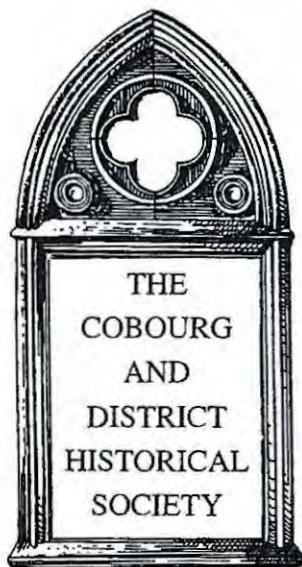


HISTORICAL REVIEW 16



1998



1999

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**THE COBOURG AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY
PROGRAMME OF SPEAKERS
1998 - 1999**

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Cover Photograph

The Arlington Hotel where Italian tenor, Enrico Caruso joined in the hymns of the Salvation Army (see page 44).

REDISCOVERING LOST LIVES

by
Jill Downie

There are chapters in every life that are seldom read, and certainly not aloud.

Carol Shields. *The Stone Diaries*

Three rooms: the first, a dining-room in Markham, Ontario. On a large circular table are piled letters, photographs. The most striking features of this particular collection are boxfuls of faded, yellowed newspaper columns, and a necklace of gold nuggets.

The second room is a rec-room in London, Ontario. Spread out on a pool table are albums of photographs, albums of postcards. The most striking feature of this collection is a tattered, much-used cook-book, a white chef's hat, and an album of gilt-edged menus.

The third room is in Derbyshire, England. Spread out on a table about fifteen feet long are letters, a collection of leather-bound diaries, photographs. The most striking feature of this collection is the setting of the room itself. For in this third room we are in a mansion, a palace – Chatsworth, the home of the Dukes of Devonshire. Two suburban homes and a palace. But the most striking feature of the three is the similarity, and not the differences, between the three settings. For these three tables carry the untold story of three women: a nineteenth-century Toronto journalist who hid that persona behind her profession as a respectable teacher; an Escoffier-trained woman chef who was put into service as a scullerymaid at the age of thirteen; and a Duchess, whose father and husband were governors-general in Canada.

Let's take a closer look at the second room, the rec-room in London, Ontario. On the floor by the pool-table are a hat-box and a steamer-trunk. Full-blown cabbage-roses line both the hat-box and the steamer-trunk, the green of their fabric leaves and the crimson of their woven petals faded with time. The hat-box is hefty -- more of a hat-trunk. It is a foot and a half in height and width, as solidly-constructed as the matching trunk, which bears the labels, "CPR Cunard," and "Not wanted on voyage." Open the lids of both and the memories fly out, memories of voyages taken, journeys made, the story of a life.

Or, more accurately, clues to a life. But this latest project of mine, which became *Storming The Castle: The World Of Dora And The Duchess*, did not start with the hat-box and the steamer-trunk, the property of a woman who belonged to the British servant class. It began with princesses, duchesses, countesses and marchionesses -- more precisely, the women who came to Canada as wives of the governors-general. Without exception they were, of course, members of the British ruling class. Originally, I was asked to investigate the possibility of writing about the Rideau wives for this book.

So I began by looking at the handful who left letters, papers, diaries. Many of these women lived so deep in the shadows of their illustrious husbands that no one has seen fit to keep any of the papers that recorded their own thoughts and feelings on the events of their lives. In one case, the daughter destroyed the mother's diaries and some of the letters that -- from clues gleaned from some that have survived -- might have thrown an interesting light on the role of the vice-regal spouse. It would have been much easier to write about the governors-general. But where are the wives, and did they have anything to say?

In the course of trying to answer that question, I wrote to the present Duke of Devonshire at Chatsworth and received a reply from the Keeper of Collections. He confirmed that there were indeed papers and letters of Evelyn, the ninth duchess, whose father and husband had both held the post of governor-general in Canada. The Duke and Duchess of Devonshire were at Rideau Hall from 1916-1921, during the years of the First World War. At the end of his letter was this sentence: "Earlier this year a Mr. Stanley G. Vince wrote to me about his mother Mrs. Dorothea Mary Lee, who served the 9th Duke and Duchess as head cook while they were in Canada."

That was how I discovered Dora -- Dora who had been a star in her own world, who had broken down barriers and entered what had always been considered a man's realm: the kingdom of *haute cuisine*.

Dora was more than a cook; she was an artist. She could whip up sauces for kings and princes, spin sugar into culinary edifices that turned dinners into dreams. Millionaires, a beer-baron, an American dollar-princess, a countess and a dyed-in-the-wool duchess used her skills to impress the rich, the influential, the easily-bored and the difficult-to-please. Yet, apart from telling her children that she had trained with Escoffier and worked for the Guinness family and the Duchess of Devonshire in Canada, she kept most of her story to herself -- and, fortunately, in her Edwardian hat-box and steamer-trunk.

Tracing Dora's story began by looking at the contents of the box and trunk at the home of her eldest son, Stanley Vince, in London, Ontario: there were her chef's hats, white and starched -- her *bonnets* -- the badge of her profession, worn so rarely by a woman, and her aprons, some still marked where she had wiped her hands on them. Alongside them was a long black skirt and some lustrous ostrich feathers, a little leather-bound almanac and, tucked away in a pocket, a miniature hand-stitched note-book -- so tiny it is a miracle it has survived the years. There were also photographs, testimonials and some letters. But most of the room was taken up by the postcards -- hundreds of them, albums-full, years of laughter and sorrow, a record of endurance and achievement by Dora, and dozens of young girls like her, struggling their way through that punishing downstairs world.

There is something about that collection, doggedly kept together as Dora made her way up that downstairs ladder and around the various houses that would be her home for a year or two before she moved on, that suggests the owner of that life wanted those who came

afterwards to know her achievement, however silent she may have been during her lifetime. The silence was deafening; it was a story that cried out to be told. So the project became a book about two women: about Evie and Dora, a duchess and a scullery maid.

Faith Fenton, the nineteenth-century journalist, wrote in one of her columns about "the chain of living memory" -- how human beings pass on from generation to generation the history of a country, a community, a family. For this particular column she had interviewed Archdeacon McMurray of St. Mark's Church in Niagara, and heard his stories of seeing the american fleet coming around Toronto island to attack the then City of York when he was a little boy. He remembered the drunkenness and the rioting, but he also never forgot the kindly soldier who had given him a toy bugle. Faith tells the story -- a human interest story, a small and insignificant detail in historical terms -- and so passes it on to another generation.

That chain of living memory took on a real significance when it came to telling the story of Evie Devonshire, the ninth duchess. Evie has not had a good press. Daughter of Lord Lansdowne, married to one of the wealthiest and oldest titles in England, an aristocrat to her fingertips: haughty, completely devoid of the common touch, very much on her dignity, an ice-queen. Her grandson, Andrew Devonshire, is now the eleventh duke, and he had granted us an interview to talk about his grandmother -- on my husband's birthday, as it happened -- during our visit to the archives at Chatsworth. In the diary I kept on the trip I wrote: "Butterflies -- how does one prepare for an interview with such a one?"

We had walked around Chatsworth the day before as visitors -- marvelled at the superb carvings of Grinling Gibbons, the painted ceilings by Verrio and Laguerre, the statuary by Canova in the Orangery, the sheer mass of silver, silver-gilt and gold. On the day of the interview we are taken through the porter's lodge, past the security cameras and television monitors watched over by one of the retired gamekeepers -- the only game he now watches is the gaggle of earwigs who live in the monitors and wander over the black and white images on the screen. There is also a very sleepy guard-dog, a German Shepherd called Buster -- "but you should see him in action," says the gamekeeper, who reminisces about the days of the great shooting-parties when they would bring down a thousand birds in one day. His great ambition is to go hunting in the Yukon -- "now that's the life," he says wistfully to us. The great gilded gates into the private area of the grounds are opened and we go through, just after the duchess drives through in her Land Rover with her dogs. It is a long walk past the private gardens to the great front door in that magnificent facade, but we are greeted on the doorstep by the duke, who is concerned that we didn't bring our car up to the door to save ourselves the long walk.

Then, after the valet has served us port and coffee in the duke's private sitting-room, littered with papers, lined with books -- even the doors had false book-fronts -- he charms us. Fascinated to hear about things political in Canada, talking with delight about his grandchildren, with sadness about the dilemmas facing his class during times of war.

How *do* you prepare for such a one? Whether it be duke or dustman, you let him talk. And what about the purpose of my visit, his own memories of his grandmother? In this case, the duke corroborates the ice queen reputation: "an alarming woman," he calls her. He tells a couple of interesting stories about her and, just before we leave, we meet the duchess, who has returned from her errand with her dogs. She gives a very straight, almost stern look -- in her own way, I think, an alarming woman, like her grandmother-in-law. We are escorted by the duke's secretary to the archives, red ropes are removed and we make our way past the boule cabinets and the Meissen, the tortoiseshell and the satinwood, past a huge Turkish caique from the Bosphorus, brought back by the sixth duke, which almost entirely fills one corridor, to the non-tourist areas, backstage as it were.

I had been warned before the Chatsworth visit that it would be unlikely that I would be given access to most of the papers, because they are as yet uncatalogued -- one of the archivists explained that they haven't yet reached the 20th century -- but we were in luck. That direct look decided we could be trusted: the duchess has said yes.

To quote Faith Fenton again: "How sadly strange it seems," she once said, when looking at the letters and papers of some past celebrity, "that these perishable bits of paper should survive the hand that wrote, the brain that willed, the heart that beat." In the case of the ninth duchess, those perishable bits of paper at Chatsworth, and her letters which remain at the Lansdownes' ancestral home, Bowood House in Wiltshire, revealed another woman behind the ice-queen: a tender, caring woman, who struggled with the dilemma of reconciling the public role of duchess with her private role as mother, friend, wife.

There were letters, for instance, from a woman friend who had confided in Evie for the eight years she had waited, hoping to marry the man she loved and of whom her parents disapproved, and her letter of joy and gratitude to Evie, the one person in whom she had been able to confide; letters from Evie's children (two boys and five girls). There was volume after volume of her husband's diaries, speaking of his wife's reluctance to take on some of the ceremonial tasks expected of her that would remove her from her domestic life. It seems in so many ways rather a modern dilemma. *Noblesse Oblige*, as the saying goes. She had no choice.

A contradictory personality, as most human beings are, more complex than the ice-queen image would have one believe. One of Faith Fenton's favourite sayings, one that fitted her own life well, as I discovered when I wrote *A Passionate Pen*, was, "Stories in this world tell themselves by halves. There is always a silent side, and none may know the life of another."

True. Very true in the case of Dora Lee, the little scullerymaid who was one of the very, very few women to train with Escoffier in Paris -- at the age of nineteen in a kitchenfull of about fifty men -- and who became head cook at Rideau Hall. In Dora's case, the chain of living memory was just enough to save her extraordinary achievements from disappearing

altogether, because her eldest son held on to her vast collection of postcards from a veritable postcard parade of maidservants -- Lily, Lizzie, Florrie, Ada, Ruth, Alice, Kate, Nell. The postcard was an amazingly efficient method of communication. There is evidence in the collection of rendezvous made and broken within a twelve-hour span. One, from Jessie, was posted at 1.p.m., and it reads: *Dear Dora: don't come to see me tonight as I can't enjoy your visit as I hear we have a lunch and dinner party. I do get wild however, any other night you can spare soon, am looking forward to having a good old talk.* And, among some other memorabilia, an amazing collection of gilt-edged menus, chiefly from Dora's time at Rideau Hall. The glamour of that lost golden age is reflected in the names of those dishes -- Saumon Lucullus, Suprêmes de Volaille Strasbourg, Consommé Parisienne, Fraises à la Ritz, Caviar Astrakan.

But where is Dora's voice? It has to be heard through the voices of her girl-friends, for there are no letters from this period of her life. Dora's life, in fact, has to be reconstructed from the places at which she worked, her talent and her character established from the sheer grit and guts it took to become what she became in what had always been a man's world.

