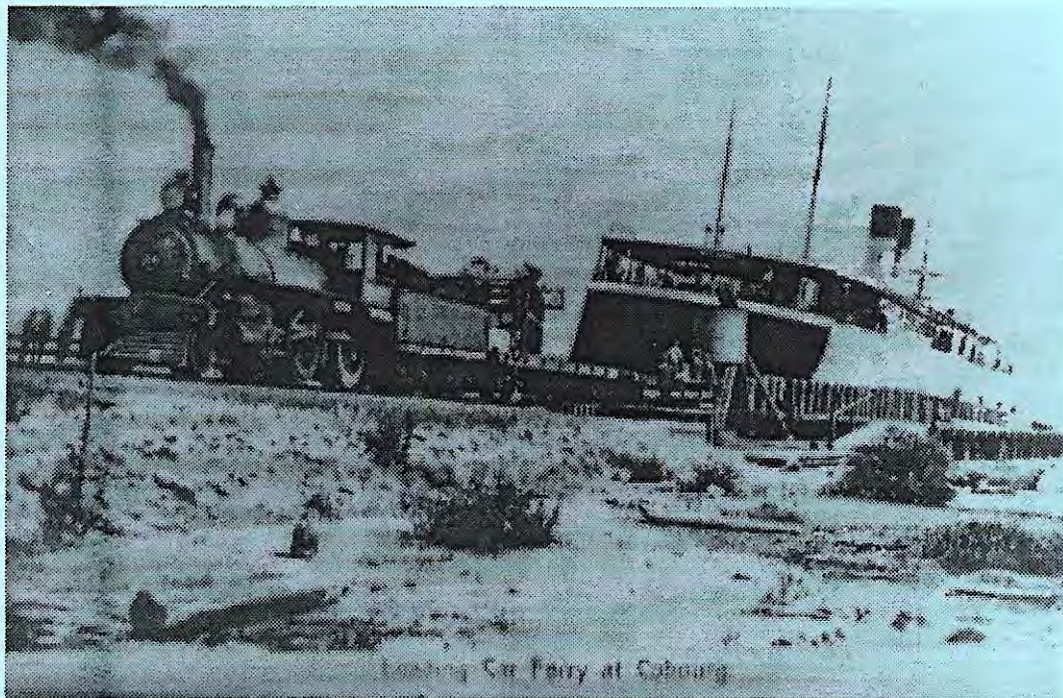
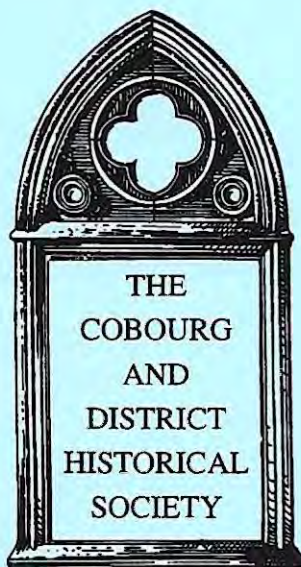


HISTORICAL REVIEW 17



Loading Car Ferry at Cobourg

1999



2000

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**THE COBOURG AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY
PROGRAMME OF SPEAKERS
1999 - 2000**

1999

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Cover Photograph
Loading Car Ferry at Cobourg

The Cobourg and District Historical Society Archives 1998-2008

COBOURG HISTORIANS

by
Colin Caldwell

My topic tonight is labelled, The Major Cobourg Historians Down to Herodotus. This may sound a bit odd, but I shall explain myself in a minute. What I really want to talk about is the way in which Cobourgites – to a greater extent than we normally imagine – invented Ontario History.

We often forget that most university level subjects have a very recent background. English, for instance, wasn't considered sufficiently serious until the beginning of this century. Before that it was thought that one spoke about English as literature at the dinner table, not at the college seminar. Quite frankly, English wasn't dead enough. In order to be really serious in your studies, you had to be talking about Greek or Latin, or even better, Babylonian, as that was really dead.

So, too, with History. Roman, fine. Medieval, iffy. Egyptian, no problem. Ontario? You have to be kidding!

Now, back to my title.

At the University of Toronto, where I did my studies in Classics – among the snobbiest scholars you ever came across – we constantly had to read titles such as "The Major Historians from Herodotus to Plutarch" or "Livy to Ammianus Marcellinus." Each had their own style and their own way of adding to the history of their own times as well as adding to the way in which history is understood and told.

To be brief, though all ancient historians told a consistent story, Herodotus recounts many versions of the various events. Thucydides cleans up the various stories and gives us only his own version. This makes it difficult for modern historians to judge the truth. Every historian would prefer as many alternate versions as possible. Herodotus is always known as the Father of History; he is also known as the Father of Lies.

I have decided to review the history of the telling of Cobourg's history with an eye to the way in which historians from Cobourg, quite remarkably, influenced the way in which the history of Ontario, as a whole, became treated.

Although the first Cobourg historian was Sandford Fleming, who put a small historical squib on his 1847 map, I'm not really taking him into account. It is, however, interesting to note what he does not mention.

Until at least the 1850s, no one really thought that Ontario, or Cobourg, had a history that wasn't only current politics. This changed in 1852 with the formation of the Upper Canada

Historical Society, founded in St. Catherine's by Egerton Ryerson, William Hamilton Merritt (the Welland Canal builder), someone named John George Hodgins, and two others, George Strange Boulton and Henry Ruttan, both of Cobourg. Through their influence in the legislature of the province of United Canada, they nominated a man named George Coventry, at that time the building inspector of Cobourg, to begin collecting documents on the early history of Canada West for the beginning of a national archives.

Coventry had worked as a clerk for Merritt and had also published a newspaper called the *Prince Edward Guardian* – “a bad concern” – as well as having written a history considered “inaccurate” of the 1837 Rebellion. He collected all sorts of documents which a later generation deemed “relatively unimportant” and he died, unmarried and impoverished in Toronto in 1870.

I would like, here and now, to propose Coventry as the patron saint of Cobourg historians: he collected useless documents, died unmarried and impoverished.

The next big boost to Ontario history began in the 1870s, right after poor Coventry's death. Following Confederation, there was a new burst of enthusiasm for reading about the War of 1812. Here Ruttan stepped in and wrote a detailed memoir of his own part in that war. Only excerpts from it have survived, but from what I have found of it, it is quite an impressive work. His description of the battle of Lundy's Lane, where he sustained a disastrous wound, is very well told.

I don't know whether or not Boulton wrote his memoirs – he was known to have had an impressive war record – but as he died in 1864, he may not have felt the need.

Writing about 1812 was considered a patriotic gesture. This led quite naturally to memoirs and reminiscences about the early days of pioneer settlement. In a previous talk, I brought to your attention a memoir recorded by one Nell Gwynne who recorded the recollections of the local Ash Family for the then *Cobourg World*. I have yet to discover more about this amiable antiquarian, but that was about 1885. Hers was a style typically used to examine the past, wherein you tried, in a leisurely way, to discover the romance of the pioneers (often your own ancestors).

Then, in 1852, William Renwick Riddell was born in Hamilton Township, I believe just west of Cobourg. Riddell studied at Victoria College, taking his B.A. at 22, the first science graduate. Later, during the time he studied law in Cobourg, he lived at the bottom of Ontario Street in the house now known as Illahee Lodge. In the course of time he became one of Canada's most famous jurists, a position he regarded seriously. Once, when asked about retirement, he remarked that the government needed every cent it could get, and why should they hire another judge when he was still perfectly serviceable.

He also commented on the notorious habit of some people to elevate their names. Of his own, he would say, "It's RIDDle, dammit, not RiDDELL!"

What interests us here, is that he was also a prolific writer on Canadian history. When the Ontario Historical Society was established in the 1890s, Riddell began churning out articles for their review, in many cases writing just about the entire thing himself. One biographer said that before Riddell, there were gifted amateurs; after him there were academic specialists.

Riddell kept going until February 18, 1945. First buried in Mount Pleasant Cemetery [Toronto], his remains were later re-interred in his native Cobourg.

And it was from Cobourg that Riddell's most gifted pupil, Edwin Clarence Guillet, also came. Everyone here knows of Guillet. His family is one of the oldest in Cobourg. He received his B.A. at the University of Toronto, and his M.A. at McMaster University, after which he became a librarian in Peterborough. A true student of Riddell's, he then set out to make the study of Ontario history a truly scientific discipline.

Guillet wrote a prodigious number of books about pioneer life, primarily about the early days in the province of Upper Canada and Canada West, mostly along the lines of social history. Most importantly he established a rigorous set of standard procedures for gathering and evaluating all the evidence. As he was not writing narrative history, we cannot accuse him of suppressing alternate views, as we can with Thucydides.

In 1934 he began writing, as a sideline to his regular work, a column on local Cobourg history. Here we can see him at work, particularly as we have preserved in the library photocopies of his private correspondence with a local Cobourg antiquarian Andrew Hewson, the postmaster, who lived at Henry and James Streets.

We can observe him as he diligently checks every old legend, comparing it with other sources, and then carefully compares the events described with other versions of the story, rejecting those which do not correspond with better authenticated ones, until arriving at the most trustworthy. The result of this can be noted in his book on *Cobourg 1798-1948*. While in his private correspondence he examines many opinions, in the published version you find only the end result, a habit much criticized in Thucydides. Although this seems to be Guillet's normal habit, he had an extra incentive in the shape of Idell Rogers.

Idell Rogers was of Loyalist descent and tended to emphasize, in very colourful language, the glorious exploits of her ancestors. She, too, wrote for the local papers in Cobourg and her methods of research consisted of uncritically accepting anything which was related to her.

This practice enraged Guillet. For example, on the occasion of the publishing of *Cobourg 1798-1948*, there was a furious row between the two carried on the front pages of

The World, in which Guillet accused Rogers of calling him a liar. Rogers had used old family legends to show that Cobourg "must" have been founded in 1791 or earlier, perhaps in the immediate aftermath of the American Revolution itself. Guillet argued that the earlier stories were mere hearsay and civic glorification. Whereas he had trusted only first-hand, documented evidence to establish a solid date of 1798 as first settlement, though acknowledging that it was entirely possible that individuals may have wandered around here before that date.

Idell Rogers disappears from sight after that, but it must be said that she had a tremendous effect on raising people's awareness about Cobourg history. I suspect that many well-known anecdotes, both accurate and inaccurate, are due to her.

Guillet achieved his goal of setting the standards which brought the study of Cobourg History up to the level considered worthy of regular university courses. His galaxy of writing left, according to Robertson Davies, "a treasure trove of works from which scholars and novelists will benefit for years to come."

By the way, I always assumed his name was Edwin C. Guillet (pronounced GeeYAY). To my surprise, I found his personal correspondence signed E. Clarence Guillet. Wandering into Kelly's [the Homelike Inn] one day, I met someone who knew the family well and declared, "He was always putting on airs, that one. The higher he got, the fancier the name got. We always knew he was just Ned GILlet."

We now come to the last of our great, published historians, Percy Climo. Born of another old Cobourg family, Percy grew up during the First World War, living first over his father's shop near King and George Streets, then in the west end near the lake. Graduating as an engineer, Climo worked for most of his life in Timmins and St. Catherine's, while retaining a lively interest in his beloved Cobourg.

Climo is responsible for at least two indispensable achievements. After his retirement to Colborne, he wrote a series of articles on local history for the *Chronicle* followed by innumerable articles on Cobourg for the *Cobourg Star*. His other magnificent work was that of compiling several volumes of clippings extracted from the *Star's* huge archive of newspapers going back to 1831. These he arranged on different themes: the waterfront, the militia, county fairs, and so on. Not content with that, he also alphabetized tax returns, census forms, and court appearances. No local historian can but bless him.

In summary, the story of the storytelling of Cobourg's history involves some of the most influential historians in the growth of the study of Ontario's history. It was Cobourgites who dominated the Upper Canada Historical Society; it was a Cobourgite who kept the fledgeling Ontario Historical Society going in the early part of the century; and it was a Cobourgite who rewrote the standards for research and added that professionalism which brought Ontario history to the university level.

In a way, too, Cobourg historians have gone back and forth between the two ancient historians I have named this presentation after. The earlier, nineteenth century, historians often had the same, not too critical, approach to their sources as the earliest Greek historians, the precursors to Herodotus.

We then get two fastidious historians, Riddell and Guillet, who remind us of Thucydides, with their rigorous research yet their irritating habit of thinking that their answer is correct, so all other versions and records are ignored. Historians have nothing by which to judge their arguments.

We then are blessed with Percy Climo, who, though he never wrote a grand narrative history of Cobourg, collected all the records and published them for posterity. As I said before, no historian could but be in his debt, and through this I consider him something of a Herodotus.

This combined heritage brings me to a statement I made the first time I appeared before this body, that you must not fall into the trap of believing that Cobourg is all yours. It belongs to all of Ontario, and is only yours to preserve.

**HISTORY AS A MEANINGFUL WAY OF INTERPRETING MODERN DAY
PROBLEMS: WHY IS AMERICA MORE VIOLENT THAN CANADA?**

by
Rick Scott

Rick Scott, who recently retired as History Department Head at MacDonald Collegiate, presented a thought-provoking talk on the differences between American and Canadian Societies.

From the colonizing of the eastern seaboard to the peopling of the west, Americans have exhibited a "frontier" attitude which emphasizes personal rights and autonomy over centralized authority. Their heroes were often villains, men such as Daniel Boone, Jesse James, John Dillinger and others. Defined by the Declaration of Independence, the literal interpretation of a man's right to bear arms reflected, and continues to reflect, a general distrust of government to safeguard their rights. Thus, on remote frontiers, individuals or localized communities stood firm on their legal rights to defend their properties.

In contrast, the United Empire Loyalists, loyal to King and government, were defined by, and continue to accept, the ruling of a central authority. As a consequence, our rights and responsibilities have evolved differently which Scott feels makes Canadians less likely to resort to violence.

John Jolie, Newsletter Editor

**MEMORIES:
THE SOCIAL HISTORY OF WORLD WAR II**

by
Members of the Cobourg and District Historical Society

November has become the Society's "Time for Remembrance," and as this is the last November of the century, all of us are part of this remembrance. While as one we recognize that sacrifices have been made to ensure that we live in peace, war is not just political history, but is also social history affecting all of us. By viewing war as social history, we can consider a number of aspects from at least three perspectives:

1. actively participating;
2. experiencing the war as civilians;
3. as Canadians at home.

