

Vol. 7– September 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...*

**September Meeting: An Essex County Treasure**  
**New: Family History Section**

## Newsletter News!

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

*Our cover displays a splendid image of our September meeting host site, the JR Park Homestead. We hope you can join us to catch up on the activities over the summer months.*

We're introducing a family history section starting with this issue. And we invite anyone with a short history, that they would like to share with other members of the HEIRS family, to send them along to any one of the directors. Of course, we would like to use some pictures when and where possible, so take a look at what you can share and send them along.

*We hope you enjoy our brief personal family history section in the issues to come.*

*Welcome back!*

## September Meeting

**Where: J. R. Park Homestead** (County Road 50 (near the Iler Road intersection) **1:30 PM**

*The September meeting of HEIRS will be held in the meeting room at the Homestead, hosted by curator Janet Cobban and her staff. Following our business meeting, to bring us all up to date on events during the past summer, members will enjoy a guided tour of this jewel of Essex County history, after which we will again gather for refreshments in the meeting room.*

*The Park House dates from the 1840s, built by John R Park and his wife, Amelia Gamble. He was a prosperous merchant, farmer and sawmill operator, who came with his brothers from Massachusetts about 1820. The 3 brothers moved to Amherstburg, but John remained and built his fortune here along the shore of Lake Erie.*

*The property was bought by Francis Fox eventually, and finally became the property of the Essex Region Conservation Authority (ERCA).*

*Today the Homestead serves as a living museum where life in the 1850s can be viewed, with many events held to demonstrate blacksmithing, old time social events, bygone skills, and much more.*





HEIRS has had another successful, busy summer, thanks to our hard-working and capable summer student employee, Andrea Leslie. Keeping our HEIRS library open 5 days a week through the summer, she greeted visitors, provided information for phone and email requests, and worked diligently on improving our files and data collections - always with a smile. *We appreciate all your work, Andrea; thank you for representing HEIRS so well.*



Activities at HEIRS over the summer included email enquiries from many places- including New Zealand! Willie Finlay of New Zealand is researching a William Finlay, who emigrated from Ireland to Amherstburg.

Two ladies in the process of writing books also called at HEIRS. One is writing on the interactions between Michigan and Essex County over the years, while the other is researching St Mark's School, Church and cemetery.

The Planning Committee of the town of Essex also called upon HEIRS for assistance. They are looking into the cemeteries of Essex County, with the goal of designating some of these as heritage sites. Cemeteries being looked at include, among others, the Tofflemire/Snider Cemetery, the Ferriss Cemetery and the Gilgal Cemetery. HEIRS is please to be involved in these activities, and will offer support where we can.

HEIRS member Milo Johnson published his book, "*The Grayer Family Genealogy*", the descendents of Forrest Albert Grayer and Ida Belle Chavis. HEIRS is fortunate to have a copy of this book in our reference library.

The July barbecue at Sanford and Son store was a great success. HEIRS raised almost \$250 with sales of hot dogs, burgers, and sausage. We thank Sanford, and the entire community for their support in our activities.

## He Was A Hessian

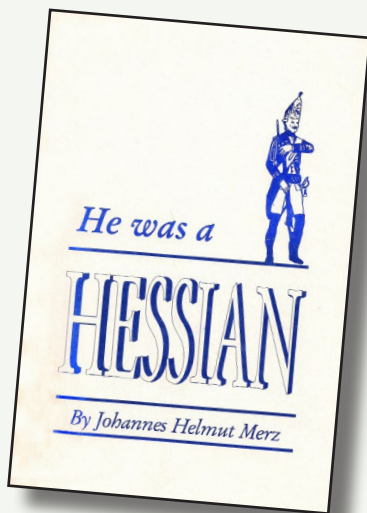
- by Johann Helmut Merz

This is a small paperbound book, about 75 pages long, which tells the story of Johann Leonard Kratz, and brings a very human element to a historical time full of violence and tragedy.

