

# Manitoba Living History Society

La société pour l'histoire vivante du Manitoba

Delivery of the

## NEWSLETTER

in the Red River Settlement

September/October/November 2016



Seasons from Fall to Winter

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## Chair Chat and Editor's Message

What a whirlwind 2016 was for those many of us who immersed ourselves in the regular season of MLHS events, plus the added events to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary for Votes for Women.

For some of us it was meetings, sewing a new time era of clothing, and going to many MLHS events near and far. This year we broadened our time period spectrum and for what many thought was a once only wearing of our new outfits – we have been at a 1916 event almost monthly. Yea Nellie!

Now, as we slowly wind down the 2016 year, we look forward to another year of festivities with Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Confederation as well as the normal season of events in 2017. Requests have been received for our presence for spring and summer events. It is looking like a great year history for us.

I really tried to keep this newsletter shorter, but once again we have done so much and it is important to celebrate where we have been and what we do. The next newsletter will be end of March, early April and will encompass December, January, February and March. I do invite your articles of research or of interest to our members to be submitted. This is your information newsletter.

With the upcoming Christmas Season, we have decided to hold our MLHS Christmas Winter Celebration on January 15<sup>th</sup> so that all members may attend and not have to choose between the many activities that go in during December.

I do wish each and every one of you a Happy Christmas and a Merry New Year and healthy new year. We have so much to look forward to with the first event of the season -- the Lieutenant Governor's Levee at the Manitoba Legislative Building on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017. I hope to see many of you for this auspicious start to a year long celebration with your newly wonderfully created sesqui-centennial (1867) clothing. Will look forward to your company at the Winter- Christmas Gathering January 15 -details to follow, and at the AGM January 28 – again more information to follow.

What an amazing group of living history folks we all are! Thank you for your enthusiasm, hard work and dedication to supporting living history in all things that we do.

...Until next time  
*Your humble and sometimes obedient servant*

**Marie**

Chair and Editor



## Eyeglasses

Eyeglasses in various forms date back to the 1200s. By the 1850s they had evolved into a wide array of styles and many of the wealthy enjoyed wearing intricate versions. These spectacles were made with many different materials. Some were corrective, some for protection, and some just decorative.



*Rimless with tortoise shell temple pads*



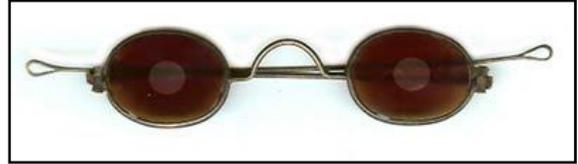
*Tortoiseshell rims with tinted lenses*



*Pince-nez with black lenses*

Most frames that have survived are of silver alloys, sometimes with gold. The spring wire arms did not appear until the 1880s, previous to then arms were often hinged like the examples above, or just straight, or none as in the pince-nez (French for pinch-nose).

There were eyeglasses specifically made for certain uses. An example would be shooting spectacles.



*Shooting glasses with yellow smoked lenses in silver frames*



*Cinder glasses, 1850*

With the growing popularity of rail travel in the 1840s cinder goggles were mass produced. Originally for the engineers, but then also for passengers because the cars didn't have glass in the windows (third class didn't even have roofs). Clothing sometimes caught on fire as coal sparks would blow in from the chimney. To get a hot cinder in your eye would certainly be painful. The highest-class cars were the furthest back on the trains, and the first to have glass in the windows.

When there was a fear of the glasses falling off a strap or string would be used to secure them in place. Straps were made of leather or elastic. \*

For many of us, trying to find the just right eyeglasses is difficult, however if you look at pictures of the time period you wish to portray, a pair of wireframe eyeglasses in a correct shape will pass, or we can do like they did in the day and go without.

*\*Thomas Hancock patented elastic fastenings for gloves, suspenders, shoes and stockings in 1820. By the 1850s it was used for almost everything we do today.*

Adapted from

<http://www.museumofvision.org/exhibitions>

<http://www.eyeglasseswarehouse.com/index.html>

## How Edwardian Are You?



Take the Quiz



Ten questions to test your knowledge of the Edwardian era

### 1. Flummery is:

- a polite way of telling you that what you have just said is unbelievable rubbish
- a soft wool fabric used for underclothing to keep you warm in draughty country houses
- a starch-based sweet soft pudding

### 2. The scullery is:

- a room below stairs where servants gather every morning for prayers and to await daily orders from the butler
- a room below stairs exclusively for washing dishes and scouring pans a part of the kitchen
- boathouse where oars are stored

### 3. A follower is:

- the young man your maid keeps sneaking out to meet
- a hall-boy in training to become a footman
- the gamekeeper's assistant who retrieves dead pheasants after a shoot

### 4. Burglary was not uncommon in English country houses. On arrival at the Manor where would your maid take your jewels for safekeeping?

- to the Study safe, to which only the master of the house has the combination
- to the silver safe in the butler's pantry
- every guest room has a strong box built under the mattress for guests' valuables

### 5. A Folly is:

- a drawing room game played after dinner with matches and string
- a decorative building built for no purpose other than to ornament the view
- something giddy and irresponsible you regret doing at your coming-out ball

### 6. A ha-ha is:

- a feature used in landscape design
- heavy iron weight used to keep the front door propped open
- what the footman mutters under his breath after a practical joke has just been played on you by your younger fellow guests

### 7. On arrival your maid reports to the housekeeper in her office, which is often referred to as:

- Pug's parlor
- the lair
- the dragon's parlor

### 8. Anmer is the name of:

- a famous trout river in Scotland where you have been invited to fish
- the name of the King's horse that Emily Wilding Davison ran in front of at the Epsom Derby on June 4, 1913
- the new motor car made by Royce which you have just become the proud owner of

### 9. Cinq à sept refers to:

- the fifth course to the seventh course at dinner - served only with red wines
- a reference to the fifth and seventh hoops in croquet
- the discrete hours from five until seven in the afternoon when your lover visits you for 'tea'

### 10. Ascot, Cowes and Lords are:

- the highlights of the London social season
- the most celebrated country houses in England where the aristocracy prefer to stay
- livestock shows at county fairs

How do you think you did?

Answers in next newsletter

Ladies in all Stations of Life should send at once for  
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## September 2 Baggage

*Activity for the day*

*Housifs (also known as Housewife)*

We gathered at Seven Oaks Museum for an outdoor Baggage with a learning lesson for the day. We looked at a variety of sewing Hussif or Housewife's. *The Housewife is a small portable sewing kit which would house needles, thread, scissors and buttons for quick and immediate repairs. They were used quite often by the military and are still issued today.* Marie and Judy brought samples to see, fabric selections and trims to make personalized individual ones.



