



Historic Gloucester

Newsletter of the

GLOUCESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

www.gloucesterhistory.com

VOLUME 14, NO. 3

Fall 2013



Braddish Billings

In commemoration of the 200th Anniversary of the arrival in 1812 of
Braddish Billings

In 1812, Braddish Billings became the first permanent settler in Gloucester Township, when he settled east of Bank Street on the south shore of the Rideau River. Braddish cleared and farmed the land, built a sawmill and provided food and building materials for the construction of the Rideau Canal. He operated a ferry to carry his produce to Bytown and canvassed for the construction of the bridge that now bears his name.

His lands were the township's administrative centre for over 100 years. Billings shaped the community by building a school, churches and the township hall, while acting as clerk, assessor, path-master, collector, pound-keeper, warden, magistrate, Justice of the Peace and District Councillor. He helped build Bytown's first jail and courthouse and assisted in bringing Bytown its first railway. His descendants were influential as philanthropists, politicians, scientists and writers. Completed in 1829, "Park Hill" was Braddish's grand home and is located on nearby Cabot Street. It is now known as the Billings Estate National Historic Site.

Unveiled in 2013 and sponsored by the

Gloucester Historical Society
 Association of Friends of the Billings Estate Museum
 Gloucester Lions Club
 Billings Bridge Shopping Centre



En commémoration du 200^e anniversaire de l'arrivée, en 1812, de
(1783 – 1864)

En 1812, Braddish Billings, premier colon permanent du canton de Gloucester, s'installe à l'est de la rue Bank, sur la rive sud de la rivière Rideau. Il défriche et cultive la terre, construit une scierie, et fournit de la nourriture et des matériaux pour la construction du canal Rideau. Il exploite un traversier pour transporter ses produits à Bytown et milite en faveur de la construction du pont qui porte aujourd'hui son nom.

Pendant plus d'un siècle, ses terres constituent le centre administratif du canton. Braddish Billings façonne la collectivité en construisant une école, des églises et l'hôtel de ville, tout en agissant comme greffier, évaluateur, responsable de la voirie, percepteur, garde-fourrière, préfet, magistrat, juge de paix et conseiller de district. Il participe à la construction de la première prison et du premier palais de justice de Bytown, et contribue à l'arrivée du premier chemin de fer. Ses descendants ont été d'influents philanthropes, politiciens, scientifiques et auteurs. Achevée en 1829 et située à proximité, sur la rue Cabot, « Park Hill », la troisième maison de Braddish Billings, est aujourd'hui le Lieu historique national du domaine Billings.

Dévoilée en 2013 et commanditée par :

La Société historique de Gloucester
 L'association des amis du Musée du domaine Billings
 Le Club Lions de Gloucester
 Le Centre commercial Billings Bridge

Braddish Billings 200th Anniversary

Contents

From the President’s Desk..... Glenn Clark 3

What You May Not Know About Mooney’s Bay and Hog’s Back..... Glenn Clark 4

Instruction in Gloucester Township Schools for 1900..... 6

Unveiling of Billings Bridge Plaque..... Joan Scott 7

A New Plaque Remembers Former Reeve John Innes..... 8

Fall Talk by Claire Trépanier..... 9

Membership Form..... 10

THE GLOUCESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY
 IS HAPPY TO ANNOUNCE
 THAT ITS HISTORY ROOM WILL BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
 EACH THURSDAY FROM 10:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.
 BETWEEN MAY 1 AND OCTOBER 31, 2013,
 OR BY APPOINTMENT

LOCATION: 4550B BANK STREET (AT LEITRIM ROAD)

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

Cover Photo: The Gloucester Historical Society, with the generous financial help of Corporate and individual donars, erected a plaque in honour of Braddish Billings who settled in the Township of Gloucester 200 years ago. He was Gloucester’s first settler. (see article on p 7)

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.

PRESIDENT’S REPORT

By Glenn Clark

I am pleased to announce our fall program. First, we received a surprise telephone call from the City of Ottawa advising us that there will be another plaque unveiling, this time honouring the memory of former Reeve John Innes who served Gloucester Township from 1931 until his death on August 24, 1939. The unveiling will take place on Saturday, October 19, 2013 at 12 noon along the entrance walkway at the Gloucester South Seniors’ Centre, 4550 Bank Street. Our neighbours, St. James Anglican Church Leitrim will be hosting a reception and a bake sale in the seniors’ centre immediately afterwards. Please bring a few dollars and take home a few treats. This all follows our regular board meeting at 9:30 a.m. which is also open to the public. Our office is in the lower level of the same building accessed next to the fire hall off of Leitrim Road.

