

# THE CABOOSE

Newsletter of the Cumberland Township Historical Society (CTHS)



ISSN 1203-147X

Volume XXIV Number 2

Fall 2016

## 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 four times each year by the Cumberland Township Historical Society.*

## Our Executive

*Gérard Boyer, President  
Jean-François Beaulieu, Past President  
Tom McNeely, Vice-President  
Gilles Chartrand, Treasurer  
Verna Cotton, Director  
Ross Bradley, Director  
Ivan Tanner, Director  
Karly Ali, 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](http://www.cths.ca)*



## President's Message, December 2016

Well it seems our summer issue of The Caboose went reasonably well. I wish to thank my sister Marguerite Boyer and Marguerite's husband, David Shanahan, for taking over the setting up and printing of The Caboose through their company The North Grenville Times. I also wish to thank my sister Christine for helping them out. We missed a few people in our last mail-out so please let us know if you are aware of any other misses. For those receiving The Caboose by e-mail, this will resume with this issue. If more of you wish to receive your copy by e-mail, just e-mail us at [cths@cths.ca](mailto:cths@cths.ca). We also wish to thank Tom McNeely, Gilles Chartrand and Jean-Yves Pelletier for their presence at the launching of Cumberland Township's heritage history book Glimpses of Cumberland Township. Thanks to Dorothy Smith for her presentation World War I Through Local Soldiers' Eyes. We've included a summary in this edition.

Finally, Merry Christmas, Happy New Year and Best Wishes for the Holiday Season from all of us on the CTHS executive.

*Gérard Boyer*

## Navan Wilsons & Coxes

*Submitted by Gérard Boyer*

While at the Navan Fair last August, I conferred with Ross Bradley about the two first families of Navan, Michael O'Meara and Ralph Wilson. I had just realized where those two families had settled, facing each other on either side of Colonial Road just east of today's Frank Kenny Drive. I mentioned the location of a graveyard on what was originally the Ralph Wilson property.

Ross told me the tragic story of the Wilson family. The Wilsons donated land for the first Presbyterian (now part of the United Church) church in the area. While hauling out logs for the construction of that church, Ralph was killed by accident.

I didn't follow up any more on this family until I read an e-mail on

the Cumberland Township Historical Society website from a Cox descendant who was looking for information about William Cox, who had settled in Navan and, according to her, was a brother to John Cox. I remembered vaguely that we had done some work on John Cox about a year ago in the Caboose, but I hadn't backtracked to check.

A quick search for William Cox revealed a William Cocks in the 1861 Census of Canada. He was a labourer, Irish, Church of England and 24 years old, according to the census. He was working for Jessie Wilson, a widow, whose neighbour was Michael O'Meara. Ross Bradley's story about the tragic Wilson accident seemed to tie in with this search for William Cox.

Most of our readers know by now that there is a small group of

researchers working on the early history of Cumberland Township. There are three Wilson families who settled by 1840, and Ralph Wilson's history had been the most difficult to discover. We are not even sure if any of these three Wilson families are related. The other two are John Wilson, whose history seems to be more related to Cumberland village history, and Thomas Wilson whom we have linked to the Bearbrook settlement.

So here is a brief account of the Wilson and Cox histories with their family trees attached. We hope that some of our readers can help us complete their stories.

Ralph Wilson began paying taxes on lot 10, Concession 7 in 1839.

*continued on page 2*

## Next General Meeting

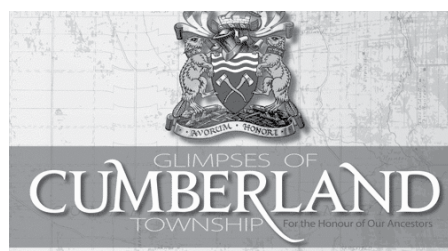
Wednesday, January 4, 7:00 p.m.  
in the Lori Nash room of the  
Ray Friel  
Library, 1599 Tenth Line Rd.  
Orléans,  
Ontario. Gérard Boyer will  
describe  
The Morin descendants'  
genealogical trip  
To France this past summer

## Glimpses of Cumberland Township

For the Honour Of Our Ancestors

\$30.00

Available at the Black  
Walnut Bakery and Café  
in Cumberland, Bradley's  
Store in Navan,  
Péladeau's store in Vars  
and the Rockland  
Museum.



