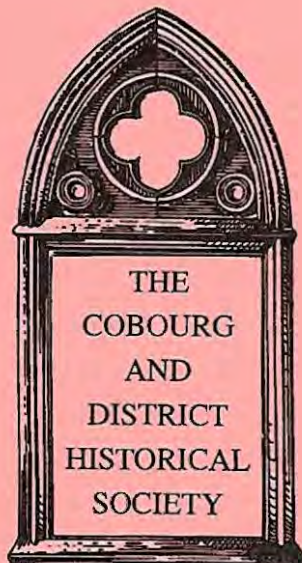
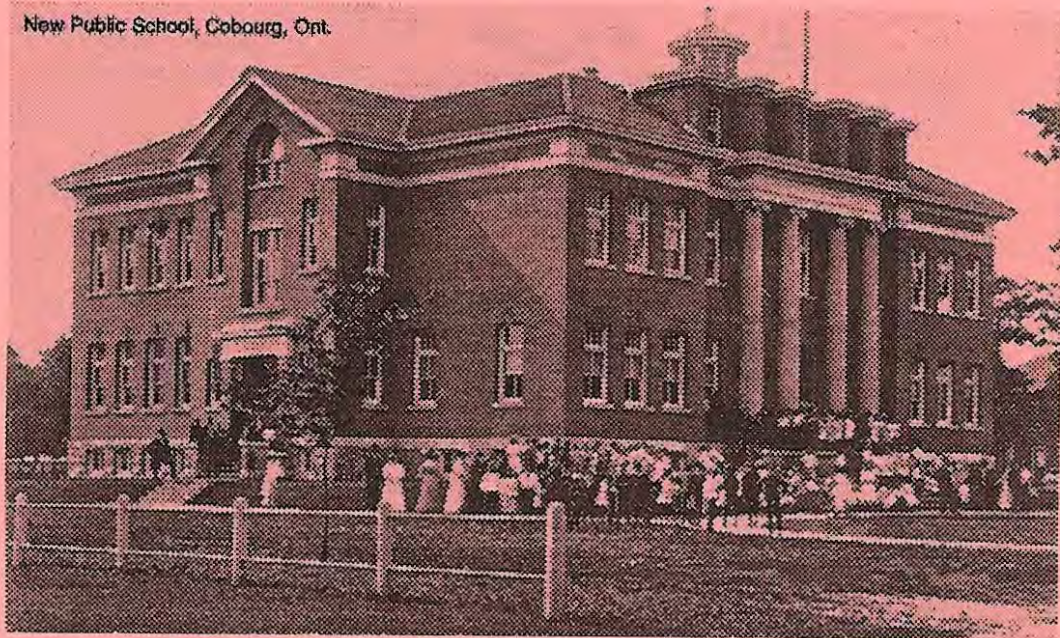


HISTORICAL REVIEW 15

New Public School, Cobourg, Ont.



1997

1998

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THE COBOURG AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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**THE COBOURG AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY
PROGRAMME OF SPEAKERS
1997 - 1998**

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Cover Photograph:

New Public School, Cobourg, Ontario [now renamed Thomas Gillbard Public School]

PARKWOOD ESTATE AND GARDENS: PARKWOOD THEN AND NOW

by
Brian Malcolm

Once home to "Colonel Sam" McLaughlin, Parkwood is a popular heritage attraction and National Historic Site comprising a stately fifty-five room mansion and gardens of outstanding design. It was a labour of love for Col. McLaughlin who, with his wife Adelaide, collaborated with some of the most important artists, architects and landscape designers of their day, to create the grand estate we enjoy today.

Parkwood is praised by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board "as a rare surviving example of the type of estate developed in Canada during the interior years, and is rarer still by its essentially intact condition, furnished and run to illustrate life as it was lived within."

Parkwood was built from 1915-17, shortly before McLaughlin became the founding president of General Motors of Canada. By 1915, the McLaughlin Motor Car Company was quickly surpassing the success of the earlier McLaughlin Carriage Company, which had already been named the largest producer of vehicles in the British Empire.

The McLaughlins had achieved "first family" status in Oshawa, and they purchased the former "Prospect Park" as the site for a grand new estate. Prospect Park, used previously for many years as a public amusement park, was a large single property resplendent with many beautiful trees. It provided the perfect starting point.

Architects Darling and Pearson were commissioned to design the magnificent house, several outbuildings, and many of the alterations which followed in the 1920s and '30s. No strangers to success themselves, Darling and Pearson had designed the Centre Block of the Houses of Parliament, the Royal Ontario Museum, and Convocation Hall for the University of Toronto, among others. At a mere forty rooms initially, the house design included many modern conveniences rare to that period, such as sophisticated plumbing and heating systems, private ensuite baths, electric elevator, built-in vacuum system, and an inter-room telephone system. The house also contained a bowling alley with an early automatic pin-setter, a squash court, an indoor swimming pool, and a large greenhouse complex. Nearly all these features have survived into the present.

Significant murals adorn the interior, including works by Frederick Challener and Frederick Haines, along with many artworks which remain today. The interiors are so complete - down to the family mementos and monogrammed linen - that visitors experience Parkwood almost as guests of the McLaughlins.

Shortly after 1917, landscape designers, Harries and Hall, were engaged to design a fitting setting for the mansion. Drawing on English garden traditions, they incorporated many of

the existing trees and shrubs from Prospect Park into their work. The landscape was designed to beckon so that one was enticed from every principal room of the house to a terrace or garden area just outside, and then further out into the beautiful wooded park. Beyond, and screened by groves of trees and rows of cedars, were areas for recreation, farming and the production of cut flowers.

The grounds and gardens were further refined during the 1920s by the husband and wife team of H.B. and L.A. Dunnington-Grubb, who added the Italian Garden, the Sundial Garden and Summer House, and the Sunken Garden. They also refined the South Terrace as well as designed intricate lattice fencing for the tennis court and the Italian Garden.

The Formal or "New Garden" was added in 1935-36 and was immediately hailed as an achievement of significance in Canada. Architect John Lyle was awarded a bronze medal from the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada for its design. Lyle was also responsible for Parkwood's more modern interiors, the Art Gallery and Col. McLaughlin's bedroom suite, completed in 1941.

Parkwood remained the principal residence of the McLaughlins throughout their lives. Adelaide passed away in 1958 and "Colonel Sam" in 1972, just four months after his 100th birthday. Their appreciation of design and horticulture, and their love of beauty continue to be reflected in every room and garden space at Parkwood.

R.S. McLaughlin remains in our memory as a great Canadian industrialist and philanthropist. Among his many gifts to Oshawa, Ontario and to Canada was the bequest of his beloved Parkwood to the Oshawa General Hospital. The Parkwood Foundation was established to operate and care for the property, and it has been enjoyed as a heritage attraction for nearly twenty-five years.

Guided tours of the mansion are available year round, with ground tours available throughout the summer. The grounds, however, are open to view at no charge to residents, and are enjoyed spring through fall. Many special events are offered at various times of the year, generally at no- or low-cost to the public. Gracious hospitality has always been a tradition at Parkwood, and it continues today with rental accommodations and food services such as the Garden Teahouse restaurant or the Greenhouse Tearoom.

Parkwood continues to gain in fame and popularity through recent features on *America's Castles* and Gardening television, and numerous appearances in feature films, television movies and commercials. But, however extensive the coverage, nothing can match a personal visit in discovering the whole Parkwood story and revealing its full splendour.

Editor's note: Mr. Malcolm illustrated this talk with videos made of original home-movie footage of McLaughlin parties and a family wedding, as well as a professional film produced for the series, "*America's Castles*."

RESEARCHING OLD HOMES

by
Donalda Badone

It's a pleasure to come to Cobourg to talk about researching old houses. We've seen a number of handsome buildings here and know they are appreciated. We put together our book, *The House Detective*, partly because we were threatened with a very large development across the road from us. At this time our house seems to be fairly safe from demolition.

Our deed says our house was built in 1923 but there were construction details that made us think it was much older than that. For one thing it had originally been built with no plumbing! Our woodwork and trim were much more substantial than noted for houses built in the 1920s, and there were round plaster marks in the ceilings between the windows in the two front rooms. We found the answers to these mysteries and produced the book as a guide for others who might have similar mysteries in their homes.

First, we discovered that there were some common house types in nineteenth century Ontario. The characteristic features are a simple rectangular plan, a symmetrical arrangement of windows about a central doorway, a low-pitched roof, and the use of stone, brick or frame construction. The simplicity of these buildings developed partly as a result of the materials available to builders at the time, and partly from the use of tools and construction methods with which they were familiar. Interior design; that is, the number of rooms and how they were to be arranged, also dictated form. And last, but not least, it was a response to the need for a pleasing harmony.

In 1983, Darrell Norris published, in *Ontario History*, the results of his analysis of inventories of pre-1939 housing stock. His well-illustrated work revealed that the average popular, or vernacular, house could be described by the form of the roof (gable, central gable or hip) and the number of storeys which varied from one to two and a half. Based on Norris' definitive descriptions, our house of one and a half storeys and central gable appeared to be one of the second most common house style of the nineteenth century. Rather than being a twentieth century house, our home was likely that of an earlier period.

We started our investigation with the North York Historical Society and were directed to the Canadiana section of the public library. There we found information on Elihu Pease, who built a house on the property in 1834, and photographs of his wife and his son, Edward. Later we found an auction notice of a sale of contents of household goods and equipment from his tannery. Also Tremaine's map of the 1860s showed where the Peases had a house. At the Ontario Archives we found a copy of Elihu's will, also mentioning a house and its contents. All this archival documentation fitted in with the evidence of the house itself. Certainly, wood for interior trim was more plentiful and cheaper a hundred and fifty years ago. As well, it was evident from marks on the plaster that parlour stoves once stood between the windows, with pipes to take the heat through the ceiling to the upstairs rooms.

Now, how can anyone else, like ourselves without special expertise, go about researching a property?

First of all, look carefully at the structure for clues. Does it have stained glass windows, for instance, or distinctive moulding on the wooden trim? For research in libraries and archives you will need the legal description of your property which can be found on your deed, tax bill and assessment notice.

The first place to look for information is probably your local public library. They will have local historical photos, newspapers and documents. Also peruse local histories and journals of early settlers. The local historical society, a branch of the Women's Institute and other organizations may also have done research. The LACAC (Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee) researches and rates properties for designation as historic sites and yours may be among them. Your local and/or county archives may also have information.

For the history of the land beginning with the first Crown grant, the County or City Registry Office is the source. Here you will find deeds, mortgages, and wills, all involved only with the property. Indirectly, they may refer to buildings on the land.

For a building on the land, try the assessment rolls of your municipality. They are the records of the annual assessment of a property made for tax purposes. Another local government source of information is the Building Permits office. There may be a record of the construction of your house or of an alteration made to it. As well, the Archives of Ontario and the Metro Toronto Reference Library have large collections of nineteenth century data including inventories of historic buildings compiled by both Ontario and Parks Canada staff. City and town directories can show when a house first appeared. Also fire insurance maps were prepared from 1850 on showing in great detail the layout of streets and buildings. Other maps, particularly Tremaine's of the 1850s and 1860s, can show buildings and indicate lot holders. County atlases also contain maps and pictures of houses. Census records, church records, even old cemeteries can yield useful information.

The Archives of Ontario hold many of these records. The facility is simple to use, but you must register and obtain a card. In addition to microfilms of vital statistics, you will have access to their large holdings of newspapers. Notices of marriage can signal a new house, or a death a change of property owners. The Metro Toronto Reference Library has collections of historical journals complemented by the additional resources of the Baldwin Room and the John Ross Robertson Collection of pictures.

Finally, be on the look-out for old photos or sketches at antique stores or flea markets.

The best of luck to any of you who are researching houses - it can be frustrating at times, but also very rewarding. We think of our book as a "roots" for houses and the search is very similar to genealogy.

Concluding the slide presentation, were two last slides: one illustrated how the Badones' house might have looked, as it was a drawing of the house belonging to the daughter of Elihu Pease; and to bring us back to the present, the second slide showed where the original Pease house once stood at, what is now, the entrance to Proctor and Gamble's high-rise headquarters on Yonge Street in Greater Toronto.

Editor's note:

The Badones discovered that their house was indeed built earlier and subsequently moved to the present site in 1923.

HOLLAND REVISITED: A TIME FOR REMEMBRANCE

by
Vernon White

My first visit to Holland was not via Air Canada or KLM or even by charter, but it was by air, in the form of an all-expense paid trip courtesy of His Majesty's government. In the early morning hours of June 25, 1943, I found myself over the North Sea floating by parachute towards the Dutch coast. A few moments later I landed on the island of Rozenburg in my stocking feet, in the midst of a rather startled herd of Holstein cows. I had arrived in Holland, or rather The Netherlands, to use the official name.

Our Halifax bomber flying out of Yorkshire, en route to the Ruhr, was shot down by German night flyer ace Wilhelm Johnen which resulted in our blazing aircraft disappearing into a swamp. After wandering around the island for two nights in my stocking feet, I was captured and heard that time-honoured phrase, "for you the war is over." Truer words were never spoken and I spent the next two years in Stalag Luft 3 and a variety of other camps. It is not the purpose of this talk to dwell on those POW (Prisoner of War) years as those stories have been told and retold. Suffice it to say, it was not Club Med, and there were others worse off than we were. I survived the war and made wonderful friendships that would last a lifetime.

By the time I arrived in Germany in the middle of 1943, the war news was generally improving and this trend continued for the balance of the year. The real thrill for the millions in Occupied Europe and for POWs was the Allied landing in Normandy on June 6, 1944. We had visions of being home for Christmas. This was not to be. There followed much bitter fighting across France and into Belgium and Holland and as the year ended, the Germans found themselves with their backs to the Rhine.

Meanwhile, the Soviet forces were making huge gains in the East on a broad front. In late January 1945, Stalag Luft 3 was evacuated and we tramped for days through the winter snows, then were herded into box cars and transported to a camp just south of Berlin at a place called Luckenwalde. Conditions there were grim — we were crowded, cold and hungry. Red Cross food parcels had been a Godsend but now there were none due to the chaotic state of the transportation system and German food rations were meagre at best. However, the weeks sped by and the war news kept getting better and better. The Canadians, British and Americans were across the Rhine and the Russians were heading in our direction. There were bets as to who would reach us first. In mid-April, the Germans tried to evacuate the RAF and Commonwealth Airforce POWs to southern Germany but the locomotive which was to haul the box cars was destroyed by American fighter aircraft as we sat in the marshalling yard waiting to go. We returned to camp and waited. It was the week that President Roosevelt died and the hard-core Germans thought this was divine intervention and somehow they would still emerge triumphant. Of course, this didn't happen.

The Russians reached us first — we learned later that there had been a political agreement that the Western Allies would not advance beyond the Elbe River. And so on the morning of April 22, 1945, one of Marshall Koniev's armoured units roared into camp and tore gaping holes in the barbed wire. At last we were free. Well, not quite. It's a long story, but the Russians detained us for a full month. Finally, we were driven to the Elbe River by the Russians in lend-lease Studebaker trucks. This time we were really free.

We were with the Americans for five days, and they treated us like kings. The white bread tasted like angel cake. I sent a cable to my folks as they hadn't heard from me for months. The Americans flew us to Brussels where the Canadian Army rolled out the red carpet. It was then a Lancaster flight to England, and the white cliffs of Dover never looked better. I might mention that we were deloused at every point along the way — our hosts were taking no chances. After six weeks in England, I returned to Canada in July 1945 and was released from the RCAF in September of the same year. Schooling, marriage and children followed in that order.

We can move the clock forward to February 1976 when I received a call out of the blue from the Department of Veteran's Affairs with some sketchy information about our Halifax aircraft having been found. When more facts became known, I learned that the discovery was actually made in 1967, nine years previously. I began corresponding with officials of the Royal Netherlands Air Force and received the complete story. While excavating for oil storage tanks for Gulf Oil, the workers had struck metal objects in the muck along the shoreline. The Dutch are very protective of their waterways and an expert recovery team was called in. By hand digging, parts of our Halifax, several unexploded bombs and the remains of my pilot and mid-upper gunner, both Canadians, were found. They were buried with full military honours in 1967, in the Canadian War Cemetery at Groesbeek after having been missing for 24 years.

As I wanted to learn more, my wife and I arranged a visit to Holland in May 1977 to coincide with an ex-POW reunion in London. We received excellent co-operation from the Dutch officials and I learned precisely what happened to my crew. I already knew that my wireless operator and I were the only survivors. The Dutch explained that two crew members were found in 1943 and buried in the military section of a civilian cemetery in Rotterdam. They re-confirmed that two others were found in 1967 and buried in Groesbeek. This accounted for all but one of my seven-man crew. The rear-gunner was still missing, quite possibly drowned in the North Sea. The Dutch were very hospitable and helpful; however, it was a short visit and one day we hoped to return.

