

Vol. 6 – June 2018

HEIRS

Harrow Early Immigrant Research Society

newsletter



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Harrow & Colchester South
Community Centre (Arena Bldg.)



Next meeting...

OGS & HEIRS: resources & upcoming events

Newsletter News!

Welcome to the June newsletter

With our last newsletter prior to our summer break, we encourage everyone to reach out to family with a fresh outlook on just what it means to be part of your family.

*Whether you have angels or scoundrels in your tree, it only matters that you are accurate and as complete as you can be when locating, recording or otherwise documenting the personal history of your ancestors. Enthusiasm for genealogy has been fostered recently by various television programs... but many stories behind “ordinary folks” are as awesome as those of celebrities. We all came from somewhere, and from somebody, so make this summer, a fact-gathering one. And finally, check out our ‘bonus meeting’ in June... **See you there?***

Next Meeting

When: Thursday, June 14, 1:30 PM **SPECIAL MEETING DATE**

Where: Harrow-Colchester Arena Community Meeting Room

HEIRS is teaming up with the Essex County Branch of the Ontario Genealogy Society for a special June meeting!

Milo Johnson will provide a brief presentation about his latest book... “New Canaan: Freedom-Land, the Blacks of Colchester Township”.

*Both OGS & HEIRS will also showcase their various services & activities offered to the public. Learn what resources are locally available & discover the fascinating events & meetings being planned. **Join us... enjoy the nibbles, good social time & enjoyable, educational event.***



On Thursday May 24th, HEIRS met for its last REGULAR meeting before summer. This is the annual meeting at which 3 of 9 Directors could either step down or run for re-election.

Brian Leslie remains as a Director, while both Roger Sinasac & John Brush decided to step down. John served nearly 20 years, mostly as our financial secretary. Roger & John continue as members, with John & Ann Brush thankfully continuing to be our Hospitality Committee.

With nominations open, Bonnie Storey & Lorrie Stephenson, loyal members for some time, stepped forward & were acclaimed as new Directors. Thanks to everyone offering to serve; your interest and efforts keep the group vibrant & moving forward.

Director Ted Steele's presented bits of history that are amazing, strange or just silly. We heard that Paul Revere didn't make his famous ride.

Also, that a 1940's publicity story falsely claimed that German bombers had destroyed the Vimy Monument; & another one was that Abraham Lincoln lost almost all the political races he entered in life, only to be assassinated after winning the Presidency.

Some stories provided laughter; others just made us shake our heads.

We look forward to the next HEIRS regular meeting in September. See our list of upcoming summer events in the meantime. Have a great summer.



HEIRS Board of Directors

Photo courtesy Shelby Wise, Harrow News

Front Row: Lorrie Stephenson, Bonnie Storey, Pauline Baldwin, Kathy Langlois.

Back row: Brian Leslie, Ted Steele, Richard Herniman. Missing: Chris Carter, Esther Meerschaut

4 Upcoming Events

As June arrives with our last newsletter completed until Fall, here are some summer activities available to enjoy. Though HEIRS does not hold meetings or produce newsletters during July & August, we do not shut down.

Once again, we are very fortunate to have 2 young people working with us under the Student Employment plan. They can help with your research, answer questions and offer suggestions, & allow members to prowl reference materials during the summer months.

This would be a great time to start or continue your own researches!

Sunday, June 3

The first of many free concerts around the county get under way.

Wheatley Two Creeks Conservation Area has its first performance starting at 6:30PM and going until about 8:30PM. There is no charge although they do pass the hat to help cover expenses. Music runs from classic old rock & roll to folk, from country to bluegrass, with all being easy to relax and enjoy. Performances run every Sunday night until September.

Similar concerts are held, beginning in July, at Colchester Harbour, at the Essex Spitfire Monument, and in Leamington, where there is music at the Marina on Friday night (with an opportunity for a cold beverage).

Concerts also are available on Saturday nights at the new pavilion at Lakeside Park, and on Sunday afternoons in Robson Park adjoining the Marina.

Rumour has it that Harrow may offer concerts as well, but we do not have firm information on that.

Saturday July 7

The Leamington Mersea Historical Society offers a bus / trolley trip following the path of Tecumseh and the retreating British during the War of 1812.

