

Vol. 9– November 2014

# H.E.I.R.S.

newsletter

Harrow Early Immigrant Research Society



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**Inside this Issue...**

**November Meeting:  
History of 'Boblo Island' Blockhouses**

## **Newsletter News!**

**Welcome to the November issue of the HEIRS newsletter.**

**Our last one in 2014 encompasses both Remembrance Day activities and Christmas Day celebration. A time for reflection for quite diverse reasons. It's a time that HEIRS takes stock of the past year and begins to confirm guest speakers for meetings. We encourage members to touch base with us to offer topic suggestions, requests for help with their own research, & for anything we may be able to assist them with throughout the year. Thanks for your positive reviews of our newsletters; a lot of effort goes into each one, to keep them fresh and informative. So... see you at a meeting in the New Year?**

### **November Meeting**

**When: Thursday, November 27th, 1:30 PM**

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

**Our speaker, Bill Brundage, is a retired teacher & passionate local historian.**

In 2011, Bill began a personal crusade to save the old blockhouse on Boblo Island. Built in 1838 by the British who were concerned about American participation in the attacks of 1837 at various points along the Canada-US border, by 2011 it was in terrible shape.

Bill began searching for funding, support & physical help to save and restore this local treasure.



Largely due to Mr. Norm Becker & Becker Engineering, the blockhouse was disassembled, & new foundation installed. It was then reassembled, & rebuilt where necessary. Artifacts found during its reconstruction are displayed inside, & provide a wonderful peek into what a soldier's life would have been like at that time.

Bill will discuss his difficulties in gaining official support, & the work involved to do a masterful restoration for all to appreciate & enjoy. **Join us to see what one man's determination, and the public service of a small group of caring individuals, has accomplished.**



*On Thursday, October 23, HEIRS met to observe the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of WW 1; to honour all those local residents who have served in that war, and those which followed.*

Our meeting began with Brian Meyers (left) who spoke of the desire to install a cenotaph in Harrow. He outlined the groundwork by a local committee to find a centrally located Harrow site, the designing of the monument & its sculptures, and the fund-raising which has made the idea possible.

The only artisans who could do the stone work properly are in New York, so the project has been costly ,time-consuming, and will unfortunately not be done in time for a Remembrance Day dedication, as was hoped. Bricks of 2 sizes are available (at reasonable prices), to be engraved to honour a particular family member or friend, to be placed around the cenotaph.

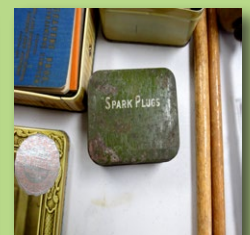
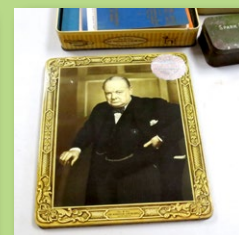


HEIRS Directors, Richard Herniman (left) & Ted Steele spoke briefly on the cost of the world wars, in terms of young men & women who gave their all in service, & the local families affected by the loss of family members in these conflicts.

HEIRS is adding the servicemen & women of the world wars to its files. Anyone searching for information, or for photographs of kin who served, should check our growing collection.

*HEIRS member Roger Sinasac (right) spoke of his experiences in the military, covering many years, many countries, and various experiences which made him grateful to be a Canadian, and proud to serve his country. He urged all members to be thankful for the freedoms we have, and to count our blessings, as many nations are not so fortunat*

*Roger brought along war memorabilia from his private collection for viewing.*



## 4 Local Events

### ***Longtime HEIRS supporter & occasional guest speaker Janet Cobban set to retire in November.***

The curator of the J.R. Park Homestead for 27 years, Janet also acted as curator of the Windsor Community Museum for 8 years. She has done much to “keep history alive” here in Essex County, with imaginative programming & family events at the Homestead through the years.



***Janet is being recognized for her contributions by the Ontario Museum Association. The incoming curator and educational director at the Homestead will be Kris Ives.***



### ***From the HEIRS mailbag...***

HEIRS member Richard McGee writes- “Thanks for my monthly newsletter. I really enjoy the newsletters. I wish I could come to the meetings and visit the resource centre. I’ll try harder this year.”

