

NEWS and views

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Simcoe County Historical Association

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In this issue...

A New Addition	1
SCHA 2015 Meetings	1
President's Ponderings	2
Gowan Portrait Restoration	2
In Memoriam	2
SCHA Executive	2
The History of a Historical Society: Preserving the Past ...	3
Quiz Answers	4
Unveiling of the <i>Emily May</i>	4
History & Anthropology Fair	5
Andrew Hunter Award	5
Coming Events	6

Contact the editor, Jill Hynes at 705-739-6220 or at mark.jill@sympatico.ca

Visit our Website

www.simcoecountyhistory.ca

SCHA

Preserving the Past,
in the Present,
for the Future.

A New Addition to *News and Views*!

Two of our executive members, Audrey and Gord Hanson, have been busy working through some of the SCHA archives and reading the book *The Recent Past* by John Craig. They are going to share some excerpts and activities as a new regular feature in our newsletter called Simcoe County's Recent Past.

For the first installment, they have a quiz for you as well as a couple of stories! The editor would like to thank Gord and Audrey for their interest and input.

Quiz on Canada's Centennial Decade

Can you answer some or all of the following questions pertaining to Simcoe County history? Answers are on page 4 of this issue of *News and Views* or in *The Recent Past* by John Craig, a book that was published by Simcoe County Council in 1977. (used by permission Simcoe County and the Simcoe County Archives)

1. What year did the Simcoe County Museum move to its current location?
2. What year was the reconstruction of St. Marie among the Hurons?
3. What year was the building of the Wasaga Beach Museum of the Upper Great Lakes?
4. What year was the Penetanguishene Naval and Military establishment reconstructed?

5. Name five Centennial Projects of Canada's 100th birthday of 1967!

Did You Know? With permission from Simcoe County

Collingwood Museum was founded as the Huron Institute in 1904, and until 1964 was housed in the basement of the Collingwood Public Library. This building was destroyed by fire but most of the museum contents survived with careful restoration. In 1964 the CNR station and adjoining Memorial Park were acquired, becoming the new museum home, officially opened in 1966. It is today a hub of activity near the waterfront of Collingwood.

The Ramara Historical Society recently became a member of the SCHA. This past July, they held a very successful Yesteryears Celebration in Uptergrove near Orillia, at the historic Columbkille Church. You might wonder that Ramara is a part of Simcoe County, since it is on the east side of Lake Couchiching. The Townships of Mara and Rama, east of Lakes Couchiching and Simcoe were transferred by mutual agreement from the former County of Ontario, when the Regional Municipality of Durham was formed. This gave Simcoe County a total of 18 townships.

SCHA 2015 Schedule

March 24 – Lori Oschefski and Sandra Joyce – British Home Children in Canada: Breaking the Silence at the **Barrie Legion, 410 St. Vincent St. at 7:30 p.m.** - **this meeting is rescheduled from the November date because of the crazy weather we had!**

April and May details in the March issue. Preview in the President's note.

President's Ponderings: Winter 2015

by Mark Fisher

Here we are with a few good blasts of winter under our belt and probably many more to come. Some of you may already be heading south to a warmer clime but we hope to see you sometime in the New Year. In the meantime we will continue on with our programme for 2015. Unfortunately we ran into a few snags in the fall. Our September meeting with "Captain" Eric Conroy of the *SS Keewatin* made for wonderful entertainment as he came with plenty of artifacts, personal reminiscences and professional videos. It is regrettable that only 15 people turned up, possibly because the *Barrie Examiner* failed to include our notice of the meeting.

We had more luck with the October meeting, with 48 in attendance, when John Merritt, the winner of the Andrew

Hunter Prize, spoke to us about his research on the Oro Black Settlement and the role of African-Canadians, in general, in the settlement of Simcoe County. He stressed how little is known about the few blacks who came into this area and we were pleased to hear that he is doing further graduate research on the same subject

We were all set for a great evening in November with Lori Oschefski and Sandra Joyce on the British Home Children but the first massive snowstorm of the winter prevented all but 12 people from turning up. It is such a marvellous story that we have engaged both of them to speak to us again on Tuesday, March 24 at the Barrie Legion. This is one meeting you will not want to miss.