The day was spent sewing and chatting, learning how to raise a tent and playing children's games. Oriole came by and shared her Tikinagan that she had used when her children were small.



## Lucet Cord Braiding –

### How to Use a Lucet Tool

#### Instructions for Lucet cord or Braiding Cord

Natasha Hoover

Using a lucet, is not difficult, but learning how to use one is tricky if you do not know someone who can show you in person. Unfortunately, most of us do not have the option of learning to use a lucet from an expert and most of the illustrations available online are somewhat confusing.

The lucet, has existed for hundreds of years. Archeologists have uncovered Viking lucets. There are several different ways to make lucet cord. On this page, I will demonstrate one of the easiest ways. Lucet cord can be used for almost anything - shoestrings, straps, ties for aprons and petticoats - Lucet cord can be made with multicolored yarn or multiple strands for an attractive appearance.



**How to Thread a Lucet** First, you want to thread your lucet. It is not necessary to keep the lucet threaded the entire time because the diameter of the hole limits the diameter of the cord. However, I find it helpful to thread the lucet to begin with because it makes holding on to the tail end easier during the first few steps. Thread it from back to front so the tail end is sticking out towards you.



Next, wrap your yarn around the lucet to begin the cord. Basically, you want to make a figure eight. Bring the yarn from behind the right prong and wrap it around the outside. Then, pass the yarn behind the left

prong and back around the front. This basic position is how your lucet should look after each additional knot is made in the cord.



Then, make one additional wrap around the right prong. Just like the others, this wrap should come from behind, go around the outside of the prong and then return to the front of the lucet. You will repeat this step throughout the cording process.



Now, it is time to make the first knot in the cord. Pull the bottom right loop up over the top loop. Keep the top loop on the prong as it now becomes your new bottom loop.



Then, flip the lucet over from left to right and pull the knot tight. I like to think of the flip as rotating the lucet half a turn clockwise, if you were looking down on it from above. It is very important to hold the tail end firmly at this point so you can tighten the knot. It may slip to one side or the other while you are tightening. That is fine, just re-center is before you start the next wrap on the lucet.



Now you can form your next loop. Just like always, pass the yarn around the back of the right prong and wrap it around the outside of the lucet. Then, bring the bottom right loop over the top loop, flip the lucet and tighten as before.



After a few more flips, the cord will start to take shape.



Continue this process until the desired length of cord has been reached. The cord looks like a four sided braid and, when tightened properly, is very sturdy. It may take a few tries to get the process down. Do not despair - you can simply take the yarn off the lucet prongs and pull to unravel the cord so you can start over.



### How to End a Lucet Cord

When your cord is long enough, carefully pull it from the lucet prongs. Cut the yarn going to your ball or skein, but leave enough to work with. You can always trim excess later. Then, pass the end through both loops and tighten them down. This can be a little tricky because you have to ease the slack through the loops. If you simply pull all at once, one loop will tighten but the other will not.

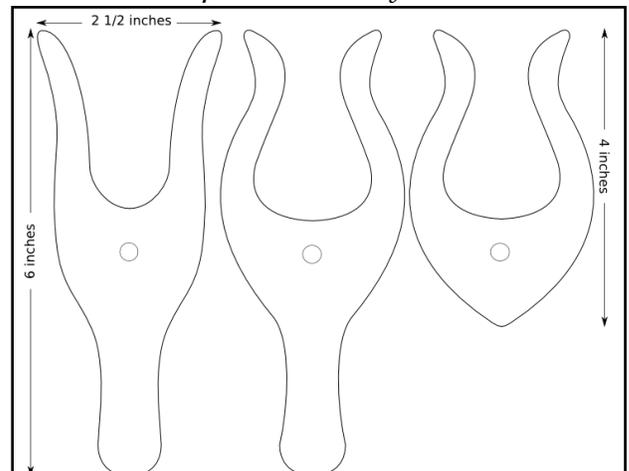


### The Finished Lucet Cord

Now you know how to make your own lucet cord. Use embroidery floss for a fine braid or choose something thicker.

July 22, 2016 By [Natasha Hoover](#)

### Lucet pattern to make your own



**September 29 Baggage**  
*formerly known as VPRR Fall Gathering*  
**Judy McPherson**

The actual day was to have been the VPRR fall school program at Seven Oaks House, but due to a major glitch the educational program had to be cancelled. We still had everyone wanting to take advantage of the day, so we did.

It was a glorious day, not too hot nor too cold. The sun shone brightly and we spent the day learning and doing things. It was lovely - good learning for raising and packing tents - trying the lathe, good food - both the lunch and the potluck supper - and as usual - great company. The kids had an entertaining day without the need for too much supervision and there were lots of activities to try. The site is a great area with the parkland to run about and explore. Thanks Seven Oaks House Museum.

As far as I know, only Marie left some stuff behind - some of which I knew about, but her black knife and her bag of leather and fabric bits and pieces - ha ha - she forgot altogether.

Discussion turned to collecting our thoughts for 1867-2017 and the next Baggage sessions.



13 Adults - Marie, Judy, Barry, Erle, Gen, Bernice, Kristine, Carla, Carol, Ed, Dawn, Barb, Gary S. 16 Kids - Darion, Xavier, Oceane, Elizabeth, Jonathan, Katherine, Penny, Grace, Nya, Tristan, Cheyenne, Rebecca, Marina, Ben, Donavin, Anthony Others/guests - Eric, Dustin, Judy (Dawn's mum), Rev. Shelly M-T; and a couple others whose names we didn't catch.



# Steps to putting up a tent Marquee

September 29 Activity



*And we're done.....*

## Our Fall Day - September 29

*Genevieve Woods*

The day started out a little dreary. It didn't take long for the sun to come out at Seven Oaks House. It was an early day for a lot of us as some of our members had to travel a long way to come join us (not to mention the ones who are definitely not morning people).

We came together to learn new skills and of course enjoy each others company. The women got together to learn to put up the **marquee** (most of the men were at work). **Erle** showed us how to put up his Tipi. We got to admire and try our newly made foot lathe and try our hand at quill writing.