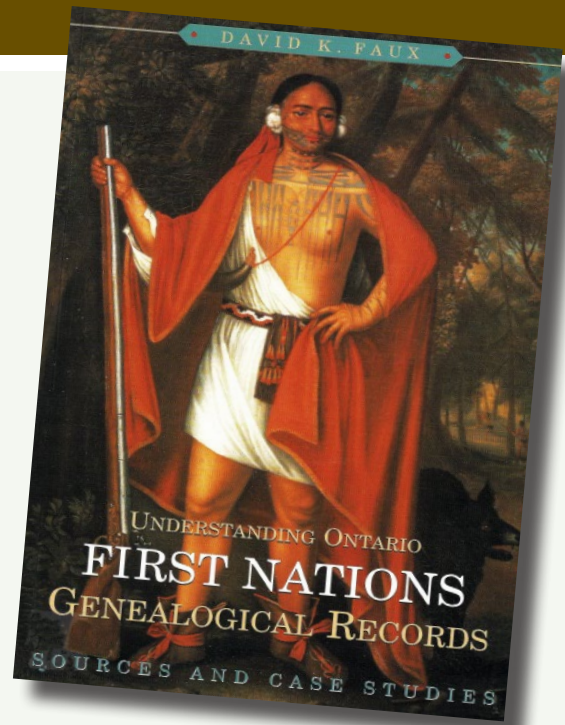
Hessian soldiers were German mercenaries, hired by the British to fight in the American Revolution. Johann was captured by rebels, but escaped and made his way to Kentucky, looking for a place to settle. He was then captured (by the British and their First Nations allies) as was his wife Mary Munger Kratz, in the Ruddles Fort battle.

Their separation and years of slavery with different Indian tribes, their hardships suffered during those years, their eventual reunion and settling in Kingsville, all bring their story to life.

The added fact that the Kratz family, which gradually became Scratch, is to this day a familiar Kingsville name, with at least one street named after them, and the fact that Mary Munger Kratz belonged to the Munger family, which was an original family in Harrow (once called Munger's Corners), makes it truly a "local" history book.



Although not illustrated, the words paint a vivid picture of what it was like so long ago.



## Understanding Ontario First Nations Genealogical Records Sources and Case Studies

- by David K Faux

It has always been difficult to trace one's roots if they have a First Nations component to them. Through intermarriage, sometimes in more than one generation, these roots have been lost, as Indian names changed to European ones and old ways died out.

Many researchers have assumed that this is a genealogical "brick wall". Indeed, by the end of the 1800s, it is said that not one "full-blooded" native could be found on the Six Nations Reserve at Brantford.

Dr. David Faux, documenting his own family history, discovered that there were many sources of genealogical data in addition to those obvious ones within the National Archives. With examples, he illustrates in his book, ways in which others can begin their own First Nations research, and unravels this intriguing and not-well-known part of the family background of many of our ancestors, especially those who arrived as Loyalists.

This book is part of the reference library of HEIRS, and is not part of the lending library.

Both Kingsville and Amherstburg have a host of activities on Labour Day weekend, as 5 tall ships arrive in port. Each town has meals, parades, and events of all kinds, as well as tours of the ships themselves. From Friday, August 31st to Sunday, September 2nd, the variety of activities to enjoy will cap off what we hope has been a great summer for everyone.

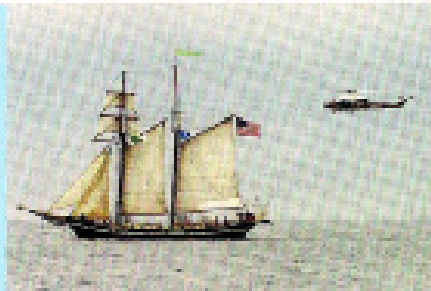


# TALL SHIPS® 1812 TOUR

PRESENTED BY *Redpath*



Kingsville's beautiful harbour will be the backdrop for this three day festival where the TALLSHIPS® "Unicorn", "Peacemaker", and "Fair Jeanne" will be open to the public for tours and interaction with their crews.



