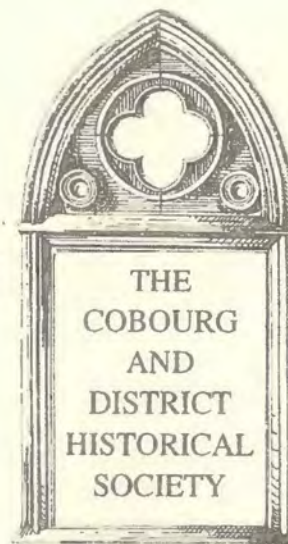


# HISTORICAL REVIEW 23



2005



2006

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THE COBOURG AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
PROGRAMME OF SPEAKERS

2005 –2006

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2006

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*Editor's note: In the Historical Review 22, the author of the article entitled "Celebrating 25 years-The Cobourg and District Historical Society" was incorrectly identified as Peter Greathead when it should have read Godfray Delisle. The editor extends her apologies.*

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**Cover Photograph:** *Harry Fields' Hardware store (first established by John Hayden.) South side of King Street, east of the Bank of Commerce. Hockey player D. Bentley is behind the counter.*

The Cobourg and District Historical Society Archives 1987-2006

## Loyal Ties

By  
Eileen Argyllis

It's a real pleasure to be invited back to the Cobourg Historical Society tonight. Apparently, you didn't hate the presentation I gave before and have even graciously decided to forgive me for living in Port Hope.

Last time I addressed this audience, I was a solo act, talking about a project that is near and dear to my heart, *How Firm a Foundation, a History of the Township of Cramahe and the Village of Colborne*, which I was commissioned to write as a millennium project. I have brought copies tonight because that project does have a bearing on what Sharon and I are now doing as a partnership.

*How Firm a Foundation* is the history of a community, but it is mainly people-centered. Of course, the seminal events are recorded, but I happen to think, and Sharon agrees, that it is the reaction of people to events that tells the real story - that people in the present want to hear about people in the past.

It all starts with people, particularly in the work Sharon and I are now doing, it all starts with you. You have the story; you have the family. If I'm doing a personal history of your life, you will most likely already have any documentation I need, but you have all the memories. Most of all, you have the point of view, your own reactions to events. If I'm writing your family history, we'll still start with an interview, to get an idea of the shape of the story, your personal memories, any family contacts - particularly older folks with longer memories.

That's how I started in Colborne, and that's how Sharon and I started these family histories.

When we were doing renovations to our old house back in Colborne, my husband used to say that he was the brawn of the operation and I was the brains. The same kind of teamwork and synthesis goes into a project like Loyal Ties, although Sharon and I both need brains, let me assure you.

In this case, Sharon supplies what might be called the skeleton, the researched factual, genealogical structure on which each story is based. This is a kind of research that I have never done. It is the information that, often, people do not have about their own families. Or perhaps they have it in part, and they need Sharon's expertise to fill in the gaps. But even if they have no research, Sharon can start from scratch and research a family tree. It takes great knowledge and infinite patience, as I have observed from working with her.

My part, you might call the flesh, or the colour. If this were a painting, her contribution would be the basic sketch. My part would be to take the sketch, fill in the flesh tones, the clothing, the background - the colour - to make a realistic portrait of a living person at a certain place and time.



else, but that was not demonstrably the case, either. In the end, we could present no definitive conclusion, only a mystery, as to why two neighbouring families, who had had a history of friendship, were linked by blood, but not by marriage.

In addition to research on the particular family, we need history of the specific region or regions where they lived, and the historical events that occurred in that place during their lifetime. Not everyone is a major shaper of history, but everyone is affected by it. Wars, droughts, floods, epidemics, migrations, even a year's poor harvest, all take their toll on the individuals who are in that place at that time. It is my job to take these historical events and seamlessly integrate them with the genealogy so that we can bring these people to life by painting them in their surroundings. Even the everyday has its place; modern readers may have little thought about what even the most mundane life was like a century or two ago.

This background material is gathered from community histories, county atlases, community, provincial and national archives, museums, and from family lore, if it exists and survives. Very few people – unless they belonged to the leisured classes – wrote diaries detailing their everyday lives. However, even these diaries are a great source of information that can be generalized to other people in the same place and time who were not fortunate enough to have the time or the skill to record their observations and feelings.

So far, wherever possible, Sharon and I have made trips to the areas where our subjects lived. This gives me the opportunity to describe the countryside, see significant landforms in relation to settlements, look at gravestones in cemeteries, even see and sometimes photograph old buildings that may have relevance to the story. We moderns may forget how much more significant geography was to our ancestors, in a world where man was still largely subservient to nature, instead of insulated from it, as we are today. The presence of a river in the area, for instance, could mean life-saving irrigation, life-enhancing industries and mills, or life-destroying floods. Anyone who has taken a look at the history of Port Hope can readily see how vital the presence of the Ganaraska has been to the development of that community.

Making trips to the area also gives us the opportunity to take photographs of surviving buildings, landforms, or even grave markers, which may help illustrate our story. Obviously, with a history of work in print media, I have a strong appreciation for the contribution that pictures make to the story. Pictures from the family or individual are most helpful. Sharon has proven herself a whiz at digging up maps, current and historical, that help to place our characters in their surroundings. Historical sketches, from before the era of photography, also help to create a mental picture of life in those times.

My job is to take all the facts I can derive from interviews, previously compiled family documents, pictures, deeds, records, and blend that with researched history of the time and place where these people lived, interspersing the story of the family with the history of the times, inject some appropriate local colour and create from this hodgepodge of

impressions a clear story line that is readable, easy to follow and compelling to read, so that even the teenagers and non-readers in the family are drawn into the story.

Your book will always be your book. You can print as many or as few copies as you wish – you are the boss. Private printing means no commercial distribution, however, my writing will be such quality that it is good enough for the commercial market.

### **Publishing Your Family History – With Our Help**

by  
Sharon Murphy

Publishing your family history – what a daunting image that conjures up! It is one of those dreams we have, that, when actually thought about, invokes a feeling of overwhelming helplessness in the best of us. Such a large and scary process, after all, where do you start?

As a professional genealogist, I too have experienced those feelings. I wasn't always experienced and had many misgivings about even the smallest project. I have learned a lot along the way and the most important lesson of all is to start it. Start somewhere and you at least stand a chance of getting it finished. Not starting, on the other hand, guarantees that you will never have to really be worried about finishing it.

Over the years I have done hundreds of different genealogy projects. I have written books about researching land records, vital statistics records, prepared courses for online students, given many, many lectures on family history. Often people will ask me how I know everything. Well, I don't. My specialty is Canada, more specifically Ontario. However, during my years in this business I have developed a network of professional researchers throughout the world that I can rely on. Of course, I would love to go to every country necessary and do the work personally, but I don't think that is the most effective way to go about this. Instead, I have the experts do the work in their particular area of expertise and then we know we have the right facts and documentation.

I began in 1975 simply typing up tombstone transcriptions, actually it was a project that was carried out by the senior citizens with a New Horizons Grant. Many of you may have heard this story before but I still can see the bags and bags of envelopes, backs of cereal boxes and old bills, all containing those precious transcriptions. Wouldn't want to waste paper, after all, they would all be thrown away when the project was done so why use good new paper? I'll tell you why – because someone - namely me – has to be able to actually read the words, that's why.

In any case, I have worked with many organizations throughout the genealogical world and it has given me a broad base of experience to draw from. During those years I had come to realize that almost everyone wants to tell their own story. In many cases, they want to leave their family a legacy that only they can. However, they are, for the most part, all faced with the same problem: Where do I start?

The key in any project is to map out your steps and then follow them until you have completed it. Yes, there are many, many steps to take to reach the finish line, however, we know what they are and we know how to help you make it happen.

As historians, which I consider you to be- belonging to the Historical Society and all - you have an interest in "things of the past". Past lives are often the subject of family get-togethers and we all have our famous and infamous characters that we like to keep alive by talking about them.

If you are not a genealogist, - and that is OK- you may still have an interest in what your family did; and where they lived; and how they got there; and why they did what they did. Often you hear the phrase, "you really should write a book about that" after you have related a particular tale. But, you dismiss the idea because *a) you are not a writer* and *b) you are not sure enough of your facts to actually 'put it in writing'*.

This is the good part, because, this is where we come in. Whether you have already started researching or writing, we can help you succeed. It doesn't matter how much you know, or how much you don't know. If you want to have your own family story written, that is all that matters.

Has anyone already written their family history? Has anyone already started on this project? Has anyone thought about starting this project?

We are going to show you some examples tonight to give you an idea of what you can do. Naturally, every person has a different style and budget and so, we have brought along a variety of examples to discuss.

What is involved in creating your book? We will work with you to get the research done that is required for the story to be told, whether it is genealogical or historical facts, or a combination of both.

When you contact us, we will meet with you to discover what your goal is. Then we will review what you have already done and what still may be needed to be completed. We will talk about the costs at that time.

My part as the overall project manager includes the genealogical and historical research as well as the finances. The research is an ongoing part of the project and Eileen lets me know what she needs to keep her busy.

Eileen is the writer, but she needs something to write about. She will talk with you and as an experienced interviewer, she knows just what to ask. You will be amazed at how she can turn the simplest event into a realistic vision of the past. She will be the first to tell you that she does not write fiction, rather, her writings are based on the real deal.



## The Historical Record of Cobourg Area Climate

by

Colin E. Banfield

Heightened public interest in climate and weather and their impacts, stimulated in part by well publicised debates over recent global climate trends and their causes, prompts an investigation of the local climate record in recent history for evidence of trends, variation and/or change. Whilst the recorded climatic history of southern Ontario and the eastern Great Lakes region has been the subject of a number of research studies, this author is unaware of such work relating to the Northumberland lakeshore portion of south-central Ontario, and the Cobourg area in particular. This work will therefore present the construction and examination of aspects of the local climate record since instrumental records commenced. It will also describe instances of particular extreme or unusual weather events that have significantly affected Cobourg and district in the past.

### Methods of constructing climate records

Climate records may be constructed for a variety of time scales, ranging from prolonged glacial and inter-glacial cycles derived from indirect ("proxy") terrestrial and oceanic evidence to recent fluctuations and trends revealed by observed records over the past 200 years. The latter category, generally referred to as the "instrumental record" of recent past climate, is heavily dependent upon the quantity and quality of observed and recorded data for the "primary climate elements" (air temperature, humidity, forms of precipitation, winds, air pressure, sunshine). Of particular importance are the length and continuity of the record at a given location, since gaps in the record and/or changes in the exact location of a climate station may limit its usefulness or necessitate careful correction procedures. This is illustrated by the situation for present-day Northumberland County. For example, the Port Hope station record (daily data for air temperature and precipitation) commenced over a century ago (1897) but unfortunately suffers from a lengthy gap from 1923 through 1962 and terminates in 1995. Within the town of Cobourg, official daily observations commenced in 1948, though the station has been re-located a few times prior to its present site at the Sewage Treatment Plant on the north side of King St. West, reporting to Environment Canada. In addition, Environment Canada has operated an automated station at the Cobourg lakeshore since 1972, presently sited at the Water Filtration Plant on Lakeshore Rd. and recording at hourly intervals. Elsewhere in the County several automated stations, recording at hourly intervals, have recently been established by Conservation Authorities, such as within the drainage areas of the Ganaraska, Shelter Valley and Trent River systems. A valuable record of measured winter snow depths and water content has been maintained since 1980 within the Ganaraska River catchment area, by Mr Bill Newell of the Ganaraska Regional Conservation Authority at Port Hope.



### Early references to Cobourg's climate

The climatically moderating and alleged invigorating effects of the immediate proximity of Lake Ontario to the town have long been recognised and, it may be asserted, embellished and exaggerated at times in order to attract more visitors and "foreign" settlers to Cobourg. This was no more illustrated than during the halcyon years of the "American Colony", between 1870 and 1920. During this period the town experienced considerable "fashionable growth", initially as a healthy and refreshingly cooler summer season destination for industrial barons and their families from polluted industrial cities such as Pittsburgh, and later attracting more permanent immigrants from Pennsylvania and the southern States.

The author is indebted to Dr Marsha Tate of The Pennsylvania State University for sharing many components of her research findings concerning the American Colony at Cobourg, with reference to the local climate and air quality, which include the following extracts from previously published material:

1. From a brochure for the Arlington Hotel (no date):  
"Within a few years Cobourg had become a major summer resort for wealthy Americans. They were attracted to Cobourg because of the clean, dry climate, its beautiful setting and supposedly salubrious air. Cobourg was said to have had the second highest ozone content in the atmosphere. This at the time was considered very healthy"
2. From a brochure for the Cedarmere Hotel (no date):  
"CLIMATE: The temperature seldom rises above 80 degrees [F] and the nights are always cool, with a refreshing breeze off the Lake. There is an abnormal amount of ozone in the air, second only to the Alps in Switzerland, which induces rest and comfort, and mosquitos are unknown"
3. From Snelgrove, Major H.J. (1896), in *Encyclopedic Canada, Men of Canada, Vol.5*:  
"A factor which speaks volumes in favour of Cobourg is that southern visitors who came here fifteen years ago, and for the first time enjoyed the pure and invigorating ozone of this locality, have returned every year since, ....."
4. From *Souvenir of Cobourg, Ontario, Canada; 1910* [Reprinted in 1980, with additional text, by Cobourg Chamber of Commerce]:  
"The summer climate of this region is unexcelled for its evenness of temperature and cool, bracing air, and is famous for the ozone, the quantity of sunshine, and freedom for fog, dampness or winds."

The above statements and assertions pre-date official climatic records for the town, yet they reveal an awareness of the reality of (1) the daytime cooling effects of the lake during periods of summer heat, (2) the tendency for the lakeshore area to experience relatively greater sunshine duration compared to inland locations affected by more frequent convective cloud buildup and thunderstorm activity. However, as current

residents will attest, the summer daytime thermal influence of the lake is a spatially varying phenomenon, sometimes bringing cooler air several kilometres inland on a stronger lake breeze, but confined to an immediate lakeside strip on days of weak lake breeze. Certainly, this localised “lake breeze” phenomenon is dependent upon the season and prevailing general weather pattern; it is most noticeable on fine days in spring and early summer, but will be prevented from developing if there are stronger offshore winds prevailing on a given day. Interestingly, it can also occur in weak form later in the fall after the lake has already cooled by several degrees and when an unseasonably warm air mass affects the area.

Included in the above quotations are references to the alleged “high ozone concentrations” at Cobourg, which was promoted as a healthy, restorative atmospheric ingredient linked to the often bright and pollution-free quality of the air, at least during the summer period. The subject of this “beneficial ozone” theory, and its credibility, are outside the scope of this study, yet in its defence it should be noted that there certainly are prescribed medicinal uses of ozone in its pure form, such as for the treatment of external ulcers and severe skin lesions, diseases of viral and bacterial origin, and arterial circulatory disturbances (Viebahn-Hansler, 1991). However, in this day and age ground level ozone is regarded as a pollutant, being an ingredient of summertime photochemical smog and having harmful effects on the human eye and some plants.

### **Preparation of an historical record for “Cobourg”**

In preparing historical time series of climate data for the Cobourg area, a seasonal approach was adopted, focussing upon the record of air temperature and precipitation for the winter and summer seasons of the year. The first step was to select an appropriate climate station as representative as possible of the local climatic region that includes Cobourg and district. Ideally, the Cobourg and/or Port Hope station records would have been used, if they had satisfied the need for lengthy and continuous operation at the same location. However, The Cobourg record is relatively recent, beginning in 1948 and with changes in the location of the station within the town. At Port Hope, records commenced in 1897 but unfortunately there is a prolonged gap from 1923 until 1962, which cannot be filled with adjusted data from Cobourg for that period. The most complete and lengthiest records for locations reasonably close to Cobourg are for Peterborough and Belleville. At Peterborough, records began in 1866; there are some short gaps, and in 1969 the Peterborough airport site became the official Environment Canada station. However, it is the Belleville record which satisfies the requirements best, having begun in 1866 and continued until the present at one site, except for some relatively short gaps before 1954.