*continued from front page*

He married Jessie McLeod from Hawkesbury West on August 7, 1840. The ceremony was held in Hawkesbury. The Wilsons increased their cultivated acreage from 9 to 80 acres between 1840 and 1848 and added another 200 acre lot to their property in 1847 (lot 9, Concession 7). Ralph Wilson was not the dominating settler of the area, but he was definitely the top farmer. Ralph Wilson died April 16, 1853, according to the tombstone inscription in Dale's cemetery, Cumberland, Ontario. This would have been the tragic accident referred to above.

This brings us to the 1861 census, where we find his widow, Jessie Wilson, still running the farm. No children are listed so we are not aware if they had any. However three young men and one young woman are listed on the property, none of them family members:

William Cocks, labourer, Irish, Church of England, 24 years old

Welsly Harison, labourer, born in Canada West, Church of England, 17 years old

Peare Seyou (probably French-Canadian), labourer, born in Canada West, Roman Catholic, 20 yrs old

Sarah Doris, no occupation, Irish, Free Church, 16 years old

So this brings us to William Cox, the first labourer mentioned. The 1901 census indicates that he came to Canada in 1854. Did Jessie Wilson

hire him to help with the farm after her husband died? We don't know. Before continuing with William Cox's story, let us finish Jessie Wilson's. We find her living with Mary Kellie in Hawkesbury West in the 1871 census. Perhaps Mary was her sister – further research would be required. And then Jessie passed away on March 9, 1873 and was buried next to her husband in Dale's cemetery in Cumberland.

I'm not sure how long William Cox stayed on the Wilson farm or where and when he set up his own farm in the Navan area. He married Elizabeth Johnston on May 8, 1863 in Navan. That marriage record indicated that both he and Elizabeth were both from County Fermanagh in Ireland. This confirmed the e-mail from the Cox descendant that started this whole research effort: William Cox was the brother of John Cox who came later to the Navan area with his wife in 1862.

May others help us complete their stories. Readers may notice that Ralph Wilson's marriage record indicates that one of the witnesses was John Wilson. Could it have been the John Wilson who started paying taxes on Lot D, Concession 7, in 1838?

Thanks to Ms. Cox for prodding her past and thanks to Ross Bradley for sharing local histories in order to give all of us leads to unlocking as much of Cumberland's past as we can.

## Ralph Wilson and Jessie McLeod

### Generation No. 1

1. RALPH<sup>1</sup> WILSON was born 1807, and died 16 Apr 1853 in Navan, Ontario<sup>1</sup>. He married JESSIE MCLEOD 07 Aug 1840 in Hawkesbury, Ontario<sup>2</sup>. She was born 1798 in Scotland<sup>3</sup>, and died 09 Mar 1873 in Navan, Ontario<sup>4</sup>.

### Endnotes

1. Dale's Cemetery Records, Cumberland, Ontario, Aged 46 years.
2. Protestants du district de St-Jérôme de Terrebonne, Grenville, Church of England, 1840, The record indicates that he was from Cumberland and that she was from Hawkesbury. Attendant minister William Mair, minister of Grenville and Chatham. Witness John Wilson and ?
3. 1861 Canadian census, Page 78.
4. Dale's Cemetery Records, Cumberland, Ontario, Aged 75.

## James Cox and Mary Anderson

### Generation No. 1

1. JAMES<sup>1</sup> COX He married MARY ANDERSON. She was born 1789 in Ireland<sup>1</sup>, and died 06 Sep 1886 in Cumberland Township, Ontario<sup>2</sup>.

Children of JAMES COX and MARY ANDERSON are:

2. i. JOHN<sup>2</sup> COX, b. 1835, County Fermanagh, Ireland; d. 19 Jan 1910, Navan, Ontario.
3. ii. WILLIAM COX, b. 1839, County Fermanagh, Ireland.

### Generation No. 2

2. JOHN<sup>2</sup> COX (JAMES<sup>1</sup>)<sup>3</sup> was born 1835 in County Fermanagh, Ireland<sup>4</sup>, and died 19 Jan 1910 in Navan, Ontario<sup>5</sup>. He married JANE CLUFF<sup>6</sup>. She was born 05 Jan 1840 in Ireland<sup>7</sup>, and died 11 Dec 1912 in Navan, Ontario<sup>8</sup>.

