



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

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Our World Wide Web

Address: www.cths.ca

Our Webmaster is Christine Boyer.

Executive Committee

President: Bill Woodruff
Secretary: Tom McNeely
Treasurer: Gilles Chartrand
Directors: Ivan Tanner,
Marcia Kennedy (History Rm),
Laurie Watson (Caboose)



United Church of Canada Centennial Celebration, Vars Homecoming and Vars Historical Tour – September 28, 2025

By Ivan Tanner

Longtime historical society member, the late Verna Kinsella, had put together a written historical tour of Vars some time ago. She passed her work along to me a few years ago and I always thought it a shame that it had never been acted on. During an Executive meeting earlier this year we were discussing possible activities for the Historical Society membership; I threw out the walking tour suggestion and it received universal support. At that point Laurie Watson made us aware of a special church service celebrating the 100th anniversary of the United Church of Canada and Vars homecoming being held on September 28th at the former Knox United Church now located at the Cumberland Heritage Village Museum. Bingo! We had an event!

From there things rapidly progressed. Many of the newer families in Vars, and some older ones as well, also had an interest in learning the village's history so the Vars Community Association offered a barbecue lunch for everyone. Even the usual labyrinth of City permitting went smoothly with the assistance of a couple of very friendly and helpful staff. Since our target date of September 28th coincided with the Sunday of Carp Fair ("the Kerp") they even guaranteed us great weather, which they delivered on.



We were able to obtain specially modified "people mover" wagons from our friends Wyatt McWilliams of Navandale Farms and Gib Patterson of Emerald Links Golf Course. They worked perfectly. Hank Bakker kindly provided and drove his beautiful vintage International Harvester tractor to tow one wagon and Jack Kinsella—Verna's grandson—with his antique John Deere tractor pulling the second wagon.

Another Marshall descendant, Phil Muggleton, acted as tour guide to inform and entertain one wagon while I was on the second.



When people arrived at the Alcide Trudeau Park in Vars they found our Treasurer, Gilles Chartrand, with a table set up for the CTHS displaying some antique railroad memorabilia and offering some of our publications for sale. Laurie Watson had a display of photos and articles about the Vars church and its 1980 move to the Museum. A loop slide show ran all afternoon of photographs of Vars then and now.



The Vars Community Association had a production line going for hamburgers and hot dogs, Navan-Vars United Church supplied desserts, and Jeannie Smith (pictured below right), Mary Jane Coburn and Robert Forsyth (below left) provided musical entertainment for our guests.



We estimate that 200 people came and went over the course of the afternoon. We took about 130 people on the wagon tours. People learned about the founding of Vars as a railway depot on the Canada Atlantic Railway, its rapid growth and prosperity, and its decline. They heard stories about the

world’s greatest bank forger, Governor General Alexander, U.S. President Eisenhower, Dennis the Menace, and the church bell with names. Everyone seemed to get something from the tour. Our deepest apologies to anyone who wanted to go but couldn’t find space on the wagons.



While preparing for “Vars Day” we were given some excellent photographs of the dismantling and move of Knox United Church to the Cumberland Museum in 1980. Knox United Church continues to be a jewel in the crown of the Cumberland Heritage Village Museum, thanks to the determination of visionaries like Barry and Verna Kinsella, Robert McNarry, Patricia Wright, Allan Tanner and Forrest Hamilton.



Knox United Church
Built in 1907
Vars, 1978



1980: The steeple and roof trusses were removed; the Sunday School and kitchen addition were removed from the rear of the building, and the main body of the church became a basic box-like structure. The steeple and roof trusses were transported separately. After placement on site at the Museum its interior plaster work was repaired.



The iconic church at the museum,
2025

A changing landscape

The photograph below on the left shows the Knox church structure being carried down the Trim Road hill to the intersection at St. Joseph Boulevard. The landscape has changed to an astonishing degree over the past 45 years. The intersection is now a round-about; there are many buildings, dozens of utility poles and road signs; and the barn in its splendid isolation in the field has been replaced by a gleaming new light rail train station.

Then...1980



Photo from the collection of Verna Kinsella, 1980

Now...2025



Photo by Beverley Dawson, September 2025

Cumberland Heritage Village Museum

By Andrew Boisvenue



It has been a very busy season for everyone at Cumberland Heritage Village Museum. Visitors to our general admission days were treated to a new sight—and smell—as staff in Foubert House used a 1930s electric stove to cook a variety of items, from baked goods to preserves. Programming in the one-room schoolhouse expanded. Visitors took on the role of students and either participated in a class or tried their hand at a sample of end-of-year exams. Be sure to join us next year when we continue to expand programming for drop-in visitors. General Admission programming runs from Mother's Day to the first weekend of October.

The Makers at the Museum workshop series continued while the museum was open and moved into a new dedicated space. The west side of Spratt-Grier House was opened and given new flooring. Our instructor welcomed students into the newly renovated space for a variety of workshops, from printing to stained glass. In addition to regular

workshops, the museum offered French versions and hosted free mini workshops for people 50+ as part of the City's Older Adult programming. More information on these workshops can be found at the museum website, ottawa.ca/cumberlandmuseum.

The museum also hosted special events all season, starting with Hop into Spring on the Saturday of Easter weekend. Other regular events included Fire Fighters' Day in June and Vintage Vehicle Experience in July. A new event this year was Animal Helpers, the last Sunday in June. For this event, the museum partnered with a variety of animal groups who did demonstrations and showed visitors how animals help them in their work. Groups included Ottawa Police K9 unit, Border Collie Club, Wilmead Farms (Ontario Beekeepers), and St. John Ambulance Canine.

