



THE GRENVILLE SENTINEL

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Upcoming Events:

Prescott Museum, King St. Prescott, across from the clock tower - Daily 11am to 5pm

Upper Canada Village - May 21st to Sept. 18th

104th International Plowing Match & Rural Expo, Kemptville - Sept. 20th - Sept. 24th, 2022

Prescott Museum Grand Opening

The Grand Opening of the Prescott Museum and Visitor Centre was held on May 21st with Mayor Brett Todd, Councillors Ray Young, Teresa Jansman, Gauri Shankar, and Mike Ostrander there for the ribbon cutting. Fraser Laschinger took part as well and the mayor gave him much credit for the incredible transformation of the space and displays for the new museum and welcomed everyone to come and visit and learn about the history and heritage of the community. The museum is located at 202 King. St. West in Prescott and is open daily 11am to 5pm.

The Restoration of St. St. John's Parish Hall, Prescott

The Slunder family made a beautiful job of restoring the old Parish Hall into a private residence. The hall had been connected to St. John's Anglican Church, but when the church decided to sell it, the two buildings were separated and the hall became the Slunder's private residence after the renovations were completed.



Recently the Restoration of St. John's Parish Hall in Prescott received an Excellence in Conservation Award from Ontario Heritage Trust. "St. John's Memorial Parish Hall in Prescott, Ontario (circa 1929) was acquired by Daniel and Bonita Slunder in 2013 from the Anglican Diocese of Ontario. The building – once a bustling community hall, and a good representation of Gothic vernacular architecture in Ontario on a humble scale –

had fallen into disrepair by 2013 and would require substantial remediation. The Slunders restored the structure and self-financed the project over a period of several years, transforming the former gathering space into their private home, moving in in 2016 and continuing to make improvements since then that prioritize the building's ecological footprint, placing particular emphasis on recycling materials and fixtures where possible. Their restoration required careful and clever work, inspiring many others. They have brought the building back to life and generated substantial community pride."

Merrickville and District Historical Society

This archives is located at 279 St. Lawrence St., Merrickville, ON K0G 1N0, Box 294, Merrickville, ON K0G 1N0. Their webpage is www.merrickvillehistory.org and their Facebook page is Merrickville and District Historical Society, email address is info@merrickvillehistory.org.

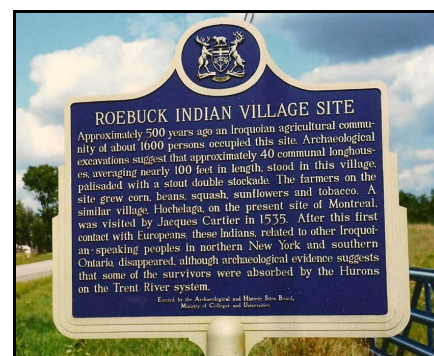


The Merrickville and District Historical Society was formed in 1965 to encourage an interest in the history and heritage of the Merrickville district and to protect its well preserved 19th century stone and masonry buildings. There is a

beautiful stone Blockhouse built about 1832 to defend the Rideau Canal, now a National Historic Site used as a museum and home to the Merrickville and District Historical Society. It houses local artifacts and tells the story of the early Blockhouse and the people who settled this area of Grenville County. The society has extensive archival material about the founding families, the buildings, and the businesses in Merrickville. They undertook a project in 2005 to digitize 1000 images that were in their photograph collection and intend to have a searchable database in the future which will be accessible for researchers. They have a dedicated group of volunteers doing the many jobs needed to operate the Blockhouse and museum.

Donation of Indigenous Artifacts

Recently we were delighted to receive a donation from Tom Connell of several shards of pottery that came from the area in Roebuck where there was a prehistoric,

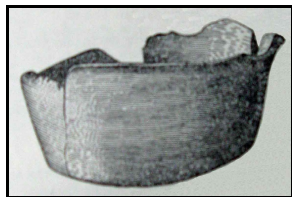


palisaded village of Iroquoian culture on Indian Creek. The shards were part

of the Goldie Connell collection that Tom inherited on his mother's death.



