



## **December 2001 Newsletter**

The December meeting of the Lost Villages Historical Society will be held at the South Stormont Seniors' Support Centre, Ingleside, on Monday, December 10, 2001, at 6:30 p.m. Please note the change in date, as our December meetings are always held on the second Monday in December. Members and "friends" are cordially invited to attend. The meeting will be in the form of a "Christmas" Potluck Dinner, commencing at 6:30 p.m. Plan to arrive for the usual half-hour social time, beginning at 6:00 p.m. It was agreed, at our November meeting, to expand the usual Christmas "dessert" to a full potluck. This would be an ideal time to invite a "potential" new member.

Program: The program part of this meeting will be our annual "Show and Tell", a "members" meeting. This is your opportunity to show and tell about an important artifact in your possession, or an interesting story, poem, etc. which you cherish. Past "Show and Tell" events have been most interesting, and this is your opportunity to showcase something which is "special" to you. A "thank you" is extended to all those who attended the November meeting at the McIntosh Inn, Morrisburg. Joy Parr was the guest speaker, and the following groups had representatives at this meeting: The South Dundas Mural Committee, The Morrisburg and District Historical Society, The McIntosh Heritage Committee, The Morrisburg and District Chamber of Commerce, and The Williamsburg Heritage Committee

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## **FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS TOUR**

Due to popular demand, and an extensive waiting list, a second "Festival of Lights" Tour, sponsored by the Lost Villages Historical Society, has been planned for December 15-16, 2001. The tour is almost identical to the one which was advertised in the November newsletter, with only two exceptions. Dinner on

Saturday, December 15th will be at Swiss Chalet, with participants enjoying the "Festive Feast", -1/4 chicken, potato, stuffing, cranberries, pie and tea/coffee. Since the "Festival of Trees" will be over on the second weekend, the tour will feature the sixteenth annual "Christmas Craft Creations" at Portsmouth Olympic Harbour, 53 Younge St., Kingston.

The trip will include stops at the second annual "Festival of Lights" at Fort Henry, a one-hour bus tour of Kingston, a visit to Fulford Place Mansion at Christmas, a one-hour bus tour through Gananoque and the Islands, and a visit to "Alight at Night" at Upper Canada Village. This is a spectacular sight!! Travel will be by Delaney Coach, and the participants will stay at "Quality Inn and Suites" in Gananoque. Cost is \$150.00. As of this printing, there are nine seats left on the tour. Accommodations are double occupancy, and Jim Brownell, tour escort, has a second bed in his room for a male participant. For further details, or to reserve your place, call Jim Brownell at 534-2423.

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#### AN "AFTER" AUCTION SURPRISE!!

As mentioned in the November newsletter, Jim Brownell attend a recent auction at Osnabruck Centre, and he received two sets of "cheerleaders" ribbons, courtesy of Peter Ross Auction Service. While at the auction, he had been keenly interested and aware of four shipping labels from the D. Smith Poultry Farm in Wales, Ontario. With the need to leave the sale early, he passed up the opportunity to bid on these labels.

Just recently, three of these labels were received by Jim, in the mail. Apparently, Enid (Connors) Rupert had observed him around the labels, and she had seen him looking at them. Enid purchased the labels, and she donated three of them to the Lost Villages Historical Society. These will be added to the D.H.C Smith collection of artifacts, some of which are on display in a showcase at Rothwell-Osnabruck School, Ingleside. We thank Enid for her generosity and her observations. A wonderful gift!

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#### BITS AND PIECES

Oops, I goofed! Having missed the October meeting of the society, president Jim Brownell was unaware that Lyle and Nancy Rutley had joined the society as sustaining members. In the last newsletter, he made reference to members of the Lost Villages who had attended the October meeting of the Cornwall Township

Historical Society. Lyle and Nancy Rutley were there. An apology for neglecting to have them listed in the last newsletter. Another example of the bonds of friendship between our two local historical societies.

St. Lawrence College's "Encore Seniors Program" has requested another "Lost Villages" study session for 2002. This will be organized for the autumn session of the Encore program.

The "Festival of Lights" tour to Kingston, Gananoque, Brockville and Upper Canada Village is shaping up to be a very successful event. In less than two weeks, the 56 seats on the motor coach were sold out. We welcome all those who have signed up for the tour, and we look forward to another tour in December, 2002. For those who did not get on this tour, don't forget the St Lawrence Parks Commission's "Festival of Lights" at Fort Henry in Kingston, and "Alight at Night" at Upper Canada Village. This is winter tourism at its best!

