



# *Historic Gloucester*

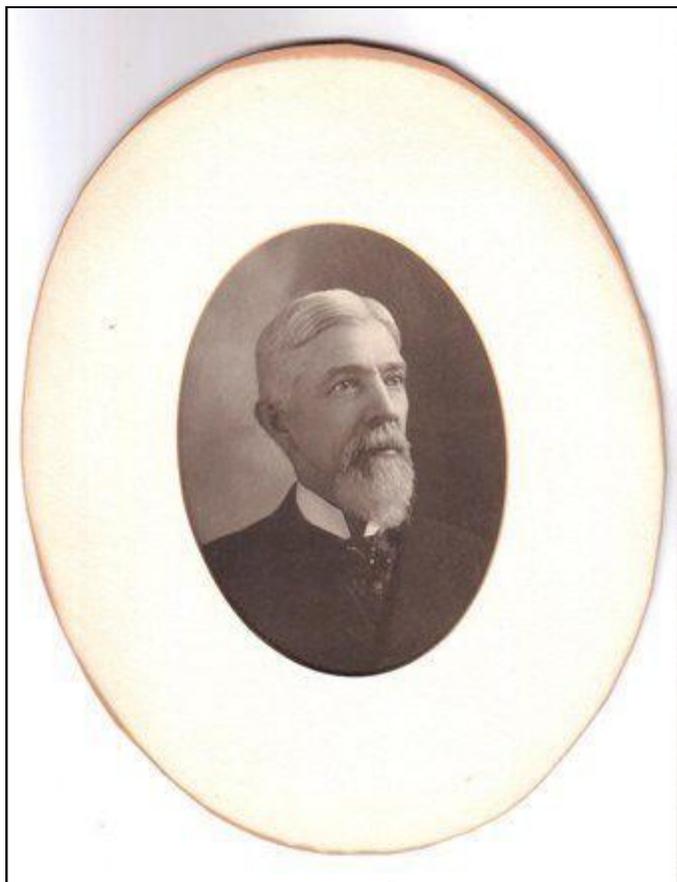
Newsletter of the

**GLOUCESTER HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY**

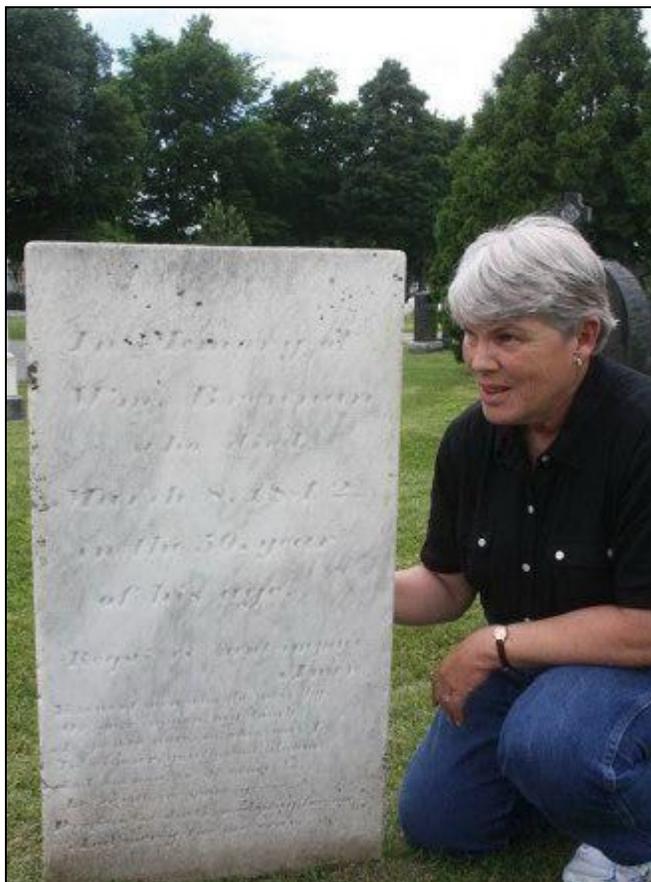
[www.gloucesterhistory.com](http://www.gloucesterhistory.com)

