

NEWS views

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Simcoe County Historical Association

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

2020 Membership - renew by March 31

Membership in the Simcoe County Historical Association is open to everyone with a love of history. The annual fee is \$20 for individuals or organizations. The Simcoe County Historical Association offers:

Speaker Series Presentations by leading historians who are knowledgeable and passionate about our fascinating past. **News and Views newsletter** A quarterly publication with engaging historical articles and features.

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

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, SCHA
P.O. Box 144, Barrie, ON L4M

CANCELLED DUE TO COVID-19
Tuesday, March 17, 7:30 p.m. at Huronia Room, Barrie City Hall
AGM: Business Meeting and Bylaw Ratification
"County Calamities" as told by members of our local organizations



Simcoe County Historical Association Executive

Ted Duncan, President	president@simcoecountyhistory.ca	705-326-9809
Mark Fisher, Vice President	mwfisher2@hotmail.com	705-728-3825
Donna Wice, Secretary	mdwice@sympatico.ca	705-436-2578
For membership information, contact:		
John Merritt	membership@simcoecountyhistory.ca	705-896-5562

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



President's Report by Ted Duncan

SCHA has been busy since our last report in December. Board members held a series of meetings to complete some projects that have been incomplete for sometime.

Deb Crawford worked on revamping and updating our Constitution and By-laws for the Board to vote on in preparation for presentation to members at our AGM March 17th. John Merritt has prepared a new Hunter Writing program for high school students to promote the writing of history in our County. He also prepared a plan for a presentation table for SCHA at the Simcoe County Museum Heritage Fair. Some of us are volunteering as judges at that fair in April. All people interested in history should attend the Fair. The kids do a great job. You would enjoy it. Deb Exel has been busy developing SCHA policy updates for the Community Partnerships process, for the SCHA Speaker Series, for the Newsletter process and the membership process. All have been approved by the Board. Also she arranged for business cards and name tags for Board members. Deb has been very

busy as well developing plans for our History Conference planned for November 21 at the Simcoe County Museum. More information will come out soon to outline how your group and interested individuals can get involved. It should be a time to share and learn from each other. Donna Wice has not been inactive either. She took a leave from us at SCHA for a couple of months to take the lead in Innisfil preparing another new book on their history. It is a big job and I hear that the book will be out soon if not already. We are looking forward to that. All members of our Board work hard in their home communities promoting and preserving our County's history. And thanks for that.

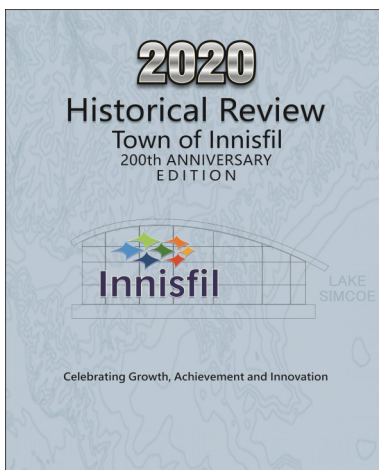
As for myself, I have helped with the above activities to bring them forward. We are a small Board and so we all have be part of the solution. I've attended meetings at the County on Grants and Agri-tourism. It is important that the SCHA meet with County people to make them aware of the needs of our history communities and how they can help us. We are hoping we can have support for our

Conference in the fall. Further to the Barn Photo Project we are promoting, I have developed a partnership with a teacher at Georgian College to have some of his students map the barn photos we have done in Ramara Township. I'm looking for this to be done across the County.

Lastly, I attended a meeting at Bradford West Gwillimbury Local History Society to speak on the SCHA past, present and future. My talk seemed to be well received. I showed digital slides of selected barns in Ramara as well. People from all over the County are interested in what we learned and are learning about barns. Afterward, there was a Q&A and sharing time about barns. There was a very interesting model of a round barn from Nova Scotia brought in for show and tell. Another result was that a volunteer, Janine Harris-Wheatly, stepped up develop a form to record speakers for a County wide Speakers Bureau we have been talking about for awhile. I would be interested and willing to visit your group to speak about SCHA.

