



Opeongo Lines

Fall

2013

Heritage Renfrew Preserving Yesterday for Tomorrow !

Library & Archives
Canada,
Home to
Heritage Renfrew
770 Gibbon Road
Renfrew, Ontario
K7V4H4



President Message's

Special thanks go out to Heritage Volunteers who helped over the summer months in the Heritage room.

Special thanks also goes to Stella Laviolette, a long time member, who continues to send us issues of the magazine "Our Canada". A valuable contribution to our Archives.

Special thanks to myFM, radio station 96.1 in Renfrew, who selected Heritage Renfrew to be a community partner. For the month of June this gave us \$2500.00 free publicity on air. A 60 second script was created with the help of the radio station and played on air three times daily. Also a 60 second interview was recorded on video and digitally shown on the myFm website. Plus we have another free website to post our coming events in the future. We received a CD of the on air script. What a great bunch to work with. Hats off to myFM !

Update on Farrell's Landing. Now that the site is not for sale, the Heritage members will continue to support the project by giving ideas to the Township for a marker for the area at the water which was the original wharf. This will be discussed at the monthly meeting in October. We will keep you informed.

The Bus Tour is working out great for Oct 26th and I will give details in next newsletter. We visit Farrell's Landing and travel to the Quebec side. Enjoy the Fall, Stay safe.

Darlene Mask

Hours of Operation

Monday and Wednesday
From 1 pm to 3 pm
Closed all Holidays.

Special Request Appointments
maybe considered after
contacting one of the
Executive members of
Heritage Renfrew

General Meetings are held on the
First Tuesday of each Month
from 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm

E-mail address -
heritagerenfrew@gmail.com

Heritage Renfrew Executives 2013

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Directors

Clarence McBride	Mary Mask
Joyce Laird McBride	Pat Patterson
Audrey Green	Doug Fraser
Ray Haniman	

Honorary Directors

Vaughan Simmons
Stella Laviolette

Past President Advisory Committee

Dave Lorente	Kay Gollinger Lorente	Vaughan Simmons	Marge Lindsay
Jim MacGregor	John Steele	Audrey Green	
Dean Black	Doris Humphries	Mary Hass	

Friendly Reminder

Membership Expiration Notification
Subscribe to Opeongo Lines for the New Year
Subscriptions for the calendar Year 2013 are \$15:00
Outside Canada \$20:00

Irish Immigrants from County Clare to Renfrew County

Historian Carol McCuaig is currently working to produce a record of a large group of people who came to Renfrew County from County Clare, Ireland, in the early nineteenth century. Many spent a year or two in the area around Perth and Pakenham before Renfrew County was opened for settlement.

Mrs McCuaig's research was the subject of the second Dan Gorman Memorial Lecture, given at Osceola May 19. Since then a number of people have kindly shared their family information with her and she hopes this trend will continue. Interested persons are invited to contact her at the address below.

The settlers came from various places in County Clare, including Ennis, Killaloe, Kilkee, Kilmurray, Kildysart, Kilrush, Knockerra and Milltown.

Family names include: Breen, Brennan, Collins, Coughlin, Culligan, Curley, Curry, Daley, Deloughery, Durack, Egan, Finucane, Foley, Gorman/O'Gorman, Howard, Keating, Kelly, Lynch, Madigan, Maloney, McNamara, Meaney, Nelan, O'Dea, O'Donellan, O'Kane, O'Shaughnessy, O'Sullivan, Riordan, Russell, Sheedy. A caveat: some of these names are shared by people who came from other parts of Ireland.

Most of the Clare families had sons named Sinon. No, that is not a typo. They were named in honour of St Senan, patron saint of West Clare. He also gave his name to the River Shannon.

Unfortunately numerous transcripts of censuses, church registers and gravestone inscriptions, made for genealogy use in Canada, have recorded the name as Simon, but a careful look at original documents tells a different story.

As time went by the name fell into disuse, becoming anglicized as Simon. Perhaps men became tired of explaining to their English and French-speaking neighbours that they were named after a Celtic saint!

Irish was the language of the home for the Clare people. John Breen of Wilberforce was brought to Canada from Knockerra as a two-year-old. In later years he used to entertain his children by crossing himself in Irish.

In ainm an Athair, agus an Mhic, agus an Spioraid Naomh, Amen.

