



Lambton Musings

LAMBTON'S HISTORY AND HERITAGE NEWSLETTER – September 2019

www.discoveriesthatmatter.ca

Canada's Waterscapes: Summer Exhibition and Speaker Series

Lambton Heritage Museum by Dana Thorne

Lambton Heritage Museum is hosting an exceptional travelling exhibit this season, closing soon!

Canada's Waterscapes: Yours to Enjoy, Explore, and Protect will be on display at the Lambton Heritage Museum until September 30. This exhibit presents a rare opportunity to see an exhibition from the Canadian Museum of Nature in Ottawa.

Visitors will discover what it takes to understand and care for Canada's aquatic ecosystems where you can explore your aquatic side in this engaging, family-friendly, interactive exhibition. Canada's Waterscapes is produced by the Canadian Museum of Nature in collaboration with the National Sciences and Engineering Research Council.

Additional opportunities associated with the exhibit include a Speaker Series, which kicked off on May 8th. A variety of speakers from different backgrounds will be speaking about how water has shaped Lambton County's landscape, animals, and our history. Be sure to catch our final speaker September 30.

SEPTEMBER 30, 6PM-7PM

Erinn Lawrie from Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation - Keeping a Great Lake "Great": Beach and dune conservation on Lake Huron

Early Oil Springs

Oil Museum of Canada by Erin Dee-Richard

The entries in the Tweedsmuir History book from Oil Springs are fascinating. The following recollection in the book was written by a former resident Mrs. A.J. Yates (formerly Anne Jane Brown, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Brown) about the early days in Oil Springs. She recounted these memories on September 2, 1931 in Waterbury, Connecticut where she lived at the time. This is a continuation from last issue of Mrs. Yates' recollections of Early Oil Springs:

Oil Springs had a population of 4,000 at one time and in one of their ambitious moments, the farm afterward owned by my husband was laid out in avenues and streets and named, Father had an old map at one time.

We had splendid sidewalks on either side, and street lamps from Mr. Merchant's home on the East end to the Sarnia plank. The Sarnia Plank road soon followed the road from Wyoming, and when finished was cause for much rejoicing.

There were many social activities in the early days. The Masonic and Orange Lodges gave many parties and our Ladies' Aid was a large active organization. We made many fine baby clothes for the wealthy families in Sarnia and sewed for the Oil Springs needy and church sales. We had fall fairs, dancing school, public library and Chamber of Commerce.

Oil Springs had several banks, stores, bakeries, butcher shops, refineries and it was indeed a great show place with the stages constantly on the move, night and day, bringing in prospectors, spectators and what not, each one of whom expected to see at least one flowing well in action.

Hudson and Solice, both Americans, published the first newspaper in 1863 known as the "Chronicle".

Oil was conveyed in barrels to Wyoming where they had a railroad.

It was with great difficulty we got supplies, many lived in bark shanties as makeshift until material for houses could be brought in. The shingles for our log houses were brought from Mooretown, in what was called a stone boat, a sled-like contrivance, placed in the ditch and drawn along by two or often four horses. Two or three bundles of shingles were brought in at one time. The cost of draying in this, or any other, at one time was one dollar per hundred pounds.

As a result of so many flowing wells and the oil that had been emptied into the creek, there were several inches of oil in the creek all the way to Wilkesport and Lake Erie. The oil on the creek took fire one day by someone carelessly placing hot coke from a small refinery too near the creek. For a time, the fire which made a terrific blaze, the smoke

which could be seen in London, threatened to run all the way to Wilkesport, but after many trees were felled, fresh sod cut and used with clay to make a barricade, it was put out. Many amusing stories were told of geese, pigs, cattle, and sheep that went to the river to bathe.

Mr. Leonard Stephenson gave the ground for the present cemetery, the first cemetery being beside the Presbyterian Church. Mrs. Stephenson, second wife of Leonard, was the first one to be buried there. Mrs. Stephenson, by the way weighed over 400 lbs. which may have prompted the generous gift of her husband, for the old cemetery had no open spaces large enough.

My fifty years stay in Oil Springs, were for the most part, very pleasant, and all these years, I have watched with great interest the history of the dear old town where I saw so many ups and downs, and made so many dear friends. It is of keenest interest to me to know you hold your "Institute" meetings in what was once my happy old home and with the kindest regards to one and all and well wishes for the future of the Institute and for the dear old town of Oil Springs, whose recent fires have caused us all so much concern. However, I still feel that oil and gas will be found in great abundance as a result of the deep wells and that greater prosperity than ever shall visit dear old Oil Springs.

