

Vol. 8– October 2015

# 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...

October Meeting:  
*Remembering John McRae*

## Newsletter News!

*Welcome to the October edition....*

*Wow... so September flew by quickly it seems this year.*

*Let's hope the Fall colours last a bit longer and from weather reports I've heard, it looks like we will need our light jackets for some parts of winter (not sure I believe that one).*

*Either way, harvest time has always been a great month in my family; with apple picking, cider, table preparations for Thanksgiving and of course, pumpkin carving for Halloween.*

*In all, October has to be one of the best months of the entire year, in this part of Ontario.*

*So get outside and enjoy warm days, the fruits of our farmers' labour, and everything fall offers.*

*See you out there?*

### October Meeting

**When: Thursday, October 22nd, 1:30 PM**

**Where: Harrow-Colchester Arena Community Centre**

Our October meeting, as always, will be focused on Remembrance Day, since it is the last one before that observance.

We will meet to hear HEIRS President, Richard Herniman and new HEIRS member Bonnie Storey tell us of the early life and career of Canadian icon, John McCrae.

**We all know him from his classic poem, "In Flanders' Fields", but little is generally known about his early life, and how he actually came to write his now-world famous creation.**

Richard has had an abiding interest in John McCrae, and knows quite a bit of his story; Bonnie is actually a relative of the McCrae family, and can tell us of the family's story as the 20th century began. This should be an inside look at a young man who lost his life too soon, and how his writing will ensure that he will forever be remembered. ***Please join us.***



"John McCrae in uniform circa 1914" by William Notman and Son - Guelph Museums, Reference No. M968.354.1.2x. Licensed under Public Domain via Commons

## September

*On September 24, HEIRS met to hear Ruth Nicholson, UE tell us of the 1812 Veterans Plaque Program through the Federal Government.*

*With her sister Susan McCloskey Hutchins, Ruth was able to place plaques for 2 Harrow area veterans this past spring. She recounted the story of Isaac Ferriss, who as a teenager, volunteered to swim the Detroit River to Boblo Island, in order to spy on occupying American forces in 1813. He succeeded at great risk and brought valuable information back to British commanders. He continued to serve through the remainder of the war as well.*



*William Hutchins was a ship-builder at the King's Navy Yard in Amherstburg and served with the Militia in 1812-14. Both are buried in the Harrow area, and their resting places are now adorned with the 1812 veteran plaque, honouring their service to the Crown.*

*Ruth pointed out that the cost is a mere \$10, and one need not be related at all to the veteran being honoured - proof of his service and location of his gravesite are the main requirements. For more information, you can go to [www.1812veterans.ca](http://www.1812veterans.ca), or come in to HEIRS for the application information.*

*Though Canada was not formed as a nation until Confederation in 1867, these brave soldiers are among the earliest heroes of Canada's history. The British government offered pensions for veterans, but was extremely slow to approve and issue them - some were old men who eventually received it, but the majority died before it was ever made available.*

## 4 Upcoming Events

*We are fortunate to have so many active local groups, that offer interesting & educational events close to home. These events are open to the public, so if one catches your interest, be sure to attend, learn & enjoy. You'll be glad you did!*

---

**October 4th** *The J R Park Homestead Harvest and Horses Event is Sunday, Oct. 4 from noon to 4 PM, with the parade of horses at 1:30 PM sharp. See the farm at harvest time, help with cider pressing, see corn husk crafts, demonstrations of the smoke house and the blacksmith shop, and more fall harvest activities.*

*For information, call 519-738-2039 or email [jrph@erca.org](mailto:jrph@erca.org). Visit the website at [www.erca.org](http://www.erca.org) and click on "Conservation Areas".*

**October 4th** *Dedication of the Tecumseh Monument occurs (see poster page 5).*

**October 5** *HEIRS members Bill Brundage and Ted Steele will be speaking at the meeting of the Kingsville Gosfield Historical Society at 2 PM on Monday, October 5.*

*Their topic will be the Rebellions of 1837-9 and the Bois Blanc blockhouse built at the conclusion of these years of conflict. The meeting is in the First Baptist Church on Division Street North in Kingsville.*

**October 9th** *The Kent County branch of the Ontario Genealogy Society meets at St. Andrews Residence, 99 Park Street East, in Chatham, at 7 PM on Friday, Oct. 9, to enjoy a presentation by the Barn Quilt Committee of Kent County.*

*The topic will be "The Thames River Barn Quilt Trail" honouring the people of the Thames from 1750-1850.*

**October 17th** *On Saturday, October 17, from 11 AM to 3 PM, and on Sunday October 18 from noon to 3 PM, the Kingsville Archives celebrates their 40th anniversary with an open house.*

*Located behind the Kingsville Library on Main Street, the Archives offer local history documents and photos, and genealogy files on local families. Phone 226-348-6377 for more information.*

