

## HERITAGE CORNER

### Victorian Tea kitchen recalls Canada's early days



Standing in the cottage kitchen at the Moore Museum's annual Victorian Tea in May, you could almost believe you were back in the days when Canada was a young nation with a lot of growing to do. The little white cottage was turned into a quaint country tea room for the day and hungry diners engaged in friendly conversation while waiting for their tea and warm scones to be delivered. The young wait staff in dust caps and crisp white cotton aprons are seen here gathered around the kitchen table waiting for museum volunteers Cathy Steward, left, and Melissa Westbrook to fill their orders.

Museum Curator Laurie Mason says the event has been greatly enhanced in the past few years due to the generous donations of beautiful china tea cups from local residents. She says the museum's wish list also includes matching creamers and sugar bowls that will further enhance the tea-time tables. Anyone who is downsizing or just looking for a good home for their china treasures can call the museum at 519-867-2020.

*Photo by Bonnie Stevenson*



#### *Canada 150 books available at Moore Museum*

Your family will enjoy *The History of Canada* colouring books now available at the Moore Museum. This new publications by the Museum Retail Consortium highlight Canada's history, with book one covering 30,000 B.C. to 1836, and book two covering 1837 to the present day. These informative books offer lots of Canadiana-centered colouring and activity pages. Each book sells for \$19.95. Copies are selling quickly and quantities are limited, so call the Moore Museum at 519-867-2020 or drop by from Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. to purchase your copies.



#### *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](http://www.mooremuseum.ca)

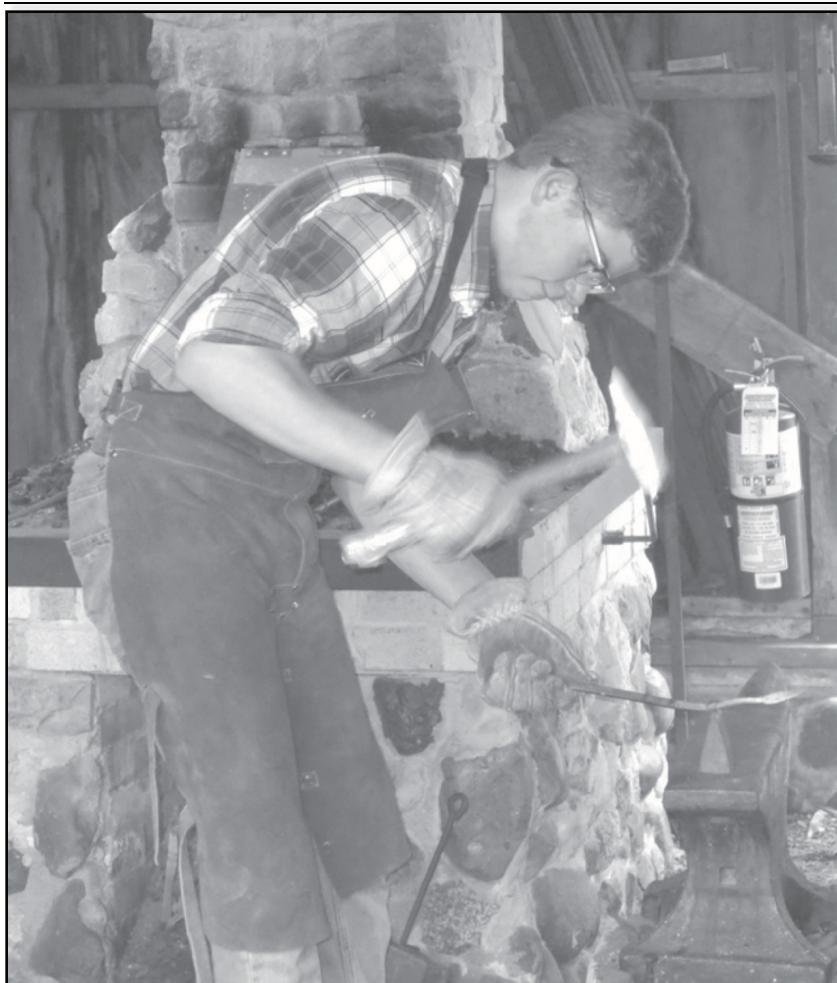


#### *Historical Beacon Bit*

In 1829, Sir John Colborne named Moore Township in memory of his commander, Sir John Moore, who was killed in Spain in 1809 at the Battle of Corunna. Moore Township had formerly been part of the original St. Clair Township, which included Sombra, Walpole Island, and the Gore of Chatham.

*-Information from third edition of History of Lambton County, published by the Lambton County Historical Society in 1973.*

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### ***Self-taught young blacksmith studies old ways the new way***

Blacksmith Ben Lester, 16, of Corunna is shown here fashioning an impossibly delicate leaf from a piece of square iron rod. After further work, the leaf became the decorative end of a plant hanger.

