

First Copy

2.50

FRONT OF LEEDS AND LANSDOWNE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER



DARLINGSIDE, A RIVER TREASURE

JANUARY 1994

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT...

"We've come a long way, baby." was a catch phrase of the '80's. Perhaps we could borrow it to describe the path of the Historical Society from the evening in August 1991 when seven of us met around a table at the Golden Apple to discuss a common interest.

In January 1992, we received assistance from the Front of Leeds and Lansdowne Council to form a historical society. Their support has been constant over the two years, especially in providing working space for our projects.

At our first meeting in May 1993, we did not have enough people present to form a full executive. However, our display at the Lansdowne Fair brought out much interest and material. We sponsored five programmes during the 1992-93 season. Membership rose to over 60.

We have been fortunate to receive two grants from Environment Canada through their heritage programme. Under a grant from the Ontario Ministry of Culture, we were able to employ Lisa Thompson for eight weeks this past summer. She completed four major research projects. Hilary-Anne Hamilton will continue to work for us until mid-March under an Unemployment Insurance Programme 25. She has catalogued our growing collection of material, and is also collecting information on schools and churches.

This year we have a full executive, have accepted a constitution and applied for incorporation through the Ontario Historical Society. Again we have planned what we hope will be an interesting series of meetings. This newsletter is another first which we hope to continue on a regular basis.

So, truly, we have come a long way. With the support of you, the members, and the community, we are sure we will continue preserving something of the past as we travel along the road into the future.

William E. Boulton, President

The purposes of the Historical Society are:

- to promote an awareness of the past of Front of Leeds and Lansdowne Township and its importance in the development of Ontario,*
- to preserve the past through a permanent collection of picture and material,*
- to carry out research to compile authentic records of early buildings and properties, and*
- to provide an avenue through which this information can be made available to the community at large.*

EDITOR'S NOTE...

We live in a part of the world that is rich with history. The Historical Society, as shown in its statement of purpose, is dedicated to finding ways to better understand that history, communicate it and preserve it. We cannot do anything without participation from you.

In assembling this Newsletter, the potential for other stories rapidly became apparent. So too did the danger of incomplete research. While we have had some success in beginning the work of creating an archive, these records, too, are not complete. We therefore hope that you will help us correct any errors in this Newsletter. If you have any more information, photographs or anecdotes that you think would be of interest, please contact any member of the Executive.

We hope that this will be the first of many newsletters with articles. This time we have benefited from research in progress and some work already complete. As Bill pointed out in his message, our researchers have really set us on the track of building an archive.

We would welcome your response to this Newsletter. We certainly would welcome ideas for future lines of inquiry.

- Andrew Graham

MEMBERSHIP IN THE SOCIETY

This list represents all those who have, since its inception, joined the Society or found their way onto our mailing list. If you are a paid up member and not here, our sincere apologies. If you are listed here and wish to remain active by attending functions and receiving our notices and publications, please send in your membership renewal now.

D.H. Akenson, Bill Boulton, Connie Burns, Dorothea Burns, George Burns, Joan Burns, Karl Burns, Keith Burns, Donald Chisamore, Paul Cote, Gloria Crawford, Cathy Davison, Geraldine Dickson, Malcolm Donnelly, Doug Donevan, Shirley Fernitich, Bruce Foley, Dot Funnell. Jim Funnell, Janet Gaylord, Murray Geekie, Glen House Resorts, Andrew Graham, Katherine Graham, Betty Green, Ada Hare, Elizabeth Haskins, Mrs. Guy Haskins, George Horton, Frank Hurrell, Shirley Hurrell, Adeline Kennedy, Alan Lindsay, Harry Landon, Martha Landon, Yolande Lapointe, Janet Lindsay, Doreen Lowans, Cheryl Lynch, Marjorie Mallory, Evangeline McCready, Van McCready, Margery MacGregor, Roger MacGregor, Laverna Montgomery, Eleanor Carleton Moulton, Pat Mulholland, Glennda Olivier, Jim Orth, Ruth Ralph, John Raycroft, John Reid, Wilma Robertson, Glen Shields, Josephine Shields, Keith Sly, John Sorenson, Louise Sorenson, Marion Steacy, Vicky Sturgeon, Audrey Tamblyn, Art Thompson, Maureen Thompson, Marie Thompson, Eileen Truesdell, Vaida Truesdell, Margaret Warren, Doreen Webster, George Webster, Paul Webster, Freda White, Kathy Wyborn, Larry Wyborn

