



HEIRS

Harrow Early Immigrant Research Society

n e w s l e t t e r



Coming Soon: HEIRS New Website

April showers bring May flowers & with our upcoming AGM on Thursday, May 25th, the board of directors at HEIRS is ready to bloom and flourish.

Treasurer Bonnie Storey shares the election nomination process on page 3. Our two interim directors, Marta Leardi Anderson and Shelby Wye have already teamed up to work on a business plan for HEIRS that will help define our goals & determine how we can better serve our community.

Read the bios of our interim directors, as well as other candidates on page 4 & you will see that HEIRS is attracting quality people. After 3 years of an incomplete board, HEIRS is ready to move forward & become a more active part of the community again.

In this issue, we'll continue to explore HEIRS resources with a quick look at Land Records. These are an important resource for

researchers and we'll give you a look at what's available and how they can be used.

It's storm season in Essex County & Rick McCormick takes a look back on the wild weather in our area, over many years.

We also have a recap of April's meeting, and we're excited to announce that we'll be hiring two summer students again this year to help us in the Resource Library. - Lorrie Stephenson

Special Note:

Mother's Day is fast approaching on the 14th, so while looking for a last minute gift she'll appreciate, you might consider purchasing an HEIRS membership for her.

If she's already a member, you could cover her \$30 dues for this coming season, as fees are payable this month. **Just contact our office.**

Next Meeting:

Thursday May 25th: 1:30PM

(Harrow-Colchester Arena Community Meeting Room)

If there were ever a time to come to a meeting, this is it!

At this year's AGM not only will you get a chance to meet our nominees, but you'll be the first to see our new website, as it launches on that day.

Jenny Obermok will be on hand from the Harrow-based, Media Addict marketing company. She'll present to members in attendance, our newly designed website and the great features that have now been added. Jenny has been working hard to meet all of our demands, while providing her expert advice and experience.





Board of Directors Nominations...

- by Bonnie Storey, Treasurer, HEIRS

Each year at the HEIRS Annual General Meeting, vacancies on the Board are addressed. Any Board member whose 3-year directorship has expired is eligible to choose to remain for a renewed three-year term on the Board. Any other vacancies are available to be filled.

The Nominating Committee consists of two current Board members & two current members in good standing.

Members of nominating committee for 2023

Brian Leslie - 519-738-3040

Esther Meerschaut - 519-738-0459

Ann Brush - 519-738-4539

Elaine McLean - 519-738-0886

All general members in good standing may nominate other members to join the Board.

Here's the process...

A member may nominate another member for the Board of Directors by calling any of the four members listed on the nominating committee, or by calling the HEIRS office at 519-738-3700, or by emailing the office at heirsont@gmail.com.

At May's Annual General Meeting, all nominees will be introduced by the nominating committee. Nominations from the floor will be taken as well. An election as necessary, will be conducted at the meeting.

Following the Annual General Meeting, the Board of Directors will meet to elect the Executive Member & Committee Chair positions.

Directors Terms as of 2023

Currently Filled

With 2 Years Remaining

Lorrie Stephenson, Bonnie Storey, Brian Leslie

With 1 Year Remaining:

Esther, Jackie, Vacant

Four Spots to be Filled

3-Year Term:

3 Vacant Positions

1-Year Term

1 Vacant Position

Board Nominations...

Four individuals have been nominated to serve as HEIRS board members to date. We've asked them to provide a backgrounder for our members.



Kat Bezaire: Born & raised in Windsor, Kat has spent most of her youth in the Harrow & Colchester areas. From a young age, Kat kindled her love of local history through countless visits to local museums & historic sites, knowing she wanted to work in the museum field. She received her Honours Bachelor

Degree in History & Modern Languages from the U. of Windsor in 2020, followed by a Master of Arts in Public History from Western University, in 2022. During her undergrad, Kat worked in the education departments of the Canadian Transportation Museum & Heritage Village, and Museum Windsor. She has managed the collection & curated exhibits at the Medical Artifact Collection at Western & for the past two years, worked as an Archivist/Reference Librarian at the Northern Ontario Railroad Museum & Heritage Centre in Capreol, Ontario.

Today, she works as a Museum Interpreter at the John R. Park Homestead Conservation Area. She loves providing tours of the 1842 historic house & outbuildings, and leading education programs to inspire school children to develop a love & appreciation of local history. She serves as the Vice-Chair for the Southwestern Ontario Heritage Council.



