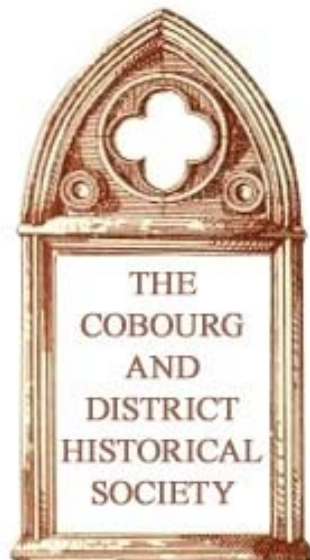


HISTORICAL REVIEW 26



2008



2009

The Cobourg and District Historical Society

2008 - 2009

Executive

Past President	David Gregory
President	Libby Seekings
Treasurer	Gabrielle Blaschuk
Recording Secretary	Jackie Hick
Corresponding Secretary	Jackie Hick
Archives Chair	Gabrielle Blaschuk
Membership Chair	Cath Oberholtzer
Programme Chair	Judith Goulin

Archivists

Ciara Ward B.A.H., MLIS	(From Dec 2008)
Michael Davis B.A., M.A., MLIS	(Outreach to Oct 2008)

Committees & Volunteers

Historical Review Editor	John Draper
Cockburn Room Co-ordinator	Judy Cross
Brass Polisher	Judy Cross
Library Foundation Representative	Peter Delanty
Cobourg Committee for Art in Public Spaces Representative	Wendy McQueen
Programme & Publicity Committee	Marian Boys Diana Cunnington - Publicity Co-ordinator Dorothy De Lisle Judith Goulin Cath Oberholtzer Mary Smith Marlynn Warling
Archives Committee	Cheryl Barlow Gabrielle Blaschuk Deane Halewood Cath Oberholtzer Ron Oberholtzer Libby Seekings Mary Smith
Newsletter Distribution	Cath & Ron Oberholtzer
Newsletter Delivery	Peter Delanty, Jim Hamilton, Jackie Hick, Lester Northeast, Nancy Petlock, Libby Seekings, Bonnie Sheridan

The Cobourg & District Historical Society

Archives Volunteers 2008 - 2009

Cheryl Barlow
Gabrielle Blaschuk
Michael Blaschuk
Aaron Bluemel
Lukas Bluemel
Marion Boys
Natalie Chomitz
David Cowin
Norah Cunningham
Nancy Gibson
Deane Halewood
Kim Harrison
Glenda Jackson
Muriel Maughan
Gayl Nelson
Cath Oberholtzer
Ron Oberholtzer
Emily Reynolds
Jennifer Rogers
Jennifer Sanders
Libby Seekings
Jessica Simons
Mary Smith
Linda Stevens
Joshua Turk
Martha Watson
Kay Whitton

The Cobourg and District Historical Society
Programme of Speakers
2008 – 2009

2008

September	<i>Famine Irish and Their Early History in Cobourg</i> Mark Finnan.....	Page 1
October	<i>The Trent Canal System</i> Dennis Carter-Edwards.....	Page 5
November	<i>Camp 30 and Otto Van Kretschner</i> T.J. Dahmer.....	Page 9

2009

January	<i>The Bible Christians of Durham, Northumberland and Hastings Counties</i> Sher Leetooze.....	Page 13
February	<i>History of Victoria Hall Volunteers</i> Madeleine Thibault-Smith	Page 21
March	<i>Railways of the 1850s and 1860s</i> Rod Clarke	Page 29
April	<i>Second Beginnings: Nineteenth-Century Fur Trade Families of the Cobourg Area</i> Cath Oberholtzer	Page 31
May	<i>May Social and Hong Kong Diary Revisited</i> Shelagh Purcell	Page 45

Cover Photograph: Victoria Hall, before restoration
Courtesy of Cobourg Public Library

September 2008

The Notable, the Neglected and the Notorious.

A review of the contribution of Irish immigrants to early Cobourg

By Mark Finnan

The popular notion about the Irish and early Cobourg is that those who came here in the early to mid 1800s were impoverished, disease ridden Catholic peasants fleeing famine and oppression in their native land. That many such unfortunates, an estimated 5000 in all, landed on the beach or wharf in Cobourg over a period of some fifty years is of course true. However only a relative few remained to find work and shelter in the young settlement. Most of the rest were in transit, brought here with help from the British government, on their way north to establish the Robinson settlement, present day Peterborough. Others were relatives of the first wave of these settlers and readily joined them. Still more moved on to York which became Toronto or other centres. But that is not the whole story by any means of Cobourg's first Irish arrivals.

Cobourg's progress as a small but important lakeshore town was due in part at least to the enterprise and entrepreneurship of a number of Irish immigrants who came here with capital and established successful businesses of one kind or another. Due to the political power structure of the day these were mostly northern Ireland Protestants. They became active in the commercial and industrial development of Cobourg and contributed to the status of Cobourg as a thriving community, one that quickly acquired civic and social order. One of Cobourg's prominent early inhabitants James G. Bethune, who was the regional agent for the London based Canada Company which promoted settlement in Upper Canada, wrote that following the first influx of settlers in 1817/18 many 'respectable' English, Irish and Scottish families soon made the society of Cobourg (then called Hamilton) 'equal to any in the province.' So who were these 'respectable' Irish that Bethune was referring to?

No doubt some were among the discharged army and navy officers and officials who were given tracks of land in the area. Others were Loyalist Irish Presbyterians, merchants and small farmers from the American colonies who had left Northern Ireland in the 1700s to escape religious discrimination there by the powerful Church of England. However there were others. One such individual was James Calcutt who arrived here with his family directly from Ireland in 1832. He purchased a sizeable track of land to the west of the present harbour stretching between Durham and Hibernia Streets and from Orr Street south to the lake. He built himself a large house and a very successful brewery, mill and malt house as well as the Hibernia Flower Mills. In 1850 his son James Jnr. who bought the house that now houses the office of the Breakers Motel started an operation of his own on University Avenue. James Calcutt lived out his life in Cobourg and died in 1869.

Another Irish born prominent early Cobourger was James Crossen [photo right] who started the very successful Crossen Car Works in 1870. A blacksmith by trade Crossen had come to Cobourg in 1852 and started an iron foundry. Along with the development and expansion of the railroads he began building railway carriages for the Grand Trunk railway and others. His factory, which was first located north of St. Peter's church on College Street, expanded and was moved to a larger site on George Street. Crossen's Pullman cars were considered the finest in Canada. The Crossen operation at one



Photo Courtesy of
Cobourg Public Library

time employed 300 people, which was quite sizeable at the time and was the largest employer in town.

The Dumble family came from Ireland in the early 1840s. Thomas Dumble built an impressive house on George Street and operated a successful store on the main street. He and his son John were surveyors and helped resolve the New Brunswick/ Maine border dispute. Another son Thomas became a prominent Cobourg lawyer and citizen.

The Rooney family came from Ireland in the early 1800s and set up home in what became known as Corktown, the area that lies east of present day Victoria Park to Darcy Street and from the lakeshore north to below Queen Street. At least two generations of Rooney men were active in the trade that flowed in and out of Cobourg harbour. One captained a vessel that carried coal and other cargo across the lake to and from Oswego Another became a popular harbour master.

William Rosamond came to Canada with his father who set up one of the largest woolen mills of the day in Almonte. William came to Cobourg in 1875 and took over the Ontario Woolen Mills that had been in operation for some years on Tremaine Street. A successful operation it produced prize winning cloth and employed over 100 people. He enlarged and improved the plant, married the daughter of Judge Boswell and became part of Cobourg society of the day.

Paul Kane the renowned Irish born artist, famous for his portraits of native life, came to live and work in Cobourg in 1834. He was employed for a couple of years at Clench's furniture factory and painted portraits of several prominent Cobourg citizens and their wives.

The 2000 plus impoverished Irish immigrants who arrived in 1825 to establish the Robinson settlement made the region in and around Peterborough a productive agricultural community. This development in turn made a significant contribution to the growth of Cobourg as a centre of trade in such commodities as lumber, grain and other farm products. The presence of such a large settled population north of the town added to the importance of the harbour as a point of entry to the interior, which in turn added to the growing importance and prosperity of Cobourg.

Having landed in Quebec, they came to Cobourg by steamer from Kingston, 500 at a time between August and October of that year. They were billeted in tents on the west beach. Rev. Ansen Green, a Methodist circuit rider who was visiting Cobourg described the scene as follows. " When in Cobourg last October I saw the beach west of Division Street covered with small white tents filled with Irish immigrants. The Honourable Peter Robinson had been home and brought out a shipload of these people whom he landed here. There was no wharf at Cobourg then and the landing was somewhat difficult. They were to be located in the bush beyond Rice lake..... These white tents presented a beautiful and attractive appearance. They stretched along the sandy beach lying between the lake and a forest of small cedars. which covered the worst part of the swampy ground east of Ham's mill."

What became known as the Great Migration in the 1830s brought another wave of Irish, English and Scottish immigrants to Canada and with them came the dreaded Cholera. The plague which originated in India had spread across Europe and was transported to North America. With the arrival of some of these immigrants, Irish included, in Cobourg harbour a sanitary station was set up to both quarantine and assist these arrivals. It is believed to have been somewhere in the vicinity of the existing water treatment plant. This timely preventive action saved the town from any serious infestation. Nonetheless there were about a dozen deaths from the disease. Likewise during the worst of the Famine years in Ireland there was an influx of immigrants who had been quarantined first at Grosse Isle in the St. Lawrence managed to make their way to Cobourg. While many of these badly emaciated men, women and children managed to move on to other places such as Peterborough some remained, no doubt adding to the population of Corktown.

