

BULLETIN

THE ONTARIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

LOCAL SOCIETIES COMMITTEE

1466 Bathurst Street

Toronto, Ontario M5R 3J3

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COMMENT

There seems to be a considerable amount of misunderstanding and general lack of knowledge about the types of membership in The Ontario Historical Society open to local historical societies. First of all, there is Affiliated membership. For this, a local society must have been established for at least two years, must make a formal application and must present its credentials to the Executive of The Ontario Historical Society. If accepted, the local society is then incorporated under our Act of Incorporation and is listed on the back cover of Ontario History. Each year, the local society must send us copies of the Report of its Annual Meeting, an up-to-date list of officers and a copy of any publication issued during the year. There is no extra fee for affiliation, but if the conditions of affiliation are not carried out, the affiliation, and the incorporation, lapses. This type of membership is most useful, and economical, for small local societies.

Corporate membership is of advantage to those larger societies who have their own incorporations or who own property, (not museums). Such societies receive the same O.H.S. publications, invitations to Seminars and Workshops as do the affiliated societies, but they are not required to send in reports and are not listed in Ontario History.

If you are in doubt about the status of your society, please write and ask. We have complete records going back to the beginning of the founding of O.H.S. It may just be a question of a missing report or perhaps the payment of the annual fee (\$5.00) may have been overlooked. The commonest reason for cancelling the membership in either type occurs when new officers take over and the retiring ones do not pass on the necessary information.

ANNUAL MEETING

The Ontario Historical Society's Annual Meeting will take place this year at Thunder Bay, on Friday evening, all day Saturday and Sunday, June 20, 21 and 22. Moving the dates a day ahead to include Sunday is an effort to comply with the results of last year's questionnaire which showed that many people, especially history teachers, did not attend the Annual Meeting because the times were inconvenient.

Activities at this year's Annual Meeting will center around Lakehead University, - with its new and, to us old-timers, luxurious accommodations. There will be the usual program of historical papers, which this year, will focus on Northern Ontario topics; a panel discussion which will give the audience a chance to get in on the act; a trip to the new and controversial Fort William; the President's luncheon and the Annual Banquet featuring an outstanding speaker.

It is easy to get to Thunder Bay. Air Canada has four flights in and out every day. It is a direct over-night trip by C.P.R. or by bus. There are good roads through scenic country if you decide to drive your own car. We look forward to seeing you there.

CONGRATULATIONS

We offer congratulations to Dr. John Moir, a Past-President of The Ontario Historical Society, who will receive an Honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from the Presbyterian College in Montreal next June.

POSTAL CODES

Earlier this year, we had a good deal of difficulty in getting postal codes for some of our members. We sent lists of names to the Post Office, and about half of our listings were returned with the notation "incomplete address". We then sent inquiries to the people with the incomplete addresses. One of these, Mr. Ewan Ross of Goderich, returned his full address promptly with a note - "In spite of an inadequate address, tax collectors, bill collectors, salesmen and women of all sorts, canvassers un-numbered and others with or without legitimate business find me with no difficulty. Even mail from O.H.S. gets here eventually - 5 days from Toronto and it's only a 3-days walk. Maybe the postal system needs some research - and fewer numbers." We thoroughly enjoyed his comment and agree completely.

THE INDEX

After many years of talking about it and several abortive efforts, O.H.S. has finally issued An Index to the Publications of The Ontario Historical Society, 1899 - 1972, by Hilary Bates and Robert Sherman of Western University in London, Ont. It is a 3-part index, - a chronological listing of articles, an author index and a subject index. It includes not only Ontario History but also Profiles of a Province; The Defended Border; the John Strachan Letter Book; The Settlement of the United Empire Loyalists; The Simcoe Papers and The Russell Papers.

This useful index can be obtained from our office for \$3.25 postpaid. It is uniform in size and format with the Research Series except that the cover is green.

