

Vol. 8– October 2013

# H.E.I.R.S. newsletter

Harrow Early Immigrant Research Society



www.HEIRS.ca  
Tel.:519 738-3700  
Email:hheritage@bellnet.ca

243 McAfee St., PO Box 53,  
Harrow, ON Canada N0R 1G0  
Harrow & Colchester South  
Community Centre (Arena Bldg.)



## Inside this Issue...

**October Meeting:**

**Support & Sacrifice on the Home Front during WWII**

## Newsletter News!

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

*We are all looking forward to the great colours of the fall season again, the not too chilly days, apple picking trips, and Thanksgiving Day with friends, family and favourite food.*

*And right after comes the excitement of pumpkin carving and the decoration of front porches to delight the ghosts, goblins and 'Justin Biebers' that will arrive on Hallowe'en.*

*HEIRS will be busy too.*

*Take a look at our October meeting below, and don't forget about our ElderCollege course October 9th. The contact info you need for registration is within this edition.*

*Enjoy the season!*

## October Meeting

**When:** Thursday, October 24th, 1:30 PM

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

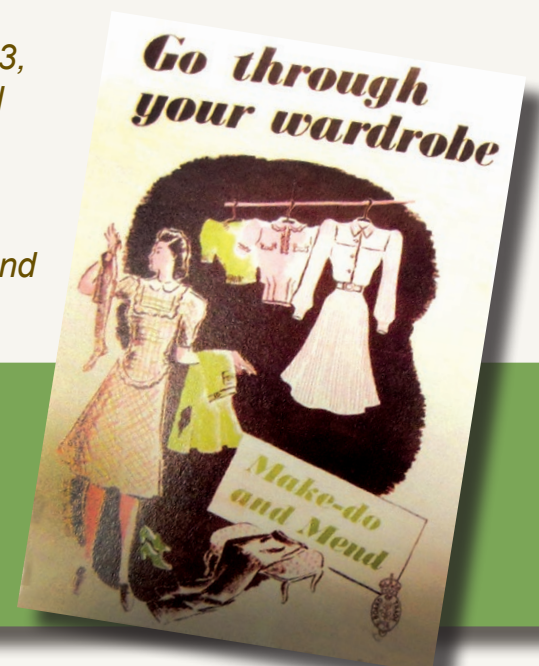
*Our October speaker will be Ms. Veronica Brown, a local historian with a deep interest in identifying and preserving our local structures and landmarks of historical importance.*

*Veronica is part of the Kingsville Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee, and has been instrumental in getting the Heritage designation for many of the oldest buildings in our area.*

*Her own home, the Curtis J. Green house, was built in 1893, was the first Kingsville home to boast indoor plumbing, and was designated as a heritage home in 2006.*

*She also loves to gather the stories of the people who built and lived in these homes, and how our towns evolved around them.*

**Veronica will share some very interesting stories of the efforts and sacrifices of the men and women here on the Home Front during the Second World War, a not-well-known chapter of Canadian history.**



On Thursday September 26, approximately 25 members of HEIRS met at the J. R. Park Homestead along Lake Erie's shore near Colchester. After a short business meeting, we were welcomed by curator Janet Cobban, who gave us the background on the homestead and how it has come to be a living museum of what life was like in the 1850s for a prosperous merchant like J R Park.

*We were then invited to tour the facility, with staff member Kris Ives pointing out various features and explaining details of how items were acquired by the Homestead, or how they would have been used by the Park family.*

We then gathered in the meeting room for goodies and coffee, and explored the garden, yard and outbuildings of the museum. President Richard Herniman presented the Homestead with an old farm implement which had been found in a dairy barn. Our best guess was that it was used to pull down tied bales of hay or straw from atop the piles.