My father took four weekly papers, when I was a little girl, living in Sterling, daily papers not then being known for Canada. Very few people took papers in those days and my



Main Street of Oil Springs showing the splendid sidewalks.

Early Oil Springs Continued...



The fire brigade at the Duggan Store fire in 1914

old school teacher would hurry along to meet me before school began to ask the latest news, especially the anxious, thrilling days of the Crimean War, in case he had not been present when the papers arrived. I have been reading the Toronto Globe since 1861 and have taken the "Chronicle" or Petrolia papers since they were published. Now four daily papers, one Weekly and many periodicals furnish me with the current events and keep me interested and with a lovely garden and these lovely, friendly Connecticut hills, the time passes very pleasantly.

Signed

Anne Jane Brown-Yates

Waterbury Connecticut, Sept. 2, 1931

Vintage Cameras

Forest-Lambton Museum by Sandy Burkhart

We live in an era when the capability of our phone to take a picture is almost more important than its calling feature. Taking pictures has never been easier. It is estimated that every two minutes we snap as many photos as the whole of humanity took in the entire 19th century.

The idea of capturing an image is an ancient one. Pinhole cameras can project a reversed image through a small opening onto an opposite surface. This basic concept has been around since the 5th century. The challenge lay in fixing the image as well as creating a portable device to capture it. The world's first photograph was created in 1826, an image printed on pewter. Early images were created on tin or glass plates and required a long exposure time. New developments followed quickly. Probably the most familiar name in early photography was the Daguerreotype. It took less exposure time but was still printed on metal and difficult to reproduce. In 1841 William Fox Talbot created the calotype which allowed multiple prints of the same image.

For many years photography remained in the realm of professional studios because of the bulk of the equipment and the complicated processes involved. Most of the "instant relatives" found in antique shops are from studios. In 1884 George Eastman changed the face of photography when he developed dry gel on paper or film to replace the photographic plate. The first Kodak Camera went to market in 1888 with the slogan "You





push the button; we do the rest". The camera was to be returned to the company to have the film developed. The popular and inexpensive Brownie camera was introduced in 1901 making photography accessible to a wide market.

The first colour photo was made in 1861. Amazingly the first digitalized image dates to 1957.

Photography developed in the past due to the high cost of oil portraits. It has grown from a slow process involving long exposure times and high developing costs to instantaneous pictures from a cell phone.

A picture is said to be worth a thousand words. Cameras have recorded world history, war, fashion and treasured family moments all at the push of a button. The Forest Museum is featuring its collection of vintage and antique cameras and photographs this year. There will also be an exhibit by local photographers from our photo contest with a chance to vote for your favourite image.

The museum also has an interesting collection of soda pop, beer and medical bottles on loan from a local collector.

Sources: Invention's, A Visual Encyclopedia, DK Publishing 2018
Encyclopedia Britannica

The Story of Reverend George John Rawkin Salter

Lambton County Archives by Nicole Aszalos

Early in 2019, the Lambton County Archives acquired a transcript by Reverend George John Rawkin Salter taken under oath on September 20th 1887. The transcript, regarding a dispute between Alexander Vidal and the Incorporated Synod of the Diocese of Huron, shares valuable insight to the life of Rev. Salter in Sarnia including the Vidal family and St. Georges Church in Sarnia.

Who is Reverend Salter?

Rev Salter was born in Devon England on May 26th, 1815 to Reverend John Salter and Dinah Adams (some reports mention a Dinah Pinhey).

He received a formal education after entering Christ Church April 17th, 1833 at the age of 17. Salter obtained his BA in 1837 then went on to complete his Masters of Arts at Oxford. He was ordained as clergyman of the Church England in 1848.

Coming to Canada and St. Georges Church

His journey brought him to Upper Canada in 1847 where he was appointed missionary by Bishop Strachan of the foundry whose diocese had the whole of Upper Canada seated under his authority. Rev. Salter was missionary in the Township of Moore and parts adjacent. As such, he held services in Sarnia once every three weeks at a time when there was no building for the Church of England. In 1849, Captain Richard E. Vidal erected St. George's church at his own expense on a small one acre parcel on the north side of London Road. Rev. Salter was the first to hold church services here.

"It was called St. Georges, I believe, in honor of myself." - Rev. Salter

Capt. Vidal furnished the church with pews, an altar, and the bell which was given by Mr. Townsend but possibly paid for by Capt. Vidal's estate. During Capt. Vidal's life he refrained to give the church to the bishop since he wanted to keep control of the church in his hands. He tended to all the maintenance and repairs and always had the church open and ready for Rev. Salter's service. Capt. Vidal controlled the building and took charge of the collections.

