

BULLETIN

THE ONTARIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

LOCAL SOCIETIES COMMITTEE

40 EGLINTON AVENUE EAST
TORONTO 12 ONTARIO

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Editorial Comment

As a result of the many requests which come into our Office for help or advice concerning the preservation of Ontario buildings, The Ontario Historical Society has recently established a Preservation Committee to advise the Executive Council of the Society on matters concerning Preservation. The Committee will be asked to evaluate the requests for support of various preservation projects and to advise the Executive on appropriate action to further the cause of preservation in Ontario.

With membership throughout the Province, in cities and in smaller centres, The Ontario Historical Society has a unique opportunity to encourage preservation activities at the grass roots level as well as to press the Government for enabling legislation.

The September issue of Ontario History contained several articles about preservation matters, as well as news of the Historic Buildings' Surveys now in progress. Extra copies of this issue of Ontario History are still available from our office for \$1.50 each.

Announcement

We have received several reports on The Ontario Historical Society Annual Meeting at Trent University last June. These are reports made by an official delegate to his local historical society. One such report from the Past President of the Essex County Historical Society gives an excellent summary of the Meeting. We wish that more of the local historical societies could send a delegate, or, better yet, a delegation, to the Annual Meeting. All local societies which are members have a vote which, only too often, is not exercised. The personal knowledge and impressions as well as the contact with "your opposite number" in other societies is invaluable from several points of view. This is the one occasion each year when a representative from a local group can meet all the officers of the Society. There are many opportunities to ask questions, discuss problems and clear up misunderstandings. We recommend that local societies give some consideration to paying the way of a delegate to the Annual Meeting, even if it is only a token payment.

The Annual Meeting of The Ontario Historical Society for 1972 is to be held at the University of Waterloo on June 22, 23 and 24. Full information will be sent out in May. Plan now to attend.

Oxford Historical Society

With the notice of its next meeting, the Oxford Historical Society distributes the Minutes of the previous meeting and a full report of the talk given by the speaker of the evening. We found the May 28th subject, "The Romance of Cheese" given by Mr. Elder Barlow especially interesting. Mr. Barlow traced the history of cheese from its origin in legend, through the development of some of the more exotic varieties, to the present state of cheese-making in Oxford County. The Editor well remembers visiting that first cheese factory north of Norwich in the 1915-1920 era, where children were allowed to eat all the curd they could hold.

We hope that the Society is looking forward to publishing a collection of the talks given at the meetings. They contain much that is valuable in the history of the County.

North York Historical Society

The first meeting of the 1971-1972 season consisted of an evening of films on historical restorations. The first of these was "The Restoration of Philipsburg, N.Y." showing the work which has taken place in the Sleepy Hollow region of New York State made famous by Washington Irving in his story of Rip Van Winkle and other legends of the area. Mr. Russell Cooper, Administrator of Black Creek Pioneer Village presented new films on Black Creek. This made a most interesting comparison with what has been done at Philipsburg.

Oakville Historical Society

The Oakville Historical Society is fortunate in possessing a valuable collection of photographs in both negative and print form. This collection has been built up gradually and consists of gifts of photographs by generous donors. In most cases negatives have been made of these and the whole carefully catalogued. In 1969, the collection was substantially enriched when Colonel Walter Moorhouse generously presented to the Society his priceless collection of negatives. Colonel Moorhouse's expert knowledge as an architect has enabled him to pin-point the approximate year of origin of buildings, and his artistic eye for a good "shot" has created an invaluable record of early Oakville landmarks.

Orillia Historical Society

The back page of the Orillia Historical Society's monthly Newsletter makes fascinating reading. In the October issue, we learn that there is nothing new about Women's Lib. In fact it has almost reached the status of an historic movement. To prove this, the following verses from the Orillia Packet of November 15th, 1895 are cited:-

I see her turn the corner;
I hear her mannish tread;
I feel an awful presence
That fills my soul with dread.

Great Scott! she's drawing nearer;
I'll vanish while I can.
If she's the coming woman,
Then I'm the going man!

Norwich and District Historical Society

A very ambitious and successful undertaking took place last June at Norwich Fair Grounds. The first Annual Historical Show was held under the auspices of the Historical Society. It lasted for three days and provided entertainment for everyone from 10 o'clock in the morning until dusk. In addition there were two special evening programs. Among the many activities listed were a Flea Market; a display of Indian artifacts; an exhibition of antique farm equipment; and a parade of antique cars.

An affair of this kind takes endless planning and organization and the Norwich and District Society is to be congratulated on the enthusiasm and energy of its planning committee.

