



# Leeds & 1000 Islands Historical Society



**Phillip Kaiser at reins with Jessie the horse - November 1917**  
(See article on page #7)

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## CONDOLENCES

We regret to report the death, since our last Newsletter of:  
Eric Webster, Lloyd Knowles, Margaret Moorhead, Dale Gibson,  
Gerald Roney, Lawrence Edgley, Keith Burns and Richard Scharf.  
All were longtime members.  
To their families and friends, our deepest sympathy.

## Township Schools

Many images and documents regarding Township Schools can be found by searching through the Archives Website -- [ltiarchives.ca](http://ltiarchives.ca) -- where our volunteer Donnie Dory has pains takenly and methodically up loaded them. Also - see past issues of the L.T.I. Historical Society Newsletters.

**More information on Township Schools to come in  
the next newsletter issue #53**

## MEMBERSHIP FEES (Canadian Funds Please)

General (Family) - \$15.00    Association - \$20.00    Corporate - \$30.00

Our membership term is Sept. 1 to Aug. 31

Memberships available at any meeting or by cheque to:

**LTI HISTORICAL SOCIETY    Box 332 Lansdowne, Ont. K0E 1L0**

## NEWSLETTER

**As our newsletter binder was growing large, we have decided to split it into two.**

Back copies of our newsletters are available for \$2.50 each  
Copies 1 through 20 are now available in a three ring binder. Cost \$62.00  
Copies 21 through 40 - Cost \$62.00 - Binders with all copies 1-50 are still available. Ask for price.  
Due to the weight and high cost of postage, if these have to be mailed,  
postage will have to be added.  
Also available now is a binder with a coloured cover insert or the coloured cover insert alone.  
**Ask the Executive for prices.**

## Heritage Organization Development Grant

Once again the Historical Society was the recipient of the 2020-2021  
Heritage Organization Development Grant.

This grant will be used to cover the cost of preparation and distribution of our Newsletters.  
**The Society thanks the government of Ontario for its continued support.**



## **A Message from the President:**

*Oh, what a year we are having! When we held our last Annual General Meeting, no one could have predicted that the next one would need to be held online due to a GLOBAL PANDEMIC. We chose the Zoom platform as the easiest to use technology and the one available to most people. The agenda and the reports submitted for the AGM 2019 – 2020 can be found on our webpage (by Friday, December 11, 2020).*

*So many special activities have needed to be cancelled to keep us all safe!  
Until further notice, all in person activities are postponed.*

*But that does not mean that we were not working to fulfill our mandate. Working with Lansdowne and Area Organization for Revitalization, the Train Mural had a refresh which was completed by the original artist, David Sheridan. This mural faces almost directly south and therefore requires ongoing maintenance. Both organizations are budgeting for this maintenance in order to keep the Train Mural for as long as possible. We are not the only group whose murals have needed touch-ups. David was very busy this summer in Athens and other sites in Leeds County.*

*Ongoing research has been happening online and more recently, at the Archives in the former Escott Town Hall and at Springfield House. The Archives are open Thursday afternoons from 1 to 5 pm. and by appointment.*

**Please call ahead if further COVID restrictions have been applied.**

*As soon as, Covid-19 allows, we hope to have some very special activities for everyone to enjoy. In the meantime, please watch our Website as we gradually add new material. **Several more newsletters will be added.***

*At this time we need you to renew your membership, which will enable us to continue with our programs, research, and cataloguing donations from the community. How about giving a neighbour a gift subscription?*

*Until we can meet in person, thank you for your support.*

**Glenda Olivier, President**

## **The purposes of the Leeds and 1000 Islands Historical Society:**

- To promote an awareness of the past of Township of Leeds and the 1000 Islands and its importance in the development of Ontario,
- To preserve the past through a permanent collection of pictures and materials,
- To carry out research to compile authentic records of early buildings and properties,
- To provide an avenue through which this information can be made available to the community at large.





## The Big Move...

One of the most memorable and significant events of the year was the relocation of the Historical Society's collection of artifacts, by an intrepid team of socially distanced volunteers, from the Greenfield School to a new temporary home at the Municipal Building at 1 Jessie St. The Society thanks the Grier family for graciously providing Greenfield School as a museum for the past 19 years and thanks the Township for providing alternate temporary storage on short notice.



