



## May 2001 Newsletter

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The annual general meeting of the Lost Villages Historical Society will be held on Monday, May 21, 2001 in the Vernon Hill Hall at St. Andrew's/St. Mark's United Church in Long Sault, (Johnson Crescent, -3 streets north of the traffic lights). The meeting will feature the society's annual dinner, hosted by the Fundraising Committee of St. Andrew's/St. Mark's.

The usual social time begins at 6:00 p.m., with dinner at 6:30 p.m. Dinner will consist of ham, beans, scalloped potatoes, salads, dessert and tea/coffee. Cost is \$12.00. We hope that you will circle your calendar and plan to attend. Please call Rita Canough at 537-2388, by May 16, 2001, to reserve your place. Plan to invite a family member, neighbour or friend.

**NOTE: ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS ARE DUE.**

**GUEST SPEAKER:** The guest speaker for our annual dinner will be Cornwall's "Citizen of the Year" for 2000, Mr. Chuck Charlebois. Chuck is no stranger to the Lost Villages, for he was a co-presenter at one of our monthly meetings, a number of years ago. Today, Chuck comes to us with many successes under his belt, -the Waterfront Project, the Renaissance Project, etc. etc. Chuck is one of those people who takes the bull by the horns and gets things done. With his recent award as "Citizen of the Year", we are pleased that he accepted our invitation to attend.

With the first "draft" of the Township of South Stormont's "Waterfront Development Plan" now off the press, Chuck may have some ideas and thoughts for us on South Stormont's waterfront. It is a waterfront which is very near and dear to our members.

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### ANYONE CAN WRITE A COUNTRY SONG, -BY DONALD STUART

As announced at our April meeting, we announce the release of *Anyone Can Write a Country Song*, a collection of poems by Donald Stuart. As a charter member of the Lost Villages Historical Society, we are very proud of Donald's literary accomplishments. Just two years ago, he published *No Road Back*, a *Grown Boy's Stories of Wales*. *Anyone Can Write a Country Song*, a chronicle of the life of a working man, is Donald's first book of poetry. Spanning more than half a century, this collection of poems tells of the complexities of the simple life. Through Donald's poems, we reflect on the wonder of Judy's new-born

foal, the hard rules of nature we are compelled to accept, and the joy of enduring love. Clearly, not just anyone can write a country song. **Anyone Can Write a Country Song** is published by "Old Crone Publishing, Ingleside, Ontario. Besides Donald, we congratulate Rosemary Rutley and Glenda Eden, of "Old Crone Publishing". Our historical society members are busy, and we are proud of them!

**Anyone Can Write a Country Song** will be launched on Friday, May 4, 2001, from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at The Sanctuary Book Store, 217 Pitt Street, Cornwall. Autographed copies of the book will be available. We encourage you to visit The Sanctuary, and support our society's members.

Sympathy is extended to Lost Villages Historical Society members, Leonard, Betty and Cathy Raymond, on the passing of Leonard's sister, Hazel Daye, on Monday, March 5, 2001. Hazel had her roots in Mille Roches, and was an active leader in the C.G.I.T, (Canadian Girls in Training) in Mille Roches and Cornwall. As well, she had a long association with Camp Kagama. We offer condolences to Lillian Poirier and Alice Raymond, cousins to Hazel Daye, and members of the Lost Villages Historical Society.

### **BAKE SALE, TUESDAY, MAY 29, 2001**

As announced in the March and April newsletters, a bake sale will be held on Tuesday, May 29, 2001, at the Bank of Montreal, 159 Pitt Street, Cornwall, commencing at 10:00 a.m. All members and "friends" are encouraged to support this major fundraiser for the society. Baked goods, jams, fudge, etc. etc. are appreciated, and these may be dropped off at the bank by 9:00 a.m. on the morning of the sale. As well, goods may be picked up or delivered by calling Vale Brownell at 537-2531, (Ingleside area), or Jim Brownell at 534-2423, (Long Sault area). Should you be able to assist at this event, please give Rita Canough or Mavis Nixon a call. Your help is appreciated.