The Museums' Section

The Museums' Section of The Ontario Historical Society held its 19th Annual Weekend Workshop at Chatham, Ontario, on October 21 - 23. Many local historical societies have a small museum as one of its activities and this Section is made up of those people who are interested in, or directing the work of these museums. Naturally, the sessions were concentrated on the discussion of problems common to small historical museums and a high degree of participation among those attending was noted. The Museums' Section issues its own monthly Newsletter, capably edited by Mrs. Roberta Gilbank of the University of Guelph. Membership in the Section, including the Newsletter is \$3.00 per year and can be obtained through The Ontario Historical Society at 40 Eglinton Avenue East, Toronto 395. A membership card will be issued.

Kingston Historical Society

The City of Kingston is looking forward to celebrating the tercentenary of the founding of Cataraqui in 1773. As its part in the celebration, the Kingston Historical Society has drawn up a proposal for the establishment of a Resource Centre for studies in local history. The written proposal is succinct and practical. It points out the necessity for providing research material to satisfy the needs of the schools, faced with the new interest in the development of the community resulting from the approaching celebrations. It lists places where many records can be found and notes the problems which arise in making these records available to school children. Such problems involve not only the physical handling and use of the materials but the provision of adequate space and trained supervision.

The proposal envisages the Resource Centre as a large collection of master copies of all kinds of archival, visual and audio materials pertaining to the history of Kingston and Frontenac County. The material would be listed and the list distributed so that individual teachers could request what is needed for carrying out projects. Finally, the proposal lists what would be necessary in the way of staff, space, equipment and supplies in order to permit such a centre to function usefully.

The whole proposal is a fairly elaborate one, suitable for the City of Kingston. Several of the larger cities in Ontario already have Resource Centres in operation. It seems to us that the idea of making copies of original archival material available to the schools could be done on a much smaller and more simplified scale than is recommended in the Kingston outline, and is one which would make an exceedingly useful project for any local historical society.

Bruce County Historical Society

This society has had an active and interesting summer. On August 19th, the annual bus trip sponsored by the society proved to be a happy event. Almost 100 persons took part. The first stop was at the Nuclear Plant at Douglas Point on Lake Huron. One has to see the many buildings to believe that they could exist behind the densely wooded land near the lake. Competent guides explained the purpose of the various buildings and their relationship to the whole complex. A film on the future value of the plant to Canada was shown. After lunch, on to Formosa. Here was the over-flowing well and the Roman Catholic church with its history, its wood carvings and its mural paintings. The next stop was the Saugeen Conservation Park which has been much improved. Near Chatsworth, a short time was spent at the Fish Hatchery. Inglis Falls was a delightful spot where a thriving mill once stood. The waterfall rushing over the rocks is similar to many in Scotland. Finally, in Owen Sound, a hearty dinner was enjoyed. All returned home, perhaps a bit tired, but pleased with the trip.

On September 25th, the Bruce County Historical Society sponsored the unveiling and dedication of a historical plaque commemorating the late Duncan Marshall at Gillies Hill. Almost 200 persons attended. Mrs. James McClure, President of the Historical society was Chairman for the occasion. The plaque was unveiled by Miss Ida Marshall, a niece of the man who was honoured.

The Annual Banquet was held in Southampton on October 7th. The speaker was Dr. Reid from the University of Guelph. This Dinner was also the Annual Meeting of the society, when reports were given and officers for the ensuing year were elected.

The Historical Society of Ottawa

One of the Standing Committees of the Historical Society of Ottawa is the Scrap-Book Committee. This Committee takes its work seriously and the report of the events recorded in the Scrap-Book during 1970 reads like a resume of the history of Ottawa for the year. Governor-General Michener's New Year message to the Society should be taken to heart by all of us. He suggested that Canadians

take stock of their assets and liabilities and then serve the common good by "doing our own thing" better than before. "Our own thing" could well be remembering that in our own areas we have a heritage of natural beauty and historic landmarks that need careful cherishing by all of us or it will be lost forever.

In November, 1969, Miss Gladys Blair began a series of weekly articles on Old Houses in Ottawa and vicinity. There are now about 70 of these which, together with excellent photographs, form a special Scrap-Book displayed at the Annual Meeting of the Ottawa Society. Another series, by Miss Marion Rogers is being written about churches. The December, 1970, article was about the Blue Church at Prescott. It is interesting to note that the earliest records of this church were in an old 1809 scrap-book. Perhaps this proves that Scrap-Books do have some value in local history.

York Pioneer and Historical Society

The opening meeting for the Fall season was held at St. Andrews United Church on Bloor Street East in Toronto. The meeting was interesting and exuberant. The history of the congregation was traced by the Minister and was interspersed by tableaux and skits depicting the Sunday School Concert, the meetings of Session and the Choir Practices as carried on in the 1850's. The capacity audience sang with gusto, the magnificent old Presbyterian hymn tunes, using the humorous verses of the early Scottish Presbyterian choirs, who regarded the metrical psalms too sacred for any day other than the Sabbath.

