

Vol. 2– February 2017

# HEIRS

Harrow Early Immigrant Research Society

*newsletter*



[www.HEIRS.ca](http://www.HEIRS.ca)  
Tel.: 519 738-3700  
Email: [hheritage@bellnet.ca](mailto:hheritage@bellnet.ca)

243 McAfee St., PO Box 53,  
Harrow, ON Canada N0R 1G0  
Harrow & Colchester South  
Community Centre (Arena Bldg.)



***Next meeting...***

***Black History Month***

## Newsletter News!

### Welcome to the February newsletter

*This February as we have in the past, we shift our attention to celebrating events surrounding Black History Month. A special “history as it use to was” article is included in this month’s newsletter, and highlights some past events we all would have hoped did not occur in our backyards, but they did.*

*Our meeting will also be focused on black history events, and it is great to see that February’s meetings in the past have been one of the most widely attended by our members.*

*As always, at this time of year...  
stay warm, stay healthy.*

## Next Meeting

**When: Thursday, February 23rd, 1:30 PM**

**Where: Harrow-Colchester Arena Community Centre**

*Traditionally HEIRS uses our February meeting to enlarge our knowledge of Black History here in Essex County. This month we will gather to hear more about the Black Experience, as long time teacher and Harrow resident Milo Johnson, an author of several books on local families, will present his views on growing up Black in this area.*

*He will remind us that racism is dying a long, drawn-out death, yet is among us still in various subtle forms. Seeing things from a different perspective is always an eye-opening experience, and Milo will, I am sure, give us some things to think about.*



*Director Ted Steele will also contribute a few items showing that the last 50 years have been more unfair to blacks than perhaps we have stopped to consider.*

*Each February, Ontarians are invited to celebrate heritage in all its forms within their communities. The celebration of Heritage will be particularly important for residents of the town of Essex this year, as 2017 marks the 150th anniversary of Confederation & Colchester’s 225th.*

*To emphasize the municipality’s effort to preserve & promote its buildings & cultural heritage resources, Rita Jabbour (Assistant Planner for the Town of Essex, & staff liaison to the Essex Municipal Heritage Committee), will be holding a presentation on the economic & social impact of heritage planning & preservation on **March 23 at 1:30 PM** in the Harrow-Colchester Arena meeting room with HEIRS. The town will also be shedding light on our history through a series of Facebook posts during Heritage Week, Feb. 20-26. Please like their Facebook page to view the posts and share in our history. A great chance to find out what will be happening locally to mark important locations & events in our own past.*

**On Thursday, Jan. 26, HEIRS met to begin 2017, the year in which Canada marks its 150th birthday. Director Ted Steele reminded us of past heroes who have achieved great things & have made Canada proud, and made the world a better place.**

Beginning with the often-maligned Simon Girty, patriot, we were reminded of Tom Longboat, from the Brantford Mohawk Reserve, who in the early 1900s was the dominant distance runner in the world; of Canadian born James Naismith, who invented the game of basketball while teaching in the U.S. and of Frederick Banting, one of the scientists who developed insulin.



**Viola Desmond, a black woman in Nova Scotia, refused to give up her seat in the “Whites Only” section of a theatre, and was arrested and charged.**

This happened a full 9 years before Rosa Parks became famous for doing much the same thing in the USA.

**Many other Canadians who “should be famous but are not” were revealed.**

Perhaps the most amazing story shared was that of Reginald Fessenden. Although Marconi received the credit for the development of radio, the financial rewards & the place in history, a Canadian actually achieved more and at an earlier date than Marconi.



Fessenden sent voice messages in 1906, when Marconi had only sent morse code. He sent 2-way trans-Atlantic **voice** messages while Marconi sent only one-way messages. He broadcast music, singing & violin playing (true RADIO!) long before anyone else. This Canadian genius invented forms of sonar for locating icebergs, & microfilm data storage. Yet, being Canadian, he went unrewarded and largely unremembered.

