

Vol. 4– April 2016

HEIRS

Harrow Early Immigrant Research Society

newsletter



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Inside this issue...

***Next Meeting: April 28th
The 1980 Essex Explosion***

Newsletter News!

Welcome to the April newsletter

Although we've experienced April like weather for most of March, spring is officially here! Now, while recovering from your overzealous early yard work, you might like to sit back and check out some of the history offerings that TV provides us. Get your 'free guide' in Ted Steele's article on page 9 of this newsletter. (**We hope you recover in time for our next meeting - see you there?**)

April Meeting

When: Thursday April 28th, 1:30 PM

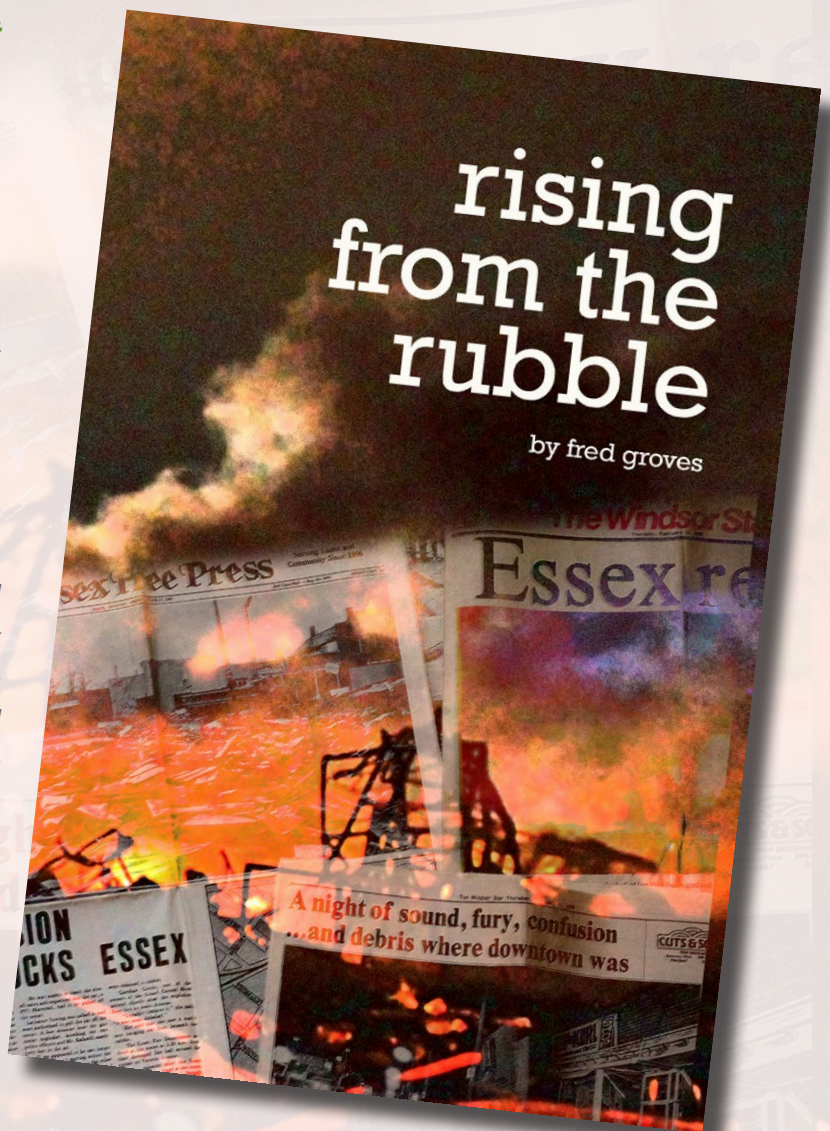
Where: Harrow-Colchester Arena Community Centre

Local author Fred Groves joins us at HEIRS on Thursday, April 28 to tell us of his book, "Rising From The Rubble", which tells the story of the massive explosion which levelled parts of Essex.

In the early morning hours of Feb. 14, Valentine's Day in 1980, the town of Essex had most of its downtown core levelled by a gas explosion.

Fred Groves was beginning his career as a journalist for the Essex Free Press, and was among the first on the scene. His book is a collection of his photos and interviews of the disaster, and his presentation will set the record straight, clearing up myths and misconceptions while also showing the determination of the town to rebuild & go on.

Join us for an inside glimpse of a local event that most of us will remember, but few of us know what actually took place.



The March meeting of HEIRS, held on Thursday, March 24, was very well-attended, as a large crowd enjoyed the presentation by Cris Kohl on the search throughout the Great Lakes for La Salle's lost ship, the Griffon.

