

Historically Speaking

The Newsletter of the Cobourg and
District Historical Society

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Re-enacting History

Our October 22 meeting will feature Chris Robins, a local teacher and avid history buff. Chris was born in this area to a family that homesteaded north of Roseneath over 170 years ago. He has been a teacher of History and Geography at Cobourg District Collegiate Institute West for the past 25 years. His wife, two sons, friends, and former students have formed a re-enacting group that portrays the 1st Kentucky Rifle Regiment during the War of 1812. Their group re-enacts battles across southern Ontario and northern New York State. Locally, they run a re-enacting club with the students of CDCI West who portray four different regiments from the War of 1812 including the local Northumberland militia. With his history students, they have contributed exhibits, articles, and websites about local history to the local newspapers, museum, and archives. Recently he received a heritage award and in previous years has received awards for mentoring student teachers. He has also worked with the Sifton-Cook Heritage Centre.

The meeting will be in the usual location in Victoria Hall's Citizens' Forum. Doors open at 7:00 PM and the meeting begins at 7:30 PM. Coffee and cookies will be available before the meeting. All are welcome so bring a friend!

Anyone who would like a ride to the meeting or is willing to drive others should contact Elaine Rosetter-Saunders at 905-372-5958.

Our Previous Meeting

Chief Kai Liu

At our September meeting we learned about the history of policing in Cobourg and gained many insights into modern police operations. Kai Liu, Chief of Cobourg Police Service, was born in



Taiwan but his family came to Toronto when he was very young. Living in Regent Park, the largest government run housing facility in Canada, he decided that he wanted to be a policeman. Chief Liu moved through the ranks of the Ottawa police, served as Chief in Gananoque and became Chief of the Cobourg Police Service in 2012.

Kai provided a glimpse of Cobourg bylaws at the beginning of Cobourg policing in 1837:

- No discharge of muskets or squibs in the city
- No bathing within a quarter mile of a house during the daytime
- Any swine permitted to roam the streets subject to capture and a fine of two shillings
- A fine for any household that did not have a ladder capable of reaching the eaves.

Equipment has changed through the years from Cobourg's first police car – a 1948 black Chevrolet – to Kevlar® filled vests and Blackberry smart phones that allow instant access to information on suspected miscreants and continuous reporting to the dispatcher of the location of all officers.

The numerous questions that Chief Liu ably fielded revealed the interest in his presentation and policing in general.



Our Next Meeting

Lest We Forget

November is the month of Remembrance. On Tuesday November 26, Cobourg born Dave Kerr and his grandson Max Jenkins, will join us at CDHS to share their story of how they observe Remembrance Day together every year. Dave's father, Fred Kerr, and several other Cobourg men, including the late Cy Winter, a long-time member of our historical society, served together in World War II. Their presentation will take us from WW II until the present. Max, at nine years old, is perhaps the youngest speaker ever at a CDHS meeting. Even more remarkable is the fact that he and his grandfather Dave have already observed seven Remembrance Days together!

In Memoriam

It is with profound sadness that we report the death of Jacqueline Yvonne "Jackie" Hick. Jackie was a very active and valued member of several Northumberland organizations including the Cobourg and District Historical Society, Victoria Hall Volunteers, Pine Ridge Hiking Club and



the Big Brothers Big Sisters Garden Tour Committee. She served in a number of positions on the CDHS Executive and most recently as our Secretary. Jackie was a graduate of the University of Toronto and received their E.A. Robinson silver medal for outstanding academic achievement upon her graduation in 1985.

Jackie is survived by Michael, her husband of 53 years, her children Dr. Anthony Hick and Pik Sai Kwan of Sudbury and Dr. Katherine Hick of Toronto and her

grandchildren Michelle, Sara, Zac, John and Matilda who have brought her great joy and much laughter. Jackie will be missed by her extended and loving family and by her many friends, here in Canada and the U.K., Australia and the United States.



Bring Him Home! Bring Him Home!

Ken Willcocks

I am sure everyone fondly remembers Alfie Boes singing “Bring him home” in the masterpiece *Les Misérables*. As you will shortly understand this sentiment applies to an interesting historical project.

In 1865, after twenty years as an employee, 39 year old James Crossen bought the Helm Foundry in Cobourg. The Foundry was located between St. Peter’s church and College Street at Swayne Street. About the same time the owner of a prosperous iron ore mine at Blairton, five miles west of Marmora, was looking for a better way to transport his product than by ox cart on a 40-mile bush road to Trenton.

