

Cornwall Township Historical Society

Newsletter September 2021

www.cornwalltwphistorical.ca

Editor: Don McIntosh

The following article is an excerpt from the October 8, 1960 edition of the Cornwall Standard Freeholder. It describes the formal dedication ceremonies of Ault Park which is now home to the Lost Villages Museum in the former Cornwall Township. The park was intended to compensate area residents for the loss of public land on the westerly end of Sheek Island flooded by the creation of Lake St. Lawrence.

Relocated Ault Park Formally Dedicated

Another link in Eastern Ontario's pioneer past was welded back into the chain of history with the formal opening and dedication of Ault Park yesterday afternoon by Ontario Hydro. The park, a short distance east of Long Sault, replaces the former public site on Sheek Island given to Cornwall Township by descendants of the United Empire Loyalists Ault family in 1914. Bromwell Ault, a descendent of the pioneer family who now lives in New York City, was present along with members of his family.

Focal point in the 10 acre plot being developed is a huge field stone borne to the park from Sheek Island during power project construction on a special road across the dried out bed of the Long Sault Rapids. The original bronze plaque which decorated a similar stone at Sheek Island and a new one provided by Ontario Hydro to mark yesterday's opening ceremonies have been superimposed on the rock. Both were unveiled yesterday by Bromwell Ault.

The park is just off No. 2 highway and is separated from the beautiful Lake St. Lawrence by some 23 acres of rugged pasture land.

Cornwall Township officials—none was present at the ceremony—having criticized Ontario Hydro in past weeks, suggesting some 50 acres of land should be turned over to them as compensation of the loss of Sheek Island. But although Hydro officials will retain title and maintain the new park, they have indicated they may increase its size by purchasing the 23 acres between park and shoreline.

The land in question is now owned by the Ontario St. Lawrence Development Commission. Both parks commission and Hydro officials at the scene hinted that negotiations are underway.

Should the agreement be carried through, the 33 acre park which would result should prove popular with both township and city residents.

In addressing the crowd which gathered for the occasion, Mr. Ault spoke of the legal agreement under which the property at Sheek Island was turned over to Cornwall Township. It provided that the property be returned to the family in event the island be flooded by future river development. He said he was happy Ontario Hydro allowed interest enough to replace the park and public site and thought that this was the best location for it.

“At one time we thought we might make use of the lumber from Sheek Island to provide some other form of memorial in this area, but the idea didn't work out. This was a far better idea and we hope good use may be made of this property for both educational and recreational purposes”, he said.

Mr. Ault recalled hearing his grandfather, born a short distance from the park site, and an uncle telling stories of this area and said the lease on Sheek Island dated from 1796 when an agreement was made with Mohawk Indians from St. Regis.

Lt. Col. A. Kennedy, commissioner for Ontario Hydro who helped with the unveiling ceremonies, said development of the park marked the culmination of one of the promises fulfilled by Ontario Hydro as a reward to area residents for the inconvenience they suffered during power project construction.

“It was sad to see this shore lines so rich in history disappear beneath the waters of Lake St. Lawrence. But progress always brings with it a measure of heartbreak. And we are happy in the knowledge we can perpetuate the glorious past which lies buried beneath the lake waters,” he said.



Left, the stone from Sheek Island with the original 1914 and updated 1959 plaques. The stone is the centerpiece of the park and beautifully decorated by members of the Lost Villages Historical Society.

Editor’s Note: *The land title for the park was transferred to Cornwall Township at a later date. The 23 acre waterfront property to the south remains part of the St. Lawrence Parks Commission. A small piece of it is currently used by the Sea and Navy Cadets of Cornwall for training and recreation. It’s noteworthy that none of township council*

made an appearance at this dedication ceremony. The reeve at the time, John Lawrence McDonald, was never pleased with some of the intimidation tactics that Hydro used to acquire the land for the Seaway project and expressed his disdain in view of that.



