



# The Cottonwood Crier

Bi-monthly Newsletter

May/June 2023



Spring at Cottonwood Mansion

*Welcome to the new format of the Cottonwood Crier bi-monthly newsletter!  
Continue reading below for some exciting updates and upcoming events.*

## Past Events & Updates



### **Mother's Day Afternoon Tea**

On May 14th, Cottonwood held it's annual Mother's Day Afternoon Tea. Mothers of all kinds were celebrated! Thank you to all who attended and to all who helped by volunteering for this event.

### **Cottonwood Tree Planting Event**

We had a wonderful turnout to our Cottonwood Tree Planting event, and thanks to the generous donors of Eising Greenhouses and Richard Harrison, we now have a Cottonwood Tree back on the grounds! Cottonwood also announced the bequest from Robert Gray at this event. We look forward to many years of growth ahead of us!



### **Queen's Commemorative Afternoon Tea & Dressage Show**

Cottonwood welcomed 47 guests to our Queen's Tea & Dressage Show event on June 10th. Guests enjoyed a dressage show on the grounds, followed by an Afternoon Tea and a Queen's Exhibit at the mansion. Thank you to our partners for helping to make this a memorable event!







The Victorian House Guest Experience is live! Book your tickets today!

[Book Now](#)

## Upcoming Events

### Public Paranormal Investigation

July 29th, 2023, 6:00pm & 8:30pm

Public Paranormal Investigations, run in partnership with Spirit Hunters Ontario, allow guests to explore additional spaces previously closed to the public, utilize more equipment, both traditional and high-tech, and opportunities for guided and independent EVP sessions and independent investigation. These events are limited, book your spot today!





## Cottonwood's Classic Car Show

Saturday, August 5th, 2023, 10:00am-3:00pm

Cottonwood's Classic Car Show is back for another year! Come out to see some awesome vintage and classic cars and win some amazing prizes. This event includes a 50/50 draw, raffle prizes, free house tours, food trucks, oldies music, kids activities, and more. First 100 cars to register get a free dash plaque! *Raindate Sunday, August 6th, 2023.*

## Victorian Garden Party

Saturday, August 26th, 2023, 11:00am-3:00pm

The Victorian Garden Party is an elegant, decorated, costumed event is modelled after traditional Garden Parties during the Victorian era. Roam the grounds as you listen to live music and engage with entertainment, play lawn games, try our signature cocktails and mocktails, make-your-own calling card, explore the mansion on a tour, and much more. *Rain date August 27th, 2023.*



## Book Tickets

# From the Archives

By Andrew Spearin

The long-form 1842 Canada West census is a trove of data for historians to research. With this document, we gain insight into who lived at Cottonwood's property and how they made a livelihood two decades before the mansion's construction.

The first two columns of the census indicate there is one house inhabited and one house being constructed. William Holmes is named head of the family and property owner of the 200 acre farm. Here is a summary of who lived on the farm:

- 2 married men between age 30 and 60.
- 2 married women between age 14 and 45.
- 4 residents were from Canada of British origin.
- 2 residents were of United States origin, who had been in Canada for 35 years.

