

NEWS and *views*

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Simcoe County Historical Association

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Contact the editor, Jill Hynes at news@simcoecountyhistory.ca

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

SCHA Member Survey

The executive of the SCHA has prepared a short online survey with pertinent questions and to obtain some feedback. We thank you for participating in this survey and for your membership in the SCHA. The answers you provide will help guide us in planning exciting new directions for the SCHA's activities and membership. Your continued support is what makes this organization and all we do possible.

Please access the survey by clicking this link or by typing the link address into your browser search bar.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FLD3L79>



Mary Harris of the Barrie Historical Archive receives a Barrie Heritage Award for her contributions as a local historian, writer and story teller of Barrie and Simcoe County. Mary and the Barrie Historical Archive are currently developing historical podcasts which will be released in 2020.

Simcoe County Historical Association Executive

Ted Duncan, President	tedcansher@sympatico.ca	705-326-9809
Mark Fisher, Vice President	mwfisher2@hotmail.com	705-728-3825
Donna Wice, Secretary	mdwice@sympatico.ca	705-436-2578
Deb Exel, Interim Treasurer	deb@simcoecountyhistory.ca	

For membership information, contact:

John Merritt membership@simcoecountyhistory.ca 705-896-5562

Save the Date! March 17, 2020 is our Annual General Meeting

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



President's Report by Ted Duncan

Our last *News and Views* helped to connect people with an interest in history in our County.

I spoke at a Tiny Township Heritage Meeting in Balm Beach on October 22. This was a constructive meeting, allowing me to find out about the interesting things they are doing and for me to talk about what we at SCHA are looking at doing. There is no society or association in that township, but they are one of our members.

The SCHA presented the Beattie Farm and Distillery our Heritage Business Award in recognition of their decades of service to the development of Simcoe County on October 5. The presentation took place at the Beattie Farm distillery just outside Alliston. More than 70 people, including family and friends, were there. The County and the Town of New Tecumseth were represented by the Mayor of the Town, Rick Milne. He spoke of the long service that the Beattie family has provided to the people of the area over many years: a well-deserved family business in the County to be honoured by our recognition Award. On October 23, the CTV station did a segment on the presentation to the Beattie family.

Huronian Woodlands Association held their AGM in Elmvale on November 9. I went to the meeting to hear Cathy Walton speak about her new book *Vanishing Barns* in Vesperia-Springwater. I took the opportunity to talk about SCHA and what we are doing and make connections with a number of people there who are interested in history.

SCHA, in partnership with the

Barrie Legion, sponsored speaker Evelyn Ross of Orillia at the Legion November 13. She told the story of her parents' escape from Nazi occupied Holland. Leaving in 1942, it took two years for them to reach North America. Evelyn's mother kept a diary of the journey, but left the names of people and places out in case they were caught by the Nazis. After reaching Canada, she completed it from memory. It was a very touching story with much of it told in her mother's words by Evelyn as she read from her mother's diary. It was a poignant reminder of why we sent young men and women to fight the Nazis in WWII and why we honour their service every year on November 11.

I took part in three meetings of the Truth & Reconciliation Circle in Orillia this fall. We are discussing how the indigenous community and the wider general community can interact and work better together now and in the future despite the past.

We are hoping to bring more young people into the Circle. It's not going to be easy, but we all need to keep talking and be of good will.

Our County Board of Directors continues to work updating SCHA Policies and Constitution. We are looking at becoming more involved with the County Heritage Fair hosted by the Simcoe County Museum in the spring. SCHA has been involved with the recording of our history through the written word in the past, and so we are looking at promoting history writing in our high schools.

Special thanks to Donna Wice and Deb Crawford for doing a great job organizing the Beattie Presentation. Dedicated Board members Deb Exel, Mark Fisher, Jan Blommaert and John Merritt continue to work hard for History in our County. We really appreciate the work of Jill Hynes who publishes our *News and Views* Newsletter. Thanks to All!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you and all your Families!