On Wednesday, October 23, 2013 at 7:00 p.m., we will be sharing the photographs that we have been taking in various parts of Gloucester over the summer. Of course, historical photographs are always welcome. Please consider taking a few more photos before that date. This will be at the Grace Johnston History Room (our office) in the lower level of 4550 Bank Street, with parking next to the fire hall off of Leitrim Road.

Finally, we will be having a fall speaker this year. Claire Trépanier will be speaking on the topic of her book “A Woman of Valour, The Biography of Marie-Louise Bouchard Labelle”. This is a true Gloucester story, which took place in Rideau Park, Alta Vista. It tells the story of a woman who entered a romantic relationship with a priest, 33 years her senior. They had three children but later he was pressured to return to the priesthood and he abandoned his family. Come and hear this fascinating story. This presentation will take place on Sunday, November 10, 2013 at 2:00 p.m. at the Gloucester South Seniors’ Centre, 4550 Bank Street.

Remember that The Grace Johnston History Room is now supplied with Internet to assist researchers when they come to visit. From May to October this room is open every Thursday and by appointment at other times.

Also remember to visit our website at: www.gloucesterhistory.com. There is a wealth of information available at this website and we invite your comments regarding it.

**Board of Directors
2013-2014**

President:	Glenn Clark	Directors:	Bob Kemp (2015)
Past President:	Mary Boyd (2014)		Jean-Marc Jossinet (2014)
Webmaster:	Glenn Clark (2015)		Aline Mageau (2015)
Treasurer:	Laurel Sherrer (2014)		Russell Johnston (2014)
Secretary	Robert Serré (2015)		(Vice-President)
Newsletter Editor:	Joan Scott (2014)		
Membership	Shirley McCooeye (2015)		

* Indicates date when this person is up for re-election to Board of Directors.

What You May Not Know About Mooney's Bay and Hog's Back

(A continuation of the article from the last edition of *Historical Gloucester*)

By Glenn Clark

The building of the locks and permanent dam at Hog's Back began in 1827 and was contracted to Walter Fenlon. A temporary coffer dam was to be built by Philemon Wright and Sons. Originally the permanent dam was to be built with an almost vertical stone wall facing downstream with a gradual slope consisting of clay puddle topped with earth facing upstream. The partially completed dam was washed away in February 1828 and again on April 1, 1828. In the fall of 1828, Walter Fenlon was released from the contract, and a new contract was signed with Philemon Wright and Sons. With the assistance of the Royal Sappers and Miners, work proceeded on a new dam during the winter of 1828-1829 when the soil was frozen. This proved to be a serious error. On April 2, 1829, the dam sprung a leak and while repairs were being made the following day, the dam gave way. Colonel By was on the dam at the time but because the soil was still frozen a bridge of frozen soil permitted him and other workers to escape. In order to control costs, a 350 metre railway was built in May 1829 to move rock from the nearby quarry. Many believe this was the first railway built in Canada. The dam design was also changed and the near vertical stone dam was eliminated and replaced with an earth dam back by a huge pile of rock. You can see this today. Some of the rock was from the 1829 collapsed dam. The weir at the east end of the dam was originally built of timber cribwork and designed as an overflow dam. The dam reached 45 feet and was completed in the spring of 1830. It raised the river level 41 feet and flooded the Three Island Rapids

providing navigation all the way south to Black Rapids. Despite the success of the final design, the dam was threatened on a numerous occasions by flood waters and ice and repairs and improvements were needed many times [Rideau Canal]. The dam also included a timber slide that was removed many years ago [Francis p. 14].

Of further interest, the current Rideau River channel and waterfalls are actually manmade or partially manmade as part of the dam and weir design. The original river channel passed through the area to the west of the rock formation, mid-way between the current channel and the canal. It is also believed that the rock formation that gave the area its name has long ago disappeared as a result of the dam construction and the excavation of the new channel through the falls.

The lockmasters house was first built in 1838 as a defensible stone building on the Nepean side of the canal and was replaced with current frame building in 1907. In 1886, a swing bridge was built over the locks and a fixed bridge over the weir. This allowed cross river traffic for the first time [Rideau Canal]. The current bridges opened in 1977.

Hog's Back was a popular destination for swimmers, campers, cottagers and cyclists, known as wheelmen at the turn of the 20th century. For generations, diving into Devil's Hole just below the falls was a 'rite of passage' for many young men. It was also dangerous. For years, police tried to stop the diving but only when new fencing and stiff fines were implemented did the practice finally end in the 1990s.