Dedicated Volunteer  
Connie Burns



Empty Greenfield School

## **Presentations from 2019...**

Prior to the appearance of Covid 19, the Historical Society had a very active slate of presentations by local experts on a wide variety of topics.



Councillor Gordon Ohlke  
Soldiers and Families in  
War and Peace  
September 2019



Marcus Latourneau,  
Renovations of a  
Lansdowne Heritage  
Building,  
October, 2019



Art Shaw and Jeff Earl,  
Update on Lyndhurst Dig,  
November 2019



## **Postcards from Mitchellville** - assembled by Pierre Mercier.

I recall, from the distant memories of my youth, having conflicting emotions during the annual Holiday drive to visit my relatives in Montreal. On the one hand there was the excitement of visiting and, of course, Santa, but on the other hand was the torture of being squeezed in the back seat of the car, surrounded by scenery-blocking parcels and luggage for what seemed like an eternity as we meandered through eastern Ontario along Highway 2. Had I been able to see out, I would have seen a very different scene than that which I see now driving along County Road 2. I would have seen almost innumerable hamlet after hamlet, each with its unique mix of amenities catering to the residents and intrepid voyagers, including my home, Mitchellville.

**Bill Boulton's wonderful book Village Streets and Country Lanes**

**LANSDOWNE Then & Now** is a charming and poignant inventory of local communities, some now virtually invisible.

Now the views have changed due to demolition, fires, development and, of course, the 401.

*For further reading on the history of roads in Ontario please consult  
**Footpaths to freeways: the story of Ontario's roads: Ontario's bicentennial  
1784-1984***

*by Sharon Bragnato and John Shragge, 1984.*

During the summer George Horton graciously put the Kaiser family in touch with the Archives and because of that we have been able to discover and record digitally treasure after treasure of hidden images and information of this small but once dynamic community, Mitchellville. Included in this trove is one particular treasure close to my heart that we will reveal near the end of the Newsletter. But first, let's start at the beginning.

### **The Mitchells:**

In keeping with the nature of postcards, these entries will be brief. A great deal of further information awaits you at the Archives. Also, where possible we've included references to further materials about the subjects.

Our note here about the Mitchells is just an overview of highlights of extensive research and writings by Ruth Chisamore in the Historical Society's Newsletter Number 6, 1996, and Alan Lindsay's article "Building the Bridge to Somewhere" in Thousand Island Life, November 13, 2010.

(Continued on Pg. #6)





(Continued from Pg. #5)

### **The Mitchells**

As Bill mentions in his book, Mitchellville got its name from the enterprising Mitchell family which arrived on the scene in 1822. The head of the family, Valentine, died enroute and was buried locally. The family carried on and established itself in farming, local business and politics and the arts.

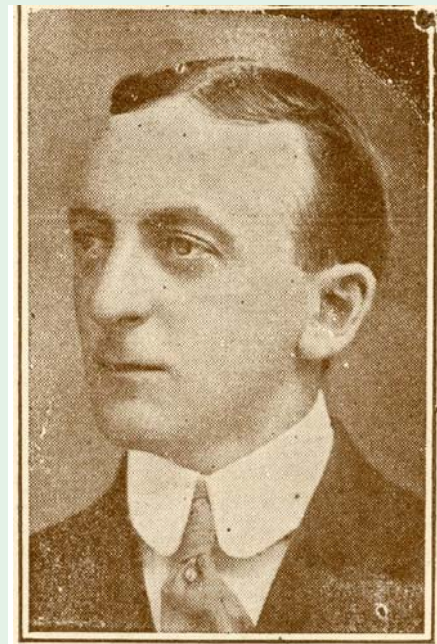
The contribution to the arts where primarily through Mary Mabel "Minnie" Mitchell, "... retired civil servant, and former teacher, Miss Mitchell was a writer, poet and book reviewer." (Obituary without citation, apparently from 1958)

In addition to the business of farming, the family was involved in an array of enterprises. Across the road from the school, Joshua Mitchell established a blacksmith's shop in the 1930's. The Mitchell Brothers ran a feed store in Lansdowne. The Mitchell House also hosted the local Post Office in the early 1900s.

One of the most prominent members of the family was John G. "Jack" Mitchell who at one time was personal secretary to Prime Minister Sir Robert Borden. "Most important is that John G. Mitchell was instrumental in having the International Bridge built at Ivy Lea. When two other sites were being considered, he addressed the House of Commons and successfully persuaded them to construct it in its present location. " (**Ruth Chisamore, Lansdowne Women's Institute**).