Have you noticed burn marks like this on a barn beam you know? It indicates that the beam was in a fire, and it is likely from a salvaged tree that was in a forest fire. There were many such fires as the forests were cleared in the 1800s for farms. Might indicate an early barn in the County's development.

Wilson's Hill Research Request

Soon after the Wilson's Hill Cemetery article appeared in the fall edition of *News and Views*, descendants of James and/or his wife Mary Wilson visited the Cemetery. On October 11, in the Visitors Book, they wrote that the mother had collected family history. Unfortunately there was no contact information, but the names in the

book were Tim and Jackie Hammond.

Our local historians have been looking for this information for years. If you are this descendent or know them, could you please contact Tracey at Wilson'sHillGuardians@gmail.com or Janine at 905-936-6548 if you are interested in sharing Wilson family details.

These would be added to the Wilson's Hill Cemetery file which is being compiled by Tracey, one of the Cemetery Guardians, in conjunction with our restoration project.

Janine Harris-Wheatley, President, Tecumseth and West Gwillimbury Historical Society

2020 Membership - renew by March 31, 2020

Membership in the Simcoe County Historical Association is open to everyone with a love of history. For those that enjoy hearing about the heritage of Simcoe County, to connect with others of similar interests and support historical education and preservation projects in our area, then membership in the SCHA is for you!

The annual fee is \$20 for individuals or organizations. The Simcoe County Historical Association offers:

Speaker Series Presentations, offered 4 times a year, by leading historians who are knowledgeable and passionate about our fascinating past.

These events provide a great opportunity to discover more about the history you love and socialize with other members.

News and Views newsletter A quarterly publication with engaging historical articles and features. Every edition also includes information about heritage events and a directory of our partner associations.

Invitations and notifications of special events and happenings to keep you informed of association activities and historical projects in Simcoe County and beyond.

Voting privileges at our Annual General Meeting.

Email this completed [form](#) to our [membership](#) chair and send your payment via PayPal to this [address](#).

Or mail the completed [form](#) along with your cheque, to

Membership Chair
Simcoe County Historical Association
P.O. Box 144
Barrie, ON L4M 4S9

We look forward to seeing you in 2020! Thank you for your support!

Simcoe County Museum Events

Winter Break Activities

Saturday, December 21 to Sunday, January 5, 2020

Everyone loves a special occasion — be it India's Diwali, the New Year in China, the Jewish celebration Hanukkah, Toonik Tyme in Iqaluit or Canada Day — what better way to appreciate the diversity of celebrations in Canada than through Kids Celebrate!, a new travelling exhibition from the Canadian Museum of History.

Engage in hands-on activities, try new games, make crafts, and take on new roles all while exploring the many different celebrations in Canada.

Stay tuned to the Events page on our website for details. <https://museum.simcoe.ca/programs/upcoming-events>

Can't make it this Winter Break? That's okay you can come and visit this travelling exhibit before it leaves on February 23, 2020.

Winter Break Day Camp

Join us for one or all of our exciting themes! Day camps run from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and are suitable for children 6 to 12 years old. Camps fill up quickly, so register early to avoid disappointment. For more information or registration visit our website.

Christmas is Coming - December 23rd, 2019

Gear up for Christmas by helping us solve the mystery of the gingerbread man, getting crafty, and channeling your inner elf.

Whimsical Winter - January 2nd, 2020
After the holiday rush it's time to get outside, strap on some snowshoes and enjoy everything winter has to offer.

Winter Sports - January 3th, 2020
Calling all sports enthusiasts! Come try your hand at mini luge, improve your reflexes, and complete the winter relay challenge.

Watch out for:

Museum Skate Trail

This winter, come and enjoy the Museum Skate Trail. Glide along a more than one kilometer long trail that winds its way through our heritage buildings, displays of historical equipment, and silent, snow-bound forests. Skate the trail by day on weekends or by lamplight on select weekday evenings. Trail availability will depend on the weather. Stay tuned to our website, Facebook and Twitter for details.



County of Simcoe announces new historic lookout by John Merritt

In October, the County of Simcoe announced that it has begun revitalizing a former landfill site on George Johnston Road in Springwater.