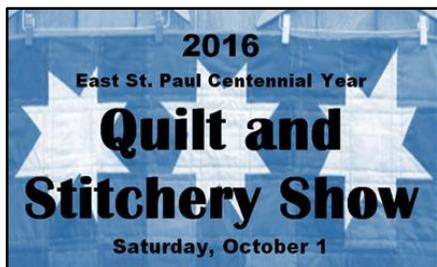
The kids were kids and did what they usually do: run, climb, get stuck and play the whole time, ignoring the couple of organized games that were presented to them. When we were not learning and admiring new objects we sewed a bit on our projects and talked about what activities our group will be participating in the near future.

Lunch was a buffet of do it yourself sandwiches and cookies for dessert. Supper was a potluck of food which included: ham, baked beans and fried potatoes cooked on the fire pit (we kept the fire burning all afternoon), perogies and many other foods. The *pièce de résistance* was Judy's pumpkin bread pudding.

I enjoyed our Day. It was a beautiful day as it was neither too hot or cold. The day was relaxing and fun. I got to learn new skills and connect with old and new friends.



October 1



*Fran Howard*

Once more the 21<sup>st</sup> century division dressed to chant for Votes for Women. At the invitation of Fran, Judy, Olivia and Marie made ready the banners, sash and placard and marched for the Vote for Women.

Mayor Shelley Hart, who was opening the Material Girls Centennial Quilt Show in East St Paul on October 1, was interrupted by 3 suffragists as she was about to begin her remarks. They shouted, "Votes for women!" and "Women want the Vote!" and noisily made their case for women voting.

The key word was "centennial", 2016 was the 100th anniversary of the division of the Parish of St Paul into West and East St Paul and also the centennial of Manitoba's crusade for women's suffrage.

The suffragists were Marie Zorniak, Olivia Arnason, and Judy McPherson. They played their roles with zest and aplomb then enjoyed the quilt show, finishing up with coffee and cake.

Our thanks for their contribution to our show.



## Foot Powered Spring Pole Lathe

*Ed Douglas*

This project began in July this year when the wood for the lathe was purchased. Two workshops were organized and executed to instruct the building crew on the use and application of the historic tools, as well as the structure and materials for the lathe itself.

The first happened on July 24th and focussed on hand tool techniques and use, as well as building individual parts and cutting mortises and tenons.

The apprentice wood-working crew worked well and quickly mastered the basic skills that they needed. Ed Douglas and Ray Perrier continued to shape the parts and finished the construction.



The second workshop allowed for practice on the completed lathe and the start of the next project: the flax brake. One final piece has been added to the lathe: a small board to direct the drive belt and control its lateral movement along turning.

Since then the lathe has been used by several people and some turnings have been created. The hardest part is still coordinating the use of the treadle, followed by getting familiar with the feel and use of the lathe tools.

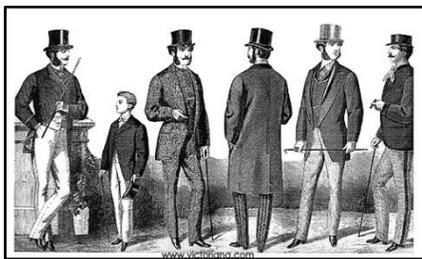
The lathe functions well and although there is learning curve, most people can make this machine work within about twenty minutes if the piece has been carefully prepared ahead of time. The foot powered lathe should become an excellent display for future MLHS events as most people can begin to operate it in a short period



*First spindles created*

of time, it is easy to get immediate results, and it is interactive. All of these features guarantee that people will stop and watch and also ask questions. This makes a very good demonstration item of the time period that we portray.

## Victorian Clothing for Men



From *Fashion History 1860s: Men's Victorian Clothing* [April 18, 1868]

### Victorian Clothing for Men - 1860s

**FULL DRESS** The standard style for full dress in the mid-1800s is black dress-coat with full collar rolling low, white vest, or of the material of the coat, and black doeskin pantaloons. The English Victorian fashion of blue coat and white vest, with lavender pantaloons and gloves, has been seen at some fashionable entertainments, and will be more generally adopted during the winter by young gentlemen.

**WALKING DRESS VICTORIAN CLOTHING** The fashionable walking suit for men is a short double-breasted frock coat made of diagonally ribbed coating or of plain dark cloth. Vest of the same material, with broad collar rolled to suit the shape of the coat. Gray or drab pantaloons with diagonal stripes, or of a solid color with a side stripe of darker shade. Pantaloons still fit closely, but are cut wider at the ankle, giving the necessary spring over the boot. Suits of black cloth made in this manner are chosen for visiting.

**OVER-COATS FOR VICTORIAN MEN** The fall over-coat for Victorian men is a loose sack of light drab or tan-colored cloth, with wide dark facing of silk on the roll in front. A closely-fitting surtout, made moderately long, will be worn as winter fashion. It is of Elysian beaver, a thick warm cloth with rough surface, but as soft as flannel. Brown, dark claret, and blue are the colors.

**VICTORIAN MENS HATS** The fashionable Victorian silk hat has a medium crown slightly bell-shaped, with a two-inch brim curved at the sides. Cashmere under the brim. Glossy silk beavers are selected for full dress. Pocket Hats, of soft pliable felt, have a jaunty appearance, and are convenient for traveling and the theatre. They are also made of

ribbed silk, and of light Scotch cloths, to match the suit with which they are worn

### SHOES AND BOOTS FOR VICTORIAN MEN

Victorian buttoned and laced shoes are more fashionable than boots for street wear. The shoe is in the full English shape, with stout soles and low broad heels. For evening, gaiters will be worn made of light calf-skin cut all in one piece, with elastic sides. The tongue-boot of fine calf-skin, with light soles and morocco legs, is considered full dress, though boots are objectionable with the present scant trousers.

**GLOVES FOR MEN** Golden brown and maroon are the fashionable colours for gloves. Doeskin gloves are preferred to kid for street wear. They are more durable, and cost only a trifle more. The serviceable black kinds are faced inside with white, to prevent the wrist from being stained. Glove powder, or Hygienique, used to facilitate putting on a new glove, is said to soften and bleach the hands.

**HANDKERCHIEFS** Negligee handkerchiefs, just imported, have hems only half an inch wide, striped with hairlines of cerise, blue, or purple. Others have solid coloured hems, either tan or maroon. Sheer linen, with wide hem and monogram, is selected for more dressy occasions.

