



Lansdowne Telephone Company
First Telephone operator -
Ms. Fern Fredenburgh

Fredenburgh's Men's Store
First location for the
Lansdowne Telephone Company

*Lansdowne prepares
for switch to dial*
Mrs. Fred H. Earle displays old magneto telephones to be replaced
Oct. 20, 1968 at Lansdowne by dial sets.

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Condolences

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of two very special friends of the Leeds and 1000 Islands Historical Society.

Jack Brown had a wealth of knowledge about our local history, both places and people. To his family and friends we express our sorrow for your loss.

To Nancy Murray, her family all Peter's many friends, we extend our condolences on the passing of Peter Murray. Peter was versed in the natural history of our area and was always willing to share his knowledge.

Township Schools

Many images and documents regarding Township Schools can be found by searching through the Archives Website – www.ltiarchive.ca – where our volunteer Donnie Dorey has painstakingly and methodically up loaded them. Also see past issues of the L.T. I Historical Society Newsletters at www.ltihistoricalsociety.com

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 Lakeshore, 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 1-52 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 2021-2022

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.



THE BEATTY DIARIES

1869

- Aug. 4 I made out the papers for lots No. ? of ?? of the ?? Robert Webster Esc.
7 Went to funeral of Joseph Turner. He was drowned at Gananoque and was brought to his fathers. Mr. Smart preached.
13 Ad and Billie plowed and scraped the foundation of the church. I worked half the day in sand pit getting a place uncovered for light sand for the church.
18 I went to the funeral of old Mrs. Cornet in the afternoon. She was buried at Robinsons. The Rev. Mr. Follock preached.
21 Got some of the horses shoes fixed with P.M. Moore and made a bargain with him to shoe by the year for 61/2 dollars.
24 I went to Mr. Darlings with Mr. Austin. I laid out a road between 17 & 18 in the first concession. Got dinner at Reeds & tea at Darling.
Sept. 6 I went with Mr. Thompson to Mr. Armstrong and got out 4 sills for the church and drew them home.
Oct. 1 Drew some sand for the church. Billie has been working at the church attending the masons since last Friday.
21 Helped John Shields and Nathan McKay to draw stones & sand for the church.
Nov. 4 I went to Marble Rock to an auction sale of DeLong and Emons of lumber.
6 I helped Mr. Mitchels men at the church. They began yesterday. We got all the rafters and connections up today.
Dec. 27 I took the receipt that I got from T. E. Keaton for \$31. for the road to the Council.
29 Went to the funeral of Miss. Shipman. She died in Belleville, was buried in Robinsons.

1870

- Jan. 3 Very few at the election, it is too stormy.
12 Went to the school meeting. Benj Warren was elected as trustee.
13 I went to the Annual Meeting of the Agricultural Society at Westons. Was elected President.
26 Billie went to the funeral of Mr. Horton at Dulcemaine Schoolhouse.
Feb. 4 Went to Ellens Landons funeraal . Rev. Mr. Pollock preached.
5 I went to the funeral of Mrs. Tackaberry
24 I went to Mr. T. Lindsays place and laid outa road between lots NO. 7 & 8 in the first concession of Leeds.
Apr. 29 Wat and Ad left with the morning express for Toronto on their way to Muscopa
30 Geordie has been working with the sawyers at the station most of the week.
May 7 I was skinning a calf and ran the knife into my arm and cut a vein. Sent for Dr. Elsworth, it bled so fast.
26 Billie is going to learn to be a carpenter with Mr. L Heslip.
June 5 I went to the funeral of Dr. Redmond. He was buried at the Cemetery at Pitsburg.
7 Went to the scchoolhouse in the afternoon to a meeting of the buiding committee. Nothing done there. None from the upper Reads Settlement there.



LANSDOWNE RURAL TELEPHONE COMPANY

HERITAGE PLAQUE

by **Bill Boulton**

In August 1876, Alexander Graham Bell developed a working model of the telephone.

The Darling Family had formed a company which built a line from Lansdowne to Rockport in 1892. The Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company bought this service in 1910.