The site, now named Wiidookdaadiwin (an Ojibway word meaning “working together and helping one another”), will become a regional heritage attraction that features a historic lookout with vistas stretching from Collingwood to Mount St. Louis Moonstone. The historically significant Minesing Wetlands, Fort Willow historic site, and Nine Mile Portage route will also be visible.

Wiidookdaadiwin will also become the new home of a bronze sculpture of the same name, created by renowned local sculptor Marlene Hilton Moore and financed in part by Heritage Canada. The sculpture portrays a First Nations man and a European traveler pausing together mid-portage. The First Nations man shields his eyes to look into the distance while the European man balances a birch bark canoe on his shoulders. The sculpture is currently on display in front of the Simcoe County Museum but will be well suited in its new home, overlooking the historic transportation route linking the upper



and lower Great Lakes via Lake Simcoe, the Nine Mile Portage, and the Nottawasaga River.

The County has been working on making this project a reality for the past several years, in collaboration with Friends of Wiidookdaadiwin (formerly known as the Huronia Lookout Committee) and with financial support from the Tri-Council First Nations, the Township of

Springwater, the Rotary Club, and private donors.

The site is expected to be open to the public sometime next year. To learn more about the project or to sponsor or donate to it, visit www.wiidookdaadiwin.org.

OHS now accepting nominations for 2019 Heritage Awards

by John Merritt

The Ontario Historical Society is currently accepting nominations for its Honours and Awards Program for 2019.

The program was created in 1967 to honour individuals and organizations who have made significant contributions to the preservation and promotion of the heritage of the province. Through the annual awards, the OHS also hopes to increase public awareness of Ontario’s history and the people who work to preserve and promote it.

The program currently offers fourteen different awards – seven

for books or articles and seven for outstanding achievement by individuals or organizations.

All recipients of these awards will be publicized by the OHS and will receive a framed certificate and a citation acknowledging their contribution to the Ontario heritage community.

Anyone is welcome in participate in the OHS Awards program by submitting a nomination. Self-nominations are acceptable, with some restrictions. Nominees can include volunteers, professionals, non-profit groups, businesses or corporations.

To submit a nomination, complete a nomination form and provide the supporting materials required for the relevant award. Nominations can be submitted electronically or by mail.

For more information on the different awards and to get a copy of the nomination form, go to <https://ontariohistoricalsociety.ca/honours-awards>.



Policy meant to utilize surplus farm houses has unintended consequences for heritage barns by John Merritt

Ontario Barn Preservation wants to know what your municipality does with surplus farm dwellings.

Surplus farm dwelling severance is a planning policy that was enacted several years ago to address an old policy that allowed farmers to expand their farmland by purchasing former farms and letting the old farmhouses fall into ruin rather than bother with renting them out.

The province introduced the surplus farm dwelling policy to allow these unused farm houses to be severed from the rest of the property and rezoned as residential. Since the policy was first enacted three years ago, these small severed lots have appeared all over rural Ontario.

However, this policy which seeks to prevent old farm houses from going to waste comes with a negative side-effect: farm

buildings on either the newly severed lot or in the agricultural land around it must be demolished in order to create a buffer between the new residential property and farming activity on the lands surrounding it. Due to this, the new policy has decimated the stock of heritage barns in many parts of the province.

Recognizing this negative effect of the severance policy, many municipalities have begun reviewing it. Ontario Barn Preservation, a not-for-profit group dedicated to preserving and promoting Ontario's heritage barns, is taking this opportunity to convince municipalities of the value of preserving heritage farm buildings. The Association argues that due to their age, old heritage barns are unlikely to be used by their new owners on the large farms and would be more beneficial to be included in the severed residential lots, whose

residents would be more inclined to use and preserve the buildings. The Association also argues that the rezoning designation should be changed to allow the farm buildings on and around newly severed lots to remain standing.