It was therefore decided to adopt the Belleville and Peterborough [Airport] monthly records of air temperature and precipitation as the principal surrogate data series for Cobourg. These records were downloaded online from the Canadian National Climate Data and Information Archive. Whilst the local air temperatures and precipitation experienced at these towns can differ on a day to day basis, their records will exhibit the same overall long term trends and variations, which is the focus of this work. The gaps



in the Belleville record before 1954 can be filled, for air temperature at least, by undertaking a comparison of its monthly average temperatures with those from the concurrent Peterborough record, for as many years as possible from 1866 until the present. This procedure enabled determination of average differences by month [Belleville – Peterborough, degrees C], which were then applied to Peterborough monthly temperatures to produce “best estimates” of the missing values for Belleville. The ensuing Belleville temperature record, whilst still suffering from some gaps, covers a substantial portion of the period 1866 – 2004. This procedure cannot be used as reliably to reduce gaps in a station’s precipitation record, since there may be greater spatial variation in daily and monthly amounts of precipitation, and the relative amounts of rain and snow, due to local influences such as elevation and distance from the lake. Therefore the available Belleville precipitation record was used as a fair approximation for that of Cobourg since 1866, with respect to the overall variability through the full period of record.

Consequently the following data sets were produced for Belleville, to be used as a surrogate for Cobourg. Graphs 1–4 illustrate the fluctuations in each of these climate elements during the period 1866-2004, from the available data.

Annual total precipitation, which is the sum of the monthly totals (January-December) of all forms of precipitation.

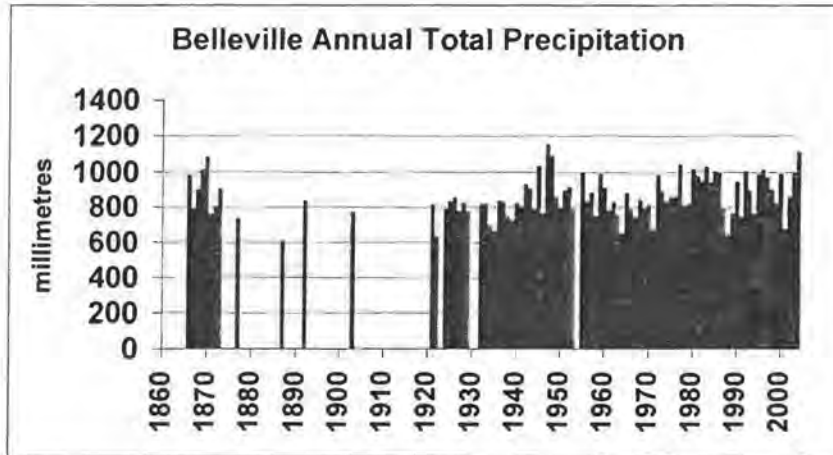
Average “winter” temperature. “Winter” air temperature is defined as the average of the months of December, January and February. The values represent the average of the daily maximum and minimum temperatures during each of these months.

Total winter snowfall. In the context of snowfall, “winter” is here defined as the months of November through March.

Average “summer” temperature. “Summer” air temperature is defined as the average of the months of June, July and August, calculated in the same way as for average winter temperature.

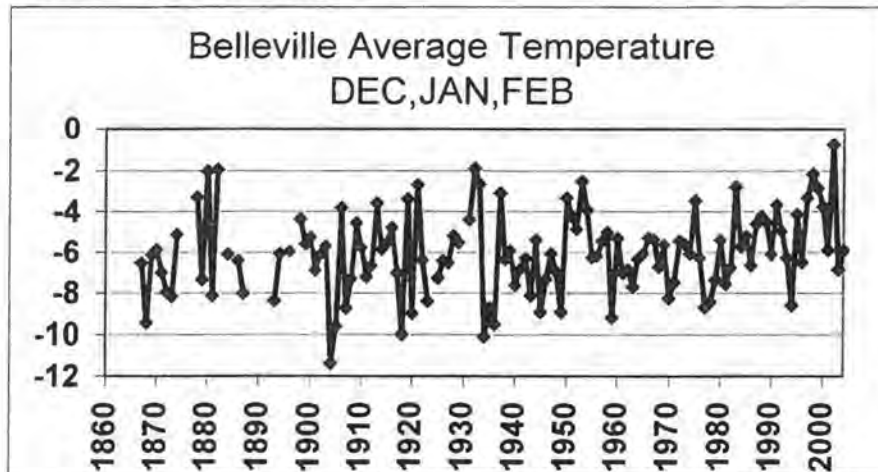


Total Precipitation [Graph 1]



The fluctuations in annual total precipitation at Belleville may be viewed in relation to the most recent long term (1971-2000) average of 892 mm for this location (at Cobourg it is 872 mm), with the least and greatest annual amounts ranging between approximately 600 and 1150 mm. There is no evidence of a long term trend. However, relatively wetter and drier periods are evident, such as the wetter early-mid 1980's and the drier 1920's, 1930's and 1960's. In recent memory, the year 2004 stands out as one of the wettest on record in this region, coming only three years after one of the driest, 2001.

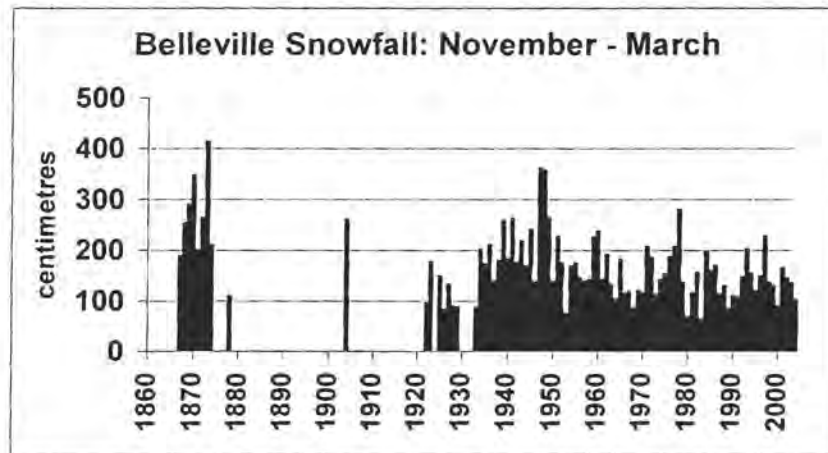
Winter temperature [Graph 2]



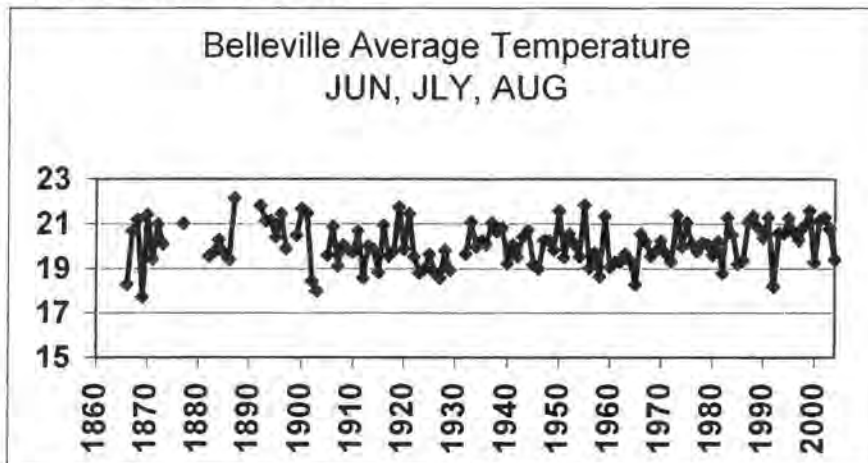
The long term variability of air temperature is relatively great for the winter season in southern Ontario, due to the region's geographical position in relation to the degree of southern penetration of the arctic front at this time of the year. During winters when this major front is further to the south for the majority of the season, relatively low temperatures prevail. If, however, the arctic front remains well to the north of southern Ontario, much milder conditions result (as, for example, in January 2006). At Belleville

and Cobourg, therefore, the average temperature for the months of December, January and February combined has ranged from near  $-1$  C for the mild winter of 2002 to near  $-11$  C for the winter of 1913. Prior to about 1980 the record does not display any significant overall trend, with considerable inter-annual variation being a major feature. Relatively cold winters prevailed from the early 1930's until the late 1940's. Since 1980 there has been a more consistent upward trend in winter temperature (apart from the cold winter of 1994).

Winter Snowfall [Graph 3]



Measured snowfall at Belleville for the months November through March over the past 140 years has varied from the 70-90 cm range to maximum amounts of 300-400 cm (before 1950). It should be noted that snowfall measurement procedures have advanced over time, and the values for early decades of the record period may be more susceptible to observational error or instrumental limitations. The average snowfall for the entire year, from the most recent published "Climate Normals" (1971-2000) was 156 cm at Belleville and 106 cm at Cobourg (where the climate station is adjacent to the moderate effects of the lake). The relationship between winter snowfall and average winter temperature is not clear cut, as relatively cold winters in the past have been associated with both lighter and heavier amounts of snow. The very cold winters of the early 1930's, for example, were not particularly snowy (probably because the very cold, stable arctic air masses contain much less moisture and limit the frequency of incoming snowstorms). By comparison, the fairly cold winters of the late 1940's saw heavier than normal snowfall, as did the cold and stormy winters of 1977 and 1978. The above-noted trend toward more frequent warmer winters since 1980 has been accompanied by generally modest amounts of snowfall along the Northumberland section of the Lake Ontario shoreline.

Summer temperature [Graph 4]

Whereas the winter season average temperatures have varied through a range of 10 degrees C during the period of record [Graph 2], summer temperatures show a much less dramatic range of approximately 4 C, with the warmest summers averaging 21-22 C and the coolest 18-19 C. During summer this region remains predominantly within the sphere of influence of warm air masses, which limits the degree of variability of temperature. No overall rising (warming) or falling (cooling) trend is evident for the period as a whole. However, as with the winter record, the period since 1980 has witnessed more frequent relatively warmer summers (although not as prominently as for winter). Within this most recent warmer quarter century the summer of 1992 was particularly cool, cloudy and quite wet, which has been attributed largely to the major eruption of volcanic Mount Pinatubo, in the Phillipines, the previous year. Cooler summers also prevailed during the 1960's and 1920's.

Noteable Weather Events and their Impacts

To characterise a particular weather event as “noteworthy” or “significant” is a somewhat subjective decision, depending upon the type of weather experienced and the nature of the resulting impacts across the community and region. According to the season and particular weather elements involved, the impacts may include financial and economic losses, disruption to transport and communications, danger to life and safety, environmental damage, either singly or in combination. Furthermore, what constituted a significant weather event a half century ago may now be of reduced concern, as society’s “weather defences” have generally advanced over time. Conversely, the degree of “risk” from certain forms of severe or “bad” weather may actually have increased in the modern age, such as the greater absolute frequency of motoring accidents on busier highways during inclement winter weather. Recognising these caviats, the following represents a small sampling of significant weather episodes that certainly made the headlines in local newspapers at the time. Sources for these examples include the invaluable and detailed personal diary of local resident John Joli, and this author’s scrutiny of local newspapers for selected short periods since the 1830’s, as limited by available time to date.



falling temperatures – a dangerous combination, especially as it coincided with schools closing for the day. Various school buses became stuck within and north of Cobourg, as snow quickly drifted to depths of several feet (2 metres) across highways, and many town streets were impassable for some time afterward.

If the snowstorms of 1977 and 1978 were regarded as amongst the worst in living memory at the time, the snowfall of December 10, 1992 was likewise described as the “worst since 1969” for the Cobourg-Port Hope area, at least in terms of the actual amount of fresh snowfall. One local death was attributed to the heavy snow accumulation, and 5,000 residents were left without power as lines were snagged by falling trees under the heavy, wet snow (*Cobourg Daily Star*, 11 December 1992). Along the lakeshore the snowfall amounted to 40 to 60 cms, whilst Environment Canada estimated up to 80 cms fell over the Oak Ridges Moraine area and northeast to Campbellford. Such a large amount in a single snowfall has not been witnessed since that event. As disruptive as this snowfall was, it did not measure up to the blizzards of 1977 and 1978 in terms of wind speeds and windchill effects.

An early example of the impact of a pronounced winter thaw and heavy rainfall on local watercourses is the “Heavy Freshet” of mid February 1876, as reported in *The Cobourg World* of 18 February that year. Cobourg area streams were swollen “to an enormous extent” as a result of “copious rains” (there were no locally measured amounts at that time). There was considerable damage to property cellars and their contents on King and Division Streets from water that had overtopped the dam on the upper part of the creek flowing into the central part of downtown. In this case the dam was not breached, although several bridges across streams north of Cobourg were carried away by the exceptional rate and volume of flow. At this time of year the ground would most likely have been frozen to begin with, such that a heavy rainfall would translate into immediate high runoff.

### Spring

Localised flooding of the type that affected Cobourg in February 1876 is more typically a risk associated with spring season, when accelerated snow melt combined with heavy rains and possible ice jams can produce a significant rise in water levels at the lower reaches of rivers and streams. Such was the case with the “Great Freshet at Cobourg” during the week ending 14 May, 1864, which claimed the lives of three men at the lower end of Factory Creek (now Cobourg Creek) (*The Cobourg World*, 14 May 1864). The culprit was “the most severe storm of rain that many of the oldest inhabitants have ever witnessed”, which fell that Friday. Heavily swollen streams from the hill country to the north proceeded to tear up embankments, carry away bridges and, reaching Cobourg, flooded and damaged many low lying streets. By nightfall the rains had slackened and waters began subsiding in the town. However, at 5:00 am the next morning Perry’s Dam, a little to the north (later known as Pratt’s Dam), failed due to the unprecedented water buildup behind it. The sudden release of a very large volume of water had major repercussions downstream, including the destruction of the William St. bridge and the distillery dam below it. Three men were caught on the lower reaches of the river banks

### Winter

In the geographical context of south central Ontario, the forms of winter weather that generally lead to impacts of the type(s) defined above would include:

- (a) particularly heavy snowfalls and blizzards,
- (b) prolonged and/or repeated periods of temperatures well below the normally experienced range,
- (c) localised flooding caused by rivers and streams overtopping their banks during pronounced winter thaws and heavy rainfalls (sometimes exacerbated by ice jams).

Examples of particularly cold winters in southern Ontario generally are 1934, 1943 and 1977, with temperatures dipping below  $-30^{\circ}\text{C}$  at times. During the early months of 1934 and 1943 widespread ice cover formed on Lake Ontario, which in almost all years remains largely ice free, except for the shallower northeastern section and very close to the shorelines. Shipping was adversely affected, including the cross-lake ferries "Ontario 1" and "Ontario 2", which served the Cobourg-Rochester route. On Rice Lake the ice cover by late winter 1934 was the thickest local residents could remember, measuring 31 inches (79 cms) during the second week of March. The front page headline of the *Cobourg Sentinel Star* on Thursday 28 February, 1943, read "Wintry Blast Hits District", with reports of "plumbers and garagemen doing rushing business as pipes burst and cars freeze up; hard coal scarce, mails delayed", as temperatures dipped into the  $-20$  to  $-30^{\circ}\text{C}$  range for several days. The Montreal train service was cancelled as the penetrating cold was also accompanied that week by a major blizzard, reportedly creating drifts up to 25 feet (7.5 m) depth. Fortunately, milder conditions eased the difficulties the following week.