It's Nearly Completed! by Donna Wice

A committee of 12 Innisfil historians have been hard at work since July of 2016 gathering stories of events, people, businesses, changes and growth. Under the editorial skills of former Business English teacher Gail Lucas, the fourth in a series of Innisfil Historical Reviews (1951, 1967, 1984) is shaping into a wonderful tribute to Innisfil's 200th Anniversary celebrations in 2020.



The book will be revealed to the public on July 9th at Innisfil Town Hall. Pricing and advance sale info to be released shortly. The excitement mounts!

Donna Wice, Project Coordinator

Remembering Josephine Hester Beynon Boos 1923-2020 by Donna Wice

The executive of Simcoe County Historical Association was saddened to hear of the passing of longtime member Josephine Boos. She was a valued resource and reference person for all things historical in Simcoe County.

Josephine was the daughter of Rev. Erdman Doane Beynon and granddaughter of Rev Robert Barnes Beynon, minister from 1904-1908 at Stroud Methodist Church later known as St James United.

During her teaching years, Josephine Boos was a valued English teacher and librarian at Barrie North Collegiate, and in her obituary former students paid tribute to her fine attributes.

Josephine owned Shenrone Enterprises Press and published several local history books. She was also involved in the reprinting of older books like the two on the Warnica family from 1886 and 1891 by Andrew Frederick Hunter. Her specific area of expertise revolved around assisting others with their research. In 1988 she published *Materials of Value to Researchers* and later *County of Simcoe Limited Bibliography*. She was instrumental in collating a master list of *Historical Plaques of Simcoe County*.

I never met Josephine, but I knew of her. I wished I'd known her many years ago because I felt that she

was "a family History Library" in her prime. Ross Wallace shared a paper which she wrote and I actually sent it to Ireland because it spoke of settlers from Queen's County who came to Simcoe County including the Thompsons and Coopers to whom we were related.

Susan (Black) Oleskiw

In recent months, Josephine's family contacted SCHA and generously gave President Ted a number of items of great historical interest.

Our sincere sympathy is extended to the family of Josephine Boos.

OMAH in March

OMAH Speakeasy Night
Friday, March 27
6 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Join the Roaring 2020s!

This fundraiser will feature five food stations, music, and activities inspired by the 1920s on every floor. Immerse yourself in an experience that will transport you to another century. Themed musicians will be playing in each area, including The Big Butter and The Egg Men. Explore the past with an exclusive pop up exhibition about Orillia in the 1920s. Get a VIP password that lets you in through the prisoners' entrance to chow down and sink into a sidecar while you do your time in the jail cells.

General Ticket = \$50
VIP Ticket = \$75

Orillia Silver Band
at the Orillia Opera House

March 22 at 2:30 p.m. and April 4 at 7:30 p.m.

Celebrating its 70th anniversary, the Orillia Silver Band has partnered with the Orillia Museum of Art & History and Mariposa Arts Theatre to produce a multi-media show, SHINE! - 70 Years of Orillia. The show will feature a series of stories and vignettes about Orillia's history over the last 70 years, a video montage of photos and film, and music performed by the Band and others spanning the period.

Advance sale of \$20 for adults before March 18, (then \$25), \$10 for students & children. Tickets are on sale at the Opera House Box Office.



Wickedness in the Woods - The Story of John Tryon by Mary Harris

For one hundred and two years, Canada hanged people. Murderers, rapists and those convicted of treason, including twelve women, took a walk to the gallows in cities all over this land. From 1860 until 1962, this was the law. The old Barrie Jail saw five men hanged and this is the tale of just one of them, John Tryon, the second prisoner to meet the hangman behind those limestone walls.

In the jail's long history, years or even several decades passed between executions, but for some reason, the first two hangings in Barrie both occurred in 1873. James Caruthers, a farmer from Ivy with an explosive temper made worse by drink, was found responsible for the sudden death of his wife and made the first climb up the wooden stairs at the Barrie Jail in June of that year. John Tryon would follow him in December.

The writing style in old newspaper articles is absolutely fascinating, in my opinion. The headlines and subtitles were always attention grabbers. **SENTENCED TO BE HANGED!** The reader could expect the story to reveal all sorts of juicy details – graphic details of injuries, witness testimony, idle gossip, speculation, hearsay, personal opinion and all sorts of curious tidbits that would never be seen today. The writer for the September 23rd, 1873 edition of the Northern Advance described the accused as “strongly-built shrewd looking man ... who betrayed considerable nervousness during the trial.” while his son, George Tryon, who was then co-accused, as a “pleasant looking young man ... certainly ‘the murderer’ was not marked in his countenance.”

