

Vol. 3 – March 2023



HEIRS

Harrow Early Immigrant Research Society

n e w s l e t t e r



It's all about preservation...

Welcome to the March 2023 newsletter!

We've recommended that our members start to record their family histories.

We've suggested you speak to your relatives about family stories & write them down. We encouraged you to even create voice and video recordings of your most elderly relatives to preserve this history. **This month's cover image may offer the right analogy.**

Take something fresh & enjoyable today and with a little time, effort & processing, people will enjoy the fruits of your labour in the future. **It's all about preservation & so is this issue.**

HEIRS saves valuable items in many ways, not only family stories. Images with scratches & mildew are digitized before they deteriorate even more. And importantly, we ensure donated historical treasures are handled and stored properly. Preservation is part of the HEIRS mandate after all – should it be yours too?

You've been glancing at these pictures. Do they seem familiar to you?
A portrait created in the 19th century & one taken last week... so what do they have in common?



No one knows who they are, why or where these pix were taken, or how to ever return them to family members!

Antique and thrift shops have stacks of photos like the one on the left. I imagine in 40-50 years, maybe sooner, stacks of CDs & thumb drives with unknown, wonderfully-lit snapshots and selfies of smiling people will meet a similar fate. Those happy people will remain unknown, or worse... just be deleted forever from this 'old media'. That is unless we start adding some names & dates (at least) on our most important printed photographs and on key digital image files. **How many times have our kids asked us 'who's that' in a photo? Filenames like 'IMG_1853' won't cut it.**

Thousands of digital images get uploaded to our computers; some automatically sorted by date, places or events. But 'Florida Vacation' is useless if our descendants can't identify the people in them. Having no value to anyone, they will be tossed! Our parents placed photos into albums, signifying some semblance of importance given to their family members, even if not identified either.

Ask yourself... how many photos marked 'Grandmother' have you seen on these old photos? So read on & see what we've been preserving. **And when your family asks what are you doing, while labeling your photos, just say this weekend... "I'm working on my preserves!"** - Rick McCormick



HEIRS Updates...

- by Lorrie Stephenson, President, HEIRS

Good news travels (real) fast!

From a childhood interest in her grandparents, Pauline Baldwin's passion for local history blossomed, eventually leading her to research family members of Deslippe-Pollard-Craig-Baldwin lines.

Her family connections date back to the 1500s; arrival of the Filles du Roi; ancestry in 1600s Connecticut, & were associated with the UEL emigration to The Western District in the 1700s. All lineages were proven, certificates obtained, & they were presented to each of her children and grandchildren - preserving their family stories for future generations.

Local members might have seen the recent photos & the write-up on our own Pauline Baldwin, former HEIRS Board member for 23 years. The Town of Essex, Heritage Committee honoured Pauline with a Community Heritage Preservation Award, on February 22nd.



Coverage/photo: Town of Essex: Facebook

Pauline began volunteering at HEIRS, spending countless hours including many weekdays, weeknights, and sometimes weekends. Pauline now works with our volunteers & under her tutelage helps them to discover her research approach. With her work ethic and broad experience, Pauline hopes to inspire more people to join us & to contribute to the preservation of Harrow's important history.

Congratulations Pauline, and thank you for the 23 years of dedication to the HEIRS board, as well as your ongoing commitment to guide our volunteers.

"Survey says..."

The HEIRS newsletter survey received a healthy response from members & we really appreciate your important input.



Meanwhile, our meeting surveys are steadily arriving by snail mail. If you are wondering why you didn't get this one, it was sent only to members who reside in the Essex Co. region, those close enough to likely attend most of our meetings. We'll share the trends and some specific responses, once fully board reviewed.

April Meeting Reminder: April 23rd 1:30 PM



Laurie Brett will be speaking at our April meeting about her new book, *Essex: 'A Village Rising'*. Copies are already available at HEIRS Resource Centre. Be sure to mark this date on your calendar.