**The meeting ended with attendees knowing more about these great Canadians, and feeling a bit more proud of their country.**

## 4 Upcoming Events

*The winter months do not normally have many events to promote, but as they do begin to surface, it's a welcome sign that Spring is not too far off. These will keep us all looking ahead at fun and interesting times on the way soon.*

### **Sunday, March 5th**

*The J. R. Park Homestead kicks off the maple sugaring season on Sunday, March 5, from 11 AM to 5 PM. Wear your boots and enjoy the opportunity to make maple taffy in the snow, and see how syrup is made the pioneer way. Pure maple products of various kinds will also be available for purchase.*

**Cost is \$6 for adults and \$4 for children, with a maximum cost of \$20 per family.**

### **Tuesday, March 14**

*This is the date for the Maple Moon, an old-fashioned sugaring-off party. Collect sap, boil it down by moonlight and make taffy on the snow, Join the barn dance and linger for stargazing and legends being told.*

**Pre-registration is required, cost is \$15 per person.**





**Tuesday, March 14 and Friday, March 17**

*The Homestead will offer its Maple March Break for Families, on Tuesday March 14 and Friday March 17.*

*Events begin at 1:30 PM on both days Dress warmly and come early to tour the site with a costumed guide- discover the sweet process of Maple syrup and sugar making as the pioneers did it.*

*Help carry the sap with pails and a wooden yoke, try your hand at drilling holes with a brace and bit, and see the trees tapped and the sap evaporating.*

*Learn the history of this springtime treat as you help make maple syrup and sugar, and do some tasting as well.*

**Cost is \$6 for adults, \$4 for children and \$20 family maximum.**

**March 18th**

*An important event for the Homestead itself is the Maple Dinner Fundraiser, on Saturday, March 18 at 6 PM.*

*Held at the Oxley Estate Winery, this maple-themed dinner provides funds for the ongoing activities of the Park Homestead.*

*Included are many dishes with a taste of maple (what is more Canadian?), with interpreters explaining maple history and tradition in the Essex region.*

**For more information, contact [jrph@erca.org](mailto:jrph@erca.org) or 519-738-2029, or visit the website- [www.erca.org/maple](http://www.erca.org/maple).**

**To reserve your spot, contact Oxley Estate at 519-738-3264.**

## 6 Upcoming Events



*HEIRS members will likely remember a ceremony held in Harrow in 2015, honouring two veterans of the War of 1812, William Hutchins and Isaac Ferriss.*

*This culminated in a plaque placed at each gravesite to honour these heroes.*

*Various history groups in the area as well as the United Empire Loyalists Association of Canada, continue to search out deserving veterans of 1812 so that they can also be honoured.*



*The descendants of George Ward (of the Wardsville area) will place two plaques in honour of George, William and James Ward who served with the Loyal Kent Militia. George was a career British soldier who served in many locales. When the War of 1812 broke out, he was 69, William was 18 and James was 17. Both George and William were for a time imprisoned in Detroit.*

*On Sunday, March 5, 2017, at 2 PM, the annual Longwoods Memorial Service will be held at the Battle Hill National Historic Site (2945 Longwoods Road, Glencoe) to commemorate the battle fought in the London-Middlesex area during the War of 1812, involving many local groups to lay wreaths, and local re-enactors to fire volleys of musket fire to salute the dead.*

*Following this ceremony, the group will move to the Wardsville cemetery where the Ward family will then unveil the grave marker featuring the plaques. All are welcome to attend; refreshments follow the unveiling at the cemetery. These are the first War of 1812 plaques to be issued for veterans of Middlesex County.*



**February 2**

John Vincent has purchased a new Overland car; McDonald and Son are also showing a 1917 model demonstrator.

The new Library Board is: President Captain C. H. Bassett; Vice President Mrs. C. F. Smith; Directors Mrs. James Forsythe and Miss Ella Wright. Eve Thompson is re-elected Secretary, and Richard Tofflemire is the veteran librarian. The purchasing committee is Rev. J. E. Russ, George Rogers and Mr. Tofflemire.

Women have equal rights on the Library Board, even if they don't have the franchise.

**February 3**

Thomas Martin, aged 81 years, came from County Antim, Ulster, Ireland, with his parents when he was a child. His siblings are Mary Jane (Mrs. Lennox Thompson); James, of Colchester S., Ellen (Mrs. James Brush) of Amherstburg; John, who drowned; Matthew Francis of Potlake; Thompson and John Edward of Anderdon; Sarah Ann (Mrs. Jacob Snider) of Colchester S.; Eliza (widow of Alphaeus Adams); and William, on the homestead, lot 12, Concession 3. Thomas Martin Married Caroline Woodbridge of Gosfield; only 1 daughter survived, Georgia Adella (Mrs. Silas Brush). Percheron horses and shorthorn cattle were his hobby.

**February 9**

The dedication of the new Oddfellows Hall was cancelled due to the change in the railroad schedule, which made travel to Harrow very inconvenient.

