

Biography of Andrew William Frank was a labour of love for his daughter

'May we be encouraged by his example'

Acton author Jean Somerville preserved the past so the rich history of her family – five generations in the Nassagaweya area – is available to current and future generations.

Somerville's latest book – her third, called *"With Dignity and Dispatch – A biography of Andrew William Frank"* was formally unveiled at the book launch on Sunday at Ebenezer United Church as family and friends saluted Andy Frank's penchant for saving notes and mementos of his life which included a stint as Halton's Sheriff.

Somerville said she tackled the biography as a labour of love after completing two previous books about her family – *The Bands Played On* revealed the importance of music and dancing the

social life of the early 20th century. Her second book *In His Words* is an account of her maternal great-great grandfather, John Newton, who settled and prospered in the Limehouse area.

"I wanted to write about the personal details that made my father who he was and why he was a risk-taker," Somerville said on Friday, adding when her parents moved from their home to an apartment, her dad gave a box full of notes, papers, postcards, posters and newspaper clippings. That material formed her newest book of colour photos, antidotes and memories of relatives who helped fill in many details of her dad's childhood, marriage and many successful careers which included farmer, market gardener, real estate agent, building contractor and Sheriff of Halton County, despite having no formal advanced education.



PRESERVING HISTORY: Acton author Jean Somerville (seated) signed a copy of her latest book *With Dignity and Dispatch* – a biography of her father Andrew William Frank – for Sandra Early of Guelph at the book's launch on Sunday at Ebenezer United Church in Nassagaweya. – Ted Tyler photo

"He gave it to me and I felt the information was valuable and should be kept in some special way," Somerville said,

adding she always kept a journal and was able to confirm facts through it. She said the box is full of "pleasant memories" and pulling it all together and sorting it into chapters has taken at least two years – she missed going to Florida for two winters to work on the project, and was "very pleased" when she saw the final result.

Somerville produced the copy in long-hand, written on every other line on ruled paper, part of the reason it took her so long to complete the work. With no interest in technology, family members helped – daughters and grand-daughters typed the manuscripts,

made corrections, edited, and scanned photos. The final version, 155 pages printed in Toronto, has garnered good reviews.

A cousin in British Columbia who was eager to receive the book, paid Somerville the ultimate compliment of writing an exposé of the realities of living during times of depression and war, and how they responded to situations beyond their control. "The resilience of your mum and dad – how they did what was necessary to provide for their family is inspiring," he wrote, adding he has admiration for people who didn't expect a government handout, but just did what was required.

Somerville said when there was no work, her father and mother would just try something else – dairy farming, cash cropping, fruits and vegetables and chickens were some of their enterprises to put food on the table. "If he didn't succeed, he'd go and do something different," Somerville said adding, "may we be encouraged by his example."

With Dignity and Dispatch – A biography of Andrew William Frank is available at Sweet Molly's in Acton, the Spice of Life store in Milton, actondalepress@sympatico.ca and from Somerville at 519-853-1549.

HE DID IT ALL...

"WITH DIGNITY AND DISPATCH"

A Biography of Andrew William Frank



Jean Somerville

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