



Historic Gloucester

Newsletter of the

**GLOUCESTER
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

www.gloucesterhistory.com

Vol. 27 No.2

Summer 2026



Farm holds memories for expanding Morozuk clan

Descendants of Stephen and Maria Morozuk, who immigrated to Canada from Ukraine early in the last century, gather at the family's former homestead on Bank Street in South Gloucester in April. The story of how the abandoned farm is being rejuvenated is on Page 8.



The Gloucester Historical Society acknowledges financial assistance of the City of Ottawa.

President's Message	Glenn Clark ...2
Tales of the Barrett Bison Robe	Robert Barrett ...4
The Morozuk Family Farm Reborn	Laurel Sherrer ...8

President's report

By Glenn Clark

After a quiet and very wet summer, I will give a number of updates on what is happening with the Gloucester Historical Society.

Ottawa's 200th Anniversary

First, I hope some of you were able to attend the recent 200th anniversary celebrations for the founding of the City of Ottawa. September 26, 1826 is a date to remember.

If you have the opportunity, you should read the story titled "The Untold Story of Bytown's Birth" by Randy Boswell, which appeared in the Ottawa Citizen on September 26, 2026. I had no idea that such detail was available on the specific events that led to the formal founding of Bytown. This story even contains a detail about Lewis Williams, a person of interest in another history project that I have been working on. His house is one of the oldest still standing and is located in Old Ottawa South.

Our Former Building (4550 Bank Street)

With a bit of nostalgia, I was able to enter the building on September 26th as the last museum artifacts were being removed. They were being relocated to a building on Albion Road North. I was told that utilities were to be turned off on October 1st with demolition to follow in the near future.

Mary Boyd, Past GHS President

It is with sadness that I report the passing of Mary Boyd on June 11, 2026 at the May Court

Hospice in Ottawa. She is buried with her parents, Barclay Boyd and Melba Cameron, at St. George's Hawthorne Cemetery on Russell Road.

Mary was born on May 27, 1942. She was from the well-known Carlsbad Springs family that ran the Boyd Hotel on Russell Road for many years. Her grandfather, Thomas, and Uncle Russell were the proprietors.

Mary's father worked for Singer Manufacturing Company, the same company that manufactured Singer sewing machines. Mary spent her early years with her family living in the village of Duhamel, Quebec, north of Papineauville where the Singer Company had a large tract of land.

Eventually, the family returned to Carlsbad Springs where Mary became a very active member of Bethany United Church until its closing in 2018. Mary also volunteered with the Gloucester Historical Society for many years and was President when I joined the society in 2005, a position she retained until 2009.

In 2010, Mary received the Helen Keller Fellowship Award from the Gloucester Lions Club and as mentioned in the Spring 2026 edition of Historic Gloucester, she was given the Grace Johnston History Award on January 21st for her lengthy service to this Society.

Mary's contribution to the GHS included assembling extensive lists of museum artifacts, photographs, and archives in the society computer and the knowledge that she shared in preparing our publication titled "Remembering Carlsbad Springs". Her memories of Carlsbad



Mary Boyd, past president of the Gloucester Historical Society, passed away in June. She will be missed for her extensive knowledge of local history and her passion for sharing that knowledge.

Springs and her knowledge of our holdings will be impossible to replace.

Mary was also involved in obtaining a provincial historic plaque at the former Boyd Hotel site on Russell Road and also agreed to be interviewed on her memories of that same hotel. The video interview can be found on our website and at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8R3EVmz8pE>.

Fall Presentation

I am pleased to announce that the society will be giving a free public fall presentation on

Sunday, November 8, 2026 at 2 p.m. at the Fred Barrett Arena, 3280 Leitrim Road. A flyer with additional details is included in this newsletter. There will be two presentations.

The first will honour Remembrance Day when I will tell the story of a Gloucester native who joined the Number 2 Construction Battalion in World War I. This is particularly notable because this was Canada's only "all-Black" battalion during the first war. Our soldier's name was William Robinson.

Our main presentation will be given by John Barrett, who will share his memories of being an NHL hockey player. I have heard him speak on this subject previously and he is quite passionate about hockey both during his era and today. Please join us and bring your hockey-loving friends and family along to this open event.

