

THE CABOOSE



NEWSLETTER OF THE CUMBERLAND TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY (CTHS)

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July 2009

President's message (by Dorothy-Jane Smith)

I am looking forward to seeing many of you at our next meeting on September 2nd when we will hear Brian Grimsey speak on Ottawa River Heritage. And... we need volunteers! Our most pressing need, if The Caboose is to continue past this year, is someone interested in becoming newsletter editor but we also need new directors. In the meantime, we have completed another successful project in the background research we did for the Museum's summer exhibit on the Rockland Mills. We also wish to congratulate Glenn Charron and his team at the museum for winning the Ontario Historical Society's Thomas K. Cooper Living History Award. We were proud to propose them for their innovative problem solving in creating the Interim Preservation Centre. So until September, take time and enjoy your gardens and friends! Thanks to outgoing director Bob Kendall for his dedication and hard work. Welcome to Ross Bradley for coming 'on board' as a new director.

Our Society

The Cumberland Township Historical Society (CTHS) was founded in 1986. We are a non-profit, volunteer and community-based organization whose goal is to preserve Cumberland Township history.

Our newsletter

The Caboose is published six times each year by the Cumberland Township Historical Society.

Our Executive

- Dorothy-Jane Smith, President
- Jean-François Beaulieu, Vice President
- Randall Ash, Past President, Newsletter production
- Jeannie Smith, Director, Newsletter Editor
- Bill Woodruff, Treasurer
- Verna Cotton, Director
- Ross Bradley, Director
- Dan Brazeau, Website

Our address and local history room

Cumberland Branch
Ottawa Public Library
Local History Room
1599 Tenth Line Road
Ottawa, ON K1E 3E8

Our World Wide Web address

www.cths.ca



Cumberland Township Pioneers



Robert MacEachern and his sisters



Amy Scharff, Jack MacMillan, Thomas McWilliams, Almira Scharff

Next meeting of the CTHS

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday, September 2nd in the boardroom of the Ottawa Regional Police Station, Tenth Line Road and St. Joseph Blvd. Plan to arrive at **6:30 pm** as the meeting will begin at **6:45 pm**. Brian Grimsey will speak about the Ottawa River Heritage project. Be sure to bring a friend along. Light refreshments, as always, will be served.

Society calendar

For more information on these and other upcoming 2009/10 events, please contact a member of the executive committee or visit our website at www.cths.ca.



Check for events at the Cumberland Museum: www.Ottawa.ca/residents/heritage/museums/Cumberland

CTHS newsletter

The electronic version of the CTHS newsletter "The Caboose" is now archived in Library and Archives Canada's Electronic Collection, under public access. The URL of the archived copy of this publication is the following: <http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/201/300/caboose/index.html>

A preliminary bibliographic record has also been created in Amicus Web, Library and Archives Canada's online catalogue which may be accessed through the following link: <http://amicus.collectionscanada.ca/aaweb/aalogine.htm>

New book in the CTHS room

Grant The People, The Settlement, The Story by Alexandra D. de Quimper

Spend an afternoon in the history room to check out other interesting books and do some research on family histories.

Thanks

Thank you to retired director **Bob Kendall** for editing previous issues of The Caboose. **Michael McNeely**, a student at Queen's University, has kindly volunteered to edit the newsletter. Thanks to **Ross Bradley** for becoming a new director on the CTHS executive.

Notes of interest on Archibald Petrie

contributed by Dorothy Jane Smith

From the 1854 Minute Books of the Ottawa Horticultural Society reporting on their first

Annual Show held at the West Ward Market on Friday, September 8, 1854:

*Capt. A. Petrie 15 shillings for 1st prize for the Best ten varieties of apples
Value of prize 15 shillings*

Ottawa Citizen –report on the 3rd Annual Show printed on September 15, 1856:

"Major Petrie showed 12 varieties of apples all of first qualities, raised in Cumberland." He won first prize again for this collection.

from the Ottawa Horticultural Website
<http://www.ottawahort.org/history.htm>
Jeff Blackadar webmaster and society archivist

W.C. Edwards Mills exhibit at the Cumberland Heritage Village Museum

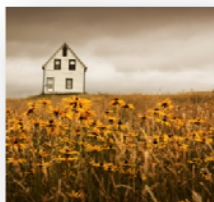
The CTHS has worked with Glenn Charron, Cumberland Museum curator to produce a detailed exhibit of the W.C. Edwards Mills at Rockland. Take time to learn about this interesting local history. You can also visit McKeen's Store, an added attraction which may prove interesting because of its quaint character!

