

Vol. 6 – June 2021



HEIRS

Harrow Early Immigrant Research Society

newsletter



How Old are Your Family Photos?

Welcome to the June 2021 newsletter.

Some folks say that a crisis brings out the best in people.

For me personally, this pandemic seems to have brought out the “*beast in me*” instead. Specifically, canine characteristics - *let me explain...*

I’ve noticed over the past months that I have developed the habit of running to the kitchen every time I hear the can opener, or dishes clatter, and I’m led by the scent wafting down to our TV room, back to the oven door, after it’s been opened to inspect our meal’s progress.

Okay, many of you are saying this is just regular behaviour. So, what about this...

We have no pets at this time. But like many of my dog-owning neighbours, every time a person (letter carrier or not) walks by the front of our house, I leap from my seat to see who it is. And if I don’t know who, I ‘bark’ at my wife saying ‘do you know who that is, do you know who that is?’

And even stranger, yesterday I caught myself watching (and watching) them, until they were out of my line of sight. I then realized my nose was pressed against the window trim as far as it physically allowed me to go.

Yes, I’m definitely in need of more hobbies, and much less *Pavlovian distractions* it seems. Before Covid lockdown I never had this *guard dog* mentality. As you can imagine, I just can’t wait for things to begin to normalize.

But when we finally get to visit our friends post-Covid, I still fully expect to hear them ask my wife, “*Has he had his shots?*”

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

- Rick McCormick



“Until now, I never understood why you got so excited when someone walked past the house.”

Reflection

Covid has given us all a chance to stop and reflect on where we are in life.

For some, it has been a taste of retirement... more of a sense of time to be filled & what to do with it. This can be a serious problem.

I knew a fellow, who for 30 years, even though he didn't mind his job, talked constantly of how he was looking forward to the day he could retire, relax & enjoy his pension. He couldn't wait for that day when he got his gold watch for service & no longer had to get up & go to work.

That day eventually came & he soon realized that he had little to do. He tried woodworking & a few other things, but at last applied to go back to work part-time – but was no longer needed or wanted. He was something of a lost soul during his last years, with no real purpose in his days. Then his health faltered & he wasn't able to enjoy much of anything.

It's very true that you need to retire TO something, and not just FROM something. A rocking chair can age you in a hurry if you have nothing else in your days. I was fortunate (in many instances), and retired from teaching - to grandchildren, to family genealogy and HEIRS. It has provided me with fun, much interest & a passion for spreading the viewpoint that history can be fascinating.

If you are seeing retirement approaching down the road, I suggest you attend our meetings when we are again able to gather (that day will come). Get involved with the story of your own family background & find out how you can join us as an HEIRS volunteer. I joined and for a few months just watched the activities & services at HEIRS & saw how I could help.

Best of all, nobody assigned me a task, it was up to me to find what I really wanted to do that needed someone to do it.

Some computer skills & a teaching background made me a good fit for newsletter production, as Edith Woodbridge was stepping aside after long service. Joining Chris Carter in arranging speakers & meetings prepared me for that task, which I still enjoy.

My retirement years have been anything but dull and boring – thanks in large part to the good friends I have made at the HEIRS research centre. A common interest, good people & fun social activities continue to make my days challenging, educational & a creative outlet for my quirky thought processes.

*If you wish to get started, spring is a perfect time to become an active member. Join us to begin sharing what many of us have enjoyed for many years now, genealogy on your terms. **Your family's story waits for you to uncover it, and surprises await you.***



2020 & 2021 will mainly be remembered for the things we were deprived of during this time span. Most especially, we will remember people in our lives that have left us. The summer of 2020 saw HEIRS lose our friend & HEIRS director/co-worker Kathy Langlois & past -president Doug Horne. Within a month we lost president Richard Herniman. We continue our efforts & focus at HEIRS with them in mind. As 2021 continues, 4 more valued members & supporters of genealogy & local history have been lost.

