



Historic Gloucester

Newsletter of the

**GLOUCESTER HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

[Www.gloucesterhistory.com](http://www.gloucesterhistory.com)

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Montreal and Russell Roads Tollhouse

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THE GLOUCESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY
IS HAPPY TO ANNOUNCE
THAT ITS HISTORY ROOM IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
EACH THURSDAY FROM 10:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.
BETWEEN MAY 6 AND OCTOBER 28, 2010

LOCATION: 4550B BANK STREET (AT LEITRIM ROAD)

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Contact Robert Serré at 613-749-0607 // bob.rosealine@gmail.com

Cover Photo:

This circa 1915 photo is of a tollhouse that was on the corner of Montreal and Russell Roads. The tollhouse was owned by the Ottawa, Montreal and Russell Consolidated Road Company. Gatekeeper William McPhail stands at the door. Tolls were used by municipalities to raise funds for civic projects. The toll for a horse was 10 cents, for two horses 16 cents and for a car 25 cents.

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.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Several members of the GHS Board attended the BIFHSGO Conference September 10-12 at Library and Archives Canada. There were some great presentations with well known and interesting speakers. A wide variety of information and help on genealogy research was available. There was access to many genealogy databases with researchers on hand to help you find your ancestors. A large selection of books was also on sale and representatives from various associations involved in History or Genealogy were present.

You are reminded that this Newsletter is published four times a year for you, the members of the Gloucester Historical Society. Your feedback on it would be most welcome. Anyone who wishes to submit a story about Gloucester is welcome to do so. Tales of pioneer families are always interesting and if you have any old photos these would be a great addition. You do not have to be an author to make a submission to the Newsletter. Just send us the facts and we will write it up for you if you wish.

Also, we are always looking to enhance our family records of Gloucester families. If you have any information you would like to share with us, or if you would like to discuss anything concerning Gloucester and its people, please phone the GHS office at 613-822-2076 and leave a message and someone will get back to you. You may also drop in to the Research Room at 4550 Bank Street at Leitrim Road any Thursday until October 28th, or by appointment. There is lots of material and books to help you if you are doing research or if you are just interested in taking a look at the information we have. The entrance is off Leitrim Road next door to the Fire Hall. We would be glad to hear from you.

The Board of Directors meets the second Saturday of every month at 9:30 am in the Research Room. Anyone is welcome to come to these meetings so please feel free to join us some time.

Joan Scott

Board of Directors 2010-2011

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ROCK-CLIFFE AIR STATION

by Robert Serré

In 1898, the Department of Militia and Defence expropriated 160 hectares (395 acres) of land in the Township of Gloucester, and established the Rockcliffe Rifle Range on this new property [Kom 2005]. The John Lyons Construction Company was contracted to build the new facility [Voller 1981], and a military camp was set up in the area for the twelve-day spring training of militia units. The Dominion of Canada Rifle Association, which had been founded in 1868, and provided rifle training for Canadian militia soldiers, was the first group to move to the newly-built range site. The old 43rd Duke of Connaught Rifles and the Governor General's Foot Guards each had its regimental club house on the premises. There were 15-metre-tall limestone cliffs in the area, and they acted as target backstops [Walker 1968, Payne 1999].

In 1921, the Dominion Rifle Association moved its targets from the Rockcliffe site to the Connaught ranges in South March [Walker 1968]. During the previous year, the Ottawa Air Station, Ottawa's first airfield, had been opened on the site, and the government proceeded to remove the firing range and erect a few hangars for bi-planes. In 1922, the base was turned over to the military, and in 1924 the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) was established [Haig 1975]. By 1935, the size of the base had reached 376 hectares (930 acres). There was an upper level, separated from a lower level by a 15-metre cliff. Housing, recreational and other facilities occupied the upper level. On the lower level were some hangars at the foot of the cliff, then the airfield, followed by two former seaplane hangars near the river, and a slipway at the river's edge. Between 1935 and 1964, the year in which the RCAF ceased flying operations there, the site became one of the most important bases in the history of Canadian aviation [Payne 1999].

