

NEWS and views

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Simcoe County Historical Association

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Visit our Website

www.simcoecountyhistory.ca

Heritage Week - Here We Come!

See you on February 19th

How do you do it? How do you produce the wonderful, original historical society newsletters that I receive each month as the corresponding secretary for the SCHA? There are a lot of valuable volunteers and writers out there that take their time and energy to keep the rest of us informed.

Let's get together this Heritage Week Saturday afternoon from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. and share our wealth of knowledge. The SCHA is sponsoring a free seminar on Publishing for Historical Societies, once again at the Simcoe County Museum. We will enjoy instruction from Sheila Creighton, editor of the OHS Bulletin, and I will share some of my own hair-tearing moments and time consuming successes. The journey in the redevelopment of

News and Views would not have been possible without the help of my tutor, Rhonda Long of Kempenfelt Graphics, whom I am hoping will join us as well. We will have the rest of the afternoon to brainstorm everything from gathering material, to assembling the newsletter, to new technologies, to corporate sponsorship of our efforts.

I look forward to spending time picking the brains of many of you! This seminar would also be of interest to anyone currently producing (or thinking about) a newsletter for the not-for-profit sector. Please let me know if you can attend by calling 739-6220 or e-mailing mark.jill@sympatico.ca by February 15th. Bring samples of your work and the work of those you admire!

SCHA 2005 Schedule

January 18 – Dr. Brad Rudachyk – *Beautiful Barrie*, at the Parkview Centre, 8 p.m.

February 19 – Heritage Week Saturday Seminar – Publishing for Historical Societies, at the Simcoe County Museum, time TBA

March 15 – Larry Cotton – *Whiskey and Wickedness in Simcoe County*, at the Simcoe County Museum, 8 p.m.

April 19 – Dr. David Beasley – celebrated author of *Sarah's Journey* and *The Canadian Don Quixote; the life and works of Major John Richardson, Canada's first novelist*, at the Simcoe County Museum, 8 p.m.

May 17 – Annual General Meeting at the Bell Farm Road Banquet Hall Featuring Dr. Linda Ambrose, Laurentian University, Department of History, who is currently researching Madge Watt and her family.



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

President's Message

In this number of News and Views, editor Jill Hynes takes us on a captivating tour of Simcoe County, thanks to some very fine contributors. It never ceases to amaze me just how dedicated are our heritage volunteers and professionals. In Simcoe County, we are truly blessed. Keep up your good work and be sure to share it with us at SCHA.

Also in this number, I commend you to the requests for information

that appear on page 10. If you have any information to share, I know that it will be gratefully received. Or, if you have a particular research interest, please contact Jill or myself. We will be pleased to pass it on. One of the goals of *News and Views* is to become Simcoe County's premiere heritage information clearinghouse. If it has to do with the history or heritage of our county and you are interested, so are we.

As the new year approaches, I would also like to remind you to please renew your membership. In recent years, SCHA has enjoyed a healthy rate of growth. Together, we can keep the ball rolling. As you renew, can you think of anyone who might be interested in joining us? And, lastly, donations are always welcome.

On behalf of your Board of Directors, I wish you all a happy and prosperous 2005.

In Memoriam

Jean Wass 1919-2004

Many of us will remember often meeting Bud Wass and his wife Jean at our local history meetings in Barrie or Innisfil. Bud and Jean were married for 64 years. Condolences are extended by the SCHA to Bud, his four surviving children, eight grandchildren, twelve great grandchildren and three great great grandchildren.

Burton Ford 1921-2004

Simcoe County Historical Association lost a good friend recently. Burton Ford had in the past served us as President. He was born and raised in Hamilton. He served in the RCAF Bomber Command. His long career as a history teacher started (after graduation from McMaster) in Sudbury, then Brantford, and

culminated with 22 years at Banting Memorial High School in Alliston. As the local Alliston paper so aptly put it, "Mr. Ford lived local history." The SCHA extends our condolences to his wife Irene, his six children and nine grandchildren.

Young Historians' Adventures in Simcoe County

Where Amy Went

N&V: Where did you go this time to check out another historic Simcoe County spot?

Amy: Our whole family spoiled Mommy by taking her for an overnight to Blue Mountain in Collingwood. Of course she took us to the Collingwood Museum while we were there.



N&V: What did you do there?

Amy: My sister and I looked at all the boats and pictures they have from back when a lot of boats were made there. We also saw some train station things like dishes and tickets, and the museum is actually the old train station!