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### **CLEAN UP DAY AT THE LOST VILLAGES MUSEUM**

Saturday, May 5, 2001, will be "Clean-Up Day" at the Lost Villages Museum. Volunteers are encouraged to arrive at 9:00 a.m. with buckets, rags, brooms, vacuum cleaners, "Mr. Clean" or the like, Window Cleaner, etc. etc. Our first tour will be in late May, and we have a number of displays to arrange before that time. Your help is appreciated. Also, some levelling of the museum site is required. Should you wish to do some outdoor work, please bring a garden rake and shovel. Remember, many hands make light work.

As mentioned our first group tour is on Monday, May 23, 2001. A group of senior citizens from Brockville, Ontario, will be visiting the museum site, and taking the guided tour of the Lost Villages. President Jim Brownell will be meeting this group at Gedoro's Restaurant in Cornwall, and will travel as far west as Iroquois, Ontario.

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### **BITS AND PIECES**

**Congratulations to Maggie Wheeler on the launch of her first book, A Violent End. This is a must book for all "Lost Villagers", and Maggie has done a superb job at mixing fact with fiction. Woven in this murder-mystery are facts and details from the Hydro and Seaway projects of the 1950s. We are most pleased with Maggie's interest in our society, and her generous donation from the book sales at her launch at the South Stormont Home and Trade Show. Maggie donated 10% of the Saturday afternoon sales to the Lost Villages Historical Society.**

**Thanks you to the members of our society who volunteered time at the Lost Villages booth at the South Stormont Home and Trade Show on Friday, April 27, and Saturday, April 28, 2001. To Jane Craig, Vale Brownell, Reg & Doris Donnelly, Lenora Salmon, Peggy Barkley and Rita Canough. The society's booth captured "second" place at the show, with Shannon's Creations taking first, and Nightingale House Bed and Breakfast placing third. Jim Brownell prepared the exhibit. Besides profiling our society to the many patron of the show, we also made a profit of \$180.00 during the show. This was a very soft sell, as we were more interested in promoting our summer "Bus Tours". We congratulate the South Stormont Chamber of Commerce; Leslie O'Gorman, chair of the Home and Trade Show; and the organizing committee, on a job "Well Done".**

**Thank you to Larry Brownell and Ross Gellately for kindly moving the Dickinson's Landing and Farran's Point pews to a new storage location. We thank Larry for storing them for us for many months, and we look forward to the day when a permanent move can be made to the museum site. We thank John Chase, Long Sault, for providing storage space for them.**

**Thank you to Claude Dignard, Optician, for his kind donation of two display cases. Having closed his store on Pitt Street, Cornwall, he provided the cases to our society, free of charge. As well, we thank Ross Gellately for his wood-working skills on the cases. They look excellent. These cases were used at the Home and Trade Show in order to display artifacts from the six Lost Villages, and the Long Sault Rapids.**

**A second wedding at the "Sandtown Church" at the Lost Villages Museum has been booked for Saturday, August 25, 2001. Pam Leroux and Scott Burke will be married on that date. Our church has certainly established a profile in the community, and its use will help to generate some financial dollars for the society.**

**We thank the South Stormont resident who has agreed to contribute \$20,000.00, anonymously, toward the move of the Forbes Library to the museum site. Along with the other contributions to date, (\$30,000.00), let's hope that this will show the "Heritage Challenge Fund", a program of the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Tourism and the Ontario Heritage Foundation", that the community is committed to the project. .**

**Jim Brownell was the guest speaker at "Rural Ladies Day", Glengarry County, held at the Glengarry Sport's Palace in Alexandria on Tuesday, April 10, 2001. Over 250 Glengarry ladies listened to the "Lost Villages" story, and viewed the displays which were assembled.**

**Many fine contacts were made, and we should have many Glengarry visitors at the museum this summer. On Saturday, April 21, 2001, Jim also made a presentation at the**