This Newsletter

Two original stories are included in the following pages. The first explains the history of a bison blanket owned by the Barrett family and used during the winter when travelling by sleigh before automobiles became reliable transport.

This blanket has been in the family for generations and remains in remarkably good condition. I am sure it will make an appearance at our November 8th public event.

The second tells the story of a recent family reunion of the Morozuk family, formerly of South Gloucester, and the history of their farm. Their former farm, now known as Findlay Creek Farmstead, includes historic log buildings, and has been open to the public this summer on Saturdays and Sundays between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. at 5420 Bank Street. Admission is \$5 and free for those 17 and under. <https://findlaycreekfarmstead.com/>.

Barrett bison sleigh robe tells tale of the wild west

By Robert Barrett

On September 13th, 2025, a bison sleigh robe was returned home to the Barrett family farm at Leitrim, Ottawa, Ontario, after a 45-year round-trip back to its prairie origins. This robe is in better condition than many exhibited in the museums of western Canada, and it is a reminder of the history, not only of the Barrett family, but of a turbulent era in the once wild territory that became Canada's prairie provinces.

My name is Robert Barrett, and my father, Harold Wilson Barrett (1920-2005), was born on the Barrett farm. In 1972 at the age of 23, I headed west to Alberta where I have since lived all my adult life. In about 1980, my father's eldest brother, John Gamble Barrett (1902-1992), bequeathed to me a bison sleigh robe that had belonged to his father, my grandfather, Frederick William Barrett (1869-1943). Grandfather's initials, FWB, are stitched into the felt backing of the sleigh robe.

This bison sleigh robe triggers nostalgia within our family – a reminder of the six-kilometre sleighride from the Leitrim farm to the church at Johnston Corners. We can imagine our ancestors as children – cuddling, wrestling and giggling under the warmth of the robe, as the sleighbells jingled and the snow fell.

The provenance of the Barrett family bison sleigh robe will ever remain a mystery of the 19th century bison trade. This much we know. The Barrett family bison robe is not a sacred artifact of Indigenous culture. Rather it was manufactured explicitly for purposes of trade. The bison trade ended with the near extinction of this

magnificent species when the bison population collapsed in the 1880s. In 1880, my grandfather was only 11 years old, so he could only have acquired the robe in one of two ways. He either inherited it from my great-grandfather, George William Barrett (1833-1910), who immigrated with his parents to Canada from Ireland when George was six years of age; or else my grandfather bought the robe second-hand. We can only speculate about the source and history of the Barrett bison sleigh robe.

In 1755, Anthony Henday became the first European known to explore the Canadian prairies, then known to Europeans as "Rupert's Land" (i.e., the watershed of Hudson's Bay, loosely governed by the Hudson's Bay Company). Traffic jams on the prairies were subsequently reported by European explorers, missionaries, hunters and trappers, who found their travels interrupted by vast herds of migrating plains bison. It often took several days for a single herd to cross a trail and finally yield the right-of-way to humans.

For millennia, the very lives of the Indigenous peoples of the plains had depended on the bison as their primary source of food, clothing, shelter and tools. Their livelihood and civilization revolved around the bison: migration patterns, technology, spiritual life and culture.

The near extinction of the plains bison by the 1880s was among the greatest man-made ecological disasters of history. The loss of the bison, coupled with epidemic waves of European diseases, doomed the Indigenous civilizations.

How did this disaster happen?

*The near
extinction of the
plains bison by the
1880s was among
the greatest man-
made ecological
disasters of
history.*



The storied Barrett family bison robe features the initials of Frederick William Barrett (1869-1943) stitched into the felt backing.

European explorers and traders had long been in the habit of trading with indigenous subsistence hunters for bison meat products like pemmican; and bison robes were even accepted as a form of currency. By the early 19th century, trade in buffalo robes began to overtake the profitability of the fur trade, both for the Hudson's Bay Company and for the Indigenous peoples. Enormous labour, most of it performed by women, was required to produce each of the robes for sale: first, skinning the bison, then sequentially stretching the hide on a wooden frame, pounding off the flesh, curing the hide with a "brain mixture", smoking, soaking, rinsing, drying and finally "working" the hide to restore its flexibility. All this work earned the Métis of the Red River and Pembina areas (present-day Manitoba and

North Dakota) an average of five dollars per finished robe, the equivalent of about \$175 in 2025.