The festival opens **August 30** with the **Harbourside Dinner**. Guests will dine on the areas best wines and tastiest offerings directly alongside the TALLSHIPS®. Daily tours of the ships are complimented by a full festival line up including **Entertainment**, an **1812 Commemorative Parade**, **Peace Garden Dedication**, all leading to the **Grand Finale September 1st** with the **Symphony of Sound and Light** at Lakeside Park.



**TALLSHIPS® Weekend Boarding Passes** are available for \$15 and includes your entry onto the ships, not only in Kingsville, but also in Amherstburg and Windsor.  
**TALLSHIPS® Daily Boarding Passes** per port are also available and reasonably priced at only \$5.

Daily updates & more information can be found on our interactive website below.

[www.kingsville.ca](http://www.kingsville.ca) or [www.bigsilverinc.com/Kingsville-Tall-Ships-Festival](http://www.bigsilverinc.com/Kingsville-Tall-Ships-Festival)

Call 519.733.2123 or email [mdurocher@kingsville.ca](mailto:mdurocher@kingsville.ca)

 Follow us on Facebook at: Kingsville Parks and Recreation





## 6 Upcoming Events

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, and 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.**



**ESSEX REGION CONSERVATION FOUNDATION**

**To the Rafters -  
200 Years After  
September 14, 2013**

**A once in a lifetime opportunity!**

Limited numbers. Advance tickets only.

**Visit the oldest, continuously family-owned house in Essex County!**

Tickets are \$50.00 per person

- Arrive between 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- Tour the 1813 John Snider House
- Visit the attic where the workmen saw the naval Battle of Lake Erie unfolding in 1813
- Enjoy a sampling supper on the spacious grounds
- Meet characters from the past!

[www.onlineregistrations.ca/jrph](http://www.onlineregistrations.ca/jrph)

**519-738-2029**

Proceeds benefit the John R. Park Homestead

The J R Park Homestead offers a complete guided tour of the historic Snider house near Colchester. Built in 1812, workers could hear the roar of cannons from the Battle of Lake Erie, as the American Navy defeated the British fleet.

This beautiful old home has been lovingly maintained by the present owners, who are actually members of the Snider family. We recommend that you park behind the Colchester Water Plant, where you will be shuttled to the John Snider house, to explore the home, enjoy food samplings and a glass of wine on the lawn, as historical characters circulate in a Meet and Greet style.

Call 519-738-2029 or register online at [onlineregistrations.ca/JRPH](http://onlineregistrations.ca/JRPH). Only 200 tickets will be sold for this special opportunity to step back in time. Help the Park Homestead fund needed repairs.



**Finding the  
Skeletons  
In Your  
family's Closet**

**ElderCollege**

*- 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 1:30 to 3:30 PM. Part 2 will take place in the HEIRS Research Centre in Harrow on October 21st from 1:30 to 3:30 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.

