



Historic Gloucester

Newsletter of the

**GLOUCESTER
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

www.gloucesterhistory.com



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This year Gloucester Historical Society celebrates 40 years of existence in its current form, To mark the occasion Laurel Sherrer made this cake to share with attendees at our recent event where Jennifer Halsall spoke about the Green Belt.

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President's Report

By Glenn Clark

As we approach the end of another year, I hope you enjoy the latest stories presented in this Newsletter. We are endeavouring to find a wider range of interesting stories about our community and the people who live here. We welcome submissions any time.

We are also about to release the first version of documents on the history of both Gloucester schools and churches to be posted on our website. Please watch for this sometime during the holiday season. This will be an ongoing project and more information will be added as it is located. We know there are many written or on-line histories of churches and schools but sometimes they are difficult to locate or are no longer available or accessible. These make valuable resources and would be great additions to our library at the Grace Johnston History Room.

We continue to work hard at locating interesting photographs, and researching events, places and Gloucester families. We encourage your inquiries and donations anytime.

We wish to extend our best wishes for the coming New Years and a Merry Christmas, as well as a happy and healthy holiday season.



THE GLOUCESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY HISTORY ROOM WILL BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
BY APPOINTMENT ONLY DURING THE WINTER MONTHS

LOCATION: 4550B BANK STREET (AT LEITRIM ROAD)

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT Mary Boyd at 613-521-2082 or boydmary172@gmail.com

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 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.

Coming to Grips with the Greenbelt

By Laurel Sherrer

A treasure or a rip-off?

Both words were used to describe Ottawa's Greenbelt by members of the audience at the Gloucester Historical Society's Nov. 25 lecture, presented by Jennifer Halsall, a Cultural Resources Officer with the National Capital Commission.

Halsall, who studied the impact of the Greenbelt on local families as part of her master's thesis at Carleton University, took a balanced approach to the topic, outlining a variety of pros and cons in her talk, entitled "Voices of the Greenbelt."

The Greenbelt, created as part of the 1950 Gréber Plan, was intended as a way to curb urban sprawl and preserve farmland by creating a ring of land around Ottawa where development would be prohibited. However, as Halsall pointed out, this goal has not always been met, with many affected farmers just giving up on their farms rather than living as NCC tenants, and with the urban sprawl simply being pushed farther afield. In addition, the Greenbelt's goal itself has changed over time, from the original idea of preserving farmland, to the more recent focus on protecting wetlands and creating recreational venues.

From the beginning, the process has been "highly contested," says Halsall, especially by those whose rural lives were turned upside down by the expropriation process.

The Greenbelt is made up of about 200 km² that comprise 5,700 hectares of good agricultural land. Before the Gréber Plan, about 1,000 landowners held the land in the belt, many with multi-generational families living on small farms. Now large portions of the area have grown back up into forest -- often through deliberate tree-planting that has created highly unnatural arrow-straight rows of trees -- and other portions simply lie idle, giving the appearance of neglect.

On the plus side, Halsall said, there are three dairy farms still operating in the belt and many fruit and vegetable farms, as well as 150 km of trails for hiking and winter sports. There are family-centred educational venues and equestrian activities. With 1,555 distinct animal species living there, it is a haven for wildlife, including several at-risk and endan-

gered species. For example, a species of bittern that is critically endangered, with only 50 of the birds believed to exist in all of Ontario, has 16 members of its species living in the Mer Bleue Bog.

On the minus side, in interviewing many former Greenbelt dwellers, Halsall found that the expropriation process left emotional scars that persist to this day. Young people who had fully expected to carry on farming their family's land as their parents and grandparents had done before them, found it "distressing" to be denied that opportunity, she said.

The amount of money offered in compensation was generally considered inadequate and unfairly distributed, based on what the NCC had planned for the land, rather than the quality of the farm and its buildings. This meant "your investment in the land had no effect on the assessment," Halsall said.

A newspaper article from the time quoted ousted residents as feeling like "modern-day Acadians."

Small communities like Ramsayville, Bowesville and Hawthorne were destroyed because the plan was seen as "scientifically justified and rational" under the "high modernist view" espoused by Jacques Gréber and other urban planners of the time.