While other communities such as Kingston have commemorated the arrival of these victims of famine and persecution with a cairn or Celtic cross, Cobourg has not. Some such action now would give long overdue public recognition not only of their arrival here but also the subsequent contribution they and their descendents made to the cultural and commercial life of this community. It would also give historical context to and highlight the ongoing existence of Corktown. A neglected part of Cobourg's history

Like immigrants from other countries the Irish had their share of misfits and malcontents. One has only to check out the list of inmates of the Cobourg jail during the 1830s and 1840s to see the assorted crew of criminal types in residence for crimes of the day ranging from mistreatment of an animal (progressive for the time) to drunkenness, assault and even murder. However the Irish so charged were no more numerous than those listed as Scottish and English. One Irishman who definitely deserves the title of most notorious immigrant to arrive in Cobourg has to be one James Dempsey.

It seems that when James Calcutt, one of the Irish born businessmen who in establishing the Calcutt brewery and other commercial enterprises added to the growth and prosperity of Cobourg, left his homeland he did so under the threat of death.

Calcutt being a Protestant had run afoul of a group of Catholic militants known as the Whiteboys. The Whiteboys terrorised those who they identified as being sympathetic to English rule and oppression in Ireland at the time. The leader of this band of Whiteboys was James Dempsey. Although Calcutt managed to get away with his family and assets to Canada and he did not evade his pursuer Dempsey. He arrived some time later on the very same ship that had earlier brought Calcutt to Cobourg with the intention of following through on the sentence of death issued against him back in Ireland. Fortunately for Calcutt his would be murderer, according to one report, was swept off the gangplank by a storm surge while disembarking in the harbour and drowned. At least that is the version handed down. Ironically his badly mutilated body was washed up on the shoreline at the southern end of the Calcutt family property. Scribblers of the day drew the public's attention to what they pointedly considered was the divine justice involved.

Mark Finnan

October 2008

The Trent Canal System

By Dennis Carter-Edwards

Built in stages over a period of 87 years, the Trent-Severn Waterway may well be the longest, both in time and distance, “infrastructure” project undertaken by the Government of Canada.

Begun in 1833 when the Cobourg firm of Pierce, Dumble and Hoar won the contract for building a small wooden lock at Bobcaygeon, surveys and plans were soon in preparation for additional masonry locks at Crook’s Rapids (Hastings) Whitla’s (Peterborough) Purdy’s Mills (Lindsay) Myers Island (near Trenton) and Chisholm’s Rapids (Glen Ross). The purpose of this ambitious navigation scheme was to open the Kawartha Lakes and section of the Trent River to settlement and assist with moving produce to the ports on Lake Ontario.

The outbreak of the 1837 Rebellions and the subsequent border raids by American sympathizers, resulted in the canal funds being diverted to pay for raising local militia units and fitting up military posts along the border.

After the Union of Upper and Lower Canada in 1841, as recommended by Lord Durham in his famous report, additional funds were allocated by the new provincial government to complete the half finished locks. The newly established Board of Works supervised the project as well as building additional dams and timber slides to facilitate the booming lumber trade. With a limited number of steamers on the lakes, it was white pine and the rich harvest of the north, rather than passenger boats that made the greatest use of the interior navigation system slowly emerging through the Kawarthas.

No further funds were committed by the government to “improve” the nascent canal system. In fact, it was left to the private lumber companies, working through a Slides Committee to maintain the dams timber slides from tolls collected from the users. Following Confederation of the colonies into the new Dominion of Canada in 1867, the federal government focused its attention and resources to extending the national boundaries further west by promoting a transcontinental railway. It was left to the Province of Ontario to pursue new lock construction. Under the direction of Kivas Tully, engineer for the provincial Department of Public Works, new locks were built by private contractors at Rosedale, Youngs Point and Lindsay. The purpose was to open the new north for agricultural settlement by complementing the new roads and railway lines into the northern reaches of the province.

Unsatisfied with this tepid response by the federal government, local entrepreneurs in the Kawartha Lakes region, headed by Mossom Boy, the “lumber kind of the Kawarthas” formed an effective lobby group, the Trent Valley Canal Association, to press the federal government to construct new locks and open the region for further navigation. Faced with a pending election and the need to garner every possible seat, Macdonald agreed to build new locks at Fenelon Falls, Buckhorn and Burleigh Falls. When completed, these new locks extended the area open for steamboat navigation from Burleigh Falls west to Sturgeon Lake and south along the Scugog River. By the 1880s, tourists, many coming up from Toronto by rails and then steamer. were patronizing the growing number of resorts being built. A local writer described one such lodge on Sturgeon Lake, built by Commodore George Crandell, as “a very handsome three storey frame structure, with verandahs running round three sides of two stories, and mansard roof, and is situated among the trees which makes it cool and pleasant.” Soon, navigations companies were vying with each other to capture the booming “tourist trade.” M Boyd’s Trent Valley Navigation



Construction crew working on the canal at Campbellford
Courtesy Dennis Carter-Edwards, Trent-Severn Waterway

Company, or the Trent Valley Transportation Company or Captain P.P. Young's steamship were kept busy running wealthy Torontonians to and from this delightful summer playground.

Buoyed by its success, the Trent Valley Canal Association was soon back pressing the government to expand the inland navigation system. This time, their appeal went beyond mere local benefits. They argued a through navigation route linking Georgian Bay with Lake Ontario could form part of a national commercial "highway" bringing Prairie wheat through a barge canal system from the Lakehead on Lake Superior to Lake Ontario and markets beyond by a system of locks and dams that could expedite transport of wheat from the

west to the east before the annual freeze up. In typical Canadian fashion, Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald, temporarily defused the situation by appointing a Royal Commission to investigate the proposal.

Three Commissioners, Frank Turner and John Kennedy and Judge Weller from Peterborough, were appointed by Order in Council in 1887. After widely consulting with various interested parties – today we would call them stakeholders – via public meetings, questionnaires and personal communications, the commissioners report in favour of extending the system of locks and dams that constituted to the Trent Valley Canal system in the latter part of the nineteenth century. With this favourable reply in hand, Macdonald, just before the 1891 election which proved to be his last, reported that government would act on the commission's recommendation. Additional locks would be built to join Lakes Simcoe to Balsam Lake and from Peterborough to Lakefield, thus extending inland navigation from Rice Lake through to Lake Simcoe.

The engineer put in charge of the project was Richard Birdsall Rogers. A local Peterborough boy, Rogers completed his formal training at University of Toronto before engaging in survey work and later a position on the Trent Valley Canal. He married Mina Calcutt daughter of Henry Calcutt, steam ship magnate, successful brewer and prominent Conservative. Rogers was keenly aware of the need to move the bountiful harvest of prairie wheat to European markets in a timely and efficient manner and proposed to overcome the more than 60 foot drop on the Otonabee River by building a hydraulic lift lock. This novel engineering innovation was not without precedent. Rogers toured through Britain and Europe studying the few hydraulic lift locks then in operation and adapted the concept to the unique conditions of the local landscape. Rogers also pioneered in the use of concrete in canal construction. Although cement had been known in Roman times, its properties as a building material were uncertain and Rogers carried out extensive experiments to test the durability and strength of the material. When completed in 1904, the Peterborough Lift Lock was the highest in the world and the first to be built by unreinforced concrete.

Unfortunately, Rogers did not have the pleasure of basking in the glory of his truly outstanding accomplishment. A small break in the upper reach brought down the full fury of the Department of Railways and Canals, now under the Liberal control of the new Liberal Prime Minister, Sir

Wilfrid Laurier, caused flooding in the town of Ashburnham, located adjacent to the Trent Canal. After a brief investigation, Rogers was asked to resign, although politics rather than engineering competence was the real reason he was forced to step down.

Avowed critics of the canal scheme while in Opposition, the new Liberal Government was soon inundated with petitions and meetings with the reeves, mayors and other local officials, urging the government not to abandon the projects started by the preceding government. Laurier, now candidly aware of the great economic benefits, not to mention political benefits of continuing the government's practice of expanding the system "as the resources of the country would permit" agreed to extend the canal system from Rice Lake via Hastings down to Trenton. Laurier had another reason to continue with the practice of adding more locks to the system in piecemeal fashion. By the 1890s, hydroelectricity was seen as the "white coal" that would fuel a new industrial economy. The system deployed on the Trent Valley Canal was referred to as the "slack water system." Where impediments to navigation existed in the river, a dam would be built downstream to flood out the rapids and then simply use a typical masonry lock to bypass the dam. Where dams were built, a head of water was created, often enough to operate a turbine that would be hooked to a generator producing electric current. By opening navigation along the Trent River, Laurier established the federal government's authority over the river and thus authority over the granting of licences of occupation – so necessary for the construction of the new generator's housing.

The final section of the canal from Lake Simcoe to Georgian Bay was completed under the Conservative Government of Robert Borden. By now, all thoughts of a barge canal bringing Prairie wheat east had been discarded. Instead, the natural beauty and the potential to enhance the tourist trade along the Severn River route prompted the Minister responsible Frank Cochrane to proceed with the work. Although there was no pressing economic rationale for undertaking the necessary work to link Lake Simcoe with Georgian Bay. The outbreak of the Great War delayed completion of construction and forced the government to install temporary "marine railways" at Big Chute and Swift Rapids due to shortages of labour and materials. Like the other temporary war measure, income tax, the marine railway at Big Chute remained while that at Swift Rapids was replaced with a modern lock in the 1960s.