By coincidence the ice finally managed to totally destroy the famous railway bridge connecting Cobourg to Peterborough over Rice Lake. The railway business almost disappeared.

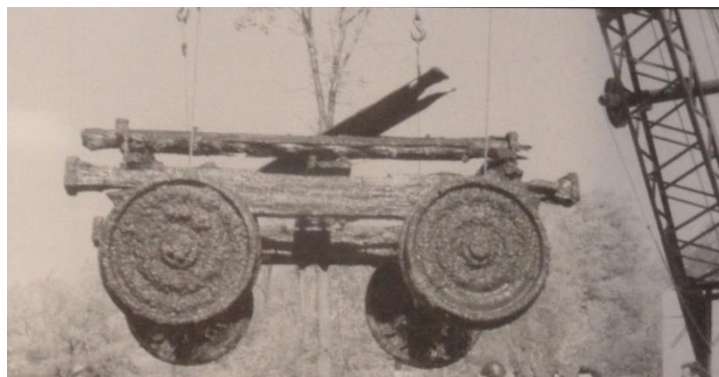
It was realised that if an eight-mile railway line could be built joining Blairton and Trent Narrows (now Trent River) the iron ore could be shipped by scow (barge) through a lock at Hastings to Harwood on the south shore of Rice Lake. From Harwood the ore could travel on the existing 15 miles of railway line to the Cobourg harbour. The major market was Pittsburgh.

The new railway was built from Blairton to Trent Narrows. Locomotives were purchased. James Crossen was awarded the contract to build tilting rail cars to move the iron ore. This was his first railway order. Later his Cobourg works would employ 300 tradesmen and make flat cars, box cars, high class passenger cars etc. The new “works” was located between the present day Thomas Motors on University Street and the railway tracks.

The cars were delivered on time and iron ore began to flow from Blairton to Cobourg. It should be explained that at Trent Narrows a wooden ramp had been built on a man-made island. The ore cars were pushed up the ramp and off loaded sideways by gravity into the waiting barge using the tilting box of the ore car. One day in 1881, for a reason no one knows, the locomotive driver made an error and pushed some cars off the ramp and into the river! There they stayed for 125 years.

In the 1980s, Parks Canada decided to rescue some of the “drowned” ore cars. A crane assisted by divers recovered parts of cars and these were removed to Cornwall and stored for possible future display.

With the assistance of Dennis Carter-Edwards, who was once Superintendent



of the Trent Canal System and President of the Peterborough Historical Society, we managed to contact Bob Garcia at the Cornwall office of Parks Canada. He said that the old ore cars recovered from the Trent River are in their salvage yard.

It was explained to Mr. Garcia that, since the ore cars were made by Crossen in Cobourg, the Cobourg Museum Foundation would like to repatriate a car, refurbish it and put it on display beside the existing plaque near the Cobourg Marina. Our logic was that a refurbished iron ore car would serve a better historical purpose to be on display than hidden in a storage yard. We realise that the restoration of the ore car will be a major undertaking and are hoping that local historical and railway enthusiasts and wood and metal industries will be prepared to help.

We are now waiting patiently for a reply to our request. As most know, the wheels of government move slowly except when you forget to pay your taxes! We have written to Mayor Brocanier and our MP to secure their help. If you know persons who might be able to assist please ask them to use their influence.

Bring him (the ore car) home, bring him home!

My thanks to local historian Ted Rafuse for part of the above information.

Membership Matters

New Members

We would like to welcome Dave Savage who is our newest member.

Introducing Your Programme Committee

Chair: Alison Torrie LaPaire; Members: Judith Goulin, Carla Jones, Patricia Perry, Bianca Rende and Elaine Rostetter-Saunders. Carla, Bianca and Patricia are new members this season. Thank you Judy Cross and Dorothy DeLisle for your work on this committee in past years.

The Programme Committee has been diligently searching for interesting speakers for the 2013 - 2014 season at CDHS. You can look forward to History Trivia Night, a bus trip in May to points unknown; and in between, Dr. Bob Scott on Polio in Cobourg and the World, From Certo to Kraft: Blind Taste Testing and perhaps the Fickle Ganaraska and Its Floating Fannies!

The members of the Programme Committee work hard to please you, but we need your feedback so that we know we are on the right track. Whether you like the speakers or not, we need to hear from you. If you have a great idea for a bus trip destination, or a speaker you would like to hear, please let us know.