As summer turned to fall, September was packed with events. The second weekend had free workshops for older adults as well as a corn boil, using corn grown in the museum's field. The following weekend Cumberland Farmers' Market had their annual Harvest Market, which saw over 5,000 visitors! Then, on the last Sunday of the month, Ottawa Valley Live Steamers and Model Engineers had one of their demonstration days. The museum also had a second corn boil that day, where visitors enjoyed close to 300 cobs of corn. The animals returned to their farms the first weekend of October, at which time the museum's drop-in season came to an end. Of course, this did not mean the work ended, as staff prepared for Halloween Hijinks, our special event the last weekend before Halloween.

Next up is Vintage Village of Lights, which runs Friday, Saturday, and Sunday evenings from November 28 to December 21. Highlights for this season include a walk-through light display, period seasonal baking demonstrations, heritage trade demonstrations, and of course, a visit with the big man himself. This year, the museum will also have workshops available. To register for Vintage Village of Lights and/or the workshops, watch for information on the museum website. We hope to see you visit and wish everyone the best for the new year!



Interior of Knox United Church at Cumberland Heritage Village Museum

Archibald Edwards

By Laurie Watson

Born December 19, 1895 at 1572 Cox Country Road, Cumberland, Archibald Edwards was the third of the ten children of **William John Edwards** and **Alice Mary Maud Watchorn**: Ernest, Sarah 'Sadie,' Archibald 'Archie,' Rosella, Gertrude, Norman, Leslie, Gordon, Mary, and Alma. [The Edwards family story is told in the Spring 2007 edition of The Caboose.]

Archie Edwards' military service began as the long, wasting war which started in Europe in 1914 ground on. By the autumn of 1917, Canada's war losses had totalled 78,000 injured and dead of the estimated 236,000 who had served to this point; this from a national population of just over eight million. In 1917-1918, when it was no longer possible to recruit enough men for infantry battalions, depot battalions were organized in Canada to obtain personnel who would then be sent to the Canadian Reserve Battalions in England.

Twenty-two year old farmer Archie Edwards was called up on June 25, 1918 to the 2nd Depot Battalion, Eastern Ontario Regiment, in Ottawa. His regimental number was 3324874 and he was a Private in "C" Company. He embarked from Montréal on H.M.S. "Corsican" in July 1918, part of the 80th Draft of Canadian soldiers. Assigned to the 6th Canadian Reserve Battalion he was taken on strength on August 8th at Seaford base on the south coast of England.



Archibald Edwards is second from the left in the front row.

6th Canadian Reserve, Seaford, U.K. 18/9/18. Eastern Ontario's

Canadian YMCA Hut, Seaford (upper right)

6th Canadian Reserve Battalion men in Library at Seaford (lower right)

The 6th Canadian Reserve Battalion's war diary for August through October 1918 reports various-sized groups of soldiers arriving and departing on an almost daily basis. Over this period, eleven hundred men arrive at the camp and nine hundred men proceed overseas. It is only a matter of time before Archie Edwards is sent to the battlefield. However, fate intervenes when the influenza epidemic reaches Seaford camp in mid-October. The war diary states, "*The Bn [Battalion] was this day quarantined owing to outbreak of Influenza amongst new drafts from Canada.*" Dozens and dozens of men suffering from influenza are sent to hospital daily, with 13 deaths. By early November the epidemic is decreasing and arrangements are made to move the entire battalion of 63 officers and 2592 other ranks on five trains from Seaford to Witley Camp on November 8th in preparation for deployment to France. However, with influenza still being a concern the battalion is quarantined for one week at the new camp. On November 11th, the diarist reports: "*Signature of ARMISTICE with GERMANY announced at 11:30 this date. Little excitement. Parades as usual.*" Sadly, the Canadian Expeditionary Force had paid a heavy price with 30,000 casualties in the battles of last 100 days of the war.

Thus the war ends and the diary declares that, "*Christmas Day passed quietly & all ranks appear to have enjoyed themselves.*" Seaford Camp then becomes a transit camp for homeward-bound soldiers pending return to Canada. Military life continues, however, with regular training drills and parades. It takes a long time to inspect the men's health and clothing and prepare discharge and embarkation documents. In spite of the physical activities, educational classes, sports, concerts and plays provided, soldiers grow impatient with the delays. Repeated sailing postponements mean that it isn't until May 26, 1919 when Archie is demobilized. His battalion subsequently embarks from Liverpool on S.S. "Belgic" on June 23, 1919. He lands at Halifax on Dominion Day, July 1, 1919, and is discharged from military service on July 3, 1919. Archie receives the Army War Service Badge Class B (pictured above).



Stoic and steadfast, Archie Edwards and the men and women of his generation who survived the Great War went on to rebuild their lives, their communities, and our country, in spite of the trauma, injury, loss, and disruption they had endured.



Archie returned home to his parents' farm. Pictured at left is Archie in 1922 with his horses Charlie and Nance. His parents and six of his younger siblings are ranged around him. He stands in the snow beside the sleigh, dressed in a fur coat like his father (who is at far left).

Archie married Bertha May MacEachern on Dec. 29, 1923 at her family home in Cumberland. The minister was Rev. George Campbell of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. As their family grew, Rev. Campbell baptized all five of their children: Muriel (1924), Maysie (1926), Stanley (1928), Mary (1934), and Gail (1938).