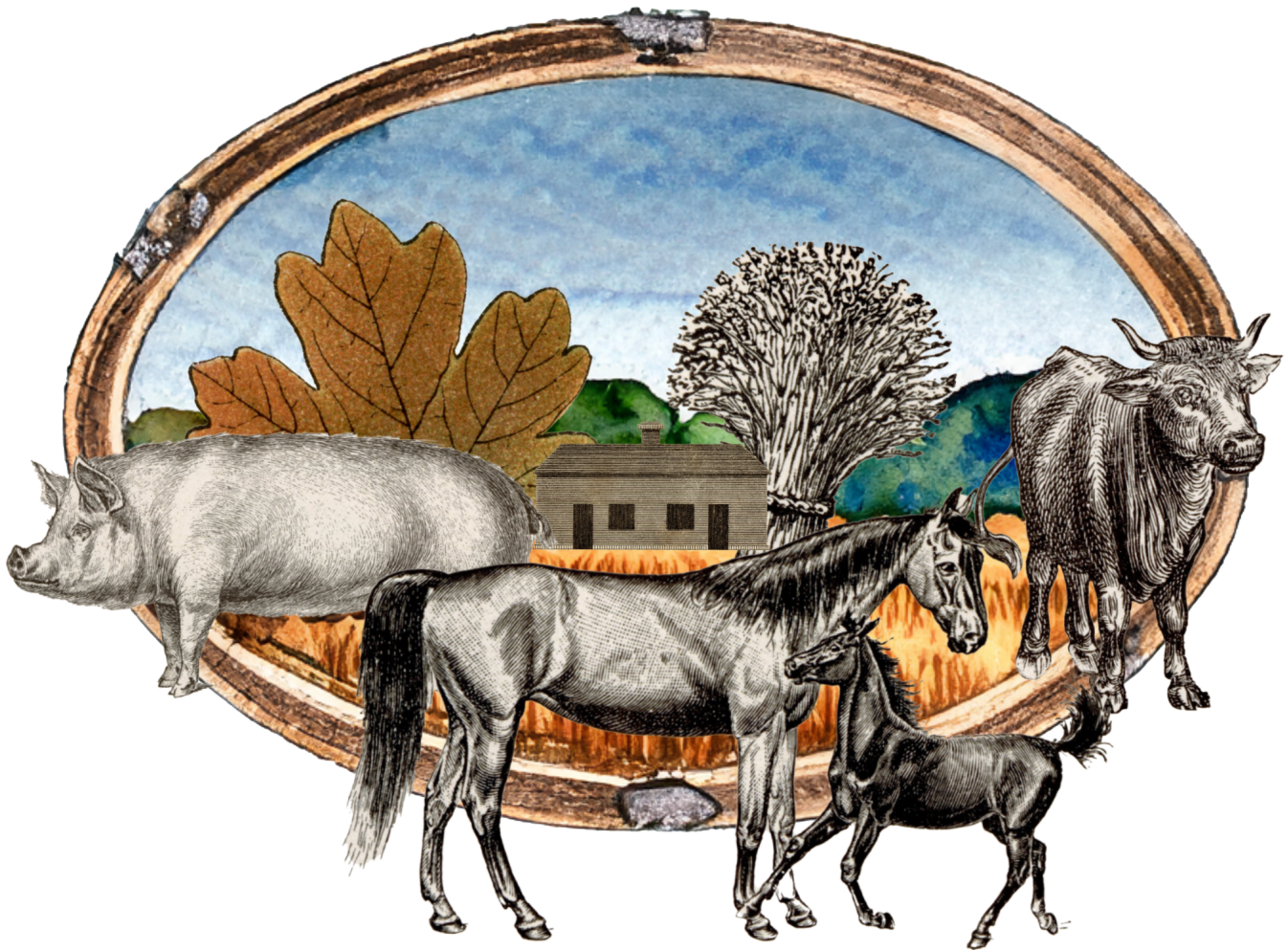


- 1 girl over 5 years of age; this being Eliza Holmes.
- 1 boy was under 5 years of age; this would be Joseph William Holmes born in 1842.
- 2 girls were under 5 years of age, referring to Fidelia and Susana Holmes.

Evidently, there are two married couples living on the farm, including William and Mary Holmes. Of the 200 acre property, there were 60 acres of “improved land,” presumably land that was cleared of forest to use for planting crops.

Documented crop yields for the year are 40 bushels of wheat, 50 bushels of oats, 40 bushels of peas, and 100 bushels of potatoes. The farm also produced 100 pounds of maple sugar, from the remaining wood lot on the property. The Holmes family also tended livestock including 7 cattle, 5 horses, and 11 hogs.

From this census, we know that during the two decades before the grand Cottonwood Mansion was built, William Holmes and his young family were simply farmers making a living from their land like most families in Haldimand County during that time period.



## President's Message

Clayt Spears, Cottonwood Mansion Preservation Foundation

You will quite often hear those men and women who have reached the twilight of their years say; “The Golden Years sure aren’t golden”; however, there is one factor that helps set them apart and that is being able to share fond memories of days gone by with others. Each senior has a story to tell and in my case, Cottonwood takes me back to the days of my youth over seventy years ago when my family made the trek to visit with my widowed Grandmother Willis (1862-1953) at Camborne, north of Cobourg, to celebrate Christmas with her and the family. The farm home had no electricity and the huge kitchen consisted of dark wooden narrow tongue and grooved wallboard, a small sink with a hand water pump, a well stocked provision pantry plus a huge stove which seemed to always have a kettle boiling on it. It also had a large seven party line crank operated telephone from which Granma would listen in on the Q.T. when her neighbours were talking. When the need arose, you exited from the kitchen, went past a wood pile, two horse box stalls and entered a small room at the far end that had a two-holer. Needless to say, you didn’t spend much time in this room in mid December. Like Cottonwood, the front parlour was off limits to the children and we were told; “There are special things in there and we don’t want to get anything broken.” Consequently my time indoors was spent playing 78’s on the gramophone or viewing the scenic cards on the stereoscope in the sitting room. All this would draw to an end when night time fell because the only lighting available was from coal oil lamps. Then it would just be, sitting in the corner listening to a bunch of boring ‘old’ folks making small talk and falling asleep hearing an extremely loud wall clock going tick-tock-tick-tock...

All of the above personal rambling was brought about by a pleasant visit I had with Marg Featherston at our A.G.M. on May 13th. She and her husband Harvey were one of the first couples to pitch in and help restore Cottonwood after Larry Hamilton bought it in 1988. She talked about scraping wallpaper, scrubbing floors, bringing manure for the flower beds in five gallon pails from their farm, folding newsletters, working shoulder to shoulder with the large group of volunteers at various events plus a lot of other interesting anecdotes. Sadly, at the end of our conversation, we both agreed, all we have now are our memories of days gone by and there is no way we will ever see them again because times have changed and in order to move forward and survive, organizations such as ours need to toss the torch to a whole new generation. Fortunately for Cottonwood Mansion Museum, Iona Whatford is part of this new generation.

-Clayt Spears, *President*