It includes a stop at St. Peter's Church built in 1802, continues along to Chatham where historic sites will be pointed out. Two of Chatham's museums will also be visited. The journey begins in Leamington at 9AM and returns there about 1PM.

Tickets are \$30; for more information, call Paul Bunnett-Jones, president of the OLMHS (519-326 1691). Seating is limited.

August 10-12

The Essex County Steam and Gas Engine Museum hold their 34th Annual Show, at Co-An Park in McGregor. Show hours are Friday 12-6PM, Saturday 10AM-6PM & Sunday 10-5. The Saturday Parade through downtown McGregor starts at 9AM sharp.

Other opportunities

Keep in mind to consider visiting the Canadian Transportation Museum and Historic Village on the Arner Town Line, Fort Malden in Amherstburg, Boblo's 1839 blockhouse (open Sundays from 12 to 4 PM), the Freedom Museum in Amherstburg and other local sites of great interest.

We are lucky to have so much to see & experience so close to home.

J R Park Homestead

Sunday June 17th, 12pm-4pm

Caricature Carving Workshop

Learn the basic techniques for carving and whittling a caricature into wood. A great activity or gift – just in time for Father’s Day! Course fee is \$25 per person. Participants must be 18 years of age or older.

**To register, email jrph@erca.org
Advance Registration Required.**

Saturday July 28th, 9am-4pm

Basket Weaving Workshop

Join the Homestead basket-weavers and make your own Potluck Basket to take home! Course fee is \$75 per person and includes the materials and instruction.

**To register, email jrph@erca.org
Advance Registration Required.**

Sunday August 12th, 12pm-4pm

Lost Arts Festival

There is no better way to connect with the past than through the lens of artistry. Join the John R. Park Homestead and a variety of demonstrators for the annual Lost Arts Festival, a unique and family friendly event to see and experience different forms of artisanship from years gone by.

**Admission is \$6 per adult, \$4 per child,
\$20 family maximum.**



Walk the grounds & enjoy the site every day, from dawn until dusk. During the summer, the house & outbuildings are open Sunday to Thursday, 11am – 4pm. Visit www.erca.org/jrph for registration & details.

Summer Hours

HEIRS will be open on weekdays, all summer, as we were fortunate enough to obtain a government grant for student summer employment help. Two students will be available to assist visitors with their research and to explore our many resources. The Directors will enjoy a much needed summer break (but they do drop in occasionally to help out).

September

We start back up with our regular meeting on September 23.

We have long wanted to focus on the French roots of many of our members, which go back at least a generation before the United Empire Loyalists, and in some cases, to the Filles du Roi.

These “King’s Daughters” were unmarried women, sometimes widows who were sponsored to immigrate to New France. As private interests gave priority to bringing over male workers, the French government and religious community attempted to correct this gender imbalance in the colonies.

Even though the first women arrived in Canada in the 1630s, only the 800 or so who arrived during the first 11 years of royal government in New France were called Filles du Roi. These ladies were NOT low class undesirables as is sometimes assumed, but were chosen because they wanted to live in New France, and brought various strengths and skills to make the colony itself more self-sufficient and viable.

We have Agathe Villancourt coming to speak with us, from the Windsor organization called Réseau du Patrimoine Franco-Ontarien (RPFO) which provides resources and materials for those researching their French-Canadian roots. Families such as Bondy, Bezaire, Langlois, Beneteau and many others will definitely want to hear Agathe explain how they can assist their research.

October

Our Remembrance observance meeting features retired Lt. Col. Hardy Wheeler from the Essex Kent Regiment, presenting that unit’s illustrious history from the late 1700’s to the present. This is being planned as an evening meeting so that more members may be able to attend.

November

A descendent will be presenting information of the Canadian hero and “White Savage”, who at one time was the most hated man in American history... Simon Girty. Come and learn the true facts behind this infamous man, the distortions and legends.

The Amherstburg Echo.

Vol. XXX No. 15

AMHERSTBURG, ONTARIO, FRIDAY, MARCH 4, 1904.

Week No. 2426

100 ACRES FOR SALE.

In full possession, Amherst Township, good water, 100 acres, at base of hill, with well buildings. For further particulars see page 10.