It wasn't until 1920 that a private passenger boat, the Irene sailed the entire length of the Trent-Severn Waterway, at last bring to reality the dream envisioned by engineers and politicians for almost a century.



Big Chute Marine Railway

Courtesy Dennis Carter-Edwards, Trent-Severn Waterway



**Steamer at the
Fenelon Falls lock
station**

*Courtesy Dennis Carter-
Edwards,
Trent-Severn Waterway*

November 2008

Camp 30 Bowmanville

By T .J. Dahmer

On August 17, 1941, Major Brighton and Captain Murray of the Canadian Military drove up to the Boys Training School in Bowmanville. They were there to see Dr. Cooper the head of the boy's correctional facility on behalf of the Department of Defence. The Boys training school was for boys who were multiple offenders o the law. Major Brighton was there to explain to Dr. Cooper that the government was commandeering the facility for the Canadian Government. The school was the only suitable facility for a German POW camp in the area. Within 72 hours Canadian military engineers would begin construction of a camp to hold 600 German officers.

The POWs were interred in Canada as England believed that Germany could still launch a successful invasion of England. With a successful invasion Germany could replenish its ranks with high ranking experienced officers. Camp 30 would hold many famous German officers including KorvettenKapitan Frederick Schumacher. Schumacher graduated first in his class at the world famous Neustadt U-boat academy. At 29 he was awarded Germany's highest military honour, the Knights Cross with swords and oak leaves for his work in the North Atlantic. The KorvettenKapitan was captured during a raid on a priority convoy beading towards England. Schumacher was responsible for torpedoing 47 ships during the Second World War.

Responsibility for running the camp went to World War One hero Lieutenant Colonel Jack Armstrong. Colonel Armstrong firmly believed in the camp mandate being that the camp would provide the best care and facilities of all prisoner of war camps. The various facilities on the 110 acre camp were state of the art and designed to keep prisoners busy over a long period of time.

Sports facilities included a baseball diamond, soccer pitch, football field and hockey rink. In 1944, the prisoners held an Olympic competition where the winner received a weekend stay at the Royal York hotel in Toronto. The German prisoners believed that they had improved in hockey to the degree that they could challenge the Canadian guards. By 1944, the prisoners were allowed to leave the camp with a pass if they agreed on their honour they would return within a certain time.

Other facilities included a large library and theatre where various Shakespeare plays were performed by the Germans to the delight of the other prisoners. When not keeping themselves busy the prisoners ate in shifts of 200 prisoners at the dining hall.

The German prisoners ate better than the Canadian soldiers who fought against the Germans during the war.

In the four years that Camp 30 operated there were several escape attempts by the German prisoners. During the first two years the German prisoners of war only attempted escapes



Some of the German officers at Camp 30
Courtesy of Clarington Museums and Archives

individually with little planning. In late 1943 the war in the Atlantic began to shift toward the Allied side and Germany needed more experienced naval officers. Schumacher began to organize the officers for one large escape co-ordinated with the German navy.

The British Security Operation or BSO which was in charge of Camp 30 began to be suspicious of the prisoners and executed operation Anorak. Operation Anorak was the BSO attempt to infiltrate the German prisoners with a Canadian agent. Colonel Roger Stedman, then head of Camp X in Whitby was given the job to infiltrate the German officers and expose any escape attempts. Pretending to be a captured Major in the German intelligence he was able to expose the German prisoner's plans for escape while narrowly escaping with his life.

Stedman would pass information about German escape plans through the laundry with pieces of paper written on with secret ink that would only show up in certain light. The German prisoners had secretly dug a tunnel under the fence and were preparing for a mass escape attempt Stedman gathered information about the escape and sent a message to warn his superiors. While sending the message he was caught by the German prisoners and had to be rescued by the guards. As a result the mass escape attempt was foiled and only one prisoner was able to escape.

After the debacle of the mass escape attempt only one other escape was successful. Kapitanleutnant Wilhelm Klein was able to build a chair harness that would be able to be lifted over the wall by a pulley. The prisoners caused a fight in the yard as a distraction while Klein's friends lifted him over the wall. Klein made his way on foot to highway 2, where he would hitchhike all the way to Toronto. What Klein did not know was that he was secretly being followed by the BSO.

Klein had supper at a diner in Toronto where unbeknownst to him he was approached by a BSO operative and was offered a place to stay for the night. The next morning Klein purchased a ticket to New Brunswick by train. After arriving Klein walked the rest of the way to the coast where it was planned that he meet a German submarine in secret that would take him back to Germany. Two Canadian soldiers would ruin Klein's plan as they stumbled upon him while on patrol of the coast.

BSO operatives had planned on catching the submarine as it stopped to shuttle Klein aboard. The submarine stayed submerged as no German prisoners were at the coast to meet the sub. The BSO escorted Klein back to Camp 30 ending the last escape attempt made at Camp 30. Soon afterward the incident known as the Great Escape occurred where Allied prisoners of war were gunned down after being recaptured and rounded up. After hearing this news Schumacher and the other POWs decided that they would not attempt any more escapes.

On October 10, 1942 Schumacher was called into Commandant Armstrong's office beginning an event which would be known as the battle of Bowmanville. Schumacher was informed that after the disaster at Dieppe on August 19, 1942 Adolf Hitler ordered that the majority of the prisoners taken at the raid were to be shackled. Armstrong informed Schumacher that he was ordered by the government to shackle one hundred German prisoners. The German POWs found this situation unacceptable and began to rebel.

The Germans immediately barricaded themselves into the different buildings on the compound using what weapons they could find. Armstrong tried to stop the situation before it escalated by sending the guards into the building to put down the rebellion. The Germans took several guards hostage and injured several more. Armstrong had no choice but to send for the army. When the army arrived the next day they began to force their way into the buildings slowly. It took the army two days to expel the Germans from all the buildings. The Germans were not able to hold out against a force with real weapons.

After three days the rebellion was finally put down. Armstrong had to find a way to compromise with the prisoners to stop another rebellion from starting. Armstrong decided that he would still continue to shackle the prisoners but the guards would leave the keys there so that the prisoners could unshackle themselves right away. The compromise ended the Battle for Bowmanville and further garnered respect for the Canadians.

When the German Prisoners think back on their time at Camp 30 it is with fondness as conditions they lived in during their time as prisoner were the best among all countries involved in the war.

Many prisoners chose to make their home in Canada after the war as a result of their time at Camp 30.

Camp 30 can still be viewed today as it lies along Lambs Road in Bowmanville.



Mess Hall at Camp 30
Courtesy of Clarington Museums and Archives

January 2009

The Bible Christians of Durham, Northumberland and Hastings Counties

By Sher Leetooze

Introduction

The Bible Christians were part of the large Methodist body. They came into existence at a time when England was undergoing a deep depression. The country had been bankrupted by the Napoleonic Wars, both in Europe and in North America. People had no jobs, they were hungry, they were penniless, they were destitute. While the established church, The Church of England, preached doom and gloom from the pulpit every Sabbath, the Bible Christians, and other Methodists, preached love, and hope, and light at the end of the tunnel. Who wouldn't line up to join in a time like that!!! So, in 1815 their time had come.

Unfortunately, so had the time come for many to seek homes in other places, and by the 1830's and 1840's the Great Migration had begun. England's southwest nearly emptied out as people went to Australia, New Zealand, and of course, North America.

The Founders

William O'Bryan was a Cornishman, son of a miner, and he was a former Methodist preacher. When he was just a lad his father took him to a Wesleyan meeting - none other than John Wesley himself preaching. Wesley laid a hand on the lad and pronounced that he would touch thousands - and he surely did!

James Thorne, the son of a yeoman farmer in Shebbear Parish, Devon, liked what he heard when O'Bryan preached at his father's farmhouse and joined the cause. He took his ordination with the Methodists so he could take a leadership role with the Bible Christian movement.

Canadian Conference

John Hicks Eynon was sent in 1831, the same year Francis Methersal was sent to Prince Edward Island. However, the boat on which he was coming to Canada sprang a leak somewhere west of Ireland and the ship put back to port, only to sink just before arriving. I believe everyone on board was saved, but Eynon lost everything except a trunk of books he had packed. He put his trunk in storage and went back to England to discuss his future with his superiors. It was during this trip that he met Elizabeth Dart. His superiors B O'Bryan and Thorne B suggested that a married man would get further in that "wild country" than would a single one, and so, with a good preacher in Elizabeth Dart, and therefore a good companion for such a wild country, they wed and were sent off in the summer of 1833 to replace John Glass who had been given the appointment the previous year, but had been overwhelmed by the wildness of the country in which he found himself, and so resigned the ministry. Poor John Eynon, when he stopped at Ireland to pick up his trunk of books, he discovered they had been stolen!

The Eynons made their home at Cobourg and began the arduous task of building their circuit and finding "lost sheep" in the Canadian wilderness.

Portrayal of the Itinerant Preachers

C.W. Jefferys was a scholarly man, besides being a good artist. He studied the documents of the past in order to get a “feel” for the time in which he set his drawings. The sketch of the Saddlebags Preacher is about as accurate as one can get. I too studied the old documents when I was doing this project, and he is right on the money, from the broad-brimmed black hat to the drab cloak. In those saddlebags the itinerant preachers carried their bible, a note book for jotting down their thoughts as they rode along - to be used the next time they gave a sermon - and occasionally a sandwich or a potato, when they could get one! If they camped out at night they wrapped up in their cloak - no sleeping bags back then!

