

Cornwall Township Historical Society

Newsletter December 2009

www.cornwalltwphistorical.ca

Editor: Don McIntosh

New Cairn Plaque Officially Unveiled

On Sunday September 13, I represented CTHS as officials from the City of Cornwall and surrounding area unveiled the plaque which will be mounted on the recently erected Founders' Memorial Cairn in Lamoureux Park near the Cornwall Community Museum. The cairn commemorates the June landing 225 years ago in 1784 of the 1st Battalion King's Royal Regiment of New York on the north shore of the St. Lawrence River. This landing officially marks the founding of Cornwall, formerly called Johnstown.

The significance of this date should not be lost on members of our historical society as it was a few months later in November 1784 that natives from St. Regis led a group of United Empire Loyalists to a site on the banks of the Raisin River. Their arrival date was November 30, the feast of St. Andrew, the patron saint of Scotland. So in his honour they called their new home St. Andrew's.

The migration of some thousands of Loyalists from the 13 Colonies, which became the United States, had a far reaching effect on the history of Canada. The Peace Treaty, signed on September 3, 1783 in Paris, formally ended the American Revolutionary War between the Kingdom of Great Britain and the United States of America. Residents of this new country were not provided for in the Peace Treaty and many had to abandon their worldly possessions and start a hard new life in pioneer life to the north. They came, perhaps 50,000 in all, to what are now the provinces of Quebec, Ontario, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. It was Lord Dorchester who ordained the letters U.E. signifying United Empire should be offered to the families "who adhered to the unity of the Empire and joined the Royal Standard in America".

The arrival of these loyalists who were seeking a safe haven in a British colony marks the beginning of development in our area. In his address to delegates and guests at the unveiling ceremony, Doug Thompson, a City of Ottawa councilor noted that our areas share a common bond historically and geographically. Each is rich in diversity and ethnic culture.

The transcript from the bilingual plaques read as follows:

Cornwall-SDG
1784-2009

An understanding between Mohawk Chief, Thayendanegea (Joseph Brant) and Sir John Johnson led to the settlement of Cornwall and Stormont Dundas and Glengarry.

On June 6 1784, Loyalists camped on this plateau before travelling to their new homes.

Subsequently, Scots, Irish, French Canadians and peoples from all corners of the globe arrived, laying the foundation of today's multicultural community.



Here left to right, Jim Brownell MPP, Guy Lauzon MP and Mayor Bob Kilger unveil plaques.

Congratulations!

On September 19, 2009 former Cornwall Township residents Wally Barker and Jim MacDonell (deceased) were inducted into the South Stormont Sports Hall of Fame. Both gentlemen were instrumental in organizing youth hockey and lacrosse leagues in the 1960s.

Our sympathies go out to members Sharon McCullough and Gay Young on the loss of their mother Audrey McPhee. Audrey was a long time member of CTHS and will be truly missed.

Welcome New Members



Gary and Jean Ivens of Apple Hill recently became members of CTHS. If you see them about, please extend a warm welcome.

Stormont Dundas and Glengarry Highlanders: A Brief History

The month of November is now behind us. I'm sure many of you took the time last month to reflect on the sacrifices that our war veterans made on our behalf so that we can enjoy the freedom bestowed upon us. As a way of paying respect to our war heroes, I spent some time getting to know a little bit more about this area's celebrated battalion, the Stormont Dundas and Glengarry Highlanders. Like you, I heard a lot about the Highlanders and for many years I wanted to know more about their history. I spent an afternoon with Ian Bowering of the Cornwall Community Museum and he was most helpful supplying me with historical information, much of which was researched and written by him. I wish to credit him for his assistance with this article.

The counties of Stormont Dundas and Glengarry have had a long and proud military history. The counties were founded by citizen soldiers belonging to Royal Highland Emigrants and the First Battalion King's Royal Regiment of New York. The first militia unit west of Montreal was organized in Eastern Ontario in 1787 under the command of Major John MacDonell. During the War of 1812 the area militia and the Glengarry Light Infantry Fencibles helped the British army fight off the Americans. The population of the area continued to grow after the war. Rumors of Britain wanting to withdraw from British North America brought about the Fenian Raids. The Fenians were an Irish American Brotherhood who believed that they could free Ireland by invading Canada, provoking an international incident that between America and Britain. In response, the new country of Canada passed the Militia Act of 1868, dividing the country into nine military districts. The 59th Stormont and Glengarry Battalion was formed and headquartered in Cornwall.

At the outbreak of the First World War, the Regiment, in Highland dress since 1904,

guarded the St. Lawrence Canals until December 1915 when they were called upon by the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) to fight overseas. More than 100 members of the 59th Stormont and Glengarry Regiment were killed while serving with the CEF, including Claude Patrick Nunney who won the Victoria Cross posthumously in 1918 for his bravery during operations. Nunney, originally an impoverished "Home Child" from England, enlisted while working on a farm in the North Lancaster area. The Victoria Cross is the highest military award given in the United Kingdom and has brought a great deal of pride to the regiment. To this day, Nunney's Victoria Cross hangs on display in the Cornwall Armory Sergeants' Mess.

