

Vol. 3– March 2016

HEIRS

Harrow Early Immigrant Research Society

newsletter



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Inside this issue...

Next Meeting: March 24th

The Griffon: LaSalle's Lost Ship: A multi-media presentation

Newsletter News!

Welcome to the March newsletter

Everyone learned a bit about LaSalle and his voyages to the New World in public school. This month, HEIRS brings forward an exciting & illuminating presentation to its monthly meeting on LaSalle and his ill-fated ship. If you ever wanted to join us, March couldn't be a better time. **Check out our meeting info below, and we'll see you there!**

March Meeting

When: Thursday, March 24th, 1:30 PM

Where: Harrow-Colchester Arena Community Centre

THE WRECK OF THE GRIFFON – THE GREATEST MYSTERY OF THE GREAT LAKES

- A multi-media program by Cris Kohl & Joan Forsberg

In the year 1679, the first ship to sail on the upper Great Lakes disappeared with its entire crew and valuable cargo of furs. Built by the explorer, La Salle, near Niagara Falls, its loss nearly ruined him. To this day, more than 335 years later, the wreck of the Griffon has not definitively been found. It has become the most hunted – and the most “found” – shipwreck in Great Lakes history.

On its maiden voyage, this ship was the very first vessel to sail across Lake Erie, up the Detroit & St. Clair Rivers, and across Lake Huron and Lake Michigan. On its way back to Niagara from Green Bay, it vanished, commencing the centuries-long quest to discover its fate.

This multi-media program, based on the intensely researched new book of the same title, relates the fascinating story of the Griffon & many of the 22 claims of discovery made in the past 200 years, with exciting on-screen visuals, vibrant background music and dramatic live narration.



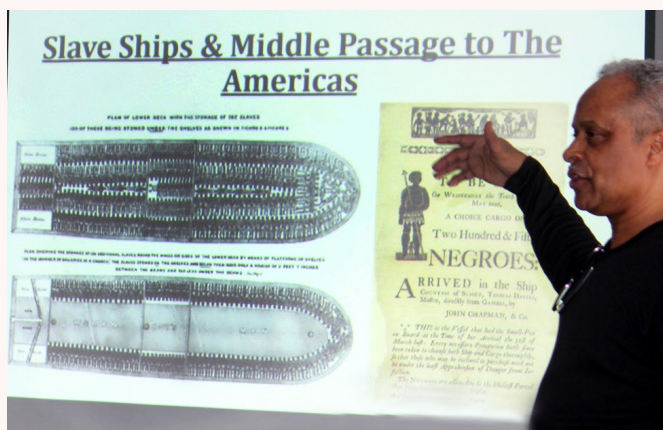
Authors Cris Kohl & Joan Forsberg

Everyone is welcome, free admission.



The February meeting of HEIRS featured local teacher and author Milo Johnson, who helped us observe Black History Month with a personal and moving story.

Milo outlined what it must have been like for unfortunates who were captured and brought to North America as slaves- the enslavement itself, the long sea voyage in horrendous conditions, and the loss of self-esteem, of dignity, of culture and language, as they were forced to give up all they knew to survive.



It can easily be argued that the United States as a nation was built on slavery, as it made their economy what it was. Of course, all slaves dreamed of escaping, but penalties were severe if an attempt failed. Even so, the underground railroad developed, a secret series of "stations" helping slaves elude their pursuers and get to freedom.

Milo told of his own great, great grandfather Gabriel Clingman, who in 1846 escaped slavery and arrived in Colchester, a free man.



He also displayed a quilt made by his sister, which depicted the Johnson-Grayer family tree from its roots to the top branches, which showed the family members of today.

We all learned more about a chapter of our own local history, and a better appreciation for what freedom for all is truly about.

Also at the February meeting, we heard from Rita Jabbour of the Town of Essex Planning Department. She expressed the desire of the committee to have volunteers represent this area, joining those who represent Essex Centre in discussing the heritage and history of the Essex, Harrow and Colchester areas, and be involved in promoting what we have to offer.

This would also include heritage designations for properties, and the placing of commemorative plaques at various sites, such as the Underground Railroad station and various military training locations. She has requested that HEIRS be an involved participant, and is hopeful that interested individuals will also come forward.

If you would like to be part of the important local group, please let Rita know at 519-736-7336 or rjabbour@essex.ca, or let us know at HEIRS.





From the HEIRS mailbag...

Special thanks...

