



Annual Report 2000

LOST VILLAGES HISTORICAL SOCIETY - ANNUAL MEETING

MONDAY, MAY 15, 2000

OUR LADY OF GRACE CHURCH HALL, INGLESIDE, ONTARIO

This evening's annual meeting marks the twenty-first time that members and friends of the Lost Villages Historical Society have gathered to reflect on the accomplishments of the past year, and to recognize and thank all those who work to the aims and objectives of the society. 1999 has been a year of success for our society, and all volunteers and "friends" of the society are to be congratulated for the work they do "to preserve and protect the history and heritage of the Lost Villages". As in the past, members and friends rose to the challenges which were before us, and, through their efforts, the Lost Villages Historical Society has attained a strong presence and profile in the community. We continue to build on the successes of the past, on the aftermath of "Celebration 40" activities, and on the encouragement and support of community leaders and citizens. Let us continue to carry the torch from those who first planted the seed for our society in 1977.

As president of the society for some years now, and as I have done at the past annual dinners, I wish to thank the members of the executive for their efforts and volunteerism during 1999. You all have rolled up your sleeves and worked diligently in the name of the Lost Villages. You have given countless hours of your time and talent in support of the activities of the society, and you continue to plan for the future. To Joan McEwan, past-president; Fran Laflamme, first-vice president; Rita Canough, recording secretary; Vale Brownell, treasurer; and Isabel Hunter, membership convenor, our "thank you" for an outstanding year. It has been a team effort, and you have all made valuable contributions in your areas of expertise.

As has happened for many years now, members and "friends of the Lost Villages" have rolled up their sleeves and assisted with the many activities which were carried out during 1999. Whether it was organizing and donating to a flea market, baking goodies for a bake sale, supporting bus tours, painting buildings, or just encouraging others and spreading the news of our society, you have all played a significant role in the success which we achieved in 1999. Without naming names, I, as president, thank you all for your time and talents. As said, you have helped us to attain a prominent profile in the community, and you continue to keep the names and spirit of our "Lost Villages" alive. From myself, and all members of the society, our "thanks"!

In this last year of the term for the first council for the Township of South Stormont, we must not overlook the support and encouragement received from the Council, the staff and the employees of the municipality. As a strong advocate of history and heritage conservation and preservation, I am happy to say that our society was blessed to have a Council which endorsed and encouraged our activities in the community. Throughout the year, they continued to give support to our applications for funding from higher levels of government, and they continued to see the economic value in the work which we accomplished at Ault Park, and throughout the Township of South Stormont. As president of this historical society, and Reeve for the Township of South Stormont, I am encouraged by the moral and financial assistance given to history and heritage conservation and preservation in all parts of our community. May I encourage them to continue to support the activities of our community's historical societies, and to support the need for preserving our community's past. Our community's historical societies have important and unique stories to tell, and may they continue to be supported by strong and supportive township councils in the future.

In mid-June, 1999, the Lost Villages Museum was opened for the seventh summer season. Visitors and patrons to the museum complex were met by our summer interpreters, and we are most grateful for the continued financial support received from Human Resources Development Canada and from the federal government's "Young Canada Works in Heritage Institutions" program. Without the financial support from these two programs, much more interpretive work at the museum would have to fall on the shoulders of volunteers from the society. Although we are restricted to the scope of work provided by our summer students through our grant applications, they do provide a valuable service to the visitors and patrons to the museum. During

the summer of 1999, we welcomed back Ann-Marie Bourgon, our summer student from the past. She volunteered to organize a "Summer Camp for Children", and, along with expertise from her mother and other student volunteers, she staged a most successful event for our society. The young children from our community, who took part in the summer program, gained a greater knowledge of the rich history and heritage of their community. As in the past, we have applied for funding for our young interpreters in 2000, and we hope to offer a "Summer Youth " program at the museum. Once again, these activities add to the profile of our museum site.

Having now made them annual events for the society, our two summer flea markets/truck sales/bake sales were very successful. The support of these events help to defray the museum's operating costs, and to help us plan for future activities. Vale Brownell and Rita Canough, once again, convened these activities and they worked diligently to make them successful. The executive hopes that members and "friends" will continue to support these activities and provide baked goods and "flea market" items for our society's tables. Other events which were well supported by members were the annual Heritage Fair held at the Brookdale Mall on February 27, 1999, and the summer Antique Showcase held at Morrisburg. As well, members supported the Bus Tours which were held in the summer of 1999, a new activity which was initiated by the society and hosted by a new society member, Mary Lynn (Johnston) Alguire. Because of the success of the tours in 1999, six tours will be held in the summer of 2000. These have already been promoted in our society's newsletters, and more information will be provided as the dates approach. For success of these tours, the society encourages its members to promote them. Encourage family, friends and groups to call myself or the museum in order to reserve a tour date. For \$12.00, participants are treated to a tour of over three hours, and a barbecue follows the tour.

