

NEWS and views

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Simcoe County Historical Association

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Visit our beautifully redesigned website

www.simcoecountyhistory.ca

Many thanks to Pat Elliott for her work rejuvenating this important tool



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

Ontario Heritage Trust Plaque Honouring T.P. Loblaw to be Unveiled on Saturday, September 20, 2008

The Ontario Heritage Trust, the Simcoe County Historical Association, Stevenson Farms, and the Essa Historical Society cordially invite you to attend the unveiling of a provincial plaque commemorating Theodore P. Loblaw on Saturday, September 20, 2008 at 11:00 a.m. at Stevenson Farms.

Who could imagine that a homework assignment could result in such festivities? SCHA member, and former Andrew Hunter Prize winner, Dave Osborne, was assigned T.P. Loblaw as the topic of his proposal to the OHT in a project for one of his university history courses. His scholarly result was forwarded to the Essa Historical Society who approached the OHT. The rest, as they say, is history.

on College Street with partner J. Milton Cork. Loblaw pioneered the concept of self-service grocery stores that provided all types of food products under one roof and opened the first Loblaw Groceteria in 1919. His merchandising methods ultimately changed the way that people could shop for food in Canada. He donated generously to the establishment of the Stevenson Memorial Hospital in Alliston and the Toronto Western Hospital and was a charter member of the Toronto Kiwanis Club. Loblaw is buried at Alliston Union Cemetery and was inducted into the Canadian Business Hall of Fame in 1999.

For a look at this beautiful venue, visit <http://www.stevensonfarms.com>.



T.P. Loblaw was born in Elmgrove, Ontario to James Loblaw and Isabella Stevenson.

Orphaned in his teens, he was raised by his Scottish-born

grandparents, William and Elizabeth Stevenson on their farm.

At age 17 he moved to Toronto with twenty dollars and a dream. In 1897, Loblaw married Isabella Adam and in 1900 purchased his first grocery store



Follow Hwy 89 west to the "T" intersection with County Road 15. Turn right (north) on County Road 15. Go north 4.3 kilometres. On the right hand side look for a big white house with a green water tower. Turn right at the private gated entrance with two large mounted copper maple leaves. Areas for parking will be visible from the laneway. See you there!

Annual General Meeting at Stevenson Farms

The venue put you in a historical frame of mind long before the meeting began. The 2008 Annual General Meeting took place at the beautiful Stevenson Farms in Essa.

We dined on roast pig and a fabulous dessert of ice cream, maple syrup and exotic barbequed bananas. Then we proceeded with our customary greetings, report presentations, and election. In case you didn't realize, we are now short a president. (The Board welcomes the opportunity to meet any candidates willing to consider the role.)

Our gracious host for the evening, Stephen Milne (at far right in photo), was also our speaker/tour guide. This multi-talented member of the SCHA splits his time between his career in filmmaking and his passion for the home of his ancestors, the Stevensons. The restoration project he and his wife Susanne began a decade ago is an impressive labour of love.

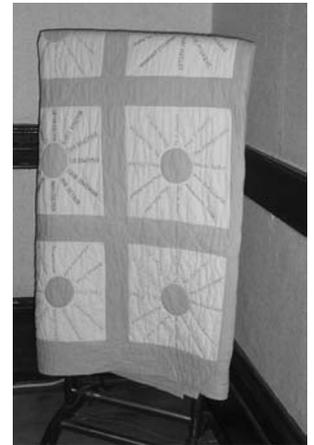


This beautiful property is best known as the home of T.P. Loblaw. Stephen shared numerous stories and memories, with a little help from some of the local attendees! His tour of the main areas of the house revealed the numerous transformations it has endured over the years, as well as the many original design features that have been preserved.

As well, the Milne's own collection of Loblaw and Stevenson

memorabilia enhances the ambiance of the home. Many tales hold some mystery, like the one about the quilt, (pictured below) which was crafted in Essa, but was "borrowed" for a number of years by the family of one of the officers stationed at the Farms during WWII. Eventually a community member recognized a number of the names stitched into the quilt while shopping at an antique sale in Southern Ontario. The quilt now has pride of place in one of the loveliest rooms in the Bed and Breakfast.

This was an A G M to remember. M a n y thanks to the Milnes for sharing t h e i r homestead, stories and hospitality.



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



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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 August 25, 2008

OMAH Works to Preserve Vintage Orillia Films

from *Orillia Today* article by Frank Matys, February 22, 2008 reproduced with permission

The black-and-white scenes unfold at a brisk clip, the people and places rushing past in a stream of images recorded on a hand-cranked movie camera more than 70 years ago.