From the Archives, we have a collection of letters written to a local young woman during the Second World War. As a collection, there is much to commend it: the provenance is local with named individuals; the time period is specific; the letters have all been retained in their original envelopes; and the donor has provided a labelled photograph for virtually all of the writers. cursory examination suggests that the letters have little content, but much can be gained nevertheless.

The letters have been written primarily by "boys" of 16 and 17. For many this was their first time away from home, and certainly their first experience of the brutality of war. The messages are generally positive in nature, whether to keep up the spirits of the writers or the readers is difficult to know. Mention of fond memories and poignant remembrances to family members suggest an urgency to keep in touch with those at home. What is clear is the obvious concern about censorship, for there appears to be no mention of locations, activities, or concerns.

Censorship concerns are further revealed by the envelopes which bear post marks from overseas yet give no clue as to the whereabouts of the sender. Locations are indicated only as "Field Post" or "Canadian Overseas." Others bear evidence that they have been opened by examiner number *** or by a censor. On one air letter is a certificate signed by the writer which reads, "I certify on my honour that the contents of this envelope refer to nothing but private and family matters." Instructions for signature state, "Name Only."

The stationery, ranging from plain paper to air letters to airgraphs and even an envelope turned inside out and re-used, provides another element of the war experience. Much of the paper used for these letters was supplied by a host of service sponsors. These include the Salvation Army which imprinted the admonition "Keep in touch with folks at home" on the top of each sheet, the YWCA, The Beaver Club (London, England), Canadian Legion War services, Knights of Columbus War Services Overseas Service, and the Armed Forces Air Letters with special "Christmas Issue." Supportive reassurance came with every printed sheet.

All in all, this is an important collection for gaining insight into one "grass roots" aspect of war participation.

War has affected all of us in some form or another – from such linguistic metaphors as "fighting a cold," "losing the battle against cancer," an "invasion of privacy," and so forth, to knowing a relative suffering from shell shock. Architecture and the post-war building boom can be noted in the erection of "war time housing," which provided both jobs and "affordable" accommodation for the returning veterans. As a service reward/benefit, veterans were given the opportunity to attend university, a possibility not previously open to so many. As their numbers swelled the universities, their war experiences were felt in other ways. Freshman hazing decreased or disappeared – these men had experienced an initiation far more critical than the boyish escapades of recent high school graduates. On the positive side, new foods, broadened horizons and an urge to travel were introduced by returning veterans. And the baby boom began with all its later ramifications.

Those who remained in Canada recall rolling bandages, knitting socks, gloves and balaclavas for the Red Cross; packing boxes for the men at the front; buying war bonds; militia training; ration coupons (and the sparking of artificial wants and hoarding); writing endless letters to loved ones serving overseas; and effecting small economies: saving the foil from cigarette packages; women using leg make-up in place of stockings, the back seams drawn on with black pencil; wearing shorter skirts to save on fabric (but having longer jackets which used more material!); and the list continues. Some families, such as Cobourg resident Dorothy Rolph, lovingly billeted British children while bombs fell on their homes in England. Women joined the workforce, and the fame of Rosy the Riveter became a common image, while teenage girls became Farmerettes replacing male farm hands. German shopkeepers, effigy burning, and an invasion of Japanese beetles roused uncertain fear in impressionable young children. School boys became adept airplane spotters, recognizing innumerable plane silhouettes high in the sky. Blackouts in cities, enforced by volunteer wardens, had a profound effect on youngsters who responded to their first exposure to bright city lights with awe.

The following personal memories were shared by various members.

✧ **Alf (Cy) Winter** wanted to put one thing straight: that although some people dwell on the bad things which happened, that there were many positive aspects. His story begins just after he graduated from High School when he was hitchhiking to the west coast with \$62 in his pocket. Arriving in Sudbury, he slept in a hay stack. Next morning he ran into Charlie Leonard from Cobourg. For a time, Alf worked in the nickel industry in Coppercliff until October when he injured himself. Returning home, he was informed by his parents that his brother had enlisted. Went back to Sudbury, but quit two days later to join up as well. He joined the 47th Battery, serving four years overseas. On his way to Aberdeen, Scotland, he asked directions from a WVS lady, who asked if he had eaten breakfast. She had her daughter take Alf to a canteen before he headed off. This brief encounter had greater manifestations as this young woman later became his Scottish war bride. During his one and a half years in Italy, Alf took

advantage of the time to see the country. He was outside St. Peter's when Rome fell. Was present when the Pope was carried into St. Peter's. Saw Rome, Florence, Napoli, as well as France, Belgium, Holland, England and numerous monuments in London. As far as Alf is concerned, the war taught him a lot about life. He met beautiful people who are still friends. As he says, "The war did me a lot of good."

✧ **Vern White** experienced many lasting memories. He related an anecdote about a friend who was shot down and was taken a Prisoner of War in mid-July of 1943. This friend was in very bad shape, unshaven for a month, and with his head right on his shoulder. Despite this, he retained his sense of humour by referring to his state as: "See what Charles Atlas has done for me." Although "Al" received some medical care from the Germans, it was an American flyer from New England who used his limited medical and physiotherapy training to help Al carry on a near normal existence. After that, Al proved himself to be a great fix-it man. After the war, Vern and Al came home together from Germany on the same ship. In 1975, Vern visited Al at Baddeck, Nova Scotia for two or three days. Vern asked Al if he had ever been able to locate the American who had worked on his neck. Al replied that he was still trying to find him. Around 1997 in Sydney, Nova Scotia, Al appeared on TV show dealing with Hogan's Heroes. After panning that programme, he mentioned that he was still looking for "his hero" who had helped him so much. The same night Al received a phone call from a woman in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, who said she thought the man in question was her nephew. Al asked if he was a doctor, but was told that he was a colonel in the Air Force. After 30 years, they were in touch once again. Al died shortly thereafter.

✧ **Godfray De Lisle**, while a young boy in Buckingham, Kent, England, his community was on the bombing route to London. Before the war started, he used to see planes with "swastika" – it was the daily mail flight to Croydon [south of London]. Godfray remembers the Prime Minister on the radio declaring a state of war; of twelve airplanes dispersing mushroom like parachutes, but which were anti-aircraft fire puffs; and of the wail of sirens sending them off to the shelter three or four times a day [more stimulating than the lessons which were interrupted!]. In the dining room of their home they had a Morris table to be used as a shelter. The table was steel with wire mesh sides and bedding so that you could sleep. However, through the French windows the search lights, noisy ack-ack guns, and all the activity proved to be very exciting to a young lad. Early one morning, Godfray heard a clang in the garden. This appeared to be one half of a big bomb with fins, part of an incendiary bomb cover. He crept out and set the round end toward the house. On spying it, his parents became very nervous at first. Innumerable incendiary bombs, which were duds, landed on their sides in nearby fields and the kids, hiding in these fields, figured out how to open them up, and how to use drugstore chemicals to light them up! As the blitz intensified, Godfray went to his grandmother's home in Cambridge close to the Marshall's Flying School. There pilots were trained on Tiger Moths. As the air dome was a dump for damaged planes, the kids used to crawl under the barbed wire, unscrewed parts in the cockpits which they traded at school. And although they watched damaged planes limping back from a raid, and there were tragedies, to young boys war wasn't scary, but rather a very entertaining diversion.

✧ **Tom Parken** remarked that for him, living in Scotland, the effects of the war were minimal. The most he can remember happening is that a bomb may have killed a sheep and the kids looked for pieces of the bomb. He had a marvellous time, and rationing didn't bother him. Later, he entered the National Service for a two year stint, and heeded his older brother's advice, to "Keep quiet. Never volunteer. Stay in the middle rank and don't get noticed."

✧ **Bud Barr** was one of a group of boys who hung out at Number 10 Downing Street, later the site of Tom's Motel. They learned to make pipe bombs and shake the neighbours. On Thursday the 16th of May 1938, Bud was making a pipe bomb, holding it between his feet, when a spark set off the bomb, seriously injuring his feet. He was sent into Toronto General Hospital where he became a celebrity drawing as many as twenty-five doctors around his bed to observe their first instance of shrapnel. Gangrene necessitated further operations for skin grafts. As a consequence, Bud couldn't be accepted into the Armed Services. As one of the very few males left, he ended up running the Church Hockey League and looking after all the girls [!]. Remembers rationing for tires, sugar, butter, canned salmon, and no cars were produced between 1942 and 1946. What is now the Ryerson Guillet Room in Victoria Hall was used as the Red Cross Room during the war years.

✧ **Alf Winter** added that there were parades when the servicemen left town. At the British Hotel there were lots of dignitaries present including Bill Carey and Max Bennett's brother Jack. The Chief of Police reportedly told these young men that they could "Do anything you want. Tonight is your night. But remember, leave a little bit of the town because you're going to come back to it."

✧ **Eckford Gow's** family were caught in Rio, South America, during the war, and couldn't get back as the Canadian Ambassador wouldn't permit their return. His mother knitted and sewed, as well as singing in a choir to raise money for the war effort. His parents received letters from both sets of grandparents who lived in Kingston and Whitby. One letter from his grandfather was a long time in coming. When it finally arrived, it had been opened by a German submarine and now had a swastika on it. Fetched a good price at an auction. Brazilians rationed sugar, coffee, clothing, shoes and appliances. Also recalls the day the first Atomic Bomb was dropped. In Rio, the Copacabana Beach is three and a half miles long with a mosaic sidewalk and lamp posts to light up the sidewalk. During the war, the seaward side of the lamps were painted black but light from the other side continued to reflect off the apartment buildings. Eck was fortunate to meet a number of Canadian and British seamen and to board a number of visiting warships such as the *Exeter*, *Ajax*, and others. Three of these had been involved in the Graf's Spee. A shell had gone right through one of the ships, and you could see from one side to the other.

✧ Other members added brief comments and memories. All in all, we shared a number of memories, anecdotes and laughter, a most memorable evening.

[Compiled from notes taken by Anne Burnham, Dorothy De Lisle, and Cath Oberholtzer]

**January Meeting - 2000:
MEMBER'S NIGHT: LOOKING BACK**

With great success, Colin Caldwell emceed the "Show and Tell" portion of our first meeting of the new century. Members were invited to bring an object or document of historical interest which could have local relevance or from further afield; its importance could be at any level from personal to global; its age anywhere from recent to the very distant past. Presentations were to be as long – or as short – as the speaker wished. The range of items was superlative beginning with Mary and Leslie Rimmer who brought both a family heirloom sampler embroidered by a girl of thirteen and a set of four petit point pictures which narrated a young woman's betrothal and wedding. Jane and Peter Greathead shared their collection of inkwells which had been used by Cobourg's earlier personages. Beverly Henderson read some headlines and news items including prognostications about the year 2000 from newspapers of the '50s as well as from a book written in 1888 by her husband's progenitor who was a business man in Toronto. A legal document dating from 1581 led Murray Dillon into a discussion about how he received the deed, how similar the wording remained on indentures until the 1970s, and just what 'indenture' meant. Marion Hagen also showed two deeds for this area - one dated 1803 - and an early 'o-fish-al' souvenir of Cobourg. This paper 'fish' opens to reveal 12 tiny postcards of Cobourg scenes and buildings. Marion Hagen then generously donated these items to the archives. Graham Stratford gave us an update on the Campbell family of Campbelltown (near Grafton). Mary Smith sent a child's book and two framed pencil sketches of dolls and their mothers. These originals were used to illustrate the accompanying book published in 1901. A very old blue and white plate, one of a treasured set belonging to the Porter family, had been given to Joyce Porter by her brother-in-law.

Godfray De Lisle opened his presentation by showing the members an invitation to a lady to attend a funeral. This was followed by a photograph of the woman, as well as, a single sheet of paper which served as a passport for her and her brother, and other papers pertaining to this ancestor's life. Dorothy DeLisle presented items belonging to her father during the First World War, including a letter from King George V and an unused checkers game which was designed for use in the trenches. Dorothy also showed us an exquisite embroidered tissue wool and silk-lined christening outfit. Anne Burnham brought unidentified photographs taken by a Cobourg photographer.

A short break gave everyone time to look at Anne's photographs as well as a number of unidentified ones from the archives. The third, and final, part of the meeting was a small auction with Bud Barr acting as a very able auctioneer selling items no longer required in the Archives. Thanks to Bud's efforts and some generous bidders, we realized a profit of 70 dollars to be used for the purchase of archival supplies.

Many thanks to all members who helped to make this a memorable evening.

THE BURNHAM FAMILY: FROM A to Z

by

Anne Burnham

The first thing I want to say is I'm not finished. I have scratched the surface and documented the results. I have a lot of data (several thousand names) which I assure you I'm not going to share completely, a lot of unanswered questions, and more leads to follow. So the task will continue for some years yet, including the task of discovering my errors. That's your clue to read this, keeping in mind that I could be wrong.

I want to take you time traveling. We will make three main stops: 1100; 1600; and 1750 - 1850. I hope you enjoy this trip locating Burnhams from A to Z.

Let's begin by zooming back to 1100. William the Conqueror certainly made a big impact on British history. He placed his Norman battle buddies as Lords where Saxons thegns [thanes] once ruled. The change was not a welcome one but William succeeded in gradually mixing the two cultures. On the coast of Norfolk in England lay about seven little places with names like Burnham Thorpe and Burnham Overy because Burnham means roughly, village by the river. Before William the Conqueror arrived, a wealthy Saxon thegn named Tocha was happily ruling this little area from his manor of Burnham Thorpe or Bruneham Torp. In William the Conqueror's entourage was one William, Earl of Warenne of German lineage. His lesser important relative Walter le Ventre was also along for the ride. William, Earl of Warenne was given the area around Burnham Thorpe to rule under King William. The Earl of Warenne put his kinsman, Walter le Ventre, in the manor to look after his property it would seem. Walter changed his name to suit his new home and became Walter de Brunham or de Burnham. Last winter I visited the seven little Burnham villages in Norfolk and in the Burnham Thorpe church found a little history book. It lists Walter De Brunham as its patron in 1144. The next patron listed is Philip de Burnham in 1198. Eventually the manor fell into the Calthorpe family by virtue of Calthorpe's marriage to a de Burnham daughter. It is thought by all those I know researching the Burnham family that this story is the beginning of the use of Burnham as a surname.

