

# The Merrickville and District Historical Society NEWSLETTER

January 2004

Volume 2 Number 1

## 2003 Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the Merrickville & District Historical Society was held on November 25, 2003. The following executives and committee chairpersons were elected by members for the year 2004.

President - **Denis Faulkner**  
First Vice-President - **Frederick Martin**  
Second Vice-President - **Pat Molson**  
Treasurer - **Andrew McKay**  
Secretary - **John Cowan**

Committee Chairs: **Frederick Martin**, Blockhouse; **Pat Molson**, Volunteers; **Janet Johnson**, Archives; **Dieter Raths**, Research and Historical Sites; **John Cowan**, Newsletter; **Sheena Cowan**, Membership; **Gustave Pellerin**, Publicity; **George Yap**, Planning and Fundraising; **Denis Faulkner**, Programme. Members at Large, **Beverley Burpee**, **Jayne Bodanski**, **Joan Taylor-Smith**, **Kelly Baatnes**.

After a successful 3 year term as President, **George Barnhill** graduates to the post of Past-President with the satisfaction of having presided over a rejuvenation of the Historical Society and, with the enthusiastic help of committee members, having set it on a strong course for the future.

---

## Merrickville Street Scapes

At the November Historical Society meeting, a full house listened with interest as Margaret Carley and Wayne Poapst described the Merrickville business district along St Lawrence as it existed in 1930 and how it is now changed. Livery stables have become shops and the wooden sidewalk is no more. The Grenville Hotel (now the Goose & Gridiron) had by 1930 lost the Edwardian elegance it held as the City hotel but was a lively spot, particularly at bar closing time.

A. L. Mills carried on the family business of manufacturing furniture (and caskets) in the busy nearby industrial area and then sold from a store he built at 242 St Lawrence. On the second floor of the Jakes block the town dentist, Dr. Leach, was kept busy, no doubt because of the three ice-cream parlors and two candy stores located in two blocks of the "downtown" area. One of the ice-cream parlor owners, Mr. A.A. Lisson, received the first telephone service in Merrickville Village with the number, what else? numeral "1".



The City Hotel c. 1856

*By 1794 the first store in Merricks Mills had been opened John Chester. By then the blacksmith, Samuel Dow was in business. Dow died in 1805 and was the first person to be interred at the Wolford Chapel Cemetery. His daughter Lamira was the first teacher in Merrickville and later married Bradish Billings, the first white settler in Gloucester Township.*

---

## The Merricks (part one)

**William Merrick: Where did he come from? How did he get here? What did he accomplish? And what was he like?**

*The following are excerpts from the presentations made by J. K. (Kim) Abbott to the Historical Society in 1967 and 1993. They are re-printed here with his permission. Mr. Abbott is the great-great-great-grandson of William Merrick. In this segment we learn of the Merrick family's arrival in America.*

William Merrick was born at Springfield, Massachusetts, on April 30th, 1760. His ancestors had migrated from Wales to Massachusetts nearly 125 years earlier, in 1636. Their descendants pioneered the Hudson and Mohawk Valleys, and William typified those rugged men who forged a nation out of the wilderness. Men who held firmly to their beliefs, and the old adage that "God helps those who help themselves".

The North American branch of the Merrick family came from Bodorgan on the Isle of Anglesey. They were descendants of Llewellyn Merrick who had been the Captain of the Guard during the Coronation of Henry VIII, and later, the first High Sheriff of Anglesey. In the spring of 1636, four Merrick brothers arrived in Charlestown, Massachusetts, from Bristol on the sailing ship "James". They ranged in age from thirty-three to sixteen, and the Merrickville branch sprang from the sixteen year old.

Thomas Merrick was the ancestor who started it all. He was a restless pioneer who was destined to make a significant contribution to the development of Massachusetts.

In 1638, when he was eighteen and married, he and his wife, Elizabeth Tilley, and seven other families founded a settlement in the wilderness that became the City of Springfield. Their grandson, Ebenezer, moved to New York State where he obtained land at Sarasota and Ballston, including land at Sarasota Springs known as the Deer's Lick. George Washington and Alexander Hamilton visited this region in 1784, and the records show that they had ridden through an area known in earlier times as Merricks Mills. The name had been changed after the revolution.

William Merrick, the 28 year old grandson of Ebenezer, had remained loyal to the Crown during the American Revolution, and after the war he joined thousands of other loyalists at Sorel, just outside of Montreal. They were gathered there for dispersal and settlement in the wilds of Upper Canada.

*In the next segment Mr. Abbott describes William Merrick's search with Roger Stevens for a site for a lumber mill on the new Rideau frontier.*

---

## Nominations for Heritage Award of Merit

Two years ago the Merrickville & District Historical Society began a programme to recognize individuals, organizations and businesses that have made a significant contribution to maintaining the heritage and history of our area. Last year, the Merrickville Remembers Committee was recognized for their creation of an elegant tribute to Merrickville's war dead.

Bruce Stackhouse was recognized for the sensitivity to the character of the historic H. D. Smith home in his renovations of Wood'N'Feathers, Martha Dulmage and Chris Whitehead for similar concerns in their domestic renovations; and Phyllis Walker was recognized for a lifetime of concern for the Village and its heritage. If you would like to submit a nomination for the 2004 awards, send information telling the reasons for your suggestion to:

Merrickville & District Historical Society,  
Heritage Award, PO Box 294, Merrickville K0G 1N0



**George Barnhill (2nd left) Presents 2003 Heritage Award to Merrickville Remembers Committee members (L to R) Peter McKenna, Jack Wilcox, Joyce McKay, Jack Jessop.**

---

## Walking Tour

A new handy walking tour brochure is being prepared to assist member volunteers in conducting guided tours of the historic sites and structures of the Village.

*Did you know Elisha Collar, an early settler, built a home on the rise of land just east of town and married William Mirick 's daughter Charlotte. He and Charlotte are interred beside William and Syla Mirick in the pioneer cemetery named in his honour, Collar's Hill Cemetery. This important historic site was restored in 1983 by the Merrickville & District Historical Society.*

---

Published by The Merrickville & District Historical Society  
Copyright The Merrickville & District Historical Society, 2004,  
John Cowan, Editor

---

[Return to Publications Page](#)

---

Merrickville and District Historical Society  
PO Box 294  
Merrickville, Ontario K0G 1N0

[Home](#) | [About Us](#) | [News](#) | [Publications](#) | [Projects](#) | [History](#) | [Blockhouse Museum](#) | [Walking Tour](#) | [Links](#)

website design donated by [Ken W. Watson](#)

©2006 The Merrickville and District Historical Society