Also, until recently, there has been a shocking disregard for the heritage value of farm properties in the Greenbelt, and a pervasive ignorance of the area's history within the halls of power. Take, for example, a property on the Ridge Road near Anderson Road that the federal heritage authorities had listed as the "Powell House." When Halsall tried to look into the property's history, she was told that despite it being a "Recognized Federal Heritage Building," the authorities couldn't find a reason why it was called by the name Powell and knew of no "person or event of note" in connection with the property.

Halsall did further research and found that in the 1980s (not exactly early history) a Rev. John Powell I rented the property. However, in a stroke of luck for heritage enthusiasts, Gwen and Earl Whyte saw the house on a website and got in touch with the NCC to point out that the Whyte family had lived there for generations before that -- since 1887 in fact. This information took the NCC by surprise.

The Whytes showed Halsall a huge scrapbook about the Whyte family and the local institutions, painting a rich and colourful picture of times gone by in a vanished community. Deciding what is “of note,” she says, is clearly a matter of opinion and she has vowed to continue uncovering more of what she calls the Greenbelt’s “hidden agricultural history.”

The property is now known as the Whyte House, rather than the Powell House, and it has become an example to the NCC that “you need to scratch a little bit beneath the surface,” when trying to accurately reflect the rural heritage of the Greenbelt, said Halsall.

The concept that there is important heritage to protect in the Greenbelt is catching on, despite the large number of buildings that have already been lost. “There’s been a new-found push to document and protect rural heritage in the Greenbelt,” Halsall said. Recently, 10 interpretive plaques have been placed on historic properties, and efforts have been made to preserve or restore historic buildings, such as a 150-year-old barn on the Anderson farm.

Overall, Halsall concluded, the Greenbelt has always presented “a mixed bag of opportunities,” some of which were seized, but many of which were missed. The NCC is trying to remedy some of the errors made in the past, but there is much work yet to be done.



GHS Treasurer Laurel Sherrer
with the anniversary cake



Jennifer Halsall and GHS President
Glenn Clark with new banner.

Thrills and Chills in Eastview

Thumbing our noses at winter has been a quintessential Canadian occupation for a very long time. Around the year 1908, you might find the children of Scott Street in Eastview making the most of the season by taking a thrilling ride down the ice slide at Hector Frederick's place.

Hector Frederick, born in 1891, lived at No. 7 Scott Street. As a young man, Hector built the wooden framework for an ice slide in an open area beside the house where he lived with his parents, Hector Sr. (who may also have gone by the name Simeon) and Malvina. According to his grandson Richard J. Bouvier, Hector would cover the slide with ice in winter by labouriously climbing up and pouring pailfuls of water onto it.

For several years, children from all around the neighbourhood, now of course known as Vanier, would converge on this property with their toboggans to slide down the steeply inclined structure and off into the woods, ending up on a pond that used to exist between Scott Street and St. Jacques. Since then Scott Street has gone through two name changes: first it was renamed Ste-Cécile and then in 2016 became Joffre-Bélanger Way.

Bouvier has provided the pictures reproduced here, showing the slide and neighbourhood children in winter, as well as one summer picture of Hector in a horse-drawn carriage with the wooden framework of the slide behind him. The precise dates of the pictures are unknown. Bouvier thinks Hector's project may have been inspired by the ice slide at Quebec City, or perhaps by the nearby Rockcliffe ski jump.

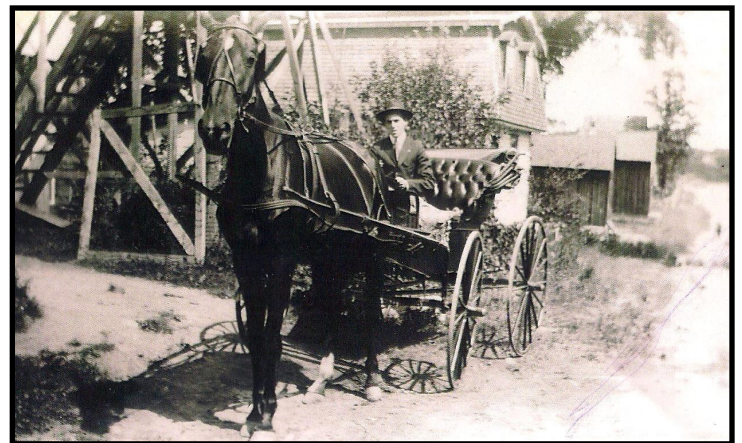
Hector later married Maria Lafontaine, of Lowertown, Ottawa. Their children were Aline, André, Lorette, Simone, Cécile and Fernand. He died at age 92. Bouvier says the original Frederick house still exists on Ste. Cecile St., and it still has an unusually large side yard where the slide used to be.