### LOUNGE JACKETS AND VICTORIAN SMOKING JACKETS FOR MEN

Billiard and smoking jackets are short sacks of gray cloth, lined with purple, crimson, or green flannel, trimmed with soutache the colour of the lining. Smoking caps to match are cut in very narrow gores, braided with gilt. A long tassel droops from the center.

Serviceable dressing gowns are made of dark gray woolen serge, wadded and lined with delaine.

Outside facings of green silk stitched in small diamonds with gold-coloured silk. A silk cord and tassels at the waist. Soft cashmere, and Empress cloth in cashmere patterns, are made into handsome robes, and faced with satin.

**MEN'S JEWELRY** Scarf rings of Neapolitan coral are shown to represent a tiny serpent with flexible joints winding around a white scarf. Others are of filigree silver with Etruscan carving, with sleeve-buttons, studs, and the fashionable locket - all en

suite. A half dozen small buttons of pink coral for a vest are sold for \$45. Sleeve-buttons to match are \$15. Other sets for vest and cuffs are of the dark blue lapis lazuli, or of carved yellow ivory, the Brazilian beetles, and grinning death's heads of French enamel; but good taste dictates the more quiet styles, such as the smallest sized studs of Etruscan gold, or small jewels with very little gold visible in the setting.

Watch-chains are short, with an extra attachment for the universally worn locket. A fancy sporting chain is formed of golden bits and buckles, with a pendent whip, stirrup, and horse-shoe. The price is \$100 in gold. buttons representing a jockey-cap and whip and bridle are sold with the chain.

**MENS VICTORIAN VISITING AND CALLING CARDS** Visiting cards for the coming season are of unglazed card board, large and almost square. Tinted cards, especially buff, are fashionable. The lettering is in old English text, or in script. The expense of fifty cards is \$3.50. One corner of the card is turned down to denote the object of the visit. In different cities, a different signification is attached to these broken cards. We give the custom of New York society. On the left hand upper corner, the word Visite is engraved on the reverse side. This corner is turned down, displaying the word on the front of the card to signify that an ordinary call is made. On the right-hand corner is Felicitation, to be used when making a visit of congratulation on some happy event, such as a marriage, or the birth of a child. On the left lower side is Conge, or Good-by. The remaining corner is marked Condolence.



GENTLEMEN'S SHIRT  
[SEPT. 26, 1868]



KNITTED UNDER-SHIRT  
[March 7, 1868]



VELVET CAP & REDINGTON  
[March 14, 1868]



GENTLEMEN'S RIDING COSTME  
[June 6, 1868]



GENTLEMEN'S PARIS FASHIONS  
[August 1, 1868]



[October 10, 1868]



GENTLEMEN'S WALKING COSTUME  
[February 22, 1868]



[March 14, 1868]



GENTLEMEN'S COLLARS AND CUFFS  
[SEPT. 26, 1868]

*Harper's Bazaar* issues  
February 1868 to October 1868.

## Baggage October 15 Underpinnings for All

*Discussion and sewing of undergarments for 1867 clothing*

We had a surprise visit from Kira-Lyn who was visiting her family and dropped by to see her MLHS family. Kira was returning to England the next day and will be back for July activities for Canada 150.

We all worked on various clothing bits and underpinnings. A lot of work has been accomplished for 1867 clothing and most will have their new 1867 fashions for the New Year's Day Levee



## October 21 Professional Development Day/SAGE

*Yet again we dusted off the 1916 clothing...*

**MLHS was there threefold....**

*Judy's report: I make no bones that I don't do "early" well. So, I'll let others describe the first two parts of our three-point action day - Nellie McClung Suffragist loud welcome to participants - the MLHS display table - and the Seminar.*

Opening of the Conference – Votes for Women Welcome. MLHS was at the ready greeting participants as they entered the gym prior to the keynote speaker for the annual Professional Development Day at Kildonan East Collegiate. Dawn, Fran, Grace, Gen, Cheyenne, Rebecca, Marina, Oceane, Judy, Marie and two guests from Saskatchewan - Cori and Karen chanted and cried out for support for the vote for Women. The Minister of Education and the President of Manitoba Teacher's Society were delighted to see the line of women expressing the right to vote.

After the initial opening, Fran and Dawn and Judy looked after the display table and handed out information about MLHS focusing on what we do and all the time periods we portray– concentrating on 1867 – Canada's 150.

Seminar Session - Marie decided she and I should deliver a seminar on the effect of The Great War (a theme of the convention) on women's clothing. With photographs and our own 1916 Nellie clothing plus more hanging up - plus corsetry and other underwear (some corsetry on loan from Sabrina with thanks) - and the omnipresent headwear - we illustrated the dramatic changes from the 1890s through to 1920. Those attending participated in the discussions with enthusiasm, including a cautionary to the one male in the room when it came time to discuss split drawers. Towards the end of the hour, we set out a dozen hats and asked the group to place them in chronological order, and finally asked for a volunteer to try on one of the hats. They all enjoyed the discussion. Marie and I enjoyed it as well.





## Carpentry and Baggage October 29<sup>th</sup>



### "Flaxable" at the Douglas Farm

October 29th - combo Baggage and Carpentry at Ed and Carol Douglas' farm. Attendance was "intimate". Everybody met in Ed's workshop, where Carol was seen sitting behind a dump truck load of flax stems. (Thanks Erle, I think.) It looked like a giant feathery million piece pick up sticks game. Carol was carefully bundling flax stems. Judy and Kathie joined in. After a dozen or so bundles that job got boring and it became clear the rest of the pick-up sticks were not going to be bundled. Whether they would ever be retted and scutched and breaked and all the other words describing getting flax to the ready-to-spin-into-linen stage is a guess at this point. Judy made a mini-bundle and will see if, after some trimming and tighter stringing, it might work as a whisk broom for the quern.



Ed and Gordon worked on building a wooden stand for the whetstone. The women went inside. After lunch the women reviewed a box of patterns Kathie had acquired many years ago. They are mostly for Indian projects - beading - clothing for men, women and children, and accessories. [Does anyone know what an octopus bag is?].

The patterns will be deposited with Barb as part of the MLHS Library. Carol is going to spend a day at Barb's some time later in the season and work on cataloguing the library which keeps growing.