In the New Year we will also hold a joint meeting with the Innisfil Historical Society. Noted author Larry Cotton will be speaking on the subject of his latest book, *100 Taverns in 100 Miles: Toronto to Penetanguishene* at the Innisfil Town Hall on Saturday, April 18 at 2 p.m. These afternoon meetings are always pleasant and at least you won't have to drive at night. And finally, the Annual General Meeting and dinner will be held at the United Church in Midhurst. The ladies put on an excellent dinner and we hope to have the popular Ken Webber to address us again on one of his many fascinating topics. The date in May will be posted in the *Barrie Examiner* which is also posted online. The members of the Executive look forward to seeing you in 2015!

Restoration of the Potrait of Sir James Gowan

We are planning to have a grand unveiling of the very large portrait of Judge Gowan, the first judge of Simcoe County (1843-1883) on Wednesday, March 4 at 7:30 p.m. in the Rotunda of Barrie City Hall. Gary Owen of Gary

Owen Framing and Fine Art has done a magnificent job in restoring both the painting and the frame to their original condition. We will have representatives of the County, the City and the various organizations that donated considerable

funds to this expensive project. There will be other artifacts and photographs on display and rumour has it that His Honour may make a personal appearance as well. Watch the *Barrie Examiner* for further details.

In Memoriam

The SCHA notes with sympathy the October 19th death of Michael Millar, father of past Recording Secretary Ellen Millar.

Michael was an avid philatelist and charter member of the Barrie District Stamp Club in 1960. Michael co-authored with Larry Whitby the "List of the Post Offices in the County of Simcoe, 1830 to 1967."

Over the years, Michael gave several presentations to the Association. At the SCHA Annual General Meetings, Michael and his wife Dorothy would welcome me, your editor, as an honorary Millar for the night. I would get all caught up on their travels and interests.

I can never picture him as anything but

Mr. Millar, Ellen's dad. He always had a warm smile and a great story to share. His varied interests in life made him an ideal dinner companion. I know this English gentleman is much missed by his family, the stamp collecting club, and the congregation of St. Andrew's Presbyterian in Barrie where he was their congregational historian.

Simcoe County Historical Association Executive

Mark Fisher, President	728-3825 mwfisher2@hotmail.com
Earl Elliott, Vice President	734-9808 earl.elliott@rogers.com
Gord Harris, Treasurer	739-7649 gordon.harris67@gmail.com
Ardis Harris, Corresponding Secretary	739-7649 ardis.harris@gmail.com

For Membership Information, contact

Earl Elliott, Membership Chair	734-9808 earl.elliott@rogers.com
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You are invited to submit photos and articles regarding your historical happenings in Simcoe County. Photos will be returned. Mail to SCHA, Box 144, Barrie, ON L4M 4S9.

Deadline for the next issue is February 25, 2015

The History of a Historical Society: Preserving the Past

by Audrey Hanson

The Northern Advance
November 12, 1891

Late Friday afternoon there was a meeting at the Town Council chamber to consider the advisability of organizing a Pioneer and Historical Society for the county of Simcoe.

The following gentlemen were present -- FEP Pepler Q.C. Mayor of Barrie, Reverend Doctor Parker, Messrs. H W Hewson and John L Warnica, C W Lawton of Orillia Times, Geo. H Hale Orillia Packet, Dr. Jakeway Stayner, Mr. W H Doel of the Provincial Association, H N Courtlandt of the Advance, and Mr A F Hunter of the Examiner.

After thoroughly talking the matter over, it was moved by G H Hale, seconded by Dr. Jakeway, that we form a society to be called the County of Simcoe Pioneer and Historical Society.

Carried

Moved by A F Hunter, seconded by John L Warnica, that the society be constituted of members who have obtained the age of twenty-one years.

Carried

Moved by C W Lawton, seconded by Rev. Dr. Parker, that those eligible for membership be those who resided in the County of Simcoe prior to Confederation, July 1, 1867, or their decedents (sic) who shall be known as pioneers, and also natives of the county and those who have been resident in the county for five years previous to their application for membership.

Moved by G H Hale, seconded by Dr. Jakeway that the officers be: Honorary President - the Hon. J R Gowan, President - Judge Ardagh, Secretary - A F Hunter, Treasurer - C W Lawton, Executive Committee - Rev. Dr. Parker, Wm Hewson Esq., Mayor Pepler and S L Soules.

Moved by Wm. Hewson Esq., seconded by Mr. Lawton that the next meeting be held in Barrie on the first Friday in December at eleven o'clock.