In 1994, I learned of plans which were taking shape to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the liberation of the Netherlands. A Veterans Pilgrimage Tour was being organized and sponsored by the Dutch Foundation National Committee, "Thank You Canada." This was to be an historic occasion and even though it was primarily to recognize the courage and sacrifices of the ground forces, I was assured that other branches of the service which had served in the European theatre, were welcome. I also had a personal reason for wishing to attend — four of my crew were buried in Holland. It would be a 12 day itinerary and the veterans and family members

would be placed with host families throughout Holland. There would be free transportation by rail or bus anywhere in the country plus an elaborate programme of special events in many communities. We paid for our airfare to Holland, but not much else.

There were charter flights originating in several of the major cities in Canada, in our case it was KLM out of Toronto where there were departures on four successive days. It was a beautiful flight across the Atlantic, and as we approached Schiphol (airport), we swung to the south and in the distance I could pick up Rotterdam with the island of Rozenberg just beyond. It was 52 years earlier that I first saw that same piece of real estate. How time flies!

At Amsterdam's massive international airport, we began to get the VIP treatment. There were banners everywhere welcoming Canadians, Red Cross hostesses greeting us, and strapping young soldiers helping us with our luggage. As a gesture of trust and goodwill, there was no thought of going through customs — our friendly Dutch guides whisked us through a side door of the terminal building to the waiting busses.

Many of the army veterans were assigned to host families they already knew from the war years, or post-war. In my case, I had no such contacts, and when we arrived in Nijmegen, we learned that our host family resided in Groesbeek a few miles to the south. It was an appropriate choice on the part of the Dutch organizers since two of my crew are buried in the Canadian War Cemetery in this picturesque part of eastern Holland and many of the special events would take place nearby.

Our host family lived on a small farm on the outskirts of Groesbeek about one mile from the German frontier. As the parents and other relatives lived next door, there was a cluster of hospitable Dutch people making sure we were wined and dined. The older folks, about our age, had seen a lot of the war. In 1940, the German tank columns passed their very door. Their town was occupied for more than four years. In September 1944 Groesbeek was in the thick of the battle after the American airborne landings. Their farm buildings were totally destroyed and like many of the families, they had to run for their lives. They were forced to leave the area for many months since it was in the front lines. The Canadian Army occupied the Nijmegen sector from November 1944 in preparation for the assault into Germany which began in February of 1945. In a word, the parents, knowing what war and the loss of freedom was all about, had instilled in their children a sense of gratitude and admiration for their liberators.

It is not possible to recount all that transpired in our twelve days in Holland. Many of you would have followed the excellent television coverage by Peter Mansbridge and associates. Here are some highlights from my perspective:

- ◆ On May 5th, we made an informal visit to the Canadian War Cemetery at Groesbeek. It was on that day that the school children throughout Holland were decorating the graves of Allied soldiers, sailors and airmen in various cemeteries. There are three large Canadian military cemeteries in Holland, Bergen op Zoom, Holten and Groesbeek, and more than a

hundred cemeteries in the towns and villages where Allied airmen are buried close to where they crashed. Each grave is adopted by a Dutch child, and they consider it an honour and privilege to be chosen. At Groesbeek I knelt with children from a group home who were placing sprays of flowers on the graves of my crew members. I think it was meaningful to them to know that they were meeting and speaking with someone who had flown with these young Canadians long ago. My pilot's headstone bears the Star of David with the inscription, "A Star Athlete and Outstanding Scholar." It was a Time for Remembrance.

- ◆ On May 7th we traveled by bus to Apeldoorn where thousands of Canadian veterans were assembling from all over Holland. It was a celebration to end all celebrations. Some of the vets rode on WW II vehicles — tanks, trucks and carriers — as they did in 1945. Most of the others marched, if one can call it marching. For much of the route it was a case of meandering slowly through the massive crowds that lined the streets. There were lots of wonderful bands including the Burlington Teen Band which had flown over with us. From the time of forming until the end of the parade, more than five hours elapsed in 80-degree (Fahrenheit) heat. Nobody seemed to mind. It was the handshakes, the hugs, the applause that one remembers. People were hanging from lamp standards, balconies and billboards. Flowers by the armful were thrust upon the veterans, and one little blonde beauty about four years of age was standing on the curb clutching a bouquet in each little fist. She was so small no one seemed to notice. As I approached, I asked if I could have some of her flowers. She absolutely beamed as I patted her head. That alone was worth the trip. I speak for the thousands of Canadian vets in the parade and family members in the special stands, when I say that it was a 'Time for Remembrance.' I had hesitated to enter what was essentially an army parade — I wouldn't have missed it for the world.
- ◆ On May 8th, the anniversary of VE Day, we attended the National Memorial Service at the Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery where almost 2500 Canadians lie buried. Due to the huge influx of veterans and relatives, there had been a similar service two days before which Prime Minister Chretien attended. The cemetery is situated on a gentle plateau on a height of land. Across the valley are the forests of Germany where many Canadians lost their lives in the closing months of the war. Each war cemetery is marked by a large stone Cross of Sacrifice bearing on its shaft a crusader's sword of bronze. There is also a Stone of Remembrance, an altar-like monument bearing the words, *Their Names Liveth Forever More.*
- ◆ As at most of the ceremonies during the pilgrimage, the veterans were accompanied by the Canada Remembers contingent. The guard consisted of current members of the regiments which fought in the Netherlands. The flag party carried the Canadian, Provincial and Territorial flags plus the ensigns of the RCN [Royal Canadian Navy] and RCAF [Royal Canadian Air Force]. In addition, there were two Red Ensigns, one representing the army, and the other, the merchant marine. Music was provided by the Air Command Band from CFB Winnipeg and the pipe and drum band from the Royal Canadian Regiment, Gagetown, New Brunswick.

- ◆ Wreaths were laid by the Minister of Veterans' Affairs and Princess Margriet, followed by representatives of all the Allied nations that served in Europe. Princess Margriet, who was born in Canada during the war years, was prominent at all the major events. The rendition of Amazing Grace by the lone piper was especially poignant and brought many a tear as we looked down on the sea of white crosses. It was indeed a Time for Remembrance.

We spent a day with Gerry Zwanenburg and his wife. Gerry is the Dutchman who led the recovery team which had excavated the remains of our aircraft in 1967. As he is familiar with every small cemetery in Holland, he took us to two of the village cemeteries where 14 of my squadron mates are buried. They died the same week I was shot down. The squadron lost seven Halifaxes that week. These village cemeteries are beautifully groomed and these graves, too, are adopted by children just as they are in the larger communities.

Another day we traveled to Rozenburg where a Dutchman, who had lived on the island as a boy, was our expert guide. As a construction engineer who designed parts of the New Waterway, he knew all about the changes which had taken place on Rozenburg in the intervening 50 years. He took us almost to the spot where our aircraft ploughed into the island. It is now an industrial area. Afterwards, we went to the coast where I had touched down. The farms are all gone now, and there are no more Holstein cows. The coastline looks much the same and it made me realize how close I had come to landing in the North Sea.

There is one more historical item concerning Rozenburg that I learned about after the war. A barge load of gold bars was sunk off the island in 1940. It was part of the Dutch national treasure and was being hurriedly removed from the Netherlands to keep it out of the clutches of the Nazi war machine. The Germans recovered some of the gold but not all of it. The gold they did not find remained in the shallow sea bed throughout the war and was apparently close at hand when I landed in 1943. I often wonder how much gold there really was, not that it would have mattered much. I had my hands full finding my way around in the darkness, crossing small canals, all the time without footwear — and besides, the gold belonged to the Dutch.

In the afternoon, we visited a large and beautifully landscaped civilian cemetery in central Rotterdam. The chapel is larger than some churches. There is a small military section where my other two crew members were buried in 1943. It, too, is a place of great beauty, and in the peace and solitude, it was a fitting conclusion to my personal pilgrimage. I had revisited the places that mattered the most. It was a Time for Remembrance.

There were farewell dinners in dozens of towns and cities throughout Holland when the Dutch organizers said their official goodbyes. The Dutch were repeatedly saying, "Thank You Canada," and in fact, that was the theme throughout. The Canadian guests were overwhelmed by the generosity and hospitality, and more than one visitor said it is we who should be thanking the Dutch. And so it went.

At a final private dinner we entertained our host family and a few of their close friends. It was another happy occasion. At one point my wife asked why would you throw open your home to total strangers. The response was immediate: it was the least they can do as, as they said, "you (meaning the Allies) gave us back our freedom; you don't value freedom until you have lost it."

On our flight home, about the time we entered Canadian air space, the choir accompanying the Burlington teen band assembled in the centre section of our 747. I don't know whether it was impromptu or planned. These talented young Canadians burst into song and delivered an unforgettable rendition of the Dutch National Anthem followed by O Canada. It made us feel proud to be Canadians and grateful to be so richly blessed. Living in a peaceful, prosperous land is a priceless legacy due in no small part to the sacrifices of all Canadians who have served in time of war in the cause of peace and freedom. Let us remember them. As the late George Hees, former Minister of Veterans' Affairs, and a courageous army veteran, wrote:

I hope all Canadians will once again take time from their normal schedules on November 11, and recall the many sacrifices made on our behalf. Such observance is not a duty, but a very special privilege.

Thanks for inviting me, or as the Dutch say, *Dank u Wel*.

THE 1832 CHOLERA EPIDEMIC

by
Karen Walker

In 1832, in the midst of the most hopeful, most prosperous year that Cobourg had yet enjoyed, a group of men gathered around a figure lying on the deck of a steamer in the harbour. On that warm June day, it seemed to those men, and soon to many others, as if all they had built here was suddenly in peril.

Cobourg was sixteen hundred people strong in 1832. The town had more than thirty stores, shops, inns, and taverns as well as assorted distilleries, tanneries, mills, and other industries. The booming local economy even supported a resident sculptor and a dancing master. Cobourg had a fire department and a newspaper, the *Cobourg Star*. There was building everywhere. Victoria College was under construction, and up where the Golden Plough now stands, an impressive stone courthouse was nearing completion. Down at the lakeshore, there was the fine new Division Street pier, touted as the longest between Kingston and York.

This happy shore looked forward to a great wave of immigration. With millions of virgin acres and a total of only about 16 000 inhabitants, this area, then known as the Newcastle District, was a favourite destination for settlers. Two or three thousand were expected in 1832 alone.

Cobourg was particularly eager to greet them all. Settlers were profit, and Cobourg, as the capital and principal port of the Newcastle District, was well placed to reap the benefits. Everyone in town, from the local innkeepers who put them up, to land agents who sold them homesteads, to the storekeepers who outfitted them, did very well from the crowds arriving at the harbour.

So much had been accomplished in Cobourg in such a short time - only thirty years since the first families had settled - and there seemed so much more to come, that it was hard indeed to suddenly see it all in jeopardy. An elderly woman found sick on the steamer *Great Britain* on Thursday, June 21, 1832 brought this threat to town. This lonely frail soul, her name never recorded, had the fate of bringing a world wide epidemic of cholera to Cobourg.

In 1830, a terrible plague raging through India was brought to Europe by sailors returning from the east. Within months, the disease had found its way into virtually every major city, from Paris to Moscow to Rome. It leapt the English Channel with little trouble and took such a hold on Great Britain that people there compared it to the memory of the Black Death. Nearly a thousand victims died in England and Scotland in late 1831 and there were two thousand more in the first months of 1832. Poor Ireland perhaps suffered the most. Losing at least 25 000 people, the island became linked to, and even blamed for, the epidemic.

This illness not being new, people knew it when they saw it. Calling it Asiatic or spasmodic cholera, they recognized the symptoms from the individual cases and small outbreaks

occasionally seen. There were the cramps and spasms in the arms and legs, the high fever followed by vomiting and diarrhea, the raging thirst, the bluish tinge of the skin, and the frightening husky "cholera voice." Apparently healthy men, women, and children could become ill and die with terrifying speed, sometimes within a single day.

What cholera actually was, was a mystery. Some thought the cause environmental, perhaps an unknown poison floating in the atmosphere or riding upon the east wind. Perhaps it was bad weather, or a gas from fermenting vegetation. Some threw up their hands and declared that cholera arose from spontaneous generation.

In 1832, at the dawn of the Victorian Age, questions about the causes of disease often fell into morality. While it may not have been Christian to assign blame, there was a certain comfort in seeing poverty as the cause of cholera, and the morally inferior - the drunkard, the glutton, the idle, and the unclean - as its most likely victims.

The world would wait fifty years before Robert Koch, a Nobel Prize winning bacteriologist, discovered the true cause and nature of cholera. In 1883, he saw under his microscope the culprit, the *Vibrio cholerae*, and tracked this bacillus to food and water contaminated by human waste. His findings were later confirmed by fellow scientists William Budd and John Snow. Multiplying in the small intestines of its victims, the vibrio produced a toxin which blocked sodium absorption and led to water-loss and electrolytes. The result was severe dehydration, often triggering shock and kidney or heart failure. Research showed that while those living in squalor ran a greater risk of infection, the poor sanitary conditions of the day ultimately made little difference between rich and poor.

Still, if filth and immorality caused and promoted cholera, then one was well advised to fight it with morality. Cleanliness, temperance, and tranquility of mind were said to be effective. Eat and sleep well. Wear flannel clothing. Avoid the night air. One cure called for two teaspoons of ground maple charcoal, two of hog's lard, and two of maple sugar to be given every half hour. The even more unfortunate were bled or fed doses of mercury or opium. There were also turpentine enemas and laxatives concocted of terrible things.

Cobourg probably began to hear about the epidemic early in 1832. Some may have read news in letters from Europe, but most likely first learned about it in the *Cobourg Star*. The 1832 cholera epidemic was the first big story that the *Star* had covered. Beginning in January, the ambitious little newspaper featured stories about the disease taken from British newspapers. Relaxing with the *Star* around the family hearth, many in Cobourg can be excused from greeting such tragedy with little more than the shake of the head. It was, after all, so far away.

Disregarding the self-appointed experts who doubted that cholera could ever cross the Atlantic, government in Canada was, however, already worrying. It fretted over the seventy to eighty thousand immigrants expected from Europe and what anyone of them could bring to this shore. There was indeed good reason to worry. In 1832, the voyage from the Old World to the New took about six to ten weeks, even longer if there was poor weather or bad luck. In the holds

of the great transatlantic sailing ships, hundreds endured cold and cramped conditions, rats, poor food, and stagnant water. Toilet facilities were a bucket in the corner. Due to artificially low fares and British law which permitted a high ratio of passengers to ship weight, vessels destined for Canada were notoriously overcrowded. Passengers often landed weak and exhausted, just as they needed strength and resiliency the most. From Quebec, where most of those destined for Upper Canada disembarked, it was an arduous ten day journey by bateaux and Durham boat up the St. Lawrence River to Prescott. The trip west from there by lake steamer took another hard week. Unless they could afford a cabin, immigrants lay on deck in the sun and the rain and were generally poorly provided for.

It was all perfect ground for cholera. Realizing this, the colonial government developed a local plan and a national strategy. First, towns and townships were encouraged to appoint individual boards of health and organize private charities to help the immigrant who arrived poor and unprepared. It was believed that they would bring the epidemic and suffer from it most. The key to Canada's national strategy was the creation of a quarantine unit on one small island in the St. Lawrence. Grosse Isle was a rocky, heavily-wooded dot in the river about thirty miles east of Quebec City. Once the only resident, a surprised tenant farmer, had been removed, soldiers set to work building a hospital compound on the top of the island. There was also a small military outpost with cannons to stop any ships trying to run the quarantine. When doctors, nurses, priests, and sailors arrived, Grosse Isle was thought as ready as it could be.

Every ship from a European port known to be infected would, according to the government plan, be stopped here. Steerage passengers would be examined for signs of disease before being transported to the island to wash themselves and their belongings. Even mail bags were to be scrubbed. The healthy would then return to their vessels while individuals found to be ill would be detained and isolated in the hospital.

It was all very ambitious, and from a practical standpoint, quite impossible. In the first week of May, even as the first ships of the transatlantic season arrived and were inspected, cracks appeared in the Grosse Isle scheme. Whether impatient with delays which grew ever longer, or afraid of what would be found onboard, some captains began slipping by the island. The cannons on Grosse Isle never fired a shot in response.

Those vessels which did obey the quarantine sat for days, only to be met when their turn finally came by some official not sure of his job. Within weeks, the doctors on Grosse Isle were far too busy tending patients already there to examine incoming ships. Poorly trained inspectors filled in, often missing or ignoring symptoms, or hoping for the best when a frightened immigrant said he did not feel well. Many inspectors did not search the ships' holds for the many sick hiding there. They also did not bother with first class passengers. Those wealthy enough to travel in comfort were not obliged to take part in any health measures because it was assumed they could not be ill.