Upcoming Social Event: Thursday March 23rd, 1:30 PM

Spring will be here before we know it. Please join us on our usual meeting day, time & location for a chance to see old friends, meet new ones, share a cup of coffee or tea, & play a game of easy trivia.

We'll meet for an early afternoon social, not our regular HEIRS meeting. We look forward to seeing you & to welcome new friends too. As usual, there is no fee to attend.





Grayer-Clingman (Klingman) Family

- by Edward Milo Johnson, HEIRS member

Researching my African American and African Canadian families presents many barriers that do not occur for most other families. Slavery complicates the search for ancestral family members since many before 1900 did not have proper records and were not included in the U.S. census as citizens. The Canadian Census did not begin until 1851, and is more inclusive of African Canadian citizens.

My mother, Floreen Winnifred Grayer was the daughter of Forrest Grayer and Ida Belle Chavis-Grayer. They lived on a fifty-acre farm on the Third Concession of Colchester Township. My grandmother, Ida Belle Chavis was born in the New Canaan Settlement of Colchester North Township. Forrest was the son of my great grandparents James Hatfield Grayer and Mercilla Clingman. I have chosen one of the many branches of our family as an example of this complicated research – the Mercilla Clingman Branch.

The Clingman ancestors from Africa arrived in the Commonwealth of Virginia and were purchased by an unknown person. My ancestors then became the possessions of the William Fuqua family of Lunenburg County, West Virginia. William's son Moses Fuqua inherited his father's land and slaves. Moses lived for nearly fifty years on the banks of the Staunton River, WV, when he was offered a land grant in the wild frontiers of Kentucky. He sold his holdings and established a plantation in Greenup, Kentucky on the south banks of the Ohio River, where he had black slaves on one-thousand-acres of property.

The Greenup Fuqua plantation eventually went to family member Thomas B. King in 1812. Gabriel Clingman (born in 1797) was a slave on the King plantation and secretly learned to read and write from 17 year old Moses Mackoy, a young white boy from the neighboring Mackoy Plantation, despite this activity being illegal.



Floreen Winnifred Grayer-Johnson



Forrest Albert Grayer



Ida Belle Chavis



James Hatfield Grayer

Grayer-Clingman (Klingman) Family... cont'd

In the spring of 1820, Gabriel Clingman escaped the King Plantation and headed north on the Underground Railroad. Gabriel ended up in Colchester Township, Essex, Ontario, Canada where he was successful as a teacher, and became an ordained Methodist minister.

In 1834 Gabriel sent a letter from Canada to his 'tutor', Moses Mackoy back in Kentucky requesting him to ask King what the cost would be to acquire his 'Freedom Papers'. Moses showed King Gabriel's letter, & explained the situation. King directed him to inform Gabriel that it would cost \$200 cash to attain his freedom.

Upon receiving this information, Gabriel immediately sent the \$200 to pay for his Freedom Papers. He soon went to Portsmouth in 1836, reunited with Moses Mackoy, and received his manumission papers from Thomas B. King.

Gabriel preached as a registered Methodist minister in Colchester & in New Canaan (Ontario, Canada). With his Freedom Papers he was able to work as a New Connexion Methodist circuit preacher in Canada & the United States.

When Gabriel Clingman escaped the plantation in 1820, he left behind a child (also named Gabriel), who was born on the King plantation in 1816. There were about twelve slaves on the plantation when his son Gabriel Jr. escaped slavery in 1846 using the Underground Railroad.

With him were his wife Mary Ann Atkinson, three children, and two of his cousins. They arrived at Amherstburg by a lake boat from Sandusky, Ohio.

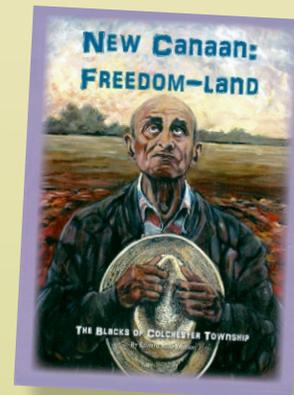
Their family was sent onward to Colchester and they were finally reunited with Gabriel Sr. – my G.G.G.G. Grandfather.

