



# *Historic Gloucester*

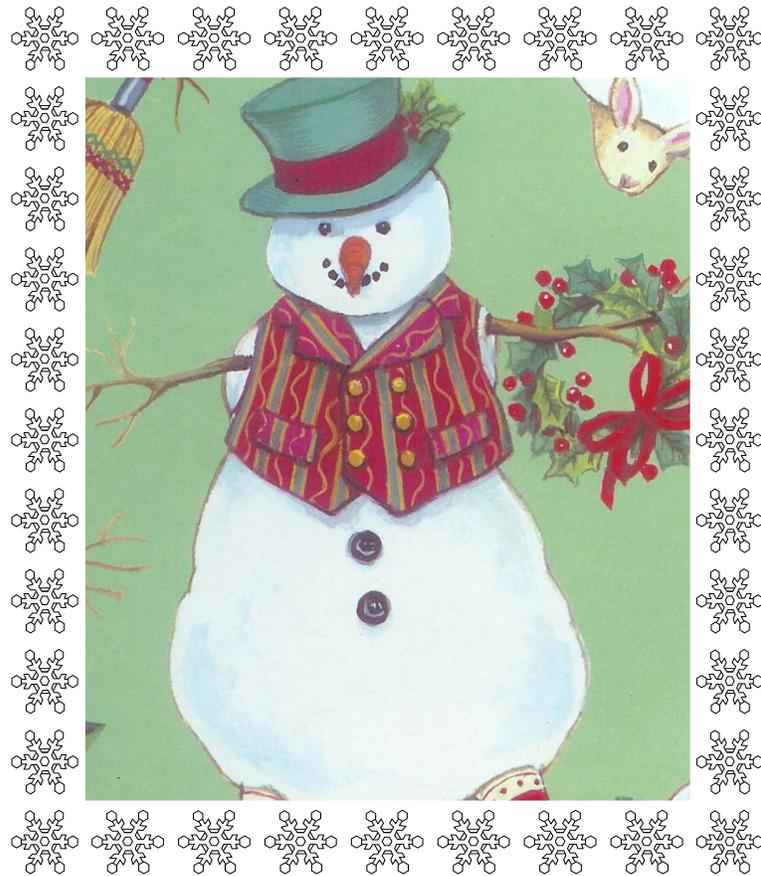
Newsletter of the

**GLOUCESTER HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY**

[Www.gloucesterhistory.com](http://www.gloucesterhistory.com)

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*Merry Christmas 2009*

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THE GLOUCESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
 IS HAPPY TO ANNOUNCE  
 THAT ITS HISTORY ROOM IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC  
 EACH THURSDAY FROM 10:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.  
 BETWEEN MAY 7 AND OCTOBER 29, 2009

LOCATION: 4550B BANK STREET (AT LEITRIM ROAD)

FOR MORE INFORMATON  
 Contact Robert Serré at 613-749-0607 // bob.rosealine@gmail.com

**Cover Photo:**

*A snowman is a frequent sight in Canada during the winter. He is wishing all our readers a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. May 2010 be a great year for all of you!*

**Historic Gloucester** is published by The Gloucester Historical Society. 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.*

### FROM THE PRESIDENT’S DESK

The Gloucester Historical Society has been quite busy. After several years of relative quiet, the Grace Johnston History Room was re-opened in May. As a result, on every Thursday between May 7th and October 29th, this room was open to the public from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., with one or several Board members on hand to provide help with any requests for information and any research project related to Gloucester Township. Our collection includes countless school, church, community and family files as well as various finding aids stored in our computer by Past President Mary Boyd. Aline Mageau and the current president attended regularly, and completed an electronic catalogue of the entire book collection.

