



Huron County Historical Society

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Executive for 2011-12

David Armstrong	president	519-524-1156	Rhea Hamilton-Seeger	councilor
Ralph Laviolette	secretary	519-565-2454	Brock Vodden	councilor
Mac Campbell	treasurer	519-524-7935	Pam Stanley	councilor
Ralph Laviolette	newsletter, Notes	519-565-2454		
Elaine Snell	membership	519-523-9531		

Next Society Meeting.....

Wednesday, April 18th, 2012

**General meeting and Dinner,
Exeter United Church,
42 James St, Exeter**

**5:00pm Guided Tour of the newly renovated
Exeter Town Hall, 322 Main Street South
(parking on street or at the back of the
building)**

**5:30pm Convene at nearby Exeter United
Church for a Roast Beef dinner at 6:00pm
with trimmings and dessert, \$20 per
person payable at the meeting**

7:00pm Brief business meeting and update

**7:30pm Presentation by Bob Heywood –
Celebrating the 125th Anniversary of Exeter
Town Hall and the 150th Anniversary of the
Exeter United Church**

**8:00pm Guided Tour of the Exeter United
Church**

**Visitors and guests are welcome to any
portion of the evening.....**

**Please call Ralph Laviolette 519-565-2454 for
dinner reservations.**

At the last meeting.....

On November 16, 2011, members and guests gathered at the Huron County Museum auditorium in Goderich for a presentation about Heritage Trees by Edith George, advisor to the Ontario Urban Forest Council and past director of the Weston Historical Society, and Jack Radecki, arborist and Exec Director of the Ontario Urban Forest Council.

Ms George and Mir Radecki gave a detailed presentation about the identification and preservation of heritage trees in Ontario, particularly poignant to Huron County at this

Archives Facilities project.....

Members will recall that in 2009, the Society undertook a project to make recommendations for a competent storage solution for the many public and private family and other collections in the County.

The working group that attended many of visits to neighboring archives reported its findings to the November 16 meeting and is now finalizing its recommendations for a discussion at the upcoming general meeting.

Membership renewal....

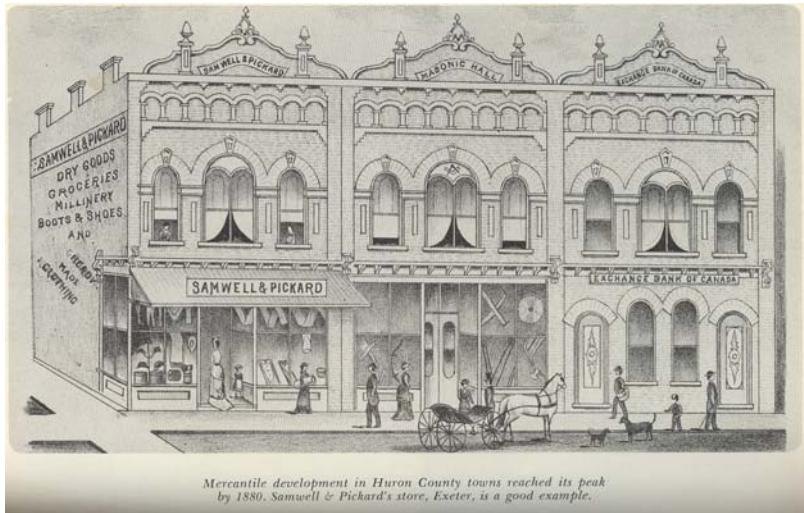
If you received this newsletter by mail, the date shown above your name on the address label is the year to which your membership is paid up, according to our records. Call or email us if your records differ. If you are in arrears, consider this a reminder that the membership fees are now \$20. To reserve your member's copy of Historical Notes, keep your dues up to date. Past copies of the Notes are available at the Museum, \$8.00 per copy.

Note our current address for mail and memberships:

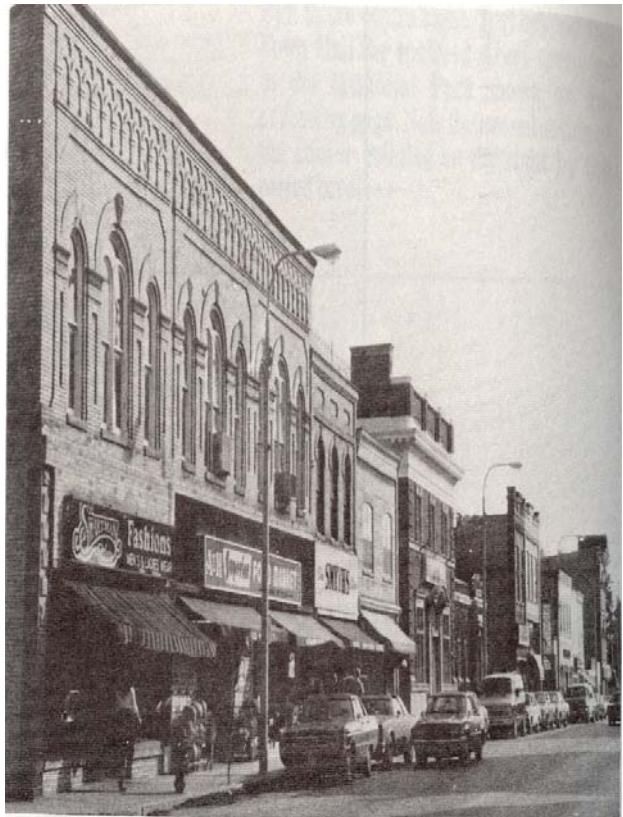
HCHS, Box 3, Goderich ON, N7A 3Y5.

Historical Notes progress.....

The 2012 edition of Huron Historical Notes is now underway. It will feature the celebrations planned for the 125th anniversary of the village of St Helens, near Lucknow, in the north-west part of the County. Notes featuring the village of Egmondville and another Pot Pourri edition are also in the works. If you have an interesting anecdote to share, or a story of historic interest to tell, please contact editor Ralph Laviolette.



Mercantile development in Huron County towns reached its peak by 1880. Samwell & Pickard's store, Exeter, is a good example.



Brief notes about Exeter.....

Settlers to the current town-site came into the Huron Tract as early as in other areas along the London Road but flooding from the Ausable River impeded the first settlers staying. The Willis family arrived in 1832, the McConnell family in 1833. McConnell built a sawmill on the river, then a gristmill, with funds raised for blazing a trail from London. Due to the unpredictable river flooding, communities arose instead at Centralia, Rodgersville and Devon. In 1843, settlement picked up – Saunders arrived, Carling began a general store and tannery and Pickard brought a mercantile business and started a flourmill and other industry.

McConnell's Mill about one mile north of town became Francistown. Both sites amalgamated in 1873 as the village of Exeter. Belden's Atlas of 1879 recorded that it was "One of the loveliest villages in the western section of the province." In 1870, the London, Huron and Bruce built a railway station, a school appeared, and the Divisional Court was moved from Crediton. A building boom ensued. Entrepreneurial settlers – Trivitt, Southcott, Atcheson, Trick and Drew - were also early business starters. The Exeter Times was begun in 1873, the Advocate in 1881.

Around that time, there was an Exchange Bank, a Molsons Bank, the Verity Manufacturing plant, seven general stores, wagon and carriage factories, seven lawyers, four doctors, woolen and flax mills and a driving park.

Exeter was one of the last towns in Huron County to incorporate, in 1951. It continued to grow as RCAF Centralia began and it continues to grow rivaling the county seat, Goderich, in population and business activity.

Sources: Scott's 1966 History of Huron County, Belden's 1879 Atlas of Huron County.