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Fall 2014



James Frederic Brennan, son of William  
Frederic Brennan



Linda Gallagher with  
Tombstone of William Frederic Brennan

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THE GLOUCESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
 WOULD LIKE TO ANNOUNCE  
 THAT ITS HISTORY ROOM WILL NOT BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC  
 ON A REGULAR BASIS BUT IS ALWAYS  
 AVAILABLE BY APPOINTMENT

LOCATION: 4550B BANK STREET (AT LEITRIM ROAD)

FOR MORE INFORMATON  
 Contact  
 Mary Boyd at 613-521-2082 or [boydmary172@gmail.com](mailto:boydmary172@gmail.com)

**Cover Photo:**  
*A number of years ago Linda Gallagher decided to try to trace her family tree. After a long, interesting and sometimes surprising, search, she discovered a number of relatives and, most importantly, where her great great grandfather had come from and where he ended up—the Township of Gloucester.*  
*For more information see the story beginning on page 4..*

**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

It was a very busy summer at the Gloucester Historical Society. We had many inquiries and visitors to the Grace Johnston History Room concerning several subjects and families. We learn more about our community with each request for information.

Perhaps the most interesting inquiry came from Michigan and resulted in a first time visit to Ottawa and an article that appears in this newsletter. The article is written by Linda Gallagher, who is a descendant of Gloucester's very first township clerk, William Brennan, who served from 1832 until his death in 1842. His tombstone survives to this day in Notre Dame Cemetery but he was likely buried in Barrack's Hill Cemetery. This latter cemetery has been in the news lately when many bodies were discovered under Queen Street as the city is in the process of building its very first subway. Maybe William Brennan is one of them. I hope you enjoy the article.

On a sadder note, I regret to announce the resignation of Robert Serré as Secretary, and Past President and from the Board of Directors. Although it was difficult to accept his resignation, he has left a great legacy to the society through the 15 books he has written or compiled and the three additional French translations that he completed. These books will be invaluable resources to future researchers and he deserves a round of applause from all those who are interested in Gloucester history. Robert is not retiring but moving to a new area of service to our community as he embarks on new challenges as a volunteer care giver at the nursing home attached to the Montfort Hospital. I wish him the best of luck and extend a big thank you from the society.

### Board of Directors 2014-2015

President:	Glenn Clark	Directors:	Bob Kemp (2015)*
Vice-President:	Russell Johnston (2014)		Jean-Marc Jossinet (2017)
Past President:	Mary Boyd (2017)		Aline Mageau (2015)
Webmaster:	Glenn Clark (2015)		John Wiebe (2015)
Treasurer:	Laurel Sherrer (2017)		
Secretary and Newsletter Editor:	Joan Scott (2017)		
Membership:	Shirley McCooye (2015)		

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

*'Be sure to check out our website at  
[www.gloucesterhistory.com](http://www.gloucesterhistory.com)  
for a complete list of publications available from the GHS,  
as well as various links and resource material.*

## **A Bucket List Wish Comes True**

By Linda Gallagher

In 1976, while staring at the newborn face of my first child, I wondered who the people were that had a part in creating his strands of blonde hair, his dark eyes, and his little cherub face. And a quest began that resulted only recently in a bucket list wish come true.

I knew I was Irish from my mother's family, but didn't realize that a large part of my DNA on my father's side of the family was also from the Emerald Isle. I had always been told that most of my father's lineage was Scottish, with a stray Dutchman thrown in here and there, and that, although the original Brennan's WERE Irish, they were Protestant Orangemen from Ulster-not those "papists" that my mother had the "misfortune" of being related to. As many of us find when doing family genealogies, nothing could have been further from the truth. But it took almost 40 years to know that.

