

OPEONGO LINES

The Voice of Heritage Renfrew

Saving Yesterday for Tomorrow

No 1 January 1997

OF THINGS TO COME AND A PEEK INTO THE PAST
(Mark your calendar now)

ANNUAL MEETING

Wednesday 29 January, 7:00 p.m.
OUR LADY OF FATIMA SCHOOL

Theme: Whence, and, O Heavens! Whither?

Speakers: Carol McCuaig: *Vignettes of a Century of Health Care in Renfrew*
and Randy Penny, Executive Director of Renfrew Victoria Hospital:
Where We Go from here in the New Millenium

A brief business session will precede the entertainment
OPEN TO ALL...COME & BRING A FRIEND OR TWO
FREE ADMISSION.....REFRESHMENTS

ANNUAL HERITAGE DAY LUNCHEON

Monday, 17 February, 11:30 to 1:00

TRINITY UNITED CHURCH

Soup, Sandwich, Muffin & Tea or Coffee

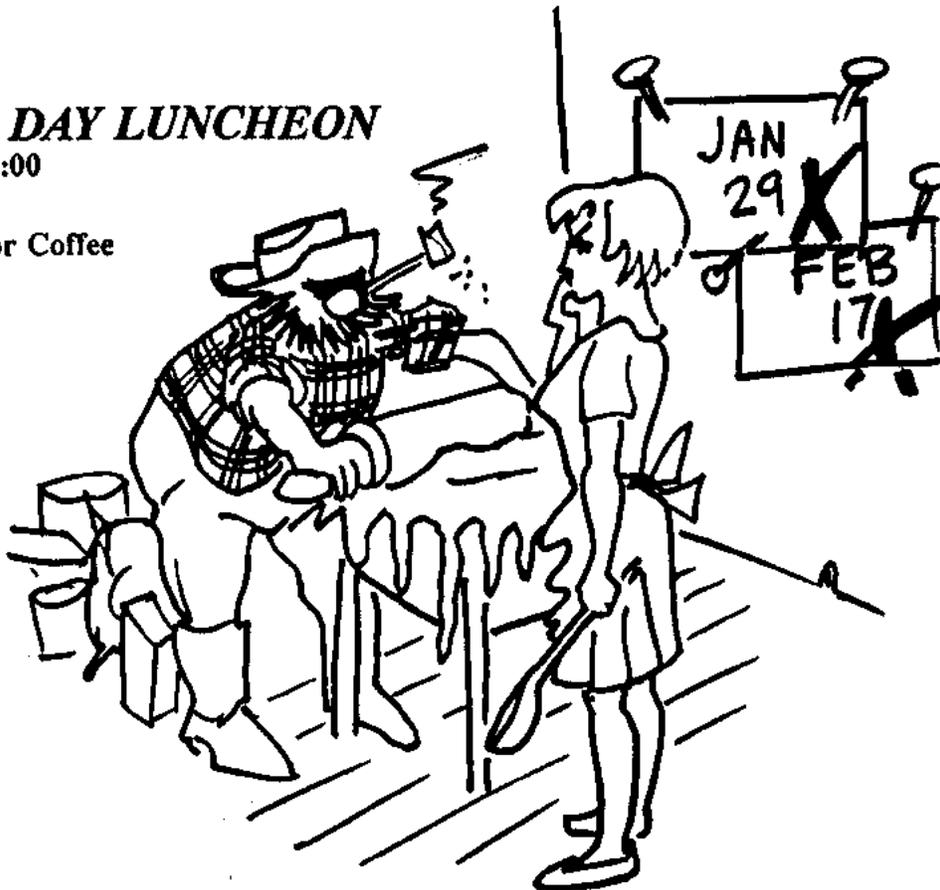
\$5.00 per person

FOOD TO EAT and

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

GREAT COMPANY

...and much more inside!



REPORT ON OUR ACTIVITIES IN 1996

THANKS:

It is perhaps right that as we look ahead to the New Year we give special thanks to the National Archives of Canada, and to the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Communications. We enjoy our facilities thanks to the former and the purchase of our photocopier, computer, reader/printer and IGI to the grants provided by the latter.

We also thank our members and directors for their interest in and support of our various activities. At the risk of spraining a wrist or two we take this occasion to pat ourselves on the back and tell you what we did in '96 because we have accomplished a lot. Besides, the statement of our activities and community involvement is actually required by the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations and The Ontario Historical Society.

