



Newsletter - February 2026

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

Zoom Meeting

February 18, 2026 7 p.m.

Capturing Oral Histories With Anneke Stryker

Remembering family stories and how do we preserve them for the next generation is a topic often talked about. Anneke Stryker is going to explore this topic as she introduces oral history and its value for preserving local knowledge and lived experience. It will explore common challenges in oral history work, highlight the importance of ethics and informed consent, and explain the Huron County Museum's current Oral History Project. The presentation will also include excerpts from the oral histories in the museum's collection and discuss ways community members can get involved.

Anneke is an Oral History Collections Intern at the Huron County Museum. She recently completed her MSc thesis interviewing formerly-incarcerated mothers in rural Ontario. Alongside her academic work, she is conducting a long-term oral history project with her grandmother with the goal of eventually developing it into a book. Anneke is also behind the Huron County Museum's new Oral History Guide, workshops, and oral history collections.

Please join us (members and non-members)

Please email HCHS1965@gmail.com for ZOOM Link to attend by January 18th.

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
- * Shirley Hutton
- * Pam Stanley

Lots to Celebrate in 2026

It is going to be another jam packed year! Our 2026 Notes will be featuring the 100th anniversary of CKNX. The Blyth Festival featured Radio Town: The Doc Cruickshank Story in 2025. In 1926 self-described "tinkerer" Doc Cruickshank managed to build a working radio transmitter in his garage in Wingham. Eventually it blossomed into CKNX, one of Canada's most influential radio and TV broadcasters, that ushered in Canada's answer to the Grand Ole Opry. From The National Farm Radio Forum to the Saturday Night Barndance and The Circle 8 Ranch, Doc's programming reflected his stubborn belief in the power of radio to unite people and build community.

In our house we didn't get a TV until 1962 and the only station we could catch was Wingham. So we enjoyed the music, the local news and of course programming developed by locals for locals. Culture at its best.



This is the iconic Romper Room Do Bee plaque which is part of the newly opened display on CKNX at the Huron County Museum.



With the closing of the North Huron Museum, valuable community artifacts were received by the Huron County Museum. We are fortunate they were able to set up the CKNX materials in a wonderful permanent gallery exhibit.

The portrait of Doc Cruickshank, left, and large camera equipment, below, are all part of a larger exhibit opening soon at the Huron County Museum



Farm Forums

A Time to Renew An Old Idea?

The radio became a window to the world for rural families, a great way to keep in touch with your community, province and country.

One of the great innovative program ideas to come out of this communication tool was the National Farm Radio Forums, broadcast locally by CKNX. The weekly programs became a staple in Huron County. Neighbours would gather to hear the latest agriculture issues and news and then discuss them. Their motto was 'Read, Listen, Discuss, Act'.

The organizing of farmers to create a single voice was a large task and there were many who were ready to take up the job. One of them was Gordon Hill of Varna.

Gordon, along with the help of his family, published *Knocking on Doors*, a wonderful look at family farming and how one man can make a difference. Gordon was a firm supporter of farmers working together to make a change to benefit all. He not only worked around Huron and the province but also developed connections across Canada.

Gordon wrote about the wonderful coverage CKNX gave local organizations while most of it was on radio, they did make time on the TV air waves.

We are featuring the farm forums in the 2026 issue of the *Historical Notes* and we would love to hear your personal stories of CKNX and the radio farm forums. Email us or call Rhea Hamilton Seeger 519-612-1201

HURON-BRUCE FORUM

Huron-Bruce Farm Forum met at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Wilfred McKague with an attendance of 21. This was review night and the following questions were discussed. 1. What project does your County Federation support financially?

2. (a) Suggest projects you would like to see the Provincial or Canadian Federation undertake.

(b) What action projects would it be worth while starting in your Community this winter. The County Federation supports the film board showings and the "hog scheme."

2. (a) We would like to see the Provincial or Canadian Federation undertake the project of spraying the weeds along the roadsides.

(b) We thought a good action project would be to make soil tests.

The rest of the evening was spent by playing progressive euchre with high prizes going to Mr. and Mrs. Harold McCormick and low prizes to Mr. Oscar Holmes and Howard Holmes (who played as a lady). The next meeting will be held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Jack McKague.

Hospital Auxiliary Meeting

The February meeting of the Ladies' Auxiliary to Wingham Hospital will be held in the Council Chamber on Monday afternoon, Feb. 3rd., at three o'clock.

Rural Diary Archive

In keeping with our topic of oral histories, the next best thing is the writings of those who have lived life in a different time under a variety of circumstances far different from what we would find today.

