

# *HISTORIC GLOUCESTER*

Quarterly Newsletter of

*The GLOUCESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
and The GLOUCESTER MUSEUM and ARCHIVES*

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VOLUME 4 NO. 3

FALL 2003

*Gloucester Historical Society/  
Société Historique de Gloucester*

Presents

## **“Crossing Bridges of Times Past”**

**Place:** Gloucester Museum – 4550 Bank Street, at Leitrim Road.

**Date and Time:** – 2 P.M., Sunday, October 19, 2003

Three bridges across the Rideau River recall histories of nearby communities. The Billings, Hurdman and Cummings Bridges each bear the family names of former Reeves of Gloucester Township. But, for most they evoke deeper memories of villages and of families, past and present.

Bernard Pelot, co-author of the book “Billings Bridge, mon village, ma vie” will engage us once more. Ben Stafford will return to illustrate his village recollections of Hurdman’s Bridge, and Florence Ladds will tell us about Overbrook. Léo Paquette, author of three books on Vanier, will also address the Village of Janeville at the Cummings Bridge. Each will speak for 10 minutes, followed by 5 minutes for initial questions. A wrap up will then allow audience participants to share their memories of these four villages. Refreshments will be served,

**All Welcome  
Admission Free: Light Refreshments**

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**COVER PHOTO:**

*The cover shows your invitation to join with us on October 19 to cross some bridges of times past. Also see articles on pages 2 to 8.*

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*Historic Gloucester* is published by The Gloucester Historical Society and The Gloucester Museum and Archives. It is intended as a Newsletter to members of the Society to provide interesting articles on Gloucester's past and to keep them informed of new acquisitions by the Museum, publications available, upcoming events and other items of general interest. Comments and suggestions regarding the Newsletter are always welcome.

**Gloucester Historical Society** gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the City of Ottawa.

## President's Report

With the passing of former Board member, Albert Lafortune, we have lost a great friend of the Gloucester Historical Society. Al, along with his wife Ruth, was very active for many years. He liked to help the museum in every way possible: he collected new artefacts that required heavy lifting and the use of his trailer; he built sets and moved exhibits and fixed doors; all the time providing good council as a Board member. His passing brings to mind our need to follow his example of remembering Gloucester through work for the Society. He is surely blessed.

The summer past has been a period of quiet and reflection. The City's review of funding for next year has not been completed, but it does not look good for anyone requiring new monies for heritage. More worrisome is that the severe shortage of staff for the City museums is unlikely to be fixed in the coming year. Hence, although heritage advocates and a recent study have recommended that museums should each have their own curator, the Gloucester Museum is likely to remain without resident staff for the foreseeable future... Hence, we may need to address this issue ourselves, either through stronger lobbying of Council, or by looking at how this Society could do a better job if we were to have the museum returned to our care. As things now stand, the status-quo equals continued decline for the Gloucester Museum.

On Sunday October 19<sup>th</sup>, please come out to hear our speakers. We have Bernard Pelot who will speak about the Village of Billings Bridge, Ben Stafford will return to illustrate again the village at Hurdman's Bridge, our own Flo Ladds will tell us about Overbrook and Léo Paquette will speak about the Village of Janeville at the Cummings Bridge. Each will speak for 10 minutes, followed by 5 minutes for initial questions. A wrap up will then allow others from the audience to speak about their experiences at these villages. Refreshments will be served, while questions continue. Don't miss this one...

Guy H. Legault



## VILLAGE OF OVERBROOK

BY Florence Bird Ladds

***Village of Overbrook, Township of Gloucester, County of Carleton, Province of Ontario.....***this was the address used to identify the Police Village of Overbrook before amalgamation by the City of Ottawa in 1950.

There is available an original copy of a publication titled ***The Overbrook Monthly***, dated November, 1946. This publication contains such items as; Local News, Community Activities, Village Political News, and Sports and Gossip. It was published by the then 'Community Association' which held meetings the "Fourth Wednesday of each month".

Public transportation was provided by the Eastview Bus Service. Scheduled runs were made from Hurdman's Bridge to the Plaza at the War Memorial in downtown Ottawa. The bus fare cost 5 cents. In the deep depression days, people would cross the frozen Rideau River in winter, and the Footbridge, over the rapids, in the summer to save a 'nickle' by catching a streetcar into Ottawa at the end of Somerset Street. There was no such thing as a 'transfer' in those days!!