Family oral history suggests that the Frederick family originally came from Germany to Pennsylvania, and then came to the Charlevoix region of Quebec before coming to Ottawa.

Bouvier says his grandfather worked for the Queen's Printers, which used to be on Nepean Point where the National Gallery now stands. He was a civic-minded person who received an award for volunteering for his religious association from MPP Albert Roy in the 1970s or 80s.

If our readers can recall any stories referring to the ice slide at the Hector Frederick home in Vanier, we would be happy to hear them.

Photos and information provided by Richard J. Bouvier, Guy Frederick and family.



The slide in winter and in summer (beside the horse and buggy) >

An Unexpected DNA Surprise

By Linda Willson-Cutts

One small gift under the Christmas tree changes a local Gloucester family forever.

Stories like this, you only see in a movie. After a seventy-eight year search a London woman brings a miracle to well known local Cutts family.

Garry Cutts, who many are familiar with through his former business, 'Cutts Motors'; at the corner of Riverside Drive and Bank Street; became curious about this ancestry stuff being advertised on the television. His wife Linda was curious as well. As a Christmas gift Linda decided to order a couple of kits and they submitted their DNA to Ancestry.com early in 2018.

It would be interesting to find out exactly where their ancestors came from. What they weren't prepared for was what else they would find.

The report came back with their ancestral origin, as well as a list of other individuals who submitted their DNA that matched to them.

Garry had many matches, but one stuck out. Dorothy Atkins!

Dorothy Atkins showed up as a 'Direct Family Member'. Not only did he not recognize the name, but a direct family member in this case would indicate this person was a sister! At that time, Garry just passed it off as a mistake. This could not be possible.

Several days later Garry, received a message through Ancestry DNA from Kelly Armstrong, who also appeared as a match, a 'Niece'. Kelly informed Garry that her mother, Dorothy Atkins, and Garry; based on their DNA match and percentages; had the same birth father.

Garry, now seventy-four, was in shock and knowing his father found this difficult to believe.

Dorothy, currently seventy-eight, was born in Toronto as 'Shirley Ann', and given up for adoption. She was adopted six weeks later and renamed Dorothy. She had great adoptive parents, William Walter Cramp and Eleanor Myrtle Ellis and an amazing life growing up. However, she had been hoping that some day her birth parents would come looking for

her and she would know where she came from and as she got older, health information that only her birth parents could provide.

From age five she knew she was adopted and as the years passed the chances of finding them seemed unlikely. Following a health scare last Christmas, that almost took Dorothy's life, Kelly, Dorothy's daughter picked up the search. Little did they know; her brother had sent his DNA to Ancestry.com and they would soon have a match. What a shock!

1940, the year Dorothy was born, was just as the Great Depression was ending and World War II was starting, so life for her mother, would have been extremely difficult. In those days having a child out of wedlock would have been unacceptable. As a matter of fact, they would have been outed from the church and scorned by the entire community. As to why she made the decision she did we will never know.



Shirley and Garry Cutts
as children

Following further investigation, it turned out, not only did Garry and Dorothy share the same Father, they also shared the same Mother! Yes, Florence Mildred Whillans (née Clark) who later became Florence Cutts was also Dorothy's birth mother. So, the first thought of them being half-sister and brother now revealed they were full sister and brother!

Dorothy was born to Florence Clark on June 2, 1940.

Walter Cutts and Florence Whillans were married on August 16, 1941 and went on to have another daughter in 1942. They later had two sons, Garry and Merrill in 1944 and 1948 respectively.

When Dorothy checked her birth certificate there was no father named. Her mother's name was recorded as 'Mildred Williams' disguising her real identity. So previous searches turned up nothing.

For Garry to have submitted his DNA, and it come up as a match, was nothing short of a miracle,' says Dorothy. 'It was meant to be'. Without that, she would have never found her birth family.

