



THE GRENVILLE SENTINEL

500 Railway Ave., Box 982, Prescott, ON K0E 1T0

phone: 613 925 0489 email: gchs@truespeed.ca
www.grenvillecountyarchives.ca

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Upcoming Events: *Annual Dinner* - Social 6 pm, Dinner 7 pm, October 12th, Prescott Golf Club. The Golf Club has planned an excellent dinner for us, and our speaker, Rene Schoemaker, will talk about the Dutch immigration to our area in the 1950s. GCHS@truespeed.ca for reservations or call 613 925-3201. (Chicken or Haddock, \$35.)

Queen Elizabeth II Died September 8, 2022

Queen Elizabeth, born in 1926, served the people of the Commonwealth for 70 years with dignity and honour. She never wavered from her commitment to the people of Britain at the age of 21 years old when she promised “my whole life, whether it be long or short, shall be devoted to your service.” During her time as queen, 12 prime ministers in Canada served under her, with her often giving advice and showing leadership. She had a wonderful sense of humour and treated everyone the same, be they everyday subjects or those in high power.

Flags were lowered to half-mast in respect for the queen’s passing. There was a huge outpouring of grief from her subjects and from people the world over, with television coverage of this major event going on for many days. Most cities and towns had Books of Condolences that individuals could sign.

We were fortunate in this area as Queen Elizabeth paid a visit to Prescott and Fort Wellington in 1984 when Prescott celebrated its 150th anniversary of incorporation and Ontario celebrated its bicentennial. A large crowd of individuals and school groups assembled on the grounds of Fort Wellington to await the Queen’s arrival after she and Philip disembarked at the CN Station. They were accompanied by Sandra Lawn, Prescott’s Mayor, the planning committee, and members of the Jessup’s Corps, a recreated Loyalist Regiment. It was an exciting day with lots of cheering and military demonstrations. The queen signed the town’s new guest book, a wonderful historical keepsake for the town to help celebrate their 150th anniversary.



The desk and chair used for the signing are now housed in the Leeds and Grenville County Court House.



Queen Elizabeth will be missed. Her son, Charles III is our new reigning monarch.

New Plaque in Prescott

Joanne Crack, who passed away in 2019, was honoured recently by the Town of Prescott. On August 10th a plaque near the foot of Centre Street was erected at the Prescott waterfront that detailed her contributions to the area. Joanne started the Facebook group called The Prescott Anchor which featured news and photos of the ships passing in this area, taught participants about the ships, and was often seen along the river greeting the ships as they went by. Mayor Brett Todd, one of the speakers at the ceremony said “She was an important person in the culture of Prescott and she loved sharing life along our river.” The plaque is attached to the base of a ship’s anchor that had been stored in Prescott’s town hall.

Heritage Building in North Augusta Destroyed by Fire

In February 2022 fire destroyed a very old building in North Augusta, originally built as a hotel. Located at 9100 County Road

15, Con. 9 Lot 34 east half, the land on which it stands was granted in 1848 by the Crown, 100 acres to William Humphries. He was listed in the 1848 Augusta census as an innkeeper with an inn on Con. 9 Lot 34. In the 1851 and 1861 censuses of Augusta, William and his family are living in a two storey stone house, and his name is listed on the property with a hotel in the 1861-2 Walling’s map. This building may have been built before he was formally granted the land in 1848.



9100 County Road 15, North Augusta

John Buck Davis bought the property in 1875 and a bandstand was constructed at the front of the hotel for the entertainment of customers and villagers and business thrived there until the temperance movement started to flourish.

In Apr. 1902 fire struck the village of North Augusta destroying the Davis Hotel. Goldie Connell is quoted in *Augusta Royal Township Number Seven*, “Mrs. J. Davis’s hotel and large barns valued at \$5000, insurance \$2200.”

Unfortunately, this heritage home again burned down in 2022, and this time they were not able to rebuild it. This is a great loss for the village of North Augusta.