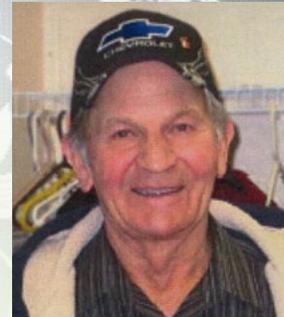
Dr. Norm Becker was an extremely well-educated man, and the driving support behind Bill Brundage's massive Bois Blanc blockhouse project, providing the engineering for the restoration & 75% of the funds needed. It would not have been accomplished without him.

His involvement in many pro bono projects around the province has made a difference in saving our cultural heritage. His loss will be felt by many.



Ken Hunter spoke at HEIRS several times, most recently on Indian artifacts found on his farm & the maple syrup local operation his family ran for many years. Ken was a casual man, quick with a smile & a wisecrack, always with the baseball cap, & that customized car!

He visited HEIRS now & then, to share what he knew. Ken spoke without script, yet was interesting, educational & humorous – I will miss him.



A Michigan researcher, Dorothy Zak made her mark at HEIRS. Often on research material or a book we'll see "written by" or "donated by" & her name. Doing copious Detroit area research, she compiled valuable information which she often shared with HEIRS. She obviously cared about the same things we do.



Bill Gay was passionate about history & an active member of the community. He often shared his knowledge of local history with Heritage Essex, Leamington/Mersea Historical Society & Windsor-Essex Historical Society. Bill was the driving force behind the Essex Fun Fest, Citizen of the Year & Essex Model Train Show. Well-known in this region over the years, his presence will be missed.



We remember those we have lost & appreciate the part each played in our lives. - Ted

6 Photo Dating

Hey, great photo... when was it taken?

Been asked that question before? It's hard to date old photos without some keys to unlock when they were made. If lucky, yours might have family names & even a date scribbled on the back. If not, when were they taken?

Looking at the materials used & adornment we can narrow their time period. But, first, some background on the 5 common old photo types, then a quick reference chart. We're not learning "how photography started" here, but focusing on dating those old images.

1839 - 1850s: Daguerreotypes

Named after its process inventor, images were created on mirror-like, highly reflective glass plates. Protected in a well-constructed & ornate, hinged cases, their image quality is stunning even today. They're easily differentiated from other cased photos by its reflectivity. When the case is held straight in front of you, its optimum image appears.

At other angles the image switches to a 'negative', faintly visible, if at all. This reminds me of early big screen TVs where you needed to sit in front of the screen for best viewing, while image quality quickly dropped off the further you sat away from the centre plane. This is key to identify Daguerreotypes.

1850s-1860s: Ambrotypes

This type of photo is often confused with the former, as both were encased similarly, albeit most ambrotypes used pressed paper-mâche instead of quality leather & silk. They became popular due to low cost, while still providing a good image. The key distinguishing feature is its non-reflective surface which allows the image to remain visible at any angle.

Although a glass 'negative', it used a black backer material (usually black velvet or

lacquer) to produce the "positive image" that we normally see. Restoration experts have produced some exciting & simple rehabilitation on ambrotypes by replacing the black backer material to reveal the stunning original image once again.



1850s to early 1900s: Tintypes

For money conscious folks, tintypes were even less expensive than ambrotypes. No tin was ever actually used, just coated iron plates, in 6 sizes to fit any purpose & budget – from the gems (2-1/2" x 1") to full plate (6-1/2" x 8-1/2"). Corners were snipped off to permit insertion into standard albums. In 1853, 3 million were made in the US alone. These well-recognized images may be in your collections; vintage ones, or perhaps modern day replicas, like the one of me shown on our cover, taken years ago at Greenfield Village's Tintype Studio in Dearborn, Michigan. Even when in cases, a magnet will help differentiate them from other similar looking images.



1859 - early 1860's: Cartes de Visité

Photography methods advanced to meet market demands. Using a specialized camera, making 8 exposures on one negative. CDVs quickly replaced glass & tin images, due to their extremely low cost & quick production of many copies for the sitter to buy. This "photo card" similar to the standard calling card of the day, measured 2-1/2" x 4".

