



Spring/Summer 2016

### Important Highlights:

- Highway Dedication
- Bootlegging
- Upcoming Events
- Project updates

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# The Silver Express

## Highway Dedication Moves Closer to Completion

When the society was first organized in 2012, one of the earliest projects that we undertook was the dedication of Highway 593 to Dorothea Mitchell, the "Lady Lumberjack."

It was a very arduous and time consuming process, as the dedication required the approval of all the local roads boards that the highway passed through. After many letters and several meetings, we received the necessary support and could proceed with an application to the Ministry of Transportation (MTO).

After waiting nearly a year and a half, we finally received a draft

proposal from the MTO regarding the highway signage. The signs, as shown below, would be blue with white lettering.

The correspondence from the MTO indicated that this design was a draft proposal and that we could suggest changes to the sign. Society treasurer Shelley Simon, who is in charge of the project, informed the MTO that we would like to include "Lady Lumberjack" below Dorothea's name. This title was synonymous with Dorothea and was an important part of her

story as an early pioneer and feminist in the Silver Mountain area.

We are hopeful that the MTO can accommodate our design changes. It appears unlikely that the signage will be ready before the end of this year or early next year. Any dedication would likely coincide with our annual History Day celebrations. We hope to have an update in our next issue.



First draft of the Highway sign.

## From the Archives

*In this issue we launch a new segment that features historic events and news from the area.*

### Bootlegging along the PAD&W

In 1916 the Province of Ontario passed the Temperance Act, which prohibited the manufacture and sale of alcohol. There were many breaches of the act in the Thunder Bay area before it

was repealed in 1927, including a least one along the Port Arthur, Duluth & Western Railway.

In early September 1920, liquor inspector A.R. Elliott received word that a gang of rum runners were at work along the PAD&W. In company with Constable Duncan Finlayson of the Ontario Provincial Police, Mr. Elliott proceeded to North

Lake to stake out the area.

After spending three days waiting patiently, a gasoline speeder approached at high



A speeder like this was involved. (S. Kerfoot)



History Day  
Sunday,  
October 2nd  
1-5pm



## President's Report

The first half of 2016 has been extremely successful for the society.

As you read on page one, our efforts to dedicate a portion of Highway 593 to Dorothea Mitchell is finally gaining some traction. The MTO has given its approval and we hope to have an updated sign design soon.

Our North-Gunflint Lake project is also making progress, though in fits and starts. We hope to have some news on the cemetery rehabilitations, but if it is anything like our other endeavours, it will take time.

Unfortunately one of our efforts has hit a unplanned snag. Last year we attempted to apply for a government operating grant that would see the society receive some funds based on our expenditures. We became aware of the grant too late to make a proper application however.

This year we had all of our documentation ready well ahead of

time thanks to the efforts of Vice-President Kyle Duckworth. In the process submitting our application, Kyle realized that we do not qualify for the grant since we are not a registered charity. This detail was not communicated to us in our conversations with the government.

At our next meeting, the board will decide how to proceed. There are many advantages to becoming a registered charity, but it means more complexities and also entails much more work.

This (hopefully) temporary setback does emphasize the need for us to expand our membership. We do have quite a number of people on our mailing list, but not all of them purchase yearly mem-

berships. Remember that as of right now, they are our only source of income. We require several hundreds of dollars to keeping the society running on a yearly basis. I know that given the current financial situation everyone's funds are tight, but our membership fees amount to a few cups of coffee. Please help us preserve history.

We have several important upcoming events. Come and visit our booth at the Hymers Fall Fair on the Labour Day weekend. Our annual History Day-we're already at year five-will take place on October 2nd. We hope to see you there and bring a friend!

Dave

### Board of Directors

Dave Battistel, President  
Kyle Duckworth, Vice-President  
Shelley Simon, Treasurer  
Secretary (vacant)  
Jeff Benedict, Director  
Elle Andra-Warner, Director

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## From the Archives continued

speed from the east. Constable Finlayson drew his service revolver and fired a volley of shots over the heads of the three men on the speeder. Moments later, Andrew Harrison and Harry Holmes of Superior, Wisconsin were handcuffed and escorted to Port Arthur; the driver was not held.

