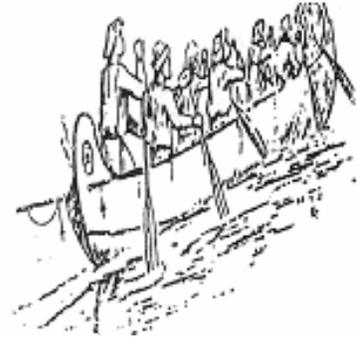

GLENGARRY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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next issue: May 2008

NEXT MEETING

Date: April 3, 2008
Time: 8:00 p.m.
Location: Alexandria United Church-on-the-Hill
Topic: The Rivermen: Echoes of Lake St. Francis



Last Chance to Renew

If you have a yearly membership and you haven't yet renewed, this will be your **Last Newsletter** !

ALL yearly memberships were due on **February 1, 2008**. You can renew at any meeting or mail your renewal to:

The Glengarry Historical Society
Box 416
Alexandria ON K0C 1A0

Current Membership dues are:
Single Membership: \$15.00
Family Membership: \$20.00
Lifetime Membership: \$200.00

The Rivermen:

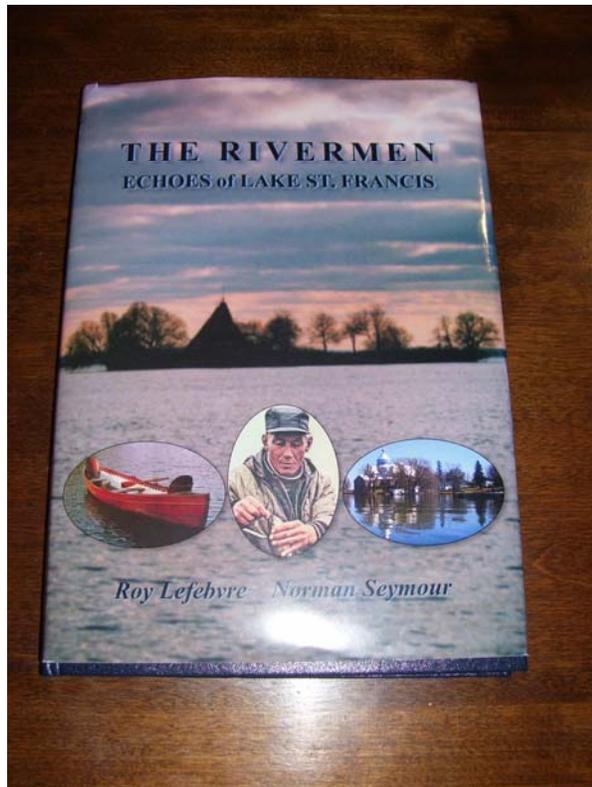
Echoes of Lake St. Francis

by Rosemary O'Flaherty

Roy Lefebvre of Lancaster and Norman Seymour of Toronto, but formerly of Cornwall, have teamed up in this enthralling book to share their memories of life on Lake St. Francis where the St. Lawrence River widens just east of Cornwall. In the process, they have included the history of some of the lake's feeder rivers like the Raisin ("The Amazin' Raisin"), the attendant Williamstown fishery, and the Salmon. The book is indeed an exercise in the historical geography of the folks that inhabited its banks, the folks that made their living from the river and the myriad species of wild life found there.

Lefebvre and Seymour let the story unfold in anecdotal fashion with reminders of both the great and not-so-great hotels, dance halls and resorts that once graced the islands of the lake. Among the many photos included are those of Stanley Island's Algonquin Hotel, the Hopkins Point Hotel, the Winfrey's

Island dance hall and the International Hotel at Dundee clearly showing the international boundary line between Canada and the U.S. It seems that you could sit at a table with your buddy and while you were in Canada, he was in the U.S. Closer to the Ontario mainland are, among others, South Lancaster's Moosehead Inn, the old Summers Hotel and the Edgewater Inn of Summerstown. Perhaps some of you can share your memories with us of these once-popular spots.



The co-authors have provided detailed analyses of the many types of fish found in Lake St. Francis: sturgeon, eel, musky, pickerel and I would be very remiss, of course, if I did not mention that they devoted considerable space to the celebrated Lancaster perch, complete with a recipe. (As an aside, please forgive my ignorance for any mistakes in

the terminology that follows.....I am neither a fish nor a duck type person, other than as a consumer, and then usually from the IGA !). The authors have provided detailed descriptions of each type (breed? species?) of fish along with their habitats, spawning habits and personality traits, as well as where they can best be found and the various and often ingenious methods of catching them. Lefebvre and Seymour present a veritable Who's-Who of the local fishermen who became experts in dealing with specific types of fish.

The second section of the book is devoted to waterfowl, the hunting clubs as well as the art and utility of the decoy. Just as the geography and topology of the lake has changed, so too have the species of waterfowl found on and around Lake St. Francis. As with the fish, the authors delve into the different types of waterfowl, their habits and the variety of methods used to hunt them.