Children of JOHN COX and JANE CLUFF are:

- i. WILLIAM HENRY<sup>3</sup> COX, b. 1868, Quebec.
- ii. ANNIE E COX, b. 1871, Quebec.
- iii. JOHN THOMAS COX, b. 17 Apr 1873, Navan, Ontario<sup>9</sup>,<sup>10</sup>.
- iv. EMILY J. COX, b. 18 Jul 1875, Navan, Ontario<sup>10</sup>.
- v. GEORGE M COX, b. 22 Feb 1879, Navan, Ontario<sup>10</sup>.
- vi. ALBERT G COX, b. 28 Aug 1881, Navan, Ontario<sup>10</sup>.

3. WILLIAM<sup>2</sup> COX (JAMES<sup>1</sup>) was born 1839 in County Fermanagh, Ireland<sup>11</sup>,<sup>12</sup>. He married ELIZABETH JOHNSTON 08 May 1863 in Navan, Ontario<sup>13</sup>, daughter of ADAM JOHNSTON and CATHERINE. She was born 1840 in Fermanagh County, Ireland<sup>14</sup>, and died 15 Sep 1886 in Navan, Ontario<sup>15</sup>.

Children of WILLIAM COX and ELIZABETH JOHNSTON are:

- i. JOHN<sup>3</sup> COX, b. 1865, Navan, Ontario<sup>16</sup>; m. ELIZABETH JANE MILLER, 30 Apr 1907, Ottawa, Ontario<sup>17</sup>; b. 1868, North Gower, Ontario<sup>18</sup>.
- ii. MORGAN COX, b. 1866, Navan, Ontario.
- iii. JEMIMA COX, b. 1868, Navan, Ontario.
- iv. ARTHUR COX, b. 20 Mar 1874, Navan, Ontario<sup>19</sup>.

### Endnotes

1. Ontario, Canada, Deaths, 1869 - 1938.
2. Ontario, Canada, Deaths, 1869 - 1938, 97 years old, a widow, member of the Episcopal Church. John J Cox the witness.
3. 1901 Census of Canada, John Cox immigrated to Canada in 1862.
4. Ontario, Canada, Deaths, 1869 - 1938, This indicated his age at death, his parents' names and the Irish County that he came from, though the spelling was difficult to decipher.
5. Ontario, Canada, Deaths, 1869 - 1938, He was living on Lot 6, Concession 7, New Survey, Cumberland Township.
6. 1901 Census of Canada, Immigrated to Canada in 1862 with her husband.
7. 1901 Census of Canada.
8. www.canadianheadstones.com.
9. Ontario, Canada, County Marriage Registers, 1858-1869.
10. 1901 Census of Canada.
11. 1901 Census of Canada, Arrived in Canada in 1854. Indicated that he was born in 1834.
12. Ontario, Canada, County Marriage Registers, 1858-1869, He was 24 yrs. old according to marriage register.
13. Ontario, Canada, County Marriage Registers, 1858-1869, She was living in Ottawa at the time, but the marriage was registered in Russell County, so assume marriage took place in Navan.
14. Ontario, Canada, County Marriage Registers, 1858-1869, 23 yrs. old at marriage.
15. Ontario, Canada, Deaths, 1869 - 1938, 50 years old. John J Cox the witness.
16. 1881 Census of Canada.
17. Ontario, Canada, Marriages, 1801 - 1928, Witnesses Arthur Cox and Jessie Miller.
18. Ontario, Canada, Marriages, 1801-1928.
19. 1901 Census of Canada.

est ainsi fait aux charges clauses et conditions qui suivent que ledit Jean Baptiste Dubois s'oblige d'exécuter sous peine des dommages et intérêt que la loi impose en pareil cas

1<sup>er</sup> De cultiver le terrain qui est cultivable sur les cinq cents arpens de terre suscité au temps de la saison,

2<sup>ème</sup> D'entretenir les batisses et faire les clôtures qui sont sur ledit terrain, de reparations locatives et de les remettre en bon état a l'opération des présentes, a l'exception de l'usage et accidents auquel ledit locataire ne sera pas responsable

3<sup>ème</sup> Dans le cas que ledit bailleur relourait ledit terrain a une autre personne ou qu'il voudrait le cultiver lui lui-même, ledit locataire sera obligé à [mot rayé] faire les labours ou autres choses qui sera nécessaire dans l'automne devant l'expiration du present bail.

