

The Carleton Place & Beckwith Historical Society Update

Society and Museum News



April 2013

AT A GLANCE

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Look For Us Around Town!

Travelling Exhibits are on
Display at:

The Carleton Place Library
Carambeck Community Centre
Chamber of Commerce
Information Centre
Beckwith Township Office

President's Message

It is quite appropriate as a Historical Society for us to be backward looking. The past is our primary focus. Our purpose is to help preserve our past for our community. However it is also important that as a community organization that we look to and plan for the future.

In planning for the future we must ensure that there is a sustainable program for the preservation of our local heritage.

Over the past year we have increased our efforts to engage the public and increase awareness. We have had involvement in many community events and positive feedback from people who had no idea that there was a local museum.

There have been many positive steps but to continue to operate and expand we must have the support of our community. It does not seem to be a hard sell. Most people are interested in their local history and in their community and recognize how important it is for a community to have a proper sense of history.

On a practical level getting people into the museum is a challenge. Our location in a primarily residential area does not allow for a lot of visibility. People have to know we exist in order to find us. In recent years there has been more signage directing people to the museum and more of a web presence including a Facebook page with regular updates of events and interesting historical facts.

The Historical Society has also engaged in mutually supportive ventures with the Town's Heritage Committee and the Roy Brown Society as well as participating with the Beckwith Heritage Committee.

Our Heritage Dinner held at Ballygiblin's Restaurant was a great success according to all reports; despite the last minute cancellation of the scheduled presenter. Good food and good spirits and lively talk were all part of the pleasant time which should bode well for future events of that nature.

For many years part of our outreach has been displays throughout Carleton Place and Beckwith which provide the public a

glimpse into the history of the community and the artifacts contained at the Museum. Unfortunately two of the key displays on the main street, at the Royal Bank and Bank of Nova Scotia, have been discontinued at the request of the institutions. While their past support has been much appreciated we are disappointed as the loss of these key locations which will significantly impact local engagement. For many people those displays at the bank exposed them to aspects of our local heritage and let them know that our community values its heritage.

Those of us interested in history and local heritage sometimes take it for granted and don't always remember to make an effort to share our heritage with others in the community. With the loss of the two key displays we will have to increase our efforts to find ways to publicize the Museum.

If you are reading this newsletter I would ask for your help. It may surprise you to learn who doesn't know about the museum or who hasn't visited. For the future I would ask that you make it a personal project to introduce someone to the Historical Society, the museum and its activities. Simply invite them to the museum to tour the display, or to attend one of our lecture series or simply direct them to our Facebook page.

At the end of April we are sponsoring a workshop on Oral Histories so that more members of the community can learn how to effectively conduct interview and create a valuable record for their family and community.

The Carleton Place and Beckwith Historical Society Presents:

An Oral History Workshop

presented by the Workers' History Museum

Background on Oral History
Interviewing Techniques and Tips
Basic Videotaping Skills
Shoot Mock Interviews

This workshop is ideal for those wishing to record their family history, for school groups, church and senior citizen organizations.

Saturday, April 27, 2013 9 am—4 pm
St. James Hall, Edmund Street, Carleton Place
\$45 includes lunch

Call 613 253-7013 to register!

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HAND IN HAND: URBAN AND RURAL INDUSTRIES

Are you aware that at the end of the 1800's, and well into the 20th century, Canada had a thriving piano industry? Built from the best natural resources, and using techniques brought by European craftsmen fleeing the unrest of the American civil war, they were made to withstand the extremes of temperature in Canadian homes. Major centres such as Montreal and Toronto had many manufacturers, such as Newcombe, Mason & Risch, and Heintzman. These pianos were known internationally for their quality, tone and beauty. But smaller towns including Kingston, Napanee, and Belleville also relied on the jobs generated in piano factories; the names of which have faded from our memories as a result of the companies merging, being taken over, or closing down. The fortunes of this valuable manufacturing export industry had a spin-off effect on the farms of Beckwith Township. The hammers used in piano actions, to strike the strings, were made of felted sheep's wool. The preferred wool was that of the Leicester sheep, noted for its long, strong fibres. As the number of piano companies declined, so too did the demand for Leicester wool, contributing to the reduction of the flocks of Leicester sheep on Ontario farms.



-John Ferguson Farm, 4th Line
Beckwith Township.

Today, the Leicester has been declared a rare and endangered breed. The finest piano hammers are still manufactured from felted wool, but now use merino wool. Perhaps there could be a way forward into the future for one industry to assist its old partner and assure its continuity, by re-establishing the connection between wool felting companies and Leicester sheep breeders? -submitted by Joy Hodgkinson

AT THE MUSEUM

There are two events to mark in your calendar for May. First, on **May 9th**, will be our Annual General Meeting on May 9th at the Library; and, on **May 17th** the opening of the museum's summer exhibit "**Traveling Through Time**".

Mindful of the transportation theme at the museum this summer our speaker at the AGM will be John McKenty who will be speaking about his recent book on the CCM company which provided many with their first wheeled transportation in the form of bicycles. The research on CCM arose out of research about the James Brothers, George and Lawrence who operated the local hardware store in Perth. Mr. McKenty will also have his book, *Canada Cycle & Motor: The CCM Story*, available for sale.

Museum opens Saturday, May 18th!
Monday through Saturday
10am—4pm
Sundays 1pm—4pm

Group Tours Available



We appreciate the support of:

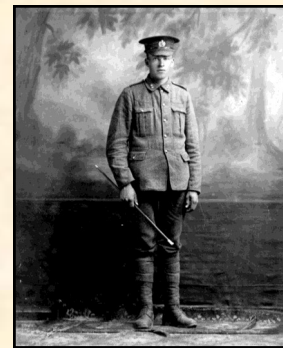


Valley Heartland
Community Futures Development Corporation

VOLUNTEERS

As always, thanks must go out to our dedicated volunteers:

Ross Bounsall recently finished the cataloguing and reorganization of our military collection. Thank you Ross, for many months of hard work!



Sapper John
Austin
McFarlane,
1918

Notre Dame Cooperative Education Program

"Hi, my name is Angela Adair, and I'm a co-op student from Notre Dame Catholic High School.



I've been working at the Heritage Museum for two months now and have learned a great deal so far. This September I will be going to Algonquin College for Applied Museum Studies, and I think my experience here will really help me in my future studies. Look forward to seeing all of you when we open on May 18th!"