

# HISTORIC GLOUCESTER

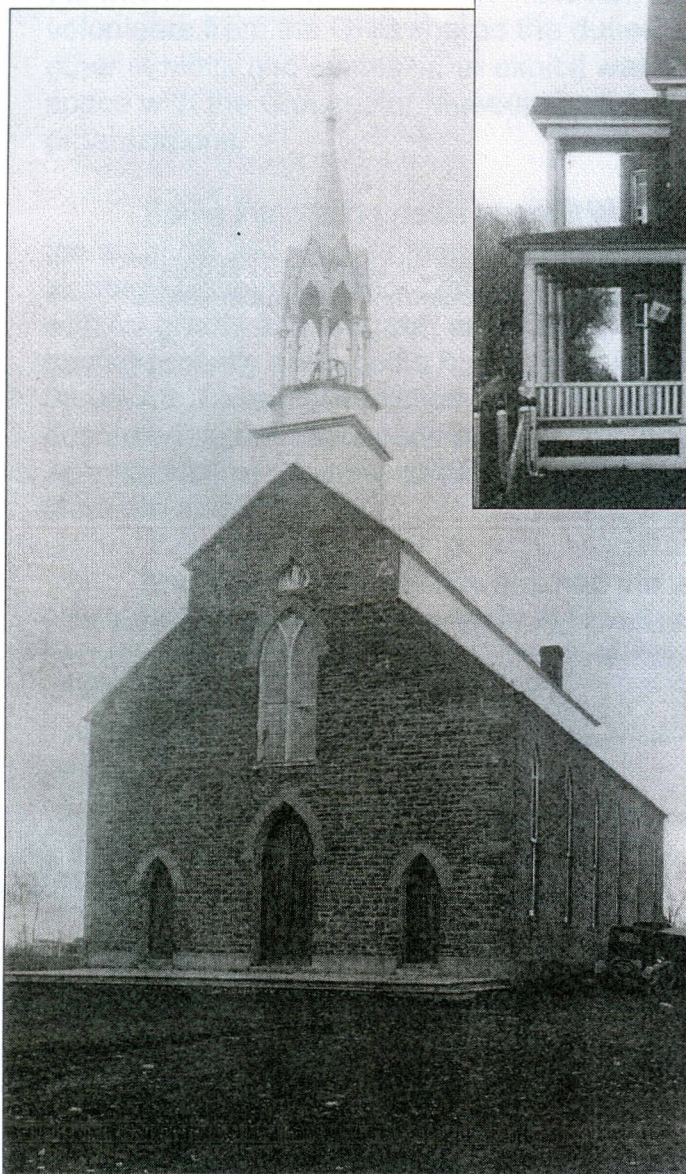
Quarterly Newsletter of

**The GLOUCESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
and The GLOUCESTER MUSEUM and ARCHIVES**

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VOLUME 2 NO. 2

FALL 2001



Our Lady of the  
Visitation Church  
and Rectory,  
many years ago

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**COVER PHOTO:**

**The cover photos** show Our Lady of the Visitation Church and Rectory on Highway 31 at South Gloucester. This is one of the oldest churches in the area and the church itself was built in 1845. The rectory dates from 1910. These photos were probably taken about 1925.

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*Historic Gloucester* is published by The Gloucester Historical Society and The Gloucester Museum and Archives. It is intended as a Newsletter to members of the Society to provide interesting articles on Gloucester's past and to keep them informed of new acquisitions by the Museum, publications available, upcoming events and other items of general interest. Comments and suggestions regarding the Newsletter are always welcome.



## President's Report

With the summer has come our usual attempt to take it easy and enjoy life. But, the vitality of the new City calls, making for summer work despite the wishes of certain members. Much of these activities have been pleasant, and the work parts show that the new City staffs are enthusiastic in their support of heritage as an integral part of maintaining and enhancing quality of life in Ottawa.

On August 6, a ceremony was held at the Rideau Canal headlocks, near the Bytown Museum. This included the annual celebration of Col By Day, the first Monday in August. This year's version also included the unveiling of a Parks Canada plaque designating the Rideau system as a Canadian Heritage River. The designation does not include new restrictions affecting private properties along the system.

