



THE OFFICERS' QUARTERLY

A PUBLICATION OF THE YORK-SUNBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 4

WINTER 1986



With many good wishes for a very
Merry Christmas

Society Collection

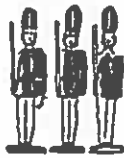
Raphael Tuck & Sons "Merry Children" Christmas Postcard Series 543

Addressed to Mr. & Mrs. Garnet Sypher, Newcastle Creek, Queens Co., N.B.

Postmarked Fredericton, N.B., December 24, 1917

YORK-SUNBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

President	Harry Quinlan
First Vice President	Tim Dilworth
Second Vice President	Dr. Peter Thomas
Treasurer	Fred White
Secretary	Donna Wallace
Past President	Dr. Elizabeth McGahan
Directors	Dr. Wallace Brown
	Wayne Lockhart
	Elizabeth Earl
	Patricia Forbes
	Dr. Ellen MacGillivray
	Dr. Ian MacLennan
	Gideon Mersereau
	Nancy Reid
	Paul Theriault
	Tanya Dove



Volume 2, Number 4 Winter 1986

This is the official newsletter of the York-Sunbury Historical Society, Inc., Officers Square, Queen Street, P. O. Box 1312, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada E3B 5C8 Telephone: (506) 455-6041.

Publication dates are quarterly, Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter. Submissions are to be addressed to the Editor and received at the Society Office by the first day of March, June, September and December for that quarterly publication date.

The York-Sunbury Historical Society, Inc. is a non-profit organization founded in 1932, and incorporated in 1934, with the aim "to gather and preserve objects and traditions of historical interest in the region of central New Brunswick and particularly in the Counties of York and Sunbury, and to read and publish papers dealing with the same."

Individual memberships are \$15.00 per year and \$100.00 for life.

Editor.....Paul M. O'Connell



THE OFFICERS' QUARTERLY

INDEX	1
PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE	2
THE STORY OF THE CHRISTMAS CARD	4
CURATOR'S CORNER	8
SOCIETY ACQUISITION	10
KINGSCLEAR POINT	11
SOCIETY NEWS	13
SOCIETY EVENTS	14
CALITHUMPIANS	15
THE BENNETT DIARY	17
THE LAST WORD	18



President's Perspective

As with most of you this time of year, my perspective is somewhat blurred by the hectic pace of the Christmas season. However, a number of important items come to mind that should be passed along.

* At the November special general meeting a revised set of by-laws were ratified and are now in place. The vitality of the organization and the security of its holdings has been enhanced by this effort. A number of people participated and gave guidance throughout this process. Dr. Ian MacLennan deserves our congratulations and thanks for bringing the by-laws to the point of ratification.

* It is with great pride that the York-Sunbury Historical Society announces its 1986 authors:

Riel, Louis. The collected writings of Louis Riel - Les écrits complets de Louis Riel. General editor : George F. G. Stanley. Edmonton : University of Alberta, 1985. 5 v.

MacGahan, Elizabeth. Whispers From the Past. (Selections from the Writings of New Brunswick Women), 1986, Goose Lane Editions.

Thomas, Peter. Strangers from a secret land: the voyages of the Brig 'Albion' and the founding of the first Welsh settlements in Canada. Toronto : University of Toronto Press, 1986. 319 p.

O'Connell, Paul. The O'Connells of Nigadoo. Douglas, 1985. 72 p.

Turnbull, Christopher Davis, Stephen A. An Archaeological bibliography of the Maritime Provinces: works to 1984. Fredericton " Council of Maritime Premiers, 1986. 118 p.
- Turnbull has been involved in others for '86.

Young, L. Mary. The Connell Memorial Herbarium, 1838-1985. Fredericton, 1986. 17 p.

Dilworth, Tim. Nisbet Furniture. 1986 September-October issue of "The Canadian Collector".

* The Very Special Bi-centennial Christmas Tree selected by Senator Muriel Ferguson for the Great Trees of New Brunswick program has again been lit this year through the corporate kindness of the New Brunswick Electric Power Commission. The tree is on King Street in front of the N.B.E.P.C., you can't miss it!



The Daily Gleaner

Robert Wilson Colorphoto

* It is expected that the Founders Commemorative Display will be ready in time to be unveiled at the Annual General Meeting at the Museum January 15, 1986 at 8:00 P.M.