N&V: What was the best part of your adventure?

Amy: They have a whole bunch of toys and construction blocks for kids to play with! Laura and I like to touch things which sometimes gets us in trouble at museums. They also had a whole bunch of letters that people wrote during the Second World War when they were away from home. I liked reading those.



N&V: What was your least favourite thing?

Amy: There is this great big wooden statue when you first walk in the front door. He is huge and a little funny looking.

N&V: I guess we need to work on your appreciation of carvings!

Orillia Museum of Art and History Update with Sim Salata

The weekend of December 10 and 11 welcomed the opening of the refurbished Orillia Museum of Art and History in the historic Sir Samuel Steele Memorial Building at 30 Peter Street South in Orillia. After three and a half years of fundraising and nearly nine months of construction, the beautiful structure is now open to the public.

The opening weekend welcomed many visitors to a free tour of the facilities available thus far. A sample from OMAH's wonderful art collection, including many Group of Seven pieces, is displayed in the airy main floor gallery, along with some lovely museum artifacts. One of note is the school organ from Central School on Coldwater Road, pictured right. Amy's grandma no doubt listened to this organ back in her own public school days!

One fun item we saw was a continuously running video of the building construction including the placement of the stainless steel finial that crowns the working clock tower seen below. A little nail biting and a lot of applause were part of this feat of architectural placement. The work accomplished thus far in the building is wonderful. There is still a lot of work to do however.



Before more artifacts can be put on display, volunteers and staff must refurbish the old, painted exhibit cases and create glass or plexiglas tops for them in order to protect the items. Sim Salata, Director/Curator of the new facility, figures that this will be done by mid to late January.

We were able to tour the sections still under development, including the second floor display space that will become the historical museum and the basement arts and education area which already boasts a beautiful mural created by kids in a past art day camp program. OMAH's art classes for adults and children begin in January 2005. To have a schedule mailed to you, please call 326-2159 or check our their website at www.orilliamuseum.org.

Ms. Salata says that by the grand opening in May 2005, the museum will have a comprehensive exhibit and education schedule. The museum and gift shop are open Monday to Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Museum Shop showcases local handcrafts, gifts and publications.

Watch for the June issue of *News and Views* when the grand opening will be the featured topic for the article *Where Amy Went*.

**Congratulations to the
Orillia Museum of Art and History
on your work of architectural preservation
and your magnificent new home.**

Saving the Archives of Ontario

by Kathie Orr

Did you read the article by Ian Urquhart in the October 17th Sunday Toronto Star about the government cancelled move of the Archives of Ontario to a new building? This situation affects all of us whether you are a regular user of the AO or have never visited.

The existing Archives is stretched to capacity and is at risk due to inadequate fire protection, building structural issues and mould infestation. A proper archives building is long overdue. We cannot let them throw away all the years of planning that got us so close to a new home for the Archives in an accessible downtown location.

We have to speak out about this matter and let the officials know that we want the Archives to have a new building. Do not leave the work to others; we have to let the government know that the genealogical and historical community is large and vocal. We need letters from individuals and groups. Your emails

and letters do not have to be long; it is the volume of letters that impress and get action.

Please do not bash the government officials. You can send an email but you must include your full name and postal address. Your emails or letters need to emphasize your use of the Archives; its importance to the province of Ontario; that users have put up with the poor working conditions and health hazards at the Grenville Street site because we understood the Archives was moving to a new location; that we are pleased that the new offsite storage building is being built; that the records belong to the people of Ontario – it is our heritage; that the people of Ontario have a right to access the records under proper conditions and without fear of injury to their health.

These are the people we have to contact: The minister responsible and the person we have to get our message to is Hon. Gerry Phillips. He is the member for Scarborough –

Agincourt and the Chair of Management Board of Cabinet. The Archives of Ontario is part of Management Board. His contact information is gphillips.mpp@liberal.ola.org You can write to the Minister at Management Board Secretariat, 77 Wellesley St W, 12th Flr, Ferguson Block, Toronto ON M7A 1N3. His constituency office is at 204 - 4002 Sheppard Ave E., Scarborough ON M1S 4R5.

We also need to contact Premier Dalton McGuinty. You can go to <http://www.premier.gov.on.ca/english/contact/> to send an email directly to the premier's office or email him at his constituency office in Ottawa at dmcguinty.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org His contact information is Queen's Park, Rm 281, Main Legislative Building, Toronto ON M7A 1A4.