"Capt. Vidal always had during his time the keys of the church. I lived 7 miles away and when I got there the church was always ready for service." - Rev. Salter

Capt. Vidal used to take the collections each year and add it to the pew rents or give it as wine to the clergymen. Any remaining collections would go back to the church for general purposes such as a widows orphan fund or as gratuity to Rev. Salter.

Marrying Maria Vidal and Capt. Richard Vidals Death

In Rev. Salter's words;

" When I asked him (Capt. Vidal) from time to time to give this property to the church he persistently refused and said in a joking way perhaps at some time I will give it to Maria, my wife. "

In August of 1850, Reverend Salter married Capt. Vidal's sixth child and first born daughter Maria Charlotte Vidal. She gave birth to at least thirteen children and they lived in Sarnia until 1869 before moving to Brantford.

The Church nor the adjoining grounds were consecrated at the time of Captain Vidal's death in 1854 but were around 1858 by Bishop Ben Cronyn. Up until Vidal's death, Rev. Salter occupied there on sufferance being allowed to preach as often as he liked.

"I still preached with the church at the time of his death. I was not incumbent to the church as it was a private building. I was in intimate and confidential terms with Capt. Vidal during this parish. I married his daughter. He died in my arms." - Rev. Salter

After Capt. Vidal's death and before the consecration of the church, Rev. Salter continued to be a missionary of the church, holding services as he did formerly. After the church was consecrated, Rev. Salter remained incumbent of the church until almost 1870 when he took a new post in Brantford.

Rev. Salter passed on October 3rd 1889. Less than two months later his wife passed after a brief illness.

Fun Note: Late March 1867 the first telegram sent from England to Sarnia was addressed to Reverend Salter informing him of the sad news of his eldest sisters death in the days previous.

References:

Lambton County Archives- 4B Salter

Lambton County Archives- 4B Salter Testimony

Find a Grave- Rev. George John Ranking Salter

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/157110591>

Summer Exhibits and Features

Plympton-Wyoming Historical Society by Gordon Mackenzie

The P-W Museum located at 6745 Camlachie Rd, in Camlachie

Open Saturdays June, July, and August 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

 Sundays July, and August 1:00p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

 Other times by appointment. Contact Don 519-869-4909 or Gord 519-869-2357

The 4 exhibit areas are:

Early Settlers Exhibit tells the story of the early settlers to Plympton Township and features stories of local settlements. See some of the tools these early settlers used establishing themselves in the "western frontier" of Canada West. (Ontario). This year, two grade seven students attending John Knox Christian School, have loaned us their exhibits from a school history fair. One tells the story of the yellow brick industry in Lambton county and the second pertains to the British Home Children.

The Great Storm Exhibit tells the story of the fierce storm of Nov 1913 that caused dozens of ships in the Great Lakes to sink. Four ships went down within about 50 km of our local shores. See artifacts, discovered in the 1980s, from one ship which went down directly off Sanilac Michigan.

The **Post WW2 Immigration Exhibit** tells the story of some of the people who arrived in Canada after the devastation of WW2.

Our Military Exhibit Room is refreshed each year. This year we tell the story of how the results of WW1 led to the beginning of WW2 in just 20 short years. See what was happening in those 20 years from (1) a global perspective, (2) from a Canada wide perspective, and (3) finally what was happening locally in Lambton County. See some of the toys children played with during those 20 years between the wars. Also see some of the early pictures of Lambton County and some of the advertisements of the 1920s and 30s.

Parts of our previous exhibits are still on display- the **WW1 Vimy Ridge diorama**, the **Wm. Wright story** with William's actual burial cross from WW1 along with his medals and his "dead man's penny" awarded to his family. We have artifacts from WW1 and uniforms from WW1 and WW2.

History of Sombra Museum

Sombra Museum by Kailyn Shepley

The Sombra Historical Society formed in November 1957 with the purpose of beginning a museum in Sombra Township. Thanks to fundraising efforts, they were able to purchase the John Bury homestead in Sombra, left in disrepair after years of renters, for \$3000 in April 1958. Over the next year, repairs were made and donations of items such as chinaware, furniture, antique farming implements and more came in from the families of Sombra Township. Opening day finally came on June 20, 1959, when local people and dignitaries, including Sarnia-Lambton MPP and Ontario Minister of Travel and Publicity Bryan Cathcart, gathered for the ribbon cutting at Lambton County's first museum.