The Ontario Barns Association encourages readers of this article to speak to their local government and find out what the policy is in your area regarding surplus farm dwelling severances. Then, share your local policy with Ontario Barns, and maybe it will help them discover alternative policies that they pass on to other municipalities across Ontario to address this issue and preserve more of our heritage barns.

To learn more, visit <https://www.ontariobarnpreservation.com/2019/11/06/surplus-farm-dwelling-severance/>

Call for Submissions: Mulcahy Publishing Initiative

The Orillia Museum of Art and History is currently accepting submissions for the Mulcahy Publishing Initiative.

Launched in 2018, the Initiative is named in honour of the Mulcahy family, who have been active members of the Orillia community for generations. In recognition of their generous and long-time support of OMAH as the cultural and heritage hub of the Orillia area, the Mulcahy Publishing Initiative seeks to support local writers and add to public knowledge of local history by facilitating the publication of one new local history book per year.

Each year, OMAH will accept

proposals for books about or involving the history of this area. Submissions will then be evaluated and one of the submissions may be selected for publication. The author of the selected book will receive help from OMAH staff and volunteers in preparing the book for publication, and OMAH will pay the costs of printing a limited run of the book, as well as distributing and promoting the book and hosting a book launch.

Eligible books for the Initiative include not only non-fiction but also historical fiction, children's books, and art and poetry collections with a historical theme. To

be eligible for this program, books must also be set in what are now the City of Orillia, the Townships of Severn, Ramara, and Oro-Medonte, and/or Chippewas of Rama First Nation.

The deadline for submitting your book proposal is January 15, 2020.

Those interested in submitting work to this Initiative or are otherwise interested in getting involved, see details on OMAH's website.

Guidelines and frequently asked questions are available here: <https://www.orilliamuseum.org/ode/1160>

OMAH's Annual Sir John A. Dinner

by Mary Ann Grant

It's almost here! The annual Sir John A. Macdonald Dinner - A celebration of Canada is being held on Saturday Jan. 11, 2020 at Hawk Ridge. In its 22nd year, the dinner is an important fundraiser for the Orillia Museum of Art & History (OMAH). The proceeds from the dinner and contributions from our generous sponsors support OMAH, a hub of culture and heritage for Orillia, the surrounding townships and Chippewas of Rama First Nation.



This year we are pleased to have a guest speaker with local roots, Dr. Kevin Kee, Dean of Arts at the University of Ottawa. Dr. Kee grew up in Orillia, attended primary school and Park St. Collegiate Institute. He majored in History as an undergraduate at Queen's where he also obtained his Ph.D. in 1999.

From early in his career as Project Director at the National Film Board of Canada, as a Director of Undergraduate Programs at McGill, and as a professor and Canada Research Chair in Digital Humanities at Brock University, Dr. Kee has spearheaded the role of computers as an analytical and expressive tool in teaching and learning history through interactive media, simulations and computer games. Appointed Dean of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Ottawa in 2015, he continues to focus on ways in which we create knowledge.

In his talk "Building Knowledge and Rebuilding Trust in the Digital Age", Dr. Kee will outline new methods, including creative ways of probing our past, that Canada's leading thinkers and

2020 SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD DINNER

A CELEBRATION OF CANADA



KEVIN KEE


SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD

Dr. Kevin Kee, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, University of Ottawa, noted digital humanist, author and historian, is guest speaker at the 22nd Annual Sir John A. Macdonald Dinner. In his talk *Building Knowledge and Rebuilding Trust in the Digital Age*, Dr. Kee will outline new methods — including creative ways of probing our past — that Canada's leading thinkers and historians are using to ensure openness and earn trust.

Saturday, January 11, 2020
Hawk Ridge Golf and Country Club, 1151 Hurlwood Lane, Severn
Cocktails 5:30 p.m. Dinner 6:30 p.m.


Celebrate this great country and enjoy good food and fellowship

TICKETS \$65 EACH, AVAILABLE AT OMAH STARTING NOV. 21
CASH, CHEQUES, DEBIT AND CREDIT CARDS ARE ACCEPTED



ORILLIA MUSEUM OF ART & HISTORY

30 Peter St. S., Orillia, L3V 5A9. Call 705 326 2159 or email inspire@orilliamuseum.org



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historians are using to ensure openness and earn trust.