We now move into September and our attendance as a small exhibitor at the International Plowing Match in Navan, September 18-22, 2001. Ten volunteers from the GHS shared the duties and were able to view some of the other exhibits and events. Our exhibit was in the City of Ottawa tent. We shared space with the Gloucester Museum and Archives and other City heritage organizations.

Some interesting news about the new City Staff... Gilles Séguin, formerly the archivist and records manager of the City of Gloucester, is now Manager, Heritage Development for Ottawa. That means that he is the one we will deal with for grants and program assistance. He is taking his new job very seriously, having recently produced a huge paper in which all heritage facilities, including museums, historical societies, archives, archaeology, etc. have been thoroughly described, and future needs projected... Another City staffer, our former curator Jennifer Vollmar, is now curator of three City museums, including the Gloucester Museum and Archives.

And finally, our new City has had the wisdom to appoint a Heritage Advisory Committee. Its mandate is broad, and includes advising Council on heritage policies and issues. The 15 members include people who have been active in many areas of local heritage. I have been fortunate in being selected for this committee. If you have any issues, or points to raise, do contact me at any time.

Guy H. Legault  
President



# OUR LADY OF THE VISITATION CHURCH

by Joan Scott

Driving along Highway 31 towards South Gloucester, you will see on your right a beautiful old stone church nestled in a tranquil oasis of trees and lawns, well back from the busy highway. For those who are not familiar with this historic building, it is the Roman Catholic church of Our Lady of the Visitation - frequently referred to as "St. Mary's." Old-time residents of the area have fond memories of it and can relate many stories about the church and parish which is one of the oldest in the area. In fact this lovely stone building predates Confederation!

Back in 1845 the Bishop of Kingston, Msgr. Remi Goulin, established South Gloucester as a mission under the guidance of Rev. F.J.Ryan as missionary priest from Bytown. Prior to this there had been missionary priests who travelled large areas of the Ottawa Valley on foot, horseback or by canoe ministering to the widely scattered faithful as best they could. At this time there was a primitive wooden Chapel on the site of the current church on Lot 28, Concession 4, Rideau Front. This chapel is said to have been in existence since 1830 and was in very poor condition. Father Ryan encouraged his parishioners to strive for a new church and they formed a committee to begin planning for it. When Most Reverend Joseph Eugene Guigues was made Bishop of Bytown, he appointed Father Thomas H. Clement as the first resident priest at Our Lady of the Visitation, with a mission also at Metcalfe (St. Catherine's). A residence for priests was built at South Gloucester and Father Clement submitted a plan, which had been made by Father Ryan for the new church, to the Bishop, who requested that it be no less than 100 feet long, 45 feet wide and at least 35 feet high. A minimum of 7 acres of land which surrounded the existing chapel was deemed necessary to provide sufficient land for the Church, the Rectory and the Cemetery.

Father Clement, his young assistant

Father Deleage and the enthusiastic parishioners worked hard for their new church and their efforts were rewarded with a superb church of Gothic architecture which is said to resemble the Monumental Church of France. Tall gothic windows grace the sides of the church while a statue of the Virgin Mary looks out from her niche high above the main doors. Inside, the church is a fitting place for peaceful prayer, designed in the elegant but simple style of churches of that period. The cost of the church was in the neighbourhood of \$4000.00 and was built to accommodate 1000 people. The cost included \$500.00 for a burial ground and a shed and yard for horses. In July 1852 the church was officially blessed. This was five years before the present Notre Dame Basilica on Sussex Street was redesigned as a cathedral for the new diocese of Bytown. The steeple at St. Mary's, with its octagon bell-tower, was completed in 1854 and the bell, manufactured in West Troy, N.Y, was installed.