Thank you to the following members of the society who volunteered at the second annual "Fall Festival" at the Lancer Centre, Ingleside, from November 9-11, 2001. We thank Jane Craig, Vale Brownell, Ernie and Rita Gillard, Maggie Wheeler, Rosemary Rutley, George and Nancy Hickey, Rita Canough, and Lenora Salmon. Our booth attracted much attention, and we raised almost \$600.00 during this weekend event. A Saturday afternoon feature at our booth was the "signing" by our two local authors, Maggie Wheeler with "A Violent End", and Rosemary Rutley with "Voices from the Lost Villages". Both books continue to be "hot" sellers, as is the video "Tales of the Lost Villages, Then and Now".

Remember, our "Lost Villages" products are on sale in our booth at Gerry Zeran's "Crafter'z Market", one-half kilometre east of Woodland Villa, on County Road #36. Unique, hand-crafted gifts may be found at this marketplace. The market is open daily, except Mondays. Drop in to the "cafe" for lunch.

The Forbes Memorial Reading Room was moved over its concrete foundation on Friday, November 16, 2001. Allan Forbes, grandson of the builder of this library, was on hand to see the move, as was Norma Stillson, of Newington. Norma has taken many, many pictures of this move, and she has provided a "sneak preview" of them through the Internet. Copies will be obtained from Norma, and these will be displayed at our "Heritage Dinner" in February.

A sincere "thank you" is extended to the Council for the Township of South Stormont, and the staff, for their interest and help with the Forbes building relocation. The township has agreed to dig the trench for the gas line, and they

kindly picked up the tab for the drilling required to get under County Road #2. On December 12, 2001, Jim Brownell presented a cheque to the Township of South Stormont in the amount of \$40,308.30, our share of the bill from CDS Movers. The walls and ceiling of the building will be insulated, and a new gas furnace/air-conditioner will be installed, from money set aside for the restoration project.

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#### MILLE ROCHES INFO...

In a recent email from Lyall Manson, the following information was received. We thank Lyall for sharing this information with us.

Just came across something I hadn't seen before. The stone Empey-Thompson house on the Post Road was called "Elmwood". (ed. This house was featured at our October meeting by Chris Emard). Also, there was an effort in the early 1920's to get an underpass built under the railroad at Mille Roches. Don't know why they didn't put one in when they originally built the railroad. Certainly enough stone around! Anyways, below is from the Mille Roches column.

The Freeholder, Cornwall, ON - May 17, 1923

Recently the population of this village has been taken and it is now 651. There are 366 people south of the railroad track and 285 north of it. Recently, a petition signed by the citizens of Mille Roches was sent to the Canadian National Railways, and the Township Council, to have a subway built under the railroad at the crossing here. The company has sent a man to investigate the matter and to keep account of the traffic over this road. It is surprising to know that on Monday, May 14, there were 765 people on foot and in buggies and 58 in automobiles, who crossed the track. Nineteen railroad trains passed the village that day.

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#### A THANK YOU FROM THE C.N.I.B. DUNDAS SUPPORT GROUP

On July 19, 2001, president Jim Brownell addressed the members and guests of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind Dundas Support Group at Stampville. A fine lunch was served, the presentation was made to a captivated audience, and many questions ensued. On November 16, 2001, the following message was received from Barbara M. Bradford, of the Dundas Support Group, along with a cheque in the amount of \$50.00.

"The Canadian National Institute for the Blind Support Group has emptied our

"Care and Share" Box for the year, and wanted to use part of the contents to make a donation to the Lost Villages funds.

We greatly appreciated your visit to our group this fall (ed. note above date, -how time flies!), and hope that the enclosed cheque will say "thank you" in a small way.

We are watching the installation of the new building with intent. Best wishes for the coming year."

We thank the C.N.I.B. Support Group for this donation, and it will be put to good use with our Forbes Library restoration work.

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### DONALD STUART REMEMBER S.S. #5, -WALES CONTINUATION SCHOOL

This is a continuation from last month's newsletter, "Donald Stuart Remembers S.S. #15, Wales Continuation School. We thank Donald for his contribution, and look forward to more from him in subsequent newsletters. Donald's two books, "No Road Back, A Grown Boy's Stories of Wales", and "Anyone Can Write a Country Song" are available during the winter months at The Crafter's Market, east of Long Sault, on County Road #36. -----

At these school fairs, the schools had a march-past with two children in front carrying their school banner. My, how we trained for that march! We went right, left, around that school yard under Mrs. Snyder's martial eye for a lot of hours. I know I was on the awkward squad. I didn't know my left foot from my right and, like army privates, we were blistered by our teacher-sergeant.