Using negatives, the process allowed any number of paper prints to be made. Photographers dramatically increased their sales to businesses & families. People ordered to give to friends & relatives & mailed them without worry of damage - no glass or tin issues. Special albums held many different prints. Most likely you've seen these displayed in antique shops.

Timing is everything. In the USA, their popularity skyrocketed during the Civil War, when soldiers sent photos of themselves, in uniform, to their loved ones. Low cost, quick production made them an easy choice. So popular were they that folks began collecting pictures of personalities, military generals, political figures and actors.

Physical changes to the backer card also helps in dating. In 1860s thin card backs & simple logos / text for photographer's info. By 1865, more ornamental with scrolls, ribbons & even promotional text stating 'copies could be had'.

Three years later, logos were much more intricate. In the 1870s, this info was usually shown within a fancy frame design. By the 1870s, card backs became more substantial & their shape changed – before 1872, square corners, after 1872, rounded. Through the 1880-1890s, the backer cards became very thick. Stamps were required on CDV photos from 1864-1866 & were affixed to the back.

Legally to be 'cancelled' by the photographer himself, this provides us an accurate date for those CDVs sent during the Civil War. Called revenue stamps, photographers may have used exact dates that photos were created – a cherished piece for family history.



1860s to early 1900s: Cabinet Cards

Competing well with CDVs with their larger size, cabinet cards were home displayed, hence their name. They used the same process as CDVs but delivered a 4" x 6" print.

A key feature that distinguishes them from almost all CDVs, cabinet cards had the photographer's name, often flourishes and his business location on the front panels.

CDVs info on the back, cabinet cards on the front. Yes, there were rare exceptions.

During the 1880-90s, gold text on black cards were used; from 1890 onward, embossed designs were the norm. - Rick McCormick

Photo Type	Time Period	Keys	Notes
Daguerreotypes	1839-1850s	Highly reflective "Hologram-like" when angled Ornate leather / silk cases Edge tarnish commonly seen	Easily damaged, do not wipe Keep out of direct sunlight No extreme temperature changes Hand tinted cheeks / lips, jewelry, uniforms Any writing reversed (letters on belt buckles)
Ambrotypes	1850s-1860s	Image visible at all angles Pressed paper cases Black backer material	Careful taking apart, glass cover might be glued to front of image plate Black backer can be replaced easily, if velvet Hand tinting common
Tintypes	1850s - early 1900s	Use magnet to help identify them from other photos placed in ornate cases	Keep dry to prevent rusting Easily marred surface when cleaning Hand tinted cheeks / lips at times Writing reversed (letters on belt buckles)
Cartes de Visite (CDV)	1859-early 1860s	Small business card size Photographer's info on back only	Often in albums along with cabinet cards Gold, silver & greenish overall tints on some
Cabinet Cards	1860s - early 1900s	4 x 6 sized cards Photographer's info on front	Card backers, gold text 1880-90s, Embossed design 1890 & later Displaying in albums dropped off, as size allowed permanent display in glass cabinets

Now available from HEIRS!

The restoration story of the old Kingsville train station is featured in footage shot by Kingsville's own Hector Ringrose. The work & countless steps required to turn this historic building into the sparkling gem, known today as the Mettawas Mediterranean Restaurant on Lansdowne Ave., is astounding.

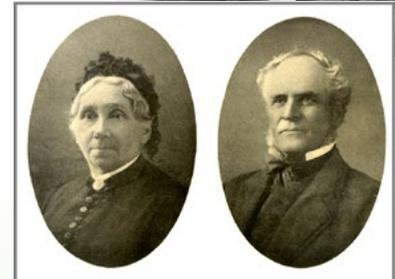
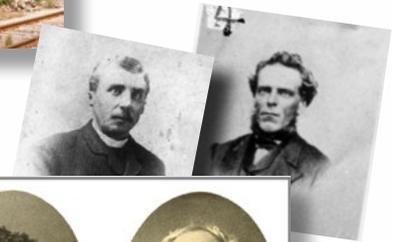
We've offered this film before as a 4- DVD set. For \$25 you can now order the 4-part story on DVD or flash drive. HEIRS will get them to you quickly. Anyone interested in Kingsville's history or a fan of old-time rail travel will enjoy these glimpses of our past & see the value of saving them.