The Circuits:

Darlington Township

At Hampton a road runs along the north side of the church - it goes over a bridge at the edge of the millpond where the spillway served the flour mill of Henry Elliott, the town’s founder, and a staunch Bible Christian B the mill sat directly behind the church. The municipality took it down a few years ago because they thought it posed a safety hazard. On the other side of the millpond you will find the old Bible Christian burying ground, Pioneer Cemetery it is now called, and it was in the vicinity of that cemetery that the original log chapel would have been built. This is the third Bible Christian church to be built at Hampton.

Eldad Chapel was built at Solina in the early 1840's. On the west side of the church is the Pioneer graveyard. A look at the names therein will match many of the names still on the mailboxes along the sideroads today – the families of Solina have remained where their ancestors settled! The church has changed little since those early days – it was raised and a foundation put under it, and the porch on the front was added to help keep the heat in.

At Courtice Ebenezer Chapel was built in the late 1830's by Christopher Courtice, who arrived from Devon England in 1833 on board the Boline as did Henry Elliott at Hampton. In the photo accompanying this article you will see a slight “dip” in the foreground. This photo was taken about 1930, likely for the anniversary of Ebenezer Chapel. The “dip” is still there and represents an old brook that once flowed along it (it is now just a seasonal watercourse draining nearby fields). It was sent under the road by a culvert and meandered through the trees at the edge of the cemetery adjacent to the church. A lovely resting place for Christopher Courtice’s family and neighbours.



Ebenezer Chapel, Courtice. Built in the late 1830's by Christopher Courtice. This photo is from the 1930's when Ebenezer was celebrating its centennial. It has changed little since it was built.

For those who know Bowmanville, the chapel here was on the corner of Queen St and Division St., right across from the High School. (The High School was housed in a new building about 1980 and this building was used until two years ago as the Senior Public School) At the time of Bowmanville's fiftieth celebrations in 1908 it was the only large structure in town and was used to house the throngs who came out to hear the speeches of the Mayor, and other town notables. At one time it was used as a dancehall! Oh, there must have been a few old Bible Christians rolling in their graves then! This building was as strong as the day it was built at the time of its demolition in 1960, but no one had a use for such a building. Being in the downtown section, the land alone was valuable, and so the building was sacrificed. The sad fate of many buildings of that era.

Other chapels in Darlington include:

- Salem Chapel just north of Bowmanville which is now a Christian Reform Church,
- Tyrone Chapel
- Bethesda Chapel south of Tyrone
- Haydon Chapel aka Peniel
- Providence Chapel just outside Bowmanville
- Enfield Chapel aka Cardiphonia
- Another chapel located in Darlington, but on the Oshawa Circuit was at Taunton, right on the County/Township line. As with the others, no photo is available.

John Hicks Eynon and his wife worked in the bush for about 2 years before they had assistance. It came in the person of the Rev. John Kemeys and his wife. Eynon retained the eastern end of the 200 mile circuit while Kemeys took over the western end - each free to enlarge their portions. The Kemeys resided at Hampton while the Eynons remained at Cobourg, but once each year they traded houses, and switched circuits - it kept them fresh, and allowed them to revisit friends they had made on the other half of the old circuit.

Clarke Township

There was at one time three meeting places in Clarke: Orono, Starkville and Leskard.

At Orono there were two chapels, the old log or frame chapel was used as the church hall when the new brick church was constructed in 1879. At the time of Union in 1884 this church was sold to the Anglican congregation who did not have a church, and the Bible Christian congregation met with the Methodists at their large commodious church building.

At Leskard the old church was taken down or sold and moved after Union.

At Starkville I don't believe there was ever a church - it is possible Sabbath services were held in the school house.

John Kemeys' circuit expanded northward into Peterborough County. When he was out on that part of the circuit he was gone for extended periods of time. Mrs. Kemeys had taken quite a liking to the daughter of Solomon Hooper, the miller at Orono, and when John was away she would often have the little girl come to stay with her for company. Unfortunately, Solomon Hooper was crushed to death by the mill stones in his mill.

Hope Township

William and Betsy Bray came from Cornwall. William was born at St. Teath near the Delabole Slate works, where he worked as a young man. In 1850 he married Betsy Bath at Michaelstow, and in about 1851 they, along with William's brother Thomas, arrived in Upper Canada. William and Betsy took up land at Lot 13, Concession 5, Hope Township, near Canton. Thomas Bray took up land in Hamilton Township, Lot 12, Concession 5, near Coldsprings. Other Bray's settled in old Durham B John, near William in Hope Twp.; Christopher in Manvers Twp., and Jonathan at Enfield in Darlington B but whether or not they are related to William I do not know. Like most of the settlers from Cornwall and Devon, the Bray's were Bible Christians, and like most of the Bible Christian women, Betsy worked tirelessly within her congregation.

Canton chapel was an abandoned log cabin when it was first used as an "all denomination" meeting house by the early settlers, then taken over by the Bible Christians in later years. It appears as if the old cabin had been covered at some time with rough clap boards to help keep out the winter winds. Like the chapel at Orono, when the "new" chapel was built, the old one was added to the rear to act as church hall. The patron of the new church was none other than Vincent Massey, whose house, Batterwood, stood not far away in Canton (the house is still there but not in Massey hands)

Zion chapel was likely the very first chapel erected in Upper Canada. Located on Lot 31, Concession 3, the land was donated by Samuel Naylor. The present church building is the third building on this site, and the adjoining churchyard houses the final resting place of many Hope Township pioneers.

The church at Welcome was built in 1890 to replace a brick church that had been constructed in 1875, but burned down in 1889. Seven acres was also donated to the congregation for a cemetery which is still in use on the Toronto Road about a mile south of Welcome, just south of the 401 interchange.

Rev. Robert Hurley was born in Somerset, England in 1811, and joined the Bible Christians in 1834. He came to Upper Canada in 1842 and his first circuit was the Cobourg Circuit which at that time included both Hope and Hamilton Townships. He was well known in the area as he served here on and off for many years. Most ministers did their 2 or 3 year term here and were never sent back. Rev. Hurley, however, did quite a few 3 year terms here, so many so that he married into the Elliott family who had settled in the Zion/Osaca area. After he returned here from a stint in Wisconsin he must have praised that land so much that most of the Elliott sons moved there. Rev. Hurley and his wife are buried in Welcome Cemetery.

Providence Cemetery at the corner of the 6th concession Road and Highway 28, north of Port Hope, is all that is left to mark the chapel that used to sit there. It was also called Brown's. The chapel has been gone a long time but the cemetery remains to mark our BC heritage.

Other Hope Township Chapels included:

- Osaca, aka Ebenezer
- Mt. Pleasant, Lot 22, Concession 4
- Port Britain
- Trelawney at Port Granby - which was moved to Port Hope in about 1908 to be used as a residence, but I can't find out anything further - where it was relocated, who lived in it.
- Perrytown - the cemetery is all that remains.
- Elizabethville - located south of the village
- Eden Chapel

- Moon's, aka East Zion
- Forest Union Chapel

Northumberland County

Seymour or Campbellford Circuit

The chapels on this circuit included:

- Campbellford Chapel, in town
- English Line, aka Tabernacle - Lot 15 Concession 3
- Zion Chapel at Petherick's Corners
- Bethel Chapel, aka Clarke's, Lot 8 Concession 11
- Salem Chapel, Lot 3, Concession 5
- Stanwood, in the village, aka The White Chapel

The Rev. Archie Clarke was born in Seymour Township in Lot 11, Concession 10 where his parents had settled sometime before his birth in 1834. Archie taught school and took Sabbath Services in the schoolhouse at Petherick's Corners in 1867-68, before Bethel Chapel was constructed. Bethel Chapel and its cemetery were also known as Clarke's, as they had donated the land upon which each stood. Rev. Clarke did not continue with the Methodists after the Union in 1884. He is buried at Clarke's Cemetery alongside his parents and other relatives.

Cobourg Circuit

The first chapel was on Orange Street and was built within the first few years that John Hicks Eynon was ministering here. A second newer chapel was built on the NW corner of James St. and Bond St. Other circuit chapels were found at:

- Precious Corners, Lot 21, Conc. 4, on land donated by Joseph Precious, son of the early settler.
- Camborne, in the village
- Plainville, in the village

Hastings County

Hastings County was and is huge, with 24 townships, rather than the customary 6 or 8. Only four of these saw any Bible Christian activity : Hungerford, Tyendinaga, Huntingdon and Madoc.

Of the others there were meeting places in Rawdon, one of which was likely the schoolhouse at Springbrook. There was also at least one meeting place in Elzevir (location unknown).

Belleville was a circuit of one chapel. It had a large congregation.