Gabriel Jr. with his wife and 3 children then settled north of Colchester village on Potleg (Gore) Road, having ten children in total. One of Gabriel Jr.'s sons, born on the Greenup Plantation in 1843, was James Milton Clingman. He married Nancy Ann Hatfield, of the Hatfield family, who were Free Mixed-Race Blacks from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.



James and Nancy had fourteen children of their own. Their daughter Mercilla (Mercy) Ann Clingman, born in 1870, married James Hatfield Grayer, my Great Grandfather.

Pictured are my Grandfather Forrest Grayer & Great Grandfather, James Hatfield Grayer.



The complex story of Milo's ancestors and their struggle to achieve freedom is fully detailed and preserved in his book:

“New Canaan: Freedom-Land.”



Donations... there are a few ground rules!

- by Bonnie Storey, Treasurer, HEIRS / Rick McCormick, Member

Each history group or museum has its own policy regarding acquisitions & the myriad of donations offered each year.

Not all items can be accepted of course, but we're happy to share one such donation that will be preserved at HEIRS for years to come!

HEIRS Acquisition & Donations Policy... sounds pretty formal, doesn't it?

One could say that HEIRS is the keeper of your history. We keep it safe, we respect it, we learn from it, and value it highly. With a specific policy regarding the deposit of records & other artifacts for safekeeping with us, we are able to keep that promise.

A short application to describe the specific nature of the donated materials is an important part of this policy. Not all materials can be accepted; a Board committee will examine the item(s) on a case-by-case basis, to see if appropriate for our organization to take ownership of them.

Once accepted, items are safely held in the HEIRS office. The donor and a few others will have supervised access to the original item(s). Assistance is provided when one wants to review or use these materials in their research.

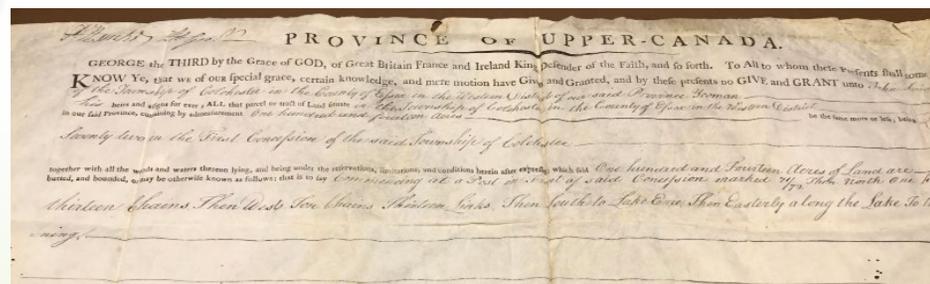
**Original articles are not removed from the library.
For example, some items are too delicate to handle.**

If they're safe to handle, we'll assist patrons to make photocopies or photographs for their own records. This 'access procedure' is agreed upon in writing, signed by the depositor, and a representative of HEIRS to clearly outline the mutual ground rules for each important family document donated to HEIRS.

Current Project

We're excited to share our latest completed project. The original land grant, signed by the Canadian representatives of King George III, as proclaimed to John Snider, September 4th, 1814.