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

These Catholic families from Clare are unique among our Irish settlers for two reasons. A very large number of their descendants served the Church as priests, nuns or Christian Brothers. Mrs McCuaig has listed some 150 to date and hopes to add to the list. This includes descendants of women who married into non-Clare families.

She is also listing descendants who have gone into municipal politics such as Bonnechere Valley Mayor Jennifer Murphy, who is a direct descendant of Clare settlers Michael O'Kane and Catherine O'Gorman. Several men in the Clare connection have become Wardens of Renfrew County.

An election was held in County Clare in 1828 that changed the course of Irish history. Until then no Catholic could hold office of any kind, but in that year Daniel O'Connell, later to become known as The Liberator, ran against the incumbent and won. As a result the British Parliament rescinded the remaining Penal Laws in 1829.

That was year in which the first of our local settlers from Clare left Ireland. There is no doubt that they took an interest in the result of that election, which may have awakened their desire to seek public office⁹ in due course.

Although Mrs McCuaig is compiling genealogical details on the early families she is particularly interested in gathering human-interest stories about the people.

She has already gathered a number of these, for example:

The John O'Dea family came to Admaston from Kildysart, fleeing the Great Famine. During the perilous voyage by sailing ship their toddler, Patrick fell and broke his leg. The resulting lameness ruled out farming as a career, so he became a teacher, working at Eganville and Mount St Patrick. In midlife he switched to journalism, becoming editor of The Renfrew Journal, a post he held for 20 years. Then a syndicate bought out the newspaper and he was let go. Old age security was unknown back then and he was in his 60s; how was he to survive? Undaunted, he sold insurance and did freelance writing for other newspapers. "We learned to admire the commendable spirit he evinced," the editor of The Renfrew Mercury wrote, when P. J. O'Dea passed away in 1910.

Women, too, could display courage. Some remained in Ireland for a time while their husbands came to Canada to get established. The Leader mentioned one such lady in 1915. 'Died at Arnprior: Mrs Brennan, mother of ex-mayor John Brennan. She was close to 90. She was a native of County Clare, Ireland, and she loved dearly the land of the shamrock from whose shores she sailed with her two little girls away back in 1853, just three years later than her husband, who had come ahead to make a home. They

proceeded by boat to Bonnechere Point and took up land in Horton Township. After five years they moved to McNab, back of Sand Point. Here they farmed until about 1884.'

There are so many other Clare people whose stories need to be told. Michael Durack, whose parents brought him to Canada when he was four years old, became a stagecoach driver. Patrick Curry, born at Killaloe, Clare, on March 17, 1837, was among the men who worked on the Opeongo Line when it was first constructed.

Mrs Daniel Collins, nee Catherine Finucane of Kilkee, was left with five children when her husband died during the Great Famine. She bravely packed up and sailed for Canada, first staying with a brother-in-law at Pakenham before moving up to Renfrew County. Descendants included Eganville schoolteacher Mary Whelan, Sister Nora Kelly GSIC and Father John Kelly SFM.

The list goes on. Won't you share what you know about your ancestors from County Clare? Carol McCuaig can be contacted at 127 McCuaig Road, R. R. 2, Renfrew, ON, K7V 3Z5 or by e-mail juniper2@nrtco.net

What's New

Donated Family Trees

Donated by Jessie Brown,
Frood, Forest, Ferguson, Wallace and Fraser
Hart, Wilson, Stewart, Jardine, Levoy, Mackie

Donated by Andrew Perrault
Andrew McCormack and Margaret McVicar

Unknown
Dampson, Coumbs, Robert Drysdale, Alexander McCallister

Vierkus, Mask

Lambert

New Documents

1. Donated by Dulcie Booland

Copy of first class dinning Children's Menu served on Ship "AQUITANIA" dated 1949

Copy of School Census 1927 in the municipality of Fitzroy. Ages 5 to 18.

2. Donated by Jessie Brown

Copy of Marriages of Westmeath and Area dated 1858 to 1899

3. Donated by Earl Martin

4. Book called — "Combermere"



News Flash September Fall Bus Tour A Success

Andrew and Beverley Raeburn celebrated 59th wedding Anniversary on the trip from Farrell's Landing to Shawville. Trip was enjoyed by all. Next fall may be to Lady Smith to check out Octoberfest. Thanks to all who made the trip