PROGRAM NOTES

'EARLY FUR TRADING IN CANADA'

On 24 November, 1993, the **Upper Canada Fur Traders**, provided an interesting narrative and visual display of the fur trading in Upper Canada in the sixteen, seventeenth and eighteen centuries. Mr. Ron Dobson, dressed as the Factor, a leading business agent in furs, accompanied by Mr. & Mrs. Gordon Chisamore of Brockville, both dressed in period costume and assisted by Mr. Craig Wells of Mallorytown described the development of the fur trade. This was the first major industry in the newly colonized native lands. It was also the first interaction between natives and the white of both French and British origin. Clearly, the good will and preparedness to help on the part of the native was put to good use by the white traders. Mr. Dobson gave a good display of the kinds of furs - beaver, muskrat, rabbit and otter - and their value in the trade. He and his assistants also showed many of the items that would be part of the barter system of trade with natives. Of course, they discussed the most important items - guns and liquor - which also lead to the decline in both the strong native culture and economy, but also, ultimately, to the fur trade itself.

The **Upper Canada Fur Traders** set up a fascinating display, commented on by those who participated. President Bill Boulton thanked the troupe and presented it with a certificate of appreciation from the Society

Tuesday, 18 January 1994, 7:30 PM, Community Centre

Do not miss **Mr. John Nalon**, President, Gananoque Historical Society. Mr. Nalon will speak on the topic **'The History and Development of the Town of Gananoque'**. For those who know of his work in developing the Gananoque Historical Society and the depth of his personal knowledge, this is a must see.

Thursday, 17 March, 1994, 7:30 PM, Community Centre

Ms. Myrtle Johnston of the Ontario Genealogical Society, Brockville Branch, will speak on **"Organizing Your Family Resource - and Where to and More"**. We hope that this program will stimulate your interest in your family and those in this community that played an important part in its formation.

Tuesday, 19 April, 1994, 7:30 PM, Community Centre

The folks from **Upper Canada Village** will provide an evening on **'Fashion in the 1860s for Men and Women'**. There will be slides and possibly a video. For those who have visited the Village or been associated with it, you will know how hard the staff work to make their costumes authentic. This will provide an interesting view into the customs of the era that the Village reflects.

DARLINGSIDE AND THE DARLINGSIDE FAMILY

The **Darlingside** site is located on the St. Lawrence River just east of the Thousand Islands Bridge. **Thomas Darling** (1813-1882) and his wife **Janet Findlay** (1825-1906) came to the area from Berwick, Scotland in 1837. Mr. Darling began a cordwood business in 1837. At that time, trade in cordwood figured significantly in the economy of the Township. Local residents from as far north as **Blue Mountain** would bring wood to Darling's depot. In turn, Mr. Darling would supply wood to steamers traveling along the St. Lawrence River.

As his business flourished, Darling recognized the need for a general store. His situation was ideal to serve both those in the Township and the steamers. The store was opened in 1845. It was closely associated in a barter and credit system of trade with the wood business. This type of trade was very common in early Canada. Little cash would change hands, but products, both raw and finished, would.

In 1851, Thomas Darling purchased Lot 24, Concession 1 of what was then Lansdowne Township. He paid 125 Pounds for the property. Later that same year, Darling purchases Lot 1 Broken Front of Escott Township for 200 Pounds. This property was comprised of 200 acres. Darling was also granted Commons Lot A Broken Front of Escott Township from the Crown in 1856. This land was comprised of 7.5 acres. Thus, the larger property known as **Darlingside** was assembled. During the later half of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, members of the Darling family purchased a substantial amount of property.