**The land grant consisted of 114 acres on Lot 72,
First Concession in Colchester Township,
in the Province of Upper Canada.**



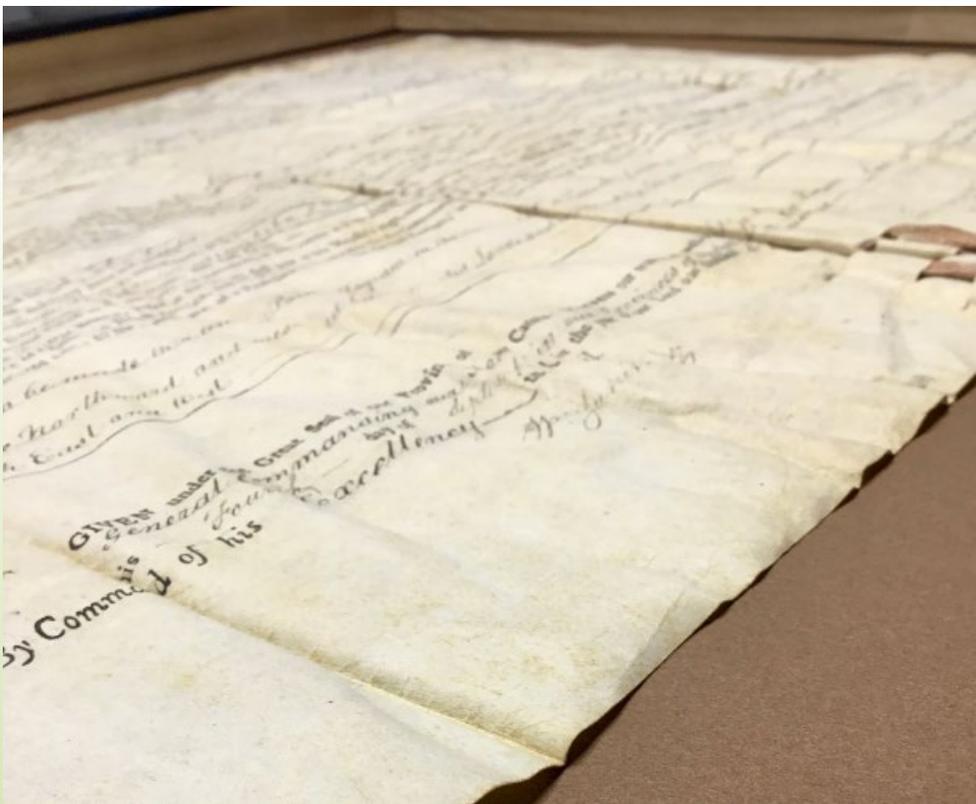
John Snider, a Pennsylvania blacksmith, eventually settled here following the American Revolutionary War. He finished building his home, with its 2-foot thick limestone lower foundation wall, and 1 square foot thick walnut, log cabin-like upper level, in 1813. The house is the oldest, continuous family-owned home in Essex Co.



John Snider grant document... cont'd

A descendant of John Snider donated this priceless document to HEIRS. She understands that our next generations are uneasy about keeping such valuable items themselves. Life is different now, with children & grandchildren moving away from their family's home region more often.

It becomes necessary to ensure that a safe harbour, like HEIRS, maintains these treasures in their original hometowns.



This land grant came to HEIRS almost a year ago. Covid restrictions delayed its work, but will adorn our Resource Centre this month.

Framing by Anna, has been the caretaker of this document using archival processes and materials to ensure its long-term viability. Along with an acid-free matte board, its conservation UV-coated glass blocks 99% of harmful rays. The chosen deep-frame construction offered an opportunity to recess the document's official seals, some 4-1/4 inches in diameter, for their additional protection.

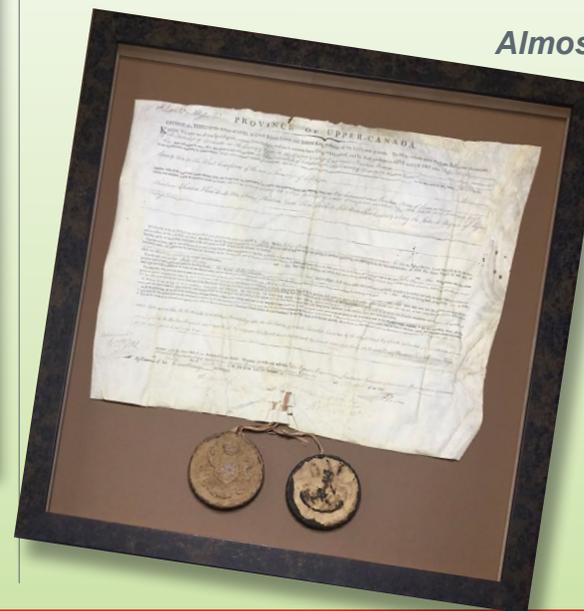


Backing materials stop dust, insects & other pollutants from damaging the fragile, original vellum document, measuring 18 x 22 inches.