On Grosse Isle itself, the situation quickly rose to near chaos. Every day, hundreds scrambled ashore and battled for a spot on the rocks to wash and drink. They were given no food.

no shelter, no assistance during the hours while they waited for the fleet of small boats to return. Few dared to venture very far, not even to look for family members taken away to the hospital on the cliffs above. By July, more than twenty-five hundred lay up there with cholera as well as typhus, tuberculosis, and a host of other killers.

Given such trouble, it was well that a Day of Prayer was declared throughout Canada on May 16th. Reverend Anson Green of Cobourg's Wesleyan Methodist Church, today Trinity United, was among those helping to soothe nerves. Preaching from Isaiah 3, Green told his parishioners that the land would be delivered and the cholera turned back if the nation prayed together.

Nonetheless, on June 7, 1832, a man, one of the ten thousand settlers that Grosse Isle had already sent on their way, collapsed on a street in old Quebec City. Before he died, he was found to be suffering from Asiatic cholera. Within three days, there were seven cases in Quebec City and a dozen more in Montreal.

Grosse Isle had not worked. To the surprise of no one who was there, the disease had easily escaped. Having exhausted itself and its victims on the Atlantic, cholera had actually grown healthy in quarantine. The disease recovered from its long journey in the holds of the vessels delayed offshore and on the rocky beach of the island where the undiagnosed sick mixed with the healthy. Once past Grosse Isle, settlers carried the disease away onto the streets and roads of Canada. Born in India and raised in Europe, Asiatic cholera had found fresh new fields. It was now stronger than ever.

There were fifty sick and dying in Quebec when little Cobourg, still far off in the west, began to respond to the crisis. The town's first act was to found the Newcastle Emigrant Society. Pledged to assist newcomers to Cobourg, Port Hope, and surrounding region, the society was begun by community leaders. In Cobourg, prominent merchant and banker Robert Henry served as the organization's first president. The Reverend Alexander Bethune of St. Peter's Church was vice-president. Other town fathers were involved, too, men like Henry Ruttan, Benjamin Throop, Charles Clark, and George Boulton. From an office located where MacCoubrey's Funeral Home is today, the society directed and advised settlers. It kept lists of land for sale or rent and notices of jobs available. That first year, the organization raised about one hundred pounds. The money was used to feed destitute immigrants, to rent them a room, pay for a physician or send them to their chosen destinations.

Of a more official nature was another new body, the Cobourg Board of Health. Pioneered by most of the area's doctors and many of the same merchants who had begun the emigrant society, the board of health swung a heavy hand. It divided Cobourg into east and west wards and assigned members to inspect each. They then reported back on general cleanliness as well as any evidence of filth and disease. The board could order that health threats be removed and did not hesitate to levy stiff fines and even recommend jail time for violators of public safety.

The Newcastle Emigrant Society and the Cobourg Board of Health were in place just in

time, for on Saturday, June 16th, cholera was found at Prescott, about half way between Montreal and Cobourg. Two days later, it was at Kingston. By the 20th of June, the disease was spreading at Cornwall, Brockville, and Picton. Then leaping over the Newcastle District, cholera struck at York. Across Lake Ontario, the epidemic had also arrived at Rochester, New York. Although the disease had actually been found in Maine weeks before it appeared at Quebec, American officials blamed the growing epidemic upon immigrants from Canada. No one was now permitted to land on the far side of the lake without a doctor's certificate of good health.

On Thursday June 21, 1832, when the disease was all around, Cobourg's Board of Health gathered to receive a government grant of two hundred pounds. The money had been given to this and other so-called "exposed stations" for the purpose of building or renting facilities for an isolation hospital. These were thought necessary as existing hospitals, which were then few and far between in Upper Canada, often did not admit patients suffering from contagious diseases.

The site the Cobourg Board of Health chose for its hospital was a windswept bluff just outside of town at the foot of D'Arcy Street. There, an old barn was rented from board member Ebenezer Perry. Beds, blankets, and lanterns were purchased to outfit it. Town doctors were then assigned to duty both at this makeshift hospital and up at the new stone courthouse where a jail cell had also been set aside for the sick.

That afternoon in late June, as the planning of Cobourg's first hospital began, the *Great Britain* was landing at the Division Street wharf. As they disembarked from the steamer, the more than four hundred passengers stepped gingerly around the figure of a woman. Dr. Newton Carlisle soon arrived and pushed his way through to where she lay. He quickly perceived what ailed the woman, and sent her off to be the first patient at the D'Arcy Street cholera hospital. She died there before sunset.

Within two days, two men and another woman from the ill-fated *Great Britain* fell ill. Another immigrant, an elderly woman remembered as Mrs. Gray from the steamer *William IV*, then became the second casualty in the barn at the end of D'Arcy Street.

Cobourg was badly in need of comfort by the time the Board of Health next met on June 27th. They were all there - Perry, Clark, Boswell, Conger, Bethune, and Doctors Morton, Gilchrist, and Carlisle - all the regular members except Richard Chatterton. The strong-minded editor of the conservative *Cobourg Star* happened to be away that morning. Chatterton's seat did not remain empty, however. It was quickly taken by James Ratcliffe, a Welshman who ran the little local reformer newspaper. A bitter opponent of Chatterton and his *Star*, Ratcliffe was much maligned in the community for his democratic politics and constant criticism of the establishment. The man does not appear to have been a regular member of the board. He was probably not even invited to the meetings. Still, he came that particular day.

During the meeting, Ratcliffe is said to have stood up and declared that he had been there at the harbour when the first case of cholera had been discovered. He had seen its horror with his own eyes. Cobourg, he exclaimed, must now save itself. Calling for a strict quarantine on our

doorstep, Ratcliffe shouted, "Self preservation requires it; and to talk of humanity...at a time such as this, is all Balderdash!"¹

The man evidently spoke so eloquently and probably at such length that when he finished, the board found itself creating Cobourg's own Grosse Isle. Members voted to require all immigrants coming into town to land first at Hospital Point, as the place had come to be called. With their ships waiting off shore, people would remain there for three days to see what developed. Those found healthy could then move on.

When the initial panic and shock had subsided and James Ratcliffe's cries had faded away, cooler heads and larger forces prevailed. The idea of a Cobourg quarantine was quickly dropped. By the next Board of Health meeting on July 4th, the impossibility of stopping all vessels and hauling hundreds to spend three days at the foot of D'Arcy Street was clear. Where would such a crowd be housed and who in this small town would feed and inspect and patrol them?

Beyond the costs and responsibilities, it had also occurred to many that such a quarantine could leave the town with a reputation for being unfriendly. Steamship companies might begin to avoid Cobourg if subjected to a long delay. The loss of their commercial and passenger business would not have sat well with Bethune, Perry, and other board members who owned the prospering Cobourg Harbour Company. Indeed, the spectre of a drop in immigration to the district and the resulting losses for local inns and stores - many of which were run by men on the Board of Health - probably sent as cold a shiver through Cobourg as did the epidemic itself.

Pressure had also come to bear from the government. Along Lake Ontario, communities like Cornwall, Kingston, and Belleville had thrown up their own troublesome little quarantines just as the true folly of Grosse Isle was realized. The government now changed strategies. Fearing that such blockages only spread disease faster and lay a great many victims at the feet of one community, officials traveled the length of the river and the lake hurrying immigrants along. They cajoled, pleaded, and threatened communities to drop quarantines and end other policies that snarled traffic.

Whatever the practical considerations, Richard Chatterton took to the moral high ground when he returned to town and attended the July 4th board meeting. He railed against quarantine when he wrote in his newspaper:

...Can it be reconciled to our conscience or...our hearts - first to invite these unfortunates to our shores...and now that they have arrived, poor, destitute, and friendless - at the very moment when they need that welcome - to shun them from our doors - to let them rot upon our roads, because they may...be sick...²

¹ *Cobourg Star* July 4, 1832.

² *Cobourg Star* July 4, 1832.

As Cobourg argued on, a family named Young were landing at Port Hope harbour. Thomas Young, his wife Elizabeth, their five children, and Elizabeth's elderly father Alexander Edmisson had left England back in March. They endured a long stormy passage before passing Grosse Isle and arriving at Quebec City in early June. They then joined the migration westward, intending to travel as far as Peterborough to join relatives already settled there. The Youngs soon fell out of step, however, when their youngest daughter grew weak and died of cholera at Prescott. Leaving her behind, the heartbroken family pushed on to Port Hope. Here, Elizabeth Young's father collapsed. For the health of all, it was now decided that Thomas would remain in Port Hope to nurse the ailing grandfather while Elizabeth and the children would travel on to reach Elizabeth's brother at Chemong Lake. Alexander Edmisson became the first known cholera death in Port Hope. When Thomas Young followed his family north, he found yet more tragedy. Two more of his four surviving children had just died.

The Reverend Alexander Bethune, a member of the Board of Health and the Newcastle Emigrant Society, could hardly have refused when the question arose as to a decent burial for those who died in Cobourg. In 1832, the cemetery to the north and east of St. Peter's Church was the only sanctified burial ground in town. While there was a small Methodist yard at Hull's Corners and perhaps a number of private cemeteries around, none but St. Peter's seems to have been available or thought suitable. Bethune opened St. Peter's although he knew that many, if not most, of those who would be buried would be strangers to the church. Some would not even be Anglican. With his tall noble manner and sterling reputation, Bethune went unchallenged when he also billed the church for coffins for victims of the epidemic.

Still St. Peter's good minister could not have heard many grumbles, as he seems to have been away for much of that fateful summer. Standing in his place was a young man borrowed from Port Hope's St. Mark's Anglican Church, the Reverend James Coghlan. By mid-July, Coghlan was certainly practised in his sad duties. Daily he drove along King and down D'Arcy to comfort the sick and ease the dying at the isolation hospital. Sometimes there was also a call to visit the sick room at the courthouse. When he returned to St. Peter's, there was usually a funeral, sometimes two, to be conducted. Coghlan must have all but memorized the brief committal service which he recited again and again. The reverend would then return to the church office and open St. Peter's record of burials. Perhaps because he wanted to be careful, Coghlan wrote in it the name of each victim. Among them was John Forrest, a young man; John Jones, a child of three; Elizabeth Taylor and her baby son Henry; young Mary Carter and her father, Peter. If no one knew the name, Coghlan did his best to describe the individual or note what little was known about him or her. The register that Rev. Coghlan kept stands today as the most complete record of the 1832 cholera epidemic in Cobourg.

Physicians here, as elsewhere, struggled to keep people alive. Armed only with rough remedies and basic theories, doctors had so little to fight with. In August, one local physician was driven to try what had never been attempted in this area before. It was all to save William Clark Gore, the brother-in-law of Dr. John Gilchrist. Gore had, unfortunately, chosen this summer to travel from New Hampshire to visit his sister at her home in Amherst. Travelling north through New York State, he had become infected with Asiatic cholera. Dr. Gilchrist treated him with all

that was usually prescribed, but Gore only grew worse. Finally, in desperation, the doctor turned to transfusion. Using water or milk, transfusion was a radical treatment seen in London, Paris, and New York and only recently attempted in the wilds of Upper Canada. Despite all the care, William Gore died.

A Mrs. Cameron, newly arrived from Glasgow, came one day to the offices of the *Cobourg Star* to place an advertisement. Addressed to her brother-in-law Alexander Cameron, the note hoped to find him somewhere in the Newcastle District. It said that she, her husband Hugh Cameron, and their baby had recently set sail for Canada to join Alexander who had already come to the region. Practically within site of their destination, Hugh had died of cholera. He was buried at St. Peter's Church. Mrs. Cameron had since then struggled along as best she could, searching the town every day for Alexander.

The *Star* soon carried other sad news beyond Mrs. Cameron's plight. There was word that George Kitson, the father of William, the local Harbour Master, had died in Montreal. The father and sister of Lewis Moffat, well known in town as an insurance broker, were also sick there. Sixteen year old Sophia Moffatt soon passed away. Neighbouring Haldimand Township lost Lt. Robert Bulman while he was travelling home through Quebec. So, too, did Avery Story, a settler from what became Alnwick Township. In a village like Colborne, the death of its own doctor, James O'Hare, who passed away in Perth, was particularly keenly felt. Cobourg was also saddened to hear about James McKenzie. As captain of the steamers *Frontenac* and the *Alciope*, he had been a regular visitor to the town's harbour. McKenzie died in York just as he seemed to have recovered from an attack of cholera.

Beyond the reports of sickness among "the landed," as immigrants were called, and sympathy upon the deaths of friends and neighbours travelling far away, very little appeared in the *Cobourg Star* about residents ill here at home. They were noted only in a few brief, unflinching hopeful references. Talk of the local cases that occurred may have been thought too invasive, too frightening, even during this frightful time. The only resident mentioned by name as having died in town during the epidemic was William Campbell. He had come to Cobourg from his native Ireland in 1817.

The dusty, difficult roads of the Newcastle District became well beaten in 1832. Throughout the season, immigrants took to the highways of the province when, despite the government's best efforts, traffic along the river and lake route remained jammed. Although slower and more expensive, many preferred travelling at their own pace on foot or by wagon and stagecoach. In late August, there came west along the Kingston Road, now County Road #2 (and until recently, Highway #2), an unknown group of travelers. They were remembered among the throng passing through not by their names, but for the terrible cases of cholera left in their wake. These people had contracted and carried with them a particularly virulent strain of the sickness. Wherever they stopped along the road, they somehow passed the disease into wells or other water supplies. D. Allenburg, who kept an hotel in Hope Township, was the first known victim on August 29th. Over the next week or so, three other innkeepers along the busy road to York - men named Butterfield, Post, and Bates - grew sick and quickly died.

The epidemic of 1832 flourished along the shores of Lake Ontario, but it seems to have slowed significantly when it ventured off into the backwoods. In the Peterborough region and other areas to the northeast and west, the sickness did not arrive until the summer was nearly gone. On August 20th, the *Cobourg Star* reported that cholera had now arrived in Peterborough with a vengeance. There were twelve cases and nine deaths in the town. Within a week, five more people died. Neighbouring townships were suffering, too, with fatalities reported in Monaghan, Dummer, and Douro. Chatterton later visited the region himself and wrote that most of the cases there had arisen because of poverty and immortality.

No such explanation was ever offered for the Kean family. Much admired in the area for their spirit, the widowed Mrs. Kean, her eldest son and daughter had come from the United States to settle a farm in a remote part of Ennismore Township. Having cleared their land and worked it into a respectable little outpost in the woods, the Keans planned to send for the younger children of the family to join them. However, Mrs. Kean, her son and her daughter all contracted cholera in the local outbreak of late August. They must have struggled to care for each other until, one after the other, they grew too weak. His mother and sister dying or perhaps already gone, the Kean boy staggered out of the cabin, evidently trying to reach distant neighbours. He was later found dead on the road. With handkerchiefs covering their faces, men then went to the Kean farm and found the girl in the yard and the mother in the house. They buried the children and burned the cabin with Mrs. Kean's remains still inside.

When news of what had happened to the Kean family became known, business was probably better than ever for Peterborough's colourful Dr. Solomon. Solomon, if that was his name, was apparently not a doctor at all, but an illiterate Irishman from the United States. He brought to a community desperate for a cure something called "Dr. Marshall's Anti-Cholera Medicine." Unlike some tonics, it was a basically harmless concoction of whiskey spiced with cloves, nutmeg, mace, and cayenne pepper. It never cured anyone, but no doubt helped customers forget their aches and pains.

In September 1832, when steamer traffic was trailing off and immigration slowed to wait for another spring, Cobourg called the epidemic over. The town was probably following the lead of its Board of Health which, on September 21st, declared its work finished. The organization proclaimed the crisis over because it had had no new cases for weeks. Coincidentally, government funding for the board had also run out.

In reality, cholera did go on. There were at least six fatalities in Cobourg from that first day of autumn until October 9th when the last victim of the year was buried at St. Peter's. By this date, the disease had abated to the east of Cobourg and was waning in the west.

An estimated ten thousand people died of Asiatic cholera in Canada in 1832, the majority of them in Quebec where the epidemic had landed. At least eight hundred are thought to have perished throughout Upper Canada. Given a mortality rate of fifty to sixty per cent, there may have been as many as twenty thousand cases, or more, nationwide and sixteen hundred in this province.

Such numbers are hard to come by in Cobourg. Neither the Newcastle Emigrant Society nor the Cobourg Board of Health ever reported the number of cases they saw. Such records may never have been kept or they may have been considered too sensitive ever to be released. The best count that can be assembled today from all sources is that thirty-three died and at least seventy people suffered from cholera in Cobourg.

In the wake of 1832, the emigrant society continued its good works. It was soon joined by other charitable organizations formed by local churches. The board of health served every summer after 1832 and eventually became permanent. Public health and safety further improved with the construction of sewers and drains. These began to control Cobourg's many small streams which, if luck had not been with the town, could have spread cholera into wells, cellars, and onto backyard gardens. Kinder, gentler, and certainly healthier, Cobourg emerged from its first great crisis as optimistic as ever, but more mindful of its own humanity.