THE AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

The 1975 announcement for the Award of Excellence was sent out to all member societies early in January. This Award is presented by The Ontario Historical Society in an effort to give recognition and encouragement to the outstanding value of the work in local history which is being done by member societies across Ontario.

It was set up in 1973 on the recommendation of the Local Societies Committee of O.H.S. That year, at the Annual Meeting in Kingston, the first Award was presented to the President of the Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Historical Society. This society won it because of the excellence of its Annual Reports over a number of years, its interesting and active programs and its extensive involvement with the Media in local history topics.

The second Award, in 1974, went to the North York Historical Society. It was presented to the North York President at the Annual Banquet of O.H.S. at Kimberley. The deciding factor this time was the society's sponsorship of an unusual and imaginative project titled "Preserving North York in Paint". This proved to be a tremendous success. As well as preserving a visual record of the community, it aroused a great interest in the society itself.

We are now looking forward to the 1975 Award.

ORILLIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The President of the Orillia Historical Society has received a letter from the 1974 Orillia City Council to say that it has recommended to the incoming Council that \$250,000 be allocated to the preservation and restoration of the old Opera House, and that work should be begun as soon as possible. The Council also asked that those groups which presented briefs supporting this project come up with suggestions how to raise an additional matching amount. We do hope that the groups concerned will not allow this challenge to drop. We will be most interested in hearing about how they have succeeded.

HASTINGS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Hastings County Historical Society celebrated Robbie Burns' Day on January 26th last in a very suitable and entertaining fashion. The skirl of bagpipes, soprano singing, spirited dancing and recitations from the works of the Bard of Scotland greeted visitors at the Hastings County Museum. One of the members patrolled the halls of Glanmore in full regalia, playing his pipes. Later he joined his daughter for some lovely Scottish songs. The Kingston Branch of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society provided the traditional dances and recitations of Robbie Burns' poems delighted the enthusiastic audience.

GRENVILLE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Grenville County Historical Society held a New Year's Day Reception in the refurbished Prescott Town Library. Invitations were sent to all members and to municipal officials. An advertisement in the local newspaper gave an open invitation to the community. Almost 100 citizens came to the reception and were welcomed by the President, the Past President and their wives.

The lunch provided during the afternoon included mincemeat tarts, oatmeal cookies made from an old recipe using maple sugar as the sweetener, and homemade bread using unrefined flour. Syllabub, made from an old recipe was also served to the guests.

The reception was an innovation for the society and the county and was well received by the community. A number of new members joined the society as a result of the event.

WOMEN'S CANADIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Women's Canadian Historical Society of Toronto held its Annual Christmas Party at the Club House, Victoria Hall. The rooms were brightly decorated with toys and dolls of yesteryear on loan from the collections of the members. At the foot of a large Christmas Tree in the Front Room was a generous pile of gifts for the Mental Health Association. An attractive tea-table with a special Christmas cake put the finishing touch to a most enjoyable party.

RIDGETOWN AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Although this society is not quite two years old, it is already becoming a force to be reckoned with in the community. A century-home was purchased by the Rotary Club and expert advice was received from the Museums Advisor. Plans were changed to restore the old home to its original 1974 condition rather than to create a museum of it, and Town Council approved the funds. The Rotary Club will turn the home over to the Town eventually, and its operation will be supervised by the historical society. When the Royal Bank of Canada planned a new building in Ridgétown, the Society brought considerable pressure to bear to ensure that the plans for it were first reviewed by the Chamber of Commerce and the historical society. Numerous changes were recommended but the Bank co-operated only to a limited degree. This all led to increased interest in the business part of town. Individual merchants began to renovate and restore the store fronts on Main Street. In general, co-operation between the society and the community has been good and enthusiasm is rapidly picking up.

WELLINGTON COUNTY HISTORICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY

Wellington County Historical Research Society offers congratulations to the Simmons Furniture Co. Ltd., at Elora, who received the Trillium Award for reproduction of Early Canadian Furniture. The pieces of furniture concerned are copies of Wellington County antiques, and for each piece sold, the Museum receives a royalty from the Company. The President of the Society assisted the General Manager of the Furniture Company in choosing the pieces and in providing some authentic history of each piece. This has proven to be a very successful venture for the society.