The University of Guelph has a *Rural Diary Archive* that is accessible on line. The archive features diaries from 1790-1960. These underused sources, often handwritten and fading, are now available for us to read. Volunteers have transcribed handwritten pages to make them accessible. There are literally hundreds of diarists and

Mark Your Calendars

Bayfield is celebrating 150 years since the village was incorporated. They have a stunning logo designed by Leslee Squirrel.

In 2026, Bayfield will be shining a light on all of the wonderful things that this community has to offer.

Community groups and individuals are already planning to make this year's celebration special.

Already the Lions Club has stepped up with an offer to provide 'seed capital' to individuals and groups who want to create special memories. They are also working with the Bayfield Historical Society (BHS) and the Photography Club of Bayfield to produce a high-quality coffee table book featuring images of the village.

The Bayfield Centre for the Arts is undertaking to commission a public sculpture which will be placed in Clan Gregor Square. They want this piece of art to serve as a lasting landmark which honors Bayfield's history while enriching the square as a place for gathering and civic pride.

Individuals such as Guy Spence are using their talents to highlight the spirit of Bayfield. He has written and produced a song with beautiful lyrics that can now be streamed on Spotify

This is just the beginning and any person or group that wants to host an event or volunteer to assist others, should contact Jeff Kish via email at jeff.kish.home@gmail.com or Diane Snell at diane@dianesnell.ca. They are acting as coordinators to minimize duplication of efforts and conflicts. (notes from Bayfield Breeze)

Our Huron County Museum is celebrating 75 years this year. More to come on that.

more are coming to light. From family writing home to let loved ones know how life is in the colonies to farmers recording daily transactions, along with weather and 'gossip'.

Some included bits of artwork in the margins showing talent for the arts.

The site is always looking for volunteers to transcribe. Full details on the website. Look for 'Start Transcribing' Learn more at

<https://ruraldiaries.uoguelph.ca/discover/>

Great site to explore on a winter day!

Howick Township kicked off their 170 years of Heritage, Harvest and Heart with a New Years Dance. Their home coming is set for July 3-5, 2026. More to come on that via their Facebook Township of Howick site

Book Early and Beat the Rush!

Beautiful Elora featured on Spring Trip

HCHS Trek this year to Elora, Wellington County is May 13. Organizers have planned this for midweek rather than a weekend event making it easier for those folks with busy weekends.

Members and their guests must preregister to secure a seat before we open it up to the general community. We have had a waiting list in the past, so don't leave your plans to the last minute.

Pre-register with David Armstrong by May 1st, 2026 519-514-1156 Email Davidarmstrong@hurontel.on.a for a full itinerary.



Elora Mill - a new life,
a place to visit!

What does it take to say no to one treasure, and then rejoice over another?

The County of Huron invites applications for two open positions on the Huron County Museum & Historic Gaol's Collections Committee. The position is for a volunteer community member from Huron County. The committee welcomes applicants that represent different communities, backgrounds, age groups, and cultures across Huron County, including newcomers and generational residents.

Volunteers meet every third month, generally on Tuesday mornings, for terms of two or three years with the potential of two consecutive terms. The Collections Committee presents a volunteer opportunity that may make a long-term impact on how our community recognizes, prioritizes and preserves history close to home. Committee discussions and review focus on short and long-term planning regarding collections, site policies in relation to collection development, and requirements of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming's Museum standards.

Sounds pretty cut and dried but I can tell you that it is one of the most interesting committees to be part of and you see a side of the museum that helps explain how collecting for a large, very active community works. It also answers a lot of questions; questions I hear in the community about how things are collected and what you see and more importantly what you don't see.

My family collects everything. You probably know someone like that too. When a family treasure is brought in to the museum there is a certain criteria that it has to meet. First of all what is the story? How does it relate to Huron and the bigger story of community? What shape is it in? Will it cost the museum time and money to restore it and/or is there something already like it in the museum?

Listen carefully to the family stories. This is what connects the objects to the local history. The colour of our lives, that is what the Huron County Museum collects.

And as we grow and age the stories continue and the Museum will be here for us. Consider being a member. I still love hearing the stories and seeing the work the Museum staff do to preserve our history.

Those interested in applying for the volunteer position of Huron County Museum Collections Committee Member can submit a written application by Monday, March 23, 2026 to:

Senior Curator

Huron County Museum & Historic Gaol

110 North St., Goderich, ON, N7A 2T8

museum@huroncounty.ca

Rhea Hamilton Seeger

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 have changed hands and we are eagerly waiting to see their grand openings. North Huron Citizen in Blyth, The Book Barn off Hwy 86 between Wingham and Whitechurch, The Village Bookshop, Bayfield and Bayfield Archives all sell our annual Historic Notes.