In 1901, less than 30 years later, a meeting was held in George Steacy's store in Warburton to discuss the building of a telephone service. Mr. Herbert Horton was the main force behind this effort. Within a year, 15 miles of line was built. In 1906 a switchboard was placed in George Steacy's store to serve the customers from Sand Bay, Warburton and Lansdowne. Thus the beginning of the local telephone company.

The Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company received its charter in November 1907. Shares in the company cost \$50.00, paid in instalments over 5 years. A 100 line Magneto switchboard was purchased in 1908. It was placed in Charles Fredenburgh's store at the corner of Prince and King Streets. Mr. Fredenburgh was named manager. His niece Miss Fern Fredenburgh was the first operator. At this time there were 282 phones in the area.

In 1909 most lines were party lines which could have as many as 20 patrons on the one line. Those patrons could call anyone on their line without going through the switchboard. A patron on one party line complained about another patron on the line for listening to their calls and using abusive language about their family. The accused party was threatened with loss of service if further complaints were made.



In 1913 a new 2 storey office was built at the corner of King and Garden Streets. An additional lot was purchased in 1971 from Douglas Donevan for a garage. The garage was built on this lot in 1973, opposite the office. Additional land surrounding the garage was purchased in 1990. In 1972, a new office was built to house the dial system which was installed that year. An addition was made to this office in 1997 and completed in 1998. This is the current office of the Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company.

In 1968 there were 48 independent telephone companies in Ontario. Today there are only a handful. After 113 years of operation, The Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company was sold to NEXICOM INC. in JUNE 2020.



With rumours of the potential sale of the company common, members of Lansdowne Association For Revitalization met with the Telephone Board of Directors in January 2018, with a proposal for a memorial to honour over a century of community service. The board voted to accept the proposal. A committee led by Donna Dempsey began to do research and collect material. Brian Phillips was engaged to design the plaque. At the final meeting of the Board in May 2020, a sum of money was voted to assist in the cost of the project.



Covid lockdowns delayed the progress of work on the plaque. Members of the Committee have not been able to meet in person due to the risk of infection, It was completed in the fall of 2021. Weather prevented the pouring of a concrete base. As soon as weather permits in the spring of 2022, the plaque will be erected. **Watch for the announcement of the date for the dedication of this plaque.**

“The significance of the telephone was immeasurable. The installation of the telephone aided many businesses and farmers in the community. Farmers could easily buy and sell cattle over the phone and by doing so, save wear and tear on their equipment. Where once businesses had to write letters or travel to their customers and suppliers, they now had the convenience of using the telephone.”

“One such company was the Fairfax Cheese Factory. The factory was located at the intersection of what is now known as Fairfax Road and Kyes Road. At the turn of the century it was an important supporter of the local economy. In 1917, the factory submitted a telephone rental application...and a phone was installed (June 4, 1917). Two months later and application came before the Board from the Rapid Valley Cheese Factory requesting the rental and installation of a telephone. It can be assumed that in order to be competitive within the community, this cheese factory also required a telephone. Their application was also approved (August 6, 1917)

References:

[The Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company: 87 years of top-quality service](#) by Lisa Thompson

[Lansdowne Tel: Celebrating 100 Years](#) by Lisa Lawrence

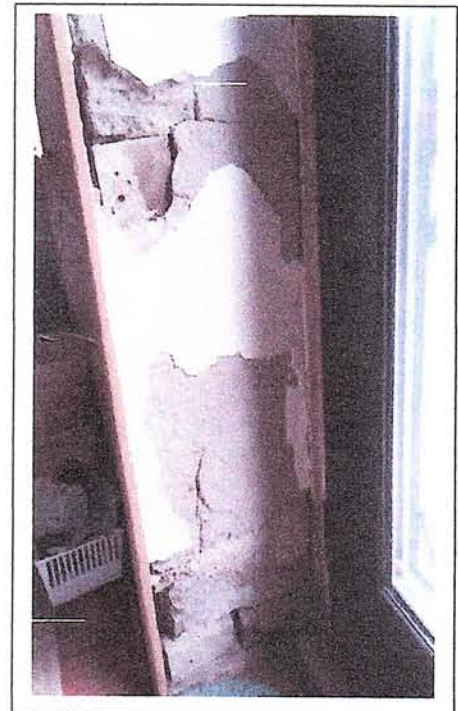
Bill Boulton's notes



Wall Repairs to an Old Stone Home....

