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The City of Kingston Could – Should be a Lesson to all in Preserving our History!

Editors Note; Since writing this article the Marine Museum has closed.

Where have I been the past month? We held our Port Maitland Festival of History in July, and zap, I'm gone! If I were smart I would build in at least a one month sabbatical following each festival just to rejuvenate. But, this is not the reason I have been missing, it is simply technical – computer technical that is! When I arrived home after the Festival I opened a couple emails and bam the computer died. It seems I was not paying attention to some early warning signs and waited too long to take the machine to the shop. My mother board had been sending bad info to my hard-drive. Not just my main hard-drive but also my backup drive. All my files are corrupted and both my hard-drives are junk. Let me end this part of the story by saying I have a fair bit of info saved, but nothing at all regarding any of the festivals and all my email addresses and emails are gone. The hard-drives are currently with the experts to see if they can be recovered, but as of yet, nothing!

On Sunday of Labour Day weekend Carole and I spent a few hours at Kingston, taking the trolley ride around the city and later taking a free trip on the ferry to Wolfe Island for an ice cream cone. We also visited the Marine Museum of the Great Lakes where among others, the files for the Canada Steamship Lines are archived. The Museum has as a rather interesting attraction in the retired Canadian Coast Guard ice breaker the *Alexander Henry*. The *Henry* serves not only as an attraction but also as a bed and breakfast. You can sleep for as low as thirty-five dollars or as expensively as nine-five dollars in the Captains quarters or a couple of other VIP quarters.

So who was Alexander Henry? I found on the net at the Four Fathers of Confederation Genealogy Web Site where I plagiarized the following highlight from Alexander's short bio. *"In the Tupper administration of 1863, Henry became attorney general and an obvious choice as one of the delegates to the conferences. He was not particularly active at Quebec, but in London he registered his fear that the appointed senate might thwart the will of the elected commons and suggested that the government of the day should be given authority to create new senators to override determined opposition. A clause was inserted in the British North America Act permitting the appointment of three or six (now four or eight) additional senators on the recommendation of the governor general."*

We learned about the *Henry* during our tour on the Confederation Tour Trolley, operated by the local Chamber of Commerce. This fifty minute ride on a trolley took us throughout historic Kingston which included such sites as the Royal Military College, Queens University, the Pen, and many other very interesting places and great stories to go along with them. I do not know one trolley from another, so I contacted the Kingston Chamber of Commerce to inquire about it. Guess I am not the best writer, or do not know how to ask a question as it took a couple tries to get what I wanted, or should I say something I thought was really cute.

Here is what Dawn Callan sent me. *"The bus is a big shinny dark red trolley bus with muted gold filigree. It runs on bio diesel and is able to hold 45 people, a tour guide and a driver. The tours are offered "live" with a guide/interpreter (who may be able to offer other languages) and we have a gps triggered translator and head set system for French, Italian, German and Japanese. The seating is a series iron mounted wooden benches with modest cushions. The interior of the Trolley is lined with Jute and hard wood. The windows feature safety bars and are alternating glass and snap on plastic coverings which are removed for most of the season."* I loved her description!

As for the Festival of History, it was another successful year, but I need to get one thing out of the way. Let me put my sins on the table for all to see here and now! In 2004, I came up with what I thought was a good method to estimate how many people attended. Admission was free so we could not use our income as a measure, and to be honest I lost focus of our original mission. Money was not the purpose of starting the festival. Money is needed to run it, but should not take centre stage. Being human it was decided we would charge a \$2.00 admission in 2005. Not only would we make lots of money, we would also have a much better idea of our attendance. Wrong! Most people I talked with thought we had more guests this year than last and our attendance seemed to come in at around seven hundred according to our income. Mind you there may have been a few bucks donated and a few gate crashers, but our income was considerably less than in 2004. Sometimes one needs to be kicked in the A%& once in a while to remind ME what this is about and to see the success in the great opportunity we gave to others to learn about their history through over thirty different ways to display our past.

Yes, the 2005 Port Maitland, Festival of History was a great success! Thanks to all our sponsors. Without them the festival would not have got off the ground. Thanks to our participants whom without their support there would have been nothing to see. Thanks to all the volunteers who came together in the final days and offered a tonne of work. Without them the show could not have taken place. Thanks to the committee members who worked with me and put up with me all year, and, whom for sure without them, nothing would have happened.

Very special thanks to the Osprey Media Group, the owner of this paper and the Welland Tribune, among many others. You were our major sponsor and provided considerable space to us for promotion of the Festival, not only in your major papers, but also in your weekly. . . (**Darryl, please fill in this part.**).

And of course thanks to our guests who share our interest in history and show this by their attendance and generosity.

We continue to grow and just to maintain our level; we desperately need more day volunteers. We need committee members and volunteers who will help us throughout the year. We particularly need one or two volunteers who will visit sponsors to solicit their continued support. If you are able to help, please contact me at your earliest convenience.

If you have items, you wish to have written about or pictures you would be willing to lend me, please drop me a note. Let me know how you feel about these articles. William (Bill) Arthur Warnick – 180 Rosslyn Ave. South Hamilton, ON L8M 3J5 or email me at wwarnick@cogeco.ca Phone 905 531-4350