Ledit bailleur se réserve une chambre qui se trouve séparé mais joignant la maison batie sur ledit terrain [mot rayé] de plus le droit d'aller lui ou comme qui lui plaira d'envoyer dans aucun temps pour visiter si le tout es en ordre

Ledit [mot rayé] bailleur s'oblige de fournir pour la première année [mot rayé] pour ensemencher ledit terrain savoir : vingt minots d'avoine, cinq minots de pois, quatre minots de blé, douze minots de patates, un minot d'orges laquelle dite semence moitié est pour ledit bailleur et l'autre moitié pour ledit preneur ledit preneur sera tenu de remettre ladite moitié audit bailleur l'automne prochain, ledit preneur sera tenu et obligé [mot rayé] de cueillir le revenu d icelle semence battre les grains et en suite en donner la moitié au dit Bailleur, et le faire que le dit Terrain produira après que que l'hivernage des animaux qui sera nécessaire sur ledit terrain, sera vendu et le revenu divisé entre ledit bailleur et ledit preneur.

Ledit preneur aura le privilège de prendre du bois sur ledit terrain pour se chauffer et pour l'usage du dit terrain seulement.

Ledit bailleur s'oblige de fournir audit preneur, au commencement du présent bail, les animaux suivant savoir une paire de bœufs ou deux chevaux, au choix du

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est ainsi fait aux charges clauses et conditions qui suivent que ledit Jean Baptiste Dubois s'oblige d'exécuter sous peine des dommages et intérêt que la loi impose en pareil cas

1<sup>er</sup> De cultiver le terrain qui est cultivable sur les cinq cents arpens de terre suscité au temps de la saison,

2<sup>ème</sup> D'entretenir les batisses et faire les clôtures qui sont sur ledit terrain, de reparations locatives et de les remettre en bon état a l'opération des présentes, a l'exception de l'usage et accidents auquel ledit locataire ne sera pas responsable

3<sup>ème</sup> Dans le cas que ledit bailleur relourait ledit terrain a une autre personne ou qu'il voudrait le cultiver lui lui-même, ledit locataire sera obligé à [mot rayé] faire les labours ou autres choses qui sera nécessaire dans l'automne devant l'expiration du present bail.

Ledit bailleur se réserve une chambre qui se trouve séparé mais joignant la maison batie sur ledit terrain [mot rayé] de plus le droit d'aller lui ou comme qui lui plaira d'envoyer dans aucun temps pour visiter si le tout es en ordre

Ledit [mot rayé] bailleur s'oblige de fournir pour la première année [mot rayé] pour ensemencher ledit terrain savoir : vingt minots d'avoine, cinq minots de pois, quatre minots de blé, douze minots de patates, un minot d'orges laquelle dite semence moitié est pour ledit bailleur et l'autre moitié pour ledit preneur ledit preneur sera tenu de remettre ladite moitié audit bailleur l'automne prochain, ledit preneur sera tenu et obligé [mot rayé] de cueillir le revenu d icelle semence battre les grains et ensuite en donner la moitié audit bailleur #endite saison chaque année et faire tous travaux a ses frais et depens # le faire que ledit terrain produira après que que l'hivernage des animaux qui sera nécessaire sur ledit terrain, sera vendu et le revenu divisé entre ledit bailleur et ledit preneur.

Ledit preneur aura le privilège de prendre du bois sur ledit terrain pour se chauffer et pour l'usage du dit terrain seulement.

Ledit bailleur s'oblige de fournir audit preneur, au commencement du présent bail, les animaux suivant savoir une paire de bœufs ou deux chevaux, au choix du



# Putting a Face on the Great War by Dorothy J. Smith

CTHS presentation November 2, 2016

I presented an abbreviated version of a six week course I had given earlier this year with Carleton University's Learning in Retirement program. For the evening with the CTHS I inserted a few of the men whose names appear on the three Township war memorials into my stories on recruitment, training, trench warfare and soldier's leisure between the outbreak of war and 1919. The men that I inserted signed up between the call-up of the First Contingent in September 1914 and the summer of 1916.