Hungerford Circuit:

- Hungerford Township

- Tweed, built in about 1852
- Bethel, Lot 8 Concession 7, at Chapman P.O.
- Bethesda, Lot 10, Concession 4, Duff's Corners

Tyendinaga Township

- Ebenezer Chapel - Lot 34, Concession 5
- Zion Chapel - Lot 5, Conc. 7, aka Halstead's

Huntingdon Circuit:

Huntingdon Township

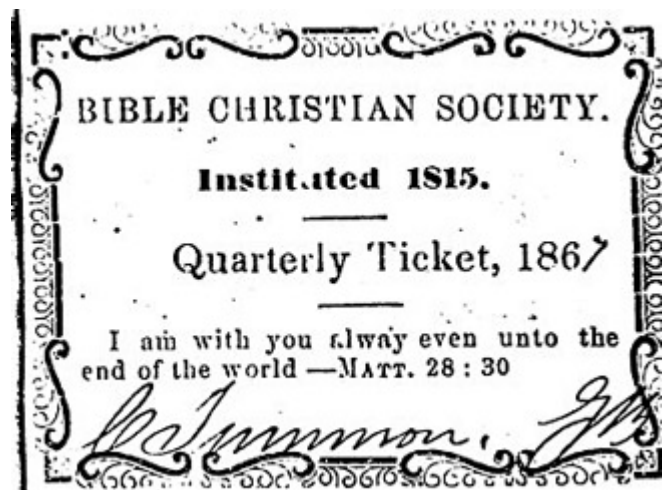
Salem - Lot 12, Concession 8, aka Fuller's - prior to the chapel being built, Sabbath Service was held in the school in the village. Today the present owner of the school has restored the building, and the village "fathers" have invited everyone to come and visit it. I can only assume it is open to the public, or by appointment. I wonder if any of its display or documentation has included its use as a Bible Christian meeting place?

- Zion - Lot 7, Concession 8 at Ivanhoe, on the NW corner of William Collins farm (1878, Belden's Atlas)

Madoc Township

- Madoc Chapel - in the village
- Ebenezer - Lot 20, Concession 1 - aka The English Chapel
- Best's Chapel - Lot 19, Concession 5, at the Upper Eldorado Mine. Most of the miners who came to this area were from Devon and Cornwall and they were likely already adherents to the Bible Christian faith.
- McCoy's - Lot 11, Concession 8. This chapel was moved from Joseph Hazard's farm to a few miles north. Unfortunately, no location is given so we do not know where it was moved, or what its use was once it was settled. It may or may not have continued as a church. Was the move after Union in 1884? No further information has been found.

Pictured here is a quarterly subscription ticket that belonged to Cotton Tummon who settled Lot 8 Concession 9. Cotton Tummon was born at St. Meryn, Cornwall, near Padstow, and he came to Hastings County in about 1857, settling in Huntingdon Township near Ivanhoe. His sisters and one cousin also came to Huntingdon, their surnames, Hoskin, Andrew and Martyn. His nephew, James Hoskin became a Bible Christian minister. Note the initials in the bottom right corner of the ticket - they stand for the circuit minister, George Bodle who issued it.



One of the most interesting men to be associated with the Bible Christians was Anselm Schuster [right]. He was a German Jew who came to Canada to “experience the world”. Once here he discovered religions he had never heard of, including the Methodists and Bible Christians. He would visit their Sabbath meetings, sitting in the back pews and listening to their doctrine. He was intrigued. He wrote home telling his parents of what he had found and they told him in no uncertain words to give up these crazy activities or be disowned. He did not give them up, but instead joined them. First, he joined the Methodists and became an ordained Methodist minister, one of his first assignments was at the “new” German-speaking settlement near Ottawa, because of his fluent German tongue. After that he joined the Bible Christians at a meeting at Tyrone in Darlington Township. He was sent to Belleville Circuit, where he spent many years. During his time there he often spoke to friends and influential townsmen about his dream of a “mission” that could help those beyond the church’s grasp. All to whom he spoke agreed that it was needed in the city. At the Union of 1884 Anselm Schuster did not continue with the Methodist ministry, but saw the opportunity to begin his mission work, and with the support of the community at large, it prospered. Sadly, Rev. Schuster did not live to see his mission prosper. He died in 1885 and both he and his wife are buried at Belleville.



The Bible Christians of the Canadian Conference included Prince Edward Island and three States in the US - Ohio, Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan (mining country). Over 230 chapels were built in North America between 1831 and Union of 1884, and nearly 200 ministers served them.

To find out about the journey’s of the Bible Christians from their homes in Devon and Cornwall to their new homes in North America, and to see where each of their chapels were built, and to learn more about the ministers who served them, please contact Sher Leetooze:

e-mail: sherleetooze@interlinks.net

website: <http://sher.leetooze.googlepages.com/sherleetooze>

or write to her:

Sher Leetooze, 80 Roser Cres, Bowmanville, Ontario, L1C 3N9.

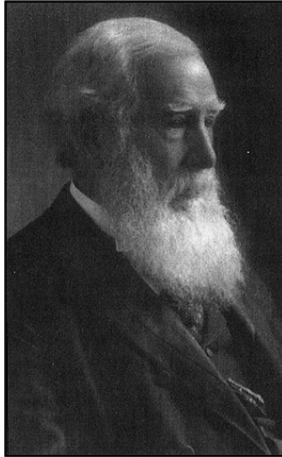
February, 2009

History of Victoria Hall Volunteers

By Madeleine Thibault-Smith

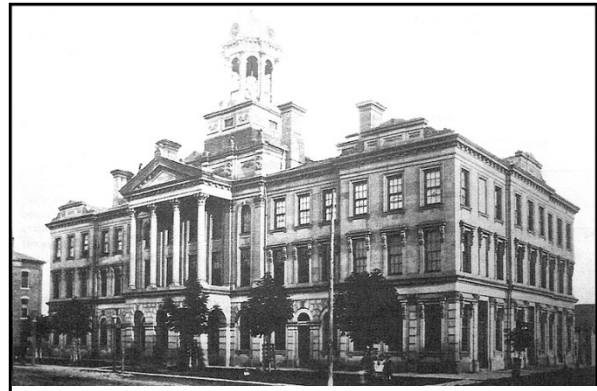
This presentation was accompanied by a Powerpoint presentation with 103 slides – a selection of these are included here.

Victoria Hall, the grand old lady of Cobourg, has presided over the centre of town for well over a century. Kivas Tully, [below] famous architect in the mid 19th century, won the town's design competition and created the plans for the statuesque building. Victoria Hall, named for Queen Victoria, was officially opened by her son, the Prince of Wales, on September 6, 1860.



Courtesy of The Cobourg and District Historical Society Archives (2006-2002 -97)

This picture shows Victoria Hall surrounded by dirt roads and horse hitches. Although citizens of the day were no doubt happy with the buildings' uses, the highest level of pride for the building was yet to come.



Courtesy of The Cobourg and District Historical Society Archives (1986-2002)

In the winter of 1971, Victoria Hall was declared unsafe and most of it was closed to the public. Town Council seemed unwilling to save it and there was talk of tearing it down for a nice, centrally located parking lot. We are indeed fortunate that sanity prevailed.

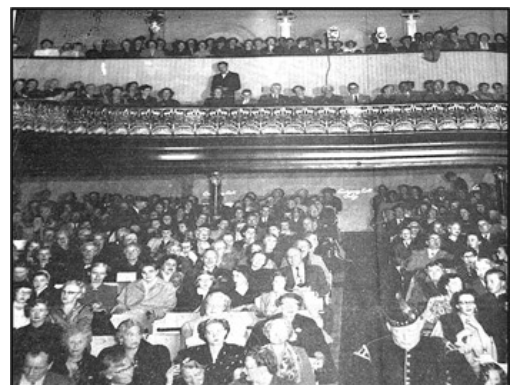
The Director of the art gallery, John Taylor wrote a passionate letter to the paper stating why the building should be saved and how this could be accomplished. With the support of Deputy Reeve Lenah Field Fisher, he organized a meeting of interested citizens which was held in the Courtroom with standing room only. As a result of this meeting a committee was formed and it lobbied hard to save the building. Finally, the Town Council resolved that efforts must be made to preserve and restore Victoria Hall and a Public Meeting was held in the Court Room on October 26, 1971 to establish an organization for this purpose. The organization was called The Society for the Restoration of Victoria Hall.

And so Restoration began.

This slide shows what the Concert Hall looked like before the major restoration.

In 1952, it was called the Opera House, a place where the arts were presented to the delight of the community [right].

This framed original poster of 2 National Ballet of Canada dancers in front of Victoria Hall takes us back to 1959, the year the N.B. of C. performed here. MTS



Courtesy of Cobourg Public Library

holds the beautiful poster presented to the VHV's by the Mayor during the James Cockburn celebration last August.

Here is the Concert Hall during restoration looking at the SE wall. You can see writing on the walls and parts of the original art work. We think this is the south door leading to the kitchen.

The entire Old Bailey court room was removed and excavated to strengthen the underpinnings.

This is the Citizen's Forum, the room we are in now.

The entire foundation was trenched and the walls repaired and made waterproof.

And here is the location of the Future White Garden, south east of the building.

Marion Hagen was on the Board of The Society for the Restoration of Victoria Hall and in the spring of 1975 she organized a House Tour which was a first for Cobourg and was a grand success. The tickets were \$3.00 and the profit was \$2200! That fall Marion founded the Volunteer Women's Committee of Victoria Hall with the first meeting being held in the meeting room above the old Library on Chapel Street, and the Membership fees were \$1.00. An Article in Cobourg Sentinel Star states "the committee's first goal is to replace the clock tower, and the proceeds from any fund-raising will go to this particular part of the restoration project." This is a picture [right] of some of the founding members taken in 2005 at the VHV's 30th anniversary celebration.



Courtesy of The Victoria Hall Volunteers

The First Fund Raiser held on November 1975 was a theatre night with the film "Let's Do It Again". Our profit from this evening was \$4,000.

We were very busy in 1976. We sponsored the Cobourg Concert Band "In Concert" at the West High School.

