



Vol. 3 – March / April 2020

HEIRS

Harrow Early Immigrant Research Society

n e w s l e t t e r

A close-up, slightly angled view of a computer keyboard. The keys are a light beige color with a slight shadow, giving them a three-dimensional appearance. The 'Pause' key is the central focus, with the word 'Pause' printed on it in a bold, dark brown, sans-serif font. The surrounding keys are mostly blank or have very faint markings.

Next meeting...

HEIRS suspends March & April meetings!

Welcome to the special March / April 2020 newsletter.

Floods, tornados & plagues... oh my!

The current COVID-19 situation got me thinking... thinking about the challenges our ancestors had to deal with and the crises they overcame. And mostly done with minimal medical knowledge, limited medicines and powerful health systems to access. For the most part, there were less coordinated relief programs, and strong monetary or emotional support available.

Stricken families relied upon one another and their neighbours. Perhaps “it takes a village” would be more appropriately assigned to the situation back then. This village aspect of the past drives HEIRS – within our newsletters & meetings – to provide articles about these early settlers, and the villages and towns that they built within Essex County – through good times & bad.

The results of past epidemics and pandemics are seen in the obituaries from decades ago, which often listed the cause of death. From smallpox, Spanish Flu, cholera, tuberculosis (consumption) or polio, doctors if even locally available, could often only offer symptomatic support.

With our current challenge of COVID -19, let’s be thankful for the public health system built over decades, and thankful for the communication giants of the internet & television that help warn, educate & potentially protect us from infection. And let’s be thankful for the modern array of medicines that support our daily lives. Most of all, let’s be thankful for our families for being with us, just as our ancestors certainly were there for their loved ones, their neighbours and towns.

Stay home! Keep your distance! Wash your hands! - Rick McCormick

Next Meeting

To be determined!

Harrow-Colchester Arena Community Meeting Room

The Directors of HEIRS have suspended meetings due to the COVID-19 issue.

*The return to our scheduled meetings will occur once public health guidance and our local government provide us the direction and approval to do so. In the meantime we’ll endeavour to provide our email-version newsletter as we can. **We warmly thank the Essex Branch of the OGS, with special kudos to Cindy Robichaud, for helping to disseminate this issue to their membership.***

*Take time now to reflect & reach out to our friends, neighbours & family, even if only through technology. We’re all in this together, and together like our ancestors, we can all do our part to help bring an end to this current challenge. **Stay safe!***

HEIRS recently teamed up with the Essex Heritage Committee to present "Harrow's Hidden History". HEIRS president Richard Herniman discussed his research into the buildings of Harrow from the late 1800s to the modern era.

An audience of about 65 people heard about the architect Thomas Jenner who designed many of the buildings, both commercial and residential, in Harrow, Kingsville and Essex.

Now almost forgotten, Jenner was important in the development of Harrow from a small village into a progressive, busy town. We learned about the influential families of these times. As well, the buying & selling of properties that the locals knew well & how a few families gathered land rights to become wealthy and members of a "local compact" which wielded considerable political influence.

Richard's skill in research and his passion for local stories were demonstrated in his talk about his hometown.

Stories like this one need to be recorded and preserved; this story now becomes a file of importance in the HEIRS centre.



Courtesy: Shelby Wye, Harrow News & County Print

A little help please...

We need your assistance to identify the location, the event, the possible date, possibly the people under the tree or any other details in this image.

This photo which was dropped off at the HEIRS Resource Centre recently without any further info.

Please email any director (see page 10) if you can help us shed some light on it for us.



**Effective May 1st, 2020
annual membership fees will rise to \$30.**

Increased insurance, telephone & internet costs are the culprits.

Why not renew before May 1st to avoid the increase!

And thanks for your continued support of HEIRS!

The Amherstburg Echo.

THE OFFICIAL PAPER OF THE COUNTY

Vol. XXX No. 15.

AMHERSTBURG, ONTARIO, FRIDAY, MARCH 4, 1904.

Whole No. 2,474

100 ACRES FOR SALE.

In 2nd concession, Anderdon Township, about 4 miles from Amherstburg, 20 acres of bush, some small buildings. For further particulars and price, see

FALLS BROS., Agts., Amherstburg.