John G. Mitchell



(Continued on Pg. #7)



(Continued from Pg.#6)

### **The Mitchells**



The Mitchell House may have started as a humble farmhouse but it has gone through a number of augmentations and renovations over the years as described in Mrs. Chisamore's article for the Lansdowne Womens' Institute. It is certainly in contention for being one of the most prominent homes in the area. The current owners, the Grahams, have lovingly maintained their home now known as **Locust Grove**.

\*\*\*\*\*

### ***The Kaisers:***

Another prominent family was the Kaiser family whose contribution we can now document due to the trove of material provided by Wilhelmina Kaiser (nee Webster) and daughter Margaret.

Two newspaper articles in the trove report on the retirement in 1947 of William Kaiser who was one of the last area cheese makers. William lived a rather peripatetic life prior to his arrival in Mitchellville. According to a clipping with no attached citation, he was born on February 28, 1868 in York County. At age 17 he moved to Brussels, Ontario to study the cheese making trade. "After three years he went to Belgrave, Huron County...thence to Alexandria... The next three years were spent at Junetown and 12 years thereafter at Tilley. After his marriage in 1898 to Miss Alma E. Phillips of Escott, Mr. Kaiser sold the factory at Tilley and moved to Mitchellville."

(Continued on Pg. #9)





## T H E   B E A T T Y   D I A R I E S

**This part of the diary is continued on from our last issue  
#51 — 2019 (Page 11).**

### 1868

- July 1** David, Billie, Ellen and Jennet went to Mr. Darlings to go on the Boat to Brockville. George went afishing with them to the river..
- 7** Drew stones for A. Fullerton's cellar
- Aug. 18** Drew stones for the underpinnings of Thompsons shed. They are for Mr. McKay. Drew stone for Mitchells cellar. He has the job.
- Sept. 4** Drew 3 loads of stone for Mr. Mitchell's cellar.
- 7** Drew 1 load of sand for Westons & 120 bushel for Mitchell.
- 10** Drew stone for Mitchells cellar. Went to a meeting at the Schoolhouse for the purpose of trying to build a church at the Station. Offered to give a lot, stone and sand. There was over \$400. Subscribed.
- 17** Drew stone for Robert Mitchell. Hugh McKay helped to quarry.
- 28** Adam Turner died. I helped to lay him out.
- 30** Went to funeral of Adam Turner. The Rev. Mr. Smart preached the funeral. He was buried at Robinsons.
- Oct. 10** Helped Joseph Bradley to move his shop up to his house.
- 25** Went to Ebenezer Church to hear Rev. Mr. Auld preach.
- 27** I went to Dave Johnstons auction.
- 29** George helped Hugh McKay to quarry.
- 31** George helped Mr. McKay quarry. He is raising stone for the church.

## Junius Writes

During the 1860s an anonymous correspondent wrote almost weekly letters to the editor of the Brockville Recorder over the pseudonym JUNIUS. His letters written from Gananoque carried news of the village and the surrounding township as well as his opinions on matters of local interest.

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On February 27, Junius wrote at length about the injuries sustained by a boy named Sherby while working at the spring shop and the duty of factory owners to provide proper guards on machinery.

### **Gananoque, February 27, 1865**

*Some of our Leeds and Lansdowne boys who were going to Kingston with loads of produce in the night to be early in the market in the morning stopped at a Pittsburg Hotel on the road which was shut up for the night and could not arouse the landlord or he would not get up. The parties determined to go in for whiskey and beer pried up one of the windows and went in and unlocked the door and took from the bar what they pleased and left the house and went on. However, when they returned from Kingston they did not stop and pay for what they took and the landlord got out a warrant the next day and followed them hence. I hear they had to pay \$20 to settle the matter.*

*I am, sir, your ob't servant, JUNIUS*



(Continued from Pg. #7)

### **The Kaisers:**

When William was making cheese, the farmers would deliver the milk to the factory. According to William many factors were taken into consideration in the process of producing cheese for raw milk: "Cleanliness is still the chief factor in making good cheese, and with it must be combined the ability to "size up the milk" as it comes in and to treat it according to its specific condition. Temperature of the air, food of the cattle and distance of hauling all have their effect on the raw milk." "No mechanical process... but a highly skilled art."