After the Second World War, a larger community flourished under various names: **Rockcliffe Air Station, Rockcliffe Air Base, Rockcliffe Airport, Canadian Forces Base Rockcliffe**. It was then that the first family homes began to appear. About 450 of the single and semi-detached houses were

built in the initial postwar years, with another 150 eventually added [Kom 2005]. A post office named **Finter** was established at the Rockcliffe Air Base on 5 September 1947, and the first postmaster was Richard E. MacDonald. On 1 September 1951, this post office was changed to a sub-post office of Ottawa, and on 1 November 1952 it was closed [Carter 1984].

Aerial surveying had been conducted from the Rockcliffe Air Station throughout the 1920s and 1930s, and in 1936 a building nicknamed White House was constructed, eventually housing one of the world's leading air photo laboratories. After 1945, the RCAF played a major role in the aerial surveying of northern Canada, and by 1949, the Photographic Establishment at Rockcliffe had carried out the largest program of its kind in the world. Photographic activity was entirely centralized at Rockcliffe, and most of the work was carried out using Lancaster, Dakota and Norseman aircraft, with Canso aircraft serving to deliver supplies. The aerial survey of northern Canada was completed in 1957 [Payne 1999].

The community which had developed over the years at CFB Rockcliffe survived into the 21st century, on land which still belonged to the Department of National Defence, bounded by the new Aviation Parkway on the west and Blair Road on the east, but the population gradually decreased, some houses were removed, and some buildings were torn down. The National Aviation Museum was built towards the river, and the National Research Council still had laboratories at the eastern edge of the site, with public roads crisscrossing the base in all directions. During the winter of 2008-09, however, the utilities were disconnected, hydro and water services were cut, the doors and ground-floor windows of all the remaining houses were boarded up. Then at midnight on 31 July 2009, the entire site was closed to the public. By the end of 2009, there was no more though traffic on what had become private property, and the Viscount Alexander Park Community Centre had been closed at the corner of Codd's Road and Via Venus. Negotiations were continuing with respect to the transfer of the base to the Canada Lands Corporation and CLC plans for future development, but native land treaty claims were delaying this process [Manor Park Chronicle, May/June 2110].

The runways and other facilities at the northern edge of the former base continue to be operated by the Rockcliffe Flying Club, and are restricted to club use [McGrath 1992]. Incorporated in 1961, and opened to civilians, the Rockcliffe Flying Club was organized by servicemen returning after the Second World War [Csoka 1981]. It is helping to keep alive the vivid memories that linger on in the minds of local residents and former personnel and employees as this segment of Ottawa's huge territory drifts towards new development plans that will undoubtedly change most of the present landscape.

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Photo taken on Cod's Road in June 2010



Photo taken on Hemlock Road in June 2010

To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism. To steal from many is research.

A bus station is where a bus stops. A train station is where a train stops. My desk is a work station.

Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit; wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.

Dolphins are so smart that within a few weeks of captivity, they can train people to stand on the very edge of the pool and throw them fish.

War does not determine who is right - only who is left.

Always borrow money from a pessimist—he won't expect it back.

You do not need a parachute to skydive. You only need a parachute to skydive more than once.

Money can't buy happiness, but it sure makes misery easier to live with.

Behind every successful man is his woman. Behind the fall of a successful man is usually another woman.

A clear conscience is usually the sign of a bad memory.

Pioneer Shelters Difficulties

by Joan Scott

Settlers arrived in Canada in many ways. Many came by ship, some from England, Ireland or Scotland, others from France or other European nations. Still others came to Canada from the United States, as United Empire Loyalists after the American Revolution or because they wanted a fresh start or thought life might be better here. Some came in large sponsored groups, some in family groups and some came as couples or individuals. However they came, they were looking for a new life and were willing to work hard to make it happen.

Some immigrants arrived to take up land that had been granted to them for services rendered, some who were United Empire Loyalists were granted land in Canada for their loyalty, others squatted on whatever land they thought suited their needs. The earliest settlers were usually the squatters and sometimes the land that they chose was granted to someone else who had not yet claimed it. This led to a great deal of trouble, confusion and cost, especially for the rightful owner. Sometimes it caused the grantee to become almost bankrupt trying to claim his rightful land.