Through the hard work of Historical Society volunteers, Sombra Township Museum operated and continued to grow every year, until in 1972, two portable classrooms were attached to the Bury House; this allowed for the addition of a marine room, agricultural room, archives and office. Over the following decades, the museum continued to evolve to present school and community programming; host events such as Music on the Porch, Victorian tea and the blueberry social; and provide summer jobs for local students.

1992 saw major work on the foundation and plaster in the Bury House and 2011 saw the long-awaited construction of the Sombra Museum Cultural centre on the adjacent street to house gallery space, expanded marine room, fire resistant and climate controlled archival vault and state-of-the-art meeting room.

This June the museum proudly celebrated 60 years of preserving and sharing the history and story of Sombra and St. Clair Townships. This kicked off on June 15 with a dinner and live auction at the Wilkesport Community Centre. The celebration continued throughout the summer, including a new exhibit celebrating some of the most interesting items from the last 60 years, and will culminate with the Historical Village Ghost Tour on September 21.

Volunteers of all ages and abilities are urgently needed for the anniversary events and throughout the summer and fall. Please contact the museum 519-892-3982 or sombramuseum@hotmail.com for information or to volunteer!



Opening Day, June 20, 1959.

Photo courtesy of Sombra Museum Archives

More Museum Updates

Thank You Members

Our thanks go to all of our members who have renewed their memberships for 2019. We very much appreciate your continuing support for the work of preserving the artifacts that represent our community's past and sharing this heritage through engaging exhibits and programs.

In Memoriam

Moore Museum is saddened to note the passing of long-serving volunteers and Advisory Committee members Ella Norton and Dave Robinson, as well as long-time member John Kimmerly.

The Co-operators sponsors preservation project

The Co-operators, The Co-operators Foundation, and Shaun and Tara Antle joined in making a donation to Moore Museum, helping to fund the construction of insulated walls that protect large artifacts housed in the museum's new storage buildings. With this donation, improved environmental conditions will also be implemented to further safeguard the collection.

Upon visiting Moore Museum to present the cheque, Shaun Antle commented:

"We have two children and the museum draws a lot of families like ours ... supporting it just made sense to us -- to preserve historical artifacts from the area, not only for us to enjoy but for our kids, their kids, and generations to come."

Moore Museum is grateful for the generous donation, which will assist in preserving the community's heritage – in a way that local residents and visitors can learn from, today and in the future.



Presenting the cheque from The Co-operators were (left to right): Tara Antle and daughter Callie, St. Clair Township Council representative Tracy Kingston, Mayor Steve Arnold, volunteer Lyle Gander, Moore Museum Advisory Committee Chair Jim Townsend, and Shaun Antle and son Ethan.



Sponsors school program enhancements at Moore Museum

Moore Museum is grateful to be the recipient of a contribution from Ontario Power Generation. This donation is to sponsor 2019 School Education Programs.

On average, 2,000 school students attend Moore Museum's educational programs each year. Museum staff, in role as "pioneers" through first-person interpretation, help students experience various aspects of settler life. The support of Ontario Power Generation allows the purchase of further reproduction items so that students can engage in active learning, participating in various activities which bring the past to life. These hands-on experiences enable a level of understanding that reading about the past simply cannot provide.

Ontario Power Generation is a long-term contributor to Moore Museum's educational programming and the Museum very much appreciates their support for assisting students in gaining greater understanding of, and appreciation for, our community's heritage.

"Adopt" a project

Each year, Moore Museum has projects which may be "adopted" by local service groups and industries. We thought that individual members might also be interested in being an "adopter" for one of this year's purchases or contributing toward one of these projects. As an "adopter" (unless you indicate otherwise), you will be acknowledged in the donor recognition book in our main lobby and on the "Community Partners" page on our website. A list of "adopters" will also appear in this newsletter and in our township newspaper, the Beacon. If you have questions about these projects, please call Moore Museum at 519-867-2020 or email lmason@stclairtownship.ca.

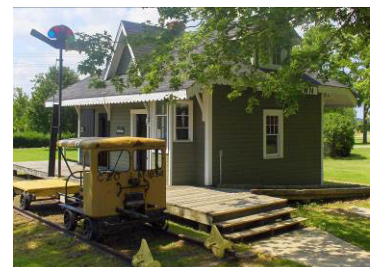
Site Improvement – Living Fence

A living fence planted along the northern edge of the site would provide a visual cue to visitors that they are entering the Museum grounds, to improve compliance with paying admission and to reduce vandalism. A living fence of shrubs would provide this division in an attractive and environmentally friendly manner.