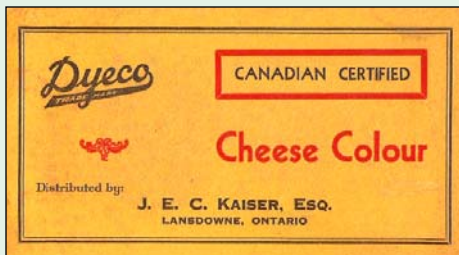
The Mitchellville Cheese Factory, store in the foreground, factory in middle and house in the rear.



Kaiser's dedication and ability paid off. William won a gold medal at a government sponsored exhibition in Gananoque in 1895 for coloured cheese.

He won a bronze medal for export cheese at the Chicago Pan-American Exhibition in 1893, while at the Buffalo World's Fair

his cheeses were amongst the top four of 204 exhibits. In 1901 patrons of his Tilley factory presented William with a gold locket and watch chain and a silver shaving bowl in recognition of these accomplishments.



William never took a day off in the 42 years he pursued his profession. Sometimes in the winter when sled delivered milk fell off a bit he could afford to take an afternoon off. William noted that the demise of cheese factories resulted in a concurrent reduction in pork production with the disappearance of a ready supply of whey.

**Forrest Johnston "Veteran Cheesemaker Retires." Family Herald and Weekly Star, January 15, 1947.**



The Gananoque Medal, 1901, photo by Brian Phillips

The Chicago Pan-American Exhibition medal, 1893, photo by Brian Phillips



## Other Notable Families Include:

***The McKees: renowned for their quarry***

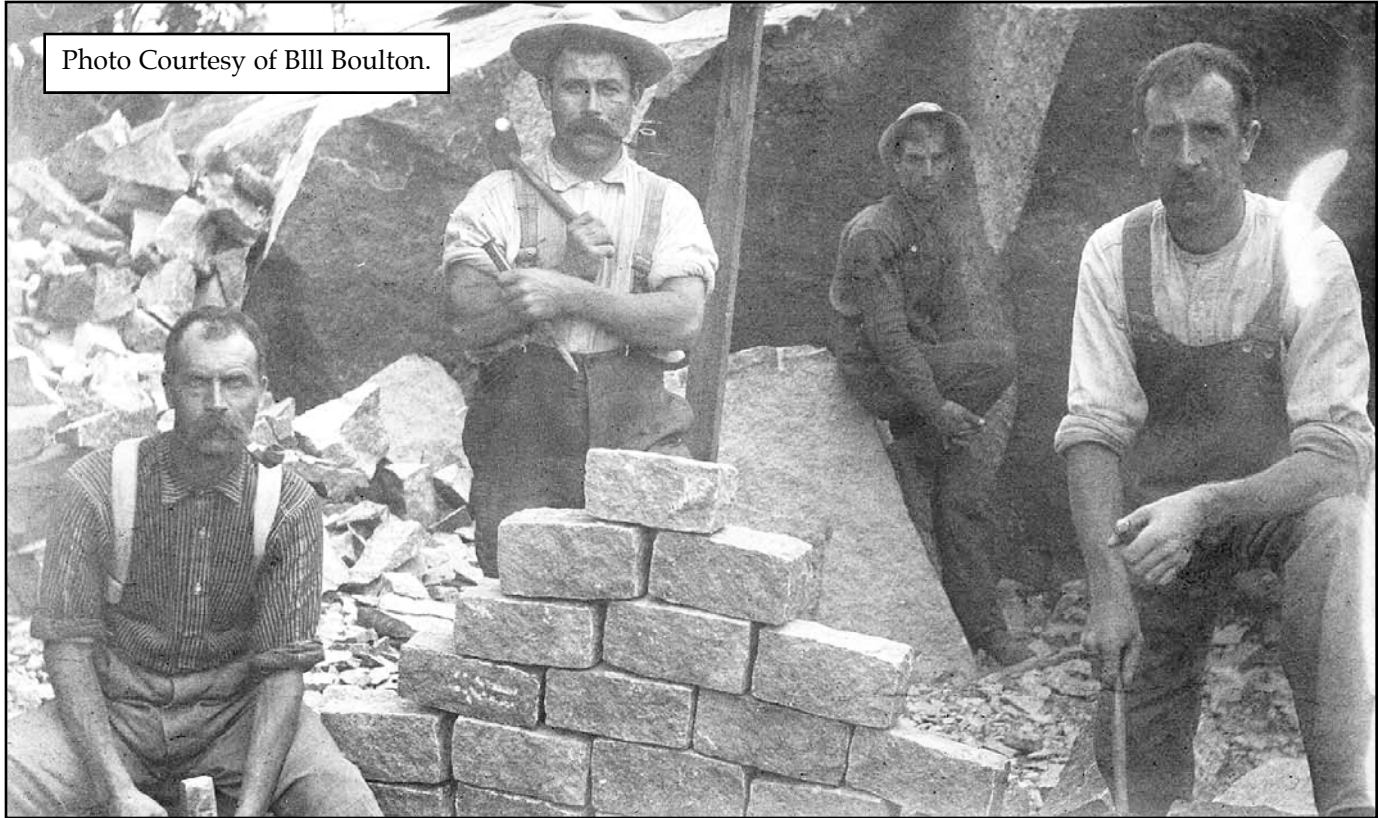


Photo Courtesy of Bill Boulton.



The McKee House

William and James McKee moved here about 1920. James, the bachelor brother, lived in the little stone cottage immediately to the west at Hog's Back Hill.

*See Newsletter Spring Summer 2006 for further information and photos.*

(Continued on Pg. #11)





(Continued from Pg.#10) **Other Notable Families Include:**

**The Redman's:**

At the north east of the crossroads, the Redmon's house burned down circa 1898 and was replaced, 1899, by a red brick house with a stylized pineapple on the roof. According to architectural lore, pineapples are a sign of welcome. Some of you may recall Arnott Gamble who lived in the house in the 1940's. A photocopy of a note in the Redmond Family file at the Archives states: "1821 John Redmond a merchant of Escott, Caintown, Lansdowne, born in Escott."