THE SOVEREIGN BANK OF CANADA.

HEAD OFFICE, TORONTO, ONT.

CAPITAL PAID UP \$3,000,000
SURPLUS AND UNDIVIDED PROFITS, 350,000
ASSETS 50,000

H. S. HOLT, ESQ., President. D. M. STEWART, General Manager.

SAVINGS BANK DEPARTMENT.

Interest allowed on Deposits of \$1.00 and upwards at highest current rate. Farmers' Notes Discounted at lowest possible rates.

HARROW BRANCH.

C. A. MacMAHON, Manager.

AMHERSTBURG BRANCH.

M. I. LANE, Manager.

LOST.

LOST—Strayed from my place, Verona, on Sunday, Feb. 29th, a black white and tan English setter bitch, answering to the name "Lady". Finder will receive liberal reward by returning to me or on being notified I will go after her. A. F. HALL, Verona.

ADDITIONAL LOCAL.

Miss W. H. Hanson's condition kept about the same. Dr. McLaughlin says she may have to stay in hospital here, as she is unable to walk.

MALDEN.

Ernest McGee, of Flint, Mich. spent Sunday at home.

Mrs. Frank Hunt has been suffering from an attack of influenza.

Win. Golden suffering from being attacked of influenza.

BROOKER vs. AMHERSTBURG.

Judge McHugh Refuses to Grant New Trial.

At the recent sittings of the Division Court in Amherstburg, Mrs. James Brooker sued the corporation of Amherstburg, for injuries sustained, alleged to have been due to a fall on a defective sidewalk. She was awarded \$80 and costs. The town, through their solicitors, Davis & Davis, applied for a new trial on the ground of the plaintiff's alleged carelessness. The learned Judge refused to grant the appeal and the text of his decision is as below:

BROOKER vs. AMHERSTBURG.—Mr. Rough for Plaintiff, D. B. Davis for defendant. This action was tried before me at the last sitting of the Division Court at Amherstburg. It is brought by the plaintiff to recover damages for personal injuries sustained by the female plaintiff by falling on a sidewalk on Fort St. which the plaintiff alleges was in a dangerous state of disrepair. It is contended by counsel for the defendant that if the plaintiff has a good cause of action the damages claimed are less than they would be entitled to recover. The law requires a municipal corporation to keep its streets and highways under its control in repair and if it neglects to perform that duty the law provides that it shall be civilly responsible for all damages sustained by any person by reason of such default. The defendant corporation applies to set aside the judgment entered hereon, the ground thereon being so obvious that the plaintiff in question was culpable in not seeing the defective sidewalk. It is contended by counsel for the plaintiff that the defendant corporation is liable for the damages claimed by the plaintiff, and that the judgment entered hereon is correct. I have considered the evidence and the law, and I find that the plaintiff has a good cause of action, and that the damages claimed are less than they would be entitled to recover. The law requires a municipal corporation to keep its streets and highways under its control in repair and if it neglects to perform that duty the law provides that it shall be civilly responsible for all damages sustained by any person by reason of such default. The defendant corporation applies to set aside the judgment entered hereon, the ground thereon being so obvious that the plaintiff in question was culpable in not seeing the defective sidewalk. It is contended by counsel for the plaintiff that the defendant corporation is liable for the damages claimed by the plaintiff, and that the judgment entered hereon is correct. I have considered the evidence and the law, and I find that the plaintiff has a good cause of action, and that the damages claimed are less than they would be entitled to recover.

ANDERDON COUNCIL.

Saturday, Feb. 27th.

Council met in regular session with all members present. Moved by Messrs. Groulx and Cote, that the minutes just read be adopted.—Carried. Moved by Messrs. Volans and Cote, that Fred Pagnou get a warrant for \$4 groceries furnished to the Veronians.—Carried.

Moved by Messrs. Cote and Antoine Leiner get a clearing ice from 60

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BURK BROS.



At Arner, on Feb. 29, to the wife of Thomas Woodiwiss, a daughter, Dorothy May.

March 26

Howard R. Haggins, son of James Haggins of Gosfield North married Emma, second daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Neville of Cottam.

The young couple were attended by Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Montgomery.

There was a scarcity of news items for March, 1920, which I suspect was due to the fact that the weather was still cold.