## Just the Flax Ma'm...



*Further to the making of the Flax Break, Ed and Carol will be planting linen flax in the spring*

**Fibre Flax** - The outer fibres of the flax plant, *Linum usitatissimum*, are used to make linen.

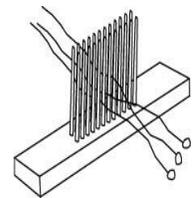
### Harvesting

The flowers appear 60 days after planting, followed by the "boll" or seed capsule. The plants are ready for pulling at 80 to 100 days. If they are pulled too soon there will be too much waste in the scutching and hackling processing steps. If they are pulled too late, the fibre will be too coarse. The best time is when the seeds are beginning to change from pale green to a pale brown colour and the stalks will be yellow two-thirds up. Once the plants are ready, they must be pulled immediately, delaying not even a day.

The plants are pulled, roots and all, to give the maximum length of fibre. Plants of similar length can be bundled together, keeping the sheaves even at the root end as much as possible. Sheaves of plants are tied with twine and stood against each other in groups of 10-12 sheaves to dry. It takes about a week in good weather to dry the plants. The sheaves can tolerate some rain, but if rain is heavy or if you must harvest in rain, bring the crop indoors to dry.

### Rippling

Once the sheaves are dry the seeds must be removed by a 'ripper'. This is a board studded with sharp spikes arranged like the teeth of a comb. The sheaves are drawn through to separate the seed heads from the stems.



### Retting

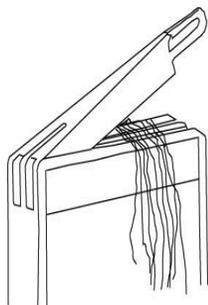
In order to release the soft outer fibres from the stems for spinning, the inner wooden core must be 'retted', or rotted, in one of several ways: *Dew retting*. The sheaves are untied and the flax is spread out in even rows on grass for 15-20 days. The flax should be turned once daily to ensure the even exposure of the fibres to the effect of the sun, rain and dew. In dry weather when the flax shows signs of drying out and becoming brittle the flax is watered lightly with soft water in the early morning or late evening.

*Water retting.* The flax is retted in streams, open tanks or ponds. The best control over the retting process occurs in open tanks such as an old bath tub. The flax straw bundles are weighted down to keep them submerged. At 27 C water will ret the flax in 5-7 days, while below 20C retting can take up to 2-3 weeks. The longer time is not harmful.

With each method the flax should be tested daily to determine when the retting process is complete. Too little retting will make the flax difficult to break. Too much retting and the fibres will be weak. The root end of the flax should split and begin to show the inner fibres. The most reliable test is to break and scutch a small dried sample. After retting is complete, lay a thin layer of flax straw on grass to cure and bleach it. Turn the fibres once a day for even exposure. Retted flax will dry in 2-3 days in sun and breeze.

### Breaking

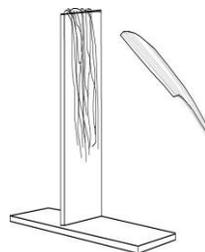
The next three steps complete the separation of the fibres from the stalks. 'Breaking' is a process that completely smashes the woody core of the stems into tiny fragments. A wooden device called a 'break' is used for this purpose.



It is a fixed frame to which is attached a chopping frame attached at one end to the fixed frame. By the handle at the other end, the chopping frame is brought down sharply on a handful of retted flax. This is repeated over the entire length of the flax stems until most of the brittle pith and cuticle gives away leaving the long band of fibre intact. A fluted mallet can be used to break the flax also, but a break makes the job much easier. If the flax straw does not break completely, the batch will have to be retted further.

### Scutching

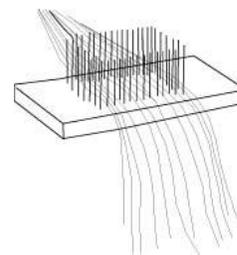
'Scutching' completes the removal of the broken stalk from the fibre. A scutching board is a smooth wooden plank held upright on a base; it is about 35 cm (14 in) wide and 1.2 m (4ft) high. A scutching knife resembles a large butter knife or paddle. It is made of smooth wood free of knots. With the left hand a handful of broken flax is laid over the top of the scutching board so that the stalks lie against the side of the board and the right hand the scutching knife



is used to repeatedly scrape and beat the stalks until all of the woody portions (the 'boon') separate and fall away from the fibres. If retting is incomplete the heavy scutching needed to remove the boon will damage the fibres and much will be lost. It may not be possible to remove all of the boon. If the retting is overdone, the fibres will break into small useless pieces.

### Hackling

'Hackling' is the process of separating fibres that are still clinging together. This is done with at least three different flax-combs or 'hackles' consisting of a board with steel spikes or needles. A coarse hackle of spikes spaced about 2-3 spikes per square inch. A medium hackle with spikes spaced 16-20 per square inch. And a fine hackle of fine needles in close rows about 80-100 per square inch.



The flax is repeatedly drawn lightly across the top of the hackle starting with the coarse one and finishing with the fine one. The hackles will separate and split the fibres in the fibre glands into finer and finer filaments. Left behind in the hackle will be shorter, coarser bits called the 'tow' that is saved to be spun into tow yarn. Fine yarn is spun from the 'line' or the fine hackled flax that results from the hackling process. A good hackler will get 55% fine hackled flax, 40% 'tow', and 5% loss.

### Spinning and Dyeing

The fine line flax is now ready for spinning. It should be twisted, folded in half and allowed to bend around itself like a skein of wool, and it can be stored this way indefinitely. Mark the root and blossom ends because this is important when spinning.

Flax is one of the roughest of the vegetable fibres and success in dyeing it depends on how it is prepared. It is best spun and hanked before mordanting and dyeing. It is then treated like wool, but with higher temperatures and longer simmering in the dyebath.

Richters Herbs [www.richters.com](http://www.richters.com)

D2701 ©2004-2011 Otto Richter and Sons Limited

## An Approach to Research

### "THE MYTHICAL BODICE"

Barry & Judy McPherson

Over the years, Barry and Judy have participated in events in the Northern tier of American states and have been dragged into the controversy of the subject of women's "bodices". There have been allegations - unfounded - that there was an English bodice and a French bodice in the 18th and early 19th centuries. This is quite a stretch. There is no credible evidence on the subject. We have to address the subject on the basis of two factors. What is a bodice? And what is NOT a bodice? We also have to try and clarify the associated thread dealing with the sidebar pertaining to who would wear such a garment and how would they wear it.