We have a good part of the story of the First Contingent from Joyce Kennedy's book *Distant Thunder* about her grandfather Robert Kennedy (the book is still available to buy through the family). But there were a number of Cumberland Township men who also signed up then, including Martin Burns. During my presentation, Martin's son Robert Burns told us he actually joined up in the west where he had been homesteading. But the picture of four soldiers at Valcartier show he was quickly reunited with the Cumberland Township men who had also volunteered with the first Contingent, including:

- *Creswell John Allan (Cumberland Memorial – Vimy 1917)*
- Martin Burns
- Robert Kennedy
- Tom Melvin
- George Muggleton
- John Pruner

The Canadian government offered a second contingent of men in October 1914 just after the First Contingent men sailed out of the harbour at Gaspé to England. But the Second

Contingent did not experience the chaos created by Militia Minister, Sam Hughes's disregard for professional soldiers and their plans. Instead the militia department returned to their original plan of decentralized recruitment centred on militia districts. From this point on, each militia district raised, equipped, and (sort of) trained their quota of men. There are two names on Cumberland Township memorials for Second Contingent men. They both signed up in Victoria, British Columbia and served overseas in western Battalions.

- ***Warren Edward Dunning (Vars Memorial – died Battle of Festubert May 17-25, 1915)***
- ***George Plant (Navan Memorial)***

Among the other men who would die and be remembered on the Cumberland Township War memorials, a number were recruited into just three battalions in 1915 and 1916.

38th Battalion

- William Arthur Buckland, (Vars Memorial – Vimy 1917)
- John A. McKenzie (Cumberland Village Memorial – Somme 1916)
- William J. Splatt (Cumberland Village Memorial – specifics not yet available)
- Roy Brownlee (Vars Memorial – Somme 1916)
- 77th Battalion (fought with the 73rd and 13th / 87th)
- Robert Kilrae (Navan Memorial – Hill 70 1917)
- Robert Leslie Taylor (Cumberland Village Memorial – Somme 1916)
- Wellington Armstrong (Navan Memorial – Hill 70 1917)

- Byron Armstrong (Navan Memorial – Vimy 1917)
- Leonard James Bird (Navan Memorial) – Vimy 1917)
- Lowell Lancaster (Navan Memorial – Hundred Days 1918).
- Thomas Foy (Cumberland Village Memorial – Somme 1916)
- 207th (fought with the 2nd Eastern Ontario Regiment - EOR)
- Ernest Lytton Bonsall (Vars Memorial – Passchendaele 1917)
- Matthew Barkley (Vars Memorial – German Spring Offensive Telegraph Hill 1918).
- Wesley Adam Simpson (Vars Memorial – poss. German Spring Offensive 1918)

A number of other Cumberland Township soldiers served in these regiments. One such soldier was Napoléon Larocque who served on the front with the 2nd EOR from 1916 until the Spring of 1918. Only then did he get a safer berth as a lumberjack in the Forestry Corps.

Some of the experiences of the 38th can be learned through the Pinhey Point Foundation for they have the letters of Charles Pinhey to his father. For the experience of joining up with the 77th, the Osgoode museum is selling a book they have recently published of the letters of a young soldier from Metcalfe, Elmo Sully. I myself have researched Matthew Barkley for the Cumberland Heritage Village Museum, who have a collection of his medals, photos and other memorabilia. All of this lets us piece together the experiences of the Cumberland soldiers.

Training in Ottawa largely consisted of route marches. Elmo

Sulley wrote about one day of training when they did a route march from their barracks on Metcalfe Street to Hunt Club, where they were given a lesson in trench digging and then marched back. The 207th activities were written up in the newspaper as well as in a regimental newspaper and a souvenir book which are at the Ottawa Room of the Ottawa Public Library. The photos include their main recruiting space on Connaught Square, just where the cenotaph is today. In May 1916 when Matthew Barkley, aged 16, and his even younger friend Dougall Marshall came to Ottawa to enlist, they probably took the Grand Trunk train at Vars, got off at the GTR station (now the Conference Centre) and walked out directly onto Connaught Square to the recruitment tent. Their Ottawa training consisted of tenting at Rockcliffe base, route marches but also demonstrations to the crowds of Ottawans who came to watch them. But whether the 77th or the 207th, all the men spent a good portion of their time playing sports. For Matthew Barkley this included swimming in the river, something he would not have done while haying back in Vars.

Eventually they all marched off to war. The 38th went first but not immediately to Europe. Instead in late August 1915 they shipped to Bermuda for garrison duty. The 77th sailed June 1916. But the 207th was delayed by an outbreak of disease which kept them quarantined in barns in Amherst, Nova Scotia over the winter. But finally in June 1916, they too were on their way to Europe.

