
COMMANDA GENERAL STORE MUSEUM

NEWSLETTER

Edition #5

www.commandamuseum.ca

January 2024



MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD MEMBERS

Museums matter because they are the gatekeepers of the past for both present and future generations. They are the crucial link that keeps our history alive and relevant in today's society. Without museums, knowledge of the past would be lessened and the perspectives of today would never be challenged. These institutions connect the individual, as well as the community to people and events of the past, all the while fostering awe and inspiration.

You may find it difficult to relate to people of the long ago past, but when we see a letter they wrote in that beautiful, swirling script...a soldier of the Boer War describing the events and battle strategies...and ending with a plaintive desire to be home to meet his new son, and get the fields

ready for plowing...your heart and your head are transported, back in time.

We may live in a era with incredible technology and cultures, but human problems remain human problems.

Museums are the protectors of stories, traditions and knowledge being passed down, from generation to generation. One only has to look at the Egyptian tablet at the British Museum - the world's oldest documented complaint - to see that we are not so different from our ancestors (for the record , the complaint was about the delivery of the wrong grade of copper).

Large museums, like the ROM or the Museum of History are impressive and fascinating, but it is the small museums that tend to foster more connections. Those housed in old houses, barns or cabins often hold the most relevant, intimate stories of local lore.

Whether your roots in this community are two hundred years deep or you are a brand new transplant, you can immerse yourself and your spirit in the past that is so rich with tales of successes, setbacks, and the pure joy of living. It wasn't all hardships; there were Tea Dances Fall Fairs, the brand new CNE , fiddle contests ,horse shoes and handlebar moustaches! But, how could we remember and imagine without seeing a dainty pair of worn out, beaded dancing slippers from 1860 ? Or, an elaborate lieutenant's jacket from the war of 1812? (People were much smaller then!)

So, on behalf of our sister Museum in Nipissing.....we cordially invite all and small to visit us next season. And remember - we have the creamiest milkshakes in the region!

*Wishing you all a very Happy New Year.
Board Members of Commanda Museum*

OUR GENEALOGY PROJECT

After a short break, 705BLACKFLY.COM is resuming production of our genealogy videos. Stay tuned to our social media for more on that!

If you haven't heard of Commanda Museum's new (and ongoing) exhibit, let us introduce you to our "Genealogy Exhibit". By capturing the verbal history of our locals, especially our seniors, the past seems more relevant and alive.

We have recently come across some cassette recordings of local people, recorded 25 years ago, which will form part of our Exhibit.

We are looking for participants, stories (verbal or written), local history books, etc. to add to our Exhibit and to add to our Resource Centre. If you are willing to participate or have books or stories you would like to form part of the Exhibit, kindly contact us.

Here are some further, edited, anecdotes, from our Genealogy Exhibit participants:

"My grandmother, Irene, was born at the Commanda Museum. Her father, Col. James Arthurs, built the store in 1885 and he also built a family cottage on Lake Commanda. My grandmother and mother told me so many stories about the Commanda Museum".

- Steven Holman, 2023, owner of the Arthurs cottage on Lake Commanda*

"My great-grandparents, Adam and Victoria Grabowski, came to Canada in 1874 and originally settled in Guelph but soon moved to the Barrett Road, eventually settling on the Alsace Road (because there was not enough free land on the Barrett Road for the adult sons - IMAGINE!!!!). My grandparents, Alexander and Mary Ann Grabowski had adjoining land on the Alsace Road. I now live in my great-grandparents original home (built in 1878). We moved into this property in the 1980s not knowing, until after we purchased it, that it originally was my great-grandparents homestead".

- Judy Merrick, 2023, living on the original homestead*

THE HISTORY OF NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

New Year's resolutions didn't begin with the ball drop in New York's Time's Square! Ancient Babylonians are said to have been the first people to make New Year's resolutions about 4,000 years ago. During a religious festival known as Akitu, the Babylonians crowned a new king or reaffirmed their loyalty to the reigning king. In what could be called a form of a New Year's resolution, they made a vow to the gods to pay their debts and return any objects they had borrowed. If the Babylonians kept their word, their gods would bestow favor on them for the coming year. If not, they would fall out of the gods' favor.

A similar practice could be found in ancient Rome after emperor Julius Caesar established January 1st as the beginning of the new year. Named for Janus, January had special significance for the Romans. Believing that Janus symbolically looked backwards into the previous year and ahead into the future, the Romans offered sacrifices to the deity and made promises of good conduct for the coming year.

For early Christians, in 1740 the English clergyman John Wesley, founder of Methodism, created the Covenant Renewal Service, most commonly held on New Year's Eve or New Year's Day. They included readings from Scriptures and hymn singing, and served as a spiritual alternative to the rowdy celebrations associated with New Year's Eve.

While the roots of New Year's resolutions are religious, the practice today is mostly secular. Whether or not you make a resolution - let's all improve our lives in 2024!



COMMANDA MUSEUM

PAST... PRESENT... FUTURE

www.commandamuseum.ca



DONATE

SUPPORT US AS WE COMPLETE
IMPROVEMENTS TO OUR MUSEUM

KEEP
HISTORY
ALIVE

The Commanda Museum had record-breaking attendance this summer as the community embraced our educational tours, new Internet Cafe, and gift shop featuring the work of local artisans. As we look forward to 2024, we are appealing to the community to help fund the restoration of sections of the building. Your donations will help us preserve the history of the region and serve the community. Tax receipts will be given for donations.

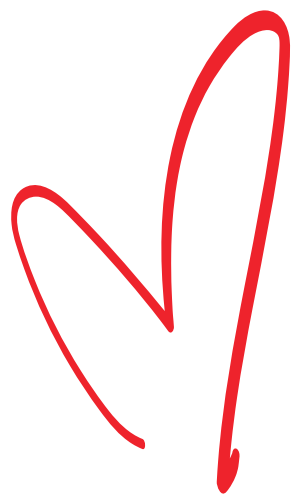
Donate Via E-Transfer
commandamuseum@gmail.com



www.commandamuseum.ca

Thank You For Your Support!





*See You
In
February!*

