

Vol. 10 – Nov/Dec 2021



HEIRS

Harrow Early Immigrant Research Society

n e w s l e t t e r



Lest we forget...

Welcome to the November / December 2021 newsletter.

It's usually around the New Year that we start to see those 'remember when' news programs providing recaps of the past year's events. Unfortunately, HEIRS does not have its own television channel, so I thought I'd take a moment to recap some of those things that we all can look back on during 2021.

Remember when...

We used to be worried about going out to buy groceries safely...

- now we're more worried about what they might cost us!

We would be horrified if someone walked into a bank with a mask on...

- now we would be terrified if they didn't!

We thought going to gas up at the local station was just another chore...

- now it's like a mini-vacation from all the dread & disaster predictions we hear on TV!

We thought dressing up on Halloween was a special night...

- now every night we can see RuPaul's Drag Race, or Canada & the UK Drag Race shows!

We were 'single' & headed to the local bar on a date...

- now we're a bachelor/bachelorette & need to date 12 girls/guys at a time to find true love!

We had plans to meet to discuss our common interest in genealogy, family history or to finally get all those image files in boxes named & family stories written...

- now we're counting on 2022 for all that to happen! I hope your wishes come true.

Phew... Ted & I exchanged over 2,000 emails in 2021... fostering & confirming article ideas – obtaining images, director updates, upcoming events, & deciding on cover themes. (Oh... and we corrected a few typos too). Thank you to members who contributed family articles & images this year. Our goal over the past decade was to provide an interesting read for members. We look forward to doing so again in 2022.

Stay safe, stay optimistic & stay in touch with a fellow HEIRS member...

especially during the upcoming holiday season! - Rick McCormick

Quick, who took the 1st ever 'selfie'?

Answer... Robert Cornelius, in 1839

Thirty year old Robert, successfully took the "selfie" seen in this murky daguerreotype some 13 years after the first ever photograph was taken.

*Bobby was an experienced chemist, who captured his own likeness in his Philadelphia, PA, shop. He did this by popping the lens cap off his camera, then dashing into the frame, remained still for 60 seconds, & then leaped back to replace the lens on again. **What no duck lips?***

Trivial Pursuit tonight anyone?



What is HEIRS up to NOW?

First of all, we continue our efforts to get back to 'normal' & to fill the slate of directors as best we can. Until our elections in May 2022, we encourage anyone interested to consider joining us on the board, to help keep this group running smoothly beyond our 50th year, in 2021.

OPEN...not as usual

But, we ARE open for visitors Tuesdays & Thursdays, 10 AM to 3 PM, with social distancing and masking rules in place. We'll be closed for the month of December as usual, then bring in the new year with the expectation that it will be better than the last 22 months.

Current Year DUE\$ please

With \$30 now, your 2021 dues will be up-to-date. Can't remember? Just contact us to check your status. **In January, newsletters go out ONLY to paid members. Yes, we're checking our list, checking it twice... so make sure you're not on the "naughty" list.** Even while closed due to Covid, HEIRS has had to pay ongoing monthly expenses, and funds are depleted.

May 2022 to April 2023 membership dues will be payable May 1st.

Fingers crossed, we plan a live, in-person meeting on the 4th Thursday in January. Director Ted Steele will present genealogy items of interest, & plans to have you laughing at somewhat silly items too. Join us for coffee, cookies & a good time. We expect that 'good old days' feeling to return, when we all can laugh & learn safely. Some new items will be available for purchase. Plan to visit us to see the physical improvements made during closure, while you research family info.

To infinity & beyond... Okay, back here on earth... we plan to officially mark HEIRS' 50th anniversary during Heritage Week, the last week of February. Details are being finalized.

Just because we like you... Members will receive a separate email this month outlining some very special items as stocking stuffers for history nuts like us. Items available through HEIRS will otherwise be much harder to find. **A surprise or 2 will be included – stay tuned!**

We can now reveal... a major project in the works, within the near future. The Boblo blockhouse, which HEIRS has supported for the past decade, will hopefully be moved from Boblo Island to the Fort Malden site in Amherstburg. The Canadian government's historical preservation branch is working to make this happen. This will eliminate the ferry crossing and make the blockhouse a more easily-visited historic site

More info will be available at our January meeting. HEIRS is proud to have been a part of this journey to preserve a one- of-a-kind jewel in our local history.



Genealogy of the Beeman Family

- by Ted Steele

John Beeman was born in England in 1520.