Do they have anything to say to us, these women? And how important is it that their voices should be heard? Carolyn Heilbrun, in her book, *Writing A Woman's Life*, says: "It is a hard thing to make up stories to live by. We can only retell and live by the stories we have read and heard. We live our lives through texts ... Whatever their form or medium, these stories have framed us all; they are what we must use to frame new fictions, new narraives."

In the case of all these three women, whose perishable bits of paper lay on those three tables in Markham, London, Ontario, and Chatsworth House in Derbyshire, there was a silent side. Like Carolyn Heilbrun, I believe that "Once upon a time there was a duchess who -- or a scullerymaid who -- or a woman journalist in the 19th century who ... " matters very much to those who come after, man or woman.

One of Dora's girlfriends, Florrie, once sent her a card with a picture of a group of people riding donkeys at the seaside. On it, she wrote: "Puzzle, find me."

I hear that cry again and again when I work on rediscovering those lives. Puzzle --find me!

ONTARIO MEMORIES -- HAUNTED ONTARIO

by
Terry Boyle

Terry Boyle, regularly featured on radio with his interesting and unusual vignettes from Ontario's past, spoke to the Society about his most recent book on haunted houses in Ontario. Terry also spoke about what, and how, various organizations of historically-minded groups in the province preserve historical information. He stressed that as the "Baby Boomer" generation moves into a more sedate lifestyle, there is an inevitable trend towards searching for their roots, delving into local history and folklore. It is up to individual historical societies and heritage groups to stimulate that interest.

MILITARY EXPERIENCES¹

by
Jeffrey Brace

Jeffrey Brace, Brigadier General (retired) of CFB Trenton, and currently Executive Director of the RCAF Memorial Museum at Trenton, captivated members of the Society with his experiences ranging from humanitarian airlift operations to Russia, Somalia and Yugoslavia to flying Royalty, and finally, to the RCAF Memorial Museum, a popular area attraction.

The significance of the humanitarian flights abroad readily provided both insights into the role of the military today as well as sharp contrasts to Brace's experiences as pilot for several members of the Royal Family and other VIPs. The intended message was clear: As Canadians we must be proud of the commendable -- and frequently, understated -- work performed by the men and women in our armed forces.

1. Compiled from Brace's written communication and "Looking Back" in *Historically Speaking* number 144.

**SAM ASH'S VICE-REGAL BANQUET:
TWO COBOURG MYTHS IN ONE**

by
Colin Caldwell

This account is meant to entice you to join me in a bit of historical detective work. It involves an examination of two Cobourg stories, which I have labelled “myths.” This doesn’t mean that I’m saying they are not true, but rather, using the word myth in the special sense of “received” tales, passed down from previous generations, with elements of historic and poetic truth mixed together with some freedom. These two stories both fall within the category of “oral” history. If we are successful with our investigations, I hope these will illustrate something of the way in which oral history actually works.

Oral History is all the rage these days. Every history you read nowadays seems to take time out to decry the “old” style of history, full of dates, battles and statesmen. Rather we tend to favour the new style of history of everyday life, with a high emphasis placed on the sort of “oral” historical record that emphasizes the average person living at a particular time, or the history to be found in everyone’s attic.

Personally, I am of two minds about this. On the one hand, I hate oral history because it is muddled, sensational, careless and repetitive of other oral histories to the point of plagiarism. On the other hand, while I also loathe it because it is usually outright fantasy, it is also indispensable for local history.

Let us examine our two stories.

It is a peculiarity of oral history that it is often useful, even when it is quite wrong. There are two legends in Cobourg’s history which nicely illustrate the way in which “tradition” really preserves our heritage. Both of these legends are accepted at face value, though one is fairly well-known and the other known only to the enthusiast. In fact, because of its inherent difficulty, the latter has almost dropped out of sight. Both are, unfortunately, incorrect, but not to the point of rejecting them outright.

One of these stories concerns Cobourg’s, or at least Hamilton township’s, possibly earliest settler. The other, just possibly, concerns the town’s oldest building. More than that, one story might, if altered slightly, give some grounds for believing a slightly altered version of the other story.

Our first story comes to us courtesy of the Cobourg Creamery Company (see Figure 1)¹. I have no idea why it should turn out that a memoir of about 1880 should be preserved for

¹ The memoir on the Cobourg Creamery Company stationery can be found in the ASH FAMILY file in the Cobourg Public Library.

us on this particular stationery. As you can see, it bears a partially pre-printed date of 192_. If I have the provenance correct, it seems to have been typed by someone with the historically colourful name "Nell Gwynne" for submission to the *Cobourg Sentinel Star*. She, however, seems to have copied the material directly from another, earlier antiquarian named Ellen Boggs. These two names, however, should perhaps be reversed.

The document purports to be a memoir, written or dictated by an even earlier local figure named Margaret Ann Wells. Mrs. Wells, née Ash, was reputed to be the second European child born in the township, in the year 1803 or 1805. She was the daughter of Samuel Ash, who could make an excellent claim to be the township's very first European inhabitant.

According to the memoir, in answer to Governor Simcoe's call for settlers, Samuel Ash sailed across the lake from northern New York in the spring of 1797, and settled east of Cobourg. Margaret was born shortly thereafter.

The memoir contains a number of hard-scrabbling, early-settler stories of a fairly traditional nature. One story she relates of old Samuel Ash sending an upstart city politician off with a flea in his ear, wonderfully conjures up what we would characterize as the Methodist view of Upper Canada politics. According to the story, Ash was put up to this by his brother-in-law, a man named Wolcott. Ash and his family were well-known later as Methodists and reformers.

Another story, obviously a family favourite, is of Governor Simcoe's dropping in one bitter night, looking for a place to stay over. After being welcomed in, the governor "laughed outright when he saw Mr. Ash bring in his logging chain for the purpose of suspending one of his pots over the fire." The memoir continues, "Necessity is the mother of invention, ingeniously (sic) remarked the sturdy settler as he lent his wife a hand in the arrangement of her pots and pans."

They then had venison for supper, though "what else, history does not record." At the end of the meal, "Governor Simcoe declared he had not enjoyed a meal so heartily (sic) since leaving England." finally, blankets were brought in, which they had "carried strapped to their saddles and they made themselves comfortable, going on their way in the morning."

This story is clearly in the genre of moral folk-tale, where the wealthy governor, lost in the woods, discovers the superior worth of the humble, but honest pioneer/cottager. One could go further, and identify it with the old motif of the Prince, lost in the forest, meeting and being rescued by the humble woodsman. It's a great story, fully in keeping with everything we know about Samuel Ash's beliefs.

Which makes it all the sadder that, as it stands, it must be complete nonsense.

First, it is unlikely that Governor Simcoe was ever thrashing about, lost, in the bush of Hamilton Township except from a boat, passing by, and that well off-shore. Simcoe's tours of inspection of the province do not seem ever to have brought him even close to the region south of Rice Lake. We also know that these townships were virtually empty of Europeans throughout the whole of Simcoe's governorship.

More important, by the time the memoir itself says Samuel Ash arrived and settled here, Simcoe was out of the province for good. Simcoe left the province by boat, ill and having spent some time in Niagara after a trip to the southwest, in July of 1796. By January 1, 1797, he was governor of Santo Domingo in the West Indies.

Again in terms of the memoir itself, it is clear that the settlers were thought to be in a primitive, but not absolutely initial, stage of settlement when Simcoe visited. One would like to assume that someone simply got that date wrong. But the date of Ash's arrival, as given in the memoir, fits very well with everything else we know of him, and of local settlement.

It has been notoriously difficult to pin down precisely the date at which anyone actually arrived during those early years. In Cobourg's case, historians of the twenties through the forties went to some lengths to try to establish dates for first settlement that predated the official 1798 list. None were deemed sufficiently trustworthy, though we generally assume that some people were hereabouts in 1797, at least, and one or two may have wandered through earlier than that. But then, Ash isn't one of the latter, and Simcoe was never here at all.

Stretch things as we may, it is impossible to get Ash and Simcoe in the same place at the same time.

Some time after I first saw this story, I saw something similar in a different place. The story was in a speech written by an ex-journalist, Mr. Rodger J. Ross, who had been researching the early history of the Danforth Road, which had piqued his interest on his retiring to the area. This time Samuel Ash wasn't mentioned, but the location was clear enough. The governor who was put up for the night was not Simcoe but Sir Isaac Brock. He, apparently, had stayed in a Half-Way House in Hamilton Township (see Figure 2), just along the Danforth Road from Ash's property. Brock, in this version, was on his way to Queenston Heights, where he died his heroic death.

Now, obviously, if Brock was staying on the Danforth Road in Hamilton Township on the way to Queenston Heights, the province was in greater danger than we thought. There is, though, no difficulty in having Brock stay at that Half-Way House at some point in his career. But for most of his career in Canada, he wasn't Governor.

This story did lead me, though, to question the identity of the governor in Ash's daughter's story.

CHARLES CAMPBELL, MANAGER
PHONE 369

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"LILY BRAND" CREAMERY BUTTER

is the daughter of Mrs. Samuel Ash
COBOURG

Written for the Cobourg Sentinel

HOME SKETCHES

By Nell Gwynne, Cobourg, Ontario.

Note--I am indebted for the facts in the following little sketch to the kindness of Mrs. Wells who is a daughter of Mr. Samuel Ash, and who was born on the spot in which she now resides, in 1805. Mrs. Wells, who among many excellent qualities is possessed of superior intelligence and a remarkably retentive memory, was affected almost to tears while recounting the hardships and sufferings of her parents during their early life in Canada.

PIRST PAPER

The first settlers in the vicinity of Cobourg were Mr. Samuel Ash, and his brother-in-law, Mr. Roger Wolcott, who tempted by the offers made to Canadian settlers by Lieut. Gov. Simcoe, left their homes in the state of New York, in the spring of 1797. They, accompanied by the father of Mr. Ash, who was quite an aged man, crossed Lake Ontario in an open boat and landed near Kingston. The two young men bought a yoke of oxen between them, and having constructed rude sheds, upon which they strapped their luggage, and which were drawn by the oxen. They travelled up through the woods, which must have been a weary journey indeed, till they came to the neighborhood of where the town of Cobourg now stands, which was then like the whole country about--a trackless wilderness. The farm on which *now* Mr. Wells now resides is part of the two hundred acres of land chosen by Mr. Ash; and the farm now owned by Mr. (James) Fogarty is part of the two hundred acres chosen by Mr. Wolcott. Having selected their land the two men went to work with brave hearts and their good axes, and they not only did their settlers' duties on their land, but had hewn out enough of the virgin forest to enable them to put in a little crop before returning to the States for their families, which they did in a couple of weeks.

The settlers' duties consisted in building a log cabin on a lot of land, and in chopping down and clearing up enough wood to make five large brush heaps. When they had done this and paid twenty-five dollars apiece for their deeds, the land was theirs. Cheap land, we would naturally imagine now-a-days, but that remains to be seen.

They recrossed the lake by the way they had come and brought their families over in a small schooner, which sailed from Oswego and landed at Presque Isle.