We'd like to thank Shelby Wye and the Harrow News for use of their photos from our January meeting, as shown in the February newsletter. HEIRS appreciates their support in our activities throughout the year.

The John R. Park Homestead is hosting a bilingual presentation called "Ontario Francophones: Then and Now" until March 31. This project, developed by the Office of Francophone Affairs and Vanier Museopark, highlights the history and achievements of the French in Ontario over the past 400 years, in the areas of culture, politics, economy and society. French families have deep roots in Ontario, nowhere more so than here in Essex County. **For more on this bilingual exhibit, contact the Park Homestead at 519-738-2029 or online at www.jrph@erca.org.**

It's Maple Season again at the Park Homestead!

Maple Syrup Festival

John R. Park Homestead
Sunday, March 6, 11am-4pm

- Pioneer syrup & sugar making
 - Maple taffy on snow
- 'Science of Maple' sessions and new museum exhibit
 - Pioneer toys & games
- Pure maple products for sale
 - Maple crafts
- Program elements also available en français
- Maple-themed lunch menu from Blackjack Gastrovan
- Blacksmithing demonstrations

Special event admission:

- \$6 for adults
- \$4 for children (3-16)
- \$20 family maximum

For more Homestead maple events visit:
erca.org/maple



Maple March Break

March 15 & 18,
1:30pm sharp

An event for families to enjoy together. Includes guided tours, tree tapping and even hands-on sugar making!

Maple Moon

Tuesday, March 15,
7pm

Experience maple making by moonlight. Help make syrup & taffy, join in the barn dance then linger for star gazing and legends. \$15/person. Pre-registration required.

Maple Dinner

Saturday, March 19,
6pm

Join us at Oxley Estate Winery for a maple-themed fundraising dinner. Proceeds go to the John R. Park Homestead. Call 519-738-3264 for reservations.

Dress warmly and wear boots!

March 14

The Essex County OGS meets at 7 PM, lower level of the Windsor Public Library on Ouellette Ave., to hear Goldie Howes tell of her research into a 150 year-old manuscript. This research led to her discovery of a Belgian spy in her background.

Note: April 16: They meet to hear Cathy Knight discuss "dit" names, frequently encountered when researching French family histories. She will explain & help alleviate the confusion this practice can often cause.

March 17

Chris Carter, HEIRS vice-president, continues his speaking engagements at the Canadian Historic Vehicle Museum on the Arner town line. His topic on March 17 (wear green) will be the Lost Communities of Essex County. Find out where Bulgetown, Comet, Albertville & other vanished communities once were, & why they are now only a vague memory.

Note: April 21: Chris will discuss Canadian hero Sir Isaac Brock. To register for these FREE events, call the museum at 519-776-6909.



March 17

The Essex County Black Historical Society meets at 7 PM at the United Way Centraide Windsor-Essex, #00 Giles Blvd. at McDougall, when Ken Rock presents "The Fascinating Fosters: A Look at One of Essex County's Interesting Early Black Families". Contact ecbhrs@gmail.com for more details.

April 13

As part of the Spring offerings from Eldercollege, HEIRS and director Ted Steele will offer part 1 of its introduction to genealogy, "Skeletons In Your Family Tree", at 1 PM at the Seasons Retirement Facility in Amherstburg.

The following week, on April 20, this group will meet at the HEIRS Research Centre for part 2 of this course, designed to help anyone get started in assembling the bits and pieces of family history, which they may already have, into an understandable form.

No computer skills are required for the course, though these would be a definite asset to a researcher. More information will be in the April HEIRS Newsletter, or in the Eldercollege calendar available at HEIRS. Call Catherine at 519-253-3000, ext. 4901. Register by calling 519-253-4944 or online at www.uwindsor.ca/canterbury/eldercollege.

Skeletons in

Your Family Tree!

Fascinating Bits of History

One of the great things about volunteering at HEIRS is the access to wonderful stories of the past which come my way. A prime example is shown here: HEIRS member Cheryl Bailey provided this from a hand-written copy made by Jessie Iler. Her grandmother, Christine Fox kept the original in her family Bible. HEIRS thank you for sharing this, Cheryl...

"It is believed that there are only 5 persons now living in Ontario who took part in defending this part of our country from incursions of marauding bands of Americans during the years 1837-38. These 5 are: Adam Fox, Charles Cornwall, Henry Lypps, Daniel Wright (all of Colchester South), and the Rev. Jacob Iler, now living at Cottam.