As we get back into our time machine to head to the 1600s, we will pass by several other Burnhams that pop up through the next centuries, though we do not know yet how they connect to each other or to us.

- Alardus De Burnham- Dean of St Paul's cathedral died 1216
- John de Burnham - Lord Treasurer of Ireland and Canon of St Patrick's - no date
- Thomas de Burnham - Justice Itinerant (Justice Trailbaston) 1304-1305
- John de Brunham - Chamberlain and Mayor of Lynn (now King's Lynn, near Burnham villages) 1355-1391
- Margery Burnham Kempe- daughter of John Burnham had religious visions and prophecies beginning in 1344

- Robert de Burnham - Chamberlain and Mayor of Lynn 1401-1408
- Robert Burnham - clerk of St Gregory's parish, Norwich, Norfolk, circa 1549

Now we are in the year 1620. Religious unrest stirs the country of England. Exploration of the New World has progressed and the religiously unhappy begin to emigrate to New England. The Mayflower and others ships set sail for Massachusetts in Sept 1620. The passengers on the Mayflower were mostly Pilgrims who felt persecuted for their beliefs. Surprisingly there was only one death en route on the Mayflower. In November they sighted Cape Cod but even after landing, they lived on the boat until December 22, 1620. Tragically almost half of the colony died before the summer of 1621. Relations with the Indians were cautiously good. In November, 1621, 35 more of their congregation arrived with nothing to aid their settlement, not even good coats. The Pilgrims were not rich but humble, unpretentious people. The Puritans, were more "of position" in society and therefore did have some pretentiousness. They began to emigrate to New England in the 1630s to live out their ambitions which rule under Charles I made impossible. In 1628, about 400 people sailed to Salem, in Massachusetts Bay, where only fishermen and traders had been before. As conditions in England worsened, more Puritans decided to come and many non-Puritans came with them. In 1629, 1000 people, cattle, and provisions set out on 16 ships. The first four ships arrived in late June and enjoyed a feed of strawberries. But they were too late to plant crops, and insufficient food over the winter led to disease and death. In 1630, governing bodies were established with Puritan members being the only voters allowed. Most colonists were not members of the Puritan church. Quakers had arrived at this point, too, and raised the ire of the Puritans by occasionally running through town naked. In the centre of town was the common where cattle and sheep grazed, protected by the surrounding homes. Fields lay outside the ring of homes. The first building usually built was the Meeting House in the common. The stocks and the pillars were raised there as well in full view of everyone's home.

At this point we'll bring in the Burnham brothers from Norwich, England and the story of their eventful voyage on the *Angel Gabriel*. The *Angel Gabriel* was a typical boat of the time of Elizabeth I and James I, a slow sailor, but staunch and seaworthy. It was built by Sir Charles Snell for Sir Walter Raleigh, and in it Raleigh made his second, and last trip to Guyana, South America. (That was in 1617 or 1618 prior to his final arrest, a victim of the caprices of Queen Elizabeth, and his subsequent execution for treason on the 29th of October in 1618.) While the Gabriel would make a grotesque figure today in comparison with our modern vessels, its adequacy for its day is evidenced by the fact that it was chosen by Raleigh for his South American voyages. On the 23rd of May 1635, the vessel *Angel Gabriel* commanded by Captain Andrews, the vessel *James*, and several other vessels left Bristol with colonists for America. Aboard the ships were included 100 passengers, 23 seamen, 23 cows, and three suckling calves.

The early records also mention the names of Captain Andrews three nephews, John, Robert, and Thomas Burnham, who accompanied their uncle on the trip. Whether his nephews were along for a pleasant round trip, or if they were bent on seeking their fortunes in the New

World, we do not know. John was 17 years of age, at the time they sailed from England, Thomas was 12 years old and Robert 11. The two vessels, *Angel Gabriel*, and *James* touched at Milford Haven, Pembroke County, South Wales and then set sail across the Atlantic, arriving off the coast of New England about the same time. The *James* lay at anchor off the Isle of Shoals on the coast of Maine, the *Angel Gabriel* off Pemaquid, Maine. The great storm of August 15, 1635 struck them. The *James* was torn from its anchor and was obliged to put about the sea. After a two-day struggle it reached Boston. At Pemaquid, the storm was frightful with the wind blowing from the north east and the tide rising to an unusual height, in some places more than twelve feet. It was succeeded by another tidal wave still higher, finally resulting in the destruction of the *Angel Gabriel*.

The Reverend Richard Mather, one of the distinguished passengers on board the *James*, was fleeing to America to escape religious intolerance. He became minister of Dorchester and was the father of Increase Mather, president of Harvard College, and grandfather of Reverend Cotton Mather, Minister of Boston. Mather kept a journal of his voyage, which has been preserved. From that journal was taken the following quotation:

May 27, 1634. While at anchor [in Wales] Captain Taylor, Mr. Maud, Nathaniel Wale, Barnabas Fower, Thomas Armitage, and myself, Richard Mather went aboard the *Angel Gabriel*. When we came there we found diverse passengers, and among them some loving and godly Christians that were glad to see us. The next day the visit was returned.

June 4, 1635. Five ships, three bound for Newfoundland Viz: The vessel, *Diligence* 150 tons, the vessel, *Mary* 80 tons, and the vessel *Bess* (*Elizabeth*), and two bound for New England viz: The *Angel Gabriel*, 240 tons, The Vessel, *James* of 220 tons.

Monday June 22, 1635. After having been delayed for 12 days, we sailed. The next evening we lost sight of the three vessels for Newfoundland. The *Angel Gabriel* is a strong ship and well furnished with 14 to 16 pieces of ordnance, and therefore our seamen rather desired her company, but yet she is slow of sailing, and we went sometimes with three sails less than we might have, so that we might not overgo her.

Wednesday June 24, 1635. We saw abundance of porpoises leaping and playing about the ship, and we spent some time that day in pursuing with the *Angel Gabriel*, what we supposed was a Turkish pirate, but we could not overtake her.

June 29, 1635, ye Lord sent forth a most terrible Storme of rain, and

ye Angel Gabriel lying in at anchor at Pemquid, was burst in pieces, and cast away in ye Storme and most of ye cattle and other goodes with one seamen and three or four passengers did also perish therein, besides two ye passengers died by ye way. Ye rest having lives given ym.¹ The Angel Gabriel was the only vessel which miscarried with passengers form Old England to New, so signally did the Lord in his Providence watch over the Plantation of New England.

The rest of the story is told by survivors of the *Gabriel*. The gallant ship went down in the storm of August 15, and John Cogswell and other passengers, including Captain Andrews and his three nephews, escaped to the shore by means of rafts and boats. Practically all their belongings were lost, but among the valuables saved was a chest belonging to the Burnham boys. A portion of the passengers erected tents and the rest of them were taken to Boston in a bark commanded by Captain Gallop. Returning to Pemaquid Bay, he took Mr. Cogswell and his family, and the others, and landed them in Ipswich the latter part of August. The Cogswell family would stick by the Burnhams for many years and even intermarry.

By September 1635, there is record of Robert Andrews being "licensed to keep ordinarye [an inn] in the Plantacon where he lives during the pleasure of ye court." He was allowed to sell wine by retail "if he do not wittingly sell to such as abuse it by drunkenness." This is the earliest reference to a public house in the records of Ipswich.

So the young Burnham boys grew up quickly in this new world and did very well. The youngest, Robert moved eventually to Boston and then to New Hampshire. He left quite a few descendants, leading to the birth of Daniel Hudson Burnham, a world class architect who created buildings in Chicago, New York, London and Washington.

Brothers John and Thomas both fought against the Pequot Indians in 1637.² John Burnham was granted land for his services. John is known as Deacon John for the position he held in the church. Deacon John had a prosperous life with many children and ample lands.

Thomas Burnham became a selectman (or 'town councillor' as today's equivalent) in 1647 at age 24. He was made sergeant of the Ipswich Company in 1664, made ensign in 1665, and commissioned as lieutenant in 1683. He was deputy to the General Court for 1683-1685, and on several town committees. In 1667, he received permission to erect a sawmill on the Chebacco River. At the time of his death he had ample land to divide among his sons. He and his wife, Mary Lawrence, who also emigrated with her family in 1635 on the ship *The Planter*, had five sons and seven daughters.

¹ Author notes that this last word may possibly be a typographical error on her copy.

² Today it seems like an unfortunate set of minor events and circumstances that lead to mistrust on both sides and finally a massacre of the Indians.

One of these sons was named John and he lived at the time of the Salem Witch trials. Salem, Massachusetts is right next door to Ipswich where all the Burnhams were. Nearby were the Burnham's friends and relations, the Choates. By the time of the witch trials, John had a son John who married Sarah Choate. Both these John Burnhams signed a petition. One source says the petition was to release John and Elizabeth Proctor from prison having been accused of being witches. John Choate had married John Proctor's niece only two years before. Another source says the petition signed by the two John Burnhams and two Choates, and circulated by a Pastor Wise requested the end of the trials. Unfortunately for John Proctor, the trials were not ended soon enough, for he was hanged in August, 1692 and the hanging of witches ended in 1693. His wife, Elizabeth Proctor, survived this fascinating and crazed horror of the late 1600s only to discover all her husband's property had been confiscated, and she was rendered both innocent and penniless.

We jump ahead to the 1750s and one Nathan Burnham. Nathan Burnham of Ipswich, Massachusetts married Hannah Choate, and together they produced seven children. In 1746, he was impressed into army service. On March 13, 1758, Nathan was commissioned a First Lieutenant. His unit was in a force of British regulars and provincials under General Abercrombie. They marched against the French Canadian fort at Ticonderoga, then commanded by General Montcalm. Abercrombie, without waiting for his cannon to arrive, ordered his men against a French barricade situated at a ridge a mile from the fort. Then followed a frightful slaughter in which British soldiers, tripping on briars and entangled in fallen trees, were shot down easily by the hidden enemy. Nineteen hundred were killed and wounded in Abercrombie's folly. The Reverend John Cleveland wrote in his diary: "8 July 1758, Lieutenant Burnham received a mortal wound in his bowels." And on the next day: "9 July 1758, Lieutenant Burnham dead." This left poor Hannah at age 30-something with seven children ages 2-13.

Asa Burnham was 8 years old when his father was killed. He later married Elizabeth Cutler and moved to Dunbarton, New Hampshire in 1772. He served as a selectman in 1789 and 1795. In 1807, after many of his children had traipsed off to Canada, he is noted for his determination to stand by his values and principles. For example, when a new tax had been devised to pay wages of the pastor, Asa refused to pay, and his cattle were seized to satisfy the tax obligation. In 1810, however, the town voted to refund his taxes and costs. It is said that Asa customarily made a gift to the Minister much greater than the cost of the tax but objected to the taxation of all, believing it should be a voluntary matter.

Within about 15 years, at least 14 Burnham relatives would cross into Upper Canada. Asa, Zacheus, John and Mark are the four brothers well-known to some. Lesser known are first cousins Aaron Greeley, Niram, Fanny, and Nathan Burnham as well as Aunt Hannah Burnham who married Jacob Choate, her third and fourth cousin, and their children, Jacob, Elizabeth and James. There is also weak evidence of Asa Zacheus, Mark and John's sister Hannah being in the area. Their sister Hannah Burnham would have been the right age to have been the Miss Hannah Burnham who taught on Walton Street Port Hope from 1815-17.

Aunt Hannah Burnham and her husband Jacob Choate brought their family first to Glanford, Ontario (near Hamilton). From 1796-1798, according to E.C. Guillet, Jacob is said to have:

walked back and forth to his old home planting crops in the spring and returning to harvest crops in the fall. In 1798, he brought three brothers and two cousins named Burnham with him, the party travelling with ox-sleighs, though the oxen had to proceed singly most of the way over the narrow Indian trails. The sleighs carried tools and other baggage while the men walked alongside, and each night they camped wherever they were when darkness came. For several weeks they were ill with smallpox, contracted when they called at a house to replenish their provisions. Upon reaching the Niagara River the men effected a crossing above the Falls by lashing a pole across an old flat-bottomed boat, fastening an ox's head to each end of the pole, and forcing the animals to swim across, thus propelling the scow and its passengers and baggage.

Later the whole family arrived in Amherst, Hamilton Township and settled finally in Hope Township. By 1815 Jacob had built an inn where the Queen's Hotel would be later. By 1817, Jacob was adding to the inn. Jacob was present at the first recorded session of Township Council. He was made a pound keeper.

Jacob and Hannah's daughter Elizabeth Choate came with her husband Zacheus in 1801. They, too, had trouble with spring conditions and their sleigh, slowing their trip from Kingston to Cobourg to six trying days.

Son Jacob Choate, who married his first cousin Fanny Burnham, was well known for his stock breeding. He would import cattle and seed from the States. Young Jacob also had a sawmill and owned land jointly with his first cousin Zac, but was known mostly for his interest in good agricultural practices. His children Nathan and Aaron would also make an impact on the community as, respectively, a master breeder of cattle and horses breeder and a postmaster.

Jacob and Hannah's son, James Choate, did not stay long in Northumberland heading first to the London area and then to Michigan.