Our Society takes pride in having published four books in 2009. The first to appear, under the title **Remembering Carlsbad Springs**, was made public on January 14th. Authored by Mary Boyd and Robert Serré, this book describes the geographical and historical setting of the Springs, and provides personal recollections, along with four photographs, a bibliography and an index of names. The second book was **Pioneer Families of St. Joseph (Orleans)**, which appeared on March 9th, and provided profiles of 53 pioneer families, along with a chapter on the location and history of the village. The third book was the French version of the Orleans book, published on June 17th under the title **Familles pionnières de Saint-Joseph d’Orléans**. Both these books were prepared by Robert Serré, as was the fourth book, entitled **Gloucester Township Ratepayers Listed by Family Name and by Concession/Lot Number for the Years 1855, 1864 and 1872**, made public on September 4th.

Our Society was saddened by the loss of one of its Board members, Ed Kirk, who passed away in October. Ed, a Board member for several years, really enjoyed representing our Society at genealogical fairs like Gene-O-Rama and the BIFHSGO fall event, where he would answer queries and handle book sales. Ed will be fondly remembered.

Robert Serré

**Gloucester Historical Society  
Board of Directors 2009/2010  
Phone/Fax 613-822-2076**

President:	Robert Sérre	Directors:	Bob Kemp
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## The Early History of St. Joseph (Orleans)

by Robert Serré

Most plausibly, this village was named Saint-Joseph d'Orléans in 1860 by the first postmaster, Théodore Besserer, after his birthplace on the island of Orléans east of Quebec City [Rayburn 1997].

The earliest assessment roll which mentions residents in the part of St. Joseph (Orleans) lying in Cumberland Township is dated 1825. It lists Joseph Laflamme for lots 30 and 31 and the east half of lot 32, concession 1, old survey, with a total of 500 acres, none cultivated. In 1826, Laflamme had five of his 500 acres cultivated, and there was a saw mill on his property. As for the part of St. Joseph lying in Gloucester Township, the earliest settler listed in the assessment rolls is François Dupuis, for the year 1833. In 1835, Dupuis owned lot 3 in the first concession of the Ottawa Front, with fifteen of his 200 acres cultivated [LAC].

The first Catholic chapel in Orleans was built of square timber around 1849 on lot 3 in the first concession of the Ottawa Front in Gloucester Township. This land was owned by François Dupuis. The chapel measured 30 feet (about ten metres) in length, and was doubled in size some time before 1857. A second chapel was built in the late 1850s, on the north side of the Montreal road and west of the creek, facing today's Belcourt Boulevard. The first resident priest was Father Alphonse-Marius Chaîne. He arrived at the end of 1860. Around 1871, construction began on a stone church measuring 144 feet by 44 feet. It was located on the north side of the Montreal road and east of the creek. After fourteen years of toil, this first stone church was finished in 1885. The old chapel was eventually transformed into a private home after serving as the parish hall. In 1917, work began on the present Gothic-style church, which stands on the same site as the previous stone building. This



St. Joseph's Catholic Church

second stone church was completed in December of 1920, and its beautiful steeple dominates the surrounding countryside [Legros 1949, Nadon 1974, Émery 1985, Deveney 1988].

In 1859, Father Gustave Ébrard, the last parish priest of the Cumberland Mission to visit St. Joseph, noticed the growing number of people coming to the chapel, and asked the government to establish a post office in the village. Permission was granted, and a post office was opened on 1 July 1860. Théodore Besserer was the first postmaster. This post office, which was located on lot 6 in the first concession, served residents of both Gloucester and Cumberland townships [Émery 1985, Deveney 1988]. Besserer resigned on 29 August 1866. He was

replaced on October 1 of the same year by Hugh McHarry, who served as postmaster until his death, in 1872. On 1 December 1872, Hugh Dupuis became postmaster, and served for more than 25 years, resigning on 26 March 1899. The next postmaster was Léon Pariseau, who assumed his duties on 1 April 1899, and resigned on 22 November of the same year. He was replaced by Joseph Major, from 1900 to 1913, and then Émile Major took over from 1913 to 1929 [ArchiviaNet].

Lot 6 in the first concession of the Ottawa Front, in Gloucester Township, was once owned by two Besserer families. In the 1850s they operated a summer resort called Besserer's Grove. There was a wharf for river boats and barges plying their way between Montreal and the upper Ottawa. Steamers which offered excursion cruises on the Ottawa River would make a stop at this wharf, known as Besserer's Landing. There was also a hotel not far from the wharf, making this a popular spot for many years. Eventually, a syndicate of real estate men bought the site, and the name was changed to Hiawatha Park [Deveney 1988, Walker 1968].