W.C. Edwards Mills at Rockland
contributed by Gilbert Hamelin



Climate and rural planning... nothing has changed!

The following excerpts are from the letters of James McRae, pioneer settler of Bearbrook, to his brothers Alexander, and John. Copies of his correspondence



have been given to the CTHS by Bob McNarry. They have been edited for more fluent reading.

Bearbrook 29th October 1838

...The climate of this place seems too cold for farming this few years past

but the weather is on the change now for the better...

Bearbrook Cumberland 7th May 1849

...I had very miserable crop last season I may say I had no wheat at all and my other things were not the best Still I will be able to push through this season but we have very poor appearance of better coming We had very little snow last winter and went away early but continues frost every night. There's no growth of any thing and hay was very scarce last Winter but cattle are able to maintain themselves in the bush now...

Bearbrook Cumberland 6th April 1851

...I have been out of all employment this winter and even doing very little at home. Both my sons are in bed with the measles. They are recovering. It is over all this County (Russell). We have remarkable winter, very cold and very warm, always changing, snow from three to four feet deep. The spring is on, very warm. The snow is all off in the clearing and the ice broke on the Brook ...

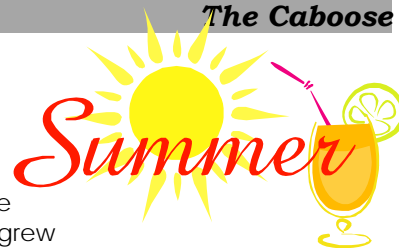
Bearbrook Cumberland 25th October 1851

...I wrote to you last spring that we had fine warm weather which continued until near the end of April and then turned cold and wet which followed on until the first of September. We had it extraordinary hot then for three weeks and tolerably good until this day which is snowing hard, about four inches on the ground. I am as usual badly off for hay. I have a good quantity laying down and some not made yet. There is a number of men making timber this winter

which will make some money to pass among us ...My crops are tolerably good this season but my potatoes and turnips. I sowed my turnips 4 times but had



none. My potatoes are hardly worth gathering, they are small and bad but no rot. They were blighted and never grew more...



Bearbrook Cumberland 5th September 1853

...We had a very wet spring and very dry summer. We had some frost on the 25 August but not bad. I have very fine crops this season, the best hereabouts. There is a railroad to be made between Montreal and Bytown but they cannot agree upon the route. I see no advantage it can be to the poor but only rise and increase our taxes ...Our county (Russell) extended to within a mile of Bytown but they took two Townships from us and placed them to Bytown which leaves our county to be the poorest in Canada West ...we have exceedingly hot weather this while past. My daughter is very unwell and the weather is not easy to bear ...

Bearbrook Cumberland 31st January 1854

...You will see by the map the Townships our county are very poor. They took two of the best Townships from us and placed them to Carleton...My sons are out after wolves. They killed one last week. They shot at him at night but could not trace him, being too dark, but they started the next morning and got his track and found him and fired three shots at him before they took him. It is an odd one. It looks like a dog. They must have come from the south. The hair is middlen fine. Everyone calls it a dog first and when they examine the skin they say they do not know what animal it is. They showed it to one magistrate. He would not pass it but owned he never saw an animal like it before so it's a chance whither they get the bounty or not...

Bearbrook Cumberland 13th February 1854

...I am nearly well. I am only troubled with the cough now and mostly all old people are troubled the same way. All my family had a turn of the cold but they are all better. We had a remarkable cold weather since the last of December with very sudden change but man is said to be created fit to live on any part of the Terraqueous Globe. He is admirably formed for particular attachments and duties. There is a peculiar and strong propensity in his nature to be affected with sentiments and dispositions of others. Men, like certain musical instruments, are set to each other so that the vibrations or notes excited in one raise correspondent notes in others. The impulses of pleasure or pain, joy or sorrow, made on one mind are by an instantaneous sympathy communicated to



all. There is something allotted to man that we cannot account for. For all our schemes and designs proves sometimes the reverse of what we planned and expected to enjoy.