Cousin Aaron Greeley, son of Susannah Burnham, was a bit of a restless man. Trained as a teacher in New Hampshire he was one of the first "Burnhams" to arrive. He soon learned to survey under the tutelage of William Hambley, working in Hamilton, Haldimand and Cramahe Townships. Aaron settled in Haldimand Township after obtaining a verbal agreement with Governor Simcoe that Aaron would receive land for bringing settlers into Haldimand. This contract seemed null and void after Simcoe left the country. Aaron was in debt after building the requested mills and handing out provisions to those who came to settle Haldimand. In 1797, with partners Keeler and Danforth, Greeley took the list of settlers to the new

government officials who were hardened sceptics believing the settlement lists to be falsely padded. Aaron and partners were very disgruntled! Despite this, in November, 1797 Greeley was sworn in as Provincial Deputy Surveyor. In 1803 Aaron married Margaret Rogers. Two years later, Aaron could not handle the debt load any longer and left for Michigan. He left Margaret to dispose of their property. But Margaret was working on another project as well. In 1806, Susan Burnham Greeley was born with dad still in Michigan. Later in 1806, with a baby less than a year old, Margaret, with the aid of her brother-in-law Jonathan Greeley and with Liberty White, a friend of her husband's, embarked on a raft on Lake Ontario to meet her husband, now an American Government surveyor. Margaret and baby Susan survived their trip and for a time the family stayed in the same place and at least two sons were born. In 1811, Aaron trekked to Washington to make a report and collect fees. War broke out in the mean time and he was captured on his return trip. The next few years saw moves to Fort Erie and New Hampshire, and Aaron was never in one place long. Margaret decided to return to the Grafton area with her four children, to look after the land she had inherited from her father. Upon hearing of Aaron's death in 1820, I don't know if Margaret was relieved that she could now stay put which she did, or saddened because Aaron seemed like a nice enough guy, he just wasn't around much. Margaret and Aaron's daughter, Susan, never married, taught 75 years of Sunday School in Grafton, and lived to be 98. Not much is known about Susan's brothers except they did not live a long life like she did.

Nathan Burnham appears to be the son of Nathan, grandson of Lieutenant Nathan killed at Fort Ticonderoga. Nathan came from New Hampshire, and can be found in Haldimand Township from at least 1811 until 1831 when he died. He married a Hamilton Township girl, Johanna Ferguson, and had ten children. After Nathan's death, sons Thomas and Franklin, who received the lions share of the inheritance, stayed for about four years. Franklin is known to have moved to Michigan after that and had a family there. I do not know the fates of the other children or their mother Johanna.

Niram Burnham, I believe, is Nathan and Fanny's brother. Niram came from New Hampshire about 1812. He worked for Cousin Zacheus for the first few years, even farming the property where I now live. By 1825, he had enough to buy Lot 18 Concession 2 from Zacheus and farm for himself. Niram's house still stands on the Danforth Road, east of Ontario Street, having been nicely restored. Niram and his wife Mary had six children. Two died young and their memorial tombstone was found years later on Niram's property. Only daughter, Sarah, died at the age of 22 in 1833. Thomas Burnham never married. Andrew Jackson Burnham and David Moral Burnham married, farmed, had children and are buried in the Heritage Cemetery of St. Peter, Cobourg.

Mark Burnham was the youngest of the four Burnham brothers, 16 years younger than the oldest, Asa. He seems to have arrived in 1812 and immediately set up shop as a merchant in the village of Amherst which his older brothers helped create. Mark married Sophronia Gilchrist, daughter Dr. Samuel Gilchrist and sister to four medical doctor brothers. (One of whom, John Gilchrist, married Mark's cousin Lucretia Gore). Mark liked business, but he also

liked music. In 1832, after moving to Port Hope two years earlier, Mark wrote the hymn "Port Hope" which was re-recorded in 1981. He was a music teacher as well as a composer and merchant. Many of Mark's compositions were for church use and are now kept in Trent University's Archives. By 1857, Mark had flour and saw mills at Keene as well as a mill in Port Hope. By this time it is likely that his beautiful home, Dunbarton Hall, had been built. Although Mark was attending services at The Children Of Peace, a splinter group of Quakers, he is known to have donated money to the building of the Catholic Church in Port Hope as a good neighbour gesture.

Inside Dunbarton Hall is a grave marker for Mark and Sophronia's baby daughter, also called Sophronia. They had a son who also died young. However, son Peregrine Maitland Burnham became a lawyer, later dying in the United States in the Civil War. Son Robert Wilkins Burnham became a medical doctor in his mother's family tradition. He died in Michigan in 1880. Henry Hamilton Burnham farmed on a number of scattered properties in our area. He was on the Board of Harbour Commissioners being instrumental for improvements in the Port Hope harbour, including getting the channel deepened. Henry was a member of the board of the Midland Loan and Savings Company, eventually becoming President in 1908, after being Vice President for 23 years. Henry was Mayor of Port Hope from 1890-1893. Henry married Agnes Johannah Amey and had one son and six daughters.

John Burnham came to this fair land I think about the same time as Asa and Zacheus. John seems to have been the quiet brother. He settled immediately and dug into farming, sticking to what he knew best. He is listed as having a prize winning farm at fair time. He made himself available to the Agricultural Societies. He and his wife, Hannah Harris Soper, daughter of Myndert Harris and widow of Seth Soper raised ten fine children. Although daughter Margaret married Edward Wilson, the stories of daughters Christina and Maria are unknown. Son Silas headed for York and became a merchant there, having married Clarissa Jane Bastedo. Charles Burnham married Mary Hugill of Hamilton Township. Harris Burnham married Marion Ann Cecilia Sisson. Elias Burnham became the first lawyer in Peterborough in 1833.

George Burnham became a medical doctor by studying in New York. He had landed in Peterborough by 1836. He was a coroner, and a dedicated doctor often driving in a 40 mile radius of Peterborough to treat patients. George was a freemason, superintendent of schools and a school inspector. At one point, he was chair of the Peterborough School Board. He married Adeline Spalding of Grafton and had four children survive to adulthood. One became an ophthalmologist, one a member of Parliament, one married a doctor, and one married a minister.

William Burnham, another son of John Burnham and Hannah Harris Soper, stayed in Port Hope and had a series of different jobs. He was a commission merchant, an agent for American Express Company, insurance agent, farm machinery dealer, and probably more. He married Susannah Bastedo and their son Stanley was Mayor of Port Hope 1918-1920.

Zacheus Burnham, son of John Burnham and Hannah Harris Soper, became a lawyer and was Judge of the Ontario County Courts for 42 years.

Asa Burnham, born 1775, came to Haldimand Township first about 1796. He started out doing some surveying, probably with his cousin Aaron Greeley. By 1801, he had built a sawmill in Hamilton township where the village of Amherst would erupt, and was farming here. By 1803, he was a Justice of the Peace and he had sold his land in Haldimand Township. Zacheus, Asa's, brother lived and farmed with Asa for a time. Prior to 1807, Asa persuaded the Legislature in York to build the new District courthouse on his land. A store soon followed, then hotels and houses. In 1807 also, Asa was involved with the establishment of schools. There was legislative action to provide a Grammar (high) school in each of 11 districts. Newcastle district's school was in Hamilton Township. The trustees were Asa Burnham, Leonard Soper, Elias Smith Sr., John Peters, Elias Jones, John Bleeker and the master, David Ovens. The cost of fees and lack of elementary schools kept attendance low and even by 1817 attendance had only climbed to 30 students. Therefore in 1811 a petition was sent to the legislature to essentially put the money into elementary schools instead. This petition was signed by Justices of the Peace, Asa Burnham, Richard Lovekin and 49 others. In 1812 Asa conveyed to the public two acres of land for use of the gaol [jail] and courthouse. Sadly Asa was drowned on his farm March 10, 1813. I often wonder what amazing things he might have done alongside his brother Zacheus had he lived past the age of 38. His son Asa was five years old at his death. There is weak evidence of other siblings who may have died young and one, Richard, who would have been born after his father's death, and who may also have died in his 30s. However, Asa's Irish bride Sarah Lovekin did a good job raising their son/s on her own.

The Honourable Asa Burnham received his early education in Cobourg but later went to New York for further studies. His mother, Sarah, had sisters who were living in New York. When Asa was baptized at age 20, his godparents were his first cousins the Reverend Mark Burnham and Achsa Burnham, both children of Zacheus. At age 24, Asa married Elizabeth Wilmot daughter of another prominent family in our area. Elizabeth is said to have been both a flirt and an autocrat.

Asa was very involved in agriculture all his life. He was, for example, the first in our area to try growing turnips. However, he is more famous for all the committees he sat on and all the governmental positions he held. I have attached an appendix which shows the chronological sequence of his accomplishments. What strikes me about Asa is how much the presence of death pervaded his life.

- Asa's father died when he was 5.
- He was only 27 when his mother died having seen only one or two grandchildren and none of her son's wonderful accomplishments.
- In 1839, while on the Cobourg Board of Police, Asa and Elizabeth lost two young daughters to scarlet fever.
- The next year Asa's uncle John died.
- While serving on the Legislative Council in 1844, Asa's brother Richard died.

- As Chairman of the first public school board, Asa buried his infant son Joseph.
- As a representative for West Northumberland in the Legislative Assembly, Asa buried his teenage son Samuel Street.
- Also in 1852, a murder of an Indian named Simon Cornstalk took place in Asa's woods. A Negro couple living in the woods were accused of the murder which is said to have resulted from a drunken quarrel. I'm sure this disturbed the family. Were they aware that people were living and getting drunk on their property?
- While county treasurer for Northumberland and Durham, Asa's favourite uncle and mentor, Zacheus Burnham died.
- Also another baby daughter named Martha was buried the same year, 1857.

Much time would be spent in the next few years with Asa and his cousin, the Reverend Mark Burnham performing their duties as executors of the huge estate of Zacheus Burnham. In 1859, two years later, teenage daughter Mary was gone. In 1863, back on the Legislative council after being Mayor of Cobourg, Asa buried his Aunt Betsy, who had likely been like a mother to him. I trust the highlight of Asa's career was being made Senator at the time of Confederation. The Senate resolved upon Asa's death, almost seven years later, to adjourn for the day out of respect for the deceased. Four senators gave moving speeches of tribute. Meanwhile, back in Cobourg, there was the biggest funeral the town had ever seen. Carriages followed in a procession over a mile long. Shops and houses were locked up so that people could attend the funeral. A Cobourg Sentinel reporter estimated over 2000 people stood round his grave. Phrases like sterling, upright character, goodness of heart, held in great esteem, amiable, exemplary life flowed from people's mouths. Even Father Timlin at the Catholic church paid tribute to this Church of England man as unostentatiously benevolent, having a kindly disposition and a broad and liberal mind.

Of Asa's children who survived him, I'm disappointed I don't know more. Son Asa was a restless one having many short-lived jobs, I believe. He came home to die in 1900 after a life of wine, women and song. He was not enthusiastically received by his steady farming family-man brother William Lemuel. Daughter Hattie seems to have inherited the Burnham's outgoing charisma as the newspaper praises her profusely at her death at age 25. After many compliments she was given a four-verse poem.

Not much else is known, save for a lovely story about the Prince of Wales that involves Annie daughter of Asa and Elizabeth. The speaker in the story is Lizzie Wilmot, Annie's cousin. With all its detail about Victoria Hall I thought it worth sharing.

The most thrilling event of my schooldays was in 1860 when the young Prince of Wales, later Edward VII visited Canada. Cobourg was a flourishing town of some importance and was included in the Prince's itinerary. The new town hall, a very modern and grand building, had just been completed and it was decided to open it with a reception and ball for the visiting Royalty and his suite. Everybody

in town and the country around was agog over the impending celebration. New gowns, decorations, surmises as to who should dance with the Prince were topics of the day. Aunt Burnham [Elizabeth Wilmot, Mrs Asa Burnham] who was somewhat of an autocrat decided that although we were a bit young, my cousin Annie and I should attend the Ball. We were to have new frocks exactly alike, although we were just sixteen and not 'out', and we were to go the Ball. It was an opportunity that should not be missed. My cousins and I were innocently pleased with ourselves in our snowy grenadines, made with modestly round necks, little puffed sleeves and long frilled skirts. We wore white satin slippers and our parted hair was crowned with little wreaths of artificial pink rose buds. Many handsome gowns and wraps had been ordered from the city [Toronto] and locally Mrs. Connells, with her long curls plastered on each cheek had fitted many fluttering hearts with taffetas and tarlatans and heavy embroidered satins. The Prince's party came from Belleville by boat in the summer afternoon, and there were few properly cooked dinners in Cobourg that evening, as mistresses, maids and cooks flocked to join in the welcome. The Prince and his party were entertained by the Hon Sydney Smith, and Colonel Boulton acted as aide-de-camp during their brief visit. A room adjacent to the Ballroom in the town hall had been set aside for the Prince's party, richly furnished with beaded chairs and couches loaned by Mrs Weller. The table had a beautiful centrepiece of silver, filled with huge peaches and delicious-looking green and purple grapes which came from Niagara. Visitors thought they were exceptionally fine.

NEVER SHALL I FORGET THE EVENING OF THE BALL! When the Burnham carriage called for me, it seemed so overflowing with finery that I refused to get in and crush my flounces. "I shall walk" I said. And I flew off before anyone could stop me. I had not gone far down the warm moonlit street when my elbow was grasped and I turned startled eyes on my cousin Jay Ketchum. "Where are you going Lizzie?" he asked. "Why, to the Ball of course" I replied and he accompanied me along and up the steps to the entrance. We looked around for my sister Kate (just recently married to Dr Read) and it was then that I got my greatest surprise and joy of the evening, for she was just starting to dance with the Prince. Kate, in her wedding dress of white taffeta with its rows of pinked ruffles, was radiant and I thought she was the most beautiful young woman there. Many charming girls danced with the Prince that night; Miss Janice Daintree, Lydia Bennett, my cousin Annie and others who had official rights. I enjoyed watching them without

envy, the mere fact of being there was pleasure enough for me. The Ballroom with its blazing gas fixtures ablaze with light, the gay uniforms, and handsome gowns was a fairy land to me. After the Prince departed at midnight, there was great rush to see who could be the first to drink out of his wineglass.

I have saved the Honourable Zacheus Burnham for the last, because in my opinion, he is the greatest of the Burnham pioneers to found our community. For the first few years of his life here Zacheus seems to have had a few setbacks. Hay in the forests of Cobourg was hard to find, only one clearing in the heart of town did he locate with enough grass to be used as Zacheus's first hay. Meanwhile he worked at clearing trees and opening some ground for next year. Zacheus's son-in-law Edward Ermatinger left us his notes on Zacheus in which he tells us that the very first winter [which was likely 1797] Zac almost cut off his foot while using an axe. He was frustrated to have to spend all winter laid up. Edward also tells a wonderful tale of livestock. Zac lost his stock in the early years, not once, but several times. After several years Zac succeeded in purchasing two ewes. They were both lost. So Zac traveled 100 miles to bring home two more. One survived and had lambs but the pigs killed all the lambs. Next he bought six or so sheep managing to keep about half of them alive. Later he had grown enough wheat to afford a cow and a yoke of oxen. According to Zac's obituary one of his favourite stories was how his beloved brother Asa worked to get their first corn to Elias Smith's mill in Port Hope:

Fully equipped with a yoke of oxen and strong sled, he [Asa] drove up along the beach to the mill, but a sudden thaw [it was the month of March] removed the ice from the beach and he was obliged to return through the woods. In some places the trees had been felled where the road had been intended, but the logs lay in the position the choppers had thrown them, and to guide a load of oxen after night in such a state of matters might well be called engineering under difficulties.

