

BULLETIN

THE ONTARIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

LOCAL SOCIETIES COMMITTEE

40 EGLINTON AVENUE EAST
TORONTO 12 ONTARIO

No. 2

Spring, 1969

Our Buried Treasures

From Ontario History, Vol. XXVIII, 1933

Buried in old chests and trunks, concealed in cluttered attics, and hidden in old bureau drawers, congested closets and a hundred other places are treasures more valuable than pirate doubloons. These buried treasures are revelations of the mysteries of human life to those who can interpret them. They explain love and hate, hope and fear, ambition and despair, good intention and bad - in short the emotions of the heart, the motives and operations of the mind and the creations of man's hands. They reveal what man has done, felt, thought and been. They give an intimate picture of the individual, the family, the community, the state, the nation and the world because they constitute the original material from which history is created.

Yet priceless as these treasures are, they are largely neglected because unappreciated. In a few instances individuals with a keener sense of human values have unearthed these treasures and have used them to reconstruct family and local history but literally thousands of similar opportunities are passed by. It remains for members of historical societies to discover and unearth these buried treasures and to use them to give form and meaning to the past.

A Correction

Volume XI of Papers & Records, which is devoted to Georgian Bay place names, was quoted in the December issue of Ontario History at \$4.00. This is incorrect. Almost all of the early volumes, like this one, are in paper covers and the price is \$2.00 per copy.

Regional Council News

The first Regional Council Workshop, sponsored by The Ontario Historical Society, was held in Kingston last November 16th, and proved a great success. Representatives from nine local historical societies in the St. Lawrence Valley and Quinte area met with a panel of archival experts and spent one day discussing research materials and local history programs. The discussions were general and provoked a lively exchange of ideas.

Similar Regional Council Workshops are planned for Belleville and district on April 12th and for Merrickville in September. Other districts will be contacted for meetings of a similar nature during next Fall and Winter.

Awards

The American Association for State and Local History has voted its 1968 Awards of Merit to 66 State and local historical agencies and museums, individuals, government units and publications in recognition of their outstanding contributions in the field of local history. We congratulate the following Canadian winners:-

Kingston Historical Society, Ontario, for the continuing and successful expansion of a long-established and well-rounded local history program.

John I. Rempel, Toronto, for his book "Building with Wood"

Esther Clark Wright, Wolfville, N.S. for research in the history of New Brunswick and her contributions over many years as a writer in the field of local history.

James G. MacGregor, Edmonton, Alta., for overall achievement in developing a strong awareness of local and provincial history in Alberta through his writing, historical society activities, lecturing and encouragement of local history projects.

The Western Producer, Saskatoon, Sask. for publishing during 1967, and consistently for over twenty years outstanding articles and books relating to the history of the Canadian prairies.

The Beaver Magazine, Winnipeg, Man. for high literary and scholarly standards in publishing on the history of the northern frontier of North America.

Henry Kelsey Public School, Saskatoon, Sask., for a research and writing on the history of place names in Saskatchewan, resulting in the publication "What's in a Name".

Prizes

It is a recognized fact today that essay contests for school children of any age are "old hat". The modern school program is so full that it is difficult, if not impossible, to arouse enough interest among the pupils to do the extra work required to write an essay of any kind. However we would suggest that the local historical society could consult with the history teacher and offer a prize for a current school project or for the pupil who gets the top mark in his history tests. The prizes need not be elaborate, - a book or a membership, - but the actual presentation of the prize could be built up into something which would stimulate interest in history, and perhaps a more active participation in the local scene.

Civil War in Canada

A certain Mr. Goodell of Parma, N.Y. kept a journal in 1837. It runs to nearly fifty pages, and is in the Archives of the Michigan State Historical Society.

During 1837, Mr. Goodell was returning from Chicago after having shipped a load of apples around the Lakes. He had driven across Michigan, had taken a boat from South Haven to Chicago where he sold his apples, returned to South Haven by stage coach, and then again drove across Michigan on his way home. He had hoped to drive to New York State through Canada, but a "civil war" prevented this.

In one stage of his journey, he stopped overnight at the Steam Boat Hotel in Detroit and noted in his journal, "There is considerable excitement in this place about the Canada War. Two men from Montreal put up at the Inn with us for one of whom I was told the Governor of Lower Canada had offered a reward of \$1,000 and \$500 for the other. There are considerable many Canadians flocking in here to avoid the trouble there".

