

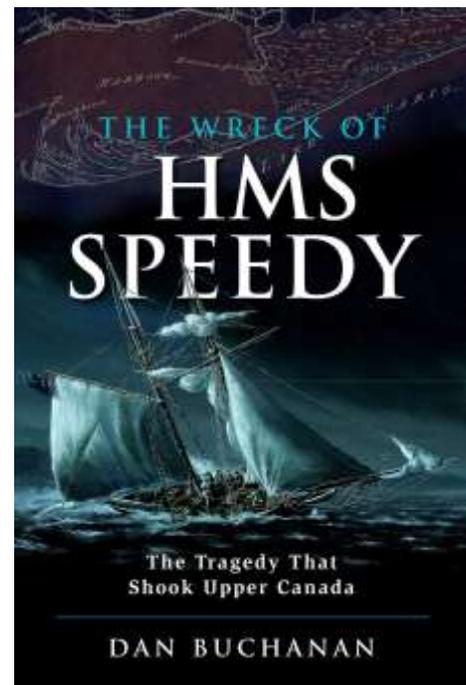
Historically Speaking

The Newsletter of the Cobourg and District
Historical Society

April 2021 — Issue 322

The Wreck of the HMS Speedy

Dan Buchanan will be speaking about his new book, "The Wreck of the HMS Speedy - The Tragedy That Shook Upper Canada." In his presentation, Dan will highlight how one goes about making a history book and accomplishing the tremendous amount of research that went into the telling of this story, well documented in the appendices, notes and bibliography. Naturally, the story of the Speedy is recounted. It might be said that what is more fascinating, at least to some readers, is the contextual facts of life in the early 1800's, a mere 200 years ago, in the Districts of Newcastle containing the fledgling community of Deans Creek (Cobourg) and the Home District in which is found muddy York (Toronto).



All CDHS members are invited to join us electronically on Tuesday, April 20 at 07:30 PM. Please register in advance by visiting:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_3l9odJRTweG6fx8dOuVyQ

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar. If you have any questions concerning registration, please contact Brian Murphy, Membership Chair at brianincobourg@gmail.com

We look forward to you joining our upcoming CDHS webinar!

Our Previous Meeting Mechanics Institute to Public Library

On March 23 Heather Viscount explained how a Mechanics Institute, formed in the 1830s to provide educational opportunities for workmen and tradesmen through books and lectures, became the Cobourg Public Library.

Heather is currently the Manager of Support Services for the Cobourg Public Library. Part of her duties includes the upkeep and maintenance of the special collections of the Library, including local history and genealogical materials.

Heather was born and raised in Eddystone. After graduating from Lakehead University as a Library Technician, she began working part-time at her local Library in Centreton. In the years following she moved up from Assistant, then to Branch

Manager, and then to CEO of the Alnwick/Haldimand Public Library. Heather was hired to work part-time at the Cobourg Library in October 1993 in the Reference Department. This is where her interest in Local History and Genealogy began. Her ancestors came to Haldimand Township in the early 1800s, mostly settling in the areas of Centreton, Eddystone and Vernonville. She has spent many lunch hours (and after hours) researching her family.

She continued working in both locations until she was hired full-time in Cobourg in 2004. Her interest in Local History and Genealogy continues today. The availability of online resources, and the Library's subscription to Ancestry, have opened more doors, lead to more questions, and keep the search alive.



The following obituary of Col. Gordon King, namesake for Cobourg's Library building, appeared in *Northumberland News* for May 12, 2003.

Col. Gordon King, pillar of Cobourg, dies at 92

COBOURG- Cobourg has lost one of its community pillars with the death of Colonel Gordon King, but the lasting memory of his leadership in many community circles will not be forgotten.

"When you look at anything of significance in Cobourg you will see that he was at the forefront of it," says Mayor Peter Delanty. "Gord was a clear and rational thinker who would go directly to the problem. He always saw how a situation should be tackled."