A regional market for bison robes was beginning to develop, enabled largely by the availability of horses and firearms to the Indigenous peoples of the plains; however, it was impractical to transport the bulky, heavy robes over thousands of kilometres to distant markets, either via York boat north through Hudson's Bay or east through the Great Lakes via arduous canoe and portage routes. The onset of the industrial revolution changed everything, driving ever-increasing demand for bison hides and also enabling bulk transportation to markets from the great plains. The new, steam-powered factories created demand for hides to make belting leather;



George Barrett tells the tale of his family's bison sleigh robe to fellow historical society board members.

and the advent of steamboats, and ultimately railroads, eliminated the transportation bottleneck. These technological developments unleashed the slaughter of plains bison on an industrial scale. Commercial buffalo hunting became an industry that largely replaced subsistence farming and trapping as the mainstay of the Métis. By the 1820s, the Red River Métis began organizing themselves into “buffalo hunting” brigades, using their Red River carts to transport the spoils of the hunt. Entire communities organized around the annual summer and winter bison hunts to achieve industrial efficiency.

Starting in the 1830s, steamboats plied the rivers to transport bison products in bulk, including

bones for fertilizer, leather and of course, robes. For example, the Red River Métis were able to transport heavy and bulky hides south across a porous or non-existent border to access Mississippi River steamboats. By 1859, Fort Benton (now Great Falls, Montana) had become the northwestern steamboat terminus on the Missouri River, and began funnelling bison products from the northern plains, including present day Alberta and Saskatchewan. There was no longer any safe haven for the plains bison.

The robe trade in the Missouri/Saskatchewan region fluctuated between tens of thousands and a couple hundred thousand robes per year throughout the mid 19th century when traders

could easily and profitably move products in bulk to St. Paul, St. Louis, Chicago, and Montreal. We'll never know exactly how the Barrett family bison sleigh robe found its way to the Ottawa Valley from the great plains because we don't know where and when that particular bison was harvested.

One Métis hunting brigade from the Red River, that had comprised 150 carts in 1822, was able to expand to over 1,200 carts and 1,630 people by 1840. Credit to the Métis that they processed the slain bison consistent with their Indigenous values to avoid unnecessary waste of the non-commercial bounty of their hunts.

The environmental conservation ethics of the Métis were, however, the exception. Once accessible transportation routes became available, opportunistic, non-Indigenous outfitters flocked to the plains in pursuit of profit. They often took the hides or just the choice meats (e.g., "buffalo tongues") and left the carcasses to rot. Once railroads began to criss-cross the plains, rail passengers entertained themselves by using the massive herds of bison for target practice. The plains became littered with bison skeletons.

In 1882, the North-West Mounted Police established their headquarters at "Pile of Bones" (Regina), the site of an enormous stack of bison bones which had been gathered from the surrounding prairies for eventual processing into fertilizer.

The bison also fell victim to war between the Sioux and the United States. The Sioux had taken up arms in the wake of American incursions into the Black Hills in breach of treaty commitments. That war included the famous 1876 Battle of the Little Bighorn (a.k.a., "Custer's Last Stand"). The American generals, frustrated by their inability to locate their Sioux adversaries on the plains, mandated the systematic eradication of the bison to starve out the Sioux. This measure contributed to the final collapse of the bison population in the 1880s, and the resulting end of the bison trade.

The Barrett bison robe is not only a family heirloom, but also a reminder of a turbulent period of pre-Canadian history, when First Nations, the Hudson's Bay Company, the Métis, colonial Canada and the United States all jostled for the power to govern some or all of the prairies north of the 49th parallel "Medicine Line". It was a lawless land, which changed frequently, rapidly and irrevocably through the ravages of strange diseases, the clash of civilizations, the forced and voluntary migrations of peoples, the vagaries of an international market economy and the inexorable impacts of the nascent industrial revolution.

