

Opeongo Lines

January 1992

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A message from Doris Humphries, president:

Greetings to all Heritage Renfrew members and friends at the beginning of 1992.
May this year be a happy and healthy one for you.
Resolution # 1: to attend all events sponsored by Heritage Renfrew. To start with, come to hear:

Roy MacGregor
Ottawa Citizen Columnist
Guest speaker at Heritage Renfrew Annual Meeting
January 29, 7.30 pm at Cafetorium Renfrew Collegiate Institute.



Roy has a fresh viewpoint on contemporary topics.
He was dubbed 'Commissioner Thirteen' on the Spicer Commission on the Constitution.
Roy likes audience participation so you may get a chance to air your views on Canada's present problems, or on how to travel with a car full of kids, or should we revise *O Canada*? His topic as guest speaker is his choice, so do come out and see what he selects this time.

Updates
by Dave Lorente

Home Children

The Westminster List - a compilation of over 2,000 names of Child Migrants sent out from that Diocese during the 1874 - 1928 period - has been sent to us by the Catholic Family History Society in London, England. Since many RC individual files were lost or destroyed the list will prove very useful to our committee in advising where information on individual cases is to be found. Indeed, it has already proved useful in several cases, including one in Renfrew. (To our knowledge no list has ever been compiled for the other five dioceses involved.)

AN INTERESTING STATISTIC: Aboriginal peoples make up 3% of the Canadian population; Home Children and their descendants make up over 11%. (Some estimates say 14%.)

The O'Brien Cup - a final word or two.

Several people have asked about the removable drinking bowl that stands atop the O'Brien Cup which was featured in our last Newsletter. They thought that the saucer-like shape would be hard to drink from at any time, and a real problem as

any post-game party progressed. They're right about that last part, and I suspect that's why we know so much about the particular type of Greek cup that is called a KYLIX. No other country used it for any length of time, to my knowledge. (Perhaps the Etruscans did, but the Romans preferred a deeper bowl.)

A chance comment, that I noticed only when I had submitted the copy for printing and it was too late to change, was picked up by one reader who wrote a letter asking why I used the word "he" in referring to the "classicist" who may have designed the trophy and got the idea of using the KYLIX in the first place. The lumber baron and hockey enthusiast's granddaughter, MARGARET RITZA, was right on in speculating that the stroke of genius might have come from a female. Attitudes of the time thwarted M.J. O'Brien's wife - Margaret's grandmother - from pursuing a career in architecture; there was no such barrier in classical studies, or indeed in archaeology, where women have been responsible for some of the greatest discoveries. (Often attributed, sad to say, to the male in charge of the dig.)

(Please turn to page 6.)

NOTICE OF MOTION FOR THIRD AMENDMENT

The Constitution and By-laws of Heritage Renfrew have been studied by a committee and by the Board as is required every second year. THERE ARE A FEW AMENDMENTS TO BE RATIFIED BY THE GENERAL MEETING, JANUARY 29, 1992. If you want a copy of the document, phone Doris Humphries at 432-6252 or Dave Lorente, 432-2486.

THE HIGHLIGHTS ARE:

There are seven classes of membership: Individual, Contributing, Institutional, Honorary, Advisory, Honorary Directors and Life.

The standing committees are:

Executive, Architectural, Archives, Publicity & Publications, Membership, Genealogy, Programme, Piaquing and Television.

There are several special or standing committees and ad hoc committees may be appointed by the Board.

Take Note: If a member wishes to propose an amendment to the constitution he/she must submit the proposal in writing to the president by January 25, 1992. (Doris Humphries, RR5, Renfrew, K7V 3Z8.)



Our membership committee chairperson, Les Anderson, has kept his Bell lines buzzing. We welcome warmly (especially at this time of year) former members, new members and supporters of Heritage Renfrew. The fee for an individual or couple is still at \$5.00. Memberships may be purchased from Les, or from the treasurer, Helen Clark, at any time.

Heritage Week
is February 17 - 22.

The luncheon will again be held at St Paul's Anglican church, from 11.30 until 1.30 on Monday, February 17.

Costume designer Ruth Mills is to be our guest speaker in June, when we meet with the Upper Ottawa Valley Genealogical Group.

Second Annual Home Children Reunion will be held at the Quality Inn, Renfrew, on Sunday, April 26, 1992.

A slate of nominations for Heritage Renfrew directors will be presented at the annual meeting on January 29, 1992, 7.30 pm at R.C.I.

We plan to publish our new book this fall.
Title:
Founding families of Admaston, Horton & Renfrew Village.