Col. King, affectionately known as the 'Colonel' by his former students and friends, passed away last Thursday at Extendicare in Cobourg. He was 92. Col. King was born in Uxbridge, Ont. on December 31, 1911. The building which houses Cobourg's archive and library, the C. Gordon King Centre, is named for him.

"The Colonel was fair and firm. When you got yourself into hot water it was considered done and over with," says Art Dalgarno, friend and former student.

Col. King starting teaching at what was then Cobourg Collegiate Institute (now CDCI WEST) in 1935 after graduating from the University of Toronto. He was principal at CDCI West from 1952 to 1972. He taught Mr. Dalgarno and Mayor Delanty during their high school years there. Mr. Dalgarno credits the influence of Col. King's leadership as the reason he went into teaching.

"He was a very influential person because you saw the effect he had on people, especially young people. You could not measure it, it was not tangible, but it was evident," adds Mr. Dalgarno.

During Col. King's time at CDCI West his only child, daughter Carol, attended the high school.

"He treated me like any other student. He gave me my first detention," says daughter Carol Quirk. "He certainly was a great loving and caring dad and husband. We had a lot of fun together."

Col. King helped in the restoration of Victoria Hall, was lead contributor to the book 'Cobourg Early days and Modern Times' and was on the advisory board of Sir Sandford Fleming College when it set up a Cobourg campus. He served in World War II and was a long-time Legion member. Mayor Delanty recalls his earliest memory, at age 11, of Col. King.

"There was new arena at Furnace Street which had burnt down. I remember Gord telling people it would be rebuilt...while smoke was still rising from the arena's ashes," Mayor Delanty notes. "It was rebuilt and his leadership made it happen."

Col. King was an active member of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church as an Elder, Clerk of Session and wrote a history of the church. Peter Greathead recalls how Col. King helped him and his family settle in Cobourg in 1966.

"He and his wife Grace were very gracious. Gord always liked to joke around too," says Mr. Greathead. "He was very helpful to us and the church community. He was a pillar of the church community and we all looked up to him for leadership."

Col. King loved taking walks along Cobourg's waterfront and downtown. He enjoyed lawn bowling, baseball, lacrosse, hockey and ice-skating with his wife of nearly 65 years, says his daughter.

"My father loved walking up and down downtown because of the people he would meet and talk to. He was just thrilled when the centre was named after him," explains Mrs. Quirk. "He was just a totally involved person who always gave his best."

Visitations will held today, Tuesday, from 2 to 4 p.m. and 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at MacCoubrey Funeral Home, 30 King St. East. A memorial service will be held tomorrow, Wednesday, at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church at 1:30 p.m. A private interment will be held at Cobourg Union Cemetery. A reception will be held after the tomorrow's service at the C. Gordon King Centre.

Future Cobourg Historical Society Programs

The CDHS Programme Committee has planned a great selection of speakers for our 2020-2021 season. Although the ongoing pandemic has forced us to cancel our physical meetings we will have virtual meetings each month.

CDHS members will receive a webinar registration email approximately two weeks prior to a meeting. Those who register will be sent a reminder email shortly before each meeting.

Our May webinar will feature Diane Chin. Diane is CDHS Program Director and a long time Chair and Board Member of the ACO (Architectural Conservancy Ontario of Cobourg and East Northumberland). She will be speaking about *The History of ACO and why it Matters*. This talk will include the story of the role of Barnum House in Grafton and how this little house inspired the growth of an organization that now encompasses 17 branches across Ontario. A brief Annual General meeting will precede Diane's presentation.

After Meeting Social

When the virtual meeting finishes don't change the channel; stay around for some fun! After each meeting we will open the Zoom webinar to everyone for a "social". You will be able to see all participants who have their camera enabled. If you have a microphone, you can ask the speaker questions one-on-one, chat with the crowd and generally do what we usually do at a physical meeting.