**October 23** *Tickets are now available for the Leamington Mersea Historical Society's 18th annual dinner. To be held Friday, October 23 at Leamington's Roma Club on Seacliff Drive, the doors open at 6 PM, with dinner at 6:30.*

*The evening includes a silent auction with over \$3,000 in prizes, as well as presentations honouring local community leaders in various fields.*

*Tickets are \$30, and can be ordered by calling LMHS President, Paul Bunnett-Jones at 519-326-1691 during the evening, or 226-216-1000 x1226 during the day.*



Friends of the Tecumseh Monument invite you  
to the final phase dedication  
at the

# Tecumseh Monument Site

East of Thamesville, Ontario on Longwoods Road

## Sunday, October 4, 2015

Rain or Shine  
Assemble at 2PM  
Presentation at 2:30PM  
Refreshments following

Please RSVP by email [bshive@bellnet.ca](mailto:bshive@bellnet.ca)  
or 519.692.4844 and leave a message



 **Chatham-Kent**  
*Cultivating Growth. Shore to Shore*  
[www.chatham-kent.ca](http://www.chatham-kent.ca)



## The Riel Rebellion

- Charles and Cynthia Hou

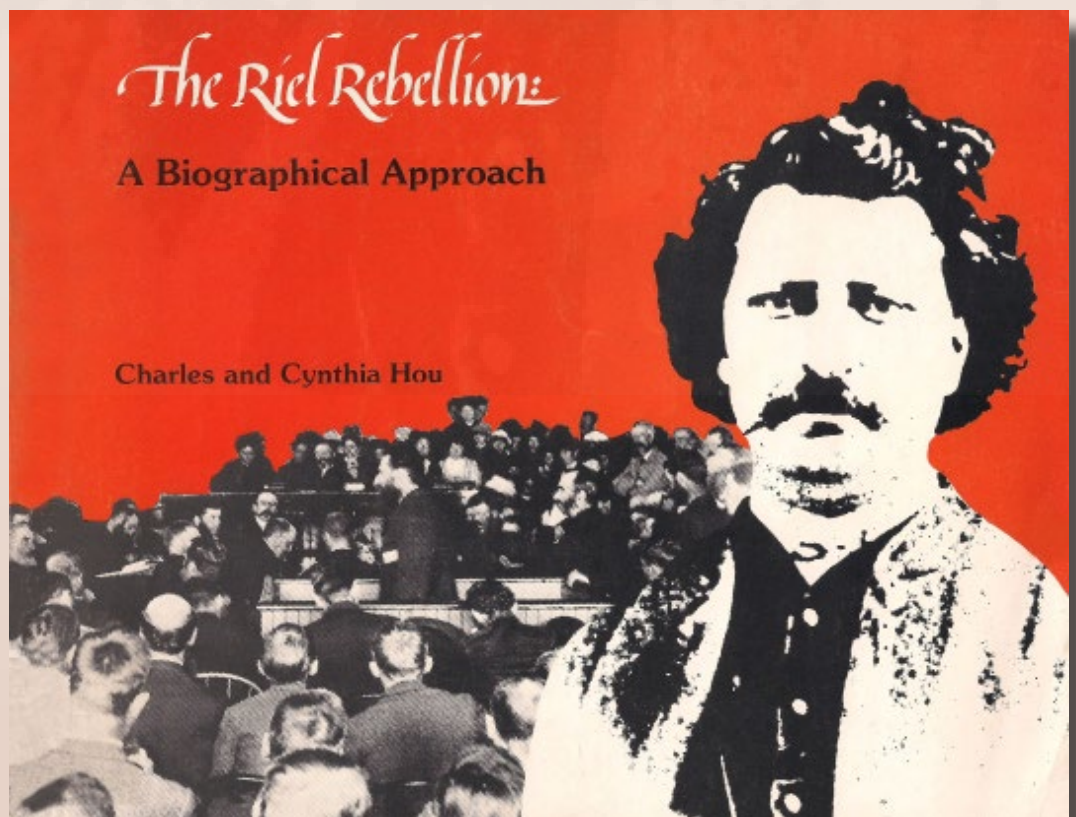
*The HEIRS lending library has some hidden gems in it, waiting to be discovered by our members. Many history and genealogy topics are represented, but it is easy to assume that they do not connect with you personally. A bit of detective work could prove you wrong, and set your family tree researches in a different direction.*

*Most of us know the building of the Trans-Canada Railway brought the western provinces into Confederation rather than joining the United States. Did you know it also allowed the Federal government in 1885 to send troops westward to put down the Metis Rebellion led by Louis Riel?*