Highly decorated pot from dig at Roebuck



Wooden dish from dig at Roebuck

This site was first investigated in July 1854 by W.E. Guest with a report filed at the Smithsonian in Washington. A more extensive exploration took place by W.J. Wintemberg in 1912 and 1915. The site, located on the north side of County Road 21, west of Weir Road, and east of Roebuck, covered approximately eight acres and appeared to be occupied around 1500 A.D. On the plaque, it tells that "This Iroquoian agricultural community of about 1600 persons suggest that approximately 40 communal longhouses, averaging nearly 100 feet in length, stood in this village, palisaded with a stout double stockade." At the time, it was recorded that there were six other village sites of the same culture in Grenville County, one in Augusta Township and five in Edwardsburgh Township. The Maynard-McKeown site, located in Maynard in Augusta Township, was thoroughly investigated in the summer of 1987 and a plaque erected by the Grenville County Historical Society in 2012. The Roebuck site, sponsored by GCHS, was plaqued in 1974. Many local people have found artifacts in different locations throughout Grenville County, and more detailed information about the indigenous population in Grenville County

can be found in our archives. Some of the Roebuck artifacts are presently on display at the new Prescott Museum.

Roebuck United Church Closes Officially

Roebuck United Church was founded in the 1910s and ministered to the religious needs of the local population, first to the Methodists and then to the United Church members for over a century, with 60 to 80 people attending at one time. They had a large Sunday School and a very active youth group. With their decision a few years ago to sell the church, they decided to hold services in the Grenville Snowmobile Club and their final service there was held in February. It was a hard decision for them to shut down completely, but it was felt they could no longer carry on. The money that remained in their account was donated to local organizations, including the South Grenville Food Bank, Rideau Hill Camp, the Maynard Cemetery Board, and several other organizations.

Sounds Great 68



Another donation recently given to the society was a 78 RPM recording, *Sounds Great 68*, produced in 1968 by band students in the music program of teacher, Walter Hofman, South Grenville District High School. The record, recorded in a studio in Ottawa and

produced by RCA studio in Montreal, was created in order for the Concert Band to raise money for the band to tour Quebec and the Maritimes. The cover for the record was designed by SGDHS student, Suzanne Seguin. The record, donated by Benny Secor, made the trip from Florida by a volunteer, Rosmarie, and the whole thing was organized by Will Thurber, all former SGDHS students. Rosmarie dropped the record off at SGDHS and I picked it up there. Now that's team work. Mr. Hofman had Concert, Stage, Dixieland, and German bands at South Grenville District High School and they performed locally and in Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Washington as well as those places mentioned above. We also have a 45 RPM record, entitled *Stadtmusikanten*, produced in 1976 by the students from South Grenville as well. Hofman inspired many students over the years and gave them a love for classical music. Pretty impressive for a small-town high school!



Walter Hofman
conducting the band.
Pic placed on
Facebook by Robin
Perry Blair

Mr. Hofman also played in and conducted the Prescott Citizens' Band, and performed with other stage and concert bands that toured Eastern Ontario, North America, and Germany. He was well-known for his excellent music program at the high school and he also started an all-girls marching band in Prescott. He was instrumental in forming the Fort Town Concert Association which operated here until just recently.

International Plowing Match and Rural Expo - Mon., Sept. 19th - Sat., Sept. 24th
Ontario Plowmen's Association, formed in 1911, has been holding these plowing matches in different areas of Ontario since 1913 with only a few years missed during this time. They serve as the host of the events held at a different location each year. This year the exhibition will be held in Kemptville, very fittingly on the grounds of the old Kemptville Agricultural College and area. The events focus on plowing competitions, machinery exhibits, farm animals, agricultural history of the area, and there will be displays by many local organizations telling about what they do and people showing their prowess with their homemade articles. Lots of vendors, entertainment, and all kinds of food available. There are expected to be about 80,000 people, with 25 to 30 exhibits, 60 to 150 tents, and the events cover about 55 acres. Our historical society will be there with an exhibit. Don't miss this event as everyone can find something of interest to them. For more information, visit www://plowingmatch.org /ipm2022.