Cris took us on a trip through history as we learned of La Salle's many ventures, including claiming most of interior North America for the French King Louis IV.

Then the story of the Griffon took center stage. Built along Lake Erie in the 1690s, it set off to travel the lakes collecting furs from the native people, then to retrace its steps, back to this area. It never arrived....



Cris pointed out locales where the wreck could possibly be, and where items have been found. In one case skeletal remains and European coins were discovered, perhaps tantalizing clues to what happened.

(cont'd on next page)



4 Meeting Recap

Continued from page 3...

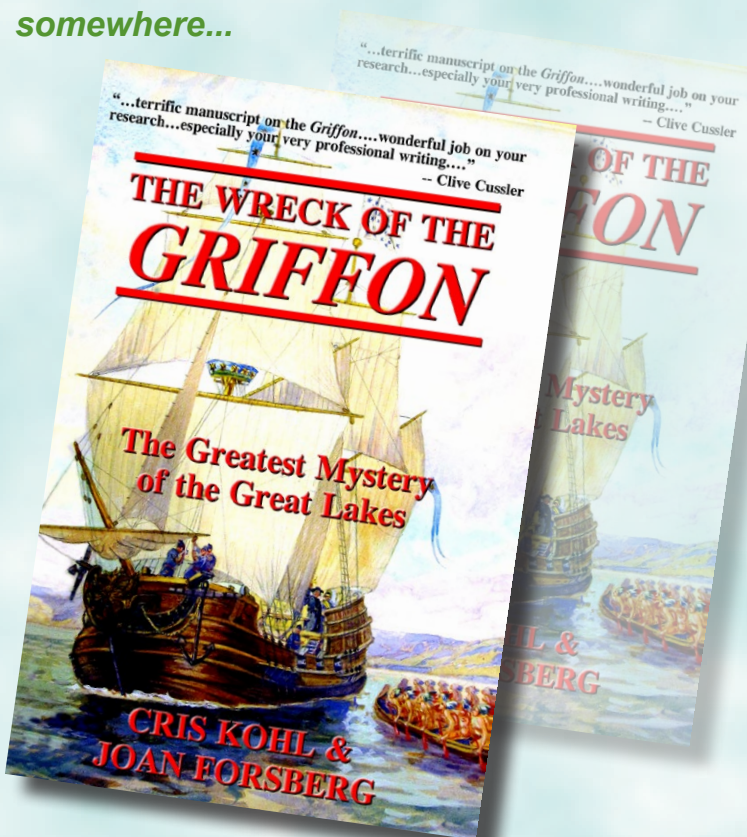
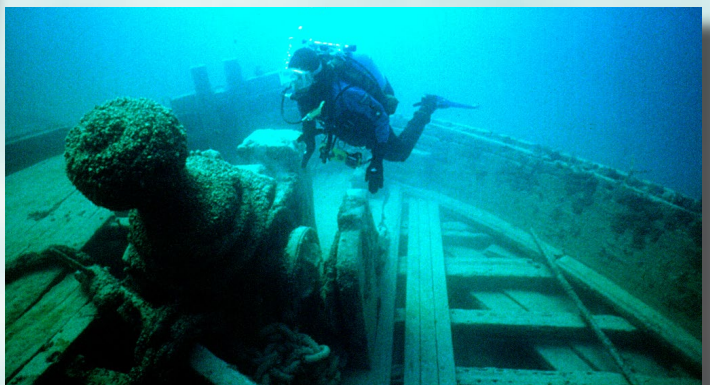
No trace of its crew, cargo or its wreckage has ever been definitively found. Since that time, many have searched for it and many times bits of wreckage have been located.

In almost every case, it has proven to be from an old fishing boat, or a tug, or a schooner from the 1800s.

He also reminded us of how easily our history can be forgotten and overlooked, eventually to disappear completely. This seems to be happening with our younger generation, who are not aware of past events in general.

With his wife (and fellow-diver) Joan, Cris plans more explorations around Tobermory this summer, checking out further possibilities in the true mystery of our Great Lakes.

The answers are out there - somewhere...



April 11

The Essex County branch of the Ontario Genealogy Society will meet on Monday, April 11 at 7 PM to hear Cathy Knight explain about “dit” names, frequently encountered and often confusing for many in French family history research. Meetings are held in the lower level of the Windsor Public Library on Ouellette Avenue, and all are welcome.

May 1

The Bois Blanc Blockhouse again opens to receive visitors beginning May 1. Bill Brundage will be on-site to give tours every Sunday from 1 to 5 PM, and is usually available for groups to visit on weekdays if reservation is made. Call him at 519-736-2330. Plans for some very interesting summer events involving the island are in the works as well.