After the war, the 59th was re-organized and on March 15, 1920 became the Stormont and Glengarry Regiment. Finally in May, 1922 with the name Dundas included, under the command of Colonel Magwood it was converted to a Highland (kilted) unit and given the authority to wear the MacDonell of Glengarry tartan. With the new Stormont Dundas and Glengarry designation, the motto "Dileas Gu Bas", a Gaelic expression meaning Faithful unto Death was adopted for the badge of honour. Still without a home, the newly elected MP Lionel Chevrier made it a priority to enlist Ottawa's support for a new armory for the SD&G Highlanders. In May 1939, the new armory building opened in Cornwall under the looming threat of yet another world war. A few months later on September 10, 1939, Canada declared war on Germany and once again the SD&G Highlanders were preparing to mobilize.



Cornwall Armory with 35 acre training camp located between Marlborough and McConnell Ave. in the background.

The SD&G Highlanders landed in Normandy on D-Day and were the first regiment to enter Caen France, reaching the centre of the city at 13:00 hours, 9 July 1944. Fifty five days later, 112 Highlanders had been killed in action and 312 more wounded in the Falaise Gap. The Regiment fought across France via Rouen, Ei, Le Hamel and Boulogne, moved to Holland and took part in the amphibious landing across Savojaards Plaat. VE Day found the “Glens”, as they were popularly know, near Emden Germany.



SD&G Highlanders landing at Bernieres-sur-Mer Normandy June 6, 1944.

It was said that the Regiment “never failed to take an objective; never lost a yard of ground; never lost a man taken prisoner in offensive action.” The regiment remains an infantry unit in the Highland tradition. Let us pray that they will never face combat again.



The Glens Crest. Note the Celtic cross with the Gaelic expression “Dileas Gu Bas”, Faithful Unto Death.



Do you have a story for our newsletter? Or perhaps you have some old photos you would like to share with other members. If so, we would love

to receive your submissions. You can contact us at:

info@cornwalltwphistorical.ca or:

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Reminder

Are you annual dues paying member? For those paying your CTHS dues annually, please be advised that dues payment for the year 2010 must be received by Dec. 31, 2009. Annual fees for individual: \$5.00; family: \$8.00. To determine if you are an annual member, check the mailing label on the envelope this newsletter arrived in. If your name is followed by an (A), please remit dues ASAP to Marg MacDonald, 17109 Valade Rd., St. Andrews W. ON K0C 2A0.

In 2010, the newsletter will be mailed only to paid-up annual (A), life (L) and honorary (H) members.

The following poem was submitted by Sharon McCullough. She found it among some of her mother's, Audrey McPhee, papers. It was written by a relative on her eightieth birthday June 29, 1915 in California where she had moved to from home on the South Branch Road.

Dear friends, it is just eighty years today, in my home in Canada, far, far away, three healthy sons to my parents were born, before I came on that bright June morn.

And I've heard friends tell of my dear parent's joy because I, the newcomer, was not a boy.

Then another sister and two little brothers came home to be cared for by our dear mother.

But now the first sorrow, for sorrows will come, when death cast its shadow over our quiet home; for the angels took Georgie, the baby, away to his home in the land that is fairer than day.

Then we six, under kind parent's care, daily grew and they carefully taught us the things we should do;

That we keep a clear conscience and use no disguise; and we all knew their counsel was prudent and wise.

That in no wrong doing we should ever engage and always respect and be kind to old age.

To be truthful and honest and do nothing in haste, that we never have cause to grieve for the past.

We were all taught to work, honest toil had its charm, in the house and the field on that South Branch farm.

And all that could go on the Sabbath day, walked to Martintown church four miles away.

The country folks then walked three and four miles, but now walking to church is long out of style.

Then the farmers would drive with their well laden sleighs to Montreal city sixty miles away;

To sell their pork, their butter and grain, And bring back their supplies and the change that remained.

And if nothing did happen to cause them delay they all did make the round trip in three days.

But soon a good market was found nearer by, that banner town Cornwall their wants could supply.

And later if you would take a trip for a rest, the Grand Truck Railroad would take you east or west.

But now there's a rush of travel to and fro, And a network of railroads wherever you go. Then there are automobiles and bicycles too, So if you so wish, you've no walking to do. Then there are mowers and reapers and all kinds of machines; the old sickle and scythe are no more to be seen.

And just think to save labour what electricity has done, and perhaps its wonders have only just begun;

For great men of science are inventing to see and today who can tell what the outcome may be.

Then those wonderful airships, whoever did dream that such an invention would ever be seen.

But in that awful war it is so sad to know, there is death and destruction wherever they go.

Dropping those murderous shells at noon, at night and morning, and the old and young, helpless are slain without warning.

May the King of all kingdoms e'er long intervene and arrest the inventors of those awful machines;

Made to torture and murder their fellow man, too awful for description by tongue or by pen.

That hot headed Kaiser should be made to see, that his barbarous conduct should cease to be.

He claims to be guided by a heavenly hand, while his deeds are unworthy in the name of a man.

Such a cruel tyrant without any heart should be banished to die, like old Bonaparte.

But I'm thinking of Canada my dear native land, who in this awful crisis has taken a stand;

Who has sent many heroes o'er the briny wave to be slaughtered and thrown in a coffin-less grave.

And now this whole nation is stung to the core, for the Lusitania's lives which can never be restored; and yet to be thankful they never should cease that their ruler is a man of good judgment and peace.

M.J. Young McIntyre, Taylorsville California.



Our Pot-Luck Luncheon will take place Saturday, December 5. Bring your favorite dish. Lunch will be served at 12:00 noon but come early and enjoy the company and a glass of punch. See you there!