



The Historical Society of Ottawa News

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September 2007

President's Report

By Alan McLay

On June 18 the Board of Directors held our meeting at the Diefenbunker Museum in Carp. The arrangements were made by Don Carrington. After the meeting, Matthew Bruce gave us a guided tour of the storage areas for the artifacts belonging to the Historical Society and the Bytown Museum.



At the meeting Alan McLay was re-appointed as President and Patricia Hartney was re-appointed as Secretary-Treasurer for the year 2007-2008. The position of Vice-President remains vacant. The chairs of the various committees were also re-appointed. Don Carrington, however, resigned as chair of the Collection Committee.

A motion was carried giving an honorarium of \$200 to John Reeder for his exemplary work in setting up and maintaining our new website for the Historical Society.

Dave Mullington reported that he had turned over two boxes of school textbooks to the Clarington Museum in Orchard, near Bowmanville, for their schoolhouse museum. The museum may take two more boxes. The Board had previously agreed that these textbooks were not relevant to the mandate of our Society.

On June 8 George Neville successfully organized and conducted the

Spring bus tour to Smiths Falls. Those who attended enjoyed the visits to the Rideau Canal Museum, Heritage House, the Railway Museum, and Hershey's chocolate factory.

On June 25th I attended the Grade 8 graduation ceremony at All Saints Catholic High School and presented our cheque for \$150 to Sean McCabe, the winner of the City of Ottawa Cup for the best project on the history of Ottawa at the Regional Historica Fair on April 4th.

In June we received a letter from Carol White, the coordinator for the Provincial Historica Fair held in Ottawa on May 16th -20th, expressing her thanks to the Historical Society for our gift of \$200. We also received a card of thanks from six students from Toronto East (see photo and text).

The Colonel John By Award in History for 2007 was presented to Tom Rorke for his paper "Clio and the Ottawa *Forza Italia*: Public History, Business History, and the Power of Place." Tom Rorke is a student in the M.A. program at Carleton University. This is the first year that graduate students were eligible for the award.

Mike Nelles, who received the Colonel John By Award in 2006, has



*Dear Historical Society of Ottawa,
We are writing this letter to thank you for your generous support of the regional and provincial Historica fairs. The last five days in Ottawa have been filled with some of the most memorable experiences of our lives.*

With your support it was possible for us to expand our knowledge and to nourish our love and passion for Canada as a nation. Thanks to your organization we were able to realize our full potential. We will continue to pursue our quest for historical knowledge. We deeply appreciate all you have done.

*Sincerely,
Toronto East Delegates,
Luisa Carr, Michael N., J. Hyble,
Sahara A., Hasyn C., Dave Shuman*

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The Historical Society of Ottawa

Patron: Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, C.C., C.M.M., C.O.M., C.D.
Governor General of Canada

The Historical Society of Ottawa was founded in 1898 (as the Women's Canadian Historical Society of Ottawa). Its objective is to increase public knowledge of the history of Ottawa by its publications, meetings, tours, outreach and participation in local heritage events and also by its co-operation with the Bytown Museum, a store of artifacts reflecting Ottawa's history from Bytown days and into the present century. Its headquarters is in the Bytown Museum, Colonel By's Commissariat Building, constructed of stone in 1827 and located at 1 Canal Lane by the Rideau Canal between the Château Laurier and Parliament Hill.

Board Of Directors

President: Alan McLay		613-730-2264
Secretary/Treasurer:		
Patricia Hartney	<i>pat.hartney014@sympatico.ca</i>	613-523-6248
Membership: Don Baxter	<i>marydon@cyberus.ca</i>	613-745-3430
Don Carrington	<i>don.carrington@sympatico.ca</i>	613-733-8740
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Herb Sills		613-231-5535
George Toller	<i>grtoller@3web.com</i>	613-731-0112
Barbara Whitfield	<i>pthosteo@rogers.com</i>	613-722-2209

Committees

Awards	Clifford Scott, Mary Anne Dancey, George Toller
Collections	Don Carrington, Dorene Hirsch, Barbara Whitfield
Monthly Meetings	George Toller
Nominations	George Toller, Don Baxter, Herb Sills
Publications	Don Carrington
Tours Coordinators	George Neville, Robert Grainger
Telephone Committee	Barbara Whitfield, Pat Richardson

