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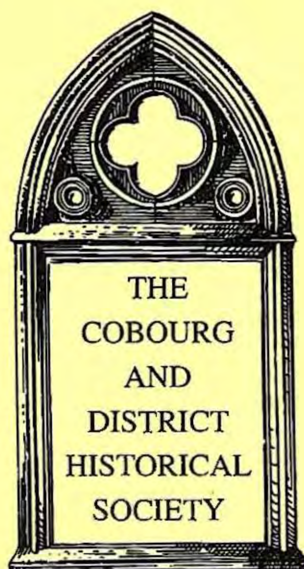

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THE COBOURG AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY
PROGRAMME OF SPEAKERS
2000 - 2001

2000

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Cover Photograph

Postcard: The Beach, Cobourg, Ontario

The Cobourg and District Historical Society Archives 1980-2001-13-12

COBALT: THE SILVER TOWN AND ITS IMPORTANCE TO ONTARIO'S HISTORY

by

John Jolie

Prior to 1900, the Canadian Shield was perceived to be an obstacle to the development of our new nation. The endless coniferous forests, the rock outcrops separating the countless swamps, and lakes made transportation links difficult and costly. Farming was marginal, at best, the weather severe and the geology so old that geologists were baffled by its complexity .The mosquitoes and blackflies could drive man and beast to despair.
Despite all of this, some individuals thought beyond the pessimism; they believed in a hidden potential in the North. The first non-Native industry in the North had been the fur trade with the Natives, and a century ago, there were still numerous trading posts scattered across the North. It was, however, the discovery of nickel in the Sudbury Basin by railroad workers which now stimulated industrial development. Vast forests were being harvested to supply rail ties, bridge materials, poles and housing for the new communities across North America. In addition to these economic changes, there were also political and social factors which changed Ontarians' feelings about their North. The extension of Quebec and Ontario's northern boundaries up to James and Hudson Bays in 1884 opened up more land. This led to an effort to entice some of the European immigrants crossing Ontario on their way to settle in the West to settle in northern Ontario instead.

Another simmering issue never far from the forefront was religion. The Catholic Church in Quebec was recruiting their flock to build religious communities in the north and some of those villages were within a few kilometres of the Ontario border. As the troubles with Riel and the Manitoba School Question were recent events at that time, Protestant Ontario did not want any more of those people in their province.

A major impetus to development came from a former Hudson Bay Company employee, Charles Farr, who had retired to the west shore of Lake Timiskaming, that long, deep lake which forms the Ontario-Quebec border. Farr purchased many lots in that area and went back to England to campaign for settlers to his "Little England." He had already persuaded the province to produce a pamphlet about Timiskaming Country .The village he started was Haileybury, named for his school in England. Starting at Timiskaming and spreading northwards is a huge clay plain – called the Clay Belt – formed by the mineral deposits of a huge post-glacial lake. If newcomers could be attracted to farm this area, more development could be justified.

A few settlers were already establishing themselves in New Liskeard, at the north end of the lake where the lumber trade and a ferry dock provided the reasons for the village's existence. Winter always meant isolation, however. When the lake froze, the only way out was a treacherous sled race down the frozen lake to the outside. The handful of settlers became persistent in their demands for a rail link from North Bay, where the CPR east-west

line was in place. The noises made by these settlers in itself would have little impact but it was a provincial rivalry that became the determining factor in the construction of the railway. Montreal was the primate city in Canada and as such, cast a wide sphere of influence far outside Quebec. At that time, Toronto had few ties to New Ontario. Political motives also became important. Liberal premier George Ross, looking for some issue to revive his party's declining support, seized on the idea of a rail link to the North. Until that point, rail investments had focussed on east-west lines, Maritime interests, and even Caribbean links, and there was no money available. The Province bit the bullet, had the land surveyed, had a report written, sold large tracts of land, and introduced a bill in 1902 for the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario Railway (T.&N.O.). The line would begin in North Bay with the prospect of its reaching up to James Bay someday. (Some schemers hoped that a line of settlers would form along the route, halting the westward move of the French-Canadians.) The first publicly owned utility in Ontario was set to go.

The T.&N.O. poked its way around the escarpment at North Bay and meandered northward through the trees, rocks and lakes towards the hamlets of Haileybury and New Liskeard. At Mile 103, along Long Lake, history began to unfold. Two contractors, McKinley and Darraugh, engaged in acquiring timber for the railway, found metal in the rocks and water at the south end of Long Lake. That was on August 14, 1903. A sample, sent to Montreal to be assayed, proved to have huge amounts of silver. The men could now stake their claims. Mining laws in those days stated that you had to actually find the ore before you could stake your claim and the prospector wanted to make sure of what he found. According to folklore, six weeks later, Fred Larose, a blacksmith working on the railroad, threw his hammer at a fox, missed, and knocked a slab off the rock face. Not knowing what metal he had exposed, Larose had a friend take it south for identification. These samples also proved to be pure, or Native silver, something not common anywhere in the world! Perhaps the disbelief in the find led the experts to not accept the finds as factual and they speculated that nickel or cobalt were the main ores. However, as prospectors started to explore the area, they found slabs and chunks of pure silver, "resembling stove lids or cannonballs."

The discoveries and the question about what exactly was being found led the government to send up the Provincial Geologist, Willet Miller, to investigate. Miller's report verified that the mineral finds were not exaggerated, that silver was indeed in incredible abundance. Before departing from the mining camp, Miller posted a board alongside the tracks, reading "Cobalt Station T.N.&O. Ry."[1]

By the end of that first year, 1903, several veins had been discovered. McKinley and Darraugh had their mine, Fred Larose sold his discovery to the Timmins brothers, Tom Hebert found the Nipissing Vein, and Neil King found the deposit that became the O'Brien Mine. Willet Miller had written his report, the silver veins were being found, but the reactions were very subdued.

1. Queens University has a building called Miller Hall named for him.

It had only been a few years since the Klondike Gold Rush, when maybe a hundred thousand set out across the continent. However romantic we view gold rushes, reality was that it was a constant struggle to survive - and many did not. They had to cross a continent, sail along the coast, climb steep mountain passes through huge amounts of snow and cold. After proving to the Mounties that they had moved a year's supply of goods in their 30 to 40 climbs, they built rafts to shoot down the turbulent Yukon River to Dawson. When they finished their ordeal of a lifetime and reached Dawson, they found virtually all deposits were staked. It was a sobering experience, and it tempered the public view of still another mineral discovery.

It took the following year for the news of Cobalt's veins to capture the imagination of the public. In 1904, a Cornish prospector, William Trethewey, found a vein within two days of his arrival and then quickly found a second vein. A friend of Trethewey found his own vein after helping Trethewey complete his staking. His shipment of ore south blew away the complacency about the discoveries. The newspaper reports described the ore as "slabs of Native silver stripped off the walls of the veins like boards from a barn." That did it. The public finally took notice.

Cobalt became the very antithesis of the Klondike ordeal. There was no year long struggle to reach the discoveries, one simply had to hop a train and arrive in Cobalt the next morning. There is one story told of an individual stepping off the train and setting off a charge on a roadway! The veins were right at the surface, or could be found by simply clearing away the shallow soil. The pure silver allowed the poorest of prospectors to hold onto their claims without selling out to monied interests. There were hundreds of veins, allowing many to share the wealth. The story of only needing a pick and a shovel to get rich in Cobalt had some truth to it. This is one reason for Cobalt being labelled as "the poor man's mining camp." There is another reason for that label, too.

There was no town plan and the newcomers built wherever they had a whim to do so. Today, Highway 11 winds in a serpentine fashion through the settlement, avoiding rock outcrops. The lack of preparation and certainly the difficulty of cutting through the rock virtually insured water and sewage problems and Cobalt had to endure several epidemics and fires.

Mining claims resembled all the order of pieces in a jigsaw puzzle. Mining claims often overlapped. Some claims went under roadways, others went under the rail bed. Until Cobalt's situation forced changes in mining regulations, veins that ran into lakes could not be staked into the water. OPP's first detachment was posted in Cobalt.

The Toronto Stock Exchange was a poor cousin to the Montreal operations until Cobalt appeared on the scene. The trading in mine shares skyrocketed, leading to the eventual eclipsing of Montreal as the financial centre of the country.

Cobalt was not, and is not, a pretty town. It was mostly occupied by mine workers and

their families. They were not rich and they struggled to survive. There were many casualties in the mines and Northeastern Ontario's miners had a history of labour strife to improve their living conditions. The *nouveaux riches* did not want to live amongst all this. Where could a new millionaire live and enjoy his newly acquired affluence? The answer was Haileybury, just a few miles to the north.

Along the shores of Lake Timiskaming (often spelled Temiskaming) a string of homes, called Millionaires Row, was built. Haileybury was the opposite of Cobalt. It boasted of
having more millionaires per capita than any other community in Canada. The head offices for many Cobalt mines were in Haileybury. Laws had made it illegal for liquor to be sold within five miles of a mine and Haileybury was conveniently just outside of that limit. Haileybury became the seat for the District of Timiskaming and had a Mining School established there. The cathedral serving as headquarters for the Catholic diocese serving all of Northeast Ontario and Northwest Quebec was in Haileybury as was a hospital and school run by the Sisters of the Assumption.

Despite being a northern town, Haileyburyians wanted to be second to none. More than one author suggested New Ontario could be a province on its own and that Haileybury could be the capital. The business elite built a streetcar line that connected some mines south of Cobalt to that town, then up to Haileybury and north to the community of New Liskeard. The company was called the Nipissing Central Railway. At the peak, in the teens of the century, a million and a half passengers were carried annually!

New Liskeard prospered, as well. The railway did open up the Clay Belt for farmers and New Liskeard became a farm centre. It also became a destination for holiday excursions to its Mile Long Beach. The three communities, with their economic links, became known as the Tritown. The diversity in their economies helped somewhat in their struggle to survive the downturns of many single-industry towns across the North.

As well, the National Hockey League has some roots in Cobalt. An earlier league, called the National Hockey Association (NHA), had a team in Cobalt and one in Haileybury. Both teams were funded by a silver and lumber magnate from Pembroke by the name of O'Brien. The first hockey game that the Montreal Canadians ever played was against Cobalt. Montreal won. The NHA lasted only a few years before more league mergers ended the viability of teams such as Cobalt and Haileybury.

Fires were a recurring problem in Northeastern Ontario. The coniferous forests have always burned in dry years, but human activity worsened fire damage. Train sparks caused fires. Burning down trees to start farms or clearing mining claims were accepted practices that often were out of control. The new towns, made primarily from wood, were kindling. Firewood, used for heat and cooking, was piled up against homes -who wanted to step out in minus 40 degree weather to get firewood? Making a neighbourhood more fire proof was an

exhausting effort and one did not have the stamina to clear cut everything near the community. When the mining towns in northeastern Ontario sprang up a century ago, fire was soon to follow. Cochrane, Timmins, Cobalt, all burned more than once, with the fires consuming millions of acres of forest as well. Matheson's inferno in 1916 took at least 243 lives.

In 1922, the summer was beautiful. The harvest was bountiful and the new farmland was being cleared of stumps in anticipation of increasing acreage for the next spring. Fire regulations had been drawn up as a consequence of the constant fire threat. One rule acknowledged that the fire season extended until the end of September and a farmer could not burn any tree stumps until October. That year there had been fires burning across the North all summer and into September. The weather had been dry and warm. Despite ideal conditions for more fires, fire season was officially over on October 1st. The few existing fire fighters were dismissed for the winter, and farmers – happy that the autumn was lasting so warm – started to burn the stumps they had pulled that summer. In the Indian summer weather, there was always the odour of smoke in the air. There were hundreds of small fires in the bush. Many creeks had gone dry. No one informed Mother Nature to check the calendar.

The fires now had all of the ingredients for conflagration. On October 4th, the small fires began to gain momentum in a north wind, which would reach equivalent hurricane strength. The small outbreaks joined, and the drying stumps became added fuel. The dry stream beds could not act as fire-breaks. The winds carried sparks far ahead of the fire front. The smoke was observed even in Ottawa. Residents in other towns suspected that trouble was brewing. The electricity and telephone links went dead. The fire swept through the communities of Englehart, Charleton, Heaslip. Thornloe, and Earlton. People stood in clearings on their farm, hid in root cellars, or stood in water. Survival was not certain in any of these situations.

By sheer luck, the fire swept by New Liskeard, burning only some buildings near the train station, and letting most of the town survive. Haileybury watched the darkening skies with apprehension. There had been several fire alarms in the past week, and all fires had been contained. This was different. The flames were visible and men were battling the enemy just across the tracks. By 2 p.m., some residents were leaving their homes. At 2:30, the high school students were dismissed. At about 3 p.m. the court proceedings were stopped, and minutes later, the court building was consumed. The train running north made a desperate situation become even worse when it severed fire hoses stretching across the tracks. Now it was simply survival that mattered. Some who tried to defend their property died. Many people stood in the water of Lake Timiskaming. The winds whipped up the water as parents tried to hold their children above the waves, brushing off the falling embers as they watched their town burn. The only section of town to survive was, ironically, Millionaires Row. The open lands of the golf fairways behind their mansions kept the flames from them.

The District of Timiskaming was in shambles. To make life even more miserable, after

that record hot spell, it snowed the day after the fire. No homes, no clothes, no fuel, no jobs, and now winter was coming! Forty-three bodies were found, 18 townships were damaged severely. Help came from Cobalt, which had had only the edge of town burn. New Liskeard took in refugees. Toronto sent up their old streetcars, which became the residences for many that winter. (Today, the one remaining streetcar left is in a museum in Haileybury.)