Moved by Mr. Hale, seconded by Mr. Warnica that a vote of thanks be tendered Mr. Dole (sic) for his kind services in attending this meeting and that the secretary take steps to affiliate with the provincial association.

Carried

Moved by Mr. Lawton, seconded by Mr. Doel that a vote of thanks be tendered to Mayor Pepler and Rev. Dr. Parker for their services in the capacity of chairman.

Carried

The meeting then adjourned.

By 1905 the executive of the Pioneer and History Society had changed to include three new vice presidents; Judge W F A Boys, Dr. C E Jakeway, and G H Hale. George Sneath was treasurer, and on the executive committee were Lieut. Col. H E O'Brian (sic), John Rogerson and John L Warnica.

... and so began one hundred years of preserving the past in Simcoe County. The Pioneer and Historic Society changed its name in the 1930's to the Huronia Historic Sites Association and in 1971 it became the Simcoe County Historical Association.

taken with permission from:
The Story of a Historical Society

research: by Doreen Horton

compiled: by Eunice Johnston

In 2016 the SCHA celebrates the 125th anniversary of the Simcoe County Historical Association and its predecessor organizations, both the Pioneer and Historic Society and the Huronia Historic Sites Association (HNSA). There has been continued

affiliation with the Ontario Historical Association.

It seems that the Simcoe County Historical Society formed similarly to those in other regions: "formed by elites whose main interest was the history of people like themselves, leaders in business, commerce, and government. Their mission was to preserve the legacy of their ancestors, to commemorate local heroes, and to preserve historic architecture. Rapid urbanization and urban renewal in the 20th century led to another wave of interest in preserving local history. No one knows for sure how many local historical societies and small museums exist ..." from the article *The Future of Local Historical Societies* by Debbie Ann Doyle, December 2012 (www.historians.org/perspectives-on-history)

Certainly the Simcoe County Pioneer and Historical Society began with some recognizably prominent citizens and continues today as the SCHA, with input by its varied membership of both professional and amateur historians, and the academic community. What is our role in the future?

The first *News and Views* was published in January 1972, produced by Gladys Train with the assistance of June Chambers, who did the addressing. It has for 40 + years kept the membership up-to-date on SCHA happenings!

"The present is the past rolled up for action; the past is the present unrolled for understanding." from *Maclean's*, January 1979

"I simply feel that you cannot see the future without looking in the rear-view mirror." from the *Globe and Mail*, 1981 (comment on the value of the study of History)

Simcoe County's Recent Past - quiz answers

1. 1962
 2. 1964
 3. 1967
 4. 1967
 5. Answers to Centennial Projects:
 - a) Simcoe County published *The Visible Past, A Pictorial History of Simcoe County*. It is still available as a reprint at the Simcoe County and other local Museum book stores.
 - b) The County Archives was established in a new wing of the the museum at Midhurst.
 - c) Duntroon - Nottawasaga restored a century old schoolhouse - used for township offices.
 - d) Innisfil acquired a site for a new park.
 - e) Essa built a new library in Angus.
 - f) Stayner built a flood-lit ball park.
- The Hansons also have a question for the membership:
- Page 263 in the book *The Recent Past* talks about Harry and Phyllis Hunt who operated an "Outdoor Education Centre" at Wyevale which featured a "beautifully preserved, water-driven grist mill that dates from the nineteenth century. Many groups of

students from Tiny township and beyond come each year to learn more about how their pioneer ancestors conquered hardships, persevered, and established communities in the wilderness of Upper Canada."

What happened to these people, and the grist mill, and this attempt at "preservation of Simcoe County heritage"? Does the mill still exist or does someone have a photograph?

Please send any response to the editor at mark.jill@sympatico.ca and I will forward it to the Hansons. If you have any queries along these lines, send them along, and we'll include them here!

Unveiling of the *Emily May*

The Innisfil Historical invites the members of the Simcoe County Historical Association to attend the unveiling of the *Emily May* replica on Tuesday, January 6, 2015 at 2 p.m.

The event will take place at the Innisfil Town Hall at Innisfil Beach Road and Yonge Street next door to the recreation centre.