THOMAS GILLBARD SCHOOL PRESENTATION

for

Heritage Night on February 24, 1998

Heritage Night provided the Society with a glimpse into the future of Cobourg's heritage. Eight student historians from Thomas Gillbard Public School shared the results of their research about Thomas Gillbard and the school he was instrumental in having built. Early photographs recording the opening of this school and of the first school board were a visual introduction to the written history. As well, the students shared both the Gillbard Family Tree replete with photographs of living descendants, and letters from family members in England. Dylan Lichtenberger (Grade 6) read the script he had presented during the 1997 Cemetery Walk at Union Cemetery. Following these presentations, Tiffany Cochrane (Grade 7) showed excerpts from a video of Cobourg's history created by Mrs. Oliver's Grade 5/6 class two years ago as part of their 'pen pal' exchange with a class in Saginaw City, Michigan. History-in-the-making was provided by Grade 3 public speaker, Brianna Petersen, who delighted those in attendance with her talk entitled "Fashion." To top off the evening, Society member Ted Peterson, whose mother had been a Gillbard, presented the Thomas Gillbard School with the sterling silver trowel which Thomas Gillbard had used to lay the cornerstone of the school.¹ The trowel was accepted by Ashley Farrell (Grade 7), student representative on the school council. Following the formal presentations, students and members chatted about their projects while enjoying homemade cookies graciously provided by Jane Greathead and Mary Smith.

The following vignettes were written and presented by individual students.

Gillbard Family Tree

Hello. My name is Samantha Jensen [Grade 5] and I am going to talk to you about the Thomas Gillbard Family Tree. This family tree was given to us in January 1997 with the compliments of Jack Gillbard of Cornwall, England. Degory Gilbert Gillbard had two children, one of whom was named Thomas. Thomas had 10 children, which was common back then. One of Thomas' children was named William. He had four children, one of whom was Thomas; the same Thomas Gillbard who donated the money to build our school.

The Offer

Hi, my name is Lauren Alls [Grade 7], I would like to begin by sharing with you the offer made by Thomas Gillbard in 1905 to the Cobourg Public School Board. This information is from the original document:

¹ Subsequently, John Elinsky turned a 'new' handle for the trowel from 100 year old rosewood. The wooden handle was bonded to the sterling silver trowel with a specially formulated adhesive obtained from Germany. The trowel is now on display at Thomas Gillbard Public School.

Aug. 5, 1905

Dear Sir,

I have initiated a provision in my will giving a legacy of \$10,000 to the Public School Board of Cobourg, for the erection of a school building. I have also decided to advance this in my lifetime, should I live so long, and you decide to build during the year 1906. I am prepared to pay \$5,000 of this on or about the first of July 1906, and the remaining \$5,000 on or about the first of December 1906 if you go on with the building and used the funds, therfor [sic] if I can be of assistance during the construction, I shall be glad to aid or co-operate with your board.

Kindly let me know your decision at as early a date as possible.

Witness
(Mr. Huycke)

Yours truly
(Thomas Gillbard)

The Resolution

Hello, I'm Ashley Farrell. I would like to share some highlights from the resolution that the Cobourg Public School Board made after accepting \$10,000 from Thomas Gillbard which he generously donated to help build our school.

At a special meeting of the Cobourg Public School Board, held on "SATURDAY" evening Aug. 5, 1905 it was MOVED by Mr. H.J. Snelgrove, seconded by Mr. J. McCaughey, and RESOLVED — That the Cobourg Public School Board here by [sic] gratefully accepts the generous gift of \$10,000 for the erection of a school building by Thomas Gillbard, esquire, in the terms of his letter just received.

Be it also resolved — that this magnificent benifiction furnishes proof of Mr. Gillbard's unselfish devotion.

We rejoice because it will enable this Board at an early date to provide Public School accommodation considerably more commodius, comfortable and sanitary than Cobourg can boast of at present.

The School

Jenny Scott (Grade 5) showed photographs of the school built with Gillbard's generous gift.

- Picture 1:* This picture was taken in 1903 before the school was built. This is a picture of the Cobourg Public School Board and teachers. The chairperson is Thomas Gillbard.
- Picture 2:* We think it is opening day because of the way people were dressed. The men are dressed in tuxedos and ladies are in beautiful long gowns. We also have a third

floor that was destroyed by a fire in 1917. If you look closely, the sidewalks on George St. are wood.

Picture 3: This is a picture of what our school looks like today. We have an addition that includes our library and offices - the principal's, secretary's, and now our own peer helper office.

Thomas Gillbard

The following is the vignette that Dylan Lichtenberger (Grade 6) researched, prepared and presented at the Cemetery Walk at Union Cemetery in 1997:

Listed among the number of Cobourg's outstanding citizen of the second half of the nineteenth century is the name of Thomas Gillbard. He served. He gave, and he was particularly fond of children.

Thomas Gillbard arrived in the Cobourg area in 1847. In Cobourg he started a clothing business located on Division Street near Covert Street. In 1848 he was married to Selina Floyd. They were married for 59 years, and lived all that time together in Cobourg.

Gillbard was also a [lay] preacher and took charge of church worship from time to time. In addition, he was a member of Victoria and Albert College Boards.

In 1853, the Samuel Retallack family built a three story structure, what is now Somerville's Sporting Goods, which was then known as the Retallack Block. Gillbard purchased the new premises and moved his business to that location. After this Gillbard was soon elected to the Cobourg town council. Later, he served as town treasurer.

Gillbard's greatest love was children. In 1864 he became a member of the public School board. For over 40 years, until his death, he served continuously on that board. In 1869, he was made its chairman, a position he occupied 12 times during his lengthy service.

Before his death, he asked the board to consider abandoning all the small schools and putting one big school in central Cobourg. Some old houses were removed from George Street to make way for the new building. Thomas Gillbard donated \$10,000 towards its construction. Gillbard passed away a few days before the opening of the building. They were going to surprise him and name the building after him.

Mr. Gillbard donated \$200 towards the old library for new books. He also donated to Union Cemetery.

Yes, Thomas Gillbard was a fine citizen; I hope that the town of Cobourg still remembers his name.

Gillbard Relatives

Hi. My name is Alisha Markle (Grade 5) and we have received a letter from the Gillbard relatives. I am going to read some highlights of this letter:

Dear Mrs. Weatherup and the Grade 4 Class,

In reply to your letter of Feb.27th...I have today sent to you a parcel of baseball caps² which I have collected to date and I would be interested to know if you receive them. I have put inside a small photo of Thomas Gillbard's brother's great-great-grandson who is also very interested in your school and would like to see it sometime in the years to come, maybe on your 100th birthday when he will be old enough to travel on his own. Thomas is very pleased with himself at the moment [as] he's playing on a rugby team.

Please keep in touch.
Sincerely, (W.J. Gillbard)

Making History

Brianna Peterson, a Grade 3 student, made history recently with her Public Speaking topic about fashion. Brianna's presentation brought her a first place standing in her class, another first at the community level and a second place standing at the regional level in Havelock, Ontario. Although we are printing Brianna's speech as she presented it, we can only imagine the vocal inflections, facial gestures and body language which made her talk so delightful.

Oh Look! His hair is purple!

Oh my! Her lips are painted black!
I'm not talking about Hallowe'en costumes.

Good evening!

Listen up! Today I am going to teach you a little bit about Canadian fashion and everyone's own personal style.

Let's look at my family for instance. My mom, she dresses okay. If she isn't dressed up for work, then she normally dresses in a track suit or a pair of jeans and a t-shirt. Although, a while back, she decided to change her style and she bought a mini skirt. At first I thought, "I don't think so," but after giving it some thought, I realized that it might have been time for a change and she was making her own "fashion statement."

Then there's Rick, my stepdad. His style is a little off the wall sometimes. He enjoys watching nature. When I say watching nature, I mean going into the woods at 6:00 in the morning and waiting patiently until he sees some sort of creature. Then if he's lucky, he takes its picture. Now to do this properly, he has to dress for the occasion. This is when it

² As part of Thomas Gillbard Public School's 90th birthday celebrations, the students were trying to beat the world's record for the greatest number of baseball caps in one place.

gets a little weird. He puts on a pair of overalls that has leaves and sticks painted all over them. He calls it camouflage. I think he thinks that the animals won't see him, but I believe the animals are quite a bit smarter than that. But again, that's his fashion choice and that's okay.

Then there is me. I have my own style. What I'm wearing now really isn't it. I prefer something a little more relaxed and comfortable and my hair isn't quite the way I would like it. Let's just say that my mother still has a lot to do with my fashion styles. But not for long. The teenage years are almost here.

When it comes to being a teenager, it looks like anything goes. Some teenagers that I have seen, wear their pants so they sit down around here [at the hips] and they are about a foot too long. That's great for some people, but for me I'd be afraid that if I walked too fast, they would fall down or I would trip over them.

Earrings seem to be another popular fashion choice, and you don't wear just one. Why not try four or five in each ear. Some people even go so far as to put them in their nose and lips. I don't know, I think it looks okay but a little too painful for me.

I guess what I'm trying to tell you is that everyone has their own style. Some are more creative than others. It shouldn't matter what you wear or how your hair looks. What matters is what's inside. Every person is different. That's what makes the world go around. Wouldn't it be boring if we were all the same?

Oh, and by the way, Mom, this is how I like my hair!

Thanks for listening, have a great day!

* The evening's programme was organized by Barb Weatherup, ably assisted by Kathie Siberry, Sarah Oliver and Lee Wakelin, all teachers at Thomas Gillbard Public School. Further support was provided by principal, Ian Watkins. Grade 5 student, Mickey McCall also read a letter during the programme.

**THE ADVENTURES OF THE COBOURG RIFLES,
DURING THE CAMPAIGN OF 1837 -
AS WRITTEN BY ONE OF THEMSELVES**

by
Colin Caldwell

Prologue

It is a great honour to be speaking to the Cobourg and District Historical Society as I come from Port Credit, a town which has no history at all.

When I grew up in Port Credit, in a family with a strongly developed historical sense, we couldn't find a building in our town that pre-dated the last war. When I went to the university, finally, I chose to study the Classics. Sometime after moving to Cobourg, I became intrigued by an old building, onto the back of which my apartment looked - so I made the fatal error of casually investigating the old place in the local history room of our library. As many of you can probably guess, that one glance became an obsession. Now my readings in Cobourg's history have had one very peculiar result, which has been that every time I turn around I find that Cobourg's history illuminates bits of the history I knew from other parts of the province, and, in particular, I continually run across references to Port Credit. I have now learned more about Port Credit, through studying Cobourg, than I ever learned about Port Credit in the twenty years I lived there.

Which leads me to remark, that when you hear people say that Cobourg is their town - or your town - you should remind them, gently, that that isn't quite true. A great part of Cobourg, a part essential to Cobourg, has only been lent to you, by the people who built it, over the last two hundred years, to be preserved for the rest of the province, if not the country. As most people don't have a chance to see a town like Cobourg every day, don't take it for granted that you can do whatever you like with it, and don't, for heaven's sake, let anyone blow it by sheer carelessness.

And now, speaking of acting nobly, and selflessly, on the whole province's behalf, we come to the stirring deeds of the Adventures of the Cobourg Rifles in the Campaign of 1837 - as Written by One of Themselves.

Let's begin by pointing out that the ADVENTURES OF THE COBOURG RIFLES DURING THE CAMPAIGN OF 1837 - AS WRITTEN BY ONE OF THEMSELVES, is an event, yes, but more exactly it is a literary description of an event, written, in five parts, ten years afterward. It appeared in three parts in the *Cobourg Star*, in October and November 1847 (see Figure 1), with two parts showing up in April 1848. The last excerpt ends, as do all others, with the words TO BE CONTINUED, just as in the example you have on the handout (see Figure 2). As the *Star* Archive is lost for the greater part of 1848, I have no idea how many parts there originally were. Frankly, I'd rather have them than some of the fragmented ancient texts from Greek or Latin that I've had to wade through in my time - like the missing

Annals of Tacitus. Although all the articles appeared on the front page, you should bear in mind that the front page, then, wasn't the front page as we know it now. When Egerton Ryerson once wrote an important article for the Christian Guardian, his brother wrote to him saying, "See with what marked respect the Editor treats your communications. He prints them on the First page...lest the quiet repose of your article should be disturbed by anyone seeing it & reading it (for not one in fifty ever read anything on the first page)."²

Other than this work we have very few sources for this march, and these other sources are very thin indeed. We have one notice from the *Cobourg Star* of the day, which I have reprinted on the handout (see Figure 1). We also have a report from an inhabitant of Bowmanville who wrote a letter to the *Star* in January of 1838 and who says he saw the Rifles pass through town, but I think he gets the day wrong. Other than that we have only this text, a memoir written ten years later, and lots of information about the events in Toronto, but which almost never bother to mention these Cobourg guys at all, since everything was effectively over before they got there. The longest and most complete study of them, that of Edwin Guillet in the book, *Lives and Times of the Patriots*, relies on a few quotes, a letter or two, some reminiscences - and the Adventures. That's it. If it weren't for this document, we would know very little about this march indeed.

I'm going to presume that the broad outlines of the Rebellion of 1837 are familiar to you. By this I mean that the names of William Lyon Mackenzie and Montgomery's Tavern, and the terms Family Compact, Responsible Government, Tories and Patriots won't be completely unfamiliar to you.

Essentially, for our purposes, the rebellion began, rather unexpectedly for Mackenzie and everyone else, on Monday, December 4, 1837, with a gathering of protesters at Montgomery's Tavern which stood on Yonge Street just north of Eglinton (now part of Toronto). The rising, as Mackenzie saw it, or the protest meeting, as most of the other patriots saw it, was supposed to start on the 7th, that Thursday. As the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Francis Bond Head, didn't believe anything was going to happen at all, he had sent all the regular forces -- who should have been hanging around Fort York to prevent this sort of thing -- down to Lower Canada (Quebec) to put down the much more serious problems there. Fortunately, the events in Quebec don't concern us here.

The only military man on the spot was Col. James Fitzgibbon, who was the hero of the battle of Beaver Dams in 1813. This was the battle which Laura Secord and her cow warned the British about, and Fitzgibbon was the man she warned. He was the one who quickly, early on the Tuesday morning, sent messengers east and west along the lake, to try to raise the local militia and get them to come to Toronto before the rebels seized the town.

One of these messengers arrived in Cobourg at about ten o'clock on Tuesday night, and roused Sheriff Ruttan, who lived on the site of the 1920s vintage house on the south side of Elgin

²Sissons, C.B. *Egerton Ryerson: His Life and Letters*. Clark Irwin. 1937. Pp.471-2.

Street just west of the creek and Pratt's Mill (which was Perry's Mill in those days).³ Ruttan then sent word to two of the most important Tories in Town, old Zacheus Burnham and George Strange Boulton. Together they started to get word out to raise the local militia.

The militia began to gather the next morning. This is quite startling for its speed. Militia duty was usually pretty casual back then - pretty much an afternoon's drunk down at the local - and every indication is that no one was expecting anything to happen. It was also startling to local people back then. The famous literary Moody and Traill sisters later declared themselves astonished that Cobourg didn't come out for the rebels instead. Later, too, Egerton Ryerson declared that the only reason so many came out for the government, was because he had let it be known through his Methodist connections, that Dr. John Rolf and Marshall Bidwell, two moderate reformers who were friends of Mackenzie's, had taken the government side. They were later to find themselves driven from the province after the rebellion. In fact, they had stayed in town with the loyal forces, but had tried to arrange a cease fire or truce, which failed. Ryerson, though, estimated that there were, in fact, at least fifty reformers for every loyalist in the townships east from Port Hope to Trenton. In all, though estimates vary, it would appear that about 2500 militia moved, at some point, at least part way, from this general area in the direction of Toronto.

To get a good picture of this movement, one should imagine Cobourg as a sort of eastern-most political nerve centre for the area, with Port Hope being a sort of bottle-neck through which all the volunteers pass. That meant that over the next few days, say from Wednesday to Friday, gangs of hastily assembled men walked down from Peterborough to Lindsay to meet men who had come through from Colborne and Grafton at Port Hope. As most people farther east of here thought everything would probably be over before they got there, they stayed put and waited for the outcome. Some of the men from Peterborough actually only got close to Port Hope on Friday and heard from more messengers that everything was already over in Toronto, and instead, they decided to go back to seize Lindsay.⁴ Some of the troops who arrived in Port Hope on the Thursday and Friday stopped to wait for a steamer but none came until too late.

