

The Old Steamer *Weslemkoon* A Picnic Group Outing, Turn of the Century Style



The information accompanying this turn of the century photograph is sparse, providing the year, 1900, and saying only that the passengers are off on a picnic. No locale is given, although the name of the vessel probably identifies the lake south of Bancroft. Obviously hats back then were *de rigueur*. They must be about ready to shove off as a blast of steam can be seen shooting from the funnel. We count fifty-four people, baby included, and would certainly recommend the man and woman on top of the wheelhouse find a safer spot for the voyage! Hopefully they had calm water for the round trip.

Dr. Karolyn Smardz Frost HCHS May Speaker

The recipient for the 2007 Governor General's Award for nonfiction, Dr. Karolyn Smardz Frost, will be the Society's month of May speaker. She will talk about her book *I've Got A Home In Glory Land, A Lost Tale of the Underground Railroad*. She was formerly the Executive Director of the Ontario Historical Society and the key-

note speaker last year at George Brown College's 40th anniversary celebration where she talked about the college's namesake, George Brown, who was a publisher, politician and anti-slavery activist. This year marks the 120th anniversary of the OHS, an organization with a mandate to collect, research, learn and teach about the wealth of heritage resources we share in our province of Ontario. The meeting notice is posted on page 4.

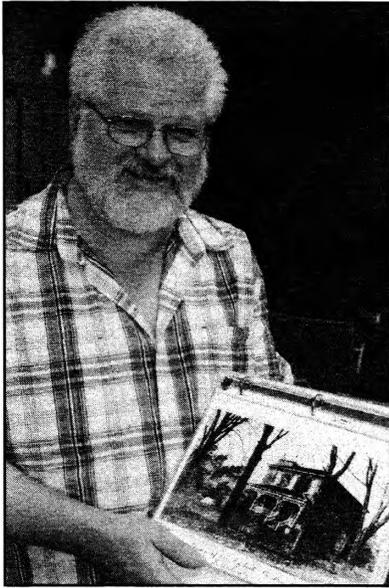
In This Issue

- Rum Runners Tour
- "I've Got A Home In Glory Land"
- The *Weslemkoon*
- Did You Know...
- Join the HCHS
- Stirling's 150th
- Lady Aeronauts
- History and Ecology
- Troubled Heritage
- The "Good Olde Days"



A Second Chance!! Rum Runner Tour, June 21st

The May 10 Rum Runner bus tour is sold out! A second tour has been arranged for Saturday, June 21st. For information or to reserve tickets call Vera Morton at **613-966-4859**. After May 15th call Bruce or Cathy Bedell at **613-968-4130**. We suggest you call as early as possible as there is a waiting list for the May 10 trip and many of these folks may now decide to go on June 21st.



Guest speaker Lewis Zandbergen displays an album of old Stirling photographs. The one seen here is of the former Parker home on the northwest corner of James and Victoria Streets. Stirling marks its 150th anniversary in 2008.

Stirling Marks 150th Anniversary In August

by Lewis Zandbergen

Stirling lies nestled in a valley created by the Oak Hills to the south, the Trent River Valley to the west and the "Ridge" to the north and east. The community straddles the boundary line between Sidney Township on the south and Rawdon Township on the north. Rawdon Creek slices through the village on the way to the Trent River. The fast-flowing waters of the creek gave early settlers the power they needed to run their grist, saw and woollen mills. The first mill constructed in the eastern extremity of what is now the "downtown" area of Stirling, was built circa 1807 by a man named Samuel Rosebush. He finished a mill begun earlier by John Bleeker; both Rosebush and Bleeker were of United Empire Loyalist stock. That mill was a crude affair powered by an over-

shot waterwheel; a later owner, Edward Fidlar, completely rebuilt the mill of local limestone following a fire in 1845. It was, along with several later mills, to become the nucleus of a village which sprang up on the banks of the creek. By 1846, the village boasted a population of 125, one grist and saw mill, two stores and four taverns.

Stirling was known by various names before its incorporation: Seldon Mills, Fidlar Mills, Rawdon Mills, and Rawdon Village. Up until 1853 it was known as Rawdon Village, no doubt in deference to the man after whom the township and the creek had been named: Baron Rawdon, Earl of Moira, later Governor of Bengal and Governor of Malta.

