
GLENGARRY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

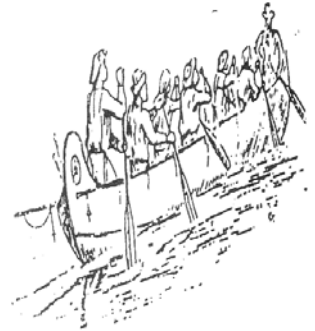
BOX 416 ALEXANDRIA ON K0C 1A0

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next issue: February 2008

NEXT MEETING

Date: November 1, 2007
Time: 8:00 p.m.
Location: Alexandria United Church-on-the-Hill
Topic: History & Mystery: Maggie Wheeler's Seaway Stories



TIME TO RENEW

Don't forget, that **ALL** yearly memberships are 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

Membership in the Glengarry Historical Society entitles you to attend all meetings, free admittance to either of the two Museums, with the exception of special events, and a free copy of Glengarry Life, upon publication.

Will ye no renew??

History & Mystery Maggie Wheeler's Seaway Stories

Snagging **Maggie Wheeler** as our last speaker for 2007 happened quite by accident. Quite simply, that time slot worked for both Maggie and the GHS. It turned out, however, to be quite appropriate as the advent to 2008 which marks the 50th anniversary of the Inundation of the Lost Villages of the St. Lawrence Seaway.

On the morning of July 1, 1958, the joint Ontario/New York State hydro authorities employed thirty tons of explosives to demolish Cofferdam A-1 whose destruction created Lake St. Lawrence, the head pond of the new Seaway system through the Long Sault rapids. It was an agonizingly slow death for the villages, taking up to four days to bury forever the six villages and three hamlets of the "Front." The town of Iroquois was relocated a mile to the north as were the flooded sections of Morrisburg. SD&G also lost the popular picnic resorts of Sheek, Barnhart and Croil's islands. By the time of

the flooding, six thousand people had been relocated to New Towns #1 and #2, present day Ingleside and Long Sault.

The thirty-two turbines of the Robert H. Saunders-Robert M. Moses mega dam were on alert that morning to start generating hydro-electric power to Ontario, Quebec and New York State and the deafening absence of sound in the wake of the flooding spoke louder than the roiling and crashing of the now castrated Long Sault Rapids.



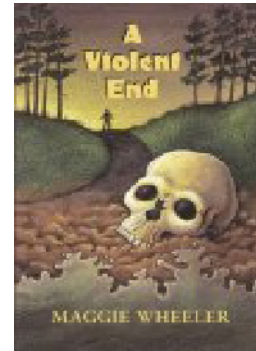
Courtesy: Lost Villages Historical Society
Highway #2 cut by the Inundation

The decade following World War II, saw unprecedented growth and prosperity. Although the Seaway had been in the planning stages since the turn of the last century, it was only in 1954 that the American Congress finally approved the project and within four years recharted the course of the St. Lawrence River and an entire community. Ironically, fifty years later the adequacy of the Great Lakes systems is once again in question.

We were a society going forward, technology was burgeoning, and a few thousand folks in predominantly rural Eastern Ontario could not stand in the way of progress. As Maggie Wheeler so poignantly states in A Violent End, “The sixties hadn’t happened yet.”

The Lost Villages came to

A Violent End

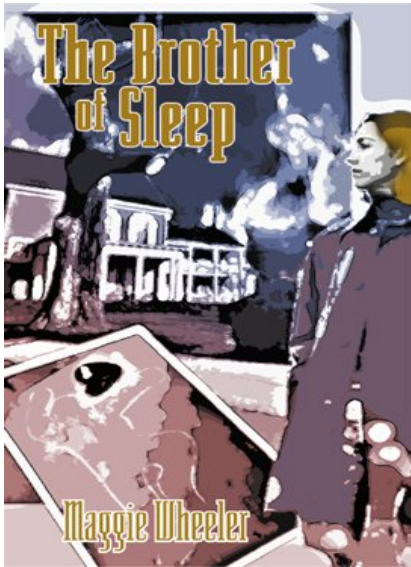


In her first novel, A Violent End, Maggie Wheeler captures the history of the Seaway project, the temper of the times and the sentiments of a people displaced. She chronicles a community of folk that could never again revisit their homes and she has done so in a “novel” way (pardon the pun). Maggie has created a spine chilling mystery that showcases the story of the Lost Villages. On the eve of Inundation, the Lost Village of Aultsville is the scene of a murder, the almost perfect murder, as the Village will imminently be submerged beneath the St. Lawrence. Forty years later, in a low water year, the corpse surfaces. Maggie’s fictional heroine, Farran Mackenzie, and OPP Detective Inspector Jerry Strauss team up to solve a mystery that threads its way through the tangled history of loss and devastation.

Maggie provides an excellent and very readable history of the Lost Villages. In this regard, she has done her homework very well. In addition to meticulous research, Maggie interviewed and spoke with many of the former residents of the Lost Villages. As a result, the novel resonates with the palpable sentiment of those who can never go home again. She speaks of the pieces of the past that sink and resurface, much like her fictitious corpse, Hal Leonard; the pieces that float away and those that remain.

