

Vol. 9– November 2015

H.E.I.R.S. newsletter

Harrow Early Immigrant Research Society



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Inside this Issue...

November Meeting:
Remembering Holidays past

Newsletter News!

Welcome to the November 2015 edition....

November... hey I was just getting use to raking leaves, when all of a sudden it's going to be winter, then Holiday season?

If you are not quite in the Christmas mode yet, maybe our upcoming November meeting will get your card writing and shopping gears in motion. Come out for sure this month, and take part if your schedule permits.

Our next newsletter will be out in January.

Until then, take care, be good to everyone, and we'll see you in 2016!

November Meeting

When: Thursday, November 26th, 1:30 PM

Where: Harrow-Colchester Arena Community Centre

As we head into November, our last HEIRS meeting before Christmas looms.

I recently came across some old advertising that bordered on ridiculous, and was struck by the way that advertising of all sorts continues to shape our thinking today.

The November 26th meeting provides me the opportunity to share some of these ads, most from our childhood or even earlier. We will travel back to a time when beer was passed off as a healthy drink, even for children, and drugs like cocaine were not only legal but often used in over-the-counter remedies.

Then we will be reminded of the toys and products that were on our own Christmas wish lists, once dreamed of, and now long forgotten in most cases. Childhood memories are sure to be revived, and a few reasons to be glad we had the childhood we did, as life is so very different for kids today.

Bring your best singing voices, and join us in singing the "true" Christmas carols, with just a few snowmen or reindeer involved.

*Come out and be a kid again with me.
As my wife often says... I never grew up anyhow.*



1913 Christmas postcard mailed to a special cousin.

HEIRS members met on Thursday, Oct. 22 to mark Remembrance Day, since this is our last meeting before November 11th.

Our topic was “John McCrae - The Man”, and our speakers were Bonnie Storey and Richard Herniman.



Bonnie has a family connection with the McCrae line through her mother's side of the family. She told how widowed John Eckford and his family were to emigrate to Canada on the ship, “Wolfville” in 1851, but it departed without them. They were forced to take another ship, and this incident proved most providential, since the Wolfville was struck by cholera and few survived. History turns on small events at times, but some things seem “meant to be”.

He settled in Brant County, and one daughter, Annie, married James Gow (the direct line for our speaker, Bonnie Storey). Another daughter, Janet, married David McCrae; these were the parents of the famous John McCrae. The two families remained close through the years.

HEIRS president Richard Herniman educated us on the man, John McCrae, who was a highly regarded doctor and teacher who served the Crown during the Boer War, and was also among the first to enlist in 1914.



He hated war but tried to ease the suffering of so many with his skills.

He wrote poetry during his high school years, and as a soldier put his thoughts down on paper, but did not think highly of his “In Flanders’ Fields” effort. He discarded it, but it was retrieved, and in 1915 it appeared in Punch Magazine, an instant symbol of the horrors of war.



After his death of pneumonia in 1918, his creation spread world-wide & is now used as part of most Remembrance services to capture & express the need to remember the sacrifices of so many.

4 Upcoming Events

November 5th

The Pelee Past Questers is an organization for the study of antiques, preservation and restoration of artifacts, existing memorials, historical buildings, landmarks and education. On November 5th, at 6 PM in the meeting room of 99 Robson Road in Leamington, they will hold a Christmas Pot Luck dinner with a Chinese gift exchange (\$15 limit, please label for man or woman). Guests are always welcome. For your reservation please call Jackie @ 519-326-1361.

November 9th

HEIRS President Richard Herniman and Director Ted Steele join the Windsor branch of the Ontario Genealogy Society on the lower level of the Windsor Library on Ouellette Avenue in Windsor.

As this meeting is just before Remembrance Day, Richard will share information he has gathered through extensive research, especially on WW1 people and events.

Then Ted will present some unsung/forgotten heroes of both world wars, people who did great things in the midst of terrible conflict.

November 28th

The Essex County Historical Society meets on Saturday, November 28 in Essex for their luncheon / meeting at Momma's Restaurant on Main Street, Essex. Speakers Bill Brundage and Ted Steele will tell of the rescue of the Bois Blanc blockhouse from oblivion, and its restoration to the jewel that it is now.

HEIRS continues to be active in promoting the blockhouse as an important historic site, and it is, as a result becoming much better known and appreciated. October saw 3 visits by high school classes, and a "Christmas at the Blockhouse" event is being planned.