MEETINGS:

- The Annual Meeting at the O'Brien Theatre in Jan '96 featured a talk and demonstration of Theatre Organs. Heritage Renfrew raised \$400 on that occasion for the local project. (See first item, next para.)
- Twelve regular monthly directors' meetings were held as well as two special meetings.
- Invited guests at our directors' meetings in '96 included: Peter Sidock on drawing Renfrew architecture, Marie Cheesman on promoting the Opeongo Trail, Ed Lee on the Lumber Baron, Don Lindsay on Schoolnet, Jan Wilson and Lewis MacDonald on historical enactments.
- An Open Meeting was held in the fall on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the Great Hunger in Ireland. Carol McCuaig spoke of the history and myth surrounding it. Our own video-taped version will be shown this year to commemorate Black '47.

PROJECTS & HAPPENINGS: In 1996 we

- supported such local activities as the Theatre Organ Society \$25,000 project to install the only Theatre Organ in a theatre in Canada. (Directly and indirectly we raised \$1,640 for this project in '96; our Heritage dolls alone brought in over \$1,000);
- also supported the Senior and Children's Choir Concert, the Home Show, Heritage Week, 100th Anniversary of Scotia Bank, the Rural Ramble, the Lumber Baron Festival and Parade, the Santa Claus Parade, the kick-off of the Hospital's centennial celebrations;
- applied for, and got a Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation grant to help purchase a \$12,000 Reader/Printer and the Individual Genealogical Index of 9,000 microfiche containing over 130 million names, mostly from western civilization;
- have only started to catalogue the 9,000 microfiche; project to continue in 1997
- purchased an Insurance policy (a condition of the Ministry giving a grant);
- introduced an SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) book covering most aspects of our operation;

- during Heritage Week we participated in Flag Raising at Town Hall, in-the-schools presentations, and we opened our Archives to whole classes of students researching local history;
- honoured retiring directors and citizens who made a contribution to local heritage;
- did research for Lumber Baron Festival, provided walk-about players and the Lumber Baron and his itinerary, coordinated the Heritage Fashion Show which raised money which was split between the Theatre Organ Society and the Lumber Baron Committee, sponsored a float in the parade and hosted two Open Houses;
- started research on 1997 Lumber Baron McCormack;
- re-designed our letterheads for Heritage Renfrew and Renfrew Archives;
- shared our Santa Claus Parade float with the Hospital;
- provided guides, a display, and made a video of the RCI Reunion;
- arranged to have some archival photos 'enhanced' by Bonnie Ramsden;
- considered involvement in Schoolnet Digital Collections Program;
- sponsored a raffle for two paintings by director Dave Lorente to raise money for the Public Library;
- two of our directors - Doris Humphries and Brian Long - volunteered to "upkeep" the Farrell Landing Monument;
- put the Mayhew collection of Lumber Baron Martin Russell artifacts on display;
- wrote three guides to using Heritage Renfrew Archives for genealogical research;
- entertained Beth Puddicombe, Consultant from the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture, and Recreation, also Tom Nagy from the National Archives of Canada, and hosted meetings of STO Superannuated Teachers of Ontario (Renfrew County) and University Women's Club of Renfrew and area;
- were guests in August of the NAC and Ministry of Industry at a party at the NAC, Renfrew;
- attempted to have the Archives and historical monuments put on the reprint of the Map of Renfrew (but someone cancelled on us);
- purchased a modem and went on Internet with Martin Munhall in charge; watch for our "page";
- published four issues of OPEONGO LINES Newsletter;
- answered inquiries, mostly genealogical, from people scattered all over Canada and the USA;
- arranged for preservation of the Shantyman Statue which we erected earlier in the Town Square and commissioned a plaque for it;
- on its 150th Anniversary held an Open meeting at which Carol McCuaig discussed the Irish Famine and later made a TV interview for showing on community TV;
- added over 50 cemetery lists and genealogical resources to our collection;
- were in touch with the Hockey Hall of fame re mention of Renfrew's contribution to forming the NHL;
- contributed photos and research to Ian Campbell's book MURDER AT THE ABBAYE;
- joined with RCI drama group in researching for reenactment of local hospital history;
- made some interesting acquisitions, e.g. Charlotte Whitton's copy of Smallwood's *History of Renfrew*, Elizabeth Stewart Papers, *Rideau River Loyalists*, *RCI Yearbooks*, *RCAF Song Book* (we kept a copy but donated the original to the Legion Museum), *Parish directories* from SFX & United Church, the *Lochwinnoch Centennial Church*

History, 42 of Olga Lewis's cemetery records for Renfrew County, several Family Histories, and periodicals such as *Irish Roots* and *Family Tree*.