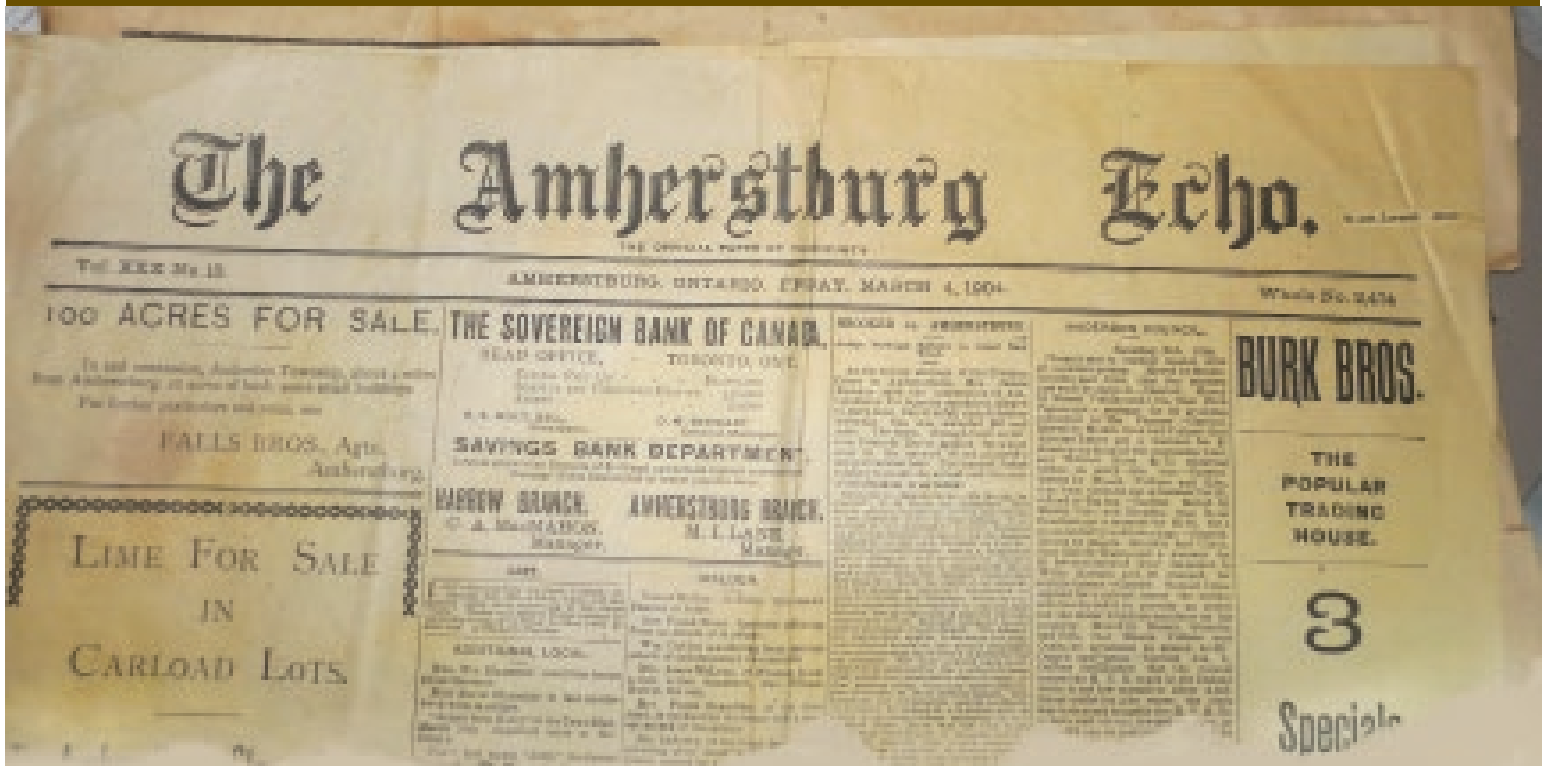
**For more information on this program contact:**

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

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

**To Register:**

*Catherine Fettes: 519-253-3000 Ext. 4944 or [fettesc@uwindSOR.ca](mailto:fettesc@uwindSOR.ca)*



**Aug. 1**

Colchester South farmers lose \$200,000 in 15 minutes; corn, tobacco, melons, fruits devastated as storm struck from the north. Ice half the size of a pigeon egg and hard as bullets fell and left the ground covered. They could be scooped up with a shovel. Half-grown ducks and chickens were killed in the barnyards. After the storm, under the trees at the Philip Ferriss farm, boys picked up 5 gallons of dead birds. (edited)

**Aug. 29**

Oddfellows are sponsoring another event: Essex Brass Band for music, a parade, horse races, baseball, baby show, track and field sports for children and Old Fellows. Good meals on the grounds, dinner and supper. Echo is worried about the lack of sprinkling in the dust laden streets.