His son Simon, born 1624, emigrated to the New England colony. Later he was accused of witchcraft - a neighbour having asked Simon for assistance & loan of an item, but was refused, interpreted this as unchristian behaviour & devilry. Whispers of witches began, some 50 years before the infamous Salem Witch Trials. The devil was believed to be ever-present, corrupting those wandering from the Quaker path.

Alice Young of Windsor, CT, was the 1st person executed as a witch in 1647. Her husband John sold the family land & moved away, fearing he too might be charged - as witches 'could be either male or female'. Their daughter, also named Alice, married one Simon Beeman.

Settling in Preston, CT, Simon & young Alice raised their family. Uriah was born in 1746 & his son Chester was also born in Preston (1782). However, records indicate he died in Essex County. **Did the American Revolution push him to move across the border into British territory?**

Chester Beeman is shown on the 1812 Essex Militia payroll records about the time that William Henry Harrison, future U.S. President invaded Essex Co. & occupied Amherstburg.

The Beeman homestead on lot 33, in Colchester Twp, was previously owned by Henry Ramsay (1794) & by Joseph Drouillard (1805). Chester & wife Annie had 7 children. The Beemans had links with many local families.

Chester's son John is on the 1812 / 1813 Essex Militia muster roll. His son, Uriah

Chester Beeman was born in 1845. It's assumed he grew up in Essex Co., although he died in Michigan. **Why the assumption? His mother-in-law was Hannah Brush who married a Shepley.**

Another son of John Beeman, Sebra (sometimes Sebray) married Margaret E. Fox in 1849. She was the daughter of George Jacob Fox, & granddaughter of Jacob P. Fox. Their son John Joseph Beeman (Joseph John perhaps?) married Mary Elizabeth Waldron, who descends from both Cornwall & Malott.



References to the Beeman House, a hotel in downtown Windsor was mentioned in Amherstburg Echo files 100 yrs ago.

Beeman House, NE corner, Oulette & Pitt c 1880s



The Beeman cabin, located within the old community of Arner, was torn down within the last decade.

Several Beeman women taught in Harrow & Colchester schools. The trail seems to end here. **Did this family move out of Essex County?** More likely, the family name disappeared when male children became fewer, and daughters married, changing their names.

I'm from Chatham & relied solely on research for this summary. Please contact me with any further info or amendments.

In 1864, a group of 12 nations met and established basic rules on treatment of wartime prisoners, and led to the formation of the International Red Cross.

In 1906, and again in 1929, updates refined these rules, to try to ensure humane treatment and compassion for those captured, and to ensure daily lives were allowed within acceptable limits. Information also was to be provided to the Red Cross concerning those killed, injured or captured. German atrocities during World War 2 caused further rules to be put in place in 1949. Packages of food and personal care items were also to be allowed on a regular, though controlled basis.

The Canadian Red Cross assembled & shipped nearly 16.5 million food parcels during the Second World War.

**Each Canadian Prisoner's
RED CROSS PARCEL COSTS \$2.50
(Approx.)
and Contains These Items**

**How many of these parcels
will *You* provide this year?**

Canada's parcel included: 1 lb each milk powder & butter, 4 oz cheese, 12 oz corned beef, 10 oz pork lunch meat, 8 oz salmon, 4 oz

biscuits, 8 oz dried apples, 8 oz dried prunes /raisins, 8 oz of sugar, 1 lb jam/honey, 8 oz chocolate, salt, pepper & condiments, 4 oz tea/ coffee, 2 oz soap. Playing cards & cigarettes sometimes were included, though some felt these were less desirable, for religious or health reasons.

In November 1943, Nazi German authorities approved receiving parcels for inmates of some concentration camps. 4500 tons of food were ultimately sent Dachau, Buchenwald and Auschwitz. In addition to food, parcels contained clothing & pharmaceutical items. The Nazis no doubt felt this took the burden off supplying captives with any necessities.

Soldiers didn't always get their intended 'parcel per man, per week' & often made do with half their package, or so. Interviews of 5,000+ former POWs showed most popular items were biscuits (cookies), with butter a close second.

Canadian Red Cross packages were judged the best - seen as having more food / items that lasted longer. Least popular were vegetable & fish items. Packages raised morale, supplemented food from captors, helped maintain POW health, & prisoners knew they weren't forgotten. Cigarettes were traded by non-smokers, a form of currency to bargain for more desirable items. Prisoners could be treated harshly, but the Red Cross provided a link home, & funneled letters to & from family, under the scrutiny of their captors.