Contact your local MPP — for their contact information go to

<http://olaap.ontla.on.ca/laompp/daCurMbr.do?locale=en>

More information on what you can do

“The provincial government has quietly killed the move of the Archives of Ontario to a badly needed new facility, putting at risk millions of historical documents. The archives - home to documents, official and unofficial, dating back as far as the 17th century - are now housed in an overcrowded building on Grenville St. in downtown Toronto, opposite Women's College Hospital. The building is a mould-infested firetrap, with no sprinkler system and sagging floors. The aisles of documents are so crowded it is difficult to walk down them. Among the treasures on the archives' shelves

are 200 exquisite watercolours from the late 18th century by Elizabeth Simcoe, wife of John Graves Simcoe, first lieutenant-governor of Upper Canada (as Ontario was then known).” This quote from the Toronto Star article of October 17, 2004 emphasizes but a few reasons for our need to act. The individual membership of the SCHA is over 160 strong. Letters from voters hold much more sway with the government than those from associations or societies.

Ellen Millar, assistant archivist for Simcoe County, and our own recording secretary, emphasizes the need for the historical community to

act. She heartily encourages all our members to take a few minutes to write the letters recommended above.

The former chair of the management board stated in the same Toronto Star article, “You have to have the archives in a location that's accessible, that people can get to... The problem is that people don't think the archives are important, but they are. These are historical documents that are irreplaceable, and they are at risk. I think it's a priority. If you don't respect the history of the province, how can you look toward the future?”

We couldn't agree more.

Innisfil Old Boys and Old Girls Photos - September 27, 2004 - Grange Hall, Lefroy

by Donna Wice

Who would believe that the simple generous gift of one old photo to the Innisfil Historical Society could spark such an energetic project, but indeed it did!!! In October of 2003, Gordon and Nancy Young, amidst the process of moving homes, discovered The Old Boys Picture, which was among many pictures belonging to Gordon's mother, Sarah Willson Young, generously contacted Donna and Merv Wice about their discovery.

And so the process of identifying the Innisfil Old Boys of 2004 began and soon expanded to Old Girls as well. Donna Wice and her contact crew of Grace and Walter Browning, Wallace Black, Norma Smurthwaite, Art and Doris Jack and Andrew Cowan took up the challenge. The criteria were straightforward: to qualify a person must be currently residing in Innisfil, and must have resided here as a permanent resident for a minimum of 60 years. As the registration numbers grew, so did the other arrangements needed. The Grange Hall in Lefroy, newly renovated yet still with a distinctly historical flavour was deemed the perfect setting. John Bartosik, a local photographer with a proven historic flair was booked for the September 27, 2004 grand event.

At last the day arrived- 100 years since the original 1904 photo which had sparked this re-creation. What was it like in 1904 while the men were gathering for their picture? How excited was everyone that day? Everything was in place at the Grange



Hall. Cheerfully greeting the picture participants, their chauffeurs and family members (for a total of 111) were Ross Wallace and Audrey Miller. Light refreshments and cold drinks were immediately offered by Gladys Miller and Ruth Webb. Jean Warrington had local Innisfil History books available should anyone require copies and Merv Wice and Doug Warrington were all set up to handle the picture orders. In they came...34 Old Girls and 47 Old Boys to be precise. Before each picture (1 p.m. - Old Girls, 3 p.m. - Old Boys) Donna Wice welcomed everyone on behalf of the Innisfil Historical Society and thanked them for being a part of the living history of Innisfil. John Bartosik then proceeded with general directions about the photo shoot.

Everyone was clearly enjoying the time of renewing acquaintances; laughter, handshakes, and lively conversation abounded. Yet, a hush fell on the hall

when that magic moment of the actual picture arrived. Amongst the two 2004 groups, names from the 1904 version leaped out: Black, Webb, Brewster, Warnica, Jack, Lucas, Reid and Hindle. What stories those people could tell? Wilda Johnston of Stroud was identified as the woman who has lived in Innisfil the longest, having been born here and being 90 years young followed closely by 93 year old May Reive of Lefroy who came to Innisfil as a five-year old. W.J.R Marling of Cookstown, who was born in 1916, was the oldest longtime man in Innisfil followed by John Duncan who was born in 1917 in Innisfil.

