

NGHS



Quarterly

February, 2010



Beckett's Landing & Ferry, 1835 Watercolour, Thomas Burrowes fonds
Archives of Ontario

The Journal of the
North Grenville Historical Society

Vol. 3. No. 1

NOTES & REPORTS

Annual Report from the President

Well, it has been quite a year for the North Grenville Historical Society, hasn't it? We have, finally, found a new home for the Archives (at least for the next year) and we are in a position to put our energies into expansion. Over the past few years, we have built a strong foundation in the Society. We have been busy preparing a list of what we have on our files and working on a number of projects which we can look forward to completing in our new quarters.

We have a newly-designed web site which gives us a presence on the internet, one which is capable of additional "rooms" to be added on to our virtual archive/museum. Our other projects will, in time, be added to the site so as to be available to the general public and researchers anywhere in the world. In the same way, this journal of the Society, *The Quarterly*, gives us an opportunity to share with the members and the wider public some of the material we have in our possession, as well as the means to publish the result of our research projects in the form of articles, reviews and reports on meetings.

In the past year, work has proceeded on some of the main projects we have undertaken. The indexing of The Advance newspaper collection continues every month. This is producing a number of important sources of information. We are developing a nominal database from the indexing project, which lists birth and death information, lists of important events in the history of North Grenville, and an important insight into the life of the community over time. The names and genealogical information gathered through this project will provide a starting point for a database which, when we add in the census material in our collections, as well as the information contained in the tax assessment rolls, will allow us to produce an important resource for all future family history research in North Grenville.

This links up really well with the Lot and Concession Project, which seeks to draw up a history of the ownership of each lot in North Grenville between 1791 and today. It was thought initially that this would be a work that would take many years to complete, but with continued research in the Land Registry Office in Prescott, and the microfilm rolls acquired recently, we have already covered about one third of the lots, as well as much of Kemptville and almost all of Oxford Mills. Eventually, this material will be added to our database, and a separate file of information will be

The North Grenville Historical Society

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Visit our website at
www.historynorthgrenville.ca

Membership fee is \$20.00 per household per year and is renewable in January of each year. Our meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month at the Old Town Hall, 15 Water Street, Kemptville, beginning at 7.30 p.m. except for the months of July, August and December. The annual meeting for the election of officers and the presentation of the annual report is in January of each year.

available for each parcel of land in the Municipality.

With the recent additions to the Executive, we will now have the personnel to carry on the publication project which we have been considering for the past year. Many of the previously published works of the Society are either completely out of print, or in very short supply. It has been our intention to republish these, and the opportunity of doing so will also allow us to redesign and update many of the books involved. Over the past year, a list of titles to be reprinted has been prepared and priority will be given to the titles most in demand and in use.

In 2009 we began to film all of our guest speakers' talks, and provide copies on dvd. These films will be kept as part of our holdings and made available to the public, and, ultimately, on the web site. One of the decisions the new executive will have to make is whether to charge for these dvds as part of our fund raising efforts over the coming year. However, the recordings are a really useful addition to our collection, including as they do the informal discussions held during the year on the history of Oxford Mills and the Railways in North Grenville, two sessions that were part of a new approach to our oral history project.

Regular activities have continued also, as we have spent money on supplies and equipment for the Society. This has included archival supplies for storing our collection, and a projector for use in meetings, allowing for power point presentations, films, etc.

Of course, it is the move to the Old Town Hall in Kemptville that really marks the past year. It has taken quite some time to negotiate an agreement with the Municipality, requiring many meetings with staff and Council, to bring this initiative to fruition. There have been many alarms along the way, as we seemed to lose our Acton's Corners location before being guaranteed the new home; but things have worked out so far, and we should begin meetings in the Court Room at 15 Water Street at our March meeting. Before then, we have to round up as many volunteers as possible to make the move, and transport all our files, shelves, furniture and artifacts from Acton's Corners to Kemptville, where they will be gradually integrated into the new building layout. Members will be hearing from the executive about this!

It is planned that the Society will take advantage of the new location to raise our profile in the community, attract new members and launch new projects. We will need to raise funds to grow in the new place, and some of the ideas already put forward include garage sales, movie nights at the Court House and the sale of books, calenders, and other items. The

potential is great and limited only by our imaginations. The building will allow us to play a larger role in the life of the Municipality. Involvement in the Dandelion festival, for example, will be greater simply owing to our location. We can think about holding exhibitions of our collections on weekends, etc. Our lease is for one year, and may be extended, depending on Municipal plans for the building in the long term. But we will take advantage of that year to investigate funding sources for archives and museums, and work hard at maximising the opportunities this new home gives us.



Nice old gent points youth to the future home of NG history. It took time, but that's history for you!

The Society has once again presented Heritage Awards Nights for North Grenville. In February, 2009, and now in 2010, the event was held at the branch restaurant in Kemptville, as we recognized the contribution to our history and heritage of a number of individuals, companies and, this year, students at both secondary and university level. Heritage conservation has become a high-profile issue in North Grenville over the past year, something for which the Society, in collaboration with Heritage North Grenville, can take a great deal of the credit.

