

Osgoode Township Historical Society & Museum

Vernon School
P.O. Box 83 - Vernon, Ontario
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Newsletter

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On the Castor, near Vernon, early 1900's

SOCIETY NEWS BY David Gray

1. Next Meeting - December 6th, 8 p.m. at the museum.

"The Use and Development of Plows"

The speaker for the evening will be Mr. George Nicholson of Ramsayville, a specialist in agricultural technology at the National Museum of Science and Technology. His talk will include information on plows manufactured in our township and will be illustrated with slides.

New members, guests, and visitors are all welcome.

2. New Publications

Now available at the museum or by mail:

- (1) Springhill Cemetery - \$6.50
- (2) An Early Ontario Harvest - Receipts from the Southeastern Counties - collected by Alice M. T. Dow - \$6.00

3. Upgrading of the museum building

Thanks to a generous offer from one of our founding members, the renovation and upgrading of our museum is finally underway. Elizabeth has volunteered to donate to the society, the cost of installing a new insulated wall with smaller, triplepane windows on the north side of the museum. This will be an important first step, and will make the coming winter much more comfortable for our research activities.

As we progress with the upgrading of the museum, we will need the the help of more members; both to maintain the ongoing research into our township history and the care and growth of our collections, and to help in the planning and the actual work of the renovations. Both the museum committee and the historical committee will be looking for volunteers this winter. Save some time for us!

MUSEUM NOTES

1. Metcalf Fair

The prize for the best entry in the class sponsored by our society went to Nancy Dixon of Edwards who displayed an excellent collection of old tin utensils which would have been used in a kitchen while making cookies "the way Grandma did!"

The raffle of the hand-made quilt donated to us by Alice Craig was a great success. At the time of the draw at the fair, we had collected a total of \$577.00! Thanks to Alice and all those who bought and sold the tickets. Shirley Lowe of Manotick was the lucky winner.

2. Certificate Awarded

Our curator, Viviane Shorey, has now completed the eight prescribed courses in Museology after 2½ years of part-time studies. She was

2. continued

awarded her "Certificate in Basic Museum Studies" at the Ontario Museums Association meeting in Kingston in October. The museum will benefit greatly from her knowledge of museum techniques and requirements, especially in these times when funding for any museum is hard to obtain.

3. What is a Museum? - By Viviane Shorey

If asked that question, a lot of people would answer that a museum is a dark, musty, old building, full of dull, old stuff lying around, and with no one very certain what it is, or why it's there at all. In many cases they would be right. But museums these days are trying to get away from that image and I am sure that some of you have seen interesting and colourful displays telling of the wonders of nature and the story of people with courage and vision, enterprise and talent.

"A museum in its simplest form, consists of a building to house collections of objects for inspiration, study and enjoyment," that is the definition given by the late Allen Douglas, director of the Royal Scottish Museum.

Museums have a long history, stretching back into the past to the great civilizations of Greece and Rome and the Far East. In Japan can be found what is believed to be the oldest museum in the world, dating to the 8th century. In Europe in the middle ages, the monasteries and churches all had collections of relics and precious manuscripts decorated with silver and gold. But all these museums were only for the study and enjoyment of the privileged few. It was only in the late 17th century that some museums opened their doors to the public.

People love to collect things, and eventually some of these collections make their way into a museum. If you are lucky enough and your collection valuable enough, you might even have the collections named after you!

Now, we have museums of all kinds. There are natural science museums, art museums, history museums, museums of science and technology, botanical, garden and zoos (yes, they are museums), and then there are hundreds of specialized museums, such as stamp museums, money museums, wool museums, lace museums, costume museums, and museums specializing in games, marine history, or woodworking. I even know of a potato museum!

A museum has to decide what to collect. It cannot collect everything and anything, because it would soon run out of space and end up looking like a run-down community attic or flea market, with plenty of dust and dead flies into the bargain. Nor should a museum be in the business of providing free storage for people who have things they cannot bear to throw away.

The other day, someone with his tongue in cheek also said, "a museum is a repository of curiosities that more often than not includes the directors!"

And what about our museum? The Osgoode Township Museum is a local history museum devoted to telling the story of the development of the township and of the hardworking and enterprising people who made it all possible. A noted museologist, Dr. Guthe, said it this way: "The local history museum has the unique privilege and responsibility of serving as the tangible expression of the living memory of the community, by giving its citizens the opportunity to see and understand the objects that once played a part in its past experiences."