* In the last issue of this newsletter the "President's Perspective" centered upon our approach to the City of Fredericton for a greater level of municipal funding. Our presentation was extensive and well received. Now the City Budget has been struck. It is with true satisfaction that I can report that our request has met with a most favourable response. Our previous annual grant from the City was \$3,500. This amount has now been increased to \$15,000. The substantial increase is indicative of a greater awareness in City Hall of the Society and its contributions to the

community. Thanks are in order to all on Council for this demonstration of confidence in our organization. Particular thanks must go to the two councillors who have participated on our Board of Directors, Mr. Wayne Lockhart and his predecessor, Mr. Sandy DiGiacinto. The importance of their support and encouragement cannot be over stated.

* As we look to the challenges of the New Year we can review the old with a sense of satisfaction, and again continue to build upon the lessons of the past. Merry Christmas All!

Harry Quinlan

The Story of the Christmas Card

The Christmas post cards depicted on the cover and elsewhere in the newsletter are from the Society's collection. These cards have a long and interesting history and should be of interest to Society members.

The following annotative article comes from the 1985 publication "British Heritage," and was written by Suzanne Wolstenholm.

Many of the now familiar and cherished ingredients of our "traditional" Christmas are of surprisingly recent origin. In 1652 Britain's ancient Yuletide ceremonies and festivities were suppressed when the Puritan parliament abolished the public observance of Christmas in any form, with its "terrible remonstrance against Christmas Day." For the next two centuries, Christmas remained a largely neglected festival in both Church and home. On Christmas Day 1780 there were only six lonely communicants in St. Paul's Cathedral, and Tennyson's "Epic" of 1842 could lament that in recent years "all the old honour had from Christmas gone or dwindled down to some old games in some odd nooks."

Reversing this sad decline, the prosperous early years of Queen Victoria's reign heralded a joyful revival of Christmas cheer that was soon to spread worldwide. The singing and writing of carols became a fashionable pursuit. Christmas trees were introduced from Germany and gifts were exchanged on Christmas Day instead of the traditional time of New Year.



*Christmas weather
Christmas cheer,
Christmas spirits
all the year,
These and more
I wish for YOU
With Christmas
joy in all you do!*

Society Collection

1916

The revival of religious observance and the growing taste for such colourful, homely ritual offered a welcome relief from industrial drabness. By the middle years of the century, Yuletide celebrations old and new were in full swing. Above all, two events of the winter of 1843 ensured that the Christmas message would no longer be silenced. In November, Charles Dickens (1812-1876) published his touching image of true Christmas charity in 'A Christmas Carol', the first of his annual Christmas stories. And that same December a small and

exclusive shop in London's Old Bond Street offered customers an original means to convey greetings of goodwill to friends and loved-ones far and near; the first Christmas card.

Behind its bowed windows, Felix Summerly's "Home Treasury" dealt in tasteful and educational children's books and toys with reproductions of Old Master paintings. Managed by Joseph Cundall, it was just one of the many interests of the distinguished Victoria reformer, art patrol and man of ideas, Henry Cole (1808-1852), later Sir Henry and first Director of London's Victoria & Albert Museum. In his lifetime the irrepressible and controversial Cole was to embark on dozens of reforming schemes, from standardizing the gauge for railways to promoting early schemes for family planning. For many years Cole had been an ardent supporter of the Penny Post, which for the first time on 10th January 1840 made it possible for the sender of a letter to bear the cost of postage. Now his ever-inventive genius seized on the growing Christmas spirit to devise the perfect candidate for the new, cheap postal system - the commercially designed Christmas card.

Cole cannot, of course, take credit for inventing the Christmas greeting out of the blue. The Romans had offered friends and business associates New Year 'strenae' branches picked from the sacred groves of the goddess Stenia, often with a medallion or small gift attached, inscribed with a New Year sentiment.

Such early New Year greeting customs evolved down the centuries and gradually acquired associations

with the Christian feast of Christmas. Small engravings or woodcuts of the Christ Child bearing New Year messages of goodwill have survived from as early as the 15th century, exchanged perhaps between the great abbeys and monasteries.

Later, in European countries, it became the custom when making calls on New Year's Day to leave a special visiting card conveying the compliments of the season and from the mid-18th century such cards often carried a printed verse message and a pretty design.

As Christmas crept back into favour in England, such visiting cards were often embellished with the bright and gaudy cut-out paper scraps of which the colour-starved Victorians were so fond. Shopkeepers would add a seasonal greeting to their trade cards and it has long been the custom for engravers' apprentices to send copies of their work home at Christmas. In the 1830's came the vogue for illustrated Christmas writing paper and matching envelopes - in many cases with the sheet of paper so small and the design so large as to leave room for little more than the very shortest compliments of the season.

With all these forerunners, occasional cards of a purely private nature may well have existed before Cole's venture. But it is generally accepted that he was the first to foresee the commercial potential of an artistic greeting, designed to be mailed and treasured as a substitute for a Christmas letter or personal visit.