But a rural area of this kind meant there were a myriad of tasks to be done in preparation for the growing season on the horizon.

Readying machinery & animals, making decisions on what should be grown & in which fields, plus ordering the seed needed... all meant busy days on the farm, with the hours of daylight just beginning to lengthen.

March 12

A. G. Taylor will move to new quarters in the Brookland store.

Frank Herdman has been dismantling the old ditching machine used to clean out the Richmond drain, and is shipping it to a point in the United States. There is over 80 tons of iron in the structure, besides wood enough for the frame of a barn.

Real estate transactions are a daily occurrence. F. H. Ferriss bought three lots from Mr. Munger, and as an inducement to his opening a new road from Munger Ave. to the main road, undertook to purchase every lot in the new subdivision. Munger has the matter under consideration.

March 18

Eber, son of Ezra Quick, died, aged 30 years.

March 19

At Arner, in March, to the wife of Herman Woodiwiss, a son.

Brain Droppings

With times seeming to change very quickly, so HEIRS need to adapt. Our costs increased for things like paper, telephone, copier rental and office supplies, so we've had to increase our yearly membership fees.

Our package of entertaining meetings and informative newsletters is the best deal around, but as of May 1st our membership fees rise to \$30. We suggest you pay for your renewal prior to May 1st to avoid the \$5 increase for this coming year.

Like some members, I plan to pay for 2 years upfront; why don't you leverage these savings too while providing HEIRS with more cash flow, a win-win. -Ted Steele

Over the past Fall, our Lending Library was eliminated as less demand for it occurred over time. As the demand dropped, the decision was made to utilize that storage space for other items. We are currently evaluating our DVD collection. Even though there are some very good videos, they are just not being borrowed with any frequency. We wonder if keeping them is needlessly tying up shelf space. It's hard for me to accept the move away from DVDs, but it is happening.

Another summer period is not too far ahead, and although we again sought a government grant to support summer students for the resource centre, COVID-19 may prevent our office being open this summer. **Grants themselves are never guaranteed though, but we remain hopeful, perhaps with new student employment programs to come.**

Our historical May meeting date is coming up quickly. This meeting always involves selecting our directors. Three current directors have terms of service ending at that time. They could choose to leave their names to stand again, or can step back and retire if they wish. All of us are dealing with advancing age, health issues, and the desire of some, to travel more.

The status quo among our directors is by no means assured. So, if you have an interest in HEIRS and want to help plan its future direction and help decide where our plans ought to take us at this point in time, please consider putting your name forward.

This step forward does not mean you will be assigned a job. But you could help us keep the research centre open Tuesdays and Thursdays, for example.

Or you could support the maintenance of our library materials or be involved in our meeting planning, or wherever you think you could lend a hand. You will be a valued addition to our team.

A fun part of May's meeting if held, is a walk back through younger days. You will be shown a set of photos and asked... Who Dat?

It's a challenge to remember the faces which we all knew well, but may have forgotten.

This event should bring back some memories of good times & Happy Days. Maybe we'll even include the Fonz.

History As It Used to Was...

- by Ted Steele, HEIRS Director

Spring is upon us and I thought it appropriate to look back at farming in the late 1800's, when horsepower actually meant horses, & work was usually more physically demanding than today.

I must confess that as a dumb kid (which I was), I saw farming as work for the uneducated, those who "couldn't do anything else" and had few other options.

Needless to say, that viewpoint has changed through the years, as I slowly smartened up to reality. The slogan that "Farmers feed cities", has a great deal of truth to it.

Through HEIRS, I acquired a book about farming in a nearby county, with photos and quotes about farm life of long ago, and thought it would be of interest since it seems to me that the information will apply to us here in Essex County, just as much.

Quotes from the 1880s...

"Walnut is becoming difficult to obtain, for our purposes and commands over \$70 per thousand board feet.

As a consequence, we must turn increasingly to other woods for our furniture.

Cherry and maple cost \$22 and \$10 per thousand board feet respectively."

"We were pulling stumps with a lever when the chain broke. The latter flew back and crushed his leg. It was necessary later to amputate the leg."