The self-taught 'smithy' says he learned his trade from a few books, but got most of his information off the Internet. Armed with his new knowledge, he has practiced the old, time-honoured ways of blacksmithing at a forge in his back yard.

Ben, a volunteer at the Moore Museum, got to show off his considerable skill in the Moore Museum's blacksmith shop during the recent Victorian Tea in May.

*Photo by Bonnie Stevenson*



### ***Students create Canada 150 quilts***

Many of the estimated 11,000 quilt blocks created by St. Clair Township school students from JK to Grade 8 have been fashioned into beautiful quilted wall hangings by Moore Museum volunteers.

The students were each given a fabric square and asked to make a drawing of their favourite part of living in St. Clair Township. A panel of judges chose 12 entries from the JK to Grade 3 and Grades 4 through 8 age divisions in each of the seven township schools.

The judges admit their task was made difficult by the overwhelming number of wonderful entries they had to choose from, but all entries not made into quilts will still be on display, along with the quilts, during the St. Clair Township Canada 150 event being held on July 1 at the Mooretown Sports Complex.

Right: Moore Museum assistant Amanda Moorehouse prepares one of the quilt blocks for display.

*Photo submitted*





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### Wood, Snakes and Wild Cats - early reminiscences of Sombra

The modern landscape of St. Clair Township retains very few reminders of the lush forests and large watercourses that marked its early days. Heritage St. Clair member Allan Anderson recently came across this wonderful account of the area as it was over a century ago.

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*Albert Perkins, an old resident of Sombra Township, lot 16, Concession 13, told the following story in the Weekly Sun, Toronto, in 1913.*

I spent the best part of my life working in the heavily timbered forests of Sombra. The land here is rather level and being composed principally of black loam is therefore exceedingly rich. The timber on such land generally attains immense proportions and certainly did in Sombra. For many years, I worked for a man named Dawson and his business was to prepare and ship square timber, mostly oak, to England. I hewed one stick of timber which was 42 inches square and 52 feet long. This was the largest I ever had anything to do with.

Before my time there was a stick that was five feet square and 60 feet long. The stick was found to be too big for removal from the forest. No engineering contrivance then known was strong enough to carry it to the water and it has, therefore, for more than 50 years, lain in the Sombra woods slowly but surely wearing its strength away. I have seen it hundreds of times and it looks like a great fort reaching up about as high as a man's head. A shot from an old time cannon would no more than blister it or perhaps knock a splinter off.

We also cut timber in Enniskillen, Camden, and Dawn Townships, and brought it down the Sydenham River to Wilkesport. Here it was made up into rafts and all chained together. Some of these rafts covered an acre. Tugs moved them down the river to the boats which carried the timber eastward.

In the spring of the year there were thousands of big, black snakes in the water. They appeared quite harmless and

would frequently crawl upon our slow moving rafts.

One time, more than forty years ago, the waste oil from Petrolia, Oil City, and Oil Springs came quietly down the river covering the surface of the water. This soon put an end to the snakes and thousands of their twisted bodies floated with the current towards the lakes.

All kinds of animals were found in the woods but I, being a timber worker, had not much time for hunting. The thick timber and big elm trees were ideal hunting and hiding grounds for the panther, lynx, and wild cats, and their screams were continually heard.

A daring and expert hunter named Neal had a pack of hounds and in season, when the fur was prime, he went on the trail of these animals and made considerable money out of their fur. He would get the hounds upon the tracks of the animals and, in this way, tree them. The shooting of panthers was very dangerous as they had a fashion of dropping down on their assailant.

Sometimes, I went hunting wild turkeys and was much pleased if I could bring one home at night. When evening drew near they would fly up among the thick foliage of the timber.

Before I commenced my job cutting timber, I worked for a farmer whose name was Huff. The first day, I pulled peas and went barefoot all the time. As I worked all alone I could hear a hissing every once in a while but paid no attention to it. The next day, Mr. Huff came to help with the pea pulling and when he heard the hissing he jumped back quickly saying, "Hello, here is a rattler". We got our courage up and dug the rattler out of the loose ground, and as I held its head down with a scythe, Mr. Huff took his knife and cut the skin around the rattler's neck, gave it a jerk, and the skin was off. The snake had eleven rattlers and was about four feet long.

Later on, in one day, I killed 22 rattlers; all of these were from three to four feet long.

### *Canada 150 commemorative \$10 bill packages assembled for township school students*



Photo by Bonnie Stevenson

As part of the Canada 150 initiative mounted by St. Clair Township this year, every student attending one of the seven schools within the municipality received a Canada 150 commemorative ten-dollar bill. The bill will be part of a special package that also contains information about the meaning of the graphics on the bill and a letter from the township.

A total of 1,800 packages were put together by members of the township's Canada 150 planning committee and some township staff members. They were handed out on the last week of the school year during school assemblies. **Left: Some members of the committee begin assembly of the Canada 150 packages.**