The Temiskaming Fire was a milestone in the history of the Tritown and area. Most small villages that burned never returned to their pre-fire populations. Haileybury never again had dreams of aspiring to be a centre of wealth or influence. Cobalt's mining frenzy was in its past and although mining went on for several more decades, the finds were now deeper, thinner, or simply the reworking of what had already been mined. It is estimated that the silver dug out of the hundred plus mines would fill a train from Cobalt all the way down to North Bay -- a hundred miles of silver! Cobalt miners learned their trade and could be seen at the forefront of discoveries in Elk Lake, Larder Lake, Noranda, the Porcupine area, Kirkland Lake, Red Lake, Yellowknife and Eldorado. The last Cobalt mine shut down in the 1980s. The Timiskaming and Northern Ontario Railway became the Ontario Northland, reaching to Moosonee. The Clay Belt still has large beef and dairy operations. New Liskeard is currently the retail centre for southern Timiskaming.

Cobalt has cast a big shadow even though the population has fallen now to a few hundred. When one considers that this town had a big impact on professional hockey, the growth of Toronto Stock Exchange, the money to trigger mineral exploration across Canada, the first community to have an OPP detachment, it certainly has its place in history .The town has developed a Silver Trail, has a spectacular silver museum and a military museum. Haileybury has a museum commemorating the fire. The Tritown is well worth a visit.

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THE RICE LAKE INDIAN WARS: A STUDY IN ORAL HISTORY

by

Colin Caldwell

My topic is the Ojibwa or Mississauga re-conquest of the Rice Lake area in the latter part of the seventeenth century. Our source for this is the recollections of a local chief who recalled the stories of his direct ancestors and who arranged for his recollections to be published around the turn of the last century (1905).

You all know me as an inveterate hater of oral tradition. Some of you will have been in attendance while I examined some of the popular legends surrounding Cobourg History. In most cases I started off – sincerely – with the idea of tracking down the tradition to its source and thus proving its validity. All too frequently I found that there was no source; or that the source was so garbled, or so riddled with hoary old myths that the story could be told about anywhere and couldn't be used at all. Sometimes we found that the story retained some truth but that it had had its geography switched around.

All of these stories, however, dealt with events purporting to have happened during what we properly refer to as the historical period; that is, the period for which we have proper historical records, even if incomplete. "Proper Historical Records" usually means European-style records. Basically we're talking about what has happened since Cobourg's founding.

Here I would like to talk about events which took place at a time and place where Oral History is the only Historical Record; that is, before European documentation. These events happened near here at a time just before full European penetration of this area. However, as Europeans were keeping records, of varying degrees of accuracy, all around this region at this time, we can check the oral history against what we know from our other sources. I make no judgements, here. I just want to see if the oral history fits.

Turning to the topic of the Ojibwa or Mississauga re-conquest of the area around Rice Lake in the latter part of the seventeenth century, we know about this through the recollections of Chief Paudash, son of Paudash, son of Cheneebeesh son of Gemoaghpenassee.[1] These were published by the Ontario Historical Society in 1905.[2] In his introduction, Paudash describes his ancestors' positions of authority and the era in which they lived, thus establishing a direct traditional lineage for the veracity of these accounts. The earliest mentioned authority would have been born, in this account, around 1765, and would thus have received the story from an eyewitness to the events.

1. In Native cultures, recitation of the speaker's genealogy establishes the authority of the speaker.

2. Quoted in E.C. Guillett *The Valley of the Trent.* Pp.9ff

Before we start on these events, let's put them in the other form of historical context.

I presume that everyone here is familiar roughly with the broad outline of European-Native contact in this area. The first European we know who came through Rice Lake was Champlain in his famous journey of 1617-8. Noteworthy here is Champlain's only comment about the population, which was that the Rice Lake area had been formerly inhabited but was now empty due to fear of the Iroquois. Champlain was travelling with a party of Huron who were taking him south to raid the Iroquois on their home turf in what is now New York State. This set off a general Native war which resulted in the complete destruction of Huronia around 1650 by massive Iroquois invasion. The surviving Huron were scattered northward where they joined or were adopted by their Algonkian-speaking allies who would later be known to history as the Ottawa, Ojibwa, Chippewa (probably a pronunciation of Ojibwa) or Mississauga. We know that Iroquois settled the north shore of Lake Ontario themselves. It was Iroquois who occupied the mouth of the Ganaraska River when it was a French mission and trading post under the Sulpicians in the late 1600s.

From 1680 to 1701 is the period of the great Iroquois-French wars conducted by Frontenac, Denonville and others; it was the era when Madeleine de Verchères so valiantly defended her family farm dressed and fighting as a man; and so on. This period of New France culminates in the Great Peace of 1701, celebrated with much fanfare by Frontenac's sucessors.

The interior of southern Ontario is essentially ignored from then until after the American Revolution when the British Government began to negotiate land treaties with the Natives along the north shore of Lake Ontario. For the most part, these Natives are Mississauga, and they have such an undisputed claim to the land that the British must seek the Mississauga's cooperation to bring the Britain's Iroquois allies over with them.

What happened? According to the account given by Paudash, the Mississauga drove the Iroquois – whom he identifies as Mohawks – out of Ontario in a protracted and strategically planned campaign. The fighting, as recorded in Paudash's account, seems to begin on the north shore of Georgian Bay/Lake Huron. Steadily fighting, the Mohawks withdrew, followed closely by the Mississauga, up the Severn River to Lake Simcoe. There the Mississauga stopped to collect allies and food and, after a council of war, one party then travelled south over the carrying place to Toronto while the rest moved across to Balsam Lake, still pursuing the Mohawks. Several skirmishes followed and the Mohawks retreated further to the Otonabee River and on to Rice Lake. Apparently these Iroquoians had taken their first real stand at Lakefield and/or Peterborough. Defeated again by the Mississauga, they next took up a position at the mouth of the Otonabee. At this point the account is somewhat confusing to my ears as the Mississauga seize Campbellford[3] and there is some etymological stuff about the Campbellford name indicating a Mississauga withdrawal. The next part seems to pick up the narrative where it left off as the Mohawks are driven from the mouth of the Otonabee over to

3. See note at the end of this article.

what Paudash knew as Roche's Point, and which, from his description, can only be Serpent Mounds.

It is worth pausing a moment to examine his description of the mounds. He calls them "mounds in the shape of a serpent and having four small mounds about its head and body in the forms of turtles." Paudash seems to believe these mounds were built by the Mississauga in commemoration of the battle fought here at this time. Although he does acknowledge that others think differently, he refutes it by remarking, "but my father has so stated it."

The fight here, though, was extensive as Paudash records that no less than a thousand warriors were slain and that a great number of bones and arrow heads are to be found there even to this day.

After this momentous battle, the Mohawks retreated yet again to what is now known as Cameron's Point. More bones and arrow heads record another Mississauga victory here and the Mohawks then retreat all the way to Carrying Place at the Bay of Quinte from which they are again driven out and flee to New York state. Wary of the possibility of the Mohawks returning later both in greater numbers and at a time to the disadvantage of the Mississauga, the Mississauga decide to pursue them across the lake and strike them in their fortresses on the Mohawk River. An inconclusive siege leads then to a lasting treaty to the great satisfaction of the Mississauga.

This, then, in outline, is Paudash's story presented as Mississauga history. How does it fit our concept of history?

There are four groups whose historical accounts are at play here. The Mississuaga, the Iroquois, the French, and the British. We've just heard the Mississauga version. The Iroquois had no interest in playing this up if no one else did. The French always claimed, and would certainly claim at the time, that their expensive military campaigns drove the Iroquois south and to the peace table. The English probably couldn't have cared less at that point.

Let us examine, briefly, what French records say. In 1692 we have a note in the colonial "*Relations de ce qui s'est passe*" and so on for that year which states, "In the west, true to their promise to Courtemanche, the Indian allies harried the Iroquois villages and inflicted severe losses on the enemy." Here I'm quoting the narrative of Gustave Lanctot in his almost annalistic 1964 *History of Canada*. Again, from the same source, we hear of harrassments of the Iroquois by western Indian allies of the French in the summer of 1693, and in 1694 there was a brief movement toward a general peace among all the tribes. In 1695, the Franco-Indian alliance is almost upset by the near-defection of some Huron and Ottawa allies who are enticed over by English rum. The situation is saved for the French alliance when some Iroquois and Ottawa hunters "returning together from the hunt...in a passion of vengeance against their traditional enemies, [the Ottawa] killed fifty of the Iroquois and took twenty-two prisoners." After that, any thought of an Ottawa-Iroquois alliance was out, much to the relief of the

French.

Later, during the War of Spanish Succession (1703-13) the French records indicate numerous skirmishes between Ottawas, Hurons, Miamis, usually on the same side, and Iroquois, all of them taking place in what is, for our purposes, the far west (that is, west of Lake Erie.) The silence concerning our area is deafening.

None of that sounds very much like our Paudash story. When we turn to Iroquois sources we're not much better off. Briefly, I'm going to summarize the opinion of the foremost apologist for the Iroquois presence north of Lake Ontario, Victor.A. Konrad.[4] Essentially, Konrad argues that the Iroquois gradually abandoned southern Ontario as it became more irrelevant to the fur trade which moved further west and north. In a curious way he argues that the Iroquois on the north side of Lake Ontario had been there to keep the Ojibwa/Mississauga from trading with the English at Fort Albany and that due to French attacks on the Iroquois heartland in New York, the Iroquois drew back and gave up on the north shore. At times he almost sounds as if the Iroquois had been doing the French a favour, and that the Iroquois were saying to themselves "well, if you don't like what we're doing, we'll just go home." Let's examine some quotes :

> ...The remaining villagers probably left as hostilities increased with the Iroquois raids on New France, for we hear no more about Iroquois villages on the north shore...
>
> The Iroquois abandoned their villages on the north shore, but these villages did not disappear.

This he attributes to bad map copying, whereby sloppy map-makers kept old names around. These villages were inhabited, he grants, but by Algonkian speakers, though, he says, " this occupation...was not well known."

Of these people (the Algonkian speakers...who are our Ojibwa/Mississauga) he says later:

> They were not an invading group for the Iroquois were still all powerful and the Algonkian speakers filled the void on the north shore only at the pleasure of the Iroquois.

Tell that to Paudash.

As I said earlier, British sources add virtually nothing to any of this. It has been suggested that there is a bit of chauvinism going on here. This makes sense. American

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4. Konrad, Victor. 1981. An Iroquois Frontier: The north shore of Lake Ontario during the late seventeenth century. *Journal of Historical Geography* 7(2):129-44.

historians are certainly going to pay more attention to the Iroquois view, and that view is not likely to emphasise major Iroquois defeats if no one else is going to bring them up in polite conversation. The French sources naturally suggest that French military action and diplomacy played the decisive role.

There are a few minor quibbles I have regarding Paudash's version. If our archaeology is correct – and let's make no bones about it (pardon the pun) that it is – Serpent Mounds is a very great deal older than this era and could not be a memorial to this fight. It has wandered into the story somehow, in a way quite familiar from other oral histories. Obviously the most celebrated Native site in the area is going to be in it somehow. I also don't really like the figure of a thousand warriors slain at one battle on Rice Lake. That's far too many dead for what we know of the size of even the best recorded Native engagements and Natives never fought with that intensity for one site. Slaughters, perhaps, battles no.

Other than that, in my opinion, there's nothing wrong with either the account or its absence from the traditional historical record. To argue that the Mississauga tradition has claimed conquest where there was really something closer to a gradual encroachment on almost abandoned territory would fit everything nicely together, but I think, unfairly demeans the Native history. There's no reason why we must assume that it isn't true just because the Europeans don't record it.

What we do know is that there was a significant displacement of peoples in this region of southern Ontario between the years 1680 and 1780. European-style history records this but with no details of how this came about. The Native oral tradition fills the gap without violating either probability or the meagre sources we do have that are independent of that tradition. It is entirely likely that Paudash's account accurately reflects the strategic situation in central Ontario. Rice Lake would have been the last stand and would have seen the bulk of the fighting. By most accounts the Mississauga word for Rice Lake means something like "land of cleared areas" or "burnt-off areas,"[5] both referring to the Mohawk practice of clearing land by burning for either crops or to create deer parkland.[6]

In short, as with the other unexplained great migration of First Nations between periods of European contact (that is, the replacement of St. Lawrence Iroquois by Algonkian

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5. This is a moot point. The authors (Norma Martin, Catherine Milne and Donna McGillis) of *Gore's Landing and the Rice Lake Plains* (Haynes Printing. 1986. Page 12) suggest that "It was the Mississaugas who initiated the tradition of burning off the vegetation" to encourage the growth of the coarse grass favoured by deer. Yet the *History of the Ojibwa of Curve Lake...* claims that *Pamitaskwotayong* means 'lake of the burning plains' and signifies the "south shore of Iroquois corn fields which had been cleared by burning."

6. In private conversation, I have heard stories of another traditional battle site either near Plainville or further east near Harwood, where hundreds of arrow heads have been found and where some form of Native tradition – as transmitted by local European settlers of the last and turn of this century – locates another "most important" battle of this war, but I have yet to confirm any more details of this.

speakers in the late sixteenth century between the visits of Cartier and Champlain), if we had so detailed an account as that of Paudash, we would accept it as part of mainstream history without qualms. The Mississauga conquered this country in what they recall as an epic war and held it until it was given up to the British by treaty in the aftermath of the American Revolution.

Note relating to footnote 3:

At the time this talk was given, I was operating under a misunderstanding of the original text. One copy (which I was using) identified this location as Campbellford. A better source (Guillet) reads "Campbell**town**." My early comment on the identification "Campbellford" read:

> It is impossible to know what to make of this. There is a seeming inconsistency in the geography, but a raid from other groups on the Cambellford area is not out of the question. The worrisome part is that Paudash explains this as an encounter in which the Mississauga retreated in a hurry from an Iroquois counterattack. This is a prelude to his explaining that the Native word for Campbellford means 'pulls-up-stakes-in-a-hurry' which he attributes to this episode. This could equally be proof that the story is genuine and can't be left out, or alternatively, that the etymology of the word has been forgotten and has attached itself to this narrative where it doesn't belong.

Campbelltown is (to me at least) a little known hamlet on the Otonabee River south of Peterborough, opposite Keene, and above Rice Lake, and therefore fits perfectly with the rest of the narrative. There is no doubt in my mind that Campbelltown is the correct location, and the reading "Campbelltown" results in no inconsistency which would require weird etymology.