It seems that the coffee and home-baked goodies before every meeting has become very popular. Leona Woods had the idea, bakes the treats every time, and both makes and serves the coffee. Thank you, Leona for this very welcome innovation.

Burning Questions

Some of our older members recall the Cobourg of the past. In addition, many CDHS members have expert knowledge of various historical topics. To tap this wealth of expertise, our newsletter will periodically include a "Burning Questions" section and solicit everyone's answers to the questions posed. Later newsletters will include the best answers. If there is sufficient interest the topic will be discussed at a CDHS meeting.

Burning Question 4:

To the right is a photo of Joseph Henry ("Harry") Smith who is the great-grandfather of CDHS member Alison Torrie Lapaire. Does anyone recognize the distinctive collar/sash that he is wearing?

Burning Question 4 Answered:



On a recent trip to the east coast I examined a display of Oddfellows regalia in the Museum of Industry in Stellarton, NS.

There were many similarities to the sash in your photo. Notice the distinctive shape of the sash and the five-point star to its right. A little Google finds many more examples such as the image to the right. Each lodge had slightly different regalia to differentiate its members from those of other lodges. An expert would be able to identify your relative's specific lodge. *Answer provided by Ken Strauss*



Announcements

Vintage Film Festival



This year's Vintage Film Festival will be on October 25, 26 and 27. Visit their website at <http://www.vintagefilmfestival.ca> for further details of the festival and for information on purchasing tickets.

Sifton-Cook Heritage Centre

The Sifton-Cook Heritage Centre, operated by the Cobourg Museum Foundation, will be open until October 14. Hours are 10 AM–5 PM on Saturdays and holiday Mondays; 1 PM–5 PM on Sundays. Exhibits include a working antique model railway and details of the railway's relationship to Rice Lake and the Blairton Iron Mine near Marmora. For further information visit <http://northumberlandheritage.ca/>

Victoria Hall Open House



The Victoria Hall Volunteers invite you to their Open House at Victoria Hall on Saturday October 26, 2013 from 2–4 PM. Victoria Hall was built in the 1850s and is central to the history and architecture of Cobourg. The dedication and hard work of volunteers, generous donations from individuals and corporations, and government grants resulted in its magnificent restoration and reopening in 1983. Learn more about Victoria Hall and the volunteers who fundraise to preserve its historical significance. Tours begin at 2 PM and will be followed by a complimentary tea.

Marie Dressler Birthday Celebration

The Marie Dressler Birthday Celebration is Sunday, November 3rd at the C. Gordon King Centre (Cobourg Library building). Birthday cake and tea will be served at 1:30 PM after which Antonio Sarmiento will introduce the Dressler hit film *Tugboat Annie* (1933) with the question "Did Dressler save Hollywood?" The celebration will end with draws including breakfast for two at the Buttermilk Café and the Dutch Oven; lunch for two at the Oasis Bar and Grill and a VIP Tour of Victoria Hall with dessert for four at Meet at 66 King East. Tickets are \$8.00 at the door.



Port Hope and District Historical Society

Monthly Meetings are held at the Ganaraska Conservation Authority Building (GRCA) - Hwy 28 north of Port Hope across from the Comfort Inn (Easton's 28 Service Centre) on the third Wednesday of October, November, March, April and May from 7:30 to 9:00 PM, unless otherwise arranged.

Lakeshore Genealogical Society

Members Show and Tell on Thursday, November 14 from 6:30-9:00 PM, Rotary Room, Cobourg Public Library. On Thursday, December 12, Stephanie Wright of Timelines Research Co., will show some of the work that they have undertaken. The December meeting will be in the Port Hope Public Library instead of the Cobourg Public Library.

Websites

There are many websites with great Cobourg-related historical material. Visit any of the following:

Cobourg Museum Foundation: northumberlandheritage.ca

Snippets of Cobourg history and current happenings: www.hardscrabble.ca

Cobourg History: www.cobourghistory.ca/

Ontario cemetery records: ocfa.islandnet.com/

History of Great Lakes travel: www.maritimehistoryofthegreatlakes.ca/

Cobourg and Peterborough Railway: www.harwoodmuseum.ca

Cobourg area heritage resources: <http://www.cobourg.ca/links1.html>

Architectural Conservancy of Ontario: <http://www.arconserv.ca/>

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