For further reading:

- Ambrose, Stephen E., *Crazy Horse and Custer*, Random House, 1996
- Donovan, James, *A Terrible Glory: Custer and the Little Bighorn*, Back Bay Books / Little, Brown & Company, 2008
- Teillet, Jean, *The Northwest Is Our Mother: The Story of Louis Riel's People, the Métis Nation*, Harper Collins, 2019
- Touchie, Rodger D., *Bear Child: The Life and Times of Jerry Potts*, Heritage House, 2005
- Weeks, Mary, *The Last Buffalo Hunter*, T. Nelson & Sons, NY, 1939

Museums and interpretive Centres:

- Blackfoot Crossing, Cluny, Alberta
- Glenbow Museum, Calgary, Alberta
- Head Smashed In Buffalo Jump UNESCO World Heritage Site, Piikani Reserve, Alberta
- Wanuskewin, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Historic South Gloucester farm reborn



Some of the Morozuk farm buildings today, including the log house where the family once lived.

By Laurel Sherrer

The Bank Street homestead of the Morozuk family was the scene in April of a large family gathering, as several dozen descendants returned to their Gloucester roots to visit the once-abandoned farm, which is now being restored.

Joining the group was 94-year-old Michael Morozuk (Junior), who was born on the farm at 5420 Bank Street in 1932. He was one of 11 children raised there, the offspring of Michael and Pearl Morozuk, who farmed the property from 1931 to 1957. He is one of three surviving children.

“The family spent a few hours touring the remaining buildings behind the stone house, entertained by stories shared by Michael,” said Shirley Morozuk, Michael’s niece. “Ninety-

five years ago, my grandparents Michael and Pearl Morozuk didn’t just plant a garden; they planted our family’s roots in this very dirt, and we are seven generations with almost 200 family members as of 2026.”

The property has now been in the hands of the Saab family for about 50 years, but sitting unused it was being reclaimed by nature. Last year Paul Saab enlisted the help of some friends to restore the farm and bring new life to the property, calling it Findlay Creek Farmstead and making it a “community farm,” where people can enjoy nature and wellness. It is currently open to the public on weekends. Wayne Morozuk, who still lives in the area, put his excavation skills to work and helped dig out his family’s historic homestead this spring.

The parents of Michael Junior (Michael Stephnovych Morozuk) moved to the site on

Metcalfe Road (Bank Street) in 1931 after the farm where they lived on Rideau Road near Hawthorne Road was destroyed by fire. Michael (Senior) and Pearl (Fedorivna Bychuk) Morozuk had been living with his parents, Stephen Ivanovych Morozuk and Maria (Leonidivna Maruszak) Morozuk.

Stephen was a Ukrainian immigrant who arrived before the First World War and was later joined by his wife and son. Stephen, with his son's help, attempted for two decades to make a living on the Rideau Road farm, despite the impossibly rocky nature of the terrain, with only a thin layer of soil and inadequate drainage that made parts of it swampy. The fire was the last straw for Michael, who was doing the bulk of the farming by 1930.

He removed what was left of their stone house there and reconstructed it stone by stone at its current location, Lot 29, Concession 4, Rideau Front, near Our Lady of the Visitation Church. While the construction was going on, the family lived in a small log house that is still on the property.

During the recent family visit Michael Junior regaled the group with descriptions of life on the farm, including when all the children had to sleep upstairs in the tiny log dwelling while the stone house was still being built.

His daughter Colleen says it was jarring for Michael to see the farm this spring after being away since the 1950s. He had moved to Scarborough as an adult and raised his family there, and has spent his retirement years in Leaskdale and then in Port Perry.



Members of the extended Morozuk family gather in April 2026 for a reunion and visit to their ancestral farm in South Gloucester, which is being restored and turned into a community farm.



The stone house on Bank Street where 11 Morozuk children were raised.

“Mike seeing the farm now was a bit of a shock because it was practically unrecognizable from when he grew up there almost 100 years ago,” said Colleen. “The buildings were the same, and he did have fun regaling the guests with stories such as carrying water from the well.”

“He noticed the land was completely different, and it had been all farmland and fences, and it was now all trees,” said Colleen. “Where crops had been grown there was now a huge pond.”

“Mike's happiest memory was when they bought a tractor, and he did not have to log the ‘14,000,000 miles’ walking behind the horses anymore,” she said.