The First Contingent spent a miserable time from when they arrived in England in October 1914 until they left for the front in February

1915. They were not the trained men requested and had to stay in England longer than the British Government had expected. But as well, there were 5,000 more men than planned for. And then there was the weather. The winter of 1914-15 saw record rainy weather on the Salisbury Plain where they CEF was camped. The soldiers who came later were spread across camps throughout southern England and experienced better weather – in England at least.

By the time the 77th men arrived the attrition on the troops at the front meant they were immediately divided between previously recruited battalions. Many of the Cumberland men fought in the 73rd, which was a “kilted” or Highland regiment out of Montreal. The 207th was recruited as a reinforcement battalion. Most of the men went into the 21st Battalion which had been in France since September 1915. But Matthew Barkley and several others went into a home defence (5th) Division. This meant Matthew Barkley was held back from the Front for another six months by which time he was finally eighteen. He joined the 2nd Battalion EOR.

All these soldiers went into the trenches which was essentially a fortification nearly 1,300 miles long across Europe. The lines were set up in defensive layers. In front of the firing line was an entanglement of yards-deep wire. Behind it lay a support line separated from the firing line by about 200 yards. 400 yards back of that was a reserve area. Communication trenches connected the lines.

Battalions rotated in and out of the front line with a certain fixed regularity. The normal rotation for

battalions was 6 days in the front line, 6 days in brigade reserves and 6 days in divisional or corps reserves. Due to snipers, all troop movements and even the work of maintaining the trenches happened at night. To avoid giving enemy artillery a clear target, no lights could be used. The men could not even burn a cigarette when travelling up communication trenches. During the day a sentry was stationed in each section while the rest of the men could sleep, eat, write letters and try to stay sane.

Kennedy and the rest of the men of the first contingent went into the trenches in February 1915. They found the trenches were waterlogged and the winds cold. The 38th came to the trenches in September 1916. Charles Pinhey wrote home about constant rain with “mud and corruption in every direction” (Pinhey Point Foundation).

Death happened every day whether there was a battle or not, for the artillery was always at work and snipers were constantly watching. But we think first of the battles in stories of that war, for that is where men died in the thousands in a matter of minutes.

The war changed its nature, however, in March 1918. After three years of stalemate, the Germans grabbed the opportunity for a massive offensive which they expected would either win the war or at least force negotiations before the Americans were able to commit their army in full to the front.. They were almost successful but in the end the British armies, strengthened by an early commitment of American troops, were able to push back. By May 1918 the tide had turned. The Canadians went out of the Front for an extended period of rest and rebuilding but returned

to front lines in August. Canadian troops were now battle-hardened and disciplined to a high degree, making them shock troops in the final battles called the Hundred Days. The armistice finally came on November 11, 1918 and the living started to come home. George Muggleton and Martin Burns were among the very few First Contingent soldiers still alive and still fighting on Armistice Day.

Many more never came home and a long process of commemoration began. The federal government began to build national memorials at Vimy Ridge and in Ottawa on Confederation Square. For me, though, the most

meaningful memorials are the ones built by ordinary people who were driven to remember because of the depth of their loss. The first of the Cumberland Township memorials was erected beside St. Andrew’s church in Cumberland Village. The second was in Vars, this time with the Women’s Institute’s support. Finally the Navan memorial was built thanks to the driving force of Herb Deavy. Each of these is about the loss to individual families and to the small communities from which the men had come.

*Cenotaph, Navan, Ontario*





# Christmas in Vars

*submitted by Ivan Tanner*



*I am the handsome wee fellow  
near the top right corner, my Dad  
is holding me*

Tens of hundreds – nay – tens of thousands of baby-boomers hold a very special sentiment towards the town of Vars.

Each year in late-November or early-December of the 1950's, parents of children in the Ottawa Valley area made their way to the Frieman's Department store (currently the Bay at Rideau) on a matter of the utmost importance. At 9:00 a.m. when the doors opened there was a mad scurry up the stairwells, up the elevators, and up the escalators to the fourth floor office where Mr. A.J. Frieman, the store's owner, gave away hundreds of free tickets for a train ride to Vars to pick up Santa Claus and bring him to the store in Ottawa. I remember thinking that my mother had wings on her heels because she always managed to be among the first ones in the long line-up at

the office.

