

Vol. 7– October 2020



HEIRS

Harrow Early Immigrant Research Society

n e w s l e t t e r



Happy Halloween

Stay Safe

It's scary out there!

Welcome to the October 2020 newsletter.

The more things change, the more they stay the same.

Our ancestors landed in Canada from around the globe. Unfortunately, they were frequently subjected to discrimination. Most often it was solely based on the sound of their last name or their visible ethnicity, along with the stereotypes their backgrounds suggested.

*Can you imagine that your grandparents (those folks in old photos that you treasure) were frequently cursed at, told to “go back where they came from”, and chided to “speak English”? **It happened all the time.***

Immigrants worked to dispel the notion that they were out to cause us harm & steal our valuables. They were simultaneously accused of being both ‘lazy’ AND ‘taking our jobs’. But they came here for a better life, to live free & work hard. They wanted to raise their families in safety. In essence, they wanted to be just like us... proud Canadians.

‘New Canadians’ arrive each year & unfortunately continue to face discrimination.

We need to reinforce a positive message about immigrants. It’s a great teaching moment. Remind your family that their own ancestors were once ‘new arrivals’ and explain how they too were confronted by discrimination. New Canadians often need a hand up, just like our own ancestors did.

We all can do better, but our young folk quickly repeat what we do AND say, and how we respect OR disrespect others. With what we are experiencing on the news cycles today, please make a conscious choice to offer a positive outlook with your family members towards immigrants, and those who have different opinion from you.

Old dogs can at least help others to learn new tricks.

Keep your distance, wash your hands & wear your masks.

*And congratulate your family on protecting themselves and others.
But don’t let complacency undo all our good work.*

- Rick McCormick

October is the month of Halloween, so it seems fitting that I choose this time for a 'peek' into my brain.

With so much uncertainty around us, I have many tentative ideas for HEIRS, and think it only fair that we provide our members with some idea of what will be coming up at some future point.

We have to move forward without 2 very important directors, Richard Herniman and Kathy Langlois, who did so much for our group. Currently we don't know when we can open again or even how many days per week.

When the shutdown hit so suddenly, so long ago, speakers were booked for our meetings. I intend to rebook these as soon as a timetable for reopening is known. The topics involved were old-time blacksmithing & the Harrow High School of the 60's & 70's.

We'll hold a general meeting to replace the one cancelled in May, to elect a slate of directors & bring all members up to date on HEIRS' activities. Also, 2021 marks 50 years since HEIRS was founded, and we plan to celebrate throughout the year. If you have thoughts on how we should acknowledge this milestone, the directors would love to hear them.

I love stories that make people say... "I didn't know that!" Possible topics could be "Submarines in the St Lawrence", "Canada's Spy Camps" or "How Teens Helped Win WW2".



Remember CKLW?

Why not a meeting on the rise of "The Big 8" in the 1960s - everyone's favourite radio station - and why it did not or could not survive?

A meeting featuring the story of "The Vikings on The Great Lakes" has been promised for a while now & will no doubt be worked into the plans.

We hope to feature more local genealogy in our meetings and newsletters; my plan is to feature a well-known local family in each issue.

We'll show how they've been part of the county's history and how each family, through intermarriage with many local prominent families, just how connected we all actually are.

I am not from this area originally, so I planned to lean on Richard and Kathy for details and help on this project. The job will now be considerably more difficult. If you would like your family profiled & can provide details & perhaps some photos we would be most appreciative.

It's absolutely amazing to learn that your family has played such an important role in our history. I know, as I found a United Empire Loyalist, a slave owner, and a WW2 hero in mine. What might we find for you?

Finally, we want your ideas- what do you want us to present? What stories do you want to learn about? As members, your input is vital to maintain the interest level & learning through the stories, yet to be uncovered.

You can contact me Ted Steele, direct by email at historynut@outlook.com, or drop a note to any of the directors' emails on page 10 of this newsletter.

