERITAGE DAY

Our most recent official holiday, Heritage Day, is celebrated the third Monday in February, this year the 15th. Heritage Canada has chosen its theme '300 years of Postal Communications'. The first mail carrier was a Portuguese gentleman who carried letters from Quebec to Montreal. Today, more than forty million items are shuffled about the country and around the world. The Canadian Post Office was one of the first departments to be created by our fledgling government in 1867 and service actually began on 1 April 1868. Makes you think.

Horses and Concord coaches were the earliest methods of conveyance. With transcontinental rail service, specially-fitted mail cars carried mobile mail sorters who busily stuffed envelopes into pigeon holes as the train spread its gritty effluence over the virgin countryside. In December 1927, the first air mail flight was conducted in a privately-owned Fairchild FC2-W2 piloted by Charlie Sutton and the owner Dr. Cuisinier. It ended in a snow-blinded crash in the St. Lawrence River, where fishermen rescued the aeronauts. The computer and postal codes were introduced in 1970 and now there is Telepost and Intelpost. What ever happened to the cleft stick?

WHAT DO ARCHIVISTS DO?

Queen's Archives will celebrate Heritage Week, 16 to 19 February, by inviting us to hear their archivists talk about their work on a favourite collection, where it came from, how it was researched, and what surprises and puzzles it contained. Here is the program:

Tuesday 16: "MacKenzie King and Kingsmere", George F. Henderson, Archivist (Public Service)

Wednesday 17: "From inner to outer space: The Douglas Family through the years", Paul Banfield, Archivist (Records)

Thursday 18: "Along the riverside: The Darling's commercial connections", Dr. Shirley C. Spragge (University Archivist)

Friday 19: "I've never archived a body I didn't like" Stewart Renfrew, Archivist (Technical Service)

Each session runs from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m. in Kathleen Ryan Hall, Room 405. An elevator is available from the entrance lobby. Parking is in the underground garage, beneath the playing field, enter off Stuart St. Early birds get the coffee and cookies. Heritage Day, by the way, is on Monday 15 February.

LOYALIST CULTURAL CENTRE

In our April 1992 newsletters we noted the financial difficulties of another museum, the United Empire Loyalist Museum in Adolphustown. After considerable brainstorming and enthusiastic support from volunteers, their situation has been turned around. Their name changed to the Loyalist Cultural Centre, new curator Kathy Staples had inmates of the local detention institution contribute many hours of painting. Volunteers kicked in \$3500. More co-operation was gained from the Parks commission, who own the property, and the Minister of Culture. They formed standing committees on finance, maintenance, school programs and fund-raising. They organized a night of choral music to raise money. They made a signature quilt on which families could embroider their name for \$10. It will be displayed in the centre. In addition to admission fees, they held bake sales and souvenir sales. They served tea. They even received SEED grants to employ two summer students. They established a wish list to encourage donations of tablecloths, bridge tables, dinner ware and a filing cabinet. They are expanding their collections of genealogies, books and papers on Loyalist and local history. In short, they are lifting themselves up by their own bootstraps. Maybe you would like to help. Send a contribution to the Loyalist Cultural Centre, Adolphustown, P.O. Box 112, Bath, Ontario. K0H 1G0

SPIRIT OF SKELETON PARK

Back in the days when cholera epidemics decimated the Kingston population, many a soul was laid to rest in the burying ground on Ordnance Street and Cemetery Lane. In time they were largely forgotten and a park was created over the site. Tall trees grew above it. Cemetery Lane became Alma Street. And then they dug a ditch for a gas line. At the next meeting of the Ontario Genealogy Society, Kingston Branch on Saturday 20 February at 10 a.m., at the Wilson Room of Kingston Public Library, the story will continue. Stephen Ross, archaeologist and cemetery records specialist will bring us up to date on what was called Skeleton Park. Oooo! Bring your own flashlight. However if you can't make it, Stephen Ross will present his talk, perhaps with further developments, at the 15 September meeting of our own Society.

HASTINGS COUNTY MUSEUM

Rona Rustige, honorary member and friend of our Society, and now Curator/Manager of Hastings County Museum in Belleville, reports a curious recent acquisition. It is an eleven-page minute book of the Congregational Church of Belleville covering the period 1844 to 1847. The folio-sized bound volume contains the handwriting of chairmen and/or pastors of the church. The book documents the expulsion of J.W. Dunbar Moodie and his wife Susanna Moodie from the church they helped to found. Those who have read Susanna Moodie's "Roughing it in the Bush" will recall her spunky character as an English gentlewoman dealing with the hardships of pioneer life north of Peterborough in 1834. It may not be surprising that in the stuffy atmosphere of a Victorian church congregation, she was outspoken and was asked to take a 'disorderly walk', an expression based on II Thessalonians, Chapter 3, Verse 6: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us." In short, don't rock the boat.

EARLY METHODIST RECORDS

Genealogical fans will be happy to hear that Seniors in the Bay of Quinte Branch, United Empire Loyalists have lovingly transcribed early Methodist Episcopal records recording marriages and baptisms before 1853 in Smith's Creek (Port Hope), Bay of Quinte and Napanee circuits. To obtain a copy, send Can. \$12. or US \$13. to Harriet D. Jeffrey at R.R. #2, Yarker, Ont. K0K 3N0.

STONE MILL FOR ONE DOLLAR

The Spencerville Mill, built in 1862 to grind and mill grains and feeds, may be sold for \$1. to any one or group willing to restore it. The mill operated continuously until it closed in 1972. The Eastern Valley Heritage Foundation purchased it in 1982, but have not the funds to complete restoration. Their restoration engineer, John Silburn of Brockville, reports that the foundation is structurally sound, but stone pointing and other work will be needed soon. Join the Foundation for \$25. and you can receive the engineer's report, photos of the three-storey mill, a site plan, an overview of the local business community, restoration cost estimates and guidelines for proposals to purchase. The property includes a 3.7 acre lot including land on both sides of the South Nation River and the section of river bed, complete with dam, in between. For further information contact Debbie Baker at (613) 984-2948 or Fax (613) 984-2872.

HEAVEN HELP THE WORKING GIRL

When you have paid your dues and reached that contented plateau called retirement, it is easy to forget the time when the clock had to be watched, the boss appeased and the children clothed and fed. In our Society's need for volunteers we may overlook the fact that some of our members are still struggling, now more than ever, to make a living without benefit of poge. Chasing the career and juggling the timetable may make it difficult enough to attend our meetings, let alone take on extra duty. As we seek to expand our membership and extend our historical mission, we should be sympathetic to their plight. Our reward may be their fresh viewpoint and their creative ideas for presenting our history ever more effectively. J.W.