Something was wrong; the plaster on the wall in the dining room was blistering and it was getting progressively worse.

The original interior walls in my house are parged, a process where lime mortar is applied to the surface of a wall. It serves two purposes, aesthetic and protective. In modern houses you may well see parging applied to the exterior of foundation walls. The materials and techniques are also used in lathe and plaster walls.



Aesthetically, in the case of my house, the original owners would probably be scandalized or at least confused by the exposed stone walls in my living room; they would prefer the refinement of a finished, surfaced wall. This need for finish can extend to the exterior as well. Robert Burtch reports that the random coursed sides of the exterior of his stone cottage were, at one time, covered in stucco or, in other words, parged. Lime is also the main ingredient in historical whitewash.

A real treasure to consult regarding pioneer attitudes and tastes is Jeanne Minhinnick, [At Home in Upper Canada](#).

It all begins with the mortar and the stones. Stones are very hard, some more than others, but they will succumb to a superior force. The mortar has very specific roles to play. For starters it has to bind the stones and fill in the spaces, but that's just part of the story. It also has to allow the wall to breath and transpire. The hopefully minute amounts of moisture that will inevitably find their way



into your wall must be provided a way out. Additionally, the mortar must be weaker than the stone. If there is any freeze and thaw, the mortar should be the one to suffer as it is relatively easier to fix than cracked stones. Historic bricks often suffer from this as well in a process called spalling.

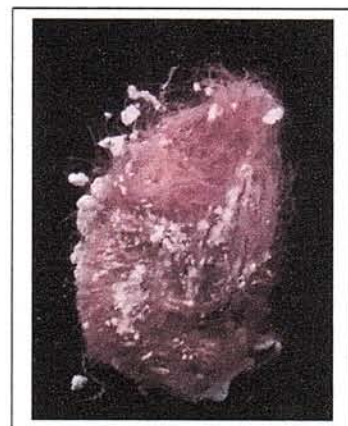
The original mortar used when my house was constructed in 1844 would be quite soft being lime-based. It wasn't until the 1870's that mortars began to contain Portland cement, a much more convenient substance than lime. Prior to that, lime produced by burning shells or, more likely here, limestone, was the primary adhesive ingredient. When Portland is mixed in to the mortar it made for a much stronger mortar but the subsequent increasing of the proportions as availability improved had an unintended consequence, the walls couldn't breathe. (Many excellent websites can be found on this topic)

This appears to be the case in my wall. Apparently, due to modern repointing of the exterior with harder cement-based mortar, moisture that would normally have exited via the exterior mortar had no other way to go but in.

As is always the case when you start to dig into a problem, one quickly reaches a point where they say to themselves "maybe I should have left well enough alone". As I picked at the paint, entire chunks of plaster readily fell off. Soon I was pulling out crumbly chunks of mortar from between stones. The damage at some places was deep. I actually pulled out a couple of loose stones. Once started, the work had to continue. There's no point in laying new material on crumbly old. I had to work back to good solid mortar. Pieces of wood to provide attachment points for baseboards and wainscoting were found as well.

Once the damage was removed it was time to order the materials for the repair and start putting things right. Typical traditional parging is a three-coat system with each coat being made up of distinctive materials and applied differently. Fortunately, the ingredients are now available premixed.

The first layer is called the "scratch coat" this is because a scratched-in pattern is applied to the exposed surface, permitting a better adhesion for the next coat. This is a thick coat, usually at least 3/8 of an inch thick, applied directly to the stone, pushing in to fill in any gaps. Horse hair is often mixed in to provide better adhesion and structural support. The attached photo shows a tuft of hair removed from the wall.





The next coat is called the “brown coat”. The recipe changes for this one with more sand added, resulting in a change of colour. It certain will be browner than the third coat which is white being mostly plaster. The second coat is usually 3/8 of an inch thick as well, is more refined, and brings the surface very close to the final level of the wall.