A distinct common thread intertwined among all the picture participants; each had lived most, if not all of their life in this great township(now Town), be they farmer, electrician, teacher, homemaker, municipal employee, secretary, contractor, salesperson, trucker or builder. Whatever had drawn the forefathers as pioneers of the 1830's and 40's to Innisfil, clearly was evident in the modern group too: an entrepreneurial spirit to tackle all the challenges of the 2000's with verve.

Regretfully, this day can not be duplicated in the lifetime of any of us, but as the information goes into the Innisfil Document Centre, perhaps in 2104, another Innisfil Historical Society group will catch the spirit of the project after viewing the pictures which are proof of such a momentous occasion.



Fort Willow Improvement Group

*Dedicated to the Preservation, Improvement, Restoration,
and Promotion of the Fort Willow Heritage Site*

Proud recipients of the 2002 Ontario Heritage Foundation Achievement Award

Article No. 3 in a series for *News and Views*



Fort Willow: The McDouall Expedition of 1814: underway

by Keith H.J. Bacon

In the previous (third) article I promised to continue the coverage of the McDouall Relief Expedition that passed through Fort Willow on their way to Michilimackinac, as revealed by contemporary documents in the Simcoe County Archives. Again, it is to the Simcoe County Archives in Midhurst, their extensive collection of fascinating documents, and the helpful, patient staff, that much credit is owed. Many of the documents are copies obtained from the Public Archives of Canada in Ottawa by Norman Clarke and are to be found in his papers deposited at the Simcoe County Archives. Thus credit is also due to the Public Archives of Canada.

In the previous article we reviewed the diary of Richard Titus Willson and his participation in the building of the batteaux near Fort Willow, in preparation for the arrival of the McDouall expedition.

Again I want you to take yourself back 190 years to the winter of 1814. Lt Col McDouall of the Glengarry Light Infantry Fencible Regiment has his expeditionary force organized and they are on their way from Kingston.

This transcribed document provides a really focused snap-shot of the expedition passing through York (Toronto) in early 1814. It vividly portrays routine British military record-keeping. These Returns of Movement of Troops documented the comings and goings of personnel at British Garrisons throughout the world. Together with Muster Rolls, they are to military historians what the census is to the genealogist. I find that the information in this transcribed document just jumps up from the page, as it does from the original copperplate handwritten document. (see page 7)

The number of men in McDouall's party on this return totals 153, primarily members of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, chosen for their appropriate marine background. The party of sailors under Lt Poyntz, Royal Navy, that arrived and departed for Lake Simcoe the same day, is not enumerated, but a letter that we will examine in a future article puts the number at 20.

Although the one Sergeant and nine Rank and File is about the correct number for the artillery contingent, the 18 pounder gun and 18 horses do not make sense. The largest guns recorded at Michilimackinac in June 1814 were two 9 pounders. An 18 pounder was a monster (Brass barrel was 5 ft 9 in long and weighed 18 cwt, iron barrel was 9 ft 6 in long and weighed 42 cwt) almost certainly beyond the ability of the expedition to transport to Michilimackinac. I have not included these particular artillerymen in the above total; they were possibly on route elsewhere.

The covering letter that was submitted with this Return mentions "the arrival of the Sailors under Lt Poyntz RN who proceeded the same day to Lake Simcoe having stay only to draw the provisions to proceed."

Another Return for the period 8th thru 18th March 1814 shows a Sergeant and 15 Rank and File of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment departing for Lake Simcoe with Regimental Stores; and a civilian, William Franklin, with Indian Stores, possibly also on his way to Lake Simcoe.

The next article in this series will cover the brief account of the expedition from the viewpoint of McDouall's adjutant, Lt Andrew Bulger of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, whose name appears in the Return, dated February 18th seen on the following page.