The winter of 1977 was notable for its degree of cold and storminess right across the eastern Great lakes region, as the jet stream held much further south than usual, subjecting the region to repeated and lengthy arctic air outbreaks. Occasionally a low pressure system would penetrate from the south, bringing heavy snow and, behind it, wind driven snow squalls as the arctic air reasserted itself. Such was the case on January 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>, as *The Cobourg Daily Star* reported "Blizzard havoc across Ontario", "Airports snowed in", and "Accidents, injuries as Cobourg snows in". Less than three weeks later the same newspaper reported how Cobourgers were "opening their homes" to travellers stranded by an even worse blizzard, described locally as "the worst (snow)storm in living memory". The "Golden Plough" home, on the northwestern edge of the town and quite close to Highway 401, gave shelter and food to 250 stranded persons on the night of January 28-29<sup>th</sup>, some suffering from shock and frostbite.

Just one year later on January 26, 1978 the centre of a very deep and intense low pressure system passed in a northeasterly direction along the north shore of Lake Ontario. Ahead of the approaching low pressure centre a moderate snowfall occurred during the morning hours, accompanied by a light to moderate northeasterly wind. However, with the passage of the low centre the wind quickly veered into the west and became gale force by early afternoon, causing whiteout conditions in blowing and falling snow, with rapidly



and were unable to escape the water surge; two of them had been trying, in vain, to open the sluice gates at the Factory Pond dam.

Factory (Cobourg) Creek has also been the scene of bank overtopping caused by ice floes piling up against bridge supports and bends in the watercourse. Such ice floes and ice jamming are a threat in early spring, particularly following a lengthy cold winter, as was the case in 1896, when dynamite was used to break up considerable ice floe buildup where the creek meets King St.

Late winter and early spring flooding has occasionally been more dramatic at Port Hope, owing to the greater volume of the Ganaraska River and the local valley topography. The lower town has been hard hit by flooding several times over the years, notably in February 1878, March 1936 and latterly in March 1980, which prompted the town to blast a deeper channel through the riverbed section below Jocelyn Street.

### Summer

The notion of “bad”, “extreme” or “unfavorable” weather during summer will elicit varying opinions, depending upon those being affected. Few will argue that severe electrical storms, torrential downpours, hail and a risk of tornadoes are anything but significant threats to human safety, property and certain agricultural crops (notwithstanding their appeal to the “storm chasers”). For many, a cool, cloudy summer is a major disappointment, whereas nowadays it will be greeted with relief by power utility companies concerned with meeting rising consumption during hot and sunny summers. Thus, for example, the exceptional coolness of the summers of 1967 and 1992 is well documented, with 2004 adding a less pronounced but, for many, unwelcome reminder of a generally cool, unsettled and frequently wet summer throughout southern Ontario.

The year-to-year variability of summer weather (particularly temperature, rainfall and sunshine) has traditionally been of special relevance to the farming community, although modern agricultural systems are considerably less vulnerable to poor growth season weather. However, certain local farmers recollect delayed harvesting and reduced yields for corn, apples and soybeans during the above-mentioned summers, especially in 1992, when much of eastern Canada experienced a very cool and rainy summer, with the jet stream further south than usual (which may have been partly linked to the eruption of Mount Pinatubo, Philippines, in June 1991). Aside from the role of the overall character of the “farming weather” during the entire growing season, smaller-scale farming businesses can be adversely affected by severe summer weather episodes of shorter duration. Apple orchards especially, of which there are several along the Northumberland County lakeshore, are vulnerable to wind-driven heavy rain and/or hail. Corn also may be stripped from stalks by such storms. In the summer of 1955, hurricane “Connie” brought several hours of very heavy wind-driven rains to this area on 19<sup>th</sup> August, inflicting considerable damage to the ripening apple crop. At an even shorter time scale, individual severe convective storms are a threat. While the lakeshore area of Northumberland County is less frequented by such storms, compared with inland areas



further from the cooling influence of Lake Ontario, the following are but a few examples of the incidence of severe but fairly localised storms, as recorded in local archives:

#### Hailstorms:

July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004: a severe electrical storm hit the Cobourg-Grafton section of the lakeshore, with very heavy rain and hail, driven by severe wind gusts. Hail accumulated to depths of up to 15 cms between Cobourg and Grafton, remaining on the ground for several hours thereafter. Brookside Perennials garden centre narrowly escaped major damage as a tree was felled on the property. Apples were stripped from nearby orchards, which incurred substantial financial losses.

July 12<sup>th</sup>, 1875: damaging hailstorm in Grafton area, noted in local press.

#### Tornado sightings (associated with severe thunderstorms):

June 26<sup>th</sup>, 1976: Garden Hill area, approximately 10 km north of Port Hope.

July 12<sup>th</sup>, 1973: Brighton, south-eastern Northumberland County.

July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1970: Harwood, on south shore of Rice Lake.

#### Fall

During the fall season there is normally a strengthening of the atmospheric circulation across southern Canada, as the temperature contrast increases between northern Canada and more southerly parts of the continent. This is manifested as increasingly vigorous low pressure systems affecting southern Ontario through the fall, accompanied by strong winds, particularly from westerly directions. Perhaps the most dramatic impacts brought by such wind storms near Cobourg have been on Lake Ontario, especially in earlier times when ships were smaller and more vulnerable to heavy weather. Early newspapers and archives include reference, for example, to an especially severe storm lasting from 22-25 November, 1835, when three ships sank on Lake Ontario, not far from its northern shore. On 1 December, 1848 the vessel "*Canada*" was wind driven and wrecked on Gull's Point, present-day Northumberland County, whilst on 2 December, 1902 the "*Jesse Drummond*" suffered the same fate on Peter's Rock, off the shoreline between Port Hope and Cobourg. Perhaps the most (in)famous loss of a vessel to a fall storm is the case of the "*Speedy*" over two hundred years ago, on 14-15 September 1804. This small ship was en route from York (present Toronto) to the settlement of Newcastle, near present-day Presqu'île Point, carrying court officials and an accused Ojibwa Indian to a trial scheduled for the latter community. That night a severe northeasterly gale developed, driving the floundering vessel away from its destination and toward the southwest section of the lake, where it sank off the Niagara peninsula. A plaque noting this fateful consequence of a lake storm can be seen at Presqu'île Provincial Park.

More recently another, much rarer, type of fall storm brought heavy rains and storm force winds to Cobourg and district on October 14-15<sup>th</sup>, 1954. Hurricane "Hazel", about which much has been written concerning its severe and deadly impacts in Toronto, was somewhat less severe along the Northumberland shore, yet still resulted in local flooding and the felling of numerous large, old trees and damage to small buildings. Whilst official rainfall amounts are unavailable for Cobourg at that time, wind gusts are known to have exceeded 100 km/hr.

#### Acknowledgements

The author's awareness of early perceptions of the local climate of Cobourg, during the "American Colony" period, and the concurrent preoccupation with the alleged role and benefits of "atmospheric ozone", has been enriched by personal research material generously shared by Dr. Marsha Tate, of The Pennsylvania State University. The reference to the research publication on medicinal ozone, by Viebahn-Hansler, was provided by Belinda Clarke, N.D., a naturapathic doctor in Cobourg. John Joli, well known amongst Cobourg and District Historical Society members for his ongoing compilation of elements of the town's local history, very kindly provided detailed extracts describing notable past weather episodes and their local impacts.

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## **26 Central Ordnance Depot**

by  
Angus Reid

The word Ordnance conjures up many things:

1. cannon or artillery
2. all military weapons together with ammunition, combat vehicles, etc. and the equipment and supplies used in servicing these
3. military branch or unit that orders, stores for and supplies to the military

Good evening, Cobourg historians and friends.

It was brought to my attention some months ago that many people now living in Cobourg do not know the background of Cobourg Industrial Park...it's beginning, how it started and how it developed over a fifty-year period.

The story had its beginning in 1950, and it was primarily due to a number of international and national events involving Canadian foreign policies and it's defence policy of the 1950's period.

We were recovering from a six-year period of world war. The two main powers, the United States and Russia, were vying for superiority and this was the beginning of what became the Cold War. It was also the beginning of a move toward a number of alliances. The Western European powers and the United States formed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Canada became a member of NATO at the same time that the Korean War broke out.

Canada, as a member of the United Nations, committed an Army Brigade, naval ships and a squadron of transport planes to the Korean War. This meant that Canada had to expand it's military to meet these commitments. From this grew a need for expanded military equipment and supplies. It was decided by the Defence Department to restructure it's Army Supply System and to build additional National Supply Depots. One depot scheduled for restructure was located in Ottawa in old buildings not big enough to meet the new requirements. It became 26 Central COD Ordnance Depot and a decision was made to move it into new buildings in Cobourg.

This was a major coup for Cobourg as there was considerable unemployment and this was an industry in itself which would bring the Cobourg economy a badly needed injection.

In early 1951, our sitting member of parliament, Dr. Fred Robertson and Senator Fraser of Trenton, did some very extensive work to bring 26 COD to Cobourg.

Later in 1951, Mayor J.D.Burnett announced that a major military supply depot would be built in Cobourg. It would be situated on a 234-acre site immediately north of the railway



and the Power right-of-way. This area was bounded by Division Street, D'Arcy and Elgin Street. This announcement was to have a profound effect on the social, economic and long-term growth of the town.

The initial contract for the development would consist of six warehouses, an administration building, a fire hall, and a central heating plant on the west side of D'Arcy Street plus 27 military houses on the east side of D'Arcy. In addition private enterprise would build 132 rental units for military families. The construction proceeded quickly and by December 1952 the takeover of the first buildings was completed.

It is interesting to note that the first group of military men were quartered in the Grafton Inn. Central Mortgage houses on Sinclair Street were also used.

In the fall of 1952, stores and equipment from depots in Montreal, Ottawa and other areas were moved by loading them onto ships. The ships wintered in Kingston and Cobourg harbours and the cargo was moved into the new buildings in the early spring of 1953.

Staff from the old Ottawa COD were moved to Cobourg but many civilians were hired locally. They were sent to Ottawa for training in the summer of 1953 and returned to Cobourg. About 400 civilians were hired locally.

By 1956-57 the staff stood at:

Military	230
Civilian	456

The role of these people was to administer the staff operations, to receive, ship, maintain and repair the stores. The stores held in Cobourg were classed as general stores, which consisted of clothing, furniture, bedding, small tools and many related items supplied on a National basis to regional military depots across Canada for issue to our Army personnel. In excess of 17,000 line items of stores were held at the depot.

Supplies would also be issued to NATO troops in Europe, UN forces in the Middle East, Cyprus and many other places around the world. Material and equipment was moved to Cobourg off National Contract as well as through local procurement carried out by depot staff.

The depot was ready for operation on October 1, 1953. Sufficient people were trained and in place to commence operation. A number of the staff were located in the Armory on King Street which is now our Police Station. They operated out of this location until the other buildings were completed in 1954.

The official opening was slated for October 30<sup>th</sup>, 1953 with the Honourable Brooks Claxton, the Minister of National Defence, laying the cornerstone of the Administration building. Sealed in the cornerstone was a special cornerstone issue of the Cobourg Star, plus coins of the period.

Present at the ceremony were senior officers of the Defence Department, Dr. Fred Robertson, our MP, Senator Fraser, Mayor Burnett and other dignitaries. Following the ceremony the official party were guests at a reception in the Pavilion in Victoria Park.

The remaining buildings on the site were completed as follows:

- 1956 – warehouse 7 (paint storage), gatehouse and pumphouse
- 1959 – engineering building, canteen, medical and dental facility
- 1960 – combined single quarters building and combined messes (east side of D'Arcy)
- 1962 – Nudet Post
- 1967/68 – the Respiratory Assembly Plant with fifteen positions, which was moved here from Ottawa

Building and construction costs for the main depot operation was approximately \$11 million and yearly grants from the town in lieu of taxes were in the range of \$250,000.00.

In the ensuing years the depot staff played many roles such as carrying out their military duties and taking an active part in the community. There were very involved in sports such as bowling, hockey, broomball and softball as well as in churches and social clubs.

The depot continued operations until 1969 when the announcement to close it was given by NDHQ. There was again a great deal of restructuring taking place in the military : joint services, new uniforms and reduced military bases. This was the beginning of the rundown of the force which would continue for the next 35 years.

The formal closing of the depot was slated for September 1, 1971 and this was completed on time. The station was reduced to nil strength. Lt. Col. Rowley Ferris was the last Commanding Officer and it is interesting to note that he was the administrating officer who completed the move to Cobourg in 1953.

The depot handover was an Order in Council and a Crown Asset Sale Order authorized the sale of 22 miscellaneous buildings, 22 married quarters, the land site (being 177 acres more or less), as well as related utilities, to the Ontario government for use as an Industrial Park.

The name of Northam Industrial Park was given to this location and it has continued to grow in size and area. There is now an area of 1,000,000+ square feet of storage and warehouse space occupied by 25 industries which provides in excess of 1500 jobs and it is still growing. The total area of Northam Industrial Park is now 92 acres.

The Park was sold by the Ontario government to the Town of Cobourg a little over two years ago and has been very profitable for the town. In 2005 there are 1500-1700 employees working for 25 companies in the Industrial Park and taxes to the town are \$1,250,000.

<sup>1</sup>“More than 100 families still live in Cobourg because of the depot. They stayed here or they moved back later. But the impact upon the community has been much more than that. It has had a lasting effect over three decades. The Depot was the catalyst that carried Cobourg from a small town to virtually a small city. Cobourg owes a great deal to the army depot. It is not often that the things of war can live on as useful benefits of peace. But the depot opened up Cobourg, new ideas, new spirit when the old town needed it most.  
Cobourg’s depot is very much alive”

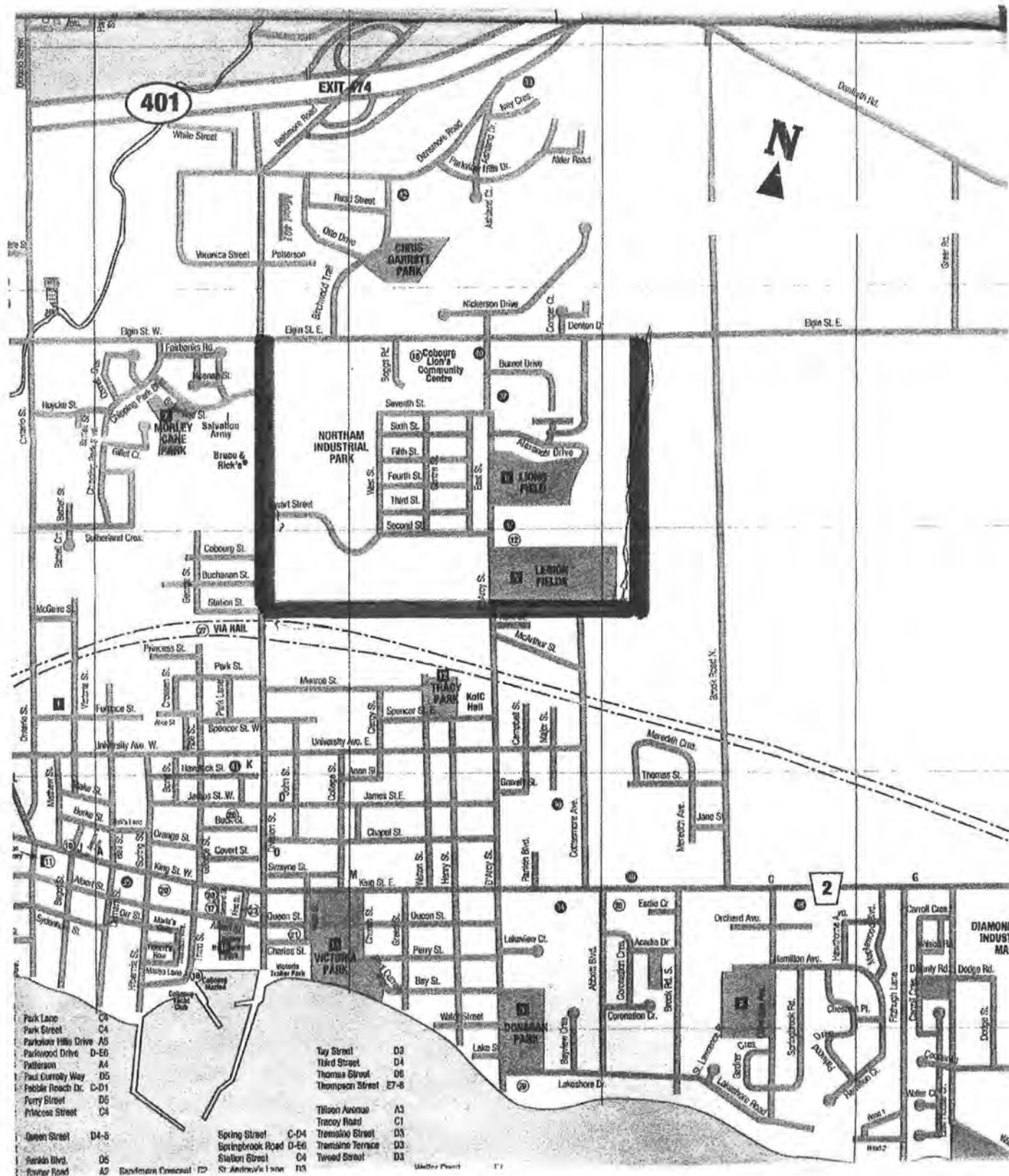
*I want to express my thanks to a number of people for helping in the preparation of this lecture. Without their help it would not have been possible:  
Lt. Col Rowley Ferris  
Barb Reading  
Staff of Delcom  
Town of Cobourg*

History moves on.