*The weather was perfect, and all enjoyed the outing tremendously. The staff showed us a warm welcome and provided the perfect spot for the gathering of HEIRS members on a sunny Fall afternoon. Essex County indeed has historical treasures to discover, to learn from, and to enjoy.*

4 September Meeting

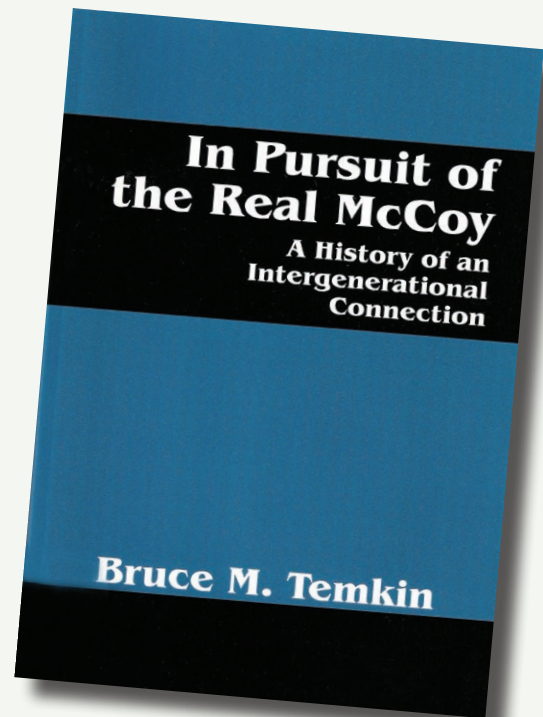
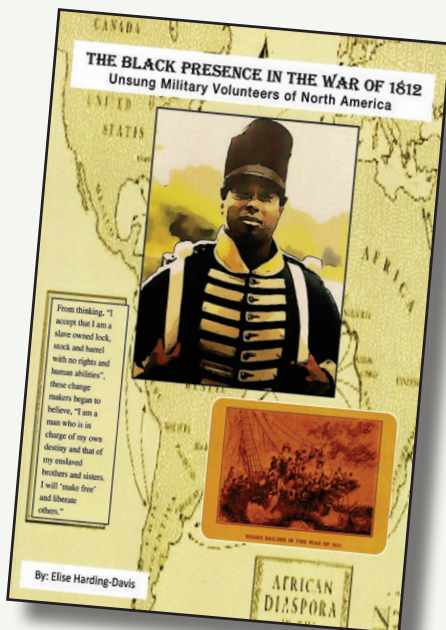


## **The Black Presence in the War of 1812- Unsung Military Volunteers of North America - Elise Harding-Davis**

Elise Harding-Davis, local historian and consultant on African Canadian Heritage topics, has written this volume to tell of the overlooked and almost forgotten contribution of the black soldiers who enlisted and served in the War of 1812 to defend their homeland. She calls Black History the “black thread in the Canadian tapestry”, a most eloquent way of stating the need for its inclusion.

The book of 61 pages with index has a few illustrations or photographs, but tells the stories of many individuals who served, their varied reasons for fighting, and also details of the battles in which black Canadian soldiers were involved.

Ms. Harding-Davis creates an interest in the stories, and also provides many resources which she used, and others can use to further their own researches on the topic. Anyone wanting to dig into their own black ancestry will find this a fascinating read, and an inspiration to get busy exploring their own tree. Available at HEIRS now, for only \$15.



## **In Pursuit of the Real McCoy - A History of an Intergenerational Connection - by Bruce M. Temkin**

Bruce M. Temkin has written this paperbound book which tells the story of Elijah McCoy, inventor. For much of his life a resident of the Harrow area, he was born in Canada, the son of a former slave, and his mother was an escaped slave.

Possessing a great intellect, Elijah was given a thorough education and showed mechanical engineering skills early on. He developed patents of several devices to improve steam engines and locomotives, especially a self-lubricating cup which was at the time, revolutionary and quite important to industry.

The book itself is 86 pages, with some sketches, photos and maps, in large print. It can be borrowed from the HEIRS Lending Library.