Their life in their new home was for many years one hard struggle. The chopping and logging and clearing up of brush, in which they were constantly employed, being very hard upon the men's clothes they had soon worn out all they had brought with them, when their wives cut up their

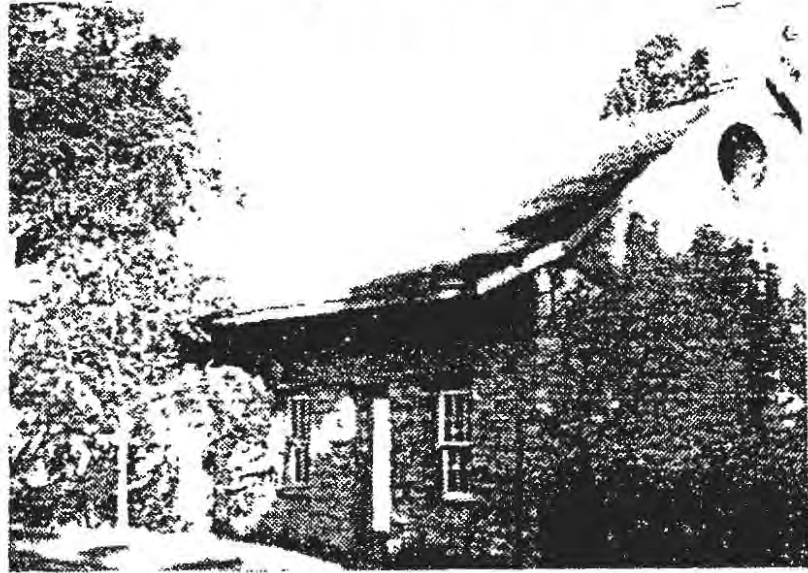
A - Architecture - Cobourg (34)

Cobourg buildings of 1812

2/21
2/21
2/21

From the Cobourg Sentinel-Star
September 28, 1950

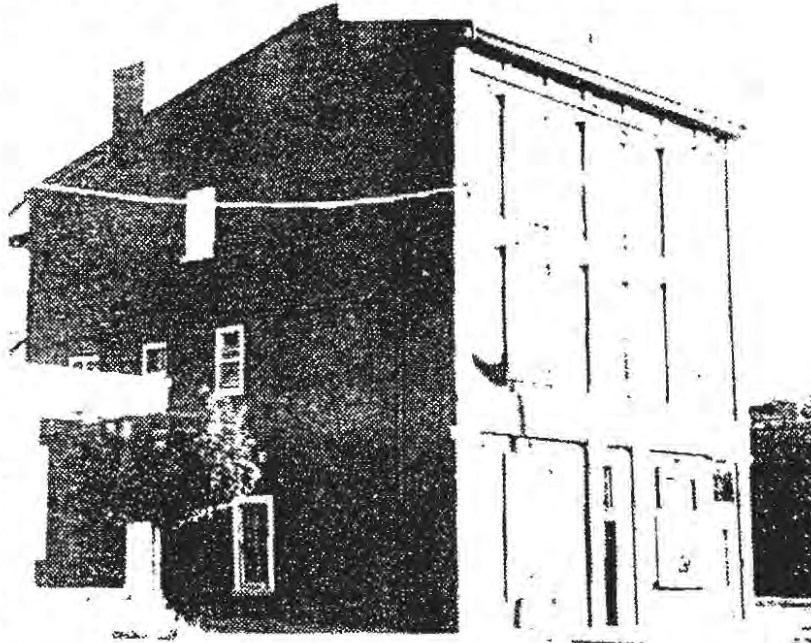
One of the oldest landmarks in Cobourg history is the stone building at the old Lakehurst Hotel now owned by Joe Delanty. The oblong stone structure is about 12 feet high with walls a foot thick and is about sixty feet long and twelve feet wide. History tells that once upon a time it was an orderly room for a British army regiment stationed here. There are round windows in either end and the craftsmanship of these is still as well preserved as the day they were placed there by expert masons of the time.



'RED COATS' ORDERLY ROOM ON ORR ST.

Use of the orderly room is believed to have been made in the war of 1812 with the United States. At that time another local building which now houses the office of Outwin's taxi, was a hospital for the troops of the day. The town was quite a mecca for the "Red Coats" of the time.

The house next to the "orderly room" has no association with the army past, it is believed. It belonged to Judge Armour before being turned into an internationally known summer hotel by the late Margaret Lucy, aunt of the present owner Joe Delanty.



KING EAST BUILDING WAS HOSPITAL

The orderly room of the late members of his majesty's forces in the field fronts on Durham and Orr Streets and can be seen from a block away for its original grey white color remains the same today as it has for the past hundred years.

Cobourg Public Library

Figure 2

Let us put this story on the back burner for a few minutes.

Our second story comes to us courtesy of the local paper.² An unsigned September 1980 article, reprinted from a 1950 edition to the same paper (similarly unattributed) gives us, I think, a concise summary of popular belief about some buildings in Cobourg and their role in the War of 1812. Accompanying the 1980 version is a photograph of the building often known locally as the “old barracks” (see Figure 2, upper). Another picture, of a building now demolished but then standing on King Street East in Cobourg, is identified as the “hospital” of that era (see Figure 2, lower).

“History tells us,” the article states, “that it (the old barracks) was an orderly room for a British Army regiment stationed here.” Not only that but that “use of the orderly room is believed to have been made in the War of 1812 with the Americans.” The author goes on to claim that the other building was a “hospital for troops” during the epic struggle. The old barracks, notoriously, looks the part. The photograph of the other building is of one which used to stand near the old Albion Hotel on King Street East, and is obviously of a later vintage than the War of 1812. Not content with these astonishing claims, he (or she) goes on to explain that the town was “quite a mecca” for the “redcoats” of that day.

This is, of course, sheer fantasy. Here we see how an old tradition – in this case of the old barracks – will attract to itself amplifications and embellishments, which later come to have a life of their own. In this case, it would not take long before the “fact” of Cobourg’s being a popular spot for troops would turn into “proof” of the identification of our building’s being the place where they must have hung out. This circular argument happens as soon as it is forgotten that the only reason anyone ever supposed there were troops there at all, was to provide colour for popularly written history about the building.

One unpublished essay I have read on early Cobourg, for example, written after that article and possibly based on it as a source, suggests that the building was there as a sort of small “fort” to guard Cobourg’s spacious harbour facilities. After all, anyone can see the harbour, which, in turn, must have been there to supply the “fort.” The logic is apparent. No outside evidence need apply.

The local legend even gives the “fort” secret “Hardy Boys” tunnels down to the harbour, which back then would have been several hundred yards away, and which now would be even further away. And they would have been through a swamp; but never mind, their purpose was to keep the “redcoats” from being seen by invading Americans. We know that this story derives from some odd noises and a subsidence of ground nearby, which took place when bulldozers were grading the Legion Village parking lot to the immediate east of the site. There could easily have been a tunnel from Calcutt’s home to his distillery, both of

² The article is to be found in the ARCHITECTURE – COBOURG file in the Cobourg Public Library.

which were built in the 1830s. But, though near, they were in the wrong place for any tunnel to connect to the old barracks.

The description of the old building in the LACAC book says that it is not unlikely to have been a military building since it was on Crown Land at the time. This is in every respect true, but unfortunately, at the time of which we are speaking, it is no more helpful than saying the building was on dry land. The chunks of land surrounding the old shed were bought and sold several times between 1819 when King Street was finished and 1832 when Calcutt built his distillery on the site and incorporated the old building into it. Or, alternatively, built it himself as a shed or malt-house. Before that, the land belonged to the Crown.

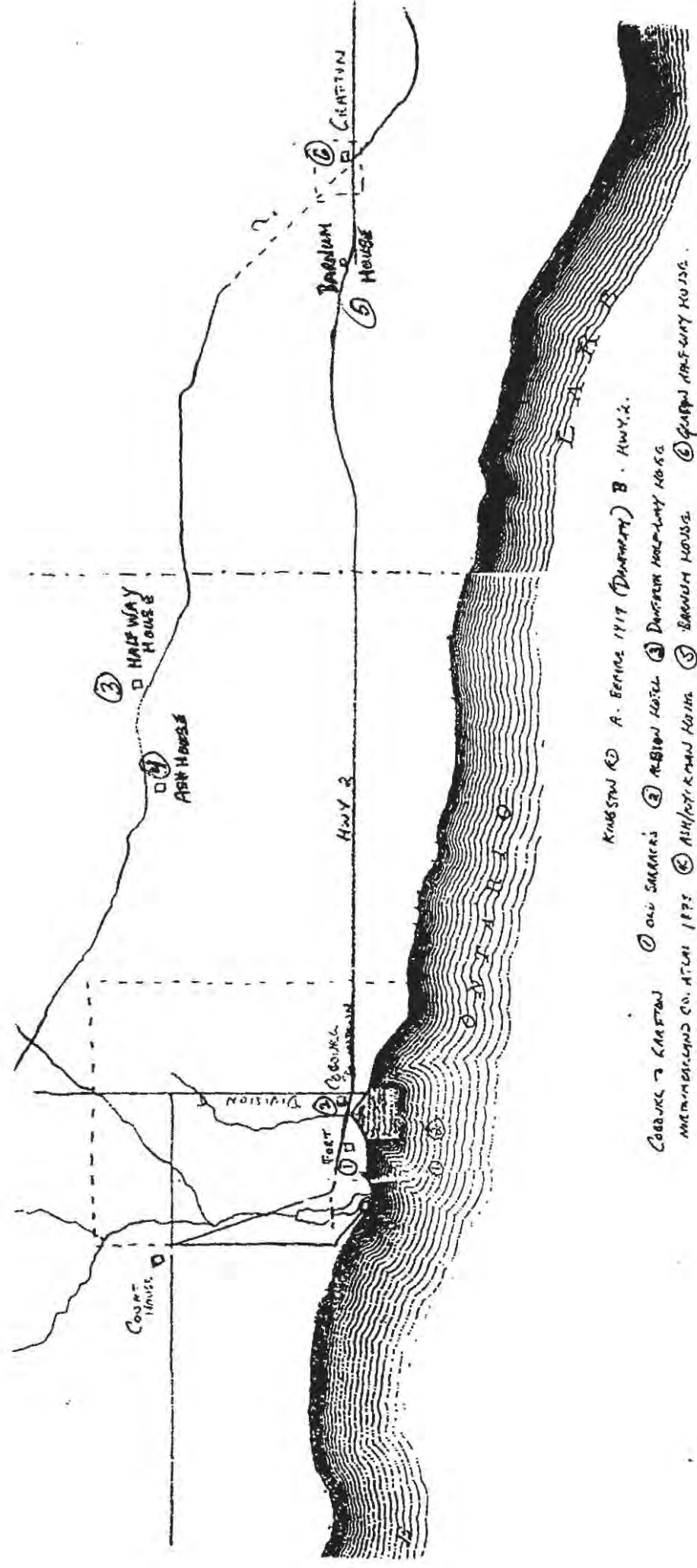
Commenting on a partial map of a town plot layout of an area nearby, dating from 1824, the local historian Percy Climo says that the “ancient fort” must be just off the map. I think that’s cheating. In fact, the little we do know about Cobourg in those days would indicate that such a barracks or orderly room, at that location, would have stood out like an international hotel. All our evidence suggests that there was nothing there at the time. We have a memoir of one woman’s arrival in 1813 in which she describes Cobourg as consisting of three houses in a clearing near the landing. All of these can be accounted for as Eliud Nickerson’s house, the tavern and the school. No fort. No stone building. Other, slightly less direct, authorities cite either one house or fifteen. The fifteen, it is clear, refers to the whole region including a number of houses inland on the Danforth Road. Over half the settlers in the township lived on or near that road, the major east-west thoroughfare which still cuts across the northern edge of the modern town, some two miles from the harbour.

Another noted visitor (Anson Greene) describes the harbour as having no wharf, just tents for immigrants on the beach (from his vantage point, just below where the fort should have been) and swamp stretching over to the next creek. Notice that he doesn’t even give substance to any harbour, and his visit took place a good ten years after the war.

When Frances Stewart landed at the Cobourg wharf the same year, she had to make two attempts to land as the landing stage was so primitive. Once on land, she walked slowly up the hill along what is now Third Street, past the old barracks, looking for her husband among the passers-by. She mentions no fort.

Since we also know, quite clearly, that the Kingston Road from Toronto, which forms Cobourg’s main street, did not come through until after the war, one wonders why on earth they would have built a fort or barracks or orderly room there. If the troops were marching from York to Kingston along the main road, the Danforth, why would they detour all the way down to the waterfront at Cobourg, only to have to retrace their steps all the way back, two miles each way, to the main highway? Surely not to go for a swim.

In another legend, sailors fleeing pursuing American ships put in at a cove just west of town to bury the gold they were escorting to York. The story is probably fiction, but it has an



KINGSTON ① A. BEINGE 1417 (DUNSMITH) B. HWY. 2.
 COBURN ② KINGSTON ③ OLD SERRIES ④ REGION HOTEL ⑤ DUNSMITH HALF-WAY HOUSE
 MEMPHISLAND CO. ATLAS 1875 ⑥ ANTIPOYKMAN HOUSE ⑦ BARNIUM HOUSE ⑧ GRASSY HALF-WAY HOUSE.