The importance of our built heritage, for example, has been incorporated into the new Municipal Official Plan, recently passed by Council. The Society's relationship with the Municipality, on an official and personal level, has strengthened greatly over the past year, as we worked together on the Heritage Awards, the new home for the Society, and in dealing with development issues concerning heritage. A new series of Historic Walking Tours has been prepared and this, too, has been an example of

the Municipality working closely with historical interests to underline the importance of history and heritage to the people of North Grenville. On moving into our new home, we will be arranging to take over all the Township and Kemptville records currently held by the Municipality, and storing them in our archive. This integrated collections of historical material will make an important archive for North Grenville history.

The acknowledgment of the role played by high school and university students in the awarding of Heritage Awards this year underlines the continuing work of the Society in encouraging young people in North Grenville to become aware of, and involved in, their own history and heritage. Again last year, we presented awards to outstanding History students at both High Schools, and we intend to use our new headquarters to encourage school trips and further awareness of local history in our schools.

We continue to receive requests for information from people all over the country, one or two each month, on average. The work the executive has been

Goddard and Connie Davies, and the re-elected members will work with them to increase membership and extend the scope and activities of the North Grenville Historical Society. The work already being done by President and Archivist will probably expand over the coming year, and it may become necessary to find funding for a part-time position to keep our operations moving smoothly, independent of who is on the executive in years to come. As it stands, the current executive are starting a new two-year term, which should provide the continuity and stability the Society will need as we transfer to our new location and expand the role of the Society in our community. We have reached a point where we have taken stock of what we have to offer, and what direction we can go, and the coming year promises to be a time of exciting opportunity and growth. This, of course, will require in the input and energy of all of the membership. We have something special to share with the wider community. I trust you will share in the fun.

Dr. David Shanahan, President, NGHS.



doing in all of the on-going projects have helped enormously in answering these queries. We have added two new members to the Executive, Wendy

The Fire Station is evacuated to make room for the Historical Society. Whatever happened to that wonderful stonework?

NORTH GRENVILLE'S PAST:

TREKKERS AND HOBOS: Riding the Rails in the 1930's

In the summer of 1935, many Canadians were unhappy with the manner in which the Conservative government of R.B. Bennett was handling the economy. Several hundred started out in western Canada and walked a good portion of their way to Ottawa to protest. I was at my grandparents farm, which was at the overhead bridge on highway 16, just east of the tower. The walkers, called 'trekkers', were on their way north from Prescott to Ottawa. It was exciting for a nine year old to see all those people walking through Bedell, but in retrospect it was sad. Some who were tired or with sore feet were riding on trucks. They stayed on Parliament Hill for two or three days, got nothing, and started their homeward trek. They arrived back at Bedell in a surly mood.

There were literally hundreds of hobos at Bedell for various periods of time in the 1930s. In the summer time they stayed in a hobo jungle in the bush just west of the tower, north of the road that is adjacent to the Winchester Subdivision. Several of us young lads used to visit them in the bush. They would have a bonfire going and maybe making tea or coffee or just telling stories to pass the time. We often heard them say they had heard of a job in Vancouver or some other far away place and they were leaving in a day or so to go there. They would leave and often be back in a few days, still with no job. After a while I often wondered if they really wanted a job. Maybe it was just my young mind at work.

Many nights in the 1930s, '40s and even into the early 1950s, when the weather was cold, men without work would sleep in the bottom of the tower. Over the years many of them came to our house looking for something to eat and Mother never turned one of them away. I never heard of them bothering or molesting anybody or stealing anything at Bedell. It's a different world today.

One of the more humorous occasions occurred when a man came to the door at my grandmother's place one evening when I was about 8

or 9 years old. There always seemed to be a big crowd around and this night was no exception. About eight of us had just sat down in the kitchen to eat when there was a knock at the door. It was a dark night, the kitchen was lit with an oil lamp only and obviously there was no light outside. I was told to answer the door and when I did this fellow, standing in the dark, asked for two slices of bread. My grandmother said: 'Tell him I have no bread, but I will give him some warm tea biscuits'. I told him that and he said: 'You tell her to keep her warm biscuits', and he turned and walked away. We laughed about that many times over the years until my grandmother died in 1972 when she was 107 years old.

When the war started in 1939, many of these men who had been around for years disappeared and never returned. Most of them likely went into the military.

Sam Gaw

The NGHS has a new website.

www.historynorthgrenville.ca



Bedell Railway Station

Archivist's Report

2009 has been a strange year for the Archives. It has been difficult to work in the Archives building for anything other than a short length of time and I have been reluctant to encourage acquisition of items until our storage problems are solved.

In the meantime, I have been working on various digital projects that should help us once we are able to more widely welcome the public back to make use of our resources.

In 2009, we continued our work indexing the vital statistics of the *Kemptville Advance*. I would like to thank everyone involved for their commitment to this project. At the time of writing, we have three years' worth of data entered digitally, another five years' worth completed manually and awaiting transfer to digital and another five years' worth underway. **We are in need of a couple more volunteers** who are willing to enter the manual records into a spreadsheet. If you have the time to do this, please let me know. If you would like to help out at the "sharp end" (in terms of pencil and paper!), we meet the third Saturday of the month (next two meetings are Feb 20th and March 20th).