FALLS BROS., Agts.
Amherstburg.

LIME FOR SALE
IN
CARLOAD LOTS.

June 21

J. H. Madill has resigned as choir director for the Methodists, a position held for 15 years.

July 12

A large number of Belgian women arrived here last week to assist the Quality Cannery in pulling the beets and beans, which are a fairly good crop.

Mac Halstead is completing blocks for A. A. Michael's new warehouse in Harrow.

Thomas H. Ferriss, age 74, has resigned as postmaster at Harrow. He was appointed in January, 1901. He was in local politics, and 14 years on township council, Deputy Reeve 2 years, and County Councillor before Colchester was divided, and Essex was part of the district. Later he conducted a butcher shop, bakery and grocery business.

August 2

Mrs. Sol Baltzer died, 70th year; nee Lucy Iler; children Lloyd, Harper and Delmer. Her siblings included Frank B. Iler, teacher in this area.

THE SOVEREIGN BANK OF CANADA.

HEAD OFFICE, TORONTO, ONT.

SAVINGS BANK DEPARTMENT.

HARROW BRANCH, AMHERSTBURG BRANCH.
C. A. WILKINSON, M. J. LANE.

PROCESSED BY ARMSTRONGS

INCORPORATED

BURK BROS.



August 30

A story from Mrs. F. I. Armstrong of Oshawa, a Harrow old girl, nee Alma Karr, only daughter of the late David Karr who, 45 years ago, kept a log tavern on the spot now occupied by W. R. Boyce and Co. Store...

"Karr family claim refuted; facts are these: David Karr ran an old log tavern 46 years ago. He bought the place, the deed being made out to his wife on a mortgage held by the late Daniel Wright. Mr. Wright had to foreclose the mortgage, and the property was sold by him to James Rae, uncle of the late Mrs. Thomas Ferriss. Mr. Rae afterwards sold it to a Frenchman who kept a tavern there, and he sold to the late John Thrasher, who tore down the old log building and built a frame store, and sold it to H. W. Allan, M.P., late inspector for Customs for Windsor Detroit. T. B. Adams, the present owner, bought it from him. This disposes of the story that any outsider has any claim to the property."

Editor's note: Not convinced that even this latter story is true. McAfee built a frame store on the corner of McAfee, later Madill's. I think the old tavern was on that corner. There are other stories about this somewhere... please check.)

The Treasures of HEIRS ...

- by Ted Steele, HEIRS Director



Part 2: The Adventurous Life of Elizabeth (Turner) McCormick

Alexander McCormick's story, presented in the May newsletter left off when he first laid eyes on his future bride, a young white girl, captured earlier by natives, named Elizabeth.

In the western outreaches of Ohio & Pennsylvania during the mid-1700's, life was precarious & full of potential danger. Day-to-day, settlers focused on obtaining enough food, their safety & building a good shelter to weather the winters to come.

Maple sugar production was an important process. And so the amazing story of Elizabeth Turner began one fateful day, when she, a neighbour girl & little brother all went out to a nearby sugar bush. There the older brothers tended maple sugar production for their families. This was tedious work with long hours & constant kettle watching, sometimes even overnight. That day, Elizabeth brought lunch for these hard-working boys.

Twenty-two year old Elizabeth & companions were enjoying the pleasant afternoon when two shots rang out... both older boys fell dead. From the woods painted natives rushed out, tomahawks raised & captured both girls & the young boy. Taken away, the young boy could not keep pace & was summarily killed. The girls became separated, never to see each other again. Elizabeth was force-marched many miles eventually to several Wyandot villages along the Sandusky River region.

Elizabeth must have been terrified, but was determined to survive & though well-treated by native standards, she was expected, as were

most native women, to bear the drudgery of daily work. Although captured, Elizabeth was a strong-willed person. One story, later retold to family detailed how she stood up against the native women who tried to force her to do a larger share of work. The braves laughed when the women protested that Elizabeth had threatened them with a hoe & tore their clothing in protest. This strength of character was valued by the natives who gave her out of respect, an Indian name meaning "Chestnut Burr" as she would sting anyone if bothered.