J.P. Wiser, A Fish Story

While John Philip Wiser was chiefly known as a distiller of fine whiskies, he had a penchant for fishing, as many of his generation of Canadian men did at the turn of the last century. While there is not much written about him engaging in this pleasant past-time in Canadian waters, a letter from him dated March 6, 1902, a hundred and twenty years ago, reveals his passion for deep sea fishing off the coast of Miami,

Florida.

The letter was published in the Prescott Messenger newspaper and gave an account of hauling in over 1600 pounds of some 132 fish in all. It appears the only thing preventing a larger catch was the size of the box on board their fishing vessel, which had been filled to capacity.

Following their exertions, Wiser's fishing party "pulled up into the lea of a most charming island and had lunch, a cold bottle and a delicate collation that really made life worth the living, then a cigar under the overhanging palms in the balmy air". No doubt, this letter was intended to incite the envy of his readers, who were back in Prescott still enduring the rigours of winter's snow and ice.

From other sources, we know Wiser and his wife enjoyed stays at the



Royal Palm Hotel, one of Miami's first and most luxurious hotels. It was built a year after the City of Miami was incorporated in 1896 with a population scarcely exceeding 300 inhabitants, or roughly a tenth the size of Prescott at that time.

Wealthy individuals like J.P. Wiser flocked to the new winter sun destination. The Wiser's celebrated their 50th golden wedding anniversary at the Royal Palm in

1906. The Society has an invitation to their "At Home" entertainment at the hotel, dated Feb. 6, 1906, which is now on display at the new Prescott Museum.

Fraser Laschinger Prescott, Mar. 1, 2022

William Headlam Diary – Part 6

The diary is now moving into the fall of 1879 and the closing of race activities on the river and the shift to indoor activities such as dancing and billiards. The entries are as appropriate followed by the author's commentaries in italics.

Oct.1st Grand two miles race in Ogdensburg open to all.

These were the days when an international meet on the St. Lawrence River could be organized without regard to government rules and formalities relating to customs and immigration procedures which apply today.

Oct.7th A skiff race to first buoy and return between C. Tinkess & Josh Goodan. Tinkess won.

Oct. 10th Sam Blacklock got drunk and raised hell put in lock till sober.

One wonders if Mr. Blacklock got drunk in William Headlam's saloon. The lock refers to the cells in the basement of the new town hall on King Street, which had been erected 5 years earlier.

Oct. 16th Race in Brockville of Quinn of Prescott rating second. Race was a good one. Wisser went well in front till he came to ½ mile post when he had to stop and back up or he would have gone ashore. The race was 2 miles with a turn in lagoon streaks.

Lagoon streaks were a version of racing skiffs.

Oct. 23rd Boat Club decides to hold off Fraser medal race till Spring. Open only to Dolman, Wisser and Easter.

Dolman had won the Rowing Club's silver cup at the end of August. Wisser was also a competitive racer. Headlam records both an Easter and Easton as racers at various meets but never in the same race and one wonders if his spelling of the name is faulty.

Nov. 18th The fire men held an assembly last night, one of their principal officers brought a disreputable character to it, several ladies from the Burg left the room, the dance was a failure, four girls of doubtful character were there and kept dancing till the last.

This is an amusing account of a dance that appears to have mixed people of different backgrounds and temperament with an unhappy result. While judged a failure by the diarist, other participants may have had a different opinion.

Weds. Nov.26th, 1879 There has been a harvest day for the Rev. Gentry of Prescott. S. Cains and Miss Ewert; Pat Barnes and Miss Madden; Haggerty and Miss Cauglin; J. Ourtell and Miss ____.

All of the above were married today.

There is no known record of a Rev. Gentry at a Prescott church during this period, but visiting ministers were often invited to participate in religious services including marriages at the different Prescott churches.

Fraser Laschinger Prescott 2022

Welcome to our newest members, Joan Rupert-Barkley and Frank McAuley.

Memberships

Annual Membership: \$20.00

Life Membership: \$200

Make checks payable to Grenville County Historical Society Inc. and forward them to:

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