VICTORIA PARK:

- We continued research into largely archival evidence to help the Town in its legal battle to retain the Parkland given to the citizens of Renfrew by a former Prime Minister.
- We solicited and received input from our MPP, the Minister of Education, the Ontario Heritage Foundation among others.
- We met with the Mayor and Town's legal counsel re the matter.
- Board and Town legal counsels will make their presentations at an examination for discovery on February 11 and 12.

OUR HOME CHILDREN (CANADA) COMMITTEE

- answered 568 requests for help since February (total almost 3,700 in the last 5 years);
- organized our Annual Reunion for Home Children and their descendants at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) in Toronto. All speakers (including two from England) came at their agency's expense;
- received Open letters from the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister/Minister of Heritage and Governor General recognizing Home Children and the work we are doing for them;
- petitioned Canada Post to print stamps commemorating Home Children;
- petitioned the CBC to include Home Children story in Heritage video vignettes;
- conducted our annual Elderhostel on Home Children at Geneva Park, YMCA Cdn HQ in Orillia in March. (Kay and Dave are booked again for this year.)
- was represented by Dave, at the invitation of our MP Len Hopkins, at the two-day Peace and Understanding Conference at Parliament;
- started making laser copies of our photo collection;
- attended and made presentations (at personal cost) at Home Child Reunions in Belleville, Melbourne Que, Kingston and Toronto;
- also made presentations at Ottawa City Hall and Family History Centre (LDS) and to Ottawa Valley Masons;
- discovered three long-lost indices to the Gibbs Home Children and sent copies to the Archbishop of Canterbury and Bishops University;
- made contact with Orphan Train Riders (predecessors of Home Children in the USA);
- completed a computerized list of all Fegan Home Children;
- arranged for submission of a rare Indian artifact to EO District Archaeologist;
- proof read and wrote preface to HOME CHILD by Barbara Haworth-Attard;
- assisted Quarriers of Scotland to arrange their Reunion in Kingston and their pre-reunion meeting in Ottawa;
- contributed to radio coverage of Quarrier Home Children Reunion by BBC and CBC;
- researched Home Children burials and deaths with interesting results;
- were given our own page in Barnardos Guild magazine, published by their largest Child Welfare organization in the UK;

- liaised with The Ellen Foundation in PEI re Home Children;
- can now be reached by phone/fax at (613) 432-2486 and by E-mail at lorente@renc.igs.net;

The highlight of our Heritage Renfrew Reunion for Home Children in Toronto many - apart from meeting the Home Children and hearing Home Boy Dick Wright's nostalgic and whimsical trip down memory lane - was learning from Collette Bradford of Barnardos After Care that studies (by Kubler-Ross, Fahlberg, Jewett) show that as a reaction to loss and separation alone, a Home child could be expected to go through as many as thirteen different emotional stages: *shock, alarm, denial and disbelief, yearning and pining, searching, anger or guilt, disorganization, despair* and finally *reorganization and integration*. And that does not include the stages caused by the stigma imposed on Home Children in Canada and abroad and by the abuse they suffered.

N.B. The 1997 Heritage Renfrew (Canada) Reunion will be in Montreal at McGill University on Sunday, June 8. It will be held in conjunction with the Quebec Family History Society's 20th Annual Conference. Kay and Dave will be making a presentation at this conference on the 7th. More information per 107 Erindale Ave, Renfrew ON, K7V 4G3 or at the phone/fax/E-mail listed above.

Your 1996 Executive made all the above possible. They are: (acclaimed): Helen Clark (Treasurer), Con Hunt (stepped down as Vice in Feb), Sylvia Hodgins, Lois Leclaire, Stella Laviolette, Brian Long, Doris Long, Kay Gollinger-Lorente (Vice-President), Martin Munhall, Gladys Sidock, Grace Simmons, Vaughan Simmons (President). Appointed directors: Joyce Laird, Olga Lewis, Frank McMahon, Jim MacGregor. Irene Trobridge (Past President), Gordon Cross (Membership Chair), Dave Lorente (Secretary). Active Advisory Board members: Doris Humphries, Marge Lindsay, Dave Lorente.

Vaughan T Simmons, President

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FLASH!

As we go to press we learn that COSMO DE CLERQ will be presented with the Citizen of the Year Award on January 22 in Trenton. Cosmo was a Home Boy whom the Canadian Army deemed too small to be a soldier, so he became a Belgian paratrooper. He was also a super soccer coach, is still an active columnist with the soul of a poet writing on affairs that concern seniors, and was a local volunteer most of his life. All this, from a British Home Boy who was received at St George's Home in Ottawa, and, at his first placement in Canada was made to sleep, eat and live in the barn before he ran away. Congratulations, Cosmo!