- shrubs for living fence - \$50 each

Safety Enhancements – Railroad Station Ramp

Ramp access to all buildings on the Museum site allows all visitors to enjoy the exhibits. The shaded location of the ramp on the railroad station, however, causes moss build-up which requires



regular de-mossing to keep it safe for use. Improved safety and reduced maintenance costs would be provided by re-decking of this ramp with a plastic material, "Thru-Flow".

- "Thru-Flow" decking material - \$200 per panel – 6 panels required

Exhibit Enhancements - Model Train Display

Due to the popularity of the Lionel model train room, and donations and purchases of new buildings and rolling stock, this display area has been expanded. New exhibits will be installed, and upgraded lighting is needed to enhance the displays. Since the trains are run regularly, maintenance of engines is required annually.

- track lighting to improve exhibit visibility - \$100 each – 8 required
- locomotive maintenance and repairs - \$250
- buildings and accessories to enhance layouts - \$ any amount



General

If you don't see a project in this list which seems just right for you, financial support in any amount is always appreciated, and will be used for:

- programming
- artifact preservation
- maintenance



Summer In St. Clair Township

These photos from Moore Museum's collection provide a look at summertime in our community's past ---

At Work . . .



Threshing at John Peter Taylor farm on 2nd Line of Moore (now Oil Springs Line)



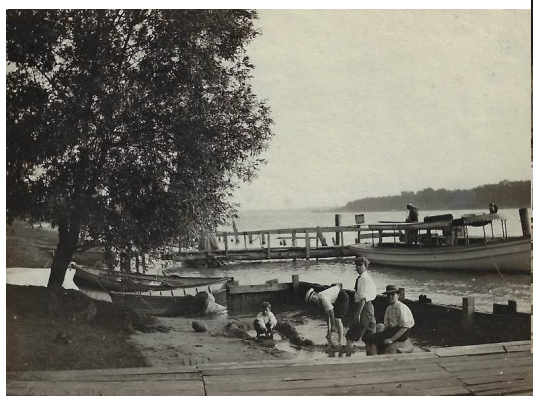
Threshing –
unidentified farm



And at play . . .

Sixth Line
Methodist (now
Sixth Line United
Church, Moore
Line) Sunday
School Picnic 1893

Stag Island pavillion
and ferry dock



LAMBTON HERITAGE MUSEUM

FALL COLOUR & CRAFT FESTIVAL

October 19-20 2019
10am-4pm

Lambton Heritage Museum
Hwy 21, south of Grand Bend

www.lambtonmuseums.ca/fallcolour

The festival is located at the museum property only for the convenience of our patrons. Admission \$5.00 for adults/seniors. Children 12 and under are free.



Over 80 vendors will be showcasing their handmade products! New in 2019, experience family friendly activities including:



Face Painting
Food Trucks
Fall Crafts
Historical Characters

Bouncy Castle
Live Music



Contributors

Lambton Heritage Museum

10035 Museum Road,
Grand Bend, ON N0M 1T0
519 243-2600
www.heritagemuseum.ca
www.facebook.com/lambtonheritagemuseum

Oil Museum of Canada

2423 Kelly Road
Oil Springs, ON N0P 1R0
519 834-2840
www.oilmuseum.ca
www.facebook.com/oilmuseumofcanada

Lambton County Archives

787 Broadway St
Wyoming, ON N0N 1T0
519 845-5426
www.lambtonarchives.ca
www.facebook.com/lambtoncountyarchives

Moore Museum

4 Moore Line,
Mooretown, ON N0N 1M0
519 867-2020
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www.facebook.com/mooremuseum

Sombra Museum

3476 St.Clair Parkway
Sombra, ON NOP 2H0
519-892-3982
sombmuseum.webs.com/
www.facebook.com/sombmuseum

Plympton-Wyoming Museum

6745 Camlachie Rd,
Camlachie, ON
Outside summer hours, private tours may be
arranged by calling Gord at 519-869-2357 or
Don at 519-869-4909
www.plymptonwyomingmuseum.ca/
[www.facebook.com/Plympton-Wyoming-
Historical-Society-286687844815040/](https://www.facebook.com/Plympton-Wyoming-Historical-Society-286687844815040/)

The Forest Museum

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sites.google.com/view/the-forest-museum/
home](https://www.facebook.com/ForestLambtonMuseum/sites.google.com/view/the-forest-museum/home)

Arkona/Rock Glen

Lions Museum

8680 Rock Glen Road
Arkona, ON
Located at beautiful Rock Glen Conversation
Area
[www.lambtononline.ca/home/residents/
museums/arkonamuseum/Pages/Default.aspx](http://www.lambtononline.ca/home/residents/museums/arkonamuseum/Pages/Default.aspx)
www.facebook.com/arkonalionsmuseum/