In the fall of 1800, Zac, a powerfully built man over 6 feet tall, went back to New Hampshire, married his first cousin Elizabeth Choate and came home with her in February. We mentioned earlier that the trip was once again made difficult by a thaw. After the initial few years here, things went very well for Zacheus. He and Elizabeth or (Bess/Betsy) had five children who all did well by marriage. Daughter Elizabeth married Richard Birdsall who had worked for Zac in surveying in the Peterborough area. They had four daughters. Unfortunately Elizabeth died young. Son Mark was educated with the best, eventually studying in Oxford, England. He was rector in the Church of England at St. Thomas for 23 years. Then he became Rector of the Peterborough diocese. Reverend Mark's son John became Member of Parliament for Peterborough in 1878. His son George became a Peterborough doctor, while son Zacheus provides us with an interesting story. In 1860 he ran away to the California Goldrush. When he hadn't returned ten years later, Mark sent Absalom Ingram down to find his son. Son Zacheus

was penniless at this point, a sure disgrace to a fine Anglican Rector father. Reverend Mark nevertheless welcomed home his prodigal son, set him up with a farm, and a herd of purebred jersey cattle. Zacheus was more interested in the cottage and never did take to farming. Zacheus met his nemesis when a prize bull attacked and did him in. Zacheus' son Mark S. Burnham is the one who donated the tract of woods [near Peterborough] once owned by his great-grandfather, the Honourable Zacheus Burnham, to the good and use of the public in 1957.

Returning back to the Honourable Zacheus' daughter Achsa. She married Edward Ermatinger of St. Thomas whom she must have met through her brother Mark, rector at St. Thomas. Edward made the Dictionary of Canadian Biography because he was a fur trader, banker, postmaster, merchant, politician and writer. It is he who has given us first-hand family-member glimpses of the Honourable Zacheus.

Zacheus' daughter Maria Burnham married James G. Rogers of Grafton, and had ten children. In 1832, James G. helped to choose the name Grafton. In 1836, he was a director of the Grafton Harbour Company and became the first reeve of Haldimand Township in 1850.

The baby of Zac and Elizabeth's family was Affa. Her husband George Ham had already been in politics before coming to Cobourg in 1831. He married Affa in early 1832. I think Zacheus rigged this marriage possibly arranging it after he met George at the Legislature, talked him into meeting Affa, and moving to Cobourg and so forth. Anyway George turned out to be an asset, serving on the Cobourg Board of Police, even President of the Cobourg Board of Police, and also on the Board of Trade. Unfortunately George died suddenly in 1843. Several years later Affa married Elam Rush Stimson, son of a St Catharines' doctor. While Zac influenced marriages for his family, he was busy influencing a number of other things in Upper Canada. His list of accomplishments is longer than your arm [Please see appendix]. Yet with all his accumulated wealth and positions of power, I have never noted anything but decency and generosity on Zac's part, and admiration and respect shown toward him. He has been said to be unlike other speculators because he truly cared for the economic well-being of his community. He was known to be a good person to borrow money from. In government he spoke out most on road improvement, the establishment of schools, the adjustment of property assessment laws. He was literate, ambitious, dutiful, and workmanlike. Zacheus Burnham was involved in philanthropic and religious associations as well as business. A self-made man, it has been written that he exemplified the human achievement of the new society created in Upper Canada. Zac's son-in-law calls him good-natured, with a considerable vein of humour. A shrewd businessman, he nevertheless spent lots of money on his children and grandchildren. Zacheus died at home in February of 1857, a man of conviction, strict integrity and clearness of judgement. A man to admire.

**APPENDIX A:
Accomplishments of the Honourable Zacheus Burnham**

- 1801 - entered militia as private
- 1806 - received first tavern license in Hamilton Township
- 1807 - built first distillery
- 1808 - owns 380 acres
- 1810 - has 100 cleared acres
- 1811 - appointed roads commissioner for Newcastle District
- 1812 - Captain in Militia, troops may have been quartered and fed at his farm, responsible for transportation of supplies along Lake Ontario
- 1813 - first of several commissions as Justice of the Peace
- 1814- 1851 - treasurer of Newcastle District (oversee surveys, layout town sites, buy land at low prices)
- 1816 - elected to Legislative assembly
 - paid all debts of the estate of Samuel Marsh
- 1818 - along with Mr Hayes, a contract to survey Peterborough and Victoria Counties
- 1820 - began to sell lots on east side of Burnham street and Amherst was born
- 1821 - helped establish fairs in Cobourg and Port Hope, clerk of the Quarter session
- 1824 - elected to Legislative Assembly for Northumberland
- 1827 - voted for Naturalization Bill
 - Traveled with Sir Peregrine Maitland [Lt. Gov.], Col. Talbot, Hon John Beverly Robinson, James Gray Bethune, Charles Rubidge, Peter Robinson to hear the views of the people in the Peterborough area; big dinner held in honour of such important men
- 1827 - signed petition along with other Justices of the Peace for regular ferry service on Rice Lake
- 1828 - Director of Northumberland Agricultural Society
- 1829 - appeal to have Cobourg designated as Port of Entry
- 1830 and on - Cobourg a leading immigrant stop and Zac was a leading figure in the Newcastle District Immigrants Relief Society and Children's Friend Society
 - judge for agricultural society competition for best managed farm 1831 - now on Zac's farm there were 100 cattle, 150 sheep, 70 hogs, 20 milk cows, 6 work horses, 4 oxen, 330 acres in production including wheat, Indian corn, barley, peas, oats, potatoes
 - member Legislative Council appointed by Lt. Gov. Sir John Colborne
 - President Northumberland Agricultural Society for three years
- 1833 - along with investors J. G. Bethune, John Gilchrist, built the steamship Cobourg for service on Lake Ontario
- 1834 - company formed to promote idea of rail from harbour north, 15 shares made Zac the 2nd largest shareholder behind George Boulton
 - built first gristmill in Dummer Township
 - appointed to Board of Commissioners for establishing Trent- Severn Waterway
- 1835 - Zac and Henry Ruttan propose a joint stock bank with credit available to new enterprises, called The Newcastle District Accommodation Company,
- 1837 - Vice president of the County of Northumberland Agricultural Society for several years
 - rode in procession of carriages from Cobourg to Port Hope; Henry Ruttan announced Victoria as Queen
 - now Colonel in militia, rallied support for fighting rebellion and rode to Toronto
- 1838 - Zac had rock blasted between Stony Lake and White Lake to increase the flow of water to his mills. This also increased the areas rate of settlement.
- 1839 - made Judge of District Court for Newcastle District
- 1840 - Justice of Peace again
- 1850 - donated 4 acres for church and cemetery at Warsaw
 - President of Port Hope Agricultural society
- 1854 - sold 6 acres to Cobourg - Peterborough Railway
- 1857 - died at age 80, perhaps richest man and largest landowner in district and well respected.

APPENDIX B

List Of Accomplishments for the Honourable Asa A. Burnham

- 1836- on committee with relative George Ham to petition for Cobourg's incorporation
- 1838 - on Cobourg Board of Police
- 1841 - Legislative council
- 1845-1849 - President of Cobourg Board of Police
- 1847 - chairman of first public school board
- 1849 - Cobourg fence viewer
- 1850 - Treasurer of Northumberland Agricultural Society
 - elected to first Cobourg council (Cobourg Star newspaper reported before election that they thought Asa would be elected Mayor. William Weller won.)
 - Justice of the Peace
- 1851 -54 - representative for West Northumberland in Legislative Assembly
- 1851 - Warden for Northumberland and Durham
 - at cornerstone laying ceremony for Port Hope Town Hall
- 1857 - Treasurer for Northumberland and Durham
- 1861-1862 - Mayor of Cobourg
- 1863 - Legislative Council
- 1867 - Senator at Confederation

Also: President of Board of Commissioners for the Cobourg Town Trust Director Bank of Toronto Member Agricultural Societies of Ontario Major in Militia [40 years in militia] Chairman for Board of trustees for Cobourg Collegiate Institute Director of Northumberland and Durham Immigration and Society executor of several wills Guardian to Jacob Choates' grandsons.

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THE UNITED EMPIRE LOYALISTS:
WHO AND WHAT THEY WERE

by
Don Diminie, U.E.L.

I think it was General Douglas McArthur, quoting Plato, who said, “only the dead have seen the last of war!”

Some of you may wonder why I am introducing the subject of war. However, to talk about United Empire Loyalists, to understand who they were, what they did, and why, it is necessary to talk about a particular war. The American War of Independence, the American Revolution, or as I think of it, the FIRST American Civil War, which indeed it was! Pitting son against father, brother against brother, it split families like an axe cleaving a log! This particular war gave birth, not to one great country, but to TWO: the United States and Canada. Of course, all the Loyalists – soldier and civilian alike – were English, correct? No; the Loyalists were, in fact, of many ethnic backgrounds.

Overall, I don't know if it has been determined how many of each ethnic origin actually were Loyalist, but the Toronto Branch of the United Empire Loyalists (UEL) reviewed its members' records to find the national origins of each member's Loyalist ancestor. It was found that originally

28% were from Germany,
23% from Scotland,
18% from England,
12% from Ireland,
8% from Holland,
5% from France,
4% from Wales,
1% from Switzerland
and less than 1% were from Denmark and Sweden!

There were also Afroamericans and Native Americans.

Protestants of all denominations joined with Catholics in a common cause. What they all had in common was the “Unity of Empire.” They likely didn't think of it in those terms, or indeed, think of themselves as Loyalists! That came later; at the time they were just Tory suspects or outright, “damn Tories.”

In 1774, when Samuel Adams and his friends started circulating the Covenant which advocated boycotting all things British, I imagine they figured the majority of the colonists would sign it. Many did not and would not. Those who refused to do so were shunned by their neighbours and friends, and ostracised by their communities. We've all heard of the Boston Tea Party. But have you ever wondered why the culprits dressed up like Indians? If they *really*

believed in their cause, why dress like Indians to put the blame on them? In any event, war was the unavoidable outcome. In 1775 the “shot heard round the world” was fired at Lexington-Concord in Massachusetts. Now, at each end of the Concord Bridge, there is mounted a bronze memorial plaque honouring both the American AND British who died that day.

Not many months ago, we saw on our TV sets, thousands of refugees in Kosovo. If today we had film footage to look at of the Revolution, the scene would be similar! For the Loyalists did indeed become refugees; the first political refugees of North America. They lost their homes and land as well as personal possessions. In many cases, they were lucky to get away with their lives! One recorded incident concerns a “John Sigir.” In the account Sigir, was on his way to New York city to visit friends. He was stopped by a ‘Patriot’ patrol. His head was shaved, he was tarred and feathered, and run out of town on a rail. Imagine what this really means! Head shaved while being held by force, then hot pitch poured on and then covered with feathers. And then the ultimate torture for a naked man: to be tied to a split rail, one leg on either side. Uncomfortable!

Some of you may recall my last visit here when I shared with you the story of my great-great-great-great grandmother, Sarah McGinnis, who was responsible for keeping the Mohawk on the British side.³ How, on one occasion she, along with her daughter and granddaughter were thrown in prison where her 16 year-old granddaughter died, possibly of fright, abuse, neglect, or all of those things. These are only a couple of many documented incidents. There are many. The sides were set: “Rebel” Patriots and “Tory” Loyalists; if you weren’t *with* the Patriot cause you were against it, no neutrality was allowed.

When a Loyalist family lost their homes and land, but were not imprisoned, how they made their escape depended on such things as where they were located. Were they near the ocean, possibly New York City? Were they in the Mohawk Valley? Where were the British forces nearest them? A certainty is that they had to flee on foot or by boat, possibly by both. In the case of my ancestors, the McGinnis family, they fled on foot from the present-day Herkimer, New York area to Fort Stanwix at what is now Rome, New York. Joining British forces there, they accompanied them to Oswego, New York, and thence to Montreal and Sorel, Quebec. Looking at a map will indicate what a distance it was, but only imagination can tell how gruelling it must have been.

Those who lived close to New York City (NYC) would be safe once inside the city as the British forces held this city during the entire war. Indeed, many Loyalists took a ship from there to England or the Carribean, as well as to Canada. In Spring 1783, a fleet of 18 ships took several thousand people from NYC to Nova Scotia. I believe it was this “Spring Fleet” that had several ships lost at sea with all aboard. Another of my ancestors took ship from NYC, leaving in June and arriving in Quebec in early August. A long journey up around the Gaspé,

³ See *Historical Review 14*, 1996-97:2-7

then to Quebec City, and on to the Sorel Refugee camp.⁴

These refugees took only what they could carry: the clothes on their backs, some things in a bundle perhaps, and maybe, if they were really lucky, some British currency. They may have used a box or a carry case such as the one I have here. You can see that it's not very big. Perhaps some linens or dresses, a favourite candle stick and the family Bible would be about all they could put into it. This particular box I borrowed from the Loyalist Cultural Centre at Loyalist Park in Adolphustown. It belonged to Rufus Spencer who was born about 1806 in the county of Lennox & Addington. His father was Henry Spencer, a Loyalist soldier. It may have been the father's, but we think it's from a post-revolutionary time, early 1800s. It's very much original and you can see where changes have been made to it. Nails were put in here and there, and likely the handle was added.

If you enjoy this sort of thing, visit the Loyalist Cultural Centre at the Park in Adolphus-town in the summer. This year [2000] June 17th would be a good day as that's when we are having our Second Annual Landing Re-enactment.

Returning to our refugees, we find that life – as it does in any refugee camp – went on at Sorel, even in winter. Folks became sick, died, married, had children baptized, and so forth. Speaking of illness, there were of course no clinics to go to, nor in most, cases any doctor. They had natural remedies though. Below are just a few.