COBOURG AND THE MILITARY
by
Colin Caldwell

Editorial note:

As November's speaker was unable to present his talk, the Society's Vice-president filled in at the last minute with two vignettes from Cobourg's military history. Both of these have been published in somewhat greater detail in the *Cobourg Star*, and are available in the vertical files of the Cobourg Public Library.

Cobourg and the Militia

Cobourg, like every town in Upper Canada had a regular militia beginning before the War of 1812. They usually turned out a few times a year for some drilling and what otherwise could almost be considered a day off from their regular occupations. We all know the efforts Cobourg made during the Rebellion of 1837, when not only the militia but a select body of riflemen made the mid-winter march to Toronto to assist the government forces. The forces weren't called out again until the Fenian raids of 1865-6. At that time Cobourg units were used to garrison Fort York, while the regular Fort York troops were moved to Niagara where they fought the battle of Ridgeway. The Cobourg Prince of Wales' Light Dragoons were given the honour of escorting the funeral ceremony for the casualties in that campaign. These dragoons were a troop of mounted men privately raised and commanded by Cobourg's D'Arcy E. Boulton.

In Victorian times Cobourg's military contingent consisted of volunteers for the First Northumberland Infantry and the Cobourg Garrison Artillery. This last named is the most famous of Cobourg's military units. The earliest Cobourg military base was a drill hall built on the site of the present-day bowling lawns in Victoria Park. The cavalry drilled extensively in the area later known as Donegan Park and, of course, figured prominently in Cobourg's famous horse show. The artillery practised firing at targets in the lake off the grounds of what is now the Villa St. Joseph at the bottom of Tremaine St.

In 1904-5 the government of Wilfrid Laurier began building up Canada's armed forces and Cobourg benefited from this to the extent of having a new combined barracks built at the corner of King and Hibernia Streets (the present Police Station). In every way the barracks entered into the life of the community, being the scene of numerous grand balls and evening entertainments. The artillery certainly kept up a well-earned reputation by winning prizes for gunnery as far away as the Isle of Wight in the United Kingdom. In 1914 all parts of the Cobourg military establishment were ready and waiting and were among the first in the province to mobilize and move off to war. But that is another story.

Cobourg Garrison Artillery

It would seem that Coboungers took to the military like the proverbial duck to water.

Of course, in Upper Canada almost all adult males were, even if only nominally, liable for militia duty. We have local militia rolls from as early as 1812. By the 1830s it was generally understood that militia duty was a pleasant enough excuse for a bit of marching around with a gun and wearing a uniform – if you had either of those things – and a grand drunk afterwards.

On at least one occasion it's likely that John Covert, a militia colonel and wealthy resident of what is now known as New Lodge Farm, got into trouble over remarks he made at a militia outing. He probably harangued them about politics, as he was a Tory and the complainant was a Reformer.

Of course, everyone knows about the gallant march of the Cobourg Rifles to Toronto in 1837. They didn't quite make it in time to help, but were much admired anyway.

Military life got more serious at the time of the American Civil War. As part of the Confederates' campaign to get international recognition of their new country, the Richmond Government sent two envoys to Britain and France, travelling on a British ship, *The Trent*. The Union Navy seized the ship, which caused a major quarrel with the British, who threatened war. President Lincoln is said to have declared that one war at a time was enough for him, and the Yanks backed down. Everyone was secretly relieved, but it did cause a flurry of patriotic gestures, especially in Canada.

In 1855, just before the war, the Cobourgers had established another Cobourg Rifle Company, and now, in 1863 they formed a second. In 1866, with the war in the States over, large numbers of Irish patriots who had been serving in the Union armies decided to finish off their quarrel with the British by attacking Canada. They formed what they called the Fenian Brotherhood and gathered at several places along the border, particularly around Buffalo.

This threat moved Captain John H. Dumble, the Cobourg police magistrate and master of chancery, seconded by the mayor, to announce, on May 4, 1866, the formation of the Cobourg Garrison Artillery.

Now there are several puzzles about this. Some historians say that the Artillery was formed from one of the rifle companies, while others say that the two companies went on to form the 40th Northumberland Infantry Battalion. The situation is further confounded by the existence of Colonel D'Arcy Boulton's Cobourg Cavalry which he apparently almost privately raised and equipped, and which later took the grand name of the Prince of Wales Canadian Dragoons. What I find mildly odd is that Cobourg should have formed an artillery "garrison" when they had no artillery. It is possible that they did have the old mortar, which now graces

the entrance to the Legion Hall. But most early historians agree that it was a grand day when, just after the Dominion Day celebrations were over on July 1869, the Garrison Artillery got its first "big gun."

This, however, is getting slightly ahead of our story. Those Fenians did cross the Niagara River in the summer of 1866. After a mad scramble and a fairly major battle at Ridgeway outside Fort Erie, the Canadians, mostly troops from Toronto, managed to push them back to Buffalo.

Again the Cobourgers headed off for the big city. This time they quite effectively garrisoned Old Fort York in order to free up troops for the front. Again, they missed the fighting, but were singularly complimented on their smart turn-out. In fact, they took up a very honourable position escorting the funeral procession for those killed at Ridgeway.

That was the end of any actual fighting for another half century. This did not, however, put an end to their drill in which they took considerable pride, especially after 1869 when they got that 32-pounder gun for practising, and which was later supplemented with an 18-pounder. At one point, the usual equipment must have been in short supply since we read of their firing the cannon for practice, then running after the cannonball, digging it out of the earth where it landed, and then carrying it back so that they could fire it again. Another time we read of one chap stuffing the old mortar with grass and earth on top of the gun powder, firing it off the east pier and being oddly disappointed at the result. There must have been more plentiful times as well, however, as we also hear of target practice from Weller's Hill at the south end of Tremaine Street against the barrels floating in the lake. Surely they didn't have to fetch those cannonballs back from the water. (They did, however, parade the shattered barrel staves through town.)

The drilling paid off. Quite consistently the Cobourg Garrison met with other units across the country, winning prize after prize in Toronto, Ile d'Orléans in Québec, and Halifax, among others. Many of these prizes can still be seen in the recently refurbished Armouries.

In 1895, the Prince of Wales Dragoons was moved to Colborne, then Peterborough, where it merged with other units to form the Prince of Wales Rangers. In 1910, the Artillery was renamed the 10th Heavy Battery, but the name was soon changed back to the Cobourg Heavy Battery. In 1911, part of the Battery along with other Canadian units went to England for exercises where they fired away at the Isle of Wight, winning the prize in all three set categories.

In their new Armouries on King Street – which opened with a gala ball in January 1906 – the Battery not only honed its skills, but also took a proud place in the town's social life, performing with its band in local parades and firing salutes on special days. Which was just as well, for as late as the last July issue of the *Cobourg World* in 1914, a minor headline on the right of page asks uncertainly: "Could a General European World be at Hand?"

The Currie-Mons Trial

On 12 June 1927, the citizens of the small Belgian city of Mons, along with some Canadian dignitaries who were there for the event, unveiled a war memorial to commemorate the liberation of the city from the German army in the closing days of the First World War. That monument led to a sensational trial which occupied the front pages of every Canadian newspaper for weeks, and placed Cobourg, oddly enough, at the centre of attention.

Mons is a city of about 40-50,000 people, south of Brussels in the middle of the most fought over stretch of ground on the planet. The Duke of Marlborough fought the Battle of Malplaquet just south of it, and the field of Waterloo is a bit north and east. In the autumn of 1914, it was the scene of the British Expeditionary Force's first encounter with the German armies which had invaded Belgium. That invasion had brought Britain, and by extension Canada, into World War I.

The British were defeated, but, as is often their habit, they made a virtue out of their defeat and Mons sparked a number of legends. Among them were heavenly angels promising revenge, a contemptuous remark about the British by the German Kaiser which prompted those soldiers to refer to themselves afterward as "Old Contemptibles," and a special medal called the "Mons Star."

As the war drew to a close four years later, the Canadian forces led by Sir Arthur Currie, their Ontario-born General, found themselves approaching Mons from the west. As Mons turned out to be within the general area in which the Canadians' objectives lay, there arose the idea of re-capturing it at the last minute as a fitting finale for the British forces whose war had started there. The citizens of Mons were grateful, as all liberated people are, and gave the Canadians a parade and a number of glory-filled speeches. The city's liberation, and the festivities took place on 11 November 1918, the day on which the Armistice took effect, and the war was over.

After the war, with some hindsight and settling of scores, people in parliament began to question why Canadians had been asked to risk their lives liberating towns when the war had practically ended. They questioned whether or not any Canadians had to die so that a general could have a parade. Thus, when the citizens of Mons dedicated their new monument, and trotted out their speeches about sacrifice, one newspaper man decided to take exception to it. His name was Frederick W. Wilson and he owned the *Port Hope Evening Guide*. He promptly published an article by a well-known local journalist and politician, W.T.R. Preston, in which Preston repeated the charges that Canadian lives had been needlessly wasted to satisfy the general's vain-glory.

Sir Arthur Currie, the general in question, decided the time had come to set the record straight. He sued the *Evening Guide* and Preston for libel, claiming fifty thousand dollars in

damages. Lawyers gathered from Toronto, Peterborough and Montréal (where Currie was president of McGill University). The trial itself was held in Cobourg's "Old Bailey" courtroom of Victoria Hall in April of 1928. For the next two weeks the press, the lawyers, and the former soldiers called as witnesses all jostled for space in Cobourg's hotels, and in the lobby and street in front of the town hall.

The trial soon centred on the question of whether or not there had been excessive loss of life on that last day of the war, and whether or not the officers in command at the time had known that the end of the war was that close. Hours were spent in cross-examination trying to determine exactly at which minute the news that the war was over was received and forwarded to the front lines.

The very success of the memorial initiative taken by the citizens of Mons hindered Currie and helped the *Evening Guide's* defence. If there were no casualties involved in taking Mons, why was it celebrated as so glorious an achievement? The proclamations in Mons on the day of liberation spoke of heroic self-sacrifice on the part of the Canadian soldiers. This is usually quite gratifying to the official myth-makers, but here it became a problem. Heroic self-sacrifice means dead soldiers. Otherwise Mons hadn't needed liberating.

It soon became clear that no one could quite be sure which Canadian soldiers who had died in the last few days of the war had actually died as a result of this particular operation. Probably, we will never know.

Currie won the case, but barely. He received $500 as compensation and the defendants had to pay the court costs. One juror dissented openly, but it was clear that the small award swayed some others.

To me it seems fairly clear that when soldiers do have to carry out the ghastly business of fighting, morale boosters like the Mons legends are an integral part of what keeps them going. In that sense the decision to symbolically end by revenging so famous a defeat was justified. But two cheers also for Cobourg and the Port Hope *Evening Guide* for forcing everyone to think it through yet again, and answer for it. Just in case we forget, for a moment, for what those soldiers were fighting.

MEMBERS' SHOW AND TELL NIGHT

Old artifacts and documents were highlighted at our Second Annual "Show and Tell" programme for the January meeting. Members were invited to bring objects and/or documents of historical interest to the meeting and then relate the stories attached to these items. For those in attendance, the evening was an enjoyable event with much laughter in addition to learning more about our history.

Sybil Eakins brought a tea cup stand made by her great grandmother, Elizabeth Knowles, sometime between 1850 and 1860 in Shropshire, England. The wooden stand with mahogany veneer is semi-elliptical in shape with a sharper arc cut out on the narrower side. On the bottom are small bun feet, while the top is covered with wool work (needlepoint) tacked into place. Adhered to the bottom is a note documenting the provenance. Sybil noted that it will hold four cups and saucers, but has no further information how – or why – it was used originally. Nor was anyone in the audience able to enlightening us on its purpose.

Marion Hagen shared the programme for the Cobourg visit of His Majesty's Scots Guards Band on May 5, 1922. According to the pamphlet, His Majesty granted permission for the band to tour Canada during the month of May, 1922, for the benefit of the Great War Veteran's Association. Cobourg as one of the venues may have come about through the Cobourg connections of Ella Beatty Schoenberger Harriss, wife of the band's director, Charles Albert Edwin Harriss. Admission for the concert, which was held in the Horse Show Park, cost 50 cents for adults, 25 for children and 25 for war veterans wearing buttons. Grand stand seats cost an additional 25 cents while reserved seats were 50 cents. Autos were charged 25 cents.

Marion's second item was the June, 1855 issue of *The Canadian Journal, a Repertory of Industry, Science, and Art: and a record of the Proceedings of the Canadian Institute.* In this particular issue an article by T.C. Clarke, C.E. of Port Hope entitled "On the action of the Ice upon the Bridge of Rice Lake" has local relevance. Included is a fold-out diagram of the bridge across the lake.

Last, but not least, Marion brought a virtually complete set of Society newsletters, *Historically Speaking,* from its inception in October 1980 through to January 2001.

Marion then generously donated these items to the Society's Archives.

Mary Smith's interesting object was a pair of gold buckles used on men's britches. In an accompanying photograph, her husband Peter's great grandfather, William Smith, is shown wearing britches with these buckles evident just below his knees.

Penny Klinck shared some readings from an 1885 *Fourth Reader*, the text used by Grade 8 students. Alec Blyth, the original owner, added rather sophisticated comments to the various

stories and poems in the Reader. Although he didn't care for one of Robbie Burns' poems, he noted that one of Burns' love poems was "sublime."

Bob Eakins read from the autobiographical account, "An Account of My Early Days," written by his great grandfather, George Eakins. Born in Tyrone, Ireland in 1807, young George came to Canada in 1828, and married in 1836. As a cabinet maker in Newburgh (northeast of Napanee), he and his wife raised nine children. Further information about George Eakins, Cabinetmaker, can be found in the book about Newburgh, *Rogue's Hollow*.