During the decades to the 1830s large numbers of Scots settlers came into the area and Edward Fidlar, who came from the Orkney Islands, was among the earliest. Another early Scot was Robert Parker who came from Ayr, near Stirling, Scotland. He arrived in 1821 to monitor family interests in the Marmora Mine. It is through the work primarily of these two men that Stirling received its name. Fidlar and Parker and the Scots settlers decided the area so favoured their homeland in its natural beauty and scenic splendour that the town was named Stirling.

Stirling is an enchanting village with tree-lined streets, limestone buildings, magnificent Victorian architecture and turn-of-the-century storefronts. Two disastrous fires, one in 1883, the other in 1908, did not spell the end for the village and today boutiques and antique shops mix with the businesses which have survived since the 1880s. A thriving arts community includes painters, woodworkers, writers, a flourishing theatre, and regular musical venues.

Stirling will celebrate its 150th birth-

"Forty Parachute Descents The Past Season And Not One Failure!" 19th Century Lady Aeronauts



Among the many treasures at the Hastings County Archives are this flyer and the one on page 3 promoting Mademoiselle Mayo and Miss Grace Levere, Lady Aeronauts. These daring damsels would ascend in balloons and bail out to the delight

of the enthralled onlookers below.

The Mayo flyer goes on at great length to explain why hot air balloons are better than gas balloons. They are cheaper, ascend much faster, and there can be no cause for failure on account of bad gas. Numerous testimonials from satisfied customers are included in the flyer. Here is one from a Mr. J.B.

cont'd on page 3

cont'd. on page 3

Aeronauts cont'd from page 2

Johnston of New Castle, Pennsylvania: "I wish to express to you the thanks of the New Castle Association for your admirable and in every way successful bal-

THE 10TH YEAR OF

WILLIAMS & YOUNG,

THE

World's Greatest Aeronauts.

The Most Successful Parachutists Living.

After a most successful trip through Europe and the Continent, the United States, and Canada, and having made over **Four Hundred Ascensions**, we are **still alive**, and wish to inform all managers of **Expositions, Fairs, Festivals, and Fourth of July Celebrations** throughout the U. S. A. and Canada, that we are ready to contract for **Ascensions for the Season 1891-92**.

We also wish to announce that we have everything entirely new, **NEW BALLOONS, NEW PARACHUTES, NEW RIGGING, NEW and ELEGANT PRINTING, NEW LITHOGRAPHS, etc.**, thus assuring us a successful Season for ourselves as well as for the managers who engage us.

Miss GRACE LEVERE,

The World Renowned Lady Aeronaut,

Can also be engaged to make **Ascensions** under our management.

NO OTHER SPECTACLE PROVES SO ATTRACTIVE.

Apply at once for terms, giving full particulars as to

How Many Ascensions are required and on What Dates.

so as to save time and correspondence.

Prompt attention will be given to all applications. Address

WILLIAMS & YOUNG,
Aeronauts,
HUNT'S HOTEL. CINCINNATI, O.

loon ascension and parachute jump at the New Castle Fair, Aug. 28, 1890. It was the first and only successful ascension and parachute jump ever made in this county. In making contracts for future ascensions, we will give you the preference, for we recognize the fact that cheap aeronauts who make blundering ascensions and failures are dear at any price."

If Mademoiselle Mayo or Miss Grace Levere didn't excite you, there was Miss Nellie LaMount, the Champion Lady-Aeronaut and Parachute Artist. She was popular at summer resorts. Her employer, W.W. McEwen, advertised Parachute Leaps with Improved Hot Air and Gas Balloons. It seems the ladies back then were the daredevils. It does shine a different light on the Victorian era with its ankle length skirts and floppy hats. It's not known if the ladies made it to Hastings County.

The "Good Olde Days" and the Smells of a Belleville Spring!

The Daily Intelligencer, 1869: Now that the warm weather has come the (smell) from some of the backyards and lanes is horrible. It is high time that every yard, lane and outhouse were thoroughly cleaned. The cholera has made its appearance in the Southern States and we know not how soon it will find its way northward. Experience has proved that its ravages may be greatly lessened if not altogether prevented by attending to the simple sanitary precautions recommended by the Board of Health. Will they be heeded before it is too late?

cont'd from page 2

Stirling's 150th Anniversary

day in August this year. The week-long event will kick off with an evening with Roy Bonisteel and Our Friends on Monday, August 18, at 7 p.m., in St. Paul's United Church. Other events planned are the world's longest tractor parade (we're going for the Guinness record), a visit from a circus elephant, the annual Stirling Fair and the Hastings County Ploughing Match. It will be one busy week for the Little Village With the Big Heart.