We also initiated a Pennies for Victoria Hall campaign with cans being placed in the stores and businesses all over town.

In September of that year, we held our first House Tour. This is President Marion Hagen whose house was on the tour. We made almost \$3,000 that day.

During 1977, we hosted two Public Awareness Evenings. The first featured Architect Professor George Baird whose topic "Three Ontario Towns" illustrated the good and the bad of restoring main streets.

The second evening was called Past + Present = Future with the Mayor of Kingston, Ken Keyes, and Dr. Margaret Angus, well-known architectural conservationist. In order to ensure that our Mayor and council would be in attendance, the organizing committee entertained them at dinner in their homes that evening. This event played a pivotal role in the formation of LACAC here in Cobourg!

In September 1978, we produced another House Tour and this one made \$6000, twice as much as the first tour. This is "Rathbunwood" the home of the Honourable George Hees MP for our area at that time.

In 1979 we had our first Valentine's Day Draw and here is Lenah Field Fisher, still very much involved, making the draw. The prize was dinner for 4 people at Dressler House, Cobourg's finest eatery at that time.

An annual series of Travelogues, beginning in 1979 and continuing for 4 years, was a good fundraiser earning \$1,000 in its first year. Here we see, then Mayor Jack Heenan, receiving tickets from President Mary Jane Pocock.

In 1980, we changed our name from the cumbersome, Volunteer Women's Committee of Victoria Hall to, the **Victoria Hall Volunteers**, which is much easier to say.

We continued the Valentine's Day Draw for Dinner at Dressler House. Here is Lenah Fisher again making the draw with Mary Jane Pocock holding the box.

The first fundraising souvenirs were introduced in 1980; Hasti-notes and Bookmarks. The Hasti-notes are still popular. The Bookmarks came from the UK and the cost became prohibitive so they were discontinued.

In 1981, we donated \$400 to seal the concrete floor in the Concert Hall so it could be used. Not wasting an opportunity, we booked the hall for the "Serendipity Sale" of items from the estate of Lenah Field Fisher. This was a cooperative effort with the Art Gallery. It opened with a gala wine and cheese reception, with the sale continuing over the week-end. The proceeds, \$8,000, were split with the Art Gallery.

In September 1982, Jane Fellowes, one of Canada's top fashion models at the time, was in Cobourg visiting her mother. She volunteered to model along with VHV members in a VHV sponsored fashion show. The clothes were from the Kettle Creek Canvas Company which was owned by one of our members. Posters for the event were designed by figure skating champion, Toller Cranston, who then lived in Baltimore. The newspaper article suggests the "show will be one of the happy social events of September and make money for a good cause as well."

Also in 1982 we made our first major donation, \$11,000, for work on the Clock Tower and fulfilled our original goal.

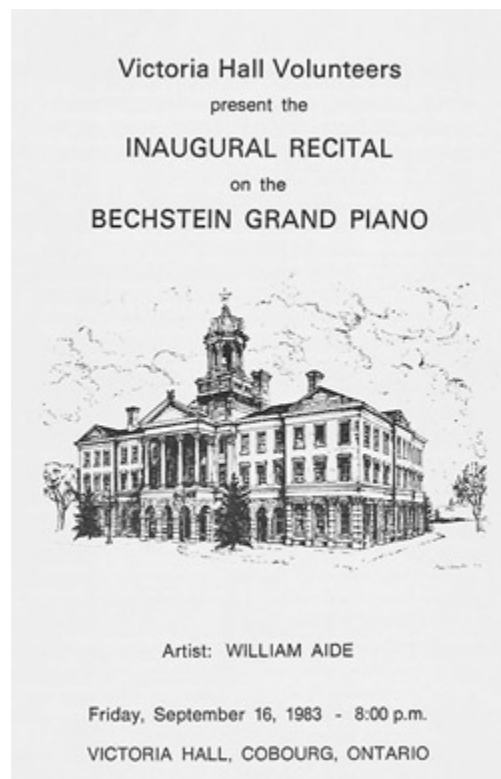
Between 1975 and 1982 we gave over \$16,000 to the Restoration Society and during that same period the membership averaged 35.

In 1983, we continued the Valentine's Day Draw. Here we see President Moira Hayes making the draw while Beth Duncan holds the box.

We added a cookbook called Restoration Recipes to our souvenirs. It sold for \$8.00 and featured recipes from politicians, Cobourg citizens and of course, VHV members. Recipes included: Heather Weyman's Canadian Mud Pie, Lenah Fisher's English Monkey and Grace King's Artillery Punch.

Also in 1983, we held a Fashion Show of Period Clothing.

In that same year, we received a Wintario Grant of \$15,000. Shown in this picture are Win Anderson, Jay McLaughlin, Moira Hayes, Jane Greathead, Barbara Jean Taylor receiving the cheque from then MPP Howard Sheppard. The Wintario grant money was combined with some VHV funds to purchase a Bechstein grand piano and a Kawai upright piano. These were presented to the Town just in time for the official re-opening of Victoria Hall. The Bechstein



Courtesy of The Victoria Hall Volunteers

piano cost over \$32,000.00 which is still our largest single donation. We then sponsored the Inaugural Recital featuring Pianist William Aide.

Souvenirs now included hasti-notes, bookmarks, cookbooks, postcards and now tote bags. All can be seen in the Ryerson/Guillet room's display cases.

In the winter of 1984, we presented an evening of music with the Canadiana Singers called Songs of the Maple Leaf. When Anne Wilson and Jane Greathead were reviewing these pictures and events with Trisha Essery, Anne remarked, that she didn't remember the music but she remembered the gingerbread we served!

Our donations during 1984 were many and totaled about \$6,000.

The first printing of the Victoria Hall Brochures cost \$625. This picture shows Terry Hullin, then Vice President of the Cobourg Chamber of Commerce receiving the first brochure from Moira Hayes. These brochures have been reprinted several times and VHV continues to fund the reprinting. Information on the brochures appears in both official languages.

We also provided a Podium. This actually shows the second podium we purchased; the first one became so banged up we were ashamed to use it... so we had another one built. We also had a brown velvet fall made for the front of the podium, with Victoria Hall Cobourg embroidered in gold. It was stolen very quickly by some souvenir hunter; we replaced it and it was quickly stolen a second time. So we gave up!

Our targeted efforts to make the Hall more functional continued during 1984 with the purchase of china, cutlery, stemware, tables, tablecloths, trolleys, and here we see some of our members with several Town Councilors. This photo shows some of our members using the bar dishwasher in the Citizen's Forum room. Technology seems to have advanced in leaps and bounds since that time!

In 1985 the Valentine's Day Draw was again a success. We continued to sell souvenirs and we started to give tours of the Hall and served coffee and muffins afterwards in this room.

In the fall of 1986 we launched the current affairs series Viewpoint. This first series made \$2,500. This biennial series continues today, with the next event planned for October 2010.

1987 was Cobourg's Sesquicentennial and the VHV's held a Sesquicentennial House Tour in June, which netted us \$14,000.

We bought a new sofa [right] for the Mayor's Office and recovered the chairs. Here Johan McLean waits for the Mayor!



Courtesy of The Victoria Hall Volunteers

We also gave a \$1,000 Donation to the

Sesquicentennial Committee. Miriam Johnston, Marion Hagen, Moira Hayes, Charlotte Cockerill and Anne Wilson are seen giving the cheque to Bruce Margles who was Treasurer of the Sesqui Committee.

In 1988, we sponsored another show of period clothes "Fashions of Yesteryear".. That year we also replaced the carpet in the Art Gallery at a cost \$4,000.



Courtesy of The Victoria Hall Volunteers

In 1989 we decided to improve the area between the Firehall and the back of Victoria Hall. Landscape Architect, Miriam Mutton presented plans for the White Garden and oversaw its installation. It cost \$6,000 and was a vast improvement for that space. This is, of course, The White Garden Today [left].

In this same year, Dressler House had a disastrous fire. We gave a donation of \$1,000.00 to the Marie Dressler Foundation to assist in the restoration.

In 1990, we ventured into new territory with an Antiques Appraisal Evening called, "Is there Gold In Your Cupboard?" with a professional appraiser from Waddington's. This event produced about \$800.

Selling souvenirs at the Waterfront Festival in July was also a new venture. Here are Marg Allen and Carol Norcutt busy at work. [right]



Courtesy of The Victoria Hall Volunteers

Always concerned with looking out for our investments, we paid for a dolley and ramp to facilitate easier moving of the grand piano. Later, we funded a hydraulic lift which makes moving the piano much easier and safer.

June 1991 found us doing another House Tour and this one raised a little over \$10,000. Here Jan Howieson, Linda Stephen, Heather Weyman and Ethelwynn Rempel sit on the steps of the Curtis home.

And again we were selling souvenirs at the Waterfront Festival. Here are Marion Hagen, Amber James and Charlotte Cockerill busy at work.

We paid for the additional Handrails on all the stairs. This is Dorothy Gain, Johan McLean, Gail Rayment, Maura Leahy, Brenda Niles, Isabel Pankhurst, and Lynne Anderson using the handrail.

1992 found Amber James and Binty Robertson again with Souvenirs at the Waterfront Festival.

Also in 1992, we provided the much needed humidification system for the Bechstein piano [right].



