

Cornwall Township Historical Society Newsletter

September 2022

www.cornwalltwphistorical.ca

Editor: Don McIntosh

Even though Simon Fraser died in 1862, the monument on his gravesite in the St. Andrews cemetery was not erected until 1921. It was completed and paid for by the Hudson's Bay Company in recognition of his accomplishments as one of Canada's great explorers. The following article is from October 6, 1921 from the Cornwall Standard. The writing describes the official dedication of the monument and its history.

Pioneer Service Recognized Monument Erected at St. Andrews West to Memory of Simon Fraser the Explorer

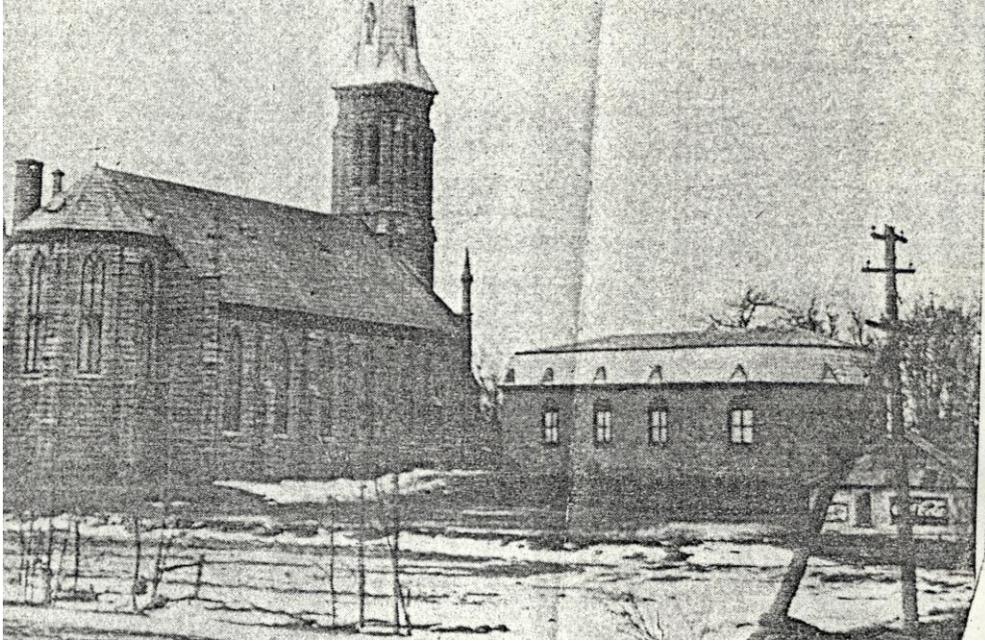
Messrs. Fallon Brothers, of Cornwall, have just completed the erection of a monument of grey Barrie granite in the cemetery of St. Andrews West, six miles North of Cornwall, to the memory of Simon Fraser, the explorer, and discoverer of the Fraser River in British Columbia. The monument stands six feet high and the base is about four feet square. It is the only monument erected in Mr. Fraser's memory East of the Rockies, although the great explorer's worth to the civilization of the early days in British Columbia was recognized about two years ago by the erection of a monument in a park in New Westminster, B.C. The monument in the cemetery At St. Andrews West was secured through the instrumentality of Colonel Donald McGregor, of Yukon fame, who is now at his old home in Martintown, Glengarry County. The Colonel brought the matter to the attention of the Hudson's Bay Company's officials, suggesting that Simon Fraser's last resting place should be fittingly marked. Perhaps no man living was more familiar with Simon Fraser and the work he accomplished than Colonel McGregor, as he knows every foot of the Fraser River from its source to the sea, and covered much of the territory in British Columbia which Simon Fraser traversed. The Hudson's Bay Company's officials in Montreal and Winnipeg were much impressed with the idea of erecting the monument to mark the resting place of Simon Fraser and his wife, and the contract was placed with Messrs. Fallon Brothers a few months ago. The monument is now complete and bears the following inscription, which is in raised letters in black, of imperishable material:--



"In memory of Simon Fraser, explorer, born 1776 ; died 1862, While in the employ of the North West Co. he conducted important exploration and pioneer work, principally in the area now known as British Columbia, which he helped to secure for the British. He led the first exploring expedition to descend the great river which now bears his name, reaching the Gulf of Georgia on July 2nd, 1808. This monument was erected in 1921 by the Hudson's Bay Co. over the grave where he and his wife were buried."

Simon Fraser was born in the State of Vermont, when it was a British possession and his father, who was a member of the King's Royal Regiment, was made a prisoner during the Revolutionary war, and died as such. His widow fled with her family, including Simon, then a mere infant, and settled at St. Andrews West, where the future explorer grew up. Like so many young men of that day, Simon Fraser joined the North West Company and remained in its service until its amalgamation with the Hudson's Bay Company, when he resigned and returned to St. Andrews, where he spent his last days. During his travels he discovered the river known to the Indians as the Great River, which he explored to its entry to the Pacific Ocean, and which was called after him. He also discovered a tributary to it, which he named after David Thompson, an astronomer of the North West Co., who on his return from the West, settled in Williamstown, where he purchased the home now occupied by Farquhar Robertson, of Montreal, and which was originally a Presbyterian Manse, the first in Upper Canada.

On his route Simon Fraser established the principal posts of the North West Company in what is now known as British Columbia, to which the Hudson's Bay Company eventually succeeded. In his journeyings he was accompanied by a man named Stewart, an uncle of the late Lord Strathcona, and gave his name to a large river and lake.



