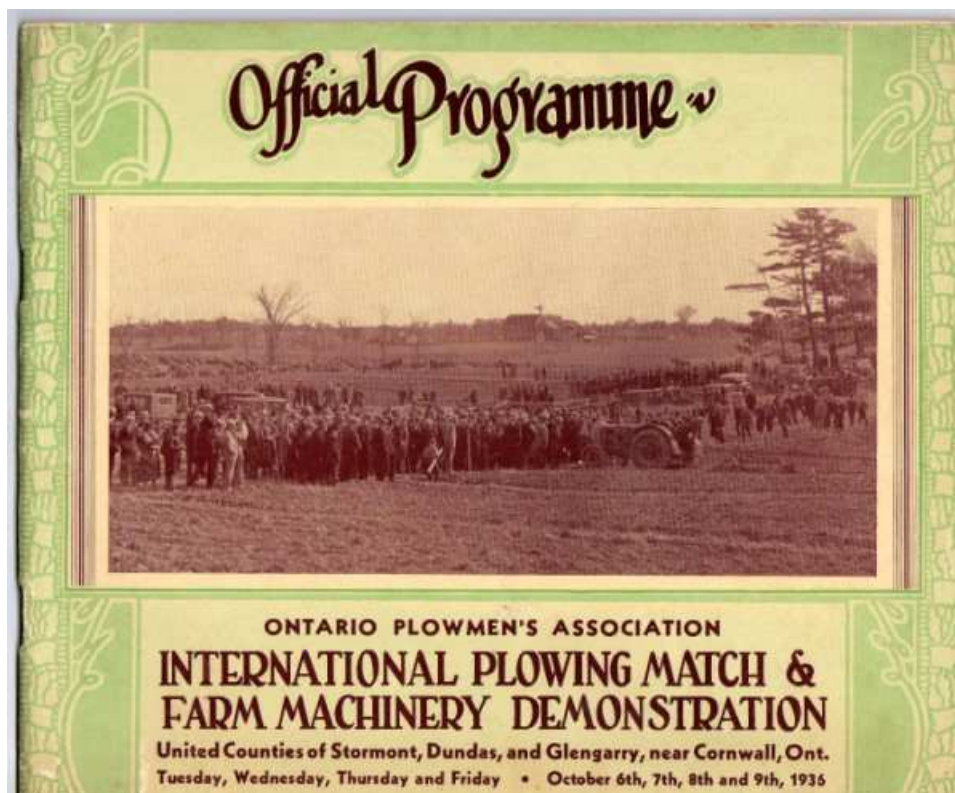


Cornwall Township Historical Society Newsletter September 2010

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Editor: Don McIntosh

1936 International Plowing Match Comes to Cornwall Township



Years from now when anthropologists study the twentieth century, comparisons may be drawn between 1969 Woodstock Music Festival in New York State and the 1936 International Plowing Match held here in Cornwall Township. Both events drew thousands from many miles away for fun and entertainment and turned their host farms into veritable muddy tented cities. The 1936 International Plowing Match brought fame and prominence to Cornwall Township and Stormont County. The four day event was held from October 6th to 9th on D.L. MacLennan's farm on the South Branch Road*. This is where the tented city was located and much of the plowing was done. The farm was selected by the Ontario Plowman's Association not only for its fertile soil; this Eastern Ontario site would attract participants and spectators alike from Quebec and Eastern States. Mr. MacLennan had a front row seat to the show.

**The farm is currently run by the next generation, Garfield MacLennan*

As the *Ottawa Citizen* described him, "He had never before witnessed an International Plowing Match. In fact he was at first just a little quizzical but when he saw people swarm over his property in the amount of 40,000 in one day; when from his broad patios and terraced lawns he surveyed a line up of 40 spans of heavy horses that would do credit to the Royal Winter Fair; when he beheld 2,000 cars parked on the slopes of the farm across the South Branch Road, he was so speechless he could scarce express his surprise and enthusiasm. He declared he never expected to again witness such a spectacle!"