Although little can be said with certainty about the school situation prior to 1885, it would appear that a school was opened in 1860 in a two-story house. Its exact location is not known, but the misses Hotte, Choquette and David served as pioneer teachers. Separate School Number 1 was built in Orleans in 1890, west of the creek, and became known as the Académie Saint-Joseph (St. Joseph's Academy). The Grey Nuns took charge of it. In 1895, an English Separate School was built in Orleans near Green's Creek, following a preparatory meeting held on 13 September 1894 at the home of Michael Kenny, and chaired by Patrick Brady [Émery 1985].

The first Catholic cemetery in the village was located south of the Montreal Road. The present cemetery in Orleans was established on

ten acres of land that were bought by the parish on 23 January 1893. It is located on the north side of the Montreal road, west of the church [Beauregard 1983, Émery 1985].

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*My first job was working in an orange juice factory, but I got canned - I couldn't concentrate.*

*Then I worked in the woods as a lumberjack, but I just couldn't hack it, so they gave me the ax.*

## Some Christmas Traditions and Legends

### Christmas Trees

The Christmas Tree tradition was started in Germany in the late 15th century. At that time a popular theatrical performance, the *Paradise Play*, depicted the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise, and was represented by a fir tree hung with apples. Soon the tree was placed in the homes of Christians who interpreted it as a symbol of the coming Saviour. The apples were replaced with small white wafers representing the Holy Eucharist. Later the wafers were replaced by small pieces of pastry cut into shapes of stars, angels, hearts, flowers and bells.

Pennsylvania Germans claim to have initiated the Christmas tree custom in America. The first Christmas tree is recorded under the date December 20, 1821, in the diary of a Matthew Zahm of Lancaster, Pa. The first known exhibition of a Christmas tree was held in York, Pa, in 1830. Early trees were decorated with fruits, nuts, popcorn, toys and candles. Today more than 80 percent of American families buy and decorate a tree at Christmas.

### Christmas Wishes

In 1822, the Superintendent of Mails in Washington, DC, complained that homemade Christmas cards sent via the mail were clogging the postal system. Concerned that he needed to hire sixteen extra mail carriers, the Superintendent petitioned Congress to limit the exchange of cards by mail, pleading, "I don't know what we'll do if it keeps on!"

The first commercially printed Christmas cards originated in London in 1843. Sir Henry Cole, a wealthy British businessman and patron of the arts, commissioned London artist John Calcott Horsley to create a card he could proudly send to friends and professional

acquaintances to wish them a "merry Christmas." Cole sent 1,000 Christmas cards in 1843. The idea of using commercially printed cards caught on. Currently Americans exchange nearly 3 billion Christmas cards annually, making Christmas the largest card-sending holiday in the United States.

### Christmas Plants

Americans may hang mistletoe in the doorway for the purpose of stealing a kiss, but early Britons who started this custom believed the mistletoe heightened fertility in humans. Britons called mistletoe "all heal," believing the plant had magical powers which could cure disease, neutralize poisons, and bring good luck to couples who sealed their love with a kiss beneath the mistletoe.

The presence of poinsettias in churches and homes at Christmas time is traced back to a village in Mexico. According to the legend, it was a custom for villagers to place gifts before the crèche in the church on Christmas Eve. A small boy, too poor to give anything, knelt to pray in the snow outside. On the spot where he knelt, the legend says, a beautiful plant with scarlet leaves grew immediately. The boy took it into the church and presented it as his gift to the Christ Child. Mexicans call the plant *Flor de la Noche Buena* (Flower of the Holy Night), and it is thought to resemble the Star of Bethlehem. The poinsettia plant is named after Dr. Joel Roberts Poinsett, the first United States minister to Mexico and an accomplished amateur botanist. He discovered the beautiful plant there in 1828 and brought it to the United States where it was named in his honour.