**Men's Breakfast at Christ Anglican Church in Long Sault. This was the second presentation to this group, and they were most interest in our activities, and the progress being made at the museum site.**

**Congratulations to Sharon Johns, Maxville, Ontario, on winning our society's booth prize at the South Stormont Home and Trade Show. Mrs. Johns won a pass for two for the summer "Bus Tour of the Lost Villages". Our congratulations to Mrs. Johns. As well, our society donated a similar prize to the Chamber of Commerce prize list. This was won by Debbie Smith of Long Sault. Congratulations Debbie Smith.**

**A poster has been printed on the back of this newsletter, advertising our summer bus tours. The society would appreciate your help in posting this poster around the community, -a bulletin board at your supermarket, corner store, etc. This is a major fundraiser for our society, and your help is appreciated. We would encourage you to promote these tours in any way. Should you know of a group wishing to take part, please let them know the details. Most details are provided on the poster. When at Rothwell-Osnabruck School in Ingleside, stop by our society's display in the front hall. The school did a superb job with the display cases. This school will soon be studying the "Lost Villages", in their "big" study unit. Jim Brownell will escort the grade seven class on a bus tour on Tuesday, May 8, 2001.**

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## **THE SHARP ENDERS & BLACK GANGS & COOKS OF THE PRE-SEAWAY CANAL BOATS**

**The following is the first of a two-part literary presentation of "Life on the River" by Alan Rafuse, member of the Lost Villages Historical Society: This first part will focus on the canal boats of the St. Lawrence River, and the second part, presented next month, will focus on the "sights" and "sites" along the St. Lawrence River, in the area of the Lost Villages. We thank Alan for his time and talent in recording the experiences of life on the canal boats.**

**Firstly, a personal opinion:**

**As life goes along, we all graduate with different lines of work and modes of living. Working most of one's life in a one-place atmosphere and the same people, everyday sort of thing becomes almost a religion of sorts.**

**Working on a ship, in a lot of ways, expands one's basic thinking into a more broadened picture of life and the world. That is why a seaman spends a lot of time gazing at the wonders of our universe, instead of the person next to him.**

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**Personally, I feel very privileged and gratified to have worked 17 years of my younger life on ships. Those 17 years spanned all of the St. Lawrence and Great Lakes canals, the Gulf of St. Lawrence, Upper Great Lakes and the Canadian West Coast.**

**For all intents and purposes, we'll stick to the canals and canal boats that traversed the canals and the St. Lawrence River between Cornwall and Prescott grain elevator, mostly the area of the "Lost Villages".**

**By the time I had started working the ships, (summer of 1952, while attending C.C.V.S.), the St. Lawrence Canal systems had become a very smooth operation. It took approximately 150 years to get to that point and has been fairly well documented.**

**Except for a handful of composite-hulled ships, (wood on steel framing), most of the ships were made of rivetted steel plating, and mostly coal-fired steam-reciprocating engines. Diesel and oil-fired engines had started to make their mark. For now, we'll talk about the coal-fired jobs, as they were predominant.**

**There were three distinct crews (categories) aboard these very popular and versatile ships. They were the forward deck crew (sharp enders), the engine room and fire-hold crew (black gang), and the galley (kitchen and cook crew).**

**The sharp-enders were named as such because they were mainly housed on or near the bow, the sharp or pointed end of the ship. That section of the crew usually included: one captain, -sometimes a river pilot; three deck or bridge officers (mates, licensed); three wheelmen (helmsmen); three watchmen (deck shiftmen); four to six deck hands (depending on type of trade); and occasionally one boson, -sometimes with self loading and unloading deck booms and extra gear.**

**The engine room, (black gang) included: one first-class licensed engineer; one second-class; one third-class, (all shift work); three oilers; three firemen; and one coal passer (occasionally).**

**The galley staff included: one chief cook (male or female); one second cook (male or female); one porter (mess person) (male or female); one night cook (short-order work) occasionally. The ship normally had a crew of 26.**