Post card of the Davis Hotel,
date unknown



North Augusta fire Feb. 9, 2022
by Bill Tennant on Facebook

Running Water Transformed in Prescott

At the turn of the century in 1900, Prescott set about to transform the lives of its residents by introducing a waterworks and sewer system. Two contracts were awarded, one for the construction of an 83,000 gallon storage tank at the north end of town on Wood Street and another to the firm of Clark and Connolly to install the pipes and conduits to hook up houses and businesses.

A decade earlier the Water and Light Commission had been established and headway had already been made to install electricity in the town, starting with some street lamps on King Street in 1888. It was to take several decades, however before

everyone in town had electricity in their homes and businesses.



This water tower was the original built in 1889 and it was replaced in 1970 by a new cement one.

Running water was a different proposition, however, as it was going to take a lot more money to provide the town with sewer system. Not only did it entail digging up all the streets and yards to lay the pipes to individual buildings, but a large tank to provide pressure and a water treatment plant both had to be built to ensure safe drinking water. A sewage treatment plant on the other hand, lay decades in the future. Initially pipes just discharged raw sewage into the St. Lawrence River below town.

Several years ago I came across an old ledger in the town hall archives which turned out to be the minute book detailing each water installation in Prescott, commencing in the spring of 1900. It is a very large ledger and runs to around 500 pages covering the first fifty years of water installations. Details concerning individual buildings are set out, usually an entire page for each building. The amount of detail for hookups in the first decade provided a fascinating insight as to how the system

was initially implemented.

It may come as no surprise to learn that the first installation in May of 1900 was to a house at 554 Henry Street West for a Mr. John Carruthers, who happened to be the Chairman of the Public Utilities Commission, a former mayor of Prescott, and prominent businessman in town.

In a way it was fortunate that he was an early beneficiary of having indoor plumbing, since he wouldn't enjoy it for long, as he died on April 1st the next year.



The first house to get water was the home of John Carruthers at 554 Henry Street West in Prescott.

Details of the Carruthers' installation, which appear on the first page of the ledger, provide a template for all that follows for other buildings. It starts out by giving the owner's name and place of residence, John Carruthers Residence Henry St N.S. At this time there were no street numbers on buildings in Prescott so reference was made to on which side of the street the building was located. Next are several lines of details as to the size and type of pipes and connectors used. Then there is a listing of the options the householder contracted for his house. For

Carruthers, it was a tap \$6; Bath tub \$3; Water closet (toilet) \$3; Lawn Sprinkling 3000 sq. ft. \$4; for a grand total of \$16.

In John Morris's book *The History of Prescott*, on page 207, it is stated simply that customers were required to pay \$1 in advance for a sewer connection and the cost of one lavatory and tap was \$6 per year. From the minute book it shows that depending on the options selected, each customer would pay annual rates based on the number of options they selected. Examining the ledger reveals that many residents living in more modest homes only paid \$6 a year for a single tap. These households would not have had a toilet installed so would have had to continue to use their outdoor privies. For the larger, more luxurious residences, the options could encompass much more. In the case of Isaac Wiser, the playboy son who lived in the mansion his father had built for him on the riverside at the west end of town, the annual bill came to \$36 and included 4 additional taps, 2 toilets, a bath tub, an outdoor fountain and lawn sprinkling of 11,000 sq. ft.

All the hotels in town took early advantage of having running water. Because of the size of their establishments, the bills ran much higher. As an example, the Revere House at the corner of King and Edward Streets (now Bobby's Restaurant) had an annual bill of \$56, which included a bar tap for \$10, multiple toilets and urinals, and a tap for the stables (\$10). It also included a \$4.50 charge for street sprinkling.

The entire operation did not go entirely smoothly in the first year, as is detailed in Morris's book. There were complaints that

the contractors were destroying the streets and sidewalks and injuring people's properties. There were also abuses cited of people wasting water. Initially, water was not paid for by metered rates. The fee structure was evidently meant to cover differing consumption by individual households. By 1906, metered rates were introduced with a cost of 30 cents per 624 gallons and a minimum yearly rate of \$5. Despite some growing pains, the citizens of Prescott welcomed the convenience of indoor plumbing, which revolutionized household chores and the comfort of everyday living. The twentieth century beckoned with the promise of more such progress in the lives of everyone.