The store called Rene's Sundries, was "Under the Management of Ex-Service Men" and, besides selling "patent medicines" they sold such items as "gifts, cigarettes, tobaccos, cosmetics, and baby supplies. The Morin family, who lived on Prince Albert Street, owned the grocery store called "Morin's" which was

situated on 'Russell Road". There was also a smaller store on Queen Mary Street called "McCrae's Groceteria"and it was owned by the McCrae family. Albert McCrae, a son, would deliver small grocery orders on his bike, in the summer time, and with his dog Pal pulling a sled, in the winter months. The butcher shop was called "Overbrook Meat Market" and was run by the Prest family.

The people of Overbrook also depended on some shops in Eastview when they needed such items as coal, coke, or animal feed. The place to buy lumber and building supplies was called "Green Valley Lumber Co." situated in Eastview.

The Village of Overbrook, located between Eastview and Hurdman's Bridge, was a thriving community way back when, and was a great place to play and grow-up!!

Submitted by:  
Florence Bird Ladds

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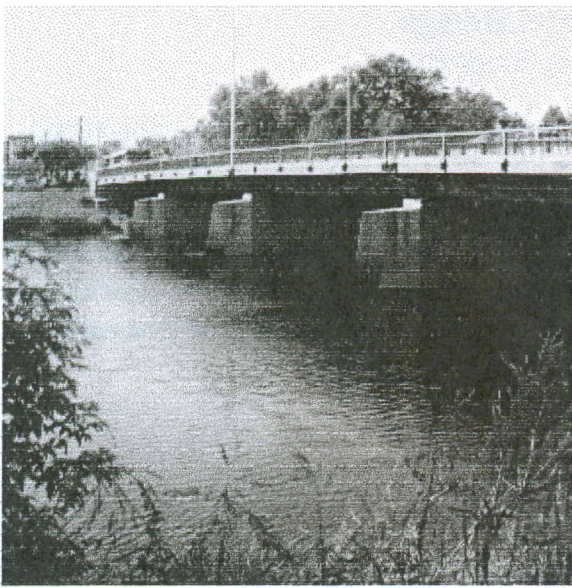
***Gloucester Historical Society wishes to thank Bob Kemp for his continued support in selling Nevada tickets for the Society at his gas station on Bank Street at the corner of the Leitrim Road. Thank you Bob!***

## Billings Bridge by Clive Bloomfield

Originally called the “Farmers Bridge” this bridge provided vital access to Bytown for the settlers at the Village of Billings Bridge and for those living throughout the southern-western areas of Gloucester. It was the first bridge over the Rideau River. Like all of the early bridges over the Rideau River, Billings Bridge was made of wood and was too low to avoid spring flooding, which occurred when the ice melted first in the swifter upstream parts of the river causing ice jams.



