

Cornwall Township Historical Society

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Editor: Don McIntosh

Memories of Longue Sault Hockey League and the Shaver Trophy

It's been nearly fifty years since the last league game was played, but for the players and fans who remain the memories of the Longue Sault Hockey League are still vivid. Teams came and went throughout the league's 37 year history but the one constant was the coveted Shaver Trophy given each year to the league champions. First played on outdoor ice, the league began in the year 1931. Years later teams faced off regularly at the Mille Roches arena in the town of Mille Roches. First won by the Aultsville Hockey Club in the 1931-32 season, the cup was donated by Frank Shaver an Aultsville store keeper and one time member of parliament. The last team to win the trophy officially was Williamstown in the 1968-69 season in a hard fought battle against defending champs St. Andrews Saints. In March of 1969 it was do-or-die for the Saints in game seven of the semi finals series with each team tied at three games apiece when they faced off against Williamstown at the Water Street Arena in Cornwall. Williamstown eliminated all chances of a comeback for the Saints by defeating them 9-3 in a thrilling game that ended in a brawl in the last period. Six players, three from each team, were thrown out of the game that began with a fight in the third period and ended when both teams cleared the benches to get into the action. That hotly contested game allowed Williamstown to go on and beat Ingleside in the finals in three straight games of the five game series and raise the Frank Shaver Trophy for the last time. And this is where the mystery of the disappearing Shaver Trophy begins.



Frank Shaver Trophy on display at Long Sault Arena

Tradition was that each year the winning team brought the trophy home with them to show-off their victory. So in the spring of '69 with the Longue Sault Hockey League now just a page for the history books, it fell to Williamstown to provide indefinite safekeeping for the trophy. As the years passed veterans of the league and some members of the Lost Villages decided that the trophy should return to its rightful home and put on display at the museum. Thanks to the detective work of some former league players and others, the trophy was found to be at the home of a former player for the Williamstown team. Unfortunately, that trophy holder was reluctant to give it up. A few years later the trophy suddenly resurfaced and was found to be with Kenny MacDonald, another player on the Williamstown team and a former Cornwall Royal. Without any persuasion required from members of the Lost Villages, Kenny graciously released the trophy so it could return to its rightful home in Long Sault.

The trophy now resides safely on display at the Long Sault arena and part time at the Lost Villages Museum. Throughout the league's history, except for a few missing years, the cup is engraved with the winning teams. These gap years were during the War and from 1955-1960, Seaway years when the league was unable to play at the Mille Roches arena, demolished in the spring of '58, and before the new Long Sault arena was built. Another striking anomaly is that the 1969 winner for the final year of the league, team Williamstown is not displayed. Yikes! Maybe that decisive win cost them their legacy; being the last ones to hoist the Frank Shaver Trophy in victory.

Various teams came and went from the league. There were team amalgamations and name changes too. The St. Andrews team began as the Blackhawks but along the way changed their name to the Saints. Could that have been an attempt to seek the help of a higher power to improve their fortunes? Martintown Superlites joined forces with the Williamstown team. There was even an international element to the league with Massena Scarlet Stars and St. Regis/Fort Covington Combines. Naturally, during the Seaway project teams from the towns of Wales, Mille Roches, Moulinette and Aultsville became memories but were later reincarnated as teams Ingleside Oil Kings and Long Sault Tex-Mades.

Throughout the league's early history games were played on outdoor ice until the Mille Roches arena was built in 1935. It too covered a natural ice surface. The hockey games attracted many people to the arena that held over 800 spectators. Even when winter storms blocked roads people hitched up horse and cutter to get there and cheer on their favorite team. St. Andrews player John Morris Wheeler remembers how in springtime the ice could become soft and difficult to play on. Floyd Barkley the arena manager had a neat trick to overcome this. In the morning, he had snow hauled from outside the arena and covered the whole ice surface with about 6" of the white stuff. Just before the 8:00 pm game he had his ice makers scrape the snow from the ice to uncover a hard sheet of ice ideal for hockey. John Morris was a favorite at the arena and known to eschew regular hockey gloves in favor of ordinary leather work gloves. Perhaps they made it easier for him to fire off those blistering slap shots that he was famous for. Incredibly, during his hockey career not one hand injury was sustained on ice wearing just those work gloves.

By far the team with the most trophy wins was St. Andrews with a record 10 wins. Winning the cup was a time to celebrate and one such celebration was held at Ernie's Hotel in Mille Roches. The year was 1948 and the St. Andrews Blackhawks had beat Wales 3-2 in a tight series to become league champs. Ernie Runions, being a team sponsor, invited not only the team but all their families and friends to join them in a banquet at the hotel. The photo next page shows a full banquet hall at Ernie's. Some of the notable names in the picture are Terry, Tony and Theresa, Garret, John Morris Wheeler along with their parents Dennis and Christina. Other notables are John Lawrence McDonald, Ernie and Shirley Quinn, Everett McMillian, Bernie Wheeler, Alfred and Theresa Quinn and Tommy Cavanaugh (son of Steve Cavanaugh).



