

Vol. 1– January 2015

H.E.I.R.S. newsletter

Harrow Early Immigrant Research Society



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Harrow & Colchester South
Community Centre (Arena Bldg.)



Inside this Issue...

January Meeting:
Growing Up In Essex County - Long Ago

Newsletter News!

Welcome to the first issue of the HEIRS newsletter for 2015.

Once again our directors have been working diligently behind the scenes to line up interesting speakers, topics and local trips related to the history of Harrow and the surrounding counties.

With your input, these meetings can be better targeted to meet your needs. Whether help with the best way to start your own family discovery, or to find out more about the geographic history in your own back yard, HEIRS strives to be supportive first, informative second, and fun third. (Sometimes we switch up the order to give fun a much bigger role.)

Won't you join us for a meeting or two this year?

January Meeting

When: Thursday, January 22nd, 1:30 PM

Where: Harrow-Colchester Arena Community Centre

HEIRS will once again meet in the Harrow-Colchester Arena meeting room to go back in time and "be kids again". We plan to remind you of forgotten people and places - favourites of all kinds that you haven't thought about in years.

We will look back at Essex County as it was, but is no more - when 12 cents got you into the movie theatre, colour TV was still a dream, Fibber McGee and Molly were on the radio, Rock and Roll was new and fun, and everyone had 'Lunch with Soupy'.

Richard Herniman has some memories of being a Harrow kid to share, and we encourage all our members to bring souvenirs of their childhood for displaying, and also to please bring your own memories to share with us.

We want to hear about your favourite teacher (or least favourite), where you had your first alcoholic drink, how you cut school, and whatever mischief you got into as a kid.



The more who take part in this sharing session, the better. It should be a lot of fun!

On November 27th, HEIRS held its final meeting of 2014, and heard Bill Brundage tell of his efforts to save and restore the sole remaining Boblo blockhouse.

It was built in 1839, following the rebellion of 1837, when armed groups from the U.S., called "Patriots" invaded the Windsor and Amherstburg area. These "Patriots" were routed and many were either executed or exiled to Tasmania, a remote penal colony.

The British and Canadian forces feared further attacks, so a blockhouse was built on the southern shore of Bois Blanc Island, facing Lake Erie. This outpost allowed troops to watch both the lake and the Detroit River for any signs of invasion, and sound an early alarm. No shots were ever fired here, but it was used for a number of years for sentry purposes.

Over the years, it began to decay, and when Bill Brundage saw it in 2011, he decided it had to be rescued, & quickly. He found little local interest or support, but eventually Domenic Amicone, who owns Boblo Island, & Dr. Norm Becker, of Becker Engineering, came on board.



The blockhouse was completely dismantled, a foundation put in place, & the structure restored, though much old timber was not reusable. A remarkable job was done to save a one-of-a-kind jewel. These 3 gentlemen, among others, have done a service to us all & our grandchildren now have the opportunity to go back in time & see that Canadian history is exciting to learn about.



On behalf of HEIRS and the Faire Tyme Toys company, which makes replica pioneer items, Bill Brundage accepts a wooden musket from Director Ted Steele, to start a display at the blockhouse.

4 Local Events

On November 6, HEIRS Director, Ted Steele spoke at the Windsor Community Museum (the Baby House), on *Unsung Heroes of World War II*. Ted told of ordinary people who did extraordinary things because "it was the right thing to do".

Included in this list were Oskar Schindler (of *Schindler's List*), Audrey Hepburn, Anne Frank, Irena Sendler, and the "Candy Bomber" Gale Halvorsen, among others. They showed us all that good exists in the human spirit at the darkest of times, and that decency will ultimately prevail. Most of the audience did not know much about HEIRS itself, but quickly snapped up a large supply of our October newsletter!