**February 23**

The change in the railroad timetable caused a great inconvenience, but it was accepted as a war measure. Now, there seems to be large quantities of steam coal in trans-shipment, & this time is thought to be ripe to reinstate the trains taken off. A largely signed petition will be presented to the council of Colchester South, praying that the council make application to the railroad to restore their former service, for the very good reason that they are under obligation to the amount of \$20 000 bonus to Colchester South, to run two trains each way a day. This agreement was entered into & a by-law passed embodying same on the 22nd day of Jan. 1887, & the last of the bonus debentures are just being paid off... to be without a morning train puts Harrow out of its class.

The question of paving would be raised this season. When cement walks were first agitated, there was stiff opposition to the improvement, & now Harrow has as much of this kind of walk as any other village of its size in Ontario. The merchants figure that the time is ripe for a start on paving, particularly the main street, both as a matter of cleanliness & also as a measure of progress.

From the HEIRS mailbag...



Our local history partner, the Kingsville Historical Park Museum has just released its brand new quarterly newsletter, the Museum Dispatch.

This 16 page publication is written by museum staff and various local history enthusiasts, and includes many photos, both colour and black and white. It showcases items of interest housed at the museum, and tells the personal history of medals and other mementos of wartime service.

One story tells of a local war bride, how she met her future husband at a wartime dance in England, and for the next 50 years was his wife here in Essex County. A very important yet little known battle is featured in another story, while a wartime letter from a wounded soldier to his worried mother is also reprinted.

Several soldiers who served with distinction, also have their stories told in this first issue.

You will also find bits of the history of the military museum including how it came to be, and the roots of Kingsville itself.

This is a very attractive and well-done production, and my copy will be read several times so that each story can be appreciated.

The newsletter is available to members of the Museum, but we will have a few copies on display at the next HEIRS meeting on January 26.



by Kevin Fox, Museum Curator

Welcome to the first newsletter from Kingsville Historical Park Museum. This publication will be produced in quarterly instalments to share the military history of Windsor and Essex County and the history of the Kingsville area.

Our contributors include local authors like Robert Lynch (*Taking the 'Lectric, The Grovedale House*), military members like Lieutenant Colonel Murray Stewart, C.D. (Retired) and local historians and researchers like Veronica Brown, Matthew Pritchard and Nicole Chittle. We have also received submissions from local groups like The Harrow Early Immigrant Research Society (HEIRS) and The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 188, Kingsville.

The newsletter showcases recent donations to the Museum and includes transcriptions of letters written to loved ones during wartime. We have added features like **Beyond the Page**, that allow the reader to go online and continue reading interesting accounts like, *The Battle of Kapyong* in this edition. Within the pages you will also find interesting stories about local veterans and war brides. For those more interested in local history, **Local Tales** features tidbits from the area's past and in this edition a history summary of our Museum. Future editions will have an additional feature, **Pillars of Industry** that will focus on local industries and businesses that made the area what it is.

Those who love to read will find **Required Reading** features books available to members in our lending library. We hope that you enjoy reading the newsletter and that you will take advantage of the membership form on the back page to join the Museum and receive a copy each quarter.



**Military Museum**

Adjacent to Royal Canadian Legion Branch 188  
145 Division Street South, Kingsville, Ontario

Hours ~ Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, & Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
Closed Wednesday, Sunday, and Holidays



## “History As It Used to Was”

- by Ted Steele, HEIRS Director

**When many of us think of racial prejudice, it often seems to be “long ago and far away”. It happened someplace else, not around here in southern Ontario, and not in my lifetime!**

*I grew up in Chatham in the '50s. Not far away was Dresden, home of Uncle Tom's Cabin. It was unknown to me at the time, but blacks in Dresden could not get food service in most restaurants, or even get a haircut in town. It was not openly stated, but seems to have been an unwritten rule at the time. This was challenged in court eventually, and some owners sold their businesses rather than comply. (Among these was my aunt and her husband, who owned Emerson's Restaurant in Dresden for many years.)*

### Judgment Reserved In Canada's First Racial Discrimination Trial

CHATHAM, Ont. — (CP) — A magistrate Wednesday reserved judgment in the first hearing of racial discrimination charges in Canada.

Magistrate Ivan B. Craig reserved decision in a hearing of two Dresden restaurant operators charged with violating the Ontario Fair Accommodation Practices Act, the province's six-months-old anti-discrimination law. He did not indicate when the ruling would be handed down.

The two men were Mervyn McKay and Matthew Emerson. They are charged with refusing to serve food in their cafes to three Negroes and a Chinese-Canadian girl “because of color.”