Raefield Cumberland 29th October 1858

...Your spring weather and ours seems a real copy and I may add the summer from the middle of July we had the wettest time ever remembered. The crops are good in appearance but not in quality...I had always had to stack my hay until last year. I have plenty room this year, I cannot fill my barn. The frost kept longer off this year than any since I came to Canada. The first frost to do harm was on the 23rd September which is four days later than any year since I came here. I once had all my crops froze on the 12 of August and the next year on the 14th of August, the next on 19 August and the fourth year 28th August. The four years successive which kept me poor for years after...

Raefield Cumberland 10th April 1861

...I was in Bytown which is now called Ottawa. The government buildings are going on. They are to be the best in Canada. Our taxes are getting up every year and the Provinces are greatly in debt. The works may do good to the province but very little good to individuals. I paid for last years taxes for a bush lot in the Township of Cambridge \$9.75. I sold it for 600 dollars at 4 years credit. I could have got 200 dollars more three weeks after. I did not think the fellow was for purchasing it. He was a young lad and his father was to pay for it (and so he jewed me)...I have not been happy since my wife died. My daughter seems more kinder but I am afraid that's for cake and pudding. Women are very quirky...I think that we will have a railroad from Montreal to Ottawa. It had been proposed long ago but got a branch from Prescott which is only fifty miles and it does not pay. I do not think any in Canada pays but they are not managed as they should be. We had soft weather in February and very stormy in March and cold yet, only the heat of the sun and hard frost at night. They have only commenced making sugar. Our spring will be



late but it generally comes very warm when late. Everything grows well, grass is particular. We had good hay last year but miserable hay in Lower Canada. We send down to them and sell as dear so there is nothing but changes in the world. We are troubled with Canadians. They will soon carry the vote over us in our counsels and then we will be ruled by them. They are very good when under but the moment they become master they are not easy to put up with...



Raefield Bearbrook 16th June 1862

...We are talking of new roads here but we are very heavy in debt already and pay not the good for the Province...I have had very warm days, dry and cold nights with frost last night, killed all the tender weeds, corn and pumpkins and even nettles. What we shall do next year I do not know but we are well enough for this year. Our stores are layed by for the year but the next may cost. Some thought but God is merciful, his will be done. It was the 9th of May before we got a plough in the ground being so wet and even then the water came over the top of the plough at every hole and before the 20th got so dry that we could not plough without strong heavy horse which made us very late before we got done say the 12th of June...the floods were never so high as this year and yet the timber is left in the small creeks. Great bridges were carried away. It has done a great deal of damage, saw mills, grist mills and even houses were gutted and only the walls left.

Raefield Bearbrook 1st July 1865

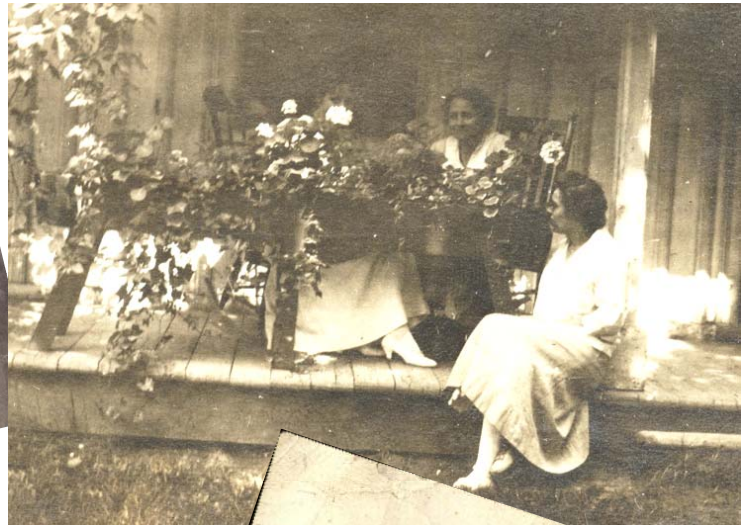
...I am losing my memory which is leaving fast, losing the use of my legs. I still keep my health which is a great mercy. We have got finished our labour and our road work and the most of our hoeing. We never had such good appearance as we have got just now. We escaped a heavy shower of hailstones which left considerable snow on the ground. We thought it would be frost after then it got very cold but it got warm afterwards. My sons and I were at the Ottawa River at an election for and against tavern keeping. We voted against them. There were above sixty against and twenty for taverns. How they settle up I do not know. There are a great many smugglers at present. We had very fine weather since the first of February and fine appearance on the ground if the weather proves good. Canada will be able to ship a good deal of grain this year, but a great deal depends upon the weather.



