



Genealogy society's meeting looks at Dunnville

Bill Sorge, publicity chair, Haldimand County Branch of the Ontario Genealogy Society

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The May meeting of the Haldimand County Branch of the Ontario Genealogy Society was held on May 6.

Following a time of research from 7 to 7:30 p.m., co-chair Sylvia Weaver called the meeting to order, thanking everyone for coming out and welcoming new faces.

Pat Logan, membership chair, stated there were 98 members and nine volunteers as of the end of April.

Sylvia reported that this year's Memorial Day Parade would be like it once was; fire departments from across Haldimand County, Scouts and Guides will parade on June 5.

The Mudcat Parade will be held on Saturday, June 12; the theme is the 150th Birthday of Dunnville.

There will be a Mini Museum in Dunnville regarding Decades of Dunnville; Karen Richardson was doing this.

The Haldimand County Museum was filled with photos and information of Dunnville over the past 150 years.

Librarian Marg Clause introduced Karen Richardson as guest speaker. Last year she had worked in making Cayuga's 150th Birthday Celebration a success; now she is doing the same for Dunnville's 150th Birthday Celebration.

While getting ready for Cayuga's 150th, Richardson kept coming across items regarding Dunnville.

"I got so excited that I started to work more and came across so much of what Dunnville was first of in Haldimand County and at times in Ontario. It just blew me away. There will be some of these items but many more in the Mini Museum in Dunnville's old Council Chambers. I am working at getting two walking tours in Dunnville for the birthday. Also possibly a tour of the Grand River Navigation," said Richardson.

Dunnville started with Aboriginal settlement; along the Grand, over 2,500 sites have been found, with some dating back 11,000 years ago. A large camp is where the town of Dunnville sits now. The first ones who settled here were the Neutrals. This area was covered with trees.

The first white settler in the Dunnville area was Salamon Minor, who built a home here. Then an influx of Loyalists settled here. One was Benjamin Canby, who Canborough is named after.

He built the first mill there in 1820. People carried their grain there to be milled.

In 1825, there were six homes in Dunnville.

Salamon Minor started the 1829 Welland Feeder Canal.

In 1832, the Grand River Navigation Company took over the Welland Canal Company.

In 1834, the toll bridge cost 15 cents for team, 10 cents for horse, and one to two cents for people to cross bridge and river.

In 1845, famine came to Dunnville, three men took over and fed the population.

In 1851, the first newspaper in Haldimand County "The Independent" was published- this was the first of many more 'firsts' in Dunnville.

The first mills were built by Mr. Phelps and Mr. Keefer. Both were grist mills. There was also a sawmill built by Mr. Thompson. Dunnville was growing.

Dunnville, formerly part of the Township of Moulton, was elected to a village on January 1, 1860.

There was a population of 1,800 people, 320 voters and 720 acres within the corporate limits.

John Jauron was elected first Reeve of the Village.

In 1860, Dunnville got wooden sidewalks; afterwards came the building of Grand Trunk and Western Railroad through town to Brantford. This meant the end of the navigation on the Grand River.

The fire and town bell was purchased in 1862.

In 1847, Dunnville saw Bucket Brigade Fire Company, the first in the County, with 100 members.

In 1899, Edison's Vitascope began showing moving and living pictures at the Opera House.

Dunnville was incorporated as a town in 1900; Mr. F. J. Ramsey, the last Reeve of Dunnville, became its first mayor.

All of these pieces of Dunnville's historical trivia and more were shared throughout Richardson's presentation.

Sylvia Weaver thanked Richardson for all the work she had put into the evening's talk; afterwards, coffee and goodies were served.

Tours at the mini museum will be June 5, 12 and September 18.

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