### Gifts and Presents

St. Nicholas, the godly bishop of Myra in Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey) is the source of the Santa Clause tradition. He was widely known as a generous Christian who was especially kind to children. After his death a St.

Nicholas legend evolved that he visited children on Christmas eve and left gifts. During the Reformation of the 16th century St. Nicholas' popularity was diminished and some countries banished the custom completely. As a result a more secular version emerged, *Father Christmas* in England and *Papa Noel* in France. When Dutch settlers came to America they brought St. Nicholas ('Sinter Klaas' in Dutch) with them to this country. This 'Sinter Klaas' became completely secularized into the person we now know as Santa Claus. He was no longer a bishop, but still came during the night leaving gifts for children. The red and white colours associated with Santa Claus' uniform are derived from the colours of a bishop's vestments.

According to legend, the practice of *hanging up stockings* originated with St. Nicholas. It is believed that St. Nicholas learned about a man who was hopelessly in debt. His creditors were about to sell him and his daughters into slavery. Moved with compassion, Nicholas put together a bag of gold from his own resources. Wishing to give anonymously, Nicholas went to the man's home and threw the bag of gold through the man's window. The bag of gold landed in one of the daughter's stockings which had been hung up to dry.

### Special Foods

Christmas is also a festive time of eating, and the season brings it's own distinctive foods. In Italy there is *panettone*, a light, fluffy cake traditionally made with raisins, candied citron or with a rich cream filling. The cake, which may be tall or short, is covered with chocolate or flavoured with various liquors. There are many legends which seek to explain the origin of *panettone*. One of the most charming attributes the creation of this cake to Sister Ughetta, a young nun living in a very poor convent. In order to enhance Christmas celebrations for her community, she took ordinary bread dough turning it into a delightful dessert by adding sugar, butter, candied fruit and raisins.

Among the British, a popular dessert served only in December is the *Christmas Pudding*. Although early versions of Christmas pudding included an odd assortment of ingredients such as chopped poultry, pheasant, partridge, rabbit along with sugar, apples, raisins, candied oranges and lemons, by 1595 this Christmas cake became *plum pudding*. It was made up of dried fruit, eggs, breadcrumbs and various spirits. In 1664 the Puritans banned it as a "lewd custom," unfit for the people of God. However, in 1714, King George I re-established plus pudding as part of the royal Christmas meal. His recipe eliminated meat in favour of more sweets. People began to sprinkle plus pudding with brandy, setting it aflame when serving it to their guests. Traditional plus pudding is a labour of love requiring time and intensive marinating which often takes eight hours to cook.

Among Germans, *gingerbread* is the dessert of choice at Christmas. In some places it is a soft, delicately spiced cake; in other places it is a crisp, flat cookie; while yet at other locations it is a warm, thick, dark square of 'bread' sometimes served with a pitcher of lemon sauce or whipped cream. Sometimes it is light, other times it is dark, but always sweet and spicy. In Germany, the gingerbread is usually cut into shapes of men, women, stars or animals and colourfully decorated and dusted with white sugar.

One popular treat for those with a sweet tooth is the *candy cane*. The original candy cane was born in the 1670s when the choirmaster of Cologne Cathedral in Cologne, Germany, bent sticks of white sugar candy into canes to represent a shepherd's staff. Thus, the candy cane today is meant to symbolize the shepherds in the fields near Bethlehem who first learned about the birth of Jesus. Hearing the angels announce his birth, these humble shepherds went to the stable paying homage to the newly born child.

Author Unknown

**Publications Available From the Gloucester Historical Society:**For further details regarding publications visit our website: [www.gloucesterhistory.com](http://www.gloucesterhistory.com)

(Postage, if mailed, in brackets)