## From the HEIRS mailbag...

Kirk Flowers writes..."My grandfather, Milfred Ford, lived on Pleasant Valley Road opposite SS #12, I think. I can remember playing around the school when I stayed on the farm in the summer during the late 50s. His unmarried sister, Nevedna, lived in the homestead kitty-corner to the school. Somewhere in the lineage were Ulch and Deslippe. My grandmother was a Sweetman before she married. Can anyone help me search out more of my family background?" *If you can help, contact Kirk at [kwflowers@gmail.com](mailto:kwflowers@gmail.com) or through HEIRS.*

Colette Arquette Wallace writes to HEIRS... "My 4th great grandparents were Joseph Quick (1769-1845) and Susannah Munger (1788-1849) of Colchester South. I want to know who the parents of Susannah Munger were. Some list them as Joseph Munger and Sarah Girty, Sarah being the daughter of Simon Girty. However, Sarah's birthdate is listed 4 years after her daughter's birth. I would appreciate any help in untangling this relationship. *Contact her at [collette 68@hotmail.com](mailto:collette68@hotmail.com) or through HEIRS.*

Stephanie LaLonge is seeking information on her GG grandfather Richard Belcher. "According to the Essex Free Press, he was a teacher in Olinda and at Oxley in the 1850s and 1860s. His son, my great grandfather, was Frederick Belcher, born in Colchester on Jan. 24, 1862, so his father may have been teaching at Oxley at that time." The family appears in the 1861 census, but not in the 1871 census. The children were apparently living with other families around the county, and one child, Almina, died in 1869. She is buried in Cottam Cemetery.

Richard Belcher was born in England about 1816, and listed as Anglican, as was his wife Eliza. Neither has been located in the Christ Church Cemetery in Colchester. *Can you help? Contact HEIRS or [stephanie.lalonge@sympatico.ca](mailto:stephanie.lalonge@sympatico.ca).*

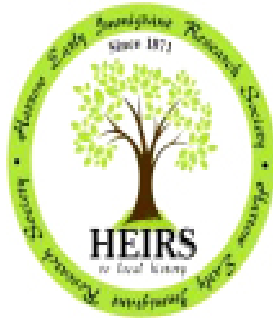
Thamesville again hosts a historical tribute to 1812 with its corn maze, a labyrinth to explore and enjoy.

At the same site you will find rides for the kids, & other fun things to do with the family on an autumn afternoon.

It is located at 12768 Longwoods Road, near the Battle of the Thames historic site, at Thamesville.

**Call 519-692-5451 for details.**





# Finding the Skeletons In Your family's Closet

## *Fun and learning... as it ought to be!*

As part of the Eldercollege series of courses for seniors, HEIRS will again offer “Skeletons or Treasures In Your Family Closet”, an introduction to exploring your family tree.

Successfully offered in Essex and Kingsville, it will now be provided in Amherstburg at the Seasons Retirement Home, social room, on October 9th from 1:00 to 3:00 PM. Part 2 will take place in the HEIRS Research Centre in Harrow on October 21st from 1:00 to 3:00 PM.

HEIRS Director, Ted Steele will discuss why you should begin & just how to do that, in a relaxed style -with a few laughs along the way. No computer skills required as we focus on what to look for and where that information may be found.

We also discuss organizing your collected info so that it becomes usable. Software titles that assist in this task will be provided.