There was also public speaking. Oh, the agony of standing on the platform of a truck and reciting to what I was sure were deadly enemies! I know it was good training for an uncertain future but at the time it wasn't my idea of fun.

Every December the school put on an entertainment - usually in one of the local church halls. I know every parent and relative came and jammed the hall to the doors. At these affairs, a time was set aside when the School Board awarded books to everyone who had passed from one grade to another. Mrs. Snyder, who was a great book lover, also presented books that were her own gifts. Even now, sixty years later, it gives me a good feeling to open an old book and recognize her handwriting - "Presented to so and so on passing from junior fourth to senior

fourth." The classes were numbered like that. It was a few years later that they became numbered grades.

One thing we had at school was a large yard and at noon and recess we usually played, segregated. Boys and girls did play ball together and in one of these games I was catcher and the girl at bat threw the bat into the air and it came down on my head. I was rushed into school with blood pouring down my face. After it was under control I was sent home but, for sure, we never saw a doctor. We played a rough game in which we tied two wooden spools about three inches apart and used tree branches to hurl them back and forth. Eventually someone got hit in the face and cut, and the game was forbidden from then on.

We were encouraged to go outside at recess no matter the weather. Our outhouse was also the outside type and one had to put up one's hand and be noticed and excused.

The public school was heated by a wood-burning furnace in the south-west corner of the room. There were days in the winter when it was the only warm corner. Yet I remember plants on the window sills which we were encouraged to look out for. Mr. Charles Dixon was the caretaker and the school was usually warm when we arrived between eight and nine o'clock, and during the day the bigger boys would feed the furnace.

Our drinking water was carried in from a pump across the road. There was an insulated tin fountain with a tap at the bottom. We were taught to make a cup out of a page from a scribbler - still a few years away from paper cups. After the second room was added to the Continuation School, the School Board decided it would be better to have a well on the school property. A lot of us, like myself, had never seen a well-drilling machine, and after it was set up and started its rhythmic pounding, it was a fascinating sight. We checked every day to see how deep they had driven and watched the five or six- inch steel pipe disappear into the ground until the next piece had to be attached. Eventually rock was struck and, for several days, little headway was made. Perseverance broke the rock and, at ninety feet, enough water was coming in that it was judged a good well. One thing was wrong - the water had a yellow tinge. A pump jack and engine were set up and it was decided to pump steadily until the water became clear. The pump ran night and day and the level in the pipe couldn't be lowered and the colour stayed the same. The water was tested and found perfectly safe for drinking so the pumping stopped and we had our well.

The well was on the Continuation School grounds and near it was a flagpole made

of angle iron on a concrete foundation. Memory makes it about twenty to thirty feet tall. Here on the twenty-fourth of May ( or probably the day before as Queen Victoria's birthday was still a holiday and the school was closed along with most everything else) we raised the Union Jack making sure it was right side up and we sang "God Save the King" and "The Maple Leaf Forever". We were being instilled with love and respect for the Empire. When we opened our readers in the early thirties the first thing we saw was a coloured picture of the Union Jack and on the next page, the words to "God Save the King". History consisted almost exclusively of Canadian and British History. Mrs. Snyder could recite the names of the British rulers along with the dates of their reign far back into ancient times. We were instilled with a pride in the Loyalists and I found it rather embarrassing when she would go on about the Stuarts and the land grant and how old the house I lived in might be.

The year before we attempted our examinations to enter the Continuation School, we were prepared by studying the entrance examinations back into the middle nineteen-twenties. We were broadsided by the esteem with which she had held for previous classes some of which contained our brothers and sisters. She despaired of us ever passing out of her classroom. The thing was that these same seniors had been in the school when we started and I had vivid memories of them being berated in the same way. We tried our entrance examinations in the junior room of the Continuation School under a neutral eye. Here we saw the seniors from neighbouring schools who, as it turned out, made up the Grade IX class in the fall. There were a lot of serious faces and I don't believe there were many failures. The next year we were informed by our juniors that Mrs. Snyder declared that she had never seen such a bright class as we had been. There isn't much new about brainwashing.