Archie and Bertha bought their own farm at 978 Old Montréal Road, Cumberland, close to his parents' home. They farmed here from 1923 to 1944. The farmhouse is still standing but the landscape has been transformed by residential and commercial development [see Then and Now photos on page 2; the Edwards farm was immediately to the east of the barn in the first photo.] With their farm constrained by its 70-acre size and subject to flooding at its shoreline on the Ottawa River, Archie and Bertha sold their Cumberland farm in the spring of 1944 "lock, stock and barrel" for \$8000. Their son Stanley Edwards recalled that all they had left after selling was an axe and a shovel. They bought a 150-acre farm from Harold Shaw at 3135 Trim Road, Navan; its high land was well-drained and it had electricity and pumped water in the barn, which not many farms had at that time. With a team of borrowed horses and a sleigh they moved their household furniture to Navan. Having sold all their livestock they started over by buying cattle and horses as they were able. They sold hay and shipped cream the first year and began shipping milk in 1945.



Bertha and Archie Edwards at Niagara Falls, early 1924, probably on their honeymoon



Archibald and Bertha Edwards

Generous with his time and resources, and no doubt mindful of the duty he felt having survived the war, Archie was a blood donor during the Second World War, a church elder at St. Andrew's United Church and a school trustee for S.S.#6 on Old Montréal Road. After they moved to Navan he became an elder and the church treasurer at Navan United Church. He was a volunteer at the construction of the two Navan Memorial Community Centres in the 1950s—named to commemorate the fallen of the First and Second World Wars—the second building replacing the first which burned shortly after opening.



Archie Edwards (left) and Norman Watson (right) at the 1953 Navan Fair cattle show in the new Navan Memorial Community Centre.



Archie owned a threshing mill with which he worked at local farms (above). Raking hay with his horses (right).

Archie was a very hard worker. As a young man and during the Second World War he worked in the winter with his team of horses at lumber shanties in western Québec. He had a lifetime love of horses. When the opportunity arose he preferred to work with horses even when a tractor was available to him.



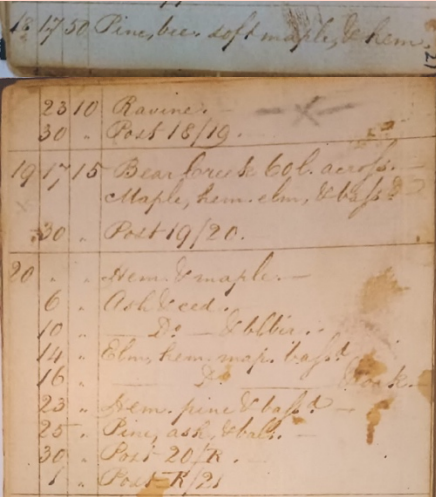
Archie and Bertha were community-minded and the best of neighbours. Their children followed their example, sharing hospitality and musical talents with church and community. Archie farmed with his son Stanley until his death on June 19, 1974. Their farm is now operated by Archie and Bertha's grandsons, Glen and Wayne Edwards, and Wayne's son, Shawn.

Sources: Lynda Rivington and Wayne Edwards (Archie and Bertha's grandchildren) and records of Mary Edwards Munro (their daughter). G.W.L. Nicholson. *Canadian Expeditionary Force 1914-1919. Official History of the Canadian Army in the First World War.* 1962. Library & Archives Canada: Guide to Sources Relating to Units of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. Tim Cook and William Stewart. "War Losses (Canada)." *International Encyclopedia of the First War.* <https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/war-losses-canada/>. Last updated 10th August 2017.

Watch for the Spring edition of The Caboose when we will showcase some Cumberland Township women who came of age a hundred years ago, in their pursuit of higher education and/or careers, one of them being Bertha MacEachern—Archie Edwards' future bride.

Concession 3, Lots 18-19-20

In Lot 18, Con. 3 Duncan McDonell finds pine, beech, soft maple, and hemlock. Passing through a ravine, the Bear Creek in Lot 19 is 60 links wide [40 feet] and McDonell records maple, hemlock, elm and bass. Lot 20 contains several tree species: hemlock, maple, ash, cedar, black birch, bass, oak, pine and balsam.



G.D. Dunning, G. Jarden, Wm & G. Dunning, Wm Dunning, and W.D. Dunning later owned properties in these lots according to the Walling Map below.

Concession 4, Lots 18 – 22

McDonell finds a “fine creek”, 30 links across [19.8 feet] with a high bank on its south course in Lot 18, Con. 4. There is hemlock, maple, bass, birch, elm & black birch.

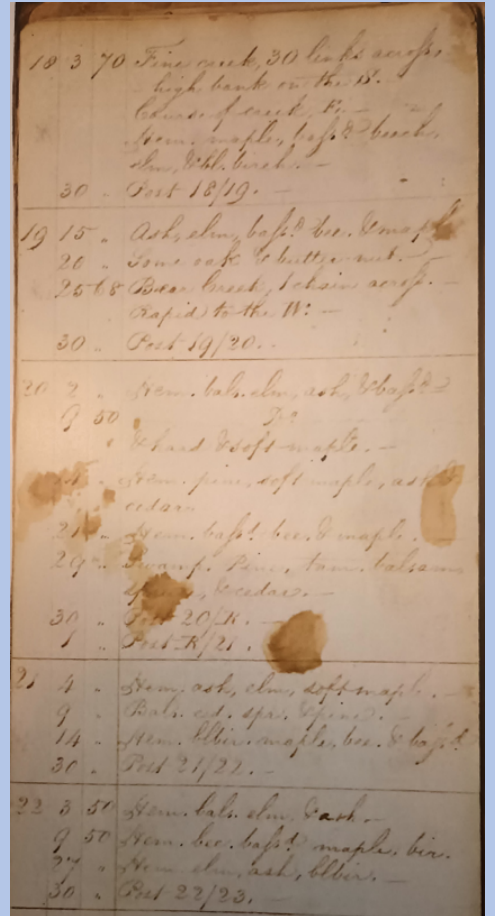
In Lot 19 the Bear Creek is one full chain wide (66 feet) with a “Rapid to the west.” Here there is ash, elm, bass, beech & maple, some oak & butternut.

