



# *Historic Gloucester*

Newsletter of the

**GLOUCESTER HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY**

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*Cover Photo:*

*On October 15, 1942, two Canadian National Railway freight trains collided head-on at the west end of the trestle running over the Metcalfe Road (now Bank Street) at Billings' Bridge. See article on page 3.*

*Historic Gloucester* is published by The Gloucester Historical Society. It is intended as a Newsletter to members of the Society to provide interesting articles on Gloucester's past and to keep them informed of new acquisitions by the Museum, publications available, upcoming events and other items of general interest. Comments and suggestions regarding the Newsletter are always welcome.



*Gloucester Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the City of Ottawa.*

## Editor's Comments

At this beginning of this new year, I think it is appropriate that we mention some of the activities and highlights of the Gloucester Historical Society during 2007. These are taken from the year-end report given by GHS President, Mary Boyd.

- A "TimeLine" was added to the Gloucester Historical Society's web site.
- GHS members attended *Heritage Day February 19, 2007*, at City Hall.
- GHS participated in the Street Name Project of the City of Ottawa.
- The Society took part in the St. James Yard Sale.
- The French version of the Society's brochure was printed.
- GHS secretary, Robert Serre, published *Pioneer Families of New Edinburgh (Vol. One)*.
- Meeting was held with representatives of the City of Ottawa and a museum consultant regarding the future of the Gloucester Collection and GHS input re the collection.
- GHS requested observer status in Ottawa Museum network.
- President Mary Boyd attended the reception celebrating 150th anniversary of the choosing of Ottawa as Canada's new capital city.
- A new computer was purchased for use by the Society.
- Glen Clark advised that the new "*Gloucester Quiz*" had been added to the website.
- Robert Serre spoke at the New Edinburgh Cultural Community Centre on his new book "*Pioneer Families of New Edinburgh (Gloucester Township), Vol. 1*."
- It was agreed by the Board that GHS will continue to sponsor at least two public lectures each year, one in the spring and one in the fall.

If you would like more information on any of the GHS activities, research activities or genealogical studies, please contact Mary Boyd or phone the Gloucester Historical Society Office at 613-822-2076 and your call will be returned. As well, if you are interested in volunteering with the Society or making a donation, we would like to hear from you!

Joan Scott



Ottawa Journal, October 15, 1942

## 5 Trainmen Hurt; 20 Horses Killed Freight Crash at Billings' Bridge

### Head-on Collision Heard Throughout Ottawa South – Cattle Cars Telescope

With a crash that was heard throughout Ottawa South, two Canadian National Railway freight trains collided head-on at the west end of the trestle running over the Metcalfe road at Billings' Bridge at 9:15 p.m., Wednesday, injuring five trainmen, none seriously, and killing 20 horses.

Witnesses said the east-bound train, made up of 51 cars, attempted to come to a stop when Engineer Alexander Gauvreau suddenly saw the headlight of the on-coming west-bound train. Brakes were applied fast. Fireman Lemay, of 57 Laurier Avenue East, on the east-bound train, stated it had practically stopped when he and Engineer Gauvreau jumped down the steep south embankment.

Two cattle cars containing about 35 horses were telescoped down the north side of the tracks. Nine were killed when the two cars struck the ground and others were put to death by humane methods.

Horses carried by the train were destined for the Canadian Army, to be used as transport animals in military camps.

## Names of Injured

The injured:

Fireman J.A.H. Lemay, 57 Laurier Avenue East, painful cuts on the face.

Engineer Alexander Gauvreau, 647 King Edward Avenue, bruised shoulder.

Brakeman W.G. Bannon, of Belleville, possible fracture of the ankle.

Trainman William Wickens, of Belleville, head injuries.

Trainman Howard Gray, of Belleville, injured side.

Hundreds of spectators drawn to the scene by the crash, watched dozens of volunteers attempt to free the tightly jammed and crushed animals which were neighing and kicking the sides of the cars to gain freedom.

Five horses were extricated from the wreckage, while one was thrown clear. One horse galloped down the road. A.R.P. men at Billings' Bridge who were testing fire pumps at the time of the accident aided greatly in the work. They were handicapped by a load of lumber that slipped off a flat car that was also knocked off the rails.

On the impact of the two freight trains, a carload of lumber was forced upwards in the telescoping of the train, and planks went flying through the air to scatter over the embankment below the tracks. The lumber-laden car fell sideways and took with it the stock-carrying cars in which the horses were carried.





## Heard Terrific Crash

A graphic description of the scene was given by Paul Boisvenue, aged 29, who was walking along a path towards his house at the foot of the embankment at the moment of the collision.