The crime took place many miles from Barrie, near an isolated cabin on the shore of Commanda Lake in the Parry Sound District, where the

Tryons were trying to eke out a living by trading furs and provisions with the local aboriginal people. The two men partnered with another man named Francis Fisher, who was a German immigrant who had lived for a number of years in New York State before coming to Canada. Mr. Fisher was to arrange all the trading, keep the house and do all the cooking while the other men spent their time hunting. The three met in Collingwood in September of 1872 and sailed across Georgian Bay aboard the passenger steamer *Chicora* to reach the North Shore area where they intended to conduct their business.

On a cold and starry winter night, the partnership came to a sudden and horrific end when Francis Fisher was found dead several feet from the cabin. Robert McKee, a young man from a neighbouring cabin, would later testify in a Barrie courtroom that George Tryon came to his home and asked that he come quickly because he believed that “Fisher was killed and asked me to go and see.” Young McKee found the body of Fisher lying under several hundred pounds of deer meat that had been hanging from a pole stretched between two trees. It appeared that the dead man had been standing on a sled while attempting to cut a piece of meat for dinner with an ax, but the whole structure collapsed and killed him.

The next day, Robert McKee was sent to find some aboriginal men to help bury the body. They returned and buried Mr. Fisher. A few days later, McKee and the Tryons traveled to Parry Sound to report the death. It was not until early April that anyone came to the little shanty in the woods to investigate the death, but the cold weather had preserved the body of Fisher quite well, so a lot of telltale evidence still remained. Even as the science

of forensics was still in its infancy, it was quite easy for Dr. John E. White of Parry Sound to tell wounds made by falling meat and tree limbs from those made by an ax. John and George Tryon were arrested and charged with murder.

No witness saw the final altercation, or ever knew the three men to ever have any quarrels among them. The most damning evidence came from the hundreds of dollars, in American, Canadian and in gold, found on the men when arrested, when no person could ever recall them having money of their own previously. In the end, the verdict was guilty and the judge gave them the only sentence he could – death by hanging.

“I must sentence you as the law directs, which is, that you, John and George Tryon, be taken hence to the place whence you came, and from thence to the place of execution on the day of 16th December next, and there be hanged by the neck until dead, and may God have mercy on your souls.”

On September 22nd, three days after their conviction, John Tryon requested to see Rev. E. Morgan of Trinity Anglican Church. He then confessed to the minister that the murder was all his doing, and that George knew nothing about it. He also said that his motive was not about hate, and not about greed over Fisher's money, but a rather odd reason was given. He said that George's wife was due to give birth in Barrie any day, and that George was going to be leaving him behind to go to Barrie. In John Tryon's twisted thinking, Francis Fisher's ‘accidental’ death was somehow supposed to keep George from going to Barrie.

George Tryon was freed, and John Tryon kept his date with the hangman at the Barrie Jail.

In Memory of the Postcard by Billy Courtice

Wish you were here.

A simple sentiment that, at one time, was likely entirely overused. At one time, when distance was a real thing. When entering into someone's company, regardless of spatial separation, wasn't as easy as booking a cheap flight to any corner of the world. When our best friends, even from far-off places, weren't just a click away.

After all, there are very few instances today in which we *really wish* you were here. Between our Facebook timelines, Twitter feeds and Instagram stories, we know exactly what you're up to. We know how your parents are holding up, we know about the successes of your kids. Why the need to get together anyway?

But less than a century ago, before commercial flight took off, or even less than three decades ago, before personal computers found their way into the homes of just about *everyone*—we truly wished you were here. And we let you know on the back of a postcard, which you might have received a week, or even a month later.

Lithography changed the face of postcards dramatically before the turn of the 20th Century. The postcard, first emerging in Central Europe in the 1860s, was originally a business-focused medium, acting much like a business or appointment card. But soon, colourful, artistic renditions of notable landscapes, streetscapes, favourite cities and parks soon allowed us to show our recipients a snapshot of our lives at their most picturesque. Today, many of us publish and receive these postcards every day—without a conscious thought. No longer are we required to select a card, share our thoughts and best wishes, sign, seal, stamp and stroll to the post office box to send it away. Instead, we capture our lives at their most extraordinary—and their most mundane—and share these images with all our friends online.