Early parishioners of Our Lady of the Visitation were mostly French or Irish, and at times services were held in both languages. They were hard working farmers who felt so strongly about having their own church that they were willing not only to pray and work for it, but to give what they could from their meagre incomes to support the new church. The first records show Father Clement blessing the wedding on 19 September 1848 of Abraham Lachance, son of Alex Lachance and Reine Lyrette, and Mary Murphy, daughter of Thomas Murphy and Mary Skeffington - obviously the early parishioners were not racially biased. Brigid Labranche, daughter of Edward Labranche and Brigid Lamoureux was the first child to be baptised on 24 September, 1848 and the first funeral was for fifteen year old Jane Harney, daughter of Patrick Harney and Margaret Kilfoy. A stroll through the old cemetery just south of the church reveals the names of many of the pioneers of South Gloucester.



Over the years repairs and improvements have been made to the church property. In the 1908 Annual Report expenditures were listed for the building of a vestry; decorating of the church; a steam furnace for the church; a new gallery and 26 new pews; a water closet and bath in the presbytery; and a cow and poultry shed. These items cost \$6,827.38. The original presbytery burned in 1870 and was subsequently replaced by what was then known as the "Old Hall" but which is also now gone. A new parish hall will soon be built to meet the needs of a reinvigorated, growing parish which has resulted from the increase in families moving to the area. A substantial rectory was built close to the church in 1910 and this remains the residence of the parish priest. The old stations of the cross, erected in 1881 were replaced in 1908. In 1968 the church was completely rewired, redecorated and carpeted throughout with parishioners helping with the work where possible. An old Estey organ was moved from the choir loft to the sanctuary and electrified. Near it stands the 100-year old baptistry. The church roof was repaired in 1979; the Belfry repaired in 1980; and the inside of the church painted in 1981. In 1970, on the occasion of the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the church, a plaque in memory of former pastors was installed inside the church.

There have been a number of schools associated with this parish, some of them being common schools. St. Mary's School, South Gloucester, School Section #1, is situated on Lot 30, Concession 4, Rideau Front, just south of the church at the corner of Regional Road #8. In 1866 some 32 pupils attended the log school. A one-room frame school was built in 1889 and in 1950 a new two-room brick school was built with additions being made in 1958, 1966 and 1969. Bogtown School, School Section 4, 5 and 12 - also known as Kerwin's School - existed on Lot 12, Concession 3, Rideau Front from the early 1880's until 1924. The Bowesville School, School Section #5, Gore Lot 12 between Concession 2 and 3 Rideau Front, was originally built of logs around 1860, later replaced by a one-room school which was subsequently replaced by a two-room brick building in 1905.

This served the community until 1950 when it was expropriated to make room for the Uplands Airport expansion. Another school on the Limebank Road, School Section #2, Lot 25, Concession 2, Rideau Front, was shown as a log building in 1863 but replaced by a frame school in 1875 with as many as 60 pupils at that time. There was also Roman Catholic Separate School No. 2 in a log building until 1892 when it was replaced and served the community until 1966. This school was known as the Harney School, Waller School, Osgoode School and then St. Patrick's School, Osgoode. It was situated in Manotick Station. Johnston's Corners School was a little log school built in 1838 near what is now the Rideau Carleton Raceway. By 1867 it had become too small and a new one was erected south of the original. This one was also of logs but was replaced by a brick building in 1880 on the same property. When this was expropriated by the Department of Transport, a new two-room school was erected in 1959 on the Rideau Road to the east.

Our Lady of the Visitation church and parish, has always been a very vibrant part of South Gloucester which is one of the oldest communities in the area, next to Billings Bridge. Highway 31, where the church is located, was originally a main thoroughfare known as the Bytown-Prescott Stagecoach Road. The old village of Bowesville, prior to its expropriation to make way for the airport expansion, was part of the parish and had a chapel there from 1879 to 1905. Parishioners also came from many of the surrounding areas such as Osgoode, Metcalfe and Billings Bridge. Father George Prud'homme was coach and manager of the Greely Hockey Team in 1916. The Holy Name Society for Men and the Catholic Women's League were at one time very active but now the dominant force in the parish is the parish council which acts as an advisory body to help run the parish. Still in existence are the St. Vincent de Paul Society and the Charter Council Knights of Columbus 8092. For many years St. Mary's was famous for its July 1<sup>st</sup> picnics. Over 2000 people attended these events. Prizes and trophies were awarded. There was band music, food, games and dancing.

