



Historic Bovaird House

Newsletter • Fall/Winter 2019/2020

A Barn for Bovaird

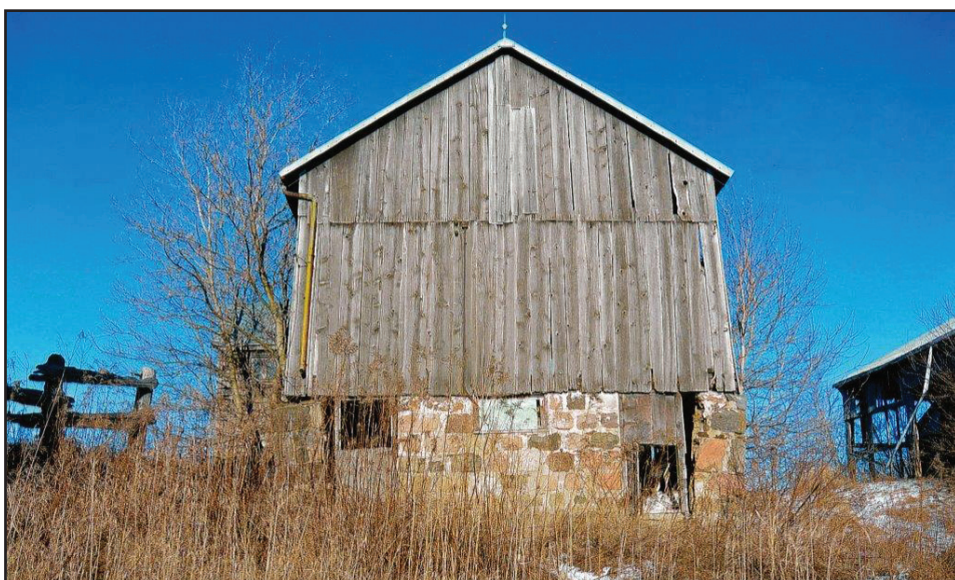
Volunteers have to move quickly to save a piece of local heritage. – Michael Avis, Friend of HBH

For several years the *Friends of Historic Bovaird House* volunteers tried to locate a small barn to compliment and complete the museum site. Several were considered however, all were found to be either too large or in such a deteriorated condition that relocation and restoration would not have been feasible.

The interest in locating and obtaining a heritage barn was prompted by the regrettable fact that we are losing heritage barns at a faster rate than heritage houses. Farming was an important part of our history with the remaining barns serving as unique landmarks and prominent examples of Ontario's earliest built heritage. Sadly, many are vandalized and stripped of barn boards and logs while others are sold and shipped south of the border to an appreciative American market that is eager to recycle them into magnificent residential or commercial properties.

Many fall victim to progress with developers finding them easy targets for demolition while others simply rot away, an ignominious end to remnants of our early farming heritage.

Barns housed livestock, crops, buggies, wagons, tools and every conceivable piece of farm equipment and machinery. They also provided workspace for the early farm settler as he toiled with a multitude of daily jobs and repairs.



Old Ontario barns are all-purpose, practical buildings that are valuable reminders of our Peel County agricultural heritage.

Prior to WWII two thirds of all Canadians lived on farms. However, today most children have never had the opportunity to visit and experience an old barn.

Early in 2016 *Friends* were made aware of a heritage barn that, for their purposes, would tick all the boxes. The c1875 *Robinson Barn* located in the Town of Caledon (formerly Albion Township, now part of Peel County) was scheduled for demolition by the developer on April 1st 2016. *Friends* had to move very quickly if they

wanted to save this important piece of the Peel County cultural landscape. With demolition imminent plus the fact that the barn served as a natural habitat for barn swallows, now declared a *threatened* species, the precise timing of the removal of the barn was subject to strict compliance with the *Species at Risk Act* [SARA] Canada.

With the input from a professional heritage log building specialist, it was determined that because of the barns' provenance, condition and relatively small size it would be an ideal candidate for 'repurposing' and therefore a very appropriate and desirable addition to

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Welding Without a Welder

... the art of the Blacksmith

– by Stephen Wallace,
member of: Friends of HBH and
Ontario Artist Blacksmith Assoc.



The blacksmith ... a respected tradesman who was vital to everyday life in many Ontario villages.

Several years ago while at Waldie's Blacksmith Shop in Milton, I was asked by a lady how blacksmiths welded before welders were invented. She had an old lamp that was clearly made in two parts but it was visibly welded together. This is a very good question because obviously electric arc welders had not yet been invented and yet every wagon wheel in history has a welded steel tire holding it together. How was this accomplished?