Throughout 1999, many members, and new members, helped to boost the attendance at our monthly meetings, held on the third Monday of the month. With attendance averages of more than 30 members and "friends" at each meeting, we now avoid the problems of the past, when hardly a quorum could be achieved. This shows the vitality of our active and busy society, and I, as president, encourage you to continue showing this spirit and enthusiasm for the activities of the society.

Besides our society's money making ventures in 1999, we were blessed with strong financial support from community-minded organizations and

provincial funding partners. We are grateful for the generous contributions from the Ontario Lottery Corporation, through its "Advanced Funding Initiative". Our society received over \$15,000.00 in funding support for the development of our museum site. As well, through the kind efforts of Bob Hunter, Evelyn Baker, and Vale Brownell, members of our historical society and associated with the Bank of Montreal, we realized a contribution of \$3,000.00 from the Bank of Montreal for society activities.

In October, 1999, Longue Sault Public School was recognized with a special "Community Recognition Award" from our society for their generous contribution of over \$1,800.00 from the fourth annual "bike and walk-a-thon". Students and staff from the school were treated to a barbecue at the park, by our society. We thank them for their continued support and recognition of local history and heritage. and we look forward to working with them in the future. Our historical society cannot overlook the generous financial support by members and "friends" during the past year, through memorial donations, donations from special activities such as the "Old-fashioned Christmas", and contributions in support of acquisitions. Your generosity is appreciated.

In 1999, we opened our seventh building at the museum site, the Ernie McDonald Blacksmith Shop. Mr. and Mrs. Bob Buiting and family, donors of this building to the society from the Ernie McDonald estate, participated in the ribbon-cutting ceremony on Canada Day. Throughout the summer, Alex McGillivray, society member, demonstrated his blacksmithing skills at the forge and anvil in this structure. The restoration work of School Section #17, Roxborough Township, continued throughout the summer months, with Alan Rafuse, Donnie Alguire. Alex McGillivray and myself spending many hours in preparing it for the official opening as a museum on Canada Day 2000, when special "Millennium" celebrations will be held at Ault Park. In the autumn of 1999, we acquired the Advent Christian Church from Sandtown, Ontario, a quaint country church with much appeal. This building was donated to the society by Leitha Casselman and her daughter, Betty (Casselman) Neville. With much history to tell from our Lost Villages churches, this structure will provide us with the space to do so, and it will honour an early Christian faith in our community, and the hamlet of Sandtown. With its early church appointments, and its white clapboard appeal on the exterior, the structure is expected to be "officially" opened at the museum site on Canada Day. With the weather conditions of late, we do wonder about this target date. If not

July 1st, then we will strive for a late summer or Thanksgiving opening.

The work of producing the monthly newsletters for the society is an onerous task, and I encourage members to call or write with news, stories and history/heritage information. The success of our society in recent years may be directly linked to the information imparted through these newsletters. Members from near and far have mentioned how much they enjoy receiving them and being informed of our activities. As well, they give an outlet to those who wish to take pen in hand and write a story or compose a poem. The preparation and printing of the monthly newsletters is a contribution from the society's president, and Winnifred Murdock has, over the years, kindly contributed the postage for their distribution.

The monthly meetings for 1999 commenced with our annual "Heritage Dinner" meeting, held on February 15, 1999, at the South Stormont Seniors' Support Centre in Ingleside. We were pleased to welcome Lily Worrall, a resident of North Stormont, and author of "Look Ma! No Hands", the story of Captain Allan Piper. Lori Emmell and her staff at the Support Centre provided a delicious meal for this annual event. I shall capsulize the meeting activities with a short outline of our guest speakers. At the March 15, 1999, meeting, a number of interesting scrapbooks were presented for members' scrutiny. Fran Laflamme presented scrapbooks which had been compiled by the late Bob Eadie, formerly of the Cornwall Standard-Freeholder, and scrapbooks compiled by Mrs. Mary Jarvis from 1935-1972 captivated the attention of society members. These books were donated to the society by Pauline Dafoe, daughter of Fred and Mary Jarvis.