When someone settled on a tract of land, the first thing they usually did was to build some form of shelter. Wood was abundant and so log homes were most common. Some settlers, however, started out with what was called a sod hut which was a temporary measure. First homes were usually quite small, sometimes only ten feet by eight feet in area. The sloping roof would perhaps be six feet in front and four feet in the rear. A blanket covered the door opening in the front of the shanty. In some cases the whole front was left open so that a fire could be kept burning just outside to provide heat to the building.

Crude roofs were formed of bark slabs supported by poles and held down by other poles and rocks. A better roof was made of basswood, split lengthwise and hollowed out with an adze. Half of these were fastened with the hollow side up, side by side, and then the other half placed over them with the hollow sides down and the edges in the hollows of the first layer. In this way rain would run from the upper to the lower and off the back of the roof.

Now that the settler had constructed some sort of shelter, his next priority was to clear some land so that he could grow food to feed his family and, eventually, to trade or sell for other necessities. This was no easy job. If there were sons in the family they would assist their father in this endeavour. If there were no sons, nearby settlers, if there were any, would probably have helped with this chore. When necessary, the settler's wife would also help out.

Trees were a mixed blessing for the settler. While they provided material for building a home and making some articles of furniture, they were an impediment to clearing the land, a task that was necessary if the farm was to become productive as soon as possible.

Settlers tried to use their resources efficiently and did not just randomly clear cut and burn the land. Trees were felled and cut into ten to fifteen foot lengths which were then stacked into piles with five logs as a base. Branches were used as levers to hold the logs in place. Each tier was smaller so that the pile tapered towards the top. Branches, brushwood and wood chips were scattered on top and allowed to dry for several months. Then the pile was set afire from the top. By this method the intense heat was dissipated into the air rather than damaging the ground which would make the soil unfit for crops for years. The ash from this fire was collected as soon as it was cool and before it got wet. This ash was sold to be made into potash, with enough retained for making lye to be used in soap making for the family.

Felling the trees was not the most labour intensive part of clearing the land. The stumps still remained and, while some, such as hardwoods might rot in about eight years, others, such as pines, could last for half a century. In many cases seeding had to be done between tree stumps, and there was always small roots and bushes which had to be eradicated. It usually took years for a field to become completely cleared so that it could be ploughed with ease.

Fences were the next priority for the settler. These were needed to keep out of the planted fields any family livestock or any wild animals in the vicinity. Again, the ample supply of wood was used to build the fences. Cedar, black ash, oak, chestnut,

hickory and sometimes walnut were the woods of choice. Basswood was sometimes used, but it was not as sturdy and did not stand up as well or as long. Tree trunks with straight grain were selected and split into rails about ten to twelve feet long and about four inches square by using a broad axe.

There were a number of styles of fences. For a straight rail fence two stakes were driven into the ground about the width of a rail's thickness apart. Rails were then placed between them, overlapping first to one side, then the other, so that rails of one section were over or under the rails of the other section. As two sections of rail were roughly a rod, this could be a useful way of measuring the land. Zig-zag or snake fences were erected in a similar way but each section went in an angle to the adjoining sections. Occasionally pine stumps were used to make a fence, particularly in high sandy ground. These stump fences became well weathered and in some cases became almost like stone.

Once the settler had built his log home and cleared some land, he was ready to build other out-buildings. As his livestock increased, the need for a barn was met by constructing another log building, but not to the standards of his home. The logs might not be particularly straight because of the great length of the logs needed, and the butts which overlapped might remain uneven. Mostly saddle notch construction was used whereby a rounded notch was made on the lower side of the log and this rested on the curved upper part of the log beneath. Unlike the houses these buildings were not chinked in any way. In the home the joints were dovetailed together and the butts evenly cut. Many of the log homes were chinked with lime plaster or wood chips. Once the settler had the time he might also use lime to plaster the inner walls of the home.

Early homes had dirt floors of packed earth but occasionally log floors were laid and the surface would be smoothed somewhat with an adze. Sometimes a second layer of trimmed logs, also smoothed with an adze, was added to the first. These logs were held in place with wooden pegs, but when the wood dried out and warped making it uneven, the floor would have to be re-laid.