A happy sequel to this has been related by one of the members present at the meeting. An old gentleman in a nursing home remembered these choir practices and offered the following additional example of such verses:-

"Old John Brown was a naughty mon,
We shall not see him mair,
He stole his father's coffin lid,
To make the hen house door."

Try singing these words to the tune of Winchester Old.

Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society

Erie County, in New York State, is celebrating its 150th birthday this past summer, beginning on April 2nd. Special events to mark the anniversary went on all summer long and some very imaginative ideas were put into effect. The usual birthday party, complete with a huge cake baked by the students of one of the local high schools was held - a reigning Queen was chosen - window displays of an historical nature were placed in downtown stores using artifacts loaned by the historical society. A series of town history pamphlets was inaugurated - one for each of the twenty-five towns in the county was issued weekly. An exhibit of New

York State silver went on display at the Historical Society Building, launched with a dinner. Auto tours, including historic buildings and museums in several towns were arranged. Of course, there were prizes. Fifty dollars was awarded to the oldest woman at the birthday party, whose birthday fell on April 2nd. Subscriptions to American Heritage magazine were given to the libraries of schools having prize winners in a contest entitled "Reading, 'Riting, 'Rithmetic - I go to School, 1821 - 1971". And so that no sector of the community be forgotten, six months of free diaper service was awarded to the first baby born in the County on April 2nd, 1971.

Gleanings

Two pamphlets of interest have recently come to our desk. One is a "Discussion Leaders' Handbook" and the other is "Conference Planning for Involvement". These are issued by the Community Development Section of the Ontario Department of the Provincial Secretary and Citizenship. They are short, practical and very much to the point. We think they would be helpful to the officers of any historical society.

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An 1823 Cure for the Cholic ...

Take a large table spoonful of hog's lard, melt it, put a little rum or brandy and sugar in it to make it palatable, and take it as hot as the patient can bear it. If the first dose should not have the desired effect, repeat it. It is said to be a certain cure!

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At the recent Ontario Historical Society's Publications Seminar, held at Waterloo University, it was suggested that a list of local histories would be helpful. The best list that we know about is the one compiled by the Kingston Public Library. This list does not pretend to be complete, and many of the histories listed are now out of print. If you want a copy, write to the Kingston Public Library and enclose \$1.00.

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Have you ever tried making up a Crossword puzzle with a local twist? All sorts of place names and outstanding historical events in your locality can be worked into such a puzzle. It could be difficult enough to interest adults or easy enough for small school children, and if a small prize were offered, you might arouse a good deal of local interest.

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A handsome pamphlet entitled "A Sense of Time and Place" will be of great interest to preservationists in Toronto. It is basically a collection of buildings having historical and/or architectural merit and which should be preserved by the city. There is a thoughtful foreword by Robert Fulford and an introduction by John Sewell. Copies can be obtained from: City Pamphlets, c/o 76 Charles Street West, Toronto.

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Those among you who have attended the Seminars at Cooperstown will be interested to learn that Dr. Jones has retired as Director of the New York State Historical Association and its Farmers' Museum after 25 years of service. The new Director is Mr. Peter Welsh, who comes to the Association from a high echelon post at the Smithsonian Institution. He is no stranger to Cooperstown as he has taught at the Seminars and at the Cooperstown Graduate Programs.

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What do you do with articles which are presented to your society and do not fit into your plans? You accept them because you do not wish to offend the donors who have presented you with a prized family heirloom. One society has solved the problem by setting up a display entitled "Grandma's Attic." This is an exact description of the show. There were no limitations of date or theme - and the show was a resounding success!

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The Landmark Society of Western New York, 130 Spring Street, Rochester, N.Y., 14608, has published an "Amateur's Guide to (Architectural) Terms". By Harley J. McKee, F.A.I.A., the mimeographed booklet identifies by means of line drawings the names of the most common architectural features of historic buildings. Copies are available from the publisher for \$2.00 each.

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A leaflet entitled "Cemetery Transcribing: Preparations and Procedures" by John J. Newman of the Indiana State Archives is available for 50¢ from American Association for State and Local History, 1315 Eighth Avenue South, Nashville, Tennessee, 37203. This is a technical leaflet which will be of interest to genealogists and local historians who seek information from cemetery tombstone inscriptions.

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Once again, we would like to thank all those people who took time out to send us news for this edition of the Bulletin. If your society has had a successful project, or an interesting meeting - even if you yourself have read a book about some facet of Ontario history which you think should be better known, do let us hear about it. A good many other people will be interested in it too.

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