Hog's Back was not always surrounded by parks. For decades, cottages existed right next to the falls and some were eventually winterized. There were two streets on the Gloucester side known as the

Lower Road and the Upper Fallsview Road. About five houses and cottages existed on the lower road, while ten to twelve existed on the upper road. These roads now appear as paved walking trails but the location of houses can still be discerned by flat spots next to the trails. As part of the Gréber Plan, the area was designated for parkland and by July 1, 1952 all the houses and cottages had to be removed or demolished [Bernard]. By 1955, Hog's Back Park was a reality and the current pavilion was built. The pavilion opened on May 24, 1955 [*Ottawa Citizen*, May 21, 1955 p.9]. There had been other snack bars near the falls for many years previously. Vincent Massey Park to the north was developed over the following few years as an extension of Hog's Back Park and named to honour of our first Canadian born Governor General.

The Rideau Canoe Club on the west shore of Mooney's Bay near the canal entrance was established in 1902 and they set up an elaborate Victorian clubhouse at the foot of Fifth Avenue in the Glebe along the canal. It became known as the Rideau Aquatic Club as early as 1914 [*Montreal Gazette* July 3, 1914 p.12] and this continued through the early 1940s. The club house was severely damaged by ice in April 1943 and demolished starting on April 14, 1944 [*Ottawa Citizen*, April 14, 1944 p.12]. Some blamed the Department of Transport for emptying the canal too early in the spring of 1943 leaving excessive amounts of ice hanging from the structure which led to irreparable damage [*Ottawa Citizen*, April 21, 1943 p.8]. This ended the existence of the Rideau Aquatic Club. In 1946, former members established a new Rideau Canoe Club that operated temporarily at Lansdowne Park. A suitable location was then found at Mooney's Bay in 1948, which has become its new permanent home [*Ottawa Citizen*, July 15, 1950

p.28]. The current clubhouse was completed in 1980 [Rideau Canoe Club].

The end of our walk featured a short diversion to the east through the woods to the old Hog's Back Quarry, previously known as the Brulé Quarry operated by J.D Brulé and Sons Ltd. prior to its liquidation in 1938 [Ontario] . Totally concealed from the surrounding area, the size of the quarry is quite remarkable. In addition to its initial purpose to provide stone for the Hog's Back dam, it later was used to make crushed stone to macadamize the nearby Bowesville Road as well as other nearby roads [*Ottawa Citizen*, August 7, 1920 p.10]. There is no evidence of the railway built in 1829 but there is evidence of road accesses to the quarry in more recent years as well as littered blasted rock just to the north of the main quarry. The site is dangerous with vertical rock faces. For this reason, the quarry has been surrounded with fences except the floor of the quarry is accessible from the west side. During the 1940s, the quarry had a pond in it and the land owner stocked it with trout [Bernard]. It later became a popular swimming hole for local young people. For safety reasons, the pond was drained in the 1960s or 1970s and it appears that the quarry has been partially filled in.

Bibliography

- Ball, Lynda Russell, Interview, May 1, 2013
- Belden, H & Co., Historical Atlas of Carleton County, Ontario Illustrated, 1879 p.40
- Bayview Public School History <http://www.gloucesterhistory.com/bayview.html>
- Bernard, Margaret interview, January 2013
- Francis, Lloyd Ottawa Boy, An Autobiography, General Store Publishing House, Burnstown, Ontario, 2000

Jamieson, Pamela e-mails 2006 and 2013

Johnston, Grace, Bowesville: A Place to Remember, Gloucester Historical Society, 1988

Kemp, Maureen interview 2013

Ontario Ministry of Northern Development and Mines <http://www.geologyontario.mndmf.gov.on.ca/gosportal/gos?cmmand=mndmsearchdetails:mdi&uuid=MDI31G05NE00014>

Pirate Adventures <http://www.pirateadventures.ca/>

Rideau Canal History <http://www.rideau-info.com/canal/history/locks/h11-12-hogsback.html>

Rideau Canoe Club <http://www.rideaucanoecub.ca/home/about-us>

St. Elias http://steliasc.orthodoxws.com/history_cathedral.html

St. Patrick's Home Website <http://www.stpats.ca/about/history.htm>

Walker, Harry and Olive, Carleton Saga, The Runge Press Limited, Ottawa, Ontario, 1968, Mooney's Bay p. 118

Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terry_Fox
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_H._Nelms
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hog's_Back_Falls

*The Sunday school teacher asked "Johnny, do you think Noah did a lot of fishing when he was on the Ark?"
 No, replied Johnny. "How could he, with just two worms."*

Instruction in Gloucester Township Schools for 1900

The following is a list of instructors in Gloucester Township Schools in 1900. Published Ottawa Citizen, January 25, 1900 Page 3