From the HEIRS mailbag...

A recent visitor to HEIRS recently wrote of her experience...

"I wanted to thank you again for all the help you gave me when I came to Harrow to do research in the HEIRS collection. I came away with a much better understanding of the settlement of Colchester, both the Loyalists and the Black settlement. Your files are great, but what really wowed me was the knowledge of the volunteers. You guys really know both your area and your collection. I would probably be still trying to figure out where people and places were located without your help. Thank you again, it was definitely worth the drive to Harrow from Toronto."

This same visitor then continued,

"The other purpose of my email is to let you know that the Sandwich parish register for 1801-1827 is now online. It has now been digitized for free on the Heritage Canadiana website. I came across it by accident, and it does include many names from Colchester. It includes Amherstburg, Colchester, and some Detroit families as well. Some entries include "people of colour".

Valour Remembered CANADIANS IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR


The Chatham-Kent Museum presents

Seamus Gunn

Gunn looks back at "The Great War," its causes, its effects on Canada, and the personal stories of two Canadian Victoria Cross recipients.

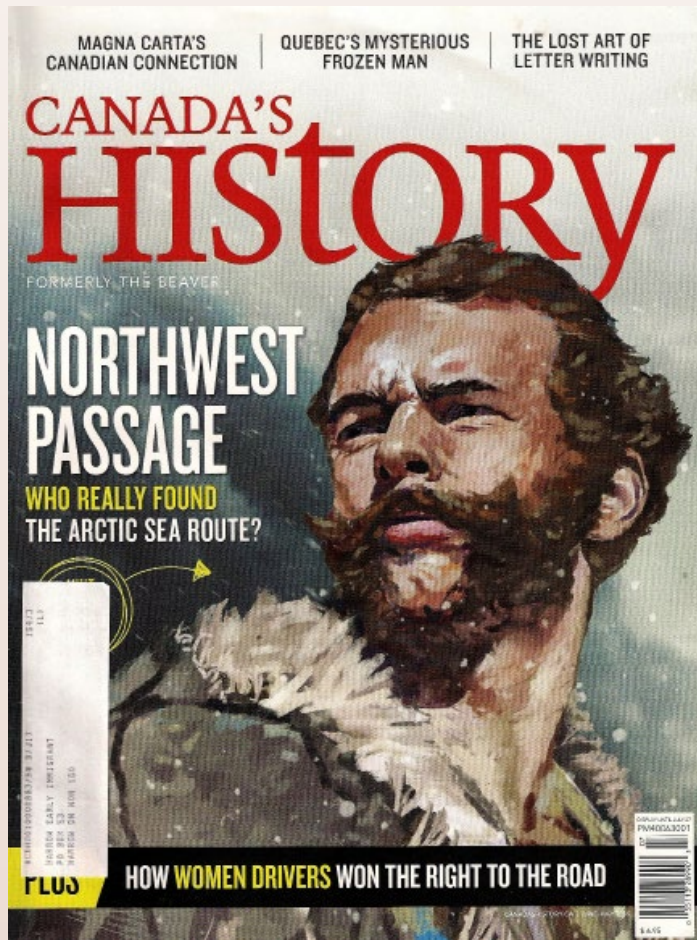
Tuesday, November 17, 2015

7PM | Studio One | \$12 Advance or \$15 Door
Chatham Cultural Centre, 75 William St. N. Chatham

 **519.354.8338**



Records of historical people and events surround us, yet much slips by unnoticed. Personally, I am always searching for “stories that need to be told”, to be used in some future HEIRS meeting, and recently I was thumbing through a magazine to which HEIRS subscribes, “Canada’s History”.



There were many articles included, of greater or lesser interest to me; the Magna Carta and the Arctic exploration articles were of some interest. But then, as I flipped through, I found several which immediately grabbed my attention.

One discussed the role of women in WW1, as ambulance drivers. At a time when it was widely thought that driving was too physically demanding for “the weaker sex”, this group of women proved that, not only could they drive, but could do so under battlefield conditions.

While helping greatly with the war effort, these

ladies were also making strides in the fight for women’s rights in general and the vote in particular!