In 1993, the first lecture series on gardening, "How Does Your

Garden Grow?" was held and it earned \$2,000. VHV member Miriam Mutton was one of the speakers in the first series. Here is speaker Mark Cullen signing books after his talk in 1996. The Garden Series has continued each spring to sold out audiences with ever increasing profits. After a very successful 15 years, this event had its final curtain call in 2008. Here we see VHV Dorothy Gain and speaker Anna Leggatt at one of the evenings.

The major expenditure in '93 was for the Blinds in the Concert Hall and Citizens' Forum. Here are Sharon Reid, Madeleine Thibault-Smith, and the infamous blinds. The blinds in the Concert



Courtesy of The Victoria Hall Volunteers

Hall were motorized and proved problematic from the beginning. It was a good idea if only they had worked and the company had stayed in business.

In 1994, our only purchase seems to have been the large projection screen which is used in the Concert Hall.

In 1995, our chief expenditure was \$3,500 to repair and restore the chairs and benches in Council Chamber. [left]

Another Valentine's Day Draw with then Mayor Joan Chalovitch pulling the winning ticket and Judy Kerr, Charlotte Cockerill, Mary Jane Pocock and Jane Greathead looking on.

In 1996, we held a course called "Common Sense Self-Defense" for women.

And we replaced the carpet in the Citizens' Forum.

The Victoria Hall tile was added to our inventory of souvenirs.

1997 saw the introduction of the biennial Wine Tasting Evening [right], including our own Wine Consultant Bruce Maclean.

That same year, we provided a state-of-the-art Sound System for the Concert Hall at a cost of \$18,000. Here we see Tom Hall and some VHV's figuring it out.



Courtesy of The Victoria Hall Volunteers



Courtesy of The Victoria Hall Volunteers

In 1998, we paid for Banners to advertise the Concert Hall and Art Gallery.

In 1999, we remembered deceased VHV members with an "In Memoriam Plaque and Tree" in the White Garden. June Mackenzie, Miriam Johnston, June Harvey, Marion Hagen, Judy Kerr, Jane Greathead, Diana Cunnington, Gwenn Care and Mary Jane Pocock are seen around the plaque.

Also in 1999, our famous T-Shirts and Sweatshirts were introduced. Here are June Mackenzie, Marg Allen and Joyce Graham selling shirts at the Farmers' Market. [Left]. Then in December we got National Exposure in the Globe and Mail with an article on how

to "repurpose" our sweatshirt!

In that same year, we purchased a commercial dishwasher and provided additional sound-mixing equipment.

In 2000, we purchased body-pact mics and cordless microphone and here is Tom Hall demonstrating their use.

And then in 2001 we had the Rose Controversy when Town Council suggested placing this design in the forecourt of the Hall. The Victoria Hall Volunteers successfully lobbied against this proposal. And thankfully once again sanity prevailed!

We purchased more speakers for the sound system and donated the Armillary Sphere Sundial to Victoria Square. Wendy McQueen and Jane Frost look like they'll give it a spin.

In 2002, we again we contributed to the Clock Tower restoration.

Pointing to the tower are Jennifer Darrell, Jane Greathead, Ethelwynn Rempel, Jannette Johnson, Fran Morrison, Faye Haddow, Marg Allen, Nicole Corbeil, Paula Glaser, Joyce Graham, Jackie Hick. To date we have given \$21,000 to restore the clock tower.

We also refurbished the Display Cases in the foyer and here are Barb Blaney, Gloria Blake, and Bert MacMillan checking out our display.

Also in the foyer, we provided the Plinth and Cover for Queen Victoria. This picture was taken at the unveiling.

In 2003, our major contribution was the addition of Theatre Lights for the Concert Hall.

In 2004, we donated the Table, Chairs and Chess Set for Victoria Square. Here we see Helen Lackey and Jennifer Rogers ready for a game.

Our most recent major expense was \$20,000 contribution to the Town towards the repair and restoration of the water damaged West Wall and to replace the Concert Hall Floor.



Courtesy of The Victoria Hall Volunteers

On Valentine's Day 2005, Paula Todd, formerly from TV Ontario, was the guest speaker at our author's luncheon and we were thrilled to see her wear our sweatshirt that evening on Studio Two. Great publicity for Cobourg and the VHV's!

In 2006, these lovely banquet chairs were purchased to enhance the overall look of the concert hall at formal events such as weddings and banquets.

Another donation was for the conversion of the street gas lamps to electricity while maintaining their historical look [left].

In 2007, responding to a request from the Art Gallery, we donated \$5000 for the installation of laminate floor in the gift shop.

Here we see the presentation of our \$1000 cheque to the Historical Archives staff. Our historical records and minutes needed a good home and we were happy to make this contribution to this organization.

Last year, we had the golden opportunity to have Peter John

Stokes, the restoration architect, retell the story of Victoria Hall's "rebirth". The evening was a memorable one in many ways, not the least of which is a video documentary of the event.

Recently, we purchased the projection screen and table we are using tonight, contributed to the purchase of new concert layout chairs for the Hall and soon, you'll see a newly refurbished Information kiosk at the north west corner of the property.

You have just relived a Coles' Notes version of the 34 years of the VHV's many accomplishments. Over that time, our activities and initiatives have raised more than \$300,000 which have been applied to many facets of the building, and helped raise awareness of heritage issues. We have proudly helped to preserve and maintain one of Canada's National Historic Buildings and in the process we have forged lifetime friendships and we continue to have much fun.

In 1983, several months before the October 7 Re-Opening of the Hall, then Mayor Mac Lees stated that, "the future vitality of Cobourg would revolve around Victoria Hall, with it as the crowning jewel of the town centre". In 2009, we can attest to the wisdom of those words and we, the VHVs, take pride in our achievements to support that concept.

Looking ahead, our next big project is the planning of the 150th Anniversary of Victoria Hall, which will be marked with a Grand Ball on May 29th, 2010. With that in the works, we think Kivas Tully, the building's architect, and John Taylor and Lenah Fisher, the advocates for the building's restoration, are all smiling down on us!

March, 2009

Railways of the 1850s and 1860s

On 24 March 2009 The Cobourg and District Historical Society welcomed author Rod Clarke who gave a presentation entitled *Railways of the 1850s and 1860s*. Mr. Clarke is the acclaimed author of *Narrow Gauge Through the Bush* the story of two Ontario railways constructed in the 1860s. Rod Clarke began his presentation with an overview of the history of railways in British North America touching upon the earliest railways and the ensuing railway mania of the 1850s which lead to the ill-fated Cobourg & Peterborough Railway.

By the late 1850s the largest cities in the provinces of Ontario and Quebec were connected by rail as well as ports such as Windsor and Sarnia. Unfortunately an economic crisis in 1857, the effects of which were not unlike the one we are currently experiencing, put severe restraints on further railway expansion and some companies, including The Grand Trunk Railway, were near to insolvency.

Gradually the political climate of the time favoured the idea of confederating the Maritime Provinces with Quebec and Ontario and the railways came to have an important part to play in nation building. By the mid-1860s railway building was back on the agenda and the building of lines from Toronto to the North East and the North West was being proposed. A lot of the discussion revolved around the width of the track and this developed into a fierce debate as to which gauge should be used.

Mr. Clarke explained the merits of various gauges for railways and the history of how different gauges came to be used in different parts of the world. He illustrated the various widths with the help of a nifty gadget that could expand from the narrowest to the widest gauge. Since these railways were not connecting with the United States' broad gauge system and the cost of building a track that was 3ft 6ins wide was deemed to be more cost effective to build and operate both the Toronto Grey & Bruce and the Toronto & Nipissing Railways were constructed as narrow gauge.

Mr. Clarke introduced us to the main players who were the supporters of the construction of both these railways and also the engineers who were employed to construct the lines.

He also spoke about the raising of funds and the political reasons for opening up the areas to more settlement. In the case of the TG&B the town of Orangeville was the first objective beyond which the ports on Lake Huron and Georgian Bay would allow commodities such as timber to be transported directly to Toronto. The town of Uxbridge was the first objective of the Toronto Nipissing Railway however the goal of Lake Nipissing was never attained due to rising costs, low settlement in the area due to poor quality land and competition from the Northern Railway Company.

As a life-long railway enthusiast, and especially of narrow gauge, Rod Clarke has spent over twenty years compiling material of every description covering all aspects of these two railways from their inception and construction through to their operation, rolling stock, equipment and station architecture. His talk was fully illustrated by photographs, plans, maps, advertisements etc. presenting a wealth of detail. We all enjoyed the journey.

Libby Seekings

Narrow Gauge Through the Bush - Ontario's Toronto Grey & Bruce and Toronto & Nipissing Railways by Rod Clarke.

Published by Rod Clarke and Ralph Beaumont 2007

ISBN 978-0-9784406-0-2

The Cobourg and District Historical Society has presented a copy of *Narrow Gauge Through the Bush* to the Cobourg Public Library.

April, 2009

Second Beginnings

Nineteenth-Century Fur Trade Families of the Cobourg Area

By Cath Oberholtzer

Many years ago I was told a story about fur trader Jacob Corrigan's native wife who, homesick for the north, erected a tepee in the living room of their Cobourg home. It is certainly true that Jacob Corrigan retired to Cobourg after many years working in the North. However, his Cree wife died 17 years before he settled in the south, and if indeed a tepee had been erected, it more likely would have been outside.¹ The story indicates – at least to me – that it was intended to reinforce (and continues to reinforce) local knowledge that Corrigan's wife was “Indian” and that their children carried her bloodline. This story, and the fact that a Scottish-born Hudson Bay Company trader and his mixed-heritage children had settled in Cobourg, intrigued me.