Return of Movements of Troops at York from the 15th to the 21st February 1814

Date	Corps	Strength								HORSES	Under whose Command	Arrivals &	Mode of	Remarks
		GENERAL OFFICERS	FIELD OFFICERS	CAPTAINS	SUBALTERNS	REGIMENTAL STAFF	SERGEANTS	DRUMMERS	RANK AND FILES					
February														
14 th	Embodied Militia			1				7	8		Capt McKay	A	4 Sleighs	Private Baggage
15 th	Militia	1							1		Lt Col Coffin (?)	A	4 Do.	Do.
Do.	Glengarry L.I.		1						1		Lt Col McDouall	A	1 Do.	Do.
Do.	R. NFLand				1		1	13	15		Ensn O'Brien	A	17 Do.	With Ordnance Stores
16 th	Do.				2		2	51	55		Lt Radenhurst & Ensn Davies	A	22 Do.	Ordnance Stores
Do.	R. Artly. Drivers						1	9	10	18	Sgt Major Selseiber (?)	A	(?)	With one 18 Pounders
17 th	R. NeFld. Reg.				1			15	16		Ensn O'Brien	Dep	4 Sleighs	To Lake Simcoe
Do.	Civil Bilet (?)			1				7	8		Capt McKay	Dep	4 Do.	To Do.
Do. and 18 th	R. NeFld Reg.			2			2	2	63	69	Lt Bulger & Lt Armstrong	Ar	42 Do.	Ordnance & Naval Stores
18 th	Glengarry		1						1		Lt Col McDowell	Dep	1 Do.	To Lake Simcoe
Do.	49th & 10th Reg.							9	9		Provost Sgt Fallon 100 th Reg	Ar	2 Do. & Marching	With 23 Pris or War and 3 envel pris docmts
19 th	49th & 10th Reg.							11	11		Do.	Dep	8 Sleighs	With 23 Pris of War and 4 envel pris docmts
20 th	R. NeFld Reg.		1				1	3	5		Capt Winter	Ar	1 Do.	From Kingston
21 st	19th Light Dragoons						1		1		Sgt Hall	Ar	2 Do.	Do.
18 th	Sailors						1				Lt Poyntz RN	A & D		Arrived and proceeded immediately to Lake Simcoe

(Signed) Geo.(?) Leliere(?) DAQMG(Deputy Acting Quarter Master General?)

- Notes:
- Entries of Embodied Militia, Glengarry L.I., R. NFLand, R.NeFld Reg., Civil Bilet(?), and Sailors denote probable participants in Lt Col McDouall's relief expedition to Michilmackinac.
 - "Do." above is an abbreviation for "Ditto".

Excavations at the Allandale Train Station

by Ellen Millar

At the November 2004 meeting of the Simcoe County Historical Association, the assembly was treated to a talk about the archaeological excavation at the Allandale Railway Station site. Charlton Carscallen, of AFBY Archaeological and Heritage Consultants, did an excellent job of explaining the three steps of archaeological excavation in Ontario, and how they approached the Allandale Station project. Andrew F. Hunter wrote about an ossuary on the site, but from what he described in his notes, the modern archaeologists knew that its integrity had been lost. Further historical research revealed that there had been at least three "proper" station buildings located on the site; "proper" station meaning a building containing a ticket office, passenger waiting room and possibly a restaurant, located beside a platform. As well, the land around the end of Kempenfelt Bay was originally very marshy, and considerable amounts of fill had been added to the area in order to keep the

railway tracks stable. Early maps, plans and photographs were used to position where buildings had been located on the station grounds.

Once the research had been completed, test holes were dug, and an area to the west of the current station building was selected for excavation. On the first day, with the assistance of an enthusiastic backhoe operator, part of the stone foundation of the original station building was found. Further investigation uncovered ceramics, bones – none of which were human remains – as well as the remains of posts. One shovel-full of earth, when sifted, revealed an 1856 penny as well as 14th century pottery shards, which confirmed that the soil surrounding the station buildings had been stirred up over the years. The remains also confirmed that what had been found was not an ossuary, but a midden (garbage dump).

Based on archaeological and historical research into the items found, several conclusions were

reached. Certain ceramic decorations were used by Ontario Natives during specific periods, and the pottery shards found at the site date from the late seventeenth century. The bones were almost overwhelmingly those of fish. And those fish were of the type which spawns in warmer water, in the spring of the year. The remains of the posts indicated that they were too flimsy to be fences, and were most likely parts of frames set up to dry the fish taken from the end of the bay. It is believed that the site was used primarily as a fishing camp, since most Native villages were located on higher ground, away from malarial marshes. To which village the fishers belonged, however, remains unclear. Known villages in the area are either too far away, or pre/post date the Allandale site.

Carscallen's talk was an absorbing mixture of archaeology, and native and railway history. It certainly provided the audience with many points to ponder the next time they travel past the old railway lands at Allandale.

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Historical groups are invited to submit photos and articles regarding your significant meetings, accomplishments, and your coming events. Imagine your society on the cover! Photos will be returned.

Deadline for the next issue is February 20, 2005

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*With thanks to
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for their financial support.*

Nine Mile Portage Opening

by Bernie Longson

On September 18th the Nine Mile Portage hiking trail was opened between Barrie and Fort Willow.