Rev. Iler, who aided in suppressing the rebellion of 1837-38 speaks of the events as follows: "I have a vivid recollection that near the close of 1837, about 100 young men of what is now called South Essex, volunteered to serve 3 months under Capt. Rudyard at Amherstburg. I was one of them. After being in the town for a short time, we were taken over the river to Bois Blanc Island. After being there a few days, a number of buccaneers came in small boats from Sugar Island and desired to land on the Island, but when they saw that we were ready to receive them, they fired at us with muskets a few times and returned to the place whence they came.

The next day was Sunday, 7th; everything was very quiet. Early next morning the schooner Anne was anchored between the island and Amherstburg. The men on the vessel constantly cannonaded the town all that day and the next, Jan. 9. A little after dark, the Lord sent a fierce wind from the west that made the river quite rough, causing the cable of the Anne to break, then the vessel went very rapidly with the current down to the south end of the island, where the strong wind wafted her to our shore. The assailants kept up the fight until the keel of the schooner struck the bottom of the river about a rod offshore. The Lord gave us the victory. Not one Loyalist was hurt. A few were wounded later. After this, we had no more freebooters to fight until the 3rd of March on Pelee Island in 1838.

I was there with other volunteers and 2 or 3 companies of fighting soldiers. One horseman was killed and several regulars were badly wounded. The greater part of them died soon. Several pirates were killed and 20 prisoners were taken to Amherstburg. I belonged to Capt. Grant's Horse Co.; I was in that troop 5 months- and was once thrown from horse and received internal injuries, from which I never recovered entirely. Suffering so great intense after a few months- dared not to speak a word- not even a whisper for about 2 years- used a slate instead of tongue.

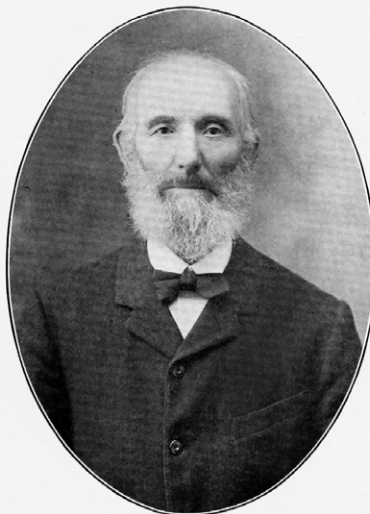
It is annoying to see volunteers in other wars who were never in any military engagements, honoured with medals and land grants while those in new Ontario in recognition of their services to suppress the Canadian rebellion are entirely overlooked.

In conclusion, I only need write a few line pertaining to the battle of Windsor which was fought on the 4th of Dec. 1838. At that time I was a horseman in Capt. Grant's Company in Amherstburg and was only occasionally in Windsor. I know, however, that the famous battle was the last kick of the Canadian rebellion."

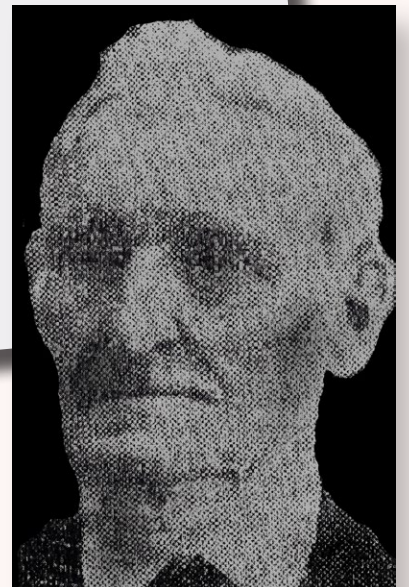


Mrs. A. Fox

Amanda Deborah Thompson



Adam Fox



Rev Jacob Iler
b. 1818 - d. 1912



March 3

The beautiful new home of the Oddfellows in the village is nearing completion. The dedication of this fine building will mark an epoch in the order locally that will be a historic one.

The spectacle of mail wagons, setting out from Harrow every day about noon, going north, south, east and west, rain or shine, with their tidings of the day's doings, and letters bringing news from far or near, leads one to reflect on what a revolution has taken place in the conveniences that the people now enjoy, to what they did only a few years ago. The railroad, telephone, automobile and rural mail delivery have all added to the enjoyment of life and has levelled class distinctions.

March 10

A Detroit dealer telephoned James Drummond that he wants a car of horses from 10 years of age up, ranging from 1100 to 1500 pounds. This is a class of horses that does not resell readily as a rule.