From the 1845 census, it is evident that at that time the Darling family only consisted of **Thomas and Janet Darling**. Eventually, they had ten children. Two of the eldest boys died at very young ages. The majority of the family is buried in **Lansdowne Cemetery**.

Excellent records remain of this important family. Early Census Records are with the Leeds and Grenville Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society. In addition, the wills of the Darling family are recorded on microfilm and can be found at the Land Registry Office in Brockville.

Each of the Darling children was unique and, to a certain extent, eccentric. The Darling girls were well educated. Each boy, with the exception of **Arthur Darling**, was also extensively involved in the community. The family exercised considerable power in this community because of its economic status. Some of the Darling men held public offices. For example, Thomas Darling was Reeve of Lansdowne Township during the 1860-70's. His son, **Thomas J. Darling**, was Reeve in the 1880-90's. **J.D.W. Darling** was Township Clerk during the 1880's, a Justice of the Peace in Lansdowne during the early part of this century, and also operated an insurance company in the village.

The coming of the steamboats to the river affected our area in many ways. Landing and fueling stages had to be provided for the boats, and many farmers supplemented their incomes by providing cordwood - or, in early days, bartering it for goods. Before long local entrepreneurs were building and operating steamboats, and landing stages existed at various times at Mallorytown Landing, Poole's Resort, Rockport, Darlingside and Gananoque. Among other benefits, the steamers made available to local people cheap excursions to Kingston, Brockville or Ogdensburg; but the most important effect of the steamboat was to open up our area to tourism, and, with the example of Alexandria Bay to follow, resorts soon sprang up on the main shore and the islands. Ferry service was available cross the St. Lawrence at an early date; a regular passenger service to Clayton was begun by Captain Joe Dix of Gananoque as early as the middle 1800's; and car ferries ran from Gananoque (to Clayton) and Rockport (to Alexandria Bay) until the International Bridge was built.

- from the Kingston Whig Standard, 1936 - Profile of J.D.W. Darling

One of the girls, **Margaret**, provided mortgage funds for many of the farmers starting up in the area. **George** was a tea merchant who sold tea throughout eastern Ontario and New York State. The family were staunch Presbyterians and active in the support of the church in Lansdowne. Much of this information is available at Queen's University Archives as well as the Provincial Archives in Toronto.

The architecture of the **Darlingside** buildings is also of significance. On Lot 24, Concession 1, there are four buildings: the **Darling General Store**, the house, a barn and a boar house. The house and store are of the greatest importance. The store was operated from the 1840's to the 1890's. Its architecture provides a good representation of the American Classical/Georgian style. Considering its age, the store is in amazing condition, virtually unaltered from its original state. The store records and ledgers are very well preserved in the archives mentioned above. They provide great insight into the lives of a middle class mercantile family in Upper Canada. There is also preserved original merchandise dated to the 1800's. It is doubtful that a more complete record of such an operation exists anywhere.

While they were not wealthy or known on a provincial level, the Darling family certainly made an important contribution to the history of the Thousand Islands Region. They were pioneers in Upper Canada. They continued their mercantile business into the Railway Era. The family was also prominent politically in township and country government. Since the 1940's, the Darling family have used Darlingside as a summer home.

Material for this article was assembled by Lisa Thompson, researcher for the Society. Darlingside is a unique part of our community. We should be concerned for its preservation.

"WISH YOU WERE HERE.....!"

POSTCARDS FROM THE TOWNSHIP.....



Published for G. E. Deane, Lansdowne, Ont. 1907

FRONT OF LEEDS AND LANSDOWNE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PAGE 6
JANUARY 1994

Lansdowne Village Schools

Akenson's "The Irish in Ontario" tells us that Lansdowne was granted a Common school in 1826. This first school, called **McKelvey School**, was a log building on the north side of the present County Road 2, just west of Reynold's road. **Joel Stone**, the **McDonalds** and several members of the **Landon** family were students in those early days.

Log schools came to be considered unsuitable as community standards improved. A new brick school was built on the **Copeland** farm on the east side of present Railway Street between the railway and the **Jeffries** house. The date of this building is uncertain, but it is shown on Walling's 1861-62 map. This building was also used as a place of worship.

