

Vol. 8 – September 2021



HEIRS

Harrow Early Immigrant Research Society

newsletter



SUMMER'S OVER...

- time to get back at it!

Welcome to the September 2021 newsletter.

As the new school year begins, we're focusing this newsletter towards schools of the past, specifically the early schools - rules, teachers and the day-to-day process.

Much has changed over the years, more demands, and of course more history has transpired, so much more to learn. But the basics to good learnin' remains the same.

Over these past 18 months, we've all worked hard, learned new things, and kept our (masked) noses to the grindstone as best we could. Perhaps it's time we are all granted a Master's Degree, from the School of Hard Knocks?

Stay safe, stay optimistic, and stay in touch with a fellow HEIRS member.

- Rick McCormick

Oh yeah... we're doing this!

We'll be there.

Saturday, Sept. 18th

**See you
there?**



Sept 14th OGS Virtual Meeting... 50 Years with HEIRS

Tuesday September 14, 7:00 PM



Join our friends at the Essex OGS as they welcome us to their virtual presentation. For 50 years, HEIRS has preserved local history & assisted people researching their ancestors in Harrow & the surrounding area. HEIRS will showcase the materials & resources in our impressive collection that the public can access.

A Zoom account is NOT needed for this event, but you must register using your email! IT'S QUICK & EASY... just click this link...

<https://essex.ogs.on.ca/meetings/#Upcoming-Presentations>

Can you help HEIRS? We're readying our Fall sessions, & you can help out...

Sketches of our Town



Have any videos of this series, in any format? Each week news anchor Harvey Kirck visited an Ontario town; one week Coburg, the next week could feature Essex. Each town's history was highlighted as cameras toured the town; various people interviewed, stories told, & each place was boosted as an attractive place to visit. I have several shows, but would like more. **If you have any I could BORROW, please contact Ted at historynut@outlook.com.**

Future Newsletter Items:

HEIRS is most interested in accessing old news photos & files, or scrapbooks, etc., so we can scan & preserve them for researchers and future newsletters. Recently, I dove into a scrapbook of 80 or so pages spanning 70 years. They were assembled by Mrs. Etta Quick Herniman. I discovered amazing clippings and photos from the Harrow News.

This is a new source of info for HEIRS & anyone who might want a wedding photo of their grandparents, a missing birth or death

notice in family files, or photos of old sports teams & school groups - you might very well find what it here. Anyone with a WW2 family member, could easily find their story & likely a photo from a Harrow News issue of that era.

Hands Up Please!

HEIRS needs volunteers for our group. We need someone with IT knowledge to assist us with computer equipment; someone to scan our paperwork to computer files; and someone to wade through our Genfile collection of family files to eliminate duplicate copies. Anyone with library experience or background would also be valuable in keeping our shelves organized properly.

If recently retired, or will be soon, you will quickly find that you will need a passion & interest to fill all the time you suddenly have. A rocking chair does little but to help you age faster.

HEIRS is enjoyable, stimulating & socially involving, with good people to work with. Contact any director and let us know what you would most enjoy doing with us.

Good News...HEIRS RESOURCE CENTRE OPENS IN SEPTEMBER!

**Tuesdays & Thursdays
10AM - 3PM**



Please read important info on page 10 of this newsletter!

More Good News... HEIRS accepts e-transfers for payments. Pay membership dues, buy books, flash drives, etc., using this payment method. Donations are always needed & appreciated; tax receipts sent. **Are your 2021 dues way overdue? Send e-transfers to heirsont@gmail.com**

Questions? Contact Bonnie at bgstorey45@gmail.com

Genealogy of the Girty Family

- by Ted Steele

Descendants of a Legend

In the years during the American Revolution, Simon Girty had been a guide, scout, and Indian leader for the Americans.