Almost ready!

We invite you to visit our Resource Centre to view the finished piece in person.

While here, discover the many other treasures which now live with us... under the security blanket of the HEIRS Acquisitions and Donations policy, of course.



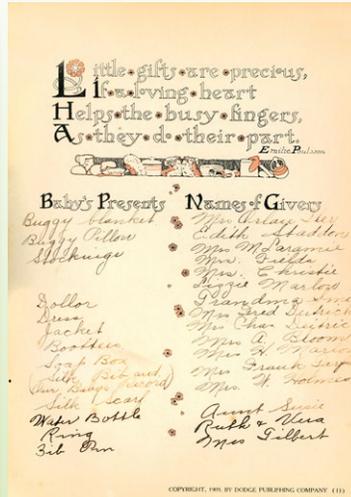
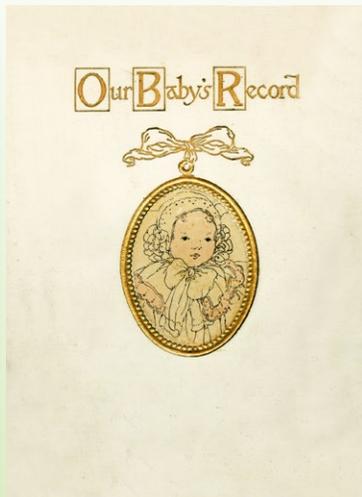
Photos courtesy of:
Framing by Anna, Kingsville

Treasure - no gold or silver, just precious family memories...

- by Lorrie Stephenson, President, HEIRS / Susan Kennedy, Volunteer

A donation arrived at HEIRS in January. When purchasing them from a local yard sale several years ago, the donor knew these family photo & letters would be treasured by a relative. She's maintained them well & has now donated them for safe keeping.

HEIRS researchers initially emptied the box of these obvious family mementoes, which included a photo of a young boy named Darwin. Along with other items was his baby book, lovingly preserved by his mother. Letters from the 1970-80s were neatly lined up in a smaller box; with one bearing a 1905 postmark. A beautiful late 1800s family album contained several pages of studio photos.



Upon further study, we identified a number of the individuals and importantly their relationships. Little Darwin grew up to be Darwin Stolte, known around town as 'The Apple Man'. Darwin's family home was on Smith Side Road, west of Harrow. He lived alone prior to his passing in 2005, and his house has since been demolished. The garage sale find was a collection of Darwin's family's photos and documents.



On the back of one photo, written in pencil was "Mrs. Stolte".

Since Darwin never married, and with a bit more work we were able to piece together that the lady in the studio portrait was in fact, Darwin Stolte's mother, Alma Pearl Smith.