It will cover families who were in the district prior to, and at the time of, the 1851 census.



To use the archives, phone one of these numbers:
Dave Lorente 432 - 2486
Marge Lindsay 432 - 3126
Dorothy Skinner 432 - 2302
Doris Humphries 432 - 6252

The Case of the Unidentified Photographs & Early Renfrew Photographers.

A whodunit by Dave Lorente Sr.

Today virtually anyone can take a decent photograph. As the ad says, even very expensive cameras are so sophisticated they're simple and there are all kinds of places to get your work processed. It wasn't always so - at least, not until George Eastman came along, started Kodak and invented the P.H.S., the "Push Here, Stupid" camera.

By the way, people then as people now (myself included) did not always identify just who was whom when they took snaps - or had them taken by the local professional. Which brings us to the Case of the Unidentified Photographs, and Renfrew's early photographers.

We celebrated the 150th anniversary of photography's invention just a couple of years ago. It's exciting to note that when you research the subject you find that there is not just one 'Father of Photography' - there are two. Omigosh!

The Frenchman Daguerre got the first patent for the product he modestly called a Daguerrotype. It was a positive image in which printing appeared reversed and it was on a rather expensive silver plate. The image appeared as a positive or negative depending on the angle of view. Daguerre taught many people, including the American Edison - he of light bulb fame- how to use his technique. Edison was just one luminary to introduce the art/science to this continent. Some Daguerrotypes were taken in our county - perhaps even in Renfrew - but no early Renfrew photographer is identified as a 'Daguerrotypist', in early directories, at least.

Peruse your family album - or that old shoe box of family mementoes and you may find a picture on metal. It is probably a 'tintype' - a misnomer because it was actually on a thin sheet of lacquered iron. The ambrotype is a related technique but on glass. Tintypes and ambrotypes were also used by early Renfrew photographers. The three types of photograph all have a solid non-paper support which means that extra copies and enlargements cannot easily be made. Photography as we know it, on paper, with a negative capable of producing easy copies, even enlargements, was not yet born. Or was it?

Henry Fox-Talbot, an Englishman, had produced paper negatives long before Daguerre got his patent and was able to make positives from them, but he could not prevent the picture from fading until, a few weeks after Daguerre's announcement, Herschel, the famous scientist, suggested potassium thiosulphate as the hypo or fixing agent that is used even today. So was born the popular, cheap (relatively speaking) photography that photographers in Renfrew came to use. It underwent many changes but the technique remained essentially the same. The paper negative base gave way to glass which was less grainy, then to Kodak George Eastman's lighter, more pliable but highly explosive nitro cellulose base and finally, when I was entering my teens, to the less flammable cellophane or mylar base we use today. All the while different solutions of salt, gelatin or even eggs were used to hold the chemistry on the negative or paper positive. Salted papers gave way to albumen prints by 1855, then gelatin and collodion printing out prints became popular until 1895 when gelatin developing-out prints were in and when A.L. "Gus" Handford started his studio in Renfrew.

Knowing a bit about all this was essential if we are to make head or tail out of old unidentified photographs, as I found out when Heritage Renfrew was given a beautiful album of 50 prints, all but one unidentified. The photos were presumably of the family, their relatives, and, perhaps, friends. Other than that, all we knew about them was that they were old- very old- 19th century old.

The first thing to do was to compile a list of Renfrew photographers. I turned to Glen C. Phillips' Ontario Photographers' list for 1851-1900 and found out that ten photographers operated in the Town of Renfrew during those years.

The earliest to open a studio was Thomas Byfield who operated for one year, 1865, before moving to Beachburg where he had another one year stand. He graduated from 'photographer' to 'photographic artist' in the process. He also had a studio in Cobden in 1865, by the way. It seems that Forester's Falls of all places had the first photographer in what it now Renfrew County; that was Thomas Faught. Mary Faught appears to have taken over the business a year later, but just for a year.

Elsewhere in the Valley the first photographers were: A. Trenheim, in 1866 in Arnprior; the two Georges in Pembroke in 1870; George Ford, the telegraph agent and George Neapole, and John A. Smith in Eganville in 1882. Until the turn of the century, the total for the county and seven localities mentioned was 49, and that includes one female.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch - in Renfrew - general merchant George Eady Jr and Robert Simms opened for business in 1870 and continued their rivalry until 1889 when Eady closed shop. Simms shut down a year later. These two cornered the local market for almost two decades until Henry Finan hung out his shingle in 1888. He took it down within the year. Moffat & Co operated from 1890 to 1892 and William Moffat had a photo business in 1891. Joseph A. Neil was in business from 1892 to 1895 about the same time as J.A. McNeil (1892-1899.) There is a possibility that these two gentlemen were one and the same person. (Would anyone out there contact me if they have an opinion, or information on this?)