Cars covered acres of fields.

The 24th annual International Plowing Match promised to be more than competitive plowing. Farmers marveled at the exhibition of machinery in the tented city. The tented city provided displays, demonstrations and talks on the latest farm equipment. Ladies too were particularly invited to attend the event and visit a tent set up by the Hydro Electric Power Commission to display the latest labour saving household appliances.

Opening day on Tuesday attracted more than 5,000 visitors under a steady drizzle of rain. The first two days of competition were restricted to plowmen from mainly Eastern Ontario: S.D. &G., Prescott & Russell Counties, Grenville and Carleton Counties. Former champions had to wait till the last day to defend their titles, so competition grew more intense in the final days of the plowing match. Each competitor had to plow a plot 22 feet wide by 14 rods (75 yards) long at the rate of between 12 and 16 hours for one acre depending on the class. Classes were with single or team horses, tractors, riding and walking plows etc. Plowmen were judged on the depth, quality and straightness of their furrows. Rules called for a 6" deep furrow with a breast not less than 6 ½ inches wide. Some of the noteworthy local winners in the early days of the competition were: Clair Leitch 7th Plain or Jointer Plow, Boys under 18 years and younger; Charlie Quail 3rd Plain or Jointer Plow, Single Furrow, Boys 18 years and younger; Marland Murray 3rd Plain or Jointer Plow Horse Drawn.

A total of \$4,000 in prizes was given away in all events. First prize winners took home up to \$40.00 in cash; those placing lower \$2.00 to \$10.00. For major events, corporations sponsored trophies; the T. Eaton Co., Royal Bank, International Harvester, Cockshutt Tractor to name a few. Even the

politicians got in on the act. Mitchell Hepburn, Ontario Premier, Prime Minister R. B. Bennett and many prominent politicians were among the trophy sponsors.



Frost & Wood Cockshutt Display Booth

The matches were spread over 40 farms along the South Branch Road, mostly between Eamer's Corners and Grant's Corners to the east. Over 175 acres of land were turned by the plowmen throughout the four day event.

Accommodations were basic at best. A tent was provided for the contestants for sleeping but the plowmen were told to furnish their own blankets etc. The T. Eaton Co. erected the rest room area and invited all visitors to make use of the facility. During the afternoon from 1 to 4 o'clock an afternoon tea was served to the ladies attending demonstrations.



The rest area tent sponsored by the T. Eaton Co.

On Friday, the last day of the event, Cornwall's Mayor Horovitz hosted a dinner at the Cornwall Arena on Water Street for over 700 participating plowmen along with invited guests. Guest speaker Hon. Duncan Marshall, Ont. Minister of Agriculture, gave a rousing speech that entertained young and old alike.

Is there another International Plowing Match in South Stormont's future? Who knows? If one does reoccur one thing is for certain. Turnout from the current grey haired Woodstock generation will be overwhelming. For the plowing? Absolutely. But with a bit of wistfulness

they may even hear the voices of Janis and Jimi somewhere in the hills beyond.



The CTHS would like to thank Karen and Frank Quinn, the organizers of the Scottish Ceilidh held June 13 in the St. Andrews Parish Hall. Half the proceeds raised from this event were handed over to the CTHS in order to help us preserve local history.

Also, thanks to all members who greeted the visitors at the Heritage Centre on Sundays this past July and August and Doors Open in September.

Welcome New Members



We have one new member to welcome to CTHS. Bonnie Ostwald of Toronto paid a visit to the Heritage Centre this past summer and has joined our organization. Bonnie is the granddaughter of Steve Cavanagh and daughter of Ada (Cavanagh) McDougall. Steve was a long time loyal employee of A.J. McPhail who operated McPhail's General Store for many years in St. Andrews.

A Simon Fraser Caveat

This past summer while on tour duty at the church in St. Andrews, I met a visitor from Ste. Anne de Bellevue Que. The gentleman had a particular interest in the Simon Fraser gravesite since, as he

stated, there is a Simon Fraser House located in Ste. Anne de Bellevue. This house is of historical significance because the famous Irish poet Thomas Moore once paid a visit there as a guest of Simon Fraser. It's claimed that the area inspired him to write some of his famous poetry there. In 1961 the house was acquired by the Canadian Heritage Foundation.