The *Emily May* was a Lake Simcoe excursion steamer whose hull lies off of Belle Ewart Park today. She was a long white steamboat with one stack

and the name *EMILY MAY* painted on the side. It was the largest and most serviceable paddle steamer on Lake Simcoe, known as a side-wheeler. The boat could carry 800 passengers and had a speed of 14 miles per hour. It was built in Belle Ewart by Isaac May in 1861 and was in service for 21 years doing both passenger and freight business, and made regular trips from Orillia, Barrie, and Holland Landing in addition to numerous excursion voyages. She

burned at the dock in Belle Ewart 24 years later in 1884.

Don Houghton, assisted by Bill Hester, has dedicated over 2200 hours to the research and production of this remarkable scale model. The completed work is nearly ten feet long and two feet wide, including four lifeboats.

The Innisfil Historical Society has supported this project and looks forward to a great day of celebration.

*Happy New Year
to all our members
and member
organizations
from the
Simcoe County
Historical Association!*

Visit our Website

www.simcoecountyhistory.ca

SCHA
SIMCOE COUNTY
HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

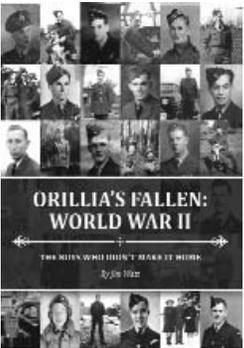
**Preserving the Past,
in the Present,
for the Future.**

New Orillia WWII Book

Local historian and author Jim Watt has debuted his second book, titled *Orillia's Fallen World War II - The boys who didn't make it home*. Meticulously researched, the book is a heartfelt chronicle of the lives of the young men from the Orillia area who gave up their lives for their country in the last Great War.

The stories recounted are the end result of over four years of research into primary and secondary sources such as military archives, *The Orillia Packet and Times*, and interviews with the surviving families. A combination of biography, military and social history, *Orillia's Fallen* maintains that the greatness of humankind should not be measured by our ability to go to war, but by our capacity to recognize and remember the human costs of war.

The not-for-profit book was generously sponsored by the City of Orillia, Jane and Garfield Dunlop and the Simcoe County Historical Association, and was supported by a number of other donors and contributors.



History and Anthropology Fair

The Lakehead University Student Union is pleased to host the second annual Simcoe County History and Anthropology Fair on Thursday, February 26, 2015 from 5-7 p.m. at the Lakehead Orillia Academic campus. Refreshments will be provided.



The Andrew Hunter Award 2015

The Andrew Hunter Award is offered annually for historical research on Simcoe County, Ontario, written by an undergraduate student for a course in any university or college. In this seventh year of competition, we look forward to receiving many worthy entries for each of the two awards being offered.

Conditions: The entry shall be an essay between 3,000 and 5,000 words in length or a fourth year undergraduate thesis paper (no length restriction) on some aspect of the history of Simcoe County, Ontario, written in English or in French. The author must have been a part-time or full-time undergraduate student in a degree program at an accredited university or college at the time of writing. The essay must have been written to meet the requirement of an undergraduate credit course during the 2014-2015 academic year. The thesis paper must have been submitted for grading in the 2014-2015 academic year. Entries become the property of the



Simcoe County Historical Association and may be published as part of an essay collection.

Submissions: Essay entries shall be postmarked by April 20, 2015, and undergraduate theses shall be postmarked by July 31, 2015. Submissions will not be returned to the contestants. Papers must be typed in Times New Roman 12 point font, double spaced, and should not bear the instructor's comments or grade. Three copies must be provided. A cover sheet must list the author's name, address, phone number, year of study, school affiliation and department, and the name of the instructor for whom the paper was written.

Entries should be sent to:

The Corresponding Secretary
Simcoe County Historical Association
P.O. Box 144
Barrie, ON L4M 4S9

Adjudication: Entries will be judged by a distinguished panel appointed by the Simcoe County Historical Association. The winners will be announced as soon as possible. Contestants should keep the SCHA aware of their contact information.

Award: There will be two awards offered in Canadian funds, one for \$500 for the best undergraduate essay and one for \$500 for the best undergraduate thesis. The Simcoe County Historical Association may edit the winning entries for the purpose of publication.

The Simcoe County Historical Association is under no obligation to grant the awards. For more information, see www.simcoecountyhistory.ca

The SCHA acknowledges the financial support of the County of Simcoe and of the Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Culture.