History and Ecology

by Orland French

The historical development of Ontario has inevitably left a deep imprint on the province's ecology. This relationship is the theme of the 2008 annual conference of the Ontario Historical Society in Guelph, June 13-14.

Speakers will examine such diverse topics as the nature of the ancient cliff-face forest of the Niagara Escarpment, the impact of quarrying, shifting perceptions of the Rideau Corridor, Ontario railways before 1880, and the wild life stories of Ernest Thompson Seton.

The keynote address by Dr. Gilbert Stelter is titled "The Environment and the City: The Symbiotic Relationship between the Natural Environment and the City-Building Process."

Tours of Elora and the Guelph historical area are also available.

Further information can be obtained from the OHS at: 34 Parkway Avenue, Willowdale, ON, M2N 3Y2; www.ontariohistoricalsociety.ca; ohs@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca; 416-226-9011; or from Orland French, 613-969-8354.

Troubled Heritage

The following brief passage is taken from a 2007 issue of the Canadian Historical Association Bulletin, Vol. 33.2. The author is Fred Farrell, Manager of Private Sector Records, Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, and Past Chair of the Canadian Council of Archives: In the past several years the archival community has taken stock of its situation through a number of reviews and data collecting initiatives. The results of those efforts, although alarming, do not come as a surprise to many archivists. Archives are significantly under funded for their mandates and the expectations of both their sponsors and the public. Living on hand to mouth on static or reduced budgets from the 1970s and 1980s, archives are dealing with the residue of the 19th century and earlier, the growth of record keeping in the first half of the 20th century, the proliferation of documentation since the 1960s, and the avalanche of electronic records of today. To put it succinctly, archives have a massive backlog of unprocessed records that you can't see, and that you won't be able to see in the foreseeable future, if in fact they are preserved.

Did You Know...

Herschel Township (in Hastings County) was named in 1857 after Sir John Frederick William Herschel, a British astronomer and physical scientist. Elzevir Township was named in 1820, possibly by Lieutenant Governor Sir Peregrine Maitland after the Elzevir publishing family in Holland.

Learn About Your Heritage Attend HCHS Meetings

Come on and join the Hastings County Historical Society! Yearly membership fees ranging from \$15 to \$25 are a great bargain! Among other things membership includes the Outlook and priority status to participate in events like the upcoming Rum Runner tours through Prince Edward County in May and June. Vera Morton is the person to contact. She can be reached in Belleville at **613-966-4859**.

If you haven't attended a Society meeting give us a try. Everyone is welcome, member or not. We meet once a month for eight months of the year at the Quinte Living Centre in Belleville. You'll have the opportunity to meet interesting people and hear their intriguing stories about our past.

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, May 20, 2008

Speaker

Dr. Karolyn Smardz Frost

Topic

I've Got A Home In Glory Land
A Lost Tale of the Underground Railroad

Monthly meetings start at 7:30 and are held
in the Auditorium of the Quinte Living
Centre, 370 Front Street, Belleville

Hastings County Historical Society Directors

President	Orland French
Vice-President	Dick Hughes
Treasurer	Mike Shaw
Secretary	Diane Sule
Archive Location	Sharon White
Membership & Outlook Distribution	Vera Morton
Photo Collections Manager	Mary Jane Throop
Promotion	Bobbi-Jo Morris
Publicity	Bruce Bedell
Outlook Editor	Bill Kennedy
HCHS Website	www.hastingshistory.ca

Hastings County Historical Society is based at the old township office in Cannifton. Please address mail to General Delivery, Cannifton, ON, K0K 2K0. Outlook is published in January, February, March, April, May, September, October and November for the friends and members of the Hastings County Historical Society. The editor, Bill Kennedy, can be reached at 613-962-5991, or email [<kennedypec@aol.com>](mailto:kennedypec@aol.com)

HCHS MEMBER ADDRESS