As the local population grew, a larger school was needed. A new stone school, **Braehead**, was built at the north end of the community in 1872. This building is now **J.W. Lackie's** warehouse. The bell from this school stills exists.

The first continuation school was opened in 1908. A continuation school provided classes from Grade One to Grade Ten, thereby offering an extended education for those who could not afford to travel to either Brockville or Gananoque where full secondary schools were available. This was located in a room over **Keating's Store**, which is now thw Pro Hardware. The School Board granted \$200 for equipment and an additional \$425 for other expenses. However, the teacher, **Miss Dell**, received an annual salary of \$600. It was decided that the parents of students attending the school would make up the difference.

At the annual meeting of the School Board in 1911, plans were discussed for the building of a new school to meet the needs of a growing community. A special meeting in January 1912 looked at two sites: on **S.E. Johnson's** farm just north of the Fair grounds, and one on the property of **N. P. McNeil** on the west side of the village. The later was chosen. **Mr. B. Dillon** was chosen as the architect. The tender of **Wm. McConnell & Son** for \$7945 was accepted. The building was completed in the summer of that year. Classes opened in September 1912. A public opening for **Victoria School** was held in early 1913.

The middle school entrance exams were held in Lansdowne for the first time in 1914. Continuation classes opened in the new building that fall. Until 1921, tuition fees of 50 cents per month per pupil were charged. An assistant teacher was hired and a second room opened also in 1921.

Many changes took place over the years. In 1927, the grounds were enlarged. In 1929, **Haig and Burns** installed electric lights at a cost of \$359. In 1932, a music teacher was

hired. In 1938, the heating system was changed from hot air to low-pressure steam, In 1950, the boys' basement was remodeled into a third classroom, thus lessening the load on the lower grades.

Discussion of an addition first took place in 1937. No active work was done until 1952 when a one-room addition was built at the back of the school.

Continuation School students living outside the village found their own means of transportation to school, often by foot or horse. In the winter months, many boarded in the village. Bus service was first provided for these students in 1949. A bus service for students going on to Grade 13 in Gananoque began in 1951. The Continuation School closed in June 1956. Thereafter, all Grade 9 to 13 students went to Gananoque. This allowed the elementary school to expand into the two room formerly used by the upper grades. Plans for a new school began in the early 1960's. The school population became so large, about 170 students, that those living to the west of the village were sent to the new William Hiscocks Public school. Construction of the new Lansdowne school began in 1962. Lansdowne and District Public School opened in January 1963 with eight rooms and a gymnasium. At this time, the remaining one-room rural schools were closed and all pupils transferred to the new school.

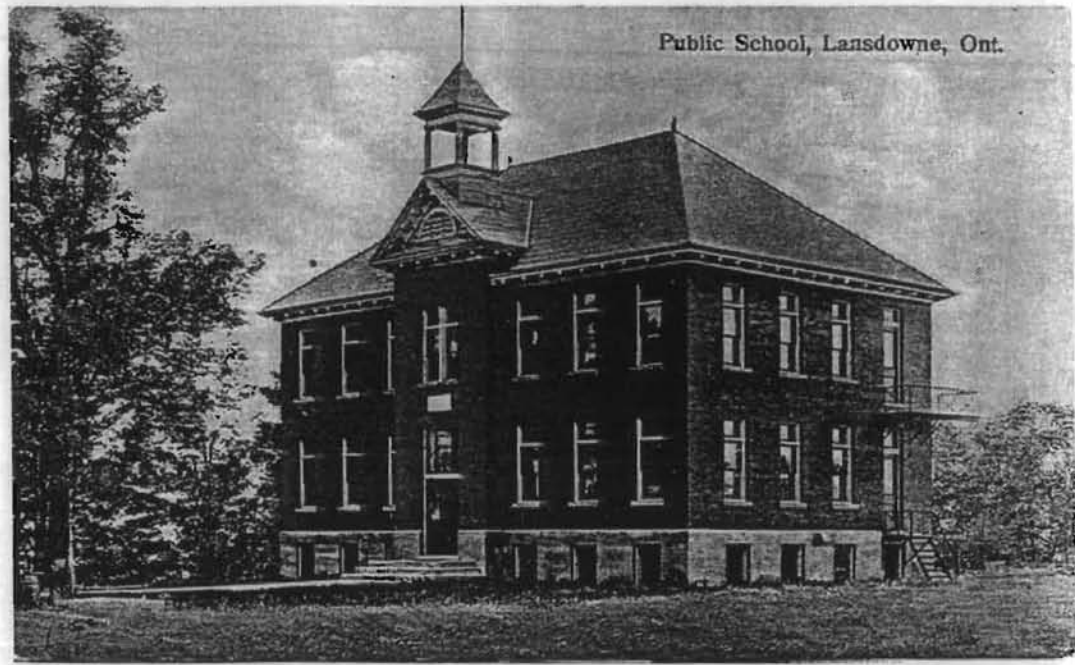
Lists of the teachers at the Continuation School are in the archives of the Leeds and Grenville School Board. They include **Janet Lindsay** who taught there in 1956 and **Marion Stacey** who taught from 1942 to 1946.