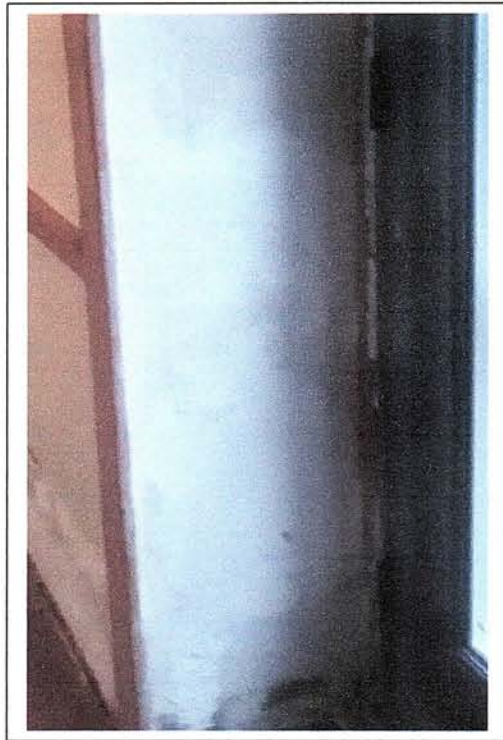
There are several arcane actions that must be undertaken besides the scratching of the first coat. For example, at each stage you must wet the new surface prior to the application of the new coat. This promotes better adhesion. The prescribed time for the drying of each coat took a surprisingly long time Three to ten days for the first coat, twenty-eight days for the second. These details are covered in available websites and videos.

There’s a whole new vocabulary of terms describing the various tools used. Who knew you needed a hawk and a rake to plaster a wall!

The third and final coat is essentially white lime putty, very similar in appearance to modern Drywall compound. I suspect a professional apply this perfectly smooth and level, but I had to Resort to some sanding after the material had dried. The third coat was applied only to the surface exposed above the baseboards.

Ready for Final Coat





Ready for Painting

The recipes and techniques for each coat are readily available online:

<https://www.oldhouseonline.com/repairs-and-how-to/repairinghistoric-flat-plaster-walls-ceilings/>

<https://www.bobvila.com/articles/462-how-to-rebuild-a-wall-with-three-coat-plaster/>

The manufacturers of historically similar mortars are also an excellent source of advice and support. I was referred to LimeWorks.us. They provide a series of educational videos on various topics at

<https://www.limeworks.us/how-to-videos/>

Lessons learned:

- The pleasure of revealing the bones of your home and seeing, even touching elements, such as the mason's scratch incisions or the horse hair, that have been hidden for a hundred and eighty years.
- The pleasure of sympathetically restoring the work of a craftsman.
- The emotional rush of realizing that you're just part of a stream of stewardship.
- The necessity of understanding how and why things were done and using appropriate techniques and materials.
- Discovering the hard way that lime is a dangerous chemical and the mixing of the mortar can be messy. Floor covering, ventilation, masks, goggles and gloves are required.



Outstanding Questions:

- Where was the lime used in my house produced? A great video on quicklime production can be viewed at <https://www.tfcg.ca/limeburner-old-occupation>
- Where do the distinctive Potsdam (ferruginous) sandstones used to build my house come from? (My guess would be the hill by the Union Church.)

<https://www.buildingconservation.com/articles/pointing/lime-pointing.htm>
https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/The_use_of_lime_mortar_in_building_conservation

<https://maclennanwaterproofing.co.uk/lime-plaster-for-damp-proofing-the-dos-and-donts/>

Leeds & Thousand Islands Historical Society

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E-mail: ltihistoricalsociety@gmail.com

July 2021

We hope you are enjoying receiving our newsletters. Just a gentle reminder that your membership is past due, so please take a minute to renew so you may continue to receive future newsletters. You will notice the pictures in newsletters received on line are now in colour.