Dorothy and three of her four children, Kelly, Michael, and Kathleen visited Ottawa from London during the long weekend of August 2018. When her brother Garry met them at the Adams Airport Inn, it was an emotional event followed by an evening of sharing a lifetime of stories, pictures and lots of hugs. There was an instant connection and it was like they had known each other for years. As Garry keeps repeating; 'It is just unbelievable. After seventy-eight years, and seventy-four for me, we come together. I was meant to be. Why else would this have happened at this time?'

A family gathering was held by brother Merrill and his wife Johanna at their home near Almonte. Dorothy and her family were overwhelmed with the wonderfully warm welcome received by all.

Garry and Linda toured them around the city with cousin Glenn Clark, visiting their parent's grave site and telling stories of his years growing up in the Cutts household. Glenn shared a wealth of information on both sides of the Clark and Cutts family. As he is the historian of the family, he had all the entertaining stories on the elders.

At their parent's gravesite Garry, Dorothy and her children laid flowers and Garry had a few words for his mom, saying; 'Mother your secret is out'! It was an emotional moment but one long overdue for Dorothy.

No one will ever know what happened back seventy-eight years ago. They, or maybe just she, took it to their graves. But for what ever reason it was meant to be and a family has been reunited.

Plans are underway for a trip to London in September. At this age there is no time to waste. There is also another niece Kerry that they would like to meet along with extended relatives.

A wonderful ending to a mystery we will never have all the answers to. One thing we do know, Dorothy was conceived out of love. The fact her parents went on to marry a year later attests to that. The Cutts family has welcomed her with open arms and much love and are grateful it was not too late.

A story movies are made of!



Garry and Dorothy at parent's grave in Pinecrest Cemetery

Postscript

Since the original meeting Garry and Linda have traveled to Meaford, Ontario, to meet up with Dorothy and her children and grandchildren. Kelly and her husband Mark hosted a get together at their hobby farm just on the edge of town, which allowed us to really get to know one and other.

Since then we look forward to our weekly texts and phone calls.

Early December 2018 and Dorothy was again rushed to the hospital with heart issues. She had a pace maker put in last December. It appears she has inherited her mother's genes when it comes to her health. She ended up with two stints and is back on the go. A bit of a scare as mother Florence Cutts had died of heart problems at the age of 69. Garry has been plagued with heart issues as well. So, it runs in the family.

Dorothy feels so blessed with this new limb on her family tree. She now feels her family is complete. The search and all those questions are over. The why she will never know. But that doesn't seem to matter any more. The outcome is far more rewarding than she ever could have imagined.

As for Garry, Dorothy has enriched his life. He looks forward to many years of being able to tease the heck out of her and enjoying the years they have left. As all brothers should!

Although they have not known each other long, it seems like they have been family forever.



Merry Christmas to All



Merrill Cutts, Dorothy Atkins
And Garry Cutts, August 2018



Garry Cutts, Dorothy Cramp,
Merrill Cutts as children

Canadian Explosives Laboratory

By Joan Scott

Are you aware that Gloucester was once the home of Canada's unique Explosives Laboratory? Here's the story.

A high loss of life and serious injuries in factories and mines resulting from the manufacture and use of explosives, as reported in Mines Branch Annual Reports, resulted in a new Explosives Act being passed in 1920. At General Explosives Company Ltd. in Hull, Quebec on May 8, 1910, there were 10 deaths and 20 injuries in manufacturing potassium chlorate powder 'Virite'; on July 11, 1910. 3 deaths and 8 injuries occurred at Dominion Explosives Company Ltd., Sand Point, Ontario, who were manufacturing 'Blaster's Friend,' a nitrated cassava flour powder marketed for its non-freezing properties as a substitute for nitroglycerine explosive. At the Bellevue mine in Alberta, there was an explosion of fire damp (methane) on December 9, 1910, when 31 men died¹. In 1911 there were 3 more explosions resulting in 15 deaths. The worst disaster occurred at Hillcrest Mine in Alberta on June 19, 1914, when an initial ignition of fire damp was followed by a coal dust explosion, causing the death of 189 men.

In 1922 the new Explosives Division is shown as a separate autonomous unit within the Department of Mines, but reporting directly to the Deputy Minister, with J.G.S. Hudson, explosives engineer being its investigator. This remained the status until 1936 when the Explosives Division became a part of the Bureau of Mines in the Department of Mines and Resources. In 1919 Lt. Col. G. Ogilvie became the Chief Inspector of Explosives and Hudson continued as inspector. Lt. Col. F.E. Leach who had been Inspector of the Western Region, replaced Ogilvie as Chief Inspector of Explosives in 1922. Another Explosives Act was passed in 1946 to cover such things as "a) the sale of explosives, (b) seizure of unauthorized explosives, (c) or where an offence under the Act is believed to be committed and, (d) the destruction of abandoned or deteriorated explosives."