Levi Lane, who at one time railroaded here with the late Tuggy Allen, has been visiting with friends and relatives.

Mr. Lane has railroaded all over the U.S. and finally some years ago landed at Los Angeles, California; he is now the supervisor of the Los Angeles Electric Railway.

He does not think that Los Angeles is the jumping off place by any means. He will take his father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. Wallace Lane, back with him to the coast.

October 7

To Mr. and Mrs. W, Dewey, twin daughters.

October 14

Charles, son of Lawrence Quick, died, age 2 years.

October 15

Isaac Thornton of Essex passed away in Mersea on Monday, age 69 years. Deceased was son of Harrison Thornton and is survived by 4 sisters:

Mrs. Jenny Wigle and Miss Rachel of Essex, Mrs. Robert Gregory of London and Mrs. Sol Coatsworth of Kingsville. Interment in Cottam Cemetery.

A number of our farmers are bringing discredit on the whole community by harvesting their tobacco on Sunday.

It is a case of biting off more than you can chew. A quiet Sabbath in Canada is one of the things

we pride in and the law of the land insists on Sunday rest.

October 22

In Colchester South, to Mr. and Mrs. Wm Jas Taylor, a son.

October 27

To Mr. and Mrs Norman Wright, a son.

October 30

In Colchester South, to Mr. and Mrs. C J LeBay, a son, Corliss Beull Jr.



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6 Dealing with Covid

We seem to be trapped in dark times by Covid - it affects us all in multiple ways, and not the least of these is emotionally. As this health crisis drags on, we all get dragged down at times and depression can set in.

For this issue, I want to go back to the “young adult” years our parents (in varying degrees) endured. Their generation encountered many hardships: the 1930s economic depression, and then was plunged into WW 2.

Rationing, worrying about family in military service, depressing stories of battles and enemy victories, and generally doing without all the things that make life enjoyable. How did they get through it?

In the 1930s, radio became ever-present; many comedy stars emerged to keep everyone laughing. Burns and Allen, Jack Benny, Bob Hope and a hundred others.

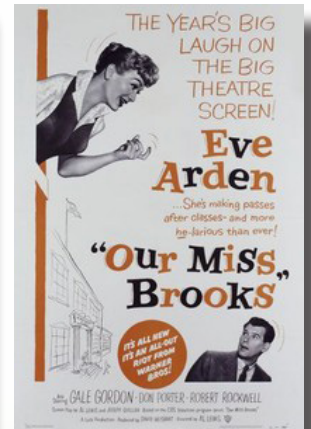


Musical comedy shows abounded, bringing a bit of daily cheer. By 1931, film-makers found a way to add sound to silent movies, and musical comedies became staple fare, often featuring the “faceless” stars from radio.

For a few cents each week, anyone could

enjoy a steady stream of musicals, comedies, westerns, horror and romance.

The 1940s brought anthologies like *Suspense* and *Inner Sanctum*, comedies like *Fibber McGee & Molly*, *Amos and Andy*, *The Great Gildersleeve* and *Our Miss Brooks*.



Soap operas ran daily, as did the *Lone Ranger* serial and many others.

Music. Big bands were featured prominently too. Songs of patriotism and better days ahead helped everyone keep their spirits up - songs about long distance romance, or a “soldier boy” off fighting the war.



Even parodies making fun of the Nazi forces being fought... like Spike Jones with “Der Fuehrer’s Face”.

They helped everyone to remain upbeat.

Songs like “Till Then”, “I’ll Be Seeing You”, and “The White Cliffs of Dover” have remained classics ever since.



Rationing, giving to scrap drives, buying war stamps, all helped people do their part in getting things done during difficult times.



We have to do our part today to fight through our challenges, just as they did many years ago - masks, distancing and hand washing, as well as common sense decisions each day.

We’re all in this together, and supposedly, all on the same team. We can easily enjoy music, television programs, hundreds of movie channels, videos & video games, and other “edutainment” .

