



Newsletter - April 2025

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email: hchs1965@gmail.com www.HuronCountyHistoricalSociety.ca

Save the Dates!

HCHS Trek May 10

Exploring Lambton

Join us as we explore the history, culture, and early oil industry of Lambton County

Agenda includes:

- Lambton Heritage Museum and its historic outbuildings
- Guided tour of Kettle and Stoney Point First Nation with Jordan George, Language/Communications Specialist
- Lunch at Actor's Restaurant Petrolia
- Guided tour of Oil Museum of Canada, a National Historic Site, and drive along historic oil fields
- All Inclusive \$100.

Pre-register with David Armstrong by May 1, 2025
519-524-1156 or Davidarmstrong@hurontel.on.ca

HCHS Sponsored Book Launch
**Challenge and Change
in Huron**

**April 26 2 p.m.
Huron County
Museum**

David Yates will be speaking
about his latest book,
*Challenge and Change
in Huron*

Afterward he will
autograph copies until 4 p.m.



'Farmerettes' Still Rolling Along

It all started with the book *Onion Skins and Peach Fuzz* written by Bonnie Sitter and Shirleyan English. They set out to tell the story of young women who became farm workers, contributing to the feeding of a nation during the war years. The book was adapted for the Blyth Festival stage by Allison Lawrence and played to large crowds last summer. I don't need to tell you it was a hit.

For Remembrance Day the Canadian government unveiled a commemorative stamp.

This year the documentary *We Lend a Hand: The Forgotten Story Of Ontario Farmerettes* was launched. We have a Huron connection with all the Huron county girls who volunteered 'to lend a hand' were filmed at Blake's Orchard, Brussels. Don McNeil, also of Brussels, did his bit as well and drove his 1936 Ford V8 truck for the reenactment. Produced by Colin Field, Albireo Films of London, it debuted its world premiere at the Junction North Film Festival in Sudbury, April 4th. The audience was excited and eagerly applauded and then participated in a Q and A.

Continued on page 2



We met the three young women who stepped up to be farmerettes in the film reenactment in We Lend a Hand: The Forgotten Story of Ontario Farmerettes, Sam Chuter, Kirsten McIntosh and Nicole Whyte.

Photo by K. Seeger

Executive for 2025

David Armstrong - President 519-524-1156
Ralph Laviolette - Secretary-treasurer 519-440-6206
Elaine Snell - Membership 519-523-9434

Directors

- Mary Gregg 519-524-9372
- Rhea Hamilton- Seeger 519-612-1201
- Mac Campbell
- Susan Gloucher
- Larry Mohring
- Ben Woodward
- Mandy Sinclair

Fashions For The Farmerette

Jersey
1.19

Smart, torso-length cotton sports pullover. Latest thing in stripes, blue - and - white or brown - and - yellow. Crew neck. Sizes small, medium or large. Each 1.19.

Farmerettes

A 1.98

Ideal outfit for the farm or cottage. Dusty rose or copen blue denim that will take plenty of hard wear. Sizes 12 to 20. Each 1.98.

B 2.49

Heavy navy drill farmerette for gardening or farming (not sketched). Sizes 16 to 44. Each 2.49.

C 2.49

Cotton gabardine farmerette in pastel shades of turquoise, grey or tangerine (not sketched). Sizes 12 to 20. No phone orders, please. Each 2.49.



Phone orders filled unless otherwise stated—TRinity 8111
Simpson's Air-Cooled Basement Store

Actual footage of recruitment and working in an orchard in 1943 was secured from the National Film Board to be included in the documentary. Check out their website where the trailer can be viewed and in the near future Eventbrite will be added to take care of ticket management and sales. Premiere for London is June 6th Wolf Performance Hall; Sarnia June 12th Main Library Theatre and Goderich at the Huron County Museum July 19.