Figure 3

early provenance. This indicates that in the early nineteenth century it seemed reasonable to the locals that the seamen would not simply stop at the "fort" and harbour for safety, since everyone knew there were no such things there in 1812.

Cobourg grew quite a bit in the immediate aftermath of the war. Probably as part of the general clean-up of the defence and communications following the repulse of the Americans and the defeat of Napoleon which freed money for public works, the road from York (Toronto) to Kingston was brought down from near Port Hope to swing along close to the lake over to Grafton. This formed Cobourg's modern main street, King Street. If the building of this road had been accomplished using soon-to-be-disbanded army regulars, it would not be at all surprising if the government would choose to build a way-station, all-purpose shed and, perhaps, temporary barracks, at exactly where the old building now stands. It would have been close to the landing area, yet not actually in the developing village. Like many another Ontario "fort," it would thus be associated with the war, but dated to immediately after. This would explain its non-significance in early accounts of Cobourg. It was not there during the war, and would have appeared to be of no importance a few years later, once the road was completed.

However that may be, many troops during the war probably did use that Danforth Road route between York and Kingston. The most celebrated instance is the retreat of General Sheaffe (acting Governor of the province) and his three or four hundred regulars from York to Kingston, in April 1813, after the American capture of York. By that march, Sheaffe saved his small army from capture by the numerically superior American force, but at the price of abandoning York to American occupation and burning. For this he was bitterly criticized by, among others, the Rev. John Strachan³.

Another important local tradition appears to tie Sheaffe's march with a different local landmark, the well-known Barnum House on County Road 2 outside present-day Grafton, west of where the modern highway intersects with the old Danforth Road (see Figure 3). Fifty years ago, when the Barnum House was being marked for preservation by an Ontario society of architects, it was comfortably believed that the present house was erected after the war, on the site of, and perhaps even on the foundation of, an earlier house. That house, also owned by Barnum, had been burned as a result of carelessness on the part of some British troops staying there during the War of 1812. Some versions of this tale confidently assert that the troops in question were those of General Sheaffe on that famous retreat. So patriotic was Eliakim Barnum, that he refused compensation for his loss after the war.

As recently as 1990, the brochure guide to Barnum House stated that the fire took place while Brock's (not Sheaffe's) troops were on the scene; and that some of those troops

³ Strachan would go on to become one of the principal advisors to most later Upper Canada governments, in the process gaining a reputation as the ideological head of the notorious Family Compact.

had also stayed nearby in a half-way house in Grafton. There is indeed an old Half-Way House in Grafton, although not as old as the one on the Danforth, nor attested to for the War of 1812, and located at the junction of the post-war Kingston Road and the Danforth Road, somewhat east of Barnum House.

Then the story begins to unravel completely. Some versions place the fire at the beginning of the war when Barnum House was supposedly a “command post” (this is extremely far-fetched), and others report both the fire and rebuilding as occurring in 1814 or later. Finally, the story itself seems to have gone down in flames when a search of the assessment records indicated that Eliakim Barnum did not own a house there at that time. There may have been a small log cabin there, on a small track leading back out of town to nowhere, owned by someone else and perhaps rented to Barnum. Only in 1821 do records show a house like Barnum’s on the site. This also seems to put an end to the related legend that Barnum’s daughter was affianced to Brock. In 1812, apparently, Barnum only owned one cow and no land. The daughter would have had to be very pretty indeed.

But there was a colourful, local-to-Grafton military hero who had received advance word from Sheaffe that he was on his way at the time of the march. (This much is attested to by a letter, now in the Ontario Archives, from Sheaffe to Prevost⁴.) The man in question was David McGregor Rogers, son of the famous Rogers of Rogers’ Rangers. Thus, he had an impeccably loyalist background. He had also fought at Queenston Heights a year earlier, and was to fight again at Lundy’s Lane in 1814.⁵ He had also, in 1809, bought the Half-Way House Inn on the Danforth Road near Samuel Ash’s property.

So, we might begin to imagine how a harried General/Governor Sheaffe (perhaps written down on the manner of the period as “Gov. S—”) bivouacked his men at or near the Half-Way House on Danforth Road during the retreat from York. This house was definitely there in 1813, and was a well-known stopping place on the trip to Kingston or York. It also has now, and may well have had then, an upstairs ballroom in which apparently 150 people could dance. This would have been more suited to Sheaffe’s wounded men than any other house in the district.

This Half-Way House on the Danforth was superseded after 1820 by one on the new Kingston Road – at the new crossing of the new and old roads to Kingston – in Grafton. After 1819, no one would bother to use Danforth’s old road, and the old inn on it became a private home. The post-war Half-Way House, or something on that spot, is a central architectural jewel of modern Grafton.

⁴ A description of this letter can be found in the GRAFTON file, in a series of newspaper articles from the *Cobourg Sentinel Star* of 1934.

⁵ The record reveals, somewhat vaguely, that Rogers’ was not compensated or “redeemed by parliament” for something, we know not what, at the end of the war.

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In the years after 1825, or so, the famous William Weller developed his transportation network between Toronto and Kingston and beyond. He used the new Kingston Road, naturally, but centred his operations, and his Half-Way House, in Cobourg, where he also made his home. Weller's Cobourg Half-Way House stood on the east end of King Street; that is, the section of Kingston Road which passes through Cobourg. That's right where the building stood which the author of our newspaper article mistook for a War of 1812 hospital.

What I hadn't properly noticed until this point in my own investigation, was that the – probably now correctly identified – Danforth Half-Way House where Sheaffe's men probably stayed, was right near where Sam Ash had one of his major properties and very likely his major dwelling.

Samuel Ash and his brothers settled on several lots in the two broken concessions A and B, and the first concession, to the east of what was to become Cobourg. All of these concessions straddle the two versions of the Kingston Road. In that stretch of Hamilton Township the two roads are quite close. Almost any of Samuel Ash's lots would have had fairly good access to the old road. Most of them, however, would also have as easily accommodated themselves to the new road closer to the lake. So close are the two roads, that Ash could easily have described himself, both before and after the new road went through, as living east of Cobourg on the Kingston road without moving his location an inch.

Is it not possible that Sheaffe, after settling his men into the grounds around the Half-Way House Inn, perhaps with the wounded inside in a make-shift hospital, then sought shelter for himself and an aide down the road in Samuel Ash's house? As a General, and Governor, he would not share accommodation with his men, especially not if they were wounded. (Rather than an indication of snobbishness, this behaviour was but a decent regard for his men's comfort.)

Sheaffe has received bad press for his actions at York and was Governor for only the one year. His particular accuser was the markedly ant-Methodist, Rev. Strachan. This would probably not have been lost on the later arch-Reformer and Methodist, Samuel Ash. Sheaffe's visit could easily have become a cherished memory. That particular point to the story may, however, have been lost on Mrs. Wells some seventy years later in the retelling.

To reconstruct the story we have had to switch the action of the soldiers of 1812, from the new, and more easily identifiable road, back to the old one and remind ourselves, as few Cobourgers in the last century would readily think of doing, that the new road did not exist until after the war. This would have been particularly confusing since both roads bore the same name, the Kingston Road. They wouldn't have used the term Danforth Road for some time as many of them had known Asa Danforth, and those who did, probably knew him as something of a crook.

There is certainly a problem with the story of Samuel Ash and Governor Simcoe as we have it. That story, though, has more convincing circumstantial detail than many other stories that have come down to us from that era. It is not hard to borrow some elements from other, common, tales. Most of the usual examples of difficult feats of endurance in the course of pioneering, or of hunger and hardship in the early years of settlement, tend to meld into everyone's reminiscences.

The details, though, about the Governor laughing at the use of the logging chain as a pot-holder, the expression: "Necessity is the mother of invention," and the detail about the travellers fetching their blankets from their horses' saddlebags, sounds very much like those of a young eyewitness who had both heard and herself repeated the story, faithfully, many times.

If we simply substitute the name "Sheaffe" for "Simcoe" in Mrs. Wells' story, we can date the story to April 1813. This removes all difficulties about dating the memoir. We know that Sheaffe was, indeed, passing through Hamilton township at that time and that he was doing so as Governor of the province. It is extremely likely that he used that Half-Way House, and Sam lived right near-by at the time of the incident.

If the visit to Samuel Ash's home did happen, it would have happened exactly as Mrs. Wells later described it. Ash could easily have used a makeshift apparatus to help with the extra load of food to be cooked. Sheaffe, used to seeing his men cooking for larger numbers, might well have been amused at Ash's ingenuity, calling up a phrase from him that, perhaps, his daughter later heard with wearying frequency.

In his relief at reaching the relative safety of Rogers' Inn, Sheaffe may easily have stated that the home-cooked meal was the best he had had since leaving England. He then would have fetched blankets from the horses they undoubtedly had with them in 1813, but which Simcoe could not have had in 1796. In 1796, there were no roads, nor even good enough paths, for Simcoe to have ridden a single horse anywhere near that stretch of territory without immense difficulty.

Memory, then, gradually shifted these events from the old road to the new. David McGregor Rogers belonged to Grafton history. Though he owned the Half-Way House, he also owned property in that village. Over time the memory of Grafton people putting up the soldiers during the war shifted to the most obvious locale, Barnum House for the officers – in one version – and the Half-way House for the men. Those were the most likely places on Grafton's Kingston Road.

Cobourg's War of 1812 house also attracted legends. The wounded had been put up in the Half-Way House, on the Kingston Road heading out of town. Everyone knows the Half-Way House in Cobourg. And the officers? They were probably in that orderly room that dates from the war.

Oral tradition preserved the story, I think, but “corrected” it according to the new geography of the area, into two stories, each in the wrong place. Samuel Ash’s daughter may have had the Governor’s name wrong – she chose a more famous one that sounded like it – but the Ashes probably did serve up a “Vice-Regal Banquet.”

RICE LAKE PLAINS TALLGRASS PRAIRIE

by
Russell Lake

I hope you will learn something, and in particular look differently at your environment. My greatest hope is that you will take some suggested action.

Let me tell you how I became interested in prairies. During the winter of 1985 we purchased a wetland with some meadow and cedar swamp. I immediately made all the mistakes of the pioneers of this country. I ordered trees from the ministry, and started a large garden. After planting 4500 trees I realized that only the trees that the land wanted would grow there, and after many crop failures, I grow only the things that the animals and the land allow. Throughout this time we discovered many wildflowers which we enjoy. Now we cannot decide which season is the best, with Canada anemone, blue-eyed grass, black-eyed Susan, to closed gentian, grass-of-parnassus, lady tresses, and a variety of asters in the fall. Gardens and trees have given way to the appreciation of existing and relocated wildflowers.

Three years ago Ed Heuval gave a talk to the Willow Beach Field Naturalists on the restoration of Red Cloud Cemetery. This restoration consisted of cutting pine trees planted by well-intentioned cemetery board members.

When I hear the word "prairie" I visualize the great open areas of the west. However, prairie is simply the French word for 'meadow', and a tallgrass prairie is a term used to describe a community of grasses, wildflowers, shrubs and trees which primarily occur on well-drained sandy and loamy sites.

The Rice Lake Prairie covered an area from Castleton in the east to Pontypool in the west. This prairie evolved since the last ice age, adapting to local conditions together with bacteria, insects, reptiles, amphibians, birds, and mammals. Until about 150 years ago this prairie existed as the Rice Lake Plains Tallgrass Prairie.

Catherine Parr Trail described the Rice Lake Plains in 1835:

A number of exquisite flowers and shrubs adorn these plains which rival any garden in beauty during the spring and summer months. Many of these plants are peculiar to the plains, and are rarely met with in any other situation... These plains were formerly famous hunting-grounds of the Indians, who, to prevent the growth of timbers, burned them year after year.

Less than one percent of the tallgrass prairie found in Ontario exists today, making it one of the most endangered habitats on the continent. Numerous species of reptiles, amphibians, birds, small mammals, butterflies, and other insects – many of which are on the decline – depend upon the tallgrass prairie for their existence.

Allow me to quote William Beebe: "when the last individual of a race of living things breathes no more another heaven and another earth must pass before such a one can be again."

