

## NEWSLETTER

### FEBRUARY LECTURE

As part of the annual University of Guelph lecture, Dr. David Murray, presented his paper, "The Cold Hand of Charity and Other Niagara Tales." The lecture was related to his book *Colonial Justice, Morality, and Crime in the Niagara District, 1791-1849* published by the Osgoode Society in 2002.

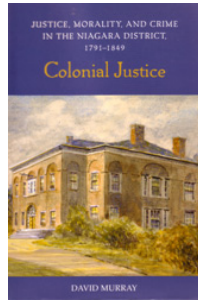
In writing the book, Dr. Murray said he sought to use the law as a means of looking at history and what the law reveals about society.

Dr. Murray commented that legal historians make a distinction between high law (e.g., Supreme Court) and low law (e.g., everyday courts). As a historian, the low courts offer more insight into society than the high courts.

Based on early court records (1828-1840s), found in the courthouse at Niagara-on-the-Lake, *Colonial Justice* uses the documents to construct both a legal and human history. These documents are a rich source of Upper Canada's legal history.

In 1791, British officials brought to Upper Canada the same legal system that was operating in Britain. The primary court in the Niagara District (1791-1849) was the Court of the Quarter Sessions. Dr. Murray highlights

the dual role of the magistrates who served both the courts and as members of the local government. In reading the court decisions, Dr. Murray found that the Niagara District jurors exhibited independent views often in contrast to the local magistrates. These views reveal a great deal about local opinions.



Dr. Murray also discusses the treatment of the criminally insane. It was not until the 1840s that provincial asylums were created. Before this time, the insane were held in jails. An example that illustrates the treatment of the insane is Patrick Donnelly who was remanded in Niagara jail for killing his wife. However he was never tried because he was considered insane. He was held in jail for eight years without conviction.

The title of lecture refers to social welfare. During this era, social welfare was part of the criminal process. Cases were decided in the Court of Quarter Sessions. Applicants would petition for relief in the same manner as a formal presentment. Jurors would then decide whether support should be given.

Through his research, Dr. Murray demonstrates that to know the legal history of the Niagara District is to know much of the history of Upper Canada.

*David Murray, now Professor Emeritus in the Department of History, University of Guelph, has been a member of the Department since 1967.*

### BARBARA BROOKS (1932 – 2008) EDITOR, HISTORIC GUELPH, 2000 – 2005

I was greatly saddened to hear the news of Barbara's sudden death. She was instrumental in getting me involved with the Guelph Historical Society through her perseverance in persuading me to research and write an essay for the annual essay contest. After my essay was accepted for publication in *Historic Guelph*, she insisted on absolute quality in its documentation and writing. My experience with Barbara demonstrates her determination as editor to produce a quality publication.

Barbara's death in January was a great loss not only to GHS, but to Guelph's arts and heritage community as a whole. She was to receive her Volunteer Service Award for 20 years as a Historical Walking Tour guide for the Guelph Arts Council, and she had helped with various aspects of Doors Open Guelph for six years. She had a great spirit, an infectious laugh, and a strong commitment. We will miss her. —Susan Ratcliffe

### QUIZ: BLUE ONTARIO PROVINCIAL PLAQUES

A visit to [www.ontarioplaques.com](http://www.ontarioplaques.com) reveals that there are 26 Ontario Heritage plaques which contain the name "Guelph". Of these, 12 are located in Guelph. Let's see how well you know these plaques. If you don't know the answers, you could visit the site to see the text inscribed on each plaque.

1. According to "The Founding of Guelph" plaque, located interestingly enough in Exhibition Park, John Galt was superintendent of which company?
2. In Royal City Park, opposite the Boat House restaurant, recognition is made of 135 destitute Scottish settlers who arrived in Guelph via Venezuela and New York City. Collectively, this group is known as what?
3. The plaque standing at Norfolk and Paisley streets states that the Guelph Public Library was established in which year?
4. Which Guelph masterpieces were created by these architects: Joseph Connolly, Henry Langley, William Thomas, Thomas Young?
5. In which year was the University of Guelph established?
6. In which year did the Ontario Veterinary College move to Guelph?
7. This Arctic explorer and author lived on Nottingham Street for 12 years. Who was he?
8. Edward Johnson's plaque is located in or near which park?
9. At the entrance to which museum is the plaque marking Toronto's (and Guelph's) radial railways located?
10. The Huron Road ran 153 km through the Huron Tract from Guelph to which town on Lake Huron?

Prepared by John Parkyn

Answers on page 2

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### EVENINGS WITH HISTORY: GHS LECTURE

**Date:** Tuesday, March 4, 2008

**Title:** *If These Walls Could Speak: The Wellington County House of Industry and Refuge, 1877-1947*

**Speaker:** Susan Dunlop

**Location:** St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, corner Norfolk & Suffolk

Before the advent of social welfare, impoverished citizens relied on kindly neighbours and on churches for support. Local government entered the picture in 1877 when the County built the House of Industry and Refuge between Fergus and Elora. Known locally as "The Poor House", this institution offered food and shelter to the "deserving poor" of our area. Today this building houses the Wellington County Museum. This talk will discuss 19th-century attitudes and responses to poverty, explore the living conditions of the inmates and staff, and will show the behind-the-scenes process of how the House of Industry exhibit, currently on display at the Museum, was put together.

*Susan Dunlop is the Curator of the Wellington County Museum and Archives. For two years she researched the House of Industry and Refuge in preparing this major exhibit about the history of the institution.*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Tax Receipts

Tax receipts were mailed with this issue of the newsletter. If you did not receive your tax receipt, you may pick it up at the general meeting on March 4, 2008.

### OHS Annual Meeting: June 13-14, 2008

The GHS is hosting the annual meeting of the Ontario Historical Society. A registration package is included with this newsletter.

### Back Issues of GHS Newsletter

If there are any members who have a complete set of back issues of the newsletter and who would be willing to allow us to photocopy them, please contact John Parkyn at: (519) 824-0564.

### ANNUAL BUS TRIP

**TUESDAY MAY 6, 2008**

**VISIT THE ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM**

SEE THE CONTROVERSIAL MICHAEL LEE-CHIN  
CRYSTAL ADDITION

#### PLUS

A private guided tour of "Darwin" the most comprehensive exhibition ever assembled on Charles Darwin and evolution. The ROM is the sole Canadian venue to host "Darwin" on its international tour.

#### PLUS

Tour two new exhibits in the World Cultures Gallery – articles collected by the ROM on indigenous peoples, cultures and traditions from Africa, Asia-Pacific, South America, and textiles and costumes collected by the ROM from China, Egypt, Islam and Western cultures.

Pack a lunch or eat in the Food Studio

Ticket price: \$55 (members)      \$60 (non-members)

Bus leaves Harcourt Memorial United Church parking lot, 87 Dean Ave. at 8:30 a.m. and returns to Harcourt at 5:30 p.m.

For additional information call Betty-Anne Stammers at:  
(519) 822-4051

### Zehrs Tapes

The Guelph Historical Society collects Zehrs tapes to help with the ongoing expenses of maintaining the office and the archives. Please bring your tapes to the monthly meetings and drop them in the box on the membership table.

### Quiz Answers

1. Canada Company
2. La Guayra Settlers
3. 1883
4. In order: Church of Our Lady, St. George's Church, City Hall, Wellington County Court House.
5. 1962
6. 1922; for 60 years before that it was located in Toronto.
7. John McLean
8. Riverside Park
9. Halton County Radial Railways Museum
10. Goderich



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