Our computers help us to learn new skills, and find our own reasons to smile. Even if we need to remain distant, we can Skype, Zoom or (even) phone our family... very inexpensively compared to yesteryear.

In fact you can find complete shows from the radio classic years or the music made by everyone listed in this article, online!



Hard times come and go, but we will get through this.

Good times will return; in the meantime, enjoy the little things of life and the people who make it all worthwhile.

History As It Used to Was...

- by Ted Steele, HEIRS Director

Stereotypes & Prejudices

I think we all have these to varying degrees, preconceived notions about certain types of people & in many cases these are not only incorrect, but grossly unfair.

Our last issue discussed Poundmaker, a Cree chief who saved many North West Mounted Police from slaughter by refusing to allow his warriors to chase & kill retreating soldiers. As we noted, 150 years to recognize his sense of honour, and realize his heroic action have passed.

These western provinces joined Canada and not the US because John A MacDonald promised & delivered a coast to coast railway system. This was only possible by using workers from Asia; mainly Japanese & Chinese. Often they did the hardest & most dangerous jobs. As well, Newfoundlanders fought in both world wars but were NOT even a part of Canada until well after WW2 ended.

Status Indians were considered to be “wards of the court” - not full citizens of Canada. Without rights as citizens they were also not expected to enlist and fight. Even so, as war began in 1914, hundreds of Canada’s native people did enlist. By the end of the war several thousand had volunteered. They not only served, but served well, winning many decorations and awards for heroic deeds.

Here are only a few...

George McLean was the son of a Scottish father and native mother.

He fought at Vimy Ridge where he carried a wounded officer off the battlefield, then

returned to fight. He single-handedly captured 19 prisoners and won the Distinguished Conduct Medal.



Joseph Roussin was a Quebec Mohawk, serving with the Van Doos, a famous French Canadian battalion.

He was a “trench raider”, a scout who would sneak close to enemy positions and gather information. Sometimes, even more was possible. In 1917, Joseph surprised 8 German soldiers in a trench, killing 5 and capturing 3.

He won the Military Medal and was considered the most wounded man in the regiment, possibly in the British army too. Often he was patched up and went back to the fight.

A northern Ontario native from the Parry Sound area, Francis Pegahmagabow (Peg), became a deadly sniper who won the Military Medal with 2 bars.



In 1916 he captured a large number of enemy soldiers and he braved machine gun fire to go for ammunition for his company.

By war's end he was "credited" with 378 kills and more than 300 enemy captures, but even so, he complained of persecution by his company sergeant major. He was most likely the deadliest sniper of either side in the war.

Henry Norwest, a Cree Indian from Alberta, was awarded the Military Medal after Vimy Ridge for showing skill, bravery and personal initiative while saving many lives with his accuracy.

In 1918, while on a mission to find and eliminate an enemy sniper, he was killed in action. He was given the bar to his Military Medal for showing exceptional gallantry in action.



Image courtesy of Marilyn Buffalo, great-granddaughter of Henry Louis Norwest

Charlotte Edith Anderson Monture was a Mohawk woman from the Grand River reserve in Ontario.



(John Moses.)

She tried to obtain nurse training in Canada, but was denied because she was native. Determined, she got her training in the US, and graduated at the top of her class.

In 1917 she volunteered for service and went overseas. Before she left, her family gave her ceremonial Mohawk clothing for her burial, if she should not survive the war.

Serving at a military hospital in France, she was part of a medical unit that performed 50 operations in a single day. At war's end she returned home to the reserve & lived to be 105.

More than 300 First Nations soldiers were killed & thousands wounded in this conflict.

What a shame that this sacrifice is so overlooked & under-appreciated, but what a wonderful reflection of the Indigenous people & their standards of duty and loyalty.

HEIRS RESOURCE CENTRE

Open September - June (December excepted)

Tuesday & Thursday: 10AM - 3PM

Call to confirm Wednesday or other appointments.

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.

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\$10 per visit (+ photocopy costs).

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Harrow & Colchester South
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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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