"I heard a terrific crash that seemed to come from just above me", he said. "Then I saw a string of cars sliding down right in my path. I started to run to get out of the way, and in the dark I saw big white planks falling around the embankment close to me.

"Some came very close and there was no way to tell where the next would hit. I ducked behind a tree and waited until the planks stopped clattering around.

"There was a terrific stamping of animals feet and milling around from the stock cars that mingled with a roar of escaping steam from the engines above. About six horses broke free from one of the cars and started plunging and rearing about.

"They came sliding down the embankment and started galloping across a nearby field."

Boisvenue joined a group of volunteer workers who were trying to liberate a group of horses that had been trapped in the livestock cars. In one of them, a horse lay dead at the bottom of the car, and a second one on the embankment. In another car, the animals were jammed tightly together, some dead, some badly injured and others unhurt.

Headed by Inspector Friend and railwaymen, workers began cutting the sides of the cars with axes to liberate the trapped animals. Spectators heaved on ropes to take away the crushed sides of the cars, and managed to make openings through which uninjured horses were coaxed and pulled.

The horses were packed tightly and had no possible means of escape. Ropes were attached to the necks of the horses and one by one they were

pulled through narrow openings to freedom. They were sent to the barn of A.A. Brule, of Billings' Bridge.

Inspector Joseph Friend of Ottawa Humane Society and his assistant William Myles were informed of the crash of the horse-laden cars and hurried to the scene. Both worked frantically with railway employees, A.R.P. wardens and volunteer helpers to extricate the animals from the crushed and battered cars on the embankment. The Humane Society officials were forced to shoot a number of the animals that had broken legs and deep wounds.

Spectators held flares to light the scene. Firemen from No. 8 station arrived with portable generators and floodlights, which proved of great assistance.

Sergeant Major E. Wicklow, of Uplands Air Station, gave valuable assistance in the task of rescuing the horses, as did also Dick Brule, of Billings' Bridge, who helped to get the horses free and organized spectators to clear a space in the wrecked cars for the horses to get through.

## Engineer's Story

Engineer Gauvreau said he saw the other freight train coming towards him as his own engine neared the trestle.

"I spotted his headlights about four or five poles away, and threw on my brakes, but it was too late. Then I shouted to my fireman and we jumped from the cab and rolled down the embankment. I don't remember hearing any crash, but perhaps that's because we were dazed by the fall after we jumped clear.

Engines of both trains remained on the tracks jammed together. At least a dozen cars on the east-bound freight were derailed. Had the crash occurred in the centre of the trestle the cars would have been strewn about the Metcalfe Road.



Engineer J.A. Ferris and Fireman B.D. Salisbury, both of Belleville, who were in the cab of the west-bound freight were uninjured.

C.N.R. Superintendent J.A. Rogers arrived at the scene shortly after to direct operations.

W.G. Bannon, who suffered a possible fracture of one ankle, and William Wickens and Howard Gray, the other train crewmen who were injured, were detained at the Civic Hospital for the night. They were reported at an early hour this morning not in serious condition.

## TWO NEW PUBLICATIONS

The Gloucester Historical Society has published two new books in the last few months. In May 2007, the Society published a 55-page book entitled **Pioneer Families of New Edinburgh (Gloucester Township), Volume One: 1830-1870**. It includes a brief history of New Edinburgh, located at the northwest tip of the Junction Gore in Gloucester Township, and contains profiles of 93 pioneer families. In September 2007, a 46-page book entitled **Pioneer Families of Hurdman's Bridge (Gloucester Township)** was published, and it follows the same pattern: a brief history of the village, and profiles of 55 pioneer families. Hurdman's Bridge was also located in the Junction Gore of Gloucester Township.

The author, Robert Serré, grew up in Ottawa's Sandy Hill neighbourhood, and now lives in Manor Park. A retired translator, Robert has become an avid local historian. Having recently published books on the pioneer families of the Gloucester Quarries, Glen Ogilvie and Cyrville, he is preparing another book on Janeville, which later became Eastview, and then Vanier.

The price of the **New Edinburgh** book is \$10.00 (mail orders \$12.00), and the **Hurdman's Bridge** book costs \$8.00 (mail orders \$10.00). Contact: Robert Serré, Secretary of the GHS, 1057 Riviera Drive, Ottawa K1K 0N7, e-mail [belser@magma.ca](mailto:belser@magma.ca) (tel. 613-749-0607).

## Besserer's Grove

*Ottawa, July 21, 1887, Dominion Churchman:*

The picnic of the Anglican Sunday schools to Besserer's Grove on the 5th July, was blessed with exceedingly fine weather, and was a success in the highest sense of the word, all the children as well as people of a more mature age declaring that they had spent a very enjoyable day. It would have been rather hard indeed if such had not been the case. The executive committee threw themselves heartily into the work of preparing and arranging the day's pleasure and presented their patrons with a programme, which was perfect in every detail.