Finding out about my father's family was relatively difficult, as I soon found out that my father was less than interested in knowing anything about his forebears. "Who cares," he said. "They're gone and it doesn't matter." But to me, it did.

By hook and by crook, I managed to elicit enough information from my father about his two half-sisters that he hadn't seen or communicated with in more than 50 years to obtain an address that led to a letter to a woman in the state of Washington that I now think of fondly as "Aunt Sallie".

Sallie Brennan Mincks responded almost immediately with a short history of her family as she knew it, stories of her early childhood on Grand Boulevard in the 1920's in what is now the slums of downtown Detroit, Michigan, and an address to a cousin, Ruth Brennan Tawney, in Annapolis, Maryland, who had done some work with the family tree.

Cousin Ruth also responded with remarkable speed, and it wasn't long until I knew that my great great grandfather, William Frederic Brennan, "a Protestant Presbyterian", had emigrated from points unknown in "northern Ireland" to Ottawa, the national capital of Canada, where he had worked on "some canal" before becoming a town clerk and tavern owner, as well as the owner of 300 acres of land which was later sold "to make way for construction of the Parliament" while raising a family until his untimely death of unknown causes.

Ruth had visited Ottawa in 1965 after hiring a genealogist who wasn't able to find any further information at all on the man who was her great grandfather, and thinking there was no one left in the family who would be interested in family artifacts, she donated a silver pocket watch during that trip to the Ottawa Historical Society that had once belonged to William Frederic Brennan.

Remaining with the family, now in the possession of another cousin last known to be located in Texas, would be the original sheepskin land grant from King George III William had acquired when he purchased his 300 acres of land from William Fraser, a United Empire Loyalist. William was buried, she said, with the bodies of both his wife and his mother-in-law, all in a single grave, with a simple headstone. She had no idea why.

Over the course of the next 40 years, that's all I knew about William Frederic Brennan, as eliciting records from Canada was not, and still isn't, easy for an American citizen. I was, however, able to trace his wife Miriam Snow Richardson's family back to their emigration from England in the 1600's, with the assistance of a dusty old tome in Detroit's Burton Historical Collection called the Richardson Memorial, and records in Salt Lake City's Mormon Family History Library, which I personally visited in 1996 when that newborn of mine grew up, joined the United States Air Force, and was stationed at Hill AFB in Ogden, Utah.

The advent of the Internet was revolutionary for family history buffs everywhere, and I was no exception. By 2002 I was eagerly digging through family records and websites online, looking for anything I could find.

In 2003, I found the website "Bytown or Bust", where I learned about the construction of the Rideau Canal, and began a short correspondence with a man by the name of Allan Lewis, who pointed me to a lovely lady and Bytown genealogist by the name of Ellen Paul.

In very short order, Ellen told me that my great great grandfather was the 260th listing on the McCabe's List, compiled by Mr. Bruce Elliott, which she had a copy of. When he signed that list, which told me he could read and write English at the time, William was living with three other adults, which I knew from a note in the Richardson Memorial was his wife and her parents, and said that he had a brother, Thomas, who lived in Curbally, County Sligo, Ireland, who might be interested in emigrating to work on the canal. Shortly after that, Ellen also provided me with William's burial record, which not only gave me his date of death, (March 8, 1842), but said that he was 53 at the time of his passing, and here I was dumbfounded. He was buried in a Roman Catholic cemetery. So much for being an Orangeman from Ulster.

But finding out anything more about my elusive relative, much less untangling the mysteries recently revealed, was not to be for another 11 years, although it was just two weeks before I had a number of photographs of the tiny village of Curbally as it looked in 2003, courtesy of my youngest child, who was attending Kingston University in London as a university exchange student, and a quick weekend trip to the land of his ancestors.

Last year, that same son told my husband and I that, as a thank you for the years of financial assistance with that very expensive college

education, he and his wife wanted to treat us in 2015 with a trip to the British Isles and of course, Ireland.

