

Vol. 2– February 2016

HEIRS

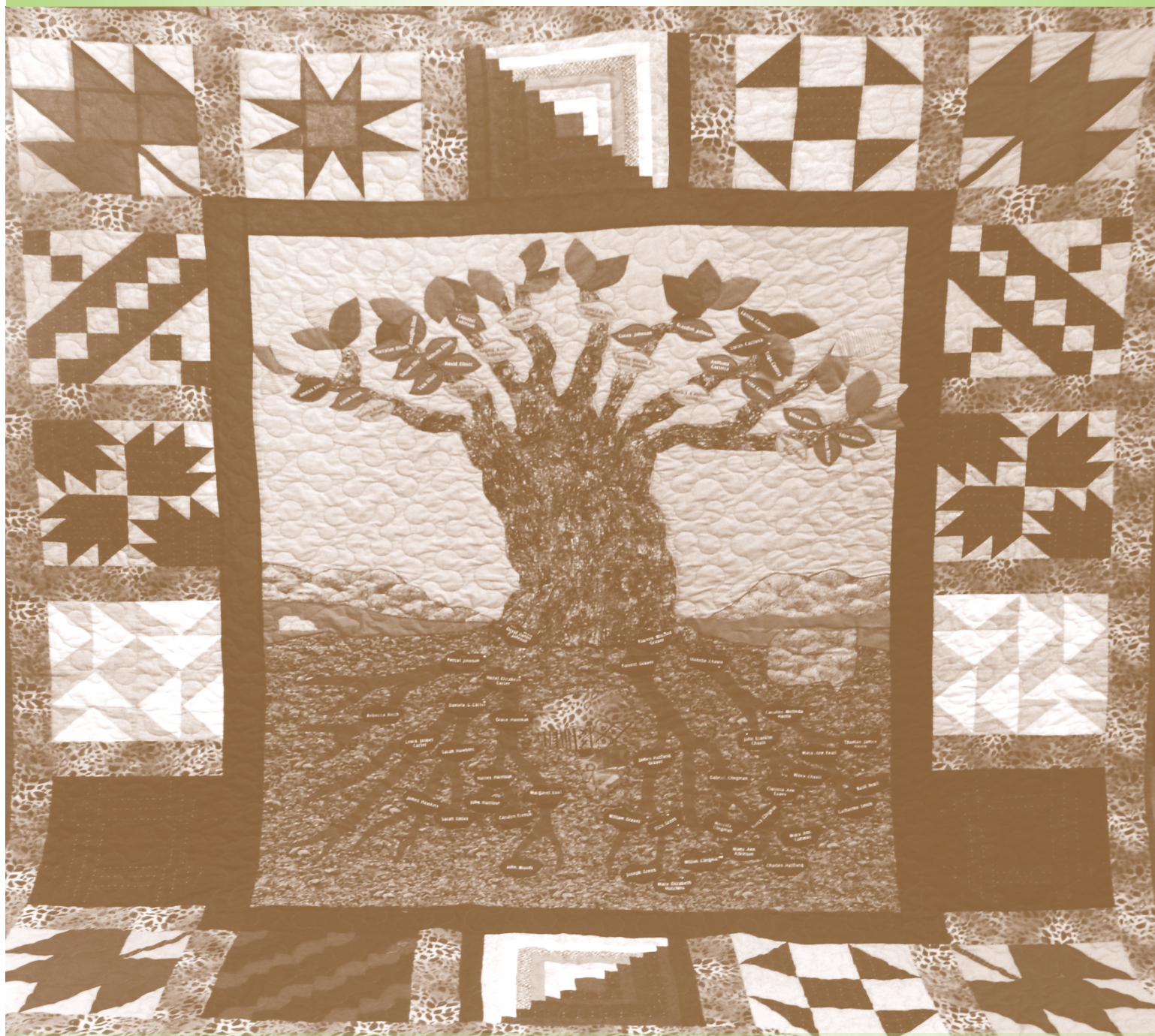
Harrow Early Immigrant Research Society

newsletter



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Welcome to February's newsletter

We continue to bring meetings full of information on subjects some of us may pass by, if it weren't for the presentations and speakers who bring their own experiences and families to life. By illuminating their own family history work, it encourages all of us to follow their lead, and dig a little deeper into our own ancestors' stories.

