



THE GRENVILLE SENTINEL



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Upcoming Events

The Bytown & Prescott Model Railroad Club will be hosting the 1st Annual Model Train and Toy Show on April 13th, 2024 at the Leo Boivin Community Centre, 444 Prince St., Prescott. Admission: Adults \$5.00 Kids under 12 free. CASH only. See operating layouts, displays, model train sales, swaps & more. Our historical society will have a table there as well.

Annual General Meeting

We held our AGM on Feb. 7th, 2024 at our headquarters in the old Grand Trunk Railway Station. President Fraser Laschinger chaired the meeting, summing up our accomplishments over the past year. Annual reports were submitted. Election of officers was held and below is our new Board of Directors for the coming year. Thanks were expressed by Jane Ramsay to Fraser for all his hard work and support of others during the past two years while he served as president. After the meeting ended, refreshments and good conversation were enjoyed by all.

Board of Directors for 2024 -2025

Past President - Fraser Laschinger
President - Jane Ramsay
Vice President - David Graham
Secretary - Valerie Schulz
Treasurer -David Robertson
Research - Bonnie Gaylord
Collections - Valerie Schulz

Special Events - Fraser Laschinger
Membership - Gini Leonard
Plaques - Fraser Laschinger
Newsletter - Bonnie
Publicity & Facebook - Tom Van Dusen
Webmaster - David Graham
Member-at-large - John Wilson

Greetings from the President

Hello. My name is Jane Ramsay. I am honoured to be serving as the President of the Historical Society. Unlike many in the organization, I have no previous ties or relations in Grenville County. However, I do share a keen interest in Ontario history. Upon retirement I chose this area due to its foundations in the Province. Thankfully my husband was in agreement.

I have been with the Society for over two years. During that time I have volunteered alongside fantastic people who have been very patient with me during my learning curve.

I look forward to the next two years. Please drop in and say hello.



Fraser Laschinger is congratulating Jane on her new position of president of the society.

New Display at our King Street Location

David Graham and Tom Van Dusen worked together to mount a display for the window at 159 King Street East in Prescott where we store the old newspapers that we received from Beth Morris. We hope to start on the digitizing of these newspapers before too long. The display looks very appealing and advertises our Archives at 500 Railway Avenue and the Prescott Museum on King Street. Thank you David and Tom for taking on this job.

William Headlam Diary – Part 15

1889 April 1st Electric light was tried out tonight. Gave good

satisfaction in the stores. Failed in the street.

This entry, one of only two for all of 1889, was actually earth shaking news in its way. The harnessing of electricity for domestic and industrial usages was to change the way of life for all people, albeit it came gradually to all depending on where you lived. Prescott was actually in the vanguard in this development, as much larger cities like Montreal and Toronto had only introduced electricity a few years before. Harnessing the power of Niagara Falls in Ontario was yet more than a decade and a half away. At the Historical

Society we have photos from the turn of the century of the interiors of stores on King Street showing electric ceiling lights.

Nov. 1st Sailing race between Evangaline of Prescott and Yukwa of Montreal.

This was pretty late in the season to be holding sailing races. The laconic entry suggests the Prescott boat did not win.

April 2nd 1890 Prescott sailing club formed today. H. Wisner Commodore J.P. McArthy (sic) Vice., H. Robinson Secy., H. Horwood Treas. First race came off May 24th. My boat won the open skiff association. C. Horwood sailed her.

This was a significant development in the Prescott boating world. Sailing had become a popular pastime and soon would eclipse rowing for the masses. Harlow Wisner provided the leadership and resources needed to get this initiative off the ground in a small town like Prescott.



Commodore Harlow Wisner

Unfortunately he died four years later and the club, along with the Prescott Rowing Club of which Harlow was also a key member, seem to have died out not long after Harlow passed from the scene.

May 15th Meeting held in my room to form a sailing association, delegates from Ogdensburg, Clayton, Gananoque, Brockville, Prescott. H. Wisner, Comm. Dr. Bain Clayton, Vice. A. Port Ogd. Secy, B.H. Walton, Gananoque. Tres.