To design his latest brain-child Cole enlisted the services of friend and distinguished Royal

Academician, John Horsley (1817-1903). The resulting illustration was lithographed by Jobbins of Warwick Court, Holborn; hand-coloured by a professional colourer named Mason and put on sale at the "Home Treasury" for the not inconsiderable sum of one shilling a copy - the equivalent today of about \$17.00. An estimated 1,000 cards were printed, of which only a dozen or so known copies have survived as treasured collectors' pieces all over the world.

Until the 1860s commercially produced cards remained few, with most private households still favouring the old Christmas visiting paper and envelopes. The idea, however, appealed to the British public and many cards from this period were made and painted by hand, often very complicated creations using several layers of cut-out colour printed scraps, perforated paper, lace and ribbons reminiscent of home-made Valentines.

Eventually the advent of cheap colour printing processes and the development of die-stamping and embossing techniques in the 1850s led scattered, small enterprises to undertake the commercial production of Christmas cards as a sideline, to satisfy an ever-growing public demand.

The first London firm to issue illustrated cards in large numbers was the playing card manufacturer, C. Goodall & Sons, who began production in 1862. Their success was followed in 1867 by Marcus Ward & Co., who followed Henry Cole's lead in commissioning noted artists of the day, such as Kate Greenaway and Walter Crane, to produce exclusive designs. Early Ward cards are small masterpieces of



Society Collection

1913

printing and design, eagerly sought after by collectors today.

In 1870 new regulations allowing for the transmission of post cards and printed matter at the reduced rate of one half penny increased sales still further. By 1880 the despairing Postmaster General was forced to issue his first public plea to "Post Early for Christmas."

In the same year 'Punch' decided that the custom was getting

quite out of hand and published a satirical poem in its Christmas number, ending:

With too much of them thrust
on us,
E'en soft, sweet things seem
hard.
Most Punch, must England, old
and young,
Henceforth live buy the card?

Poor Punch could hardly have foreseen that in 1984 the British public would be swamped with purchases of over 1,300 million cards!

The exchange of Christmas cards might have remained an exclusively British peculiarity but for the talents of Louis Prang (1824-1909), the father of the American Christmas card. An exile from the German revolutions of 1848, Prang emigrated to New York in April 1850. After several ventures he founded the lithographic business of L. Prang & Co. in the Boston suburb of Roxbury in 1856. By 1866 he had perfected his process for multicolour printing and his reproductions or "Chromos" met with universal acclaim.

In 1874, Prang created his first Christmas cards. Uncertain of the American market which attracted only a limited number of cheap imported German and English

cards, he exported his first year's designs to the already receptive English market. So superior were they to the home produced British cards that they bowled over the critics and became the most sought after designs of the year.

Writing in the special Christmas number of the art magazine, 'Studio', the eminent

Victorian art critic, Gleason White, was forced to admit:

With all due respect to our English makers, it is doubtful if any designs this side of the Atlantic were better printed; indeed it would be a somewhat difficult task to find a dozen samples published in England that could be set forward as worthy rivals of the Boston cards.

While modern cards may lack some of the romantic charm of their Victorian ancestors, the pleasures of giving and receiving have not changed. Behind the bewildering range of design and sentiment, the timeless Christmas message remains the same as that contained in the anonymous verse inside a little card dating from 1900:

It's an old, old wish,
On a tiny little card
It's simply "Merry Christmas"
But I wish it awfully hard.



Curator's Corner

On Sunday, November 30, Society members, their children, and Grandchildren, gathered together at the Museum to decorate a Legendary Christmas Tree. Spirits were high in an atmosphere of co-operation, as young and old worked together in anticipation of the festive season. In the Pioneer Kitchen, under the guidance of a team of volunteers, groups of helping-hands patiently strung popcorn, cut out snowflakes of unimaginable variations in design, and earnestly assembled tree ornaments of bumblebees, spiders, apples, etc. Meanwhile, in a nearby room, members (strategically situated beside the table of sweets and hot cider) prepared to deck the halls of the Officers' Quarters with pine boughs, pine cones, and poinsettia. The results were wonderful - all in preparation for the Santa Claus Parade Open House (December 6) and the Society Christmas Party (December 18).

What, some of you may wonder, is a LEGENDARY CHRISTMAS TREE? Spiders and bumblebees are not usual Christmas ornaments. These, as well as many other curious decorations which hang on this year's Museum tree, represent folk legends and superstitions associated with Christmas. I hope you'll make a point of viewing our tree before the Museum closes for the Christmas holidays on December 23. The idea developed from a Superstitions Tree which the Loyalist House in Saint John decorated as part of their 1985 Christmas program. Upon inquiry, David Goss generously provided information which was combined with legends from various sources. For your interest, a few of the legends have been reprinted elsewhere in the Newsletter.

