



spring 2011 **newsletter** VOLUME 9, NUMBER 1

This is the 26th newsletter published by the Historical Society since 2003 and the first to be printed in our new format. We are pleased to now be able to efficiently circulate the newsletter by email to the majority of our members who use computers and also still circulate it by mail to those who prefer to receive it the “old fashioned” way.

It is also an opportunity for me to sign off as editor of the previous newsletters and to welcome Bob Stanley who takes over the enjoyable duty of keeping our Historical Society members informed about events and activities, while at the same time conveying informative and interesting vignettes from the pages of our history.

As a final note I would like to thank our members for the privilege of serving as editor.
John Cowan

From the Prez:

Spring has passed us by and the summer season for the Blockhouse Museum is just around the corner. In fact we opened up with the Societies volunteers on Saturday 21st of May and had a splendid weekend weather wise which brought out a large number of visitors. The week prior, May 14th was clean up day and our volunteer Manager, Ellen Hackett sent out a notice to the membership looking for volunteers, and had a wonderful response. We arrived with buckets and mops in hand and set out to remove all those creatures that had made the blockhouse their home for the winter.

She (the Blockhouse that is), is looking all spruced up and ready to go. We open officially on June 18th and will have a variety of activities going on in the Blockhouse Park. We have been fortunate this year to obtain grants from the Federal and Provincial Governments to hire students, and after interviewing a number of excellent candidates, these students have been now been hired. We are ready for a successful summer season, and if you have any visitors and are not sure were to take them, why not drop by, admission is free but the Society does rely on donations to help maintain the day to day operations of the Blockhouse.

Next Event:

Tuesday, May 31, at 7:30 pm

Snowdon’s Corners

Wayne Poapst,

Our member, Wayne Poapst will help us to relive the hardships of Irish immigrants who came from Ulster to Grenville County in the 1800’s and eventually established a close knit community which became known as “the Snowdon Settlement”.

We will hear how these hardy immigrants overcame deprivation and misfortune in the “Land of Nod” to establish a close knit community which survives to this day.

Hard working Irish Settlers clear land



No Scots on the Scotch line.



**Awa' wi ye
An' Bile Yer Heid!**

Ref:
Scottish Curses and
Insults, David Ross

Most of us have walked some part of the "Scotch line" near Merrickville and imagined the hardy Scots who scratched their way through the wilderness in the 1800's to establish settlements along the route named after them.

But, we would have been mistaken. In spite of the name "Scotch Line" there is no evidence that any Scots were involved in working or settling along this famous route. No, the Scots came later and mainly (and wisely) settled in the already more established Eastern Ontario communities. From there they built the political and commercial successes of the country to become Canada.

Why then the name Scotch Line? And if not the Scots who?

"I have dug deeper than I ever planned" reports member David Hammonds, "and believe I have found the 'mother lode' on the subject".

He found that the definitive line between West and East Jersey, surveyed in 1687 is in parts such as Hopewell County, NJ still referred to as the "Scotch line", with the verb "to scotch" meaning to mark, cut or score the ground.

Further says David, "I am reasonably confident the term refers to a line marked on the ground - as a 'base line' or 'scotch line' which could be found again easily by surveyors who would later return to survey lots for settlers."

It is also significant that "Scotch Line" is the designation of numerous other Ontario pioneer routes. One such runs from Collingwood to Owen Sound in the Bruce Peninsula. Of course the Scotch line in Perth is well known as is the fact both these areas well well populated by Scots after 1815. But undoubtedly the survey line which defined properties in this area was "scotched" much earlier, by surveyors from the British military.

Research of the Scotch Line by David Hammonds,

Blockhouse Opening

Saturday June 18, 2:pm

official Blockhouse opening

featuring:

ribbon cutting by Merrickville

Chef Mayor Doug Struthers

school historical essay contest

winners in all classes

pioneer crafts quilting and rug

hooking and ropemaking

traditional music, bagpiper and

Maplewood Ceilidh Band

Opening Ceremony at 2:00 pm.

Come early and enjoy additional

demonstrations and displays in

the Blockhouse Park



2008 school essay contest

winners with Denis Faulkner and

Nina Donald (and some guy in a

suit in the background.)

2011 Heritage Award

How fortunate we are that Ken Watson was attracted to the Rideau shores near Elgin in 1995. Taking an interest in both the Rideau Canal and the development of Internet websites, and finding little on the subject on the web, Ken decided to learn how to build websites by creating one about the Rideau Canal. This led to the development of www.rideau-info.com in 1996, a non-commercial website, now the largest canal-related website in the world. (a hobby gone wild as described by Ken)

Although some important Rideau writings had existed prior to Ken's "hobby", there was virtually no information of substance available on the newly, fast growing world wide web. Ken has remedied that shortfall immeasurably.