Melissa Drummond Sanford, from Maryland, is researching her family roots. Her ancestors include Joseph Drummond, who operated a “taxi” service from the Harrow train to Oxley. HEIRS provided Melissa with family information, and she plans to return to HEIRS in the future.

Joy McLean Austin, from Minnesota, contacted HEIRS regarding her grandfather, Charles McLean, son of Thomas McLean and Adeline Beaudoin. By making use of the extensive records at HEIRS of the McLean family, Joy is now able to establish her UEL status through John McLean, the first McLean in the New Settlement.

***HEIRS is pleased to have the chance to assist so many families in their researches.***

# A Knave among Knights in their Spitfires



Jerry Billing MIA, CD, AGC

## A Knave Among Knights In Their Spitfires

- by Jerry Billing

*This offering is a 2011 reprint of an original book printed in 1995. It is a paperback book of 152 pages, with many black and white photos.*

*In it, Jerry tells his own story, of starting as a very young man in Essex in the 1930s, and feeling the urge to fly. He tells of his trials as he sought to serve in the air, and of those who repeatedly told him that he did not qualify to be a pilot. Proving them wrong, he finally gets his chance as a Spitfire pilot and joins the RAF, to fight the enemy Huns.*

*As his story unfolds, Jerry is at times blunt; he tells of other pilots he liked and some he did not. He is occasionally critical of superior officers, and their tactics; he even describes some events which portray him as "less than heroic".*

*One instance has Jerry and friends helping themselves to fresh fruits while holding the fruit pedlar at gunpoint.*

Jerry writes to tell "how it really was" and while the book is not overly technical, it is written for the reader who has some knowledge of wartime events. In more recent times, Jerry expresses opinions on topics such as Nazi war criminals in Canada, American propaganda, and the misrepresenting of historical facts. He paints himself as a man who did what he dreamed of doing, on his own terms, and in his own way.



Available for purchase at HEIRS - \$20.

***We will not see his kind again.***

## 6 Upcoming Events

### November 8th

*The final class of the year at the J R Park Homestead goes on Saturday, Nov. 8, from 9 AM to 2 PM. This is your chance to learn to make a coiled pine needle basket; teachers are volunteers and the fees go to the Homestead for future projects. Cost is \$40.*

### November 8th

*The “Harvest Moon” evening program is planned for the evening of the same day, Nov. 8, at a cost of \$15 per person. On Saturday, Nov. 29, the Friends of the Homestead annual general meeting, decorating bee and potluck lunch will run from 10 AM to approximately 1:30 PM. For these events, contact incoming curator Kris Ives at [kives@erca.org](mailto:kives@erca.org) or call 519-738-2029.*

### November 10

*The Essex County branch of the OGS (Ontario Genealogy Society) meets on Monday, Nov. 10 at the Windsor Public Library, lower level, at 850 Ouellette Ave., in Windsor, beginning at 7 P.M. Topic will be “Taking Flight”; members of the Canadian Historical Aircraft Association will look back at the WW 2 Air Training Program held at the Windsor Airport. All are welcome to attend.*

### November 14th

*The Kent County branch of the OGS meets at St. Andrews Residence, 99 Park St., in Chatham, at 7 P.M. Dawn Parker-Heuston will honour Kent County military heroes and some local heroes in her November 14th presentation.*

### November 21st

*The retirement party for Janet Cobban will be Friday, Nov. 21, from 3 to 6 PM. Janet requests that any going-away gifts be contributions to the purchase of museum environmental monitoring equipment for the Homestead. This will help preserve and extend the life of various artifacts.*

***A request from HEIRS...*** Our research files are full of genealogy info. Each file deals with information on a family in the Essex County region. There is likely a file or two on your family tree. Over years, accumulation of duplicate pages has made them overly large.

***Please consider volunteering at HEIRS, on your own schedule, to help sort out your family file to see what should remain and what can be discarded.***

Learn about your roots & help us as well. Any volunteer help is greatly appreciated, as HEIRS grows & expands its information files.

***Not only that, it's an enjoyable group to be a part of!***





**November 6**

Phi Wilson has rented the blacksmithing dept. in A. E. Vickers' shop, and A. Wright will do this in Clifford Rose's.

