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The Port Maitland, Festival of History becomes an Event!

Saturday, July 26th, from 10:00 - until 4:00, No. 6 RCAF Dunnville Museum 1999 Inc., will host the third Port Maitland, Festival of History, at the Dunnville Airport.

I went to public school at Stromness. History, was my favourite subject, but as I grow older, I now realize where the system failed us as it applies to local history. I recall spending about two, or three days talking about Senator McCallum and his involvement with Stromness. I remember something about his selling cordwood, about his being a Senator, about his being a Scotsman and that Stromness derived its name from somewhere near his birth place. I remember something about a battle that he was in some way involved. I would often visit his abandoned home on the feeder canal with other kids and we would tell stories of its haunting while we hid in corners or closets waiting for some previously set up victim, to tippy-toe past. Then we would jump out screaming and waving our arms. That would be the last we would see of that buddy for a day or two.

What we were not taught, was there in our classroom were great-great nephews and niece of Senator McCallum in the persons of Jim, Bill, Dave, Brian, and Judy Vaughan. We were not taught much of the Senator's politics and his tremendous community mindedness. We learned, or were led to believe he did not have much use for Catholics. Being a Catholic myself, I remember that being an uncomfortable lesson. In my research I have since found many references where he participated in fund-raising events benefiting the needs of the Catholic church in Dunnville. He was no saint! He was a formidable opponent in business and politics, but generally, I believe he was mostly an honest hardworking and industrious man.

We learned little about the Senator's shipbuilding business, and were not even given a glance at where this took place, yet it was only a few hundred feet from our desks. I was so unaffected by him, that in my early research of Sherbrooke Township. I skipped over many long and detailed articles, about him. The slant of the articles were more to do with the politics of the editor than the facts as they occurred. Politics in the late 1800s was a dirty game and the Senator knew how to play as well as the other fellow.

The Senator, was only one of many in the area who's history in the lumber industry has not been told. This area provided a considerable amount of lumber for the building of the cities to our south, including lumber for the rebuilding of Chicago after its disastrous fire.

I will not tell you that my new found interest in the Senator and my lack of knowledge of his life and effect on the Dunnville area is the reason for holding the Port Maitland, Festival of History. The fact is, there will not be any displays specifically depicting information about the Senator. However, the Dunnville District Heritage Association will feature John Docker's new book *Dunnville Heroes*, where John relates the story of the Fenian raids, in which he tells of the involvement the young Lachlan McCallum played in the defence of Canada during that conflict.

We have a proud history of service during the Second World War from this area. On July 5th, this year No. 6 RCAF Dunnville Museum 1999 Inc. Dunnville, held an open house in recognition of the official opening of their new museum. Come out and see the great work these men and women have performed preserving the history, - written, sometimes in blood, in service to King and Country. The Dunnville Airport was opened in 1940, as the Royal Canadian

Air Force No. 6 Service Flying School. Until it closed in 1944, it was home to thousands of airmen and airwomen from throughout the British Commonwealth. Over 2400, received their wings before being sent overseas. Forty-seven died while on duty here before ever having the occasion to see battle.

The Canadian Warplane Heritage from Hamilton will join us with a display. They will not be bringing any planes with them. (Not this year anyway!) Let us hope they will have some of their chartered flights make a swing by our airport. Keep looking up, maybe you will get a glance at the Lancaster! If you like vintage warplanes, come and watch Doug Gilbert while he works on his newest painting. He might even sell you one!

This year the Canadian Football Hall of Fame, will visit the Festival and bring the Grey Cup along with them. The CFHF, spotlights and archives accomplishments of all levels of football in Canada. This includes football from the very young through to university and on to those better-known players and builders in the Canadian Football League. My good friend, *Pig-Skin-Pete* will also spend the day with us, so bring along your camera to capture a picture with you and *Pete*; or the Grey Cup!

The Hamilton and The Scourge Project, Port Colborne Historical and Marine Museum, Canadian Canal Society, Port Dover Harbour Museum, and Mike Walker with his Mohawk Island lighthouse display, will add to the marine section of our history festival. Each group has its own story to tell, but they are all concerned with the preservation of marine history in one form or another.

