

HERITAGE CORNER

Noted historian shares the story of the St. Clair Raids

*If you had lived along the St. Clair River in the late 1830s, you would have found it a lot less pleasant and peaceful than it is today. In this two-part story, noted historian Dr. John Carter, an authority on the events of that time and the author of *Piratical Doings on the River St. Clair*, gives us a brief look at the St. Clair Raids.*

Trouble brews along the border

Troubles on the shared frontier between Canada and the United States were projected prior to the St. Clair Raids in June of 1838. As early as December of 1837, then Lieutenant-governor Sir Francis Bond Head addressed the legislature of Upper Canada, after the invasion of Navy Island by Patriot forces. He reported that; "I am informed that Americans from various quarters are hastening from the interior to join this standard of avowed plunder and revolt; that cannon and arms are publicly proceeding there; and under these circumstances, it becomes my painful duty to inform you, that in having offered to the United States the smallest provocation; without having entertained the slightest doubt of the sincerity of American alliance, the inhabitants of this province may in a few days be called upon by me to defend their lives, their properties and their liberties, from an attack by American citizens, which, with no desire to offend, I must pronounce to be unparalleled in the history of the world." This would be a precursor to the population not only in the St. Clair River region, but across Upper Canada, to begin to prepare for unrest during the next year.

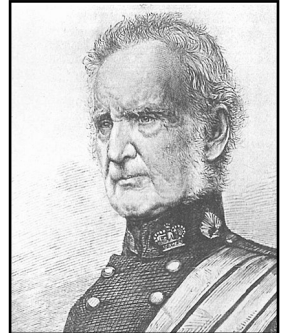
These warnings continued. In a June 2, 1838 despatch from the Earl of Durham to the British Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, Lord Glenelg, Durham wrote; "I have received information that it is intended to keep up a state of constant alarm on the whole line of the frontiers by attacks of this kind, at various and distant points. If this system be permitted, the consequences will be most serious, both as regards the population on our side of the line, and also the expense which will be incurred providing adequate means of defence."

Shortly after this, further concern was expressed by Sir John Colborne in June 8th correspondence that he had with Lord Durham. As the Commander-in-chief

of the British forces in the Canadas, Colborne warned; "...that without the zealous co-operation of the authorities of the United States, it appears impossible to protect our extensive water frontier from the incursions of the pirates now acting in small parties in this vicinity."

Eleven days later, Arthur sent a June 19 note to Lord Glenelg changing his projection; "The accounts which I continue to receive from Amherstburg and Sandwich represent the inhabitants of the western frontier as still greatly apprehending predatory incursions from the States Michigan and Ohio, where it is said assemblages of brigands are heard of from time to time at various points along the border, or at a short distance in the interior." Arthur added that reports he'd received from Colonel John Maitland "...tend to support the apprehension entertained on the western frontier, of an attack from Michigan and Ohio."

On June 23, Durham again corresponded with Glenelg. He wrote; "It seemed to me of the highest importance to bring the fair intentions of the American government to a practical test as soon as possible after receiving such hearty assurance of co-operation. I am also of the opinion that a great and salutary effect will be produced by the sight of two flags united on common effort to put an end to this unnatural excitement on the frontiers." This was after a June 11 announcement by the U.S. Secretary of War, Joel R. Poinsett, which stated that the American Department of War would employ unarmed steamers on Lake Erie and Lake Ontario, to help maintain peace on the frontier. Durham concluded his letter to Glenelg by requesting that the Secretary; "Keep up the amount of our naval and military force to the fullest possible extent during the present year." This request coincided with a June 14th order from Charles Paget, Vice-admiral and Commander-in-Chief of British naval forces in Canada, that captains were authorized to have their crews "... volunteer their services for the purpose of being employed

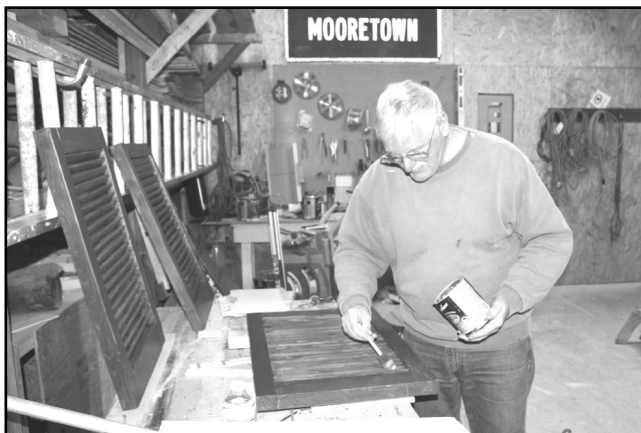


Sir John Colborne

on the lakes, for the protection of our own shores against future attempts of piracy and robbery which may be made by these hordes of buccaneers!"