This event was a major milestone in the efforts of the Fort Willow Improvement Group to identify, and protect, for future generations, the original portage between Barrie, Fort Willow and Georgian Bay. The Fort Willow Improvement Group have been actively involved for the past nine years in unraveling the little known information and secrets of the Fort and the Nine Mile Portage, and to bring it forward in such a way as to generate interest from various groups and organizations.

Exploring the possibilities of the preservation of this very rare piece of our heritage, before it is completely lost to development, as has rapidly happened in the past few years, has been our primary objective. Fortunately several groups came together with the objective of developing a hiking trail that would closely follow the original historical trail. This took a great deal of

cooperation between various entities, as the trail traverses several municipal jurisdictions and adjacent private lands.

It was only possible to develop the trail with the cooperation of the City of Barrie; Springwater Township; the County of Simcoe; the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority; the organizational and financial efforts of the Barrie Rotary club and affiliates; many enthusiastic private individuals; hiking groups; landowners; the Simcoe County Historical Association; the Fort Willow Improvement Group and the list goes on. It is to the credit of the foregoing groups for getting together, putting the plan into action and bringing it to fruition, in the events of September 18th.

The weekend saw re-enactors from near and afar converge on Fort Willow. They set up an encampment, proceeded to Barrie for the ceremonies, where they landed by Bateaux and canoes on the Barrie waterfront in full regalia, and participated in the opening ceremonies.

The group then returned to Fort Willow to set up the "Village" and carry out their very effective interpretations.

Hikers and runners then crossed the trail from Barrie to the Fort. The times ranged from one hour and 15 minutes for the runner, to four hours and twenty minutes for the hikers.

Members of various political affiliations were involved with the opening ceremonies by the City of Barrie and Springwater Township which were observed by several hundred visitors to the events. Representatives from the federal and provincial governments, Simcoe County, Springwater Township, the City of Barrie, the First Nations and the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority participated.

Although the hiking trail was rushed through for the official opening, more work will be done to bring it up to standards that would make the original developers of this trail proud to use it today.

Avro Arrow Revisited

by Helen Yielding

Ron Brighty recall his experiences on the development and demise of the Avro Arrow at the November meeting of the Tecumseth and West Gwillimbury Historical Society.

In 1954, Ron was appointed Instrumentation Laboratory Supervisor in Avro's Experimental Flight Department. While the first Arrow was under construction, his work was to study the current instrumentation used on the CF100 and the 'Jetliner' and to instruct engineers and technicians in the use of these systems.

Over time Ron's staff increased to 42. He got to know the three test pilots, Jan Zurakowski, 'Spud' Potocki and Peter Cope. He enjoyed a flight in the Jetliner and sadly, later, watched its destruction. New, advanced experimental

instrumentation was chosen for use in the Arrow and Ron spent time in California studying one type at the manufacturer's plant. On October 4th, 1957 he attended the roll-out of the Arrow and was actually inside the port air intake checking a transducer installation at 1:30 a.m. on the morning of the Arrow's first flight. Later that morning he took an 8mm movie of the first take-off and landing which was shown at the Society's meeting.

On the morning of the Arrow cancellation, Ron was with 'Spud' Potocki who told him of his speed the previous day: 1,480 m.p.h. at 35,000 feet. Later, Jan Zurakowski told Ron that he believed the Arrow would almost certainly have flown at 2,000 m.p.h. if the Iroquois engines had been

installed. There was no doubt in Ron's mind that the Arrow had been a remarkable aircraft, well ahead of its time.

Jim Floyd, Avro's Vice President of Engineering, told Ron that the National Advisory Committee on Aeronautics in Washington D.C. had confirmed all of Avro's claims for the aircraft, even considering them conservative. This endorsement also confirmed the convictions of the pilots but was ignored by the Canadian Government. Without exception, everyone strongly condemned the totally misleading and near libelous CBC mini series on the Arrow. Ron said that he felt that any knowledgeable survivor of the Arrow era would fully endorse this view.

Information Requests from Members and Readers

From Bernie Longson

The Fort Willow Improvement Group are doing ongoing research on Fort Willow, the Nine Mile Portage, and Willow Creek Landing. If anyone has information they can share with us in the way of documents, photographs, reports or other items pertaining to this work it would be greatly appreciated.

We are also trying to obtain the book *The Genesis of Barrie* by W.A. Fisher and would purchase that if anyone has or knows where we can obtain a copy.