One year there was a tug of war between RCMP "A" Division and the Ottawa Police Force for a handsome cup donated by A.Goulet and which was won by the RCMP. Another year there was a baseball game between St. Mary's and St. Thomas Aquinas of Billings Bridge. According to reports in the Ottawa Journal, many prominent people attended and enjoyed these festivities along with parishioners, neighbours and friends from far and wide.

Today the parish of Our Lady of Visitation continues, under the direction of Father Bill Lunney, to minister to the people of South Gloucester. The church community, though smaller in geographic size than it used to be is once again growing in population. It is still a very active one and the old church remains a quiet respite in the busy life of the new city of Ottawa, reminding us of the fervent pioneers who, despite poverty and hardships, struggled to build this beautiful church so that they might have a worthy place of worship for many years to come.

#### References

- 1) Daley, Michael - *140<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Booklet, 1845-1985, Our Lady of the Visitation Parish*
- 2) Ottawa Journal, various articles

#### Pastors and Priests of Our Lady of the Visitation Church

- 1848-1850 - Father Francis Clement, O.M.I.
- 1848-1853 - Father John Regis Deleage, O.M.I.
- 1854-1855 - Father Antoin Paillier, O.M.I.
- 1852-1854 - Father Francis Coopman, O.M.I.
- 1855-1869 - Father Thomas O'Boyle, O.M.I.
- 1861-1869 - Father John O'Brien
- 1870-1872 - Father Patrick Killoran
- 1871-1875 - Father Joseph Francoeur
- 1875-1893 - Father John E. McGuire
- 1896-1907 - Father James Charles Dunn
- 1907-1923 - Msgr. G. D. Prud'homme, P.D.
- 1923-1945 - Father Francis Corkery
- 1945-1968 - Canon John Patrick Tompkins
- 1968-1973 - Father Michael Hurtubise
- 1973-1973 - Father Joseph Francis Andrew
- 1973-1974 - Father M. A. Minvielle
- 1974-1978 - Father Victor Chateauvert, M.S.F.
- 1978-1980 - Father Joseph Audet, M.S.F.
- 1980-1980 - Father Arthur Ockwood, M.S.F.
- 1980-1981 - Father Patrick Lorand, O.M.I.
- 1981-1982 - Father Thomas Allen Riopelle
- 1982-1987 - Father Francis X. Johnson, S.J.
- 1982-1987 - Father Joseph T. E. Muldoon
- 1987-1991 - Father G. McCormack
- 1991-1992 - Father J. Whalen
- 1992- - Father William Lunney



Bonanza Creek where gold was first discovered and panned for gold, like the miners 100 years ago.

It is my hope to bring some of William Ogilvie's experiences to you through this exhibit so that you will gain a better understanding of his role in shaping both our community's heritage and our country's heritage. A Renaissance man to be sure, William Ogilvie was a husband and father, a surveyor and explorer, an administrator and governor, a writer, a historian, a photographer, and a Gloucester pioneer.

By studying the story of one man, this biographical exhibit is also meant to remind people, that every individual, through their experiences and stories, has contributed and is contributing to shaping our community's identity. And as museums, it is our job to preserve that collective memory of the communities in which we live for our future generations.

### **SUMMER ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THE COLLECTIONS**

by Geri Laird, Collections Officer

Listing, lifting, sorting, sewing! It was a busy summer in the collection storage area of the Museum this summer. Lots of progress was made in collections care.

With the help of Carolyn Wells, the summer assistant, the Museum's artifact collection was totally inventoried and re-

organized thematically. A location binder was then created, listing every object on the storage shelves. Now artifacts have an assigned place based on systematic principles. Even the book collection is now shelved according to year of donation!

To free up existing shelf space, four, large, wall-screens were erected so that oversized tools like cross-cut saws and rakes could be stored suspended. The hanging clothing collection got special attention too. Carolyn sewed about 40 costume covers for all the clothing in the collection that could be safely hung. Brand new, jumbo, metal cabinets were then purchased as closets for these hanging textiles.