Lot 20 contains a wide variety of trees: hemlock, balsam, elm, ash and bass, hard & soft maple, pine, cedar & beech. There is a swamp with pine, tamarack, balsam, spruce & cedar.

In the vicinity of where the actual Bearbrook village was later established in Lot 21, McDonell observes hemlock, ash, elm, soft maple, balsam, cedar, spruce, pine, blbir [black birch], maple, beech & basswood.

The same variety of tree species is repeated in Lot 22.

The names of D.J. Shea, Dunning, Dunning, Wilson, J. Walsh, S. Lowe, and N. Lowe are shown as subsequent owners of the five lots according to the 1862 Walling map. Note the “Eng Ch” [English Church] marked on the map at Lot 21, Con. 4 just below “Bear Brook P.O.”



Bear Brook P.O. [Post Office]

Excerpt from Map of the Counties of Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry, Prescott and Russell, by H.F. Walling. Published by D.P. Putnam, Prescott, C.W. [Canada West], 1862. Available online at: [https://maps.library.utoronto.ca/hgis/countymaps/Stormont Dundas/Stormont Dundas_1.jpg](https://maps.library.utoronto.ca/hgis/countymaps/Stormont_Dundas/Stormont_Dundas_1.jpg)

In my quest to see if I could find any remnant of what our forebears found in the Cumberland wilderness, I trekked the length of the Bear Brook, following Duncan McDonell’s notes. Two hundred years ago he describes a beaver meadow at Lot 15, Con. 7:

‘Bear Creek. The beaver meadow extends along Bear Creek far to the South West, & to the east nearly the breadth of Concession, and is partly overgrown with alder, and variegated with clumps of pine & balsam.’

I was amazed to discover that the beaver meadow and swamp still span the entire width of the concession today.

Read five more stories about Bearbrook, its early families and farms, homes and businesses, church and school in the September 2012 issue of The Caboose: <https://cths.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/The-Caboose-September-2012.pdf>

The Walsh Families of Bearbrook

George Walsh (1809-1886) and his wife **Elizabeth Quirn** of County Longford, Ireland came to Canada in 1840 as part of the large Walsh family chain migration that had begun in the 1820s with **Robert Walsh Sr** being one of the first five land patent holders in the Bearbrook settlement, described on Page 6. The Walsh family migration eventually encompassed George's widowed mother **Letitia Hewitt Walsh** (1783-1863), eight of her adult children and their families.

George and Elizabeth Walsh's son, **Samuel James Walsh** (1851-1919) and his wife **Margaret Matilda Anderson** (1857-1951) (*photograph below*) became



the parents of nine children: William, Herbert, Dorothy, Bedford, Thomas, Elisha, Albert, Alice and Berton. Their home was at 4075

Rockdale Road, Navan, now the home of Robin and Liz Briggs and their tree farm.

William James Walsh, born in 1877, was the eldest of Samuel and Matilda Walsh's nine children. In 1901 William set out to establish his own farm beside the Bear Brook at Lot 19, Concession 5 -- 4832 Dunning Road, Bear Brook. He began to cut his way into the bush with an axe and saw. About 1000 feet off the road he built a cabin, possibly with help from his six brothers. Later he added a two-storey addition to the house, with his uncle Sidney Smith (husband of his father's sister Catherine Walsh) doing the stucco work.

The 1901 census of Canada lists William Walsh as single and living at Bear Brook. The census also lists his Aunt Fannie (Walsh) Melvin (Mrs. Tom Melvin) and six of her seven children living with him. The census records Aunt Fannie as a widow but her husband did not die until 1917. It was said that William's mother suggested that her sister-in-law Fannie move in to keep

house for William as apparently she had nowhere else to go. Her husband had gone west. By the 1911 census, William was married to **Mary Ann "Mamie" Armstrong**, daughter of John F.

Armstrong and Jane Hayes of Bear Brook—and living on the farm at Bear Brook with their son **Cecil**, born in 1908. Aunt Fannie and her children were gone.

William and Mamie Walsh went on to have three more children: **Borden** (1911-1980), **Dorothy** (1917-1989), and **Harold** (1923-2016).



Mary Ann 'Mamie' Armstrong and William James Walsh, September 19, 1906



Mamie & Bill Walsh with 3 eldest children, Cecil, Borden and Dorothy (above) in 1919. Their youngest child Harold (left) in 1926.



Mamie, Cecil and Borden Walsh at the Walsh home at Bear Brook, 1913

By Kathy Walsh and Laurie Watson

William and Mamie had Jersey cows and quite a few horses, mostly Percherons, on their 200 acres. Electricity arrived at the farm in the winter of 1932. Ed Cotton of Navan and Keith Walsh of Bear Brook stayed a week with the family to install the wiring. When Cecil Walsh and his friend Albert Richards came home from the shanty in the spring, they came over the hill at Rathwell's pit and discovered the lights at the farm were on. What an amazing sight that would have been. [Albert Richards was a British Home Child, sent to Canada at age 10 in 1909 through Doctor Barnardo's Homes. He was placed with the Walsh family and remained with them for many years. He later always came home to the Walsh farm for Christmas and other occasions.]