G. A. Snider opened and closed in 1895, the same year that A.L. 'Gus' Handford, perhaps Renfrew's most famous film artist, opened his studio. Gus was to operate in the block called after him until the late 1940s when his daughter Lillian, and later his grandson Ed, took the business over. Gus will be the subject of a separate article nearer the centennial of the founding of his business.

But, back to the case . . .

Armed with the above information - which may be incomplete - I carefully extricated each photograph in our Heritage Renfrew album from their fragile sleeves and discovered from stamps, initials, marks and pasted-on paper, that the photographer could be identified in approximately one third of the cases. Knowing when he operated gave approximate time frames.

When the Muse inspires, and time and proclivity permit, there is more work to do. I've been poring over a flow chart that displays enlarged areas from the 13 main paper processes used during the 19th century. If grain and other chemical and paper characteristics can be matched with the samples on the chart I'll be able to determine when each process was introduced and ceased to be used, and so narrow down the dating even further.

"Quick, Watson, the magnifying glass!"

We now know that most of the pictures are a century old and some are as old as 130 years. We know roughly when some were taken, and who took them. But we don't know who posed for them, or who commissioned them and who didn't put identification on them Or, to coin a phrase, 'Who didn' dunnit.'

So, do yourself, and those who come after you, a favour. Identify those people in your photos. Who knows how much detective fees will be, years from now? . . . and then there's GST!

"The very thought of it is chilling. Quick, Watson, the aspirin!"

Looking Back over 1991

by Doris Humphries, president.

- Monthly Directors' meetings
- dozens of committee meetings
- open meetings featuring guest speakers: Dr Max Buxton and Sarah Kirby; Alan Rayburn; Mona Mahusky.
- Home Children's Reunion resulted in a tremendous response. Dave Lorente has sent out over 200 kits and made contacts world-wide in his special research project. He received the Westminster File listing 2060 Home Children and presented a copy to Dr Hallot, president of the National Archives of Canada.
- full participation in the Lumber Baron Festival; we made a donation of \$1500 to the Lumber Baron Committee, the proceeds from the O'Brien Open House.
- Carol McCuaig's work on the Founding Families manuscript is progressing well; much appreciated, Carol.
- acquisition of the Harry Hinchley collection, the Individual Genealogical Index, Ontario Land Records, Renfrew County Census Records 1842 - 1881, many books on history, O'Brien family memorabilia and other archival items of interest.
- Heritage Week business: successful Heritage Day luncheon; our own flag raising; speakers and contests in many schools.
- we went out all year to clubs and schools as speakers, and on walking tours.
- we hosted a book launch of Frank Consentino's book *Renfrew Millionaires*.
- plaque unveiled at Farrell's Landing to mark the start of the Opeongo Road on the River Road in Horton.
- bus trips hosted by Con Hunt and Doris Humphries to Fort Coulonge and the Pontiac.
- Flaming Leaf bus tours of the Opeongo hosted by Con Hunt and Dave Lorente.
- workshops for the Board of Directors led by Marge Lindsay and Dave Lorente.
- participation in Spicer Commission Constitution discussions.
- video committee busy. (*Smile* when you see Vaughan Simmons or Dave Lorente carrying a camera.)
- Marge Lindsay and Maclean Hunter TV have made several history-laden films with special people.
- attended the official opening of the National Archives in Renfrew and presented Betty Kidd and Tom Nagy with scrolls for their help in getting us our space in the Archives.
- and more . . .

Thanks to one and all.



Updates by Dave Lorente *Continued from page 2. . .*

Special thanks to PAULINE ENRIGHT HUGHES and to GARY BRISCO who recently donated their family histories - the Enrights and Briscos of Admaston - to Heritage Renfrew's collection.

We welcome collections, and photocopies of articles, obituaries, and pertinent family mementos that you have collected.

These should prove invaluable to those interested in tracing their family trees. There are hundreds of other surnames in each family. Think about it: if Mr X married Miss Y and they had three children who also married and had three children who married, in three generations Grandpa X's family tree would have no less than 13 other family surnames on it. If his 9 grandchildren married, there's another 27 names, for a grand total of 40. It's awesome to think what happens after that. That's why having a single family tree can be useful to so many people.