In fact, the rebellion was put down at the battle of Montgomery's Tavern on Thursday, the seventh, mostly by militia raised in Toronto itself, about a thousand of them, maybe more, with about a thousand men whom Sir Allan Napier Macnab, of Dundurn Castle in Hamilton, had managed to bring from Hamilton by steamer.⁵ It is probably useful to point out that had even a normal garrison of forty or fifty regular troops been in Toronto at this point, the whole rebellion,

³There is a story I haven't been able to confirm, that that messenger was shot and wounded as he passed through Cramahe Township. Or he may have shot a rebel as he passed through Darlington. Or both may be true, or there are two stories, two messengers, and two shots, one in each direction.

⁴I'm not sure why. Possibly just for the hell of it. It may have seemed like too good an opportunity to miss. They were Irish after all.

⁵This, by the way, is the Macnab who laid the cornerstone of this building we are in (Victoria Hall), twenty odd years later, possibly during one of the times he was Prime Minister.

which in the end lasted just under a week, would have been over in about fifteen minutes on Tuesday morning.

So there you have the context to the Adventures. Now, let me warn you that there is going to be a difficulty here, because I am, perforce, going to talk about a text that you probably haven't read.⁶ There is also a description - taken from the same source - in Guillet's *Lives and Times of the Patriots*. I'm going to have to do quite a bit of skimming through this, and even some reading from it, which is awkward, and rather difficult to follow, but it's unavoidable.

The Cobourg Rifles

Now to the Rifles, and their part in all this. First, who were they? Well, they were really the *crème de la crème* of Cobourg society. These were real Tories. These weren't just farm boys who were out for excitement, though like all men at the age of twenty or so, they wanted that as well.

Let's look at the list of them. I need only point out some names which must be familiar to you: Perry, Covert, Buck, Tremaine, Gravelly. They're all Cobourg street names; not necessarily named for this exploit, but for the families anyway. The only names I don't see are Burnham and Boulton. I'm pretty sure there was a parallel group of Radical Tories who took off on the same Tuesday morning, but on horse-back, a sort of mounted militia. I rather glorified them in a recent article on this incident, but it's clear from a letter in the *Cobourg Star* a week after the revolt, that a Colonel Boulton was in Port Hope on the Tuesday with 200 men. All later evidence indicates that this was D'Arcy Boulton, who would have been 23 at the time. That some mounted militia, from Cobourg and area, helped to secure the bridges at the eastern approaches to Toronto on Thursday morning seems clear. A Boulton was certainly one of them, so I have cheerfully put both of them there.

But you can tell these Rifles are pretty special. First they're ready to go first thing Tuesday morning which means they don't have to worry about the chores; and they're well-armed. It's astonishing, in view of the way we often think of people back then, how few of them could actually put their hands on a good gun. Most of the rebels seem to have been armed with pikes, a sort of saw blade on the end of a long stick, and our author points out that the majority of the loyalists were in the same shape.

They set out at noon, according to our author, and got as far as Delarey's tavern, six miles west of Port Hope. I think it's still there. Guillet says it's on the north side of Highway 2, west of Welcome near Morrish Corners. Morrish Corners has disappeared, but Morrish Church Road hasn't, and there, just east of it on Lot 19, Concession 3, is an old house which I think fits the bill very nicely, at least for the building Guillet was sure it was. But as there were several old buildings near there identified as old taverns, I can't confirm anything. Remember, Guillet was talking about the 1940s before really significant changes had come to any of these roads, giving him insights no longer available to us. There the Rifles stayed the first night and told stories,

⁶ The text is available in the collection called *Our Magnificent or Our Glorious Militia* in the Cobourg Public Library.

wrecked the one bed which was left for twenty of them, and got up to drink more punch at three a.m. From Delarey's they marched through Bowmanville, where they were cheered by the pretty girls, apparently, then either took a break, or possibly stayed the night, just west of town.

Here there is a chronology problem. If you follow the text closely, there are only two overnight stops before Toronto. But every other historian has them arriving in Toronto on either Saturday at the earliest, or Sunday. I have not reconciled this, nor have I tried the experiment of walking the journey myself. Their next stop, according to our author, is Post's Tavern, just west of Whitby. Guillet was able to find it as well, in fact in his day the building still had a faded sign on one wall saying "Post's."⁷ From there, according to our author, came the grueling twenty mile slog through mud, eventually to be relieved by meeting Col. Boulton, who escorts them into Town.

The rebellion is over. They see the men of Gore, who would be Macnab's men from Hamilton, and hear about the Battle of Gallows Hill, a misnomer, since all that happened at Gallows Hill was the parlay between the rebels and Drs. Baldwin and Rolf.⁸

The Rifles are offered the recently built Osgoode Hall to bunk down in, but it has no beds, stoves, or other furniture. They are then met by William Boulton, D'Arcy's older brother, (the son of the D'Arcy Boulton who built the house known as The Grange in Toronto), who was accompanied by the son of the then Chief Justice, John Beverly Robinson, who invited them, all forty of them, to stay at their respective houses. The Rifles stand on their dignity, not being properly accoutred for the drawing room, and take over the North American Hotel - all of it - where they order the best dinner to be had, and, after being reviewed by Bond Head himself at Government House, on the site of the present Roy Thompson Hall, they concluded the adventure with a grand banquet.

These are not farm boys from the sticks!

So ends the Adventure.

Part Two

Here, in modern talk-show parlance, I "segue" into Part Two, a discussion about the actual text of the Adventures.

This is a literary text, and as such, the fact of its existence, is as much an historical fact as the march itself. Sometime in 1847, someone, anonymously, decided to tell this story for the

⁷ As an aside, in 1837, Post's Tavern was owned by a man named Lee.

⁸ Bidwell, who we mentioned earlier, was asked to join the truce team but chickened out. He later left the province and his property may have been confiscated. He owned the property in Cobourg at 35 King St. east, now occupied by Gordon's Insurance. Immediately following the rebellion, that property passed out of Bidwell's hands and into those of either Ebenezer Perry or W.S. Conger, one of whom probably built the present building.

Cobourg Star. As I mentioned earlier, as the story ends with TO BE CONTINUED, we don't know how much more of it there might have been. I also do not know who the author is, though not for want of trying to figure it out. He is one of them, and, in the history as we have it, there seems to be at least one person there in every event described as being witnessed by the author. That person is Rowe Buck. Unfortunately, the author is always listing people by their initials, so I can't be sure. There are other details which make me uncertain of this identification. For instance, Rowe Buck doesn't have a political career, as this text suggests he would. He becomes a fireman, and decamps for England in the 1870s.

As I say, the story is incomplete. But curiously, as a literary text, what we have ends exactly where it ought to end. The march is over. The fighting, in Toronto, is over. It's a perfect place to finish the story. It is hard to imagine what should follow. We know, from other sources, that some of these people go on to take part in the skirmishing and cleaning up of Navy Island near Niagara Falls in January and February where the last of the rebels hold out near the American border. Captain Warren, the leader of them all, gets wounded at the burning of the ship *Caroline*, the burning which came close to causing a war between Britain and the United States. But it's very difficult to see how one could fit that into the structure of what we have. Because, and follow me closely here, as a literary text, this is very carefully crafted. This is no rambling, garrulous memoir of an old soldier.

In broad outline, the narrative part has a classic comic structure. It starts with a disturbance of the social order. There follows a long journey, with adventures along the way, the journey becoming progressively worse as they go, until they hit rock bottom on the slogging mud march before they are rescued by a knight from the city they are trying to reach. Then they are reintegrated into their society and they celebrate with a banquet and story-telling. Northrop Frye would explain this as going from social stability to complete disintegration, back to social stability again.

Am I inventing this? It gets worse - or better - depending on your mood. By reading the opening of the tale, replete as it is, with omens, we find that it is a straight spoof on the Roman Historians, Livy and Suetonius. All ancient historians began their accounts of great events with omens and odd experiences which set a tone of foreboding. Our author knows this and spoofs it.

Let us look at the structure of the piece. The piece has two sides to it which are quite skillfully interwoven. On one side is the straight narrative of the events: where they stayed, what they saw, what they drank, that sort of thing. On the other side is the collection of stories they told *en route*. It's like the *Canterbury Tales*, or something similar. I made a complex chart which I decided to spare you from having to ponder, but, take it from me, over half the work is taken up with these stories.

Essentially three quarters of Part I is made up of two stories. Most of Part II, after a bit of story telling, is narrative. All of part III is a story. Part IV is all narrative except for the last bit which is a long toast. Part V is entirely one long story. Those stories have nothing whatsoever to do with the actual narrative. I've tried hard, but the only thing I can find which they all have in

General Advertiser.

called upon the militia to redeem the pledge which in their name he had made; and the unanimity of the answer almost exceeded the powers of belief.

On Tuesday night, (the 5th inst.) expresses arrived at Cobourg, bearing orders to the different Colonels to forward their regiments; the flank companies to advance on Toronto, and the others to hold themselves in readiness to march at an hour's notice.

Early on Thursday morning the several volunteer companies began to assemble. A few days previously, several young gentlemen had formed a rifle company, in case their services might be required, and the alacrity with which those youth, accustomed to all the luxuries of life, advanced in their country's cause, reflects on them the greatest credit. They mustered about forty, under the command of Captain Warren, late of the 66th. This company formed the advance; they were succeeded by Captains Clark and Calvert's companies, and Capt. Conger, with his men in line order and in excellent appearance, brought up the rear. After the volunteer companies had left the town, Col. Burnham inspected the remainder of the regi-



THE KINGSTON-YORK ROAD, 1830

THE KINGSTON DISTRICT GAZETTE

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1847.

THE ADVENTURES OF THE COBOURG RIFLES, DURING THE CAMPAIGN OF 1837.

WRITTEN BY ONE OF THEMSELVES.

Pat having roused the Rifles by reading the reverse, a general roar of laughter hailed the close of the Poem. It was loudly encored, and Pat gave it again with even more emphasis than a first. As it was three o'clock, and all our fellows were thoroughly awake, it was unanimously resolved, that a bowl of punch should be got ready to while away the time, till the hour at which we were to march. It having been duly prepared we drew up round the table, and drank Her Majesty with all the honours. There was sitting on the chairman's right hand, a pale youth of about 17; he had, to all appearance, been in a dying state of consumption, for the previous 3 months yet he would not listen to his friends who advised him to remain at home, but set out with the Rifles. However, he was unable to walk, and had bought a pony to ride on the march. This youth having been called on for a sentiment, said:—"You are aware, my dear friends, that for some time past I have been dangerously ill; the other day I was with my friend Mr. B——us, and having remarked to him how painful the thought of leaving this world while young, he sat down and wrote the following most beautiful lines, which, with the company's permission, I will read." The company having signified their willingness to listen he read as follows:—

THE TIME TO DIE.

Oh! I would not die in the Winter drear,
To be laid in the frozen ground,
While muffled mourners shivering near,
The bleak cold grave surround;
And hurriedly the Sexton old,
Down heave the frozen clod,
And even the words of the Priest seem cold
As he reads from the Book of God!
And quick congealed is the parting tear,
Ere it reacheth the cold hard ground,
Oh! I would not die in the Winter drear,
To be laid 'neath a frozen mound!

By ten o'clock next day, two thousand men were hastening to the different places of meeting set out by the notices. Among other bodies organized on that day, were the Cobourg Rifles, composed of the young gentlemen of this Town. The following is a list of their names:—

- Captain Warren, late 66th Regt.
Lieuts. Chatterton, McDonald, late 59th, and H. Colvert.
Gr. Major Serg't H. E. Nichols,
Serg'ts G. M. Gordon, H. H. Meredith.
Corporals Saunders, R. Armour.

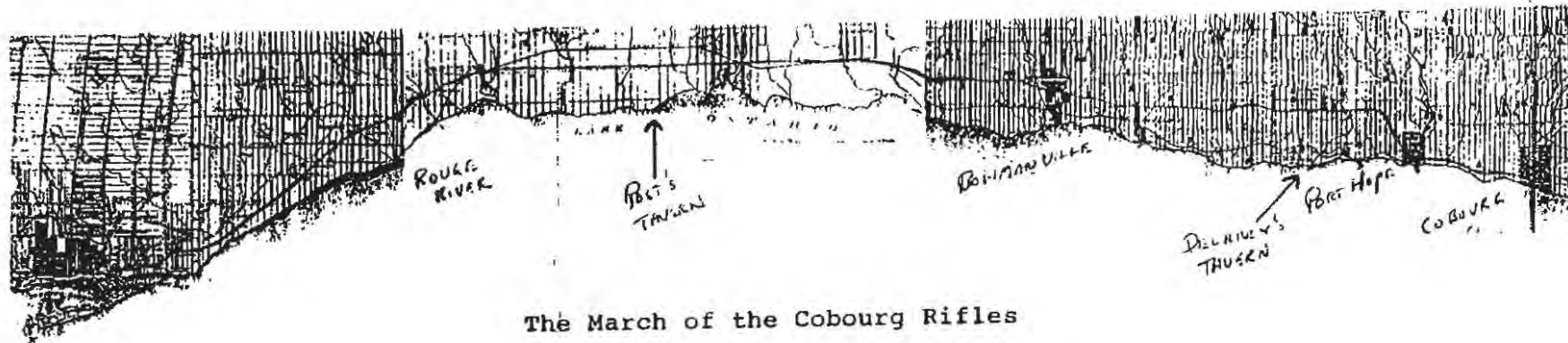
PRIVATES.

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Charles Perry, | C. S. Finlayson, |
| Rowe Back, | W. W. Hammond, |
| J. McGarvey, | R. D. Rogers, |
| F. H. Burton, | C. J. Owston, |
| H. W. Jutra, | John Laurie, |
| W. F. Harper, | Henry Blackstone, |
| Wm. Dancks, | Amos Crawford, |
| G. G. Bullock, | Geo. Pieps Marsh, |
| Wm. Gravelley, | Jonathan C. Tremblin, |
| R. H. Throp, | Henry Falkner, |
| Wm. Butler, | A. G. Allan, |
| Charles Doster, | F. P. Covert, |
| Wm. Boswell, | — Brady, |
| James Mowbray, Jr., | Henry J. Rattan. |

Of the officers, (two had served in the line. Captain Warren in the 66th, and Lieut. McDonald in the 59th, owing to their exertions the Cobourg Rifles were better organized than any other volunteer corps on the Frontier.

On the 6th, at 12 o'clock, the Rifles shouldered arms, and amid the cheers of the inhabitants, set out on their tedious march. All were in high

Figure 1: Cobourg Star October 1847



The March of the Cobourg Rifles

Arrah, Paddy Bellow I is it true, that you,
 By God her'd poor Molly Carew,
 With your soothing tongue?—you ought to be hung
 By the neck till you're dead, Bellow, if you
 Don't die the sweet Molly Carew, so true,
 Dear'd the sweet Molly Carew.

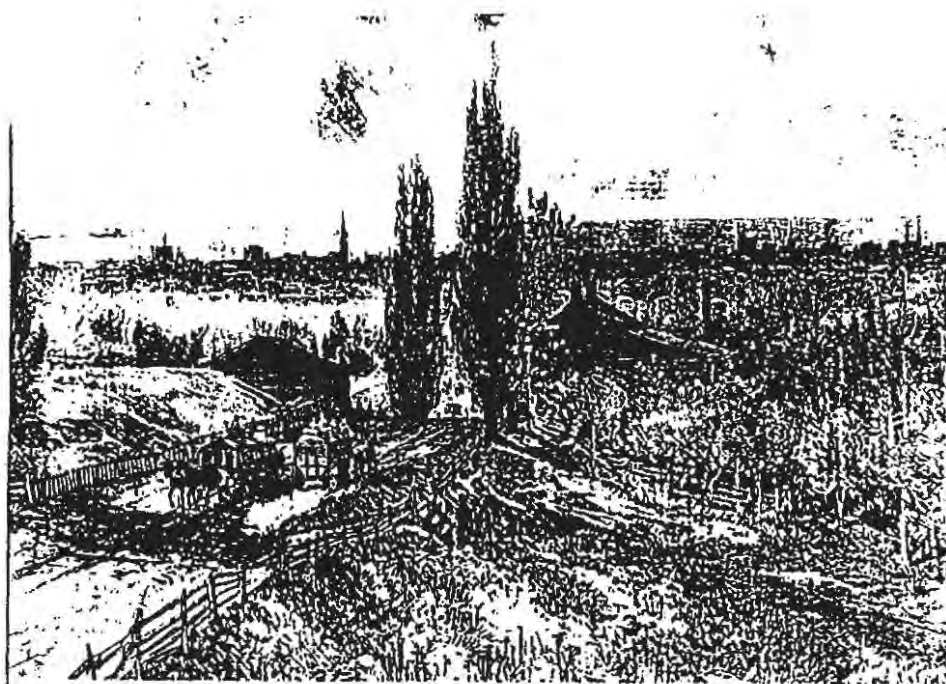
For 'tis certain that Molly Carew loves you,
 Then how could you leave her, Bellow!
 To cry and to weep, and to lose all her sleep
 By day and by night, Bellow, while you
 Ne'er think of poor Molly Carew, so true,
 Ne'er think of poor Molly Carew!