The following Saturday morning, I along with my brothers and sisters and my Mom (my dad stayed home to watch the dog and cats) and countless numbers of other families, would gather at the Ottawa train station on Rideau Street where the Conference Centre is now located. We would wait at the boarding ramp where we could see the Christmas-decorated steam engine chug towards us. There was lots of steam, and lots of wheel- sounds, and lots of children squealing with joy, and lots of lively Christmas music raining down on us. Sometimes, despite repeated warnings from my mother, I would reach out and touch the slow moving train just to make sure that I was not dreaming. It was a challenge to get seats together, and it was an even greater challenge to

get a window seat. Then the trip began – We were going to Vars!

At the railway crossings the engine whistle would toot its warning, the train would slow down a tad. At Navan the train slowed to a crawl and we would instinctively turn towards the windows and wave and smile at the bystanders lining the way. The truly big waves and the huge smiles were reserved for Vars where the whole town seemed to turn out. We smiled and waved so much that our teeth hurt and our arms ached. Although we could only see a few houses from the train, I then thought that Vars was a mega-city with Christmas toy factories on every street.

Most years, Santa was waiting for us at the boarding ramp with the Varsites. One year, he was not there as we arrived, and then shortly after we spotted a helicopter circling the

train and it landed near the ramp and who else but Santa emerged when the dust settled and visibility returned. Oh my! It was magical! Vars was magical! Santa got on the train at the front end. The train engine slowly started to purr and the long train started back towards Ottawa in reverse. No sooner had we passed the sign that said Vars when elves dressed in green and red velvet appeared with cookies and chocolate milk, and red straws for each of us. The bakery of Morrison-Lamothe, owned by Jean Piggott and Grete Hale's father provided all the treats. Mr. Morrison, Jean and Grete were sometimes with the elves as they distributed the most delicious cookies. I did not know who they were then, but I often see Jean nowadays and I don't hesitate to bow in reverence. Coincidentally, by the time we finished our treats, Santa would arrive at our train compartment. He seemed to know many of our names — as he entered we would hear him say "Where is Mary? Where is John? Where is Tim? Where is Ann? Where is Bobby?" His suit was real velvet and his boots were real leather. I always managed to walk with him for a few seconds while holding his warm hand. He lingered in each compartment long enough to have a short conversation with each of us and our parents. Then he was on to the next room. But, we knew we would see him again this day, so, we were not sad. Next came more elves with candy canes. Could anyone ask for anything more?

The arrival in Ottawa was always well organized. Santa would get off first and the children would follow in a scene reminiscent of the Pied Piper of Hamelin. We

would all walk the one block to the Frieman's store and then go to the fifth floor for our official visit with Santa to present him with our Christmas wish list while our parents visited the toy department which opened on that date. Our last stop was for a 5 cent malted milk in the basement of the Frieman's store. No other store at that time, or since, has been able to offer such a delicious glass of malted milk. No other store at that time, or since, has been able to offer such a magical day. No other town at that time, or since, has been able to produce such a wonderful Christmas memory. Thank you Vars.

**Q & A:**

***Did Ottawa Ever Have a Santa Claus Train at Christmas?***

Lewis Miskell, Ottawa ON  
Ottawa's Freimans Department Store had a Santa Claus train that lasted until 1970. The train ran on a Saturday in early December from Union Station to Vars on Canadian National's Alexandria Subdivision (the railway's line to Montreal). At Vars, it met Santa who, in later years, arrived by helicopter. He rode the train with the children back to Union Station and then went to Freimans to begin the visits by the kids until Christmas. Toronto had a Santa train as well. There have been others in connection with tourist operations in recent years.

*(Thanks to Bruce Chapman,  
Bob Meldrum, Bernie Geiger  
for the information)*





# Remembering The Kennedys, A Proposal

Remembrance Day has just passed and Cumberland's war heroes have been remembered in the service held in the village where I grew up. I was not at the service as I was at the Legion in Orléans where I have laid the wreath on behalf of the province of Ontario for 11 years. I have for some time been communicating with Joyce Kennedy, a student in the last high school in Cumberland, 1951-52 and for one year at Lisgar, 1952-53.