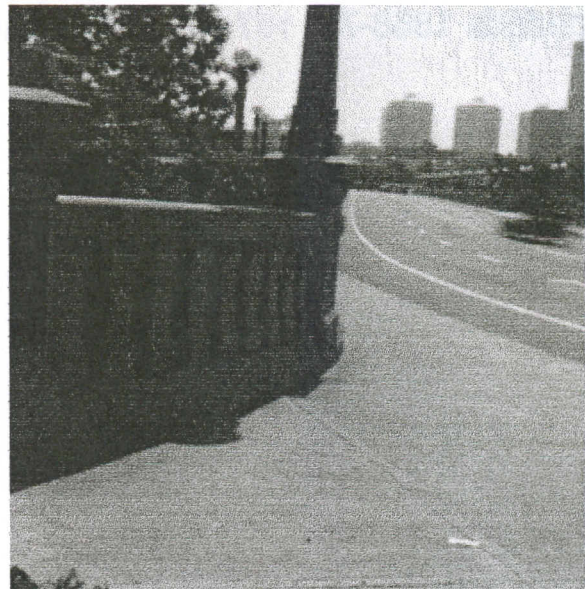


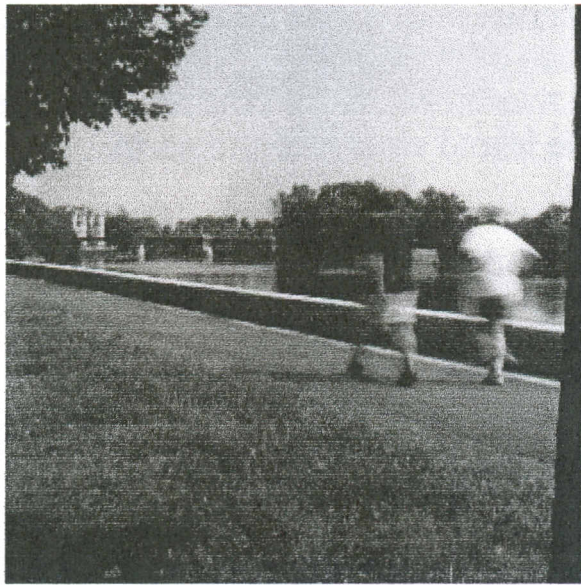


**This bridge has been replaced several times. The site was first settled in 1812 by Braddish Billings. One of his sons, Charles, was the Reeve of Gloucester in 1862. The pictures show Billings Bridge, as it is June 2003.**

## Cummings Bridge by Clive Bloomfield

The pictures above show Cummings Bridge as it is today in June 2003. The original bridge was built by Robert Cummings to connect the two sides of the Montreal Road across the Rideau River via an island in the river at which he collected tolls. The current bridge bypasses the island closely to the north.



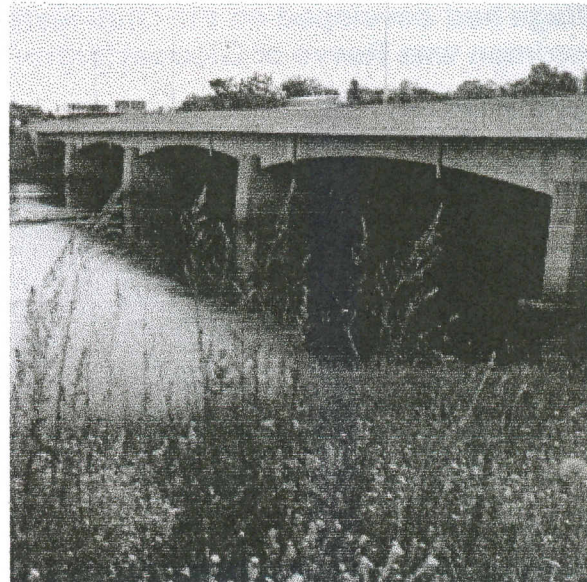


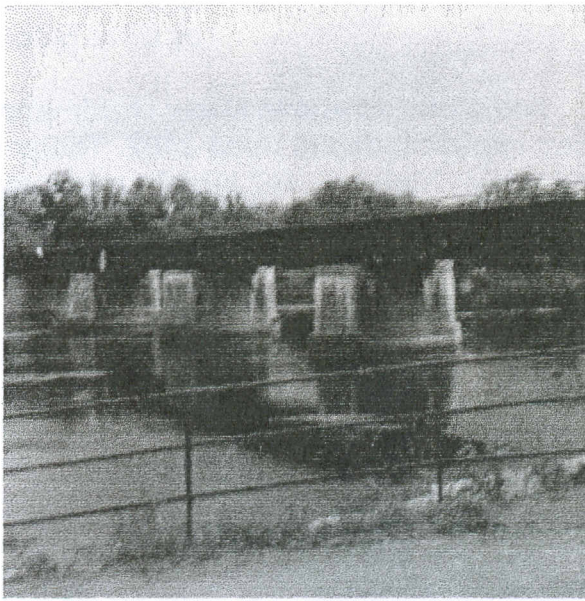
The Gloucester village to the east of the bridge was originally named Janeville in honour of his wife, and was incorporated in 1873. Janeville and lands to the north and east became Eastview when it officially became a town in 1908. Eastview in turn became the City of Vanier in 1969. Robert Cummings was Reeve of Gloucester in the periods 1868-72, 1874-76, 1880 and 1884-87.