Edward Milo Johnson: Genealogist, Educator, Author

Born in Harrow, Ontario, Milo attended Harrow Public Elementary School and Harrow District High School. Milo attained a Bachelor of Environmental Studies from the U. of Waterloo (1972) and a B. Ed. from

the U. of Windsor. Milo taught for the Greater Essex County District School Board for 32 years, retiring from that position in 2004. Family genealogy & local Black history research led Milo to write 6 books to date. He's been an active member of HEIRS since 2007 & as a Harrow native is a source of local history. Through his extensive research for his books at HEIRS, Milo is well-acquainted with our Resource Centre, and has assisted others in their research efforts. Milo is on the Artists of Colour's board of directors.



Marta Leardi-Anderson: Marta is a native of Amherstburg, Ontario. In her career of over 20 years, Marta has been an invited speaker to business and government groups.

She has provided strategic policy and operational advice to the most senior levels of public and private sector organizations. Currently, Marta is the Executive Director of the Cross Border Institute at the University of Windsor.

In 2020 Marta's lifelong interest in history inspired her purchase of the historic Oddfellows building on the corner of King and Queen street in Harrow.

Her interest in researching and restoring the traditional building led Marta to HEIRS. Marta's fondness for history and career experience, prompted her to volunteer at HEIRS.



Shelby Wye: Shelby is a lifelong resident of Kingsville, other than during a quick detour for post-secondary education.

Previously a reporter for the Harrow News, she's been a regular visitor to HEIRS' research library & an attendee at meetings, providing courtesy photos for our newsletters.

Shelby has an interest in chronicling the quirks of the region, and finds our library's broad selection of research a fascinating resource. She appreciates the importance of such a library, and is even more in awe of the amazing volunteers who have made HEIRS possible, over the past 50-plus years.

Shelby's looking forward to assisting HEIRS in its mission to support both the community and its members.



Land Records...

- by Lorrie Stephenson / Pauline Baldwin

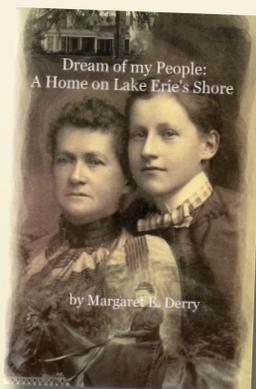
Land records are an important research tool for researchers who use them for various reasons & an invaluable resource for local history authors. These authors rely on land records to determine & verify family location & timelines.

Nuttwood House still stands grand on County Road 50, just east of the Bell House, which was built by Charles' son, Harry. It's through diaries and record keeping on the part of those with foresight, that we are able to glimpse a peek into the past.



On the left is the beautiful white Bell House built by Charles' son right next door to the Nuttwood House, shown on the right as it appeared in 1888.

In the illuminating book "Dream of My People: A Home on Lake Erie's Shores" author Margaret Elsinor Derry, a descendant of Charles Bell of Nuttwood House, resourced family diaries and Land Records from the collection housed at HEIRS to verify facts.



On April 2, 2000, then HEIRS President, Gerald Pouget applied to the Essex County Land Registry office for placement of all Land Registry documents for Essex, Kingsville, Leamington, North and South Colchester, and Harrow into the HEIRS resource centre.

The name Charles Bell can be found on many land deeds. Mr. Bell was the township clerk of Colchester South for several years. His office was maintained out of Nuttwood House on Highway 50 East in Oxley, Essex County, Ontario, as early as 1870.

A legal agreement between HEIRS and the Land Registrar from Essex #12 office (located in Windsor, Ontario) was completed on January 3, 2002, entrusting HEIRS with the preservation and safe keeping of original land records, following strict preservation and maintenance protocols.

The house was so called, after their family's Nuttwood Creamery business operating on the property. His insurance business used the original one room section built before he & his wife lived there.

The time period covered in these Land Records are from 1868-1955, with any documents that were discovered to be pre-1867 or records with plans/sketches/surveys attached, to be immediately transferred to Archives Ontario.

In his obituary, Charles Bell was credited with being the 'financial agent for many large estates, drawing deeds, mortgages and perhaps more wills than any other man the county.'