A coal or charcoal forge can heat steel to the melting point. A good blacksmith can pull the steel out of the fire just before it melts so that it will be "sticky" and can be welded to another equally hot piece of steel. This is called forge welding. Forge welding is generally done with 3 heats. The first time the steel is brought out of the fire it is quickly tapped with light hammer

blows which will "glue" the parts together but not really weld them together. With the second heat the steel is hammered together to form the solid joint. The third heat should finish the welding and start to shape the piece. If this is done correctly then the joint will be nearly invisible as one piece of steel flows into another. The lady asking about the welding without a welder likely could not see the weld in her lamp and thus her question.

The black scale, on the outside of hot steel, is iron oxide, which is commonly called rust. Rust is a chemical reaction between the steel and oxygen which normally happens slowly over time but due to the forge's high heat this happens very quickly. Scale is the enemy of a good forge weld because the scale will crumble apart and the pieces will not weld together. The scale is easily

removed with a wire brush and a flux is often added to help keep the scale from returning. A common flux is standard supermarket borax which melts and becomes a liquid when the steel is a bright red colour. The molten borax paints the steel which blocks the oxygen from getting to the steel and forming scale or rust. When the parts are hammered together the liquid borax squirts from the welded joint. Because of this hot, flying flux most blacksmiths will wear a leather apron to protect themselves and their clothes.

It is possible to forge weld without flux if you know your fire. Fires use up oxygen. By keeping the steel close to the top of a deep, hot fire you can prevent scale buildup. Fluxless forge welding is the historic way to weld but is less common today. Fluxless welding requires a higher temperature and the steel is at higher risk of melting and forming a puddle in the bottom of the forge.

Different kinds of steel can be forge welded together. For example, a piece of high carbon steel can be welded onto a piece of mild steel. This is the traditional way of making knives and axes that need a hard cutting edge while the rest of the blade could be a cheaper mild steel. Also blacksmiths can layer different types of steel to produce Damascus steel. This gives a warm, wood grain look to the steel which is used primarily for the making of knives. A high carbon steel layered with a high chrome steel will produce light and dark layers. The Sutton Hoo sword found in England was made around the 7th century AD and was crafted from layered steel, proving that today's blacksmiths are not doing anything new but are merely continuing to employ ancient techniques.

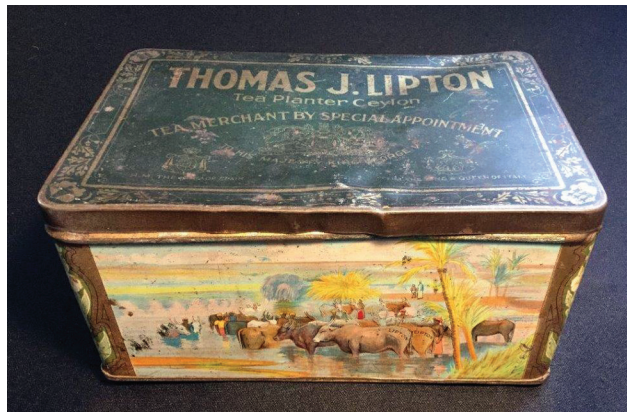
Tea, Anyone?...

— by Joanne Green

*I have always loved old tins.
The more colourful the better!*

In the course of researching my family history, I found that my great grandfather, Joseph Green, was a tinsmith from Erin. He worked for MacDonald Manufacturing Co., a company that flourished from the late 1880's until 1923 and was located in the now historic 410 Richmond Street in the area of King and Spadina in the heart of downtown Toronto.

Recently, on walking into the Historic Bovaird House farm kitchen, I spotted, high up on a shelf, four tea tins that were manufactured by MacDonald Manufacturing Co. The company produced a long list of tin ware from Ontario's first automobile license plates in 1911 to tins for honey, tobacco, lard, tea, coffee, biscuits and more. MacDonald Manufacturing Co. was one of the first companies to print colour designs on the outside of the containers, a process called tinsplate lithography. Many tins were pre-printed with the supplier's name added on separately afterwards. The most common tins I've found were for honey and the tall red/gold/black tea tins which came in many sizes.



Tin was the plastic of its time. Containers kept the contents fresh, dry, free from pests and the elements plus they were able to withstand rough handling during shipping. All these properties were important for consumers at the time, especially those in rural areas who would make purchases infrequently. The surface of the tin also served the equivalent of today's web page "about us" with backstory and contact information. The lovely Lipton tea tin depicts happy ladies

picking tea with the men on the next panel working with cattle branded with the company logo. Probably not so accurate but after all it is advertising and besides, it looked very attractive on the table.