Anita Miles, collections manager at the Orillia Museum of Art and History, can't keep from smiling.

"I'm not sure whether to take my jaw off the floor or leave it there," Miles said only half-jokingly. "It is absolutely fabulous stuff."

The vintage film is among dozens of 16-millimetre reels, shot by a local man between the late 1920s and early 1950s and donated to the downtown museum several years ago.

Only now are their contents fully coming to light, as staff sets in motion the process that will lead to their careful preservation.

The antique reels, nearly 50 in all, were given to the museum by the Couchiching Conservancy in 2003.

The non-profit group discovered the cinematic stash in a country home owned by the family of the late Lewis Grant, who purchased the rural property, now known as Grant's Woods, in 1909. The property was donated to the conservancy in 2002, and with it came the films.

The independently wealthy Grant, whose access to a movie camera was a rarity for the day, shot the majority of the films.

Each reel runs 10 to 15 minutes in length with the images flickering by in randomly collected snippets that offer a visual diary of Orillia as it once was.

We see men harvesting apples in the 1930s and children playing with firecrackers or shoveling snow. Elsewhere, a locomotive storms past the camera in a huff of steam.

Horses figure prominently, too. In one clip, the elegant animals are seen racing around a makeshift track on the icy surface of Lake Couchiching; in another, a horse-drawn wagon loaded with lumber glides along a city street blanketed with snow.

About half of the 48 reels bear some link to Orillia's past, and range from the everyday, children hamming it up for the camera or curious onlookers gathering to watch a house fire, to the comical with men in one-piece bathing suits preparing for a winter plunge in Lake Couchiching.

And there is Grant, hacking down a tree that will later appear in the family's livingroom, draped in Christmas decorations.

Downtown businesses that were long ago erased from the streetscape make appearances, too, among them Carter's Grill, the Princess Theatre and Liggett's drugstore.

Other films document Grant's travels abroad, including a trip to the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin, Germany.

The Sir Sam Steele Building, today home to the museum, is here, too, filmed inside and out when it still served as the local post office.

"This is a fabulous treasure," Miles said of the collection.

The already brittle filmstrips were transferred from their original metal canisters to ventilated containers to slow the deterioration that results from the buildup of gases produced by acetate.

The museum is now preparing to have them transferred to a digital format to ensure this rich collection of images is preserved for future generations, at a cost of about \$100 per reel.

The museum is inviting residents with an appreciation for the past to donate toward the preservation effort. Those who give \$100 will receive a DVD copy of one film. "If we don't transfer them now, we are going to lose them forever," Miles added. "I want to know that information is going to be around."

To see a sample of the films, visit <http://209.200.253.26/special/simcoe/videozone/index.php?id=164®ion=Simcoe%20County>

SCHA Spring Meetings

At the March meeting of the SCHA, local author Heather Kirk (at right) discussed her latest book, on the topic of the Whiteoaks and Jalna. Heather is a prolific writer whose wide-ranging literary abilities made for a stimulating evening. You can visit Heather's website at www.heatherkirk.ca.



In April, Ellen Millar of the Simcoe County Archives provided an overview of the history and future of the county's collections. You can now electronically search a portion of the holdings, over 17,000 records, by visiting <http://www.county.simcoe.on.ca/culture/information/archives/index.htm>. Enjoy!

Doors Open Ontario Events in Simcoe County

Doors Open Huronia

On June 7 and 8, Doors Open Huronia will welcome the public to the following locations.

All venues are open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more details see www.doorsopenontario.on.ca

Crossland General Store

2678 Crossland Road,
Springwater Township 728-4784

The store has served as a post office, gas station and general store since 1874.

Grand Homes of King Street

Tours begin at the Midland Curling Club, 472 King Street, Midland 526-4275

The stately homes along King Street have been recognized for their grand style and elegance.

Hillsdale Jail

Martin Street West, Hillsdale
(Springwater Township) 728-4784

The Hillsdale Jail, one of the smallest known jailhouses, measuring just 20 feet by 28 feet, was constructed by local Hillsdale builder William John Davenport in 1906.

Huron/Ouendat Village

545 Little Lake Road, Midland 526-4275

The Huron/Ouendat Village represents Huron life between 1500 and 1600. In May, 2007, a fire destroyed most of the village, but visitors are invited to view the rebuilding in progress to recover this internationally recognized attraction.