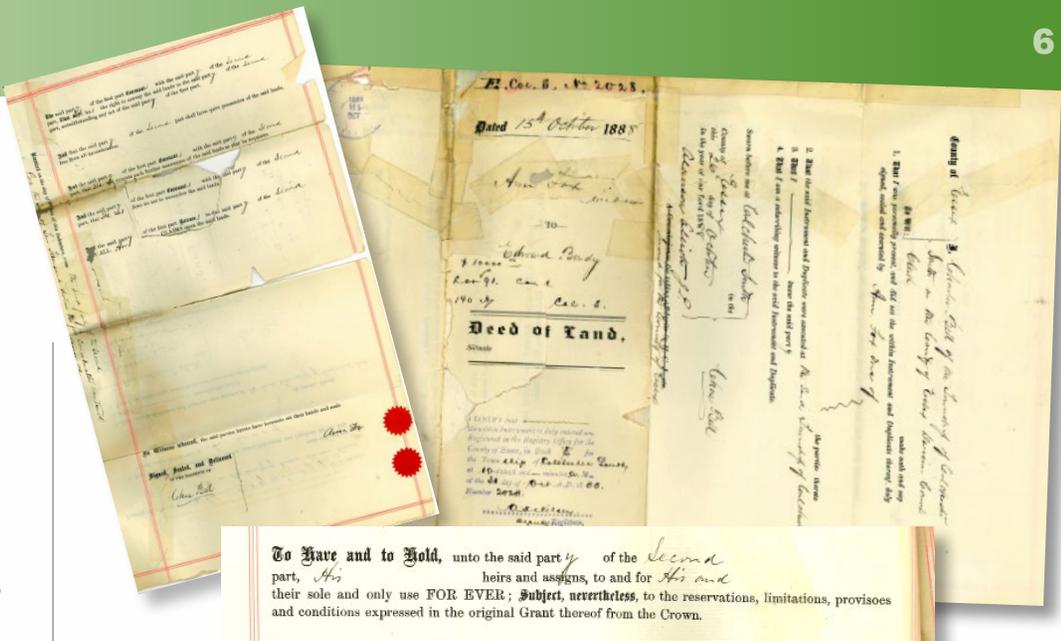
Contact the Archives if you wish to research records from Canada's Confederation or earlier. (www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/index.aspx)

Land Records... cont'd

Records that were placed in the HEIRS Resource Centre in the then new Harrow and Colchester South Community Centre, had these specific criteria to meet:

- Temperature and humidity controls to be regulated
- Accessibility to genealogical/historical searchers
- Records must remain the possession of HEIRS, unless given written permission by the Land Registry office

The Land Record collection is now housed in 16 file cabinets.
(Note: Records for Essex were transferred to ECHRS in 2008.)



Above is an example of a land record that HEIRS maintains in its files. This October 16th, 1888 land deed between Ann Fox & Edward Bondy transferred Lot 91, Conc 1, in Colchester S., some 140 acres for \$10,000 - 135 years ago.

- Township of Colchester 1868-1879
- Township of Colchester North 1880-1955
- Township of Colchester South 1880-1955
- Township of Gosfield 1868-1887
- Township of Gosfield South 1888-1955
- Town of Harrow 1930-1955
- Village of Kingsville 1882-1901 / Town of Kingsville 1901-1955

Microfilm entrusted to HEIRS contains records on the Townships of Anderdon and Pelee (1868-1955), as well as bankruptcy, by-laws, deposit, and a general register.

A massive index to the land records was created by former HEIRS Director, Les Hodgins and our summer students working at the Resource Centre.

This practical index makes it possible to search for specific names, dates and lot numbers without having to forage through the 16 cabinets of files first. Due to their age and fragility, research assistants are on hand to assist researchers with these Land Records files.

Reg. No.	Municipality	Registration Date	Transfer Date	Curre	Plan No.	Lot No.	Lianzine 1	Lianzine 2	Lianzine 3	Lianzine 4	Lianzine 5	Lianzine 6	Lianzine 7	Lianzine 8	Lianzine 9	Lianzine 10
889	Col. of East Essex	1888	1888			222										
890	Col. of East Essex	1888	1888													
891	Col. of East Essex	1888	1888													
892	Col. of East Essex	1888	1888													
893	Col. of East Essex	1888	1888													
894	Col. of East Essex	1888	1888													
895	Col. of East Essex	1888	1888													
896	Col. of East Essex	1888	1888													
897	Col. of East Essex	1888	1888													
898	Col. of East Essex	1888	1888													
899	Col. of East Essex	1888	1888													
900	Col. of East Essex	1888	1888													
901	Col. of East Essex	1888	1888													
902	Col. of East Essex	1888	1888													

The above image is a screenshot of Les Hodgins' land records index page for the same Fox/Bondy transaction. A new feature on our revised website will be a searchable index for these land records: by name, lot or deed number or by registration date.