Fraser Laschinger, Prescott, August 29, 2022

William Headlam Diary – Part 8

We pick up the diary from April 7, 1880, the springtime when activities on the St. Lawrence River again become the focus of William's diary. Commentaries on the entries are in italics.

Apr. 7th Whitney and Plumb landed their new Steam Yacht The James Buckley this morning.

There are many Plumbs and Whitneys living in Prescott at this time, so identifying them without having their initials is a challenge, since the author is unaware of the yacht named after James Buckley, the coal dealer and ship chandler who had his business on Water St. Isaac Plumb, who lived in Prescott, was a captain on the Prescott-Ogdensburg Ferry company, a family business operated at the time by Henry Plumb of Ogdensburg. He

certainly was qualified to operate a steam yacht.

April 29th James Buckley made her first run.

Headlam was sparing on details and one is left to wonder whether the yacht was used for pleasure or business. Wealthy individuals like James Buckley were acquiring personal steam yachts at this time to enjoy the river and the Thousand Islands.

May 1st Str. Algerian down today, first boat of Royal Mail Line.

The Algerian, owned by the Richelieu and Ontario Navigation Co., was a steamer employed on the Upper St. Lawrence between Montreal and Kingston, and able to shoot the rapids on the down river trip. It was later re-named the Cornwall.

May 5th Harlow Wiser fell out of his new shell boat to-day.

This is probably only noteworthy to Headlam as providing an opportunity to take a cheap shot at the young lad who was a keen racer and just happened to be the eldest son of the richest man in town, distiller J. P. Wiser.

May 25th Boat races in Brockville. Quinn won, came is as he liked.

As we have read in the October 16th diary entry of 1879, Quinn was one of the more competitive racers of the Prescott Rowing Club, but had placed second in Brockville the previous fall. Winning the Brockville race the following spring would have been gratifying to him.

May 27th Str. Armstrong made her last trip this afternoon at 2:30. She is going into dry dock and thence to Brockville.

We've seen reference to the Armstrong before on Aug. 12th 1879 in Part 5 of Diary in our Mar/Apr edition of the Sentinel. In July 1880, the Armstrong was sent to Brockville to inaugurate a new rail car ferry service between that town and Morristown in New York State.

June 10th McArthy (sic) and Purkis got their new Steamer (City of Belleville). She is a beauty.

June 17th Belleville began to ferry this morning at 6:30.

I.D. Purkis was a prominent merchant in Prescott who had many business interests, including as an agent for the Richelieu and Ontario Navigation Company and providing the dock in front of his Water Street business east of Centre Street for the Plumb ferry service. At this time he got into the ferry service himself, presumably with John McCarthy, owner of the Grenville Brewery.

Aug. 15th All the glass in the Hines (sic) Printing office was broken last night.

The Conservative Messenger was a Prescott newspaper founded by Charles J. Hynes and published by him until 1882. The name of the newspaper was changed to The Prescott Messenger and continued under succeeding owners as a conservative voice in opposition to its rival reform Telegraph. No doubt the Messenger had published something that offended supporters of the reform movement.

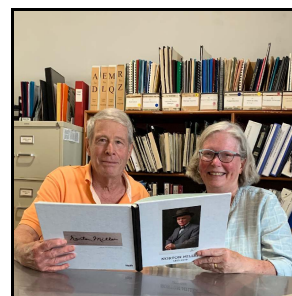
Fraser Laschinger, Prescott, 2022

New Member

We had an enthusiastic researcher, Sheila Isiah from Calgary, AB working on the Willard family this past week, and she took out a new membership in GCHS.

Book Donated

Researcher, Joanne Griener from Edmonton, AB, recently donated a book about her great grandfather, Norton Miller, to our archives. She has done an excellent job of telling about his very interesting, accomplished life. Thank you, Joanne, for presenting us with this beautiful book.



Fraser Laschinger, GCHS president, & Joanne looking over her new book, *Norton Miller*.

Memberships

Annual Membership: \$20.00

Life Membership: \$200

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

Gini Leonard,
Membership Chair,
GCHS,
500 Railway Ave., Box 982,
Prescott, ON
K0E 1T0

Editor: Bonnie Gaylord