This article was written and researched by Bill Boulton



Braehead School

VICTORIA SCHOOL AND COMMENCEMENT PROGRAMME 1899



Certificates.

“ Let knowledge grow from more to more,
 Eut more of reverence in us dwell.
 That mind and soul, according well
 May make one music as before—
 But vaster.”
 —Tennyson.

P. S. Leaving Certificates

W. FAIRLIE E. WALLIS

Entrance Certificates

D. CORNETT M. HEASLIP E. YOUNG. W. WRIGHT
 M. SIMPSON

“ Stand not upon the order of your going
 but go at once.”—Shakespeare.

God Save the Queen.

“ All the world's a stage, and
 all the men and women merely
 players ; they have their exits
 and entrances, and one man in
 his time plays many parts, his
 acts being seven a piece.” Shakespeare

COMMENCEMENT
 EXERCISES

LANSDOWNE PUBLIC
 SCHOOL.

TUESDAY, DEC. 19th, 1899

Printed at the office of The Gananoque Journal.

BILLS OF FARE.....

STORIES OF LANSDOWNE MERCHANTS OF THE PAST.....



JOHN BAILE CONDUCTING BUSINESS ON KING STREET. FOUR GALLONS OF COAL OIL FOR 50 CENTS, THEN BARS OF SOAP FOR 25 CENTS, COICE ONIONS, A BUSHEL 60 CENTS, FOUR POUNDS PRUNES 25 CENTS AND BEST BUTTER 1 LB. 20 CENTS. MR. BAILE MOVED TO RED DEER, ALBERTA IN 1913.

THE COMMUNITY OF MARBLE ROCK

Marble Rock Road is now part of the Township's road system. For those who drive it, the question may occur: where is the marble? That is not known, but it is possible that the quartz mine provided the source. However, in the nineteenth century, this road originally known as **Mill Road** led to the small but vibrant community of **Marble Rock**.

The community was situated on the shore of the **Gananoque River** where a dam, some houses and camping lodge are found today. In the mid-1880s, it consisted of a grist mill, tavern, a lime kiln and several homes on one shore. A saw mill, post office, two general stores and more homes were located on the opposite shore. Some of these homes operated farms as well.

On the adjoining page, a map of the area is taken from the **Historical Atlas of Leeds and Grenville**, available at the Community Library.

This community's life centered on the dam and the commerce that flowed from the logging of the area in the nineteenth century. Over the years, there have been several dams built at **Marble Rock**. The first was built by the **Emery Brothers** in the 1850's. It was more than two hundred feet up the river from the present dam. This wooden structure had a sluiceway at each end. On the east bank was the saw mill and on the west bank the grist mill. When the second dam was built in the present location, a good deal of farm land was drowned out further up stream. It was at this time that a guard house was built on the east bank. It was about ten feet square and lined with steel. While the guard house was actually used for several years, it never did have cause to fend off any attacks. The foundation of this structure can still be seen today. In the early 1920's, the **Gananoque Light, Heat and Power Company** built the present structure. It continues to maintain it as part of its regulation of water flow along the river. A 1949 picture on the following pages also shows other more recreational uses of such a dam.