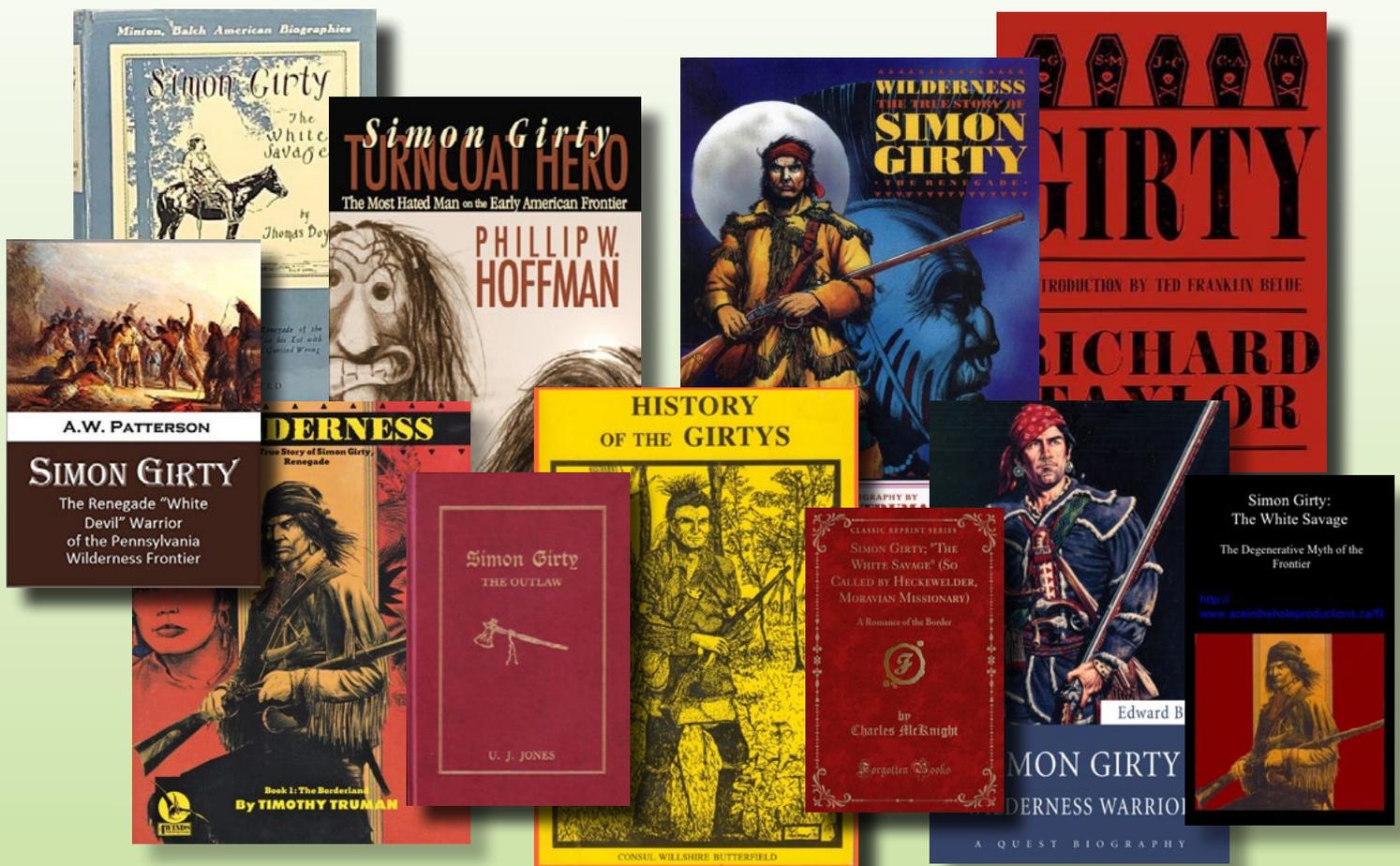
But he saw their policy as one of native extermination, in order to obtain their land. Simon switched to the British side, and at this point, he became the most hated man on the American frontier, "the white savage", and blamed for every possible atrocity of the war, while being labelled a traitor to his country (America) and his race.