In the early 1930s William Walsh and his youngest son Harold were struck by a milk truck carrying cans at the end of the farm lane. Harold was not injured but the collision badly damaged his father's hip. From then on William used a cane and lastly crutches.

William and Mamie's second son Borden stayed home to work on the farm. Cecil went out on his own, farmed a bit, and worked on the railroad. Harold earned his high school diploma and began to work for the Royal Bank of Canada at various branches throughout eastern Ontario.

In the late 1940s Borden left the farm. Now alone, William and Mamie wrote to Cecil and asked him to come home from his railroad employment which he did. Cecil Walsh farmed by himself, with some hired help, until 1972 when he had a heart attack. In the meantime his brother Harold helped him with the hay, grain and corn. Neighbours Leslie Armstrong, Victor Mount, and Gordon Devine, along with Cecil and Harold, got together to harvest the corn on their respective farms at Bearbrook and Vars.

Cecil Walsh sold the farm to Walter Henn. Some of it is now part of the Bear Brook golf course and subdivision. Cecil relocated to Vars where he lived in a trailer at the northeast corner of Harold's farm. Cecil died in 1982 and is buried at Trinity Bearbrook Cemetery.

Harold Walsh attended S.S. #4 Bearbrook; his first teacher was Miss Hilda Dawson from Hammond [later Mrs. James Shaw of Navan]. He remembers her taking him by the hand on his first day of school. He completed his high school education at Navan Continuation School, staying with his grandmother Matilda Walsh in Navan while in school and when employed by the bank.

When war began Harold and his brother Cecil joined the Royal Canadian Air Force. Harold served with Bomber Command in England, loading bombs onto Lancaster airplanes. Cecil was based in Ontario and Québec, retrieving planes that had crashed during training.



Harold Walsh with a Hurricane fighter aircraft, United Kingdom, 1945



Harold Walsh, Innsworth, England, September 1945



Volunteering to go to Japan after the war ended in Europe, Harold was granted a two week furlough in Canada, but by the time he got home the war in Japan was over.



Harold, Borden and Cecil Walsh, 1943

And back he went to the bank after demobilization from the Air Force. He

was working in Montréal when he and Mildred Griffith of Vars got married in 1948. They came home in 1949 to take over the farm from Mildred's father, Edward Griffith.



Harold Walsh and Mildred Griffith September 4, 1948

It was a big change for Harold to come back and take over the farm. He had told his Dad that he did not want to farm. However, he did love animals, especially the cats and dogs, and he enjoyed looking after the cattle, improving the herd, and taking off a good crop of hay.

The vintage lamp pictured below belonged to Cecil Walsh and is now owned by his niece Kathy Walsh. An aerial photograph of the Walsh farmstead is printed on the curved lampshade and the scene is illuminated by a lightbulb at the back. The edges of the shade are woven with gold ribbon.



The table lamp is dated from the early 1950s and was manufactured

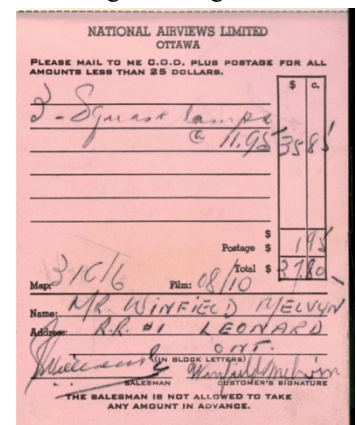
for **National Airviews Limited** of Ottawa. Inspired by the use of aerial photography for strategic purposes by the military during the Second World War, the company photographed rural farmhouses and outbuildings with hand-held cameras from low-flying aircraft, and sold them through local agents and door-to-door sales representatives. For an additional fee, the photographs could be hand-coloured at the photo laboratory.

Sarsfield general store owner, **Roger Villeneuve**, was the local agent for National Airviews. A few years ago the Villeneuve family donated to the CTHS a collection of aerial photo proofs and National Airviews invoices (sample at right) from the family store.

According to this invoice the original cost of such a lamp was \$11.95. The Bank of Canada calculator suggests the 2025 equivalent would be about \$140!

The National Archives of Québec in Montréal holds some two million photographs taken by various aerial photography companies, one being National Airviews Limited.

Sources: <https://www.bankofcanada.ca/rates/related/inflation-calculator/>
Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec BAnQ. <https://advitam.banq.qc.ca/notice/59791>



The CTHS has an ongoing project to identify the aerial farm photographs in the Villeneuve collection. Several dozen have been identified and are displayed at the Navan Fair every year. Come and see them in 2026—you may find your family homestead!

The Dunning Family

By Maggie Clarke and Virginia Vols

Ancestry research has been a meaningful way to reflect on our history and has been a passion in our family for a long time. Recently we decided to focus on our grandmother **Annie Lawrence Dunning**'s side of the family. Our search began using as many ancestry programs, databases and documents we could get our hands on. We finally decided it was time to do some in-person research as there were so many unanswered questions, and the pieces of the puzzle were not quite fitting as we thought they should. Our travels took us Ontario and Québec in a search to uncover unknown roots and to pay honour and respect to those who came before us and provide us with a sense of connection to our past.

It has been an amazing opportunity to learn more about where they lived as well as the historical events of our country that our ancestors lived through. Time after time the name of the Cumberland Township Historical Society would appear, and it became quite clear it was time to check it out in person. Enter Marcia Kennedy (a recently discovered 4th cousin) who is one of the many individuals responsible for the vast collection of books, documents, maps and information the society cares for. The CTHS reading room has proved to hold a mountain of interesting facts about the Dunning family—who they were, where they came from, and just how little we knew about our extended family and their history.