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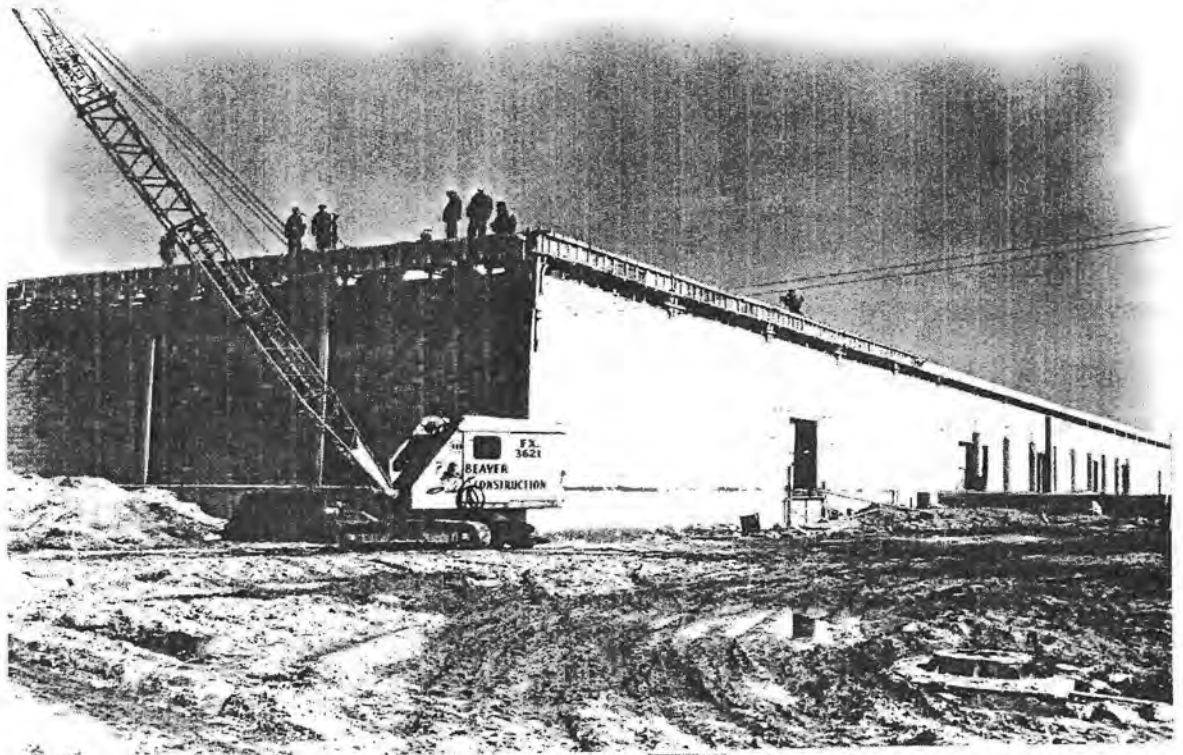
<sup>1</sup> Cobourg Sentinel-Star, 1971



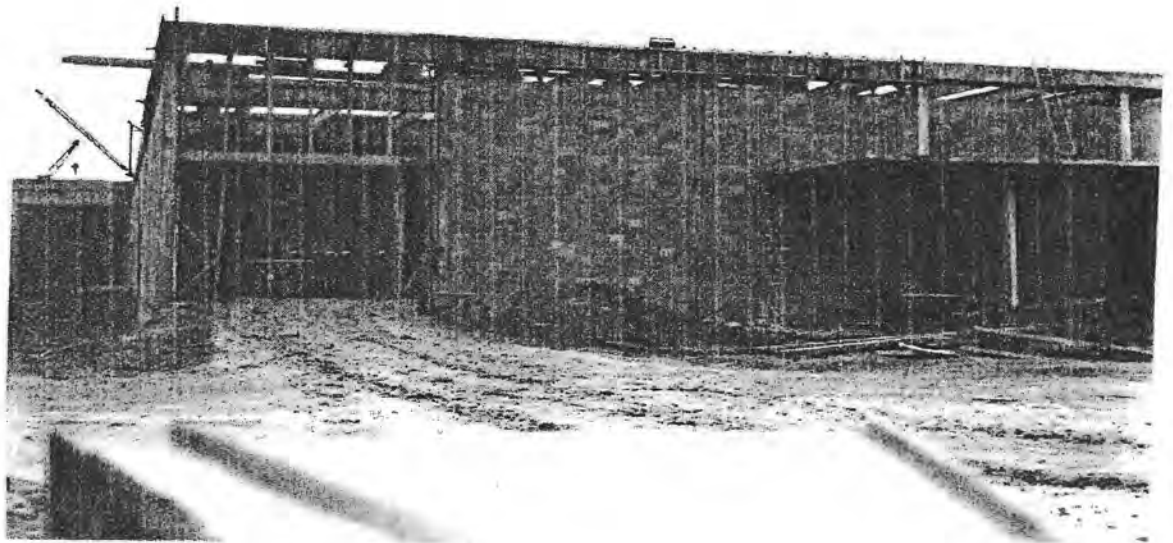


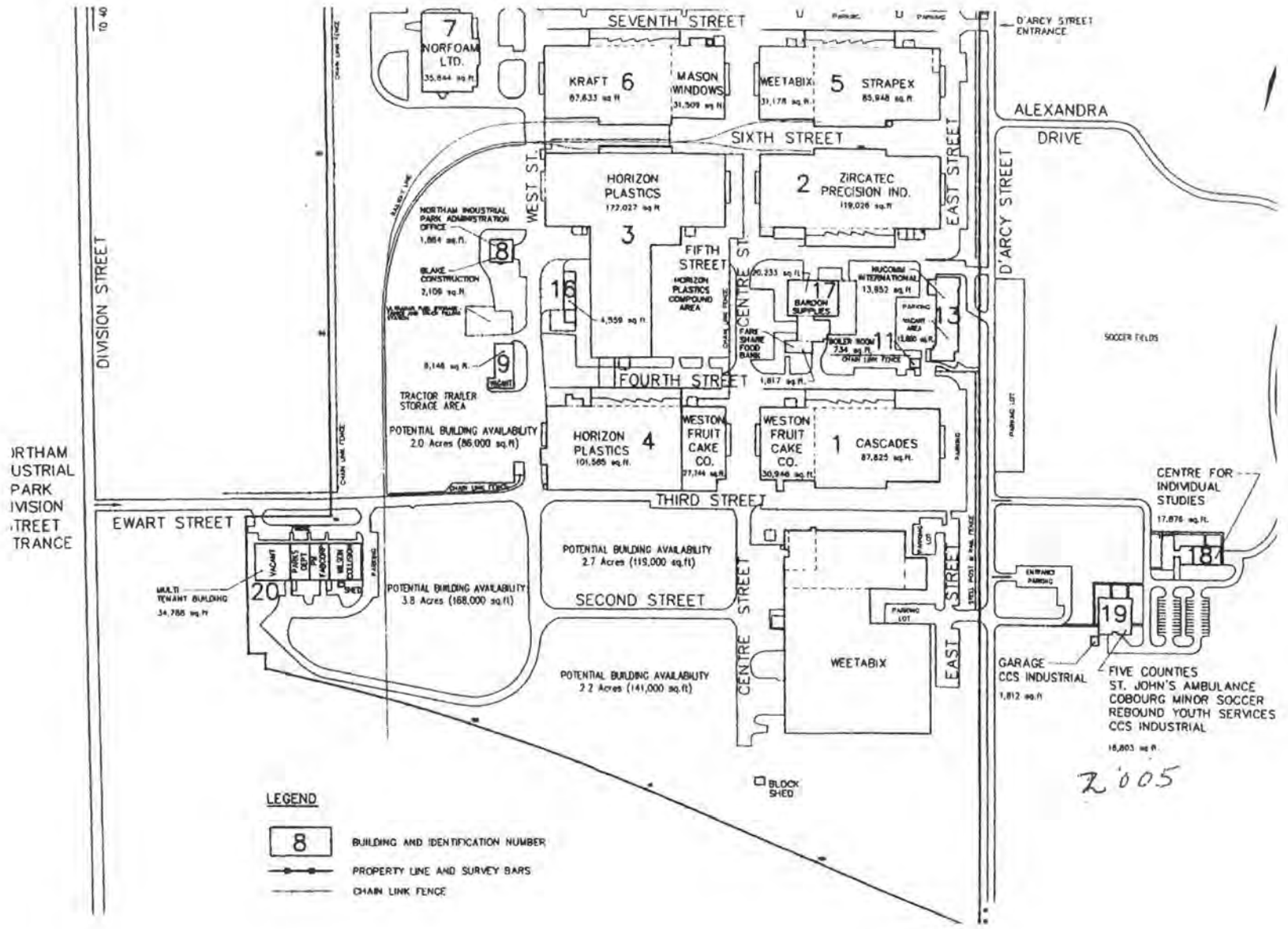
Present Day Northam Industrial Park

*Construction 1951-52*



*Construction 1951-52*







## History of the Cobourg Yacht Club

by  
Phil Colnan

Our first meeting of 2006 had members enjoying an evening of sharing Phil Colnan's reminiscences of the Cobourg Yacht Club. A committee was formed in 1964 when Cobourg was slated to be the destination of the end of the first leg of the Freeman Cup Race. This was the beginning of the CYC. By 1965 it was a chartered organization and by 1967 the first Clubhouse was erected and the annual sailing race between Cobourg and Port Hope was started. The Cobourg Yacht Club began with 14 wooden Blue Jays, then acquire a few Albacores, some Lasers, Petrils and finally Catamarans. Soon the slips in the inner harbour were abandoned in favour of a compound on the West side of the clubhouse. A large boost came in 1975 when Sir Sanford Fleming Campus introduced a sailing school and the Yacht club was chosen to provide instructors. An indoor facility and gallery was then added but high waters and severe storms in 1977 caused the relocation of the compound to its present-day site.

## Heritage Month February 2006

Heritage Month for The Cobourg and District Historical Society was filled to the brim with events this year. Along with two Open Houses, two Heritage Fairs and four tours, the historical society held its first ever Genealogical Workshop in partnership with the Cobourg Public Library. Their was a full attendance of 25, with a promise of another workshop in the fall for those on the waiting list.

## Genealogy for Beginners

by  
Gabrielle Blaschuk

Tonights's workshop is on how to start at square one. It is hoped to get you on the right track and excited at what you are about to do. For those of you who have started, but have become overwhelmed we will help you see where you went astray and get you back on track. The evening will be split into two. The first hour will encompass the very basics – how, when and where to start and the methodology of recording. The second hour will give you some understanding filing and of various resources and which ones to start with. Throughout the evening we will have hands-on and hand-outs. Please do not hesitate to ask questions at any time.

### *Step 1 – What you already know*

*What genealogy means : a dictionary will tell you that it is the science of tracing your family back through the centuries. A record or a table showing the descent of an individual or a family from a certain ancestor. It is the study of your pedigree.*

What is involved however is the fun and thrill of actual detective work that will bring to life the various generations of your family. That being said, one needs to be prepared to become a full-time detective, a snoop, a diplomat, a skeptic, a thorough historian, a student of law, a linguist, sociologist and a reporter. This is not an overnight project, not a month not even just a year. You will hit brick walls, obstacles and relatives who will

oppose your project. You need to be aware of all this plus have extreme patience and excellent record keeping skills...but the rewards in the end are well worth it.

The most frequently asked question is "How far back can I go?" Well that depends on a number of factors such as personal records, family history and the actual country of origin. India for example can go back 1000 years, China maybe only 200 years and if you are of European descent, usually 3-500 years with certainty. Finally it will depend on how much time you are willing to commit to your research. Some people, if researching for medical reasons are satisfied with 3-4 generations, while others with a burning desire to take on a challenge make genealogy a lifelong experience. So, in the end only you yourself can determine the answer to that question.

Now before we start there are some do's and don't...you are already fulfilling the first 'do' by actually taking a workshop on the proper way to start. By doing this you may be saving yourself from making frustrating mistakes that may lead you astray or waste a lot of time further in your research.

DO use pencil until you have definitely verified the facts.

As for 'don't' there are some very strict ones to always remember:

DON'T assume. Everything must be backed up with facts and should at all times be backed up by documentation preferably primary sources

DON'T start with anyone but yourself. You know yourself best, so record all your information accurately and fully. This will help you understand what you need and how to record all your ancestor's information.

And finally DON'T leave things on little papers, etc. Establish a filing system and accurate recording at the very beginning. You will be surprised how fast your material can accumulate especially with all the resources now available to us that were never available before and how quickly you can then get lost or frustrated. Starting off on the right foot will make this a very enjoyable hobby.

#### **Miniature tree.**

If you count back to your great-grandparents you will find eight different family lines to follow. You will need to consider that each of these individuals had another eight great-grandparents and suddenly you many no longer know which way to turn! Do not try to pursue all these avenues at once. This is one of the most common mistakes and leads many a budding genealogist to put away his materials for another day...one that never comes. Tonight I am going to have you start with yourself. Then you need to decide whether you want to trace the maternal (female) line – mother's mother's mother or the paternal line (son – father- grandfather) Your choice can depend on what your gender is, who you feel closer to or which line you have the most material on already. You need to make this decision right at the beginning so that your charts can be properly set up but you can change your mind along the way. Just a note – during your research you will find information on many relatives you are not researching at the moment – record where and when you found them so that you can return to them later. We will have research logs that I will be handing out and talking about that will help you with this, since there is nothing as frustrating as finally working on that relative and knowing that you actually have found what you needed but have no idea where that was!

#### **Information I already have chart**

Now you start to round out this tree. You need to gather together any information in your possession – documents with names, dates place and activities. Look for certificates,



journals, scrapbooks, military records, family bibles, funeral cards, baby books needlepoint samplers, anything with factual information about your family. Don't forget those photographs even if you do not know who is in them – in the future you may be able to identify them. Do not decide if the information is important yet, just collect all you can into a central area and then begin your sorting. You will need a box or filing cabinet and some manila folders for sorting and storing. You will also need log and research sheets and a place to record data and proven data.

There are seven basic steps:

1. Consult your information sheet and set a goal on one piece of missing information
2. Decide on the records that will help you fulfill that goal
3. Locate the record
4. Transfer the information from the records
5. Cite your source
6. Make a copy of the document and file it
7. Evaluate if you have met your goal. If yes choose the next goal. If not, continue to search out records.