It would not be long before actual events of armed incursion took place along the St. Clair River.

Museum volunteers work smart to beautify buildings



Moore Museum volunteer Leo Griffiths puts the finishing touches on shutters he created using miscellaneous pieces of wood left over from other projects at the museum. Leo's smart use of materials resulted in the beautiful shutters that now grace the main museum building.

The shutters were installed to give the museum a more welcoming façade.

Bonnie Stevenson photo

Part 2 of the
St. Clair Raids
will appear in the
August 2018 Beacon.

MORE HERITAGE CORNER

calendar highlights seasonal beauty of St. Clair Township

The beauty of St. Clair Township varies from season to season, but it is never diminished. The Moore Museum has issued a captivating photo calendar for 2019 that highlights 12 of the many scenic settings on view in the township throughout the year.

The calendar is the culmination of the museum's Canada 150 photo project, *Seasons In St. Clair*. The project invited township residents to submit photos that presented each photographer's individual idea of what makes St. Clair Township beautiful. The engaging full-colour photos that illustrate this calendar were chosen from those submitted images providing a monthly feast for the eye.

Photographers featured in the calendar include: Ben Hazzard; Jane Drummond; Lorraine

Kraayenbrink; Kai Sorensen; Bonnie Spitzig; Patty Colquhoun; Liam Hazzard; Shaun Antle; Erica Hazzard; Steven Hunt; Lauren Mullen; and Debbie Anderson.

The calendar is now on sale at the Moore Museum during summer hours of operation, *May through August, Friday through Tuesday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.*, and will be sold at upcoming events at the museum.



Model Train event rolls into Moore Museum

The Model Train event rolls into the Moore Museum on Sunday, July 8 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Train enthusiasts of all ages will enjoy watching the museum's multi-display train room come alive under the knowledgeable hands of the museum volunteers. For details about this popular event, see *Around the Township*, page 20.



Township's baseball heritage now on show at Sombra Museum

The Sombra Museum is open for the summer season and there are lots of intriguing displays and exhibits for visitors to take in.

You have a unique opportunity to add your own local baseball experiences, or just leave your name and team affiliation, at the exciting baseball exhibit that has been assembled to highlight the vibrant baseball heritage of St. Clair Township. Photos, local baseball cards, newspaper articles, and personal memories or anecdotes will continue to be accepted throughout the summer.

Other displays will include: a collection of items from the Baby Point settlement, discovered by Cliff Roy, author of *Shawanese Township: The Baby Point Settlement*; a featured exhibit about the local railway; and exhibits created by the museum's summer students, which will be displayed in the Bury House.

The Sombra Museum is now open every day from 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. until Sept. 20.

MORE HERITAGE CORNER

Can you identify this Waubuno baseball team and players?

Mystery photos, like this one of an unidentified team representing Waubuno, are currently waiting at the Sombra Museum for someone to give its players names and, perhaps, some information that will illuminate its history. So far, two similar mystery baseball team photos from St. Clair Township's rich baseball heritage have been identified and it's hoped the same can be done for several

more that are currently on display at the museum as part of its special local baseball exhibit.

To view the photos, visit the Sombra Museum at the corner of Smith Street and the St. Clair Parkway in Sombra village. You can also call the museum at 519-892-3982.

BRIGDEN FAIR AMBASSADOR CONTEST ON THE WAY

The Moore Agricultural Society is looking for some energetic, personable young women and men to participate in the 2018 Brigden Fair Ambassador contest, slated for the Brigden Fairgrounds exhibition hall on Sunday, Aug. 26 at 2 p.m. Admission is free.

If you've ever wondered what it's like to represent the fair, both locally and at the great events and conventions ambassadors get to attend during their one-year reign, stop wondering. Check out the MAS Facebook page and www.brigdenfair.ca for more information.