For the uninitiated, like me, you will find this to be an absolutely fascinating read. Here is a plethora of history swathed in a good story. It is a history of a way-of-life that has not quite vanished but has changed in unrecognizable ways. It has inevitably adapted to environmental and societal change. Water levels rise and fall, islands appear and disappear, while throughout, technology has changed and in many cases revolutionized equipment and tools.

We will have copies available for sale at the meeting of The Rivermen: Echoes of Lake St. Francis: \$35.00 for a soft copy, \$55.00 for a hard copy or you can pick a copy up at the Second Time Around Book Store on Main Street in Alexandria.

Team Lefebvre & Seymour

by Rosemary O'Flaherty

Only a great team could have produced such a great book! It will be our pleasure to welcome Mr. Roy Lefebvre of South Lancaster as our speaker on Thursday evening, April 3rd. Unfortunately, Mr. Norman Seymour will not be able to join us, living as he does in the wilds of Toronto and there is no-one among us unkind enough to make anyone “do the 401” until April’s dead.

Dr. Seymour, now retired, is a professional biologist who taught biology at St. Francis-Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia throughout most of the past 3 decades. Quoting from the St. F-X website, “Ever since his uncle took him hunting as a young boy among the reed beds of the islands of the St. Lawrence River, Norm Seymour's passion has been ducks. He has hunted them, studied them, researched them and taught about them.” In his 2002 book, Living A Dream: The Education of a Duck Hunter, Seymour presents for the lay person his scientific findings about waterfowl and how to manage populations much as he did for many years in his classes.

Originally a native of Cornwall, Seymour has, and still does, maintain a summer home on Hamilton Island beside his beloved Lake St. Francis where he can continue studying his main passion, black ducks.

Mr. Roy Lefebvre, who will speak to us on April 3rd, hails from Williamstown where he grew up on the Raisin River and was a regular visitor to Lake St. Francis, a living embodiment of the Rivermen you will meet in his book. A graduate of CharLan, Roy left the area for many years to pursue a career in aviation but returned some 12 years ago when he settled in South Lancaster. Besides his interest in the lake and life on

the river, Mr. Lefebvre became interested in local history, legend and lore. He has done a very creditable job of weaving his various threads of interest into the fabric of the book.

As luck would have it, Lefebvre and Seymour met during one of Seymour’s book signings at Joan Levy-Earle’s Sanctuary Book Store in Cornwall. Comparing notes, they decided to team up and, based on their combined memories and experiences, produced this gem of a book.

At the meeting, Roy will take us through the making of the book, upon which I am sure you will agree, they have done a bang-up job with the help of some of our GHS members such as David Anderson, Dane Lanken, Joan Levy-Earle and Tim Julien, to name but a few, as well as a host of others, too numerous to mention here, but detailed in the book’s Acknowledgements.

Slaying the Sleights

by Rosemary O’Flaherty

In the last issue, I promised to have more on sleights in this April issue. As those of you who reside in Eastern Ontario are well aware, we have had a rather difficult winter (is that the understatement or the year, or what?).

Therefore, in the interest of not being assassinated by my fellow GHS members, I have decided to defer further discussion of sleights to a more propitious season when the when memories of March 8th have faded just a tad and our tired, old muscles have recovered from shoveling and shoveling and shoveling and shoveling !!

Dictionary of Glengarry Biography

A précis of Royce MacGillivray's prospectus

Royce MacGillivray, native Glengarry historian and former professor at the University of Waterloo, has recently completed the manuscript of the above biographical dictionary. The GHS will provide further details of publication in the near future.

The manuscript, which extends to about 850,000 words, contains the lives of nearly 1,600 people of historical significance closely associated with Glengarry County. These biographies cover most occupations found in Glengarry extending for the 230 years covering the arrival of the first settlers, the highland immigration and out-migration from the Province of Quebec up to the year 2000. Often frustrated by the limited economic opportunities available in Eastern Ontario, the Dictionary also includes former Glengarrians who relocated to other areas in Canada and the United States as well as those who achieved positions of some eminence in various fields such as: Mackenzie King, the "Big Bishop" Alexander Macdonell, Ralph Connor, John Sandfield Macdonald and Claude Nunney, to name just a few.

In addition, the Dictionary also addresses some perhaps lesser known and lesser studied areas of Glengarry history; for example, railroad building in the 19th century, Glengarry's black Loyalists and the often overlooked fact that in the first decades of settlement,

Scots Gaelic was the first language in Old Glengarry.

For a sneak preview you can check the 2005 Autumn issue of Ontario History which contains a selection of 6 lives from the dictionary. For further information on publication details, please contact GHS members David Anderson, Dane Lanken or Allan Macdonell.

Royce MacGillivray is a graduate of both Queen's University and Harvard. His books include Restoration Historians and the English Civil War, The Mind of Ontario, A Bibliography of Glengarry County and as co-author of A History of Glengarry. Professor MacGillivray presently resides in Romford, England.



Dr. Royce MacGillivray

Website Source:

<http://library.uwaterloo.ca/develop/friends7no1.html#portrait>, 27March2008

See You on April 3rd!

. . . . Rosemary O.