Provenance Found

Readers will recall in the Summer 1986 issue (vol. 2, no. 2) of the Society's newsletter an article by Nancy Reid concerning a late 18th century porcelain tankard in the Museum's collection ("Provenance Lost: Porcelain Tankard...A Tale of Provenance Lost"). Unfortunately, at the time of writing, information concerning the item's provenance was not available due to the fact that the piece did not possess an accession number. Readers were thus reminded of the necessity for maintaining systematic and thorough registrations records.

As a follow-up to this article, I can report that the provenance has since been found. After nearly a year of searching document sources, and with the assistance of Mrs. Lucy McNeill's telephone detective work, the tankard has finally been matched with its original registration entry. It so happens that this artifact was donated to the Museum by Miss Ida Todd of Saint Stephen on December 20, 1932. Miss Todd was a daughter of the Hon. William F. Todd, Lieutenant Governor of New Brunswick from 1923 to 1928. Entry number 463 in the old museum accession book states: "One considerably mended specimen of Bristolware (China)"; indicating a believed manufacturing origin of Bristol, England.

Members should be reminded to see our display in the window of Morrison's Insurance on Queen Street. The display features winter artifacts appropriate to this Christmas season. I would like to thank this firm for allowing us the use of this space on this and other occasions.

Museum Education Program

"I learned more about history in one hour at the Museum than in three weeks of history class."

... student

"The opportunity that you provide for teachers to supplement their program is really valuable."

... teacher

The Museum's education program has had a very successful fall season. This year the program expanded its services to the schools by offering its first 'museum class' as well as continuing to offer general tours and the loan of educational kits. With the theory that students should focus on one particular aspect of our Museum in mind, we put pen to paper and created our own "Pioneer Life" class featuring the pioneer kitchen. This class is offered to students in grades 4 - 6 who study "How people in N.B. lived in the past", in their social studies curriculum. The students participate in a variety of activities geared to recreate family life in New Brunswick in the early 19th century. Working a butter churn with cream, examining candle molds and other kitchen artifacts, modeling reproductions of 19th century children's clothing and drawing shadow portraits all serve to make this class enjoyable and educational.

General tours of the Museum have been enhanced for the Junior High level by the development of a worksheet outlining the importance of the 'artifact' in historical study. As well, a worksheet (funsheet!) for our latest exhibit "Time Machines" has been designed recently for these classes.

None of this could have occurred without the very capable help of several society education volunteers. By conducting the classes and tours with enthusiasm and patience they have shown both teachers and students that the Museum is a very special place to visit indeed and I would like to thank Megan Bawn, Denise LeBlanc, Margaret Brant, Mary DeWoolf, Velma Kelly, Althea Macaulay and Isabelle Richford for their donated time and energy.

Katie Boyer, Education Officer

In closing, I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas. Thank you for your assistance and support throughout the year, and I look forward to working with you again in 1987!

Cynthia Wallace-Casey



SOCIETY ACQUISITIONS 1986

Pie Peel and Foot Warmer	Mrs. M. Hanson
12th Battalion Camp Colors	Christ Church Cathedral
Hat Box from McLeod Inn	Mr. G. Mersereau
Oil painting, France, 1918 Gunner McKay, 4th Siege Battery	Mr. G. Mersereau
Major William T. Howe sword	Mr. A. Sansom
Oil painting, woman and cow, Hazen, 1874	Mr. M. Tonks
Fredericton photographs	Mrs. M. Berthe
Birdseye view, Woodstock, Brand, 1850	Mrs. M. Berthe
Maliseet birchbark container, 1851	Mr. H. Berry
New Brunswick Official seal (1784-1870)	Mrs. E. Fraser
Fredericton newspapers	Mrs. E. Fraser
Royal Coat of Arms	Brig. A.F.B. Knight
Mary Barker collection	Mary Barker estate
Fredericton photographs and Morrison family photos	Mr. Z. Calabresse
York County Caribou head	Mr. R. Morehouse, on behalf of the late Dr. O.E. Morehouse, Sr.
Loyalist centennial souvenir	"
Silk bodice, c. 1860 and shoulder cape, c. 1900	Mrs. L. McNeill
Mayor William T. Walker collection	Mrs. C. Walker, via Provincial Archives of New Brunswick
William Wyton collection	Mr. W. Wyton
Caleb Bennett Diary, 1842-1846	Mr. S. Gomori
Rev. W. O. Raymond scrapbook	Mr. R. W. Hale