What gave **Marble Rock** its brief vibrancy was the log trade. The **Gananoque River** derives its name from a native word meaning 'River of Rocks'. In the mid-1880's, vast quantities of logs were cut from the heavy timberland to the north and east of **Marble Rock**. Because the **Gananoque River** drains **Gananoque Lake** and **Charleston Lake**, it provided a natural route for the delivery of the logs to trading areas in the south. The dam also provided the water power to operate the mills.

The logs would arrive from upstream at the dam in huge rafts. These had to be taken apart and the logs guided through the opening singly. When the logs were all safely

below the dam, they were directed to a flat part of the shore where a scow would be waiting to receive its cargo to be delivered to the purchaser.

The grist mill was operated by **Mr. Thomas Dickson**, who, with his family, came from Scotland in 1865. In later years, this building was also used as a cheese factory. A picture of this building when it was used as a cheese factory follows.

Mr. George Emery, who, with his brother, built and operated the saw mill, was also in charge of the Post Office which served 25 to 30 homes in the immediate locality. His annual salary was \$72. The mail for **Marble Rock Post Office** was picked up at **Gananoque Junction** and brought to the office by various means. When the road was not passable, it was transported across country by foot.

The commerce of this small community was built on one of the foundations of early Canada - the timber and lumber trade. That came to an end in the late nineteenth century when the first cut trees that provided lumber were gone. As in so much of Canada and the world at that time, ships, buildings and commercial enterprises changed dramatically, using more metal and other building materials. Fuels also changed from cordwood to coal and oil. And so, just as in the broader world, the basis of industry changed, leaving behind communities like **Marble Rock**.

In January, 1898, the Post office was closed. There can be little doubt that the residents of the area would see this as a major loss.

As the various mills and commercial operations closed, the farms carried on, often in the name of the original settlers. **Marble Rock** remains to this day a popular fishing area. Very little remains of the many buildings that were built in this thriving community. The mills either rotted or burned down. An old resident once defined the cause of **Marble Rock's** decline as "conflagration and starvation."

This area has remained a favourite site for those who enjoy outdoor activities such as camping and fishing. The picturesque setting remains, as does the dam.

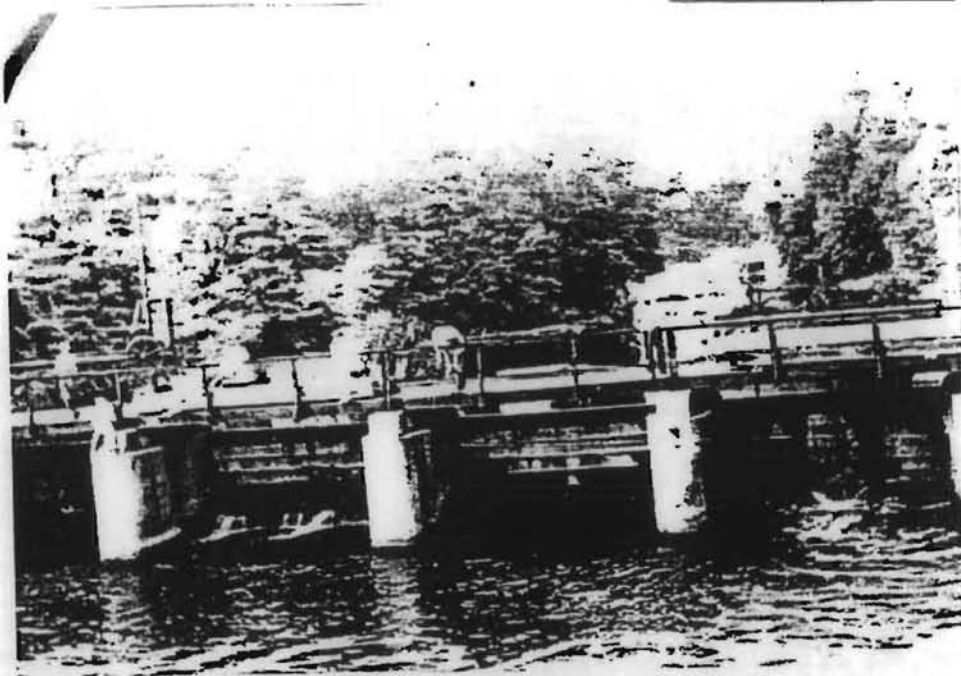
Material for this article was taken from the archival material held by the Historical Society. Any further information would be welcome

