

# BULLETIN

THE ONTARIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

LOCAL SOCIETIES COMMITTEE

40 EGLINTON AVENUE EAST  
TORONTO 12 ONTARIO

No. 9

Fall, 1972

## From The President's Address - Annual Meeting, 1972

"This society is a society of and for people interested in the history of Ontario, or of some part of Ontario, and is, therefore, by implication a society whose purpose is the recording and the writing of the history of Ontario ..... Much of the history of this province remains unwritten and much of it, the real backbone of our history, that is, regional and local history will go unwritten unless we write it. This society is uniquely equipped to take part in the writing of history from the ground up (which is not necessarily the same as writing it from the bottom up) since we represent so many regions and so many varieties of historical interest ..... We all can and should write history but if we wish our work to have any value beyond purely personal gratification, we must be prepared to accept the discipline of history. In a general way the most important rule seems to be an absolute insistence on accuracy of detail, the necessity of working always from a solid body of authentic evidence, an avoidance of guesswork or over-generalization, the use of readable prose and the written acknowledgement of sources. .... It is, I suggest, the duty of the members of a historical society to take part in the broad process of writing many kinds of history, at many levels and from many points of view, and it is equally the duty of members of a historical society to do this work using acceptable methods. History should be lively and entertaining but it must meet basic standards. .... 'What it is like to live in the past' may sound like a simple matter for investigation but it is, in fact, an infinitely complex question and any approach to an answer to it must follow many paths at many levels. It is an approach to history which members of this society, whether they call themselves professional, amateur or local have been taking for a long time. It is this kind of many-faceted historical work which we must continue to do."

We regret that space does not permit us to send you the text of this address in its entirety. Those members who heard the talk agree that it was one of the highlights of the Annual Meeting.

## Awards for Historical Writing

Our congratulations go to the prizewinners of the following awards:

1. The Cruikshank Medal for the best article by a professional historian published in Ontario History during 1971 - awarded to Prof. Leo A. Johnson of the University of Waterloo for Land Policy, Population Growth and Social Structure in the Home District, 1793-1851, published in March, 1971.



2. The Cruikshank Medal for the best article by an amateur historian published in Ontario History during 1971 - awarded to Mr. Frank B. Risteen, Sr., of Sudbury for Children of Sir John Johnson and Lady Mary (Polly) Johnson, married at New York, June 30, 1773, published in June 1971.

3. The Sainte-Marie Prize awarded to Prof. Conrad Heidenreich of York University, Toronto, for The Historical Geography of Huronia in the first half of the 17th century. The prize, in addition to a special citation, includes a cash award and a publishing program. The amount of the cash award - \$1,649 - commemorates the date of Sainte-Marie's destruction. This prize was established at and named for Sainte-Marie among the Hurons at Midland.

#### Old Cemetery Societies

There is nothing sadder than an abandoned cemetery with its weathered, tilted and broken headstones, choked with weeds and under-brush. Within the last few years, there has been a revival of interest in such old cemeteries, largely due to the recognition of the fact that much historical data can be gleaned from the headstones. The genealogists have been especially active in this regard and a number of school groups have found that the restoration of an abandoned cemetery has been a valuable starting-point for the study of local history. Now we hear of the formation of the Wisconsin State Old Cemetery Society which became an affiliate of the State Historical Society last fall. This new society will not actually restore neglected cemeteries, but will attempt to interest local people in providing care for them. Neither will it compile or publish lists of gravestone inscriptions but it hopes to serve as a medium for directing people in search of information.

Wisconsin is not the first state to have an Old Cemetery Society. The Vermont Old Cemetery Association was formed in 1958, and a similar group was organized in Maine in 1969.

We would be interested to learn of any similar groups in Ontario. The reclamation of a neglected cemetery seems like a very worth-while project for a local historical society.

#### An Opportunity

At its meeting on March 11, 1972, the Executive of The Ontario Historical Society approved the recommendation of the Local Societies Committee that an Award of Excellence be established for local historical societies in Ontario. The purpose of the Award is to encourage and promote the study of history within the province. The conditions are as follows, -



1. An Award of Excellence shall be made to an historical society which has been judged to have made an outstanding contribution in the field of local history through such means as publications, museums, educational programs, special projects, etc. This achievement need not be confined to a twelve month period.
2. Awards of Excellence shall be presented at the O.H.S. Annual Meeting in June.
3. Having received an Award, a society shall not be eligible for a further Award for at least five years.
4. Nominations for Awards of Excellence shall be submitted in writing to the Secretary of O.H.S. no later than March 31st of any year. Nominations can be made by individuals or societies (including the society nominated). These nominations should outline in some detail the reasons for the nomination.
5. The judges shall be the President of O.H.S., the immediate Past President of O.H.S. and the Chairman of the Local Societies Committee.
6. The Award shall be a framed certificate.
7. Only societies holding membership in O.H.S. shall be eligible.

