

# Yesteryears

The Newsletter of The Burk's Falls and District Historical Society



## Summer 2016 in Review!



This year the Historical Society was able to hire two summer students: Luke and Victoria. Trina also worked on contract as Heritage Coordinator. This was made possible through the Young Canada Works and Canada Summer Jobs grants in cooperation with the Municipalities. They accomplished a lot over the course of the summer, and worked hard every day to further the vision of the Burk's Falls and District Historical Society.

As a first priority, the students worked on cleaning, updating, and refreshing the displays throughout the Watt Farm House. They also contributed significant support in the preparation for Heritage Day and showed amazing visitor service skills on the day of. They have created an updated gift shop inventory that lists all merchandise, and a sales record sheet to track all sales made. They were able to greet visitors to the Farm House and provide information on the displays.



They worked on updating our catalogue records, and organizing the collections storage areas. This has led to easier access of the collection for researchers and staff. Over the course of the summer they effectively photographed and scanned approximately 850 artifacts, inventoried 360 artifacts with updated locations, and catalogued 170 artifacts with detailed information on their appearance and condition.

We would like to formally thank Young Canada Works, Canada Summer Jobs, and the Municipalities for all their support.

This season the Watt Farm House saw a total of 315 Visitors. Wilma Bentley also reported that the Wiseman Schoolhouse saw a total of 451 visitors with a record number of 35 on Sunday Oct. 9<sup>th</sup>!



# Heritage Day 2016!

Heritage Day took place on July 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Watt Century Farm House, and was a great success. The Historical Society was fortunate enough to host about 100 visitors. The event featured wagon rides, refreshments and various exhibits.

Our busiest exhibit was our 162nd Battalion exhibit, which was set up in the livingroom area. This exhibit featured summaries of service records of the 162nd Battalion, information on the medals awarded to the 162nd Battalion, and a WWII military style jacket, which was loaned to us by the West Parry Sound District Museum. Another popular attraction with the children was the gun display and military truck set up by the Algonquin Regiment. There was a great presentation of the Colours being brought in by the Burk's Falls Legion, which was accompanied by the Callander Pipe Band. This presentation then lead into various speeches and an unveiling of a new plaque to be put in the Farm House recognizing various donors in their financial support. On this day, the museum's regular exhibits remained accessible to the general public, and were operated by the event's volunteers.

We would like to thank everyone who participated in this celebration of the 100th anniversary of the 162nd Battalion: Almaguin Trefoil Guild Girl Guides of Canada, members of the Algonquin Regiment, Hammond's Horse Drawn Wagon Rides, Esther Stone who played the piano, the Burk's Falls Legion, the Callander Pipe Band, and Amber's Creative Cookies for providing the cake, and all the other volunteers who donated their time to this event. We also want to thank everyone that came out to enjoy the festivities – without you, this event would not have been the success it was.



## More about the Hearse...

The hearse on display in the Watt Century Farm House garage is currently owned by David Opatovsky and is on loan to the Burk's Falls and District Historical Society. This particular hearse was driven in the Magnetawan's Fall Fair in 2007 by David Opatovsky as well as Lisa Armstrong, who is the undertaker for Opatovsky Funeral Homes. The horses who pulled it also pulled the fire hose in town in their off-time. This hearse was driven by Nicholas Bennet and owned by Joseph Hilliar, whose names are plated on the hearse.



In Canada, black horses were common for funeral processions for men. Unmarried women and children were provided with white horses as an alternate. The processions would carry the individuals from their home to the cemetery, where the burial was completed.



## Halloween Event

On October 15<sup>th</sup> the Burk's Falls Historical Society hosted a Halloween Themed Party. It was very much enjoyed by the families and children that attended. The event included pumpkin carving demonstrations, storytelling, dressing up, trick or treating, bobbing for apples, and other fun games. There were about 40 children that attended and everyone left with a goody bag, and a smile on their face.

## British Home Children Day

On September 29<sup>th</sup> at the Watt Farm House the Historical Society hosted a British Home Children Day. Dona Crawford presented some of her amazing research, showed a video, and shared various artifacts and pictures. About 16 people attended the event. Everyone was really engaged in the material, and excited to learn more about British Home Children. The event ended with tea, scones, and conversation about the presentation where Dona was available to answer questions.



## Library and Military Room

Dedicated to  
**LAWRENCE MAIN**  
A founding member of the Historical Society  
and in honour of his 90th Birthday  
Military and Library Room



The Library and Military room is a recent addition to the Watt Century Farm House. The room is dedicated to Lawrence Main, honouring his dedication to the Historical Society as a founding member, and congratulating him on his recent ninetieth birthday. The library features new cherry wood shelving – which was recently built by Rod Blakelock. The shelves contain information, and stories relating to: WWI, WWII, and the surrounding Townships. The library features military artifacts which were used in WWI and WWII, and had been donated to the Historical Society previously. In the future, the library will have a computer set up, which will house a database to accommodate the general public in their research.

### **Don't miss out on our upcoming events...**

- ❖ Burk's Falls Agricultural Society's Christmas Craft Sale – November 25-26<sup>th</sup>, 2016
  - Volunteers needed!
- ❖ Annual Pot Luck Dinner – December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016 starting at 6:00pm at Fell Homes
- ❖ Christmas Cookies with Mrs. Claus – December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016 (1pm-3pm) at the Watt Century Farm House

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The mission of the Historical Society is “to educate and preserve the deep-rooted heritage of the Burk's Falls area while providing educational learning opportunities, fostering community partnerships and stimulating visitor traffic throughout the region”. The Historical Society has acquired two heritage buildings in the last twenty two years since the Historical Society was first established in 1994: the Wiseman's Schoolhouse and the Watt Century Farm House. The Burk's Falls & District Historical Society relies on a group of dedicated volunteers to operate both museums. We encourage any interested individuals to apply for a membership with the Historical Society to help further our mission. This may be done online, or by filling out a physical copy of the form at either of our museums. We would also be happy to hear from any interested members of the public who would like to become a volunteer. For more information regarding volunteer opportunities please visit our website, call 705-571-3308 or email [info@burksfallsdistricthistoricalsociety.com](mailto:info@burksfallsdistricthistoricalsociety.com)