Port McNicoll Grain Elevator

At the end of Talbot Street, Port McNicoll (877) 678-7678

The CPR chose Port McNicoll as its Great Lakes port. In 1908 a deep-water channel was dredged, and in spring 1909 construction of the massive grain elevator commenced. Two expansions increased the elevator's capacity to 7 million bushels, making it reportedly the second-largest grain elevator in the world.

Pratt Estate

328 Fifth Street, Midland 526-4275

David Shear Pratt purchased this home shortly after the First World War, then added a number of large additions to the already palatial building.

Downtown Midland Murals Tour

Meet at 208 King Street, Midland 526-4275

The murals of Midland comprise Ontario's largest outdoor gallery.

Rumney Home

1831 Rumney Road, Township of Tay

In 1890, after 10 years of clearing land and building two barns, Matthew Rumney built the home his family and descendants have lived in ever since.

Tay Shore Trail

Year Built: railway 1875-79; trail 2007

The trail links the historic villages of Waubaushene, Victoria Harbour and Port McNicoll and passes by the Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre and Sainte-Marie among the Hurons

Victoria Harbour Range Light

283 William Street, Victoria Harbour

One of the last surviving range lights on the Great Lakes, this beacon sits at the crest of a hill in Victoria Harbour with a commanding view of Georgian Bay.

Doors Open Barrie

Doors Open Barrie takes place on Sunday, September 28. Pre-registration is required for free walking tours of the waterfront (11:00 a.m. & 2:00 p.m.), downtown (4:00 p.m.) and Union Cemetery (11:00 a.m. & 2:00 p.m.).

For details, please visit www.doorsopenbarrie.ca. Passports to the event, including maps, are available at the Southshore Centre at 205 Lakeshore Dr.

Barrie Arboretum and Barrie Metals Pavilion

Sunnidale Park (corner of Sunnidale and Cundles Roads) 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

The striking architecture of the pavilion, commemorating Barrie's Sesquicentennial, reflects the native and exotic trees of the arboretum. See over 13 acres of beautiful grounds. Interpretive panels tell the park's story from ancient island to present day.

Doors Open Barrie Information Centre

Southshore Centre, 205 Lakeshore Drive, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

The Southshore Centre incorporates a restored 1903 Grand Trunk Railway master mechanic's and stores building and a steam-powered crane. East of the building are the remains of a railway roundhouse, where steam locomotives were repaired.

Doors Open Barrie continued

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

47 Owen Street, Noon–4 p.m.

Barrie's earliest Presbyterians arrived in 1843, and by 1849 had formed a congregation. A building opened for worship in November 1850, but was soon outgrown. The present church at Owen and Worsley streets opened on February 25, 1883. The Casavant "Opus 2712" pipe organ arrived in 1962.

The Robert Simpson Brewing Company

107 Dunlop Street East, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

This brewery is named after a master brewer who was also Barrie's first mayor. The stunning brewhouse, overlooking Kempenfelt Bay, although modern, emulates classical Victorian style. Tour the brewery to learn about the art and history of brewing in Barrie.

Harbour View Inn

1 Berczy Street, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

This stately Gothic Revival residence, built in 1885 for John Forsythe, chief clerk in the Barrie post office, was pictured in the Toronto *Globe* newspaper in 1895. It wraps around the corner of Dunlop and Berczy Streets, offering a panoramic view of Kempenfelt Bay.

Meridian Planning Consultants Inc.

113 Collier Street, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

Built in the 1860s on one of Barrie's oldest streets, this former Gothic-Revival-style residence has pointed gables, a three-storey bay window and patterned masonry. It was once owned by F.E.P. Pepler, barrister and mayor, who tried unsuccessfully to have an electricity generating plant built to divert Kempenfelt Bay's waters to the Nottawasaga River.

Grey and Simcoe Foresters Regimental Museum

36 Mulcaster Street, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

The Mulcaster Street Armoury, built in 1888, is the ancestral home of the 35th Battalion Simcoe Foresters, now known as the Grey and Simcoe Foresters. The building now houses the Regimental Museum, which features a collection spanning from the late 1800s to the late 1900s – including photos, uniforms, medals and more.

MacLaren Art Centre

37 Mulcaster Street, Noon–4 p.m.

The MacLaren Art Centre combines the renovated 1917 Carnegie Library and a dynamic contemporary space designed by Siamak Hariri in 2001. It

houses a permanent collection of over 26,000 Canadian and international works.