As always, the more you can support HEIRS by attending our meetings, corresponding with us on questions that we may just have the answers to, and heading out with us on our day trips to interesting local places, the more HEIRS is enthused to bring more of the same to each of you. Let us know you're out there, and contribute where you can.

February Meeting

When: Thursday, February 25th, 1:30 PM

Where: Harrow-Colchester Arena Community Centre

HEIRS will meet this February to mark Black History Month. Our featured speaker, Milo Johnson, is a retired local teacher of many years, who has been exploring his own roots, and has kindly offered to share his research with us.

Milo will display the quilt shown on this month's cover, made by one of his cousins, telling the story of one branch of his family from slavery through the gaining of freedom and working to establish a new and better life for themselves, often quite difficult.

Milo has also performed much research through documents and internet files to fill in the blanks and make his own tree more complete. He is the author of at least 2 books telling the stories of his own ancestors, and will bring some of these to life for our members.

Also on the program, HEIRS Director Ted Steele will discuss some of the progress made in achieving equal rights for all by looking back at some of the racist events that have occurred during our own lifetimes, and some of which



happened right here in Essex County. This will include cross burnings, the Canadian KKK, and the overall unfair treatment of blacks, even those who had achieved success professionally in many fields.

Civil rights have indeed come a long way, but racial unfairness is NOT something that only happened "long ago and far away".

While not the most pleasant area of our history to examine, it is still reality and, as such, needs to be kept in mind.

HEIRS met on Thursday, January 28 to learn about the Kingsville Military Museum, and to inform us all about some of the events of WW2 which local residents were involved in.

Our featured speaker was Kevin Fox, the recently named curator of the museum, and a well qualified young man for the job. He began with an outline of the museum itself, explaining its focus and its ongoing collection of items which tell of Canada's military history.



Kevin then went into some detail about the Dieppe raid, which the Essex Scottish was deeply involved in. As he told of the events, he also involved local area servicemen who took part in the fighting, bringing the events even closer to home.

The bravery and gallant actions of several were pointed out, as this fighting unit was a very effective one throughout the war.

Many were to become POWs and endured harsh conditions and savage treatment at the hands of their captors. Kevin's talk was both educational and interesting, and did much



to help us understand to a better degree the experiences of these fighting men, who did what had to be done, & made Canada proud.

His presentation was sprinkled throughout with names like McCormick, Scarf, Jaspersen, Snook, Bryden, Lucas, Large, Hayhurst and others, families still in the region today.



We honour them by remembering what they did on our behalf.



From the HEIRS mailbag...

*Here at HEIRS, we really appreciate the comments which come in as to the content of our newsletter. It allows us to get an idea of what interests our readers, and what ought to be explored in future issues. **If you have comments or questions, or even a request, please write or email us with your thoughts.***

Our January issue brought immediate feedback. At least 2 readers wrote to ask about the nurses on the front cover, in particular asking for their names. The image is from the Kingsville Military & Historic Museum's Flickr page as a prelude to its new curator, Kevin Fox's visit with us, at the recent January meeting.

The picture was entitled the Dorothy Martin Group. **We will see what we can do to locate these ladies' names.**



This tells us that there is interest in the topic, and I have wanted to develop a meeting on those exact lines. This provides the push to do so, and I expect it may well be the topic for our October meeting on Remembrance Day.

The January issue also contained a thank you for papers donated to HEIRS, specifically about the Fox family. A member living in Vermont wrote to request more information on the Fox line, especially as to its connection with the J R Park Homestead. The writer grew up next to the Homestead, and remembers buying eggs and corn from the Fox family who owned it. HEIRS will happily pass along the info requested....**that's part of what we do!**



You will also notice that events sponsored by other groups are occasionally included in Upcoming Events. We feel that the various history and genealogy groups of Essex County share a common bond and appeal to a wide range of interests; if we can point out events of interest to our members, and help other groups with their efforts, that's a positive approach. **We're all on the same team here.... right?**

HEIRS has been contacted by a Mary Ulch, who is seeking information to prove a connection between her husband Kenneth and Andrew Ulch, who settled in Kingsville in the 1790s.