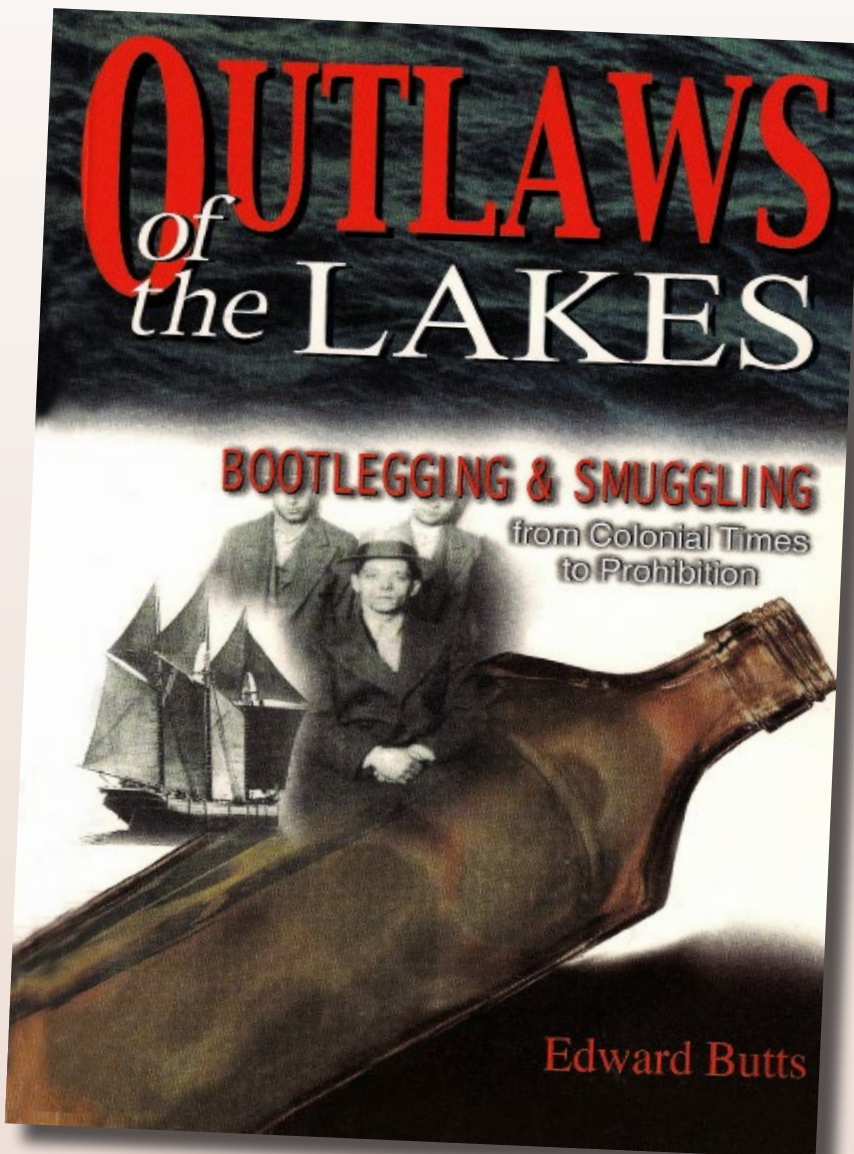


A second article reminded me of the number of stories that go untold, and are allowed to fade into history. It tells of the Polish army-in-training, mainly from the Polish-American community, that drilled and practised in Niagara-On-The-Lake during WW1, and helped defeat the Central Powers (Germany). When that conflict ended, this army of Polish Americans was sent across Germany to their homeland of Poland, to defend it against Russian invasion.



Isn't it amazing to find out we have such intriguing stories to share? Only in Canada!!

Take the time to check out what we have in the HEIRS library..... some great reading material, no matter what your interests are. And don't overlook the monthly magazines, too, as they have some fascinating stories!



Outlaws of the Lakes

- Edward Butts

For this month's book review, a paperback called, "Outlaws of the Lakes-Bootlegging and Smuggling from Colonial Times to Prohibition" by Edward Butts was selected.

I had assumed that it would be mainly about sneaking booze across the border, but very quickly was reminded that it's a mistake to judge a book by it's cover.

It began with a fascinating chapter revealing details about the beginnings of Detroit and its founder, Cadillac. (For details, check out the "History" page in this issue.) From earliest times, furs and alcohol were the main currency, and the governments of both New France and the American colonies sought to control these, mainly for taxation production. Much trade across the border was soon common, with goods flowing both ways easily.