Newsletter Editor: Paul Reside-*hso.news.editor@sympatico.ca*-**613-825-3104**

All correspondence should be addressed to:

The Secretary, The Historical Society of Ottawa
P.O. Box 523, Station "B"
Ottawa, ON
K1P 5P6
Society Email: hsottawa@storm.ca

Coming Events

Friday, September 28

Monthly Meeting
Speaker: Herb Sills
"A Visit to Vimy Ridge"
Cumberland Ave. at Guigues St.
1 p.m. (please note the change
in starting time)

Thursday, October 4

Fall Bus Tour
Vankleek Hill
8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Friday, October 26

Monthly Meeting
Speaker: Mary Cook
TBA
Routhier Community Centre
Cumberland Ave. at Guigues St.
1 p.m. (please note the change
in starting time)

Friday, November 30

Monthly Meeting
"Family Treasures: Show and
Tell"
Routhier Community Centre
Cumberland Ave. at Guigues St.
1 p.m. (please note the change
in starting time)

Friday, December 7

Christmas Luncheon
St. Richard's Anglican Church
12 noon

A note regarding Membership renewals - For regular members of the Ottawa Historical Society, your renewal date is shown on your address label on this newsletter. Please check it and see that you are up-to-date. If not, a renewal form is available for you to photocopy on the last page of this newsletter.

Editor's Note: Anyone wishing to receive the HSO Newsletter by e-mail may request it by sending your e-mail address to the editor at:
hso.news.editor@sympatico.ca

President's Report

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written a pamphlet on the history of steamboats on the Rideau Canal, which is about to be published in the Bytown Pamphlet Series this summer.

We all rejoiced to hear on June 30th that the Rideau Canal was officially designated as a World Heritage Site. This is timely recognition in the year of the 175th Anniversary of the opening of the Canal. Congratulations to all those who worked on preparing the submission for this distinction.

I hope that all our members have enjoyed a summer of leisure and enrichment. In September we look forward to the beginning of a new season of activities for the Historical Society of Ottawa.

The Bytown Soirée Celebrating 90 years!

By Steve Dezort

On Friday, September 28th, you are invited to dress up as your favourite Ottawa character (or just dress up!) and dance the night away at the sumptuous and historic Ottawa Army Officers' Mess. The Mess, a Centretown mansion once owned by the Freiman family, calls for the creation of distinctly themed rooms. You will be able to explore a Governor General's costume ball, Mother McGuinty's Corktown tavern and a 1940s dance hall.

We want to demonstrate to Ottawa residents that our community's heritage is dynamic, fascinating and a good investment. Funds raised will be used in the preservation and celebration of the Bytown Museum's irreplaceable collections of artifacts.

The Soirée begins at 7:30pm and the ticket price of \$65 includes appetizers, dessert and the opportunity to bid on several exciting prizes during our silent auction.

Treasurer's Report to August 18, 2007

Source	Revenue
Memberships	\$2,945.00
Donations	1,395.00*
Pamphlets	12.00
Revenue from Spring Bus Tour	446.00
Grants (Ottawa: \$3,000; Ontario: \$900)	<u>3,900.00</u>
Total	\$8,698.00

(* \$325 of this sum was donated in memory of Peggy Moffatt)

Expense	Paid Out
Annual Report (printing, postage, envelopes)	423.34
Award for City Cup winner	150.00
Colonel By Award	500.00
Diefenbunker rent (paid to September 30 th)	970.91
Donation to Bytown Museum	500.00
Donation to Ont. Prov Hist Fair	200.00
Library – purchase of books	35.00
Membership dues (CHOO & OHS)	111.80
Newsletter (actual expenses & pre-payment)	800.00
Office supplies	159.07
Postage (except Annual Report & Newsletter)	59.05
Post box	62.54
Telephone (paid to September 30 th)	510.00
Website maintenance fee for 2007	<u>100.00</u>
Total	\$4,581.71

Bank Balance as at August 18, 2007: \$21,447.86

You can purchase tickets by contacting the Bytown Museum by phone at (613) 234 – 4570 or by email at director@storm.ca. A tax receipt for \$25 will be issued for every ticket sold. For more information about the Bytown Soirée, please call the Museum.