What happened to the prairie? Early settlers were probably farmers or people who looked to the land for their living, a combination of need and greed, found the area ready to cultivate for crops of corn wheat and grain. Early methods of agriculture used up the nutrients, and exposed the light topsoil to the wind and rain. Soon there was a wasteland and many thriving settlements became deserted as the land could no longer provide a living.

Mahatma Ghandi once said, "the land can provide for man's needs but not for man's greed."

What was done about this? We planted trees: red pine, white pine, tamarack, all government sponsored, and Northumberland and the Ganaraska Forests were created. Some areas, through better farming practices and richer topsoils, are still farmed today. Crops such as tobacco grow well in this light soil, and gravel extraction is also a major resource of this area.

Only fragmented areas of the Rice Lake Plains Tallgrass Prairie exists today. You can find these along old roadsides, unopened right-of-ways, or rugged areas too rough to cultivate. One three-acre area was discovered at Alderville, while a two-acre area of Red Cloud Cemetery was also identified in 1993. I find it interesting that All publications on tallgrass prairies were printed within the last decade.

Let me quote from an article by Louise Livingstone from the summer 1996 issue of *Seasons*:

Some places are special, Robert and Sara Walker recognized this when they buried their infant daughter Amarilla in June 1858 amid the prairie flowers at Red Cloud, Ontario.

This action protected a piece of prairie grassland from the plow, but not from tree planters.

Stewardship Councils have been set up to help manage the land in south central Ontario. These councils are made up of landowners and others who have an interest in this important natural resource.

Peterborough Stewardship Council conducted a survey of 2000 landowners who identified what they felt was important to them. The results indicated that the number one concern was water quality followed by wildlife habitat. Fifth and sixth in importance were, respectively, shoreline restoration and the planting of native trees, shrubs, and plants.

Stimulated by these concerns, Tony Kenny, an active member of the Peterborough Stewardship Council, planted 10,000 native trees on his own property. In addition, Tony, his wife Heather, and their family volunteered to retire 19.5 acres of marginal agricultural land for

tallgrass prairie restoration. This tract of land is ideally located adjacent to a Provincially-significant wetland complex on the west side of the Otonabee River estuary, where it flows into Rice Lake. Wesyl Backowski, a biologist with the Ministry of Natural Resources, has certified the site as "ideal" for the reintroduction of tallgrass prairie species.

Restoration purposes encompass the following:

1. To provide a critical buffer zone to protect the wetland complex and improve water quality and fish habitat;
2. To provide an important nesting, rearing, and foraging habitat for threatened, endangered, and common species of birds, mammals, amphibians, reptiles and insects. For example, to create a habitat essential to the establishment of the Henslow Sparrow;
3. To demonstrate innovative shoreline and upland restoration techniques;
4. To provide public access for nature appreciation, education, and scientific research; and,
5. To allow for the collection and propagation of native Tallgrass Prairie plants to support other habitat restoration projects in this area.

The prairie will be restored by planting plugs provided by the Rural Lampton Stewardship Network who operate a nursery. They guarantee that plugs and seeds will come from the Rice Lake area. Specifically, tallgrass prairie specialists and biologists have recommended that the site be reestablished with a blend of six native grasses, fifteen perennial flowers, four shrubs, and four tree species. Together these will closely emulate the original floristic composition of the Rice Lake Plains Tallgrass Prairie.

- GRASSES

- Big Bluestem
- Little Bluestem
- Canadian rye grass
- Indian grass
- Switchgrass

- WILDFLOWERS

- Black-eyed Susan
- Blue-eyed grass
- Butterfly weed
- Canada anemone
- Canada Tick-trefoil
- Blazingstar
- White, Heath, New England, Sky-blue and Smooth aster
- Hairy and Smooth Beardstongue

- TREES
 - White oak
 - Bur oak
 - Black oak
 - White pine

- SHRUBS
 - Service Berry
 - Highbush Cranberry
 - Nannyberry
 - Mountain Ash

Five acres were prepared for planting last June (1998) through normal agricultural practices, and two cycles of "Round-up" (commercial herbicide) to kill existing weeds and plants. A portion of the site was planted with 60% grasses, 35% wildflowers, and 5% trees and shrubs. The actual planting took place on June 2nd with volunteers from interested groups assisting. Lampton Stewardship provided a modified automatic tomato planter and an operating crew contracted by the Peterborough Stewardship Council. Willow Beach Field Naturalist members, Marg and Bob Short and I, volunteered. From 9am to 3pm we worked along with about 30 other volunteers.⁶ Marg dropped plugs into rotating canisters which in turn dropped each plug into a slot cut by a disc, while a hose from the vat watered the plug, and a trailing wheel closed the slot. In theory it sounds great. However, the sloping, uneven ground, compounded by rocks and washouts played havoc with the process. This is where the volunteers were required, following along to replant the plugs. As we moved up the slope to more level ground, rocks became fewer and the planter worked more efficiently. We were planting about 10,000 plugs per acre and by the time we left, we had planted about 30,000 plugs. The remainder were finished that afternoon and the next morning. On leaving, we were each presented with a number of mixed plugs for planting.⁷

We returned to visit the site in October and found some of the grasses doing well, but couldn't identify any of the wildflowers. We also noted that common weeds were doing well in spite of the "Round-up." While talking to Duncan Armstrong, the Peterborough Stewardship Council Co-ordinator, about the lack of flowers, he advised me that these, and most perennial wildflowers, spend their first year establishing a root system, and I look forward to this summer for results.

⁶ Russ brought along a number of photographs illustrating this work in progress.

⁷ Russ showed a photograph of his prairie garden which he referred to as looking like a burial plot. The bottom central plant was an evening primrose which grew about two feet tall with an abundance of flowers.

The long-term aspects of this restoration project call for:

- development of an interpretive trail system
- construction of an observation deck overlooking the wetland
- construction of duck nest boxes, bluebird boxes, and martin houses
- production of interpretive literature
- construction and placement of signage to describe the site

The total project cost is estimated at \$70,000, with the majority of the cost being 150,000 plugs at 40 cents each.

Numerous advantages to landowners for the establishment of tallgrass prairies to restore sites include:

- unobstructed view of site lines in areas where trees are not a viable option
- faster growth period over trees and shrubs
- lesser cost than trees and shrubs

Long range possibilities include holding forage trials for beef and dairy producers. As well, when periodic prairie burns take place to promote natural regeneration of certain species, these burns can provide a venue for training area fire-fighters in the control of grass fires.

Restoration projects, however, need support, and as more people become aware of the many advantages of planting prairie areas, our environment will improve through the diversity. For example, at the interchanges of Highway 401 where flowering crab have been planted and have died, prairie species could be introduced at a lesser initial cost with a greater chance of survival, and with a longer flowering season. Similar plantings could be applied to all undeveloped lands, informal parks, schoolyards, and even your own back yard. In your own yard you can save yourself time and energy by allowing prairie species to grow, or alternatively, by not mowing into corners or allowing the back edge of your property to grow wild, perhaps making only two cuts per year. Furthermore, when you gather twigs, build a brush pile in a corner where you do your composting. You might post signs for uninformed visitors, "BRUSH PILE" or "PRAIRIE GARDEN." By doing this you will be creating a more diverse ecosystem and you will be able to enjoy more birds and butterflies.

I really hope you will consider looking more closely at your environment – be selfish – create a sustaining environment for yourself and a legacy for future generations.

Editorial Addendum:

According to the Peterborough County Stewardship community news release (May 1999), this year's planting of an additional six acres in conjunction with last year's six acres, "will result in *THE LARGEST RESTORATION SITE FOR THIS ECOSYSTEM IN THE WORLD!*" [emphasis in the original]. We are indeed making history!

DEVELOPING A FAMILY TREE

by

Ken Ledgard, Cheryl Barlow, Jack Davies, Paul Morton and Debbie Elder
(Members of the Lakeshore Genealogical Society)

For our annual Heritage Week meeting in February, Ken Ledgard introduced the five panel members who presented the following discussion on developing a family tree. After offering their experiences and acknowledging sources, progress (backwards), and good fortune, the panel then answered questions from the audience.

Beginning with "getting started" presented by Ken Ledgard, Cheryl Barlow followed with a detailed analysis of searching for the Barnum family in ever-widening circles from Ontario, through Canada and the United States. Jack Davies expanded the area of research to Overseas, specifically to Wales. Paul Morton then introduced the facet of computer research on the Internet. Debbie Elder shared her method of compiling family information and treasures from the past. For those not already addicted to genealogical research, this presentation was an enticement to become "hooked."

Getting Started (Ken Ledgard)

WHY do people start on this trek into the past?

- Is it a hobby?
- Curiosity about one's forebears? Their lifestyles, occupations, education, or ?
- Looking for a "Blue Blood" connection?
- Maybe a WILL that they should have been named in?
- Childhood memories of whispered names such as Ken himself remembered along with tour coaches, a 1978 photograph of a street name in Wakefield, and an unknown great grandfather and other scattered details.

WAYS to start:

- Hire a professional genealogist. How would you recognize one? They talk and write funny! For example, "I am sending five children in an envelope;" or "My grandfather died at the age of three." This way is very expensive, no fun, and you miss all the frustrations. And then again, how do you know if what they give you is true?
- Or like the fourteen-year old boy who wrote to an Historical Society: "I do not want you to do the research for me. Please send me all the material on the Welch line in the US, England and Scotland. I will do the research."
- or tackle it your self.

WHERE to start?

- Make a list of all known living relatives.
- Call, write, or visit. Tour their attics, basements, photo albums, and old boxes. Take a tape recorder. Pester them until they say “enough already” or they emigrate and don’t leave a forwarding address! Start the TREE.
- If you have an idea of where your ancestors originally came from, get some addresses from telephone directories and write. You may receive such replies as “No, not one of us” and “Don’t want to know. Please do not write again.” Or, you will receive no reply at all.
- Now you are really curious! There must be MEAT here to flesh out the bones!
- Date and source all your notes and throw into boxes.
- Decide just what you want in your Tree: Just names and dates; or, also occupations, lifestyle, education, etc. You will need Birth, Marriage and Death Certificates as well as census information to get into all these areas.

PROGRESS:

- This is not an exact science, there is due process, but how well you progress is often more good luck than good research. A personal example will demonstrate this.
- In a book at a Hobby Show, I found “Connie” on Manitoulin Island researching the family name. I wrote and received a quick reply with a family Tree pointing back to a Ledgard in the mid-1800s. Connie also advised me to write to a chap by the name of “Reg” in Yorkshire who was known to be researching Ledgard. Reg in turn sent a Tree.
- After establishing a firm postal contact, Reg also suggested that I subscribe to a Yorkshire magazine called the *Dalesman*.
- I submitted a FAMILY QUEST in one issue and quickly received a reply from South Africa!
- In another issue of the *Dalesman* I spotted a Family Quest from a “Neville Ledger” in Australia who was researching Ledgard. I wrote to him. A Tree was sent back pointing to a “John Ledgard” of 1810 who stole lead from a church in Yorkshire in 1828. This John Ledgard was given seven years and sent out to the Penal Colony in Australia. Passing this information back to my contact in Yorkshire, Reg subsequently found the details of the charge, the trial, statements of witnesses, conviction and sentence. We also know John served his time, obtained his Certificate of Freedom in 1835, married, became a well-respected kangaroo farmer, sired eleven children, and died in 1888 at the age of 78 with a very complimentary obituary in the book. Working with Reg, both Connie and Neville (and perhaps others) found their place in Reg’s Family Tree.

HISTORY:

- This example demonstrates where and how you gather real history to add to your Tree. It gets exciting and you realize you are “hooked.” You also know why some family members don’t want to talk – who wants to admit to having convicts in their family!

PAPER:

At this point you have accumulated considerable amounts of paper and are considering dedicating a room or building an extension just for the project though all the while wondering what other sources you can tap.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Tackle only one line of the family at a time (that is, IF you can...).
- Remember, this is your MOST important project, and you mustn’t let MORE important projects interfere with it!

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North American Research (Cheryl Barlow)

Two years ago the Lakeshore Genealogical Society was approached by the Barnum House Foundation to prepare a history and family tree of the Barnum Family. Five members, including myself, agreed to take on this project, never realizing how overwhelming it would become. We started out with one file folder and ended up with three binders. It took us a little over one year. As part of the results we compiled a chart showing Eliakim Barnum’s ancestors and another tracing his descendants.