Simcoe County Museum

1151 Highway 26 West, 1–4:30 p.m.

Visit the Simcoe County Museum and have fun experiencing history firsthand! Five climate-controlled galleries and 16 heritage and display buildings on 327 acres of forested parkland await you. Explore the natural and human history of the area, including a 1900 schoolhouse used in the filming of *Anne of Green Gables*.

Trinity Anglican Church

24 Collier Street, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

Trinity, the oldest Anglican parish in Barrie, built its first church on Berczy Street in 1835, but relocated to the present site in 1864. Seventy years later, lightning struck. The ensuing fire gutted the church's interior, but by year's end the building was fully restored to its present appearance, including the beautiful stained-glass windows.

Historica Fair 2008

The Simcoe County Historical Association was pleased to once again provide financial support for the annual history fair. See the full story on page 7 of this issue.

This year, the participating schools were as follows:

Admiral Collingwood Elementary School
Alliston Union Public School
Mountain View Elementary School
New Lowell Public School
Cookstown Public School
Ferndale Woods Elementary School

Maple Grove Public School
Baxter Central Public School
Shanty Bay Public School
W.C. Little Elementary School
Sunnybrae Public School
Worsley Elementary School
W.H. Day Elementary School
Innisfil Central Public School
West Bayfield Elementary School
Byng Public School
Tecumseth South Central Public School
Mnjikaning Kendasswi

Madison Dedora, a grade eight student from Innisfil Central wasn't stressed out by the judges' questions

Photo J. Mays



The SilverShoe Historical Society

by Jane Cooper-Wilson, Executive Director



THE SILVERSHOE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Presents
JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION
&
MEMORIAL CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

SATURDAY, JUNE 21, 2008

4:00 to 9:00 p.m.

at

BETHEL – UNION PIONEER CEMETERY
(Creemore Avenue & Concession 7, New Lowell, Ontario)

COMMEMORATING THE UNVEILING OF
THE
ROOTS OF FREEDOM GRANT PROJECT

Sponsored by

THE ONTARIO MINISTRY OF CIVILIZATION & IMMIGRATION

In Partnership With

THE TOWNSHIP OF CLEARVIEW

&

THE EMANCIPATION FESTIVAL COMMITTEE

SHARE AN ENRICHING
MULTICULTURAL EXPERIENCE!
GUEST SPEAKERS – MUSIC – DANCERS – EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS
FOOD VENDORS – 50/50 DRAW – SITE TOURS – AWARDS

EVERYONE WELCOME AT THIS FUNDRAISING EVENT!

SITE TOURS START @ 4:00 P.M. PROGRAM STARTS @ 7:00 P.M.

TecWeGwil Happenings

Victorian Gardens Usher in Spring

Spring came early for the members of the Tecumseth and West Gwillimbury Historical Society when Dennis Pollock, head gardener at Black Creek Pioneer Village, brought his programme, "Thoughts on Victorian Gardens," to the March meeting.

Pollock brought not only thoughts, but also plants, tools, clothing and a wide knowledge of planting and growing techniques practiced by our forebears. Plants, indoors and out, were a source of beauty, decoration and pleasure to new immigrants to this country. Seeds from home countries were lovingly tended and helped to soften the ugliness of some of the early homesteads and village streets. And, lest we moderns think our plant choices of flowers and vegetables are substantial, Dennis provided an example of an early seed

catalogue with a mind-boggling variety of seeds available to Victorian gardeners.

Our members can now green up our contemporary gardens with an old variety of zinnia seed that he provided for each of us. Small wonder that Dennis Pollock is one of our most popular speakers and his presentation is part of our 30th anniversary year celebration.

Beeton's History on View

The village of Beeton can boast of two civic boosters. In the 1950s it was Howard Galbraith, the CNR stationmaster and later, into the 21st century, it is Bert Platt. The Society members were the beneficiaries of the memories of these two men at their April meeting.

Back then Galbraith took great pleasure in filming everyday scenes

of his surroundings with his new 8mm camera, recording daily activities such as weather, train activity, main street happenings and church and social gatherings. His daughter, Olga Parsons, had his films converted to video thereby saving and sharing a wonderful record of small town life.

Bert Platt, long-time resident and author of a book of Beeton's history, interpreted and enlarged on some of the scenes from Howard's films and put into context this engaging portrait of a vital community in South Simcoe. He knew by name many of the people in the video, the store owners and the location of many buildings now gone. Bert's commentary added another dimension to the video's portrait of a beloved village.