The basic first home rarely had a fireplace or

a chimney. Flat stones were used to build a fire pit and the smoke was released through a hole in the roof. This, of course, was a very poor solution as the smoke was not only hard on the people inside, but made for a very dirty and unhealthy environment. As soon as possible the settler would construct a chimney. This was built in a similar manner to the home itself, using smaller branches rather than logs. The framework was then plastered on the inside and out with clay bound together with chopped straw. This plaster had to be quite thick to keep it from becoming cracked with frost or to prevent the chimney from catching fire. A permanent ladder was usually placed from the ground to the roof with a second ladder affixed to the roof itself to enable quick extinguishing of chimney fires.

When fireplaces were built they were usually huge to accommodate large logs so that fires could be kept continually burning. This was done not only because they were very hard to kindle, but also to provide the sole source of heat, to be used for cooking, and to provide light during long winter nights. Embers were taken from the fireplace to start fires outdoors for soap making or boiling mutton or beef fat to make tallow for candles. In later years, ovens were built into the fireplace for baking bread and other things.

Source: Milnes, Herbert, "Settlers' Traditions," The Boston Mills Press, R.R. #1, Cheltenham, Ont. 1980.

Do not argue with an idiot. He will drag you down to his level and beat you with experience.

I want to die peacefully in my sleep, like my grandfather. Not screaming and yelling like the passengers in his car.

We never really grow up; we only learn how to act in public.

Going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than standing in a garage makes you a car.

Why does someone believe you when you say there are four billion stars, but check when you say the paint is wet?

Nostalgia isn't what it used to be.

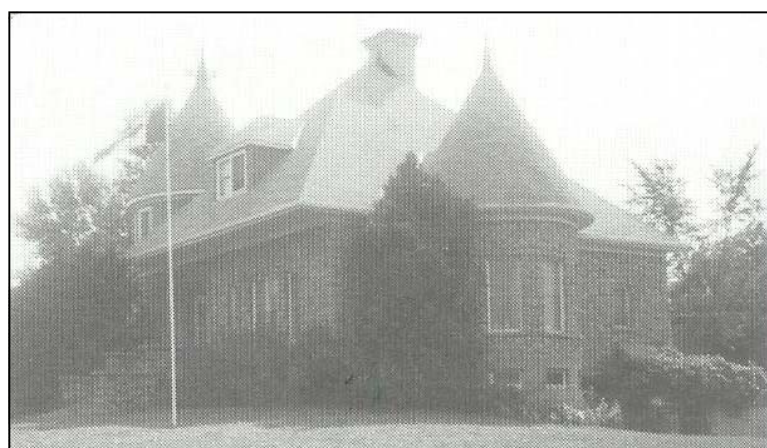
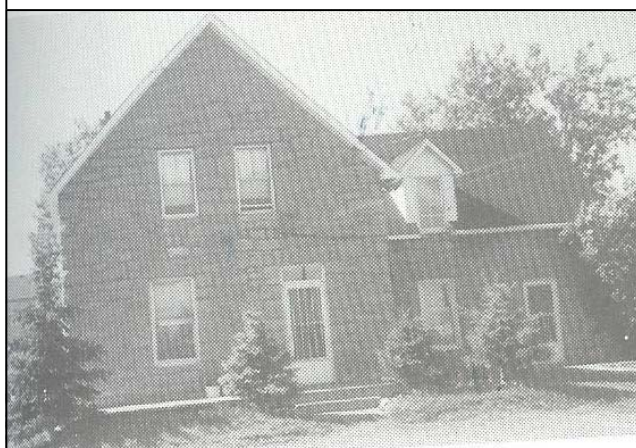
Publications Available From the Gloucester Historical Society:**For further details regarding publications visit our website: www.gloucester-history.com****(Postage, if mailed, in brackets)**