Section 2 (Leitrim) Jessie E. McDonald, Leitrim
 Section 3 (Ellwood) Lizzie Argue, Billings' Bridge
 Section 4 (Johnston's Corners) George Yost, Johnston's Corners
 Section 5 (Bowesville) Tomas E. Gilmore, Bowesville
 Section 6 (Billings' Bridge) John C. Ferguson, Billings' Bridge
 Section 7 (Bayview) Rose M. O'Toole, Billings' Bridge
 Section 9 (Quarries) Jennie G. Wallace, Robillard
 Section 10 (Hurdman's Bridge) Isabella Parkinson, Hurdman's Bridge
 Section 11 (Manotick) Laura Frost, Manotick
 Section 12 (Limebank) Mabel Hanna, Limebank
 Section 13 (Ramsayville) W.C. McCartney, Ramsay's Corners
 Section 16 (Hawthorne) W. Annie Mills, Hawthorne
 Section 18 (Carlsbad Springs) Loney, Eastman's Springs
 Section 19 (Glen Ogilvie) W. Hopkins, Cummings' Bridge
 Section 20 (Piperville) Lucy Bowen, Piperville
 Section 21 (Blackburn) Mary Stuart, Blackburn
 Section 25 (Janeville) M. MacFarlane and Miss C. Slinn, Cummings' Bridge
 Section 27 (Borthwick Ridge) Sarah Harrison, Hawthorne

Unveiling of Billings Bridge Plaque

By Joan Scott

On a beautiful, sunny day in August, 2013, a group of people interested in the history of the former Gloucester Township, gathered in Linda Thom Park for the unveiling of a monument to Braddish Billings.

Most people are aware that Braddish Billings was the first settler of Gloucester when he arrived in 1813 with his seventeen year old bride, Lamira Dow. Dr. Billings, the father of Braddish, came to Brockville in 1792. Lamira's family was from Cambridge, New York, and settled in Merrickville, Ontario.

The year before the couple took up residence, Braddish had come to the area and chosen his property. He then built a log cabin about 100 feet from the present Billings Bridge and sixty feet from the shoreline. The young couple worked hard, he, with a partner, William Marr, as a jobber for Philemon Wright and as a farmer; she as a housewife and mother as well as a field hand when required! Their fortitude and bravery were demonstrated when, on returning from a trip to visit Lamira's family in Merrickville, their canoe caught in the rocky rapids at Hog's Back but they managed to make it through safely, to the great joy of Philemon Wright who had been at the portage.

Over the years Braddish Billings was involved in many pursuits – lumbering, farming, cheesemaking, ferrying, politics, bridge building and railroads. His forethought was instrumental in providing access to the Bytown Market for selling farm produce.

Over the years Braddish Billings built three homes, each larger than the last. The third home still exists and is known as The

Billings Estate Home. Today it is a National Historic Site.

The plaque that was unveiled in Linda Thom Park at the north end of the Billings Bridge, is a beautiful metal plate, some 36 inches by 24 inches. A brief biographical sketch of Braddish is contained thereon. The lettering is bilingual and is embossed in bronze on a background of blue. It is a very striking tribute to this great pioneer who has done so much for the area.

At the ceremony, Gloucester Historical Society President Glenn Clark told about the coming of the Billings family to Ottawa and their many accomplishments. His Wor-



ship Mayor Jim Watson also spoke of the contributions made by the Billings family which impacted on the future City of Ottawa. Also in attendance were former Gloucester Mayors Claudette Cain and Harry Allen, as well as many Directors and members of the Gloucester Historical Society and members of the Gloucester Lions Club.

The plaque was obtained through the hard work of Glenn Clark and those who assisted him in getting this successfully through the maze of red tape. Financial assistance was also provided by the Gloucester

Historical Society, the Association of Friends of the Billings Estate Museum, the Gloucester Lions Club, Billings Bridge Shopping Centre, and private donors. A well deserved vote of appreciation is given to all those who helped with this project.



Some of the crowd at the unveiling listening to the speakers Mayor Jim Watson and GHS President Glenn Clark

We hope you will drop by the park and see the plaque – it is near the sidewalk on the west side of Bank Street very near the Riverdale Avenue intersection. If you have never visited the Billings Museum on Cabot Street you may want to do that as well.

Sources:

Unveiling Ceremony, August 21, 2013

Walker, Harry and Olive, *Carleton Saga*, The Runge Press Limited, Ottawa, Ontario, 1968, Gloucester, p 155-159

If lawyers are disbarred and clergymen defrocked, then doesn't it follow that electricians can be delighted, musicians denoted, cowboys deranged, models deposed, tree surgeons debarked, and dry cleaners depressed?