COMING EVENTS

of our Member Societies

Alliston Historical Society – contact

Jackie Baillie

705-435-5626 or

cknowles@rogers.com

Meet at Museum on the Boyne,
Fletcher Cres., Alliston 2:00 p.m.
Second Wednesday of the month
February- June and October-
November

**Barrie Historical Association –
contact Mark Fisher**

www.barriehistorical.com

**Collingwood District Historical
Society – contact Joan Miller**

705-445-1119

Meet at Leisure Time Club, 100
Minnesota Street, Collingwood – 7:00
p.m. www.historicallyspeakingcdhs.ca

Jan. 12 – Peter Case, author –
*Turning Back the Pages of
Collingwood's History: The Writings
of Jack McMurchy*

Feb. 2 – Mary (Mitchell) Watson,
Wasaga Beach archivist – Sharing
Memories: Stories of Wasaga Beach

**Essa Historical Society – contact
Olive Lee** 705-458-9971

teddylee1@rogers.com

Meet at Thornton Library fourth
Saturday of the month except July,
August and December – 1:30 p.m.

**Friends of Historic Fort Willow –
contact Gord Hanson** fortwillow.com

**Friends of The OPP Museum –
contact Ellen Blaubergs**

705-330-4178

support@oppmuseumfriends.ca

**Genealogical Society – contact
Linda Mitchell**

Meet at Church of Jesus Christ of
Latter-Day Saints 79 Ferris Lane,
Barrie – 2:00 p.m.
www.simcoebogs.com

Jan. 3 – Interactive Working Session:
Finding Resources

Feb. 7 – Jim Commandant –
Graphology – Another Genealogy
Tool

**Huronian Museum Huron
Ouendat Village**

549 Little Lake Park Road, Midland –
705-526-2844

www.huroniamuseum.com

**Innisfil Historical Society – contact
Donna Wice**

Meet at Knock Community Centre,
10th SR at 9th Line, Innisfil – 2:00
p.m. www.innisfilhistorical.ca

Jan. 6 – Innisfil Town Hall official
unveiling of the Emily May model –
see page 4 of this issue

Jan. 17 – Dr. Jim McPhee – prisoner
of War survivor

Feb. 16 – 1-4pm – Family Day
featuring Games from the past

Feb. 21 – Story telling...Snow storms

**Museum on the Boyne – contact
Katie Huddleston-Naieb**

250 Fletcher Crescent in Riverdale
Park, Alliston – 705-435-3900 ext.
1802

**Orillia History Speaker Series –
contact Daniel Byers**

Meet on the 3rd floor of the Orillia
Museum of Art & History, 30 Peter
Street South. – 7:30 p.m.

Jan. 10 – Sir John A. Macdonald
Dinner – John Boyko, author of *Blood
and Daring: How Canada Fought the
American Civil War and Forged a
Nation*

Orillia Museum of Art and History

30 Peter Street South, Orillia –
705-326-2159

www.orilliamuseum.org

to Jan. 10 – This is Tomorrow –
High School Exhibition

Jan. 15-Feb. 7 – Creating Futures

to Feb. 7 – Sir John A. Macdonald
and His Era – A Historical Adventure
to May 9 – World War

**Penetanguishene Centennial
Museum and Archives – contact
Nicole Jackson**

13 Burke St. at Beck Blvd.
Call 705-549-2150

www.pencenmuseum.com

Jan. 6-Mar. 21 – A Lifetime – Day
by Day, Five Women and their Diaries
exhibit from the Archives of Ontario

**Ramara Historical Society – contact
Cathy Westcott**

westcott.cathy963@gmail.com

Meet at Udney Community Centre,
2347 Concession Road 10 (east of
Orillia)

7:00 p.m. Third Thursday of the
month (except July and August)

**Simcoe County Museum – contact
Kelley Swift-Jones**

1151 Highway 26, Midhurst –
705-728-3721 museum.simcoe.ca

Dec. 27-31 and Jan. 2-4 – Twelve
Days of Christmas Special Events

Mar. 14-22 – Game On – History of
Video Gaming in Simcoe County
interactive exhibit and activities

**Stayner Heritage Society – contact
Dorothy Millsap**

www.staynerheritagesociety.com
705-428-2540

Apr. 24 – The Blazing Fiddles –
Stayner Community Church, 8 p.m. –
call for \$25 tickets

**Tecumseth & West Gwillimbury
Historical Society – contact Patricia
Blackstock**

Meet at Tec We Gwill Hall, Newton
Robinson, 7:30 p.m.

Third Monday of the month January-
May and September-November 416-
247-6551

Jan. 19 – Show and Tell