Alf Winter shared some of his personal history which, in fact, is part of Cobourg's history. Alf told the story of a young farm lad who had to leave school to help his father farm. At the age of 17, this lad decided he wanted to be a doctor. This entailed returning to elementary school to matriculate in order to continue with his higher education. As a doctor, he came to Cobourg to practice. This young lad matured into Dr. J.A. Ivey, and who was Alf's grandfather. Alf related some anecdotes about his grandfather and, in particular, the establishment of the Cottage Hospital.

The coming together, the compiling of information, and the sharing of these items and stories from overseas and from Canada, reflects Canada's history, and ultimately, the history of Cobourg.

JOURNEYS: BLACK HISTORY
by
Larry Hall

My fascination with this particular aspect of history is quite personal, stemming from the fact that two of my great-grandfathers were fugitive slaves who fled from the United states in the mid-1800s out of fear of the consequences of the infamous "Fugitive Slave Act" passed by Congress in an attempt to appease the Southern, slave-holding states, and ease the tension that was steadily building. It would all explode, ten years later, with the American Civil War and its horrendous cost in lives and in properties, but it ended the sadly immoral – even evil – dreams of the much romanticised "old South."

While the North's victory ended slavery in 1863 when President Lincoln brought forward his Emancipation Act, it is generally accepted that slavery was on its way out. For the most part, it had disappeared from Europe for sound economic reasons. Society had come to realize that it was cheaper to pay labour – Black or White – very low wages, than to provide food, clothing and lodging for slaves from birth until their death. Despite the horrendous treatment slaves suffered, it was generally understood that owners had a responsibility for their lifelong care, even if it was minimal indeed.

Slavery is an ancient institution. It was the first system devised which allowed the group in power, in any society, to get others to do their work. This developed millennia before the development of coinage , which in turn greatly facilitated the exchange of value for labour or for goods.

Moses delivered the Jews from bondage in Eygypt. The Jews themselves, as often noted in the Old Testament, owned slaves, some of whom played an important role in biblical stories.

Where does all this stand in 2001? News reports have made us all aware that Arabic traders are still trafficking in captured African tribesmen, particularily in sub-Saharan parts of the continent.

It was in this ancient context of slavery in the south that my two great-grand-fathers took matters in their own hands. Samuel Hall escaped Harford County, Maryland, part of a group that family oral history claims was led by Harriet Tubman. Samuel was about 17 at the time. Charles Williams was somewhat older. While Samuel Hall is believed to have been a rural labourer, Williams' experience was as a slave in the city. We first find him owned by a minister, before he moved on to become part of a household in Washington. He is next found as a fugitive being hidden from bounty hunters by abolitionists in Boston, the city where anti-slavery feeling was very high. Williams finally fled to Montreal on the underground railroad.

Where do I and the rest of their descendents come in?

Charles Williams' daughter Margaret Ruth, married Samuel Hall Junior, son of the original escapee Samuel Hall, in Montreal in 1885. The younger Samuel Hall had travelled from Niagara Falls to Montreal to find work on the railroad. He became a sleeping car porter on the CPR.

These are the circumstances which led me to explore African-American history – and the quest just grew and grew.

To discuss a little of the history of the Black Man, particularly his role as slave, and then his flight to freedom here in Canada, it is necessary that we look at this unique country we call Canada, and its role as a safe haven for peoples from around the world.

Millions of the displaced, the oppressed, the hungry, and the endangered have flocked to our shores. In return for our having given shelter and protection under our laws, these people of all the world's nationalities, religions and colours have given us their loyalty, productivity and enriched us with their cultures. Most of those who emigrated to the Americas; that is, South, Central and North America and the Caribbean, came of their own free will, for
any number of reasons they left their home-lands. They sought refuge here.

The Black African tribesman, however, was different. He didn't want to make that arduous journey across an ocean the breadth of which he couldn't imagine, to a land he had never heard of, to then find himself under the inhumane yoke of slavery.

It's so difficult for us to image a life where all of our rights and freedoms have been wrenched away and where this condition is enforced by law generation after generation. Perhaps I can illustrate it this way: I want you to imagine that

- You don't own yourselves.
- You aren't a human being, you, personally, are like the farmer's cow, his tractor or an acre of his land.
- You cannot own land if you were to reside in one of the Southern slave states.
- You cannot select who you will marry, in fact you cannot enter into any kind of contract.
- You cannot be seen assembling into any group in public and it is forbidden that anyone attempt to teach you to read and write. In fact, to possess a book is an excuse to be severely beaten. In short, you do not own yourself.

But, as a slave, you do have great value to your owner. A young, fit male slave was worth around $1,000 dollars in the mid-1800s, while a young female was worth at least $200 more because she was considered breeding stock. Young female slaves, as you might expect, were also considered available to their white owners or any other white male who was around. This is the consequence of not owning yourself. And it was all confirmed in Law.

The history of Black African tribesmen was linked to slavery long before settlement came to the Americas. Black slaves, usually obtained as the spoils of war in intertribal conflict, or purchased by itinerant Arabic or European buyers, had long been commonplace in the middle East and in the ancient nations of Europe. Even then many had won their freedom and participated fully in life alongside the white population. It is believed at least one African was among the crew members sailing with Columbus.

It was this voyage of Columbus that sparked the colonization of the Caribbean islands, Central America, South America, and lastly the eastern coastal area of North America. The colonists immediately set up an agrarian economy, producing foods to be shipped back to Europe for the most profit possible. Beginning with sugar cane in the Caribbean islands, a very labour intensive enterprise, it became obvious that a great deal of man-power was needed. The indigenous people were not only unable to comprehend the European's concept of harsh labour, but also rapidly succumbed to newly introduced diseases. This brought on a labour crisis that precipitated the infamous slave trade.

The slave ships were owned by the Portugese, French, English, Dutch and Spanish. The journey across the Atlantic was called "the middle passage" because it constituted the middle leg of a voyage which featured three distinct stages. The first leg carried European produced goods such as cloth, guns and liquor to the 40 main fortified slave holding posts along the Western African shoreline. After bartering for the available captives, the slaves were loaded onto dreadfully crowded sailing ships to endure the second leg, or the "middle passage" from Africa to the Americas. With the sale of the slaves, those same ships were then loaded with goods produced in the Americas, sugar, potatoes, corn and lumber, for the third and final leg of the journey back to European ports.

It has been estimated that over the approximately 300 years that the slave trade lasted, 25 million African men, women and children were captured in the interior of the African continent, but when the survivors were finally landed on our shores, only some 11 million had lived. Surprisingly more than six million of these survivors ended up in Brazil, more than three million were destined for Central America and the islands, while what we now know as The United States absorbed under two million.

Indeed, the rearing and sale of slaves in the United States was in itself a very profitable venture considering Society's growing and insatiable demand for cheap, or in the case of the slave, unpaid labour. Perhaps we should take a closer look at what ownership of a slave meant.
They weren't merely field hands. Slaves became skilled as carpenters, tanners, barbers, stone masons and teamsters. Women cleaned the white man's house and cared for, even breast fed, the children. They also represented old-age security for their owners, especially aging widows who had inherited their slaves. These otherwise impoverished widows would hire out their slaves, sell their skills or labour and collect the wages paid by the employers. Their only obligation was to see that the slave was kept in food, shelter and clothing sufficient to keep

him or her healthy enough to work.

But there was a terrible price paid for all of this. Despite beatings, the chains and even the murders, the Black Man, from the time he was first captured, resisted as best he could. The slave ships usually had a crew of about 30 sailors to control upwards of 300 chained blacks. Slaves who in one way or another managed to escape their chains were known to either take over the ship, or commit suicide by jumping overboard. Either way, the profits of the voyage were endangered.

Once landed ashore and sold, both the slave and the owners lived in fear of one another. Slaves were not always docile, not all were intimidated by the whip and prison. Arson was a favourite weapon. As the years went by in the United States, laws were enacted to tighten the noose of slavery ever tighter around the black man's neck. It was the fear of reprisal that led the white population to bring in ever harsher laws, which in turn increased the rage felt by the captive black man. The pressure built and the American Civil War of 1860 drew closer.

Meanwhile blacks were running away from their masters. In Central America and the Caribbean slaves had persistently escaped to nearby jungles, setting up villages and living in the traditional African way. Sir Francis Drake, in his raiding forays against the Spanish gold fleets, formed alliances with some of these escaped slave colonies. In the United States slaves were leaving the South, fleeing to the Northern states such as Pennsylvania and New York where slavery had been abolished long before the nation wide emancipation was declared by Lincoln in 1863.

There were other ways of leaving. Many were transported to either the West Indies or to Halifax by the Royal Navy following their raid on Washington in the War of 1812. Earlier than that, many blacks who accompanied their United Empire Loyalist masters out of the United States following the 1776 defeat of the British and the Declaration of Independence, simply walked away soon after arrival in Canada.

A mild form of emancipation was declared in Upper Canada in 1793 but even before that date, slavery in Canada was falling out of favour. The English Parliament outlawed the Slave trade in 1807 and emancipated all slaves in the Empire in 1834. In the United States it took a civil war to free the black population from the institution of slavery, but the repression carried on through social customs described as discrimination. For example, one of the first laws enacted against blacks near the end of the seventeenth century was a ban against Black-White co-habitation, for marriage. This law was not repealed by congress until 1967.

But let us return to 1850. This was the year that Congress, in an attempt to appease the Southern States, passed the Fugitive Slave act. This allowed Southern slave owners to hire bounty hunters to seek fugitive blacks in the free Northern States, capture them and either return them to their Southern owners or sell them at auction. This terrified blacks who

believed they were safe north of the Mason Dixon line.

There had been a steady trickle of escapees to Nova Scotia, Montreal and southwestern Ontario for many years, but this became a flood following the passing of the fugitive slave act. It is estimated that some twenty to thirty thousand fugitive slaves sought refuge in Ontario as a result of this law. Many returned to the United States to rejoin family and friends after the American emancipation in 1863.

In the case of my family, both Samuel Hall and Charles Williams married in Canada and raised their families here. The male offspring married into white Canadian society and as time went by their descendants assimilated into their communities. As the result of the poverty of the early years compounded by discrimination and the denial of normal employment opportunities, a curtain of secrecy was drawn to conceal the family's Black roots and origins in slavery. Several of the girls married African-Canadians and moved to the United States where job opportunities were more abundant. This resulted in a split in the family, one group North of the border and the second South of the line. Soon all communication was lost.

My genealogical investigation led me to those southern, American cousins. They had always lived in the Black-American milieu, while I had lived, with my Canadian relations, in an assimilated society. We came together, shared our living experiences, visited each others homes and churches. The remarkable thing was, despite the different social or cultural norms, we found we were all so similar in our way of life, our emphasis on education, a belief in the value of work and the importance of our church life.

This January, the family joined in a project to buy and erect a granite gravestone marking the burial spot in Niagara Falls of the original Samuel Hall and his wife Jane. Their plot had had no marker.

Somehow the circle is now complete. We have acknowledged the courage and determination of a young Samuel Hall to seek a free life, at the risk of being captured, beaten and sold on the auction block, or even killed. While we gave him a granite stone, he gave us freedom. He assured his descendants of being born, raised and employed in a free society.

Whose gift was the greatest?

A Few Significant Dates for Canadian People of African Descent

1603 The first Black man to arrive in Canada was Mathieu DaCosta. He acted as a translator between the Micmac and the French with Champlain.

1628 The first known slave, Olivier LeJeune, is recorded, As a child of 6, he had been captured in Africa and was later given the surname of one of his owners - a priest.

1775 The British forces during the American Revolution are led by Lord Dunsmore, in an effort to weaken the "rebel" side. Dunsmore invites all rebel-owned (African) male slaves to join the British side.

1779 With the hopes of winning the American Revolution, the British under Sir Henry Clinton invite all Black men, women and children to join the British side and were promised their freedom for doing so. 10% of the Loyalists coming into the Maritimes are Black.

1793 -*The Upper Canada Abolition Act,* supported by Lieutenant-Governor Simcoe, freed any slave who came into the (now) Province of Ontario and stipulated that any child born of a slave mother should be free at the age of 25.

1812 *The Cochrane Proclamation* invites refugees of the War of 1812 to become British citizens through residence in British territory, including Canada.
The settlement of Oro is established by the government for Black veterans of the War of 1812.
A Coloured Corps is formed after the petitioning of Black veteran, Richard Pierpoint.

1833 *British Imperial Act* abolishes slavery in the British Empire (which included Canada), effective August 1, 1834 .

1850 The second *Fugitive Slave Act* is passed in the United States placing all people of African descent at risk. The Underground Railroad steps up its operations - freeing enslaved Black people by transporting them into Canada.
The *Common Schools Act* is passed in Ontario permitting the development of segregated schools. The last segregated school in Ontario closed in the 1950s.

1905 The beginning of the Black Trek, the migration of dissatisfied African-Americans from Oklahoma to the Canadian prairies.

1967 Changes to the Canadian immigration laws facilitate the entry of people of African descent from the Caribbean and elsewhere.

[copied verbatim from The Ontario Black History Society infosheet]

THE CHARITY OF MARS
(A brief history of The Royal Military Asylum, Chelsea: 1801 -1892)
by
A. W. Cockerill

For most of the nineteenth century and during the early years of the twentieth, the armed conflict with Revolutionary France and the armies of Napoleon Bonaparte (1793 to 1815), ending with the Battle of Waterloo on 18 June 1815, was known as "the Great War." During the more than twenty years of almost continuous warfare, one million men and boys[1] from the British Isles bore arms either in the Army or the Royal Navy .At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the population of the British Isles was about 14 million, which meant that over seven per cent of the population had served in the Army or Royal Navy. By the time the conflict was at an end over 315,000 of those who served their country had been killed.

In 1801, Frederick, Duke of York, the second son of George III and Commander-in-Chief of the British Army for most of the Great War, founded the Royal Military Asylum[2] by royal charter. In his day, York was the butt of a lampoon that became so well known it takes its place in the annals of nursery rhymes as "The Grand old Duke of York, he had ten thousand men; he marched them up to the top of the hill and he marched them down again."[3] Funded by the Army, the RMA became a home to children of fallen rank and file soldiers. At the height of the conflict, in 1814, the RMA was home to 1,500 military orphans, 1,000 boys and 500 girls.