Wingham and Area Historical Society

Writing Your Story For The Future

The Wingham and Area Historical Society has been very busy collecting stories and posting photos. Their group encourages the recording of recollections of shared times (growing up, neighbours, family, school, work, involvements, etc.) in Wingham and area, or recording memories of someone in your family. The Advance Times has generously offered to publish these and they can also be shared via the Wingham Historical Society Facebook page (which over 1800 people with a connection to Wingham read). "We truly believe that everyone has an interesting story to tell. YOUR STORY is important and should be preserved. Just think of how much your grandchildren and great grandchildren will appreciate your efforts as they get older!" said Brent Boyer. If you'd like to write out your story yourself and need help putting it into final form, contact Brent Boyer, WAHS secretary and interviewing team co-ordinator, at the email below. The group has a team of interviewers and one can come to your home (if in the Wingham area) to have a conversation/ interview. A few interviews have been done by phone or email. The Society organized an interactive workshop April 12 at the Alice Munro Library. Contact by email WinghamAHS@gmail.com for more information on their interview project



Repatriated commemorative plate with cup proudly shown off in Brussels Library. Photo courtesy of Paul Nichol

A Treasure Comes Home to Huron

A lovely commemorative plate featuring Brussels Public School, Ontario found its way home from California. Andrea Minnich grew up in Rochester, New York and has fond memories of visits to Canada. On a clear day she could see the CN Tower from her home. She lives in California now.

Andrea spotted the plate at an estate sale in her neighbourhood and did a bit of sleuthing. Long story short, the plate was carefully shipped to Paul Nichol in Brussels who took it to the library there where it now resides with a matching cup the library already had. While the Huron County Historical Society does not have an archives or collection we do have contacts. Thanks to Andrea for taking the time and effort to return a piece of history home.

**THERE WILL BE A
MAGIC LANTERN SHOW
AT THE 1890 TOWN HALL IN ZURICH
SATURDAY JUNE 7 AT 2 P.M.**

No, you are not reading an old newspaper heading. Gary Flaxbard will be giving the history of the Magic Lantern and the George Hess family June 7. He will explain that many of the photos have been reproduced in the 2006 Vintage Photos Disk during Zurich's 150th Anniversary celebration. He will also touch on the histories of Hay Township and Zurich while projecting some of the glass slides with the Magic Lantern. There will be a switch to a multimedia projector to show various photos from that 2006 disk and Gordon Hess's binder of photos. In the course of it, Gary hopes to explain the history behind some of the photos, as well as the history of the Hess Family in Hay Township and Zurich.

Accessibility to the magic lantern slide projector is thanks to the generosity of the Dorothy and Gordon Hess Family. Barry Hess got the magic lantern working again with an update to an LED bulb, so no fan is necessary. It had been converted from the original oil lamp to an electric light. Harry, Gordon's father, continued to make glass slides and show them with the Magic Lantern.

Incidentally, George Hess drafted the plans for the town hall building as well as the St. Peter's Lutheran Church. Everyone welcome to attend.



*The Herald, 1907
Zurich, courtesy of
the Huron County
Digitized Newspapers,
Huron County Museum
and Gaol.*

King Charles Medals Awarded to Notables in Huron

Bonnie Sitter was honoured for her work in bringing the story of Ontario's Farmerettes to life through the book she co-authored, *Onion Skins and Peach Fuzz*, which was then turned into a play and a documentary.

Duncan McGregor was honoured for his more than 60 years of involvement in Huron county arts in community and theatre as a playwright, director, actor, and artistic director. He has a long history of raising money for many organizations through his theatre productions. Photo contributed by Bonnie Sitter



Membership renewal....

If you received this newsletter by mail, the date shown above your name on the address label is the year to which your membership is paid up, according to our records. Call Elaine Snell if you are not sure or need clarification. If you are in arrears, consider this a reminder that the membership fees are \$20. To reserve your member's hard copy of Historical Notes, keep your dues up to date.

We are making it easy to renew membership or simply to make a donation by using e-transfer. Send the e-transfer to: hchs1965@gmail.com

Copies of recent past Historical Notes are available, please email hchs1965@gmail.com (past copies are \$8 to \$10 per copy).

To access the members-only section for the Historical Notes or to do a search for names or places in the Historical Notes, go to www.HuronCountyHistoricalSociety.ca, open the dropdown menu for Publications, click HCHS Members Login. If you cannot get access using the password, then check if your web browser is up to date. If the password is lost or not available readily, contact hchs1965@gmail.com

Just an added note. The login password has been the same for a number of years and our web master suggested it was time for a change. So if you have not renewed and are having problems accessing the archives, please contact Elaine about renewing.

**Where to get your Local History Books
And back copies of the Historical Notes**

Fincher's and The Book Peddler both of Goderich, North Huron Citizen in Blyth, The Book Barn off Hwy 86 between Wingham and Whitechurch, The Village Bookshop, Bayfield and Bayfield Archives.