I have been working on a central index of persons, using census and assessment information as well as other sources. Eventually this will comprise a primary finding aid to holdings as well as general genealogical information and can be a good starting point for enquirers. I have completed the entry of South Gower from Census 1851-1911 and am currently working on Oxford on Rideau for the same time period. At some point, I would like to open this up to members on-line so that they can edit information, and enter such information as they have, such as weddings, maiden names, dates of death and so on. We will eventually be merging the land registry records in with this database also.

Still to be tackled is our oral history component. This could now be recorded with our camera. If people would like to be involved in this, please do not hesitate to contact me.

In addition, I believe that we should look to organising some school reunions, especially for Acton's Corners as the building is likely to pass out of public hands in the near future. It would be nice to have a final reunion in the building/grounds and to be on hand to record memories of times there. This could be extended to other existing school buildings where possible, or nearby public buildings if not.

I look forward to 2010 being a busy year for the Historical Society and please feel free to let me know

any ideas that you might have for how we can use our artifacts and resources to extend the reach of the Society.

Doug Hendry, Archivist, NGHS



Treasurer's Report

As reported at the NGHS AGM on January 19, 2010.

The North Grenville Historical Society had to dip into its reserves in 2009 to make up for shortfalls in income, which left the Society with a deficit of Income over Expenses. The primary reason for the 65% reduction of Income in 2009 over 2008 was the receipt in 2008 of a one-time bequest of \$2,500 and a 25% drop in Membership.

Expenses were reduced by 15% to adjust to the reduction in cash flow, with certain events, such as the Kemptville 150th Anniversary and the Heritage Awards, either not being repeated or the costs being handled by other associations. On the other hand, the Historical Society did invest in its own Website to expand future education and access to archival material for the public. There was also an increase in both equipment and hall rental for the monthly presentations.

The assets of the Society, its chequing account and a GIC, were sufficient to carry NGHS through 2009. The GIC was deemed to be a restricted fund by past executive boards. It has been determined by the current board that it can be considered surplus to aid with current and future major projects that the Society is and will be undertaking. At the same time, a grant from the Government of Ontario has been received to aid with daily expenses. North Grenville Historical Society will, in 2009, be increasing its membership drive and looking for other opportunities to raise funds to support the expansion of the archives and development of its new location.

Graham Pincott, Treasurer, NGHS

The Kemptville Centurion

Annotated excerpts from the Kemptville Newspapers from February, 1910 for the edification and amusement of our loyal readers.

Farewell Party at East Oxford

On Monday evening, Jan. 31st, a party of guests numbering about 80, gathered at the home of Mr. W. J. Cochrane, of East Oxford, to bid he and his family farewell. Mr. And Mrs. Cochrane and daughter, Miss Mildred, are moving to Kemptville where they will reside in future, and the best wishes of a host of friends follow them. Mr. Cochrane is among the oldest residents of East Oxford, having resided on his farm for 65 years.

Box Social, Bishop's Mills

Our staff reporter at Bishop's Mills sends us the following: Notwithstanding the inclement weather, quite a number attended the Box Social held in the Temperance Hall Friday evening, under the auspices of the I. O. F. Court Pleasant House, No. 904.

Mr. Robert Jones was again called on to perform the duties of auctioneer and fully sustained his reputation for getting the highest prices for beautiful well-filled boxes. The most expensive box sold for \$1.50.

Rev. N. McLaren's Stories of Camp Life and Mr. R. Jones' impromptu explanation "How It Happened the deer was shot", brought forth rounds of applause. Mr. J. Sherrard's recitation entitled Death of Barnaby Rudge received an enthusiastic encore and was responded to by another recitation entitled "Woman's Rights".

An amusing tableaux was put on, entitled "Why the butter did not come".

Brief, witty and complimentary speeches were delivered by N. Greer, A. Ennis and R. McCoy.

The Sherrard-Atkinson Orchestra furnished excellent music at intervals throughout the evening.

Court Pleasant has upwards of fifty members and is one of the most flourishing rural Lodges in the District.

The Literary Follies are clearly following a fine North Grenville tradition! We seem always to have had a deep reservoir of talent in our community.

Kemptville

The Pancake Supper held in Leslie Hall, under the auspices of the Young People's Guild of St. James' Anglican church, on Tuesday evening, 8th inst., was fairly well attended. The Pancakes must have been relished by all, as there was a large quantity disposed of.

Mr. Irvine Gibson had such a vivid dream of fire the other night that he jumped through his bedroom window into the snow.

- The cantata, "The Fairy Chain", has been postponed to 25th inst., owing to prevalence of measles.

- Remember the postponed cantata, "The Fairy Chain", in I. O. O. F. Hall, Friday evening, 25th inst.