Just think of her eyes so blue, Bellow!
 All blue'd with weeping for you:—
 So pale is her cheek, oh her heart it will break!
 Just think of that, Paddy Bellow, oh, dear!
 And don't murder poor Molly Carew, so true,
 And don't murder poor Molly Carew.

For her death you will surely rue, Bellow,
 When her ghost will be bothering you!
 So sure will you find, of body or mind,
 (You'll be just like the wandering Jew, Bellow,
 From the ghost of dead Molly Carew, so true,
 From the ghost of dead Molly Carew.

Oh I'll tell you what you ought to do, Bellow,
 Just marry sweet Molly Carew:—
 For the Priest at once send, all your troubles to end,
 And give to poor Molly her due, her due,
 By making her Mrs. Bellow, so true,
 By making her Mrs. Bellow!

(To be continued.)



A distant view of Toronto, from the Kingston Road, 1885.

common, is that all of them describe something which is not what it seems to be. This makes one nervous about the veracity of the history part. Whether that "theme" - if you can call it that - is at all helpful or not, I don't know.

The first story is a simply awful surreal yarn about an Indian chief called the "Red Whale." It really is badly told, but, and here it gets interesting, the story is interrupted by one of the Rifles, who stops the story-teller, essentially shutting him up on the grounds that it's a very bad story. We have nothing but sympathy. Then the author slides, quite effortlessly, into probably the funniest part of the whole work. If the last story was bad magic realism, this one becomes straight Monty Python. It, too, is surreal, about a young Irishman coming to Canada, meeting a whale at sea, who turns out to be a priest, who tells very bad but funny puns combining religion and fish - and yes, it can be done - and it ends with a turtle in despair over losing the love of his life. The story teller takes out a filthy piece of paper, wipes away his tears and recites a poem about Paddy Bellew (see Figure 2). That poem is the one which wakes up the Rifles at Delarey's Tavern, on the first night out, whereupon they re-open the bar and start in on the punch.

To save time, rather than read more of this literary document, I will quickly describe the other major stories. One (almost all of Part III) is a long shaggy-dog type Irish tale about a man who gets called out by a ghostly messenger to visit his sick daughter, stays over because of a snow storm, whereupon his body, or what the villagers think is his body, is found and buried. His wife remarries, and the man returns, but everyone thinks he is a ghost. You get the idea. It turns out to have been a dream all along. The other really long story - this is Part V - is a very literary effort by Col. C-----, told at the banquet, about his attempt to get a shave in an unfamiliar town. He is taken in by the appearance of a barber's pole and gets shaved (substitute "shorn" or "fleeced" or something) instead. This story is transparent as a tale, but very carefully written. Also, it may include an anachronism dating it to 1847 instead of 1837.

Apart from this, the *Adventures* as a whole includes about twenty literary allusions, by which I mean snippets of poetry, quotes, literary jokes, and asides. I have managed to track down about half of them. There is also one toast at the end of Part IV, comparing medicines and medical practices to then popular foods and recipes (with a side swipe at politics) which alone would require an entire essay to make all the jokes clear. I'm working on it.

There are, too, a number of "literary" turns embedded in the narrative itself. Just outside Bowmanville, on their march, the soldiers meet two Irish girls, going to Toronto to enter service. There's nothing for it except to tell you that the author - to say nothing of the rest of the troop - falls hopelessly in love with them. He goes on and on and on about how pure they are, how badly Ireland has been treated and what he would do if anyone mistreats Ireland (for Ireland I'm sure we can read these two girls here), or ever mistreats Ireland again. Here he paraphrases Walter Scott on how he would treat the swine. It all gets to be a bit much, but just when you want to tell the author to shut up, he does, and introduces an alarm. There's always an alarm of some sort, just when you think the author's gone overboard with the sentiment. In this case, some rebels seem to appear a ways down the road, the Rifles get ready to do battle. The rebels - evil looking chaps - disappear into a nearby tavern. The Rifles go to capture them there...

Now that we are on this military theme, let's quickly review all the "military" events. Our heroes capture some rebels here, who had taken refuge in a tavern. During the Rifles' raid on the house of the rebel, Dr. Hunter, the author climbs down a ladder into the cellar backwards to present his face to the enemy, becomes impaled on a meat-hook and has to be rescued by his chums, to everyone's amusement. At the battle of Rouge River, they capture the rebel stronghold where the enemy turns out to be a barrel of apples, and they ate the prisoners. When the patriots meet Col. Boulton, they try to give him a rifle salute, but find that only eight of their prized "rifles" will actually fire. These are the only military references in the piece.

And this is the text historians have relied on to tell us about the Cobourg militia's participation in the rebellion of 1837.

It should be obvious to you by now what my own attitude to this text is. Once you let your guard down, I think after the second story, you realize that the whole text is a spoof of a military memoir. You, as the reader, notice that you didn't notice that the author's voice had changed completely from the "gruff old soldier" in Part I to the adventurous young lad out for a lark in Part II and thereafter. It's a very curious old-soldier's tale, since in fact, there's almost no "old-soldiering."

Conclusion

In 1847, at the very time this was being written, most of the issues for which the rebellion had been fought were being resolved. The great issue before parliament, now of the united provinces of Canada, was the Rebellion Losses Bill, to compensate those who had suffered by the events of 1837. Precisely between the publication, in the *Cobourg Star*, of Parts III and IV, there is a public debate about whether Mackenzie should be allowed to return to Canada. The rebellion Losses Bill passed, and was signed by a somewhat reluctant Lord Elgin, ushering in precisely the responsible government the rebels wanted. The Family Compact, against which they had revolted, had died out with the union of the two Canadas in 1841. In many respects, the rebels, who lost, won.

What this comic "old soldier's memoir" represents is reconciliation. There are no enemies in it. The rebels aren't fiends. The worst the author ever says about them is that their reading of the constitution differed from other peoples'. Not exactly vicious. Nobody the author knows was injured. They had a glorious lark, fell in love a bit as young men should, drank too much as young men will, joked their way through an awful long muddy walk, eventually return to normal with a shave, a bath and a good dinner at a nice hotel. That was the rebellion which tore the country apart. Great fun, wasn't it?

This is not a terribly important text for Canadian history, or Ontario's history, or even Cobourg's history. But, I have found no other texts in any of our histories even remotely like it. The tone, frankly, I cannot find anywhere else until I come to, of all people, or places, Stephen Leacock's "Mariposa."

What I think is important, is that the author, whoever he was, knew that his gently humorous text would be perfectly acceptable to people who had been there, who had taken part

on both sides, and who had come as far as he had in the intervening ten years; or at least, he knew they could make the leap quite quickly if called upon to do so, by his light-hearted text. I won't claim this text did anything on its own, or signaled the beginning of anything, or the end of anything. But somehow, in that one respect, of reaching out and inviting even his old enemies to join in the laugh on themselves, this text sounds, to me at least, like the beginning, here in Cobourg, of - to use a modern buzz-word - the making of a very "civil society" indeed.

**FAILED PROPHECY:
THE MEN OF THE
COBOURG & PETERBORO' RAIL ROAD COMPANY**

by
Ted Rafuse

For much of the nineteenth century, rail roads were synonymous with the concept of adventure coupled with profit and community progress. For visionaries, the adventure was in the dreaming of "what if?" For entrepreneurs, the adventure was to accrue large profits. For contractors, the adventure was in the organization of men and material necessary to complete the construction. For lumbermen, carpenters and labourers, the adventure was in the working, and then moving on to the next construction site. For managers and lessees, the adventure was in the operation of a new venture. For the mechanically minded, the adventure was in operating the new and exciting steam locomotive. At the beginning of the 1850s, a variety of adventuresome men found themselves joined in a common interest in the small Upper Canadian town of Cobourg: the Cobourg & Peterboro' Rail Road would be the means for each to realize his personal adventure.

Before the Cobourg & Peterborough Rail Road came the men with vision. A generation earlier, in the 1830s, some men of substance in Cobourg quickly grasped the significance of Robert Stephenson's steam locomotive, the 'Rocket', which successfully operated on a short length of railroad in England in 1829. They argued that a Cobourg to Rice Lake rail road could form a natural economic activity. Northbound trains would tap the natural and human resources of the hinterland. Products and people from distant points would funnel through Cobourg enroute to the growing northern communities. Southbound trains would transport the agricultural and forest products from the Great Pine Ridge to markets near and far. Cobourg's harbour as a transshipment point would bustle with the mingling of people, products, ships, and trains, all in a natural and synchronous commercial harmony.

One of the earliest visionaries, James Grey Bethune, combined and juggled various careers as Post Master, Merchant, Land Agent for the Canada Company and President of the Harbour Company. An ally, Ebenezer Perry, was the owner of extensive land holdings in Cobourg, and was such a successful dry goods merchant, that he could display his wealth by constructing his large mansion, Woodlawn, on the east side of Division Street, north of University Avenue. Benjamin Throop, merchant, grain dealer and distiller established himself as a renowned local entrepreneur. The Boswell family, father and sons, combined land holdings, dry goods retailing and political office to wield influence in the Town. George S. Boulton, successful lawyer and investor, also represented the Town as the Member for Newcastle District in the Legislature.

Bethune assumed the leadership of this diverse group of visionaries. He possessed both the skills and the knowledge to achieve a reality from a vision. Born in Charlottenburg, Upper Canada, of United Empire Loyalist parents, he attended John Strachan's school in Cornwall. He was the first of several men associated with Cobourg rail roads who came under the tutorship of John Strachan who imbued in all his students commercial entrepreneurship and political conservatism. In 1822

Bethune was appointed Postmaster in Cobourg, and shortly thereafter married a daughter of John Covert, a Cobourg landowner and manufacturer. Bethune subsequently engaged in commerce, initially as a merchant and then as a wholesaler. Through his family, he held connections to Montreal and the wider world.

A man of action, Bethune possessed considerable entrepreneurial aptitude. By 1830 he was actively engaged in a variety of enterprises. He was an extensive land holder in the area. He was agent for the Canada Company which was interested in developing the lands north of Cobourg. His primary interest, however, centred upon transportation. He was a director, and treasurer, of the Cobourg Harbour Company. He operated several schooners on Lake Ontario. He owned a stage coach company which provided communication and transportation service from Cobourg to Rice Lake. In the spring of 1832, he ordered the construction of a steamboat, the *Pemedash*, to operate from Sully up the Otonabee River to Whitla's Rapids, just south of Peterboro'.

However, the lack of a reliable transportation link between Cobourg and Rice Lake constituted a problem for Bethune. His vision witnessed a solution: a rail road connection between Lake Ontario and Rice Lake. Therefore, he allied himself with other men who were interested in the construction of a rail road as a link between Lake Ontario and Rice Lake. In 1832, these men, along with others, commissioned F.P. Rubidge, Provincial Land Surveyor, to investigate a potential route for a rail road between Lake Ontario and Rice Lake. Later that year, Rubidge produced a map illustrating the proposed rail road between Cobourg and Rice Lake.¹ The proposed rail road entered Cobourg at its eastern boundary, in the area of D'Arcy Street; its route of 13 miles to Sully (Harwood) was somewhat more direct than that which was eventually selected. With this map the vision of a Cobourg Rail Road achieved its first public reality. Late in December, 1832, following a public meeting, a committee was established with the object of petitioning the Legislature for such a rail road project. The following month, fifty-four citizens of Newcastle District, primarily men resident in Cobourg, formally petitioned the Legislature either for money to construct a "Railroad from the Town of Cobourg to Rice Lake or to take such steps...to accomplish the purpose."²

Little occurred immediately thereafter. In response to the petition, the legislature ordered Nicol Baird to undertake an exhaustive study of the costs of canalizing the Trent River System. When the report became public that fall, Richard Chatterton, editor of the newspaper, the *Cobourg Star and Newcastle Gazette*, editorially supported the petitioners by stating that he supported the rail road concept as being a far less costly enterprise than would be the construction of a number of canals on the Trent River system.³ Chatterton's support elicited a number of contrary opinions in subsequent letters to the editor.

Once again, following several public meetings, a new group of 37 petitioners hoping to be incorporated as a Stock Company for the purpose of constructing a rail road, was formed. A select

¹ CIHM #58226.

² *Journal of the Assembly of Upper Canada, 1832-33, January 1833, Appendix "Report on Mr. Clark's Petition,"* p.209.

³ *Cobourg Star*, October 30, 1833.

committee of the Legislature examined Baird's report, and, remarkably, made only one recommendation for the expenditure of any funds. It suggested dividing the Trent system into five portions for construction, and suggested that one, from the top of Healey's Falls to Rice Lake, the least expensive section, be undertaken. By creating a dam at the head of the falls, and another at Hastings, the Trent would be navigable. The land distance from Healey's Falls to the iron works in Marmora was only nine miles.

Initial scrutiny would suggest this to be an unusual recommendation put forth by the chair of that committee, George S. Boulton. However, Boulton was one of the thirty-seven men who were petitioning the government for the right to construct a railroad. With this knowledge, the committee's recommendation thus assumes a new level of understanding.

George S. Boulton was a member of a wealthy family. He was well connected in provincial political affairs. His father, a successful and influential lawyer, was, variously, solicitor-general, attorney-general and judge. Boulton's elder brother followed his father in similar portfolios, and in 1830 was elected to the Legislature representing Niagara. George Boulton, born in 1797, also attended John Strachan's school in Cornwall, and received a similar education to that of John Bethune. After being called to the bar, George S. Boulton moved to Cobourg in 1824. Shortly thereafter he was appointed Registrar for the County of Northumberland. About the same time he constructed Northumberland Hall on the eastern fringe of Cobourg. In 1829 he became a director of the Harbour Company. For ten years, commencing in 1831, he represented Durham (which at that time included Cobourg) in the Legislative Assembly. He also was active as the Manager of the Newcastle District Building Society, as a trustee of the Northumberland and Durham Savings Bank, and as a promoter of the Cobourg Rail Road.

With Boulton's adroitness prevailing in the political process, the petitioners on March 6, 1834, received the right to "construct a double or single iron or wooden rail road, at their own cost...to carry passengers, goods and property either in carriages propelled by the force of steam, or by the power of animals or by any mechanical or other power, or by a combination of power."⁴ Amongst the twenty-four clauses of the charter included one which stated the company had to commence construction within two years and to be completed within eight years of the granting of the charter. Neither of these clauses were subsequently fulfilled.

By the summer of 1834, James Bethune had over-extended his assets and managerial abilities, and had become financially insolvent. Two years later he was in debtor's prison. Eventually released, he died a pauper in Rochester in 1841.

Not until mid-1835 did Perry, Boulton, and others of the Company meet at the Steamboat Hotel on Division Street to determine a course of action. At that July meeting the stock book was opened and 465 shares, at £10 each, were immediately sold. The press lauded the shareholders for

⁴ *Statutes of the Province of Canada*, 4 William IV, Cap 28.

their decisive action.⁵ The Company now duly formed, the Directors hired Neil Baird, C.E. and Frederick Rubidge, P.L.S., to determine "the most eligible and least expensive route for a railway from Cobourg to Rice Lake."⁶

On August 26, 1835, these two men commenced their survey, taking their first sightings from the east pier of the harbour. They eventually surveyed three routes to Rice Lake, each route terminating at a different location, Bewdley, Claverton (Gore's Landing) and Sully (Harwood). Baird estimated, with incredible accuracy, that the cost of constructing such a rail road would be "twenty-six thousand eight hundred and thirty-two pounds, five shillings and three pence, for the grading of a double track and the completion of a single line of railway."⁷ Having completed this facet of preparation, the Company once again lapsed into inactivity due to the inability to raise sufficient capital from local sources to commence construction. G.M. Boswell, Company president, was authorized to visit the United States to invite American capitalists to share in this important work and to share in its profits.⁸ None did so.

Through the auspices of G.S. Boulton, a three year extension of the date at which to commence construction was granted. Apparently this had a salutary effect on the selling of the Company's securities, as about £8,000 had been subscribed by the end of June, 1836. Much of the money however was raised in Montreal, not in Cobourg. By late fall, the Directors, obviously apprehensive regarding their ability to raise the necessary capital, applied to the Legislature for a loan of £10,000. In March of 1837, this loan was granted.⁹ Within two weeks, a meeting held in Cobourg resulted in another £7,000 being subscribed.

Other events soon overtook the fledgling rail road company. By the summer of 1837, the Canadas were well on the road to political unrest and rebellion. Economic activity, especially of a speculative nature abruptly halted. Ebenezer Perry, ever hopeful, petitioned the Legislature in 1839 for a further extension to the commencement of construction date. When that two year grant was up, the charter of the Cobourg Rail Road Company terminated. The saga of the visionaries ended with their vision unfulfilled.