We are currently checking our files and endeavouring to help her prove her husband's status as a UE. I feel that the majority of families who settled here early in the 1800s were indeed Loyalists, and we are only too happy to help prove the connections.

The regular meeting of HEIRS will be held on Thursday, March 24, featuring Cris Kohl and Joan Forsberg, husband and wife scuba divers who have explored many of the shipwrecks of the Great Lakes, including those near us in the infamous "Pelee Passage".

Their research encompasses the war of 1812 and many other facets of Canadian history, and should be most interesting. You won't want to miss their presentation!

The RFPO Pionniere du Sud-Ouest research centre reopened as of January 26, 2016, after being closed for a year. It is now open on Tuesdays from 10 AM to 8 PM for those researching their French Canadian background.

Later this Spring, there will be a grand opening ceremony with guests and festivities. The centre is located in the former Puce Public School at the intersection of old Tecumseh Road and the E. C. Row expressway near Emeryville. For more information, call Agathe at 519-948-6924.

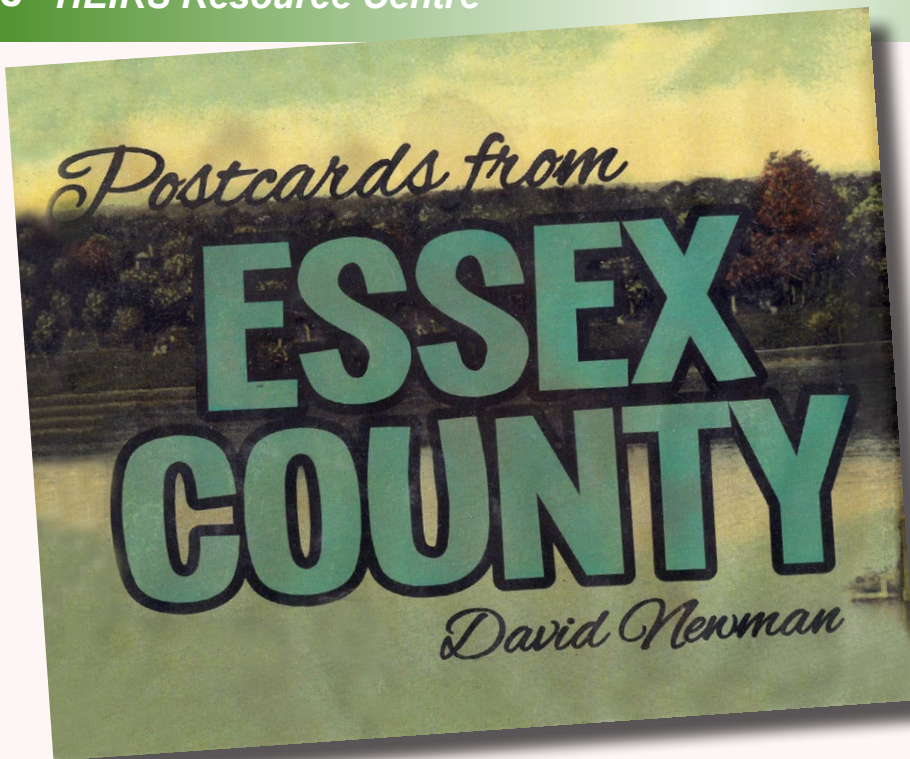
The Kingsville-Gosfield Heritage Society is arranging a trip to Meadow Brook Hall on Monday, April 25, at a cost of \$75 per person. Call Pat Ford at the Kingsville Archives (226-348-6377) between 10 AM & 4 PM, any Tuesday or Thursday for further details.



Their next regular meeting, February 8th at 1:30PM, in the Kingsville Baptist Church at 58 Division Street North features Bob Lynch talking about his book, "The Grovedale House" (King's Landing), a recently closed landmark restaurant in Kingsville. The book will be available for purchase at the meeting for \$10.