Long Hot Summers



Ferguson Family on the Empress steamer, 1906



Stella Knox Cameron and two friends on the porch attached to the Cameron Store, 1909 or 1910.



Louisa Taylor Coburn, 1912



Millie Cameron Smith, 1919



Keith MacEachern, 1930s



Claudette Hamelin 1953 Diane
Diane Beausejour Hamelin, 1950s



Diane Beausejour Hamelin with her mother Irene Paquette Beausejour by Napoleon Paquette's ferry.

Memo Diane Hamelin 1953

HAROLD BORDEN WYMAN - June 22, 1912 - Mar 12, 1999

by Bonnie Sastrri

My father was born in 1912 in Cumberland Ontario, just 2 months after the Titanic sunk. Sir Robert Borden was the eighth Prime Minister of Canada and hence Dad's middle name, Borden. His earliest memories were of running along a dirt road, dragging a stick and watching the clouds of dust billow along behind him. Automobiles were a rarity in Cumberland. Airplanes had scarcely begun. There was no electricity. Farms were farmed with horsepower, kerosene light, wood, river ice, unremitting manual labour, resourcefulness and ingenuity. The necessity to work long hours in an unceasing manner was sternly encouraged and reinforced and from this my father sprung a life-long reputation as an exceptionally hard worker.

By the age of five, he was turning the handle on a fanning mill. By the age of seven, he was forking down hay. He often said that he was doing a grown man's work at the age of fifteen, up at the crack of dawn, toiling all day, and a few years later, going to every available dance at night and playing hockey in the winter, the fastest skater on the Navan team. He wasn't a big man, but he had a big man's hands, the hands of one who has guided a horse-drawn plough, and planted, and hand-milked cows and cut down trees.

Many young men of the day went to Quebec to work in the woods, the quota being 100 logs per man to cut every day. And there were no chain saws in those days. Everything was by hand, with ax and cross-cut saw. He had some perilous escapes, jumping on and dislodging logs in the river, sometimes falling into the water and once having the tip of a tree fall on him. It was also here in the lumber camps that he learned to cook in quantity, for a large group of people. Much, much later in life, from memory, he painstakingly reconstructed, right

to scale, a model of a shanty-man driving a horse sled heaped high with logs through the snowy woods.

It was in the thirties when he met my Mother, Maude Brereton. The Brereton home was well known in the village of Navan for its sense of fun, family and music. The Brereton sisters could sing, and he could sing and play the guitar. Dad became one of the regulars, Mom caught his eye, and after 59 years of marriage, they were still together.

In the late thirties, word got around that work was available in Northern Ontario. He drove on unpaved roads to seek employment in the gold mines of the Porcupine Camp and was hired at the Preston East Dome Gold Mine in the Assay Office, where he first acquired a life-long admiration for, and interest in, chemistry. But with the early forties there was war, and Dad, along with his brother-in-law, Hamilton Brereton, enlisted. He completed his basic training at Toronto, Barriefield and Petawawa, and was assigned to the Royal Canadian Artillery. He was sent by boat [The Lady Rodney] to Goose Bay

Labrador to work on radar, something only being developed at that time and made very urgent by the war. From there, he was posted to Halifax where he worked in the embarkation transit office, handling



Harold Wyman, son of Almira Scharff McWilliams and Arthur Wyman

Arthur James Wyman as a youth, born Aug. 10, 1891 – died Dec. 7, 1968. His niece, Greta Wyman Preston, thought he might have been 19 or 20 in this photo, so the picture dates from around 1910 or 1911. He married Almira Scharff McWilliams on March 22, 1911.



unaccompanied baggage from the war in Europe. He could have made the decision at this time to become a career soldier, for the army was reluctant to let him go. They knew a good man when they saw one, but finally he was released and returned to the North – back to his wife and young daughter and fire assaying at the Preston East Dome.