**The captain of these Canadian-owned canalers was quite often a local person or a man who had gained his experience by coming up through the system, and had travelled the canal and river system extensively. The chain to get there was: deckhand (ordinary seaman); watchman (standing shift deck watch); wheelman (steering the ship, plus deck duties while tied up or loading and unloading); third mate (shift deck and bridge officer); second mate (shift deck and bridge officer); and chief mate/first deck officer and bridge, qualified to take charge in any event the captain became unable.**

**It was normal practice to pick up a river-pilot at Clayton, New York, or Kingston (east-bound or downbound with the current); or at Lachine (west-bound or up-bound against the current). The pilot usually did the river sections of the system, while the captain handled the canals and locks. Legally, the pilot is only in an advisory capacity, whereas the captain is responsible 24 hours around the clock. It is his ship! A lot of pilots were older men and periodically they would doze off or be suffering from too much alcohol consumption or long hours! There were also some captains suffering from the same**

dilemma. If the ship was slated to load or unload within that area, then a pilot would be notified to travel to that particular spot, however he could get there. Most captains were qualified to run the rivers in case the pilot was unable or there wasn't one available. Otherwise, the ship stayed put at a tie-up wall, until one was available.

Deck hand chores were numerous, and staying at that position for any length of time, there were many experiences gained. They were involved in just about everything about the workings of the ship, except the engine-room, boiler-room and galley, and on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Being the ships were canalers, the deck hands were always about when tying up outside of locks, in the locks, harbour docks and anything to do with tying-up or letting go. On approaching a dock, at least two deck hands were swung ashore (or on a floating dock) on a landing boom, which was a 30-foot long, horizontal boom (on either side of the ship) fitted with a knotted rope dangling to the water surface, adjusted for different heights of load level. Once on shore, he was thrown a heaving line tied with a bow-line knot to a mooring cable, and pulled ashore as it was fed out. Eventually, four cables were pulled ashore, and the eye of the cable placed over a bollard ashore (sometimes called a nigger-head). Hence, the cables were gradually tightened by a steam mooring winch aboard ship and the ship held in place. In a place with a strong current or a lengthy stay, two extra lines were cast out, one on the extreme bow and stern. On letting go the lines, the line was slackened aboard ship, the eye lifted off the bollard and reeled in by the steam winch. The heaving line that was attached to the cable was usually untied as soon as the cable was in place, but periodically, if the ship was just shifting ahead, the heaving lines were left intact, but away from the back of the bollard to prevent being cut off when the cable came up tight.

There were areas in the canal system where there was a fair amount of walking and running for the deck hands. For instance, if there was a back-log of traffic above Lock 20, at Ernie's Hotel (Maple Grove), the deck hands would be swung off at the Swing Bridge at Mille Roches, and walk the distance to the guard-gate above Lock 20, usually a fast walk or run to meet the ship there, -about a mile. Another place was Farran's Point Lock, west-bound. There was a long, curved tie-up wall north-east of the lock. The wall was so long and curved to counteract a very strong eddy in the river that pushed the ship along, making it very hard to get stopped. On approaching the wall, with engines full-speed astern, and two mooring cables trying to check the speed down, it was always a very testy spot for all concerned. Light ship (no load) was best, but loaded with pulp-wood or iron-ore or the like, the extra weight carried her forward much longer and farther. There were many full length cables left on that wall. When 200' of one-inch cable gets stretched out to its length on a dock, with something tugging on the other end, it is impossible for one young man or boy to lift it off the bollard. Consequently, it parts at the winch, and is mostly left behind at the cost of the company. I imagine many of the local farmers had their eyes on that.

Deck hands were also used physically to keep the ship tidy, clean and ship-shape, under the instructions that could be handed down from the captain to the deck or bridge officer on watch, but most of those instructions came from the First mate (officer), and divvied out down the line to each officer as they stood their watch. Also, the orders from the officer on

watch went to the wheelsman and watchman.

While in the canal system, the deck hands usually spent their time handling lines. I swear that a few trips running from the Prescott grain elevator to Montreal, that I walked most of the distance of the canal banks.