It's that time of year (unfortunately)...

- by Rick McCormick, HEIRS member

Photo: 1946 tornado shot from the Windsor Airport

I'm no storm chaser, but incimate weather & tornadoes have played a part in the McCormick family for some time, especially in one historical case.

Back in 1792, (yes 1792) a series of strong tornadoes swept across Ohio, that dissipated in the Niagara region after causing mayhem along the way. The storm leveled a large stand of trees in the Maumee region (Toledo, OH), & became the namesake for a pivotal battle between the British, American & Native groups – each wanting to stake ownership of the land for their country.

The name 'Battle of Fallen Timbers' was given to this important event, and it happened right in the backyard of my ancestor, near Alexander McCormick's trading post & home. He now rests in their family cemetery, on Lot 7 (the Gore) on Dunn Road.

I like a good storm (when safe & sound). As a toddler, I stood at our screen door delighted by lightning strikes & the loud rumble of thunder, but Mom wisely thought otherwise. Flash ahead some years, and I experienced the 1st of two separate lightning strikes on our home. **It was tremendously loud & shook the entire house!** Flash ahead again to the only funnel cloud I saw in real life. It never reached the ground, but was still mesmerizing.

On the anniversary of that first strike on our home recently, I wondered about Essex County tornadoes – not to glorify the damage, death & destruction they can bring, but to better understand how often and how damaging they truly are, especially at this time of year!



Some interesting facts...

-  **We're not alone.** The Prairies see more tornadoes each year than Ontario & Quebec combined.
-  **Damage comes in all forms.** Shingles & roofs dislodged, buildings completely destroyed, trees uprooted, & sadly people dying of course. But, I never even considered how many animals, from pets to livestock are often lost in these storms.
-  **Blame game.** We blame our storms on the "Colorado lows" that always negatively affect our weather, but those same southern states blame a "cold Arctic blast from Canada" just as much.
-  **Tornado season.** In Ontario, this season officially runs from May through September, with June & July being most active.



Tornadoes... cont'd

During my research, I was surprised by how many times Essex County had been hit by tornadoes. It seems there are lots more tornadoes today, but we have more sophisticated & robust analytical capabilities & reporting, even than just a decade ago.

Many members have lived through some big ones, have their own stories to tell, and likely now keep an extra eye on the Weather Channel during this season. Here's a chronological listing of past tornadoes in Essex County.

1851 July 8 Wheatley area, F1 hits hamlet of Windfall

1892 July 29 Maidstone, uprooted trees & barn roof blown off

1896 May 25 Sandwich E. district, no people killed, but many horses & cattle died, and fences, buildings & trees were destroyed

June 25 Windsor region, destroyed homes, roofs blown off, chimneys blown down

August 10 Amherstburg, Lake View House roof blown off and across the street, boats overturned in Detroit River

1898 July 29 Kingsville area, may have been a downburst, 800 peach trees completely destroyed

1899 May 16 Windsor, telephone lines & trees knocked down

1903 May 27 Amherstburg, drive-shed, new barn & dwelling destroyed, person carried several yards... but not injured

1904 May 27 Amherstburg, Lake View House damaged, Electric Light & Power Company's tall smokestacks toppled, court house partially destroyed

1919 November 29 Leamington, no details

1946 June 17 Windsor & Tecumseh, 3rd deadliest tornado in CDN. history, F4, 17 dead, hundreds injured, damages \$9M at that time

1948 March 19 Windsor, earliest tornado date in Ontario, up until 2016.

1956 May 12 LaSalle, F4 tornado hits southern portion of town

1974 April 3 Windsor, F3 tornado hits curling club, 9 dead, 30 injured, 6th deadliest in Canadian history

1980 July 16 LaSalle, evening F1 tornado damaged property along a 6.3 km path, no injuries reported.

Aug. 8 Wheatley area, F0, 3.2 km path of damage, no injuries reported.

1985 May 31 Leamington area, small tornado, part of the storm outbreak over province, including devastation in Barrie.

1997 June 8 Ruthven, F1 tornado, minimal damages.

July 2 Windsor, an F1, an F2, and an F3 hit city & surrounding areas.