Merrickville and District Historical Society Lecture Series

September 16 THE ROMANCE OF STEAM by Coral Lindsay A pictorial presentation of the age of commercial and leisure steamboats.

October 21 ANOTHER RIDEAU WORLD by Jonathan Moore The underwater archaeology of the Rideau.

November 18 THE RIDEAU: A LIVING HISTORY by Doug Stewart The Rideau Canal's 20th century evolution and its future promise.

All lectures will be held at 2 p.m. on Sunday afternoon in Merrickville United Church. Admission is \$25 for the series or \$5 for each lecture.

Obituary

We regret to announce the death of Peggy Moffatt in June. Peggy was an active, longtime member of the Historical Society of Ottawa and the Pinhey's Point Foundation. She was the author of histories of several Ottawa families. Our sincere sympathy to her family.

HSO Bus Excursion to Smiths Falls Museums - 7th June 2007

By George Neville

With 47 passengers on board a shiny 2-year old Healey Transportation motor coach, HSO members and friends began their approach to Smiths Falls from the north via Hwy 15, and the Richmond Rd. from the Fallowfield Rd. This approach provided opportunity for commentary on the establishment of the three military Rideau Settlements, Perth (1815), Richmond (1819), and Lanark (1821) by which the British government established loyal inland populations by decommissioning soldiers of the 99th and 100th Regiments of Foot at Quebec City.

These settlements along with the construction of the Rideau Canal (1826-1832) were the means by which Upper Canada was to be maintained and supplied loyal to the British Crown free of menacing attack from the Americans across the St. Lawrence River as had occurred in the War of 1812-14. Passing the cairn on the Richmond Rd. to the memory of Charles Lennox, the 4th Duke of Richmond, marking the location of his untimely death due to rabies



View of western end of Heritage House showing the projecting 2-storey privy vertical structure.

from the bite of a pet rabid fox in Sorrel, QC, extended the commentary of this dutiful Governor General of Canada in visiting the military installations at York, Perth, and Richmond. He is interred in the Anglican Cathedral of Quebec City between the pulpit and communion table.

In Smiths Falls, we first visited the



View of 2nd storey privy from Joshua Bate's master bedroom of Heritage House today.

very informative displays on three floors of the Rideau Canal Museum located in the former saw/grist mill built by Abel Russel Ward. Just before noon, we were taken by bus to Heritage House, near Old Slys Lock, via the Rideau River and Canal route where half the group (first of two sittings) partook of a catered lunch of sandwiches, veggies, and beverages topped off with freshly baked (on premises) rhubarb spice cake and ice-cream. Meanwhile the remaining half-group was first treated to miniature warm muffins with rhubarb marmalade in the kitchen in front of the brick, wood-fired bake oven of this 2-story house built (1861) by Joshua Bates, a very successful saw mill operator in Farmersville (Athens), just as Smiths Falls was beginning to develop industrially. The groups were taken on guided tours throughout the various rooms of Heritage House furnished throughout for the period 1867-1875.

A unique feature of its construction is a two-storey privy, the only remaining one in Ontario.

The top portion of this unusual privy was easily accessible from the second floor of the house. There are



two shafts, the upper being placed to the right side of the privy and the bottom one being placed further to the left side. A dividing wall separates the two shafts. The bottom portion of the privy was reached through a door on the outside of the building.

Mary Edwards had pointed out some points of interest on the north side of Smiths Falls as we arrived, but after lunch at Heritage House, our local bus driver, Alex Fry, took us on a varied tour of the central portion of the town while pointing out features and historical connections finally passing the Bascule Bridge erected in 1912-13 to carry the Canadian Northern Railway main line across the Rideau Canal. This Scherzer Rolling Lift Bascule Bridge is one of the oldest bascule bridges remaining in Canada.

By this time we were nearly at the Smiths Falls Railway Museum with unexpected delights for all, e.g., the elegant architecture of the waiting room,



John Mulkerens of Kingston, operator of the 'Speeder Ride', tips his cap to HSO riders on terminating their run out and back along a spur track at the Smiths Falls Railway Museum.

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HSO Bus Excursion - 7th June*Continued from Page 4*

the electronic communications room, a dental service car on the tracks with accommodation for dentist and nurse that served northern Ontario until 1978, and the 'Speeder Ride' section-car half-mile runs on track to the east of the museum that 13 intrepid women took in two shifts to their great delight!