1. James Wade, age 7 on his enlistment, was a drummer in the 9th Foot (The Norfolk Regiment) at the Battle of Bucasso. At age 28, after 21 years of service, he applied for a medical discharge due to wounds received in battle

2. Asylum in its old sense, meaning sanctuary, haven, refuge.

3. The nursery rhyme was not original. In the standard work on nursery rhymes published in the 1950s, the compiler, lona Opie, said that the ditty was of French origin in the late 17th century and was written of Louis XIV who "marched 40,000 men to the top of the hill and ne'er marched them up again."

The phenomenon of the Asylum that existed from 1801[4] until 1892 is best understood as a frontal assault on the arrogance, ignorance, brutality and, all too often, savageness of the officers towards the rank and file soldiers. The disregard and disdain of the officers for the common soldier was widespread and existed at all levels of command. For example, at the regimental level, there is the case of the 48th Foot[5] whose commanding officer, Lt. Colonel Donnelly, routinely awarded private soldiers and NCOs a thousand lashes of the cat o'nine tails for the most minor offences during the Regiment's service at Gibraltar (1779 to 1783). Punishment was delivered at the halberds[6] by relays of drummers and it was from this period that the 48th Foot got its nickname 'The Steelbacks' .At the brigade level, General Craufurd, the coarse and brutish commander of the Light Brigade, held a drumhead court for two alleged deserters on the Brigade's retreat to the port of Vigo and awarded 300 lashes on the spot to a third Rifleman, Dan Howens, for speaking his mind in his hearing[7]. At the highest level of field command, the attitude of the officers in the early 1800s is epitomised in Wellington's casual observation that the soldiers of his Peninsular Army were the "scum of the earth." Wellington was no friend of the common soldier. This place went to the much-maligned York, who has always been known as "the soldier's friend."[8]

The people responsible for the harsh discipline the ordinary soldier endured during the period of the Great War, including Wellington's Army during the Peninsular Campaign, deserve the strictest censure for their actions. On the other side of the scale, there were those who by their words and deeds worked diligently to ameliorate the suffering, misery and distress of the soldier. Full recognition should be accorded to the men and women who gave comfort to the common soldier and his dependants during this harsh period in the history of British arms.

It was through the efforts of such people, but principally through the Noble Duke of York, which resulted in the creation of the Royal Military Asylum. The Institution was modelled on the Royal Hibernian Military School (1765 -1924), Dublin, that had been founded and funded by The Hibernian Society for the destitute families of rank and file

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4. The Institution dates its beginning from 1803 when the first child entered the Asylum. The year 1801, however, was the year the Royal Charter was dated.

5. The Northamptonshire (County) Regiment.

6. 6 A tripod constructed from the combination spear and battleaxe at that time carried by sergeants of infantry companies.

7. Harris, Rifleman: *Recollections of Rifleman Harris,* 1848

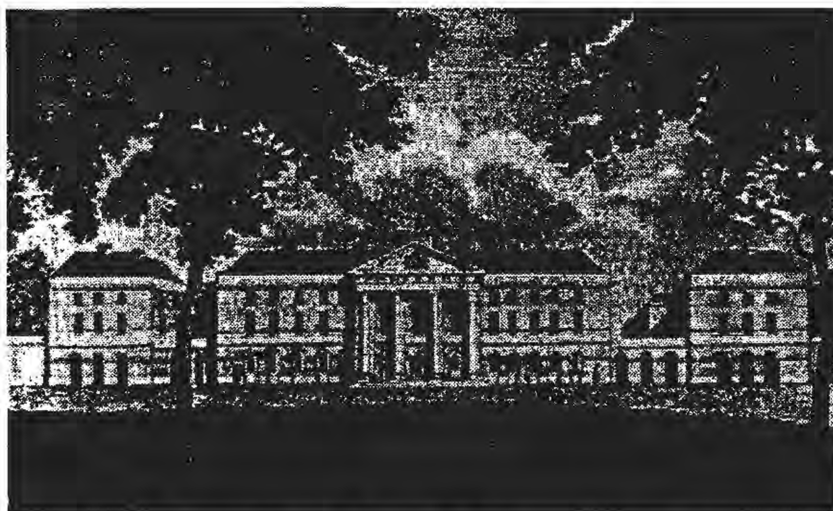
8. York's reforms are many and generally acknowledged as of major benefit to the ordinary soldier. It is therefore no accident that while Lord Wellington is celebrated in effigy astride his horse "Copenhagen," York stands atop a column within sight of the United Services Club, London, for all to see from afar.

soldiers of the Irish Establishment.[9]

Officers, politicians, men and women connected with the RMA were for the most part devoted public servants, but not invariably upstanding, honourable, ethical, honest, moral and worthy. Most of course were incorruptible and stalwart supporters of the system. Others were incorrigible rogues and scoundrels to which the records bear eloquent testimony.

To govern the new Asylum, the Commander-in-Chief formed a Board of Commissioners from among his most senior generals at the Horse Guards,[10] officers who had been under his command when campaigning against the revolutionary army of France in the Low Countries. The RMA was intended to replace the dependence of military families on regimental depots and the charity of the officers. Alterly, destitute families of soldiers had to rely on the workhouse system, which meant that families first had to travel from the regimental depot to the parish in which the father had been born. This could mean in many instances a long and arduous journey for which the Commanding Officer of the regiment in question had to provide a signed pass of safe conduct through parishes along the way to avoid being charged with vagrancy.

The design of the main building that formed the centerpiece of the Asylum is identical to the design of the Victoria College building that faces College Street in Cobourg. That is, it was a three-story structure with a striking front entrance of which the Doric columns were an impressive feature.

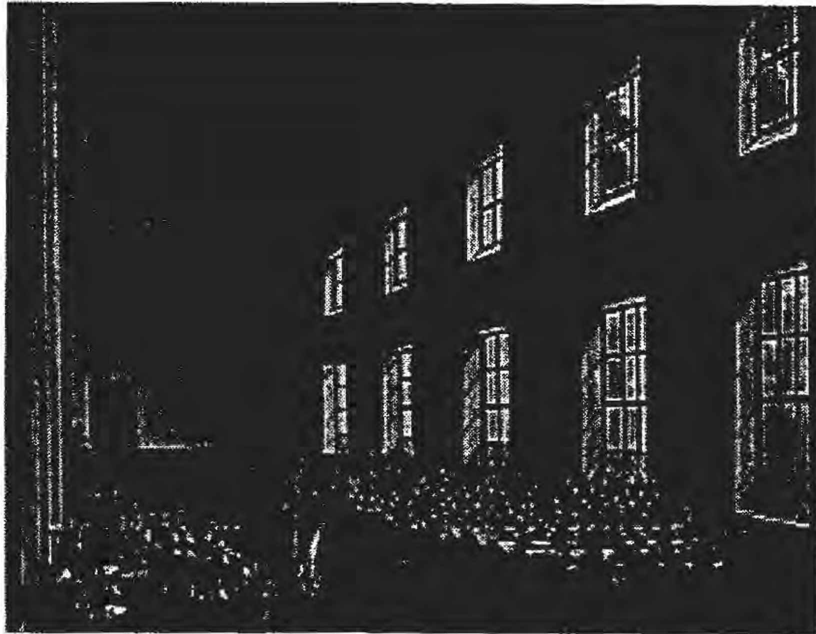


The Royal Military Asylum, Chelsea (1803-1892)

9. Military units in Ireland had always come under the Irish Military Command. All other units in the British Isles were under the command of the Horse Guards, London, otherwise known as the Home Command or the Home Establishment.

10. Military operations in 1800 were directed from the Horse Guards, and only later transferred to the War Office.

From its inception, the Asylum provided the country with the first large scale system of education of working class children. For this purpose, the monitorial system of education was used, first introduced by Joseph Lancaster (1778-1838), a Quaker. It involved one or more teachers who gave lessons to monitors who, in turn, taught up to 20 of their fellow students. The Asylum children were taught reading, writing and the four rules of arithmetic. Within a few years, Lancaster's system was replaced by the almost identical 'Madras' system developed by Dr. Andrew Bell,[11] an Anglican minister at an orphanage in Madras, India. Bell so impressed the Duke of York that his system of monitorial instruction was introduced not only at the RMA but throughout all regimental schools of the British Army. It is, however, fairly certain that Dr. Bell and the RMA Commissioners, being of the Established Church, strongly influenced the outcome of the battle for dominance of the Madras System.



The earliest known illustration of monitorial teaching using the Lancaster System

Within a short time, boy monitors of 13 and 14 years of age from the Asylum were sent to India, the West Indies, the Iberian Peninsula, Canada and distant stations of the empire to introduce the monitorial system of education to regimental schools. The passages of two boys shipped to Canada became the subject of a dispute as to who would bear the £5 cost of the return passage.

11. Bell developed his version of the monitorial system in Madras, India; hence, the Madras System.

One of the most remarkable features of the Army's co-educational RMA on so large a scale was, for the time, an exceptional development. Considering the Army's total lack of experience in caring for children, the attention given to soldiers' daughters as well as sons was unprecedented. An all-female staff supervised the girls. The most interesting, and indeed sad, occurrence in the short life of the "Female Establishment" was its demise and the eventual denial of entry to girls. Interestingly, the decision to deny entry to the daughters of soldiers came about at the instigation of, and on fallacious evidence, provided by the aging matron.[12] Even so, in retrospect, the exclusion of female students was a deplorable and ungracious decision by the Commissioners.[13]

Children of the Asylum (circa 1807)

The confinement of children in the restricted space of the RMA accommodation led to difficulties during outbreaks of cholera, diphtheria, chickenpox and like infectious and contagious outbreaks that occurred from time to time.[14] They posed a constant threat to the crowded conditions of the Asylum. None was more difficult and mysterious than an outbreak in 1809 of what came to be known as "ophthalmia." In the early years of the nineteenth century, viral infection and the existence of bacteria was unknown. The discoveries of Pasteur

12. Girls were not again admitted for another 165 years, and then only thanks to an enlightened and progressive Board of Commissioners.

13. Later in the 19th Century, The Royal Soldiers' Daughters Home, London, was opened for the daughters of soldiers, but was closed after the end of WW II.

14. In the early days, children slept two to a bed and shared the same towel.

and Lister were fifty years away. For two years, the outbreak raged and defied the leading medical minds of London to find a solution. Children and the nurses caring for them went partially and, in some cases, permanently blind.

The Asylum's lowly surgeon, Surgeon McGregor, provided the solution that put an abrupt end to outbreak when he persuaded the Commissioners to provide each child with his or her own towel at a total cost of £100.[15] McGregor himself had no idea why his solution worked. He only knew that it was the last possible reason for the continuing affliction. The disease posed a medical mystery that was only recently satisfactorily explained by the joint effort of microbiology units in three universities: the Boston Research Clinic, an Oxford research unit and the Research Clinic of Trinity, Dublin.[16] The consensus is that the epidemic was in fact an occurrence of trachoma, a sub-Sahara disease that does not occur in temperate northern climates. This contradiction is explained by the fact that immediately before the outbreak, twenty-four children from units stationed in Malta and twelve children from Gibraltar were admitted to the Asylum, seven only after they had been cured of the "itch," which was probably scabies.

During the early years of the Institution and well into the nineteenth Century, children leaving the Asylum were provided with indentured apprenticeships in all trades and callings. This was a remarkably generous service the Asylum authorities provided. The experience of the cotton weaver apprentices, both boys and girls, indentured to cotton weavers and journeymen in Lancashire in the 1820s and 30s, however, led to a major enquiry by the Adjutant General Department.[17] The children were being used and abused to the point of suffering physical harm. One child died from his injuries; another was maimed for life. In the face of the industrial revolution and creation of cotton spinning factories, independent cotton weavers were reduced to weaving fustian cloth. Unable to attract apprentices from local workhouses, the journeymen conspired to obtain apprentices from the RMA.[18]

One of the most contentious issues in the life of the Asylum was Catholic emancipation stemming from the Act of Union with Ireland in 1801. The Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829 was a natural development of British politics, which Wellington[19] succeeded in getting through Parliament with the support of Peel and Pitt. The Act was passed in the face of stiff opposition from the Monarchy, the Army and the "Established

15. 3,000 towels were ordered at a cost of 8d each for a total sum of £100.

16. I am indebted to Professor Tim Foster, Department of Microbiology of the Moyne Institute of Preventive Medicine, Trinity College, Dublin, Dr. Jack F. Leeson of Cobourg, Ontario, and medical research authorities at Oxford University and Boston University for a solution to this intriguing medical mystery.

17. The Army's Legal Department.

18. Cotton weaving was not the exclusive province of independent journeymen. Women weavers wove fustian cloth and employed apprentices. Collectively, cotton weavers were known as journeymen.

19. Prime Minister of the Tory Government in 1829.

Church." On the strength of the Act, the long-suppressed Roman Catholics began flexing their muscles in numerous ways. The correspondence of the RMA provides a rich source of data with which to trace the development of the Catholic struggle with the Established Church at the institutional level.[20]

Last but not least in this brief account of the history of the Royal Military Asylum is the development of Army education, which was many years ahead of universal education in society at large.[21] In the mid-1840s, to create a "Normal School"[22] for training sergeant school-teachers, the Board of Commissioners transformed the Asylum into a 'Normal School' and, for training purposes, a "Model School." To accomplish this end, the student population was considerably reduced, civilian masters were hired, and students engaged to learn the trade[23]23 of teaching, eventually to become schoolmaster sergeants. The introduction of civilians into the Institution's hierarchy led, inevitably, to a clash between the new civilian staff with the established military personnel, which was only to be expected.

In 1892, the RMA was renamed The Duke of York's Royal Military School and, in 1909, moved to new premises constructed on the Downs of Dover, Kent. In the late 1980s, the daughters of soldiers were again accepted for entry to the School in equal numbers to boys.

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20. Owen Chadwick's *The Victorian Church* 1829-1859 (Third edition of Part I pub. 1971) provides an excellent account of the national scene. The records of the RMA provide an equally superior description of the struggle at the institutional level.