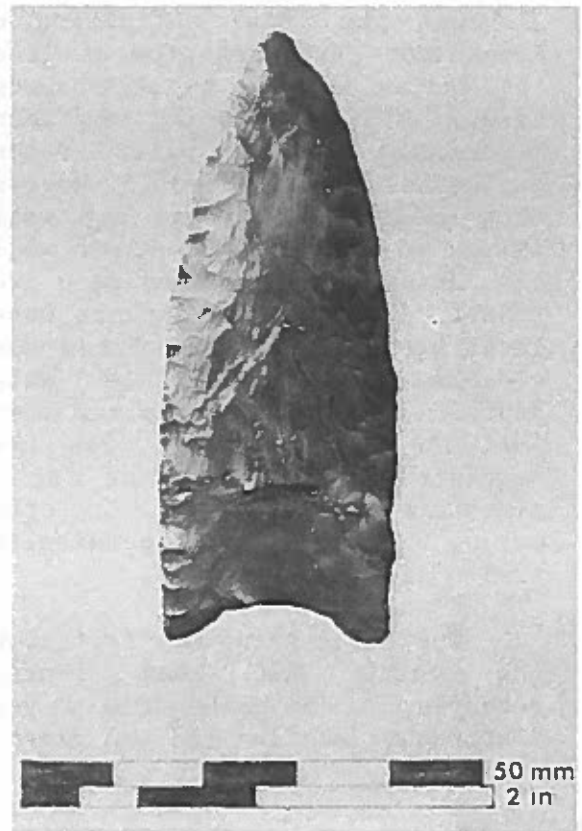
KINGSCLEAR POINT

Christopher J. Turnbull

There are very few signs of the first peoples who lived in New Brunswick; only a handful of their spear points have ever been found. Both in Maine and in Nova Scotia, however, their actual campsites have been discovered and excavated at places like the Vail site near the western Maine-Quebec border and the Debert site, near Truro, both of which have been dated between 10,000 and 11,000 years ago. In New Brunswick, spearheads have been found near New Horton Lake, Albert County, near Quaco Head, Saint John County, in Sunny Corner, Northumberland County and near Kingsclear, York County. The latter specimen is in the collections of the York-Sunbury Historical Society.

The spear, itself, is quite unprepossessing, although it has been made by a sophisticated stone working technology. It is 66 mm long, 25 mm wide and 9 mm thick. It has a very simple shape with a pointed tip for penetration and a distinctive concave base where it was hafted on to a shaft for throwing during the hunt. The base has been "fluted" - flakes have been detached by the craftsman from the base to create a concavity running up the middle of the specimen. Presumably this was for ease and strength of lashing the point to its shaft.

This method of finishing the base links the Kingsclear point to the rest of North America as similar methods were used through the continent. In the western Plains, the spears were used to hunt the now extinct woolly mammoths as well as buffalo. These



western sites date as early as 12,500 years ago. Most specimens from the New England states and the Maritimes date to a slightly later time between 10,000 and 11,000 years ago, although the Kingsclear point is probably early in this millenium because it doesn't have the deep base so commonly found on specimens from the excavated sites.

The provenance of the Kingsclear point is uncertain as the only catalogue entry for the specimen lists it as coming to the museum from a Mr. Angus Watson of New Maryland who "...claims he got (it) from an Indian who found (it) at Kingsclear." Mr. Watson could not be relocated to ask for more specific information. However, Kingsclear is not an unlikely place to find such as early point,

although the local definition of Kingsclear stretches from at least the Indian Reserve to about Longs Creek. While the point was found before the dam was built, recent geological studies would suggest that about 10,000 years ago water levels on the St. John River would be drastically different from today. In fact, the current water level behind the dam probably more closely approximates the water depth. The head of tide now found just below the dam is even suggested to have been as far up river as Grand Falls. In other words, there is still a possibility that a site may be found.

One interesting new fact about the point has been learned recently; it is made from a very distinctive mottled red and green

chalcedony. The quarry source for this material has now been identified; the point originally comes from the Mungsungan Lake region in northern Maine. This lake is in the St. John River basin, flowing through the Aroostook. Recent archaeological research in the Mungsungan Lake, by Dr. Rob Bonnischsen of the Early Man Institute at the University of Maine at Orono, has found a whole series of extensively used quarries. He even thinks that they may have been used as early as 12,000 years ago.

The Kingsclear point itself has added about as much to our knowledge as can be expected from a single surface find. All we need to do now is find the site from which it came!

* * * * *



The Society's collection of artifacts, paintings, manuscripts, photographs and books forms an impressive effort to preserve all phases of New Brunswick history. This effort, begun in 1932, is the result of countless donations from Society members and non-members alike.