- Kemptville people should on no account miss seeing that beautiful cantata, "The Fairy Chain", as presented in the I. O. O. F. Hall on Friday evening, 25th inst. This promises to be the treat of the season. *Quite a lot of publicity: all from one issue of the paper!*

The local central telephone office is closing evenings at nine o'clock instead of ten. The change was effected since the Bell Telephone Company's purchase of the North American's plant and business here. The local manager had the usual instructions to close at eight o'clock (according to Bell rule) but took it upon himself to extend the time to nine, "splitting the difference" with the public who will no doubt appreciate the concession.

Notice

The Undersigned having disposed of their Planing Mill and Lumber Business in Kemptville, desire to thank their numerous customers for the kind consideration and liberal patronage extended to them since coming to Kemptville; and they also desire to introduce their successors, The Palmer

Lumber Co., who are practical Lumbermen of long experience and who they are assured the public generally will find to be courteous and accommodating, and will be able to supply everything required in the building line. Wishing All a Prosperous and Happy Year.

We remain yours respectfully,

R. D. McMaster

R. E. Millar of the McMaster Lumber Co.

The Weekly Advance is Powerless

This issue of the Weekly Advance will reach our subscribers 24 hours late. We are able to "blame it all on the Government". The Department of Railways and Canals is repairing the Burritt's Rapids locks, and have let the water out of the canal, leaving us without electric power. This necessitates the printing of our newspaper at Smith's Falls; but the regulations of the Post Office Department will not permit us to distribute our newspapers from that point. Consequently, when printed they had to be shipped back to Kemptville again, to be folded and mailed by hand. We are sorry to be so late with this week's edition, but somewhat grateful under the circumstances to get to press at all, for which we may thank our contemporary the Rideau Record.

Annual Meeting of the 56th

The 56th Regiment, Lisgar Rifles, held their annual meeting at Kemptville Saturday afternoon, to make arrangements for the local camp next summer. Among those present were Colonel Beckett; Majors Rankin and Bedell; Captains Kidd, Hunter, Elliott, Kerfoot and Newman; Lieutenants Inglis, Baker and Kingston. "The father of the regiment", Capt. Kidd of Burritt's Rapids, gave an inspiring address on regimental efficiency and Major Rankin offered an exceedingly practical talk.

The 56th will go into camp at Kingston this year. It will be a large Divisional Camp made up of the three units of infantry, cavalry and artillery, with engineers and service corps; from the two Districts, Nos 3 and 4. The Divisional Camp will be inspected by Gen. French, who is coming to Canada for that purpose.

Bad Fire in Oxford

Yesterday morning the home of Mr. George Bailey, between Oxford Mills and Oxford Station, was burned to the ground. The origin of the fire is not

definitely known but the facts are that Mr. Bailey made the morning fire, as usual, and went to the barn to do chores. When Mrs. Bailey arose she smelled smoke and the wall proved to be on fire inside. Flames spread so rapidly that Mr. And Mrs. Bailey were powerless to check their advance and their little home was burned to the ground. There is \$400 insurance, we understand.

Oxford Mills

The senior hockey team defeated Osgoode Station by five goals to two. They play the Juniors here next Saturday and the return match at Osgoode Friday.

Entered Into Rest

Mr. Asa Bishop, Bishop's Mills

Our staff reporter at Bishop's Mills writes: The funeral of the late Asa Bishop occurred on Monday last, and was largely attended. Deceased was 78 years of age, [born 1832] and was a life-long resident of this village. He leaves to mourn his loss, a wife, two sons, Orla of Oxford Mills; Harold of Oxford township, and a daughter, Mrs. Hunter, of this village. Rev. Mr. Weese conducted the funeral service, in the Methodist Church, after which the remains were interred in the Alexander cemetery.

Oxford Mills Victorious

Oxford Mills defeated Burritt's Rapids last Saturday to the tune of 9 - 2. A good crowd was present to cheer for "the boys" and although the ice was heavy and a light snow storm was on, a scientific exhibition of hockey was put up. The score stood at half-time 3 - 0 in favour of Oxford Mills...The Burritt's Rapids boys were royally entertained to supper at the Maple Leaf Hotel after the game.

The return match will be played on Saturday.

How Oxford's Taxes Are Expended

Council expenditures for the year 1909:

Roads & Bridges	\$949.03
Salaries & Allowances	\$736.45
Loans & Interest	\$3,579.50
Sheep & lambs killed by dogs	\$174.29
.....	
Total expenditures	\$18,063.50
Balance on hand	\$327.48

But remember, a man's fur coat in Kemptville cost just \$13, on sale from the usual \$18. Good old days.

NORTH GRENVILLE'S PAST:

History of Kemptville by a Pupil of the Kemptville High School

The following piece is taken from the records of the Kemptville Women's Institute Tweedsmuir Papers, located at the Ontario Archives in Toronto. It is clear from the context that the article was written in 1880, and explanatory notes have been added to the text in italics.

...As there have been no records kept of its early settlement, we must depend upon fragments of information gathered here and there, and are especially indebted to some of our worthy residents, who, being now well advanced in years, remember many interesting incidents connected with the younger days of our thriving little village. From a friend, we learn that in the spring of 1813 John Boyce, late of South Gower, came to what was afterwards known as "the branch", then an unbroken forest, felled the first tree, built a small hut, and cleared about one acre; and in 1814 sold his claim of 100 acres to Lyman Clothier Snr., receiving as payment a yoke of steers and a fusee.