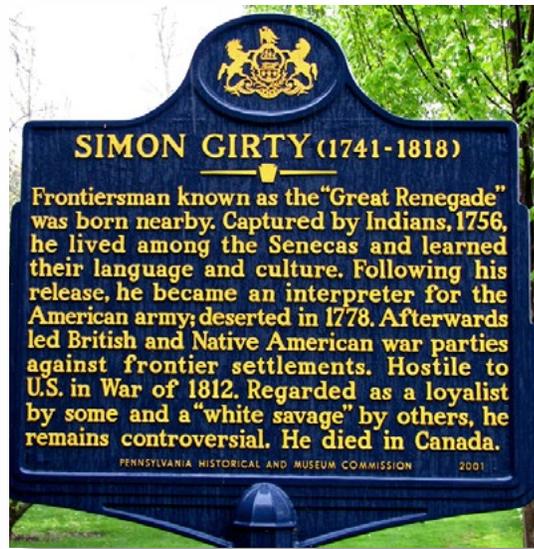
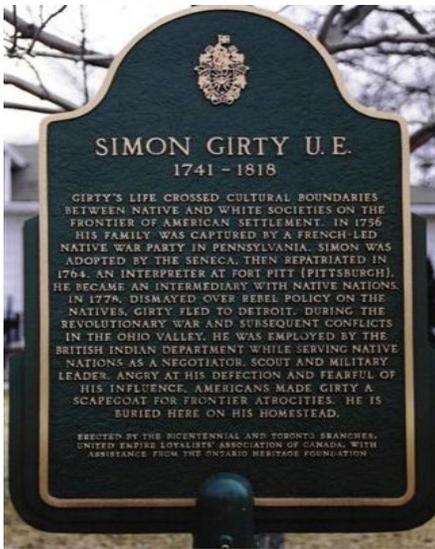
After the Revolutionary war, Simon settled in Amherstburg along the river. He married Catherine Mallott whom he had rescued from a native tribe. Over their tumultuous years together, they had 7 children.

Who was the real Simon Girty?

There are many tales, stories and historical reports that were given to military leaders on both sides of the American Revolution about Simon Girty.

And books? There are lots of them - exaggerated tales or otherwise. His legend grew, good or bad depending on one's allegiance to Britain or America.





Historical markers, left is the UEL version, in Amherstberg & the other in Pennsylvania.

His life and adventures are controversial to this day evoking strong emotions.

Go to any discussion site about him, and the bitterness still exists.

Simon's son, Prideaux Girty became prominent & an important leader of the Essex Militia during the 1837 Rebellions. He married Catherine McKenzie.

- *Son Thomas, married Mary Ann Fox. Thomas became a doctor & is buried in Kingsville behind the Anglican Church on Main Street.*

- *Their son, Simon Peter Girty married Anna Cook. Their son was George Lawrence Girty, who married Edith Gertrude Shaw. George Lawrence Girty's son, George Lawrence married Helen Jessie Robertson. Son Edsel, born 1885, married Blanche Minnis, and they had a daughter Jean.*

- *Daughter Mary Jane married Peter S. Wigle, and the couple produced 13 children. Simon's daughter Sarah married Joseph Munger,*

Some of the original Simon's descendants moved back to the U.S. over the years, which was quite common, but through the 1800s, his many many grandchildren intermarried with Laraabee, Munger, Ferriss, Malott and uncounted other families, ensuring Girty kin will always be present in Essex County.



Following generations of Girtys includes individuals I have met through the UEL & HEIRS:

Gerald Lawrence & Helen had sons George Lynn (who married Judith Lee Crewe). They produced Gregory Lloyd and Sarah Joy Girty.

Peter Ross Girty (who married Sara Elizabeth Kirkland) had children, Sean Michael Robertson Girty and Kristen Elizabeth Miller Girty.

My HEIRS searches also showed several family members actively participated in the world wars; anyone wishing to research will find photos & more in our voluminous files.

