

A brief history of Deseronto

A large tract of land on the Bay of Quinte was awarded to a group of twenty Mohawk families led by Captain John Deserontyon (c.1740-1811). Deserontyon had a farm at the eastern edge of this land: the area now occupied by the Town of Deseronto.

Deserontyon's daughter married a Scottish fur trader and their son, John Culbertson, inherited Deserontyon's property. Culbertson improved the lands and built a wharf on the waterfront. In 1836 he applied to the Crown for the right to own these lands and was granted them in 1837. The village that grew up around the waterfront became known as Culbertson's Wharf.

A portion of the village was purchased from Culbertson by Amos Rathbun, Thomas Y. Howe and L. E. Carpenter in 1848 and formed the site of the area's first sawmill, which became a centre for transport and processing of lumber from trees that were cut from a wide area and transported down the Napanee, Salmon, Moira and Trent rivers. Amos's brother, Hugo Burghardt Rathbun continued the business by himself from 1855 until 1863, when the Rathbun

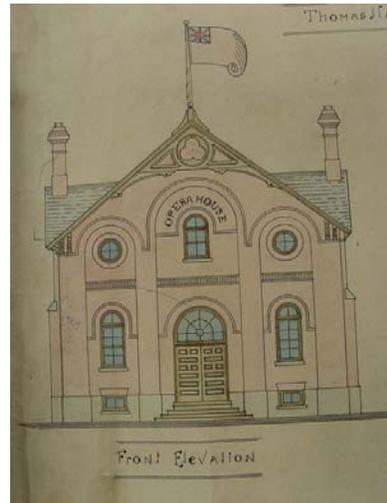
Company's management was taken over by his son, Edward Wilkes Rathbun (1842-1903), who significantly expanded the company's operations. Mill Point, as it was then known, became incorporated as a village in 1871.

In 1881 the village was renamed Deseronto in honour of Captain John Deserontyon. Deseronto

was incorporated as a Town in 1889. By the

1890s it was home to 4,000 people, many of whom worked in the Rathbun Company's concerns, which included a sash and door factory, shipyard, railway car works, terra cotta factory, flour mill, gas works and chemical works.

Main Street and St. George Streets were thriving shopping centres in the late nineteenth century, boasting bakeries, drugstores, hardware stores and busy hotels. A number of churches were built in the town during this period, while Naylor's theatre put on a wide range of plays, musical performances and other events and could hold an audience of up to 550 people.



Original plan of the front of Naylor's Opera House, Deseronto, by Thomas Hanley, Architect, of Belleville.

Deseronto Archives

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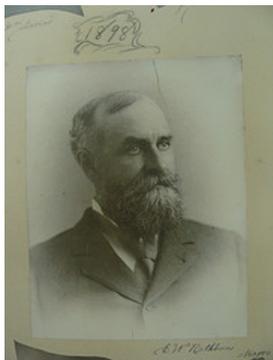
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Looking after our town's history

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Edward Wilkes Rathbun,
as Mayor of Deseronto,
1898

What we do...



Room 2, Deseronto Public School, 1936

DPS-06-10

Deseronto has a rich and interesting history, from its industrial heyday as the centre of the Rathbun Company's lumbering process businesses, to its role in training pilots during the First World War, there is much to discover about the town and its people.

Deseronto Archives provides a safe, temperature-controlled environment for the maps, papers and photographs which tell us about the town's history.

The Archives is situated in Deseronto Public Library and the Archivist, **Amanda Hill**, is available every Wednesday between 10am-12pm and 1pm-4pm.

Between those hours, you can call her at 613-396-2744, or email any time at

deseronto.archives@gmail.com



Orphanage, Foresters' Island, Floyd Marlin Collection

Find us online

Over 1,000 images of Deseronto and its people are available through the Archives' account on the photo-sharing site, Flickr. You can view them by going to the following location:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/deserontoarchives/collections/>

The Archivist regularly posts on the Deseronto Archives website on subjects relating to the history of the town. You can find the site at

<http://deserontoarchives.wordpress.com>

There are also regular articles on historical subjects in the 'Deseronto News and Views' newsletter, which is published every two months and delivered to every home in Deseronto.



Mill Street and Main Street, c.1900, from the Arlington Hotel

RATHCO-08-02

The Archives has a Facebook account at

<http://www.facebook.com/deseronto.archives>

and you can also

follow us on Twitter: [@DeserontoArch](https://twitter.com/DeserontoArch)

Sharing your memories

If you have old photographs, records or even just memories of Deseronto, the Archives would love to hear from you. We have an active program of oral history interviews and scanning projects within the Archives. We are always happy to accept donations of historic materials, but if you would rather keep them yourself, then we are able to scan them and

share them online with everyone else.

We have a special website where you can share your own photographs or written memories of Deseronto. It's called 'About Deseronto' and you can find it here:

<http://aboutdeseronto.omeka.net/>

This site was funded by grants from the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Town of Deseronto. Here, you can find interviews with Deseronto residents, photographs and written memories from members of the community.

If you have something you'd like to share on this site, all you need to do is click the 'Contribute an item' link.



Deseronto Fire Department, c.1960

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