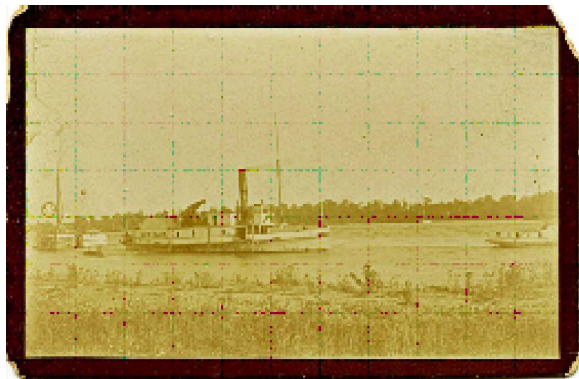
St. Lawrence Sailing Championship Race
Photographed at the start by
J.T. Conlin for the Saturday Globe

Little is known about this association at the Society or what became of it.

Early Days in Edwardsburgh cont'd.

For Friends at Home is a book about a Scottish emigrant that came to Grenville County in 1845 and tells about some of his successes, his failures and his exploits settling in a new land.

On his arrival in Montreal, James had intended to travel on to Toronto, but took on a job as a baker in Montreal. On June 2, 1845 a man visiting the bakeshop said he was looking for a baker to work in a village on the river near Prescott, so James immediately decided to take him up on his offer and left the next day in a caleche with one small chest and another that was to be forwarded to his destination. His adventures had begun.



The Chieftain, a mail steamer

At Lachine he boarded a mail steamer, the Chieftain, at noon, passed three rapids, and arrived at the Cascades at 4 o'clock, where he boarded a stagecoach

which held nine passengers and a massive amount of luggage.

At Coteau du Lac (La Coteau), they then boarded a boat, the Canada, that landed in Matilda, 15 miles below Prescott, on June 3rd at 7 a.m. From here James left his trunk in a store and carried a small bundle with him, walking the six miles to Edwardsburgh [Cardinal]. It is surprising that they were able to travel such a great distance so quickly.

James' first impression was that the area was well-settled and cleared with some good old farm houses, just about every one with a large orchard. James finally arrived at the store where Mr. MacPherson was the keeper. He was able to examine the bake house where he was to work and started immediately to prepare the bread for the next day. The owner of the shop was Mr. Elliott, a contractor on the canal being built along the St. Lawrence River; he was responsible for a section of the canal, had a farm, a store, a bake house, a wife and three children.

As Mr. Elliott was also in charge of sections at Beauharnois and Williamsburgh, he spent little time in Edwardsburgh. Mr. Elliott finished his section of the canal in September 1846. James was able to board at the Elliott house, along with Mr. MacPherson and two teamsters (farm servants). Canalers made up the majority of their customers.



This photo taken in 1958 shows what remained of the old canal on the south side of Cardinal, the east part already submerged, but even that part is gone now due to the construction of the Seaway.

James had one day off a week and travelled to Matilda and Prescott on wagons when the teamsters made their trips. On these trips he saw many good farms, cleared fields, he “past the remains of an old windmill and a number of roofless stone houses, monuments of war” [Battle of the Windmill site]. Next was a barracks surrounded by a fortification and battery [Fort Wellington].