HELP!

HR member Pat Bolger, (613) 432-8303, is researching Percy Cooney, who lived in the

Peterborough area before moving to Arnprior and then to the States at the turn of the century. He worked in Hollywood and wrote **THE KINSMEN** - a novel about the Laird McNab's goings-on in the Ottawa Valley. Anyone with information, photos, or ideas about where to look should contact Pat who is very interested in ensuring that Cooney be given a much deserved mention in the annals of Canadian literature.

HAVE WE GOT A BOOK FOR YOU?!

We have! Just one! And the only copy is at our Archives! It's a invaluable compendium of tid-bits and interesting names (including strays), stories, dates and data that our director **OLGA LEWIS** has run across in researching the first decade of the Mercury (1871-1881). Where else would you find out that a Mr Curtain was the first settler in Shamrock, or that the way not to wet a soggy match is to shoot at it with a black powder bullet (and take the tips of your fingers off in the process) as one of our pioneers did? There is much humour (some grim) in the facts and in the writing style which Olga has transcribed verbatim. It is an invaluable source of information for genealogists. Fully indexed. Fantastic! We can hardly wait for the second decade.

UOVGG GENEALOGICAL SEMINAR

The Upper Ottawa Valley Genealogical Seminar on *Searching your Roots in Renfrew and Pontiac Counties* will be held on 12 April at Calvin United Church, 276 Church Street, Pembroke ON. There will be a Market Place, Wayne Walker will talk about LDS Resources, Russell Merredew will hold forth on Free-Net and Internet Resources. For more information and application forms write our director and the UOVGG Program Chair **OLGA LEWIS**, 190 Massey Cres, Renfrew ON, K7V 4C1.

A CALENDAR OF (some) 1997 EVENTS

- Feb 17 - **Flag Raising**, then **Heritage Renfrew Luncheon** at Trinity United Church
- Mar 16-21 **Elderhostel on Home Children** in Orillia YMCA (info per Kay or Dave at 613-432-2486)
- Apr 26 - UOVGG Genealogical Seminar in Pembroke
- May 31 - **May: Nursing Graduates Dinner and Dance** for all Health Care Providers Past and Present (RVH Program)
- Jun 1 - Luncheon for Nursing Graduates and escorts (RVH Program)
- 6-8 - Quebec Family History Society at McGill University
- 8 - **Heritage Renfrew (Canada) Reunion** at McGill
- Jul 22 - **Lumber Baron Festival Week** begins
 - Heritage Renfrew will host two **Open Houses** during the Festival for visitors
- Jul ? - Debut of "The History of Renfrew Victoria Hospital" (RVH Program)
- 19 - **Teddy Bears Picnic** (RVH Program)
- Sep 14 - **Marchmont Home (Home Children) Reunion** in Belleville
 - ? - **Heritage Renfrew Bus Trip**, probably to the New Archives in Gatineau
- Oct 18-19 RVH Public Celebration, Saturday evening banquet, Sunday tent BBQ, and service of thanks by Ministerial
- Fall ? Our Quebec chapter, the Bamptons, host their **Annual Home Child Reunion** in Richmond, Quebec (or nearby Melbourne)

Dec ? - RVH 100th Anniversary celebration concludes at Tree of Lights ceremony at Low Square.

And as we go to press we have compiled some interesting statistics. In hockey and the Internet, success is often measured by the number of "hits" one has. If we use the same terminology Heritage Renfrew Archives has, in the last five years, had over 6,000 recorded "hits". Perhaps, we'd better make that "clients".

Our two-person Home Child Committee has received almost 4,000 requests by phone, mail, fax and E-mail about Home Children and has answered mostly of them the same day. In 1996 we replied to 568.

Over 2,800 "clients" have visited our Archives and signed the record book. This past year (1 February to January 31) we have had over 791 and - as we write this - there are still three weeks to go and a scheduled meeting of the University Women, so we'll be closer to the 850 mark.

And these numbers are low, because many visitors forget to sign in, we did not keep records in our early days, and we still keep no numerical record of requests for genealogical or historical information.

We are proud that we have justified the faith that National Archives of Canada officials like Dr Wallot, Betty Kidd and Tom Nagy had in us. And we also thank Bob Armstrong, Martin Munhall and the Renfrew NAC crew for being so helpful.

AVE ATQUE VALE!

Hail and farewell! We're not leaving Heritage Renfrew but we are leaving the editor's chair which will be filled in future, as it used to be in the beginning, by the incoming President. S/he will have our full support, believe me. To all who contributed and cared to comment during the past half dozen years, and to all our readers, sincere thanks.

Dave Lorente