With added fervor, I renewed my family history work last winter, and found myself in contact once again with Ellen Paul, who made another amazing discovery for me in the online files of the Drouin Collection. William's wife, Miriam, the daughter and grand daughter of Baptist ministers, who passed away just two years after her husband, leaving five young children behind, had converted to Catholicism just two days before her death. And every one of those five children, plus a child that died as a baby, had been baptized in the Roman Catholic faith. So much for the long held belief by everyone in my family that William was a Protestant Presbyterian. Particularly when Ellen pointed out that his death record had named him a "church warden of the new church" in Bytown, probably for Ottawa's Notre Dame Cathedral, which in 1842 was in the first stages of construction.

With just a year to prepare for my Irish adventure, I made plans to make a small detour on our next trek to my son's home in Vermont to Ottawa, Ontario, which I had never previously visited and to realize that bucket list wish I had always had, of someday visiting Ottawa. I had to see for myself where William lived and died before seeing where he came from.

A Mother's Day gift of an international membership to Ancestry.com from my oldest son soon led to more discoveries about William. He and my great great grandmother Miriam, who I soon found was born in Compton, Quebec, in 1804, had been married in the Presbytery St. Gabriel, a Presbyterian church in Montreal, on March 4, 1828. An apparently devoted Catholic married in a Protestant church? Apparently so. More importantly, that marriage record listed William as a "mason". I now know that not only was my ancestor a skilled tradesman,



Mysteries remain about my ancestor William Frederic Brennan. We still don't know why he is buried with the remains of his wife and mother in law in the same plot, nor if he is really buried there at all. We do not know for sure who raised his five young children for several years after the deaths of both William and Miriam. And we still don't know what happened to that silver pocket watch donated in 1965.

Miriam Richardson Brennan's father, David Richardson, a widower since 1835, left the Ottawa area sometime after the death of his daughter to live with his oldest son Samuel Richardson in Compton, Quebec, where the Richardson's had settled in 1801 after emigrating from New Hampshire. He died there in 1849.

There are no records after William's death in 1842 for either Thomas Brennan or his wife Mary, but I believe that, at least for a few years, William's brother raised the five orphans.

By 1855, all five of the children had immigrated to the United States, most at a very young age. My great grandfather, James Frederic, William's oldest son and heir, born in 1832, was in Mt. Clemens by that year, where he worked on the incoming railroad before marrying in 1860 and opening a livery stable. One of his sisters, Mary Ann, who with her twin sister Elizabeth Ann was born in 1830, lived with her brother in Mt. Clemens for a few years before marrying and moving to Wisconsin, as did younger sister Matilda.

However, we have recently discovered that Elizabeth Ann, called Eliza, remained in Ottawa during her early years, where she married John Richardson McVicar, son of the explorer Robert McVicar, of Toronto, and began a family. The 1861 Ontario Census shows Eliza and her family living on her father's land, but by 1866 the family had headed west, settling in Minnesota, where John McVicar died. Eliza died in the state of Washington at the home of her daughter

Records show that after Eliza's departure from Ottawa, my great grandfather sold his father's Gloucester Township land, signing off on it in 1871.

The youngest son, William David, left Ottawa for Malone, New York, at the age of 14, where he also worked on the incoming railroad before befriending the Smith and Millar families, who we believe assisted him in attending Franklin Academy, then Middlebury College in Vermont. He joined the U.S. Army in 1861 reaching the rank of major during the Civil War after several campaigns, including the battle of Chapin's Farm, where he lost a leg. Returning home to Malone, he passed the bar and began a private practice as an attorney before successfully running for the NY State Senate, which he served for several terms before committing suicide after reportedly becoming involved in a political scandal in 1881, leaving a young wife and two young children.

The Malone, New York, branch of the Grand Army of the Republic was dedicated in his honor and a large monument in the middle of town also marks his service. He is buried in Malone's Morningside Cemetery along with his wife and several members of her family.