It was John Byce, not Boyce, who first settled on the land. This article may be the origin of the story of the "yoke of steers and a fusee" which has persisted since. Sometimes, the purchase price is given as a yoke of oxen and a fusil, but all of these are incorrect, albeit colourful. In fact, Clothier paid £75 for the 100 acres, a sizeable amount of money at the time.

Mr. Clothier, with his young wife, immediately took possession of the cabin, which was about 12 feet square and covered with basswood scoops - the one room serving as kitchen, dining-room, parlour and bed-room. In this cozy dwelling was born the first white child, Mary, who afterwards became Mrs. Banks, mother of William and Chester, who are now

residents of this place. In the following year the Clothier Brothers, with much energy, set to work to build a mill-dam, and in 1816 erected, where the stables of the Central Hotel now stand [*on the south-west corner of Clothier and Prescott*], the first saw-mill, which materially assisted the building operations as boards took the place of scoops and split basswood. Mr. Asa Clothier, the same year erected a blacksmith shop on the site now occupied by the post office [*the empty lot beside the branch restaurant*], and as necessity required, acted the



Beckett's Hotel, later the McGregor & Sanders Store, and Scobie's. Corner of Clothier and Sanders Streets.

part of carpenter and joiner, shoemaker, harness-maker, cooper, blacksmith and shingle weaver. And at this date Thomas McCargar, Sr., also became a settler, and was soon followed by Messrs Hurd and Bottum, all of whom spent the remainder of their days in this vicinity, and still have descendants in our midst. On 30th June, 1817, the first male child (Indians excepted) was born, viz., A. Clothier, Esq., who is still among us, and whose enterprise has advanced the interests of Kemptville to a great extent. The settlement gradually extended and the population increased by the addition of new arrivals until in 1819 the first hotel was opened by Asa Clothier Sn. At that time hunting and fishing were the

favourite pastime, game being abundant, and fish so large and numerous that a horse attempting to cross at the Little Rapids was caused to stumble by their efforts to ascend the stream; and one caught, we are told, when dressed and ready for cooking weighed 44lbs. The inhabitants now became so numerous and feeling the want of a mill to grind their grain, that in 1821 a pair of rock stones were placed in the lower part of the saw mill, which circumstance was hailed with great delight by the little community...

Another hotel was opened in 1832 by Thomas Beckett; *[empty lot at the corner of Clothier and Sanders]* and all things seemed to have pursued their steady course; and in 1834 the first grist mill, now known as Harding's was built by Wm. Kennedy. Mechanics became more plentiful, the different trades being fairly represented, hotels and stores increased in number, the village extended its borders, and in 1838 a carding machine, by A. Holmes, and a saw mill by O. Barnes, were started, at what is now known as "Parkinson's dam" *[around the bridge on Hurd Street]*, and these much increased the comfort and convenience of the inhabitants...The population [in 1854] numbered a little over seven hundred...Previous to this time goods were brought in summer by boats and in winter by sleighs, and produce shipped in like manner, but now was ushered in a new order of things, the St. Lawrence and Ottawa Railroad being opened, in 1854, which proved a lasting benefit to the commercial interests of the community; and two years later Kemptville became an incorporated village.

A newspaper viz "The Kemptville Progressionist", which was first published in 1853, by Mr. Kelly Sr., continued to be issued until 1861 when it became "The Observer" under the management of Mr. Kelly Jr., and finally disappeared in 1864. The first serious accident that happened on our Railroad, in this vicinity, occurred at the old toll-gate in 1861, Mrs. Allen, while endeavouring to drive a cow from

the track, was overtaken by a train and her body severed....

A town hall was also built in autumn of [1874] which added much to the appearance as well as convenience of the village.

...Among the recent improvements, last but not least, is our memorial Church *[St. James' Anglican Church]*, erected in 1879, in memory of the late Archdeacon Patton, which is now being finished and, when completed, will be an ornament to the town, and compare favourably with many of the city churches; and in November 1880 was issued the first number of "The Advance" by S. E. Walt, publisher and proprietor. *[This version of the Advance only lasted less than a year. Walt restarted the paper in 1889. Although the current owners of the newspaper have been informed of this, they insist on printing that their paper was founded in 1855]* As a safeguard against fires, we are in possession of a "first class steam fire engine". Population at present is about 1200.

Cyrus McCargar

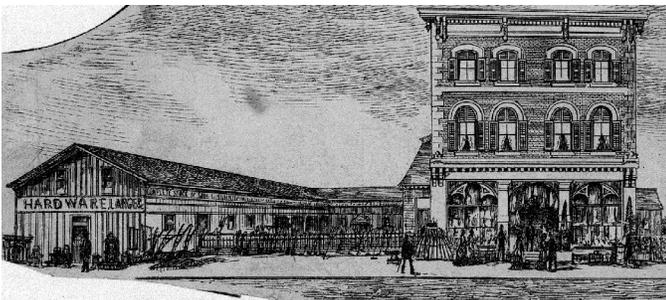
[There is some confusion about McCargar. Although he is stated to be a High School student in 1880, he was, in fact, 20 years old that year. Whatever his reason for writing this piece, which is only excerpted here, we are grateful to him to have this early account of Kemptville's history to that point.]