# Hurdman's Bridge by Clive Bloomfield

**The pictures above show Hurdmans Bridge and an adjacent bridge as they appear today in June 2003. Today Hurdmans bridge is a part of the Queensway - highway 417 a main roadway through Gloucester and Ottawa.**



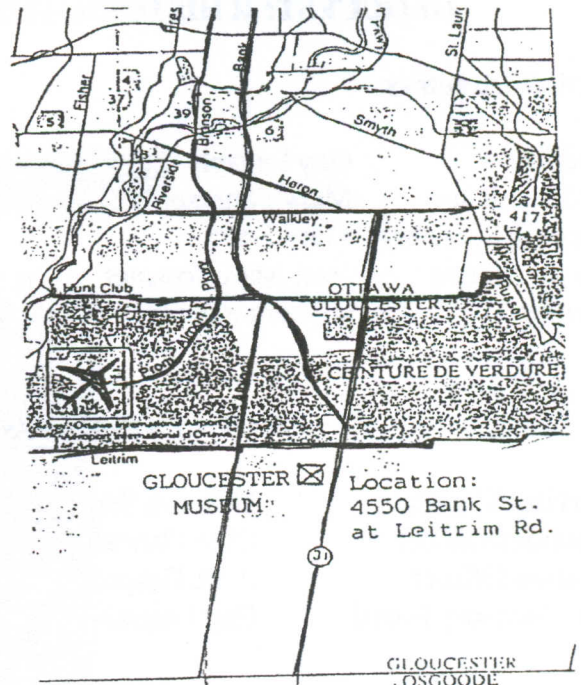


**The adjacent bridge, which was originally a railway bridge and is possibly older than the Highway Bridge, is now used for bicycles and pedestrians only. The original Hurdman's Bridge was the third bridge built over the lower Rideau River. Built in 1867 as a wooden structure, it served the Hurdman lumbering family by connecting their lumber and storage yards on the Ottawa side with the railway in Gloucester, and was also opened for use by the public. By the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a small village had developed on the Gloucester side of the River. William Hurdman was Reeve of Gloucester from 1877 to 1879.**



**BOOKS AVAILABLE FROM THE  
GLOUCESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY:**

- A History of Gloucester Historical Society*  
by Grace Johnson.....\$2.00
- Belden Map of Gloucester, 1879*.....\$5.00
- Billings Bridge: My Village, My Life*  
by Gerard and Bernard Pelot.....\$20.00
- Blackburn-Glen Ogilvie: Centennial History*  
by Anna Elliott.....\$ 2.00
- Bowesville: A Place to Remember*  
by Grace Johnston.....\$15.00
- Carlsbad Springs/Ramsaywille Branch East  
Carleton Women's Institute 1934-1994*..\$ 4.00
- Gloucester Roots*  
by Lois Kemp.....\$20.00
- Memories of the Lockstations*.....\$ 4.00
- Milk/Cream Produce-Distributors in  
Gloucester 1892-1975*  
by Grace Johnson.....\$10.00
- Valley Views*.....\$10.00



*If you have memories of life in Gloucester or stories of schools or families from early days, and would like to share them, please give us a call. Artifacts and photographs of yesteryear are always welcome additions to the Museum.*

**Call us at 822-2076 to talk about it!**

**About the wooden bicycle (see front cover) -**

In 1898 James Blair, a 17-year old who lived in Gloucester on the present site of Ritchie Feed & Seed store off Innes Road, built himself a wooden bicycle which he rode all over the farm and to the Byward Market in Ottawa. This amazing bicycle can be seen in the Gloucester Museum.

**Board of Directors**

President	Guy Legault	Directors:	Denise Amyot
Vice-President	Mary Patterson		Ed Kirk
Recording Secretary	Mary Boyd		Florence Ladds
Correspondence	Jean-Marc Jossinet		Aline Mageau
Treasurer	Graham Ritchie		Jacqueline Rawes
			Joan Scott

**GLOUCESTER MUSEUM & ARCHIVES**

Supervisor/Curator	Deborah Scott
Collections Officer	Olga Pluviati
Education Officer	Anik Despres
Chair, Advisory Board	Guy Legault

**IF YOU HAVE NOT YET RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP, OR IF YOU WISH TO BECOME A NEW MEMBER, PLEASE COMPLETE THE FORM BELOW AND SEND IT IN WITH YOUR CHEQUE. STILL ONLY \$10.00 PER YEAR OR \$40.00 FOR A LIFE MEMBERSHIP!**

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**Membership Form -Gloucester Historical Society/Societe historique de Gloucester**

Membership/Adhesion 2003 - \$10.00 for one year..... \$40.00 for life membership.....

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ PROV \_\_\_\_\_ POSTAL CODE \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: Gloucester Historical Society  
4550B Bank Street,  
Gloucester, Ontario  
K1T 3W6 Tel: 822-2076



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