#### Help For Historical Museums Curators

A new publication from the American Association for State and Local History has just come to hand. The Care of Historical Collections: a Conservation Handbook for the Non-Specialist describes problems in conservation and offers practical procedures for the health and safety of valuable artifacts. Written by Per Guldbeck for those untrained in complex conservation practices, this book tells how to equip the workroom and laboratory, how to maintain a secure environment, and how to treat paper, wood, leather, metals, textiles, ceramics and related materials.

Those who have attended the Seminars at Cooperstown will know Per Guldbeck and will be aware of how practical and down-to-earth his advice can be. We recommend it unreservedly to all workers in small museums. The price is \$5.00 from A.A.S.L.H., 1315 Eighth Avenue South, Nashville, Tennessee, 37203.

#### Dundas Historical Society

In celebration of the 125th anniversary of the Incorporation of the town of Dundas, a limited, up-to-date edition of Picturesque Dundas first printed in 1896 has been published. Copies of the book were featured at the Anniversary display at the Museum last June and can be obtained there.



### Advice from Cooperstown

A recent news release from the New York State Historical Society at Cooperstown offers some hints that local librarians and archivists might find useful. Collectors of valuable manuscripts and books which may have been damaged by water in the recent floods are advised by one of the world's top art conservators to put them in the deep freeze as the first step towards restoration. Placing water-damaged books and manuscripts in freezers temporarily will stabilize them until restoration measures can be carried out. If you don't have a freezer, put them in the coldest place you can find. Mould or mildew and staining can be held back by this emergency treatment. Permanent restoration can be carried out by standard methods once the condition of the objects has been stabilized.

An information brochure on the treatment of art objects and historic artifacts which have had flood damage has been prepared. It can be obtained from the New York State Museum in Albany, N.Y.

### Kingston Historical Society

A special volume of historical essays on 19th century Kingston is a project of the society as one contribution to the city's tercentenary. Prof. Gerald Tulchinsky of Queen's University is the editor and most of the contributors, all professional historians, are members of the society. "Each essay", says the editor, "will explore in depth certain highly significant aspects of Kingston's social, economic and political life in the last century". The society hopes to have it on the market in late 1973. It will be a collector's item to look forward to.

The Kingston Historical Society's News Letter for September stresses the involvements of its members during the summer. It lists the names of people who worked on the re-organization of Murney Tower Museum: who were responsible for producing the attractive new brochure: who were active in greeting guests at society functions: and those who acted as hostesses for bus trips and visits. It is always gratifying to those who put in time and effort on behalf of a society to know that their work is appreciated, and too little public recognition of this sort has been done. We would recommend it as a member-getting device.

### Come Home in '73

"A journey of 1,000 miles begins with a single step". Many thousands of former Kingstonians will take that initial step during 1973 as they head "HOME" for Kingston's 300th Anniversary celebrations. Homecoming '73 is one of the highlights of Tercentenary with special events and activities planned for the entire week, early in July. Garden parties, open-air dances, the re-enactment of the landing of Count Frontenac, a mammoth early-morning costume breakfast, and a planned Royal Visit are only a few of the activities already scheduled.



One VIP activity which has not been mentioned is the Annual Meeting of The Ontario Historical Society, which will take place late in June at Queen's University in Kingston. Start planning now to attend this meeting. Program planning is already under way with some unusual features being considered. You are sure to have an interesting and rewarding time.

#### Ontario Historian Commemorated

On Wednesday, September 27, 1972, two historical plaques (one in English, the other in French) commemorating Brig. Gen. Ernest Alexander Cruikshank were unveiled on the grounds of the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa. Among those invited to take part in the ceremony were Prof. J. Keith Johnson, President of The Ontario Historical Society, who represented the Historic Sites Board, and Prof. Sydney F. Wise, Director, Directorate of History, Canadian Armed Forces Headquarters, and a Past President of The Ontario Historical Society, who gave the historical background.

Brig. Gen. Ernest Alexander Cruikshank (1853-1939) was a noted authority on Ontario's history. He was born in Welland County and educated at Upper Canada College. An ensign in the militia in 1877, he retired as a brigadier-general in 1921. Because of his interest in history he was seconded to the Public Archives of Canada in 1908, became Director of the Historical Section, General Staff, in 1918, and the next year was chosen first Chairman of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. He was a member of the Royal Society of Canada and a President of The Ontario Historical Society.

Possibly the most important of his numerous historical publications are the edited Volumes of The Simcoe Papers. These come in five volumes and can still be obtained from our office at \$25.50 the set.