A New Plaque Remembers Former Reeve John Innes

Unveiling Date: Saturday, October 19, 2013 at 12 Noon

Gloucester South Seniors' Centre
4550 Bank Street, Gloucester

A Reception and Bake Sale sponsored by St. James Church Leitrim will follow.

John Innes was born on January 30, 1877 in Gloucester, son of Alexander and Margaret Innes, originally of Aberdeen, Scotland. He married Margaret Little Moxley in 1915 and had a successful 65 acre dairy and mixed farm near Cyrville on the original alignment of today's Innes Road. He became Deputy Reeve in 1927 and was elected Reeve in 1931. He served in that position until his death on August 24, 1939, following a stroke suffered on July 27th of the same year.

Mr. Innes was a very active Liberal in the Russell County riding, which included Gloucester Township and was a member of Hawthorne United Church. He had served very ably as Chairman of the Finance Committee of Carleton County Council for the last five years of his life. He was also a member of the Ontario Good Roads Association and the Ottawa Valley Dairy Producers' Association and other agricultural societies.

His wife passed away in 1933 and they had three children, Eric Winston, John Lloyd and Margaret May.

This plaque replaces a cairn originally located near the intersection of Walkley Road and Russell Road and installed by the Gloucester Horticultural Society in 1940. The cairn was to include a sundial plaque but it is unclear whether the sundial was ever installed or whether it subsequently disappeared. The new plaque has been sponsored by the City of Ottawa.

Innes Road is named in memory of John Innes.



The Gloucester Historical Society Presents

A talk by Claire Trépanier on her book titled

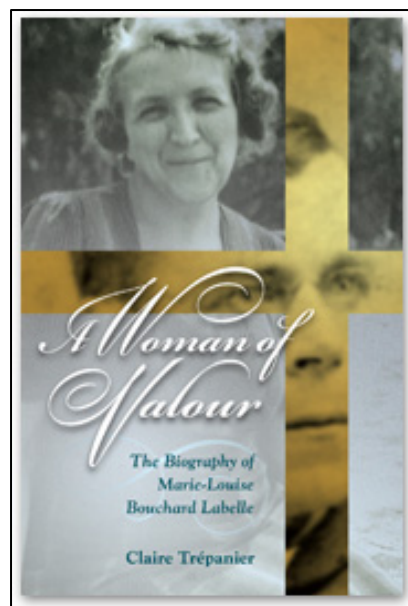
"A Woman of Valour

The Biography of Marie-Louise Bouchard Labelle"

A true Gloucester Story which partially took place in Rideau Park, Alta Vista

of a woman who enters a romantic relationship with a priest, 33 years her senior. They have 3 children but after being pressured to return to the priesthood, he abandons his family.

Come and hear the full story.



Sunday, November 10, 2013 2:00 p.m.
Gloucester South Senior's Centre
4550 Bank Street, Gloucester

Free parking and admission

Bus Route 144

Members Wanted:

The Gloucester Historical Society is always looking for new members. Regardless of age, anyone who is interested in the history of Gloucester, as a Township, City, or part of the City of Ottawa, can benefit from membership in the Society. There is a well-stocked history room at our Leitrim Road office. Every Thursday, from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm from early May to the end of October, there are knowledgeable people there to help you in all aspects of research about your family, friends or neighbours in Gloucester.

Your membership entitles you to receive the *Historic Gloucester* newsletter four times a year so that you can keep up with what is going on with the GHS and read interesting articles of times and places of long ago. For more information on the Gloucester Historical Society be sure to check out our wonderful website at www.gloucesterhistory.com.

Family Histories Wanted:

If you have information on any family who resided in Gloucester, we would be happy to add this to our records. There may be others who would like to share this information but have been unable to find it. And, you may find that the family of someone you know was once a neighbour of your ancestors!

Publications Available

The Gloucester Historical Society has a large selection of publications on people, places and happenings in the old Gloucester. As the listing is too large to show here, see the complete list of books available on our website at: www.gloucesterhistory.com.

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 year runs from April 1 to March 31st of the following year)

**** NOTE: NEW MEMBERSHIP FEES EFFECTIVE APRIL 2012 ****

Membership Form—Gloucester Historical Society/Société historique de Gloucester

Membership/Adhésion - \$20.00 for one year..... \$150.00 for life membership.....

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ PROV _____ POSTAL CODE _____

Mailing Address: Gloucester Historical Society
4550B Bank Street,
Gloucester, Ontario
K1T 3W6