April 13

As part of the Spring offerings from Eldercollege, HEIRS and director Ted Steele will again offer part 1 of its introduction to genealogy, “Skeletons in your Family Tree”, at 1 PM at the Seasons Retirement Facility in Amherstburg.

The following week, on April 20, this group will meet at the HEIRS Research Centre for part 2 of this course, designed to help anyone get started in assembling the bits and pieces of family history, which they may already have, into an understandable form.

No computer skills are required for the course, though these would be a definite asset to a researcher. More information is available in the Eldercollege calendar available at HEIRS. Call Catherine at 519-253-3000, ext. 4901.



The Amherstburg Freedom Museum invites descendants of the Underground Railroad in Canada to have their portraits taken to be used in a new exhibit at the African American History Museum. In partnership with the African American History Museum in Washington, D.C., and photographer Yuri Dojc, the new exhibit is expected to open in September.

Date for the photo shoot will be announced as info becomes available.

There is no charge, but participants must sign up at the Museum:

Call 519-736-5433 or email curator@amherstburgfreedom.org

6 Upcoming Events

On Monday, April 11, the Kingsville Gosfield Heritage Society meets in the Baptist Church on Division Street North in Kingsville at 2 PM.

Guest speaker will be Lorraine Gibson, who is the Chair of the Migrant Workers Program for the Leamington area.

She will discuss the 50-year history of using migrant workers to get the farm labour done in the region.

All are most welcome to attend.



The Rivertown Living History Festival is planned for April 23-24 in the King's Navy Yard Park in Amherstburg. Sponsored by the Provincial Marine re-enactment group, there will be activities each day from 10 AM to 4 PM. At least a dozen local groups interested in local history will take part, with hands-on displays, musketry and cannon fire, the firing of the Provincial Marine "Noon Gun", Shaymus Gunn the Story-Teller, and more.



There will be an historic encampment by the Provincial Marines for some great photo opportunities. More details will be available soon, including a list of participating groups and entertainment.



HEIRS recently received the following communication:

*"To HEIRS- This cheque is a donation to HEIRS in memory of **Gerald Wigle** who would have been 100 years old on March 16 of this year. He loved Essex County and the area of Colchester & Harrow where he grew up. I hope that you will be able to use this donation as you see fit for an organization that was important to him."*

- HEIRS is grateful for the donation, appreciative of the kind words and happy to learn that our efforts are enjoyed by our members.

“HISTORY AS IT USED TO WAS”

As a young lady became of age, suitors would occasionally be invited to share in the activities of her family, so that her family members could become acquainted with the young man & pass judgement on his suitability. Certainly his presence regularly at worship was important, & he might be invited to share Sunday dinner with the family after services. *Here the couple could be supervised, but still find ways to enjoy each other's company in “appropriate” activities.*

She would demonstrate her musical abilities on the piano, perhaps, or there were “guessing games”, and polite chat. In the evening, popping corn was a pleasant and tasty pastime, as was taffy-making. This latter activity allowed the couple to work together on task, to laugh and share in a fun venture, and to enjoy the results.

No doubt senior family members watched their interactions, judging his propriety, and the developing relationship which might or might not meet with their approval.

TAFFY RECIPE

Dr. Chase's “Molasses Candy”

Take equal amounts of brown sugar and molasses, and put them into a suitable kettle, and when it begins to boil, skim it well, strain it, or else pour it through a fine wire sieve to free it of slivers and sticks which are often found in the sugar.

Then, return it to the kettle and continue to boil, until when you have dipped your hand in cold water and passed one or two fingers through the boiling candy and immediately back to the cold water, what adheres, when cold, will crush like dry egg shells, and does not adhere to the teeth when bitten. When done, pour it on a stone or platter which has

been greased, and as it cools, begin to throw up the edges and work it by pulling on a hook or by the hand, until bright and glistening like gold (the hands should have a little flour on them occasionally).

NOTE: It is this pulling of the taffy that is a courting pastime, she holding one end while he holds & pulls at the other end. Talking, having fun & laughing together would certainly promote bonding, and enjoying the product could make for a fun evening... even now!



Now keep the mass by a warm stove (if much is made at one time) and draw it into stick size, occasionally rolling them to keep round, until it is all pulled out and cold; then, with shears, clip a little upon them at proper lengths, for the sticks, and they will snap quickly while yet the stick will bend.

No colour, no butter, no lard or flavour is used or need be, yet any oil can be used for flavouring, if desired, when poured out to cool. Sugar left in the molasses barrel works very nicely in this preparation. Pulverized white sugar sprinkled amongst it will prevent it from sticking together.