Also available!

A flash drive containing genealogical files on the Quick family, as compiled by the late Dorothy Zak, is now ready for tracking this family's story through the years. You will find lots of info here, for only \$25. HEIRS will send orders out immediately.

The pandemic has provided all of us more time to follow our interests. What better way than to explore your own personal roots? Email historynut@outlook.com to get your order started.



HISTORY

Discover It

Make It

Be Part of It

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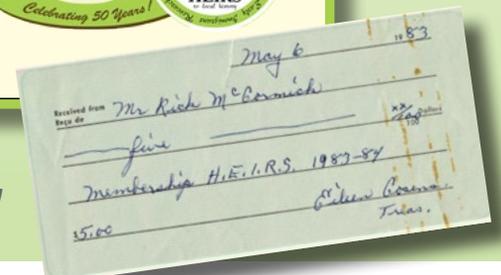
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My 1st membership receipt!

History As It Used to Was...

- by Ted Steele, HEIRS Director

I have noticed a growing trend here in Essex County, over the past 6 months or so. Communities have realized the need to promote their own history, and to preserve what may be in danger of being lost. An awareness of the need to protect our heritage seems to be taking root.

The old schoolhouse in Colchester is the focal point of a non-profit group named Heritage Colchester. They are leading the charge to restore the old, red brick schoolhouse, now formally designated by the Town of Essex under the Ontario Heritage Act, as being of 'cultural heritage value or interest'.

The original log schoolhouse constructed south of Christ Church was lost to erosion, and a new school was built in 1856, on the same site. In 1881, a new red brick schoolhouse was built further south on the same lot.

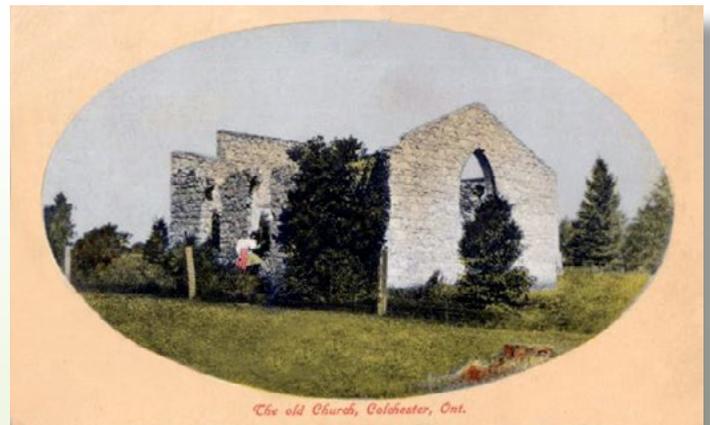


Known as S.S. #2, the school had one room and one teacher for all grades. It ceased to function in the early 1960s, as did other township schools when elementary education was centralized in Harrow.

Essex Council has adopted a by-law which recognizes the value of the schoolhouse, and

protects it by requiring that all alterations to the property which may affect its heritage value to the community, are not permitted without consent of the council.

Also on Bagot Street is the old Anglican Church. In 1807, Reverend Richard Pollard, chaplain of the garrison at Amherstburg, began travelling from Amherstburg to minister to a small Anglican congregation in Colchester. As the congregation grew, so too did the need for a church.



Built by William McCormick (Colchester's first postmaster, a magistrate & the elected Member of Parliament for Upper Canada from 1812-1824), the original church was located in the middle of a graveyard dating back to at least 1808, maybe earlier. The oldest dated tombstone in the graveyard is known to belong to Stephen Brush who died in that year. The "Old Church" was built of limestone that McCormick transported from Pelee Island. Dedicated in 1821, Christ Church was officially Anglican, but locally, it was considered to be a place of worship for all denominations.

Two gems from our own past are now being preserved for future generations, as they should be.

HEIRS RESOURCE CENTRE

Open September - June (December excepted)

Tuesday & Thursday: 10AM - 3PM

Call to confirm Wednesday or other appointments.

Office is temporarily closed due to Covid restrictions!

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:

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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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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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