The Essex County Historical Society will meet in the Harrow - Colchester Arena meeting room on Saturday, Feb. 20 to hear local author Chris Carter discuss his book on the early iron ore industry at Olinda, right here in Essex County. This relatively obscure bit of local history is quite interesting, and Chris will bring it back into focus for us.

HEIRS members are welcome to attend, with tickets at \$10 per person, and a lunch and coffee provided at 1PM. Those interested in attending should contact Jim McTavish at 519-967-9410 or at jmctavish4@cogeco.ca by Wednesday, February 10.



Postcards from Essex County

- by David Newman

Our featured book this month is a beautiful, pictorial scrapbook.

Mr. Newman is a postcard and antique dealer who grew up in the Windsor area, and now resides in Michigan. He has assembled a large collection of postcards which tell the story of the people, places and events of Essex County, and they are arranged in this hardcover volume of approximately 300 pages. The postcards are arranged alphabetically by the locale each represents, so Amherstburg becomes the first chapter.

The Matthew Elliott plantation, the original train station, street scenes from the early 1900s all have their place; anyone who grew up there would know these landmarks and the stories they tell.

Treated in similar fashion are the communities of Belle River, Boblo Island, Colchester, Comber, Essex, Harrow, Kingsville, Leamington, Pelee Island, St. Joachim, Stoney Point, Tecumseh and Woodslee.

Even the smaller locations in the county are represented, as he has included postcards showing Blytheswood, Oldcastle, Malden Centre and McGregor.

Many of these were sent as souvenirs to family members, and as such, they “show off” what the town had to offer at that time.

Stores and merchants, forms of transportation and even public amusements are shown, as we are able to peek at “the way it was” 100 years ago.



The book is available from the HEIRS Lending Library for any members, and I can promise that you will thumb through it several times, as one taste of nostalgia will not be enough.

It is hoped that Mr. Newman can arrange to speak at an upcoming HEIRS meeting, as he is able to schedule his time.

Fascinating Bits of History

Just as events of long ago continue to affect us today, so too does the language of the pioneers continue in our own expressions and vocabulary. I often come across words or expressions, and think to myself, "Where the heck did that term come from?" Let's look at some expressions with a Valentine connection.

Courting was usually done in the parlour, with a chaperone always nearby. "Parlour" of course connects with the French verb "parler", meaning "to talk". So as well do "parliament", and the backwoods slang term, "palaver", among others.



Another of these strange terms is the word, "antimacassar". If you have ever seen the old Roseanne show on television, you have seen one of these. It is the home-made "quilt", or sometimes a lace "doily", often a pattern of interlocking squares, which is thrown over the back of the couch.

I always assumed it was what we would call a "throw", for a little extra warmth on a cold winter night. Not so!!

In Victorian times, the fashion was for gentlemen to load their hair with grease to slick it down and hold it in place, particularly when they were courting. When calling, they would be seated on the family's best couch in the "parlour", a special room reserved for these formal occasions. The grease on the young man's head would often make a terrible stain on the back of the couch, much to the mother's consternation. One of the most popular hair oils of the time was made by mixing alcohol, olive oil, some rose oil and a piece of alkanet

root, draining the liquid and letting the residue form an oil. This became known as "macassar oil", and the material to protect the back of the couch was "an anti-macassar". **That makes perfect sense!**

As I was typing this, the weirdness of the term "doily" struck me. I wonder if it also connects, since it seems to be connected with the word "oil"? I'll never know!

Spooning is still heard as a term for courting; so how did this evolve? A young man, to show his intentions, would bestow on his sweetheart a fancy spoon, perhaps an early indication of setting up a household. Many young ladies of the time collected such items, and if she accepted one from a gentleman, he was being considered with interest. I would imagine that young ladies with large spoon collections would show them off to the envy of their friends!

On occasion a young lady and her suitor might be given alone time in the parlour (but not too alone). A "sparking lamp" was lit, which gave low light and gradually burned out. When the sparking lamp ran out, the young man was

also expected to be on his way out. Now I know why "courting & "sparking" are sometimes used as synonyms!