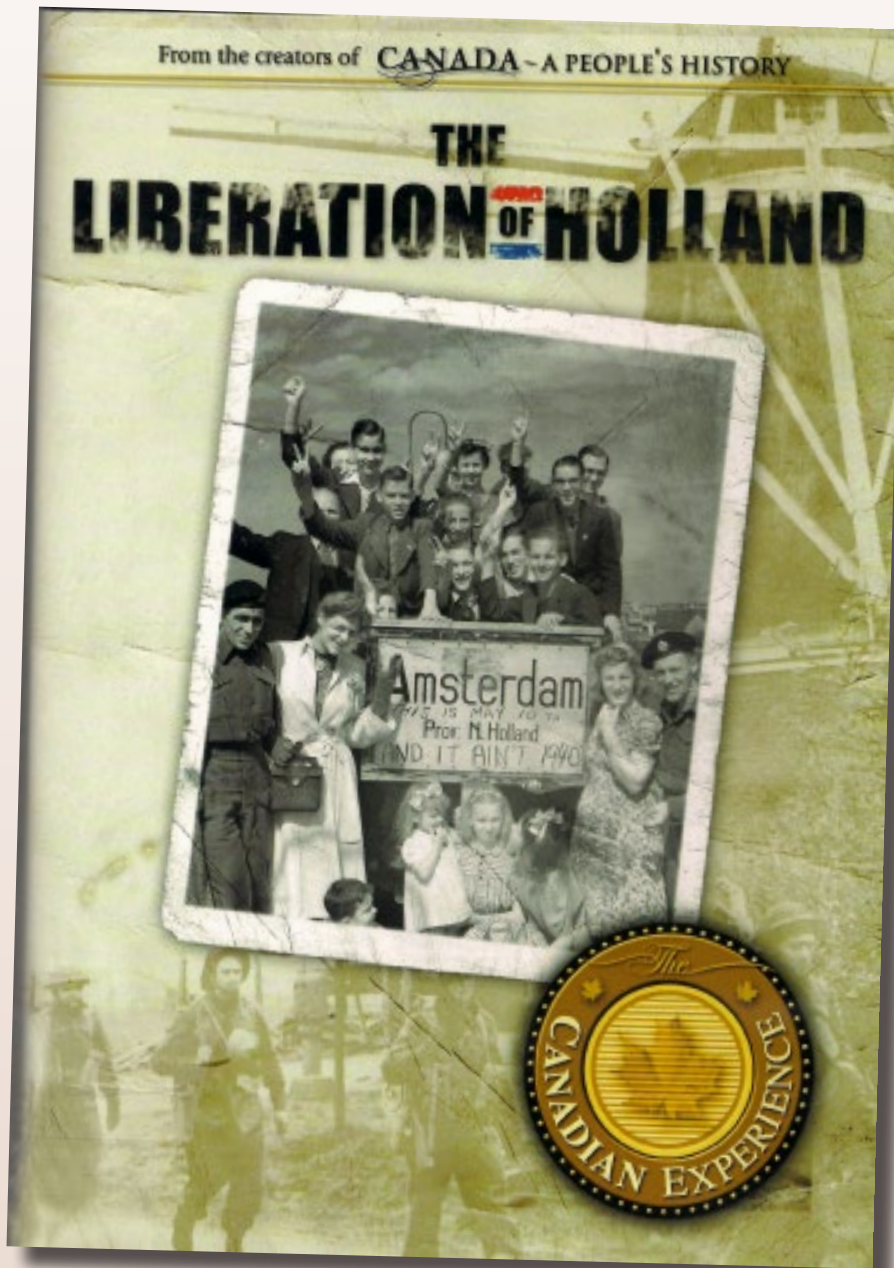
*Militia and Northwest Mounted Police were able to quickly get to the embattled area, along with their artillery and various weapons, so that the rebel forces were rapidly outnumbered and hopelessly outgunned. Young men from Ontario joined up to go west to fight, and some remained there to settle. My distant cousin, George Wellington Steele, was one. His branch of the family tree is in Manitoba today.*

*The book, "The Riel Rebellion: A Biographical Approach", points out the views held by the Metis that their rights has been ignored, and their land claims invalidated. Their attempts to reach a settlement with the Canadian government were dismissed and they had little choice but to take a stand and fight. At the end of the conflict, the Indians were beaten militarily and spiritually, their culture all but erased, and many of their leaders executed, some without sufficient grounds.*

*This paperbound book of 154 pages with an index, is an easy to read narrative of events which brings fairness to both sides of the issue, as both sides must share in the blame for what happened. It is an overlooked but important part of our history, though it does reflect poorly on official treatment of minority groups.*







## **The Liberation of Holland - Video**

Most Canadians know that the Dutch consider Canada to be their best friend, and that it somehow connects with WW 2.

The D-Day landing included the Essex Kent Scots, and they took part in fighting their way with other Allied forces, through France, at Falaise and Caen, then into Belgium and Holland.