Our most memorable moments—an impossibly perfect day at Minet's Point beach, the purchase of our first home, a 50th wedding anniversary—melt into the minutiae of otherwise forgettable days. There they are, sharing a spot on my cellphone



alongside Tuesday's lunch (a rather pedestrian turkey sub), or a blurry shot of the neighbour's pesky cat. And once they are launched from my device into the chaotic playground of social media, they are just as soon jettisoned from people's feeds to float in the vacuum of cyberspace, where they are immediately forgotten. Not the case with those old postcards though.

People really hang onto those. They meant something to us when we sent them, so they ought to mean something when we receive them. They offer a look at colours not found in historic black and white photography. They put a name to a place, and a date to a moment in time that was otherwise not captured in a photo. They reveal places in Barrie that were once special to its residents, long-since gone. They mean plenty to Barrie residents, too. We have proof of it, looking at the dozens shared with us that have until now have been preserved for decades in special boxes, cases and cabinets. Fortunately, many of these postcards have been donated and digitized for all to enjoy on the Barrie Historical Archive. See them [here](#).

And if you haven't joined us on the Barrie Historical Archive in a while: *We wish you were here*.

We also invite you to enjoy [weekly postcards](#) from Orillia!



Coming Events of Member Societies

[Allandale Neighbourhood Association](#)

Contact [Cathy Colepatch](#)
March 31st meeting cancelled.

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

Archives of Ontario Library
Contact [Frank Van Kalmthout](#)

[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

The Cookstown Community Development Team

www.CooktownON.ca Deb Crawford contact at 705 791 2051 or [Email](#)

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

Essa Public Library
[Contact](#)

[Friends of Fort Willow](#)

Contact [Bryan Wesson](#)

Heritage Barrie
Contact [Tomasz Wierzba](#)

[Historic Military Establishment of Upper Canada](#)

Contact [David Brunelle](#)

[Innisfil Historical Society](#)

[Contact](#) Donna Wice

Meet at Knock Comm Centre 2 p.m.
Mar. 21 Pigeon Club of Innisfil
Apr. 18 A panel of tradesmen sharing stories of changing times
May 16 *Leah Emms* Ontario Federation of Agriculture Rep for Simcoe County
June 20 Road trip to visit local sheep farms and antiques

Innisfil Public Library [Contact](#)

[Museum on the Boyne](#)

[Contact](#) Katie Huddleston 705-435-4030 x. 1802

[Orillia Museum of Art and History](#)

Contact 705-326-2159

Mar. 18 *Orillia Silver Band* A Celebration of 70 Years of Service
Apr. 15 *Christine Johnstone* Stories from Behind the Badge
May 5 **Carmichael Lecture** *Jim and Sue Waddington*

In the Footsteps of the Group of Seven

May 20 *Margaret Pomeroy* Quilting through the Years

To Apr. 11 She Shoots... She Scores

To Apr. 11 At Risk: Tracey Lawko

Oro-Medonte Heritage Committee
Contact [Cathy Keane](#)

[Penetanguishene Centennial Museum and Archives](#)

Contact Nicole Jackson 705-549-2150

[Ramara Historical Society](#)

Contact [Cathy Westcott](#)
Meet at Udney Community Centre 7 p.m. 3rd Thurs Jan-June, Sept, Dec

Mar. 19 *Colleen Clark* Vintage Embroidery - Show and Tell

Apr. 16 *Ted Duncan/Murray Mulvihill* Show & Tell Barn Memorabilia and Tools

May 21 Show & Tell Vintage Attire and Accessories

June 18 Picnic at St. Columbkille Church Grounds

July 25 Yesteryears Celebration

[Simcoe County Branch, Genealogical Society](#)

Contact Nancy Leveque
Meet at Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints 2 p.m.

Apr. 4 *Linda Corupe* Making her Presence Known, meeting at the Orillia Public Library

May 2 *Mike Clare* Spanish Flu

[Simcoe County Museum](#)

Contact Kelly Swift-Jones 705-728-3721

[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

Township of Essa

[Contact](#)

Township of Tiny

Contact [Pamela Zimmerman](#)