"Life on the farm appeared to be & certainly was then, exceedingly distasteful, because at the time there was an overabundance of hard work & not much of anything else was plentiful."

"On a farm of 300 acres, I plant 12 to 20 acres in root crops. Carrots especially for the horses, and mangels (beets) for the milking cows.

Turnips do not do well because of the fly that attacks them. I sell some carrots for 15 cents a bushel."

"In 1867, the average income per person in Ontario was considered to be about \$46 a year."

"In the 1880s, there were 14 Summer varieties, 26 Fall types and 44 Winter varieties of apples grown in Ontario." Today 16 types are grown and 3 varieties by themselves constitute 3/4 of the total crop.

“Except in the south-western corn growing counties and in some cases in connection with cheese and butter factories, hog raising is nowhere carried on upon a large scale in Ontario.

Only in Kent and Essex counties did anyone pretend to find it a profitable business beyond the supplying of the family demand.”

“My opinion is that there is nothing that pays an ordinary farmer better than to keep a limited number of fowl. I do not think it would pay any man to

keep a very large quantity for the production of eggs at ten cents a dozen.

But when a man has 100 acres and keeps 50 to 60 fowl to consume a great deal of stuff about the farm that would otherwise go to waste, he can obtain a large quantity of eggs at little cost.

I do not think as yet, however, it would be advisable for the farmers of the county generally to use an incubator unless one was in the business of hatching eggs for surrounding farmers.”

These words are from well over 100 years ago, but they provide a little insight into living in the 1870s and 1880s, when most Canadians were employed in some manner by farms, producing a variety of farm products.

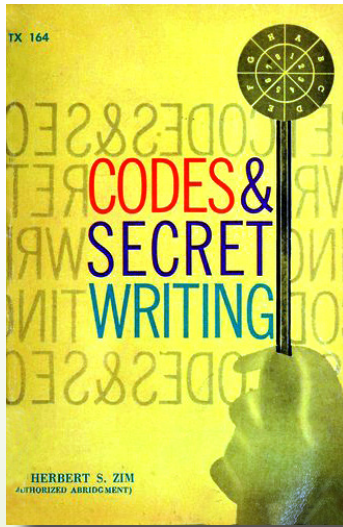


History As It Used to Was...

- by Ted Steele, HEIRS Director

Several topics I have been thinking about of late have one thing in common... secret communications. The list includes Enigma machines, escaping slaves, POW camps, and spy training schools right here in Ontario. With that in mind, I present part one of a 3-part series. This segment is entitled Codes and Ciphers, two quite different attempts at secrecy.

In grade 6 (I think), I found Herbert Zim's book in the school library - 'Codes and Secret Writing'. I was fascinated by secret passages, hidden treasures, so this one really grabbed my attention. I devoured its info & cryptograms became a lifelong pastime.



A code is a message in which an entire word or phrase has one symbol for the whole idea being expressed. In Egypt, a single hieroglyph would stand for the name of the Pharaoh; another single symbol might be used for "son of the Sun-King".

Many cultures have used these kinds of symbols, and they are difficult to decode. It is equally difficult to encode the messages, so it would be of limited practicality. Native tribes used bent trees to indicate which way to water, or other information. Smoke signals were a code, with a single puff of smoke telling an entire idea.

In the American Revolution, both sides used spies and codes, and anyone carrying a coded

message was often hung from a nearby tree. Nathan Hale and his "I regret that I have but one life to give for my country" statement is NOT an accurate quote, but we've all heard it.

My own ancestor was jailed as a spy; he was carrying a message about rebel troop strength and movements. He was jailed in chains, but escaped... (luckily for me), otherwise, someone else would be writing this article.

A message could read "butter worms hawk bootlace cranberries" and each of these words would have a very different meaning when decoded. The real message might read "troops coming today retreat east". However, that meant the one receiving it had to have a book with all the words in it, and the corresponding words listed down as well. That sort of code falls apart if the enemy also obtained a copy of the book.

For this reason, code books on ships were lead weighted; if in danger of being captured, it was just thrown overboard to sink to the bottom.

Slaves on the Underground Railroad had their own codes too; a nail in a tree branch or fence post, a lighted candle in a particular window, a password to prove you were a friend, these and more were needed to preserve secrecy. A knock on a friendly door might be answered, "Who is there?" Slaves were told to respond, "A friend with friends", to indicate an escaping slave with others following.