Although you might want to jump back and forward or tackle many goals at once, trust me, this methodical method of research will save hours of work or lost information down the line. I don't believe there is a hobby out there that can offer the hobbyist as many distractions as genealogy so your main goal is to stay focused on the task at hand! When setting your goal, be certain the information you have is correct. Verify it with original documentation. You do not want to start building your tree with incorrect or unverified information. Choose an event that is missing and keep the question simple "Where was my grandfather born?". You cannot rush this process - all persons, dates and places need to be accurately located and correctly recorded. One of the best ways to find new information on the next generation back is by information found when searching the children's vital records.

### **Pedigree chart**

A *pedigree* chart **identifies** your ancestry and **sums** up your work while a *family group sheet* or record is the means to develop the pedigree chart. This sheet lists the immediate family of a couple, whether they were married or not, children, parents, other spouses. Consistently record names, dates and places in the same format.

### **Family Group Sheet**

*These sheets record general, informative, interesting and factual information regarding entire individual families* Complete these sheets for every family member you have located. Just a note that the date and location of birth is not listed for the main person – this is because it is recorded under the children's section of their parents' form. If you copy the information too many times it is too easy to make transcription mistakes. These are very important worksheets Place children in birth order and do not forget children who died at birth or multiple births. Also – do not be confused is more than one child has the same name. It was common practice to name the children after older family members and if a child died young, the name often was given to a later baby. Do not confuse or discount the second baby thinking it was actually the first.

Make sheets for aunts and uncles and do not forget to cite your findings

Be accurate and alert when studying the information and organizing it. It is imperative you extract from the records only the facts – do not speculate unless you can justify. Find



all the records you can to back up a finding – try not to settle for just one. Use the following guidelines to choose

- Use primary sources over secondary sources
- Rely on original documents over derivative documents
- Two independent sources are better than one
- Use actual date over estimated

If information looks illogical or inaccurate, do some research on the social and economic customs of that era. What might seem out of place to you might be a common occurrence for that time period. The pieces of the puzzle might fall into place. But remember, just because something is in print it does not mean it is accurate – verify, verify, verify. When you record remember to cite information such as the title, copyrights, name of depository and any important information. Record about only one family on a sheet of paper. Avoid recopying notes and citations because every time you transcribe or copy you have the possibility of making an error. Record as much as you know – condition of item, previous and current owners, some history, when acquired – this will prevent confusion in the future. Write name out fully, dates and places – no shorthand

So when recording remember:

- Use a pencil until you have finalized the evidence
- List each person's full name if know
- Indicate nickname in quotations
- Record dates by day, month, year and stay consistent
- Try to record full place names – town, township, county, Province
- IF you do not know the exact date use *by, after or probably*
- If estimating a date use *ca* or *circa*
- IF you do not have a piece of info leave the space blank!

### Filing

Now that you are set to go you will discover you have reams of material and more to come! There are many filing methods. Some manual, some computerized and some combine the two. We will cover the basic failsafe method. First, if at all possible photocopy all the original documents, then store the original in an acid-free sheet protector. Keep these original copies in a safe, dark, dry hopefully fireproof spot. Organize your pedigree charts and family group sheets into a loose-leaf binder. Place a copy of the pedigree chart on the front of the binder for easy viewing and to quickly identify which relations are in the binder. Use tabs to divide the loose-leaf binder into family. File each family group sheet by the husband's surname. You can file the most recent generation first or file alphabetically by surname. Prepare an index placed at the beginning of each binder, listing abbreviations used and methods of working which are consistent throughout your project. Also index the types of documents included and where they are housed. This is like a master map so that you can quickly put your hands on material needed. Choosing binders allows for expansion and color-coding in order to match folders where your documents are stored. These binders are your "Active workbook"

You will want to store documents that you are no longer using.

Then label a manila folder with the names of your mother and father. Include their birth and death dates with their name. Make a similar folder for each set of grandparents and great-grandparents. In each of these family sections place the finished documents, correspondence etc. Here you might want to color code. For example – choose one color for each g-grandparent. The first folder holds info and documents on the generation prior to the g-grandparents. The second file folder is for documents dealing with the great grandparents plus a file folder for each child of the g-grandparents. They are have the same color and are labeled with their name and reference number. If you have lots of material you may choose to divide each folder into files for each of the children. Each file folder holds an envelope labeled with the same name and reference number found on the file folder. Now what goes in here? All the inactive material such as letters sent out, and answered (letters still pending or being used should not go in here). General information found on families or individuals if not used. In the envelope you should store everything that is precious such as certificates, reports, actual newspaper clippings or photographs. Now you will need one more file folder with matching color of the abovementioned family groups. This is your active file. In here you will keep all unanswered correspondence, etc.

Your binders, since you are working with them constantly can be stored on a shelf. Your folders hopefully in a filing cabinet or box with a cover.

Remember you will accumulate tons of paper and without a good filing system right at the beginning it will be impossible to easily find what you want when you need it. As for coding, my suggestion is once you have organized and filed all your material as mentioned above, you might want to decide whether to take out a reference book which will give you a variety of coding choices. You can then choose which one works best for you. Also more and more genealogists are using computers to reference. There are a great variety of software programs that can make your genealogical project much easier. If you choose this route, simply match up your folders and envelopes with the assigned reference number. But unless you have a laptop you will still need the binders to take with you. When you get home you will transfer this information to your computer. Remember to choose forms and programs that you feel comfortable or feel free to develop your own.

Finally we will touch on resources. You need to know and understand clearly the difference between original and derivative records and primary and secondary sources. This is very important.

### **Original and derivative records , primary and secondary sources**

There are two types of records – original and derivative A original record is one created at the exact time of the event usually by someone with personal knowledge. Derivative records are other documents, oral accounts created sometime after the event took place and the information was supplied by someone who was not an eyewitness. Note also that the information on the record can be primary or secondary. Primary information is a statement by a participant or witness to any given situation. Secondary information is a statement of knowledge reported by someone who was not a participant or witness. Vital records such as birth marriage and death are the best know primary sources. Be aware however that the government documents can be secondary records also. For example - a death certificate is an original record for the death date but a secondary

source for the birth date. Of course you will want to work with that secondary record but ultimately you want to verify the information with a original source. There will be times this is not possible, then aiming for a number of secondary records that state the same fact might be the best you can achieve.

**Where do you find these sources?**

So you have decided which family line you are investigating, you have organized the materials you have on hand, interviewed relatives, and gather as much information as you can about names, dates, places and other pertinent details. You know what part of the country you are looking at so where do you go next? Well, you begin your search using **vital records** – birth, marriage, death. These vary from country to country but all contain basic information. In Canada start with the **National and Provincial Archives, and church records**. Remember that birth may also be baptismal records. Marriage bonds, banns, licenses and certificates – you can check the archives but marriages did not have to be recorded till after 1869 so try church records, newspaper announcements (although secondary may be all there is). Death records include registrations, burial records, obituaries. Cemeteries, religious artifacts, insurance records, probate and pensions. Check the archives, library and churches first. Then cemetery records and newspapers. **Family Bibles** are sometimes the only record of vital statistics and although the accuracy cannot be guaranteed it might be all there is and can often provide extra background detail. And finally there are the **census records**. These can be found through the **archives and your library**. Some give very detailed information some not. They are secondary sources but can either help confirm data or start you off in a new direction

A quick summary – (P =Primary, S=Secondary)

Birth dates (P) church, vital, family bible (S) census, cemetery, newspaper, obituary

Death dates (P) cemetery, church, vital, probate, family bible (S) land, town, newspaper

Marriage (P) marriage certificate, family bible (S) newspaper

Residence (P) census, land, military (S) newspaper, books

You are also now ready to start the world's fastest growing hobby – Genealogy!



Our president, Diana Cunningham, manning the Northumberland Mall display



Archives Chair, Gabrielle Blaschuk taking her turn at a shift



Our Port Hope Heritage Days display

### Historical Society Show'n'Tell



Judith Goulin showed a lightning rod which once sat atop a barn. It consists of a metre-high tripod featuring twisted metal, probably hand-wrought, a verdigris copper rod and a transparent green glass ball. While this may seem to be an odd thing to have inside one's home, the Goulins consider it as an objet d'art. They both love storms, so the lightning rod stands on the floor in the living room as a companion piece to their favourite painting, Sun After Thunder, by A.J. Casson



Jane Watanbe showed off this plank that was part of a wall between two twins beds. This wall had been inserted, she believes for privacy. The unique texture was a topic for conversation and in the end members think it was made like this to help the plaster adhere better.



Doreen West was proud to show the various medals and honours bestowed on her various family members.



Mary Smith showed off this footstool that she used when she was a little girl and is still being used today.



Mary Rimmer introduced us to a family friend called 'Michael' who had brought much fun and laughter to her family during the years.



Richard Randall, a great collector of Cobourg memorabilia showed off one of the rare pictures he has of Faraday Hall.



Libby Seekings brought a rolling pin that she treasures because it was used by her grandmother when pastry making was an important everyday skill in the home



Marion Hagen wil her plate from Bo'ness, Scotland. It was manufactured about 1883 by John Marshall & Co. for the Canadian market. It is one of a series of designs showing Canadian sports scenes, mostly winter. This was the snowshoers scene.





This little pastel was given to me as a wedding gift by Tom Brennand. Tom told us at the time that it had been done by his grandfather, Owen Staples. It wasn't until years later that I discovered that Owen Staples had been one of Canada's well known artists with work in the National Gallery as well as in many public buildings in Ontario. He died in 1984, but his former home in Toronto is still in the family and was featured in the Riverdale Garden Tour in the mid 90's where I met one of his other grandsons and saw more of his paintings. Pastels were not his usual medium but I think the one I have is particularly charming.

This cigarette lighter sat on a display case in Alfred "Hungry" Huber's Smoke Shop in Southampton, Ontario. It has two cylinders which were filled with lighter fluid; the box contained a dry cell battery. When the cylinders were swung forward a spark was created which lit a wick. A cigar cutter is attached to the front.



The Cobourg and District Historical Society finished off Heritage Month 2006 by sharing historical items from their homes that had delightful memories or great meaning to them. A number of the items had fellow members pondering what they were, while other items had great stories attached to them.

Since the theme for this year's Heritage Month centered around architecture each show and tell item came from a home, a business or was lovingly looked after in someone's home. In between speakers, Judith McIntyre kept all those attended entertained by offering 'home' jokes, riddles and coercing members to participate in short sing-a-longs with each song focusing on 'home'.

It was a great evening of fun and memories shared by all.

## A.P.Coleman and Cobourg's big meteorite

by

John Jolie

Ladies and gentlemen, we have an unusual problem in this area. We have an excess of history! That's good news for groups like ours, but it is so easy to overlook important events. I am here tonight to tell you about two of these forgotten stories. Anywhere else, these events would be written up as big events in local history – but not here in Cobourg!

One overlooked story is about a rock we had in town. This stone was on display in Faraday Hall, the science building that was part of Victoria College. The rock was a 313 pound meteorite and was the centerpiece of the mineral collection. It was said to be the largest meteorite ever found.

Today, a few larger meteorites have been found around the world, but that stone we had here in Cobourg still ranks as the largest meteorite ever found in Canada. You would think that local people would boast about this feature in our past, but in truth, most people in town don't even know about it!

Now, before I continue, I must confess that Cobourg's meteorite did not belong to us. Ladies and gentlemen, we swiped it! It reminds me of the explanation given by an American congressman who was justifying why Hawaii, a country once run by Hawaiians, was now an American state. The congressman simply said: Hey, we stole it, fair and square! I guess we could use the same excuse to explain why we had that meteorite.

What does it look like? The rock is gray-brown, a 99% pure iron object, polished by its plunge through the atmosphere. The surface has concave indentations along it. Most meteorites are hard to spot as their composition is usually more stony than metallic. However, the Cobourg meteorite stands out. It looks like a typical meteorite, a big classic meteorite!

How did it get to Cobourg? It never did belong here. When this meteorite fell to earth, it landed very close to the Alberta - Saskatchewan border. It is probable that it fell onto the glaciers that covered Canada during the ice age. It lay on the western prairies for many years.

In his journal, explorer and fur trader Alexander Henry noted that the Cree regularly visited this 'iron stone'. This stone was their relic – a place to pray and connect to their god, the great Manitou. This 'Manitou Stone' was their sign from heaven. It had magical powers! The legend was that the stone was growing, increasing in weight every year! It did weigh 313 pounds! Now, let me go off on a tangent for 30 seconds. That fur trader, Alexander Henry had relatives here in town. The first street on this side of D'Arcy Street is Henry. Henry was most likely named for Cobourg's Robert Henry, the nephew of that fur trader, Alexander Henry! You know, I've filed this tidbit away and I've waited for decades to somehow bring it up in a conversation. Now, it's off my chest!

The Cree always made a point of stopping at the stone during their migrations. In 1860, the missionary, Reverend Thomas had also reported that he saw the Stone. Local landforms in that area of the Prairies carried the names of Iron Creek and Iron Lake.

There was yet another missionary to the Cree. He was the Rev. George MacDougall. He had come from Cobourg! He had taken his ministerial training at our Victoria College. He, too saw that Manitou Stone and asked the natives about it. He wrote that the Cree told him that the stone had been there since 'the floods had retired.'

This phrase 'since the floods had retired' can be interpreted to be the time when the glaciers were finally melting, creating huge floods. From what we can imply from the location of Iron Creek and Iron Lake, the stone lay in southeastern Alberta, close to the border with Saskatchewan. Today, no one knows exactly where it fell. In fact, for many years, the Royal Ontario Museum, when it housed the meteorite, had labeled the rock as being from Saskatchewan. It must be noted that the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan did not exist back then - the land was all part of the Northwest Territories, part of the Hudson Bay Company.

We must appreciate the efforts that Missionary MacDougall must have had to deal with. He crossed Canada before trains were around! He left Cobourg, headed west by boat and horse, determined to convert the Cree to Christianity. MacDougall went with the natives to visit their sacred relic, the Manitou Stone - their sign and gift from God. Now, MacDougall had a problem. He had come to tell the Cree about his God, but he could not convince the natives to change their beliefs. Think about it. This Manitou Stone was a more tangible sign from heaven than anything a dour preacher from Cobourg could come up with! So, MacDougall knew what he had to do. He swiped the meteorite! He moved the rock to his church mission further north. There, it lay in the mission garden. The natives were not too happy. Dire predictions were made. There would be war. Tribal warfare broke out. The buffalo would disappear. They did. Disease would devastate the natives. Smallpox soon decimated them. Without the protection of their Manitou Stone, the Cree were full of despair.

Now, little was written about the stone and so the timelines regarding this meteorite become unclear. However, we do know what happened to the pilferer of the meteor, our Reverend MacDougall. He ended up perishing in a blizzard, tending to the spiritual needs of natives. But, before he died, the meteorite had been sent to MacDougall's school, Cobourg's Victoria College. The date of the stone's arrival in Cobourg here is uncertain, but it was put on display among the mineral collections in Faraday Hall. It was, by all accounts, the biggest attraction of the exhibit. There are a stories about the meteorite's days in Cobourg. One tale has to do with souvenir hunters breaking off samples of the rock. It was written that the rock took such a beating from souvenir hunters, that it lost its world ranking as the biggest space rock. Now, as you can see, there is a small piece missing at one end, but it is not really too significant.

There is another story was about a nighttime raid, when some students tried to carry off the stone. They dropped it, and damaged the floor! Just think of the weight of this space object. I have a barbell here, weighing 10 pounds. It would take 31 of these to equal the weight of our meteorite.

When the stone was in Faraday Hall, a newspaper reported on a rugby match won by Victoria College. The jubilation was intense. During the celebrations, two professors, Haanel and Coleman managed to lift the 313 pound rock, to the applause of all. Coleman, the professor of Earth Sciences at Victoria College had written a scientific paper about the stone in 1886. It was entitled A Meteorite from the North West.



Sadly, Cobourg could not hold onto the space rock. Victoria University moved from Cobourg to Toronto in 1891 and they took 'our' rock with them! When the Royal Ontario Museum was assembled from 5 separate museums, the meteorite was moved from Victoria University to the new ROM. Nobody calls it the Cobourg Meteorite, today. It is officially known as the **Iron Creek Meteorite**.