President’s Message: At the time I’m writing this newsletter, we are seeing COVID-19 restrictions being lifted and we’re once again being able to somewhat socialize. We will plan for our fall session of meetings at the St. Andrews Fire Hall and keep our fingers crossed hoping that current positive trends continue. You can check out our schedule for the fall meetings further down in the newsletter.

We undertook two projects this year: installing a welcome sign in the old pioneer cemetery in St. Andrews and the installation of a historic mural in the village. The welcome sign has been installed; however, we encountered a few problems along the way with the mural that we hope to have resolved soon. We are still planning on the mural being completed in 2021. However, if we can’t complete it this year the plan is to complete it as soon as we can.



Welcome sign in the alcove of the cemetery. The description gives a brief history and significance of the cemetery.

Both the welcome sign and mural come with significant cost but we were able to secure a grant from S.D.G. Counties for \$2,500 to help us cover some of these costs. Let’s hope we can resume fund raising activities next year to help us cover the cost of these much meaningful projects.. On this note, we were pleased to receive a \$300 cash grant from the Township of South Stormont. This will help us cover expenses like our website, newsletter and other miscellaneous items.

As you are aware, our invited speakers to our meetings have been deferred due to COVID. And unfortunately we will not get to hear from one of our most highly anticipated speakers, Mr. Robin Flockton who passed away this past June. Robin had recently released a book *Glengarry and the First World War* which recorded the impact upon, attitudes and experiences of the people of Glengarry County during four years of a global conflict 1914-18. His book is still available at local bookstores and online.

Some members may have not heard the sad news. Sometime over the Easter long weekend the Heritage Centre was broken into and vandalized by some unscrupulous characters. Most of the damage was malicious in nature but for the most part our artifacts survived. The break in brought home the fact of how vulnerable our artifacts are, given the state of the Heritage Centre. We realize that over the years many families donated artifacts that hold strong historic and sentimental value. For this reason we are encouraging families who may have contributed to the collection and would like to retrieve them for safe keeping, please do so. At some point in the future the artifacts will be placed in storage and/or displayed somewhere, but until then they are at risk of further harm. If this interests you, contact me to arrange for pickup if you wish.

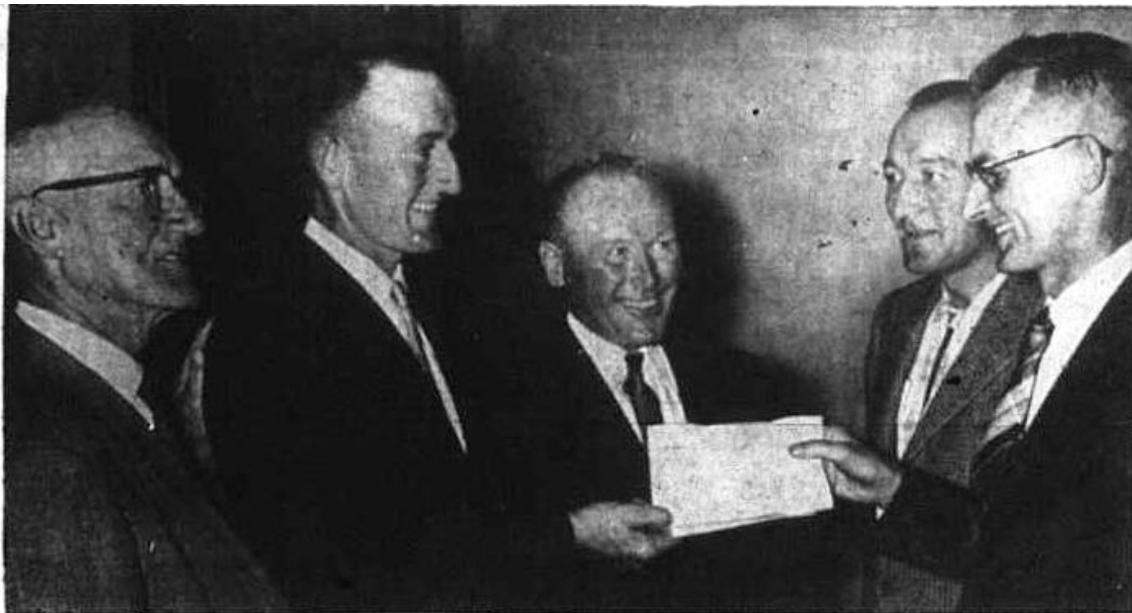
Pics from the Past



Say Cheese! *This picture of the McDonald family was taken at the Glenco Cheese factory in Bonville probably in the late 1950s. Left to right brothers Dan, Bill, Don, Duncan (father), Jack and Frank McDonald.*