Heritage Awards Night, 2010

The North Grenville Historical Society, in conjunction with Heritage North Grenville, are presenting their Heritage Awards for 2010 on Heritage Day, February 15, at the branch restaurant beginning at 7 p.m. This year, five awards will be given out, an indication of how busy it has been on the heritage front in North Grenville over the past year.

Two of the awards are being given in recognition of high quality renovation work done on heritage properties in Kemptville. Near neighbours, the **DePencier House at 220 Prescott Street** and **the old Co-operative Building** were bought by local companies over the past year. The DePencier House, which dates from around 1900, is a building of great character, a landmark on Prescott Street next door to the High School. It was bought by Gilles Brisebois and the LA Group and has been restored with great expertise and taste, preserving this wonderful piece of architecture. The Co-op Building has a longer history than most in North Grenville. Originally part of the Blackburn Store which over the years became the Red and White, the building was built around 1873 and was used at first as a store for large



The Co-op building as portrayed in 1878, when it was part of the original Blackburn Store, later Anderson's Store and the Red & White.

agricultural and hardware items. Over the years it has served many functions and suffered from a major fire in the 1940's. Since it was bought by Kollaard Associates, it has been restored to a place where it is closest in appearance to the original building than it has been in decades. But it in the imaginative use of the space for commerce and residential use that has really given new life to this old building.

Another award is going to students of the **North Grenville District High School** and their teachers, **Barb Tobin and Don Muntz**, for the heritage murals they have created together and which grace the streets of Kemptville. It is really important that our young people are introduced to their history, and the murals are a wonderful way of giving that history the profile it deserves and needs.

Another group of students being recognized comes from Carleton University. Together with the Ontario Ministry of Culture, the students from the Schools of Architecture and Canadian Studies prepared a Report on Adaptive Re-use of Heritage Buildings in North Grenville, which was presented to the community last November. This Report provided the Municipality with a variety of possible uses for a number of heritage buildings declared surplus to requirements by North Grenville.

The fifth award is going to **Robert Edwards and Natasha Gagne** in recognition of the tremendous work done on restoring the stone house on the old Caldwell farm (1848 Beach Road) following a fire last year that almost completely destroyed the building.

This year, the awards are being sponsored by the **North Grenville Community Newsletter**, in collaboration with **Heritage North Grenville**. This has become a major event in the cultural life of North Grenville and a significant night in the NGHS year. The night is open to the public and is free of charge.

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

March 10, 2010:

David Shanahan will be talking about aspects of the history of Kemptville, concentrating mostly on the economic life of the settlement as he developed through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This will be our first meeting at our new location: 15 Water Street, Kemptville.

April 14, 2010:

Olivia Mills, a member of Heritage North Grenville and author of a recent book on Burritt's Rapids, will be talking about the development of that hamlet. As part of the Rideau heritage corridor, and the oldest community on the Rideau Canal, Burritt's Rapids continues to play a central role in the history and heritage of North Grenville.

May 12, 2010:

The Women's Institutes around Ontario have gathered and safeguarded the historical records of many Townships and villages for more than a century. Jeanne Lambert, from Bishop's Mills, will speak on the WI and the part they have played here in North Grenville.

Further details on these talks, and other NGHS matters, will be published in the *North Grenville Newsletter* each month.

SPEAKERS CORNER:

Recent talks at NGHS

June, 2009:

"Women in the War of 1812". A native of Kent, England, Dianne Graves' most recent book, *In the Midst of Alarms: the Untold Story of Women in the War of 1812*, is a groundbreaking study of women –

American, Canadian, British and aboriginal – who experienced the War of 1812.

September, 2009:

Doug Hendry spoke on "The Uncontrollable Plague: North Grenville and the Influenza Pandemic of 1918-19". Based on extensive original research, Doug described the effect of the pandemic on this locality, underlining the severity and the distribution of cases of the virus in North Grenville during a time of fear and uncertainty.

October's meeting was a business discussion, mostly concerning our need for a new headquarters.

November, 2009:

"North Grenville Then and Now" was the topic of a photographic exhibition by David Shanahan at the November meeting. Using the Society's growing collection of photographs, David put together a series of "then and now" pictures of various buildings in the Municipality, some of which had changed very little, others of which were almost completely unrecognisable. This collection will be available on the Society web site in the coming months.

January, 2010:

This was the Society's Annual General Meeting. The business section was followed by a talk by Doug Hendry on the history of the 93rd Sutherland Highlander Regiment. This illustrated talk covered the first decades of the Regiment's colourful career, the original "thin red line" of the British Army, which served in Canada, Jamaica, India, Ireland and other parts of the British Empire in the nineteenth century.

MEMBERSHIP IN THE NORTH GRENVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

costs just \$20 per household per year.