The Brennan's have now spread all over with the winds of time, from California to Washington to Illinois and Michigan as well as the East Coast. But our roots, and that pocket watch we're still hoping to find some day, are in Canada, in a beautiful city once known as Bytown.

Editor: William Frederic Brennan was Gloucester's first township clerk serving from 1832 until his death in 1842. His property was located at Lot 1 Concession 2 Rideau Front, just south of Mooney's Bay. In his will, he noted several other properties including where Patrick Mooney's tavern was located at the corner of Walkley Road and Riverside Drive and for

which Mooney's Bay was named, as well as a lot in the Byward Market, and other properties in Nepean, Osgoode and Gloucester Townships including in the Irish community of South Gloucester adjacent to the site of Our Lady of the Visitation Roman Catholic Church.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE GLOUCESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

by Robert Serré

On June 29, 1962, a meeting was held at the town hall in Leitrim. The main focus was to find a place to store the growing number of artifacts collected since the early 1950s. This first Society did not survive, but a new society, called the Carleton West-Russell Historical Society, was incorporated in 1964. Eventually, people began to plan local historical groups, and the CWRHS was disbanded, but its Gloucester members formed a new Society on May 13, 1978, with Grace Johnston as president. The first annual meeting was held on February 16, 1981, and a motion to seek affiliation with the Ontario Historical Society, and to become legally incorporated, was carried.

Bob Kemp was elected to the board of directors at the annual meeting held on 4 April 1982. In April 1983, Mary Boyd and Shirley McCooeye were members of the Society, and Ruth Lafortune was elected to the board of directors. In 1984, Mary Patterson and Jacqueline Rawes were elected to the board of directors and Jim McPherson became president. The following year, Mary Patterson was elected president. During the 1980s, the artifacts of the society were stored at the former Johnston Corners School. The first curator of the museum was Brenda Dowling.

Following the relocation of City Hall, the Gloucester Museum opened on February 20, 1989 and the old council chambers at 4550 Bank Street became the display area, while the basement was made available for the storage of

artifacts, for an archival space and for the Grace Johnston History Room.

In 1989, the society was renamed **Gloucester Historical Society and Museum**, with Lois Kemp as president. Lynne Terroux welcomed as curator in January 1989, and served until 1995. Graham Ritchie attended a board meeting in October 1989 as the Society's new treasurer. Lillian Kitchen was elected president in 1993, and was replaced by Guy Legault in 1995. Deborah Scott took over as curator in September 1995, and in 1996 Lillian Kitchen was elected president; because of illness in her family, Guy Legault completed her term. In 1997 the president was Clive Broomfield, and Deborah Scott was replaced as curator by Janice Beath. Guy Legault was reelected president in 1998.