Even the family members remaining in the Gloucester area were unaware of some of the property's history. Says Michael's niece Shirley: “Growing up near the Morozuk homestead, we kids had no clue there was a log home and barns hidden behind the old stone house on Bank Street. In 2005, my brother Wayne went to a garage sale there,

spotted some buildings in the back forty, and asked to take a look. He called me soon after, completely blown away by what he found.”



Michael (Senior) and Pearl Morozuk are shown in front of the stone house in 1957.

“Our dad, Millie (Emile) Morozuk, had never mentioned living behind that stone house, so we were absolutely surprised by the history that surrounded us when Wayne took me to the property for the first pictures during my visit home that fall.”

According to Ontario Land Records, the original farm was 100 acres on the south half of Lot 29 Concession 4 Rideau Front. It had been owned by the Durning family. Pioneer Patrick Durning passed it to his son James Durning and then to his daughter Hannah Durning.

After Hannah died in 1916, it took a Supreme Court of Ontario ruling before the farm passed to Hannah’s niece Susanna (Susan) O’Brien in 1929. Susanna was the daughter of Susan (née Durning) O’Brien and her husband Patrick O’Brien. Hannah had no direct descendants.

Stephen Morozuk then purchased the farm from Susanna O’Brien for \$11,500.

“Mike’s happiest memory was when they bought a tractor, and he did not have to log the ‘14,000,000 miles’ walking behind the horses anymore.”

Current owner Paul Saab says his father bought 18 acres of the property (only part of the original farm), some 50 years ago and despite having dreams for a community farm, was never able to move forward on the project.

Paul is now excavating and restoring, with the help of Wayne Morozuk, who shares his vision for the farm and has worked for many months helping rescue the farm from disappearing into the woods.

“Just the way the world’s going now,” made Paul yearn to help people get back to nature and enjoy simple things like walking through the woods and petting animals.



The Morozuk family is acknowledged with this sign at the Findlay Creek Farmstead.



Michael Morozuk Senior with his workhorse team, Maud and Molly, in 1945.

“The neighbours have been welcoming” he says, and many local farmers have donated animals. There are now well over 100 animals

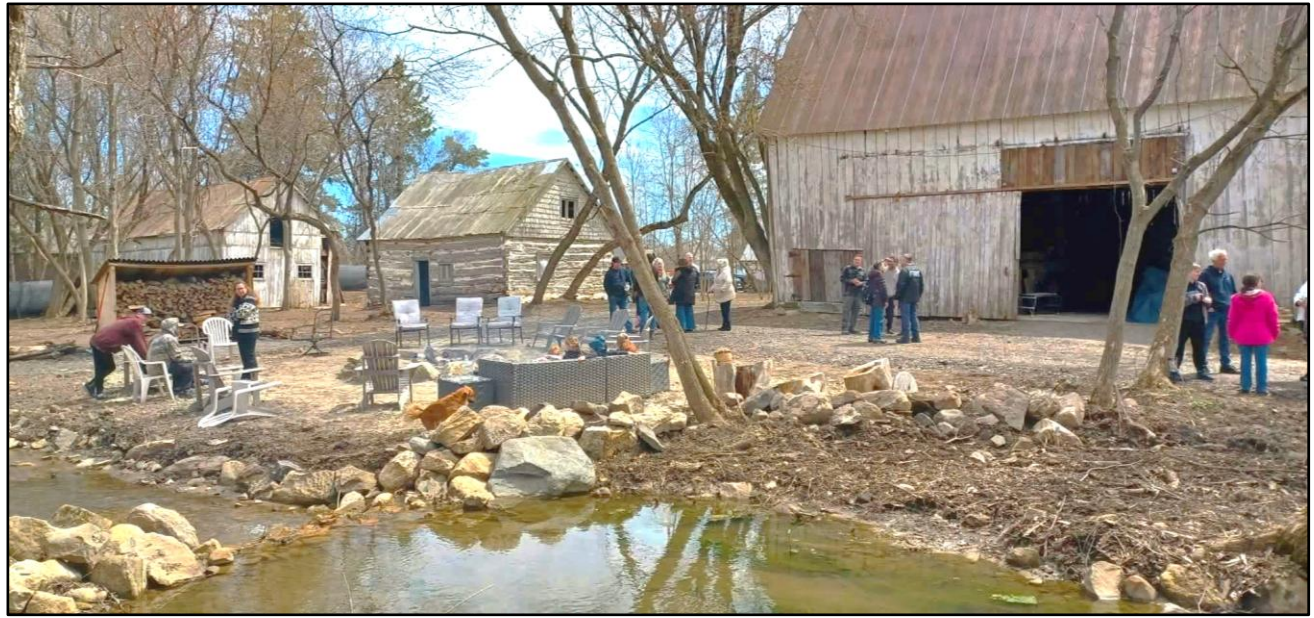
on the property: cows, chickens, sheep, goats, dogs, peacocks and rabbits. Produce is also being grown in multiple greenhouses. A walking trail on the property has been named “Morozuk Trail” in honour of the family.