Remember the curse of the Hope Diamond? There are parallels with our meteorite. When the natives lost their stone, I told you about three calamities that hit them. The minister who swiped the Manitou Stone froze to death in a blizzard. When Cobourg had the stone, we lost our university shortly afterwards! Coincidence? I don't think so!

During the years when the meteorite was in Ontario, there were demands from the West. They demanded that we send back their meteorite! In the meantime, we folks in Ontario lived by the slogan 'Finders, keepers, losers, weepers!' Eventually, it was just too embarrassing to deny the truth. We had stolen goods!

The ROM made a cast and mold of the rock and painted the model to be as close to the real thing as possible. You can see the model in the ROM. The real Iron Creek Meteorite was then shipped to Alberta, FOB – we weren't going to pay the bill for shipping that 313 pound chunk of iron! Today, you can see the real thing on display in the provincial museum in Edmonton. That is where I saw and caressed it last June. After seeking it out for a quarter of a century, it was an exciting moment for me.

The story of the Iron Creek Meteorite is still not finished. The Natives in Alberta still want their Manitou Stone returned to them, not to be parked in Edmonton! Whatever happens, I think Cobourg's part in this tale is over.

- By the way, remember Rev. MacDougall, the missionary who relocated the Manitou Stone? He had a son. That son was one of the persons who started the Calgary Stampede.



Your editor's "to-do list" was shortened when he touched the Cobourg Meteorite, last June

**Arthur P. Coleman**

I have a photocopy of the Cobourg Sentinel Star, dated June 9<sup>th</sup>, 1932. It celebrates the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Victoria University. Large numbers of alumnae

returned to Cobourg, both staff and students. One of the returnees was Professor A.P. Coleman. Arthur Coleman played an important role in the university, in the province, the country and even to the whole world. But, I'll let you be the judge.

Incredibly, there is nothing to commemorate the years that Coleman spent in Cobourg. His profile here in this town is virtually non-existent. So, that is my job tonight, to tell you about my hero. You should never again say that you know nothing of Arthur P. Coleman (unless you doze off during my talk!)

Arthur Coleman was born in 1852, in Quebec (Lower Canada). His father was a Methodist minister, and as he changed parishes, his family moved from town to town. Now, Cobourg was a draw for Methodists and that was Victoria College. Arthur Coleman's father brought his family to Cobourg when he undertook his religious training. The family spent some years in Cobourg, but I don't know the details. Coleman's mother had an impressive lineage. She was descended from the American president John Quincy Adams.

Now, our boy Coleman had an advantage that few other young people ever had in those days. You see, a Methodist minister had the opportunity to enroll one son into Victoria College, for free! Arthur was the chosen son.

In those early days, Victoria College also took in much younger students. In fact, the college had more young children enrolled than students who we would regard as being of college age. As enrollment increased, the college occupied the building that also served as Cobourg's first collegiate, across from St. Peter's Church. That is at 117 King Street East. Today, the former school is an apartment building and each apartment unit was once a classroom.

Coleman went to both that preparatory school on King Street and to the college building up on University. He had great marks. He received his B.A. in 1876 and won the top prize in his class, the Prince of Wales Medal. The school recognized his talents. He turned from student to teacher and began to teaching students at a high school level. His abilities must have been considerable because he was invited to deliver a talk to fellow teachers in Ottawa on 'The Importance of Science in Schools'. He was also continuing his studies, right here in Cobourg, while earning his M.A. in 1880.

Now, Arthur Coleman had to leave Cobourg to learn more. He went off to Germany and received his Ph D. He became a professor of Geology and Natural History and returned to Cobourg, spending another nine years right here in Cobourg. By the way, he also taught German and Classical languages at Victoria University.

ARTHUR PHILEMON  
COLEMAN  
(1852-1939)



Sadly, just like that meteorite, Professor Coleman left Cobourg when Victoria University left for Toronto. As a professor, this man did not relax. Arthur Coleman typically spent his non-teaching time studying and advancing our knowledge of the earth. He was hired by the new Ontario Department of Mines to carry out fieldwork on the rocks and minerals across the province. His reports on the province's geology are too numerous to even list, but gold, copper, coal, nepheline syenite, iron were just a few of the reports he wrote.

Coleman was also a very good artist. When he went to Germany to get his PhD, he briefly contemplated the idea of going down to Italy to study art. Lucky for us, his brief flirtation with an artistic career in art did not become his occupation, but he did use those talents for the rest of his life. He sketched and painted scenes that struck his fancy. His artwork took in flowers, people, buildings, wildlife, trees, geologic landscapes, rocks – everything! I have some small copies of his sketches. Coleman's interests were universal. The ROM alone has 300 watercolours that he produced. Sometimes, fellow climbers became exasperated when they were focused on the summit and Coleman 'wasted' their time examining and sketching ordinary objects that he discovered some beauty in.



Convocation Hall at the University of Toronto constructed of Don Valley bricks: watercolour by Coleman. Courtesy of the Royal Ontario Museum

When Arthur Coleman was studying in Germany, that time period coincided with a renewed interest in mountain climbing in Europe. This sport attracted our man and ever the athlete, he climbed several peaks while he was over there. Now, this mountain climbing spurred his curiosity in alpine glaciation. When he returned to Canada, he spent many summers hiking and climbing the Rockies.

The Rockies of a hundred years ago are not what we know today. When Coleman became one of the first explorers to reach the Rockies using the CPR, transportation away from the rail line was primitive. Travellers would get off the train and then proceed by horseback to explore the unmapped interior. The trips were exhausting expeditions. It would typically take weeks just to reach their objective.

Now, a way back in 1827, a couple of gigantic mountains were described by travelers, a Mt. Brown and Mt. Hooker. They were put on maps and identified as some of the highest mountains in the world. Always open for a challenge, Coleman went to find them. It was puzzling that no one else, including Paul Kane had ever made mention



of them. (Paul Kane, of course married a local girl and worked for some time in town). Coleman spent several seasons trying to find these giant mountains. It turns out that he and the rest of the world had been strung a line. Those so-called giants turned out to be very ordinary. It was Coleman who reported to the world that those mountains, world famous, were a hoax.

On his trips out west, Prof. Coleman would usually get off the train at what is now called Lake Louise. He was among the very first non-natives to visit the area. Coleman got together with a few other hikers and climbers, and together, they formed the **Alpine Club of Canada**. Alfred Coleman became their first vice president, serving under President Sandford Fleming – you know, the father of time zones and the person who did the first decent map of this town. Over the years, Coleman wrote a number of articles for the alpine club's journal, describing the landforms, the scenery and ascents. He later served as president of the Alpine Club of Canada.

Now, a few years before, European and American climbers had already discovered our Rockies and were already climbing the peaks. It was somewhat embarrassing, but virtually the only Canadian efforts at tackling Canadian peaks in those early days were made by Arthur Coleman and whom ever he brought along in his climbing party!

Members of the Alpine Club of Canada organized a climb up the highest Rocky Mountain, Mt. Robson. (Coleman believed that the mountain had been named for a Methodist minister, trained in Cobourg and whose territory covered a huge area around Mt. Robson. However, others have believed that another Robson was accorded that honour. Whoever it was named for, Coleman tried to climb Mt. Robson for three consecutive summers, but the weather frustrated his efforts each time. Remember, the obstacles were not just the weather and the heights. The ordeal in even getting to the mountain each year was exhausting. It took 41 days for Coleman to reach the mountain one year. Today, we are so spoiled by highways, railroads and nicely laid out hiking trails. It wasn't like that back then!

I should point out other Methodist ministers who started out in Cobourg also made a name out there. Mount Rundle, the peak that dominates the horizon at the end of the main street in Banff was named for a Methodist minister as well.

When you travel along the Banff- Jasper Parkway, you will see an imposing mountain to the east of the highway, close the Banff-Jasper boundary. That is Mount Coleman, named for our A.P.! There is also a Coleman Glacier. Hey! Don't forget Coleman Creek, too. Virtually the entire route of that highway was traversed by Coleman, and it wasn't by car!



**Mount Coleman** – Somewhat smaller features are Coleman Glacier and Coleman Creek

Coleman never got to climb the height named for him. It was named by others to honour his contributions to alpine knowledge. He wanted to climb the peak, and was planning such a trip. I can't imagine anyone else in their eighties planning to tackle a big mountain, and, unfortunately, his mortality caught up to him. By the way, he did scale some South American mountains at that advanced age. He had several other projects to complete.

One of the most distinctive heights in Alberta is Castle Mountain, a succession of peaks jutting out of a thrust fault. It is a stunning sight. For a short time it was named Mt. Eisenhower. In 1884, Castle Mountain was climbed for the first time. It was Arthur Coleman who did that! Later, he and his climbing party were the first to climb Mt. Alberta. He was among the first to visit the Columbia Icefield and map parts of it (the Athabasca Glacier is just one finger of that ice field, a mere 2% of the huge glacier) I don't know if some of you have seen it a different times in your life, but it is melting away at a phenomenal rate.



**Castle Mountain** – This impressive thrust mountain was first climbed by A.P. Coleman. (For a few years it had been called Mt. Eisenhower)

So, Arthur Coleman climbed mountains and mapped them. He taught geology, right here. He studied and lifted the Iron Creek Meteorite. He wrote books on art, on riding and hiking trails in the Rockies, on glaciers, and of course, on geology. But, and I am already in awe of him, all of these efforts pale in comparison to his discoveries in Northern Ontario.

From 1902-04, Coleman was sent out to investigate some newly discovered nickel deposits in the Sudbury region. Now, before Coleman had ventured into the wilderness in that area, others had decided that the nickel-copper ores ran in parallel belts, the North Range and the South Range. Coleman studied and then produced his world famous 'classic study' showing that the nickel deposits were in fact a continuous elliptical ring. It is called the Sudbury Basin today. It is 38 miles by 17 miles, with a mineral band 1 ½ miles thick. Coleman's map defined one of the world's greatest ore bodies! He described the formation as resembling a giant bathtub. He was right on! No one had ever outlined such a unique mineral deposit, anywhere! His map became the best selling map produced by the Bureau of Mines, for a long time!

Today, the consensus is that the Sudbury Basin he outlined was the result of a huge meteor impact.

There are, of course, many mines in the Sudbury Basin, but I want to point one of them. It is the **Coleman Mine**, named after our Professor Coleman.

That work in itself would allow the discoverer to bask in glory, but Coleman was not done. In 1906 he was sent to investigate the silver deposits in the Cobalt mining camp. He noticed that the rock in which most of the silver veins were found was a conglomerate rock. He observed that this very ancient rock resembled glacial deposits he had studied from only a few thousand years ago. He concluded that these deposits had to be glacial, too, but several billion years old! Obviously, the ice ages were not a one time event in Earth history! Extensive glaciation had occurred right through the earth's history! That too, was Arthur Coleman's discovery. He traveled around the world and found the same glacial rocks (tillite) in South Africa, India, Australia and South America, among other places. This discovery demolished a long held accepted theory, promoted by Lord Kelvin, that the Earth had been continually cooling since the early days of the Earth.

Here is a map of the area around Cobalt. The colours here indicate the rock types. The ranking of age is also here. The brown areas show the rocks that were formed as glacial deposits – billion and a half year old glacial deposits! If you look at the legend on this map, these rocks have a name. Those ancient glacial deposits are called the **Coleman Formation**. I have a photocopy of conglomerate rocks from the Cobalt area, showing the ancient till.

The townsite of Cobalt was officially part of a township. The name of that township was called **Coleman Township**! Fancy that! We had a town employee a few years back, Loraine Brace. She and our town did an exchange with Coleman Township, maybe ten years ago.

When you visit Toronto and drive down the Don Valley Parkway, you pass the old Brickyards. You are passing the site of still another of Professor Coleman's world recognized discoveries! On top of the bedrock, the rock which was used to make bricks, there are glacial deposits, material pushed here by advancing glaciers. That is not unusual. Northumberland is full of these deposits. However, what Coleman discovered was that there were two distinct layers of glacial material. In this sandwich of glacial remains was the good stuff. It had fossils of plant and animal life. This showed to Coleman that a glacier came and left some rock material as it melted. A warm period followed, allowing plant and animal life to thrive. Then, a second glacier advanced across the frozen layer that held the organic material. No one, anywhere, had ever thought that



the recent ice age, during the Pleistocene Period was more than a just a one time occurrence.

Professor Coleman traveled the world and wrote reports everywhere he went. In Quebec, he studied the Gaspé Peninsula, in Ontario the Thousand Islands. The Niagara Escarpment was still another interest. He thought he had climbed the highest peak in the Torngats, between Quebec and Labrador. However, when you are first, sometimes someone comes along and finds something even higher. In this case, Coleman lost out. Coleman wrote about glaciers and visited every continent, to look for evidence of them. The Royal Ontario Museum has over 3000 rock samples that he collected. Oh, guess who the first director of Geology at the ROM was?

In the 1990's, Toronto's Victoria University showed off a collection of art that Coleman had drawn. His water colours of the landscapes, rocks, flowers, people and animals exceed 300 works, just at Victoria! Ladies and gentlemen, they are good! The highest award given out by the Royal Society of Canada was the Flavelle Medal. Our Arthur Coleman was awarded that. Later, he became president of that Royal Society of Canada. In England, the highest award given by the Royal Geographic Society was the Victoria Medal. Coleman received that, too! Now, Canadians have a tendency to be impressed when Americans get around to acknowledging us. That happened when the Geologic Society of America awarded Coleman their most coveted prize, the Penrose Medal. - hey, not bad for a kid that grew up in Cobourg! By the way, Coleman also served as the president of that American society!

I have a photocopy of the front page of the Cobourg newspaper. In 1932, Professor Coleman returned to Cobourg when Victoria University celebrated its centennial.

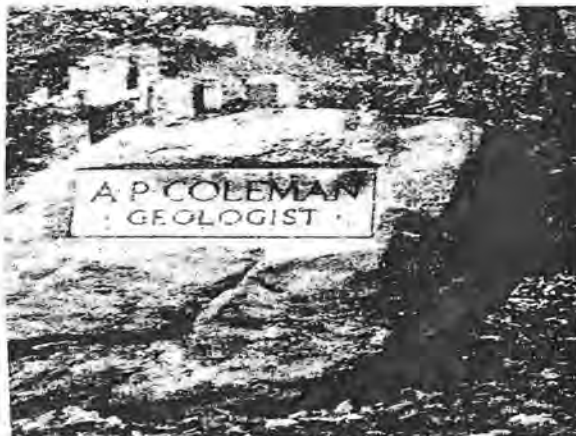
In 2005, I visited the provincial Mines building in Sudbury. When I went in, I stated that I was searching for information about A.P. Coleman. The secretary gave me a quizzical look. We walked to the map area, and there were about 20 maps lying on the counter, waiting to be re-filed. I paused, and just by scanning those maps I noted the sources that were used to make the maps. By chance, about a third of them had Arthur Coleman's name on them! The librarian suddenly became as excited as I was. Coleman visited and reported on every continent, except one. He was keen on glaciers and visited every one he could get to and not too arguably, he was the foremost world expert on glaciers.

The only continent he did not get to was Antarctica. However, that has not prevented his name from being attached to an Antarctic mountain, way down in the Antipodes! There is a Mount Coleman in Antarctica, immediately east of the Commonwealth Glacier. Antarctica's Mount Coleman was named by Sir Charles Wright, a former student of his. (You may have forgotten this, but it was Charles Wright who found the tent where the bodies of the ill-fated Scott expedition to the South Pole were found. (Mt. Coleman is at 77° 32' S 160° 32' E)

Coleman's final work, published posthumously, was a book called The Last Million Years, a Description of the Last Ice Ages. It is still widely quoted.

Coleman was extremely fit for his entire life. He was known as the fastest walker around the University of Toronto. He still did mountain climbs in his eighties! He died in Toronto, in 1939, at the age of 87.