21. The Elementary Education Act of 1870 was, to quote Lawson and Silver *(A Social History of Education in England),* "the most workable piece of compromise legislation in English nineteenth-century history."

22. From the French *Ecole normale*, meaning teacher training school.

23. Until teachers became an organized force through the trade union movement and conferred on themselves the designation of a "profession," teaching was generally regarded as a trade.

GREETINGS OF YESTERYEAR
by
Wilf Cowin

For almost a century, picture post cards have offered people a window to the world, making a detailed, historical account of places, events, and people from around the world. Literally billions of post cards have been produced on every topic imaginable: cities, streets, buildings, ships, trains, and special events – the possibilities are endless.

The hobby, once a craze which lanquished over time, is enjoying a resurgence today. These small works of art are collectors items, cherished by people in all walks of life. Reasons for collecting are as varied as the cards themselves. Some consider it an investment, others value their cards for historical significance or artistic merit, but the majority collect for pure joy and interest.

The post card was introduced by the Austrian government as an economical and easy means of communication. Dr. Emanuel Herrmann wrote a newspaper article on his idea of a post card, and it was on the basis of this article that the Austrian Postal Administration introduced the world's first post card on October 1, 1869. This post card was followed by the army post card, the post card with return postage paid, the letter card, and many types of picture post cards.

These early cards were blank on one side for the message, and stamped for the address on the other. Private companies began producing cards that were used for advertising, and not long after the picture post card emerged. The first commercial picture post card appeared in 1893. At first the pictures took up only a small part of the message side, but gradually filled the entire space. During the Edwardian Era, the plain black and white photograph versions were popular, as were German cards of black and white photographs hand-painted over.

The first Canadian cards appeared in 1871, and the divided back, having both the address and message on the same side, was introduced in Canada in 1903. It's been recorded that Canadians mailed over 27 million post cards in the year 1900.

Today, post card collecting is one of the world's most popular hobbies, probably because it is relatively inexpensive. Post card clubs exist in most major centres across Canada. The largest is the Toronto Postcard Club. Members of these clubs share information, trade and sell, and display their cards at Exhibitions.

Push for reduced postal rates prompted release of the first British postal cards

Although an American, John P. Charlton of Philadelphia, filed for copyright on inventing a postcard in 1861, the first official use of government-issued postal cards in the mails

Postal Stationery

By Peter Collins

began in 1868.

That year the Austrian Post Office introduced legislation to permit postal cards through the post at a cost of 2 kreuzer instead of the full letter rate of 5kr. An example of this card is shown in Figure 1.

For a long time, there had been agitation from businesses and the general public for reduced postage for the sending of short messages or printed notices, e.g., advertising or notice of an organization's meetings.

Great Britain allowed the use of postal cards with an imprinted stamp within its mails beginning Oct. 1, 1870, but it was not until 1875, when the Universal Postal Union gave approval to the use of postal cards at half-price postage, that international use of postal cards became acceptable. Great Britain's first postal card is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 1. The world's first official postal card — with a 2-kreuzer denomination — was issued by Austria in 1869.

Inland postage on postal cards in Great Britain was ½ penny, being half the rate of a letter at 1d. Overseas letters cost 2½d, so from July 1875, postal cards to overseas destinations cost 1½d.

However, an odd quarter penny (farthing) presented problems in accounting, and from April 1879, overseas postal cards were issued with postage reduced to 1d. Other rates were later introduced for cards to other destinations with other letter rates.

Many post office users felt it would be still more useful if private unstamped postcards could be used for this service, upon which adhesive stamps could be placed, but the British Post Office was only prepared to accept its own printed prestamped cards.

In 1882, an essay mock-up was prepared for a card that would have control by the Inland Revenue Department but that could be stamped individually by the user. The essay is shown in Figure 3. This was not brought into use, however, and it was not until 1894 that cards other than official stamped postal stationery issues were allowed through the mails. This breakthrough opened the way for the use of the pictorial greetings and view cards that became so popular in the first decade of the 20th century.

Upon the death of Queen Victoria in 1901, postal cards with King Edward VII ½d imprints for inland and 1d for overseas cards were introduced. An example of the overseas card is shown in Figure 4. Following the accession of King George V, 1/2d and 1d postal cards with this monarch's head were issued for inland and overseas postage.

British soldiers on duty at home or abroad had to pay regular postage rates on their mail, i.e., ½d on postal cards, 1d on domestic letters, and 1d on postal cards from overseas.

Since British soldiers first served abroad in the 18th century, they have been allowed a concession rate on letters sent home, which, at that time, were very costly.

For a single rate letter home from wherever the soldier was serving, a letter cost 1d, but from Jan. 1, 1901, all letters sent within the British Empire were only required to pay 1d postage to any other destination within the Empire including, of course, Great Britain.

Most British garrisons overseas were stationed in Empire territories, so the men could just as well send a letter in which they could write much more and which was sealed up and private, as to send a postal card. Pictorial view cards are to be found from men usually serving in Malta, Gibraltar and India.

Until the outbreak of World War I, international postage on letters, with the exception of the Universal Penny Postage rate within the Empire, was 2½d, or its equivalent of 25 centimos, centimes, pfennigs, or 5¢ in United States funds.

When war broke out in August 1914, British soldiers went to France in the first weeks of war. They had concession rates of postage home: 1d for letters, ½d for postal cards.

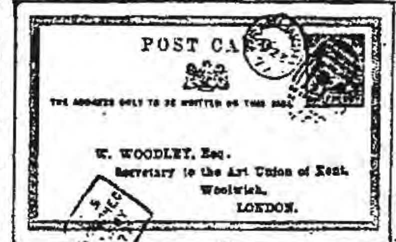


Figure 2. The first British postal card was issued in 1870.

Figure 3. An 1882 essay for a postcard to which adhesive stamps could be added was presented to the British House of Commons with the certifying stamp and royal arms. The proposal was rejected, and unstamped cards were not allowed until 1894, 12 years later.

Two major problems immediately arose. It was not practical to maintain a supply of stamps as the troops moved around, and the men could not find time or opportunity to write.

To overcome these difficulties, the British Post Office produced a special postal card. It had a 1d face value, the regular rate for overseas postal cards, not a concession, and the legend "FIELD SERVICE POST CARD," as shown in Figure 5.

The 1d stamp was printed from a separate die from the overseas 1d card. It shows a full stop after the word "ONE PENNY," which does not appear on the 1d overseas issue.

On the back of the card, a series of messages was printed:

"I am quite well.

"I have been admitted into hospital: sick; wounded; am going on well; hoped to be discharged soon.

"I am being sent down to base.

"I have received your: letter; telegram; parcel.

"Letter follows at first opportunity.

"I have received no letter from you: lately; for a long time."

The sender merely had to strike out the phrases that did not apply. He thus, in effect, had a letter ready-made for sending.

The printed card had another advantage: With a standard series of messages, the card avoided the need for censorship.

The first issue of this card is reported to have appeared Aug. 21, 1914. It was printed in black on a buff card with a red stamp.

A similar card, identical in every respect but on grayish card, went on sale Sept. 28.

A third printing, on buff card, was identical in design but with the printing entirely in red as an economy measure, as printing in one color would be cheaper than in two.

Figure 5. Great Britain's Field Service postal card was issued in 1914. Messages appear on the reverse.

It was available beginning Oct. 15.

Beginning Sept. 1, 1914, postage on home mail for troops serving in France was free, so despite the 1d stamp, these cards must have been distributed for use to the soldiers without any charge.

With the introduction of free postage, postal cards bearing a similar set of phrases were printed without any stamp on the address side. These were issued as an army form and showed the form number A.F.A. 2042.

They do not rank as a post office issue of postal stationery. They were printed by private contractors whose various imprints and date of printing are shown. The earliest printing date known of the "free issue cards is "9/14," i.e., September 1914. ■

Figure 4. This 1-penny postal card was issued by the British Post Office for overseas destinations.

Austria released its annual Stamp Day commemorative last Nov. 17, and it pictured Dr. Emanuel Herrmann, inventor of the postcard, which helped change the pattern of personal communications.

Almost 76 years ago, on July 13, 1902, Dr. Emanuel Herrmann died in Vienna — a man whose name has to be mentioned when we speak of the introduction of the postcard.

Born in Klagenfurt on June 24, 1839, Herrmann studied at the university and became a civil servant and a teacher of economics. He taught at high schools in Graz, Wiener Neustadt and Vienna.

Before he was made Professor of Economics at the University of Technology in Vienna in 1882 he held a high office in the Ministry of Culture and Education. In the ministry, Herrmann's activities were mainly devoted to the establishment of vocational schools and their equipment with training facilities.

In his private life Herrmann collected Carinthian fold songs, wrote books — mainly in economics — and made several inventions, the most important of them being the postcard.

Herrmann wrote a newspaper article on his idea of a postcard and it was on the basis of this article that the Austrian Postal Administration introduced the world's first postcard on Oct. 1, 1869.

Similar ideas had also been expressed by the German Heinrich von Stephan at the fifth Conference of the Austro-German Postal Union.

The Austrian postcard was so successful that it was soon introduced in many other countries.

The postcard was followed by the army postcard, the postcard with return postage paid, the letter-card and many kinds of picture postcards — a development that could not have been expected at a time when only the letter was known.

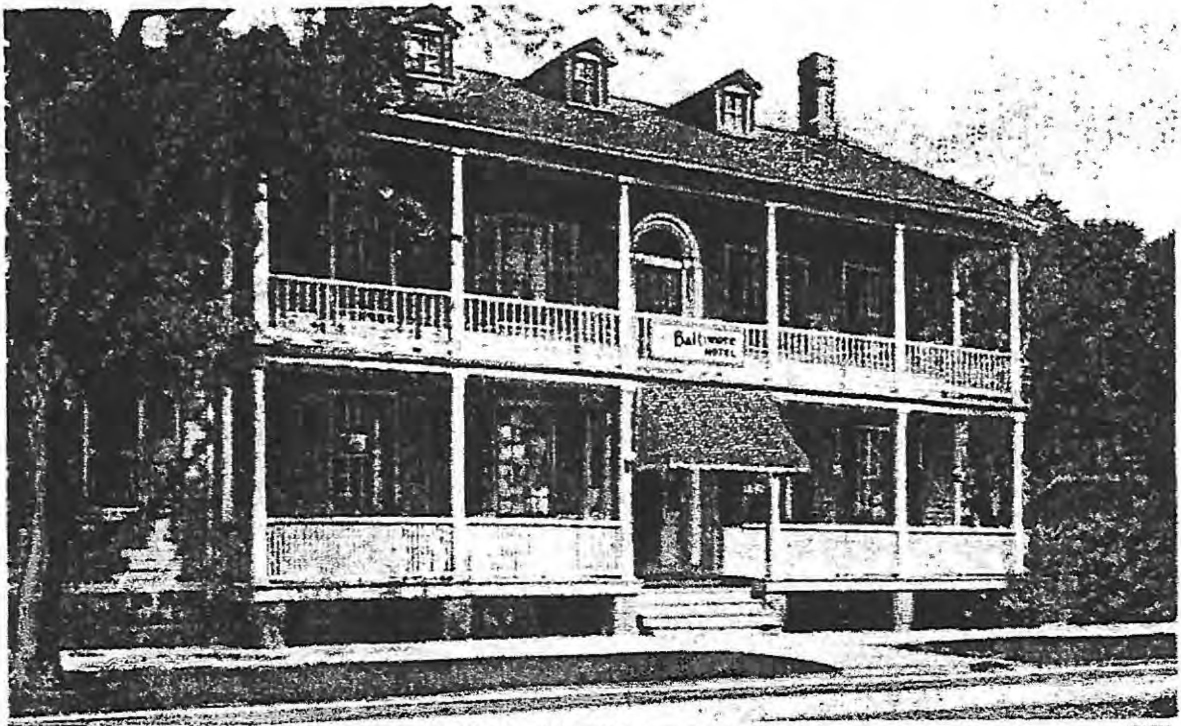
obverse

Raum für schriftliche Mittheilungen.