A number of artifacts were sent out to professional curators for cleaning, stabilizing or repairing: a plaster wall plaque, a framed hair wreath, 25 books, 2 maps, a War Bonds poster. All have returned much improved.

Excitingly, the collection continues to grow and get public recognition. Several donations came to the Museum this summer: two official embossing presses used by the Township of Gloucester, a Robillard's Dairy bottle, Plante Dairy bottle caps and tokens, and several Gloucester Police uniforms and badges. In September, Gloucester's ice-cutting artifacts will be featured in the City of Ottawa's heritage section at the International Plowing Match in Navan, and thousands of people will have a chance to enjoy them.

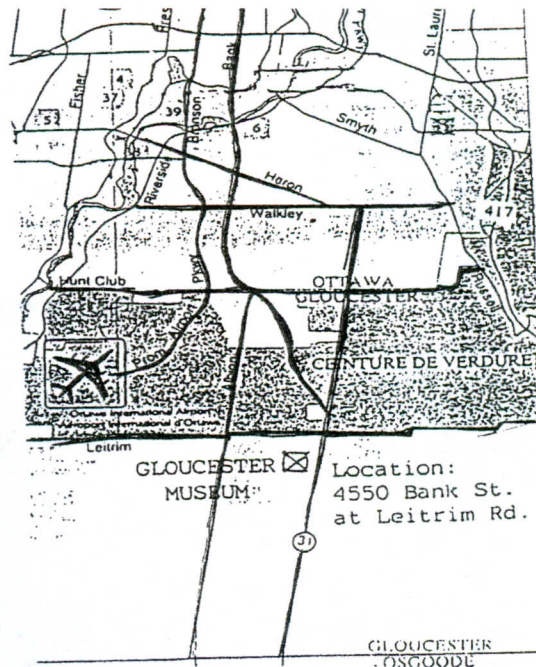
Right: Jeremy Morrison and Jennifer Rowberry are assisted in cutting the opening ribbon by William Ogilvie descendents' Jean Christeira Ogilvie and Jimmy Blackburn





**BOOKS AVAILABLE FROM THE  
GLOUCESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY:**

- A History of Gloucester Historical Society*  
by Grace Johnson.....\$ 2.00
- Belden Map of Gloucester, 1879*.....\$ 5.00
- Billings Bridge: My Village, My Life*  
by Gerard and Bernard Pelot.....\$20.00
- Blackburn-Glen Ogilvie:  
Centennial History*  
by Anna Elliott.....\$ 2.00
- Bowesville: A Place to Remember*  
by Grace Johnston.....\$15.00
- Carlsbad Springs/Ramsayville Branch  
East Carleton Women's Institute  
1934-1994*.....\$ 4.00
- Gloucester Roots*  
by Lois Kemp.....\$20.00
- Memories of the Lockstations*.....\$ 4.00
- Milk/Cream Produce-Distributors in  
Gloucester 1892-1975*  
by Grace Johnson.....\$10.00
- Valley Views*  
by Nicol Mackie.....\$10.00



***If you have memories of life in Gloucester or stories of schools or families from early days, and would like to share them, please give us a call. Artifacts and photographs of yesteryear are always welcome additions to the Museum.***

***Call us at 822-2076 to talk about it!***

**About the wooden bicycle (see front cover) -**

In 1898 James Blair, a 17-year old who lived in Gloucester on the present site of Ritchie Feed & Seed store off Innes Road, built himself a wooden bicycle which he rode all over the farm and to the Byward Market in Ottawa. This amazing bicycle is in the Gloucester Museum.



**GLOUCESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY - Phone/Fax 822-2076**

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**IF YOU HAVE NOT YET RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP, OR IF YOU WISH TO  
BECOME A NEW MEMBER, PLEASE COMPLETE THE FORM BELOW AND SEND IT  
IN WITH YOUR CHEQUE. STILL ONLY \$10.00 PER YEAR OR \$40.00 FOR A LIFE  
MEMBERSHIP!**

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**Gloucester Historical Society**  
Société historique de Gloucester  
Membership/Adhésion 2001

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