### **For more info contact:**

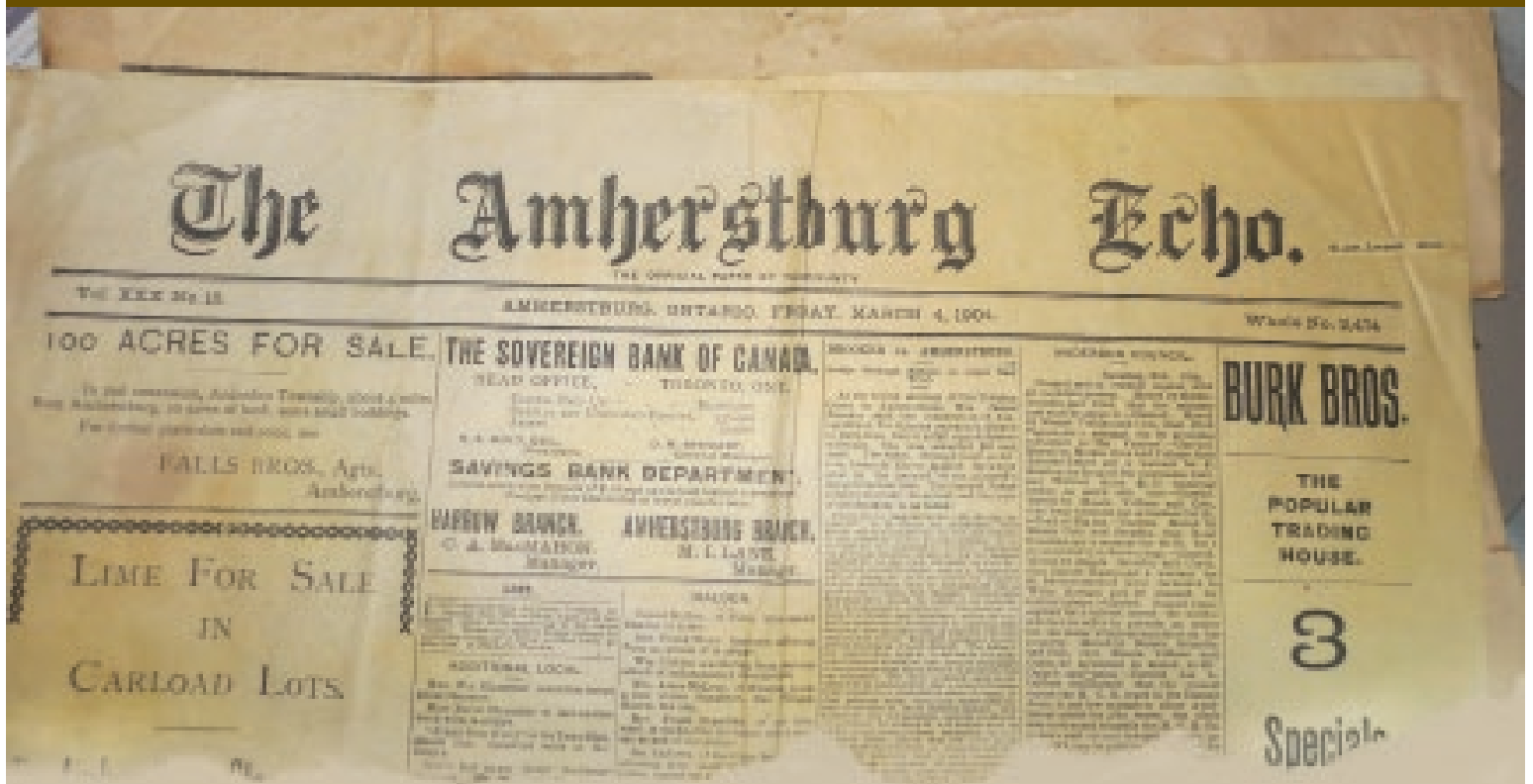
**HEIRS: 519-738-3800 / [hheritage@bellnet.ca](mailto:hheritage@bellnet.ca)**

**Ted Steele Direct: 519-733-3456 / [twsteele@sympatico.ca](mailto:twsteele@sympatico.ca)**

### **To Register:**

**Catherine Fettes: 519-253-3000 Ext. 4944**

**[fettesc@uwindsor.ca](mailto:fettesc@uwindsor.ca)**



**October 17**

A large number of young men took part in the stock judging contest conducted by the local branch of the Dept. Of Agriculture at the Harrow Fair-16 competitors - and they judged horses, cattle and swine. Each had to write his placing and a few reasons for the same. Bernard Pollard of Harrow won first prize on horses and cattle, and 3rd on hogs, thereby winning the silver medal, and the championship medal.

At the Fair, some old-timers were present: Philip Ferriss, age 90, who is the only man living of those who petitioned the government for the first Fair in Colchester South. They received the government grants, bought stock with it, but didn't hold the annual show. Mr. Ferriss was the president of the first Fair.