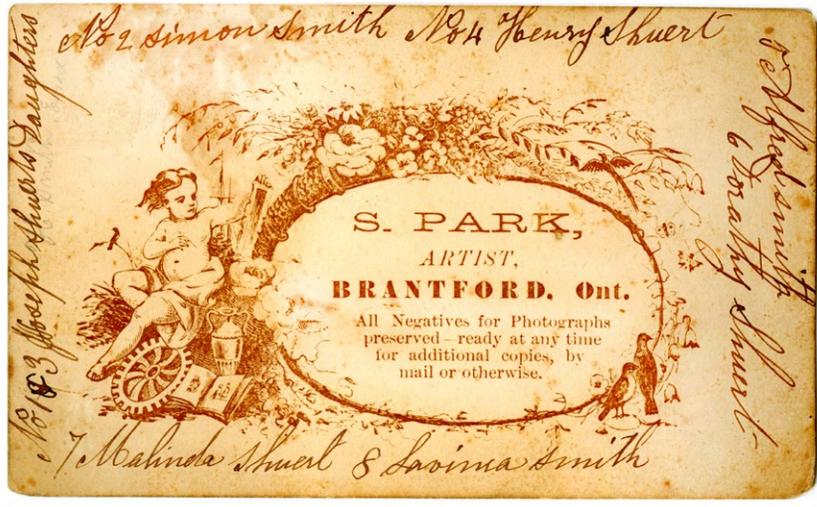
This may explain why Darwin's home was on Smith Road.

(You didn't think we would leave her as an unidentified lady back on page 2, did you?)

A family tree for Darwin, located on Ancestry.ca, also showed that he had 3 brothers and 1 sister. At the time of the entry on Ancestry, no death date was shown for them.

The siblings have yet to be located, and Darwin's possible nephews or nieces have not been identified currently. We'll continue this search so we may soon return these items.

Can you provide more info? Please contact us, as these important & personal items really belong with their family records.



Another photo from this discarded box was labelled with numbers on the front and corresponding names on the reverse side, written over the photographer's identification. This family image identifies our Alma Pearl Smith's uncles & aunts on both sides of the families, pictured when they were young adults.

Two daughters of Joseph Sheurt were pictured (#1 & #3) but not identified by name. On the family tree they are Eliza Jane & Lucinda.

Joseph Sheurt was the maternal Great Grandfather of our "unknown lady", Alma Pearl Smith.

Numbering & naming these family members helped to preserve this photo's value for their descendants. Ancestry searches revealed that Simon Smith (born 1849) died in 1927. Using the image Simon was likely in his 20's when it was taken, so our first guesstimate for when it was taken would likely be from 1869 onward. But can we determine a shorter date range than that? The photographer's card gives us more dating information to ponder. **Brantford Public Library became our next resource.**

Seth Park went to Brantford from the Niagara region in 1853, originally selling artist's supplies & operating a photo studio with his wife. After Seth's death in 1875, she kept the business going for a year or so, while their son Edward trained in the trade,

'S. Park' branded photos ran from 1853-1876, If Simon was 20 or older in the photo, then the date range is between 1860 & 1876 (the year that business name ended). A 16-year range (but maybe even less if Simon was older).

As confirmation, Edward (& Mom) 'renamed' the business as Park & Co. in 1877 & used their **new** backer card. As the largest shop in the country & winning prestigious photo medals, the Ontario government commissioned him to cover special events. His 1917 photo shows the unveiling of the Bell Monument in Brantford, honouring the invention of the telephone. Despite torrential rain throughout that day, Edward Park captured this image during a break in the storm. He closed his business after 54 years, in 1930.



Alexander Graham Bell, family & committee members, 1917, Park & Co.

Our young family group photo is the reason why naming photos is important, even if just scrawled on the back. Researchers then have a starting point to find descendants, to preserve their family's memories, generation after generation.

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Membership

\$30 CDN/U.S. per person or couple. Memberships run May 1st - April 30th, annually.
Please provide phone, postal address, email & family names you are researching.

Payments

Make cheques out to: HEIRS, 243 McAfee St., PO Box 53, Harrow ON, Canada N0R 1G0

E-transfer payments or donations to HEIRS? Send to: heirsont@gmail.com

Members research for free. Non-members using research library: \$10 per visit (+ photocopy fees)

Newsletter / Meetings

Published 9 times / year. Meetings usually 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.

Resource Centre:

Open Hours: Mondays 5:30-8PM, Tuesdays & Thursdays 10AM-3PM

Please contact us at heirsont@gmail.com or (519) 738-3700 to confirm our 'open status' prior to arrival.

519 738-3700

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