Tickets are available at the OMAH front desk. Cash, cheque, debit and credit cards are accepted. Don't delay, because last year tickets sold out before Christmas. Please call OMAH at

(705) 326-2159 to ensure availability or to be added to the waiting list. Don't miss this much anticipated cultural and social event. Join us to hear an excellent speaker, enjoy a delicious meal and good fellowship.

You are invited to submit photos and articles regarding your historical happenings in Simcoe County. Please email to Jill Hynes, Editor at news@simcoecountyhistory.ca

History of the Auld Kirk

In the early part of 1819, the following men from the Red River District, with their wives and children, making a total of 140, arrived in what is known as the Scotch Settlement today:

Sutherland (6) Donald, Hamon, William, Robert, James and Angus

McKay (4) James, Roderick, Robert and Donald

George Ross

Matheson (2) Red John and Black John

Arthur Campbell

McBeth (2) Andrew and Charles
George Bannerman

In the latter part of 1819 came three Irishmen, the Wallaces, Armstrongs and Alegos, who came from the south and crossed the Holland River. In 1821, John Faris, an Irishman, settled on the farm where the Auld Kirk stands. A little later came the Grants, McCauslands, Frasers, McLellands, Watsons, Murrays, Gunns and many more families.

In 1822, land was obtained from John Faris for a graveyard which became the final resting place of the Selkirk Settlers. In 1823, a log church was built which also served as a school house during the winter months. The first teacher was William Moffat, and John Carruthers started teaching in 1826. The teacher was paid directly by the parents of the pupils until the School Act of 1841. The Scotch Settlement school began in 1827 and No. 3 in 1840. This log building which was moved to site No. 3 school was both the first school and first

church in Simcoe County and also the first Presbyterian Church north of Richmond Hill.

The congregation was organized by James Harris of York, now Toronto, on January 6, 1822. James Sutherland was authorized by the Church of Scotland to conduct baptisms and marriages until there was a settled minister. Services were held in the church four times a year by Rev. William Jenkins who made the trip from Richmond Hill on horseback. On January 24, 1824, there were 14 members, and Adam Goodfellow, William Sutherland, Alex Bannerman and John Matheson were the first elders. A frame church was built in 1827 owing to the large congregation. In 1831, Rev. Peter Ferguson became the first settled pastor. In 1832, they decided to send for a minister to the Established Church of Scotland with the result a new church was formed at Bond Head.

The Auld Kirk carried on under Rev. William McKillican from 1832-42, then under Rev. McMurchy from 1842-44. However, the congregation was again divided in 1844, several families joining the Free Church which is the present Scotch Settlement Church. Innisfil broke away at this time also and built its own church at Cherry Creek. The two became sister churches. The Rev. Ross died and Rev. McKee filled the appointment until 1871. After 1871, there was no settled minister and only occasional services were held.

In 1869, the present church was erected at a cost of \$1,000 but the

congregation kept dwindling until the settlement's little church was finally closed in 1885. The small congregation upheld the standards of the Scotch Presbyterian Church to the end. They never had an organ in the church; just a precentor with a tuning fork. Sermons were preached in Gaelic and interpreted by John Matheson, a schoolmaster who conducted the Sabbath School.

In 1912, a roof was put on the church. In 1922, the Centennial was held in the Bradford Rink. In 1929, shutters were put on the church and doors repaired. A fence was built around the cemetery and the shed taken down. Later the church became very badly in need of repair, and the cemetery became overgrown with bush. In 1953, a restoration of the church was started on the cemetery. In 1958, restoration of the church was started, and a new roof was put on, windows were again put back in the church, plastering done, new steps were built and floor jacked up. The Church was painted inside and out. In 1967, a Centennial Service was held which was largely attended by people who had been away for years.