Defence counsel W. A. Donohue of Sarnia called no witnesses for the defence but said in his closing address that the Ontario act is not only illegal but unworkable. He told the magistrate:

“It imposes an impossible task on the prosecution ... the crown has to prove the state of mind of the accused.”

Mr. Donohue amplified his remarks by saying a restaurant owner could refuse service for any number of reasons but that in cases of alleged racial discrimination



**MATTHEW EMERSON**  
— one of accused restaurateurs

the crown must prove service was refused primarily because of race, color or creed.

The lawyer also questioned the legality of the act. He said it was criminal law and therefore, came under federal jurisdiction, not provincial.

#### Crown Disagrees

Crown attorney A. D. Bell disagreed. He said the act deals with the civil rights of citizens to be given service and accommodation in a place where the public is customarily admitted. That is a provincial matter, he added.

In Wednesday's testimony Ruth Lor, secretary of the University of Toronto Students' Christian Movement, and Bromley Armstrong, member of the United Auto Workers Union (CIO-CCL) local at Toronto Massey-Harris-Ferguson, said they were refused service for more than half an hour in McKay's cafe.

Mr. Donohue claimed the colored persons came from Toronto in a “frame up” to make things difficult for the accused.

Asked if he went into the restaurant to get food or to create an embarrassing situation, Mr. Armstrong replied:

“I went in to get food and at the same time making a test for the joint labor relations committee to see if they (McKay's restaurant) were complying with the act.”

Emerson was charged after two Dresden Negroes lodged similar complaints. They were Mrs. Bernard Carter and her brother, Joseph Hanson, a farmer.

*He had a great voice &, for a short time, his own TV show; that ended when no major company would support a black program, and the network could not continue to broadcast it without a sponsor.*

*The only black program that was sponsored was Amos 'N Andy, which caricaturized blacks. I have been a big baseball fan since the mid-1950s, and I well remember the second black major league player (I was too young to remember the first, Jackie Robinson). Larry Doby played for MY team, the Indians, and was an all-star center fielder. He began in 1947 and played over ten years.*

*1955 saw ‘rock & roll’ begin; only white singers had their songs on the major radio stations. Pat Boone among others had several hits but they were written & first recorded almost always by blacks, such as Fats Domino (Ain't That a Shame?). White groups recorded the songs of the black “doo wop” groups, but the result was normally a pale imitation. By 1960, this was also changing, though slowly. American Bandstand, for example, carefully kept a distance between black performers & white kids in the audience, not wanting any complaints.*

*I have been told that when the Black History Museum began in Amherstburg, threats were made against those leading its formation. Over the last 20 or so years, there have been crosses burned in various locations, whether as some kind of statement or just a joke in poor taste, it's hard to say. Three locations I know of where crosses have been burned in public have been Chatham, Windsor & Amherstburg. Even the Canadian KKK has surfaced at wide intervals, representing itself as promoting WASP (white anglo-saxon protestant) values. To be honest, they seem to hate anyone who is different from them, not just racially different. Recently, right here in Kingsville, documents from the 1940s surfaced showing restrictions on home sales involving blacks.*

**We have come a long way, but equality and fairness are goals we must still pursue.**

*My teen years saw a growing realization that prejudice was all around. Do you recall Nat King Cole (Mona Lisa, Nature Boy)?*



## 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: May 2016 to April 2017**

**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 the printing & mailing costs of B&W copies by regular post. Simply provide your email address to our office.**



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



### Board of Directors

#### President

**Richard Herniman**  
herniman5@sympatico.ca

#### Vice-President

**Chris Carter**  
cdcarter002@gmail.com

#### Treasurer

**John Brush**  
jmb1@xplornet.com

#### Secretary

**Kathy Langlois**  
kathyl@msni.net

#### Directors

**Pauline Baldwin**  
**Brian Leslie**  
**Esther Meerschaut**  
**Roger Sinasac**  
**Ted Steele**

### Committee Chairpersons

#### Resource Centre

**Pauline Baldwin**  
baldwin1@xplornet.com

#### Kathy Langlois

kathyl@msni.net

#### Program / Publicity

**Chris Carter**  
cdcarter002@gmail.com

#### Ted Steele

twsteele@sympatico.ca  
519 733-3456

#### Membership

**Richard Herniman**  
herniman5@sympatico.ca

#### Hospitality

**Ann Brush**  
jmb1@xplornet.com

#### Esther Meerschaut

#### Newsletter

**Ted Steele**  
twsteele@sympatico.ca