Trucks line up at Glenco Cheese Factory waiting to unload 8 gallon milk cans



Our very own Ken McDonald (second from left) was the grand prize winner of the 1960 Stormont County Plowing Match that took place on the family farm on the Ninth Concession of Cornwall Township, now Willy Allen Road. Here he is receiving his cash prize from B.F. Barker, Esso agent from Monkland. Others in the photo are Harold Fickes, Peter Manley (MPP) and Ken Best. As the McDonalds were hosts of the event, Ken put his talents to work donating prizes that included a set of farm gates and a milking stool made from a milk can cover.



This historic photo is from the early 1950s showing the 4 corner intersection at St. Andrews looking west. Note the gas pumps beside the store. The gasoline company was Champlain Oil, a Canadian company that Charles Emile Trudeau, the father of Pierre Elliot Trudeau, was associated with.

The white building behind the store was once a cheese factory. When the photo was taken it housed a barber shop run by Ed Lauzon, Guy Lauzon's father. According to Guy, the shop operated from 1951 to '53.

The photo is from the Alex Mullin collection of photos. His entire collection of 1000s of photos is now in the possession of the CTHS under the care of member Steve Cameron



You may recall from a few years ago that local artisan Brian Sturgeon made a mini replica of the log church located in the old cemetery in St. Andrews. We are pleased to say that Brian has graciously donated the mini log church to the CTHS. It is now in our possession and on display in the log church. Thank you Brian for your kind donation.

Heritage Centre Updates: As you are aware this past January the Township of South Stormont passed a Notice of Intent to repeal by-law 3418. Repealing this by-law would remove the 1979 heritage designation of the Raisin River Heritage Centre. Five objections to this repeal were received from various individuals and organizations. These were forwarded by the township to the Conservation Review Board (CRB) and a pre-hearing teleconference took place June 28, 2021 with the objectors and township representatives.

It was agreed that within the next two months, the objectors would provide the township with a formal proposal on the future of the building. Should an amicable solution not be reached, the CRB will convene in September to set a date for a formal hearing later in 2021. You can read township administration's full report on the appeal by clicking **HERE**.

In Memoriam: We are saddened with the loss of long time member Kay McAlear (née Fraser) who died this past May. Kay always had a keen interest in what was going on at CTHS and was a great resource for us to learn about local history. She was a proud U.E.L. descendent and in her later years took an interest in genealogy and helped others discover their roots.



The current state of affairs allows 25 people in the meeting room at the St. Andrews fire hall. For the COVID related requirements, masks are required indoors if 6 feet distance cannot be maintained. You're welcome to wear your mask at all times if you wish. As we all know things could change in a moment's notice but these are the current guidelines.

As of September 22 it appears that the Township will be required to enforce the guidelines set out by the Province regarding proof of vaccinations. More information will be coming but it is

likely that only the fully vaccinated will be allowed within the facilities.

I have listed below our meeting schedule providing things proceed as planned. The upcoming meeting in September will be our AGM. If a stay at home order is issued again, you can assume our meeting during that period will be cancelled.

I will also post meeting dates and cancelations on our website meetings page, <http://www.cornwalltwphistorical.ca/meetings.html>

Therefore, the nominal meeting schedule for the spring session is as follows:

Tuesday September 28, 7:00 pm Annual General Meeting with the election of officers.

Tuesday October 26, 7:00 pm

Tuesday November 23, 7:00 pm

Note, this is our last newsletter before we adjourn for the winter so if you plan to attend any of our meetings, please mark your calendars accordingly