**Sandhill School, now
on Station Road,
was moved from Marble Rock
when it closed.**

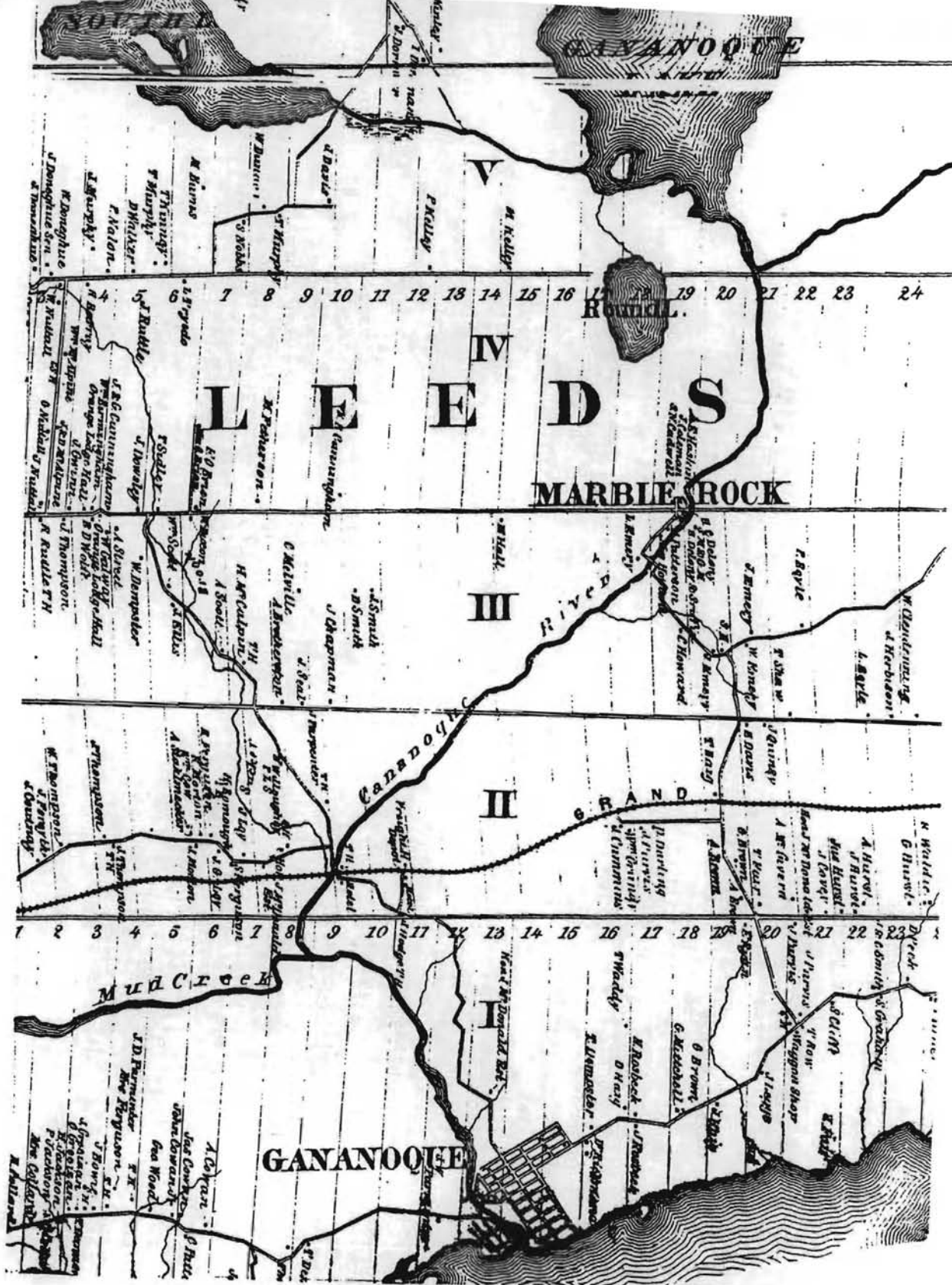




CHEESE FACTORY, MARBLE ROCK



DAM, GANANOQUE RIVER, MARBLE ROCK, 1949



- from Historical Atlas of Leeds and Grenville
Mika Publishing, 1976

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The purpose in publishing a list of books about the Township is to inform and seek other titles and articles from our readers. The list is not exhaustive. Further, anyone wishing to share any memories or information is welcome to do so.

Akenson, Donald Harman, The Irish in Ontario: A Study in Rural History, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984

Campbell, Marjorie Wilkins, Ontario, Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1953

Clow, G. & Meribeth, H. Leeds and Grenville, Bicentennial 1984, Brockville: United Counties of Leeds & Grenville, 1984

Cruikshank, Ernest A. The Settlement of United Empire Loyalists on the Upper St. Lawrence and the Bay of Quinte in 1784: A Documentary Record, Toronto: Ontario Historical Society, 1966

De Visser, John and Fleming, Patricia, 1000 Islands, Erin: The Boston Mills Press, 1990

Earle, Evelyn Purvis, Leeds the Lovely, Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1951

Leavitt, Thad. V. H. The History of Leeds and Grenville, Belleville: Mika Publishing Company, 1986. Originally published in 1879 by Recorder Press, Brockville

Leeds & Grenville Country Board of Education, Adult Basic Education/E.S.L. Recollections and Reflections: An Oral History, Brockville: Leeds & Grenville Board of Education, 1990

McKenzie, Ruth, Leeds & Grenville: Their First Two Hundred Years, Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Ltd, 1967