Fire assaying is a method to determine the gold content of ores. This involves a process in which lead is vaporized. Occupational safety was not as developed as it is today. There were no fume hoods and Dad lost all his teeth from lead poisoning.



Arthur James Wyman, 67 years old in this photo.

After seventeen years at the Preston and seeking better opportunities, he went down “south” to Elliot Lake in 1957 to work at the Stanleigh Uranium Mine as a laboratory technician, performing various types of analyses associated with the production of uranium.

For his daughters, it was an exciting time, living in a modern frontier town in the Algoma forest. Everyone and everything was new: the people, the schools, the town. It was easy to make friends. But the old familiar things were there and ever present: barbering, constant improvements and renovations to the house, discipline, Dad checking our report cards – always first zeroing in on the grade for conduct.

International uranium contracts were not renewed in 1960, and uranium mines were closing one by one in Elliot Lake. Word had it that there was work in Brockville – at Brockville Chemicals, as it was known then.

Dad’s qualifications and background (he was by now a senior laboratory technician) landed him a job at Brockville Chemicals, where he remained until retirement. These years saw many things: the family happily installed in Brockville, two daughters grow up, complete their education, and secure good jobs. Dad was too peppy and vital to see any “reclining”

years. The urge to work hard was deeply ingrained. He remained busy almost to the very end: barbering, gardening, ferrying cars.

My great grandmother, Almira Scharff McWilliams Wyman, went out to work in the fields too soon after my father’s birth and died tragically (probably hemorrhaged to death) when he was only three months old. Her first husband, Thomas McWilliams died in 1909 and she married Arthur Wyman in 1911. Their farm was located on the present site of Laidlaw in Cumberland. (See *The Caboose Jan. 2009 pg 3 to learn more about Ernie Brereton and Eva Burns.*)



Almira Scharff in her wedding dress for her marriage to Thomas McWilliams Jan. 2, 1895.



Thomas McWilliams, June 5, 1862-Dec. 31, 1909 and his wife Almira Scharff Jan. 14, 1874-Sept. 1, 1912.

Bonnie Sastri notes, “The baby Ira is Willard McWilliams’s father. Ira had the dairy farm in Navan established by his father’s siblings at 3782 Trim Road. The three little girls (Mary, Eva and Claire) all went on to live in Ottawa. Almira Scharff McWilliams Wyman went out to work in the fields too soon after my father’s birth and

died tragically (probably hemorrhaged to death) when my dad was only three months old. Their farm was

located on the present site of Laidlaw in Cumberland.”



What's happening at the Museum?



Margot Edwards Ledoux, Angus Wilson and Emmanuel Doucet at the opening of the W C Edwards Mills exhibit



The Russell K. Cooper Living History Site Award, awarded to a living history museum showing excellence in programming, ingenious problem solving, or site development, was awarded to **Cumberland Heritage Village Museum**.



Founded in 1888, The Ontario Historical Society (OHS) is a non-profit corporation and registered charity dedicated to increasing an appreciation of Ontario's history and preserving its heritage for people of all ages and cultural backgrounds.

In 1967, the OHS established an Awards Program to honour individuals and organizations who have contributed significantly to the preservation and promotion of Ontario's heritage.

Left to right: Dr. Brad Rudachyk, Second Vice President, Ontario Historical Society (OHS); Linda Kelly, Director, OHS; Ms. Rowena Cooper, wife of Russell K. Cooper (deceased); Glenn Charron, Curator of Collections, City of Ottawa; Dr. John Sabeau, Chair, OHS Honours and Awards Committee

Photo Credit: The Ontario Historical Society