Two plaques were dedicated in 1958. One was unveiled by Henry McKay in honour of his uncle and aunt, Mr. & Mrs. James McKay. The other was erected by the Ontario Government and was unveiled by Mrs. Angus Campbell in honour of the Selkirk Settlers.

Coming Events of Member Societies

Alliston Historical Society
[Contact](#) Jackie Baillie 705-435-5626
Meet at Museum on the Boyne
2 p.m. 2nd Wednesday Feb-
June, Oct, Nov

[Barrie Historical Archive](#)
Contact [Deb Exel](#)

Bradford/West Gwillimbury
Historical Association
Contact [Jan Blommaert](#), 705-
456-1870
Meet at BWG Library 2 p.m.
4th Saturday Jan-May, Sept-
Nov

[Coldwater Canadian Heritage
Museum](#)

[Collingwood District Historical
Society](#)
Contact Joan Miller 705-445-
1119
Meet at Leisure Time Club 7
p.m.

[Collingwood Museum](#)
Contact Susan Warner 705-445-
-4811

Essa Historical Society
Contact [Olive Lee](#) 705-458-
9971
Meet at Thornton Library 1:30
p.m. 4th Saturday Jan-June,
Sept-Nov

[Friends of Fort Willow](#)

Heritage Barrie
Feb. 17-23 Heritage Week

[Huronian Museum/Huron
Ouendat Village](#)
Contact : 705-526-2844

[Innisfil Historical Society](#)
[Contact](#) Donna Wice
Meet at Knock Comm Centre 2
p.m.
Jan. 18 *Rosemary Edwards*
Edwards Farm Store
Feb. 15 *Nantyr Students* Trip
to Juno
Mar. 21 Pigeon Club of
Innisfil

[Museum on the Boyne](#)
[Contact](#) Katie Huddleston 705-
435-4030 x. 1802

[Orillia Museum of Art and
History](#)
Contact 705-326-2159

Jan. 11 **Sir John A.
Macdonald Dinner** *Dr. Kevin
Kee* Building Knowledge and
Rebuilding Trust in the Digital
Age - see page
Jan. 15 *Dr. Harry Hall* My
Life as a Doctor in Orillia and
area
Feb. 19 *John Merritt* Black
Settlement of Oro Township
Mar. 18 *Orillia Silver Band* A
Celebration of 70 Years of
Service

**Orillia Museum of Art and
History**
orilliamuseum.org 705-326-
2159
To Jan. 11 Ingrid Mayrhofer:
After Krieghoff
To Jan. 26 **Industrial** Legacy:
A History of Dorr-Oliver-Long
Limited

To Jan. 22 The Carmichael
Canadian Landscape Exhibition
Jan. 25-Apr. 11 *She Shoots...*
She Scores
Feb. 1-Apr. 11 *At Risk:*
Tracey Lawko

[Penetanguishene Centennial
Museum and Archives](#)
Contact Nicole Jackson 705-
549-2150
Feb. 15 Winterama Craft
Show 10-3

[Ramara Historical Society](#)
Contact [Cathy Westcott](#)
Meet at Udney Community
Centre 7 p.m. 3rd Thurs Jan-
June, Sept, Dec
Jan. 16 Open Show and Tell
Feb. 20 *David Town* Taming
Orillia's Red Light District
Mar. 19 *Colleen Clark*
Vintage Embroidery - Show
and Tell

[Simcoe County Branch,
Genealogical Society](#)
Contact Nancy Leveque
Meet at Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-Day Saints 2 p.m.
Feb. 1 *Nancy Leveque*
Creating your Family History
book online

[Simcoe County Museum](#)
Contact Kelly Swift-Jones 705-
728-3721
Feb. 5 Seniors' Socials:
Mystery and History of the
Avro Arrow
Mar. 4 Seniors' Socials:
Nature Barrie
Also see page 3

[Stayner Heritage Society](#)
Contact Tom Scholte 705-517-
5171

Tecumseth & West
Gwillimbury Historical Society
Contact [Janine Harris-Wheatley](#)
905-936-6549
Meet at TecWeGwill Hall 7:30
3rd Monday Jan-May, Sept-
Nov