See any errors or omissions in this article? Contact me at historynut@outlook.com.

6 Good ol' golden rule days...

Going Old School...

Many are aware that local history enthusiasts have recently put their efforts towards saving an old schoolhouse from being destroyed, SS #2 in Colchester. This got me thinking about old schools in general, the teachers and students who attended.

Early settlers saw the need for at least a basic education - reading, writing and simple arithmetic for the boys, with homemaking skills for the girls. Teachers at first were itinerant travellers, staying in an area so long as they met with the approval of the parents. They normally lodged with a local family who provided room and board, sometimes on a rotating basis.

The school itself was a single-room structure, for all ages and class levels. It had a wood stove (wood was brought in each morning), and water was pumped and hauled in from the well for drinking. An outdoor privy was the rule, with prosperous communities perhaps having one for girls, another for boys.



Stone schoolhouse, Potlake Rd. Colchester South

Since children were needed to help during planting and harvesting seasons, their attendance at school was at best, irregular.

Whenever lessons were taught, much repetition and oral reading by one student to another older, more accomplished student, was the norm.

It was important that the teacher maintained control of the class, as many of the boys could be large, strong, and less than willing students. This unfortunately made strictness a requirement for the teacher, but at the same time he had to make sure he had the support of the boy's father.

If this support was missing, that teacher might soon be unemployed and travelling to another area. I use "he" here, because women were not seen as being "appropriate in that role" - the possibility of her marrying meant family duties which would conflict with her time and energy for teaching, and the possibility that she might even leave to live elsewhere, if her husband chose to do so.



Much was expected of the teacher; frugality, a non-drinker, creative, of spotless reputation and character, and able to deal with conditions less than ideal.

One night a week was permitted for courting purposes, and the teacher was expected to be prominent in attendance at Church services

on the Sabbath. Teaching has always been historically, an occupation requiring one to set a good example for students.



Tasks included making the students quills from feathers, and even sometimes making their own blackboards. An old recipe for this included lampblack, powdered pumice, shellac, alcohol & ingredients called ultramarine blue, and powdered "rottenstone" (as a final polish). Teachers were expected to be jack-of-all-trades and largely self-sufficient.

When possible, more enjoyable ways of practising skills were employed - spelling bees with students divided into teams, and other competitive games to maintain student interest.

A young teacher would often be invited to Sunday dinner with one of the local families. The family could meet and judge the character of the schoolmaster, perhaps curry favour with him for their children in his class, and also as an educated man, might be a good match for an unmarried, older daughter.

In the early days, it seemed that the respect given to the teacher was almost seen as being part of his pay.



SS #1, Iler School, Oxley, 1930

Even in the 1960s as I began teaching, the pay was minimal, but respect was high. I saw that as the pay increased (after 7 years I matched the pay of the custodian), and the respect went down.

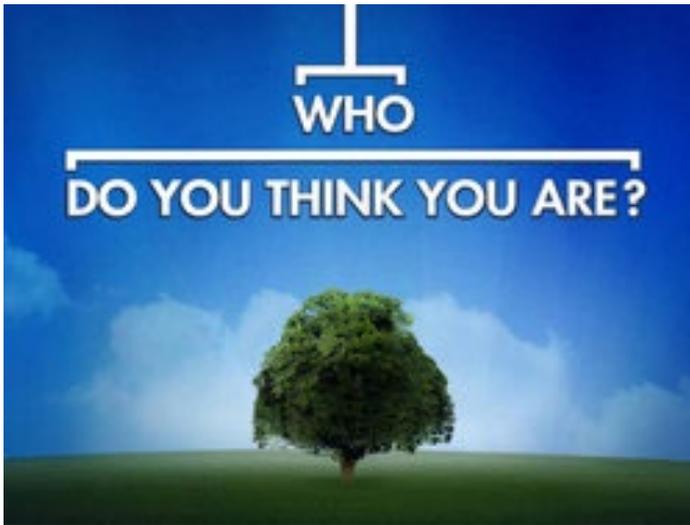


Then as it is now... teaching's not for everyone. Doing it properly, requires one to see it as a calling, not a job.