#### York Pioneer and Historical Society

The York Pioneer and Historical Society reports an active and successful year. The Annual Dinner, in May, was held this year at the High Park Curling Club on Indian Road in Toronto. The attendance was excellent and a good dinner was enjoyed. The large and comfortable reception rooms made a pleasant background for greeting and visiting with old friends and acquaintances. Mr. Gerald Killan's excellent paper, "The York Pioneers and the First Old Fort York Preservation Movement" was both scholarly and amusing. His extensive original research brought together much that was serious and much that now seems to us comical in this early struggle to preserve an important historical landmark.

The annual Fall walking tour sponsored by the society took place in Uxbridge, which is celebrating its Centennial this year. On October 14th, a bus load of walkers, augmented by a number of people in private cars, visited the town's historic spots, as well as the houses of several citizens who very kindly opened their homes. The Uxbridge-Scott Historical Society joined the group, and a most interesting and rewarding afternoon was enjoyed by all.



### Peterborough Historical Society

The Peterborough Historical Society has received the only award the Canadian Historical Society is presenting this year to a local historical society. The award was made for the society's "long and continued excellence" in serving the study of local history. It was given, not just for achievements past - but for the bulletin, the work in preservation, the publication of Land of Shining Waters and for expectations of what will be done in the future, particularly in the field of preservation.

The society's June dinner and auction was a great success. Over 150 members met at Keene United Church, where the ladies of the church, with the able assistance of the young people, provided a delicious buffet meal. One of the members acted as auctioneer, and his skill and witty remarks during the auctioning of the many treasures contributed by the members made for a very lively and amusing evening. When all was over, the Hutchison House Fund was the richer by nearly \$600.00.

The Peterborough Historical Society Archives are held in the Centennial Museum and form a real treasure house of local historical material. It has been said, "Of all national assets, archives are the most precious. They are the gift of one generation to another, and the extent of our care of them marks the extent of our civilization".

### Hands Across The Border

The Buffalo Sons of the American Revolution held a co-operative program with neighbouring branches of the United Empire Loyalists of Canada. On May 25th, 1972, Francis J. Petrie, a prominent local historian of Niagara Falls, Ontario was invited to address the Buffalo joint patriotic societies' annual dinner on the topic: "Niagara's Canadian-U.S. Border After 200 Years - the Loyalist Point of View". The dinner was well attended by representatives from both sides of the border.

### Historical Society Becomes Hysterical

This item comes from The Cider Press, - the chatty monthly news bulletin of the Norwich and District Historical Society. There are those who have long applied the adjective hysterical to our society's name but never was the term more descriptive than on the evening of January 24th, when one of our members took us around the world several times in ninety minutes. His illustrated talk covered tours of Africa, Brazil, Alaska and Switzerland. The slides were indicative of the gentleman's keen eye for a fine cow, a good crop of fruit or a well turned-out young lady. His amusing comments were greatly appreciated by the largest crowd to date.



### Orillia Historical Society

The Orillia Historical Society has obtained a grant through the Local Initiatives Program to copy, index and assemble in scrapbook form all material of local historical interest published in Orillia newspapers beginning in 1867 when Orillia was incorporated as a village and when its first newspapers began publishing. The material is being copied from microfilm which has been found to be invaluable for retention but tedious to research from.

The project began January 24th last and is continuing to September 30th which should bring it to about the turn of the century. Four sets are being prepared, two for the Orillia Public Library and one each for the Simcoe County Archives and the Ontario Archives.

The sponsors of the project hope that these scrapbooks will be useful in preparing local history courses in the Orillia area schools as well as for research into the history and social development of a typical Central Ontario community during the latter third of the nineteenth century.

### Glengarry Historical Society

Congratulations are in order to the Glengarry Historical Society for their well-planned and attractive Annual Report. This is the eleventh annual volume of the society and is a credit to those who planned and put it together. In addition to the usual list of new officers, the financial reports and an account of the year's activities, are a number of short articles on the history of the county. Naturally there is a pronounced Scottish flavour to these articles which makes for interesting reading. Where else could one find an expense item for Gaelic serviettes, or mention of a new tent for the booth at the Highland Games, or an article on Scottish nicknames? And who would suspect that an excellent article entitled "Easbuig Mohr - The Big Bishop" was really about Alexander MacDonell, a Scot and the first Roman Catholic Bishop of Upper Canada? Scattered throughout the booklet, and adding greatly to its appearance, are black and white line drawings of items which are to be found in the society's museum.

### A Reminder

All affiliated societies are required, as part of the terms of their affiliation, to send us the Annual Report, including the financial statement and the list of new officers for the ensuing year. Unfortunately a few affiliated societies have not yet done this - leaving us in doubt as to whether they still exist.

If your society is one of the delinquents, please remind the Secretary that the 1971 reports are due now.