- A "suspect bodice" has the following characteristics:
- it is worn at events as outerwear with no gown or jacket covering it;
- generally, it is too loose;
- it is usually made of polished cotton, often with a large floral print, or perhaps a tapestry-type fabric. Fine cotton and brocade were very expensive fabrics, and if you could afford those, you would not be wearing your underwear in public;
- the neckline is wrong, sometimes dipping below the breasts, which gives that "ye olde colonial barmaid" look we must avoid;
- The neckline on these "bodices" is usually way too narrow. Shoulder straps should be wide apart;
- Bad bodices rarely have the correct side seam, which was not on the side, but was curved in on the back, sort of like a princess seam.

There is no defined English or French bodice. There were variations of a number of styles within the constrictions of the principals of tailoring of the time.

A "good bodice" (to be referred to as "jumps") has the following characteristics:

- it resembles "jumps" which are meant to be a less restrictive alternative to stays and in every respect, should be treated the same as stays;
- it was considered underwear. [Women engaged in strenuous activity may well have stripped down to their stays or jumps; nevertheless, it was underwear.];
- It should be tight enough to shape the body;
- it should be worn under a gown or jacket;
- most often, it was linen fabric which could be plain or could have woven in stripes;
- it would be worn by women of all ages and social levels.

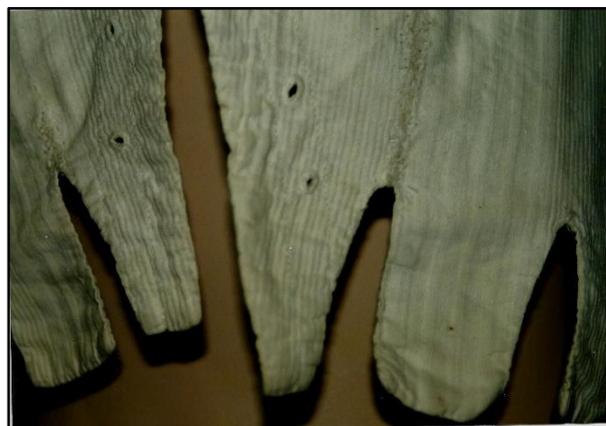
Many suttlers (vendors, sales people) have sold "bad bodices" to their customers who naively believe that suttlers are experts. Be ever mindful that a suttler is in business to make money. Some are knowledgeable and have a code of ethics that precludes them selling bad merchandise. (On one occasion, a few suttlers closed their stalls when they saw Barry coming because, he had no qualms about standing in front of a suttler's booth and telling potential customers that they were being sold junk - crap - or whatever term you need. In another instance, Barry was referred to as a "costume nazi". Made his day!!!)

Your best friend is a primary source. A suttler is not a primary source. A primary source is an original garment - or artwork of the period - or a recognized authority on historic costume. Remember the RULE OF THREES - when you have three examples of a garment, you can reasonably say it did exist and is not an anomaly. Generally speaking, we want to interpret ordinary women.

Attached photos are of a hand-quilted cotton waistcoat, c. 1800. Note the wide set of the shoulder straps. This is a waistcoat, not a "bodice" or jumps. It is somewhat close fitting

and reflects the shape of a woman who is wearing stays. Next photos are true jumps - very much like stays but with no bones at all. The cotton fabric gives the illusion of cording but in fact it is white on white textile. Note again the very wide-set shoulder straps and all the tabs at the lower edge. You can see the eyelets that tie the straps to the short tabs at the front. This set of jumps is front closing

*Many thanks to Mr. Kim Stacy who many years ago, lectured on the subject, and Mr. Roger Kerr, both former costume inspectors for the Brigade of the American Revolution.*



*waistcoat*



*jumps*



*Barry & Judy*

**Proof the Research Works**  
*- even it it's backwards...*

*Judy McPherson*

To create my first 1916 suit, I looked at women's fashion books, Butterick catalogue books, pictures of my grandmother in 1916, pictures of women in The Great War, photographs of suffragists, photographs of women in a variety of occupations from telephone operator to farm wife. After going ooooooh and aaahhhh over the amazing high fashion gowns, I made myself focus on everyday clothing, I liked the photo of a suffragette being carried by the elbows out of her protest meeting. That's what I wanted!

I don't think the men appreciated her putting her "I VOTED TODAY" button on the gravestone of her hero, Susan B. Anthony.

I chose a plain suit with common details like a belt and pockets and an A-line skirt with lots of buttons, with hem just at the ankles. I chose a tweedy fabric. I had some antique lace of the early 20th century which got added to the collar. It all got made. With the right accessories, it looked pretty good, I thought.

Then, I met a new friend - Helle Wilson - who wanted a suffragist presence at an event in Gimli. She asked to borrow my suit. After returning the suit, she was quite excited to show me a picture of her grandmother that had just surfaced, wearing a very, very similar suit. Backwards research - confirmed.



*My grandmother, Jessie Crockatt  
- Winnipeg, 1916*



**NOTES:**  
*Must learn to stand with  
toes pointed out.  
Helle's grandmother needs a  
hat  
They had big feet then.*

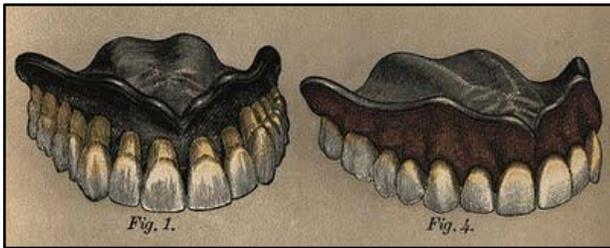


*Helle Wilson's grandmother*

## 19<sup>th</sup> Century False Teeth

*Remember to Brush....*

*Julia Armfield,*



**Have you ever thought about what 19<sup>th</sup> Century dentistry would be like? How about false teeth?**

Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the problem of rotten teeth was a concern that spanned all social classes, although with the price of early dentures ranging from between half a guinea to forty pounds, only those from the upper ranks could afford to do very much about it.

Imagine entering a dentist's office, passing jars of teeth and seeing several sets laid out on a table. Teeth were extracted from the dead to make dentures, many were collected after battles, and came to be known as Waterloo Teeth.\*. Waterloo Teeth – a moniker which quickly became applicable to any set of teeth pilfered from the mouth of a dead soldier and continued in use throughout the Crimean and American Civil Wars – were vastly preferable to those more commonly used in the eighteenth century. These pre-war teeth were frequently acquired from executed criminals, exhumed bodies, dentists' patients and even animals and were consequently often rotten, worn down or loaded with syphilis. The prospect of an overabundance of young, healthy teeth to be readily pillaged from the battlefield must have been a dentist's dream. *Career soldiers carried "pinchers" (heavy smooth-jawed pliers) specifically for pulling teeth from the fallen enemy and their cohorts alike.*

The desperately poor also sold their teeth (and hair), particularly if they had a nice set and knew they might not have long to live. One may sympathize for a young woman with consumption allowing her teeth to be extracted with no anesthetic for a petty sum, maybe to provide for her family. Real teeth were considered the best replacement for people who had lost their own. In areas with high poverty, many people used to have all their upper or lower teeth taken out in one go and replaced with dentures. The procedure was sometimes presented to a young man as a 21st birthday present or as a dowry for a young woman before her wedding – the idea being that it would save money on dentistry in the future. Depending on how much money you had, there was a variety of dentures to choose from.