Name _____

Address - _____

indicate if you would like to receive coloured newsletters by e-mail - Yes ___

Telephone No: _____ e-mail: _____

Please state the number of years you are paying for _____

GENERAL: \$15.00 ASSOCIATION: \$20.00 CORPORATE: \$30.00

I give permission to publish my name in our Newsletter and on our website Yes _____ No _____



Friends of Springfield House Complex Report December 2021



Friends of Springfield House

The site we call the Springfield House Complex is comprised of the Town Hall and Masonic Lodge of the former Front of Escott Township and the old wayside inn called Springfield House located on County Road 2 (The Old King's Highway) in Escott. Both buildings were built in 1871 and are celebrating their 150th birthday this year. The Town Hall was used as such until amalgamation in 2000 and then later housed the Archives of the new municipality of Leeds and the Thousand Islands. Springfield House was purchased by the Township Of Front of Escott in 1979 and restored through a huge community fundraising effort, to be used as a Library and Museum/heritage Center. After amalgamation it continued to serve in this function until late 2016 when the library branch closed. The Archives then used some of the rooms in Springfield House as reading/research rooms and offices.

In March of 2021 a Staff Report from the Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands regarding the future of the Springfield House Complex in Escott was made public. After many years of use by the public the buildings were not up to current code standards and needed substantial upgrades and restoration. There were three possible scenarios outlined in this report. One was to declare the buildings and property as surplus and sell them on the open market. Two was to spend the funds necessary to upgrade and restore the buildings using the estimates provided by the report. And three was to demolish the buildings.

The Friends of Springfield House Complex is an incorporated non-profit group which was formed by several engaged citizens who felt there was another option. At a Committee of the Whole Meeting, the Friends proposed that the Township pause on any action regarding declaring the buildings surplus until a second report could be done by an architectural firm experienced with the restoration and adapted reuse of historic structures. We would be willing to work with the township in a public,



private partnership to ensure that these heritage assets are maintained and actively used by the public.

Since this time, the Friends of Springfield House Complex has been working towards our goal of conserving the site as a museum, archives and active cultural and heritage center for the Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands. We are currently the only municipality in the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville which does not have such a facility. We are in the process of seeking charitable status from the CRA so that we can offer tax receipts for donations. The municipality of Leeds and the Thousand Islands released the Staff Report on Building Conditions for the December 6, 2021 Committee of the Whole Meeting. Tacoma Engineers Inc. was engaged by the Township to specifically assess the heritage structures at the Springfield Complex. This report will give us a clearer idea of what kind of work will need to be done on the buildings and how we can support the municipality as partners to revitalize the SHC. A motion to retain SHC and proceed with the recommended repairs and studies was carried. In the meantime these buildings are closed to the public. The LTI Archives will be moving to a temporary site so that the public will be able to access their services again.

We have been overwhelmed by the support we have received from the Leeds and Thousand Islands Historical Society. We look forward to working together to tell the stories of the past and share the rich local heritage with our community. We still have a long way to go before our shared vision for this designated historic site becomes a reality.

We appreciate your interest and you can follow us on Face book at Friends of Springfield House.

You can reach us at friendsofspringfieldhouse@gmail.com

Or by mail at

Friends of Springfield House Complex

P.O. Box 394

Lansdowne, ON

K0E 1L0



1981



**Friends of Springfield House Complex Report for LTIHS
Annual General Meeting (17/12/21)**

Presented by Robert Burtch via Zoom

November 2016--- LTI Library branch at Springfield House is closed

May 25 2017--- a group of citizens concerned about the future of the site met

December 2, 2019 ---COTW motion re: Escott Complex

December 6, 2019---Formation of the Escott Complex Working Group

March 15, 2020---Covid 19 Pandemic

Summer and autumn of 2020---One on one meetings with Mayor and Councillors

Mission Statement and visions for use of the revitalized site

September 9, 2020--- Formation of FSHC Board

February 18, 2021---Council meeting re: LTI Archives and future of SHC

March 1, 2021---COTW Meeting presentation by FSHC

March 2020---Constitution and By-laws

April 9, 2021---FSHC incorporated as an entity under the Ontario Historical Society

April 25, 2021--- Bank account and Post Box for FSHC

Summer and fall of 2021--- Inventory of Springfield House museum artifacts

July 16,2021---Presentation to Municipal Heritage Committee

August/September---Preparation of draft agreement (MOU) with municipality

October 30, 2021--- Inaugural Annual General Meeting for FSHC

December 6, 2021--- COTW Motion re: municipal ownership and restoration of SHC Carried



Previously published in the "Limelight" Newsletter of the Kingston Historical Society

Fellow Historians

by Glenda Olivier

A Slow and Steady Beginning for the Leeds and 1000 Islands Historical Society

On a balmy spring evening in 1991, a small group of people sat around a table on the patio of the Golden Apple in Gananoque. We were hosted by Shirley Fernetich who had a passionate interest in the history of our area. Attendees at that meeting included Bill Boulton, who became our first President, Alan Lindsay a historical researcher and genealogist, Shirley Fernetich our host, Mary Joan Barrett, Alexis Girling and Bruce Kibble who owned an antique store in Lansdowne and myself, the current President of the group. Over the next few months, more meetings were held in various locations in Lansdowne and area.