The collection at Historic Bovaird House includes tins from England, Quebec and the USA as well as ones that were locally made. Besides tea the decorative tins held such things as chewing tobacco, coffee and liquor. Also included in the Bovaird collection is a patriotic Queen Victoria commemorative tin. I am now collecting tins from great grandfather Joseph's time period with the MMCo trademark that is usually printed so small that a magnifier is needed to find it!

Prices for tins vary greatly and at the recent Christie Antique & Vintage Show I saw tins that were regrettably out of my price range. Particularly impressive and collectable was one with Schneiders graphics while another was a lovely vintage Eaton's tin decorated with a tartan print.

To me part of the charm is being able to recycle them still, using them to hold my own treasures along with my family history.

A Barn for Bovaird

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the Bovaird site. With the recently restored *c1845 Pendergast Log House* now a significant part of the interpretation of the Bovaird site it would seem obvious that the addition of a fully furnished heritage barn could only enhance the visitors experience, especially children. For Peter Chisholm, the builder of *c1850 Bovaird House*

and horse-breeder James Bovaird, who purchased the farmhouse, barn and the one hundred acre property in 1928, the barn would have been an integral part of everyday life for both families.

By way of their continuing fund-raising efforts, *Friends* have already invested substantial funds purchasing, professionally dismantling and trucking the building into temporary storage in a City works yard and are committed to

making a further monetary contribution to the restoration. With the saving of the *c1875 Robinson Barn* the *Friends of Historic Bovaird House* have once again demonstrated their commitment to the preservation and promotion of local heritage. Hopefully in the near future City Council will also affirm their support of our heritage and give the barn restoration project the go ahead.

Double Crusie Lamp

Friends of Historic Bovaird House recently purchased the *Double Crusie lamp* shown in the photograph. Starting around the early 18th century, crusie lamps were used for lighting homes in both Europe and the British Isles. Being diminutive in size, early Upper Canada settlers often brought these lamps with them, which, beside firelight, would be their only source of lighting. Fat drippings from cooked meats served as fuel and depending on where one lived, fish oil or vegetable oil might also be used. A scrap of cotton cloth laid in the 'cup' served as a primitive wick that produced a dim flame that invariably smoked and emitted a foul odour when lit.

Fashioned by hand from sheet iron, many crusie lamps had only one 'cup' to hold oil, while others, like the one illustrated, had two. The lower 'cup', caught any oil dripping from the upper 'cup' and the lower 'cup' also

had a small serrated rest which allowed the upper 'cup' to be tilted forward as oil was consumed. A hook, attached atop the upright, was designed to be driven into a wall timber or, for convenience, hung from an adjustable trammel (hook) or even attached to the back of a chair.

This double crusie dates to the mid to late 18th century and is thought to be of Scottish origin. Inasmuch as the Pendergast log house was built much later, there is little doubt that, because of inexpensive and readily available fuel, the use of crusies like the one pictured could have been used in tandem with other lighting sources such as rush lights, whale oil and burning fluid lamps and candles.

This very primitive lighting device is a significant addition to the *Historic Bovaird House* artifact collection and will shortly be on display in the *c1845 Pendergast Log House*.



Note: The word 'crusie' is of Scottish origin and believed to be derived from the word 'cruse' or a vessel to hold oil.

— by *Geoff Acheson*,
member of: *Friends of HBH* and
The Historical Lighting Soc. of Canada

Historic Bovaird House Special Events : Fall/Winter

Historic Bovaird House is pleased to present our special events for the upcoming fall and Christmas seasons.

Attending these much-anticipated events has, for many, become an annual tradition resulting in a heavy demand for reservations. With the exception of our *Victorian Christmas Open House & Gift Show* all special events are by *reservation* only.

You can stay up to date with all of our events by visiting our website or by visiting the house and asking us.

Friends of Historic Bovaird House are available to provide you with a tour of the house and to answer your questions.

HBH is open on *Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays from 12 noon until 4 pm* from March until December.



Historic Bovaird House
annual

Loaf and Ladle
Pioneer Supper

October 26, 2019

Ticket price \$20

*Reservations accepted
as of September 1, 2019*



Historic Bovaird House
annual

Victorian Christmas
Open House and Gift Sale

December 7 : 10 am – 4 pm

December 8 : 10 am – 3 pm

Enjoy a mug of steaming mulled cider served with Christmas treats in front of the blazing Yuletide hearth in Mossie's Tea Room. Browse for unique, hand made gifts.