**November 7**

H. McDonald & Son has added auto and bicycle repairs and accessories to their present business, and have rented the Clifford Rose wareroom for same. Ernest Fish, a popular sales agent, has been put in charge.

**November 21**

Fisherman Bruner at Oxley is getting big hauls of whitefish, while other fishermen have to be content with the leavings. One day this week, he shipped from the P.M. Station, Harrow, 73 boxes of 150 pounds each, the product of one lift.

It was the largest single shipment of fish made from Harrow during the last 25 years.

Trustees have applied to council for permission to purchase a fire engine, and council authorized the purchase, cost not to exceed \$1200, and council will pay for it.

**November 28**

Bad news for the tobacco growers of hail-damaged tobacco- companies do not want to buy it.

A debate at the Methodist Church on the topic of voting rights for women.



## Family History

*Local family stories will be explored in this section. This month, we showcase a family line from the Niagara region, with local descendants in Essex County today.*

### William Steel, Loyalist

*-submitted by Ted Steele, HEIRS Director*

William was born in Ireland about 1745, and arrived in New York with young son John around 1765. He was a weaver by trade, and supported the Crown as the American Revolution broke out. He served in the New Jersey Volunteers (see photo below, right). At war's end, he came to Niagara, and petitioned for land as a Loyalist.

As the War of 1812 developed, several of William's sons, including my GGG grandfather David Steele, fought at Queenston Heights, & Lundy's Lane, as part of the Lincoln Militia. At war's end, they went back to their farms.

In 1837, many were upset by the "Family Compact", a small group of rich and influential businessmen, who held all the political power at the time, and made the laws to suit themselves. A revolt began, but pitted poorly armed farmers against trained troops. David's brother Jonathan Steele was an organizer, based in the village of Sparta, near St Thomas. His grandson, Joshua Gillam Doan, led a raid from Detroit into Windsor, which was a dismal failure. Several raiders were shot immediately by order of Colonel Prince, for whom Prince Road is named. Others were exiled to New Zealand. Joshua Doan and a friend were jailed in London, tried and hung as traitors in 1838.

The revolt failed, but did force changes to the way government in Canada worked; the beginnings of responsible government and fair representation can be traced to this series of events. Cousin George Wellington Steele headed west in 1873, to join the Northwest Mounted Police and help to put down the Riel Rebellion. Both the First Nations people

and the Metis, who were of French-Native heritage, had their land taken away, and had no legal way to oppose their loss of livelihood, customs, land or rights. They were pushed aside and ignored. Conflict broke out, and the Canadian government sent thousands of troops west to end it. Sheer numbers and the use of a Gatling gun (an early machine gun) soon ended the fighting, and the Indian resistance was over.

*The most famous Mountie, Sam Steele, is unfortunately no relation to me whatever!*

My uncle, Major Telford "Si" Steele, was deeply involved in the actions clearing German troops from Belgium & Holland during WW II. He is shown below, receiving the Military Cross from Field Marshall Bernard Montgomery in Holland, in 1944.



The wider family tree includes an NHL star (Shane Doan), an inventor of a steam car in 1901, a spy for the British during the American Revolution, and a member of the KKK here in Canada. *For a farming family in peaceful Canada, the Steele history contains some amazing people and events!*

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

**Tuesday & Thursday: 10AM to 3PM** Please call for appointments for other times.

**Memberships Due: May 2013 to April 2014: \$20 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.



### **Board of Directors**

**President** Richard Herniman  
herniman5@sympatico.ca

**Vice-President** Chris Carter  
cdcarter002@gmail.com

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kathyl@msni.net

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**Resource Centre**  
Pauline Baldwin  
baldwin1@xplornet.com

Kathy Langlois  
kathyl@msni.net

**Program / Publicity**  
Chris Carter  
cdcarter002@gmail.com

Ted Steele  
twsteele@sympatico.ca  
519 733-3456

**Membership**  
Richard Herniman  
herniman5@sympatico.ca

**Hospitality**  
Les Hodgkins

**Newsletter**  
Ted Steele  
twsteele@sympatico.ca