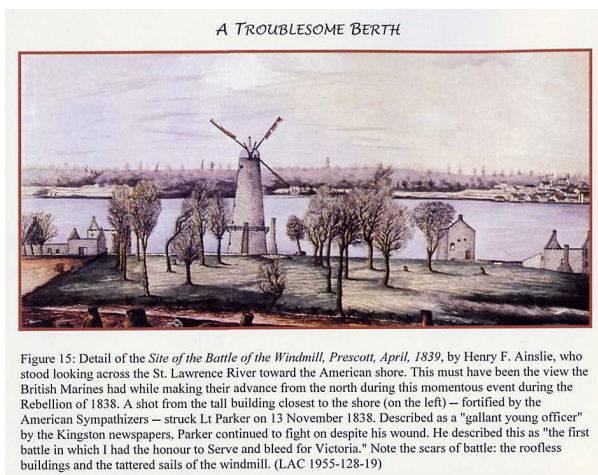


Figure 15: Detail of the *Site of the Battle of the Windmill, Prescott, April, 1839*, by Henry F. Ainslie, who stood looking across the St. Lawrence River toward the American shore. This must have been the view the British Marines had while making their advance from the north during this momentous event during the Rebellion of 1838. A shot from the tall building closest to the shore (on the left) — fortified by the American Sympathizers — struck Lt Parker on 13 November 1838. Described as a “gallant young officer” by the Kingston newspapers, Parker continued to fight on despite his wound. He described this as “the first battle in which I had the honour to Serve and bleed for Victoria.” Note the scars of battle: the roofless buildings and the tattered sails of the windmill. (LAC 1955-128-19)

The book, “A Troublesome Berth” written by Bob Andrews tells many details about the Battle of the Windmill and is available for purchase at our archives.

James wrote “The town of Prescott is a stirring little place . . . About the same size and directly opposite is the town of Ogdensburgh, State of New York.” James was able to visit Ogdensburgh with one of the teamsters and had some interesting comments about their streets. “If a person did not look to his feet he would run a fair chance of getting his ankles knocked out of joint and where the pavement is wood, he would be all the better that his legs did not possess the faculty of breaking.” They were able to cross the river in a steam ferry, fare was a yolk shilling (7 pence ½ penny Canadian currency). Here they picked up some superfine flour milled in Ogdensburgh (sic).

“The village of Edwardsburg (sic) consists of a few good large houses, two taverns, several grocery and dry-goods stores and a presbyterian church, The canalers live in shanties generally their own property, value 9 or 10 dollars. They are in no regular order but scattered about every where . . . A good many of them speak the Irish language . . . The only French I hear now is a few indians who sometimes come around selling fish. They have a little English but they are better at French.”

He tells us that there is lots of river traffic steamers, barges, rafts, 3 mail steamers one of which goes upriver every morning and one down in the afternoon between Kingston and Coteau de Lac. The steamers have to contend with the rapids at

Edwardsburgh and it was slow going up the river. In the winter the mail travelled by sleigh one up and one down between Montreal and Kingston every day passing by his door daily.

Throoptown Separate School, March 1934

“Throoptown Separate School No. 15, Augusta was built in 1892 by Father W. E. Walsh at the request of His Grace Archbishop Cleary of Kingston.

One half acre of land for site and playground was donated by Mr. M. Cullen. Carpenter work was done by Mr. Wm. Langstaff of Garretton, Ontario, assisted by the supporters of the Separate School who drew lumber from Bellamy Station free of charge besides assisting the carpenter. The cost of the building amounted to \$700.”

Teachers were instructed to record the history of their schools in their school registers; this one covered the years 1934-1944 and we copied it on June 16, 1999 when the old school registers were located at our archives.

The school board decided to close the Throoptown school and build a new Catholic school in North Augusta. Space in an abandoned public school was rented for two months until the new separate school was completed in 1959. The new school operated until 1970.

Obituary of Ron Quackenbush

Long-time member, Ron Quackenbush, passed away in Brockville on Feb. 3, 2024. He was a frequent visitor to our archives and a great history volunteer in the Kemptville area. His obituary was published in The Recorder & Times on Feb. 10, 2024.

Renewal of Memberships

Thanks to those who have renewed their memberships for 2024. We do appreciate your support. If you have not looked after this, please take care of it soon, as this will be the **last issue** of the newsletter you will receive if you have not renewed. We accept checks and etransfers. Make sure you specify the money is for membership. We publish six newsletters a year and your membership entitles you to research at the archives for half-price.

Annual Membership: \$20.00

Life Membership: \$200

You may etransfer funds to gchs@truespeed.ca or make checks payable to Grenville County Historical Society Inc. and forward them to:

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