But, ciphers are more commonly used, for 'secret messaging'. With this type of system, each letter of the alphabet has a matching symbol, so only 26 symbols are needed.

The easiest is where letters are switched out for numbers. If A=1, B=2, etc., then T=20 and so on. HEIRS would thus be written as 0805091819 (08 representing the 8th letter of the alphabet, 05 the 5th letter, and so on for the 9th, 18th and 19th letters).

TV shows like *Captain Midnight* offered viewers decoders with a “secret message” announced at the end of each episode. For example, they would indicate “C=8” & you would set your decoder at C=8. The ‘key’ would be to add 5 to each letter’s place in the alphabet. The other letters would then line up on the dial beside their own equivalent symbol, and you’d know the letter O was the 15th letter (add 5) = 20.



Similarly J (being the 10th letter + 5) = 15, & so on.

Anyone knowing the pattern could figure out that day’s ‘secret message’.

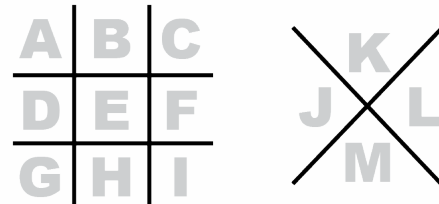
Morse Code is actually a cipher, not a code. Dots and dashes form the symbols for each individual letter sent. The coded versions had to be committed to memory or written down for use.

In my early years, I read Poe’s “Gold Bug” & Stevenson’s “Treasure Island”, both featuring secret codes & maps - and I loved them. Eventually I discovered Sherlock Holmes, a passion of mine to this day. In Doyle’s story of the Dancing Men, Sherlock himself explains how to solve a cipher, & I was hooked. If your cipher has a pattern to it, you could carry it in your head for use & not risk it being captured, like a code book could.

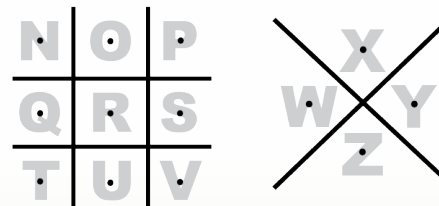
A good version of this type of cipher was used during the American Civil War, & is a staple of

secret writing in Freemasonry, it seems. Called the Masonic Cipher, it uses 2 shapes, which when combined together offers 13 shapes. The first shape is a “hashtag” pattern (#) and the second is a large “X” shape.

Grey letters would NOT appear in actual messages.



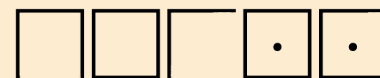
For letters N to Z, these 2 shapes were drawn, but a small dot was placed within each shape.



Each letter could then be represented by the shape **surrounding** it. For example, the letter E would be represented by just a square. An R would show a square with a dot in it.

Use of shapes rather than common symbols made it appear more difficult than it really was to decode messages using this system.

‘HEIRS’ written in code would be:



World Wars brought new urgency for secure communication. Radio messages to various places, even submarines might be intercepted but never allowed to be understood. An enemy with knowledge of your coding system could be lethal. One German system was thought to be forever uncrackable. Germany developed the Enigma, a machine creating mind-boggling combinations of letters that blocked the Allies’ efforts to decipher the Nazi’s battle plans.

But... we’ll discuss this mysterious coding machine as Part Two in our next newsletter.

HEIRS RESOURCE CENTRE

Open September - June (December excepted)

Tuesday & Thursday: 10AM - 3PM

Call to confirm Wednesday or other appointments.

Newsletter

Published 9 times per year, in conjunction with General Meetings held on the 4th Thursday of the month, September to June, (December excepted).

Receive full colour newsletters by email, or a B&W print version by regular post. Simply provide your email or street address to our office.

Memberships

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

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

Send membership cheque to:

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

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

Non-member using Research Library

\$10 per visit (+ photocopy costs).

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Harrow, ON Canada N0R 1G0

Harrow & Colchester South
Community Centre (Arena Bldg.)

Phone 519 738-3700

Email hheritage@bellnet.ca

Website www.HEIRS.ca

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

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