It is important to remember that those who came home survived dreadful conditions and endured much during their service. Their sacrifices and those of fallen comrades must never be forgotten!

Don't quote me...

I love quotations, words chosen carefully to express a sentiment or a viewpoint, usually in a very few words, but making a statement that sticks in my mind. Some are outright silly, while others make me ponder their truth. One of the best I have ever come across succinctly gives an outline for lasting relationships.

“Most of the time people will not remember what you did or what you said. But they will always remember how you made them feel”.

I have no idea who originally said it, but to me it really sums up how friends & mates are chosen, and why some others are avoided. It is also a blueprint for the right way to treat each other in daily activities.

Another quote I found recently seems to me to be the basis for groups like HEIRS, and much of the motivation behind the family research we promote. A sobering thought, with much truth in it.

“When the elderly die, a library is lost & volumes of wisdom & knowledge are gone.”

I was delighted to come across the 1978 HEIRS interviews between secondary school students & local seniors to gather their memories of Harrow during their younger days. The past 2 issues of our newsletter have included these, with more to come.

For myself, there were so many family members I wish I had spoken with to explore their family

knowledge and preserve their information, but that opportunity expired, as things do.

Now it's my own library of info that needs preservation, & many HEIRS members are in this similar position. I've found several family members who are interested in what I know (no, honestly). But they want a 'good read', with stories of our ancestors beyond just the BMD fact sheets we researchers are familiar with. I previously shared that those dozen binders of facts I had gathered make up my Steele Family History book, from 1760 Ireland, up to 1953, when all my grandparents had passed.

As the book developed, some surprising & even startling info emerged. For the first time I learned that our 4th great grandfather had been a slave owner in New Jersey! Other surprises awaited & I'm glad I tackled the task. Now much of their story is in print & on flash drives to be shared, circulated & preserved.

New or corrected info can be easily added, & errors deleted. It is fascinating to read through & realize how family traits run through these many years.

I did not include anyone other than the direct line to my 4 brothers and myself not attempting to include cousins, & others that would have taken me off-track. A planned future volume will tell the stories of some 'standout Steeles' and their accomplishments.

I began with piles of papers & documents collected over 90 years; then placing in a binder all papers on each level of our grandfathers (from one-great to four-great). Then I acquired books on the histories of townships or counties, admittedly easy for me as the family lived in one township from 1793 to 1918.



The only possible reason I can surmise is that his sweetheart was Mennonite, & so he converted in order to win her over.

It worked! He became a preacher & Deacon for 30 years. True love indeed!

I felt my family history would at least be an outline for someone else to add to and expand on, after I am gone.

If you're not a writer, even putting the story down in point form will be valuable & will preserve what you have learned. Scanning old photos, if you know the names of the people in them, is easy to do & most valuable. Nobody wants these original old photos in most cases, but including them in a book **or any form** weaves life into the story & preserves them for others. It is quite difficult to throw out 100-year old photos of Grandpa playing golf, or whatever, I know! That brings to mind another favourite and appropriate quote. **"Just because something is old, does not mean that it's valuable."**

Our generation has the task & the opportunity to have our own personal library of knowledge outlast us. With the amazing technology of today, it is so much easier to accomplish it. Consider your own collection of family lore, & please find some format to capture it into. Ensure it is not lost. **As you complete the family summary, you will likely acknowledge that you had much more in your memories than you realized, and the project will be very rewarding.** - Ted Steele

The history of Humberstone Township was a gold mine of personal information on early Steeles & many local books have been printed on most pioneer townships & counties. They list local town councils, school boards, photos of old schools your ancestors went to as kids, & more. Along with the region's history, you will find stories your ancestors were part of, or affected by. As well, pricing of everyday goods, neighbours' names & collaborative info to help flavour your kinfolks' storyline.

Finding their motivation for what they did or didn't do is important too; providing more opportunity, to get to know these people more fully. Even family 'legends' can be included. Keep in mind that people do things for a reason & discovering them can help you understand their characters.

My family has long puzzled over my great grandfather Wilmer, who almost overnight became a devout Mennonite.

Harrow, As It Used to Was...

