

The Historical Society of St. Boniface & Maryhill Community

Fall Newsletter 2018



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Notes from the President's Desk

I am pleased to report that our Canada Day celebration this year was a successful one. It was a very, hot and humid day; yet, attendance was very good. A thank you to everyone who participated to make it a success. Special thanks to the community organizations especially the Lions Club and Knights of Columbus for their contribution. We hope to involve more groups in the community for this event next year.

In late June, I attended the St. Boniface Catholic School Grade 8 graduation and presented Cameron Rebelo, with our society History Award. Congratulations, Cameron!

Planning for our annual Heritage Day celebration is well underway. Tickets for the event and luncheon are available for purchase. Please see latest details on our website. We look forward to seeing you on September 23rd.

Finally, our Annual General Meeting is fast approaching. We need new Board members to replace those stepping down after several years of service.

Contact me at maryhillroots@gmail.com if interested in serving on our Board of Directors. Please consider this opportunity to volunteer.

Thanks for your continued support.

George Isley

Ask the Archivist

Dear Diane,

What are the origins the largest family groups in the Strickler Family Collection?

Most of the larger families in our records came from what is today Alsace in France and Baden in Germany. The families from Alsace were ethnic Germans. Many of these names are still common in our community today.

How did these various families get along once they settled in New Germany?

It is noted by Father Spetz in his history that "although composed of Germans almost exclusively, rivalry and uncharitable raillery between the people from different principalities was very prevalent. Then there was no German citizen because there was no Germany each one was an Alsatian, a Bavarian, Prussian etc. Everyone considered his Principality the best and had a supreme contempt and ugly nicknames for all the others. This, however, has all passed away. All are now Canadians."

Where did these immigrants settle?

In 1826 the first Catholic settlers in New Germany were Felix Scharbach, his stepson, Christian Rich and Matthias Fehrenbach. In 1828 Gottlieb Brohman, Joseph Lauber, Theobald Waechter, Joseph Wendling and

Andreas Weiler with his three brothers, arrived. They all bought land south of the village just beyond a swamp. Lucas Zettel, from Wurtemberg, noted for his height and physical strength, arrived in 1830. These early settlers from Alsace include: Beitz, Benninger, Bitschy, Drexler, Frank, Halter, Haus, Huck, Hummel, Kieffer, Lehmann, Martin, Massel, Mattel, May, Miller, Roth, Schaefer, Scherer, Schmuck, Schuett, Stieger, Uhrig, Voegele, Waechter, Werner, Zettel, Zinger. The Fehrenbachs, Scharbachs, Schumachers and Weilers came from the central and southern part of present day Germany.

Summer Events

Canada Day 2018 is now part of our History. On a very hot and humid Sunday we welcomed about 100 guests to our festivities. There were narrated historical horse drawn wagon tours, antique displays, old cars, Maryhill Fire Service and a barbecue lunch with birthday cake.

The occasion began at 11am when we were joined by M.P Harold Albrecht, M.P.P. Mike Harris and Councillor Murray Martin in the flag raising and singing of O Canada. Then a wagon and team supplied by Diane and Herb Beitz made two tours of the village. Mary Ann Stroh and Diane Strickler narrated the rides.

Doug Keller had a large antique display of local items. Larry and Wilma Willoughby and their guide dog were present representing the local Lions club. Music was provided by Frank Rider and Peter Zettel who played many old favourites.

A special thanks to Doug Keller, Danny Strickler and Tim Vegh for supplying the tents to get us out of the hot sun.

Schmuck Family Gathering

Halter House was the setting on August 19th for a Schmuck Family Reunion. The Schmuck family came to Maryhill in 1870. About 30 descendants of Bernhardt Schmuck Sr. and Marie Anna Messmer celebrated their heritage on the lawn of the Halter House. They toured the house and viewed many local artifacts and family records. Family members came from as far away as Texas, Philadelphia, Illinois and Detroit. The group shared pictures and stories and also toured the original Schmuck homestead (now owned by Rick Motz) and the Old Walled Cemetery.

<https://schmuckfamilyhistory.weebly.com/>

See Family Website

Feature Article

Glimpses of Our Ancestors in Waterloo and Bruce Counties

The tide of German Catholic immigration to Ontario began in 1827 and lasted to about 1860. The immigrants came from Alsace, the Palatinate, Baden, Bavaria, the Rhine district, and Austria and Switzerland. Difficulties of travel were great. They travelled from their home towns by stage coach or down the Rhine to one of the channel ports, e.g. Havre. From thence sailing boats brought them, after a long voyage, to New York. At times it took almost three months to cross the Atlantic.