Joyce went on to obtain a PhD, was director Emeritus of California State University at Northridge, Ventura Campus. She holds a Bachelor of Journalism degree from Carleton University, a Master of Arts degree in mass communications from CSU Northridge; and a PhD in Educational Policy and Organizational Studies from the University of California, Santa Barbara. She has served as a flying officer in the Royal Canadian Air Force on bases in Canada, the United States and Europe. She has written two books, *Distant Thunder* (about her father Robert Kennedy's

service in the First World War) and *Just Call me Eva* (about her mother, Cumberland's health provider for decades). Eva delivered hundreds of babies in the Cumberland area. I recall in the summer of 1960 I was water skiing at the Cumberland wharf and I stepped on a broken bottle, severing the tendon under my big toe. It was bleeding a lot and I went to see Eva at her home. It was a Sunday. In no time she said, "Your tendon is severed, not a problem if you are not an athlete." An answer from me was obviously not needed. She said the wound would heal well without stitches and she bandaged me up. That was 56 years ago and it has not been a problem so far.

Irving Farmer "Bus" Kennedy served in the Second World War and he wrote a book called *Black Crosses off my Wingtip*. He joined the RCAF in 1940 when he turned 18 and in 1944 commanded a Spitfire squadron in Normandy. He was shot down behind enemy lines and escaped.

Bus was an ace pilot and shot down many enemy aircraft. He

received the Legion of Honour medal from the French Government for his contribution to the Battle of Normandy. He was also awarded the DFC (Distinguished Flying Cross).

After the war Bus graduated from the University of Toronto as a Medical Doctor in 1950. He provided excellent healthcare as a family doctor in Cumberland for many years.

The three books named above are interesting reading for Cumberland history buffs and tell the story of an exceptional family.

It is the feeling of many in Cumberland that Bus and Eva Kennedy should be remembered in the new Orléans Health Hub which is now in the design stage. A room named in their honour with some of their history and artifacts from their practices is the least we can do to thank them for their service to our community.

The new Health Hub recently pushed forward by our MPP Marie-France Lalonde will be built in the former Cumberland Township at

the corner of Mer Bleue Road and Brian Coburn Boulevard.

I would like to see a letter of support for this initiative from those hundreds of former Cumberland babies brought into this world with Eva's help and from the many of Bus' patients including Anna Marie Ryan, my wife. I believe Cecelia Ryan delivered all of her children with Eva's help except for the eldest born in northern Quebec.

Please send me the names of your family members who were delivered with Eva's help and the names of your families who went to Bus' clinic in Cumberland. Accompanying anecdotes would also be appreciated. If you support this effort to recognize our Cumberland heroes please indicate that. I will submit a proposal for the naming of a room in the new Orléans Health Hub in honour of Eva and Bus Kennedy on your behalf.

*Thank you!*

*Phil McNeely, 24 Aria Crt.,  
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## Cumberland Lions Endorse Memorialization of Eva and Bus Kennedy

Eva's husband and Bus's father, Robert J. Kennedy, was the Clerk of Cumberland in the 1960's. As well, he was a veteran of the great war and fought in the battle of Vimy Ridge. 2017 will mark the 100th Anniversary of Vimy Ridge. Robert J. Kennedy is honoured through the naming of the Cumberland Arena - the R.J. Kennedy Community Centre and Arena.

Lion Hap Kennedy was a Charter Member (4 October 1967) of the Cumberland Lions Club and he proudly served his community for a number of years. Two of the purposes of Lions Clubs International are: one - to promote the principles of good government

and good citizenship and two - to take an active interest in the civic, cultural, social and moral welfare of the community. In our Lions Clubs International Code of Ethics, it states that we should always bear in mind our obligation as a citizen of our nation, our state and our community, and to give them our unswerving loyalty in word, act and deed. To give freely of our time, labour and means. Lion Hap Kennedy was a man of integrity and honesty who shunned attention and he was a true testament to our purposes and to our code of ethics. Lion Bob Tubbe, and his wife Joan, told me that they remember him well, as he was their M.D. for

many years as well as a fellow Lion and friend.

Eva and Bus Kennedy were highly respected community champions and the members of the Cumberland Lions Club endorse Eva and Bus Kennedy, and recommend their names be used in the naming of a room or wing at the new Health Hub being built on Mer Bleue Road in the former Township of Cumberland.

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Lion Ray Lebeau  
President  
Cumberland Lions Club*

### Contact

If you have questions or suggestions regarding any aspect of the Society, you may contact any member of the executive by phone or by email:  
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The Caboose is made possible in part through a grant from the City of Ottawa.