Section #4 for \$35.00 for the erection of a new school to replace the old one on lot 15, Con. 4. The agreement was signed by Andrew Doyle, Patrick O'Brien, and James Herbert. For many years it was known as Herbert School. Countless numbers of young men and women left that one room school house to find their way of life as farmers, teachers, nurses, politicians, religious, etc. Many travelled to far off places.

In 1959-60 a new and modern class room was added to the old school to accommodate the increase in population in the area. In 1967-68 due to the amalgamating of all small schools, bussing children to larger schools came into being. The school was used by the Public School Board for a few months and then was reopened by the Separate School Board and continued to be used until 1980, for home economics and wood work. In Sept. 1980, the Community Christian School Association rented the school and continue to use it with 35 to 40 children in attendance. For over 100 years children have received their early education, have laughed and played, and continue to do so at the school at Herberts Corner.

The Post Office at Herberts Corner was established the 1st of November, 1904. Michael Herbert was Post Master from 1-11-1904 to 8-4-1914, when it was closed for rural delivery. James Herbert delivered the mail from Herberts Corner to the Railway Station (Osgoode), 1-6-1905 to 1-7-1909; J. J. McEvoy 1-7-1909 to 16-10-1912; George Ken 16-10-1912 to 8-4-1914.

The 1863 map of Osgoode Township show the inhabitants as the families of P. Herbert, John Daley, A. Doyle, S. Doyle, P. Shanahan, and Ed Daniel, and the school house situated on the S-W corner of the N 1 of lot 15, Con. 4.

Today there are 15 residences, a two room school and one portable class room, plus a well kept Jewish Cemetery, in those same lots 15 and 16 in 3rd and 4th concessions.

Notes of Interest The village of Kenmore was named by the McLarens after the village of Kenmore in Perthshire, Scotland, from which they came.

Friday, January 7, 1881, Municipal Election in Osgoode Township : Reeve, Ira Morgan; Deputy Reeve, R. Cleland; Second Deputy, James Whiteside; Councillors Duncan Kennedy and James Herbert.

February 28, 1881 - 25 box cars were being loaded at Osgoode Station with hay and grain for western Canada.

In the late 1850's and early 60's Osgoode Township, in common with the whole Ottawa district, used to be visited by tea smugglers from the United States. At that time there was a heavy duty on tea and the sale of smuggled tea was a very profitable occupation. It could be bought much cheaper from the smugglers than in the stores. There were many brushes between the smugglers and government inspectors, but with faster horses they always managed to escape. Sometimes when chased, the smugglers would turn into a farmers yard and then there would be a scurry to unload the tea out of the back of the buggy and hide it in the bush, all before the inspector got on the scene. Helping the smugglers gave the farmers quite a kick.

Some Stories Worth Telling Twice A story told by Patrick Dewan. This story narrates what is probably the greatest Halloween trick ever pulled off in this part of the County, at least. In the early 1870's, south of Metcalfe village, Halloween fell on a Friday that year and the farmer who was the victim, had intended to start to town very early Saturday morning, so as to arrive on Byward market by six o'clock or earlier. On the barn floor he had a wagon loaded with 100 bushels (in bags) of oats all ready to hitch the horses to. That night at 10 o'clock, after the farmer was in bed and sound asleep, a large crowd of husky young men arrived by pre-arrangement at the barn. With them, they had a couple of wrenches, ropes and all necessary equipment for what they intended to do. The ladder they wanted was already at the side of the barn. Then, with well planned precision, they proceeded to take the wheels off the wagon. Next, some of the young men mounted the barn roof and the wagon, without the wheels, was pulled to the top of the barn and balanced on the ridge cap. Then, the wheels were hauled up and placed back on the wagon. Next, the oats was hauled up and placed back on the wagon also. The barn door was then shut, as it had been found and the conspirators went away. In their operations, they had been helped by the fact that the barn was well back from the house and the noise of the operation was not heard.

In due time, the farmer was at the barn with his team ready to start. His surprise can be imagined, but it was not till daylight that he discovered what had happened. As the farmer had to hire to help get the load down, it can be assumed that the conspirators kept very mum. Mr. Dewan made it clear that he was not one of those present.