Information can be forwarded to Bernie Longson at 705-722-7533 or e-mail bjlongson@rogers.com, or Keith Bacon at 416-622-1958 or e-mail kbacon1116@rogers.com.

From Doug Spadafore

I'm interested in discovering any additional information, photos, old documents, or surveys your members can recall about Goffat Island owned by the The Brothers of the Christian Schools of Ontario originally acquired in 1923 for about \$3500 from Thomas J. Timlin of Uptergrove.

"In the Narrows of Lake Simcoe in the Province of Ontario, containing by admeasurement twelve acres more or less and being composed of the Napier or Saingegobinaid Island."

The island is about 800 metres due south of Cedar Point and is west from McRae Point also. Registry maps in Barrie Land Titles do not show it; however, Simcoe County Mapping does.

Many thanks in advance, Doug Spadafore 429-4949.

From Deborah Knudtson

Calling all buggy mavens, carriage connoisseurs, and past transport devotees. I have a Barrie Carriage Company piano box buggy for sale and need more information and help with assigning a value to it.

I have zero knowledge about this buggy prior to taking possession of her. What I have learned is that the piano box buggy became popular by the beginning of the 20th century, was affordable, and was often referred to as a Doctor's Buggy.

Aside from being repainted, a fate shared by many transportation artifacts, this buggy appears to be in its original condition. It is a black 4-wheeled rig with channel and rubber wheels, leather diamond button tuck upholstery and dash, and body entry steps. Visions of this two person, horse-drawn buggy clopping through beautiful farmland makes me to wonder when she was made, where did she come from, what was her purpose, how far has she traveled, and who has owned her?

I need assistance from someone who understands and appreciates this buggy's intrinsic value. I realize the concept of placing a dollar value on a piece of transportation history depends whether or not Barrie Carriage was a sought after maker of buggies. And since piano box buggies were so popular in their time, are they sought after now? Was this one crafted during Barrie's "golden era", and if so, does that increase its value?

Please contact me at daknudtz@worldnet.att.net if you have answers to any of my questions or can point me in the direction of other avenues to find out more about this buggy.

From Robert Malcomson

Battle of York, 27 April 1813. Anyone owning or having knowledge of correspondence, documents and artifacts that relate in any way to the Battle of York are invited to contact Robert Malcomson at the addresses below. Malcomson, the author of *Lords of the Lake: the Naval War on Lake Ontario, 1812-1814* and *A Very Brilliant Affair: The Battle of Queenston Heights, 1812* is working on his next book for Robin Brass Studio of Toronto which will cover the Battle at York and its aftermath. He has access to nearly all the published material and the primary documents in the public institutions, but it is the privately held, hitherto untapped sources for which he is searching. So, if you think you have something of interest, contact:

Robert Malcomson, 58 Woodrow Street, St. Catharines, Ontario. L2P 2A3 phone: 905-641-0348 email: rmalcomson2@cogeco.ca

If you are looking for assistance with research, searching for a rare Simcoe County publication, or just wanting the answer to a nagging local history question, please contact *News and Views*. We are happy to help our readers share their knowledge through this contact page.

Membership Renewal: it's that time again!

Please use the enclosed slip to renew your membership with the Simcoe County Historical Association for 2005. Included with your membership are four issues of *News and Views*.



*Artists impression of Ox-team leaving Fort Willow for Willow Landing,
drawn and generously donated by Barry Russell.*

Corduroy Road and Ox-team Transportation on the Nine Mile Portage.

The Fort Willow Improvement Group has reproduced a length of Corduroy Road here in the Gully so that you can see what it was like. This form of road was common throughout Ontario and North America, especially where the ground was swampy. Tree stumps were removed and the logs, locally of cedar, were placed side by side across the line of the road. Often large logs were laid down and smaller ones positioned in between.

These roads were essential to the Military and the Pioneer Settlers in the early 1800s, before the coming of the railways. Here at Fort Willow, the Nine Mile Portage entered the Fort at the Main Gate, exited at the Side Gate, continued down the slope, and headed into the Minesing Swamp on Corduroy Road towards the Landing on Willow Creek.

Ox-teams pulling two wheeled carts were the common mode of transport on the Portage, and when traffic was at its peak in the 1820s, a number of local individuals were involved. Alexander Walker of Barrie employed three teams, assisted by a man named Ben, and for a time by Thomas Williams. David Soules of Big Bay Point and George Warnica of what is now Painswick, also drove their teams on the Portage.

