

HERITAGE CORNER

Ontario Volunteer Service Awards presented

Six Moore Museum volunteers were recently honoured with Volunteer Service Awards from the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration. The province was represented by MPP Bob Bailey, second from left. Shown here with their awards are, left: Bob McPhee (10 years); Tammy Johnson (5 years); Leo Griffiths (5 years); Mike Johnson (5 years). Moore Museum Advisory Committee Chairperson Jim Townsend, right, was present for the awards. Absent from photo were five-year recipients Deb Bogaert and Del Knight.

"Moore Museum is pleased to have this opportunity to recognize its volunteers for their long-term dedication as they contribute their skills and time to the museum's projects and programs," said Mr. Townsend.

MUSEUM HOURS

May-Aug.: Friday-Tuesday, 11-5

Sept. to Dec.: Mon. to Fri., 9-4



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Photo submitted



Seasons In St. Clair—Canada 150 Photo contest

Until Dec. 15, 2017, St. Clair Township residents are invited to photograph their favourite spots in the township and enter up to three photos in Seasons In St. Clair, a photo contest celebrating Canada's 150th anniversary. Details are available online at: www.mooremuseum.ca



Outdoor art creating awareness of community heritage

The Moore Museum is seeking submissions from Lambton County artists for the design and creation of a large outdoor mural to enhance the façade of the museum's main building. The Moore Museum's main building is housed in a re-purposed two-room red brick schoolhouse that was built in 1942 and expanded in 1952. To prevent deterioration of the artifacts due to light damage from the large windows of the school, the windows have been covered. While beneficial to the artifacts, this has resulted in an outside appearance that leads many people to believe the museum is closed.

The mural will fill a large 28'x8' "boarded up" window that faces the main road. It will attract the attention of potential visitors and be an attractive artistic addition to the community. It will raise public awareness of the talent that exists in our local artistic community and will present a positive first impression for visitors.

Lambton artists are invited to submit design ideas and bids for the production of this mural. Designs and bids may be submitted to the Moore Museum, 94 Moore Line, Mooretown, until April 30. Further details are available by calling the museum at 519-867-2020.

The Moore Museum gratefully acknowledges the financial sup-

port of Lambton County's Creative County Fund in funding this project. The Creative County Fund invests in new and innovative projects that build cultural capacity, strengthen the creative community, define the County's unique identity, and enrich the quality of life for all residents.



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MORE HERITAGE CORNER

Little log cabin at Sombra Museum recently refurbished - original "tiny house"?

By Allan Anderson and Bonnie Stevenson

Tucked away behind the Bury House at the corner of Smith Street and the St. Clair Parkway in Sombra, there sits a tiny log cabin the size of a large garden shed. If you look close, its foundation shows signs of the significant repairs that have been done to make the old cabin safe for visitors to enjoy.

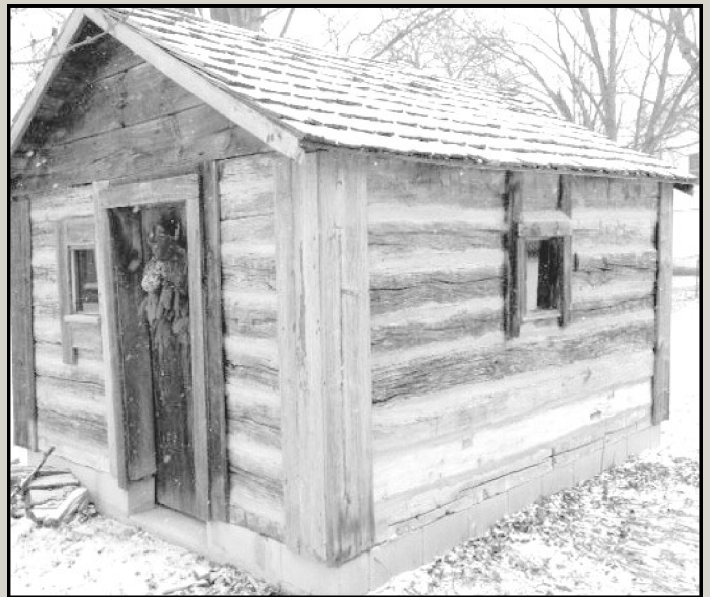
Once inside, you see that the tiny cabin is lined with wood lathing faced with carefully applied plaster, some of which has fallen to the floor over the many decades of the cabin's existence. Sombra Museum volunteer Allan Anderson, one of the team that repaired the cabin, estimates the cabin has a total floor space of about 125 square feet, about 60 per cent smaller than the "tiny houses" that have become popular on reality television shows.

Now picture yourself, along with your spouse and six children living in this little cabin through a long, cold Canadian winter. Incredible as it sounds, that's exactly what the Smith family did when they settled in what is now the Sombra area in the early 1800s.

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Following the War of 1812, settlement along the St. Clair River was opened to British veterans and settlers looking to start a new life with a 100 acre crown land grant. This area was one of the last to draw the attention of settlers. During the winter of 1819-1820, three families from Norfolk County set out in a homemade Durham boat to make the 300 kilometre journey to what would become Sombra Township. The Burnham and Smith families received property along the river, while Brinton Paine Brown's property was mostly a black ash swamp located about a kilometre away from the river.

The Smiths were the first to erect a small log house, the one that now stands behind the Bury House. It served as their shelter for two years while they built a more substantial house north of the cabin. It then became a milk house,



Smith cabin as it stands today on the north side of the Bury House. Some of the replaced wall logs are easily seen on the bottom of the side wall. *Photo submitted*

then a tool shed.

For 173 years, the little cabin stood at the corner of River Road and Smith line. Little was known about it or its relevance to local history. The cabin was eventually donated to the Sombra Museum in 1993 by the Minnie family, descendants of the Smiths, and the Demars families, who had purchased the property.

Under the direction of museum volunteer Frank McMillan and Mayor Joe Dedecker, the cabin was raised and carried to its new location on the north side of the Bury House, which was then the main museum building. It was set on a concrete slab and repaired with a new roof and cedar shake shingles. The logs walls were rechinked and it was staged to become a public exhibit as well as secured to protect it from vandals.

For 20 years, the cabin was a popular attraction for museum visitors, but eventually the black ash logs began to crumble. The cabin was closed until St. Clair Township supported the effort to refurbish the building. The project required the help of someone who had experience with log structures, and local resident Brian Rowley, who had built his own log home, offered some initial advice and direction. Museum volunteer George Klompstra and his son, Shane, then took on the project. Replacement logs were obtained from a local Sombra farmer who was tearing down his barn. With experience, creativity, and imagination, the Klompstras save this piece of living history for future generations to appreciate.

The log cabin will be open to the public starting on Victoria Day weekend as all of Canada celebrates and reflects on this nation's creation, development, history and future.



Smith cabin is lifted and moved onto the Sombra Museum site in the 1990s. *Photo submitted*