We have found many incredible things including how Dunnings were the first settlers of many regions within eastern Ontario and western Québec, the numerous land grants they received and where the original homesteads were, as well as a Dunning family cemetery in East Templeton, Québec. Interesting facts like the Dunnings once owned the land where Rideau Hall in Ottawa now stands, which answered questions about why many family members were married in what is now MacKay United Church, located across from their property. We found out that there were numerous inter-family marriages between distant cousins—quite normal at the time—as well as marriages into Louis Riel's family. We visited towns such as Bearbrook, Vars, Riceville, Maxville, Cumberland, Navan, Alfred, Champlain,

Hawkesbury, Vankleek Hill and Long Sault, Ontario.

After collecting volumes of information, we were able to assemble a listing of over 75 cemeteries, from north of Ottawa down to the U.S.A. border, in both Ontario and Québec, all with some connection to the Dunning family. Our goal was to visit these cemeteries, photograph the family headstones and talk to as many local people as we could about the history of the area.

It was apparent that there has been a huge shift in society's attitudes, and we found it upsetting that many local municipal offices lacked awareness of who their founding fathers were, where they were buried, and what they had brought to the community. Many cemeteries were created by local families, small communities and churches. Over time, the original caretakers have disbanded, moved or have passed away, and with them years of information that was never recorded was lost. There is considerable uncertainty regarding who oversees the maintenance of these cemeteries, and it has been quite time-consuming to piece together who actually is responsible for a particular cemetery. As one can imagine this has led to a lot of neglect throughout the years. Some of the founders' cemeteries we visited were overgrown. Many had impressive monuments that were now buried in clumps of trees and could not be located until a complete search of the area was undertaken. Other headstones have sunken into the ground and have been driven over by lawn mowers or equipment and had to be dug out. Most of them are not well kept and many have become a place for vandalism. Time, age and weather have taken their toll on many of the older cemeteries. Old headstones made of limestone or sandstone have been damaged by tree roots, frost and erosion and any engraving has been worn away with time. Repairing or replacing these stones is costly and the lack of funding—personal, municipal or governmental—is nonexistent. In addition to repairs there are the maintenance costs of mowing grass, maintaining fences and keeping records. Most of these cemeteries are non-profit or volunteer-run, and they rely on donations or small trust funds that eventually run out.

Municipalities no longer want to care for these places as their limited budgets prioritize things like roads, parks and emergency services with cemeteries rarely make the list unless there is public pressure. Municipalities and their staff still have a very limited historical awareness, which has led to the demolition or bulldozing of headstones into mounds so they could widen a road or make a ditch, with no respect for the site's history. These cemeteries are often referred to as abandoned cemeteries and have been deemed unimportant by local governments. Headstones have been lying in wait to be uncovered. A trip to a cemetery became a fascinating opportunity for us to excavate some of these headstones and research the deceased's history. So, our journey began.

The Dunning family roots started in Devonshire, England with **Theophilus "Fisherman" Dunning** and his family sailing to the New World, landing in the Boston, Massachusetts area in the 1600s. The men of the family served in various military capacities both while in England and in their new home. The family multiplied and moved to various areas within the American colonies.

Theophilus' great-great grandson, **Abijah Dunning Senior**, was born in Fairfield, Connecticut. Having watched his father, uncles and grandfather serve in the military it was natural for him and his sons to follow in their footsteps. Despite remaining loyal to the British Crown, Abijah Dunning Sr served under George Washington early in the American Revolutionary War. After the war, he and his wife, Elizabeth "Betsy" Gregory, their four sons and one daughter made their way to Lower Canada, arriving first in Saint-Jean-Sur Richelieu in 1791, Abijah becoming one of the many thousands of United Empire Loyalists whose arrival had a huge impact on Canadian history.

Abijah Senior and Betsy Dunning moved to Montréal and then to Buckingham, Québec where they obtained a land grant in 1795, being among the first settlers in that region. Then in 1801 they established themselves across the Ottawa River on four lots comprising 800 acres of land at Cumberland. The Dunnings were joined by neighbours from the Buckingham settlement, the Foubert family.

Together the two families built up the settlement that would become Cumberland Village, and their names are carried on today in the Township: Dunning Road, Faubert Street, Dunning-Foubert Elementary School, and the Foubert House at the Cumberland museum. [Note that Faubert is an alternative spelling of the family name.]

Abijah Senior and Betsy Dunning moved again, this time to Cassburn, near L'Orignal. When Abijah Senior passed away in 1809 and Betsy in 1820, their youngest son **William Dunning** erected a gravestone for each of them in Cassburn Cemetery. Their headstones still stand tall, weathered with time. In total 21 Dunnings are buried in Cassburn as well as 33 members of the Bancroft family who married into the Dunning family, and 3 members of the Bangs family. Dale's Cemetery in Cumberland Village is home to 51 Dunning family members. Most cemeteries in the area have at least one Dunning family member in them.

Abijah and Betsy Dunning's eldest son **Abijah Dunning II** had 14 children. After experiencing many personal setbacks and broken promises from local governments, Abijah II and a few of his sons, including our great-great grandfather, **Lewis Abijah King Dunning**, decided to establish themselves in East Templeton, Québec, becoming some of the area's first settlers. They also wanted to be able to provide for their families and were aware that there was not much land to divide amongst the sons if they stayed in Cumberland.