During the 1840s, the dream of a rail road remained just that. Not until political stability at the beginning of the 1850s allowed for the return of economic speculation did serious consideration of a rail road return to the men of Cobourg. A series of Parliamentary Acts in the early part of this decade fostered the development of rail road companies.

Late in the fall of 1850, Andrew Jeffrey, was elected Chairman of a committee to investigate the propriety of constructing a rail road to Peterboro', which was, at that time, to connect with a

⁵ *Cobourg Star*, July 15, 1835.

⁶ *First Report, Cobourg Rail Road Company*, October 19, 1835.

⁷ *Cobourg Star*, October 21, 1835.

⁸ *Cobourg Star*, October 23, 1835.

⁹ *Statutes of the Province of Upper Canada*, 7 William IV, c.74, March 4, 1837.

proposed line from Prescott, through Peterboro' to Lake Huron.¹⁰ Another public meeting shortly thereafter appointed Ebenezer Perry and D'Arcy Boulton to investigate the town's participation in a proposed Prescott to Hamilton Rail Road.¹¹

While Perry provided a link to the past and the men who held the vision of a rail road from Cobourg, Boulton represented the new generation of men who would bring the vision to fruition. D'Arcy Boulton was well connected politically, economically and socially. His father was a leading lawyer in Toronto, who built the residence known as 'The Grange' which is preserved today in down town Toronto. His mother was a niece of John Beverley Robinson, a scion of conservatism, who held, at different times, the offices of Attorney General and Chief Justice for Upper Canada.

Sent to England for his education, Boulton returned to Upper Canada where he was called to the bar as a lawyer in 1837. He moved to Cobourg to establish a legal practice with his uncle, G.S. Boulton. The following year he married, and in 1840 constructed 'The Lawn', at King and D'Arcy Streets, as a residence for his wife, and his eventual seven children. In 1847 he formed a legal partnership with James Cockburn. During this decade he became President of the Cobourg and Rice Lake Plank Road and Ferry Company, as well as two other similar enterprises that radiated from Cobourg. Politically he was active in the decade of the 1850's being a Town Councillor in the years 1851-1853, and 1858, as well as serving as Mayor from 1854-1857. As a Councillor, and as Mayor, Boulton was active in promoting the cause of the Cobourg & Peterboro' Railroad; both these positions allowed him to wield significant political influence relative to decisions affecting the fortunes of the rail road.

In the fall of 1851, a notice appeared in the *Cobourg Star* that application would be made to the Legislature for the formation of a Railway connecting Cobourg with Peterboro' crossing Rice Lake. The notice appeared under the signature of D'Arcy Boulton.¹² For the ensuing months, D'Arcy Boulton, in a number of letters to the editor, extolled the prudence and necessity of constructing a rail road from Cobourg to Peterboro'. With some of the fervour of a visionary, but also with the conviction of an astute politician, he concluded one of his letters with the following words: "This is not the place of explaining by detail the manner of accomplishing our road; but at the proper times and proper places I propose to submit my views at length, and have no doubt myself that in less than three years, we shall ride on the rail car to the music of the whistle, from hence through Baltimore and Keene to Peterborough."¹³ This statement was made in late December, 1851, and, remarkably, in late December, 1854, Boulton rode the first train from Cobourg into Peterboro', albeit not through Baltimore.

The year 1852 proved to be a busy twelve months for the politicians proposing the rail road. Locally, many public meetings debated the propriety of the citizens of Cobourg providing public money to support this venture. Council supported this object, and, during the summer of 1852, the

¹⁰ *Cobourg Star*, November 27, 1850.

¹¹ *Report to the Railroad Committee*, January 24, 1851.

¹² *Cobourg Star* November 19, 1851.

¹³ *Cobourg Star*, December 24, 1851.

citizens voted a by-law to allow council to support such a railroad through subscribing for stock to the extent of £25,000.¹⁴ Immediately the editor of the *Port Hope Guide* cried foul and protested to the Governor-General at Quebec. (The protest ultimately proved unnecessary, as Port Hope residents formed their own rail road company with the objective of running to Lindsay.)

In order to secure the legislation enabling a company to be formed to construct and operate a rail road, local businessmen and politicians journeyed to Quebec City in an attempt to ensure a successful conclusion to their charter aspirations. The *Journal of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Canada*, 16 Victoria, 1852-53, provides but the barest of information concerning the process by which the proposed bill became law. Early in September, Andrew Jeffrey, and other private citizens, formally petitioned the legislature for an act to incorporate a company for the construction of a railway from the Town of Cobourg to the Town of Peterboro. There was no public concern expressed in the Cobourg press to the known facts that Jeffrey was also the Mayor, and that D'Arcy Boulton, also a petitioner, was a Town Councillor. Several objections to the proposed bill were however brought to the legislature. One came from J.S. Smith, the Mayor of Port Hope, a second from the Peterborough and Port Hope Rail Road Company, a third from Frederick Fergusson, and a fourth from George B. Hall; both of the latter were residents of Peterboro'. None of these objections succeeded, but they did delay the process.

While the Cobourg men were in Quebec City, they undoubtedly learned of one Samuel Zimmerman. Zimmerman, without doubt, was one of Canada's foremost railway promoters and contractors of the day. Born in Pennsylvania, he had emigrated to Canada while in his twenties. He secured a contract to build a portion of the Welland Canal: following that, he became a contractor for the Great Western Railway to build their section from Niagara to Hamilton. Highly successful through somewhat unorthodox business practices, Zimmerman quickly became the wealthiest individual in the Niagara area.

Zimmerman quickly recognized that Canadian railways were involved in politics, and equally quickly he recognized the importance of the Board of Railway Commissioners, the Parliamentary committee which examined and recommended charters to the Legislature. Its chairman was Zimmerman's close friend, Francis Hincks.

Zimmerman established himself in Quebec City in the fall of 1852. Through him, "The choicest brands of champagne and cigars were free to all the people's representatives from the town councillor to the cabinet minister," wrote Canadian engineer Thomas Keefer. "More M.P.P.s were to be found in his apartments than in the library or any other resort."¹⁵ Zimmerman vowed that if local railway promoters would promise him their contract, he could ensure that a charter would be approved by the Board of Railway Commissioners. He encouraged municipalities to borrow to finance their railway schemes, and if they did so, he guaranteed that there would be no difficulty in their securing government approval for such loans. With Zimmerman's immense influence in the Legislature's railway policies, the men who lobbied for a charter to construct the Cobourg and

¹⁴ By-law #38, *Corporation of the Town of Cobourg*, July, 1852.

¹⁵ Thomson, J., "Zimmerman's Fast Moves", p.2014.

Peterborough Rail Road could not long have avoided his charm, and sway, during the many days and nights spent in Quebec City! How much time, if any, Zimmerman spent with Cobourg men, is unknown. What is known is that on November 10, 1852, Royal Assent was given to the bill creating the Cobourg & Peterborough Rail Road Company.

Having gained the Charter for a rail road the Directors of the Company determined to hire a contractor to construct the line. For the first cost estimate, the Directors engaged Samuel Keefer, who concluded the rail road could be built for £125,000, but indicated he was unavailable to accept the position as Chief Engineer. Instead, Ira Spaulding accepted that position. He reviewed Keefer's estimates and found them wanting, especially in regards to the construction involved in bridging Rice Lake.

With a new and higher estimated cost of construction, the Directors, in early January 1853, tendered the contract to several unidentified parties. Following *in camera* negotiations, the Directors accepted an offer from Zimmerman & Balch on January 15, 1853. As a gesture of good faith, Zimmerman subscribed to £1,000 in stock in the Cobourg & Peterboro' Rail Road. He could well afford to do so. He was awarded the contract for the sum of £151,000, payable in cash or debentures which were guaranteed by the Municipal Loan Fund, and the remainder payable in bonds of the Rail Road Company. In return, he was to complete the road in running order through the entire distance, build the necessary depots, watering-places and sheds, and furnish a full complement of cars and locomotives.¹⁶ All of this was to be completed in 18 months.¹⁷

A clause which would prove to be invaluable to the fortunes of the contractor allowed for route deviations "when deemed necessary;" in this case a sum per mile was specified, as was the maximum quantity of earth to be removed: however should the distance be longer or the quantities greater, then an increased sum in proportion was to be paid. Unknown at the time, Ira Spaulding was Zimmerman's confidante. While no records exist which could be analyzed by forensic accountants today, the cost of the Rail Road escalated to over £200,000 (\$1,000,000) by the time the contract was terminated. Spaulding, prior to his leaving the employ of the Company, must have determined additional costs to the favour of Zimmerman & Co. The Directors, men of integrity, were no match for the business practices of Zimmerman in a field where they possessed no expertise.

Three weeks following the signing of the contract, Mrs. Machechnie, representing her husband, the Mayor, who was out of the country, turned the first earth in the construction of the Rail Road. Much of the town witnessed the event at the open field at the intersection of University and Railway (now Spring) Streets on February 7, 1853. Thereafter construction commenced in earnest. Following the woodsmen who brushed the line, teams of men and horses, using slush scrapers, graded the line. Hundreds of labourers assisted in all manner of tasks associated with the construction of the rail road. Scores of carpenters were hired to work on the piling and bridging at Rice Lake. Catherine Parr Trail, a noted settler in the area, wrote of the summer's pile driving associated with the bridge building activity:

¹⁶ *Report of the Directors of the Cobourg & Peterborough Railway Company*, 1853, p11.

¹⁷ *The Weekly North American*, January 20, 1853.

The eye follows that line of posts, four abreast, which stretches in leviathan length far, far across the rippling waters of the lake. There, at the utmost limits, is the mighty machine that looks in the distance like a tall gibbet, against which a huge ladder is leaning, but that dark figure mid-way on the scaffold is no miserable felon, but a good, honest, hard-working Yankee, who directs the movements of the ton weight of iron that now slowly ascends between the sliding grooves in the tall frame: and now, at the magic word 'All Right!' descends with lightening swiftness upon the head of the pile that has just been conducted to its side. It is curious to see the log of timber, some twenty-five or thirty feet in length emerge from the depth of the lake: you do not see the rope that is fastened to it, which that man in the skiff tows it along by--it seems to come up like a huge monster of the deep, and rearing itself by degrees, climbs up the side of the frame like a living thing; then for a second swing to and fro, till steadied by the least apparent exertion on the part of the guide on the scaffold. Now it is quite upright--plumb I suppose the carpenter would say--then at the signal, clack, clack, clack, goes the little engine on the scow: slowly aloft mounts the great weight, down, down, down it comes--the first blow fixing the timber in its place--and sends a shower of bark flying from the pile; when the weight comes down on the head of the pile the jerk disengages a sort of claw that is attached to it; this ascends and again comes down, seizing the ring of the weight in its own grasp and bearing it again triumphantly upwards--again to descend upon the pile with unerring aim--lower it sinks, and every fresh blow comes with accelerated force, till it is brought to the level of the others. From a quarter of an hour to twenty minutes is the time employed in sinking each of these posts--that is if the lake is calm; but when the swell is on the water the work is carried on much slower and the pile-driving is delayed after some days.¹⁸

For the rest of the year, construction continued. Not until the winter did the efforts of the adventuresome abate.

The new year commenced with the portent of two problems which afflicted the Cobourg & Peterboro' Rail Road throughout its existence. The first problem appeared in the ravages that ice movement could effect upon a man-made structure. Zimmerman and Fowler, the contractors, had, during the previous period of construction, filled in the piles on the southern portion of the bridge. This had not been done on the north shore and as a result, the winter's ice raised the whole of the pile bridge north of the truss bridges some six or eight inches.

¹⁸ Trail, C., A Walk to Railway Point, 1853, in Guillet, *The Valley of the Trent*, pp.379-380.

The second problem, although instigated by human forces, was no less devastating than the natural forces of the ice. In March 1854, half a globe away the Crimean War commenced. The financial impact of this war on the Cobourg & Peterboro' Rail Road was immediate. British financiers were no longer interested in North American railway securities, so the bonds and debentures of the C&PRR could only be sold at heavy discounts. Simultaneously the prices paid for construction goods and labour increased dramatically. For the rest of its existence, the C&PRR continually suffered financial embarrassment.

With the advent of a new construction season, and an infusion of money courtesy of the Town Council's purchase of additional shares, the contractor proceeded apace with his efforts. The harbour land witnessed significant changes in consequence of the rail road. An engine house was constructed at the foot of Second Street, with a turntable and water tank to the west of the engine house. Nearby was a machine shop and an office building. A station was completed some 200 feet west of Division Street, somewhat in line with the engine house. A storage shed on the wharf completed the structures associated with the C&PRR. One track extended out onto the west pier (today's centre pier), a second flanked the northern esplanade of the harbour, and a third formed a gentle arc passing the engine house and the station terminating short of Division Street. All three joined into one track which left the western side of the harbour and occupied the centre of Railway Street (Spring Street) eventually leaving the northern limits of the town.

By mid-May, sufficient ties had been placed, 56 pound iron U rails laid, and ballast distributed, to allow the first excursion train to be run to the intermediate station at Harwood. Appropriate passenger cars, number unknown, but likely two, were constructed at Niagara Falls and were reported to be "medium cars, holding about 60 passengers, and fitted up in a very pleasing style, light and elegant, everything about them outside and inside bearing a drawing room polish--the handsomest cars in Canada."¹⁹ Guests from Peterborough were brought to Harwood by the steamer *Otonabee*, thence to Cobourg by train, to a celebration repast at the North American Hotel. Thus was the Queen's birthday celebrated on May 22, 1854 in Newcastle District.

Despite problems with the contractor, and with the quality of the work, and while still legally in the hands of the Contractor, the Directors decided to continue to operate the line on an 'as needed' basis for the rest of the season. The *Cobourg Star* reported that the line was an undoubted success, for in August alone, 1,937,000 feet of lumber had been brought to Cobourg's harbour, and \$600 in passenger revenue had accrued to the Company's coffer.²⁰

By the end of December, the bridge was completed, and the ties and rail laid on the roadbed through to Ashburnham, opposite Peterborough. Director D'Arcy Boulton must have felt proud that his prediction of three years earlier had indeed become fact. An invitation was extended by the Company to the citizens of Cobourg to a free train ride to Peterborough on December 29, 1854 in celebration of the opening of the rail road. Contractor Zimmerman had agreed to place the road in the hands of the Company for one week to allow the celebration to take place.

¹⁹ *The Mail* (Niagara), May 17, 1854.

²⁰ *Cobourg Star*, September 13, 1854.

Not for the faint of heart was this invitation to those determined to participate in what was surely an historical adventure. For this occasion, the company assembled twelve cars and two locomotives. None of these were enclosed passenger cars; but rather, platform (flat) cars, fitted with benches hastily nailed to the floor, provided the barest of comfort to those brave and hearty souls who were prepared to ride the twenty-eight and one-half miles to Peterboro'. No women reportedly joined these travellers as this celebration witnessed only men hearty (or foolhardy) enough to withstand the onerous task of a full day of celebration.

With whistles piercing the silent air, with steam chests hissing from escaping steam, with smoke belching skyward in cumulus clouds from balloon shaped stacks, the steam locomotives signalled the advent of this journey into history. Perhaps the locomotive's driving wheels initially slipped on the iron rail as Engineer John Coulter notched the throttle open. Reluctantly, slowly, amidst the groans, creaks and squeaks of stressed wood, the platform cars crept into motion. Passengers, alarmed by an unknown motion that first lurched them backward, then as suddenly forward, frantically jostled for a more secure and stable position, either on one of the benches, or on the floor of the car. No shelter, other than that provided by other bodies, shielded the passengers from the cold, piercing wind of forward motion on that December day. Comforted only by woollen clothing, some pine boughs, and, perhaps, the occasional substantial swig of whiskey, the citizen adventurers departed the station, no doubt to the ambivalent cheers of those who declined to participate in this new mode of conveyance.

At the Ashburnham station, the President of the C&PRR Thomas Scott and Mayor D'Arcy Boulton of Cobourg, were greeted by Mayor Stephenson. Mr. Scott said in part: "We will not rest until we have driven the iron horse to the town of Peterboro' on the west side of the river, and stabled him there; and even then Sir, he will not, he cannot, he must not be easy until he has reached the shores of Mud (Chemong) Lake, then Sir, you will find him quietly returning day after day, heavily laden with the products of that vast country intersected by a hundred lakes and drained by a thousand streams, moving their vast riches into the lap of Peterboro'; and then, but not till then, will she become what nature destined that she should be--one of the greatest cities of Canada West."²¹

Later that day, in a celebration dinner at the Town Hall in Peterboro', William Weller, Cobourg's stage coach magnate, C&PRR Director, and Town Councillor, regaled the celebrants in the most humorous speech of the evening. "You know I get my living by running stages, and now you are taking the bit out of my mouth, as well as my horses' mouths. All here tonight can recall having to carry a rail, instead of riding one, to help my coaches out of the mud. But, after all, I am rejoiced to see old things done away, and new things becoming Weller."²² Final cost of the railroad was \$1,100,112, almost all contributed by the citizens of Cobourg.