HEIRS Directors

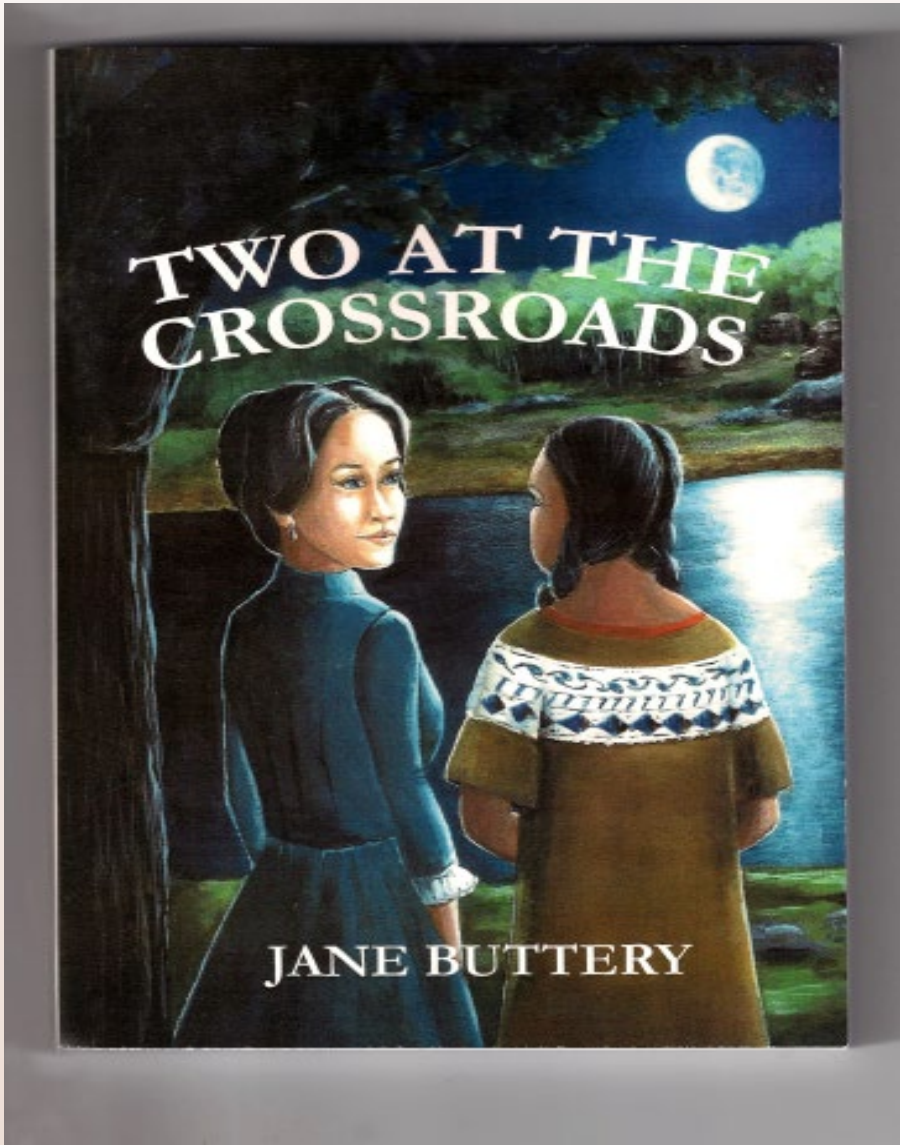
Front row: Jo-Ann Jenereaux, Pauline Baldwin, Esther Meerschaut, Kathy Langlois

Back row: Richard Herniman, Chris Carter, John Brush, Ted Steele

Absent: Peter Timmins

On Thursday, January, 22nd, at 7 PM, the Questers meet in Leamington at the WFCU building on Erie Street, very near the Wal-Mart store. Questers is a volunteer group dedicated to the preservation and collection of antiques, and to encourage the preservation and restoration of historic landmarks. It began in Pennsylvania in 1950, and has spread, now including 10 Ontario chapters, including Windsor and Leamington.

For more information, call Jackie at 519-326-1361, or contact Mrs. Beverly Cyr, 3784 Ouellette Ave., Windsor, Ontario, (or by phone at 519-969-6211). The January 22nd meeting is a sharing session on "Your Best or Most Recent Find".



Two At The Crossroads

- by Jane Buttery

This is the latest book by local author Jane Buttery. In it, she takes historical fact and blends it with events which, though fictional, could easily have actually occurred.

Catherine Malott was indeed a captive of the Shawnee for a number of years, and was rescued by Simon Girty, who eventually married her.

The Shawnee leader was Tecumseh, and this novel creates a relationship between Catharine, the captive, and Tecumapese, sister of Tecumseh.

Jane is careful to show the positive side to the Shawnee culture, and the hardships they faced daily, largely due to the encroaching white settlements and conflict with the soldiers who constantly pressured them to leave their traditional lands.

The two women of the book developed an understanding of each other and a close relationship which endured throughout their lives. While individuals may be fiction, the emotions, the relationships and the motives of the characters ring true, and give a good idea of how the people of the time interacted and supported one another.