With Abijah Dunning II passing in 1839, the family designated a piece of cattle pasture overlooking a ravine as the family cemetery. This became the Dunning Cemetery of East Templeton. Abijah was buried between two large oak trees at one of his favourite spots in the area. Alongside him are his family members, including grandchildren who passed on early. The cemetery is full of early pioneers and has become a historical marker for the local Gatineau, Québec community, showcasing the roots of the settlers and descendants. It is home to 13 members of the Dunning family as well as 84 other graves—the majority of which

are connected to the Dunnings. The cemetery is now linked to East Templeton United Church and is run by a board of directors.

Lewis Abijah King Dunning went on to have 17 children. **Henry Dunning** was Lewis's 15th child, and our great grandfather. He married **Elizabeth Frappier**, and together they had ten children, one of them being our grandmother, **Annie Lawrence Dunning**.

Henry's uncle, **Abijah Dunning III**, and his family had moved west in the 1880s. Lauder and Hartney were small railway towns in southwestern Manitoba and here they farmed successfully for many years. There is a family bridge crossing called Dunning Bridge close to where Abijah and his family once lived.

Abijah convinced several family members to apply for 160 acres of land under the Dominion Lands Act of 1872 and join him in the West. His nephew Henry and Elizabeth Dunning thought this was a grand idea. There would be open spaces to roam, room to grow, and lots of opportunity for the children to have farms of their own. In 1906, this family of ten boarded a train for Saskatchewan, bidding farewell to brothers and sisters they would never see again. Among the memorable stories told of the journey, one recalls the two younger children being identified as twins and were able to ride the train for free. Henry and his family settled in Willow Creek, close to Star City, Saskatchewan. Other Dunnings received tracts of land in the Tisdale, Melfort and Prince Albert regions of Saskatchewan. Henry and his sons had great success with cattle. Sadly, Henry died 11 years after arriving, at the age of 67, after chasing cows that had gotten out of a field. His sons carried on grain and cattle farming; his daughters became nurses and homemakers, all having large families. Some took over their family farms while others were carpenters, construction company owners, pastors, insurance agents, mechanics and automobile dealers.

Having a place to worship was important to the family and upon arriving in any new location, the family found a way to build their home church. The

family continues to be active in their local churches, serving in a variety of roles, building Sunday Schools and orphanages and pastoring a mega church in Edmonton.

The family has grown and continues to prosper. The West is still home to many Dunning relatives and farming is still a big part of the Dunning family, with homes and farms located throughout the Prairie provinces.

The Dunning family has been scattered from coast to coast across Canada and the U.S.A.—from Salem, Massachusetts to Connecticut, upstate New York, Saint-Jean-Sur Richelieu, Montréal, Buckingham, Cumberland, L'Orignal, Hawkesbury, Vankleek Hill, and on to the Canadian Prairies. The family, being well educated, served in many different capacities in the communities they founded. They served their local communities as postmasters, judges, justices of the peace, and members of parliament. They were coroners, pastors, fur traders, loggers, miners, farmers and teachers. They were entrepreneurs who owned and operated taverns, logging mills, soap factories and ferry owners. Descendant families include Dunning, Golightly, Bancroft, Foubert, Frappier, Rawson, Riel, Prescott, Dewar, Toll, McConnell, Kennedy, Giles, Schweig, Way and the list goes on and on. Dunning connections are also claimed with Winston Churchill, Lady Jane Grey, and the presidential Bush family of the U.S.A. To date we have identified over 5443 people in our family tree and there are still so many more to be discovered.

What have we learned over these past few years of wandering around in cemeteries?

Life is short, it doesn't matter who you are, rich or poor, prominent or not. Life eventually comes to an end. It makes us wonder what type of legacy are we leaving behind? Will our children know our story and the stories of those that have gone before us? Will our gravestone be one of those buried in the dirt over time or will there be others that follow us who can inspire a new generation to reflect and find the true meaning of life?

About the authors: Margaret "Maggie" Clarke resides in Winnipeg, Manitoba and Virginia Vols resides in Regina, Saskatchewan. They are the granddaughters of Annie Lawrence Dunning (Wright) who called Prince Albert, Saskatchewan her home from a very young age. They make an annual trip to Ottawa and Québec each summer to search out new contacts and interesting facts about their history and assist in cemetery clean-up as time permits. They welcome any contact, photos and stories you may have about the Dunning family and can be reached at maggielclarke67@icloud.com

Messages from Your CTHS Executive

◆Letters, we get letters!!... Well, not so many letters anymore. Most information queries now come by email. THOSE we get. This past year alone, we've been asked to: Confirm the maiden name and family history of someone's 4th great grandmother whose family lived in Cumberland; Find proof of Canadian birth in Bearbrook for someone's 2nd great grandmother; Provide information on town history and local town folk for someone married in Cumberland c1890; Research pre-contact life in the Cumberland area before 1800 and locate any indication of native settlement; Research and locate the country and place of origin for several families who settled in Cumberland before 1850. And more.



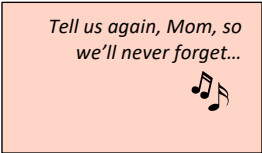
◆Remembrance Day services will be held at Township cenotaphs:

Vars – Sunday, November 9th at 2 p.m.

Cumberland – Tuesday, November 11th at 10:30 a.m.

Navan – Tuesday, November 11th at 10:45 a.m.