<i>Blackburn - Glen Ogilvie - Centennial History 1887-1967</i>	<b>5.00</b>	(3.00)
Compiled and Edited by Mrs. Anna Elliott		
<i>Bowesville: A Place to Remember</i>		<b>20.00</b>
(12.00)		
By Grace Johnston		
<i>Famillies pionnieres des Carrieres de Gloucester dans l'Est de l'Ontario</i>	<b>10.00</b>	(3.00)
By Robert Serré		
<i>Famillies pionnieres de Cyrville (Canton de Gloucester)</i>	<b>10.00</b>	(3.00)
By Robert Serré		
<i>Gloucester Memories</i>		<b>5.00</b>
(3.00)		
By Mel Rowat		
<i>Gloucester Roots</i>	<b>20.00</b>	(5.00)
Compiled and edited by Lois Kemp		
<i>Gloucester Township Ratepayers Listed by Family Name and</i>	<b>10.00</b>	
(3.00) <i>Concession/Lot Number for the Years 1855, 1864 and 1872</i>		
Compiled by Robert Sérre		
<i>Memories of the Lock Stations</i>		<b>5.00</b>
(3.00)		
Compiled and Edited by Grace Johnston		
<i>Milk/Cream Producers—Distributors in</i>		<b>15.00</b>
(5.00)		
<i>Gloucester 1892-1975</i>		
Compiled and edited by Grace Johnston		
<i>Pioneer Families of Cyrville (Gloucester Township)</i>	<b>10.00</b>	(3.00)
By Robert Serré		
<i>Pioneer Families of Glen Ogilvie (Gloucester Township)</i>	<b>10.00</b>	(3.00)
By Robert Serré		
<i>Pioneer Families of the Gloucester Quarries</i>		<b>10.00</b>

**Publications (continued):**

<i>Pioneer Families of Janeville (Gloucester Township)</i> By Robert Serré	<b>10.00</b> (3.00)
<i>Pioneer Families of New Edinburgh, Volume One: 1830-1870</i> (3.00) By Robert Serré	<b>10.00</b>
<i>Pioneer Families of Rockcliffe Annex and Manor Park in Gloucester Township</i> (3.00) By Robert Serré	<b>10.00</b>
<i>Remembering Carlsbad Springs (Gloucester Township)</i> (3.00) By Mary Boyd and Robert Sérre	<b>10.00</b>
<i>The Story of the First English Church of Gloucester Township</i>  The history of St. James Anglican Church, Leitrim, 1853-2003 By Glenn Clark	<b>50.00</b> (20.00)
<i>1879 Belden Map of Gloucester Township</i> (5.00) The map shows who owned each lot in 1879 as well as the location of roads, churches, schools	<b>10.00</b>

**A Tribute to Edward F. Kirk**

It is with deep regret and sadness that the Board of the Gloucester Historical Society learned of the passing of fellow Director, Edward (Ed) Kirk. Our deepest sympathy goes out to his wife, Gertrude, and their family.

A member of the Historical Society for many years, Ed sat on the Board of the Society during the 1970s and from 2002-2009 where he was greatly appreciated for his advice and support.

Ed loved to talk about the history of Gloucester and was enthusiastic about and



determined that, Gloucester's history be preserved. He attended many events as a representative of the GHS. He was a member of numerous fraternal organizations at the local and provincial level, as well as an active participant in his community and church.

His passing is a loss to the heritage community and to all his friends at the Gloucester Historical Society. Ed looked upon life as a challenge - he will be missed.

If you are trying to IDENTIFY the OWNERS of LOTS in the Township of GLOUCESTER, our MOST RECENT publication can HELP!

Title Gloucester Township Ratepayers Listed by Family Name and by Concession/Lot Number for the Years 1855, 1864 and 1872

Based on Collector's rolls (1855, 1864, 1872)

Contains Alphabetical listings by family name for each year Listings by concession and lot number for the: OTTAWA FRONT (OF) JUNCTION GORE (JG) RIDEAU FRONT (RF)

Also School Section Numbers are included for the years 1864 and 1872

Details 55 pages, bibliography, price \$10.00 (mail orders please add \$3.00); please make cheques payable to GLOUCESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY; please send orders to R. Serré, GHS Pubs, 1057 Riviera Dr., Ottawa ON K1K 0N7.

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.

Membership Form—Gloucester Historical Society/Société historique de Gloucester

Membership/Adhésion 2008 - \$15.00 for one year..... \$100.00 for life membership.....

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

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