**Merit award winner
Ken Watson**

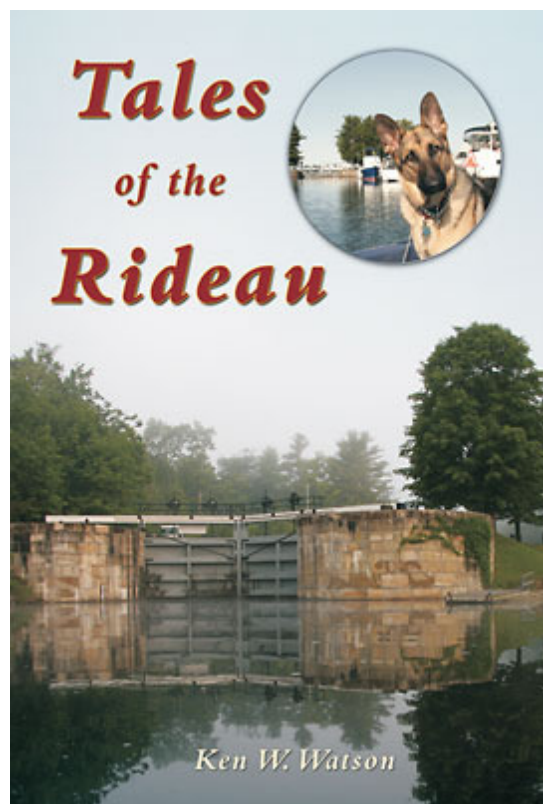
His web site www.rideau-info.com contains abundant information for the visitor and scholar alike. In addition he has developed informative web sites for and website creation skills for several other organizations including the Rideau Canal Museum, the Delta Mill Society, the Kingston Historical Society, Rideau Heritage Network, Lockmaster's House Museum, and the Canadian Canal Society. As well as contributing historic vignettes and developing their web page, Ken is actively involved with The Friends of the Rideau,

We at the Merrickville Historical Society are particularly grateful that Ken has also built and has continued maintained our own web site, merrickvillehistory.org, which receives thousands of "hits" from all over the world from people interested in Merrickville History.

It is noteworthy that all of Ken's prodigious work for these organizations has been generously donated.

2011 Heritage Award . . . continued

In addition to the material he has made available through the world wide web, Ken has published numerous Rideau related books and dozens of articles from A History of the Rideau Lockstations, in 2000, to his latest, Tales of the Rideau, which he introduced at our September speaker's lecture .



It is in recognition of his outstanding research and documentation of the History, Heritage and Culture of the Rideau Corridor and his generous willingness to share his knowledge and research with us, that Ken Watson has been recognized with the 2011 Merrickville & District Historical Society Award of Merit.

(Most understand that the pride of a community lies in its history and heritage. In recognition of the efforts of many individuals to preserve these core values of Merrickville-Wolford, the Merrickville and District Historical Society in 2002 established an annual awarding of "Heritage Awards of Merit". Ken Watson's is the 20th award so granted)

Merrickville Refugees

Since 2003 we have worked diligently to protect and preserve the valuable archival records gathered over the years, and to make them accessible to the Community.

We were successful last year in transferring our complete digital archive data base consisting of some 3000 records to the Heritage Room of the Merrickville Library, where it can now be accessed for observation and research.

But suddenly this spring we found all of our progress in jeopardy. When the Old Town Hall was sold to the Merrickville Legion we found ourselves without a home. On short notice we were forced to seek alternate safe and secure storage. In spite of a thorough search we could find no suitable space. President Nina Donald and Committee members had visions of sitting in the snow, surrounded by boxes of irreplaceable Community records.

To the rescue came a good Samaritan, the North Granville Historical Society (NGHS) called to say that they would make space available for us at their premises. Once again the Society volunteers stepped forward and everything was packed. On a snowy morning, February 28th the movers arrived to transport all to the Old Town Hall in Kemptville where the NGHS Archives are stored.



Merrickville's precious historical records safely and temporarily stored in Kemptville. Many thanks go out to the NGHS for their generous offer of support and to the MDHS volunteers who conducted this important rescue of vestiges of our history and heritage.

More from the Prez:

We had some wonderful speakers over the last year and we have more to come, our speaker for May 31 of course will be Wayne Poapst, and we already have interesting speakers arranged in the Fall for the last Tuesday of September and October.



the Rideau King (Technically, Rideau King 2nd)

We don't usually have any meeting in the summer months but this year we thought we would try something a little different with a boat tour on the Rideau King, from Merrickville to Beckett's Landings, August 6th. We are already receiving reservation (**613) 269 4289** but we have to have a full commitment for our plans to go ahead. We will keep you posted and let you know how it all went.

Membership Matters

Membership in the historical Society is renewed annually from January to December at a present cost of \$10 per person or \$15 per family. Life memberships are also available for a cost of \$100.

If you have not already submitted your 2011 dues, please do so by cheque mailed to: MDHS Membership, Box 294, Merrickville, Ontario K0G 1N0:

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Merrickville & District Historical Society
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