I am going to tell you here about some of the sources that we used in finding the information. There were five main areas in which we decided to concentrate our searches: 1) relatives; 2) libraries; 3) Latter Day Saints; 4) Registry Offices; and 5) Military records.

1. Relatives

Our first priority was to get in touch with descendants to find out what information they could give us. We had the address for a “Kit” Barnum whom we knew was a great-great-great-granddaughter of the Eliakim Barnum who built Barnum House near Grafton. She agreed to meet with us and brought her albums to show us. Kit gave us a copy of some handwritten notes by Hannah Ewing Barnum, Eliakim’s wife. From these we discovered that Eliakim was born in Franklin, New York on March 24, 1784. This piece of information was of particular interest to us as the notes in the original folder given to us stated that he was born in Vermont. Later, we found that his obituary confirmed New York State as his birthplace.

Through the telephone directory on the internet, we discovered that there were 80 Barnum families living in Canada and 200 in the States. We randomly picked some names

and wrote to them. We heard back from several who we were able to fit into our Barnum history. Our biggest coup was finding out through the internet that five other researchers were actively involved in researching the Barnum family. One of those researchers, Dayonne Barnum from California, was able to provide us with an immense amount of information on the U.S. and British Barnums. She had just published her own book. From Dayonne we discovered that Eliakim's ancestors had emigrated in the 1600s from England to Connecticut. We also found out from her how P.T. Barnum of Barnum and Bailey Circus was connected to the family.

Leigh Barnum, A great-great-great-grandson of Eliakim Barnum provided us with all sorts of documents, letters and pictures of the Ontario Barnums. Contacting relatives turned out to be a big success for us.

2. Libraries:

We wrote or visited four libraries: Cobourg Public Library; Metro Toronto Reference Library; Ogdensburg, New York Library; and the Connecticut State Library. All were very helpful and provided us with histories, cemetery records, marriage records, newspaper articles, census records, and so forth. In the Cobourg Library we found Eliakim's obituary in the *Cobourg Star*. Not only did it confirm that he was born in New York State, but also that he arrived in Haldimand Township in 1808.

3. Latter Day Saints:

The Latter Day Saints, or Mormons, in Oshawa provided us with an immense amount of information. With millions of family histories in their computer file index, the Mormons possess the greatest single source of genealogical information in the world. Their records are housed inside Granite Mountain in Salt Lake City, Utah. These records are being added to constantly by trained specialists who are microfilming parish records, deeds, probate records, marriage bonds, cemetery records, birth, marriage and death records as well as family histories around the world. Local branches where you can do your own research are situated in Peterborough, Oshawa, and Trenton. We found over 30 books and films relating to the Barnums here. We also found family tree charts dating back to English Knights.

The Latter Day Saints also hold numerous wills including an interesting one of Thomas Barnum Sr., Eliakim's great-great-grandfather, who died in Danbury, Connecticut in 1695. Although the will is very difficult to read, we were able to discover that he had had an estate worth 300 pounds which was divided amongst five sons and five daughters.

4. Registry Offices:

In Ontario we have Land Registry Offices in which wills, deeds, and many different documents can be found. We uncovered about eight wills for Barnums who lived in this area. According to information found in the abstract index book, we can trace all the transactions that took place on Lot 26, Concession I, Haldimand Township which is where Eliakim lived. This information also includes numbers which refer to deeds, mortgages, wills and so on,

which can be obtained for further information. For example, document numbered 345 reveals that Eliakim bought the property in 1812 from James Norris, Eliakim's brother-in-law.

5. Military Records:

At the Metro Toronto reference Library we found a book entitled *An Index of Revolutionary War Pension Applications*. In this book we discovered that Eliakim's father, Eliakim senior, and his Uncle Joshua, both from New York State, had applied for pensions. For ten dollars each, we were able to obtain these records from the Washington national Archives. Eliakim's father's application provides ten pages of pertinent information. When he applied for the pension, he was a resident of New York State. It states that he was born in Danbury, Connecticut on August 21, 1748. The record describes the battles against the British and of his brother Joshua being taken prisoner. It became clear from these documents that the Barnums were definitely not United empire Loyalists as some sources state – they fought for the other side.

Together these five sources provided the enormous amount of information which caused the single file folder to swell into three full binders.

* * * * *

Overseas (Jack Davies)

Ken Ledgard presented many good reasons on why you should start, and then how to get started. Cheryl Barlow has spoken about research on this side of the "pond". I'm going to talk about the other side of the "pond". As I feel that I am not an expert in this field, I'm only speaking of my own endeavours and experiences.

For years I knew that my "Davies" family came from Wales during the past century. When I was very young, my Grandmother Davies died and then my grandfather came to live with us. I remember him as a proud Welshman, and that is about all. Unfortunately, both he and my father passed away the next year. So I knew basically nothing about my Davies ancestors.

Fortunately, many years later, I came across my father's diaries which he had kept during World War I. During his convalescence in England in 1919, he visited an old aunt who told him some of his family's ancestry which he noted on a small page in a very small pocket diary.

About four years ago, I started some family research. All I could really establish was that the Davies came from a location called Ysceifiog in Flintshire, North Wales. As I found more information, I jotted it down and then made some very rough family trees. One was for my Grandmother Davies, whose maiden name was Shaw, and who came from Cheshire, very

close to North Wales. (Incidentally, my grandparents met in Hamilton when their respective families immigrated to Canada and ended up living on the same street.)

As I mentioned, my family trees were rather primitive. But then I bought a computer with all its bells and whistles. Later, after I had learned to open it up and shut it down, I purchased a genealogy software programme. Later still, I joined the local internet provider. Following that, I joined the Lakeshore Genealogical Society. I was progressing.

From my friends in the Society I learned of numerous web sites which yielded lists of dozens of names and e-mail addresses of people from all over the world who also were researching the same family names as I was. I started sending e-mails to many of these people giving a brief outline of my family history and asking if there might be any links or connections between my research and theirs. Most people were very kind and replied with some information, whether it linked up or not.

Then I discovered the CLWYD Family History Society of North Wales which I promptly joined at the cost of ten pounds sterling. This was most helpful as I was now able to learn more of my Davies family ancestors. Besides the Davies, I am also researching other branches of this family which includes "Edwards," "Ames," "Jones" and "Hooson."

I am also researching my Grandmother Davies maiden name, "Shaw," my mother's name, "Norsworthy," and my wife Joanne's family names of "Taylor" and "Ballantine" from Northern Ireland. One can go on *ad infinitum*. I will never run out of areas to research. I am now really addicted.

There are so many ways and places where this type of information can be obtained. Most of the important facts are still available, such as census records, birth, marriage and death records, but the trick is to find them. It is very time consuming, extremely interesting, and some times very frustrating. One of the most difficult tasks to overcome when researching these old records is locating where the farm, hamlet, or even township was located. For instance, the Parish of Ysceifiog used to be one of the largest parishes in Wales covering some 5,857 acres until 1848 when part was taken away to form the new parish of Rhea-y-Cae. In 1843 a section was taken to form Gorsedd, and in 1854, another part was taken to form Brymford. So, when researching a name or location, you must do your historical and geographical homework to ascertain who was where and when. Church and school records are just as tricky.

All of these contacts and sources have been wonderful and very helpful. While I will never be able to fill these trees very far back into the past, I am concentrating on expanding beyond just the names and dates to find out what made these people tick. In other words, I am trying to discover, for example, what their family life was like, what they did, and why they emigrated.

One thing that is most helpful – but one that not everyone might be able to do – is to visit the areas where their ancestors lived and raised their families. Joanne and I were most fortunate in that we were able to visit North Wales last autumn. We attended the annual meeting of the CLWYD Family Historical Society where we were welcomed like old friends. We visited the village of Ysceifiog where many of my ancestors lived, a village which has stayed still as if it were in a time warp. We visited the old parish church where we found one tombstone dated 1611, had lunch in an inn built in 1760 and which was the only commercial business in the village, toured some older homes, and visited with some of the older residents. Evidently, it seems I am related to a great many people in the area. I just have to be able to sort them out.

I have a print of an old map of the Parish of Ysceifiog which not only shows old pits and mines, roads and buildings, but also shows the names of many farms of that time, many of which still bear the same name. One of the most interesting aspects for me is that it indicates that these farms where my various ancestors lived are all within a couple of miles of the village and of each other. This helps me to understand more of the background and relationship of these ancestors.

So, please, don't let that big "pond" scare you off from trying to learn more about your ancestors over there. It is worth all the time and effort.



Genealogy on the Computer (Paul Morton)

My purpose is to give you a little insight into the ways a computer can be used to assist in your genealogical quest. Its uses include the research, storage, and reporting of data as well as communication for the purpose of obtaining the data. In particular, I will be focussing on research and communication using the Internet and E-mail.

Although I am sure that many of you already have a computer and are connected to the Internet, I am providing a brief explanation for anyone who is not familiar with them.

Internet is a worldwide network of interconnected computers, with data available on almost any subject you can think of, and accessible to anyone who has a computer equipped with a modem and an available telephone line. Search programmes provide the means to find data in a variety of ways. In genealogical terms, you might want to search by surname, by full name, by country, by town, by date, or any combinations of these or others. The search will return to you a list of websites which reference the data you were searching for, and you can then visit these websites for further details.

E-mail is usually associated with the Internet, although the two are not directly related, other than that they use the same communication network. E-mail allows you to send a note or

letter to any other e-mail user, with almost instant delivery, and, best of all, no stamps to buy. With these notes you can also send or receive attachments such as family history files or photographs. Many websites you visit will provide you with an e-mail address which will allow you to open communication or request further information.

A surname search may lead you to others who are researching the same family. Some Personal Web Pages contain entire family histories. However, if you don't limit your research by including other parameters such as a christian name, a spouse's name, a location, or whatever, you may have a return of thousands of websites, most of them unwanted. For example, a search of my surname would return sites about Morton's Salt, the town of Morton grove, Illinois, or many other irrelevant items. With a little practice, you will be able to select promising sites for further checking. A couple of clicks of the mouse will allow you to save the address of any interesting websites so that you can return to them at a later date without having to search again.

A good place to start is the **ROOTSWEB SURNAME LIST**¹ or RSL. Researchers submit their surname interests to a searchable data file, along with a time frame and known locations of a family history. Enter a surname to search this file, and you will get a list. You can be selective of the entries returned if you also enter a province, state or country code. Then, using the mouse to click on the 'Submitter' at the right side of the screen, you will get an e-mail address where you can contact this person.

When I started researching about three years ago, my father and all of his siblings were gone, and I had very little information other than his parents names, and that he was born and lived in Keswick, Ontario until he was 16 years old. In the RSL I found someone who was researching the Morton surname in the Keswick area. I contacted him, and after some further checking, we were able to establish a family relationship. Our great-great-grandfathers were brothers, making us fourth cousins. He was a serious, long-time researcher who was able to provide me with family history going back about 800 years. I have continued to build on this, adding many new names and other information.

Another excellent site is **CYNDI'S LIST**². This is a collection of over 40,000 websites with genealogical connections sorted, categorized and cross-referenced to make it easy to use. The main categories include many countries, and items such as churches, cemeteries, personal home pages, cultural sites such as Native American or Jewish, books, maps, and many, many others. Within each of these categories are further breakdowns. For example, if you are searching for family history in Great Britain, you can select sites which reference all of Great Britain, or select England which has 436 sites, Ireland with 304 sites, or

¹ The current URL [website address] is <http://rsl.rootsweb.com/cgi-bin/rslsq1.cgi>

² Current URL is <http://www.cyndislist.com/howto.htm>

Scotland with 224 sites. Within these are sites for each county, and within the county sites you will find reference to towns, cities, parishes, libraries, family history societies, professional researchers for hire, message boards, mailing lists, and so on. The information seems almost limitless.