At 6:30 yesterday morning the children of the Christ Church and St. Paul's (Rochesterville) Sunday Schools, assembled at the first named school and marched to the Queen's Wharf, being met on the way by the scholars of St. John's and St. Alban's. At the wharf were waiting children from St. George's and St. Bartholemew's. The whole embarked on the steamers Empress and Dagmar, and started for Besserer's Grove. Refreshments were supplied to the children on reaching the scene of the picnic.

The programme during the day included athletic sports of all kinds, football and lacrosse matches and performances by Messrs. Mills and Mercer upon the trapeze. A repetition of the jubilee airs was given, the children being lead by Prof. W. G. Workman.

It was estimated that the picnic was attended by three thousand persons. The pleasure and comfort of the thousands of English Church Sunday school picknickers, was greatly enhanced by the kindly hospitality of Mr. Alec Besserer. This gentleman is the fortunate possessor of the most beautiful picnic grove on the river, which is bound to become the most popular picnic grounds in the vicinity of Ottawa.

*Count your life by smiles, not tears.  
Count your age by friends, not years.*





# The Gloucester Historical Society

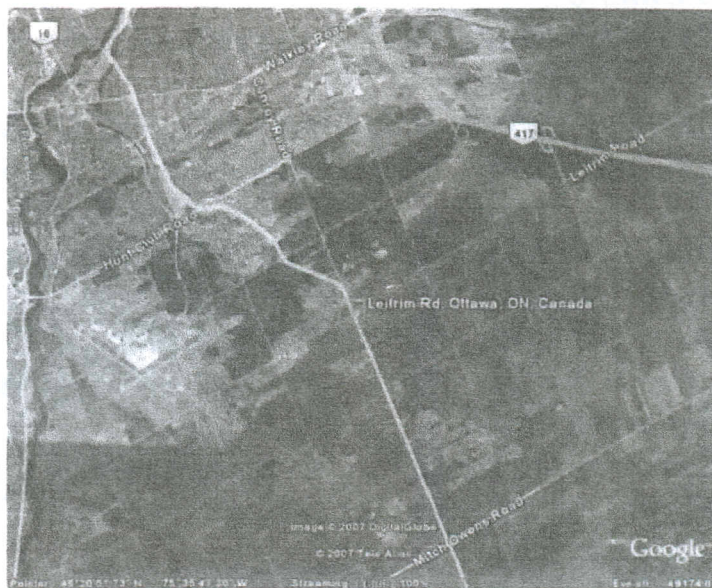
Presents

**“FROM COUNTY LEITRIM, IRELAND TO THE VILLAGE  
OF LEITRIM, NOW PART OF OTTAWA**

**170 years of settlement and present day re-settlement”**



County Leitrim, Ireland



Village of Leitrim along Bank Street South

*A Presentation by CATHAL LYNCH, University of Ottawa*

*(a native of Leitrim, Ireland)*

Sunday, January 20, 2008 2:00 pm

Gloucester Senior's Centre

4550 Bank Street

Just south of Leitrim Road

Free Admission

[www.gloucesterhistory.com](http://www.gloucesterhistory.com) 613-822-2076

**Publications Available From the Gloucester Historical Society:**

- Blackburn—Glen Ogilvie—Centennial History 1887-1967*** **5.00**  
Compiled and Edited by Mrs. Anna Elliott  
An informative story history of that area of Gloucester.
- Bowesville: A Place to Remember*** **15.00**  
By Grace Johnston  
Tells the story of Bowesville and area up until the time  
Bowesville disappeared when expropriated to build the airport.
- Families pionieres des Carrieres de Gloucester dans l'Est de  
L'Ontario*** **10.00**  
By Robert Serré
- Families pionnieres de Cyrville (Canton de Gloucester)*** **8.00**  
By Robert Serré
- Gloucester Memories*** **5.00**  
By Mel Rowat  
Some memories of Gloucester Township.
- Gloucester Roots*** **20.00**  
Compiled and edited by Lois Kemp  
Articles that appeared in the "Roots" column of the  
Gloucester Leader.
- Memories of the Lock Stations*** **4.00**  
Compiled and Edited by Grace Johnston  
Stories of Long Island, Black Rapids, Hog's Back and  
Hartwell's Locks, by Mel Rowat, Camilla (Balcombe)  
Forbes, Aletha (Dale) Davidson and Palmer Slack.
- Milk/Cream Producers—Distributors in  
Gloucester 1892-1975*** **10.00**  
Compiled and edited by Grace Johnston  
This book is about the dairy industry in Gloucester