- For a cough, a syrup made from the roots of Spignet (modern identity unknown);
- For a stomach ache, you took Catnip Tea;
- If you suffered from indigestion, you might take Hop Tea or dried Burdock Root Tea;
- For “poor blood”, you were advised to drink some Cherry Bark Tea.

In the Spring of 1784, after the Treaty of Separation had been achieved in 1783, our refugee ancestors struck out for new places to live, an unknown future facing them. About 30,000 Loyalists settled in the Maritimes. Another 10,000 stayed in Quebec, which included what is now Ontario. (Remember, at that time, Quebec extended from the Atlantic Ocean to Fort Detroit.)

Looking at the Loyalists who came to the Bay of Quinte area from what we now call Quebec, we find they travelled up the rapid-filled St. Lawrence River in sturdy, flat-bottomed bateaux to the general area where they were to settle. Those boats were usually rowed, although they may have put up small sails to help. They would be going against the current. The land they came to was raw, and uncleared. Land had been granted to them by the Crown to help them renew their lives. Remember, they had lost well developed farms or businesses. The area had been surveyed before the Loyalists arrived and lots were randomly drawn, literally, out of a hat. Sometimes the lot drawn was not kept by the person; it was not unheard

⁴ Incidentally, I could find no mark of the Loyalists having been in Sorel as there are no monuments or plaques.

of for a man to trade with someone else.

With meagre supplies and only a tent for temporary shelter, the families would strike out for their forested land. Now, the work began in earnest; the first imperative being to build a shelter before winter. This shelter would have been no more than a log shanty, quite small, perhaps 10 by 12 feet, with only a hole in the roof for a chimney. Then land had to be cleared, the soil worked, and eventually, a better house built. All this required long hard hours in all weather with inadequate tools. These ancestors of ours must have had great determination and faith in the Crown.

In January, 1784, those Loyalists at Sorel, who were going to Cataraqui (Kingston), sent a petition to Governor Haldimand asking for certain things to assist them. They requested boards, nails, shingles and 80 squares of window glass in addition to arms, ammunition, and an axe for each male age 14 and over. They asked for a variety of tools, including, for each family, a broad axe, chisels, nail hammer, hand saw, three iron wedges, leather for horse collars, 15 iron harrow teeth, and a plow. They also demanded two horses, two cows and six sheep be given to each family and delivered to Cataraqui. As well, a year's clothing and two years' provisions were to be included. Oh yes, one grindstone amongst three families.

In response, Haldimand approved for each family the following:

FOR EACH MAN OR BOY ABOVE 10 YEARS OF AGE:

Coats:	1
Waistcoat:	1
Breeches:	1 pair
Hat:	1
Shirts: (or 3/12 yds Linen)	1
Leggins:	1 pair
Stockings:	1 pair
Blanket:	1
Shoe Soles:	1 pair

TO EACH WOMAN OR GIRL ABOVE 10

Woolen cloth	2 yards
Linen cloth	4 yards
Stockings	1 pair
Blanket	1
Shoe Soles	1 pair

TO EACH CHILD UNDER 10

Woolen cloth	1 yard
Linen cloth	2 yards
Stockings	1 pair

Blanket (between 2) 1
Shoe Soles 1 pair

Also issued, was one tent for every five persons and one camp kettle for each tent.

Although they had asked for seed for planting, what they received was not enough to go around. And if they were lucky enough to get flour, it was often wormy and unfit for use. For the 34 families living at Cataraqui in 1784, seeds for onions, turnip, cabbage, carrots, radish, parsley and pease were sent in May. The smallest bag was four pounds (onion) and the largest was 17 pounds in weight (orange carrots). There was no mention of wheat, barley, flax or oats. So really, they could only depend on themselves.

The 14th of June 1784, saw a report issued, "of the works that have been completed for the Loyalists at Cataraqui during the winter."

- Wharf sunk and filled with stone to the level of the water;
- Saw Mill completed;
- Grist Mill now in hand and somewhat advanced;
- Captain Brant's house, 40 ft across and 30 ft deep, and One Storey and a Half, complete.
- Miss Molly Brant's house nearly complete (William Johnson's widow and Joseph Brant's sister);
- Navy store, 50 foot by 25 foot, built, but not finished.
- Timber squared, 9,000 feet cubic.
- Round Logs, 1,000.
- Building Timber, 50 pieces.

So, now there was a saw mill to take your logs – if you had a way to get them there; especially if you were living in the Adolphustown area. That area, not far from Cataraqui, would soon have its own amenities.

About 900 'Associated' Loyalists, the Van Alstine and Grass parties, were taken by ship from New York City to Quebec where they wintered at Sorel, were settled on the Bay of Quinte (at Adolphustown and Kingston).

Butler's Rangers, based at Fort Niagara, had settled some Loyalists as early as 1781. When the Rangers disbanded in 1784, most settled in the Niagara Peninsula area.

The Loyalists landed at Adolphustown in June 1784, we think around the 16th. Our Mohawk allies had landed in May of that year. The Mohawks of Tyendinaga continue to celebrate the event each year.

That gives you a general idea of how life was and who the Loyalists were.

At the end of the war, Sir Guy Carleton (after whom Carleton University and Carleton county were named), later Lord Dorchester, was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the British forces. It was he who was responsible for the evacuation of the troops and Loyalists remaining in New York City. Dorchester recommended to London on November 9, 1789 that: "Those Loyalists who have adhered to the Unity of the Empire, and joined the Royal Standard before the Treaty of Separation in the year 1783, and all their Children and Descendants, by either sex, are to be distinguished by the following capitals affixed to their names: 'U.E.' Alluding to their great principle 'The Unity of the Empire'." In his covering letter to London, Lord Dorchester said: "Care has been taken to reward the spirit of Loyalty and Industry, to extend and transmit it to future generations...".

It also came about that the Land Boards approved the granting of 200 acres of land (without fees) to the Sons and Daughters of the United Empire Loyalists. However, the Loyalists, in their new land, in the western part of Quebec, weren't happy being governed under the Quebec Act of 1774. Their petitions for English Civil Law, freehold tenure of land and elected assembly, brought about the separation of Quebec into Lower and Upper Canada in 1791, with John Graves Simcoe, former Colonel of the Queen's Rangers (1st American Regiment), as Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, now Ontario. Hence, the motto of the Province of Ontario reads, roughly translated, 'As She began Loyal, so shall She remain.'

Today, many people are searching their roots, finding out about their ancestors, who they were, and where they originated. Many of you here, perhaps unknowingly, have Loyalist roots. To help answer these quests, the United Empire Loyalist Association of Canada was formed in 1913 in Toronto. Having applied to the Federal Government for incorporation, Royal Assent was given in May 1914. Among the original members are such illustrious names as Colonel George Sterling Ryerson, M.D., Toronto; Lieutenant-Colonel George Taylor Denison, Toronto; Lieutenant-Colonel George Alexander Shaw, Toronto; Sir John Beverly Robinson, Bart., Edgewater, New Jersey; Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper, K.C., Vancouver; Sir Allen Aylesworth, K.C., Toronto; Major W. Napier Keefer, Toronto; The Reverend Canon Alexander Wellesley Macnab, Toronto; Lieutenant-Colonel William Hamilton Merritt, Toronto; His Honour Hedley Clarence Taylor, of Edmonton, and many more.

The Bay of Quinte Branch, founded in 1956, is one of the largest in Canada. Our area includes the counties of Hastings, Prince Edward, Lennox-Addington and Northumberland, with a membership in the range of 150, many of them United States residents. Anyone may join as an Associate member, but the "U.E." status is conferred upon only those who can prove direct lineage from a bonafide eighteenth century United Empire Loyalist.

Our branch meets five times a year. In the eastern part of our area we are active in school visitation, working with teachers on the Loyalist story. We now sell flags of the King's Colours, as well as genealogical source data. Our biggest annual project is a Landing Re-enactment held around mid-June. This event is held at Loyalist Park in Adolphustown, the very spot our ancestors landed in 1784. At the park there are trailer and camp sites as well as a

Loyalist Museum. There is no entry fee if you wish to visit only the museums. Currently we charge \$5.00 per car for the Landing Re-enactment. There will be lots of food, genealogy and history table, music and costumed re-enactors! The actual Landing occurs in a replica of an authentic bateaux, with the folks coming ashore, drawing for lots, and so on.

A couple of years ago, Harry Danford, MPP for Hastings-Peterborough, proposed a private members Bill, making June 19, United Empire Loyalist Day in Ontario. That Bill was passed *unanimously*. This is the third year that you will see the King's Colours flying in front of our marvellous Town Hall [Victoria Hall] and many other town halls around the Province.

I am very proud to be able to put 'U.E.' after my name. However, one does not have to join our Association in order to do so! This 210-year-old designation remains Canada's only hereditary title and which descends through both male and female lines.

I close by simply asking each of you to "Remember our past generations, speak to our future ones about them."

A SYNOPTICAL HISTORY OF THE ONTARIO CAR FERRY COMPANY

by
Ted Rafuse

Friday of this week will denote a historical day in Cobourg's annals. April 28, 2000 will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the last crossing of Lake Ontario by a ship of the Ontario Car Ferry Company. On the afternoon of April 28, 1950, in her final act, *Ontario No.2*, moored to the east side of the centre pier in Cobourg's harbour ending almost a half century of a unique rail-marine service. Tonight it is my intention to provide a brief chronicle of the Company and some of the people associated with the boats *Ontario No.1* and *Ontario No.2*.

For those present who travelled on board either ship, I am sure that they can recall many adventurous, perhaps even amorous, memories. However the two ships were not constructed for the pleasure of passengers. Rather, the primary purpose for the construction of the two vessels was to ensure an efficient and economical means to transport railway hoppers full of Pennsylvania coal from Genesee Dock, New York to Cobourg where the coal was to be used as fuel to power steam locomotives operating in central and eastern Ontario. To achieve that end, two railway companies formed a marine corporation.

The vice-president of the Grand Trunk Railway Company (GTR) in Canada and the president of the Buffalo Rochester and Pittsburgh Railway Company (BR&P) in the United States commenced discussions during 1905 whereby each company sought to obtain for itself certain commercial advantages. For the Grand Trunk, a secure source of railway coal to fire their steam locomotives during a time of significant railway expansion in both southern Ontario and the Canadian West was required. At the same time the BR&P was seeking to expand its railway commerce. The BR&P believed this objective could be achieved through the movement of coal hoppers from their subsidiary coal companies in western Pennsylvania. Charles Hays of the GTR and Arthur Yates of the BR&P promptly concluded an agreement to construct a railway car ferry to satisfy the needs of both companies.

Very quickly the BR&P determined that the necessary rail-marine facilities would be constructed two and one half miles upstream from the mouth of the Genesee River at a site where they already owned a tract of swampy land. In contrast, the Grand Trunk investigation of an appropriate site took many months. Although the Grand Trunk delayed its decision, the BR&P announced that the northern port would be the town of Port Hope.

So certain was the BR&P that Port Hope would be the northern terminus of the ferry that they even produced a map in 1906 which indicated the proposed ferry service between Genesee Dock and Port Hope. Several news releases reinforced that indication. President Yates announced in 1906 that the "boat will make two trips a day between Charlotte and Port Hope." Additional credence was given to the Port Hope destination by Sir Charles Wilson-Rivers, President of the Grand Trunk Railway Company, in the same year as he announced that "Port Hope was to be the northern landing of the new car ferry steamer line from Charlotte." The

trade journal *Railway and Shipping World* in its May 1906 issue reported that the "GTR proposes to spend \$100,000 on yards, etc., at Port Hope in conjunction with the project."

Despite all the foregoing indications, Port Hope ultimately lost this service to Cobourg. Nowhere in the corporate files, however, is there any indication as to why the GTR settled upon Cobourg as its northern terminus. Perhaps the greater grade difference between the harbour tracks and the main line tracks at Port Hope was a contributing factor in awarding the northern terminus to Cobourg. Meanwhile Cobourg's Town Council was divided as to the benefit to be derived by such commercial activity at its harbour, and the conclusion of an agreement between the Town and the Car Ferry Company was not a unanimous one. Despite the hesitancy on the part of some councillors and citizens, the appropriate facilities at Cobourg's harbour were completed for the car ferry operation in the late summer of 1907.

The negotiations outlined above did not prevent Vice-President Hays from seeking tenders for the construction of a suitable car ferry. The size of the boat ordered determined that it had to be erected at a ship yard on Lake Ontario. Early in 1906 the Canadian Shipbuilding Company of Toronto was awarded the \$350,000 contract, the ship to be ready for the summer sailing season. Included among the ship's vital statistics was a length of 317 feet, a beam of 54 feet, a draft of 18 feet when fully loaded and a gross tonnage of 5,146. She would carry 28 thirty-foot hopper cars, each loaded with 50 tons of coal. In keeping with the utilitarian nature of the vessel, she was christened, simply, *Ontario No. 1*.

For reasons unknown, the vessel's maiden voyage did not occur until November 1907. Painted a pristine white, save for twin buff funnels with black tops, *Ontario No. 1* steamed into Cobourg's harbour to be greeted by thousands of curious citizens. She quickly settled into her routine, a routine which was to last forty-two years.

For the BR&P especially, it became apparent quite quickly that Americans, in particular, would seek adventure and escape on board *Ontario No. 1* especially during the summer months. In 1909 a summer time passenger service, in conjunction with a boat train, was inaugurated. The boat train left downtown Rochester in time to allow passengers to board the vessel prior to sailing. When the vessel returned from its cross lake voyage, the boat train was there to carry Rochester passengers back to the city. The first year of this excursion operation proved incredibly popular as witnessed by the fact that the tourists relieved the car ferry of more than one hundred dollars of silverware from the dining room. Perhaps it is these excursion mementos that can occasionally be located at a yard sale today.

The Ontario Car Ferry Company (OCFC) rapidly proved of economic value to its railway owners. Earnings in 1909 exceeded those of the year before by fifty per cent. Within five years the company directors commenced consideration of a second vessel, and in 1914 the Polson Iron Works of Toronto was awarded a \$423,000 contract to construct a sister vessel, creatively christened *Ontario No. 2*.