As with many towns throughout Canada, the railway was instrumental in their early development. Dunnville got its beginning, not from rail but from water. However, by the end of the 19th century the town was being served by the Grand Trunk and the Town Fathers were not pleased with the service they were receiving. In the early 20th century, the TH&B railway was invited to run a branch line to Dunnville. They then decided for various reasons to extent that line to Port Maitland. One of those reasons was to operate a railway car ferry to carry coal from the States to the Steal Company of Canada in Hamilton. The TH&B Railway Historical Society will have a display depicting the history of this very small yet at onetime extremely profitable railway.

If you have ever been to the Marshville Festival in Wainfleet on Labour Day Weekend, you will have seen Doug Wright's rope making demonstration. Doug, has agreed to join us this year where he will put his talent to good use for your education. The Marshville Heritage Association who have performed admirably in their endeavour to preserve the history of the village of Wainfleet will have a booth at the Festival, where you will see some of their accomplishments and learn about Marshville Days, held every Labour Day Weekend.

The Erland Lee (Museum) Home from Stoney Creek will join us and display the history of the Lee Home, while reminding you that it was from this home the Women's Institute seeded and spread its roots.

A couple of other friends, John Burtiak and Jim Schuit, will have a number of local postcards. Jim, tends to zero in on the Grand River, while John has a massive collection of Niagara Peninsula cards. I believe he will be featuring Sherbrooke postcards this year. My cousin Tim Warnick, will bring some of his 9th *New York Cavalry - Co. A.* fellows along, dressed in very hot uniforms. You will get a sense of the hardship the Civil War soldiers suffered, especially if it is a hot day! Tim and the others know the history of the Civil War and will be happy to answer any questions.

While visiting the Festival, drop in on the Grand River Branch of the U.E.L. and learn who some of the local U. E. L. families are. You might even discover that your great great. . . grand-parents received a land grant for their loyalty to the Crown during the American Revolution! Though different in their objective but equally interested in your genealogy, is another organization that will have a table at the Festival. The Ontario Genealogical Society (OGS) Haldimand Branch has amassed a huge data base of former Ontario citizens, including an extensive record of Ontario cemeteries. Free research is available through the OGS and people very knowledgeable in local families will be at the Festival to help you.

Haldimand Museums, which include Wilson MacDonald Memorial Museum in Selkirk, Edinburgh Square in Caledonia, and the Haldimand County Museum and Archives, at Cayuga will be on hand to provide you with hands on material

and promotional items. Each location has a unique collection, while cooperatively working together, each placing the pieces a great jig-saw puzzle called *Haldimand history* into one picture. Another well-known Haldimand historic site, Ruthven Park, located in Cayuga will have a display, featuring this elegant historic home. If you have never visited Ruthven, come see what they are all about, then take a drive up the river to Cayuga and see the real thing! The Canadian Drilling Rig Museum from Rainham Centre will bring along some interesting equipment used in pioneer days to drill and control gas wells.

We all remember the Lalor Estate! You may recall that it was once planned to be the retirement home of both the Catholic and Anglican Bishops from the local diocese. For a time, R. C. Bishop Thomas J McCarthy, lived in the big old house by himself. It has seen other uses, but now is a beautiful bed and breakfast which has been well preserved. Come and see what Glen and Judy Brough have done with it. They might even bring along the Lalor Cup. If so, be sure to ask all the questions you can about it!

Two local fellows, Tom Pettigrew and Joe Maggio, my former teacher who tells every former student "*You were my favourite,*" will each have their respective books available for sale. Joe has a book telling the history of the Dunnville Golf Club, while Tom's book is on the long history of the Dunnville Lawn Bowling Club.

Cheryl MacDonald, of Heronwood Enterprises's will feature local heritage books including the Haldimand and Norfolk Heritage Book Catalogue and her bimonthly newsletter; *Yesterday's News*. Of course, the Dunnville Chronicle staff will have their microfilm reader available for you to take a look at some of those old dusty newspaper that I spend hours looking through.

One display that always gets my attention, is the antique survey equipment that Des Rasch brings along. Des knows how to dress the dress and talk the talk. Anyone remotely interested in maps, surveying, or generally curious about geography has to spend an hour or two with Des.

Then there is my display! I will have several hundred vintage photographs and postcards mostly featuring the people and events in the former townships of Sherbrooke and Dunn. I have a growing collection of school class photographs within the County, some with names on them while others are waiting for you to tell me who is who! Also, I have begun a fairly good collection of current and past fish-tugs.