His gravestone, aptly a glacial erratic, is in Mt. Pleasant Cemetery. His gravestone simply reads:



My heroes often get blank stares when I mention them. I don't mind sharing this hero of mine, Professor Arthur Coleman. Hey, spread the word. Maybe Cobourg will decide to name a street after him, perhaps a park, or even just a rock! A rock....now that would be appropriate. Thank you for allowing me to share my story.

1886 Paintings of the Rockies displayed by the Royal Canadian Society

1892 Laurentian Rocks of the Canadian Shield

1893 Report on Ontario Minerals at the World's Fair

1894 The Interglacial Period in the Don Valley

1895 Gold in Ontario

1896 Coal Deposits in Ontario

1899 Lake Iroquois

1902 The Sudbury Basin

1902 Brazeau Icefield

1906 South African Iron Formation

?? Glacial History of PEI

1915 Labrador

1916 The Torngats

1919 Yosemite (painted Cathedral Rock)

1922 Elementary Geology (Text)

? Spitzbergen

? Portuguese East Africa

1925 Stone Mountain, Georgia

1926 Ice Ages Recent and Ancient

1929 Correlation of Varves

1929 Zululand

1930 Extent of Wisconsin Glaciation

1931 Denmark

1931 Finland

1934-5 Colombia

1937 Guatemala

Egypt, Israel, Greece, Syria, Italy, France Germany

Jamaica

## What's in a name – DNA and the Cobourg connection

by

Granville H. Nickerson, MD

The initiative for this presentation was an unexpected encounter at Church. Mr. Peter Greathead (whose surname immediately fascinated me), introduced me to an elderly lady who promptly retorted, “It must be a spiritual return!” On enquiring, she added, “Don’t you know that Eliud Nickerson was the first settler at Cobourg?” I told her that I did not know that historical fact but would look further into the matter forthwith. Not to bore the gathered company with a history of my family name I decided to do the deed gently and discuss a few name in general – proper and improper.

The word *professional* originally referred to four professions only – Medicine, Law, Teaching and the Clergy. The essence of the meaning of professional was that service was a far greater importance than any reward for that particular service. The corruption of the word professional is readily recognized, not only within the four original professions but all sorts of endeavours today being called professional in order to elevate their status e.g. professional gambler, professional muffler changers, etc.

The word *nurse* originally a truly professional undertaking, has had a fascinating and an oxymoronic change. Originally a “wet nurse”, a mother who breast fed infants of sick mothers or aristocratic mothers who did not wish the chore of feeding their new offspring later became admired attendants to the sick and wounded. Nursing was transformed after Florence Nightingale and her young women ministering to the sick and wounded in 1854 at the Crimean War is a noble history. Extremely high character traits were expected of nurses. One quotes from a number of demands of nurses made either at Montreal General or the Toronto General in 1884,,,

6) Graduate nurses in good standing with the Director of Nurses will be given an evening off each week for courting purposes or two evenings a week if you go regularly to Church.

7) Any nurse who smokes, uses liquor in any form, gets her hair done at a beauty shop or frequents dance halls will give the Director of Nurses good reason to suspect her worth, intentions and integrity.

Nurse has come to be a common name – my most recent nurse at Sunnybrook Hospital was a *dry* male nurse!

Consider **proper names** – surnames. These names are often localized, non-specific, and changeable. Consider the case of Sam Asimacopolous a recent immigrant from Greece to Montreal. After a year he wished to have an English name and to that end appeared before a Judge in Civil Court. The verbal exchange was as follows:

Judge: “Why are you here?”

Sam: “I wish to change my name. I want to be English.”

Judge: “What is your name?”

Sam: “Sam Asimacopolous.”

Judge: “What do you wish to change your name to?”

Sam: “Joe Asimacopolous!”



King Henry VIII gave an edict in 1515 that everyone in the Kingdom should have a proper name. Some families already had surnames; many families did not. How to choose a name? Families without surnames did the obvious in four different ways:

- a) adding *son* to their given named e.g. Johnson, Richardson, Tomson
- b) taking names from their location e.g. Brooks, Rivers, Hill, Woods
- c) taking names from their occupations e.g. Taylor, Dyer, Brewer, Farmer, Fisher
- d) being given names of description e.g. Large, Small, Short, - but not Greathead

The best of my research suggest that Greathead, of which there are a number of distinguished members of that family, appears to be a name of location like easthead, westhead, greathead, white point, black point, etc.

It was a most volatile Kingdom. King Henry VIII, a learned theologian, was frustrated by the Church of Rome and the presence of so many obese Italian bishops in his kingdom; the large number of ignorant free-loaders in the monasteries, and the nagging fact that he had no male heir. To top matters he was forced to marry his brother's widow, a Spanish princess. A great shock to the nation was the awful death of William Tyndale, considered a heretic, and who was burned at the stake for translating the Bible into English. Tyndale's translation was a valiant effort made so that the common man could learn to read.

Furthermore, King Henry had a daughter but no male heir to succeed to the throne. The story is well known – no divorce – AND – in 1534 King Henry took his Kingdom into the Protestant Reformation separating it from the Church of Rome! He would now be the Head of the new Church of England. Hundreds of the old aristocratic associates enthusiastically joined him in his new cause. Alas King Henry died in 1547 whereupon his Roman Catholic daughter Mary took the throne and reverted the Church back to Rome. Hundreds of King Henry's supporters fled for their lives, hundreds were beheaded and the new Queen was to be known as 'Bloody Mary' (popularly recalled to this very day by a well-known tomato-based alcoholic drink!)

It is a fascinating recollection that hundreds of King Henry's supporters attempted to lose their identity to save their lives by changing their names – to Black, White, Green, Brown, or Grey – of which our current former prominent Canadian Lord Black of Cross Harbour could be a good example. Many persons today bear those names the significance entirely unknown to them.

Queen Mary died. There was also a sickly brother known as Edward VI who died at 18 years, of age but it was the younger sister Elizabeth, the King's daughter by Anne Boleyn (1522-1603), who took the throne in 1558. England experienced thereafter a most golden age in literature, theology, exploration, wealth – and the pleasure of putting the Roman Catholic Spanish King and empire in a secondary European role. Who can forget the Armada?

Elizabeth too died, with no male heir. Her nearest male relative, the Protestant James VI of Scotland, was crowned King James 1<sup>st</sup> of England. This King had the theological scholars of his day translate the Bible into English, now recalled as The King James Version. This translation has been considered to have transformed the English speaking world effecting that Tyndale had attempted when he died a martyr.

Nevertheless, new problems of Church and theology were arising all over the Kingdom and Europe, following the Protestant Reformation. Presbyterians only

recognized Scripture for Christian authority; Baptists did not recognize infant baptism only adult believers; Pilgrims who recognized only one King – viz King Jesus...and the followers of a Cambridge graduate “Brownites”, who taught that each congregation was an autonomous organization unto itself, were to be called Congregationalists. And there were members within the Church of England who wished to get rid of all the popery still visible in the Church, the brass and velvet, called Puritans. **The stage was set for civil war and emigration!** King Charles 1<sup>st</sup> was soon to lose his head!

Now for the *DNA and the Cobourg connection.*

A man named William “Redstocking” Nickerson of Norwich, Norfolk, England joined the Congregational movement. Many dissenters from the Church of England had to flee the country, thoughtful people who did not recognize the King as the Head of the Church and as Supreme Authority. The place to go was New England and the rest is history.

In 1637 William Nickerson came to America in the “*John & Dorothy*”, making the first formal purchase from the natives and founding the lovely Town of Chatham on Cape Cod. He became the progenitor of all Nickersons in the New World including Eliud Nickerson the first settler of Cobourg – and myself. The Nickerson Family history is well documented and preserved at an attractive historic building at Chatham, Massachussetts, and computerized beyond my initial comprehension. Apparently the Nickerson Family is the oldest incorporated Family Association in the USA.

The elderly lady whom I’d met at the Cobourg Church is to be told that Eliud Nickerson is 6<sup>th</sup> generation in the New World, born at Danbury Connecticut in 1760. His father’s name was Nathaniel and his mother’s name was Annice. Your speaker is 11<sup>th</sup> generation in the New World. Eliud and I had common ancestry up to the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation. His great-great grandfather was Thomas, a brother to my great-great-great-great-great grandfather William whose wife was Deliverance Lombard.

Eliud, who wife was Mary Margaret Fritz, came to Ontario, settling at a site later to be known as Cobourg. He arrived as a Loyalist via Belle Isle, New Brunswick. My family were pre-Loyalists. Joshua Nickerson with wife Ester Ryder, settled at Barrington, N.S. in 1762 – soon after the expulsion of the Acadians. That is a fascinating Canadian story in itself.

## *Historical Snippets* *By* *John Jolie*

Editor, Historically Speaking

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### ☛ September 2005 – Number 197 – Cadillac, Saskatchewan

**Cadillac, Saskatchewan** was on my list of places to visit this year. We headed West to visit our daughter, Glenna. I convinced my wife that we also had to visit some places that had an historical connection to Cobourg.

It was fascinating to explore the links Cobourg has to the West. However, this newsletter will be about our brief visit to Cadillac.

Cadillac is a small community of maybe 50 persons, not too far from the American border. Geographically, it is in Palliser's Triangle, the semi desert grassland area. The road to Cadillac offers panoramic vistas, huge ranches and very few people. I recall passing one truck in the final half hour drive to the community.

A person from Cadillac, Michigan was among the first settlers, and he named the town. Cadillac grew during the good times of the Roaring Twenties, becoming the distribution and retail center for farmers all the way down to the American border and in all other directions from the town. Grain and cattle were the strengths of that farm area.

Cadillac's initial boom, following the building of the rail line, gave the illusion of permanent prosperity. The town had seven grain elevators, four lumber yards, two livery barns and two hotels. The region the town served was roughly comparable in size to Northumberland county. A two-story school building that served primary and secondary students dominated the town. The main street had all of the needed services that downtowns provide.

Then came the Depression and the horror of the Dustbowl. Any significant rainfall stopped, for seven years! The occasional drizzles only helped the thistle to grow and then, even those weeds died. The soil blew away, leaving heavier sand particles behind. Wells dried up. One by one, the emaciated farm animals were killed for food. The animals had little water nor grain to survive on. The healthiest horse may have been kept to pull the farmer's car – minus an engine. Most people abandoned their property, leaving the doors wide open so that homeless drifters might find shelter.

Here in Cobourg, the depression was a nightmare for many. However, the experience in Cadillac was a struggle between life and death! The images that you may have in your mind of the Prairie dustbowl in the 30's are quite possibly from the Cadillac area.

In 1931, the CBC would not be linking the country for a few more years and this disaster was not given extensive coverage. The United Church, after hearing the stories coming from their parishes on the Prairies, took it upon themselves to get their



congregations involved. It was this Church that made the desperate situation in the West known to the rest of Canada. It organized one of the biggest relief efforts ever seen in Northumberland-Durham, and across Canada. Colborne, Port Hope, Brighton and Cobourg each had boxcars on their railroad sidings. The residents came to the train stations to give what they had. Clothing, preservatives, harder fruits and vegetables, even some toys, were stuffed into the boxcars. Colborne had barrels of apples shipped out. Chief Marsden of Alderville had two carloads of supplies delivered to the rail siding in Cobourg.

Meanwhile, farmers just north of Cobourg told the local paper that their food crops were rotting in the fields, unharvested. Many local people had no money to buy the food. The farmers stated that if anyone could get out and pick the crops for themselves, the food was there for the taking. It was certainly better than letting it rot.

The relief trains were a great collective effort. Hundreds of boxcars were sent from across Canada. The United Church minister in Cadillac wrote, thanking us for our generosity and relating the happiness that our boxcar had provided. The supplies from Cobourg were dispersed, and over three hundred families, from as far as 40 miles from Cadillac, benefited.

Unfortunately, the depression had many years left to run. Bennettbuggies, hobos, dust storms and sand dunes that blocked roads in the Cadillac area were still to come. Cadillac never recovered. The federal government bought up a great deal of the farmland, especially south of Cadillac. Most farmers left the area and a good number of those settled farther to the north, on land made available by the government.

Land use around Cadillac is tightly regulated today. It is only in wet years that this federal land is made available for farm animals, for grazing. Today, Cadillac is but a shadow of what it was in the 1920's. The few streets, all named for cars, are quiet. The width of the streets indicates the belief that the town would prosper. Empty lots far outnumber the lots that have buildings on them – fires and decay have created big gaps on the streetscape. The big school building is empty. There are few young people left. One grain elevator exists where seven once stood. Only one of the four churches still has a Sunday service, served by a pastor who administers to several communities. There are a few small reservoirs along area streams. Many wells in the area now reach 1200 feet. Even then, the water is not usually of good quality.

2005 is Saskatchewan's and Alberta's Centennial year. This summer, many former residents returned to Cadillac. They put together an impressive 726 page book on their history and families. Before I showed up last June, they knew about the 1931 boxcar, but did not know where it came from. I learned a great deal in Cadillac and I think they were happy to have me fill in some details about their town's history, too. It was a most pleasant visit!



Entrance to Cadillac



Downtown 1916



Downtown 2005



Downtown 2005

Approaching  
Cadillac from the  
North



☞ **October 2005 – Number 198 – Cobourg’s most incredible Thanksgiving weekend, ever!**

In 1879, Thanksgiving came at the end of October. That three day holiday was used by the colleges of Ontario for a meeting. This gathering of minds, music, intellectual discussions, athletics – the whole gambit, was held right here in Cobourg! This may have been the first time the colleges in our province ever came to such a gathering. The schools that came to Cobourg represented the faculty and students from the Toronto School of Medicine, University College, Knox College, Trinity College as well as our own Victoria College.

The fact that Cobourg was first to host this event has been forgotten. Track and field events were part of the weekend. Heaving a 34 pound stone, followed by shot putting lighter stones of 14 pounds, running and jumping activities, football kicking, were part of the sporting events. But this meeting was far more than an athletic event. There were concerts and dinners, both at Victoria Hall and Faraday Hall, the university’s science building. The townspeople went all out to impress the educational elite of the province. Cobourg was tidied up and bunting was hung on many stores and homes. There were several talks on language, science, history and problems facing higher education in the province. Every college provided some entertainment, be it songs or skits.

Part of those activities included a football tournament. Now, in 1879, football was evolving. This was when the rules for British and American football were diverging. In Cobourg that weekend, some games were played under rugby rules and other games were

played with new American rules. The teams must have been evenly matched because the first four games were all draws. The first matches were played under normal circumstances, but the fifth match was a night game, to be played on the Saturday night. Now, Cobourg had no electricity lines anywhere, no generators, no lights. Not a single watt of electricity was produced at any of the small dams in the area.

What we did have was a brilliant scientist teaching in our college. Dr. Haanel of Victoria College had arranged to have a large array of batteries shipped over from the US and he hooked the batteries to lights that he had placed along the field. As night fell, the power was turned on and the field was illuminated. The date was October 31, 1879. The playing field of Victoria College in Cobourg was the site where the world's first football game under electric lights was played! Certainly no one present could shrug and say that they had seen something like this before.

Oddly, we have never staked a claim for this milestone. Some American towns have done so. Perhaps it is time to claim bragging rights for our town.

I can imagine the complaints heard today if we watched something with the low level of lighting that must have been produced that evening, but this was 1879, and this was magic!

Now, everyone wanted to play in that first football match played under electric lights. Therefore, it was decided that the players of two schools form a team to play a combined team from two other schools. For the record, the medical students from the Trinity and Toronto Schools of Medicine beat Knox and University College.

Faraday Hall is gone. That playing field is gone. However, when I walk along University Avenue, I can still sense the history oozing from the hill where our College building is perched. Now, you have a story to tell our visitors. Heck, you might even relate it with fellow Cobourgers! Few of them know this story.



⚡ **November 2005 – Number 199 – Getting to Heaven : in this area, we have the luxury of choosing which path to take!**

**The church steeple** at Trinity United has an interesting feature at the top. The finger of God is pointing to Heaven. It seems that the leap from here to heaven is quite a challenge. Thankfully, for we sinners, our area has two shortcuts!