Accepted into the tribe for 3 years, no doubt she missed her family & wondered if they thought she was still alive. She moved with the tribe along the southern edge of Lake Erie, to the Maumee region near Toledo, OH. Pushed constantly westward from their land by settlers they were visiting the Shawnees to trade.

Among the Shawnees was a white man who dressed in native attire & knew their ways... trader Alexander McCormick.

Quickly Elizabeth & Alexander developed a rapport, having shared similar stories of captivity. Eventually McCormick propose marriage if he could help her escape. At first she hesitated, he being 30 years her elder. And she had been betrothed to a young Pittsburgh man before her capture. McCormick reminded her that she would likely never see him again & that he might have already married, assuming she was lost forever. Finally she accepted Alexander's proposal.

McCormick paid a ransom to the tribe for her, but once they understood he meant to remove her from their band, they reneged on the deal, (likely not wanting to lose such a hard worker).

Feeling cheated, Alexander took action.

In Spring, 1783, he planned her daring escape. Following the winter hunt, the Shawnees trusted Alexander with their valuable pelts to be traded at Detroit, as usual. This time he hid Elizabeth under a makeshift box in the bottom of one canoe, covering it completely with a huge load of pelts. Elizabeth's was absent from their camp, and Alexander was confronted at the river's edge. They removed pelt after pelt from several boats, even thrusting spears into the piles. McCormick derided them saying 'Brothers do you not trust me?'. When almost all pelts were removed, the tired natives relented, satisfied she was not there.

McCormick set off down the Maumee River with Elizabeth emerging at some point. Staying close to Lake Erie's shoreline by day, making camp at night, they completed the hard trip upstream on the Detroit River, reaching Detroit.

McCormick provided Elizabeth with beautiful clothes and a gorgeous wedding gown, that she often described in details to the delight of her grandchildren in later years. They were married at a friend's home, a Colonel Allen, in 1783.

McCormick' favoured a return to his roots near the Maumee River to establish a trading station with his bride. Within the year following her escape & marriage, William was born there. But soon Elizabeth longed to see her family. She decided to return to Pittsburgh, to reunite with friends & family. McCormick could not leave his business & in spite of being previously captured, her desire to return home after more than 4 years was overwhelming.

With only a female native companion & her newborn son in her arms, they travelled on horseback over 200 miles through backwoods trails and bushland.

A remarkable undertaking considering all that she had seen, felt & experienced.



This modest 'bean pot' is the actual vessel taken on Elizabeth's return trip to see her family. Now part of Pelee Island Heritage Museum's exhibits.

There are different recollections about her arrival home. One says her father had previously died & her mother passed while she was there. Another says both parents greeted her with tears. In any case, this was the last time she would see them, making her journey even more poignant. Her beau was unmarried; but both understood life just continues forward. After a few weeks, she returned to the trading post, traveling during the day, camping at night.

It must have been heart-wrenching to say goodbye once more, to her family.

Trouble was brewing... American continuous push for land into the Northwest Territory. This resulted into a vicious cycle of attacks between whites & natives. This backdrop led to a key event in history, for the Americans, British and for Natives... the 1794 Battle of Fallen Timbers.

This event would also change the lives of Alexander, Elizabeth, their son William, and their McCormick family history, forever.

Part 3, coming in September's newsletter.

HEIRS Resource Centre

Open Sept. - June (Dec. excepted)

Tuesday & Thursday: 10AM - 3PM

Wednesday & other appts: Call to confirm.

Newsletter

Published 9 times per year, in conjunction with General Meetings held on the 4th Thursday of the month, from September to June, (December excepted).

Receive full colour newsletters by email, or a B&W print version by regular post. Simply provide your email or street address to our office.

Memberships

\$25 CDN / U.S.

per person or couple covers

May 1st (2018) to April 30th, 2019

Send cheque to:

HEIRS PO Box 53, Harrow ON Canada N0R 1G0

Please include phone, postal address, email and the family names you are now researching.

Non-member user fee at HEIRS Research Library:
\$5 per visit (+ photocopy costs).

Kudos... to Greg Harrison at The Computer Centre in Harrow, who provides HEIRS ongoing support for all things technical to help keep our office running smoothly.

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