Simon Girty is depicted, with both his good and bad points noted, making him more of a real person than many other books have done. Throughout the story, the reader encounters the names of people and places, deeply rooted in Essex County history, and many will indeed find their own ancestors involved.

This is a paperback book of approximately 150 pages, with some illustrations in black and white, and is available at HEIRS and other outlets for \$15.

6 Upcoming Events

In December, Amherstburg hosted a winter carnival event, with wagon rides, singing entertainment, & various displays of Christmas merchandise. Faire Tyme Toys, the group who made the wooden musket presented to the Boblo Blockhouse Group, had a large display of old time toys and household items for sale, and showed great interest in the blockhouse project.

The photo below shows Bill Brundage of the Blockhouse Group, speaking with toymaker John Skakel of Faire Tyme Toys. Bill has indicated that a plan to restore the Boblo lighthouse is now in the works - stay tuned for more on this in coming months.



Interested in family history??

Then please join the Kent Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society for one or all of our monthly meetings. Free and open to the public. For more info, visit our website at:

www.ogs.on.ca/kent/

2015 Program Schedule

January 9, 2015 - DIGITAL COLLECTION - CK Library staff
February 13, 2015 - DABBLING IN DNA - Brenda Travis
March 13, 2015 - THE BALDOON SETTLEMENT - Brian Anderson
April 10, 2015 - UKRAINIAN RESEARCH - Wayne Vizniowski
May 8, 2015 - VICTORIAN CELEBRATION OF DEATH - Catherine MacKendrick
June 12, 2015 - RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS - Geraldine Robertson

All meetings are held at 7 P.M. at St. Andrew's Residence at 99 Park St., Chatham. Open and free to the public!

MEETINGS ARE LIVE STREAMED AND RECORDED

Visit our website for details to join us live online



FAMILY DAY OPEN HOUSE

CLIMB YOUR FAMILY TREE!!!!

The Kent Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society and the Chatham Kent Public Library invite you to tour our family history collections.



Saturday

February 14, 2015

10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

**Chatham Branch,
Chatham-Kent Public
Library 2nd floor**



January 1

The local council consists of Reeve W. A. McCormick, Ern Pastorius, T. W. Crowe, John Wilson, Thomas Bondy. Trustees are F. H. Ferriss, W. H. Ferriss, Charles Clark. Gravel roads, no plans for concrete yet.

January 15

The A J Green elevator is very busy with corn. Tobacco is 8 to 12 cents a pound. The farmers have not yet been paid for their crops from 1914.

Breakfast food ads feature "corn flakes, puffed wheat, puffed rice, Quaker Oats, Cream of Wheat, Shredded Wheat, etc." Other ads: Floods; Gold Medal Flour; F. H. Ferriss, "Home of the Good Eats"; J. H. Madill; C. Richardson & Son; Clarence Cornwall, at Heaton Block; People's General Store; W. R. Boyce; H. McDonald & Son; J. C. Murray, cash store, East Harrow; P. Hallo and Son, wool blankets, underwear, mackinaw rubbers, dry goods, boots, shoes; E. F. Darby; W. C. Webster, the harness man; Imperial Bank.

January 22

W. R. Boyce & Co. forced to reduce \$28 000 worth of stock - carpets, rugs, raincoats, furs, men's suits, dished groceries dress goods, ladies' and children's wear. Due to the backward season, and hard times, we need to save our good name. (Failure of the local cannery was a severe blow to local people.)

January 29

Eli Reno and Arthur J. Best exchanged properties. The hotel was exchanged for the Reno House and 35 acres adjoining the village. Reno will open a boarding house. The name has also been spelled both "Renno" and "Renaud". There is an ethnic difference in the names; we believe that Renaud is the correct spelling.

St. Mark's AME Zion parsonage and church at Colchester Village is destroyed by fire. Minister was Rev. F.A. Dorey.

The Failed Invasions of Canada

- by Ted Steele, HEIRS Director

Canada began to take shape as a country following the American Revolution, when thousands fled the American side of the border to escape persecution for backing the British in the war, or even for remaining neutral in some cases. During the war, many of these Loyalists paid dearly for their political views.

As most of us know, confiscation of property, branding of hands, tarring and feathering, riding sharp rails and lynching were not unusual events. In some cases, prisoners were taken to a prison in Connecticut, called Newgate, for incarceration. This was actually an unused copper mine; unfortunate Loyalists were lowered 88 feet down into a hot, damp cavern less than 6 feet in height in many spots. They were shown how to mine the copper that remained, and had to earn their food rations. They would occasionally be brought to the surface for air and exercise purposes, but not often.