Conversations revolved around the need to preserve our heritage: oral, written and built. One of the catalysts for this meeting was the tearing down of the McNeil barn which local legend says was the oldest barn in Ontario still standing at that time. According to Ernest G. Cook who did an article for the Watertown Daily Times in 1940, it was erected by a passing platoon of soldiers during The War of 1812. (See Fall/Winter 2012 Newsletter).



McNeil barn

In 1992, the first official meeting of the Front of Leeds and Lansdowne Historical Society was held at the Community Building in Lansdowne. At that meeting most of the Executive Offices were filled and we were started!

By 1994, we were incorporated under the Ontario Historical Society and published our first newsletter! Five programmes of historical interest were presented and the membership rose to over 60 people. Our display at the Lansdowne Fair brought much interest and membership grew. Lisa Thompson was hired through a government program to help with sorting and cataloguing items which had already been donated to the society. Hilary Ann Hamilton, our second employee also started recording oral histories of local residents.

Amalgamation of the Townships of Front of Leeds and Lansdowne, Rear of Leeds and Lansdowne and Escott Township brought a new name and new focus. We became the Leeds and 1000 Islands Historical Society.

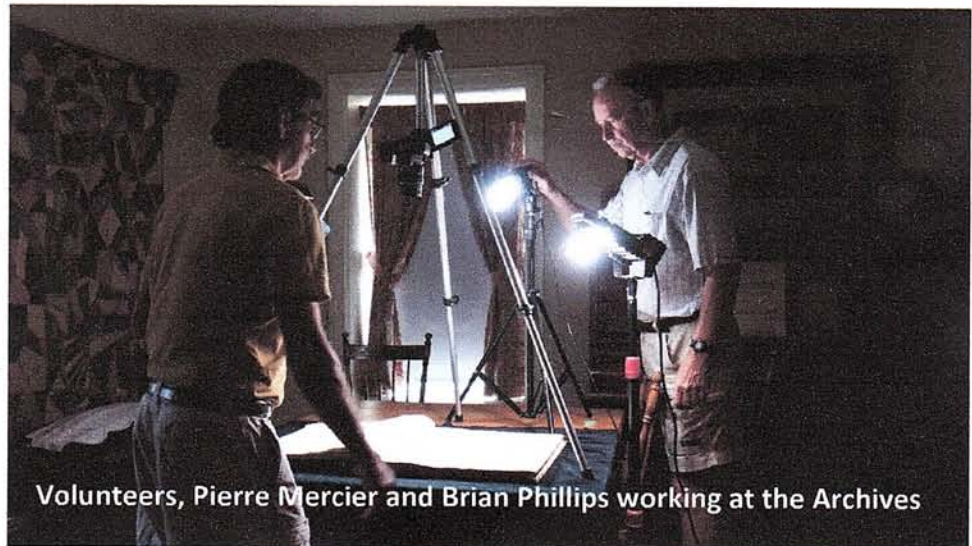
Over the past 27 years the Leeds and 1000 Islands Historical Society has been involved in many projects. Some of these include the designation of Darlingside (a historic home and business on the St. Lawrence River under the National Historic Sites of Canada which does not provide protection for buildings), the restoration of Greenfield School (S.S. #3), the restoration of the Railway Mural at the train tracks in Lansdowne in cooperation with Lansdowne Association For Revitalization, and the research, production and erection of several historical plaques in the Township of Leeds and the 1000 Islands.



Presentation about the Archaeological Dig

We have also heavily supported the development of the Veteran's Memorial in front of Thousand Islands Elementary School. We have given financial support to the Rockport Customs Park, which consists of the old custom house and dock on the St. Lawrence River in Rockport, and the archaeological dig at Lyndhurst where the first iron smelter in Upper Canada was located.