We encourage Society members to continue the search for additional items for our collection. This tradition and that of donating items is how we have achieved our present collection. It is a worthwhile thought for us during this festive season.



RAW EGGS

If you eat a raw egg before anything else on Christmas morning you'll be able to carry heavy weights all year.

Society News

☐ Clocks continued to captivate the interest of Society members and public alike. On November 1, the exhibit "Time Machines: 19th and early 20th Century Clocks" opened at the Museum and will continue until February 1, 1987. The exhibit featured many unique clocks loaned by area collectors Angus MacLean, Paul Burden, Roy Hemphill, Stephen Chase, H. MacKinnon as well as those from the Society's collection. Members were also invited to bring their clocks for expert advice on dating or repair.

The exhibit prompted Society member, Dr. Bev Macaulay to provide us with some background on his very fine old clock. Dr. Macaulay writes:

"A grandfather clock came into the possession of the Macaulay family in the 1890's. Earlier ownership is unknown.

The first known owner was an antique dealer whose shop was located on Germain Street near the corner of Princess Street in the City of Saint John, N.B. This gentleman, ill and nearing the end of his life, was indebted to Mr. Beverley Macaulay, a partner in the firm of Macaulay Bros., King Street, also of Saint John. He asked Mr. Macaulay if he would accept an old clock as payment for his debt.

After some years in a Saint John storeroom, the clock was taken by Mr. Macaulay to England for repairs. In England an established



clockmaker informed Mr. Macaulay that the maker of his clock, John Andrews, began to work in London about 1656 (during the regime of Oliver Cromwell) and was admitted to the Clockworkers Company in 1688.

The clock is a "seasoned sailor", having crossed the Atlantic Ocean five times: its original trip to North America; a trip to England and return for repairs; back to England with Mr. Beverley Macaulay's daughter, Jean, who after her marriage moved to England where she spent virtually all her married life; and finally a return to Canada when Mr. Robert Macaulay, who inherited the clock upon the death of his sister, Jean, presented it to his cousin, Beverley F. Macaulay, of Fredericton.

The clock is in prime condition after some three hundred years and ticks away beautifully, as long as the owner does not forget to wind it!"



☐ Our Museum hosted a two day seminar on Conservation Practices in early November. The seminar, sponsored by the Association of Museums of New Brunswick, consisted of a workshop presented by conservators from the Canadian Conservation Institute of Ottawa.



New Brunswick's Lieutenant Governor and one of its most distinguished historians, The Right Honourable George F. Stanley, presented a paper to the Society on November 6th. The subject, "The New Brunswick Fencibles - The 104th Regiment of Foot", reviewed their great march from Fredericton to Quebec during the winter in 1813.

Their ultimate goal was to support the Upper Canadians in the war of 1812-1814.

Lt. Governor Stanley has written an authoritative book on that war with the U.S. and his insight in New Brunswick's part in the struggle, prove to be of great interest to Society members.

Society Events



January 15, 1987 - Thursday, 8:00 P.M.

Location: Society Museum, Officers Square, Queen Street.

Annual General Meeting and election of officers for 1987. There will also be a video showing of some of the year's events such as the Ashburnham Tea, as recorded by Gideon Mersereau.

February 19, 1987 - Thursday, 8:00 P.M.

Location: National Exhibiton Center, Queen Street.

Porcelain will be the subject of a presentation by Carol Dilworth.

March 19, 1987, Thursday, 8:00 P.M.

Location: Christ Church Cathedral, Fredericton.

Gregg Finley, student of material history and former curator of the New Brunswick Museum, will present a lecture entitled "Bishop Medley's New Brunswick."

April 16, 1987, Thursday, 8:00 P.M.

Location: Society Museum, Officers Square, Queen Street.

Society Director, Gideon, Mersereau will entertain with a talk "Trials and tribulations of renovating an historic property - the road to insanity!"

May 21, 1987, Thursday, 8:00 P.M.

Location: Place to be announced.

David Myles, Superintendent of Artifacts for the Province, will continue the series on the Furniture of Old Government House.



CALITHUMPIANS

Preserving our traditions are as important, if not more so, than preserving artifacts and members during the early years of our Society paid particular attention to this task.

One tradition recorded was that of the Calithumpians. The antics of these groups, recorded in the Society Accession Book, dated 31 December 1934, describes New Year's Day celebrations in Fredericton of bygone days.

"It may be well to set down here some information concerning the old time New Year's celebrations which took place in Fredericton every year during the days before the Great War 1914-18. In the morning the more lively of the boys and youths banded themselves into groups of Calithumpians. Calithumpians were dressed in all kinds of comic costumes and usually had their faces blackened or otherwise disguised. They were hauled around in big sleds hauled by teams of horses with much blowing of horns.