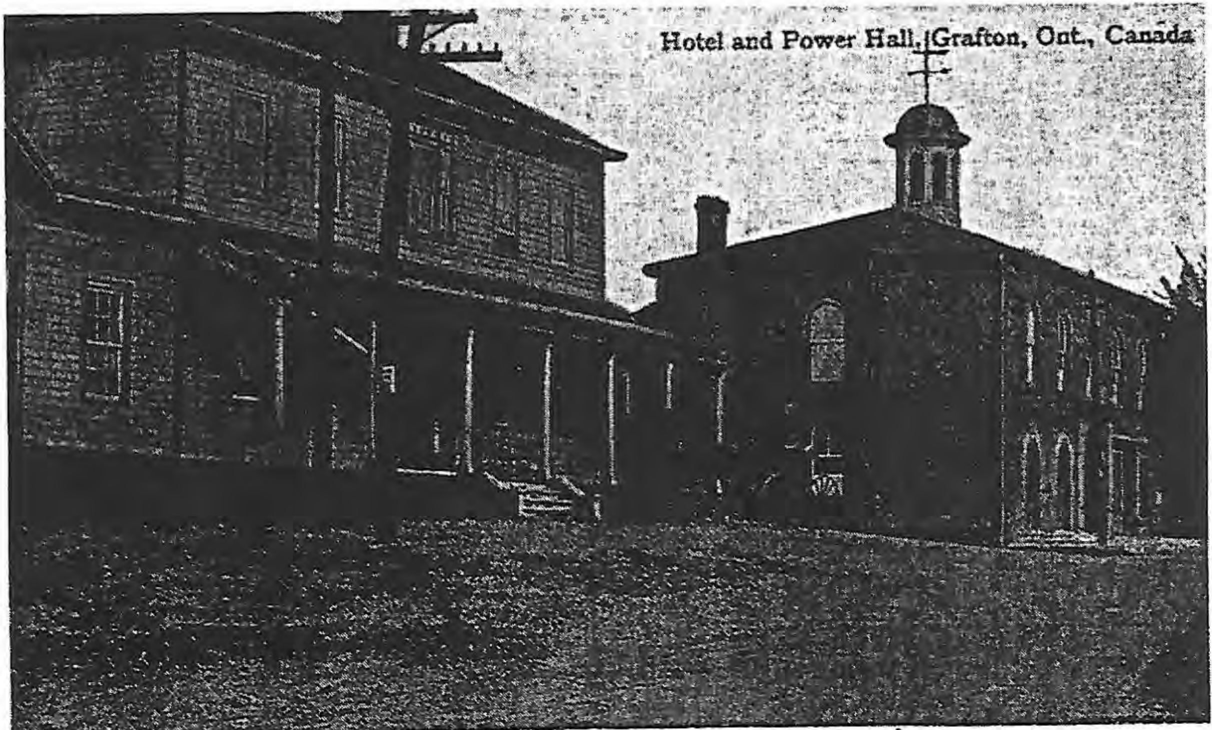
Die Postanstalt übernimmt keine Verantwortlichkeit für den Inhalt der Mittheilungen

reverse

Postcard Inventor Is Honored

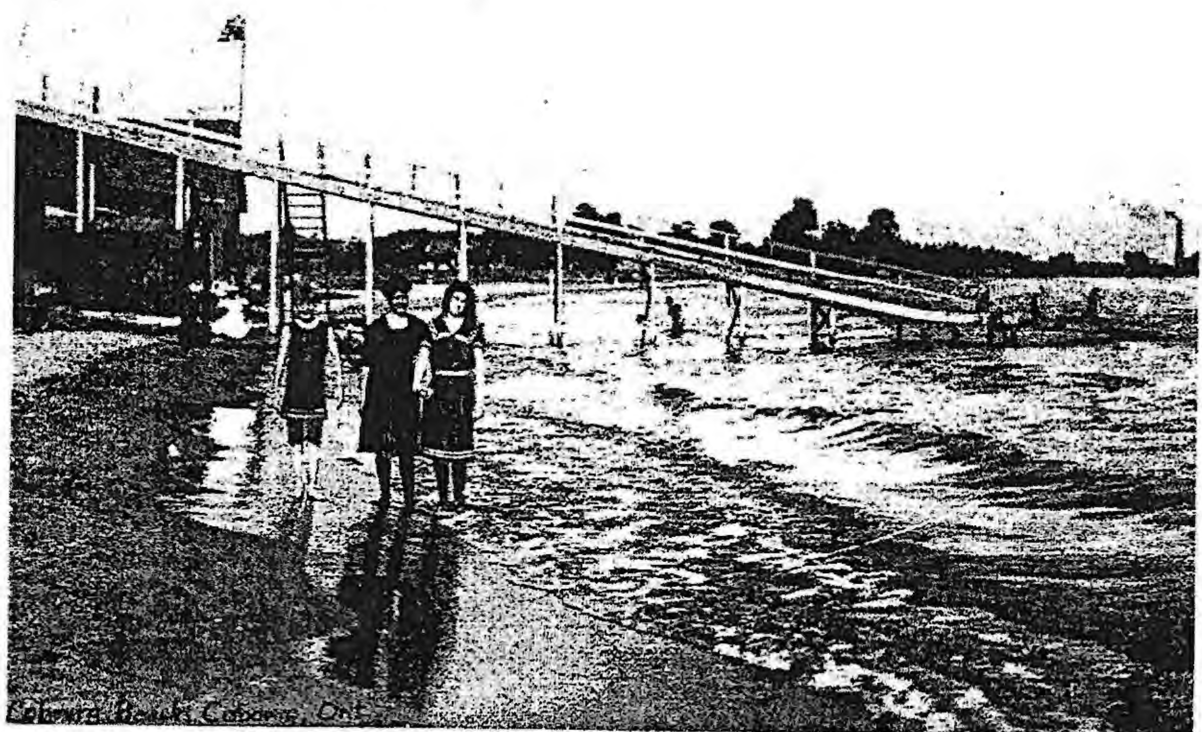


BALTIMORE HOTEL, COBOURG, ONTARIO, CANADA CICV

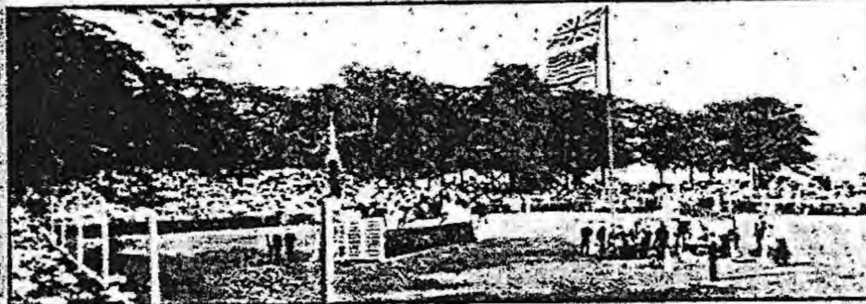


Hotel and Power Hall, Grafton, Ont., Canada

Gull Lighthouse, Cobourg, Ont.



10TH COBOURG
HORSE SHOW



CONFEDERATION: LET'S MAKE A DEAL
by
Bill Henricks
Guest Speaker for the Annual May Social

Canadian Confederation, as an event, occurred over 130 years ago. Even the final step in uniting all of British North America; that is, the joining of Newfoundland with the rest of Canada, is now more than half a century in the past. Does that mean that Confederation is no longer relevant, that it is something to be tucked away in dusty archives from Halifax to Victoria to Cobourg? The answer is an emphatic "no." There is simply too much to be learned from the experience. Canada is what it is today in the 21st century because of the way in which she was created in the 19th century.

On the world stage, the 1860s period was a time of nation building and nation maintaining. In north-central Europe, Prussia's "Iron Chancellor," Otto von Bismarck, was putting together the modern German nation-state. Through a policy of "blood and iron" and, more specifically, three wars in a six year period, Bismarck forced over thirty German-speaking states to come together to form the German Empire under Kaiser Wilhelm I in 1871. During the same period of time and, again, as a result of a number of wars, with the inevitable bloodshed that accompanies such events, the modern state of Italy emerged. Meanwhile, in an example far more immediate to British North Americans of the 1860s, a bloody Civil War was being waged to the south. Hundreds of thousands of men died in that bitter conflict to maintain a nation-state. Be assured that union was the key to that great conflict. In fact, Lincoln, the Great Emancipator, was prepared to preserve the union without freeing a single slave.

Fortunately for those who lived in the various colonies of British North America in the 1860s their leaders found a better way. Confederation would be realized in 1867 without fighting any wars and without shedding any blood. The so-called fathers of Confederation were able to make a deal, or, more accurately, a number of deals. In Canada pragmatism triumphed over passion. It may well be that Confederation was a little short on nobility and a little long on backroom manoeuvring, but the deal was done. That, in itself, was something of a miracle.

It has been said that Confederation began as a scheme hatched by desperate men looking for a way out of desperate straits. By 1864 it was clear that the Act of Union of 1841, which had joined Upper and Lower Canada to create the colony of Canada, no longer worked. Ten governments in ten years had culminated in the collapse of the Liberal-Conservative ministry of Taché and Macdonald after only three months in office. A state of complete political deadlock had been reached. In the face of that deadlock some of the prominent political leaders of the day looked to a new political set-up as a way out. The idea of confederation had been broached in the 1850s by several politicians, most notably Alexander

Galt. In fact, Lord Durham, in his famous Report completed in 1839, had written of the day when a larger political union of British North American colonies might be practical and even desirable. Yet, these visions of confederation had received short shrift at the time and it wasn't until political deadlock forced politicians to look for solutions that a small group of influential Canadians took up the cause. Interestingly, one of the last key figures to come on board was John A Macdonald. He held out for a legislative union but was finally forced to concede that French Canada would never agree to such an arrangement.

The way in which these practical politicians went about realizing their objective is indeed instructive. There was very little attempt to appeal to a nascent spirit of Canadian nationalism. There were a few of the fathers who tried that route. Men like George Brown and, especially, Darcy McGee were capable of rousing nationalist sentiments, especially in Canada West (what is now Ontario), but, by-and-large, such efforts were seen as counter-productive, especially in Canada East (now Quebec) and the maritime colonies. Instead of ephemeral visions of a united Canada stretching from sea to sea the fathers of Confederation placed the emphasis on trade, subsidies and railroads. The creation of the Great Coalition, headed by Macdonald, Cartier and Brown sealed the deal in the colony of Canada, given the fact that the members of that government had no intention of taking the proposal to the people. With a large majority in the assembly the Great Coalition pushed Confederation through against intelligent but overwhelmed opposition. There would be no Canadian plebiscite. The first formal opportunity for Canadians to register their opposition to the scheme of Confederation wouldn't come until after the fact, with the elections for the first parliament of the Dominion of Canada. These elections illustrated clearly that Confederation, while it was not without opposition in Ontario and Quebec, would have been approved by the majority. Ontarians undoubtedly realized they had the most to gain. Cartier's deal with the Roman Catholic Church, in combination with the substantial powers given the provinces in the British North America Act (BNA Act), were the keys to Quebec's acceptance.

In the maritime colonies the wheeling and dealing assumed epic proportions. This was made necessary by the strength of the anti-confederation cause. Had a plebiscite been held in the four maritime colonies there is little doubt that Confederation would have been rejected, and, probably, overwhelmingly. In fact, two of the four colonies declined the invitation to enter Confederation in 1867. Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland would have to be dealt in later. In Nova Scotia the forces opposed to Confederation were so strong that Tupper, the pro-confederation leader, didn't dare risk taking the proposal to the people. The eloquent Joseph Howe, the leading anti-confederation figure, summed up the feelings of the majority of maritimers in the following way. "I thought I knew who I was. I thought I was a Nova Scotian. I thought I was an Englishman. Now I'm told I'm a Canadian, by order of parliament." After considerable struggle, altering the terms of the Seventy-two or Quebec Resolutions, which, in essence, would become the BNA Act, to include larger subsidies and the promise of an Intercolonial Railroad to join Nova Scotia with Ontario and Quebec allowed Tupper to proceed. It also provided further fodder for Howe's vitriolic pen when he claimed that Nova Scotia was being "railroaded" into Confederation. Howe produced many witty attacks on

Confederation. My personal favourite involves a vague Upper Canadian proposal for a new flag to replace the Union Jack. Howe described it as having a maple leaf and a beaver on a branch eating himself off it. Even with the improved deal Tupper wisely waited on events in New Brunswick and then bribed Miller, one of the leading opponents of Confederation, before asking the Nova Scotian assembly to approve Nova Scotia's entry into the union. The voters of Nova Scotia had their revenge when the elections to the new Canadian House of Commons saw eighteen of nineteen Nova Scotian seats fall to the anti-confederation forces led by Howe. These results were mirrored the following year when elections to the new provincial assembly produced thirty-six anti-confederation MPPs in a thirty-eight seat house.

In New Brunswick Leonard Tilley, the pro-confederation leader, faced a bitter uphill battle. When he adopted what many might consider the honest approach and went to the people in an election in March of 1865 his party went down to defeat. The intervention of the Canadian deal-makers with better terms and the interference of the Lieutenant Governor, acting on orders from the British Colonial Office, in combination with impending bankruptcy, saved the day for Confederation in New Brunswick. The Lieutenant Governor, Gordon, in a virtual *coup d'etat*, forced new elections in the spring of 1866 and Tilley emerged victorious.

Another factor, more psychological than real, aided the cause of the Fathers of Confederation. With the winding down of the American Civil War some British North Americans perceived a renewed military threat to the south. The spirit of Manifest Destiny was revived by the North's victory. Negotiations to add Alaska to American territory seemed ominous for British North America. There was talk of the Stars and Stripes flying all the way to the North Pole. The situation was exacerbated by the presence of thousands of Irish-American Fenians in the northern states who felt they might somehow aid the cause of Irish independence by an invasion of British North America which might, in some convoluted way, lead to a war between Britain and the United States. At the end of the American Civil War in April of 1865 the North had at its disposal the largest standing army in the world - some one million men. How Canadian deal-makers were able to sell British North Americans on Confederation as a means of defence against such an army is problematic, but they did it. Had the American army marched north the union of three and a half million or so British North Americans would have made little difference. However, a war-weary United States chose not to march and the Fenian threat amounted to little more than a few border raids and one battle (at Ridgeway) followed by a precipitous Fenian retreat. Nevertheless, the cause of Confederation received a welcomed boost.

With New Brunswick and Nova Scotia now on board the Fathers of Confederation, with support from a British government that was temporarily questioning the value of colonies, could seal the deal. On July 1, 1867 the British North America Act was implemented and the Dominion of Canada came into being.

The reaction to Canada's birth was mixed. While there were parades, picnics and fireworks where the locals could afford it, there were also many examples of opposition or

indifference. The *Halifax Chronicle* hung black crêpe instead of bunting, published an obituary for Nova Scotia, and refused to close for the day. On the other side of what would become Canada, the front page of the Victoria British Columbian was dominated by an ad for Ayer's Sarsaparilla ("effective for tumors, ulcers, blotches, venereal and mercurial disease"). On an inside page, the paper ran an inch of copy announcing the formation of Canada - just under a description of renovations at the Colonial Hotel. Even Ontario possessed its share of party poopers. In Toronto, the man known as the merchant prince of Canada, and the MP for Toronto West, sat in his home on that first Dominion Day and moped. He had been a vigorous anti-confederationist. His name, ironically, was John Macdonald. That is John S. for Sandfield Macdonald. Yet, no amount of opposition or ill will could change the fact that the Dominion of Canada was a reality.