Announcements

Hastings County Historical Society

The Hastings County Historical Society has many resources including their monthly newsletter available on their website: <https://www.cabhc.ca/en/index.aspx>

Barnum House

Barnum House has been closed to physical visitors but the closure does not prevent virtual visits. The Northumberland News recently published an article on these virtual tours (<https://www.northumberlandnews.com/community-story/10358209-travel-back-in-time-get-up-close-with-grafton-s-historic-barnum-house-through-online-tours/>). The production was by local ACO members Alice and Evan McMurtry. For details of their projects visit their website at <http://www.mcmurtrycreative.ca/>. You can watch their multi-part video on Barnum House at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcTnkTs-wZZ57B_7y_Rdbgw

We understand that the Victoria Hall Volunteers plan to produce a similar virtual tour of Victoria Hall. Watch for it!

Should Victoria College Remain in Cobourg?

Victoria College, originally the Upper Canada Academy for boys and girls, was founded by the



Methodist Church in 1832. With the blessing of Queen Victoria, in 1841 the school became Victoria College and received the right to grant degrees. By the mid-1880s there were heated discussions about Victoria College becoming part of the University of Toronto. By 1887 Victoria College officially became a part of UofT. The last graduating class in Cobourg was in 1892. The following is a portion of a pamphlet that presented the case for remaining in Cobourg.

THE RELATIVE ADVANTAGES OF PROPOSED LOCATIONS –TORONTO versus COBOURG

As to advantages of location, it may fairly be held that Cobourg is a better place for such a College as Victoria than Toronto. We leave the point of probable relative attendance for discussion farther on, when we will try to show that her students, having been forced to resort to Toronto in any case, and the university character and the control of higher education of their College having been yielded up, will naturally and necessarily select that institution of the group which can offer them the best facilities, even in the lower branches which the confederated schools would teach, and the most pretentious and advantageous connection. Letting this point lie in abeyance for the present, and supposing the friends of our College everywhere to be loyal in its support, we hold that Cobourg is a much more desirable place for the residence of youth, in pursuing their student work — especially of youth who may not resist the temptations or afford the expense of a large city — than Toronto. It is quite as eligibly situated, and as easily reached. It is a notably healthy town —not subject to the effects of the impure water and bad drainage for which Toronto has become notorious. The expense of attending an institution here would be found, and has been found, to be very much less than in Toronto. The college location here, outside of Toronto, provides against the frequently-proved evils of centralization, and, with other such institutions offers the advantages of higher education to young men who cannot afford or do not wish to resort to a city, and who would be shut out from these advantages by the removal.

Very many of the largest and best Universities on this continent are located, and wisely so, not in the cities, but in the smaller towns.

But a greater consideration than any of these is the moral one. The very friends of Victoria who are now most argumentative in favor of removal to Toronto have so often and so effectually urged this moral consideration, that it is hardly necessary to touch it. Men are prone to evil everywhere and even in a town where comparatively few temptations are offered there is no guarantee against the student going astray. But how much greater his danger if placed in the giddy whirl of a city, with drinking and gambling resorts in all directions, with houses of even worse description at hand on almost every street to lure him from the path of virtue, and with a choice of two or three theatres every night. There is quite enough of life and attraction — or distraction — in a place like Cobourg for all the purposes of a well-furnished student. His business should be to prepare himself, by education, for the duties of life; *not* to seek for excitement or be thrown into the way of temptation and sin. It may be argued that such consequences do not necessarily follow. But while many, upheld by sterling principle, might escape, many others, not so fortified, would be lured to their destruction. And whose son shall it be? Sorrow has been brought into many a home by the “favorite boy” being sent to a city college, and many a Methodist parent, irrespective of the question of expense, will hesitate before surrounding his son with influences which have so often been skilfully decried by those who now desire to remove!

Member Matters

New Members

The CDHS would like to welcome a number of new members: New members for the April issue: Tammy Browes-Bugden and Martin Bugden, Richard Paul Brisco, Tammy Browes-Bugden and Martin Bugden, Peter Delanty, Jennifer Mak and Todd Strong.

Thanks!

Thank you to Ray and Bonnie Sheridan for donating copies of the *Historical Reviews* dating from 1982 to 2011. They will be available at the library and Sifton Cook. We will also provide a printed copy of our *Historically Speaking* newsletters to both locations.

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