**Sept. 12**

The death of Mrs. Jacob Eede, nee Mary Wigle, daughter of Leonard Wigle and Ann Bruner of Gosfield. One of a large family; those still living: Philip and Jonas of Kingsville, Danile L. of Windsor, Mrs. Robert Allen of Kingsville. Half-brothers and sisters include Mrs. Thomas Floyd of Arner, Mrs. George Moore, Orland Wigle, Mrs. Norman Iler and Mrs. George Coghill, and the step-mother, all of Gosfield South. Jacob Eede had 10 children,

5 sons and 5 daughters, with 7 still living. The 7 are George and Leonard of Colchester S., Dr. J. W. Eede of Minnesota, Elizabeth (Mrs. George Waters of Colchester South), Miss Nellie at Blenheim, Misses Fannie and Martha at home.

**Sept. 26**

Unable to procure an adequate supply of help, the canning factory brought in about a score of Belgian women and 4 or 5 men, and the foreign colony is housed in the old Halstead Hotel, and is enjoying life Harrow style. Nightly dances are quite in order.

**Sept. 26**

Mrs. Thomas Clark, nee Elizabeth Fletcher, was severely burned 2 years ago, when clothing caught on fire, and this affected her health. Nee Elizabeth Fletcher, born in Quebec 72 years ago, married Mr. Clark when she was 19. Lived for some time on the Huffman Road, later on the Lemuel Brush place, and then retired to Oxley 8 years ago. Her family: Louisa (Mrs Adam Iler, Saginaw), Captain Alex Clark of Kingsville, Victoria (Mrs John Knapp, Colchester S.), Eliza (Mrs McVey of Toronto), Fannie (Mrs. Solmon Malott, Detroit), David Clark of Saskatchewan. George, Albert and Cora are deceased.



## Family History

*In each newsletter, HEIRS will offer a short history of one of the local families who arrived in Essex County and became part of its history.*

We begin this new feature with a look at the McLean family.

*- submitted by Richard Herniman*

John McLean was born in Ireland in 1750. In 1772, he and wife Martha emigrated to the colonies and settled in Maryland, where daughters Rosanna (1780) and Catherine (1782) were born. John was conscripted by the Colonial Army, but instead declared loyalty to the Crown and served 4 years with Butler's Rangers in Captain Caldwell's company under Major Close.

When the Rangers disbanded in 1784, John's name was on the Executive Mark of Honour Roll for distinguished service. The family shows up as residents of Grosse Ile, Michigan, in 1784-87, where son Thomas was born. He nearly drowned in the Detroit River as the family moved to Amherstburg in 1787, but was saved by the family dog.

By 1788, the family had added daughters Elizabeth and Mary, and John was granted Lot 22 in the second concession south of Amherstburg on December 15 of that year. In 1790, he petitioned the Land Board of Hesse in Detroit to have this grant discharged, and was successful.

In 1791, he was awarded certificate 51 for lot 60, near what is now Colchester. He again petitioned, this time to have this property transferred to Thomas Ashworth, and it was again granted. In 1793, he learned that all his property in Maryland, including 600 acres of land, had been confiscated.

John and his family were living on lot 28 in Gosfield, the first farm east of the Arner Townline, and the Arner farm was on the west side. The grant for this lot was approved in 1798 when John petitioned the Receiver General for Upper Canada, Peter Russell. When John McLean died in 1805, son Thomas McLean inherited this property.

*References: The Windsor Border Region, The Centennial of the Settlement of Upper Canada, The Iler Family Book, Soldiers of the King, and H.E.I.R.S.*

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

**Tuesday & Thursday: 10AM to 3PM / Wednesday: 9AM to 12 Noon**

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

**Treasurer** John Brush  
jmb1@xplornet.com

**Secretary** Kathy Langlois  
kathyl@msni.net

**Directors** Jo Ann Jenereaux  
Peter Timmins

### **Committee Chairpersons**

**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