History can be so interesting!!





February 4

Seven per cent of the voters of Colchester South signed the petitions for prohibition. Many others who would have signed were not at home when canvassed. This means that in the event of a vote, probably 90 per cent would favour prohibition.

Resignation of James H. Brown, veteran treasurer for 22 years; appointed Roland Ferriss to the position. Mr. Ferriss has been a resident of the village for some years. (NOTE: The next week, Feb. 25, Roland Ferriss refused the position as it would interfere with his coal business.)

February 18

An old-time tobacco delivery at Harrow; five cars were loaded. The first teams began to arrive at 4 AM and by daylight there was a string of wagons from the warehouse to the P M station. It took all day to receive and pack. The leaf was in good condition, well cured and well baled. \$10,400 was paid out. James Howie of the lake front received the largest- nearly \$1000. Allan Iler delivered the best crop; he planted on tiled ground, fertilized the secondary after setting, raking the fertilizer carefully around the roots. The plants never ceased growing and ripened before others.

The Patriotic Society has engaged a dray to travel the township to gather up old newspapers, magazines, etc., household rags and rubber boots for the war effort.

February 25

James Drummond shipped 16 horses, the majority for the French War Department; others for express horses for Montreal, and a couple of nice dapple greys for Simmons, Toronto.

February 26

The Bowling Club was reorganized; Hon. President J. E. Russ; President I. E. Webster; Vice President W. H. Ferriss; Secretary Treasurer C. W. Cornwall; Chaplain J. H. Madill.

Charles Lung opens hand laundry.

Ice houses are being filled with 8 inch clear ice.

Why do genealogy?

- by Ted Steele, HEIRS Director

Why do genealogy? There are secrets to uncover! As you peel back the generations, through parents to grand-parents and beyond, you may discover names that are familiar from your days as a student of Canadian History (just a few years ago).

When I was in grade school, all the “heroes of Canada’s history” were just names on a page—not presented as people at all, no personal story to tell, merely old fogeys in days long past - dull and boring! **Who cares? Why do we bother learning this stuff in school at all?**

After my parents both passed away, I inherited the family tree files and the boxes of photos. I gradually put them into my own system, & noticed that some of the names of families that had intermarried with the Steeles rang a distant bell in my memory. There was Lundy, Kreisler, Doan, Sherk & others.

Could this connect me with Lundy’s Lane of 1812 fame? Kreisler has evolved into Chrysler... could this be the automobile company? And could Adam Crysler, called the “White Indian”, be kin? Do I have a connection with Sherston, or Sherk Street in Leamington? Is James Doan, Kingsville druggist of “Doan’s Kidney Pills” fame, a relative? And Shane Doan of the NHL? My interest in the 1839 Bois Blanc blockhouse caused me to wonder about one Joshua Gillam Doan, hung as a traitor in 1839, after the Battle of Windsor.

As I began investigating, I found answers to these and other questions. My 5th G Grandfather William arrived in Niagara about 1785 and was granted land as a Loyalist. William’s brother John married Sarah Doan, & William’s son Christian married Martha Doan. William’s daughter Marilla married Abraham

Leonard Doan. (After all, there were few candidates to choose from - *only neighbours, really*). Research showed me that Shane Doan, James Doan & Joshua Gillam Doan are all kin to me. Adam Crysler & Samuel Lundy, important figures in the American Revolution & the War of 1812, surfaced in the Steele tree.

The name NEFF appears often in the family records; a distant cousin, one Benton Neff, invented the Neff Steam Buggy in 1901. It was rescued from a junkyard about 1953, fully restored by 1970, & now resides in the Port Colborne Historical & Marine Museum. It is considered one of the finest early car examples in existence today, & the second or third oldest Canadian-made car known.

And I thought I came from a line of poor farmers! What we assume is very often not even close to the truth!



HEIRS has amazing records & files of materials already assembled on many of the Essex County families. **Check out what we have on YOUR family & then begin your own search for the real people in your background.**

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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