2010 June 6 Harrow, 3 brief tornadoes (F0, F1 & F2) touched down south of town, F1 also hits Leamington on same day. Total damage from the 4 strikes in the millions of dollars, uprooted trees, damaged houses & cars, leaving a 7 km path of destruction. Luckily, no reports of injuries or deaths.

June 27 Windsor, Severe thunderstorm, spawned minor tornado from Essex to Staples, 2nd one formed near Cottam, minor damages.

2018 September Amherstburg region, tornado knocked down Welcome sign, large trees snapped.

2020 June 19 Staples area, F0 tornado confirmed, no damages.

*2021 July 24 Windsor & Leamington, 2 tornadoes hit, the first in Windsor caused tree & roof damages, the 2nd hit Leamington & was more powerful causing extensive damage to greenhouses (4 acres of roofs replaced) and 9 acres of crops. **More tornadoes hit Ontario in 2021 than in Oklahoma.***

*2022 August 29 Windsor & Essex County, no tornado reported but high winds & hail damaged a significant number of homes, cars & large trees in the area. **In 2022, the number of tornadoes matched the previous highest number set, just the year before at 117, across Canada.***

***Tornadoes are part of our collective history,
for some their personal history too.***

***Whether little or extreme damage occurred,
my condolences go out to everyone affected.***



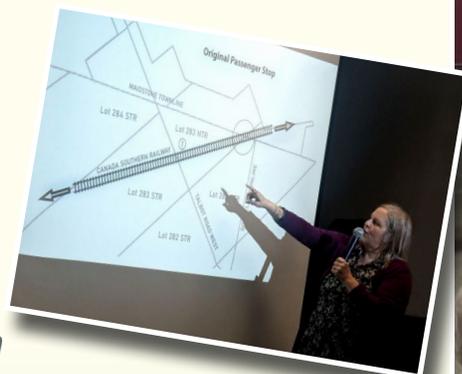
April Meeting Recap...

- by Lorrie Stephenson, President, HEIRS

Laurie Brett presented on her book, 'The Rising Village' and the origins of the settlement at Essex Centre.

She took the audience back to the time of Colonel Talbot, his disbursement of land grants, and described how original settlers to this remote area speculated on where train tracks would pass through and how the town rose up around it

It was an auspicious first meeting of 2023.



Summer Student Employees

HEIRS is seeking two (2) post secondary students who have an interest in history to complete a nine-week summer contract through the Canada Summer Jobs program. Students will be expected to work 30 hours per week, Monday to Friday at HEIRS Resource Library, located at 243 McAfee street in Harrow. **Training will be provided.**

Students will be responsible for providing excellent member & visitor services, as well as:

- Assisting with family & historical research
- Management of library collection & artifacts
- General office work & maintenance

Interested candidates please forward resumes/applications to heirsont@gmail.com

HEIRS is a harassment & discrimination free environment. Previous Canada Summer Jobs students have found their employment at HEIRS to be rewarding & have attributed their experiences with guiding the direction of their future careers.

Deadline to Apply: May 24th, 2023

Tentative Start Date: June 19, 2023



CONTACTS

Board of Directors

President

Lorrie Stephenson, lorrie67@gmail.com

Secretary

Brian Leslie, heirsont@gmail.com

Treasurer

Bonnie Storey, bgstorey45@gmail.com

Directors

Jackie Baldwin, Esther Meerschaut, Ted Steele,
4 board member positions TBD

Interim Directors

Marta Leardi Anderson
Shelby Wye



Committee Chairpersons

Resource Centre

Jackie Baldwin
jacquelinebaldwin11@gmail.com

Hospitality

Ann & John Brush

Program

Ted Steele, historynut@outlook.com

Newsletter

Ted Steele, 519 733-3456

Membership

\$30 CDN/U.S. per person or couple. Memberships run **May 1st - April 30th**, annually.
Please provide phone, postal address, email & family names you are researching.

Payments

Make cheques out to: HEIRS, 243 McAfee St., PO Box 53, Harrow ON, Canada N0R 1G0

E-transfer payments OR donations to HEIRS? Send to: heirsont@gmail.com

Members research for free. Non-members using research library: \$10 per visit (+ photocopy fees)

Newsletters / Meetings

Published 9 times / year. Meetings usually 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.

Resource Centre:

Open Hours: Mondays 5:30-8PM, Tuesdays & Thursdays 10AM-3PM

Please contact us at heirsont@gmail.com or (519) 738-3700 to confirm our 'open status' prior to arrival.

519 738-3700

heirsont@gmail.com

www.HEIRS.ca