In 1949 and 1952 revisions were made to the 1946 Act to include Newfoundland and to reflect the name of the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys. Other Acts have since been passed which broadened and clarified the scope of the Explosives Division.



A separate building on Booth Street was provided for the Explosives Division in 1937 where they remained until 1942 when they moved to new facilities at the NRC. The Department of Transport, in 1945, requested the Explosives Laboratory "to investigate the storage and shipment of ammonium nitrate fertilizer or nitraprills. The NRC convened a conference in 1946 on this subject with representatives of the NRC, manufacturers, harbour authorities, Departments of Transport and Mines and Resources". The Explosives Division issued reports of the 1947 destructive explosions in Texas and France. Once again the Explosives Division was transferred, in 1950, to the Scientific Services in the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys. Finally, in 1959, the laboratory returned to the Mines Branch as part of CANMET (Canadian Centre for Mineral and Energy Technology). In 1919 the explosive industry manufactured about 20 million pounds and this was what promulgated the first Explosives Act. Production increased to 200 million pounds in 1959 and to 400 million pounds by 1975. Needless to say, it has continued to increase since then.

In 1952 the Explosives Division finally got a home of its own. The Department of Public Works built a laboratory on Riverside Road near Uplands Airport and the explosives group moved in. They now had an isolated research atmosphere in which to work. Because of its secluded location back from the road, many people were unaware of its existence. M.C. Fletcher, the chief chemist, retired in 1951 and was replaced by D.A.B. Stevens who was subsequently replaced by J.A. Darling in 1967. The laboratory reported directly to the Chief Inspector of Explosives who had an office at 555 Booth Street.

The administration of the Explosive Act was always the first priority of the Explosives Research-Laboratory. "Authorization tests for explosives,

blasting caps, fireworks, etc, were of course the primary reason for the laboratory but a large proportion of the staff's time was taken up in investigations of in investigations of manufacturing, transportation, storage, and use problems relating to blasting explosives and accessories." The annual number of samples, ammunition, fireworks, etc. submitted for authorization varied extensively but averaged over 200 per annum in 1975. Not only the Inspectors of Explosives originated these investigations, but they also came from various government agencies such as the Departments of National Defence, Transport and the Post Office. A major role of the laboratory was consulting and giving opinions based on the accumulated knowledge of explosives, chemistry and experimental investigations.

In addition to doing research; conducting experiments; testing explosives; disposing of abandoned, deteriorated or unwanted explosive materials, including ammunition; investigating disasters; working with mines to ensure safe use of explosives; and providing advice to others; the staff of the Explosives Research Section were required to write reports on their findings and a large range of reports exists on many relevant topics. As an internationally rec-

ognized expert on explosives, J.A. Darling, as Head of the Explosives Laboratory, attended meetings and conventions in many countries.

Following a long string of names for the explosives section, in 1966 it was called the Canadian Explosives Research Laboratory (CERL) as the unique regulatory and research laboratory on blasting explosives in Canada. The following year they moved from their River Road location. The new site was in a CANMET complex around an old quarry off Timm Road and Haanel Drive in Bells Corners. Later an additional mounded magazine was added to their original cluster of buildings. One unusual duty of CERL was to supply gunpowder for the noon gun which at that time was fired every day, at noon, on Nepean Point. The powder was in a suitable container and placed in the secretary's office each Thursday to be picked up for use during the next week.

CERL still continues to carry out its mandate to make the explosives industry safer.

Source: "*A Canadian Research Heritage*" by A. Ignatieff, Canadian Government Publishing Centre, Catalogue No. M39-8/1981E

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 WITH YOUR CHEQUE. (Membership year runs from April 1 to March 31.)

Membership Form—Gloucester Historical Society/Société historique de Gloucester

Membership/Adhésion - \$20.00 for one year..... \$150.00 for life membership.....

NAME:_____Email Address:_____

ADDRESS:_____

CITY:_____ PROV_____ POSTAL CODE _____

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