JUNIOR HISTORICAL CLUB OF PETERBOROUGH

Members of the Junior Historical Club and their families gathered at Christ Church in Lakefield on the Friday before Christmas. Earlier in the week, the youngsters had gone to Lakefield to deck the pews with cedar and red ribbons, and garlands of popcorn and cranberries. The charming little stone church was aglow with candlelight for this special evening and a warm fire crackled in the old box stove. The Christmas story from St. Luke was read, as well as a Christmas poem. The carol singing was accompanied on the melodium and by a guitar.

NORWICH AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Dr. Emily Howard Stowe, 1831 - 1903, a native of Norwich, the first Canadian woman to practice medicine and an early leader in the struggle for women's rights is to be honored by the Norwich and District Historical Society. The Oxford County Board of Education has agreed to the dedication of the library in the new Norwich Public School, to the memory of Dr. Stowe. The society has decided to place a commemorative plaque and picture of Dr. Stowe in the library and also to prepare reading material about Dr. Stowe for student use.

CRITERIA

Historical Societies, and indeed whole communities, tend to become rather emotional about the preservation of old buildings in their areas. Before one becomes too enthusiastic about saving a building, it is well to have some valid means of evaluating the building to support its claim to preservation. The following criteria have been set up as a start to such evaluation.

1. The physical condition of the building.
2. Noteworthy features of architectural style or method of construction.
3. Degree of authenticity and integrity of the building.
4. Possible adaptive use.
5. Historical significance of the building, i.e. the association of the building with persons or events of historical importance.

Once the evaluation has been completed, then long-term planning can be projected on a solid basis.

TWO INTERESTING SUMMER COURSES

1. The New York State Historical Association is sponsoring its 28th consecutive Annual Seminar for the two weeks beginning July 5th. These Seminars are designed to attract both amateurs and professionals, and may be attended for one week only or for both weeks. In addition to the lecture courses on such topics as "Oral History", "Historic Archaeology", "Science in Revolutionary America", etc., a full schedule of craft workshops has been arranged. These workshops, all taught by experts in their fields, will place emphasis on student participation. A series of informal evening programs round out an active and rewarding experience. For full information, write to: Seminars on American Culture, N.Y.S.H.A., Cooperstown, N.Y. 13326.

2. A full week's genealogical program is planned for August 11th to 15th by Sheridan College, Oakville. It will consist of topics of interest to both advanced and beginning genealogists, such as, "note keeping", "evaluation of records", "compiling family histories", etc. Sources and procedures in Canadian, U.S. and British research will be given, and participants will have the opportunity to study with leading genealogical experts. There will be small group seminars in the afternoons, where individuals can work on pedigree problem-solving with faculty members. In addition to the outstanding faculty, arrangements are being made for several guest speakers. For full information, write: Don Wilson, Genealogical Studies, Sheridan College, 1430 Trafalgar Road, Oakville, Ontario L6H 2L1.

GLEANINGS

Mississauga Historical Society was fortunate to have Chief Gray Cloud as the featured speaker at the January meeting. Chief Gray Cloud lives on the Six Nations Reserve, Ohsweken, and is an eloquent advocate of Indian culture and rights. He speaks three Indian dialects and is a popular lecturer and teacher of Indian crafts.

Niagara Historical Society held its annual "Kettledrum" at the Museum in late January. Complete with costumes, candlelight, colourful decorations, drummer boys and refreshments, it provided a real treat for everyone who attended. Society members had no difficulty in selling tickets and a tidy sum was realized.

The Royal Bank of Canada has purchased 100 Century plaques which were presented to the Burlington Historical Society to be placed on 100 local residences and buildings in Burlington dating back 100 years. The Royal Bank on Lakeshore Road is the oldest bank in Burlington.