April 7

Marriage of Miss Annie McIntyre and Percival Taylor Clark, mgr. of the Imperial Bank: Miss McIntyre went to public and secondary school here, then Normal School and taught on the public school staff for 4 years.

The younger Mr. Clark came back to Harrow, and increased the purchase of land from 5 acres to 20 acres. The acreage of tomatoes has been increased from 200 to 250 acres; he also purchased a right of way from T. R. Flood and arranged with the Pere Marquette RR for a siding. Plans for the new factory show reinforced concrete building. He intimated that they plan to greatly increase facilities when the war is over, making this not only a shipping center but a manufacturing plant, running into an investment of hundreds of thousands of dollars. Expect that Clark will be to Harrow, what Heinz is to Leamington.

Heinz Pickle Co. have agents making contracts with cucumber growers at \$1 per bushel, some 15 cents higher than last year.

April 14

Mrs. Ida Thrasher leased the vacant store in the Clark block, opposite where she is at present, and

will have her restaurant and confectionery store there. The business has outgrown the present premises, which shows that local and travelling people appreciate the effort of herself and her sons to keep one of the best restaurants in any village of this size in western Ontario.

Silas Brush now owns the blacksmith shop and A. E. Vickers took Mr. Brush's farm.

April 21

Those who wish to grow beans for Clark Co. should consult T. B. Adams.

Harrow used to boast the "egg king", Charles Clark, and now can claim Gordon Arner as the "cattle king". He has shipped 42 cars of cattle to the Toronto markets during the past year, purchased in Essex and Kent counties. Work is in addition to supplying his Harrow trade and local shipments to Windsor and Walkerville. He has a better knowledge of cattle than any other man in the western district.

Corwin McGorman, our expert auto repair man, has again assumed his position with us at H. McDonald and Son.

“There’s Nothing On TV Tonight”

- by Ted Steele, HEIRS Director

The range of programming available to anyone willing to search the listings is amazing. Though I cannot name the channels that these will be available to you on, my own satellite feed brings all of them to me.

If you have cable feed, I am sure you can also find them as well. Since they are aimed at an older audience, they are often shown during the weekend or later in the evening, but are definitely worth the time spent in educating yourself to true events.

Though now out of production (I believe), old episodes of **“Ancestors In The Attic”** are still being shown on an irregular basis. The PBS network continues to screen new episodes of **“Finding Your Roots”**, on which 3 celebrities each week have their ancestry tracked to show interesting relationships. Senator John McCain, a former presidential candidate, was shown to be a 2nd cousin, 7 times removed from George Washington. Networks like Discovery, Bravo and A&E (Arts & Entertainment) present series such as **“The Curse of Oak Island”**, (the continuing search for treasure on Oak Island, just off the Nova Scotia coast).

“America Unearthed” is a series which tells true stories which have slipped from our memory and are worth re-telling; just a few of these titles are “Vikings In America”, “Underwater Pyramids”, “Mammoth Mystery”, the “Appalachian Giant”, and “Bigfoot”.

These networks also present a series called **“Treasures Decoded”**, which looks at the search for relics of history and what we know about them. Episodes include “The Spear

of Destiny”, which supposedly pierced the side of Christ, “The Sphinx “, “The Ark of the Covenant”, “Blackbeard’s Ship”, “Jesus’ Wife”, “The Vinland Map”(probably used by Columbus) and more.

The American History Channel has a series entitled “What History Forgot”; it tells stories which are totally overlooked, yet should not be...

These included “The Candy Bomber”, (who dropped goodies to the German children during the Berlin Airlift); the bombing of New York Harbour in 1916 by German spies, the time when Coca Cola was actually made using cocaine, and the story of Elizabeth Jennings, a black woman who stood up for her rights, 100 years before Rosa Parks.

Yet another series is called **“America- Fact or Fiction?”** This one is fun; it tells a very well-known story from American history, which everyone knows and accepts as gospel truth. It then reveals the real story, which is usually very far from the version we all have been led to believe. It points out that details can get in the way of a good story; when that happens, the details are often changed. Examples include the Pocahontas story about saving John Smith, the events of the Salem Witchcraft Trials, and “Nobody ever escaped from Alcatraz”.

After watching this one, you will be questioning more and more of what you have always believed... I promise!

HEIRS Resource Centre

September to June (excluding December)

Tuesday & Thursday: 10AM - 3PM

Wednesday or for other appts. Call to confirm.

**TIME
TO PAY
YOUR DUES!**

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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