Mika, Nick and Helma, ed. Community Spotlight: Leeds, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington, & Prince Edward Counties, Belleville: Mika Publishing

Mika, Nick and Helma, United Empire Loyalists: Pioneers of Upper Canada, Belleville: Mika Publishing Co., 1976

Ten Cate, Adrian G., ed. Pictorial History of the Thousand Islands of the St Lawrence River, Brockville: Besancourt Publishers, 1982

Thompson, Shawn, Rivers Edge: Reprobates, Rum-runners & other Folk of the Thousand Islands, Burnstown, Ont.: General Store Publishing
Thompson, Shawn, River Rates: The People of the Thousand Islands, Burnstown: General Store Publishing, 1991

REPORT ON THE WINNERS OF THE FUND-RAISING DRAW

Last fall, the fund raising draw by the Society raised approximately \$500. The winners were:

First Prize: **Frank Hurrell**, Lansdowne, a dinner for two at the **Golden Apple Restaurant**, Gananoque. A special thanks to the Fernetich Family.

Second Prize: **Ferdi Van den Oetelaar**, Mallorytown, a craft from **William's Place**, Lansdowne. Thanks to Bill Boulton.

Third Prize: **Dave Truesdell**, Gananoque, a hand knit sweater from **Vicky Sturgener**.

Fourth Prize: **Addeline Kennedy**, Lansdowne, a copy of '**Chess with Violence**' donated by **Hal McCarney**.

The Society appreciates the support that it received through this effort.

FRONT OF LEEDS AND LANSDOWNE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MEMBERSHIP FORM

NAME: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

MEMBERSHIP FEES: INDIVIDUAL: \$5.00

FAMILY: \$10.00

ASSOCIATION: \$10.00

CORPORATE: \$25.00

PLEASE RETURN TO: FRONT OF LEEDS AND LANSDOWNE HISTORICAL
SOCIETY, P.O. BOX 332, LANSDOWNE, ONTARIO K0E 1L0