**The Shaws:** Susannah McNickle was the daughter of William Shaw of Hog's Back Farm (see Spring-Summer 2005) immediately to the east. Husband John and later Susannah were listed as Innkeepers. The location of the inn is unknown, could it have been at their house at Hog's Back Hill which they acquired from William in 1859? More on William later.



Shaw House Today



Susannah (Shaw) McNickle  
Courtesy  
Joseph Merrick Shaw

(Continued on Pg. #12)





(Continued from Pg.#11) **Other Notable Families Include:**

***The Moultons:*** of Moulton Acres. The Moultons, for a while, also owned the farm at Hog's Back. (See Spring/Summer 2005).

**This remainder of this article will be published in the next issue - (#53 2021)**



Early Photo of The Shaw House - Date and Source Unknown

### **Fort Pitt Saskatchewan April 1885** - by Alan Lindsay



In the spring of 1885 Constable David Cowan of the North West Mounted Police found himself at Fort Pitt as the North West Rebellion led by Louis Riel was starting. It was here on April 15th a fateful event took Cowan's life.

David Latimer Cowan was born in 1863 likely near Ottawa where his father William Cowan's family lived. His mother Mary Latimer was born and raised in Lansdowne. Her parents Robert Latimer and Mary Johnston farmed at Eden Grove west of the village. David Cowan had an extensive family group in Lansdowne as well as the Johnston families in Kitley. He joined the NWMP on April 1882 and was posted to Fort Pitt.

During the winter of 1884-85 Big Bear and his band of Cree had spent the winter at Frog Lake north of Fort Pitt. Frog Lake was a small Hudson's Bay post with a store, a church and several scattered farms. The natives led by Big Bear had been encouraged over the winter by Poundmaker to take part in Riel's activities. Hostilities at Frog Lake broke out on the morning of April 2, 1885. Big Bear's warriors were getting restless and he was losing control.

(Continued on Pg. #13)





(Continued from Pg. #12) **Fort Pitt Saskatchewan April 1885** - by Alan Lindsay

In the first hours all the men except two were killed and the women taken prisoner. William Cameron, the Hudson's Bay agent, and Henry Quinn survived. Quinn had managed to hide in some bushes with the help of a friendly native and he made his way down river to warn the Mounties at Fort Pitt.