March 24

The Heaton block is vacant. Cornwall stock was bought by Mr. Johnson of Petrolia.

The Board of Trade has scored again. Mr. Clark of the firm W. Clark Ltd., the big pork-and-beans canners of Montreal, visited Harrow, looking over the possibilities of South Essex as a branch plant. He visited canneries at McGregor, Cottam, Wheatley, Harrow and other places, but liked the soil and climate of the Heart of the Banana Belt, returned, and the Board of Trade clinched the deal.

March 31

Improvements to local stores. Madill is having the partition in his store removed and both divisions thrown into one large showroom, which will give him a fine chance to display his stock. Also planning a brick front to the building to make it conform with the rest of the business houses.

Mrs. John Stapleton died near Zion, aged 57. Born in Mersea, daughter of John Quick. Married twice. (1) Charles Allen; children- Mrs. Everett Bertrand Kingsville; Wilbur Allen Cottam; Orillian Allen Zion. (2) John Stapleton; children- Mrs. Angus Lee Leamington; Samuel, Nina & Davie at home. Siblings- Mrs. George Allen & Mrs. Ed Riddle, Mrs. George Cowell, Mrs. Nelson Allen, George Quick Barrettville & Ed Quick of Elford.

“HISTORY AS IT USED TO WAS”

- by Ted Steele, HEIRS Director

Back when I was a dumb kid, I remember a nursery rhyme that ran, “There was a crooked man, who walked a crooked mile, and they all lived together near a crooked little stile”. (Not quite right, but close enough.)

**I wondered... “What is a stile?
And what is a crooked mile?”**

Pioneers had few roads, and usually took a path across the neighbour’s property to get to their destination. That meant climbing over a fence or 2; the rules of the day forbade a young lady showing even an ankle, so this over / through the fence created a problem.

The solution? A set of rough steps set against the fence at common crossing points, to allow easier passage for people. It was believed that horses, pigs and cows would avoid the steps, as they normally did. This set of “pasture steps” was called a stile. The crooked mile likely referred to the path through the fields and over the fence. **I wonder no more...**

A young woman who wanted to find a mate and start her own family, had to compete with others, of course, and that meant advertising. She had to be able to show off her homemaker skills in order to impress gentlemen who would want a wife with varied talents.

One important skill was sewing; often, wives made the clothing for all family members, & certainly had a constant stream of repairing / mending to deal with.

To show off her abilities, a young lady would do fancy creative stitchery in a frame; it usually was a Bible verse or the alphabet, & might be illustrated with a flower, a bird or a cross. It might be hung on a wall for all to admire, or she might conveniently be working at it when

visited by her beau. It was indeed a sample of her talents, & has come to be known as a “sampler”.

That’s entertainment!

In earlier times, there was little entertainment other than what was self-provided. Music, story-telling, and orating were all popular. Young people were encouraged to sing at gatherings, at school and of course, at Church.

The Church meetings on Sunday offered a chance to exchange gossip, make and renew friendships, make social arrangements and catch up on fashions and trends. The choir also offered a chance to share an accepted activity with the opposite sex, to be in fairly close contact, and often to share a songbook with a person of interest.

A touch, as the page is turned, a glance at close quarters, a chance to flirt and be a bit less formal, and who knows what might develop? Going to Church would offer many opportunities and help one’s status in numerous ways.

“Sleep tight, don’t let the bedbugs bite.”

Early mattresses were straw-filled ticks; as they were used, the straw broke down & offered little support. As well, bedbugs did indeed find their way in eventually, and became a problem. Every so often, the straw would be dumped out for animal use, & new, fresh straw put in. This helped. but the ‘tick’ itself was laid in a grid of ropes which supported it. Through use, these ropes would eventually loosen & sag; then family members would pull them tight & re-fasten them to the frame, so they were a tight support to sleep on. The occupant could then “sleep tight” indeed.

HEIRS Resource Centre

September to June (excluding December)

Tuesday & Thursday: 10AM - 3PM

Wednesday or for other appts. Call to confirm.

Memberships

\$25 CDN/US per person or couple: April 2015 to May 2016

Send cheque to: HEIRS PO Box 53, Harrow ON Canada N0R 1G0

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

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

HEIRS Newsletter

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).
Receive full colour newsletters by email & save HEIRS printing & mailing costs of B&W copies by regular post. Simply provide your email address to our office.

THANK YOU

Greg Harrison at The Computer Centre in Harrow provides HEIRS ongoing support for all things technical, to keep our office running smoothly.



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