Contact Graham at pincotts@xplornet.com

PERKINS MILLS

The Forgotten Hamlet

Mill sites are central to the history of North Grenville. Settlements grew up where saw mills and grist mills provided planks and flour for settlers, and mills were established where there was water power available to operate the mills. Think of the hamlets in North Grenville today: Oxford Mills and Bishops Mills are obvious examples, but Burritts Rapids and Kemptville (originally known as Clothier's Mills) also testify to the importance of mills in the growth of this community. The real founders of North Grenville were the individuals who set out to find the perfect mill site and invested time and energy in erecting, first of all, saw mills, and later grist mills to serve the incoming settlers looking to build homes and furniture, and grind their grain for bread. But these mills had a relatively short life span in terms of economic growth. As consumer goods became more available, the mills' importance faded. Those communities which could adapt their economic focus survived to various degrees.

Today, the area around the junction of Clothier, Hurd and Somerville on the outskirts of Kemptville is a place people only drive through. They stop only briefly as traffic dictates. But a hundred and fifty years ago, this quiet crossroads was known as Perkin's Mills, an active and noisy residential and commercial hub that seemed on the verge of great expansion. Out of this crossroads came flour, timber, woven cloth, furniture and leather goods that provided the people of North Grenville for decades.

Lot 25, Concession 3, Oxford on Rideau Township, had been granted to Captain James Brackenridge in 1795. He sold it to Truman Hurd in 1815, and the Hurd family was the main presence in the area for more than a century after. Hurd's property extended from Highway 43 south to Concession Road, and from Hurd Road on the west

to Pine Hill Road on the east. By 1859, Truman's son, Edwin, had survey plans for a major housing development to stretch from Clothier Street to Highway 43. The entire area was divided into streets, long before Cranberry Hill existed. Edwin had advertised in the Ottawa *Citizen* a sale of 175 Town Lots and 42 Park Lots, to include his own house and gardens on the corner of Clothier and Hurd. The area was to be called North Kemptville. Although the development was never completed, Edwin's house is still there, now 561 Clothier West.

But the real centre of the area in 1859 were the mills located on the South Branch River. Where the bridge is today on Hurd Street, there was once a stone dam, with the river waters backed up behind it in a large mill pond. On the north bank below the dam stood a Carding Mill, and opposite it on the south shore was a Tannery and Cloth Dressing facility operated by Reuben Gorham. Reuben had just bought the factory from Frederick Moore, whose stone house is still standing west of the crossroads at 2495 County Road 18. The large stone house across the road, now extended and improved, was the home of Henry Hurd, another of Truman's sons. The fulling and bark mills produced cloth to be used in making clothes, blankets, or whatever was needed in the community. This settlement was officially known as South Kemptville, but, locally, it was named after its most important entrepreneur.

The major force in the economic life of the area was John Perkins, who had bought 80 acres of land south of Clothier Street in 1850. Truman Hurd had taken out a mortgage on these 80 acres in 1837, possibly to build a saw mill and a grist mill. In 1840, he had transferred title to the land to the consortium holding this mortgage, and when Perkins bought from them, the two mills were already in place and operating. A mill race had been dug between the dam and a natural inlet in the river, and this powered the mills: the saw mill on the north side and the grist mill on the south. These mills and factories required workers and the workers required services.

Around Perkins Mills, coopers, joiners, shoemakers, weavers, cabinetmakers, blacksmiths, wagon makers and merchants bought and rented land and built homes. The impressive stone houses still standing around the crossroads indicate the wealth of the community at the time. John Perkins established a tavern on Hurd, just south of the bridge. The Kemptville Brick Yard operated on a large tract of land on the south bank of the river just

the bridge in good repair for ten years: an early form of development charge. The enterprise did not go well under Morrison, and was sold under power of sale in 1874. The mills were taken over by Nathaniel and George Kennedy in 1877, and they kept them going until 1914. But by then, the community of Perkins Mills, latterly known as Kennedy's Mills, was dying.

As the mills ran down, so the jobs went and people



east of the mills. John Conn opened a school on Clothier Street, in the building which still stands immediately to the west of Holy Cross School today. Some of the wealthy merchants with businesses in Kemptville moved out to Perkins Mills to live, including the owners of Averill & Hooker, and Thomas Blackburn.

In retrospect, 1859 was the high point for Perkins Mills. By 1869, John Perkins had died, and his widow rented out the mills to William Morrison, who had to pay a charge to the Corporation of Oxford Township to ensure he maintained his part of

Perkins Mills in 1914. Looking south on Hurd from Clothier. The remains of an old mill is all that is left of the once-busy centre of commercial activity, which was also known as West Kemptville.