Inspector Francis Dickens, son of the British novelist Charles Dickens, was in charge at the fort. Some attempt was made to strengthen the defenses and Dickens sent a scouting party made up of Constable Cowan, Constable Loasby and Henry Quinn to find out where Big Bear and his warriors were. When they reached Frog Lake they observed a large group of natives and they assumed Big Bear was still there. In fact Big Bear and his warriors were already on their way to the fort. The scouting party and the warriors had traveled on opposite sides of the river.

The next morning Dickens looked out to see a large band of natives on the top of a hill near the fort. On their return the scouting party didn't see them and rode right into this group of natives. They made a mad dash to the fort with the natives firing upon them.

Constable Cowan was first to fall. His horse was shot from under him. A bullet pierced his heart and he died where he fell. Loasby lost his horse too and was shot in the leg. He managed to make it to the fort under protective fire. Quinn somehow escaped but was captured the next day.

Inside the fort plans were made to escape on a scow tied to the riverbank and they could make their way south for Battleford. They made a dash to the scow and began moving down river. The only Mountie left behind was Cowan; his red tunic contrasting against the brown grass around the fort. The war party raided the fort, plundered it and then burned it.

It took three weeks to reach Battleford on the scow and a troop of Mounties then returned to Fort Pitt. Cowan's body was found badly mutilated and his heart had been cut out and impaled on a stake beside his body. He was buried at Frog Lake beside the victims of the Frog Lake Massacre and Cowan was promoted posthumously to the rank of corporal. A stone was erected on David Cowan's grave.

In 1938 a stone cairn was erected at Frog Lake to honour those who lost their lives there. William Cameron, the original Hudson's Bay agent, was present for the dedication.

At the trials following the Rebellion a newspaper clipping (undated) noted a native named Dressy Man was convicted for Cowan's death. Big Bear served time in prison and died shortly after. He was exonerated in May 2019.

*David Latimer Cowan was a first cousin of my grandmother Laura Landon Darling.  
He died before she was born.*

*Sources: "Dickens of the Mounted" by Eric Nichol. "Frog Lake Massacre"  
Harris House Publishing*



Photos by Madge Crawford, Regina, SK.



## **WILLIAM SHAW RESTORATION** - by Pierre Mercier

The last item retrieved from the bottom of a trunk was a barely discernible photo of a stern looking man peering dubiously at a new-fangled contraption, a camera.

On the back of the frame was inscribed the name William Shaw. This was the man that built my home at Stoneboat or Hogs Back Farm in 1841! William appeared on the scene in the early 1800's, a recent widower with three children in tow, including the aforementioned Susannah. He became the trunk of many local family trees, the Shaws, the Actons, the Abrams, the McNickles, the Phillips and of course the Kaisers among others. Please consult Newsletter Spring-Summer 2005 for further information.

*The Archives has recently acquired a copy of Shaw Family History  
by Joseph Shaw if you wish to do further research.*



Efforts by our local heritage digital wizard, Brian Phillips, resulted in a vastly improved image. Brian reports: "Retouching the William Shaw photograph was another of those historical projects that just had to be done. It was just so appealing to have him peering out from his picture on the wall of the house he had built so very long ago that I immediately looked forward to the task. However, with one look at the photo I could see that it was task that most would walk away from believing "Sorry, but there's really not much that could be done here." The net result though is a meticulous and accurate restoration given the source image. ▲▲▲▲▲



## Half Moon Bay

The Half Moon Bay Foundation donated its finds to the Archives this summer, adding to an already extensive array of material on this famous local site. There are plans for an interpretive sign in the near future.



In case you missed it, the whole world has been preoccupied with the inconvenience known as Covid 19. Many of you are aware that a hundred years ago the world was preoccupied with another concern, the misnamed Spanish Flu, more accurately described as the H1N1 influenza A virus. When circumstances permit, we'll be doing some research on the local impact of this outbreak. If you are aware of any information that might assist us in our efforts we'd love to hear from you.

If any of you wish to contribute some research and writings of you own on local history please do get in touch.