Their capers were as varied as were the costumes. Though they followed the sleds they very seldom availed themselves of a ride for more than a hundred yards or so, when they would jump out and engage in all manner of capers. They visited many houses, stores, and hotels and were usually treated to candy, fruit, or cake and sometimes given money. There were not on any New Year's morning more than two sled-loads celebrating (about 15 to 20 to a sled) -- The afternoon of New Year's day was always set apart for horse racing. These races took place on the river if the ice was in good condition. If the ice was not good the races were usually held on King Street. There was a goodly number of fine trotting horses in Fredericton before the days of automobiles but the number has diminished greatly; in fact I doubt if there is one real good one in the whole town and the younger people are more interested in cars than horses. With the coming of the Great War most of the liveliest youths enlisted and those who usually organized the Calithumpians went away to war. That's one reason why the custom died out besides a Calithumpian celebration in war time would have been considered quite out of place so it was entirely discontinued for four years after which time it was probably forgotten. The present generation of young folks know nothing of it but tradition."

The tradition has recently been reborn, however, in a somewhat modified form and under the title of the Calithumpians Theatre

Company. Formed in 1979 by high school teacher Peter Pacey, it began its existence to tour with the National Book Festival.

Peter's interest in the name 'Calithumpians' started in research for his award-winning Canadian Literature project "Reflections of Fredericton". In various interviews the Calithumpians were mentioned as an old Fredericton tradition. In particular, the late Luke Morrison spoke at length about the group and some of their exploits. He described their celebrations, disguises, costumes and pranks as well as their trips by the two horse drawn sleds mentioned in the Accession Book entry. Mr. Morrison recounted that

those two selds were named the "Colossus" and the "C.N.R.".

This initial reserach led to Mr. Pacey forming a full time theatre group, which has since portrayed New Brunswick history in a humourous light, in many plays and places. Besides their summer program in Officers Square, the group were on stage for the world at Expo '86 in Vancouver.

There is one void left in Peter's repertoire, however, and that is the traditional New Year's Day escapade through Fredericton. He is thinking about it however, so don't be surprised some New Year's Day soon, if you see the "Colossus" and the "C.N.R." returning to the streets of Fredericton. Ed.



THE FIREFLY

As the Wise Men presented gifts to the Baby Jesus, a tiny brown bug listened and watched from deep within the manger. The tiny creature wished to give something too. He searched until he found the most fragrant wisp of hay. Then he worked it to the top where he laid it in the Baby Jesus' hand.

The Christ Child cooed happily and to thank the little bug, gave him a flowing light which, to this day, twinkles on every firefly.

AN OLD BOOT

Burn an old boot on Christmas Eve or you'll have bad luck during all the coming year.

BEEES

It is said that bees sing the 100th Psalm on Christmas Eve - "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord all ye lands..."

The Bennett Diary

The members of the York Sunbury Historical Society owe thanks to Mr. Steven Gomori, himself an immigrant to the area, for recovering the diary of an earlier immigrant which has been missing for many years. It is the diary of Caleb Bennett, a native of West Camel, Somersetshire, England, who came to Stanley in 1846. Mr. Gamori, an electrician, recognized the value of the old book which he found in the basement of a house on Regent Street, and it is now with the Society's papers at the Provincial Archives on the U.N.B. campus.

The Bennett family placed the diary along with other items, including a glove stretcher which is still in the Museum, in the Society's collections some fifty years ago. Unfortunately, in the early years, members made a practice of borrowing interesting manuscripts and taking them home. A number were lost and the enquiries of donors and their families were a source of embarrassment until Mrs. Lucy MacNeill and other volunteers took the situation in hand and brought order to the collections. The Bennett diary is the latest, but hopefully, not the last, of the lost manuscripts to reappear.

Caleb Bennett, from a corner of England known for the making of fine gloves, sailed from London with his two sons, Tom and Robert, on the ship or bark "Duke of Wellington" on May 21st, 1846. He arrived in Saint John on June 28th, and was in Stanley on July 3rd. The diary has quite a full account of what was, for the time, a comfortable ocean voyage, disturbed, however, by the tragic loss of a man overboard.

D. Murray Young

He kept the diary regularly until the end of 1847 and there are a few brief entries later, notably for 1850, 1851, 1852, 1874 and 1880. Occasional longer notes give details on the purchase of his land and on topics such as the growing of rye. There are also some very interesting glove patterns, though he could have had little time for glove making in his early years in Stanley. His wife, Elizabeth Bennett, and their four daughters did not come out until 1850, when he had cleared a farm and built a house.

