

From the May 2013 Beacon

Sombra Museum speaker relates the incredible facts surrounding the Storm of 1913

Painter James Clary was a wealth of information on how a perfect storm can devastate ships and tear apart families long before the movie, *The Perfect Storm*, and the events that inspired it ever happened.

Mr. Clary spoke to an enthusiastic audience when he presented *The Storm of 1913*, one of the six fall and winter lectures presented by the Sombra Museum this season. He noted it was the most destructive storm to grip the Great Lakes since the beginning of commercial shipping. It began on Nov. 7, 1913 and raged for four days.

He says the greatest force of the storm was felt on Lake Huron, where eight freighters were lost with no survivors and over a dozen vessels were blown ashore. The blinding snowstorm and gigantic waves whipped up by 70 mile-an-hour winds assaulted every ship on the Great Lakes, damaging vessels and forcing them to seek safety.

The Sombra Museum's exhibition on the *Storm of 1913*, currently being displayed in the Sydenham/St. Clair Room, draws the visitor into that desperate time through the use of newspaper front pages and news reports of the storm. Unlike today, when we experience immediate news coverage, the news of the disaster was slow to reach the eyes and ears of a concerned public. Sombra Museum Curator Shelley Lucier notes, "It must have been unbelievably agonising for family and loved ones as they waited for what must have seemed an eternity to learn the fate of the ships and their crews."

The display also demonstrates the effect of the storm within our own community. A number of prints by James Clary are also on display to illustrate the fury, the violence and the horror inspired by the storm of 1913, as well as the valiant effort of ships as they fought for their survival against the fury of the storm.

The Sombra Museum opens for the 2013 season on Victoria Day Weekend from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. and will be open daily from 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in June, July and August.

The Storm of 1913 display will be on exhibit all season.