**If you plan to come to the Archives to do some research, it would be wise to check ahead to see what kind of Covid related restrictions might be in effect. 613-659-3800**

Vickie Leakie and George Horton  
from the Half Moon Bay Foundation







**Paid up MEMBERSHIPS as of December 30, 2020**

LAST NAME FIRST NAME	LAST NAME FIRST NAME	LAST NAME FIRST NAME	LAST NAME FIRST NAME
ABRAMS, GAIL ADAMS, WINSTON & WILMA ANDERSON, DEBBY ANDERSON, WAYNE ARBUCKLE, DON & GLORIA BOYD, JIM & ELIZABETH BRADLEY, BETTY BROWN, JACK BRYAN, ELAINE BURNS, DON & PAT BURNS, GEORGE & CONNIE BURNS, JOAN BURTCH, KATHLEEN BURTCH, ROBERT CAVE, SUNNY & NELSON CHISAMORE, DON & DANNY CHOWN, JANE CLANCY, RAY & FAYE CLARK, SHIRLEY CORNETT, MARY JONE CRAIG, BRUCE & BETTY CROSS, MARY DEMPSEY, CLARK & DONNA DESJARDINS, MELANIE DOAK, ROBERT DONEVAN, LOUISE DOREY, CHERI DOREY, GERRY & DONALDA DORY, MARK DUNBAR, GEORGE FODEY, TERRY & FEMIA FOLEY, BOB FOLEY, BRUCE & JOAN FOLEY, DONNA GAYLORD, DAN & JANET GEMMELL, JOHN GIBBINS, BOB GIBBINS, CHRIS & GINNY GIBSON-LANGILLE SHIRLEY GILBERT, DOUG & JUNE GILL, JULIA GODDARD, ELIZABETH GRAHAM, ANDREW & KATHERINE GREBBY, JOHN & MARIE GRIER, JAMIE & TRACIE GRIER, ROSS GRIFFIN, ROBERT HAIG, HAROLD HAIRD, KIM HEATON, STEPHEN HEWITT, TED & PAT	HUNT, ANNE HUNT, DOREEN JOHNSTON, JEAN KEYS, BOB & DEBBIE LACELLE, WILHELMINA LAMONT, RON & DIANE LANGTON, JIM & NANCY LAPOINTE, YOLANDE LATIMER, ILA LETOUMEAU, MARCUS LYNCH, CAROL LYNCH, PATTI MABEE, KEITH MACKINTOSH, DOUGLAS & BLU MACLEOD, JOHN & MARION MALLORY, GLENNA MALLORY, LINDA MATTHEW, DOUG & MARY ELLEN McCRADY, EARL McDOUGALL, MARILYN McKAY, MARION MERCIER, PIERRE MOIR, RONALD MONTGOMERY, CHARLES MOORHEAD, LORNE MURRAY, PETER NALON, JOHN & BARBARA NUTTALL, BEN & HILDA NUTTALL, JAY NUTTALL, LINDA & CHOJNACKI, MARK OFFORD, HOSS & SANDI O'GRADY, CHRIS ORMSBEE, CHRIS PAGE, STEVE PECK, GARY PHILLIPS, BRIAN PILON, TELESOPHORE RATH, NORMAN ROBERTSON, MARY REID RONEY, GERALD RUNNING, MURRAY, & DIANE SHARF, RICHARD & MYRNA SHAVER, CAROL SHAW, ART SHIELDS, JACQUELINE SHIRE, DAN SLY, KEITH SMID, HENRY SORENSEN, JOHN & LOUISE STEACY, MARLENE STOKES, WAYNE & KRISTI	STRUTHERS, VELMA SWAN, MARION TEDFORD, ROBERT TEDFORD, ROGER & CONNIE THORBURN, JON VanWALRAVEN, NICK VEENSTRA, TRACEY WEBSTER, BEATRICE WEBSTER, NANCY WEBSTER, GEORGE & REBECCA WEBSTER, JEAN WHITE, FRED WILLIAMS, HOWARD	<b><u>CORPORATE MEMBERS:</u></b>  FOX RUN BY THE RIVER RETIREMENT RESIDENCE  GLENDA OLIVIER ONTARIO WIDE REAL ESTATE BROKERAGE  HORTON HOMESTEAD FARM  LUCKY DOLLAR SUPER CONVENIENCE  TODD GRIER EXCAVATING
		<b><u>HONOURARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP</u></b>  ALLAN LINDSAY  AUDREY NEWELL  WILLIAM BOULTON	
		<div>In order to save the L.T.I. Historical Society's costs involved in printing &amp; mailing the B&amp;W Newsletter issues, we would request that you consider having the Full Colour issue e-mailed to you.  To sign up please Contact Connie Burns by email  <b>cburns@1000island.net</b></div>	

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT** [www.ltihistoricalsociety.org](http://www.ltihistoricalsociety.org)