A few days later our visitor sent me a document about the history of the house. What piqued my curiosity was a line in the document that says that Simon Fraser is buried in Senneville Que., not far from Ste. Anne's. After a little research and thanks to the internet I discovered that there were actually two Simon Frasers and coincidentally both were partners in the North West Co.: Simon Fraser "The Explorer" (1776-1862) and Simon Fraser of Ste. Annes (1760-1839). The Simon Fraser of Ste. Anne's time with the North West Co. was spent mostly doing merchant duties. He operated the trading post in Ste. Anne's. His travel took him no farther than a Lake Superior trading post.

Many of you may have been aware of this second Simon Fraser but I thought it is worth noting in our newsletters so no serious debate ensues and as to where the famous Simon Fraser "Explorer" is buried.

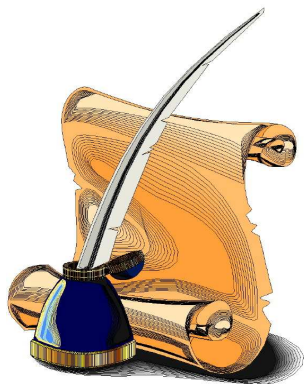


The "merchant" Simon Fraser's house in Ste. Anne de Bellevue, Que.

Remember

Our next meeting is Tuesday September 28 at 7:30 pm at the Heritage Centre. Please try to attend and bring a friend. Our guest speaker will be Margaret Robertson Flynn talking about Victoria's Quilts Canada.

The President's Pen



This is the first time I have used this particular pen so I will be brief.

Greetings to all: We have had

quite a stretch of extremely hot weather and I am grateful that "Fall" is now heading our way. Myra and I were at St Andrews on June 13th, for the Ceilidh celebrating the 150 anniversary of the present church. A great show, but very, very hot in the hall. We were back in St Andrews again on August 8th, to take a turn of duty at the Heritage Centre. Unfortunately it rained steadily that day which was the same day as Guy Lauzon's annual picnic. There were tons of traffic but Myra and Bill had had only one visitor. I also attended the Ramada Inn on August 26th, for a formal dinner of the S.D & G Historical Society to honour some of their Past Presidents, one of which was Jim Brownell our MPP.

Looking ahead!! Our Society has been approached by South Stormont Council's Kevin Amelotte, seeking our input with a project to erect a Memorial Plaque in St Andrews honouring Simon Fraser. I think this an important project and worthy of our support. More about it at the September 28th meeting.

Also at that meeting we hope to have a guest speaker in the person of Mrs. Margaret Robertson Flynn who will talk about Victoria's Quilts' Canada. Hope to see you there.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Costello, President

Great News

This past summer Maureen McAlear received a priceless artifact from a cousin on her mother's side. In April 1870, Queen Victoria bestowed the rank of Honorary Lieutenant Colonel in the Reserve Militia of Cornwall on our own John Sandfield MacDonald. The original certificate commemorating this special occasion has been in the McGillis family for a number of years and has recently been passed to Maureen. After appropriate framing Maureen has granted us the privilege to have it on display at the Heritage Centre.

The certificate is signed by George Etienne Cartier, Minister of Defense and P. Robertson-Ross, Colonel of the Militia. Our Canadian history scholars will recall that George Cartier was one of our Fathers of Confederation.



This original certificate awarded to John Sandfield MacDonald in 1870 will soon be on display at the Heritage Centre.

Vintage Art Glass



The Cornwall Community Museum on Water St. invites us to visit their new exhibit "Shapes & Colours of Chalet

Art Glass". It's a collection of artistic glass from the Chalet Glass Co. that operated in Cornwall in the 1960s and 70s. The exhibit runs until November 21. For more information contact Natalie at the museum 613-936-0280.