If you are searching closer to home, the 1871 Census of Ontario³ has been indexed, and is available online as a searchable file. Select a county, enter a surname, and you will get the census records of everyone with that surname, in the county as of the 1871 census. The Ontario Cemetery Finding Association⁴ (OCFA) also has a searchable file of cemetery records for the province of Ontario. Since the submission of data to this file is voluntary, the file is not a complete record, but it is very large and still being updated. The data for all known cemeteries in Northumberland County has been submitted. I believe a similar file is also available for British Columbia.

The National Archives of Canada also has a searchable file of records relating to the Canadian Expeditionary Force of World War I. Here I was able to access, and request on-line, a copy of the Attestation Papers signed by my wife's grandfather when he enlisted in 1914, and which were then sent to me by regular mail. Other similar sites are available for other locations such as the Commonwealth War Graves Commission for the U.K. Many other sites hosted by the Federal and Provincial governments are also available and can be helpful in your Canadian research.

If you are looking for living relatives, Canada 411⁵ on-line will help with finding telephone numbers in both the white and yellow pages, and the INFOBEL.BE⁶ has worldwide directories. There are also places to look for postal codes, U.S. Zip codes, e-mail addresses, or people.

The last items to be discussed here are **Newsgroups** and **Mailing lists**. Newsgroups are like bulletin boards where anyone can post data, and anyone can read the data that is posted there. There are thousands of newsgroups on thousands of subjects. Genealogy is covered in many ways – surnames, countries, religions and so on – each on its own bulletin board. Unfortunately, like a regular bulletin board, they tend to get cluttered with unrelated, irrelevant and unwanted material. While there can be good information on the newsgroups, it is sometimes difficult to find.

³ Current URL is <http://www.archives.ca/exec/naweb.dll?fs&020108&e&top&0>

⁴ Current URL is <http://www.islandnet.com/ocfa>

⁵ Current URL is <http://canada411.sympatico.ca/>

⁶ Current URL is <http://www.infobel.be/inter/world.asp>

Mailing lists differ from newsgroups in that you must be a subscriber to have access to the available material. There is no charge to belong. You post your interests to the list via e-mail. Your letter is then sent to all other subscribers of that list, and their postings are e-mailed to you. Since your e-mail address is included, replies can be sent to the list, or to you personally. This gives you access to many others with similar interests, and asking a question can get you answers from many sources. The on-line discussions can be quite lively and interesting, even if they are not directly related to your research. A person known as the Listowner monitors the material, and anyone who persists in posting off-topic or objectionable material is warned and/or unsubscribed so that the material tends to remain on the subject. The Rootsweb site contains a long list of available genealogical mailing lists on subjects including surnames, countries, religion and cultures.'

This is just a small portion of what is available to you, and the saying "The more you look, the more you find" definitely applies to the Internet.

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## **Keeping Records and What Next** (Debbie Elder)

Boxes piled in a corner, in a closet, in the basement waiting until you retire to put the papers in some sort of order. Does this sound familiar? Here are a few suggestions for creating some order and getting a headstart:

- **Make Pedigree charts and/or Family Group sheets**
- **Store information in binders** using one binder per family name with dividers separating siblings and their children. In this binder you can store
  - a family group sheet per person
  - pictures and photographs
  - certificates [marriage, baptismal, and so on]
  - invitations
  - announcements of births, marriages, deaths, and so on
  - party napkins
  - locks of hair or curls
  - thank you cards for baby showers, and so on
  - family history including a map showing the location of the family home or farm, occupations of family members, where they attended school, who their friends were, what games they played, the church and church school they attended.

- **Computer Programme**

Software programmes such as “Brother’s Keeper” or “Genie” can be used to enter the information you have collected. Then a descendency chart can be printed or a family group sheet complete with a picture of Great Granny. Charts can be taken to family gatherings or mailed to distant relatives to have missing information filled in. These computer programmes also have the advantage of saving the information on a disc to share with other family members working on the same tree and to send a copy to the Church of Latter Day Saints to be shared worldwide.

- **Publish a Book**

Publish a book on a single surname (for example, Elder) or an area of family names (a township, county, or other geographical area).

- **Will**

Include your family tree in your will, leaving it to a family member you know is interested, or to a library or archives.

- **Date**

Most importantly, date everything you do for your own record keeping, and to facilitate the research of other people.

HAPPY RECORDING



**REMINISCENCES OF A CHARMED LIFE**

by  
Fred Sampson

**Abstract from *Historically Speaking*** (written by John Jolie)

**M**r. Sampson's personal war experiences began with his underage enlistment in England, followed by a stint as a glider pilot. His experiences included landing a glider on D-Day and escaping from Arnhem (*The Bridge Too Far*). After the war Mr. Sampson served for a few years in India before returning to civilian life. The next phase of his career found him working for two shipping companies during which time he acquired fascinating experiences and numerous influential contacts.

It was these contacts which led Mr. Sampson into working for the widow of Sir Harry Oakes. Oakes had been a gold prospector who had struck it rich at Kirkland Lake, and it was his money which was a prime factor in the early growth of Nassau in the Caribbean. In the Bahamas, Mr. Sampson's role as private secretary for (Mrs.) Eunice Oakes entailed paying the bills, overseeing the family's seven homes and to entertain the many notables who visited. These guests included Errol Flynn, Sarah Churchill, Irving Berlin, and many cabinet ministers from both sides of the Atlantic.

His current project is to erect, in front of the Port Hope Town Hall, a monument commemorating the local World War I hero, Frank George Waghorn, M.C., D.C.M., M.M. and bar. Waghorn's quiet lifestyle and unassuming manner had almost caused his wartime accomplishments to be forgotten, a situation that Sampson is working to correct.

## **SOME PERSONALITIES AND THE PERSONALITY OF CANADA**

by  
Keith M. Chinnery<sup>1</sup>

**T**he presentation, illustrated by slides of Canadian and Newfoundland postage stamps, started with the suggestion that stamps of the Victorian, Edward and early George the Fifth periods reflected, properly, the appearance of a receipt for prepayment of mail without regard to the nature or character of the country in which the stamps were being used. There were a few exceptions, such as commemoration of Confederation, and later, the Jubilee and Coronation issues of 1935 and 1937, and the Royal Visit of 1939. There were also “wartime” and “peace” issues, and political personalities, but many of the pictorial stamps provided somewhat sterile scenery.

It was not until the mid-50s that Canadian stamps changed their style, although even then there was an official look to many issues – including sports topics, nature themes and national resources, as examples. It was as if the stamps were a subtle reminder to encourage national pride. But from around 1963, more personalities started to appear, although still of an historical nature. But at least the stamps showed real people with a record of their accomplishments rather than “heads” and lifeless symbols.

Through the ‘70s and ‘80s, and subsequently, there were issues showing men and women from more modest backgrounds who had made a significant contribution to the evolution of the social and national character of the country.

So, while commemorative topics still appear on stamps, the recognition of the part played by individuals is more evident when compared to the style of even 25 years ago, and definitely when compared to the images of 90 years ago. The speaker summarized that today the stamps assuredly reflect a change in the character of the country at large, with the contribution of individuals taking equal space with national events.

The presentation was punctuated by questions to and from the audience, with observations and anecdotes from the speaker, resulting in an informative and entertaining programme.

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<sup>1</sup> President of the Cobourg Stamp Club

**HALDIMAND LACAC PRESENTATION  
AT THE GRAFTON VILLAGE INN**

by

Lidiane Northwood, Rosemary Dignam, Jane Kelly, John DeLaCour, Pam Kelly  
(Members of Haldimand LACAC)

**O**n Tuesday, 25 May 1999, The Cobourg and District Historical Society held its annual May Social at the Grafton Village Inn, in Grafton. Inn Manager, Bill Vronsky made the introductory remarks of the evening's programme with a brief overview of the renovations undertaken to restore the inn's original grandeur. From the original pressed tin ceiling in the west dining room to the cherry handrail reproduced from a fragment of the original one no details were overlooked. Following Mr. Vronsky's talk, five members of the Haldimand Township LACAC spoke about five individual buildings which could be seen from the windows of the Inn.

**Haldimand Municipal Building** (Lidiane Northwood)

Situated on the north side of Highway #2 in Grafton, Ontario, the Haldimand Township Hall, built circa 1858, is a mixture of Revival Romanesque and Classic designs. The original building was 'T'-shaped with a later addition added on the north east corner circa 1890-1900. Originally a recessed Victorian store front was present on the south east face which is now bricked with modern masonry. About 1890-1900 substantial interior changes were made, necessitating the use of tie rods through the building. The west portion of the building was used as a jail in the late 1880s and the east used as a bank in the early 1900s.

History of the building:

- 1858 Built as 'T' on plan  
Based on the design layout, we suspect that there was an open centre floor on the upper floor. Further research and investigation is required.
- 1890-1900? The northeast addition was built and four cast iron columns with column footings were added on the existing east west fieldstone wall.
- 1858-1900? The west part of the building was used as a jail. No further details are available.
- 1890-1900? Nine building tie rods and plates were inserted into the building.
- 1890-1900? This may have been the period for the creation of the upper stage and dance floor, including the tin tile ceiling.
- 1890-1900? The east of the building was made into a bank, complete with a brick vault.

- 1978- ?      The recessed commercial east end of the front was infilled with a non-compatible brick. Other changes included partitions created internally for the Township offices and washrooms, ground floor fire doors, and fire walls on the north wall of the dance floor.  
Through the years various exterior wall openings were infilled and altered. Two east columns were removed.  
Hand painted curtain on stage (from John Turner and Sons of Peterborough) was designated.
- 1998    infill was replaced with compatible brick

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### **Immel House** (Rosemary Dignam)

Just east of the Municipal Building (and now joined to it) is the “Immel House” as it is known, an example of simple Georgian residential architecture. With many changes over the years, it is difficult to visualize what it must have looked like. Under the present aluminum siding the original clapboard is preserved. Hidden behind the rather nasty front porch and aluminum awning is a very impressive neo-classical doorway with delicate sidelights and transom as well as much of the original hardware including a Carpenter lock. Only one of the original 6 over 6 windows complete with its original float glass panes remains at the rear of the building. The balance of the windows have been replaced with 1930s (?) sash windows.

The land was purchased in 1850 by a Scottish carpenter, James Aird, progenitor of the late John Aird, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario<sup>1</sup>. The Immel House was built in 1857, a little more than a year earlier than the Township building. Building codes as we know them today obviously were not in existence at that time as the two buildings were built a mere two feet apart. This was convenient when Haldimand purchased the property in 1992, making it relatively easy to join the two structures together.

The construction is stack-board (plank on plank) with planks one and a quarter inches thick by 10 inches wide offset to enable plastering of the interior. As a result of its “solid” construction, subsequent wiring throughout the interior of the building had to be mounted rather obtrusively on the walls. The original random width pine plank flooring was at some time covered with oak flooring, and more recently with inexpensive carpeting. While the original very deep baseboards on the main floor on the main floor have been painted, those on the upstairs – and the doors – have retained their original painting in well-executed “faux oak” finish.

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<sup>1</sup> There are still Airds in Haldimand Township and Aird Street (the exit from Highway 401 into Grafton) is named after the family.

In 1880, the Lawless family purchased the home, and in the 1920s the Immels bought the property. George Immel had an auto repair garage and car sales office in what is now the Grafton Village Inn's parking lot. The "Immel House" was designated in 1994, but no restoration has been done as the Township considered the Township Building itself was in greater need of both maintenance and restoration.

It is our LACAC's hope that we can convince the municipality to at least restore the exterior to its original classical style in the near future.



### **The James Lawless Store – 1835 – now Calder's Meats (Jane Kelly)**

This property was purchased by John Grover in the early 1830s. John Grover was one of the founding fathers of Grafton, which is named after his hometown, Grafton, Vermont. Shortly thereafter, this commercial property was purchased by James Lawless and remained in the Lawless family for over one hundred years. The location of the store was of particular importance in the early days as it was at the corner of the road which led to the Grafton Harbour.

This vernacular structure is influenced by the Greek revival architecture styles of the era. Its front façade mimics the temple form and its verandah was, at one time, supported by elegant columns. The walls are of the same stack plank construction as the Immel House. There is no framing; one inch planks are nailed on top of one another in a staggered or key pattern, which allowed for the adherence of interior plaster and exterior stucco. The original main floor windows and the upper story rosette window have been replaced. Although the exterior of the building is clad in vinyl, the original stucco, clapboard and delicate woodwork remain intact underneath the siding. While many of the early features of this building have changed, there are early photographs of the building which could provide a blueprint for future restoration.