Three days later, the Cobourg & Peterboro' Rail Road ceased operating. On January 1, 1855, ice wreaked havoc upon Rice Lake Bridge. The seventeen Burr Truss bridges south of the draw bridge were pushed southwards with such force that the span abutting Tic Island was moved four

²¹ *Peterborough Review*, January 5, 1855.

²² *Cobourg Star*, January 10, 1855.

feet. Twelve inch by eighteen foot stringers were turned into splinters and the iron rails were bent double. The portion south of Tic Island, which had been embanked, suffered no damage. Zimmerman, the contractor, had used the onset of winter to hide from view the fact that he had not, according to contract, filled in the remainder of the pile trestle, nor had he filled in many of the cribs with stone to anchor the bridge sections.

During the first half of January 1855, negotiations between the Directors and Zimmerman & Co. took place, the Directors seeking to gain control of their rail road, the Contractor ostensibly maintaining that the road was not yet complete according to contract. Agreement between the two parties was finalized on terms that were not onerous to Zimmerman & Co. He agreed to sell his gravel cars at £100 apiece, his engine for £1,350, and to accept further Company bonds at 20% discount on the amount that the Company was in arrears, a sum later determined by a tribunal of arbitrators to be £46,000. The Directors received the rail road, the Contractor was relieved of any further obligations and responsibility. Shortly afterwards Ira Spaulding was fired, and Thomas Scott, the Company President, resigned in protest. Dissention marked the advent of the operation of the Cobourg & Peterboro' Rail Road.

For the next twenty-four months, the C&PRR operated with reasonable success under the Managing Directorship of D'Arcy Boulton. The trains for the most part plied between the two terminals with but the occasional mishap. Lumber exports from the harbour increased more than ten fold, and passenger traffic increased dramatically. Despite these positive aspects, the Company continued to be beset by its two most constant problems: ice damage to Rice Lake Bridge and monetary constraints due to the financial obligations inherited from the construction phase. Late in December of 1856, the *Cobourg Star* reported a startling development: "We understand that a very liberal proposition for leasing this road has been made, and will be laid before the Stockholders on the 21st January next."²³

At that meeting the Directors actually had two offers to lease the Rail Road. The first offer came from John Fowler, sub-contractor on both the Grand Trunk Railway and the Cobourg & Peterborough Rail Road. His offer was for 21 years, at £9,000 per year, payable six months in advance, with the Company being responsible for the maintenance of Rice Lake Bridge.²⁴ D'Arcy Boulton, Mayor, Shareholder, Director and Managing Director submitted a counter proposal: a twenty year lease, at £10,000 annually, payable half in cash and half in first Mortgage Bonds.²⁵ Not surprisingly, the Board accepted Boulton's proposal. Unwittingly with that decision they also set in motion an alliance of men who would effect devastating repercussions on the Cobourg & Peterboro' Rail Road.

For the rest of the year, Boulton's direction of the Rail Road proved positive, albeit less profitable for him than he had hoped. In an attempt to revive interest in the Marmora Iron Mines as a potential customer for the C&PRR, he organized an excursion of influential citizens to the mine

²³ *Cobourg Star*, December 17, 1856.

²⁴ *Cobourg Star*, February 15, 1865.

²⁵ *Cobourg Star*, February 4, 1857.

site. However the economic recession of that year effectively prevented any further development of this potential. To add to Boulton's concern, a rival rail road, the Millbrook Branch was being constructed from Millbrook into Peterborough. This branch connected with Cobourg's rival, the Port Hope, Lindsay and Beaverton R.R. The builder, John Fowler, spurned by the C&PRR Directors, would soon provide formidable competition to his rejected offer to lease.

As the year 1858 advanced, Boulton's promises of the previous year, and attempts on his part to revitalize service, failed to relieve the Company's tenuous finances. The opening of the Millbrook Branch in June exacerbated this problem. Even a £10,000 loan received earlier from the Marriage Licence Fund, the result of Boulton's political connections, proved insufficient in assuring the success of the road. In early July, Samuel Keefer, Government Inspector, ordered the C&PRR to be closed down for failure to comply with repairs ordered to have been undertaken several months prior.

Without notice, Henry Covert, President of the Cobourg & Peterboro' Rail Road assumed the lease on behalf of the Company in mid July, 1858.²⁶ The Directors and Bondholders once again tendered the operation of the road. Henry Covert, a significant Shareholder, Mortgager of the Company's station grounds in Cobourg, and of most of its rolling stock, President of the Company, must surely have submitted an offer. No record however is recorded that he did so. The fact that Covert subsequently allied himself with Fowler, suggested that such an offer most likely was proffered, and rejected.

To Covert's surprise, dismay and anger, his fellow Directors and Bondholders awarded the lease to one of their employees, civil engineer John Henry Dumble. The Bondholders must have been impressed with Dumble's previous efforts in attempting to reinforce Rice Lake Bridge from the ravages of winter ice. He subsequently produced a report on how to buttress the bridge from damage, a report which was favourably received by Samuel Keefer, Inspector General, but which had not been acted upon by Boulton, or the Directors.

John Henry Dumble had arrived in Canada at age fifteen with his father who was engaged to map the New Brunswick-Maine boundary. Following that, he was hired to survey the route of the Intercolonial Railway between Halifax and Quebec City. John Dumble enrolled at Victoria College in 1846 and on graduation gained employment as a section engineer on the Grand Trunk Railway, responsible for the Shannonville-Cobourg section. While working in this capacity, he undoubtedly made contact with Zimmerman, Fowler and D'Arcy Boulton.

In accepting a gentleman's agreement to lease (there was no formal legal lease), Dumble undertook a preliminary survey of the C&PRR: he found the rolling stock worn, the road in disrepair and the bridge next to useless. Nonetheless he raised some £5,000 on his own from the Bank of Toronto. Most of this was expended in filling in a considerable portion of the pile trestle on the north side of Rice Lake.

1859 commenced with much promise for Dumble. Although a separate entity, the Peterborough and Chemong Lake Rail Road had commenced construction, and, when completed,

²⁶ *Cobourg Star*, July 21, 1858.

would provide needed traffic for the C&PRR. Rice Lake Bridge was kept free from further damage during the winter. By early spring, he had secured contracts with a number of Peterboro lumber merchants to haul their products to Cobourg's harbour. By the end of May, upwards of 2,000,000 feet of lumber had been exported via the C&PRR, and the P&CLRR track was laid to the mills north of Ashburnham. In June, an additional train was added to the timetable due to the increase in business volume, this despite attempts by the Millbrook Branch RR to undercut tariffs.

Prospects continued to be bright through the early summer. The P&CLRR opened, and lumber passed over the road at the rate of 250,000 feet daily. With Dumble's success, the animosity of others began to coalesce against him. John Fowler had opened the Millbrook Branch to compete with the C&PRR, but was experiencing some hardship in the competition from Dumble's renewed C&PRR. Boulton, while still Mayor of Cobourg, quietly became a shareholder in the PHL&BRR, and a silent partner of Fowler. Sometime in mid 1858 Henry Covert, President and Director of the C&PRR, joined Fowler as a partner in leasing the Port Hope & Peterboro' RR as the Millbrook Branch was called. As well, Covert quietly purchased a majority of the shares of the P&CLRR with plans to divert its traffic to the PH&PRR.

Throughout the summer, Covert, as a mortgage holder on a variety of C&PRR chattels continually attempted to interrupt Dumble's efficient operation of the line. These attempts took the form of legal manoeuvres and outright seizure of some of the rolling stock. In spite of the wrangling, by the fall, Dumble had moved 26,000,000 feet of lumber, and carried much freight and many passengers as well. J.H. Cameron, on behalf of the Bondholders approached Dumble to accept a formal lease. Dumble did so, but still considered himself to be a servant of the Bondholders. One of the conditions of the lease was that any profit was to be used to fill in the bridge. In December, Cameron approached Dumble to give up the lease. Dumble agreed, believing that this action was necessary in order that the Directors and Bondholders would then be able to sell the Cobourg & Peterborough Rail Road to the Grand Trunk Railway as a feeder line. The very next day, Dumble, to his everlasting vexation, learned that he had been duped. Instead of the Grand Trunk Railway assuming the lease of the C&PRR, the new lessees were none other than the lessees of the Millbrook Branch, Messrs. Covert and Fowler.

For reasons unknown today, the Bondholders leased the line to Covert, Fowler and their minions. J.H. Cameron, acting on behalf of the Bondholders, apparently awarded a lease with few if any conditions: there was no mention of bridge maintenance, nor of roadbed upkeep, nor of the filling in of the pile bridge. In fact the first act of the new lessees was to discharge the 150 men that Dumble had hired to work on filling in the pile trestle. Covert and Fowler attempted to defend their action by accusing Dumble of failing to satisfy financial obligations to them, of having destroyed all the rolling stock and two of the locomotives, and of nepotism in hiring relatives of his who were unfamiliar with railroading requirements.

Of Covert and Fowler, not a great deal of factual information is known to this author. John Fowler came to Canada from Yorkshire, date of arrival unknown. What trade or occupation he came with, is likewise unknown. He lived east of Cobourg, perhaps along the Kingston Road. It is known that he received a sub-contract as a contractor on the Grand Trunk Railway sections east of Cobourg

and west of Port Hope. As well, he was a sub-contractor on parts of the Cobourg & Peterboro' Rail Road. He constructed the Millbrook Branch and later became part owner of the PHL&BRR. Jumping ahead of our time, during the 1860s and 1870s he actively promoted other railway lines, including a Belleville to Georgian Bay line through Peterborough, a Bowmanville line, a Haliburton line, and several lines in western Ontario.

Henry Covert also lived east of Cobourg. He was a successful merchant in town, and early became involved in promoting and subscribing the C&PRR. It was four acres of his harbour lands on which the C&PRR, through a mortgage, constructed its terminal. In the first two years of operation of the C&PRR, it was Covert who extended much needed operating capital by way of mortgages on its rolling stock and locomotives. Other than through the investment of time and money, there is no indication that Covert held any practical rail road experience prior to his association with the C&PRR.

Covert and Fowler have left no indication of their plans for the C&PRR. Their primary interest appears to have been to use the C&PRR as a threatening ploy in their attempts to ensure control of the PHL&BRR, a line with much more commercial potential, ease of operation and far less maintenance. Nonetheless, two trains daily, according to a published schedule, operated during the summer of 1860.²⁷ However the operating conditions must have been somewhat apprehensive as the Duke of Wales, on his September visit, was not allowed to take the train across Rice Lake Bridge. Confusion exists as to the status of Rice Lake Bridge, and as to the date of the disappearance of parts of it eastward along the shores of Rice Lake. A timetable was published in 1861 with Covert and Fowler as lessees.²⁸ Late in 1861 or early 1862 the bridge was ordered closed to traffic.²⁹ As a result of press inquiries in 1864, it is apparent that portions of the bridge floated away late in the fall of 1863.³⁰

Meanwhile Covert and Fowler began to strip the C&PRR of its assets. Covert as President of the C&PRR often negotiated with Covert, the lessee of the C&PRR and with Covert, the lessee/owner of the PHL&BRR. Covert in this manner ultimately removed the iron rails from the bridge so as to prevent their loss in case the bridge should collapse, or so he later argued. Covert apparently confirmed at a public meeting that he subsequently ordered that the bolts and stays be taken out of the bridge for the purpose of saving them, claiming that the bridge would have collapsed whether they were removed or not.³¹ Whether Covert was acting as President of the C&PRR, or as lessee of the PHL&BRR, remains open to conjecture.

The period 1862-1864 witnessed intermittent legal action, counter suits and rail road inactivity. By this time the Court of Chancery had declared that Cobourg could regain its rail road

²⁷ *Peterborough Examiner*, June 14, 1860.

²⁸ *Cobourg Sentinel*, August 3, 1861.

²⁹ Garrick, B., *Reflections on a Railroad*, p.8.

³⁰ *Cobourg World*, October 7, 1864.

³¹ *Cobourg World*, October 7, 1864.

for \$100,000 payable in half instalments, two years apart. In the fall of 1864 a series of town hall meetings roused the citizenry to attempt to regain control of their rail road. The meetings were a civic catharsis. Covert and Fowler, along with Boulton, received public vilification and denunciation, and were ridiculed for the attempted defence of their action. H.J. Ruttan, John Dumble, Dr. John Beatty and George S. Daintry led the forces interested in regaining control of the C&PRR on behalf of the municipality in order to resuscitate it.

In an attempt to solidify his hold on the C&PRR, Covert, late in the fall of 1864, purchased several dozen private outstanding shares in the Company. By this means he hoped to secure the election of Directors to the Company's Board. However the Town, as the major shareholder, and to prevent Covert from controlling the election, agreed to sell sufficient shares to several private citizens, including Dumble and Beatty. Covert challenged the right of the Town to sell these shares, but lost the challenge in a court decision.

When the annual meeting of the C&PRR was held in February of 1865, none of the principal officers appeared. President Henry Covert was absent. Vice-President Mason, friend of Covert, was absent. D'Arcy Boulton, Company legal advisor, was absent. John Fowler, significant Shareholder, was absent. Dr. Beatty was elected President and Mayor G.S. Daintry Vice-President. The new Directors quickly leased the line to G.S. Daintry.

George Smith Daintry had been elected Mayor of Cobourg in 1864, and was re-elected to serve in 1865. Both were critical years for the resuscitation of the C&PRR. Daintry had immigrated to Cobourg about 1845, from Cheshire, England, as he held no chance of inheriting his family's estate there. He quickly prospered by operating ferry boats between Cobourg and Rochester, N.Y. His residence on Spencer Street East, 'The Poplars,' was home for his nine children. With the collapse of Rice Lake Bridge, he hired, in the summer of 1864 and 1865, boats to operate on Rice Lake in an attempt to maintain some exports through Cobourg's harbour.

With the assistance of James Cockburn, M.P., Daintry was able to acquire locomotives and rolling stock from the Grand Trunk Railway, on lease.³² The Rice Lake steamer *Otonabee* was engaged to provide service through to Peterborough from Harwood for freight and passengers.³³ An inspection of the road bed revealed the ties and iron to be in first rate condition.³⁴ Following a few minor repairs, the line re-opened on May 29, 1865.

In response to the re-opening, the PHL&BRR immediately reduced its tariff, especially on the shipment of lumber. The C&PRR did likewise. Covert and Fowler attempted to divert the traffic generated by the P&CLRR to the PHL&BRR, as well as attempting to interfere in other ways with the operation of the C&PRR. For its part, the Town of Cobourg, paid the first instalment of \$50,000 into the Court of Chancery as partial payment for the moribund company. Meanwhile, in the

³² *Cobourg World*, March 24, 1865.

³³ *Cobourg World*, May 19, 1865

³⁴ *Cobourg World*, May 12, 1865.

legislative arena, Cobourg interests successfully lobbied for an amended charter which would allow the company to amalgamate with the Marmora Iron Works. Although many worked to achieve the new legislation, the principal architects were Cockburn, Daintry and Dumble. For the next eighteen months, their efforts concentrated on achieving a legal and binding union, and raising sufficient interest in the operation in order to sell it to commercial investors as a potentially profitable venture. By the end of September 13,000,000 feet of lumber had been brought to the harbour.³⁵

Unable to raise interest locally, Dumble set out, with a Prospectus, for New York and Pittsburgh to visit capitalists there who might be interested in investing in a combined railroad and mining company. The Prospectus outlined three possible avenues by which the rail and mine sites could be united in a profitable venture. In Pittsburgh, Dumble met with a syndicate who were interested in this venture. These negotiations extended for a longer period of time than the Directors had anticipated.

At a special meeting in February 1866, the Shareholders of the Cobourg & Peterborough Rail Road Company agreed to a formal amalgamation of their company with the Marmora Iron Company. Negotiations continued with the American investors. With the formation of an amalgamated Company, the history of the Cobourg & Peterboro' Rail Road Company ended. When the negotiations with the Americans concluded successfully a year later, the C&PRR, phoenix-like, appeared as the Cobourg, Peterborough & Marmora Railway & Mining Company.

The Cobourg & Peterborough Rail Road was born financially destitute. Amalgamation masked its final destitution. The men of the Cobourg & Peterborough Rail Road were bound by their time in history. Should they be castigated for failing in their attempt? Should they be lauded for their attempt to better their community? They did not enjoy the success that other men, in similar ventures, enjoyed. These men who envisioned a railroad, who envisioned a community asset, did not realize their dream: their prophecy for the Cobourg Railroad failed.

³⁵ *Cobourg Sentinel*, December 9, 1865.

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