- by Ted Steele, HEIRS Director

Another in a series of interviews conducted in 1978 with local seniors for HEIRS follows. The conversation with Mr. Norman Bondy, was talking with student Patty Maitre. Norman was 65 years of age when interviewed. It's original Q & A format has been abridged and slightly modified to for our newsletter article.

Norman begins...

I have been a farmer all my life and I am presently Reeve Of Colchester South Twp.

We had one teacher for 8 grades and it varied. At one time there were 42 or 45 students for the one teacher, in a single room school (#3, Colchester South), and I went through the 8th grade. My father got hurt after my grade 8 year, and I have worked on the farm ever since.

I was elected to the school board of the #3 school in the mid-thirties. I can recall I was the new trustee against a couple of seasoned trustees. We had a wonderful teacher in Mrs. Margaret Lypps. She'd been paid \$550 for a year's work the previous year, and asked for a \$100 raise. They would only give her a \$50 raise, which would make \$600. She resigned and went to the public school in Harrow.

We advertised for teachers; I forget the number of applications, but there were several, and we hired a Miss Gladys Webster. She was just out of Normal School, and was a local Harrow girl. We paid her either \$1300 or \$1350 for her first year, and I guess teachers' salaries have been escalating ever since.

In 1956 I was elected Councillor, serving for 4 years. I was Deputy Reeve for 6 years, and am starting my 9th year as Reeve.

As I remember it, the town of Harrow had no paved street, and there was no paved or hardtop road in the township of Colchester South, but Harrow (we used to call it a one-horse town) has come a long way. I believe it was 1934 when it became a town.

I recall going to Harrow in the "horse and buggy" days. Horses would slop through the streets, kicking mud & slush 8 feet high onto the store windows.

I can also recall that people in those days who had automobiles, would more or less put them in the garage for the winter and go back to old Dobbin, but now we have equipment for snow removal. In the old days when they got snowed in, everybody got out with their shovels and dug their way out.

I recall one blizzard, I think in 1918, when we had snowdrifts 15 feet high & were snowed in for pretty near a week. In those days, people made their own bread & practically everything we ate, so we didn't have to rely on a corner store. The old days weren't all bad, but I don't believe I'd want to go back to them again.

The Depression affected everybody. I was married in 1930, & we managed to raise 8 children. In the Depression years, if you could get a job for \$1 a day, you grabbed it.

I can recall my dad and I selling hogs for \$3.50 a hundred (live weight). Corn was about 27 cents a bushel, oats was 2 bushels for 25 cents, and wheat was about 75 cents a bushel. I recall the soup lines, where people lined up to get a up of soup. Thankfully I never needed to do this. **It certainly taught us the value of a dollar.**

I think we had a lot of fun, and made our own. We had house parties in the winter, going from place to place at special occasions like Halloween or birthdays. In the summer, there was swimming and baseball. As busy as we were, we still had fun. The only free time was weekends, especially Sundays. Other days were full of farm chores - wood cutting for winter fuel, and caring for animals. **Getting up at 5 AM was normal, as milking had to be done to meet the milk truck at 7 or 8 AM.**

We did everything with horses & hard labour - a good day's work with a team could get 2 acres plowed, which is now done with tractors in an hour. A 50 acre farm was a big job for one family, but now 200 acres is normal. We didn't have fertilizers or weed control chemicals; animal waste was the main chemical used.

Until 1919, we got around on foot or by horse and buggy. School was only a 5 minute walk for us. It was in 1919 than my dad bought a Ford Model T, which we used whenever roads were passable. The only glass in that car was the windshield, and you carried side curtains under the seat. In a rainstorm, you pulled over and tried to rig up the side curtains as best you could. Cars had no heaters, and they could be difficult to start. **They had no battery, and you had to turn a crank in the front end, which, if you were lucky, it got the car started.**



HEIRS RESOURCE CENTRE

*** UPDATE * We're open in November**

Tuesdays & Thursdays: 10AM - 3PM

Max. people allowed at one time is 8. Confirm space before arrival at 519.738.3700. Proof of vaccination, face masks must be worn at all times within building, hand sanitize on entry & social distance kept requirements.

Newsletter

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Memberships

\$30 CDN / U.S. per person or couple.

Memberships run May 1st - April 30th, annually.

Send cheques to:

HEIRS PO Box 53, Harrow
ON, Canada N0R 1G0

Please include phone, postal address, email & family names you are now researching.

Send e-transfer payments / donations

to: heirsont@gmail.com

Non-member using Research Library

\$10 per visit (+ photocopy costs).

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