Most importantly, the Leeds and 1000 Islands Historical Society was a partner in forming the Leeds and 1000 Islands Archives. We remain a signatory to the Memorandum of Understanding with the Township of Leeds and 1000 Islands and the LTI Public Library, and provide the volunteer hours to operate the Archives.



Volunteers, Pierre Mercier and Brian Phillips working at the Archives

Currently, we have approximately 140 members and are working with the Friends of Springfield House Complex to conserve Springfield House and the former Escott Town Hall as a heritage centre for the township.

Covid 19 has caused the Society to pause many of our activities, but the organization is hoping to resume public meetings and fund raising in the spring of 2022.

To contact us: Websites: www.ltihistoricalsociety.org (Here you can read past newsletters)

www.ltiarchives.ca

Email: info@lthistoricalociety.org

Mail: Leeds and 1000 Islands Historical Society, P.O. Box 332, Lansdowne, ON K0E 1L0

Thank you Ted and Pat Hewitt for the many years during which you edited our newsletter. You are sorely missed!!! All the best in your move to your new home!



Making a Heritage Garden



No doubt, many of you have visited the living museum known as Upper Canada Village near Morrisburg, Ontario. It was developed by the provincial government through the St. Lawrence Parks Commission in 1961. Many of these historic buildings were re-located to this site when parts of the old shoreline were flooded in order to complete the St. Lawrence Seaway. A visit to Upper Canada Village is always sure to transport you back in time to the simple, rural life of the settlers in Upper Canada before Confederation. The wide variety of buildings to be seen, range from barns, homes, mills, taverns, schools and workshops. They are all from the time period before confederation. Friendly and knowledgeable staff, who wear the costumes of the day, take on the roles of the villagers, answer your questions and demonstrate what daily life was like.

While the well conserved buildings are exceptional examples of architecture of the time, the surrounding landscapes and gardens are designed and planned with the same amount of care and research. Imagine being a small landholder, a merchant, a miller or perhaps a member of the gentry in the mid 19th century. We know that your living conditions, furnishings and dress would be a reflection your status in the community. How would your gardens grow?

Brian Henderson of Elizabethtown-Kitley has retired from his job as Lead Horticultural Interpreter of Upper Canada Village but he continues to share his passion for heritage gardening. I spoke with him recently to learn a little about horticulture in rural Upper Canada.

Brian grew up in the Niagara region, which is known throughout Ontario as a centre for horticulture. He loved to explore the backroads with his family who all shared an equal appreciation of the natural and built heritage of the region. While out on one of these excursions Brian came upon the ruins of the old Fonthill Nursery which was established in 1837. Overgrown Saucer Magnolias, Flowering Dogwoods, Thread Leaf False Cypress, Big Leaf Winter Creepers and other old nursery stock grew in wild profusion creating a "Paradise Lost". This visit spurred Brian into studying horticulture and its history in Canada. He went on to graduate from Niagara College and the University of Guelph, worked in the greenhouse/nursery business, Agriculture Canada and eventually taught horticulture at Algonquin College. In 2008 Brian became the Lead Horticultural Interpreter at Upper Canada Village.

It was Brian's role to share the history of gardening in Upper Canada with the visiting public as well as to maintain the actual gardens. From April until October, Brian and his staff were involved in planning, preparation, seeding, propagation, planting, weeding, and harvesting. All these tasks had to be accomplished with methods and tools from the era. That meant everything had to be done by hand, including watering which was a major undertaking if the summer was dry. In order to create the authentic ambiance of the time, each garden had to be planned and planted accordingly.