On April 19, 1999, Chris Granger, a railroad buff and member of the Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Historical Society, and now a new member of our society, outlined the history of the abandoned New York Central Railway, which once was a connecting link between New York City and Ottawa. He provided an interesting insight into the artifacts and buildings which remain from this abandoned line. As well, Kirsten Gardner and Michael Phifer, from Tourism 2000, provided the society with some ideas for celebrating the approaching millennium and providing for financial support to the society. The "Bus Tour" idea was presented, and we accepted the challenge to move forward with this project in 1999.

Our annual meeting was held on Monday, May 19, 1999, at Quinn's Inn, St. Andrews West, Ontario. Guest speaker was George Blackburn of Ottawa, a

long-time member of the Lost Villages Historical Society, and the author of the hit musical, "A Day To Remember". He provided some thoughts and challenges with regards to his most recent publications, "The Guns of Normandy",1995; "The Guns of Victory", 1996; and "Where The Hell Are The Guns", 1997.

Following a summer break from meetings, the monthly meetings resumed on September 20, 1999, with Shirley Racine, Manager of Upper Canada Village, as the guest speaker. Shirley reflected on the past year of activities at the village, and she provided us with her visions for the future. In her short time at the village, Shirley left her mark, and she was truly frustrated with things in the fall of 1999. We were sorry to see Shirley leave the village, and we hope that the improved amenities, some which have returned from the past, will continue into this millennium year. We know that Shirley launched the "Upper Canada Challenge" project, the development of an interactive program for young visitors to the village and throughout the Seaway Valley. Shirley's program developed during the winter of 1999 and into the spring of 2000, and the interactive activity cards will draw visitors, and especially the youth, to Upper Canada Village and the Lost Villages Museum. You will certainly hear more about this activity in the near future.

Our October 18, 2000, meeting was reserved for business of the society, and it gave us the time to reflect on the past and plan for the future. The Apples and Art Studio and Heritage Tour was behind us, and plans were formulated for the "Old-fashioned Christmas", and other winter activities. On November 15, 1999, Vernon Soloway and Ann Desrosiers, diving enthusiasts, provided an interesting video presentation on the Mille Roches Power House, Lock 21, and the Sheek Island Dam. Many of us have fond memories of these sites, and the underwater videos were haunting reminders of past activities in our "Lost Villages" communities.

The finally meeting of 1999 was our annual Christmas "Show and Tell", where members are encouraged to bring in items to display and present in short reports. A fascinating array of items were presented, and members and "friends" had an enjoyable time reflecting on the past. The usually Christmas desserts were enjoyed by a large gathering.

The Lost Villages Historical Society is proud of its association with the Rothwell-Osnabruck School community, and we presented, as we have done since 1997, a bursary to the top student in the history program at the school.

The school was most grateful of our \$200.00 bursary, and a society member has agreed to sponsor our bursary in the future. In fact, Patricia (McSweeny) Faubert, provided us with a cheque for \$200.00, to cover the bursary for 1999. We thank Patricia for her generosity, and we thank the school for honouring a student in the history program.

The events and programs which I have reflected on in this report cover only a small part of the activities of the society. We have certainly established a profile in this community, and our name reaches to all parts of the world, through the connections of the internet. May I encourage the internet users of our society to lock onto <Seawayvalley.com>. You will find weekly articles on the "Lost Villages", with pictures provided from the archives of the Lost Villages. Throughout the year, I shall be providing our local radio station, "The Blaze" 101.9 F.M., with information from our historical society. As well, what fantastic exposure we received recently in the May 1, 2000, Maclean's Magazine.

In conclusion, I thank you all for your support in 1999, and your encouragement and support in the future. Some may think of the future, and wonder if we will be able to maintain the momentum which has been established at this time. Without a vibrant and exciting past, we cannot plan for the future, however, we have had a vibrant and exciting past. Many, many people now know of the historical society, and are ready to support it. Personally, I have very optimistic thoughts for the future of our society, and, with younger members joining the ranks of our active members from the past, I think the society is in good hands. I thank my wife, Paulette, and family for their support in the past, and trust that they will continue to support my visions for the conservation and preservation of the history and heritage of our local area. As president, I wish each and every one of you the very best in good health and happiness as your work to further the aims and objectives of the Lost Villages Historical Society. I ask you, too, to reflect on the good work of those who have past on from the society. As well, remember in your prayers those who are ill or infirm, and who could not be with us this evening. My best wishes to you all in the future.

Respectfully submitted this 15th day of May, 2000.

Jim Brownell

President, Lost Villages Historical Society