As it turned out, however, that was only the beginning. Over the ensuing six years Canadian deal-makers would sharpen their pencils and get to work on completing the task. Time precludes a detailed examination of the deals that ensued. Suffice it to say that trade, railroads and subsidies figured largely in the bargaining that brought the West, British Columbia and Prince Edward Island into the fold. One clause, in particular, sums up the business-like approach to completing Confederation. In the deal struck with B.C. the new province was promised a subsidy of $35,000 a year plus eighty cents a head until the population reached 400,000. The deal with B.C. illustrates another aspect of the deal-making that must be recognized. In promising to construct a transcontinental railroad within ten years, Macdonald demonstrated considerable courage, if not outright recklessness. No viable route had yet been surveyed and the new Canadian government hadn't the funds required for such an immense undertaking It would require massive borrowing, another trend established for the future, and one of the great engineering feats of the nineteenth century to make good on that promise.

To this point in my ramblings I have tried to emphasize the pragmatic nature of Confederation. It was very much a deal worked out by capable and highly persuasive deal-makers. They were able to convince several millions of people who had no real desire to live together that they could no longer live apart. It seems to me that in many respects this reasoning continues to hold true. Separatists in Quebec and the West have, to this point in time, been no more successful in promoting their cause than the members of Canada's first separatist movements in Nova Scotia and in Louis Riel's Northwest Territories. It could be, however, that they have learned a valuable lesson from those earlier separatists - the squeaky wheel gets the grease. Both Nova Scotia and the Manitoba Métis were able to wring improved deals out of Ottawa. At any rate, the argument made by federalists still seems to come down to the contention that the best deal for all Canadians, including the so-called separatists, is to be found in a united Canada. The value of the deal was demonstrated as recently as 1949 when Newfoundland finally entered Confederation on terms surprisingly similar to those offered by the original Canadian deal-makers. Again, the lack of a viable alter helped the pro-confederation forces, led by Joey Smallwood, scrape through with 52% of the vote in a referendum.

There are Canadians, perhaps some of you included, who regret the way in which Confederation was put together and stays together. Where was the love of country that might have sparked the exercise of nation-building? This isn't a new question. It was asked in 1867. In fact, there was at that time an attempt to create a movement designed to foster the development of a distinctly Canadian nationality. However, Canada First, although it had some appeal in the Toronto area, collapsed rather quickly. Periodically, since that time, there have been attempts to promote a more chauvinistic brand of Canadian nationalism. Except during the two world wars, these efforts have met with minimal success. Indeed, there are those, including Canada's very own philosopher-king prime minister, Pierre Eliot Trudeau, who see Canada's problem as too much, rather than too little, nationalism. Be that as it may, given the nature of Confederation, it should not be surprising that fervent nationalism is not a trait to be found in most Canadians. Canada was born out of the deal, not passionate and bloody conflict. There was a sufficient supply of intelligent and daring men to put the deal together in the first place. Let us pray that there is still a sufficient supply of those rather rare commodities, courage, good will, and common sense, to keep the deal in place.

HISTORICAL SNIPPETS

by

John Jolie

Editor, *Historically Speaking*

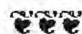
❦ September 20 00 – Number 157 – An Early Use of Fences and Guards at "the Foods"

The Kraft General Foods complex is a fixture in Cobourg. During the First World War, part of the present day buildings were used to make 18-pound shells. Once the war ended, it was announced that the buildings and land had been purchased by the world's largest manufacturer of vinegar, the York State Fruit Company, of Rochester. The company that was set up in Cobourg became the Douglas Packing Company.

A product that had housewives excited was *Certo*, a kitchen marvel which almost guaranteed that jams and jellies would set. Apples were the source for the pectin, the "miracle" ingredient in Certo. In the early days of trial and error, the temperatures inside the room with the cookers was almost unbearable. The heat not only put a strain on the workers, but also the pectin could not be cooled to the desired temperature. Unable to continue summer production at that time, the company let it be known that they would give away the surplus cider.

The Cobourg equivalent to the gold rush began! Horse drawn wagons, cars, and pedestrians all raced to the site, weighed down with bottles and jugs, creating one of the earliest traffic jams in Cobourg. So much pandemonium resulted that the company never again made such an offer. Future surpluses were poured down the drain.

The company had enough property to retain a wood lot inside. Pheasants became regular visitors, leaving the cedar groves to feed on the apple residue. The employees also enjoyed sharing their lunches with the tamed birds. Recognizing a good thing, hunters started to sneak onto the property at night. Mr. Mohan, managing director of the company, ordered guards to be posted to protect the birds.

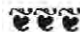


❦ October 2000 – Number 158 – Other Times, Other Uses

The functional structure, across from the post office, is not on any architectural tour. What was the original use of the building which now houses the Lakeshore Auto Electric?

Originally built to be a curling rink, E.C. Guillet's book *Cobourg 1798-1948* offers some enlightenment on the local curling activities. He mentions a newspaper announcing a club being re-established in 1859. Guillet notes seven different rink locations:

- Two rinks on Factory Creek;
- A rink south east of the market (Was Midtown Creek dammed to make the surface?);
- James Street just west of the public school (a covered rink which burned in the 1880s);
- Lightburne's, south of the jail;
- Another on University Avenue near the Midtown Creek;
- King Street West, which later became a garage, housing Moon's Garage;
- The Lakeshore Auto Electric building on Queen Street, described in 1948 as being across from the old Gas Works and behind the Cobourg Club, a place to hone one's billiard skills.



❦ November 2000 – Number 159 – The Great War 1914-1918

The individuals who were involved in the First World Was are centenarians now, and even those who can remember those war years as children have become fewer. We all owe Percy Climo a great deal for his efforts in compiling many documents from that time period – notably, *Let Us Remember: Lively Letters from World War One* and *Cobourg 1914-1918: A Magnificent Sacrifice*. The second book details the available lists of enlistments for the area, and of the sobering numbers of casualties. Cobourg was a recruitment centre and a point of departure for local men and volunteers from the north. The following is some information gleaned from the books about how the war affected Cobourg and district:

- Within two days of England declaring war, August 4, 1914, the Cobourg Heavy Battery was mobilized and on the train. The battery was first sent to British Columbia to fortify the West Coast. After a month, the battery returned east to proceed over to Europe. The 40th Northumberland Regiment and 14th Field Battery were ordered to be ready to move in 24 hours and by month's end had left Cobourg.

- By June of 1915, a shell factory had been built at the southeast corner of Albert and Queen Streets. At its height of production, it employed about 125 workers.

- The Cobourg Armoury was initially set up to accommodate 250 recruits, with more to be billeted around town.

- After Sunday church services were finished, recruitment meetings were held at Victoria Hall. (Speakers regularly visited nearby villages, too.)

- Soldiers in uniform were very visible in town. Parades and marches were commonplace in Victoria Park and other places.

- Cobourg, being named for Coburg in Germany, entertained the idea of changing its name. (Berlin, Ontario was renamed Kitchener, and the Royal Family name was changed to Windsor.) Sargeant "Bones" Aitchison, a returning veteran with 14 wounds, was adamant when he addressed the town council that the town name should remain.

- Soldiers of the Soil – boys too young to enlist – were encouraged to work on farms.

- In June 1916, it was announced that the former buildings of Victoria College would be used as a military hospital for shell-shocked veterans. Within a month, the first patients had arrived.

- The women in town were very active in raising funds and providing many needs throughout the war. The ladies in the 'American colony' were also very active.

- The steel rails from the Cobourg-Peterborough Railway were ripped up and sent to France. So were early tracks from the part of the Grand Trunk Line which had been laid too close to the lake.

- In 1916, the Cobourg Felt Mills plant was started up in the building of the Cobourg Woolen Mills. It made footwear.

- In the spring of 1917, an intense campaign was launched to get all available areas in town to be planted with food crops.

- In October of 1918, the Spanish Influenza outbreak hit Cobourg, affecting over 200. This outbreak was in the midst of killing more people than the war did, and all precautions were taken. Theatres were closed and schools were shut for two weeks. Many local people did succumb to the virulent disease.

- On November 7th, there was a rumour that the war was over. A huge celebration followed. It merely turned out to be a dress rehearsal for the real end and again the town erupted in joy. Bonfires burned every piece of wood not nailed down. Work whistles blew until the steam was exhausted. Every bell in town peeled continuously. Impromptu parades of youngsters, banging on anything that made a noise, added to the din.

More important than all of the events above was that so many had lost their lives or suffered from lasting injuries. The carnage of the war was horrific. Climo's *Cobourg 1914-1918* book certainly tempers the glory of the struggle.

❦ January 2001 – Number 160 – Here We Go Again!

No matter when we pick up a paper, listen or watch the news, the refrain is the same: "many of our talented people are leaving the country for the United States." In reading Edwin Guillet's book, *Cobourg, 1798-1948* (page 101), we find that this is old news. Guillet writes about an article in the *Cobourg Sentinel* concerning "the rush to the United States of many able-bodied young men." The article related that over 40 young men had left town over the previous few weeks because there was no prospect of making a living in Cobourg. At the time, the Town owed a huge sum of money for Victoria Hall and the new Cobourg-Peterborough Railway was virtually non-operational. The opportunity for industry did not exist and agriculture prices were low. Some locals, who could not find work here, were now earning $2.50 a day in Cleveland. In the previous year, the paper speculated that perhaps as many as 150 people left our area.

All of this was in the papers of 1864 – 137 years ago!

Identify! What is this list? Pemedash, Northumberland, Whistlewing, Isaac Buttes, Beaver, Rainbow and Geneva.

Identification answer: these seven names were steam boats which plied Rice Lake in the nineteenth century.

❦ February 2001 – Number 161 – C.D.C.I. West Anniversary.

This summer, from July 6th to 8th, the West Collegiate will be celebrating its one hundredth anniversary with a huge reunion. However, the present building known as the West Collegiate was not the first Collegiate in town. An earlier building, still standing and now apartments, served as the first high school in town. It was built in 1875 across from St. Peter's Church. One hundred years ago, that school was bursting with students, and the first stages of the present day West were built. There have been several additions since then. When the baby boomers reached high school age, the West could no longer manage, and still another high school was built. The C.D.C.I. East was built, and before long it, too, needed expansion.

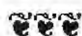
It is interesting to note that Cobourg had a college – Victoria – before it had a high school.

❦ March 2001 – Number 162 – Canadian Warships

The Canadian Navy has named many of its warships after Canadian communities, including many from this region. The *HMCS Cobourg*, a corvette, was launched from Midland, Ontario on July 14, 1943. She was 208 feet long and like all corvettes, was built for convoy duty. She paid a visit to Cobourg for several days around the Victoria Day holiday in 1944 before she proceeded on her voyage out to the Atlantic. In Tom Blakely's book, *Corvette Cobourg*, the ship's history is described. It battled a hurricane, fought off a U-boat attack, escorted convoys, and protected a crippled American ship.

The Cobourg was one example of warships named after Canadian communities. A buddy ship of the Cobourg was the *Peterborough* (they were often convoys together). Other places from this region that had ships named for them in World War II were the corvettes *Napanee, Lindsay, Whitby*, and *Bowmanville*. We had minesweepers called the *Quinte, Gananoque, Port Hope, Brockville, Oshawa,* and *Belleville*. These were all small ships, as far as warships were concerned, but that meant that many could be built in the dockyards of Collingwood, Kingston, Midland, and Port Arthur, and could still manage to squeeze through the small locks that existed on the St. lawrence at that time.

There was also the *Trentonian*. Why "Trentonian" and not just Trenton? All other ships carried unaltered town names. It turns out that as there was already an American ship called the Trenton, our warship's name was changed to avoid any confusion. Sadly, the Trentonian was torpedoed and sank off Falmouth by U-1004 in February of 1945.



❦ April 2001 – Number 163 – Donegan Park

Donegan Park has seen its fair share of history. The low ridge that winds across the park is the altered remains of an old shoreline going back to the time when the lake was bigger. D'Arcy Boulton was often seen riding his horse across this land, which he owned. In the 1850s, Cobourg hosted the Provincial Exhibition (forerunner to the CNE) and one event was the steeplechase, which ran from this site to the Hamilton-Haldimand boundary line. The Cobourg Horse Show was held here (1905-14 and 1921-23) and a horse owned by Clifford Sifton set a world high jump record of almost eight feet!

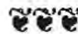
In an article written by Idell Rogers in the 1930s (the *Cobourg World*), she spun a story about the origins of Donegan Park. She wrote that a Cobourg , A.K. Donegan, had made a fortune in business in California. When he returned to visit Cobourg, he walked through Boulton's Woods and collected some beech nuts to take back to California. Donegan decided to buy the land and give it to the town. The sole survivor of the original forest is a single beech tree.

The park has had several names. It evolved from Boulton Woods to Donegan Woods, and Donegan Park. For awhile, it was McClelland Park, then Kiwanis Park, and once more, Donegan.

The Kiwanis Club members put much time, money, and physical labour into shaping the park into what it is today. Kiwanis stalwart Harold Peters said that old club documents are filled with references to the ongoing fund raising for the park.

I asked Bud Barr about the origins of McClelland Park. Bud told me that Mr. McClelland was a teacher at Cobourg Collegiate Institute and coached the local Olympic and British Empire competitors Arthur Ravensdale and Larry O'Connor. Both were Canadian champion hurdlers in the 20s and 30s. For a time, the park was named for Mr. McClelland. The track in the park was the site for track and field events. It also was the playing field where the Galloping Ghosts battled when they became Dominion rugby champs in 1946.

Parks are always evolving. The track which was at the south end of the park has been replaced with baseball and soccer fields. The latest plan calls for the addition of a basketball court and new playground equipment. Mr. Donegan would be startled by the changes to his woods.



❦ May 2001 – Number 164 – 'Dream Not Small Dreams, for They Do Not Stir the Imagination in Men's Minds'

This pondering could have been applied to many visionaries in this area. Cobourg was going to be a capital, and a resort for high society – the universe revolved around us! A century ago, another scheme to stir Cobourg out of the economic doldrums was an improbable scheme to build on the remains of our failed railroad. In 1889, Parliament made a statute for the incorporation of Cobourg, Northumberland and Pacific Railway Company. The idea was to use the rail line from Cobourg to Rice lake, barges to the Trent River, and another rail line to the iron mines at Marmora and Belmont. The word Pacific showed that they still had illusions of a fantastic future. In 1899, the charter for the new venture expired.