A little log house was home to the Morozuk family while the larger stone house was under construction.

“We’re figuring everything out,” Paul says, given that he has no background in agriculture. It was a challenge figuring out such essentials as how to distribute water and keep it from freezing in winter with no electricity, as well as keeping the livestock warm.

Saab knew very little about the family history before the Morozuks came to visit this spring. “It was enlightening to have them here,” he said. “We definitely learned a lot.”



The former Morozuk family farm is now open on weekends during the summer, welcoming members of the public who want a quiet getaway and a taste of rural life.

To renew or become a new member, please complete this form and return it to the address below with your cheque. Memberships may also be purchased on our website.

**Membership Form – Gloucester Historical Society/Société historique de Gloucester
(Membership year runs from April 1 to March 31.)**

Annual membership: \$20.00 for one year _____ 10-year membership: \$150.00 _____

NAME: _____ E-mail address _____

ADDRESS: _____ Telephone # _____

CITY: _____ PROV: _____ POSTAL
CODE _____

☐

Check here if you wish to receive your Newsletters by e-mail only. (E-mail address required above)

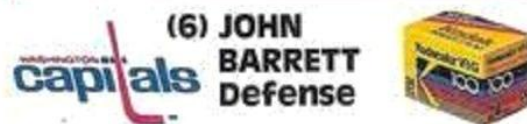
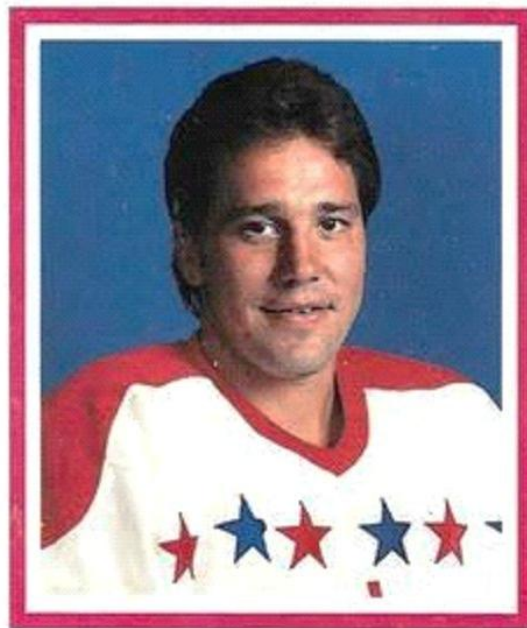
Donations are always welcome. We are a registered charitable organization and provide tax receipts.

Mailing address: Gloucester Historical Society,
4550B Bank Street
Gloucester, Ontario
K1T 3W6
Tel: 613-822-2076,
E-mail: English@gloucesterhistory.com



The Gloucester Historical Society Presents

"Memories of Growing Up in Gloucester and Becoming an NHL Hockey Player" by John Barrett



***Bonus: "The Story of a Gloucester Native Who
Joined the 'all-Black' Regiment in World War I"**

Sunday, November 8, 2026, 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**Location: Fred Barrett Arena, Lions Hall (upstairs)
3280 Leirtrim Road, Ottawa**

Open to the Public, Free Parking and Admission

www.gloucesterhistory.com



The Gloucester Historical Society acknowledges financial assistance of the City of Ottawa