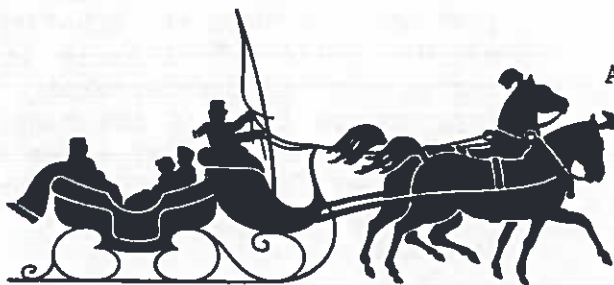
Most of the entries concern the daily round of pioneering life, ploughing, sowing, hauling, reaping, winnowing, trips to the mill to have oats ground, banking the house for winter and getting in firewood. It was a world of endless tiring chores. But Caleb Bennett was an educated man who in addition to writing a clear hand, dressed "carraboo" bear and black sheep skins for his neighbours, made axle-trees and put "handles to tools." He also ran a school, from November 30th, 1846 to May 11th, 1847 when he "Gave the Scholars one month's holiday." Clearly it was not a profitable undertaking. His farm on the bank of the Nashwaak, in the part of Stanley later known locally as "Giant's Glen," became the centre of his life and interest.

NOTE: Society members can view the diary by visiting the Society's collection at the Provincial Archives, UNB Campus, Manuscript Collection 300, No. MS 23/26. Ed.

The Last Word

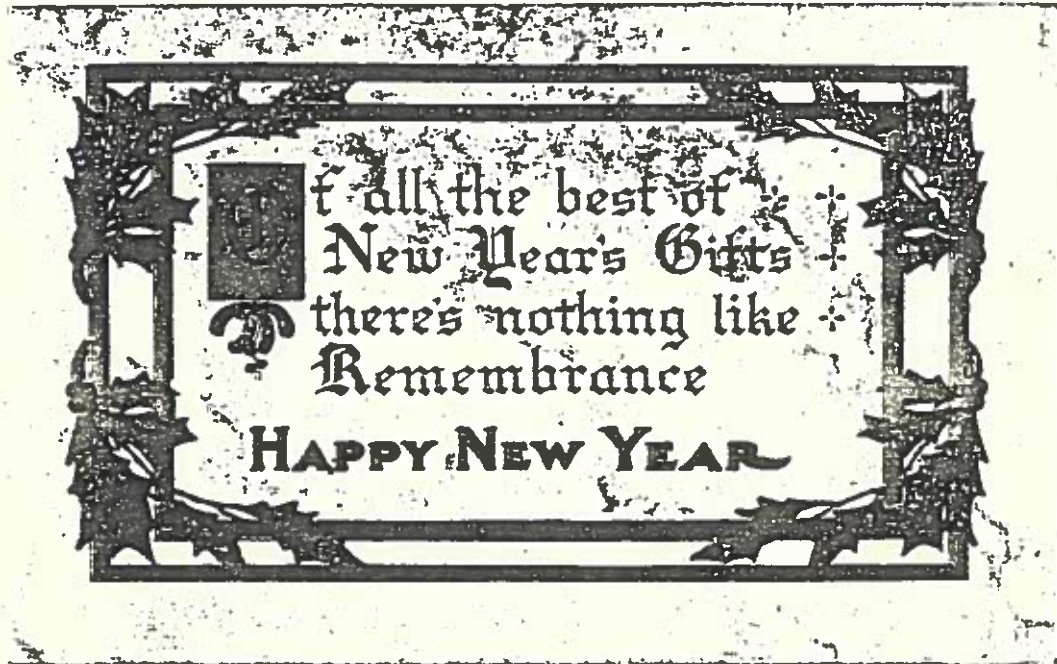
As you may have noticed we're sporting a new name - "The Officers' Quarterly". This change could hardly be called a facelift as the newsletter hasn't been around that long, so perhaps we could call it a christening. How was it chosen? ... well to be perfectly honest we did not receive a lot of suggestions to choose from. So your editor and the Executive decided that this new title was appropriate, and reflected the Society's offices and museum, the Loyalist origin of the settlement and development of York and Sunbury counties, the quarterly nature of our newsletter, and finally, a means of communicating to the Members by the officers of the Society.

Somehow the year has flown by and we have produced four issues. My thanks to the many people who have contributed, such as Drs. Turnbull and Young's interesting articles in this issue, as well as Nancy Reid's unfailing input and interest, and Janet Joslin's able skills in producing a final product. I hope that others will join in contributing during the new year.



A Very Merry Christmas
and Happy New Year

The Editor



Society Collection Jan. 2, 1913



