
COMMANDA GENERAL STORE MUSEUM

NEWSLETTER

Edition #6

www.commandamuseum.ca

February 2024



MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD MEMBERS

Despite it finally looking (and feeling) like winter out there, our thoughts on the Board of Directors has long turned to spring and summer plans. Before we talk about some of those plans, I wanted to share a personal story with you to explain why the genealogy exhibit is so important to me and to hopefully encourage you to share your stories for future generations

In the 1950s and 1960s (when long distance phone calls were so expensive that my grandmother saved all year for the Christmas Day call "home"), my grandparents exchanged reel-to-reel tapes with the family in England. In Canada, the family would gather, share their news, their stories and sing some songs and mail the tape off to England.

Months later that tape would be returned from England with more news, stories and songs. Recently, a distant cousin in England found and was able to retrieve some of my families' recordings (despite the many recordings over and over it). For the first time ever, I heard my paternal grandfather's stories, songs and laughter. Having only remembered my grandmother, and my father and his 13 siblings, hearing my grandfather for the first time so clearly filled in a piece of my father's family, that I didn't even realize I was missing. The recording, of my grandfather and so many other family members, who are long gone, made me cry and I can't tell you how grateful I am to have been able to have heard these voices from long ago.

For those of you who already been filmed, and provided photos and documents, we thank you and hope you enjoyed it as much as we have. The stories of courage, hardship, adventure, pain, loss and joy brings tears to our eyes as we participate in the interview and filming process. We did not know when we started this project that it would be so emotional! As part of the Genealogy Exhibit, we are also collecting family books...if you have a copy that we can copy, or you wish to donate, please let us know.

We currently have over 30 local history books in our reference library (and will have some for sale in our gift shop) but we are always looking for additions. If you have a local history/family book, let us know and if don't have it already in our reference library we would love to try and obtain a copy of it. Again, we want to save these books before they go out of print and are no longer available.

We hope the Genealogy Exhibit continues to grow and we invite one and all to share your stories with us. If you don't want to be filmed, we can do an oral interview, or we would even love to just receive your written stories. Please don't let this all be lost.....contact us!

We're looking for your stories!

The Commanda Museum is looking for residents or past residents of the region to share their stories for our genealogy video series. Our goal is to preserve the memories of our seniors for future generations.

For more information email:
MUSEUMINCOMMANDA@GMAIL.COM

TO SEE PREVIOUS VIDEOS GO TO
WWW.COMMANDAMUSEUM.CA



"My great-grandfather, Niklaas Rennette, was 53 years old when he came to this area from Belgium in 1885. He left his wife and 8 children in Belgium so that he could get a homestead established before his family joined him. In February of 1886 my great-grandfather wrote a letter to his family describing the conditions he was living in..."I moved into the root cellar. My bed is made out of 4 bags filled with tree leaves and find moss, a blanket and 3 coats...I've got plenty of room 8' long 10' wideThere's lots to accomplish yet I'm now cutting trees for the house....When I lay me down at night about 9 o'clock I think about you and all those living in that house. I'm up at 6 o'clock and thank God for another day and for you my dear wife and children, that God will bless you in all your ways and endeavors. .."

Rod Rennette, 2023 - living on the original homestead

Please come and join us as we celebrate in 2024 - Pancake Breakfast in April, Canada Day and Annual Opening Day Celebration on July 1st, our HUGE 1st Annual Community Festival in August, our ongoing celebration of 150 Year Anniversary of the Old Nipissing Road, afternoon teas, internet café, the best milkshakes ever, croissants and coffee and oh so much more!

COMMANDA MUSEUM

COMING IN 2024

PANCAKE
BREAKFAST

—
APRIL 14

VENDOR'S
MEETING

—
MAY 5

AFTERNOON
TEAS

—
BEGINS MOTHER'S
DAY - MAY 12

CANADA DAY
CELEBRATION

—
JULY 1

SUMMER
FEST

—
AUGUST 17

CHILI
DINNER

—
OCTOBER 19

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BLACK HISTORY MONTH

February is Black History Month and one cannot honour our past without acknowledging all significant contributions to that past. While most of the early settlers to this area were not Black, Black veterans of the War of 1812 received land grants in Oro Township. Also, did you know that the first person of African heritage, Mathieu Da Costa, came to Canada in 1604 along with a group of French explorers? Mr. Da Costa was a multilingual interpreter and a valuable member of the French expedition. The Commanda Museum acknowledges and honours the contributions of Black Canadians to this amazing country.

01 FEBRUARY - 01 MARCH

**BLACK
HISTORY
MONTH**



YESTERDAY - TODAY - TOMMOROW

THE HISTORY OF VALENTINE'S DAY

The holiday we know today got its name from a man named Valentine. While a few different stories are told about what he did to inspire the holiday, many people believe he's celebrated for his role as a Roman priest who helped couples secretly get married.

As the story goes, Emperor Claudius II of Rome—who reigned from the year 268 A.D. to 270 A.D.—banned marriage because he thought unmarried men made better soldiers. Valentine thought this was unfair and decided to break the rules and perform marriages anyway. He kept the ceremonies quiet, but he was eventually caught and later killed on February 14 of the year 270 for defying the emperor. Right before he died, Valentine supposedly wrote the first-ever “valentine” to his jailer’s daughter, with whom he’d fallen in love. Later, in the 5th century, Pope Gelasius I declared the day of his death as St. Valentine’s Day.

ANCIENT MATCHMAKERS

The celebration surrounding this day actually has roots in an ancient pagan festival that started centuries before Valentine was even alive. Held in Rome each February, part of the event focused on bringing new couples together.

During the festivities, it’s said that boys drew the names of girls from a container. The pairs would stay together during the festival, and some would actually get married when the festival was over. After Pope Gelasius I created St. Valentine’s Day, the festival turned into a Christian celebration that focused on the saint. The Catholic Church doesn’t recognize St. Valentine’s Day on its calendar anymore, but people throughout the world still celebrate the day.



COMMANDA MUSEUM

PAST... PRESENT... FUTURE

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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 March!