By 1812, with war approaching, the border towns did not want their profits interrupted and did not support the call to fight. Some areas like the New England states even considered remaining neutral to avoid fighting. The settling of this conflict in 1815 allowed business to return to normal. The smuggling of escaped slaves also occurred regularly, as the Underground Railway helped many slip over the border to freedom, with slave-chasers after them onto Canadian soil.

All through the 1800s, border towns were struck by "raiders", almost like pirates, who attacked at night and took what they could, quickly escaping onto ships. Later came the 1920s, with Prohibition and its legendary stories of Al Capone, Machine Gun Kelly, Elliott Ness and others. The ways items were (and are) smuggled is outlined, as well as the violence that punctuated the time. The Detroit River area was called "The Funnel", for the amount of liquor that poured into the Michigan speakeasies!

Its 266 pages are full of photos of the places and personalities involved, as well as the bodies of many bootleggers who met a violent end. It is a true history of this area, and will open your eyes to some overlooked stories.



November 5th

The new IOOF (International Order of Oddfellows) building is beginning to assume such proportions that its beauty is visible; Harrow will look like a different place when the new block and the Webster store adjoining are completed. The erection of such an impressive block at this time is a great credit to the Order. It is bound to bring business to Harrow, from which everyone will feel the benefit.



November 12th

The Patriotic League of Harrow was organized two weeks ago, and has gathered 58 members,

all willing to make comforts of various kinds for the soldiers.

November 26th

A branch of the Red Cross has been organized at Oxley. The ladies meet at the home of Mrs. W. D. McVey to sew and do other work.

December 17th

The French War Department has evidently heard of the horses available in Colchester South. They secured a carload of animals in a few hours. They take anything sound from 1200 to 1500 pounds. The average price is \$111.50.

December 24th

Sometimes the impression gets abroad that business is not so rushing in Harrow as in former years, but statistics disprove this. The shipments, week by week, are a proper test of the business temperature. During the past week, 15 cars were handled at the station, either in or out, related to the agriculture or business interests.

Cadillac - by Ted Steele, Directory

Our history page this month comes from an accidental discovery of a great story about our own region, one that caught me off-guard. The first chapter in the book I reviewed, "Outlaws of the Lakes", was the story of Cadillac and the beginnings of Detroit.

I thought I had a generally accurate memory of this story, but was I wrong!

"Cadillac" was born Antoine Laurent, in 1658 of commoner parents. In 1683 he arrived in Acadia (Nova Scotia) with a fake aristocratic name and a fake family coat of arms. He presented himself as a man of noble parentage, and his coat of arms is now used by a car company to advertise their top-of-the-line ("aristocratic") model automobile.

He was granted a seigneurie, married well and seemed to be set for a smooth life. However, run-ins with the governor and local priests over illegal trading deals developed; the governor declared him "a scatter-brain driven from France for who knows what crimes".

In 1691, he turned up in Quebec, and was given an officer's rank in the army. He then became commander of Fort Michilimacina, assigned to keep the allied Indian tribes happy while harassing the Iroquois, who allied with Britain. Instead, he made a fortune by cheating coureurs de bois when he bought furs, and by selling whiskey to the Indians.

In 1698, he saw the need for a strong fort along the Detroit River, and how it could be very profitable.

It was begun in 1700. Since the Detroit River was actually a strait and not a river, the settlement was called "D'etroit" - French for "the strait". Under his command, liquor was routinely sold to Indians, and all manner of misbehaviour overlooked, if it profited Cadillac.

Eventually his use of violence and intimidation earned him the hatred of the French citizens and the Indians as well.

He had to be moved out, and was sent to a place that was already a mess - the French colony of Louisiana. As bad as it already was, Cadillac made it worse, and by 1817, he was recalled to France and jailed.

Like a true con artist, he gained his freedom and was given a pension, then appointed as governor of a small French city. He died in 1730.

One official said of him, "He is the most bare-faced liar I have ever seen." Others described him as dishonest, arrogant and greedy.

To think that 300 years later, he is widely-judged to be a noble servant of the French government and an honourable figure in Canadian history, worthy of naming a luxury automobile after him.

Hours of Operation: September to June (excluding December)

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

Memberships Due: April 2015 to May 2016: \$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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