The first house on the east side of the Old Danforth Road, an understated single storey originally built by John Grover, was the home of the Lawless family. The oldest building in Grafton, its shallow roof line, balanced five-bay façade, delicate cornice returns, 12 over 12 window sash and transomed door without sidelights are all indicative of a Georgian influence which remained popular in the area in the 1830s. The architectural integrity of the house has been preserved by its present owner.



## **The 1812 Heritage Building** (John DeLaCour)

I am going to tell you a LITTLE about what is now known as “The 1812 Heritage Building,” located across the street [from the Grafton Village Inn] on the Old Danforth Road, angling off Highway 2, Lott 22, Concession A.

Now, the name itself is a misnomer. Pat Poisson who has owned the building since 1977 and who must be given full credit for saving the building from its then sorry state and doing an immense amount of sympathetic restoration work, had previously owned a business known as “1812 Antiques” in Port Hope. When she moved the business to Grafton, the name was transferred to the new location. Thus 1812 should not be taken to indicate the date of construction, for it was definitely not built in 1812.

Actually, there is some confusion as to when the building was erected. The Grover family (of Grover’s Tavern fame) which owned the land from 1820-1872, may have built some structure on the land. However, the assessment rolls would evidence that Grover built the present structure for Josias Gillard when Gillard purchased the property in 1872. The pre-existing structure – if there ever was one – may have been destroyed by fire at some earlier time, or dismantled when Grover (who in addition to being an innkeeper, was also a lumber merchant) built, or rebuilt, or reconstituted, the present building.

Be that as it may, we do know the existing structure was certainly in existence sometime between 1872 and 1875 and was known as the “Gillard Block”, a name which generally denotes a commercial structure. It remained in the Gillard family until 1919. Josias Gillard was listed in the 1878 atlas as Postmaster and General Merchant with warehouses at both Grafton Harbour and the railway station. In 1919 the property then passed to the Lawless family where it remained until 1977 when Pat Poisson started to work her magic to bring it back to life. Noteworthy is the barbershop run by James Gordon for over 50 years, still there when Pat Poisson purchased the property. The faint etching of a Barber’s Pole is still evident in the transom above the door of the shop now known as “The Tole Lantern.”

It certainly is an interesting and very pleasing building having four distinct “stores” with two apartments above. Each store had its own stove and chimney. Having been in continuous use to this day – a rare phenomenon for a small hamlet such as Grafton – makes it historically significant. This significance was recognized when the building was designated in 1985 under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

The building is constructed of clapboard over stick frame. The eaves overhang with boxed cornices and sloping soffits with a plain wooden frieze below. On the ground level there are four separate shops (1812 Antiques occupies two), each having a large display window flush with the façade. There are twenty panes on the front of each display window and four on each side, a recessed panel below each window and a dentilated decorative frieze above the store windows. Beside each window top there is a capital and fluted pilasters. A

doorway is recessed about 20 inches beside each window. The doors are French doors with six panes, a wooden panel below and a three-pane transom above. The muntins in the windows are offset in the Regency tradition. The main door of the building, which leads to the second story, is centrally located in the façade and is the original hand-hewn Christian type door with six panels (sometimes referred to as the "Cross and Bible" door). The single pane transom above this door was originally divided as traces of the muntin remain. The second storey façade displays four rectangular windows with six over six panes. The window trim is flat and plain, with a simple wooden slipsill. The endboards of the building are plain with no windows on either end.

All-in-all, the building housing "The 1812 Heritage Stores" is a very charming example of the American vernacular prevalent in this Loyalist area of Ontario. It is a building we are proud of and thankful that it has found a sympathetic owner who is dedicated to its continued existence in an appropriate manner.



### **Memories of Haldimand** (Pam Kelly)

In the summer of 1992 when my husband retired, we moved full time to Grafton. The following year we became members of LACAC. That summer Doug Johnston came to a meeting to suggest that a history of the township be written. He was a former reeve and past president of LACAC. Later that year the idea of the history book resurfaced on an agenda one night and it was decided that someone on the committee should undertake the task. To my astonishment my loving spouse volunteered me for the job, and to my greater surprise, LACAC agreed, and suddenly I had a job. We have a saying in Jamaica, "Time is longer than a rope." A year or so later the Township purchased an old school house and by public meeting it was voted to restore it for use as a community centre and Council was looking for a chairman to undertake the renovations. I said: I know a man.

The book committee began with a few members of LACAC and Doug and Shirley Johnston. Shirley was a Harnden and the Harndens and the Johnstons have been in Haldimand almost from day one. We started thinking of those members of the community who might like to help, especially those whose families had longstanding ties with the community, so that we could tap into local stories and family histories. Doug and Shirley were excellent resource people for this. We also began looking at other histories of townships. Betty Porrett of fond memory photocopied the table of contents of many of the books that had been done in Ontario. Betty was Haldimand's local historian for years and was an enormous asset to the committee. We were interested in these tables of content, and their bibliographies in order to get an idea of what sort of material we should be trying to garner, and where we would be likely to find it. These were the first steps that we took.

We then sent out press releases with tax bills, and to newspapers in the surrounding areas to alert residents to what we were about and asked them for contributions of photographs, family stories, and so on. The response was slow, and it took repeated notices in church bulletins, tax bills, etc. to get our message across. However, as word spread the stories started to come in. In this fashion the book evolved into two parts, one researched by our committee and one donated by the community.

In the meantime our committee grew. In the fall of 1994 we had a garage sale to raise funds to defray expenses, and we received cash donations from individuals. We also had a donation box set up in the township which Jane Kelly designed and built, and people dropped in small change. We appointed a secretary, Jean Rogers, and a treasurer, Murial Braham. We sort of divided up the township and the topics that we wanted to cover, and delegated responsibility to various committee members. People worked at the library, the lands office, the Archives of Ontario, and with the Township records. As people did their research, there was a lot of overlap and material was shared. However, this sort of research was not everyone's cup of tea. Some committee members spent hours ferreting out photographs and interviewing people. All of these tasks took time and were necessary. Because of this I decided that no one committee member's name would appear in the researched part of the book. Those committee members, however, who donated family stories were noted in the reminiscence section. And those non-committee members who donated material for the history, as in the case of Vernonville and Brookside, were acknowledged. For the rest it seemed fairer to let the whole community be responsible for the researched sections.

We also had three guest writers who did complete chapters for us. Karen Walker offered us a chapter on slavery that she had previously researched. Grant Robertson was invited to write a chapter on architecture, which he very kindly and aptly did. Gordon Dibb offered to do a chapter on the prehistory of the area for us. Then his firm was invited to investigate a proposed site for a water treatment facility in 1995. To everyone's surprise a very important archaeological site was discovered. So he wrote that up for us as the opening chapter of the book.

We looked at various publishing houses and selected Boston Mills Press, mainly because we had seen a history of Whitchurch Township which they had done and we liked everything about the book – the size, the layout, and so forth. So we asked them to come to talk to us about publishing a book. John Denison of Boston Mills came to one of our meetings and spelled out what we could expect from them, and what they would expect from us. Based on the Whitchurch book, we decided ours would be similar in length and obtained a price quotation from him. We told him our target date of the fall of 1997 and he told us how much lead time they would need. We then worked toward having the manuscript ready by June 30<sup>th</sup>. The book cost \$45,000 plus tax for 2000 copies.

We had to have half of the total cost in order to have the book published, and the balance thirty days after the books were delivered. We went to Council to ask them for a



bridging loan. At this point John Denison had given us a mock-up of a couple of pages which looked wonderful. I took these to Council when I went to ask for the loan. Council asked a number of questions about the book, but it was easy to see they were excited about it. I explained that they would be the anchor men on this loan, and that I would have to find another \$23,000 to pay off Boston Mills by the end of December. Hopefully, this amount would come from sales, but failing that, from loans from the community. Initial sales would be applied against this amount, and after that, to their loan. They agreed to this arrangement.

There were many crises and dramas, but somehow it all became sorted out, the book was published and delivered at the end of November 1997 in time for Christmas sales. We had our book launch at the Grafton Village Inn on December 7<sup>th</sup>.

Sales paid off Boston Mills within the designated time, and to date we have repaid close to three-quarters of our loan to Council, and are on the way to paying off the rest this year. We now have a web page, and I am confident that our sales through this will continue through the year. The Whitchurch book sold for \$35 when it was published in the 1980s, and I think our book is very well priced at the same amount. It is a limited edition which will in time be a collector's item. The price of \$35 includes GST.

## HISTORICAL SNIPPETS

by  
John Jolie  
Editor, *Historically Speaking*

• November 1998 – Number 144 – **The Cobourg Connection**

Most of Canada's Arctic was discovered in the search for the missing expedition of Sir John Franklin. Earlier in Franklin's career, he had gone across Canada and then headed up to the Arctic coast. On one trip, he and his party camped at the mouth of Factory Creek, regaling the locals with stories of his travails.

In the 1840s, the men in the Franklin expedition, searching for the Northwest Passage, vanished, as did their ships, the *Erebus* and *Terror*. The massive hunt saw more men and ships in the Arctic than had ever been seen, or would be seen for the next 100 years.

In 1930, Cobourg's Major Lachlin Burwash found some remains of the doomed expedition – ropes, canvas, barrel staves, coal and metal. (Burwash was also in the party that flew over the North Magnetic Pole for the first time.)

As Franklin's ships have yet to be found, maybe another Cobourger might strengthen the Cobourg connection to the Franklin story by finding them. With tongue-in-cheek, our newsletter editor adds: "Unfortunately, our Historical Society Explorers Fund is depleted and we cannot sponsor anyone to continue the search!"



• February 1999 – Number 146 – **Local Trivia**

Cobourg District Collegiate Institute West and Cobourg District Collegiate Institute East both have the word 'Collegiate' in their names. The use of the term 'Collegiate' came from Egerton Ryerson's 1871 legislation which designated most former "Grammar Schools" as "High Schools". Only a few superior schools were to offer "classical subjects – the languages of Greece, Rome, of Germany and France, Mathematics, etcetera, so far as to prepare youth for professions and especially the universities" (Stamp: *The Schools of Ontario*). These latter schools were to be called "collegiates". Later, in 1885, collegiate status could only be given if there was a suitably-equipped gymnasium.

Remember the "good old days?" In 1876, the province set up intermediate High School Examinations to decide promotions to Form 3 (Grade 11). In fully one-half of all Ontario high schools, not one student passed!



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• March 1999 – Number 147 – **Fighting Progress**

**I**t is human nature to stick with the old ways. Persons trying to change the way things were done often met stiff opposition. That sounds like today, doesn't it? The *Cobourg World* of June 17, 1921 reported on the opposition expressed to the paving of King Street. Indifferent to the horse manure, the dust, the mud and the ruts that were the nature of the road, opponents to a cement surface voiced their concerns to the council. They presented three points: 1) Cobourg could not afford the \$110,000 to pave King from William Street to the east limits of town; 2) if the Town waited for a few years, construction costs would surely fall; and 3) there were also complaints that the disruption would drive visitors away.

The Town went ahead. Within one year, people's attitudes had changed. Concerned citizens presented a petition to pave Division Street all the way up to the C.N.R. tracks (*Cobourg World* June 9, 1922). I guess progress did not turn out to be all that bad.



• April 1999 – Number 148 – **An Outing the Salvation Army Would Never Forget**

**T**he Arlington Hotel, built on King Street on what is now the north end of Victoria Park, was the place for high society before World War One. It attracted wealthy and famous patrons from as far away as Texas. On one summer evening our local Salvation Army was singing outside the Arlington. To their surprise and delight, a guest from the Arlington stepped outside and joined in their hymns. That guest was the great Italian tenor, Enrico Caruso!

Caruso is gone. The Arlington is gone. However, if you walk along Walton Street some day, you may note the houses at 309, 311, 313 and 315 have a similar appearance. The bricks on these homes are said to be from the old Arlington Hotel.