He finishes the day's note by saying that he felt tolerably well and ate a very Hearty Dinner.

Our thanks go to Mrs. Low, Supervisor of Hostess Training for Colonial Williamsburg for this interesting item.

Lake Simcoe (Southshore) Historical Society

This lively and energetic Society held its first Annual Meeting on January 13, 1969. They report that, during the past year, they have made a start on photographing and recording historical buildings in their area. Three of the buildings, - Bouchier's Mill (1820), St. Julian's (1841) and St. George's (1839) have been sketched by Mr. Robert Kemp, and the originals are in the possession of the Society. Prints and hasti-notes have been made from them and are being sold to raise funds. As a further fund-raising project, this Society is planning an Antique Show and Sale, and hope to organize a House Tour of some of the historical buildings in the area for next Thanksgiving weekend. One of the most interesting and most historically valuable projects of this group is the recording of the memoirs of some of their elder citizens. They would be most interested in receiving from any other Societies who have done this kind of work, suggestions as to the best way to edit and correlate these records.

This office will be happy, indeed, to pass on to their Secretary any help which other Societies may care to offer.

An Interesting Project

The Women's Canadian Historical Society of Toronto have, at its headquarters at 153 Spadina Road, a library consisting of approximately 300 volumes. The majority of the books are available for borrowing by members. Some rare editions are not allowed to circulate, but arrangements can be made for research at any time mutually convenient to the researcher and the library committee.

As the Society was founded in 1895 by Mary Agnes Fitzgibbon, granddaughter of Susanna Moodie, it has been one of its aims to own all the books it can find by this outstanding pioneer family. It also thinks it is important to add to the collection any books written by honorary members and past Presidents of the Society.

A recent addition is Gentle Pioneers by Audrey Y. Morris. The Society hopes this book will be read by its members and will stimulate interest in the Founder's family as well as in the other books to be found on its shelves.

An Invitation

Brig. W. J. Moogk, President of the Niagara Historical Society at Niagara-on-the-Lake sent us a most interesting account of that Society's recent activities. After telling of the reorganization of the Museum and the micro-filming of their documents by the Ontario Archives, he writes, - "Your mention of guided tours prompts the suggestion that a visit to Niagara is a very agreeable way to spend a day. We will be happy to arrange for this to include visits to our churches, the Society's Museum, Fort George and Navy Hall, and - should you wish it - tickets can be arranged for performances of our justly celebrated Shaw Festival. If time presses, a drive around our beautiful town under the guidance of one of our members is a memorable experience. Just let us know your wishes and we will suggest best use of your time and whatever incidental costs are involved".

His newsy and informative letter concludes with another invitation - "Our Annual Simcoe Ball, to be held this year on June 6th, continues a happy and popular event. Why not make up a group and join us? Costume is not essential but does add to the atmosphere".

Greetings

Greetings and best wishes for a long and successful life go to the Renfrew and District Historical Society which has recently been organized and which is our newest local society. We are indebted to Mr. Harry Hinchley, their very active publications convener, for a copy of the Bonnchere Review. This interesting and informative news sheet gives program notes, a list of officers, a list of members and several pages of short local historical articles written by the members.

In addition to the usual committees, the Renfrew and District Historical Society have set up a Ways & Means Committee, which sounds to us like a really clever idea for getting things done.

One Hundred Years of History

The York Pioneer and Historical Society is celebrating its own Centennial Year in 1969. As part of the festivities, their anniversary dinner will be held on April 15th in St. Lawrence Hall where "The First Grand Dinner of the York Pioneers" was held on April 19th, 1869. Mr. S. F. Wise, President of the Ontario Historical Society and Director of History for the Federal Department of National Defence will be the guest speaker.

An Appeal

If you move, or if you know of a member who has died recently, PLEASE send us the up-to-date information. You would be surprised if you knew the amount of time this office spends in tracking down its lost members, not to mention the cost to the Society. Every returned Quarterly costs us 28 cents in postage, - an amount which can soon snowball into an appreciable sum.

Ontario's "Clan-Diggers" to Meet

The Family Historians of the Ontario Genealogical Society will hold their 8th Annual Seminar and General Meeting on Friday evening, May 9th and all day Saturday, May 10th, at Regis College, 3425 Bayview Avenue, just south of Steele's Avenue, in Toronto.