As it turned out, the accused had received a tip that the authorities were on to them. They removed the liquor from its hiding spot on the south shore of Whitefish Lake and were obviously attempting to move it back across the border

into Minnesota. The speeder contained nine cases of Corby's Canadian Whiskey, valued at \$715.

Harrison and Holmes were apparently members of a gang that had been bootlegging on the railway for quite some time. The others were not apprehended, but Inspector Elliott was confident that it would only be a matter of time before they were arrested.

There were certainly many other examples of bootlegging along the PAD&W that were not documented. The fact that those arrest-

ed were Americans was probably unusual.

There are stories of the reverse scenario taking place during the time of prohibition in the United States. The most famous involves former Minnesota Governor Jacob Preus, who had a cabin on the Canadian side of Gunflint Lake. Unable secure alcohol south of the border, local First Nations people we paid to procure it at North Lake or further east. No doubt spirits found their way on to the United States side of the lake as well.

## Project Update: North-Gunflint Lakes Historic Corridor

Now entering its fourth year, the project to preserve historic sites along the border on North and Gunflint Lakes is finally beginning to see some movement.

Our cultural heritage liaison in Toronto has recommended that we complete a Phase 1 Archaeological Study. This is primarily a paper report based on historic records that will identify where potential sites are located.

This study must be completed by a licensed archaeologist, and after many months of searching and discussions, it appears as though

we have located one willing to take on the project. The information and material for the study has largely been researched and compiled by society President Dave Battistel. We will work closely with other individuals, groups and agencies to ensure all the relevant material is properly documented.

The biggest obstacle in completing this report will be the funding. Once we receive an estimate of the approximate cost of the study, we will determine how best to proceed. We will no doubt ap-

proach our local MPP, Bill Mauro, to seek his assistance in securing some funding from the provincial government.

This has been a long process and will certainly take many more years before we see any tangible results.

More information will be released as it become available. You can visit our website for additional details: <https://silvermountainhs.com/projects/north-gunflint-lakes-historic-corridor/>



## Project Update: Silver Mountain Cemetery

Society Vice-President Kyle Duckworth continues to spearhead the drive to rehabilitate two cemeteries in the Silver Mountain area.

The goal is to erect some signage at the sites and repair the headstones. The situation is complicated as both cemeteries are located on private land and will require the owners consent before we begin.

We are seeking advice from our cultural heritage advisor in Toronto on how best to proceed. There are obviously many rules and regulations regarding sites that contain human remains. We want to ensure we are adhering to the law and are respectful to those interred there.

Stay tuned for further updates.



Headstone in the Silver Mountain Cemetery.

## Upcoming events: Hymers Fair and History Day

The society will once again be at the Hymers Fall Fair on September 4th and 5th.

Come visit our booth and get the latest updates on our projects or purchase your membership. Enter your name in our draw for a 2016 membership.

Our 5th annual History Day will take place on Sunday, October 2nd at the Silver Mountain Station.

Over the years History Day has been extremely successful and has become our flagship event. Last year's edition featuring Harold Alanen was fantastic.

Details are in the process of being finalized. History Day will run from 1:00 to 5:00pm, with the formal portion commencing at 2:00. Admission is free and refreshments will be served. Please mark your calendars!



Stay up-to-date with the society blog.

Visit it at

[silvermountainhs.com](http://silvermountainhs.com)



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The Silver Mountain and Area Historical Society (SMAHS) was founded in October 2012. We are a non-profit organization committed to preserving the history of the Port Arthur, Duluth and Western Railway (PAD&W), the Silver Mountain Station and the surrounding area.

Our mandate includes the promotion of the railway, as well as the preservation of the remaining physical traces of the line and structures. We are also interested in the cultural and economic history of the area, such as settlements, mining and logging. Our geographic area stretches from the former railway stop at Sellers west to the US-Canada border at Gunflint Lake.

The SMAHS is governed by an elected board of directors and is affiliated with the Ontario Historical Society (OHS). We are headquartered out of the historic Silver Mountain Station, which was built in 1907 and is the last remaining station on the PAD&W line.

## Membership

The Silver Mountain and Area Historical Society welcomes any and all new members.

Membership benefits:

- Invitation to special events and gatherings
- Regular newsletters
- Volunteer opportunities
- Voting privileges at the Society's Annual General Meeting



For more information on how to join us, please visit our website or email us at info@silvermountainhs.ca



Silver Mountain HS



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