This picture from the Standard Freeholder from February 1953 captures one of the rare photos of Cameron's Barber Shop in St. Andrews. If you look closely at the bottom right hand corner you notice a small square building which at that time was Cameron's Barber Shop.

From Marland and Pearl Murray's 2007 *A Collection of Newsletters*, Murray says, "Father Albert McRae thought that his parishioners should have a place to get their hair cut, so he apparently gave permission to Hugh Cameron to build the shop on church property, saying he felt it was an asset to the community."

St. Andrews High School Graduating Class '62



(Loaned by Allan McPhail, Jr.)

Sister Anna (daughter of Allan & Catherine McPhail from the Little 5th Concession) and her Graduating Class of 1962

Left to right - front row: Mary Agnes Cossaboom, Deanie Sequin, Bernadette MacDonell, Mary Quinn, Sister Anna, Gail McNamara, Isabel MacDonell, Alice Day, Jeannette Chicoyne.

2nd row: Robert Brodeur, Bradley Lalonde, Betty Boots, Sheila Finn, Lynda MacGregor, Donald Wheeler, Pauline Howell, Anne O'Farrell, Joanne Terrance, Gerard O'Farrell, Douglas Masson.

Top row: Brian Cleary, Allan McPhail, Gerald MacDonald, Donald V. MacDonald, Hugh Chisholm.

A.S. 17 1911

TOWNSHIP OF CORNWALL

Name *George W. McPhaul*

Valuation, \$.....

Taxes on Lot.....	Con. <i>5</i>	Rate 10%	\$ 17.50
Tp. Special levy.....	"	1%	1.75
Township Debentures.....	"	2 1/2%	4.72
Statute Labor.....	"		
River Aux Raisin Drainage.....	"		6.58
Beaver Creek Drainage.....	"		
South Branch Drainage.....	"		1.17
North Branch Drainage.....	"		
McDonald Creek Drainage.....	"		
Thompson-Ferguson Drainage.....	"		
Bonville Creek Drainage.....	"		
Werley Creek Drainage.....	"		
Stoney Creek Drainage.....	"		
Dog Tax.....	"		1.00
Township Public School Tax.....	"	6%	14.35
Trustees School Tax.....	"		
Separate School Tax.....	"		
Total.....			\$ 47.08

Pay in Fourteen Days.

DONALD McDONALD, Collector,
CORNWALL, P. O.

This is the 1911 tax bill of George McPhaul (McPhail) for the princely sum of \$47.08.

George was the father of the late Donald McPhail, husband of Edith. This property was recently sold to Hugh Wheeler and his wife Corey who are in the process of restoring the beautiful stone house.



This is the new Simon Fraser plaque that the Township of South Stormont erected at the park in St. Andrews. It is much improved from the old one that didn't stand the test of time.

Recall, the base of the sign is the former grist stone of Simon Fraser used when he operated a grist mill. It was donated by the family of Margaret MacDonald where it was stored for many years.

Heritage Centre Updates

Back in April Don McIntosh led a delegation at a Township of South Stormont Council meeting regarding the unsafe state of the artifacts stored at the Heritage Centre in light of the previous break-in(s). At that meeting council gave us a commitment that they would endeavour to find a suitable storage location for the artifacts. Since many of the artifacts require heated storage, an investigation of suitable rental locations and the cost of moving the artifacts proved to be cost prohibitive. Since the artifacts are already in a heated environment at the Heritage Centre, it was decided that they should remain there with a provision to increase security. Currently, the Township has added surveillance cameras to the building as well as a monitored alarm system. We realize that this is a stopgap solution until the fate of the building is determined; however, it should prevent further loss or damages to the artifacts.

We can confirm that the culprits who did the April 2021 break-in have been caught and have appeared in court in June. Since they were juveniles, we have been unable to gather any information as to the outcome of the case. Prior to the case going to trial, the OPP asked us for an estimate of the damage and loss of the artifacts and collectables. Ian Bowering, former curator of the S.D.& G. Museum in Cornwall, graciously provided us with that report. We thank him for his efforts for the detailed report he provided. Innocently, the figure he arrived at for the replacement value of the damaged antiques, collectables and display cabinets is \$9,420! Should any victim compensation be awarded, the township says it will be directed to the Historical Society.

Regarding the future of the Heritage Centre, the Ontario Land Tribunal rendered a decision in April based on objectors' appeal that the township not repeal the 1978 heritage status bylaw that protects the building. ([Read it HERE](#)). The non-binding determination of the tribunal is that the building does have historical interest and value and recommends that the bylaw not be repealed. They further recommend that the township seek other options rather than proceed with demolition.

Based on this recommendation, council has decided to delay demolition of the building and by means of an expertly produced Request for Proposal (RFP), seek other options for reuse of the building. There is an extended timeline for this endeavour since the township wishes to cast as wide a net as possible to find the most suitable proposal and use for the building. And because council felt that the 1978 heritage status bylaw would limit the scope of proposals, council decided to remove it; thus, allowing the building to be used for more broad purposes.



Over the past summer on the long weekends, we opened the log church and cemetery grounds to the public for viewing. We wish to thank all the volunteers who came out to help. Your dedication to sharing our local history with others is greatly appreciated.



Meetings: Our next meeting will be held September 27th at 7:00 pm at the St. Andrews Fire Hall. At that meeting we will discuss our future meeting schedule.

As indicated in the March 2022 newsletter, this will be the last in our series of biannual newsletters (March and September). From time to time we may have a “pop-up” newsletter published on an ad hoc basis when a story or significant event that has taken place in our area. As a reminder, if you are searching for stories from past newsletters, they are still available on our website under the Newsletter heading.