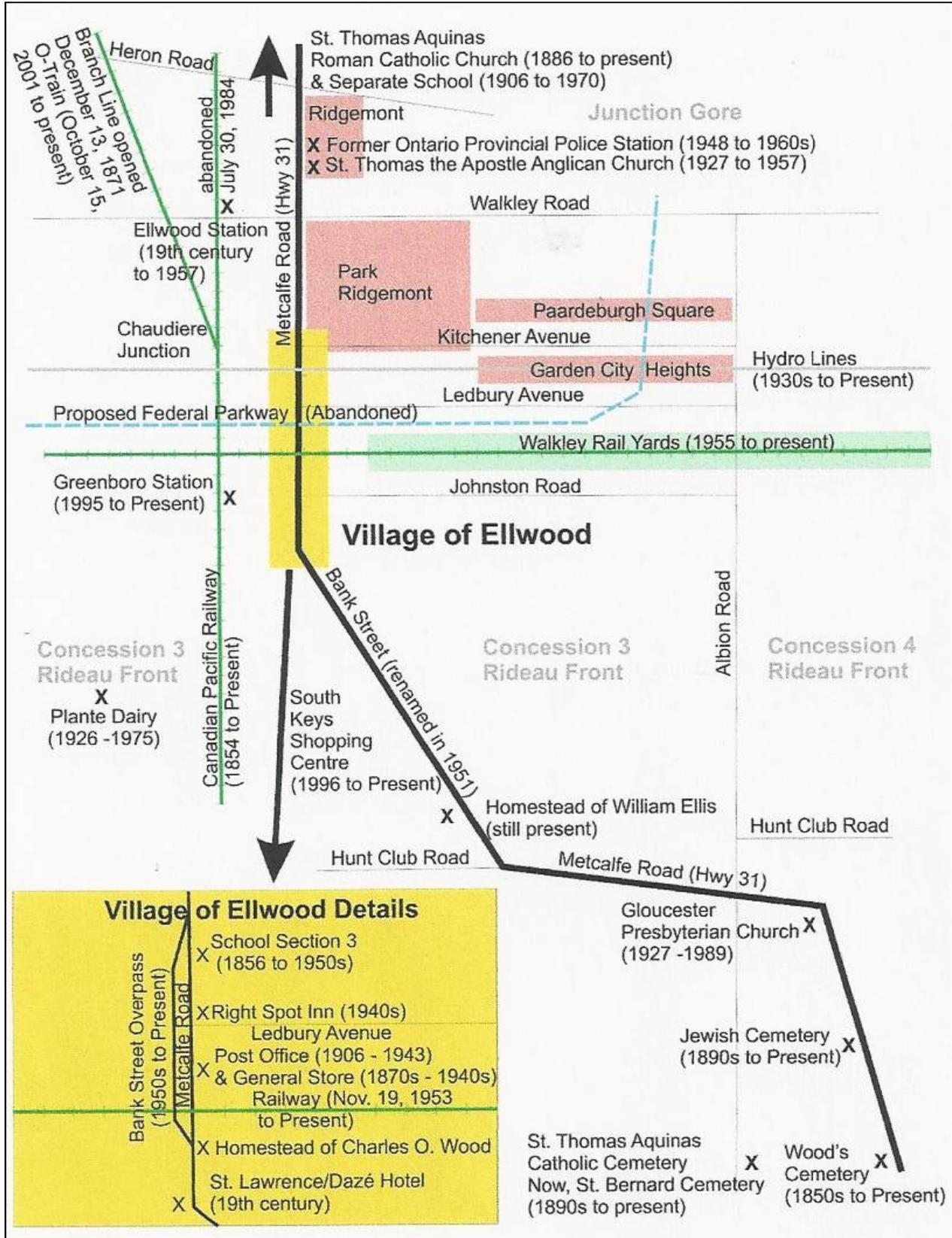
In the first issue of *Historic Gloucester*, dated June 2000 and edited by Joan Scott, Guy Legault reported that the Gloucester Historical Society no longer owned the Museum, which was renamed Gloucester Museum and Archives and taken over by the City of Gloucester, with Jennifer Busato as director/curator. As a result of the amalgamation which was enacted on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2001, the new City of Ottawa assumed ownership of the Gloucester Museum and Archives, and its supervisor/curator was Jennifer Vollmar (nee Busato). Guy Legault stayed on as president until 2005, and Mary Boyd was elected president. In 2006, Glenn Clark became the Society's webmaster, and in 2009 Robert Serré was elected president. He served until 2013, when Glenn Clark was elected president.

#### *Errata*

*In our last issue, in the article "The History of Orleans Talk by Louis Patry" on page 5, the park on Bilberry Drive was inadvertently credited with being named after Dr. Emile Major. In fact, the park was named in honour of Luc Major.*

*On page 4 of the same article, the number of francophone families in Orleans in 1880 was given as 1312. This should have read 131.*

Below is a map of where the former **Village of Ellwood** was located. Unfortunately lack of space prevented this map from being included with the article in our Spring 2014 issue.



**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 during the summer months, 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!

**Volunteers Needed:**

The GHS is always looking for volunteers to assist others with research, to assist at society functions or to help the Board of Directors in many other ways.

**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 31.)

**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 \_\_\_\_\_

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