While away from the canals for a few nights rest, the days were spent painting; chipping paint and rust; "sougi- ing", (scrubbing with a mixture of strong detergents, including a percentage of lye); hosing the decks; mending frayed lines like splicing cable or rope; mending cargo-hatch tarpaulins; water-proofing tarps with codfish oil; stripping varnished doors and re-doing; cleaning cargo-holds for the next load; repairing bilge-plank damage by replacing huge wooden planks; caulking with okum and cement, -washing over to seal tiny holes and to keep from contaminating the grain; drain and cement-wash the internals of the fresh-water tanks for freshness; periodically checking the life-boats and gear (life-rafts, if any); transferring hard coal from the life-boat deck to the cook's stove; and carrying supplies aboard at different ports. At Locks 15 and 17, Cornwall East Side Dairy supplied most of the ships with milk, butter, eggs, chocolate milk, buttermilk, whipping cream and cream.

Approaching a grain elevator to load grain, the bottom of the cargo-holds had to be swept dry of moisture by using grain dust which was carried on the ship in a good supply of burlap bags. That job being done, a Federal Government grain inspector would give the OK or not. The not usually came when the inspector didn't get his tip from the captain, whether it be dollars or liquid. I didn't see that happen at Prescott, but at the larger ports, it was a common practice.

As the hatches were getting filled to the brim at Prescott, one hatch at a time was taken care of by the deck hands, watchmen and sometimes wheelsmen. The grain was levelled off by shovel and broom. The hatch-planks were slung on, then the tarpaulins were stretched out evenly. The tarps were folded properly at the four corners (meaning with the wind so the waves coming over would not catch the corners and undo them. The edges of the tarps were folded down so as to fit into L-shaped cleets and then a section of flat steel bar placed in the cleets against the tarp and made permanent by pounding in wooden wedges. The number of wedges went quite often with the weather forecast. Most of the canal boats had five or six hatches, -six with no raised deck aft, five with a raised deck, the fifth hatch being a double one. On top of each hatch and tarp were V-shaped lengths of steel which travelled athwartships across the hatch, and held down by butterfly or wing-nuts for further insurance. They were called windy-bars in case the wind happened to get under the tarp, all would not be lost. They also helped to hold the hatch-planks in place in case the ship started working and pounding in a heavy sea.

If there was any grain spillage on deck, some of it was shovelled into the hatches, but if there wasn't any room left, some of the grain was bagged and dropped off at different locks throughout the system for whoever could use it. On leaving Prescott elevator, the remainder of the grain and dust was hosed over the side, usually before the ship got to the Cardinal lock.

**If the ship needed fuel (coal), there was a coal dock west of Cardinal lock for that purpose.**

**If any of the crew needed a few beers between Prescott and Montreal, there were numerous watering holes along the way. Ernie's Hotel at Lock 20 (Maple Grove), numerous places at Cornwall, Coteau Landing, Cascades and a tavern at Lachine. Once in Montreal harbour, you took your pick. Legally, I guess you would say, booze was not allowed aboard ships, but, from personal experience, I found there was more or less a "rule of thumb". If the captain and the chief drank, the crew drank. If the opposite was the case, then be careful for your job.**

**The deck hands were always up and about through the whole system, tying up and letting go at all the locks and tie-up walls, outside the locks while waiting your turn to pass through. There are areas in the system to have a snooze here and there. Cardinal Lock to Dickinson's Landing, Dickinson's Landing to the swing bridge at Mille Roches, Lake St. Francis, Coteau Landing to Lock 4 in the Soulange Canal, Lake St. Louis, and that was it. Up until 1953, there was no overtime paid, but that particular year, or 1954, Hal C. Banks put a stop to that notion. That was the first strike pointed at rising above a second-class citizen aboard ship.**

**After leaving Prescott grain elevator, there were numerous destinations where the ship could be designated to unload. There were small, private grain elevators within the Lachine Canal, four large elevators in Montreal Harbour, and then Sorel, Three Rivers or Quebec City Harbour. (TO BE CONTINUED)**

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