Ontario No.2 was essentially built to the same design as her sister ship with slight variations. She was 318 feet long, with a beam of 56 feet and drew 16 feet when fully loaded with 30 railway hopper cars. Her gross tonnage was 5,568. Similar to *Ontario No.1*, *Ontario No.2* was also delayed in construction, perhaps due in part to the scarce supplies of a war time economy. That delay caused bitterness between the company and the contractor when more than six thousand dollars was withheld by the company in late delivery penalty clauses. *Ontario No.2* did not commence regular service until October 1, 1915, many months later than scheduled.

At first glance the two vessels appeared identical, but careful observation revealed several visual differences. *Ontario No.1* had one level sweep of its promenade deck line from the bow stern wards to the superstructure. *Ontario No.2* had a raised portion some distance stern-wards from the bow before dipping in a similar line to the superstructure. Careful scrutiny of the pilot houses of both ships revealed differences in the window structure and arrangement. *Ontario No.2* had a central staircase from the promenade deck to the boat deck in front of the pilot house superstructure. Two large air vents framed either side of this central staircase. *Ontario No.1* had a staircase on either beam from the promenade deck to the boat deck situated just astern of the front of the pilot house superstructure. For most of its operational life *Ontario No.1* carried eight life boats on each side, *Ontario No.2* carried six. At the stern, *Ontario No.2* had one stern support pillar centred between the promenade deck and the boat deck while *Ontario No.1* had two supports in the centre.

From a commercial regard, the heyday for both vessels occurred during the Roaring Twenties. While both ships did not operate every day throughout the year, at least one did. In the years 1925-1930 the OCFC paid out \$400,000 in dividends to its parent railway companies.

In 1921 the first moonlight excursion was organized by the Cobourg Concert Band, and advertisements in the papers ensured an enjoyable evening of dancing under a moonlit sky. During the summer months this type of excursion proved immensely popular lasting to the end of the ferry boat service. More than 600,000 passengers boarded the vessels in that decade.

In 1927 the BR&P initiated a new service, that of carrying automobiles. Some ingenuity was required in this regard. Since the rails were welded to the steel deck of the car ferry, it was impossible to drive an automobile directly onto the car ferry. Additionally, the terrain at Genesee Dock prevented vehicles from gaining direct access to the ferry dock. Consequently, automobiles were driven onto flat cars positioned at the top of the cliff and these were then transported by rail to the ferry. At Cobourg, a special unloading ramp was constructed. Cost for this vehicular service varied from ten to twelve dollars, but the service continued until the demise of the ferries themselves.

E. George Smith worked on board the ferries in the 1920s as relief crew during the winter months. As a deck hand he secured the rail cars to the deck to prevent them from moving:

Once the first row of cars was loaded, the train line was connected to the ship's compressor and the air brakes were applied on all rail cars. The hand brakes were all turned, the men using pick handles to gain leverage when turning the brake wheels. A chain attached at one end to the deck had its other end attached to the freight car. A screw jack also attached to the steel deck was then tightened against the car frame to prevent it from shifting upon its trucks.⁵

In addition, railway wheel stops were bolted onto the rails in front of the end wheels of each car to prevent the car from rolling on the tracks. Old wooden ties placed between the rails at the end of the wheel sets were sometimes added as well.

Deck hand Sydney Smith, who also worked on board during the same decade, recalled his role:

The first thing I did when I got up in the morning was to look for a broom and a mop. We were constantly as deck hands cleaning. I had to keep the stern (of the promenade deck) clean and see that the ropes were coiled properly as they came in. I remember that during one storm people were sick. They were in the staterooms. Naturally we had no business in the state rooms, but we were there with pails and mops and hoses. And the decks were awash with people being sick.⁶

Early the next decade Port Hope resident Jack Laurie and an acquaintance chartered one of the vessels for a moonlight cruise. How these arrangements were completed are shrouded from memory, but apparently the Captains held the discretionary authority to make such arrangements. In any event the boat sold out quickly. Hundreds of Port Hope and Cobourg people responded to the advertisement which promised much music and dancing. The musicians set up in the music room and dancing took place there, in the dining room and on the decks.

As a youngster U. S. resident Stan McMillan recalled several trips on board the vessels in the Depression Years. As the boat readied for departure:

There would be a sudden roar from the boat whistle which would make your hair stand on end. It always caught you off guard. No matter how many times you experienced it, it always caught you by surprise. And it always was so loud and so terrifying a noise that everybody on the whole boat must have jumped.

⁵ E. George Smith, Personal Interview

⁶ Sydney Smith, Personal Interview.

We would look in the galley and watch the cooks and look down into the engine room and up into the pilot house. We could never get to some of those places because we would be interfering with the crew. They had a snack bar and a dining room which we very rarely ate in because the meals, although cheap by today's standards, it was during the Great Depression, and it was more than we could spend. In the dining room it was all stem ware and fancy silver and the whole thing, with waiters in white jackets.

The lake is pretty darn wide. We would be out of Rochester maybe three hours when we could suddenly sight the Canadian shore line. It would take us an hour and one half to get into Cobourg. From then on we kept rushing up to see how much of Canada we could see. We just had a good time on the trip.⁷

For three decades Shriners from Rochester and area were always a welcome sight in Cobourg. Their frivolity, humour, charm and generosity were a welcome sign of summer for children and adults alike. They often paraded, to the accompaniment of their own band, along Cobourg's streets to Victoria Park where they participated in a variety of games and athletic competitions and listened as the band played a concert at the beach band shell. Scores of children, Pied Piper like, followed these men from Rochester and Syracuse and from other towns in Upper New York State and all afternoon anticipated the candy treats they distributed freely.

American tourists held particular appeal to youngsters who engaged in a sport which, had their parents known, would have caused great anxiety. As the car ferry came into Cobourg harbour and maneuvered to the apron, crowds of adolescents gathered about the pilings. The passengers on board, primarily American, would reach into their pockets and would take out handfuls of silver coins. They would throw these coins from the deck and the waiting adolescents would dive into the clear water and swim to the harbour bottom and collect the coins. Caroline Straathof was one of these, but she had an unusual problem:

I remember diving into the water for silver dollars, but I made sure which boat came in before I dove. I had to make sure it wasn't my father's."⁸

Caroline was Captain Bryson's daughter so she had to be particularly vigilant in this escapade.

Fog frequently hampered operations. In the early 1920s one thousand excursionists from St. Peter's Church found themselves stranded on board as *Ontario No.2* grounded on the

⁷ Stan McMillan, Personal Interview

⁸ Caroline Straathof, Personal Interview

beach. Fog, and misinterpretation of the signal from the fog horn, proved instrumental as the ship missed the harbour entrance and came to rest on Cobourg's sandy beach about midnight. At daylight the excursionists were removed by barge and tug to the harbour. Several hours later, aided by a tug, the ship was refloated and resumed service that same day.⁹

The longest voyage, and potentially most dangerous experience, that *Ontario No. 1* agonized through commenced on January 6, 1924. The boat left Genesee Dock with 24 freight cars for what was expected to be a routine crossing north. As the ship sailed farther towards the northern shore, the weather became increasingly more intense. Snow, whipped into a frenzy by powerful winds, obscured visibility. The same wind created threateningly dangerous waves. With an open sea gate at her stern, *Ontario No. 1*, for her own safety, had no choice but to place her bow into the wind and ride out the storm. The storm's fury increased. The shore line was completely obscured, and keepers of lighthouses could not reach their structures to light the beacons. Fortunately with wireless telegraphy aboard, the captain and those on shore were able to have the station masters along the shore light flares to provide an emergency shore warning for the boat as it progressed westward at one knot.

The wind and snow increased in fury. Ice several inches thick accumulated along the front of the boat, depressing the bow some two feet and threatening to capsize the big ship. Waves crested over the pilot house. The pilot house was exposed to the elements and with each wave the navigation crew literally had to hold on with their lives at stake for fear of being washed overboard.

Finally, late Monday evening, the boat moored off Port Credit to ride out the storm. The following day the ship pulled anchor and steamed towards Cobourg. Arriving there on Tuesday afternoon, the town and the crew gave thanks for their safe arrival, their five hour trip having turned into a two-day ordeal. The open pilot house was enclosed during routine maintenance that summer!

On at least one occasion wind was the cause of terror and some panic. In this instance, *Ontario No. 2*, reeling from high winds, caused fear and panic amongst five hundred Rochester passengers. There was no warning when the ship left Genesee Dock that high winds were approaching. Several hours into the midnight cruise, the wave swells increased dramatically. As the ship continued in its roller coaster ride, fear and panic gripped the novice sailors. During a turn about manoeuver, the ship lurched, hurtling furniture and passengers across the deck sending all crashing into the walls. Some received relatively minor injuries. Concerned for the health of his passengers, the Captain sent out an alarm by radio to have a special boat train with medical assistance available upon the return of the boat to Genesee Dock. This special train then transported the injured into Rochester where they were then transferred to various hospitals. While the crew had often experienced such wave action it was a novel and upsetting experience for the excursionists. Litigation claiming negligence by the Company followed and

⁹ *Cobourg Sentinel-Star*, August 7, 1924 and *Cobourg World*, August 7, 1924.

at one time the Company seriously considered selling the ship if necessary to pay legal suits totaling \$414,000. Ultimately only \$5,500 in compensation was awarded and the boat remained in service with the Company.¹⁰

Perhaps the worst weather related situation to befall one of the vessels occurred in February 1936. It very nearly ended the career of *Ontario No.2*. A dangerous combination of snow, wind and fog combined to cause *Ontario No.2* to ground on a rocky shoal some two miles west of the Genesee River. There she remained for more than ten days, taking on water at the rate of a gallon a second. Company officials eventually determined that they could use quick drying cement to close the gaps in the steel plates where rivets had popped. Once this had set, *Ontario No.1*, along with a U.S. Coast Guard cutter, were able to free the stricken ship. She steamed back to Cobourg for temporary repairs and inspection before sailing to Kingston for further examination. A ceiling of \$100,000 dollars was placed on repairs by the company, or the ship would be decommissioned and sold for scrap. The original repair estimate was \$110,000 but some savings must have been met as the ship was repaired and later that summer resumed her career.

A most unusual rescue attempt of one of the vessels took place in February 1928. While turning about in the Genesee River *Ontario No.2* grounded in the mud, her bow lodged on the east bank, her stern on the west. Concern for the ships structural integrity heightened due to the backlog of ice jammed against her hull caused by the current carrying ice downstream. Initial attempts to free her proved unsuccessful. Early the following morning, an unusual rescue attempt was initiated. Two tug boats worked her bow while lines from her stern were attached to two BR&P locomotives on the west shore. Despite the concerted efforts of tug and train to free the boat, this unusual rescue attempt failed. Finally, with the closure of a dam upstream, and the efforts of *Ontario No.1* assisting, the boat was freed.¹¹

Several local residents worked in various capacities on board during the 1940s. Clarence 'Butch' Gallagher recalled his days as a coal passer:

The coal dust would fly. After your shift was up you were black, mostly from the cold dust. You would go and take a shower and rub cold cream on. You would see the coal dust coming out of your pores after you had already showered. That's why we were still picking coal dust out of our hair ten years later!¹²

As an oiler Don Butler recounted his duties:

¹⁰ Rochester Democrat & Chronicle, September 8, 1934.

¹¹ Cobourg Sentinel-Star, February 23, 1928.

¹² Clarence "Butch" Gallagher, Personal Interview

The duties of an oiler were to make sure the oil feeders (on the engines) were kept filled and the lubricators were on. The cylinder rods had to be lubricated about every half hour by rubbing them with a brush that had been dipped in black oil. The main engines had the main bearings which had grease cups and regularly, every half hour, you had to give the grease cups half a turn. This squeezed grease into the bearing.

Then you would retrace your steps. You had to feel the bearings. If they were cold, you were OK. If they were not, you were in trouble. If it was hot you would put the hose to it, to cool it, and when you got to the dock, you would drop out the bearing and clean the oil ways out and put them back together again.¹³

Former Cobourg Mayor Mac Lees' first day on board as a third cook proved a memorable event for him:

The third cook was supposed to be doing things like preparing salad and putting butter in butter dishes and that kind of pantry stuff. But the other job was supposed to be doing all the slop—cleaning the pots and pans and things. My initial day on there I was told my first job was to clean up the mess of pots and pans. There was a window above the sink with a bar in the middle. We were at the dock still with a bit of a breeze blowing. So the boat kept rocking back and forth, not much, but a little. The bar in the window kept going up and down, and I kept looking at this bar going up and down. All of a sudden I threw up in the sink. And we hadn't left the dock. From then on I became a waiter.¹⁴

Working in the steward's department was a prized position, but the chef was king in that domain. Clarence Gallagher recalled two incidents with a chef:

The cook was a grouchy old bugger. My friend was cooking breakfast one morning and the cook came into the galley and grabbed the frying pan out of his hand and dumped the eggs into the fire and said, "I'm the only cook in here."

I recall one other time a passenger ordered a Salisbury Steak, and I brought it to him and he was madder than hell. He said, "That's hamburg!" I guess he was expecting a great big T-bone steak. I took

¹³ Don Butler, Personal Interview.

¹⁴ Mac Lees, Personal Interview.

it back to the cook and the cook said, "Tell him to eat it or starve."¹⁵

Passengers often remarked on the quality and freshness of the food served on board. Bill Thompson once was awed by how fresh the fish could be that was served on board.

One day when I was coming on board I saw this box marked "John Lavis, Cobourg." So I carried it over to (Chef) McGraw and asked him what this was all about. He said it was a special deal the boat had on for the day's menu. This fish the Company had purchased in New York (City) as fresh caught white fish. But it was caught in Cobourg. I saw John Lavis later and asked him, "How come we are serving your fish on the boat?" He replied, "What do you mean?" I took him back the case and said, "These are your wooden cases." He started to laugh and said, "I sold that case of fish to the Ontario Fish Market in Toronto; they shipped it to Montreal because that's where all the whitefish went. They sold it to New York. There the fish was bought up by Canada Steam Ship Lines and shipped back to Canada to the ferry company to be sold in Cobourg as fresh caught white fish!"¹⁶

The Depression created severe economic difficulties for the OCFC as it did for many enterprises at the time. For much of the 1930s only one ferry operated daily. Revenues were not only constricted by the general lack of business, but also by new regulations and tariffs which allowed Nova Scotia coal to compete with Pennsylvania coal at a time when the latter mines were closing due to competition from West Virginia mines. In mid-decade the Company directors discussed the possibility of whether or not to continue the service. The Baltimore & Ohio Rail Road (successor to the BR&P) vehemently supported the continuation of the service as they believed, if nothing else, it contributed to a sense of their Company's prestige. The Canadian National Railways (successor to the GTR) held a more sanguine opinion.