Historica fair

by Jennett Mays

For Madison Dedora, choosing a topic for this year's Historica fair was easy. Her Dad used to make maple syrup, so the topic seemed like a natural choice.

Historica, an organization that promotes a better understanding of Canadian History, hosted a project fair at the Simcoe County Museum on April 30. Over 100 students in grades four to eight participated in the fair. Academic history students from Collingwood Collegiate Institute acted as judges for the fair, visiting each project and asking the students about their work.

Dedora found that the judging wasn't as stressful as it seemed. "You just have to say what you need to," said Dedora. "I knew most of my project so it was easy to just talk."

Not all the participants were as calm as Dedora though. Judge Michael Vandeputte said that getting the younger students to talk about their projects was not always easy.

"It's hard trying to get info out of them," he said, aware that the students may have been nervous talking to high school students. "It's a little difficult to not seem so big to them," he said.

His co-judge Adam Casswell was impressed with the quality of the work they saw.

"A lot of them put a lot of time and effort into the projects," Caswell said.

Kelley Swift Jones, the Education Director at the museum, and one of the organizers of the fair, said that the

key to a good project is the topic choice.

"They should do something that's interesting to them, that they want to learn more about," she said.

Students also got the chance to visit different workshops while the judges made their decisions. Workshops included a talk from Barrie's town crier, a visit with the OPP canine unit, and a chance to try their hand at paper marbling.

At the end of the day, awards were handed out, including the chance to attend the provincial Historica fair in Ottawa, with an all-expenses paid trip.

Five students from our county will be presenting their projects at the provincials in Ottawa June 11 to 15.

COMING

Alliston Historical Society –
contact Jackie Baillie 705-435-5626 or cknowles@rogers.com

Meet at Museum on the Boyne, Fletcher Cres., Alliston every 2nd Wednesday except July, Aug. & Dec. – 7:30 p.m.

Barrie Historical Association –
contact Val Brucker

Meet at Barrie City Hall – 7:30 p.m.
Sept. 28 – Doors Open Barrie – see pages 4-5

Fort Willow Improvement Group
contact Gord Hanson

Sept. 20 – Nine Mile Portage Walk-in Festival

Genealogical Society –
contact Claudia McArthur

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

June 7 – Tammy Tipler-Priolo – Four Staples of Ontario Genealogy

Sept. 6 – Mary Munnoch – Irish Research

Gwillim Group

June 8 – Unveiling of Lady Simcoe statue, Bradford Post Office
10 a.m.–1 p.m. Guest Lt. Gov. Onley

**Huroniam Museum Huron
Ouendat Village**

549 Little Lake Park Road, Midland – Call 526-2844
www.huroniamuseum.com

June 19 – Annual General Meeting

EVENTS

Innisfil Historical Society –
contact Ross Wallace

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

June 21 – Annual Mystery Tour, Brian Baker, 9:15 a.m.

Sept. 20 – Railroads with Jim Arnold, former Cookstown station master

Oct. 18 – Heritage Buildings of Innisfil with Janet Panting

Museum on the Boyne –
contact Rachelle Clayton

250 Fletcher Crescent in Riverdale Park, Alliston – Call 435-0167

Orillia Museum of Art and History monthly meeting

Meet at St. Paul's United Church, Peter St. and Coldwater Rd., Orillia every third Wednesday of the month September to May – 7:30 p.m.

Orillia Museum of Art and History 30 Peter Street South, Orillia – Call 326-2159

www.orilliamuseum.org

to **Aug. 3** – 3rd Annual ODAC and OMAH All-Ontario Open Juried Art Show

Penetanguishene Centennial Museum and Archives

13 Burke St. at Beck Blvd.
Call 549-2150
www.pencenmuseum.com

to **June 15** – ROM Star Lab

June 14 – Children's Festival – 11:00 a.m.–2:30 p.m.

June 28 – Canada Day at the Museum – 11 a.m.–6 p.m.

of our Member Societies

Simcoe County Museum

1151 Highway 26, Midhurst –
Call 728-3721

June 7-8 – Wheels and Tracks in Motion – 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

Stayner Heritage Day

July 5 – 12th Annual Celebration

Pancake Breakfast at Jubilee Presbyterian Church on Main St – 7:00–10:30 a.m.

Heritage parade on Main St – 11:00 a.m.

Shows in Station Park begin at 12:00 noon

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

June 8 – Heritage Train Trip and Picnic

**Visit our beautifully
redesigned website**

www.simcoecountyhistory.ca



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