The artist's impression above depicts a typical team heading out of the Fort on the corduroy road heading for the Landing. The memoirs of the Reverend Thomas Williams tell us that the sturdy carts had racks, two loose planks for the bottom, and were such as could be constructed by a man with an axe, a draw knife, and a couple of augers. They were capable of carrying up to twelve barrels of flour or the equivalent (about one ton).

Funding for this sign generously provided by the Simcoe County Historical Association Fort Willow Improvement Group, September 2004

This beautiful sign was installed recently at Fort Willow as a component of their educational information displays. It was placed adjacent to the newly constructed corduroy road in the ravine, to depict the type of transportation employed on the Nine Mile Portage in the early 1800's.

Funding for this sign was made available by Simcoe County Historical Association as part of our Community Partnerships initiative.

COMING EVENTS of our Member Societies

Barrie Historical Association – contact Val Brucker

Meet at Barrie City Hall – 7:30 p.m.

Jan. 13 – Archer Colwill –
Auctioneering in Simcoe County

Mar. 10 – Scott Rowe –
Horses and Racing

**Genealogical Society –
contact Claudia McArthur**
Meet at Church of Jesus Christ of
Latter-Day Saints
79 Ferris Lane, Barrie – 2 p.m.

Jan. 8 – E. Millar, P. Tessier, M. Story
– Searching Family in Simcoe County

Feb. 5 – Gary French – TBA

**Innisfil Historical Society –
contact Ross Wallace**

Meet at Knock Community Centre,
10th SR at 9th Line, Innisfil – 2 p.m.

Jan 15 – Bill Kell –
Village of Cherry Creek

Feb. 19 – TBA

Mar. 19 – TBA

Musum on the Boyne

250 Fletcher Crescent. Alliston
Call 435-0167

Saturdays for Kids - pre-register:

Jan. 15 – Winter in the Cabin

Feb. 19 – Yummy and Sticky Sweet

Mar. 14-18 – March Break Day Camp

Mar. 19 – Let's Hit the Bunny Trail

For adults:

Feb. 17 – Tea and Tales – Antique
Cameras and Historic New Tec photos

Feb. 19 – Heritage Day Winterfest

**Orillia Museum of Art and History –
contact Ross Wallace**

Meet at St. Paul's United Church, Peter
St. and Coldwater Rd., Orillia – 7:30 p.m.

Jan. 19 – Dick Johnston –
Sir Harry Oakes

Feb. 16 – Bruce McRae – Sir Sam Steele

Mar. 16 – Janice Reinhard –
Women's Institute

Penetanguishene Centennial Museum and Archives

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

Nov. 20-Jan. 20 – Listen to the
Night: Bats of Ontario

Feb. 17-20 – Southern Georgian Bay
Quilters Guild

Mar. 1-Apr. 30 – Passages to
Freedom: Secrets of the
Underground Railroad

Tecumseth & West Gwillimbury Historical Society – contact Helen Yielding

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

Call 905-775-7144 or 905-936-3659

Jan. 15 – Annual Show and Tell

Feb. 21 – Pat and Gerry Eagan –
The Eagan Stories

Mar. 21 – TBA

The Andrew Hunter Prize 2005

The Andrew Hunter Prize is awarded annually for the best essay on the history of Simcoe County, Ontario, written in a course by an undergraduate student in any university. In this second year of the competition, we look forward to receiving many worthy entries.



Andrew Hunter 1863 - 1940

Conditions: Entries must be undergraduate essays between 3000 and 5000 words in length on some aspect of the history of Simcoe County, Ontario, written in English or in French. The author must be a part-time or a full-time undergraduate student in a degree program at an accredited university or college. The essay must have been written to meet the requirement of an undergraduate credit course during the 2004-2005 academic year.

Submissions: Entries shall be submitted no later than March 31, 2005 and will not be returned to the contestants. Essays must be typed in Times New Roman 12 point font, double spaced, and should not bear the instructor's comments or grade. Two copies must be provided. A cover sheet must list the author's name, address, phone number, status, school affiliation and department, and the name of the instructor for whom the paper was written.

Entries should be sent to:

The Correspondence Secretary
Simcoe County Historical Association
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 in early May 2005 with the presentation of the prizes to be made at the Annual General Meeting.

Prize: There will be two prizes awarded, one for \$750 and one for \$250, in Canadian funds. 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 award a prize. For more information: <http://www.simcoecountyhistory.ca>