

# Heritage Renfrew

## Renfrew Ontario

December, 1988

Dear fellow members,

Since this is the end of my year of tenure as president of your organization, I would like to give an accounting of the activities in which we have been engaged over the past twelve months on your behalf.

First, let me offer a sincere "Thank You" to the Board of Directors for the constant help, attendance at meetings, encouragement, and the volume of work done by the Board members, always with willingness and despatch.

Now--let's review.....

Last January, at our General Meeting, we had Hugh McMillan from the Ministry, talk to us about Provincial archives.

Then in February, during Heritage Week, we gave 60 certificates to school children around the town for their efforts in writing, drawing, and in general, bringing to people's attention the value of Heritage. Once again, the Soup Kitchen was a success.

On Thursday, May 12, the plaque to M.J.O'Brien, (fastened to the entrance wall of the O'Brien Apartments) was dedicated.

In June, we had a walking tour of Raglan St.S., hearing the history of many of the fine older homes there. We also began the job of moving our archives after being requested to leave the Resource Centre of the Library. Newspapers and photographs were relocated in a private building and the rest of the archives were placed in a local school. All local archival collections are at present unavailable for use by the public, but negotiations have been entered into with the National Archives of Canada to arrange for space where our collections can be stored, and where they will be available to the public.

During July we began the task of helping to restore the old Byers' Church at Hurd's Lake. A considerable sum of money had been put aside for the refurbishment of Bonnington House, and when that project fell through, we decided to spend some of that money to help restore another old building with a great history and a definite Heritage aspect. Your society was responsible for aiding in the

relocation of this church to a retreat on the Pucker St. road, and in rebuilding it close to its original form. Plaquing of this project will most likely be done during 1989. We state firmly that the only involvement we have had in this project has been for the purpose of saving and restoring a building with a Heritage history.

In September a bus trip was organized to the National Gallery on Sussex St. in Ottawa. Also, work was begun on the procurement of a plaque to be placed at the western end of the Opeongo road. This plaque will be built with the financial assistance of some of the townships in that area. We also continued the purchase of last year's microfilms of the Mercury to keep the collection up-to-date.

Then in November we arranged for Dr. Max Buxton to give a slide and talk presentation of his journey on skis over the North Pole. We had expected to have the normal 40-80 people crowd attend, and were somewhat flabbergasted to greet upwards of 300 people! Dr. Max was kind enough to do two showings to accomodate everyone. Also in November we dedicated a plaque to the Mill Owners along the Bonnechere. This was a special plaque in that the cairn to hold it was constructed using the stones saved from Bonnington House. We did have to have the cairn rebuilt after vandals tore it down, but everything is solid and permanent now. This plaque is located in O'Brien Park at the north end of the swinging bridge.

Lastly, in December we launched "Faces and Facades", a book dealing with the architecture of some of the older buildings in Renfrew, and with Messrs. Nofke and Eady, two of the architects. The book contains pictures of the buildings then and now, and reproductions of the drawings along with the text. It retails for \$12, and if you're still stuck for a present, they're available from Aikenhead's, Fraser's Clothes, the Mercury, Marj. Lindsay, Dot Skinner, Helen Clark or myself.

Many thanks for a busy and interesting year. May your next years be happy, healthy and prosperous.

Sincerely,

## HISTORIC MUSINGS

Fishing and the fur trade had been the base of Canada's commercial life, but early in the nineteenth century the lumber trade took over as the colony's most important industry. With this development came a steady stream of Bretons, Scots, English and Irish across the Atlantic Ocean to British North America, and thousands of workers joined the Canadian loggers who had been the backbone of the lumber industry in its early days.

One, a Mohawk Indian named Simon Constant, who lived, hunted and trapped on the shores of the Ottawa River, observed this great activity with apprehension, believing his freedom and livelihood were being threatened. Simon made up his mind quickly, loaded his family and belongings in his canoe and left the scene of his young years for what he hoped would be a quieter environment. So-- up the Ottawa River, and then up its tributary, the Madawaska River, to Calabogie Lake, went Simon. He camped on the north shore of the lake for a while, but eventually made his home at Mud Lake, now known as Norcan Lake in North Canonto Township. Some of the Indian families who lived in the area at that time were Michies, Jockos, Jacobs, Seymours and Sharbots. These families made a trip down every year to the Lake of Two Mountains at Montreal to sell their furs.

Simon explored Constant Creek and Consto's Lake (locally known as Ferguson's Lake) and made his way up the creek to Constant Lake in Grattan Township. Here among the hills he settled and hunted, fished and trapped until his death in 1899. He was buried in Griffith, Ontario. His daughter Mag survived him but there are no known records of her life.

Simon's family name lived after him in Constance Bay, a widening of the Ottawa River in Carleton County; in Constant Creek; Consto's or Conston's Lake and Constant Lake, the latter three features in Blythfield, Brougham and Grattan Townships.

The names of the features in Renfrew County are invariably pronounced "Cawsta", or "Consta" and occasionally some people speak of the features in the possessive form, (e.g.-Constant's Creek). Public records sometimes suffer from transposition, change of position or sequence of letters in a word, therefore we get misspellings, but we are sure that justice was done to this great Valley native by using his family name to identify the lakes and streams he was associated with in his lifetime. We can assume that Mohawk Point on the north shore of Constant Lake was named after Simon and his peers, as was Partridge Island on Constant Lake named after Lizzie and Frank Partridge who were buried there after a drowning accident.

H.A.(Hank) Legris

#### AS IT GOES

In the corner she's left the mechanical toy,  
 On the chair is her Teddy Bear fine;  
 The things that I thought she would really enjoy  
 Don't seem to be quite in her line.  
 There's the flaxen-haired doll that is lovely to see  
 And really expensively dressed,  
 Left alone, all uncared for, and strange though it be,  
 She likes her rag dolly the best.

Oh, the money we spent and the plans that we laid  
 And the wonderful things that we bought!  
 There are toys that are cunningly, skillfully made,  
 But she seems not to give them a thought.  
 She was pleased when she woke and discovered them there,  
 But never a one of us guessed  
 That it isn't the splendour that makes a gift rare--  
 She likes her rag dolly the best.

There's the flaxen-haired doll, with the real human hair,  
 There's the Teddy Bear left all alone,  
 There's the automobile at the foot of the stair,  
 And there is her toy telephone;

We thought they were fine, but a little child's eyes  
 Look deeper than ours to find charm,  
 And now she's in bed, and the rag dolly lies  
 Snuggled close on her little white arm.

From "Just Folks"--Edgar A. Guest

*HERITAGE RENFREW WISHED YOU  
 A MERRY CHRISTMAS  
 and  
 THE BEST OF THE NEW YEAR!*

\*\*\*\*\*PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS\*\*\*\*\*

Our January General Meeting will be held in the Knights  
 of Columbus Hall on Wednesday, January 25th, 1989 at 7:30 p.m.  
 The speaker will be Mr. R. Nicholls, who is closely connected  
 with the Railroad Heritage organization. Admission free.

Jesse Stewart and Les Anderson of the Membership Committee want  
 to thank you for your continuing support of Heritage Renfrew  
 work. We have a membership of nearly 200, and hope to top that  
 figure in 1989. It would greatly help if you would use the form below  
 and mail in your response.

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Enclosed is the 1989 renewal of membership fee of \$3.00  
 for myself. (or myself and spouse)

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(signature)

(Please mail to Mrs. Helen Clark, Treas., 135 Quarry St.,  
 Renfrew. K7V 2W3)