-Ted Steele

History As It Used to Was...

- by Ted Steele, HEIRS Director



This television show regularly features famous people, who really have no idea about their family's roots. The show's genealogist unwraps the story of the celebrity's beginnings, which can be amazing, and sometimes upsetting. I found myself in a similar position over the last few years...

Exploring family genealogy is much like a detective story; you gather what clues you can find, and use them to trace and explain events. A bit of curiosity, and wondering 'what if' at times, and then you can often align the facts so the whole story becomes readable.

This was the case when my mother-in-law (HEIRS member, Lorna Fox) asked if I would help obtain her United Empire Loyalist certificate. She had the starting points and I used them to go back through the generations.

Maiden name: Lorna's maiden name was Newman, and her mother had been a Widdifield.

That specific name led me back to early Quakers and the Newmarket, Ontario region (Along the way, through her family records I learned that my wife and I have the same 6th great-grandfather, one Titus Doan.)



**Lorna's paternal Grandmother
Georgena (Wemp) Newman**

Lorna's maternal grandmother was Victoria Wemp (sometimes listed as Wemple). Her Wemp ancestors can be traced back to the Dutch settlement of New Amsterdam, which eventually became New York, when the British displaced the Dutch rule.

The Wemp name is tied to a very brutal episode in the early French-British battle in North America. Named the "Schenectady Massacre", an attack against the village of Schenectady in the colony of New York occurred on February 8th, 1690.

More than 200 French & allied Mohawk and Algonquin warriors attacked the unguarded community, burned houses & barns and killed

60 men, women, and children. Most of the victims were in night clothing and had no time to arm themselves.

Myndert Wemp was killed. He was the eldest son of Jan Barentse Wemp (Wemple) who owned half the great island west of the town & died in 1663, leaving two daughters and another son Barent.

Barent Wemp married Margaret Fonda, another Dutch family. This is the same Fonda family line that produced actors Peter, Jane and Henry Fonda. **Celebrity cousins.... how about that?**

Henry Fonda's mother was a Seymour. Curiosity grabbed me at that point. Could her family be from England, perhaps related to Jane Seymour, one-time wife of Henry VIII?



Following the Fonda line back a bit, I was startled to see that their line crossed into a family line by the name of Bradford.

If you have been playing with genealogy for a while, that name should ring a bell immediately.



William Bradford was one of the leaders of the group of Quakers who in 1620 set sail from England for the New World, and landed near present day Plymouth, Massachusetts.

He became Governor of the Plymouth Colony.

It would seem that Lorna can trace her lineage back through the Wemps, to the Fondas and through them to William Bradford.



100 years ago: American half dollar coin commemorating William Bradford. His 1590 birthplace in South Yorkshire, England.
(Photo Anne Hollingsworth Wharton)

So with the right amount of proof, Lorna could be both a United Empire Loyalist and a member of the 'Mayflower Society'.

Like TV celebrities, you may not know 'who you think you are' !

HEIRS is waiting to help you get started on your own detective mystery... perhaps the time has come for you to begin your own search?

HEIRS RESOURCE CENTRE

*** UPDATE * We're open in September**

Tuesdays & Thursdays: 10AM - 3PM

Maximum visitors: 6 Best to confirm prior to arrival (519.738.3700). **Face mask must be worn at all times within building. Hand sanitize on entry.**

Newsletter

Published 9 times per year, in conjunction with General Meetings held on the 4th Thursday of the month, 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

\$30 CDN / U.S. per person or couple.

Memberships run May 1st - April 30th, annually.

Send membership cheque to:

HEIRS PO Box 53, Harrow
ON, Canada N0R 1G0

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

Non-member using Research Library

\$10 per visit (+ photocopy costs).

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Harrow & Colchester South
Community Centre (Arena Bldg.)

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Website www.HEIRS.ca

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

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