Public Archives of Canada is a revised informational brochure providing researchers and the general public with a concise overall view of the organization and functions of the Public Archives. The brochure is available, free of charge, from the Public Archives of Canada, 395 Wellington Street, Ottawa, K1A 0N4.

Congratulations to the Ancaster Township Historical Society for the attractive notices sent out to members. Each sheet shows a line sketch of some historic scene. Superimposed on the drawing is a block where the information about the next meeting is given.

Have you a publishing author in your society? A book-launching party or an autographing party, or a "meet the author" party is a good way to publicize both the author and the society. Some societies - Gananoque Historical Society for one - have presented their local histories to the public in this way with great success.

Under the title "FOOD FOR THOUGHT", Prince Edward Historical Society Newsletter lists a round dozen businesses that had established themselves in the town of Picton over 120 years ago. One hardware dealer advertises "Cooking, Box and Parlor Stoves"; a lawyer claims to be a "Solicitor in Chancery"; a grocer offers "the cheapest cash grocery in the county". An intriguing ad is for an "Electric Physician". Since so little has been done on the business life in early times, this listing sounds like the beginning of a beautiful idea.

From the Norwich Gazette, August 26, 1886 - We may expect -
Marriage licences reduced to \$1.00 to give the boys a chance;
The rioting in Ireland to continue;
Some more cranks to attempt to swim the Niagara rapids and come out missing.
The merchants to make Norwich boom this fall when they announce to the surrounding country some of the grand bargains they have in store for them.

The Hawaii Bicentennial Commission will award a first prize of \$2,500 and a second prize of \$1,000 for the best original full-length drama based on Captain James Cook's expedition to the Hawaiian Islands. The play will be produced as part of the Bicentennial celebration.

Conservation Canada is a quarterly publication of Parks Canada, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. It is a handsome magazine in English and French, lavishly illustrated in colour. Volume I, No. 2 contains a most interesting account of the restoration of the St. Roch.

The Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature in Winnipeg announce the opening of the Nonsuch Gallery. The full-scale replica of the Nonsuch is a gift from the Hudson's Bay Company and is considered a masterpiece of reconstruction. The gallery overall, including the ship and its environmental setting, depicts a scene in the spring of 1668 on the river Thames with the tide out and the Nonsuch in preparation for its historic voyage to Canada.

The Canadian Friends Historical Association reports that most of the necessary funds for the renovation of the Quaker Meeting House at Newmarket have been collected and that work has begun. The land to the west and south of the Meeting House is now held by developers, while across Yonge Street to the east, the land is zoned for a shopping centre. When finished, it is hoped that the Meeting House will be a focal point for local historical interest in the Newmarket area.

Guelph Historical Society is making arrangements for its annual Tree Planting Ceremony. This year it will commemorate the 135th anniversary of the introduction of Law Courts in the area. We note here that Mr. Guy Saunders, President of the York Pioneer and Historical Society, is a great-grandson of Col. Thos. Saunders, who was Clerk of the Wellington County Court prior to 1873.

It was with sincere regret that we learned of the death of Mr. H. William Hawke last February. He was deeply involved in the work of the Gananoque Historical Society and its museum, and was the author of the latest history of Gananoque. In addition to his interest in historical matters, Mr. Hawke was an accomplished organist who had presented programs in England as well as locally. We offer sympathy to Mrs. Hawke and the family.

The old Thorold and Beaverdams Historical Society has been revived by an enthusiastic group meeting in Thorold. The old society held its first official meeting on May 29, 1894 and its last on February 13, 1908. One of the members of the new society has the original minute book of the old society, - a priceless record for the new group. We wish them every success.

Hastings County Museum invites you to view a unique display of autographs during May. These were collected around the world by a gentleman for his invalid wife. The signatures of entertainers, politicians, scientists and adventurers can be seen in this collection.

O.H.S. membership fees for 1975 are now overdue. If you have overlooked this, please send them along as soon as convenient.

Life membership - \$100;
Individual membership - \$5.00;
Family membership - \$7.00;
Museum Section Newsletter - \$3.00 additional.