



Local historian Jean Somerville (right) was kept busy Sunday at Limehouse Community Hall as she signed copies of her newly-released book *In His Words* a biography of her great-great grandfather John Newton, who was a prominent businessman in Limehouse in the early 1800s. Longtime friend Mary Smith, who encouraged Somerville to tackle the project, was one of many that had their books personally signed. Photo by Ted Brown

History 'in Newton's words'

I always admire someone who can actually bring history to life.

I think it's a God-given quality that becomes a passion, a means of conveying facts in a way that makes them real.

On a national scale we had Canadian author Pierre Berton.

Locally, we have Jean Somerville.

Getting her feet wet in the publishing world a few years back, Jean penned her first book entitled *The Bands Played On*, a history of the Frank family (her father was Halton County Sheriff Andy Frank) and how the family band traveled around the county playing at various events, in community halls, schools, and house parties—anywhere a group of people would gather to enjoy singing or dancing.

Jean's passion hasn't waned in the least, and most recently she released her second book, *In His Words*, a biography of John Newton, who was appointed the first postmaster in Limehouse, May 11, 1857.

John Newton was her great-great grandfather, and his journals and diaries between 1836 and 1878, all preserved at the University of Western Ontario, have been the main source for her book.

The book is a fascinating glimpse of life in rural Halton, most specifically Esquesing Township (now part of rural Halton Hills) as well as the day-to-day happenings in and around Limehouse.

Jean hosted a book launch party last Sunday, appropriately at Limehouse Community Hall. The hall was packed to capacity.

Personally, I experienced a unique bond when I read the book. The people and places described within the pages are names I've heard my entire life.

Both my dad and grandfather often referred to 'the Newton boys'. I've heard about John Newton and how he, along with James Fraser, John Nickell, John Meredith and Charles Meredith were the pioneers who oversaw the building of the Limehouse Union Church in 1861, now Limehouse Presbyterian Church, located at the corner of the Sixth Line and 22 Sideroad.

Local history runs deep in this book, and perhaps the most interesting aspect for me is the fact that my great-great grandfather

Ted Brown



James Brown, was in fact a friend of Newtons, living and farming a short distance from the Newton farm.

In the collection of old photos that I have at home, there is an original photo of John and Mary Newton—the exact same photo that Jean has in her collection.

So the Browns and Newtons were certainly friends. It makes sense— Jean and I share the same great-great grandfather—James Brown Sr., on her mother's side.

As I read Jean's book, I could imagine my ancestors living their lives in Limehouse, brought to life by the descriptions from Newton's 'own words' complimented by Jean's deciphering of the information, and putting it all into context.

Like many of my Brown ancestors, John Newton and other family members are buried in the cemetery at Limehouse, a reminder of the man who, during his life was a farmer, a school teacher, a businessman, justice of the peace and postmaster—all in the village of Limehouse.

When Newton died January 12, 1889, the 'Newton' story didn't end there. Up until a few years ago, I recall Bill Newton making the trek from Barrie every spring, to attend the annual Memorial Day Service at Limehouse Presbyterian Church, a Sunday when the focus of the service was on the cemetery that surrounds the church.

I have fond memories of Bill, a jovial old guy who made a point of chatting with all the 'old' family members left in Limehouse.

As we all get a little older, I think it's important that the history around us is kept alive, and we can appreciate the challenges our forefathers faced on a daily basis.

And so long as we have historians like Jean Somerville, telling it like it was, those 'olden days' will not be forgotten.

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PUZZLE of the week

Across

1. Gyro wrappers
6. Goya's "Duchess of ___"
10. Become unhinged
14. "Haste makes waste," e.g.
15. Function customarily served by another
16. Blue hue
17. Joined together again
19. City on the Yamuna River
20. Keen
21. Football playing field
23. Male hormone
25. Magical drink
27. "Dear" one
28. "___ Ng" (They Might Be Giants song)
29. "Buenos ___"
32. "___ go!", slang
36. Words interpreted two ways (2 wds)
40. Any Platters platter
41. "Cut it out!"
42. Common deciduous tree
43. ___ v. Wade
45. Wanderers
48. Reinforcement
53. Woman who receives patron's support
54. Kvetch
58. Bringing up the rear
59. Malign
61. Hip bones
62. ___-friendly
63. Member of Quechuan people in Peru
64. Beach shades
65. ___ Station
66. Cast out

Down

1. Legal prefix
2. Bad day for Caesar
3. Boor's lack
4. Rabbitlike rodent
5. Pliable plastic explosive
6. "Aladdin" prince
7. Ferntalk
8. Fermented alcoholic beverages
9. Examinations of financial accounts
10. Carpet runner holder
11. The "N" of U.N.C.F.
12. Composer Copland
13. 747, e.g.
18. Near
22. Condescend
24. Attempts
25. Carbon compound
26. Extol
28. "Much ___ About Nothing"
30. Amazon, e.g.
31. Backgammon piece
33. Put one's foot down?
34. After-dinner selection
35. "Don't ___!"
37. Catholic clergy's caps
38. Freetown currency unit
39. Word derived from person's name
44. Small dish for serving poultry product
46. Bully
47. Equipping with weapons
48. Divided
49. Start of a refrain
50. Pine sap derivative
51. Bait
52. She had "the face that launched a thousand ships"
55. Defensive spray
56. Flight data, briefly (acronym, pl.)
57. Cost of living?
60. Ashes holder

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