The Friday evening session will include a buffet, informal reception and viewing of displays of exhibits being arranged by the Toronto Branch. For Saturday the program includes an address by the Hon. Robert Welch, Q.C., Provincial Secretary and Registrar-General, relative to genealogists' use of the birth, marriages and death records of Ontario. Abbé Leo L'Homme of Montreal, representing the Société Généalogique Canadienne-Française, will tell of that society's achievements and resources for research in the province of Quebec. Mr. Robert F. Kirk, of Streetsville, will review the history of U. E. L. Migration from the old American colonies at the close of the Revolutionary War.

A dinner Saturday evening will bring the gathering to a close. Further details will be available by the end of March from the Secretary, Mrs. J. D. Milne, Box 66, Postal Station Q, Toronto 7.

Seminars at Cooperstown

The New York State Historical Society has announced that its 1969 Seminars at Cooperstown will be held from June 29 through July 12. These Seminars will include courses in history, folk culture, art, museum techniques, etc. and are designed for interested amateurs as well as for beginning professionals. Six courses are offered for each week, all conducted through discussions, demonstrations, field trips and active participation.

Cooperstown, situated at the tip of lovely Lake Otsego, with its Fenimore House, Farmers' Museum, and the new Carriage and Harness Museum is a delightful spot to spend a week - or perhaps two weeks in a historic and picturesque setting. We can recommend it highly from personal experience.

For further information write, Seminars on American Culture, Cooperstown, New York, 13326, and ask for their brochure.

Notes

A long-time member of The Ontario Historical Society and a contributor to Ontario History, Miss Alice Wetherell, passed away last May. Miss Wetherell was involved in many of the historical activities across this province and was one of the founders of the Museums' Section of the O. H. S. She was a Life Member of the York Pioneer and Historical Society and will be sadly missed by them. In her Will, Miss Wetherell left approximately \$2,500 to both the O. H. S. and the York Pioneers. No strings are attached to either bequest and it is left up to the Executives of both Societies to use the money as they wish.

It will come as a surprise to many to learn that Mrs. Scott is no longer in our office, having left us at the end of the year. Joan has been a tower of strength to the Society and her cheerful presence will be greatly missed. Her place is being taken by Mrs. Linda Hummell, who has been sending out your membership notices and receipts.

The Peterborough Historical Society Bulletin for December, 1968, has a most interesting article on early stencilling by Mrs. Gordon Scobie of Lakefield. Mrs. Scobie studied this fascinating art some years ago when she lived in Quebec, and at present she is doing research on it in Ontario. Visitors to Century Village will be interested in seeing the period furniture with Mrs. Scobie's delicately stencilled patterns.

The Ontario Historical Society has lost a valued member with the death of Mr. Laurence J. Bromley of Pembroke on December 15th, 1968. At the time of his death, he was the energetic and hard-working President of the Ottawa Valley Historical Society. Those who attended the O. H. S. Annual Meeting at Pembroke in June, 1966, will remember him as a gifted organizer. We send our sympathy to the Ottawa Valley Historical Society, who will miss his enthusiasm and leadership.

Membership

This might be an appropriate place to list the various forms of membership available in The Ontario Historical Society.

1. To become an Affiliate Member the Local Society would have to make formal application in time for it to be considered by the O. H. S. Executive at its meeting just previous to the Annual Meeting in June. The great advantage of this membership is that, if accepted, the local society is automatically incorporated under the O. H. S. articles of incorporation. It must, therefore, send a copy of its Annual Reports to the O. H. S. office. Only affiliated societies are listed on the back cover of Ontario History.
2. A Corporate membership is granted to any local society member who wishes to keep in touch with the work of the O. H. S. through its publications, - Ontario History and the Bulletin.

3. A Sustaining member is a person or society who sends in \$10.00 or more yearly. This is, in effect, making a donation over and above the annual fee to support the work of the O. H. S.
4. An Individual member may join as a Life Member for \$100.00. A Family membership is \$7.00 per year, and the regular individual membership is \$5.00 per year.

Any inquiries about membership in the Society will be cheerfully, and promptly answered by the Executive Secretary, 40 Eglinton Avenue East, Toronto 12.