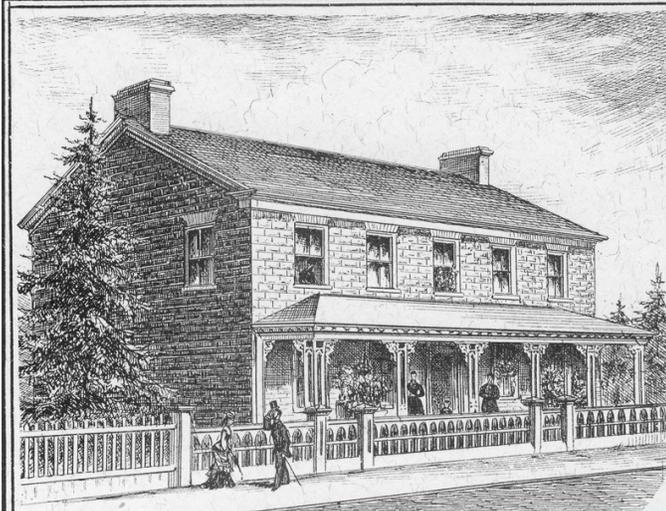
started moving away, many back to Kemptville, as that town continued to expand. So, the next time you pass through, take a look around and try to imagine the place when the dam held back the waters of the South Branch River and mills and tanneries gave employment, energy and focus to a bustling and hopeful community.

Dr. David Shanahan

North Grenville Then and Now

This item draws on the extensive photographic collection of the Society and provides a peek into changes and continuities in our built heritage in North Grenville.

1. 22 Clothier Street West:



The illustration (top) comes from the poster of Kemptville buildings prepared in 1878, and it is clearly the same building photographed (below) in 2009. Thomas Beckett had a store on this property in the 1830's, and around 1837 he opened Kemptville's only brewery on the river bank behind the house. Beckett was an important businessman in the early days of North Grenville. Thomas A. Beckett arrived from Ireland in 1823, receiving a land grant on the Rideau in the years before work began

on the Canal. His son records that, when rumours of the Canal project reached Thomas, he immediately had his brothers and father move from Ireland to take up land beside his along the Canal route. It was to prove an inspired move. Beckett himself worked on the Canal, and established a ferry crossing on the Rideau. About 1833, Beckett and his brothers joined with the people of Kemptville, still "The Branch" at that time, to cut a road from the village to the Canal.

He carried on in the brewing business until he retired in the mid-1860's. The house he had built remained a private residence for the Powell family from 1900 until 1948, when it passed to Eva Adams and Elsie Byers. These two ladies restored the building to its original plan, maintaining the porch that runs the full length of the front, and decorating the interior to match the high ceilings and well-proportioned rooms. Miss Byers sold the property in 1971 and in 1988 it became the Featherstonehaugh Manor for seniors. It continues to provide this service to the present. The illustration is from 1878.

In 1957, the house was described as follows in the special publication to mark Kemptville's centenary:

The records show that this property was part of the parcel of land bought by Squire Bottum from the Crown in 1816, and although the actual year of its construction is not a certainty, we do know that it was in the 1830's.

It is a lovely old house, built on long, low lines, which are emphasized by the verandah which stretches the full width of the front. The interior has been altered at different times as the various occupants fitted it to their own particular needs, but since the present owners, the Misses Eva Adams and Elsie Byers, purchased it in 1949, it has been restored to its original plan.

As one visits this house with its high ceilinged rooms of good proportions, with their deeply recessed windows, and furnished with many beautiful antiques, which glow in the reflected light from the old fireplace, it is easy indeed, to picture it as it must have looked a century ago.

Kemptville Centennial, p. 24.

Adaptive Re-use Study in North Grenville



One of the more important events to take place in North Grenville over the past quarter involved the Carleton University School of Canadian

Studies Heritage Conservation Programme and David Azrieli School of Architecture. On October 3rd, 2009, thirty graduate students from the Carleton

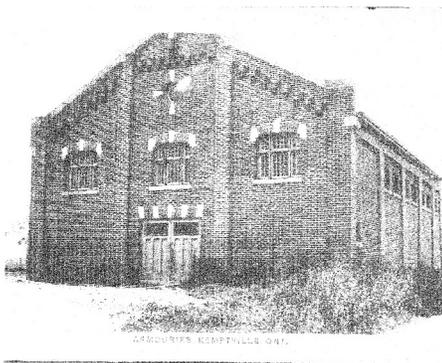


University Institute for Canadian Studies assembled in Kemptville to undertake field studies of six Municipally

owned heritage buildings.

The studies were part of a pilot project initiated by the Ontario Ministry of Culture designed to bring together academics and professionals to come up with imaginative ways to use heritage buildings no longer needed

for their original purpose. North Grenville was chosen for the pilot for many reasons, not least because we have a number of such



buildings in our community.

The students spent time visiting the six buildings: the Kemptville Carnegie Library, the old Kemptville Town Hall, the NG District High School, the Fire Hall in Kemptville, the Oxford Mills Town Hall, and our own old archives building at Actons Corners. Their work culminated in presentations given at a special reception in Carleton University last November, on



adaptive re-use proposals for each of the buildings. The proposed uses for the various locations ranged from the ingenious to the downright strange, with everything from a pub for the Kemptville Town Hall to an ice-cream factory for the one in Oxford Mills.

As a result of their efforts, North Grenville has a range of possible options for these important



heritage buildings, and the entire initiative by the Ministry of Culture has received solid encouragement to carry on the work in other municipalities across the province. The timing of the project was critical: the Municipality were in the middle of deciding the future of these buildings, and most of them had already been declared surplus to



requirements before the results of the studies were released. The Carleton students have been given a

Heritage Award this year for their work on this project.