In the Book of Genesis, Jacob had a dream. He 'saw' a staircase, reaching up to heaven. Messengers from heaven were using the stairway or ladder. The historically critical part of that vision was this: God told Jacob that all of the land at the base of that ladder was what He was giving to Jacob's People. This became known as the Promised Land. That stairway to heaven has long been called Jacob's Ladder. You don't have to look too far to find Jacob's Ladder. In fact, we have two 'ladders' in our own neighbourhood. If you have not yet discovered them, you must make a point of visiting them.

The Baltimore Ladder was lovingly restored as that community's Millennium Project. To get there, drive your vehicle on #45 and turn right on Community Centre Road. Drive along the road until you see the sign for Baltimore United Church. Proceed



to the church. A walk through the cemetery connects you to the area's history. Many names can be identified as the area's pioneer families. I hesitate to single out anyone, but the graves for the Burwash family lie at the back of the church. The father, the chancellor of Victoria College and son, the Arctic explorer, are there.

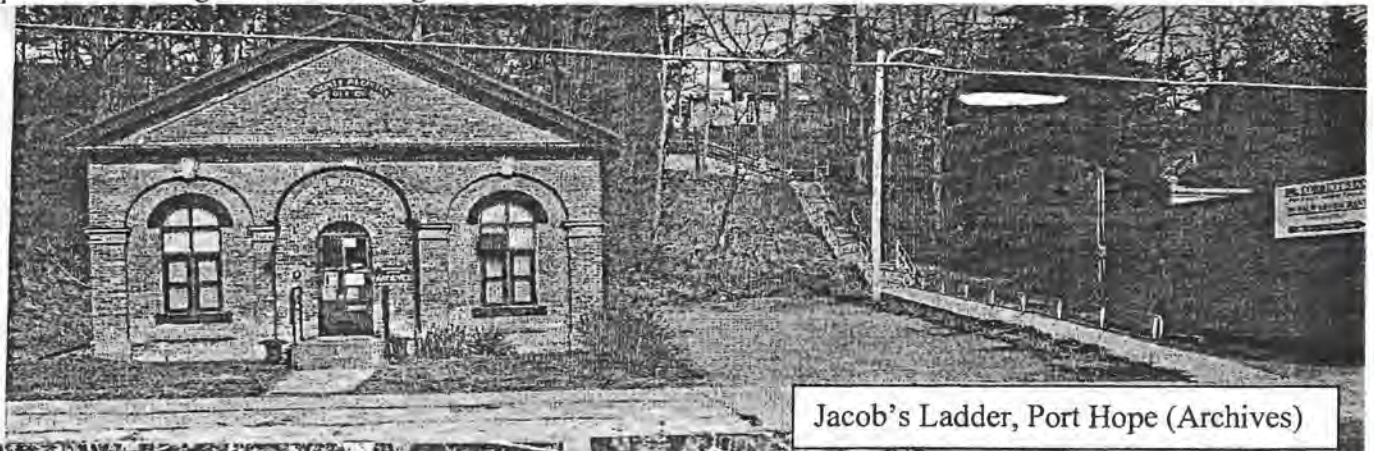
A westward walk through the cemetery takes you to the edge of Baltimore Valley. Go to the sign '2000'. Jacob's Ladder descends from there. You may spot some names of our Society members along the staircase. The stairs lead you down to the junction of Dale Road and #45. There is another path that starts near the base of Gully Road and ascends to the church – the Church Path.

Port Hope also has a Jacob's Ladder. The east side of the Ganny was called English Town in the 'old days'. The steep hill across the river was called Protestant Hill. This hill offered a fine view to residents whose homes overlooked the town. A glance of the photo, shows where to find this second route that we have 'to get to Heaven'. It is beside the old Registry Office (the Archives). Kivas Tully, architect of Victoria Hall, put up this building too.

As you ascend, look for a break in the climb, an overgrown terrace that runs along the hillside. This was once the path that residents, who lived on the hillside would take to get to the Ladder and then into town. That path continued south, to a road. Many houses at the top, on King Street, were oriented so that the more impressive facades were in the back of the house! They wanted to show off their best side facing the community that they looked down on.

When you get to the top of Port Hope's Jacob's Ladder, you face St. Mark's United Church. Vincent Massey is buried in the church cemetery, as are many prominent pioneers of Port Hope. The Queen and Prince Philip once attended a service in this church.

Unfortunately, the local Jacob's Ladders are not used much considering the effort put into creating and maintaining them.



Jacob's Ladder, Port Hope (Archives)



I thank Suzanne Camm for pointing out the remnants of this old walkway running off the Port Hope Ladder



Jacob's Ladder in Baltimore. The original stairs go back about 120 years



☛ **January 2006 – Number 200 – The Antipodes**

It is cold outside, so I thought it would be a good idea to take you somewhere warmer. The Antipodes struck me as an interesting place. The antipodes are defined as the place on the earth that is on the opposite of the earth from where one is. As kids, we knew that if we dug our way through the Earth we would reach China. That wasn't true. So, where would we end up if we started to digging, right here and go through the center of the Earth? A few calculations are needed. Cobourg and Hamilton Township are at 43-44 degrees North, and about halfway between the North Pole and Equator. A tunnel through the center of the Earth would take us to 43 degrees South.

So far, so good. In terms of longitude, we are 78 degrees West. Half way around the world would take us to 102 degrees East. ( $78+012=180$ , half of the 360 in a circle) So, it turns out that our antipodes are in the Indian Ocean, off Western Australia. So, the next time you end up in Perth, Australia and need directions home, it really doesn't matter which way they point you. The distance is about the same (It is interesting to note that virtually any land anywhere in the world has its antipodal spot in an ocean. Our oceans are huge!)



The Antipodes fascinate me. You go as far as possible from Cobourg, and you still find some Cobourg connection. Look at the map of the Indian Ocean. Run your eyes north from our antipodal position and you will be looking a Christmas Island. Christmas Island is looked after by Australia. Until very recently, huge fertilizer deposits were mined there. Christmas Island's highest point is Murray Hill. It was named for Sir John Murray, one of the earliest oceanographers, who explored this island. We don't brag at all about this, but Murray was born right here in Cobourg! The research vessel he sailed on for three years was the HMS Challenger. The vessel was important enough that the Americans named a space shuttle for it. The names Murray and Challenger are found on maps that identify water features right around the world.

Since I brought you down to the antipodes, and I still have some space in this newsletter. I want you to consider the opposite side of the Earth to Greenwich, England, where 0 degrees longitude begins. The opposite side of the world would be 180 degrees. That place is east of New Zealand, The closest antipodal position to Greenwich are the tiny Antipodes! (Save that tidbit when your conversation is dragging).



#### ☛ February 2006 – Number 201 – Gone and mostly forgotten

As towns try to preserve heritage buildings and districts, they are trying to create an illusion of the 'good old days.' Our minds have made the past a Pollyanna world. Life was different then, but mostly in negative ways.

A century ago, our streets were dirty and dusty. Rain and freeze ups made for rutted roads. Wooden sidewalks were frequently broken or warped, causing many a twisted ankle. The mud was cursed by women who had to wear ankle length dresses and who had to watch for omnipresent horse droppings. Flies thrived in such conditions. Guillet's Food Store on King Street advertised that they had no flies! (*Cobourg World, June 1915*).

On King Street, the town hired a man to collect the mud that was always mixed with animal droppings. He walked behind his horse that was dragging a scoop, much like a farmer operated his horse and plow. He hauled the stinking mixture in his wagon to a farm north of town. Our towns had to have a powerful odour! We may have a Cobourg Rose, but the town did not smell like that!

Victoria Hall had two rows of water closets at the back of the building, six stalls on each side. Somehow, they were not incorporated into the 'authentic' renovations. At the harbour, our docks were wooden, often slippery and stacked with cargo. Piles of coal, lumber and boxes hardly made our harbour conducive for leisurely strolls. Numerous rail tracks ran across the harbour. There were many sheds for storage and manufacturing. Until about 20 years ago, a train spur ran down Spring Street to the harbour.

Our memories of the old King Street business area are misleading too. Long forgotten are all of the necessary structures behind the stores. Since horses were the primary means of transportation, there had to be accommodation provided for them. Every hotel saw to it that there was a place for horses. O'Neill's Livery was three doors south of the old post office/Liquidation World site, J.F.Haynes Livery was on the north

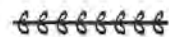


side of King Street West and the Cobourg Livery was just south of Trinity United. George Greer's Livery Stable was across the street from that. No restoration ever addresses the former equestrian locations.

The food stores had to worry about spoilage and the only way to deal with that was to have icehouses. They needed bigger root cellars than a homeowner. Sawing and hauling ice off ponds and lakes was a necessary seasonal occupation 100 years ago. Sometimes there would be a very hot summer, depleting our ice supply, causing worry and forcing us to ship expensive 'imported ice' from Port Hope or elsewhere – from anyone who had some. These icehouses had foot-thick straw or sawdust insulation in the walls and ceiling.

Elaborate root cellars would have ice blocks laid down, then wooden floors might be spread across them. If soil conditions were ideal, it would make sense to have a well nearby to take advantage of the melting ice. Of course, several people in town delivered ice to homes. Businesses and homes needed big woodpiles for heating and cooking. The Cobourg Star would barter with customers. They would trade their paper in exchange for a supply of wood. Such ads were frequently in their paper, in fact they were almost begging to have wood delivered.

So, the next time you walk through a sanitized reproduction of some community, including ours, it is not the way it really was!



#### ✦ **March 2006 – Number 202 – Electrical shortages**

**This is not** a new problem. For almost a century now, electricity has been around and our demands for it have only accelerated. For most, including me, electricity is mysterious. I could never work my mind around the workings of Tesla's alternating current. Edison's direct current was always easier to understand. The trouble was that direct current could not be carried too far. (Too much energy is lost in transmission). Edison knew he had a problem with direct current and would lose business, so he did his best to destroy Tesla and his backer, George Westinghouse. In his P.R. campaign to discredit alternating current, he would have audiences watch his workers electrocute big animals with alternating current, 'proving' that it was dangerous. His invention of moving pictures also showed such demonstrations, far and wide. Edison even invented another gadget, the electric chair, just to further illustrate just how dangerous A.C. was! (I know I am slanting and simplifying this story greatly.

The first electricity produced in our area was along the Ganaraska. Dr. Corbett's company had a monopoly and a few wealthy customers. He also had a contract with the town of Port Hope to supply electricity for a handful of streetlights in the downtown. He used direct current.

Electricity was as mysterious then as a nuclear reactor is to most of us, today. Con artists were swarming our area by the tens of the century, selling 'electrical powder' to anyone caught up in the urge to be 'first'. The fly-by-nighters collected a down payment and promised to return with the magic electricity. Of course, you what happened.

After the Great War, Adam Beck led the charge for Power for the People, taking control of private American owned power stations along the Niagara River. Ontario had

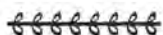
been cut out of the business and the electricity! Beck's campaign for public power was masterful. Everyone in Ontario wanted in.

Our closest source of electricity was the Trent River. The private company out there was Seymour Power (Campbellford is in Seymour Township). Adam Beck's promoters hit every town and township and the excitement that followed the presentations of lights and electrical gadgets was incredible. Everybody wanted them....now! Having a hydro pole in one's yard meant one thing – that family had electricity. What a wonderful age.

Ontario Hydro had their own stores in our towns selling electrical gadgets. Of course, the explosion of products using electricity played no small role in the boom of the Roaring Twenties. It was a wonderful time to be alive!

The private Port Hope company knew that its monopoly days were numbered. When Port Hope council delayed in signing a contract renewal with the private company, the owner shut off the town's power. That was the last straw. The private company had absolutely no public support.

Seymour Power came to our area and shortly afterwards, Ontario Hydro bought out that company and added a few more dams along the Trent. The story goes on, but my newsletter cannot. As electrical grids met across the province, Ontario Hydro bought out other utilities, linked their operations and serviced areas that private companies could see little profit if they brought in electricity. By the mid 1920's, each community was lit up.



#### ✦ April 2006 – Number 204 – Our Doctor Frank Lloyd and his connection to an interesting border town

Lloydminster straddles the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan. Often a borderline is drawn through rivers and lakes. At Lloydminster, there are no visible landmarks. The border runs across flat land and the city happens to be built on that line.

That town is, for all intents, one entity, even though there are two incorporated municipalities, one in Saskatchewan, one in Alberta. Years ago, the provinces agreed to share the management of the city. One province would deal with healthcare, the other would take care of education. Roads, dog licenses, water, energy and everything else

The pictures show the boundary area. At the border, the signs display the street names used in Alberta and Saskatchewan. The boundary (110 degrees West) is delineated with red towers that extend for a few hundred meters away from Highway 16. Those towers are simply tourist would have one province in charge of attractions.

Equally fascinating are the beginnings of Lloydminster. A century ago, the West was being opened to settlement and those wide open spaces seemed like heaven to people living in Britain's polluted and crowded cities. In England, one man, the Reverend Barr had an important aide. He was the Rev. George Lloyd, who had already experienced Canada. Barr asked Lloyd to be the chaplain of their group and Lloyd brought his family with him, including his young son Frank.

In 1903, somewhere between 2000 and 3000 followers of Barr boarded an overcrowded ship and sailed off to Saint John, New Brunswick. This group, now called the Barr Colony, then boarded trains and headed West. The Great Trek, as it was called, filled five trains. It was a logistical nightmare. Food was in short supply. When the trains reached Saskatchewan, the Colony waited in tents, while their leader talked with officials about land grants. Along the way, they consumed the food that small settlements needed for themselves, causing resentment. The Rev. Barr may have had a vision but he was no planner. He did not anticipate the day-to-day needs of his group. Barr was overwhelmed and once the Colony reached the designated land tract, it was quickly apparent that most in the Colony had no farming experience. They lacked tools, knowledge on building, tilling and planting – everything!

As frustrations increased, their anger was directed at Barr. He fled, eventually ending up in Australia. To fill the vacuum of leadership, a council was set up and their chaplain, the Rev. Lloyd rose to the forefront. Order was slowly restored from chaos. In appreciation, the settlers named the town site for their Reverend Lloyd. They called it Lloydminster.

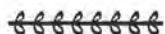
One of the youngest inhabitants in the Barr Colony was Frank, the son of Reverend Lloyd. He came to Cobourg and became our Dr. Lloyd. In 1929 he bought the retiring Dr. Irwin's practice in town. During the Second World War, he served in the army as Lieutenant Colonel.

The Cobourg Y ran its operations out of a house that Lloyd owned. Later, he presented the building to the Y. For many years, Dr. Lloyd practiced in town and may have been the first Cobourg doctor to have an X-ray machine set up in his office. Lloyd had the status that was typical of the medical profession half-a-century ago.

So, the next time you hear of Lloydminster, think of our Dr. Lloyd!







✦ **May 2006 – Number 205 – Our volunteers go way back!**

It takes a large number of members to keep us functioning at an optimum level. There are always tasks for volunteers to undertake. Our CDHS naturally has connections to the Ontario Historical Society. Before Confederation, that body was called the Historical Society of Upper Canada. It was founded in 1862, in St. Catharines. Cobourg's George Daintry was secretary, one of the three officers in that society. Then, there were 15 founding volunteers. Four of those were from Cobourg! They were Henry Ruttan, George Boulton, David Burn and George Coventry. Believe it or not, our town had more executive members than did London, Kingston or Ottawa. Only Toronto had more members, with six. So, present day volunteers, take a bow. You are part of a great tradition. You stand on the shoulders of giants!

**2006 Ontario Volunteer Service Awards**



Diane Cunnington – 20 years



Wendy McQueen – 5 years



Jane Greathead - 30 years

Also receiving awards were:  
***Bud Barr*** for 25 years,  
***Eckford Gow*** for 10 years