St. Andrews Blackhawks 1948 winners of the Shaver Trophy. Front row L to R Garret Wheeler, John Morris Wheeler, Percy Bookhout, Norm McMillian, Archie McDonald, Tommy Bookhout, Arnie Gallinger. Back row L to R Lionel MacDonald stick boy, Walter Bookhout, Emory Seguin, Timmy Bookhout, Alwyn McDonell, Charlie Murphy, Lorne Hart, Hugh McGillis, Percy Adams, playing coach. Photo taken at Mille Roches Arena.



Spring 1948 banquet held at Ernie's Hotel, Mille Roches.

The Mille Roches Arena



The idea for an arena at Mille Roches originated with Floyd Barkley. He formed the Mille Roches Arena Company and began selling shares to community members to finance the building's cost of \$10,000. The oval shaped building was 206 feet long and 90 feet wide and sat along the north-south Mille Roches Road. The arena officially opened on Christmas day 1935 with public skating and a hockey game. In the off season the arena was a popular spot for lacrosse games and community dances where many young residents had their first date.

Twenty years after it was built, Hydro expropriated the site and prepared it for demolition. The Moose Creek Recreation Association approached Hydro with their plan to dismantle the building with intentions to reconstruct it in their village for the residents' use. On April 10th, 1958 the plan ended in tragedy when partway through the dismantling process the building collapsed injuring 15 men plunging some from a height of 40 feet to the concrete surface below. It's a cruel irony that a building where so many pleasant memories were made could have such an inglorious ending.



Mille Roches Arena Co. share issued to Zina Hill March 1936 →

Heritage Centre Update: On June 26th Mayor Jim Bancroft met with members of the Historical Society to give us an update on the status of the Heritage Centre which has been off limits to us for over a year now. Mayor Bancroft had recently met with the Eastern Ontario Catholic School Board to see if there was any common ground with them to repurpose the building. Unfortunately they showed no interest. He also stated that seeking funding from higher levels of government does not look promising made worse by the fact that the site has very little land to work with. He took our ideas about possible other venues for us to display our artifacts, will present them to administration and report back in September. He assured us that no decision will be made in the immediate future regarding the building.

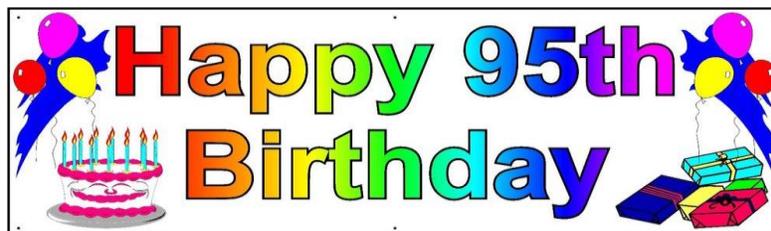
Since this will be our last newsletter before the municipal election, we would like to thank Jim Bancroft and wish him well in his future endeavors. Thank you Jim for your years of dedication to CTHS, your candor and for your leadership as mayor of our township for the past four years. It has been a distinct pleasure to work with you as mayor and our township representative with the Historical Society.



Many thanks to our volunteer greeters who helped out at the log church and pioneer cemetery on Sundays and Doors Open this past summer. During the Doors Open weekend we welcomed 75 guests to cemetery and church sites. Our guests certainly enjoyed hearing about the local history. A quick scan of our guest book shows that throughout the summer we had visitors from all across Canada and others from Mexico, France, California and Scotland!

In the photo Ken McDonald and Don McIntosh talk to visitors during Doors Open

One of our beloved members, **Bernie MacDonald** celebrated a milestone birthday this past June. With all those years comes experience and Bernie is our “Go To” guy when we have questions about local history and insight into how things were done in the past.





Remember New Meeting Time: At our last meeting in May we passed a motion to begin our meetings at 7:00 instead of 7:30 pm.

Our next meeting is Tuesday September 25. Guest speaker is Carol Goddard. She will discuss her recently published book on the Morewood War Memorial. Signed copies by the author will be available for \$15.00 with \$5.00 going towards the Morewood Cenotaph Committee.

Our schedule of meetings for the fall session is as follows: September 25, October 23, November 27, Pot Luck with Lost Villages Monday, December 10 at 11:30 am.

Rev Patrick Stephens from Christ Church in Long Sault contacted us to see if anyone is interested in a vintage church organ that dates back to the early 1900s. Its original home was in Newington. He says that with a little TLC it can be restored to its former glory. If interested contact him at 613 870 1440.

Pictures from the Past

The Wheeler brothers from St. Andrews were well known for their athletic abilities excelling in many sports but in particular lacrosse and hockey. This photo from the 1950s shows the Wheeler brothers as players and coaches for the St. Andrews Saints lacrosse team. L to R front, Terry, Kevin and John Morris. Back, Gabe, Garret and Tony.

Note: Editor wishes to thank John Morris Wheeler for supplying many of the photographs for this newsletter.