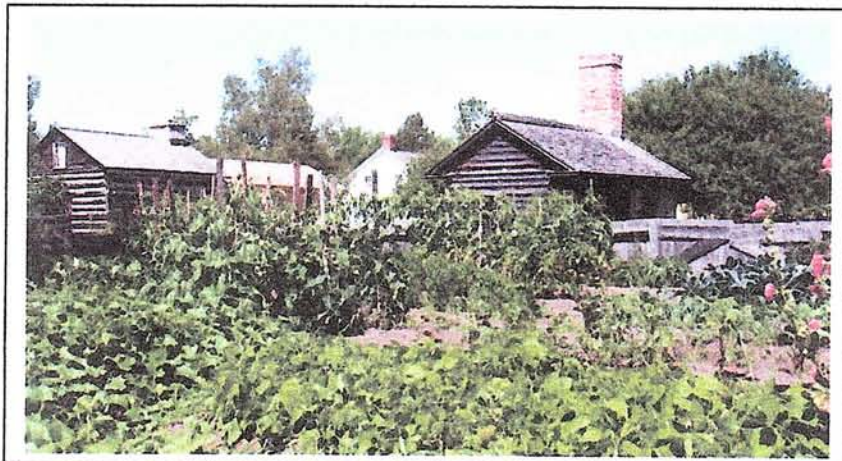


While the grand gardens at Chrysler Hall with their planted beds of annuals are stunningly beautiful they would be the exception at that time. The gentry of Chrysler Hall could afford to hire a gardener at 50 cents a day. Employing a gardener would have been a status symbol in Upper Canada at the time. The majority of population was of more modest means and would use any available plots around their home to grow vegetables such as potatoes to feed their families. The work in the family garden would have been done by the wife and children. When the boys were big enough, they would have joined the men working in the fields. There might be a small strip of flowers up at the front of the house, a peony or a lilac bush but that was it. Families needed to make sure they planted enough vegetables to be "put up" for the winter. Root vegetables such as carrots, beets, turnips and potatoes could be stored in the root cellar. Beans, tomatoes, cucumbers and peppers could be canned or pickled. In the spring some of the winter provisions would be getting low. That is why it was important to plant the seeds of the cool weather crops like lettuce, cabbage, spinach, chard and radishes in the ground as soon as possible. These early crops provided fresh nutritious produce when little else was available. Seeds would have been saved and stored from the previous season or shared by family and friends. By this time the Grand Trunk Railway and steam ships along the St. Lawrence River would have been able to transport commercially produced seeds and nursery stock to general stores in many communities. Mass produced seed catalogues with their beautiful coloured lithographs of flowers and vegetables would have generated a great deal of interest.

But what if you didn't have room for a large garden? Perhaps you were a craftsman such as a miller or a blacksmith? Bartering came into play in these situations. You could trade your flour for sacks of potatoes or perhaps shoe a horse for a barrel of apples. Shops were reserved for specialty items like tea, sugar, spices and raisins, which could not be produced at home.

When you next visit Upper Canada Village take some time to explore the gardens of each dwelling. You will begin to notice not only the beautiful plants but how the gardens reflect the station in life of the inhabitants. You will also learn how the settlers produced 80% of their food and which plants they used for dyeing cloth, for medicine and fragrances for soap and toiletries. The early European inhabitants of North America came to a strange land and had to adapt to a new climate and natural world. Although they brought many plants and seeds with them, they also learned how to grow and use native species from the First Nations people. Today we see gardening as a relaxing pastime or as a way to supplement our diets but back then it was the only way to survive the many challenges of life in Upper Canada.

By Robert Burtch



Brian Henderson will be giving a free presentation via ZOOM on "Making a Heritage Garden" March 22 at 7:00 p.m. as part of the Science Cafes, Snowshoes, Gardening, and Hikes of the Thousand Islands Watershed Land Trust. Contact : info@tiwlt.ca to receive the Zoom link tiwlt.ca



Current Paid Memberships

ABRAMS	GAIL
ADAMS	WINSTON & WILMA
ANDERSON	WAYNE
ARROWSMITH	BRENDA
BICKERTON	DOUG
BURNS	
	DON & PAT
CHOWN	JANE
CLANCY	RAY
CLARK	SHIRLEY
CORNETT	MARY JOAN
DAY	DAVID & MARIE
DOAK	ROBERT
DONEVAN	LOUISE
DOREY	CHERI
DOREY	DONALDA & GERRY
DOREY	MARK
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MABEE	KEITH
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MATTHEW	Mary Ellen & Doug
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NUTTALL	JAY
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If your name does not appear on this list, please renew your membership now.

The membership form is on Page 10.