On the way home, we stopped into the Hershey plant to visit the Chocolate Shoppe and partake of the self-guided tour of the plant's operating floors from the enclosed elevated corridors. Although concentrated in one locale, this excursion provided much variety and interest for one and all.

I REMEMBER OTTAWA*By E.W. Devlin*

This is the first instalment in a series of reminiscences by Edward W. Devlin, a former resident of Ottawa and a long-time member of the Historical Society. He describes them as a collection of local history and personal trivia, mostly from the viewpoint of a boy growing up in Ottawa between the two world wars."

The eighty-some years of Ottawa's life that I have observed have changed it from a small, dour outpost of colonial Victorianism to a capital of beauty and distinction. Here are some lantern slides of Ottawa and its people remembered by a native son.

I REMEMBER HORSES (1920s)

Clip-clopping along the early-morning streets of Sandy Hill, bringing us milk and saw dusty ice. You could click your tongue against the roof of your mouth and make a most satisfying imitation of their sound. On hot days they wore straw hats with the ears sticking through, and they ate from canvas bags hooked over their heads. They welcomed an apple or lump of sugar. Their tongues were rough and wet.

I REMEMBER SPARKS STREET (1920s)

In the 1890s Grandfather Devlin used his journalistic advertisements in *The Citizen* to scold City Hall about the state of the mud on the capital's main business street. He nobly offered to ferry customers across from the north side to his place of business on the south side. By the time I arrived in Ottawa Sparks Street was paved, but it was still a pre-motor-age Victorian alleyway that accommodated two sidewalks, two traffic lanes and two cart tracks. (I remember the electric sparks and crackles when the trolley came off the wire as the tram turned the corner into Elgin Street.) My father and other Sparks Street merchants made the very advanced proposal of turning Sparks into a pedestrian mall, and finally the city agreed. It was the first of its kind in Canada. Now it has benches and trees and fountains and snack-bars and muzak. Around it the business district has reared its glass towers.

Obituary

We regret to announce the death of Joan Finnegan on August 12. Joan was a distinguished poet, journalist, and social historian. She was the author of 31 books of poetry, stories, and local history of the Ottawa Valley. She was a member of the Historical Society of Ottawa and addressed our monthly meetings at least twice in recent years. She also accompanied the fall bus tour up the Opeongo Line in October 2001 as an authority on the area.

Joan was much loved for her sense of humour, her love of storytelling, and her ability to bring to life the characters in her books. She will be greatly missed by all who knew her. Our deep sympathy to all the members of her family.

I REMEMBER SIS TOMKINS (Lisgar Collegiate, 1902-1933)

She was really Miss E.A. Tomkins, but you learned that formality after you left the Lisgar Collegiate. My father just managed to be taught by her. So did Percy Harris, the coal dealer, whose daughter Betty married my brother Bob. Miss Tomkins induced a succession of mutinous young Ottawans to learn algebra, or at least to pass exams in it. I was one of them. To do this she used an exciting mixture of wit and sarcasm and sheer terror, controlling classrooms full of smart-alecks and hellions with a glare, a word or a hiss. We dreaded being the centre of her attention. She was an Ottawa legend long before she retired. In her post retirement serenity she visited Dad in his office. How did you do it? he asked her, and got the memorable reply: "Always razzle-dazzle the other fella before the other fella razzle-dazzles you."

I REMEMBER THE ELECTRIC CAR (1920s)

It suggested a sedan chair with a motor. It also suggested an invalid's wheelchair with a superstructure of glass windows. It was steered by a small wheel at the front which was controlled by a sort of joystick beneath the front window. The whole front, I seem to remember, opened outward to admit the occupant. It contained a glass vase holding a rose, and its windows were oval. It moved through the quiet streets of Sandy Hill at perhaps three miles an hour. The occupant was the kind of grand lady who wore net collars supported by whalebone strips, and she was probably garbed in black or plum-coloured bombazine and a Queen Mary hat.