Mac Halsted is building the fire hall under the direction of the trustees; it will be 20 x 45 feet, ample room for the new fire engine, hose reels and appliances, the wells, and pumping apparatus, with a cement floor.

**November 13**

Lewis Quick has installed an electric player piano, which for a nickel produces music. He has added a complete line of sheet music, and is putting in silent salesmen, and will also serve oysters.

**November 27**

The Richmond Drain is so near completion and it is the finest job of ditching that ever was done in Colchester South. It will drain an area now producing almost nothing because of the uncertain conditions of the weather, but which is rich enough to support a population of 500 or more....Marshfield. Since the big ditch started,

C.E. Babb, the new owner of Marshfield, has had miles upon miles of underdrains put down, and these will keep the big garden dry and cultivatable at all times. R.J. Winter, Supt. of the dredge, is delighted with the progress. The canal through Brooks' Hill is a sight worth seeing. One of the company's South American agents has been here for a month to get a practical knowledge of dredging.

The ladies along the lake front are making comforts for the Belgians. They are receiving papers from England and France pleading the great need for clothing. Echo pleads the case for all to get involved.

**December 18**

Report that the lockup is very dirty, no sanitary conveniences whatever, no stove or fuel to keep warm. Dr. Collins condemned the facility.

J.A. Secord is going into the business of electric wiring in Harrow, and is now open for contracts. He will carry a line of electric fixtures.

## The Wendle Wigle Family of Essex County

*This article is taken from a larger paper by David Botsford, written in 1963.*

Wendle Wigle was born in 1753. There is no record of the place. He was orphaned at an early age. As a result of ill treatment in a foster home, he ran away to the seacoasts of Rotterdam and hid himself aboard a vessel bound for America. He was soon discovered and had to pay his passage. The master of the vessel bound him on arrival as an apprentice for a term of 3 years, 6 months.

As he was in adult life a weaver, we can assume this was the trade he learned as an apprentice. In 1775 he was a resident of York, Pennsylvania, when he married. His wife was Julianna Romerin, though this name is often rendered "Romer".

It does not appear in the family that he took an active part in the Revolution, but was evidently a Loyalist in sympathy, as he and his family were members of a group that made their way to Detroit at the end of the war. Detroit, of course, remained in British hands for some years after the Revolution. Though several campaigns had been planned and in part carried out, no American force had succeeded in penetrating the western frontier guarded by Detroit.

On the other hand, the British made good use of Detroit, and from this point directed raids into Pennsylvania and Virginia. It was therefore with considerable vexation that the Detroit Loyalists learned of the terms of the Jay Treaty in 1794, which provided for the British evacuation of Detroit and the other Great Lakes posts. Wigle and his companions were residents of what is now Essex County on the Canada side

of the border. (Among the companions of Wigle were Philip Fox and Leonard Kratz, or Scratch.)

In the allotment of land, John Wendle Wigle received lot 5, Gosfield Township. His neighbours were his friends, Philip Fox and Leonard Kratz. Small wonder, then, that the families intermarried a considerable amount! Wendle had 11 children, 5 sons and 6 daughters; Philip Fox had 10 children, and Leonard Kratz, with his wife Mary Munger, had 11 children.

*In less than a century, the descendants of these 3 pioneers numbered 1,500!*



*Tombstone of the first 2 Wigle settlers, John Wendle (sometimes spelled Wendle) Wigle & his wife, Julianna Romerin. Greenhill Cemetery, Kingsville, row 21, right.*



THE NORTH AMERICAN BLACK HISTORICAL MUSEUM PRESENTS...



# Christmas

AT THE **Black Museum**

A LIVE VOCAL PERFORMANCE BY

A dessert buffet will be served

277 King St. Amherstburg, ON

12.17.14

at the Nazrey A.M.E. Church



**SHAHIDA NURULLAH**

Time: 7:00PM. \$30/ticket. Limited tickets available

FOR MORE INFO: CALL (519) 736-5433 VISIT [WWW.BLACKHISTORICALMUSEUM.ORG](http://WWW.BLACKHISTORICALMUSEUM.ORG)

**Hours of Operation: September to June** (excluding December)

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

**Memberships Due: May 2014 to April 2015: \$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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