Though we never saw it, there was a bell in a cupola on the roof of the public school. A rope descended into the school room and at 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m we were summoned to our desks. There was a ten-minute recess mid-morning and mid-afternoon and the bell was rung to remind us that leisure time was gone. In winter we loved to see a heavy fall of new snow. Then we played fox-and-geese. We tromped a circle as big as we could in the school yard and made trails to the centre where a six-foot space was stomped down. This was home and here the fox couldn't get you. We took turns being fox and chased one another around the trails with much screaming and laughter. We built, sometimes, quite good snow forts and chose sides for snowball fights. Just beyond the school property, beside an old rail fence, there was a low spot in the farmer's field. If we had a January thaw, it filled up with water and then froze making a great spot to run and slide and take

the feet out from one another. If it was very cold the dark entry of the school was used for "Puss in the Corner" and "Blind Man's Bluff." Here we discovered the school bully who shall remain nameless. He got away with his mean actions for awhile but was eventually found out by Mrs. Snyder and soundly thrashed. She also encouraged us to gang up on him and thrash him ourselves but her iron hand got the message across and he needed only to be reminded when he got mean again.

We did exercises in the school room every day in very cold weather. We stretched every which way - jumped up and down and around the aisles. In the neighbouring Continuation school we were referred to by the principal as "The Thundering Herd", a book by the well-known author, Zane Grey.

Speaking of books, it was Mrs. Snyder's pride that she instilled in us a love of reading. I remember her one morning, reading a verse from the Bible and when she discovered some new book of poetry, she read verses to us. It took; and many of my school friends became readers and sixty years later are thanking her for her inspiration. The school had a little cupboard, if I remember, about five feet square, fastened to the north wall. It was kept locked until a time on Friday afternoon when it was opened and we could borrow a book to take home for the weekend. Mrs. Snyder kept a notebook as ledger and it was marked as to the date and name of the book taken and the name of the borrower. If it wasn't back on time one received stern notice to get it back.

The reader must not come to the conclusion that our teacher was an ogre. Children always come out with something funny without trying and many's the day our teacher and the whole room would issue gales of laughter. Sometimes it went on and on and I remember her sudden sobering and shouting, "That's enough!". We got back to lessons.

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Eventually, in the late 1930's, I passed from the Public to the Continuation School and began a whole new set of experiences. Mr. George Pierce was the principal and he lived in a rented house about a quarter of a mile west of the school where the Wales Road made one of its right-hand turns. My memory is of a rink that he instigated on the garden plot. This was while I was still in public school and I have no memory of ever skating on it but can remember watching the high-school boys play hockey. These were the young men that in just a few years would be going away to war. Some of them were good athletes and had they been born thirty years later, might have made it into the professional leagues of hockey.

In school we had a field day every fall - or was it in the spring? Anyway we had a broad-jumping pit and standards for high jumping and the pole vault. Our dashes and foot races were held on the asphalt surface of main roads. We were a pretty rag-tag bunch by today's standards but the competition was keen and sometimes bitter. There were four trophies: Junior and Senior boys and Junior and Senior girls. I won a trophy one year but think it was just because I had grown a bit bigger and stronger than my compatriots.

The brothers, Dalton and Milton Vipond, were the best athletes I think the school ever produced. Dalton was killed flying bombers out of England in the early 1940's and Milton met his Maker in the army in Korea in the 1950's. After all this time I think of the terrible sadness brought onto our friends and families.

We had a regulation softball diamond on the Continuation School grounds and it had a good mesh backstop and was well used. It was only a matter of time until old rivalries with Aultsville saw us playing at home one week and on their diamond the next. After I finished school we had a team in the Northern Stormont League and played our home games on this same diamond. One other detail - the Aultsville rivalry was helped along by the old boy-meets-girl thing and a lot of great friendships developed.

We played soccer in a disorganized way but it was fun. Tackle football was not allowed so we played a game called, 'touch'. I agree with this completely knowing some young men who had their knees badly injured. In the early winter, the Continuation School put on a Commencement Exercise. This included choral singing, a display of gymnastics, the presentation of trophies and graduation certificates, and a play. I took part in plays several times - rather unwillingly, but the ham did come out. Our parents and friends turned out to see us, quite filling the chosen church hall to capacity, and I never heard anything but praise for our "acting".

We had a succession of good teachers from grades nine to twelve. Our one unfortunate experience was during the War when we had a Miss Weagant who had positive Nazi leanings. We eventually rebelled and I know I went out of the window while she was out of the room. I reported to my father who was a school trustee that I would not go back. The School Board took the young people's complaints to heart and she was dismissed and replaced in mid-term. The unfortunate thing was that I think yet that she was a good teacher.

It was not yet time for every family to have an automobile and most of us got to school on bicycles. In winter several of my friends, who lived seven or eight miles

from the school, boarded in Wales or with local farm families, going home only on weekends.

"DECEMBER MEETING "SHOW AND TELL"

SOUTH STORMONT SENIORS' SUPPORT CENTRE, INGLESIDE.,  
DECEMBER 10, 2001

SOCIAL TIME 6:00 P.M., POTLUCK DINNER 6:30 P.M.