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Our congratulations and best wishes to Elva Skuce, a Life Member of the Historical Society, on the occasion of her 90th birthday on September 11, Happy Birthday, Elva

I Remember Ottawa

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I REMEMBER THE GOLDEN JUBILEE PARADE (1927)

Ottawa celebrated the Golden Jubilee of Confederation in the otherwise undistinguished year of 1927, with the inauguration of the carillon in the Peace Tower and a parade of historical floats. A major event to be represented on a float was the laying of the cornerstone of the old centre block of the Parliament Buildings by 1-IRLI the Prince of Wales, which was done in 1860. HRH was represented standing, golden trowel in hand, before the stone, which hung in a sling, surrounded by frock-coated dignitaries and white-coated masons. For some obscure reason I was chosen to be dressed and bearded as HRH. The dressing and bearding were done to all the impersonators in a room at the Exhibition Grounds, and we were then driven about four miles across town to where the floats waited. I was boosted up onto my float, which seemed as large as a tennis court, and there I took my stand, frock-coated and top-hatted, before the stone in its sling. Historical figures formed up on the floats before and behind, but I remained in solitary grandeur as my float moved out into the procession. A man in a blue car shouted "Jump down! I'll drive you back!" I jumped, but the blue car disappeared. So, fully frocked, top-hatted and bewhiskered, I trudged the four miles back to the dressing room along the hot and crowded streets. It was 85 degrees Fahrenheit.

I REMEMBER THE PEACE TOWER (1930s)

Percival Price, who was the first Dominion Carillonneur, wore a black beard because the Belgian carilloneurs with whom he learned his trade could only take him seriously with a beard. In the playing-chamber under the bells he sat on a curved bench and slid back and forth to work the higher bells with both

fists while his feet hit wooden rods under the bench to sound the big bass ones. He had an apartment a story or two below the bell-chamber where he had friends in for parties. In a corner of the room rods connecting the clock mechanism below with the bells above clanked up and down every hour, and the bells boomed overhead.

Members of the Historical Society of Ottawa are invited to submit letters, stories or short articles on subjects of historical interest for publication in our newsletter. The deadline for the next issue will be Dec. 21, 2007. Please send entries by mail to our editor:

Paul Reside
c/o The Historical Society of Ottawa
P.O. Box 523, Station B
Ottawa, ON K1P 5P6
or email to:
hso.news.editor@sympatico.ca

I REMEMBER RIDEAU HALL (1920s-30s)

We went to skating parties on the pond in Rideau Hall grounds and glided around to the music of Waldteufel and Strauss and drank cocoa in the pavilion beside the pond. In our tuxedos and black ties we took our girls to supper dances in the green-and-white striped tent room. His Excellency and his lady stood in the entrance hall to greet us, and we felt both at home and very daring in the vast splendours of Government House. In midsummer all Ottawa, diplomats, generals, admirals, ambassadors, merchants, housewives, children and little old ladies in tennis shoes converged on the splendid lawns and promenades for the Governor General's Garden Party. Under huge flapping tents you had tea and lemonade and cakes and ice cream. Along the flower-lined walks you watched the great and the splendid pass by -- floating summer dresses, dazzling turbans and saris, medals and swords. From the blue-uniformed Governor General's Foot-

guards Band came the all-pervading sound of Gilbert and Sullivan, von Suppé and Sousa. At any moment you might turn a corner and find yourself delightfully face to face with one or both of their Excellencies.

I REMEMBER BRITANNIA AND ROCKCLIFFE (1920s)

Part of Ottawa now, but then, out in the country, an adventure, an excursion, the goal of a day's outing, requiring picnic baskets, bathing suits for Britannia, and mosquito oil. (I remember citronella.) The Rockcliffe streetcars in summer were made up of rows of open benches, like church-pews, with open sides to let in the mosquitoes. The ticket-seller shuffled his way along steps that ran the length of the car, rattling his coins in a glass-sided box. The Rockcliffe line ran daringly along the high bank of the river, where the rock-gardens are now. The Britannia cars were long brown monsters that thundered along the track as though bound for Toronto. They calmed down enough to deposit you at the pine-covered station, where the pier and the beach stretched out welcoming arms. (I remember how heavy your pail felt, full of wet sand.)