*Hippopotamus ivory teeth of George Washington*

Starting in the 18th century with silversmiths and barbers who tended to dental needs, by the 1850s dentistry had come a long way. The use of anesthetic allowed much more work to be done. All the same, it must have been horrendous, and the poor habitually had to live with rotten mouths and gums and no real dental care. When human teeth were scarce; ivory and porcelain were used, both yellowed so were not as popular. Gold springs would be installed so the teeth pressed against the gums and could open for speaking. Most of these early forms of dentures were not designed for eating with; they would be removed, then put back in after eating.



*Porcelain teeth of the Archbishop of Narbonne*

Some of the dental work was art, and it would have been interesting to see the rich with their fancy teeth.

Grave robbers often risked arrest just to retrieve dentures, or a good set of real teeth.



Enamel and gold

By the Victorian era, people had been cleaning their teeth for centuries, by the late 1830s toothbrushes started being mass produced for the general public. The best were silver handled with badger hair bristles, but ivory and wood handles were also common. Tooth powders and pastes were home-made or for purchase; common ingredients included: chalk, charcoal, cinnamon, burnt bread, burnt alum, myrrh, honey, sage, cuttlefish bone, cream to tartar, clover oil and dragon's blood.



The fashion for "genuine" dentures, popular though it was dogged by unappealing "graverobber" implications and it was during the mid-nineteenth century that more sustainable and palatable styles of false teeth came to be available. Porcelain teeth, which had been in use as far back as the 1770s but had a tendency to chip, underwent a great transformation thanks to Claudius Ash, a silver and goldsmith who brought his expertise to dentures in the 1820s and 30s when he started manufacturing porcelain teeth mounted on gold plates, with gold springs and wire to hold them in place and make them easier to talk and eat with. Ash & Sons, which became a

successful company, went on to develop dental plates made of vulcanite and silver, as well as sickle-shaped metal insets to stabilize single false teeth, aluminum and gold web dental strengtheners and silicate cement for fillings, among much else. It was from here that the manufacturing of false teeth took off, with dentists' advertisements from the British Library Evanion Collection showcasing the sudden assortment of materials and plates available – from platinum to 18 carat gold. The use of the genuine article in the manufacturing of Victorian dentures did not let up throughout much of the late nineteenth century and it was not until the early twentieth century that one could be certain not to find anyone smiling at you with a set of dead men's teeth.

8 WILLIAM HARNETT'S DENTAL DEPOT,	
NATURAL TEETH.	
In sets of six uppers from .. .. .	2/6 to 25/
Ditto six-lowers .. .. .	1/ to 5/
Bicuspides upper .. .. .	9d. each
Ditto lower .. .. .	6d. ,,
Laterals ditto .. .. .	4d. ,,
Ditto upper .. .. .	6d. to 1/ each.
Canines ditto .. .. .	9d. ,, 1/ ,,
Ditto lower .. .. .	6d. ,, 1/ ,,
Centrals ditto .. .. .	4d. each.
Ditto upper .. .. .	1/ to 5/ each.
Hippopotamus, or Sea Horse Teeth ..	2/ to 25/ per lb.
according to size and quality,	
Hippopotamus, or Sea Horse Blocks	2/6 to 25/ each.
Side Blocks .. .. .	3d. ,, 1/ ,,
Straight Sea Horse Teeth .. .. .	2/6 ,, 5/ per lb.
Sea Cow Tusks from .. .. .	2/6 ,, 5/6 ,,

*There were dental supply houses in every city. Harnett's was located at 12 Panton Square, Coventry St., London. This ad appeared in 1851.*

*\*The Battle of Waterloo (1815) saw about 43,500 men killed, many who were buried in mass graves. Generally young and healthy, their teeth were pulled as part of the interment process. Barrels of teeth flooded the market and were shipped all over the world. The earliest reference of the term Waterloo teeth comes from February 1858, in the American Dental Review.*

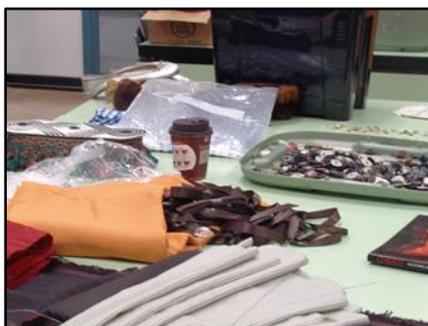
*Reprinted from Historical Resources Great Britain 2005  
Julia Armfield, Intern*

*Further reading:*  
John Woodforde, *The Strange Story of False Teeth*, (London, 1968) Stephanie Pain, "The Great Tooth Robbery" in *The New Scientist* (London, 16 June 2001) BBC H2G2, [Waterloo Teeth, A History of Dentures](#) (August, 2005)

## November 19 Baggage

### *St John's HS*

Nine o'clock AM rolled around and so did we. Tables were cleared of chairs and projects were set out. Judy brought numerous tubs of delights and we oooh'd and ahhh'd and we all took home treasures. Marie had a few offerings as well. Gen and Sabrina worked on finishing their 1867 dresses, Judy hawed and hemmed (pinned) her new 1916 dress, Marie cut out a 1867 Mantel wrap, Bernice, Elizabeth and Kristine pinned, cut and stitched various dress and underpinning parts. Dawn shared the almost completed dress bodice for Grace, Susan came by and worked on a day cap, Oriole visited and shared the book trip and in the events upcoming. Our newest member Darlene came by and introduced herself and looked at patterns for her project and Barb and company came by for a quick visit and sharing. We discussed plans for the upcoming Levee January 1, Winter Gathering and other dates we have invitations for as well as others that have already been booked. We had eighteen jam packed into the sewing room.