Surprisingly, there were numerous escapes, likely brought about with the bribing of a guard or 2. Early prisoners confined here included Adam Snyder and a Robert Steele, noted highwayman! Instructions were given to treat these prisoners "exactly as tigers are treated".

The 1790s saw these Loyalist refugees establish homes and families in British territory, never for a moment forgetting how their former neighbours and friends had treated them.

Small wonder, then, that in 1812 the Canadian forces supported the British, even though U S leaders told the American public that Canadians

would quickly join the American troops to drive out the British.

In 1837, small pockets of resistance to the current form of government in Canada, the Family Compact, led to armed conflict, and American groups saw an opportunity to again force the British out of North America. Along the border, over 20 incursions by American groups, called Patriots, occurred and again few Canadians supported their attempts to invade.

Local militia groups fought well to defend their homelands. One such attack is called the Battle of Windsor, of which we will write more in another issue. This was in fact the reason for the building of the blockhouses on Boblo Island, allowing sentries to watch for any future American invasion forces into the Detroit River area. Old memories indeed linger, and old hatreds die slowly!

In the 1860s, Irish American radicals attacked across the border, again expecting local support. Again none was forthcoming, and the raiders quickly retreated. It should be noted that by this point, no official American support was given to these "Fenian" raiders either. Their raids did however accelerate the uniting of the colonies into one nation, in the interests of self-preservation.

Canadians have always felt a debt of loyalty to the crown, in varying degrees, and this was only gradually recognized by the U.S. citizenry. Once it was accepted, the path of peaceful co-operation between neighbours quickly developed.

Cenotaph Commemorative Brick Order Form



The proceeds from the sale of these bricks will be used to help fund the Harrow Cenotaph Project currently underway. The bricks will form the area directly in front of the Cenotaph. These commemorative bricks will be a wonderful permanent commemoration of you or your family's presence in the community. It could also be a commemoration of your business or organization or a memorial to relatives or friends. Please act now, to help honour the Veterans who have served this country. Charitable donation receipts will be issued for the purchase of any bricks (donation receipts are limited to \$85 for small brick & \$225 for large brick). Please fill in the below order form & submit it as soon as possible to guarantee that your brick will be in place.

Commemorative Brick Sizes are: 4" x 8" for \$100.00 and 8" x 8" for \$250.00

4" x 8" bricks have space for two lines with up to 11 characters per line (total of 22) including spaces and punctuation such as dashes, apostrophes and quotation marks. **Number of these Bricks is limited to 300!**

8" x 8" bricks have space for four lines with up to 11 characters per line (total of 44) including spaces and punctuation such as dashes, apostrophes and quotation marks. **Number of these Bricks is limited to 240!**

Print plainly, one brick per order form, Please print the letters exactly as you want them to appear on the brick (one letter per box).

Line 1											
Line 2											

Optional lines for 8" x 8" Brick below

Line 3											
Line 4											

Please! Return this form along with payment to the Harrow Legion 37 McAffee St. Harrow

Your Name: _____

Address: _____

Address line 2: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____

Make cheques payable to: The Town of Essex- Harrow Cenotaph Fund.

Hours of Operation: September to June (excluding December)

Tuesday & Thursday: 10AM - 3PM, Wednesday or other appointments: (Please call to confirm hours.)

Memberships Due: May 2014 to April 2015: \$25 per person / couple (CDN / U.S.)
Send cheque to: HEIRS PO Box 53, Harrow ON Canada N0R 1G0

Please include your phone, fax, email, website & names you are now researching.

Non-member user fee for HEIRS Research Library, as of January 2013: \$5 / visit (+ photocopy costs).

HEIRS Newsletter

The HEIRS newsletter is published 9 times per year, in conjunction with General Meetings held on the 4th Thursday of the month, from September through June (with the exception of December).

Newsletters via Email

If you currently receive our newsletter by mail and would prefer to receive it by email, simply provide your email address to any one of our newsletter committee members. Not only will you be able to archive the full colour newsletter PDF easily on your computer, it will save HEIRS the extra handling, reproduction and mailing costs.

Special thanks to Greg Harrison at the Computer Centre in Harrow, for his ongoing support of all things technical, setting up our new equipment, and keeping things running smoothly.



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