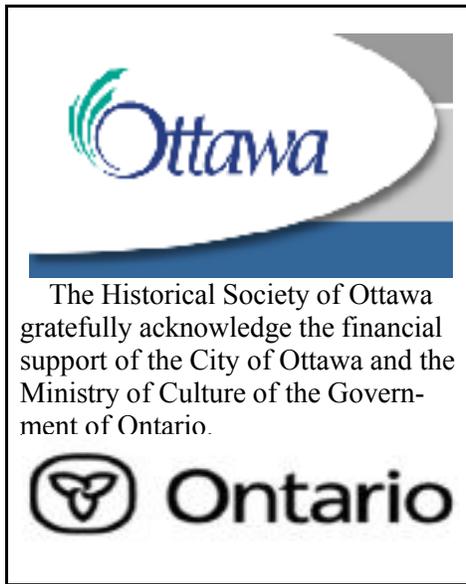
**FAMILY HISTORY
CONFERENCE September 14-16**
Celebrate Your Anglo-Celtic Roots!
Register now for The British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa (BIFHSGO) 13th annual family history conference being held September 14 to 16. Choose from 18 presentations with a special focus on Ireland and immigration. Includes a marketplace of family history products and services, one-on-one consultations using free electronic data sources, and 2 pre-Conference seminars. Library & Archives Canada, 395 Wellington, Ottawa. Full Conference, daily and session rates available, member and non-member. Pre-Conference seminars extra. Free parking on weekend. Info: www.bifhsgo.ca / conference@bifhsgo.ca 613-234-2520.

**I REMEMBER THE CANAL
(1920s-30s)**

The railway tracks crossed the river, went under the Plaza and through the Union Station and came out on the south side, along the canal. A grimy wasteland of coal-storage bins and junkyards followed the tracks southward. The National Capital Commission, or its predecessor, bless it, swept away this remnant of Victorian landscaping, put the new station several miles away and replaced the filthy mess with the handsome flower parkway which can now be gazed at with pride from the National Arts Centre and its canal-side restaurant.

**I REMEMBER ARMISTICE DAY
(November 11, 1918)**

We sat tensely, waiting for the moment that would tell us the Armistice had been signed and the war was over. Eleven o'clock. The electric light dimmed, then came up again. We yelled and hugged each other. Across the city church bells rang and factory whistles hooted. We piled into the open-topped McLaughlin Buick and joined the wild parade up Rideau Street to the Plaza.



The Historical Society of Ottawa gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the City of Ottawa and the Ministry of Culture of the Government of Ontario.

Ottawa and the western world were wild with joy.

HSO Autumn Bus Excursion to the Gingerbread Capital of Ontario

On Thursday, 4th October the HSO bus excursion will depart for the gingerbread capital of Ontario, Vankleek Hill. The approach will be

via Hwy 174 to L'Orignal where we will have a one hour tour of the old Jail and Courthouse, the oldest continuously used courthouse in Ontario. From L'Orignal we will take County Rd. #11 south to Vankleek Hill where we will have lunch with choice of homemade soup, a sandwich plate from various selections, choice of rice pudding, jello, or cake, and tea or coffee at Nicko's Resto Bar at the cross-roads of Main St. and Hwy. 34, a convenient locale from which to browse forth on Main St. to absorb the community ambiance and admire the architectural delights of this town dating from its earliest settlers at the close of the 18th century. The Higginson Tower, located not far from Nicko's, can be climbed to the top in groups of 8-10 persons at a time; meantime those waiting can browse in the proximate Arbor Gallery, then it's off to Beau's All Natural Brewing Microbrewery for free samples and opportunity to buy custom brew by the jug! The return route to Ottawa will be via Hwy. 34, Hawkesbury, the Perley Bridge, and the Québec side of the Ottawa River amidst the autumn colours.

**Membership Renewal Form
The Historical Society of Ottawa**

Date _____ Renewal/New _____ No. Members _____

Name _____

Name (for mailing) _____

Address Unchanged(Show Changes Below)

Street _____

Postal Code _____ Phone (res) _____ Phone (work) _____ E-mail Address _____

Interest (Activities?) _____ Volunteer? _____

Membership fees

Single \$35/year
Student \$10/year
Family \$50/year
Single Life \$350

Payment

Membership \$ _____
Donation \$ _____
Total \$ _____

Receipts will be issued for both membership and donation

Please complete this form and mail it with a cheque, made payable to **The Historical Society of Ottawa**, to:
Membership, The Historical Society of Ottawa
P.O. Box 523, Station B.
Ottawa, Ontario
K1P 5P6