Evading that Grim Reaper

The Brother of Sleep



Our meeting on November first the feast of All Saints or All Hallows, as it used to be known, is a delicious day to be reviewing Maggie's second Seaway novel in a series of four (we await publication of the fourth novel, On a Darkling Plain). The popular celebration with which we are perhaps more familiar occurs on October 31st, the eve of the feast of All Hallows, or Halloween. Of course, Gaelic Glengarry will also recognize it as Samhain, the one time Celtic New Year. Samhain was the darkest night of the year when the rites of inversion held sway with the climax coming at midnight, the historical liminal moment when This World and the Otherworld mingle. It is a moment that exists out of time, a fault line between the two worlds. We see echoes of this today, for example, in the entrance to cemeteries, where the gateways are liminal places where the dead and the living meet.

The Brother of Sleep plays about the margins of liminal time and space by once again marrying a 40 year old murder to the present. This time, Maggie has crafted a story that places a real death in the past with a pseudo-death that centers on blindness, both

corporeal and metaphorical. The novel is rife with pieces of the past and present, pieces of people that form and reform but are never quite able to escape the tie that bound them together in the past and pulls them together once more in the present.

The daughter of an OPP officer, Maggie draws upon that experience to flesh out her major characters; our old friend from A Violent End, Detective Inspector Jerry Strauss, Waterloo Regional Police Officer, Sargeant Perry, who had met his death at the hands of "friendly fire" nearly thirty years earlier, and Paul Vaughn, a police officer from Newfoundland who has roots and secrets buried deep in the Lost Villages. Each officer represents something special to heroine, Farran Mackenzie, who finds herself wandering in a maze of trust and mistrust.

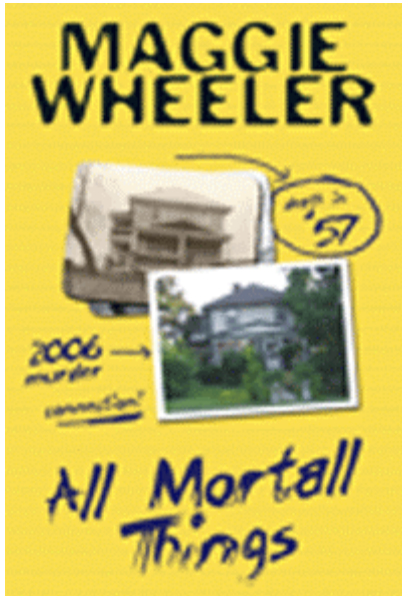
It is only when Farran is able to synthesize the three characters within her own experience that she discovers a coherent whole and is able to resolve the murders.

Cruel Sports and Mens Decay The Stuff of All Mortall Things

Have you ever been to the Nightingale House in Ingleside? If not, you should make it a point to go to this delightful Bed & Breakfast with a Victorian Tea Room that will not disappoint. Maggie based her Sterling House in All Mortall Things upon the Nightingale House which is the largest frame home moved to Ingleside from Wales during the Seaway relocation. In her Introduction, **Rosemary Rutley** refers to it as the Rice House and perhaps at our meeting on November first, Maggie will be able to tell us a little of its history in its Rice days.

In Appendix I to All Mortall Things, Maggie provides a thumbnail sketch of the house as well as a lovely thank you to the proprietors of Nightingale House, **Stuart and**

Lesley O’Gorman, who opened their doors to Maggie while she researched the novel. The House and its misty past, rising out of the remnants of a Lost Village, provide the perfect backdrop to Maggie’s third novel.



Once again, Farran Mackenzie and Jerry Strauss are central to the novel. This is essentially a story of ghosts, but not always the ethereal type. There are the ghosts of people past and present; the ghosts of deeds past and present and the ease and difficulty with which this variety of ghosts intermingles. Even the House itself is, in some sense, a ghost....of its former self.

The events that took place in the House fifty years ago in the Village of Wales, the last summer before the village disappeared, come back to haunt the House and its inhabitants fifty years later and Jerry Strauss is the medium, as it were. One would think the Inundation should effectively have buried the past but, paraphrasing Maggie Wheeler’s quote from Edmund Spenser (dare I paraphrase dear, old Edmund?), it is the mortal things that sway the ever-whirling wheel of change.

Maggie Wheeler



She is one-in-a-million, folks, and you will not be disappointed. Born in the Cambridge-Waterloo-Kitchener area, Maggie’s family moved to Long Sault when she was but a little girl. She grew up in former Hydro Site New Town No. 2 (Long Sault) and continues to reside in Ingleside, in a house from the Lost Village of Dickinson’s Landing, with her three daughters, Anna, Evan and Lindsay and....Oh Yes...the beagle named “Bagel.”

Educated at the University of Ottawa, for many years Maggie has operated a communications business while simultaneously teaching and writing. I do believe she is presently pursuing a Masters Degree in English.

See You on November 1st!

. . . . Rosemary O.