However, the two parent rail companies agreed to strike a committee to investigate the future potential of the marine company. By the time the committee had completed its investigation, World War II had begun. The committee reported that predicting the future under such conditions of war was next to impossible. Both parties did however support maintaining the service so long as the crisis lasted.

In September of 1939, Canada became a belligerent in World War II. That held potential international legal problems for the continuation of the ferry service across Lake Ontario. Under the laws of neutrality, the United States could not engage in commercial

¹⁵ Clarence Gallagher, Personal Interview.

¹⁶ Bill Thompson, Personal Interview.

activity by ship with a belligerent nation. Within weeks, however, an official in the U.S. Custom's Department issued an unusual declaration to resolve this potential dilemma. He determined that since the car ferries carried whole trains, the boats were logically a train. The ferry service continued throughout the war!

Several months following the U.S. entry into the war, the boat train became a casualty. It ceased operations in August of 1942 under orders of the U.S. Department of Defense Transportation. Nonetheless, the boats continued to enjoy a healthy passenger trade during the summer due to general travel restrictions and automobile gasoline rationing. Almost immediately after the war, however, the Company's revenues continued in a dramatic decline. While the excursion trade remained popular through the summer of 1949, the general cargo revenues plummeted to the point where the vessels were unable to pay for even their own operating costs. In the summer of 1949, *Ontario No. 1* tied up along the east pier in Cobourg for routine inspection and maintenance, and never sailed under her own steam again.

In September of the same year the burning of the *S.S. Noronic* in Toronto with the loss of more than one hundred lives resulted in swift alterations in the safety requirements and standards relative to passenger boats operating on the Great Lakes. Costs to upgrade the machinery and to meet the new safety requirements for the two ships approached one million dollars while the scrap value of the two ships was thought to be about \$75,000. The directors determined to end company operations when the boiler certificate on *Ontario No. 2* expired in April of 1950. Despite the protestations of local politicians, the red ink proved immutable.

Ontario No. 2 made her final entry into Cobourg harbour on Friday, April 28, 1950 ending nearly half a century of cross-lake service by the OCFC. Both vessels were tied up and remained so while they were tendered for disposal. One unusual inquiry came from the United Fruit Company of Florida. They wanted to know how much it would cost to bring the vessels to Chicago and have them placed on pontoons for a voyage along the Mississippi River to New Orleans. Both boats were too large to exit the St. Lawrence River locks at that time, or to move through the Welland Canal for the same reason. Eleven bids for the vessels as scrap were made, ranging from a low of \$5,000 to the winning bid of \$130,600 by A. Neuman of St. Catharines.

The Ontario Car Ferry Company held a unique history on Lake Ontario and the Great Lakes. It was the only car ferry company that operated on the Great Lakes that was registered in Canada. The port of registry for both ships was Montreal, a port that neither vessel could visit. When constructed, *Ontario No. 1* and *Ontario No. 2* were the largest boats on Lake Ontario. The company was always interested in safe operation and both ships were the first vessels on Lake Ontario to have wireless telegraphy, and later radio communication, installed on board. Of all the Great Lakes car ferries that operated *Ontario No. 1* and *Ontario No. 2* were the only car ferries that sailed in conjunction with a scheduled boat train.

Both ships were towed by tug out of Cobourg harbour in early June and quickly cut up

for scrap. Few artifacts remain from either ship, although locally some china and cutlery occasionally appears. Few citizens stood at the harbour as witness as the vessels were towed into the Lake on their last journey to Port Dalhousie. With their disappearance over the Lake's horizon, a unique rail marine saga that had affected many Cobourg lives during the first half of the twentieth century ceased. Fifty years later only memories survive.

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**May Social
Grafton Village Inn**

SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD: NATION BUILDER

**by
Alan Skeoch**

At the annual May Social, held at the Grafton Village Inn in Grafton, Ontario on Tuesday, May 23rd, guest speaker, Alan Skeoch, presented an entertaining and educational talk on Sir John A. Macdonald.

A recipient of the Governor-General's Award for excellence in teaching history at the secondary school level, Skeoch's lively interpretation of Macdonald revealed that the young lawyer who practised for a while in Cobourg and who later became Canada's first Prime Minister was a man of the times. By taking a well-known statement by or about Macdonald, and then elaborating upon that quotation, Skeoch established a more positive and flattering perspective of Macdonald than is usually recorded in history. A significant example demonstrated that Macdonald's seemingly overindulgent consumption of alcoholic beverages, did not, in fact, exceed that of his contemporaries.

HISTORICAL SNIPPETS

by

John JolieEditor, *Historically Speaking*☞ September 1999 - Number 150 - **The Cobourg Connection**

In January of 1866, the Space Shuttle *Challenger* exploded. The shuttles were not whimsically named. The names come from history, many from the names of sea going vessels in search of discovery and science. The first Challenger carried a scientific expedition that left England in the last century and spent three years circling the globe collecting marine data and materials - fish, mud, fossils, water depths and temperatures. The scientists on board had almost no background information to work with as so little had been done previously. In fact, oceanography was not yet a science. When the voyage was over, the material had to be catalogued and documented.

The person who organized the massive volumes from this trip was John Murray. Murray, recognized as a giant in his field, received many honours, including a knighthood from Queen Victoria. Sir John Murray was born right here in Cobourg!

If you check a good atlas you will find that the deepest part in the world's oceans is the **Challenger Deep** and a fault line running through the Pacific from California towards Hawaii is the **Murray Fracture Zone!**

☞ October 1999 - Number 151 - **The Cobourg Connection**

September 1999 marked the 50th anniversary of one of Toronto's worst disasters. The passenger ship *Noronic*, berthed at Pier 9, caught fire during the early morning hours of September 17, 1949. Of the 525 passengers on board, 119 died in the tragedy. The follow-up to this tragedy was the introduction of new regulations to make the ships on the Great Lakes more fire proof.

Cobourg was the terminus to the two train car ferries, Ontario #1 and #2. These boats could not meet the new standards. The main function of the ferries had always been to carry coal for the steam engines on the railways. Now, there was a shift away from that fuel. With the demand for the main cargo for these ships fading fast, the two ferries were sold for scrap and towed to Hamilton. The burned hull of the *Noronic* had already met the same fate.



☞ November 1999 - Number 152 - **Congestion on the 401 ?**

We are so lucky to have that freeway. An early pioneer, Mrs. Stewart, was reminiscing in an article in the Cobourg World (June 6, 1919). She stated that, years earlier, her husband had travelled from Cobourg, leaving at 7 p.m. and arriving York [Toronto] at 3 p.m. the next day. The four passenger sleigh only had an oil cloth hood for protection. She stated that her husband nearly perished.



☞ January 2000 - Number 153 - **Hamilton Township Assessment**

The following comes from the collector's roll of 1826: There were 297 names on the rolls, about one third in Cobourg (which did not legally exist for another decade). 19,481 acres of land were still uncultivated compared to 8091 that were farmed. (Note the currency below as it fluctuated between the British and American. No Canadian currency existed until 1858.) The highest tax levy on anyone was \$15.37 and only four individuals paid over two pounds. Twenty-eight individuals paid less than four pence, with the lowest levy being three cents! Horses out-numbered those 297 humans, the horses numbered 478!

(from *Historical Sketch of Hamilton Township*, Walter Riddell, 1897, pp.8-9 and printed at the *World Office*, Cobourg)



☞ February 2000 - Number 154 - **Quiz**

Match these dates to the event:

- | | |
|--|---------|
| • first settlers in Cobourg area | a. 1898 |
| • first horse show at Donegan Park | b. 1918 |
| 3. first Cobourg Star published | c. 1837 |
| 4. Cobourg Peterborough Railroad completed | d. 1854 |
| 5. Jones starts first survey of Hamilton Township | e. 1860 |
| 6. the Cobourg-Port Hope, Cobourg-Grafton roads get Act of Parliament go ahead | f. 1847 |
| 7. Prince of Wales sails into Cobourg | g. 1791 |
| 8. local militia march to York to battle Mackenzie's rebels | h. 1831 |
| 9. great flu epidemic sweeps through area and world | i. 1905 |
| 10. Victoria Park established | j. 1798 |

Answers to the above quiz:

1791 5. Jones begins first survey of area

- 1798 [1] first settlers in Cobourg area
- 1831 [3] first Cobourg Star published
- 1837 [8] local militia marches to York to battle Mackenzie's rebels
- 1847 [6] Cobourg-Port Hope, Cobourg-Grafton roads get Parliamentary go ahead
- 1854 [4] Cobourg Peterborough Railroad completed
- 1860 [7] Prince of Wales sails into Cobourg
- 1898 [10] Victoria Park established
- 1905 [2] first horse show at Donegan Park
- 1918 [9] great flu epidemic sweeps through area and world



☪ March 2000 - Number 155 - **Those Street Names**

East is now Darcy Street, Boswell is now Perry, Colborne is Queen, Seminary is University and Boulton is now King. (There are some obvious mistakes on the 1874 map, so this newsletter editor will not argue with anyone older than himself about the validity of these names)



☪ April 2000 - Number 155 - **Farm Improvements**

Some farmers in the country and in particular Hamilton Township went to great efforts to improve their products. They were often in the forefront for awards at the Provincial Exhibition. Early importations of Clydesdales and Percherons made good draught breeds. Durhams, Ayrshires and Devons arrived over 150 years ago. Holsteins and Jerseys were introduced around 1900. Cattle did not have a pampered life. It was customary to leave the cows outside, without shelter, huddling behind hay stacks. In two severe winters, 1835-6 and 1843-4, many livestock perished. That led to some small shelters being built for them. The first silo for feed was erected by Samuel Philip in the township. (Guillet, E.C. *Pioneer Farmer and Back Woodsman* Vol.II, pp.100-104)



☪ May 2000 - Number 156 - **The Cobourg Connection**

Later this month Toronto will be having a big open house, similar to events that have been catching on in Europe. It is called Open Doors Toronto, running on May 27th and 28th. Several architectural landmarks, not usually open to the public, will open their doors on the weekend for display. One such structure is the Gooderham or "Flatiron" Building at Wellington and Church Streets at the bottom of the city. This wedge-shaped landmark – built

to be the head office for a distillery company – has been prominent in recent advertising campaigns. I have been told that a tunnel was built under the street to the bank so that the large financial transactions would not be conspicuous.

Anyway, back to Cobourg. The Gooderham and Worts families arrived in Toronto *en masse* in 1832, with 54 family members. Starting with a windmill at the east end of the harbour, they built the largest distillery operation in the British Empire. The next generation was headed by William Gooderham, a convert to the Methodist Church. William started to give away money for charitable causes in huge amounts. Those good deeds affected Cobourg, but not in a positive way. When the good man died in 1889, he left his fortune to the Methodist Victoria University, on the condition that the university move from Cobourg to Toronto. The university, always financially strapped in Cobourg, packed its bags and moved to Toronto to become affiliated with the University of Toronto.

It is worth renewing your acquaintance with Victoria College in Cobourg and to read the plaque at the base of the white classical structure. It predates our town hall by a generation. The school's charter is older than virtually every institute of higher learning in the country.



☞ April 2000 - Number 156 - Quiz: Cobourg or Coburg on the Map

We are not the only place with that name on the globe. Name five other places around the world sharing that name. (Bonus point: What other Canadian place spells it the same as the Ontario town?)

Answer: The five are

- Cobourg Island is on the north-west of Australia
- Canada has another Cobourg, spelled like the Ontario, Cobourg name, this one is in the far Arctic. Cobourg Island is a small uninhabited island, just south of Devon Island
- Coburg, USA is a town not far from Eugene, Oregon.
- Coburg in Australia is near Melbourne
- Coburg, Germany is the original

NB: Although this is the bonus answer, the Newsletter Editor has discovered that while the early maps spell it Cobourg, more recent ones use the German spelling, Coburg.

Editor's note:

CDHS member, Ted Peterson, added the following information that Cobourg Island in the Arctic was named by Lachlan Burwash, a Cobourg surveyor who mapped the northern regions of Canada.

At our April meeting Vice-President Colin Caldwell read the following letter from the Advice Column of *THE COBOURG WORLD*:

Cobourg, 10th Jan., 1887

Goliver Oldsmith, Esq.
Office of The Cobourg World,

Dear Sir,- As you are a father, I thought I would ask your advice in reference to a son of mine. My son is 13 years old and he is wearing out my life in sheer anxiety for him. I can't get him to study his books more than an hour a day, and he spends all the rest of his time at the skating rink or the toboggan slide; and he was plucked at the entrance examination; and he wears his clothes and boots out fearfully at the toboggan slide. If you could advise me how I could induce him to stop going to the rink and the toboggan slide, I would feel very grateful,

Yours, &c.,
An Anxious Mother.

Poor "anxious mother," I do sympathize with you! It is horrid, the way boys will go on. I was a boy myself once, and I know all about it. Not only does your son wear out his clothes and get plucked at his examinations, but this skating and tobogganing makes him big and fat and rosy faced; and his hands look like a farmer's, and he grows too fast and eats too much, and there's no refinement in him and he won't study more than an hour a day; and if his career is not checked he will grow into a great strapping fellow and probably want to be a prize fighter!

Madam, I have made a special study of boys. I know all about them, and I am happy to be able to give you an infallible remedy by which you may effectually cure your wayward son of his love for those kind of outdoor dissipations. Listen: - Take your son gently by the hand and lead him into your private apartment; look sad and sorrowful; tell him how much you love him and have done for him and that he is wearing out your life in anxiety for him; impress upon his youthful mind that you have taken a firm stand and have determined to make a great change in him; then after you have shed copious tears, take him again by the hand and gently lead him out into the woodshed and stand him in the middle of it with his back towards you; pick up the axe firmly in both hands and—kill him. Nothing else will cure him. *Nothing else should!*

Goliver Oldsmith