<i>Blackburn - Glen Ogilvie - Centennial History 1887-1967</i> Compiled and Edited by Mrs. Anna Elliott	5.00	(3.00)
<i>Bowesville: A Place to Remember</i> By Grace Johnston	20.00	(12.00)
<i>Familles pionnières des Carrieres de Gloucester dans l'Est de l'Ontario</i> By Robert Serré	10.00	(3.00)
<i>Familles pionnières de Cyrville (Canton de Gloucester)</i> By Robert Serré	10.00	(3.00)
<i>Gloucester Memories</i> By Mel Rowat	5.00	(3.00)
<i>Gloucester Roots</i> Compiled and edited by Lois Kemp	20.00	(5.00)
<i>Gloucester Township Ratepayers Listed by Family Name and Concession/Lot Number for the Years 1855, 1864 and 1872</i> Compiled by Robert Serré	10.00	(3.00)
<i>Memories of the Lock Stations</i> Compiled and Edited by Grace Johnston	5.00	(3.00)
<i>Milk/Cream Producers—Distributors in Gloucester 1892-1975</i> Compiled and edited by Grace Johnston	15.00	(5.00)
<i>Pioneer Families of Cyrville (Gloucester Township)</i> By Robert Serré	10.00	(3.00)
<i>Pioneer Families of Glen Ogilvie (Gloucester Township)</i> By Robert Serré	10.00	(3.00)
<i>Pioneer Families of the Gloucester Quarries</i> By Robert Serré	10.00	(3.00)
<i>Pioneer Families of Hurdman's Bridge (Gloucester Township)</i> By Robert Serré	10.00	(3.00)
<i>Pioneer Families of Janeville (Gloucester Township)</i> By Robert Serré	10.00	(3.00)

Publications (continued):

<i>Pioneer Families of New Edinburgh, Volume One: 1830-1870</i> By Robert Serré	10.00 (3.00)
<i>Pioneer Families of St. Joseph (Orleans) in Eastern Ontario</i> by Robert Serré	10.00 (3.00)
<i>Pioneer Families of Rockcliffe Annex and Manor Park in Gloucester Township</i> By Robert Serré	10.00 (3.00)
<i>Remembering Carlsbad Springs (Gloucester Township)</i> By Mary Boyd and Robert Serré	10.00 (3.00)
<i>The Story of the First English Church of Gloucester Township</i> The history of St. James Anglican Church, Leitrim, 1853-2003 By Glenn Clark	50.00 (20.00)
<i>1879 Belden Map of Gloucester Township</i> 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.	10.00 (5.00)

Note: Copies of publications may be ordered through: Robert Serré, President of the GHS, 1057 Riviera Drive, Ottawa K1K 0N7, e-mail: bob.rosealine@gmail.com. A shipping charge as shown for each publication will be added to mail orders.



These two old homes have recently disappeared from the Gloucester scene. The one on the left was at 3497-99 Innes Road. It was built circa 1860 by the Gauthier family and occupied by their descendents until being torn down earlier this summer. The one on the right was situated at 1300 St. Joseph Boulevard. It was constructed in the 1930s and 1940s. It was always considered as a fairytale castle. After having several owners and renters, sadly it burned down last year.

- Photos from Lois Kemp's *Gloucester Roots*

Members Wanted:

The Gloucester Historical Society is always looking for new members. Regardless of age, anyone who is interested in the history of Gloucester, as a Township, City, or part of the City of Ottawa, can benefit from membership in the Society. There is a well-stocked history room at our Leitrim Road office. Every Thursday, from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm from early May to the end of October, there are knowledgeable people there to help you in all aspects of research about your family, friends or neighbours in Gloucester.

Your membership entitles you to receive the *Historic Gloucester* newsletter four times a year so that you can keep up with what is going on with the GHS and read interesting articles of times and places of long ago. For more information on the Gloucester Historical Society be sure to check out our wonderful website at **[www.gloucester history.com](http://www.gloucesterhistory.com)**.

Family Histories Wanted:

If you have information on any family who resided in Gloucester, we would be happy to add this to our records. There may be others who would like to share this information but have been unable to find it. And, you may find that the family of someone you know was once a neighbour of your ancestors!

Volunteers Wanted:

The GHS is always looking for volunteers to assist others with research, to assist at society functions or to help the Board of Directors in many other ways.

IF YOU HAVE NOT YET RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP, OR IF YOU WISH TO BECOME A NEW MEMBER, PLEASE COMPLETE THE FORM BELOW AND SEND IT IN WITH YOUR CHEQUE.

Membership Form—Gloucester Historical Society/Société historique de Gloucester

Membership/Adhésion 2010 - \$15.00 for one year..... \$100.00 for life membership.....

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