## **Publications (continued)**

- Pioneer Families of Cyrville (Gloucester Township)*** **8.00**  
By Robert Serré  
About the pioneer families of Cyrville.
- Pioneer Families of Glen Ogilvie (Gloucester Township)*** **8.00**  
By Robert Serré  
About the early families of Glen Ogilvie
- Pioneer Families of Hurdman's Bridge (Gloucester Township)*** **8.00**  
By Robert Serré  
A brief history of the area and the pioneer families that settled there.
- Pioneer Families of New Edinburgh (Gloucester Township)*** **12.00**  
By Robert Serré  
A brief history of the area and the pioneer families that settled there.
- Pioneer Families of the Gloucester Quarries*** **10.00**  
By Robert Serré  
A history of the Gloucester Quarries and the pioneer families that settled in that area.
- Pioneer Families of New Edinburgh, Volume One: 1830-1870*** **10.00**  
By Robert Serré  
About the history and pioneer families of the New Edinburgh area
- The Story of the First English Church of Gloucester Township*** **40.00**  
By Glenn Clark  
The history of St. James Anglican Church, Leitrim, 150 years in God's hands - 1853-2003

## Publications (continued)

### **1879 Belden Map of Gloucester Township**

5.00

From 1879 Belden Atlas of Carleton County

The map shows who owned each lot in 1879 as well as the location of roads, churches, schools and interesting features of the township during that early time.

**Note:** Copies of publications may be ordered through: Robert Serré, Secretary of the GHS, 1057 Riviera Drive, Ottawa K1K 0N7, e-mail: belser@magma.ca. A \$2.00 shipping charge will be added to mail orders.

### **Glen Ogilvie**

*(an excerpt from a supplement to the Weekly Journal, Friday, July 25, 2003)*

“Glen Ogilvie was the birth place on April 7, 1846, of one of Ottawa East’s most famous citizens, William Ogilvie, a man who was recognized nationally for his work as a land surveyor, explorer and writer. After an accomplished career surveying and exploring the north, he wrote about his adventures in his book *Early Days in the Yukon*, which is still considered one of the most authoritative accounts of the history of the area. The village of Glen Ogilvie was first settled by William’s grandfather who arrived from Ireland circa 1842. By the late 1850’s, the area became known as the Ogilvie Settlement. The name changed to Glen Ogilvie before finally becoming part of Cyrville in the late 1860’s.

Another colourful character in the history of Glen Ogilvie is inventor James Henry Blair. The eldest of eleven children, Blair was born on May 24, 1881.

An ingenious boy, he often constructed clay and wood models at home on his father’s farm on Innes Road. In 1898, James captured the attention of crowds in downtown Ottawa when he rode

along Sparks Street on his hand-made bicycle, carefully designed and assembled from wood, metal and rubber that he found on the farm.

Many residents may not realize it, but at the intersection of Ogilvie and Blair roads, two of Ottawa East’s pioneer families are recognized for their lasting contribution to our heritage.

### ***Old Folks Are Worth a Fortune***

*Old folks are worth a fortune: with silver in their hair, gold in their teeth, stones in their kidneys, lead in their feet and gas in their stomachs.*

*I have become a lot more social with the passing of the years; some might even call me a frivolous old gal. I’m seeing five gentlemen every day.\*

*As soon as I wake, Will Power helps me get out of bed. Then I go see John. Then Charley Horse come along, and when he is here, he takes a lot of my time and attention. When he leaves, Arthur Ritis shows up and stays the rest of the day. (He doesn’t like to stay in one place very long, so he takes me from joint to joint.) After such a busy day, I’m really tired and glad to go to bed—with Ben Gay. What a life!*



**Gloucester Historical Society - Phone/Fax 613 822-2076**

**Board of Directors:**

President:	Mary Boyd	Directors:	Glenn Clark
Vice-President:	Mary Patterson		Bob Kemp
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Collections Officer/Curator:	Olga Zeale
Education Officer:	Anik Despres

**IF YOU HAVE NOT YET RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP, OR IF YOU WISH TO BECOME A NEW MEMBERS, PLEASE COMPLETE THE FORM BELOW AND SEND IT IN WITH YOUR CHEQUE. THE COST IS STILL ONLY \$10.00 PER YEAR OR \$40.00 FOR A LIFE MEMBERSHIP - WHAT A BARGAIN!**

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**Membership Form—Gloucester Historical Society/Societe historique de Gloucester**

Membership/Adhesion 2006—\$10.00 for one year..... \$40.00 for life membership.....

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ PROV \_\_\_\_\_ POSTAL CODE \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: Gloucester Historical Society  
4550B Bank Street,  
Gloucester, Ontario  
K1T 3W6  
Tel: 613-822-2076