The Dutch had been brutally occupied by the Nazis, and starvation was common. In large measure it was the Canadian troops who liberated them, and they have never forgotten that debt.

Their children are still taught to respect that debt of gratitude, and Canada holds a place of honour in Dutch hearts yet.

The HEIRS Lending Library DVD called "The Liberation of Holland" helps to tell the whole story, and the Essex Kent Scottish were an important part of it. Combining archival footage with re-enactments and interviews with veterans who took part and Dutch citizens who survived, this is a glimpse of what our fathers and brothers and uncles may have been a part of.

It provides us the facts on Canadian heroism, and will make any viewer proud to be a Canadian, for our soldiers paid the price and did what had to be done. This is also an excellent video to share with young family members, so that the story is passed along. **We Canadians do have our heroes too.**

**This video runs just under 60 minutes, and can be borrowed from the HEIRS lending library by its members.**



**October 1**

The butter factory is still running full blast, though the early frosts indicate that pasture may soon fail. This has been a great season for cream and butter, owing to the rains, and the amount made will exceed by a half that made in any other year. At the same time, the price has kept up well.

Two meetings have been held at the office of the canning factory to try to come to some arrangements with those who grew tomatoes for the factory last year and who have not yet been paid. At the first meeting, when nearly all the creditors of the factory were present, the management made an offer of 35 cents on the dollar now, 15 cents on the dollar next spring, and the balance in the fall.

This was refused, the creditors holding out for 50 cents on the dollar now. Last week, another meeting was held, when an offer was made of 15 cents on the dollar now, 35 cents in the spring, and the balance next fall.

**October 15**

The liquidator from Sarnia sent notices to creditors, but only a small percentage will be paid.

**October 29**

The Council gave \$200, and then authorized a canvass of the whole township for Red Cross support.

Starting in the last of November, Thomas Ferriss, the veteran postmaster, will cease carrying the mail between the station and the Post Office, giving this task to John Ridsdale, drayman.

Mr. Ferriss and his little push cart have been popular objects on the street for so long, that they will both be missed.



## HEIRS - to Local History - by Ted Steele, Directory

HEIRS...to local history is the inscription on the logo which we began to use at our 40th anniversary. We collect and preserve information of all kinds on local families and events in our files, to aid those doing research. In addition, we present interesting stories at our meetings, 8 times a year.

Our members are not only the audience for these stories, they are often the source of the material itself. Your family has a story to be shared, and a history to be preserved. Is there a family heirloom whose history would make a good meeting topic?

Do you have a Family Bible, love letters during courting years ago, old postcards with notes between sweethearts, or letters written home during wartime?

Was there a love story in your family story that could be shared?

Perhaps there is a rascal whose adventures would be an interesting re-telling, or someone famous that you can claim as kinfolk. Your ancestor may have played a part in an important moment in history.

If you can help supply an idea for a future meeting, or if you would like to be a presenter, please let any of the HEIRS' Directors know- the more people we have

with creative ideas, the better! If you have information or items to share but do not wish to do the presentation, we can do that for you.

**Future meetings being organized include an eclectic mix of topics:**

- Old-time Christmas
- Romances of the past
- French pioneer families of Essex County
- Canadian KKK (yes, there was one)
- Knights Templar
- Essex County link to the Salem Witch Trials
- Boblo Island Amusement Park (location of our own misspent youth?).

If you can supply any assistance on these topics, I would be most appreciative. Please use my contact information listed on page 10 of this newsletter.



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

Tuesday & Thursday: 10AM - 3PM, Wednesday or other appointments: (Please call to confirm hours.)

**Memberships Due: April 2015 to May 2016: \$25 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**

<b>President</b>	<b>Richard Herniman</b> herniman5@sympatico.ca
<b>Vice-President</b>	<b>Chris Carter</b> cdcarter002@gmail.com
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>John Brush</b> jmb1@xplornet.com
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Kathy Langlois</b> kathyl@msni.net
<b>Directors</b>	<b>Pauline Baldwin</b> <b>Esther Meerschaut</b> <b>Roger Sinisac</b> <b>Ted Steele</b>

### **Committee Chairpersons**

<b>Resource Centre</b>	<b>Membership</b>
<b>Pauline Baldwin</b> baldwin1@xplornet.com	<b>Richard Herniman</b> herniman5@sympatico.ca
<b>Kathy Langlois</b> kathyl@msni.net	<b>Hospitality</b>
<b>Program / Publicity</b>	<b>Ann Brush</b> jmb1@xplornet.com
<b>Chris Carter</b> cdcarter002@gmail.com	<b>Esther Meerschaut</b>
<b>Ted Steele</b>	<b>Newsletter</b>
	<b>Ted Steele</b> twsteele@sympatico.ca