◆For anyone with Dutch roots, or with a connection to the Canadians who liberated the Netherlands in 1945, you may wish to attend a "Concert for Remembrance Day" on Sunday, November 9th at 2 p.m. Singer Pauline van der Roest and pianist Frédéric Lacroix will present World War II stories, songs and poems told to Pauline by her Dutch mother. The concert is at Navan-Vars United Church, 1129 Smith Road, Navan. For ticket information see the church website: navan-vars-united.org



SAVE THE DATE!
Cumberland Township Historical Society Meeting
Tuesday, November 11, 2025
7 p.m.
Lori Nash Room
Ray Friel Complex
1585 Tenth Line Road, Orléans

◆The CTHS fall general meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 11th at 7 p.m. in the Lori Nash Room—just inside the exterior doors leading to the Cumberland Public Library in the Ray Friel Complex, 1585 Tenth Line Road, Orléans.

Our guest speaker will be Sam Dagg. Sam's roots go back to some of the earliest settlers in the area. A lifelong Navan resident, he retired after a career with Cumberland then Ottawa Fire Departments and was a key player in the Guinness Book of Records 50 Horse Hitch, the 2001 International Plowing Match and was very actively involved in the Navan Fair for many years. Sam is looking forward to speaking with you and answering your questions. Bring a friend!

◆Attention Members: If you are in the History Room at the Cumberland Library, please sign the register. If you take out any item from the collection, please sign it out in the register. Thank you.

CTHS Book Reprints available

We've had a busy summer getting some of our titles reprinted. We now have more copies of the following books available for sale.

- **The Early History of Cumberland Township 1798-1840** - \$30.
- **Navan of Yesteryear** - \$15. Descriptions and photographs of the early homes and businesses of Navan village
- **Family Ghost** by Ken Dugdale - \$20. A first-person account by a Second World War RCAF officer whose bomber plane was shot down. He tells of his time in hiding in the Netherlands and imprisonment in Germany.
- **Stitching Hope by Hand: WWII Cumberland Blue Quilt** - \$40. In 1943 the Cumberland Red Cross branch raised money for the war effort by selling autograph space on a quilt. Decades later the names on the quilt were researched, resulting in dozens of family stories being "stitched together" in this amazing book.

These and several other books are available for sale through the CTHS website cths.ca, and at the Cumberland Heritage Village Museum and the Clarence-Rockland Museum.

Cumberland Soldiers			
WW1 1914-1918			
Earl Adams	William Chapman	W. I. S. Hayes	Alex McLean
Ernest John Allen	William James Deary	Charles Holmes	Thomas James McLean
Emmerson A. Allen	Edward G. Devine	Robert James Kennedy	Duncan F. McMillan
Angus E. Beaton	Robert Earl Devine	Thomas W. Kennedy	Thomas McMillan
Bert G. Beaton	Archibald Edwards	John MacKenzie	Frank Shepley
James E. Blaney	John MacKenzie	Charles L. Lough	Thomas Shepley
John F. Blaney	Russ Fraser	William Houston Lough	Sydney Spill
Wesley Blaney	Thomas Thomas Fyfe	John MacKenzie	William James Spill
Ralph James Bunn	Samuel Galloway	James MacKenzie	Clarence H. Smith
Howie J. Cameron	Alexander Galloway	Charles Henry Mackenzie	Robert Leslie Taylor
Frank Carr	James Galloway	John Arthur Mackenzie	
Arthur Chapman	Walter Galloway	Robert Mackenzie	
Henry Chapman	Harold Galloway	Charles Lough	Leonard Morton
Emmerson Allen	James Galloway	Earl Lough	Arthur Owen
Herbert Adams	William Galloway	Robert Herbert Jr. (BII)	Allen Minogue
Henry Beckman	Edwin Hackett	Lough	Irwin Minogue
George Blaney	Peter MacKenzie	Edward Martin	James Minogue
Richard Blaney	George Hanson	Marjorie Martin	Richard Pageault
Everaldine Campbell	Robert Hayes	Marjorie McArthur	Leahon Schmitz
Robert Smith	Erwin Huggins	John MacEwan	Arnold Schmitz
John Dunning	Robert Huggins	Neil MacEwan	Patrick Schmitz
Ralph Dunning	Lawrence A. Johnson	Neil MacEwan	Carleton Smith
Clarence E. Evans	Wilbur A. Johnson	Robert MacEwan	Lesley Thomas
Clayton Frasier	Crawford Jones	Gordon McLaughlin	Alma Wilson
Charles Fraser	Robert John Kennedy	Gordon McMillan	Alvin Wilson
Douglas Fraser	John Fraser	Arnold Mulbert	Carleton Wilson
John Fraser	Leslie Fraser	Robert Mulbert	Clarence Wilson
James Fraser	Irving Farmer Kennedy	Benjamin Mounie	Charles Woodoff
James Galloway	Charles Lough	Benard Morton	William Woodoff
Kenneth Galloway			
Korean War 1950-1953			
Robert Moore	Richard Hoggal	Paul Satcho	
Robert Victor Arnold	Paul Satcho	Garth (Garry) Watson	
Wilbur Junior	Garth (Garry) Watson	Richard Riddion	
James Martin	Richard Riddion		
Douglas Moore			*Killed in Action

Along with Gail Beaton's name being added to the list of contributors, nine men's names have been added to the list of Cumberland Soldiers in the new edition of the 'Quilt Book': James Blaney, Robinson Blaney, Evan Devine, Archibald Edwards and Samuel Galloway (First World War) and Ralph Dunning, Douglas Fraser, Charles Lough and Irwin Minogue (Second World War). Archibald Edwards' story is told on pages 4-5 of this edition of The Caboose.