**November 24**  
**Gwen Fox Gallery - Selkirk**  
**Judy McPherson**



Bernice Phillips is a member of the Gwen Fox Gallery collective and her artistic talents are on show there.

The Gallery was part of "Homes for the Holidays - House & Heritage Tour" - a fundraiser for Nova House, the Selkirk-based women's shelter, and for Homes for All. Bernice thought a few MLHS ladies in their 1860s hoop skirted dresses would add a Victorian ambience to the evening, so on Thursday, Judy, Genevieve and Fran journeyed up to Selkirk and joined Bernice for the lovely wine and cheese evening. The volunteers had turned the heritage post office building that is now the gallery into a wonderfully decorated Christmas room. A barbershop quartet added to the friendly mood.

The crafts and art work on display were unique - and many were tempting - especially the etched lighted glass squares created by Bernice. The welcoming warmth of the evening has set the tone for the Christmas season.



## TEXTILIS - Viveka Hansen's Textile thoughts

LAUNDRY AND DYEING – 1850s to 1914

Article shared by Fran Howard

Washing, starching, ironing, repairing, altering and dyeing were important processes not only for keeping clothes clean but also to ensure that they continued to be wearable and remained fresh as long as possible. Fabric, the sewing of clothes, and ready-made garments were relatively expensive investments, that needed either to be used till they were worn out, or dyed to look less unsightly or faded, or altered to follow to a more up-to-date fashion or be altered as clothes for children. We will look at a selection of related announcements and advertisements in the local paper *Whitby Gazette* between 1858 and 1914.



Advertisement in *Whitby Gazette* 1860.

Dry-cleaning was developed about the middle of the 19th century for textiles that could not be washed in water without shrinking or losing shape. It was an unhealthy process usually involving a petroleum-based solvent, which was also a considerable fire risk. However dry-cleaning became extremely popular since the fine fabrics favoured by Victorian fashion: silk, velvet, fine-quality wool and every kind of lace were often combined in the same garment, making washing in water virtually impossible. Dyeing was also largely based on chemicals after the introduction in 1856 of aniline dyes, which made it possible to use new and often very strong colours – lilac, rose, turquoise – and black (1863) which were difficult and expensive or almost impossible to develop with natural methods. Advertisements were placed in the *Whitby*

*Gazette* by ten separate firms involved in this activity between 1858 and 1910, some of them only through local agents, with the clothes being sent for dyeing or cleaning to a larger town.



Close-up picture of 1860s parasol – from the collection in the *Whitby museum* – with a strong azure blue colour on silk fabric and fringe, a shade that was not possible to achieve earlier using natural dyes, but with the help of synthetic dyes became widely popular.

Also noted, a smaller advertisement in 1885 promoted the services of a washerwoman: 'Washing wanted in the Country. Good Drying on the Moor edge – For address, apply *Gazette* office.' It may be assumed that this woman soaked the washing in a tub, scrubbed it clean on a washboard and rinsed it in a watercourse if any were available before laying it out to dry in the open air, the most usual procedure throughout the 19th century and even later. After being washed, collars and laces etc. needed to be stiffened to keep their form better, something to which particular attention was drawn between 1865 and 1875. This advertisement from spring 1865 refers to the then well-known 'Glenfield Patent Starch' manufactured by 'Wotherspoon & Co., Glasgow & London'.

It does not say where this product could be bought, but it would have been available from any well-stocked general dealer.



Advertisement in *Whitby Gazette* 1914.



## The Second Last Page

Feedback about events and newsletters

Thank you so much for sharing your newsletter. We enjoyed it very much.

*Martin Lake*  
Executive Assistant  
Mississinewa Battlefield Society, Inc.

Wow! Quite the comprehensive history/journal. When do you have time!!!  
Great work, Marie!

*Linda Connor*  
Social Studies Curriculum Consultant  
Instruction, Curriculum and Assessment Branch  
Manitoba Education and Training

### Picture taken of MLHS at Deer Lodge Hospital 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event



Photo credit: Deer Lodge Centre Foundation

Hello Marie,  
I have shared the news letter with my sister in law from Glasgow and we are looking forward to being at the event on the 29<sup>th</sup>. Could you advise me of the start time at the J. Inkster house? And is it possible to see any back issues of the news letters?  
Best regards.

*Victor Sawelo*  
Manager Ross House Museum

### Siege Weekend 2016 – On the wharf Old Fort William



Photo courtesy: Old Fort William

### DODGING THE BULLET...

A number of you have been aware of the fact that I have not been actively involved in the various activities of MLHS for the last while. Dodging the bullet is something I feel terribly thankful for. I am now officially clear of cancer and with one hurdle left to go, I hope to get back on my feet. That statement however is somewhat of a joke. A plastic surgeon has to take a look at my right foot and determine what can be done to cure or alleviate the pain that I have been dealing with for several years. You may well ask the question - what does a plastic surgeon have to do with resolving this issue. If I ever find out, I'll let you know. It's similar to the reality that all the cutting has been done by a dermatologist!! Duhhhh! I am so thankful that Judy has been at my side assisting me in every way possible to make life bearable. Without this high level of wifely support, and kindness from MLHS, I would never have been able to get through the past year or so. Hope to see everybody soon.

*Barry*

### What is wrong with this picture?????



The pastoral look is diminished by non-historic items.

Can you pick them out?????

We do great things, but must pay attention to details...

## The Last Page



# The Warmest of Christmas Greetings to you and your families



A Christmas that holds its happy share  
Of heart content and laughter  
And a New Year where you will be  
Happy forever after



*The MLHS Board wishes  
you and your families the best of  
Christmas Happiness and the  
warmest wishes for a  
Merry New Year  
and  
all that it has in store for you...*



## First Event of 2017

### January 1

*Lieutenant Governor's Levee  
Manitoba Legislative Building*

MLHS will be presented to her Honour Janice Filmon at the Lieutenant Governor's Annual New Year's Levee January 1, 2017.

Please arrive by 1:00 PM to ensure parking and to be ready to be presented at 2:00 PM.

We will then mix and mingle with members of the public.

All clothing styles are welcome, but the main focus for this event is 1867 style clothing to welcome Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Hope to see everyone there.

*As always please RSVP so we know the number of members attending*

## Upcoming events

### January

Levee January 1  
Winter Gathering January 15  
AGM and Baggage January 28

### February

St Norbert Winter Days February 4  
Baggage TBD



# Manitoba Living History Society



*Your Première Living History Group  
for more than  
30 Years in Manitoba*

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