From New York the route was the Hudson River and the Erie Canal to Buffalo. By covered wagon or on foot they traversed the distance from Buffalo to Waterloo County. The first German Catholic settlers came from Alsace and took up land in Waterloo County and the surrounding districts. German Mennonites had settled in Waterloo County at an earlier date along the Grand River, and these German Catholic settlers took up land adjacent to this Mennonite Colony. The early settlers [today called chain migration] writing to their friends at home induced others to come. Gradually five or six German Catholic Settlements sprang up in Waterloo County.

Whereas the early German Catholic settlers in Waterloo County came from Europe, most of the German Catholic settlers in Bruce County came from older German Catholic settlements in Waterloo County, principally from New Germany [now Maryhill] and from near Schmidsville, [now Wellesley village]. The exodus from Waterloo County was caused by the prospect of cheap land in Bruce County and this attraction was called the Saugeen fever. At this time all this northern district was commonly called Saugeen.

Bruce County settlements date back then to 1851 and 1852.. The early settlers in Bruce County moved up from Waterloo County by way of Garafraxa road [today Highway 6] running from Guelph to Durham. From Durham they travelled west on the newly opened road running from Durham to Kincardine. The German Catholics from Waterloo County were accustomed to pioneer life and made good settlers.

In Bruce County they took up land in Carrick, Culross and Brant Townships. Soon villages like Formosa, Mildmay, Karlsruhe and Neustadt sprang up- which in turn became centres for Catholic parishes.

This year we are extending a special invitation to namely to parishes: Immaculate Conception Formosa, Sacred Heart Teeswater, St Ann Riversdale, Sacred Heart Mildmay and St. Francis Xavier Karlsruhe, to celebrate Heritage Day with us on September 23. We look forward to celebrating our common heritage with them.

Historical Account is adapted from Rev J. A Lenhard German Catholics in Ontario- CCHA Report, 4 (1936-37), 41-45.

In the News



George Isley presenting Cameron Rebelo with the History Award at St. Boniface Grade 8 Graduation ceremony

Cameron Rebelo wins Maryhill History Award

Here is part of Cameron's thank you e-mail
My journey at St. Boniface school began when I came here in Grade 4 . At first, I was nervous about making friends but when I arrived on my first day I received a warm welcome and I felt like I belonged here. I remember how surprised I was when I learned that St. Boniface was over 100 years old because the school I came from was a much newer school with air conditioning! Since St. Boniface is such a small school, the teachers are able to get to know the students on a personal level. For most schools, their sports teams cannot include everybody but at St. Boniface everybody is included. St. Boniface was my home away from home for the past five years... Thank you for this award.

In the News (con't)

Sister Eleanor Olinski 100 years young

Sister Eleanor was born in Maryhill to Frank and Bertha (Crocket) on May 29, 1918. She attended St. Boniface School for Grades 1 -10. She is the eldest member of the Maryhill HS. In September 1933, Sister Eleanor entered religious community of the School Sisters of Notre Dame in Waterdown. After she completed her year at Hamilton Teacher's College in 1938, Sister Eleanor taught in schools in Hamilton, Kitchener, Cambridge and Waterloo. From 1957-1961 she was principal of St. James' School, Oakville. Later she taught at Bishop Ryan High School, Hamilton and St. Mary's High School, Kitchener. She then completed her B.A from McMaster University, Hamilton.

In 1974 she began her pastoral ministry in Hamilton and in Oakville. In 1978 she received her B.A. in theology from Newman College, Edmonton, In 2005 Sister Eleanor retired to Notre Dame Convent Waterdown where she currently resides.

Identify the Artifact

Butter Press by Fran Vegh



Early farmers, after milking the cows, would separate the cream out of the whole milk. The cream could be used for cooking and baking or churned into butter. The butter could be served in a dish or shaped into a kind of brick. I imagine if company was coming they may want the butter to be served in a more presentable manner. In comes the butter press! The butter would be pressed into this device, chilled if possible and pushed out to make a well shaped form with a decorative top. The press we [Drexler Family] had, has a simple line pattern, but some had intricate designs on them.