Then, when I was working with the Grant collections of Cree items held by the Canadian Museum of Civilization and the small Loyalists and Nor'Westers Museum in Williamstown, Ontario, I learned that the donor of both collections was a Miss Dorothy Grant of R.R.#1, Port Hope. Genealogical research revealed that Miss Grant was the descendant of two fur trade families – the Gladmans and the Stuarts – who had retired to the Port Hope area following careers in the Hudson's Bay Company. The material – most likely created by Miss Grant's great grandmother, of Cree heritage – had been passed down through the family.

These two stories continued to pique my interest and I began to look into other families who had begun new lives in the south after many years involved in the northern fur trade business. Most of the men, born in England or Scotland, had attained either the highest ranks of Chief Factors or Chief Traders within the Hudson's Bay Company or had become partners of the North West Company. All retired with good pensions and many of them were married to women of varying degrees of native heritage. I was curious about the reasons they had chosen this particular area.

- \$ How did they learn about this part of Canada?
- \$ Did they know anyone here?
- \$ What was the impetus to move south rather than return to Britain or retire in Red River?
- \$ How did the native families fare in this new social environment?

What I have discovered is convoluted and complex – but fascinating. The following is a brief – and incomplete – synopsis of my findings to this point. First, a brief overview of the two major fur trade companies is required prior to considering these retirees.

The Fur Trade Companies

In 1670, the English Crown granted the partners of the Hudson Bay Company (hereafter HBC) all the land draining the Hudson and James Bays. Initially, access from England to this newly-named “Rupert's Land” was by ship through Arctic waters, across the two large bays (Hudson and James) into the mouths of the large rivers now known as Rupert, Moose, Albany and Churchill. Eventually trading posts were set up in these strategic riverine locations with English officers with Scots from the Orkney Isles serving under them. Natives – mostly Cree

¹. After presenting this paper, I was told a similar story about John Dugald Cameron's native wife Mary who did move to Grafton with him. According to the story, she erected a tepee outside, behind the house.

during the early years – were encouraged to bring their furs to the posts in exchange for European goods. Although control of this huge area remained under the HBC until 1870 when the land was sold to Canada, the posts continued to play active roles in the fur trade.

The second major player was the North West Company (NWCo) based in Montreal, the traders themselves were commonly referred to as “Nor’Westers.” The partners of this Montreal company – primarily clannish Highland Scots – utilized the Great Lakes and river systems to gain entrance into the far northwest to gather furs. In order to move trade goods into the north and quantities of furs back to Montreal, the Nor’Westers adapted native technology to construct the enormous canoes dominant in painted images of these voyageurs.

Men from both companies married native women in the “manner of the country”; that is, without the benefit of clergy, and sired numerous children. The education of their offspring became of considerable concern. Early efforts to begin schools with English teachers in the north was erratic and not entirely satisfactory. Rather, many HBC officers oversaw their own children’s education – both boys and girls – and occasionally sent their sons home to Britain for further schooling. The NWCo partners and traders on the other hand sent their children down to Montreal to be schooled. Here the young of the Nor’Westers made long-lasting and important alliances fortified by family ties.

In 1821, the two companies amalgamated under the aegis of the HBC. A number of officers retired at that time, some going to the new Red River settlement with their native wives while others returned to England and Scotland leaving their native families behind. Several of these “turned off” native women², unable to return to their natal families, married other traders. The result created a complex web of half- and step-children spread across a broad geographical space.

During this same time period, people in the British Isles were being encouraged to emigrate to Canada where land and timber abounded. One specific corporate colonization company, The Canada Company, bought up huge tracts of land in Upper Canada to entice immigrants (C.Brown 1987:226-7) and eventually opened one of its branches in Cobourg. Add to this group a number of Loyalist families who eventually settled in the Cobourg area after leaving the United States. By the early 1830s, the little village had blossomed into the bustling commercial centre of Cobourg and when Cobourg became incorporated in 1837, steamers were busy plying the Great Lakes while stage coaches linked the growing town to York (Toronto) and Kingston. Several elementary schools provided educational possibilities. Significant in Cobourg’s burgeoning role as an educational centre, the 1836 opening of the Upper Canada Academy, a residential preparatory school³ offered secondary education (Figure 1). From a religious standpoint, Cobourg had strong Methodist, Anglican (The Church of England), and Presbyterian presence. These attributes, together with the cultural and political ambience of a flourishing community, presented a sense of “civilized” society without the distractions and drawbacks of larger communities. A perfect place for retirement and/or second careers. Into this milieu, the first retiring fur traders began to settle in Cobourg and the surrounding area.

². Sylvia Van Kirk (1980:50) provides a fuller description of the practice of “turning off” wives by arranging a marriage with another man and thus freeing the original husband.

³. The Upper Canada Academy was later upgraded in status and re-named Victoria College.

Robert Henry:

The first fur trader to begin a second career was Robert Henry, NWCo partner who retired in 1817 to take up residence in Cobourg. Henry quickly became a leading force in Cobourg, active as a committee member on the Cobourg and Amherst Fire Department, treasurer of the Cobourg Railway Company, treasurer of the Cobourg Board of Police (earliest town council) and Justice of the Peace. As a significant land holder he became known as “Squire” Henry, and had begun his second career as the owner of “one of the largest flour mills in Canada” (Guillet 1947:13). Following the sale of the mill and surrounding land, Henry opened a private bank and later became the agent of the Commercial Bank of the Midland District (Climo n.d.:64). This bank was housed in what has been claimed to be Cobourg’s earliest house built on the southeast corner of King and Church Streets (Figure 2). For many years Henry played an active role as a miller, banker, speculator, and in the social life of the town, all of which has been recorded in Cobourg’s written history (see, for example, Climo n.d.). What interests me more is how he came to be in Cobourg in 1817.

The answer appears to rest with the Bethune family. The patriarch of the Bethunes was a Loyalist by the name of Rev. John Bethune whose wife was Véronique Waddens⁴, daughter of Swiss-born Jean-Etienne Waddens, one of the original partners of the NWCo. Their large family included James Gray Bethune, a merchant, post master, agent for the Canada Company, land holder, president of the Harbour Company and much more, all of which established him as one of early Cobourg’s movers and shakers. His brother Alexander Neil Bethune, long the incumbent at St. Peter’s Anglican Church, was later elevated as the Bishop of Toronto. However, it was more than likely the oldest son, Angus Bethune, who was Henry’s initial contact as Angus had joined the NWCo at an early age. Robert Henry may have met Angus during the course of their engagement in the fur trade but they may have been brought together earlier when Angus accompanied Robert Henry’s cousin, Alexander Henry, the younger, to Rocky Mountain House in Alberta. Further ties evolved when Robert married Bethune’s cousin, the un-named sister of William Morrison (J.Brown 1980:112). The fate of the first wife remains unknown; however, Robert Henry was clearly eligible to marry the Bethune daughter, Christy, very soon after he arrived in Cobourg and thus further strengthening his ties to the Bethune family. In addition to these family ties, James Gray Bethune also involved Robert Henry in many of his entrepreneurial schemes.⁵ While acting as the agent for the Canada Company, Bethune’s office was located in the same building as Henry’s bank (Figure 4). Robert Henry and his wife Christy are both buried in the Heritage Cemetery of St. Peter’s.

David and William Burnet:

In the 1830s, the Burnet family arrived in Cobourg, possibly in response to the efforts of the companies promoting emigration. The two sons who had worked in the north for the HBC joined their parents and brothers in Cobourg, drawn there by the promise of steady employment. As builders and carpenters, the Burnet men erected many fine buildings in Cobourg including the Market Building, Victoria Hall, four houses on Ontario Street for each of the Burnet sons (Figure 3), and Jacob Corrigan’s house on William Street and Victoria Hall. I am glossing over the Burnets, for as fur traders, David and William played only minor roles, while their work as carpenters in Cobourg and their involvement in the community brought far greater and longer-lasting success. William, of the next generation became a King Street merchant (Figure 4).

⁴. Also spelled Uadin, Vadin, Wadden in the records.

⁵. See Baskerville 1976 for an overview of Bethune’s business ventures.

Impact of Methodists:

The activity in Cobourg in the 1830s reached heights almost frenetic at times, and particularly so in the work of Methodist missionaries. As I mentioned before, the Methodists established Upper Canada Academy which opened in 1836 (Figure 6). A decade or so earlier, the Methodist Missionary Society had set up a common school at Alnwick near the south shore of Rice Lake to teach the Mississauga children⁶ (Miller 1996:84). Several of these mission school students were later admitted to Victoria College (Whalen 2000:95) and one of the first students to attend the Academy was Henry Bird Steinhauer, an Ojibwa from the Rama Reserve near Orillia (Schmalz 1991:153). Steinhauer interrupted his studies there for a year to teach at the Alderville Mission School. Returning to the Academy, Steinhauer graduated in 1839 at the head of his class.

Into this mix came James Evans, who first as a teacher and then as a Methodist missionary, arrived in Cobourg to teach at the Alnwick school. In 1838, Evans left his wife and daughter in Cobourg while he took up a mission post in the Lake Superior area. Then, after convincing the HBC Governor, Sir George Simpson, that the Methodist missionaries would not disrupt the activities of the HBC, Evans, his wife, daughter and two native assistants – Peter Jacobs and Steinhauer – moved to Norway House, Manitoba to begin their mission work of teaching and proselytizing the Cree (Landon 1932). While at Norway House, Evans developed Cree syllabics (Figure 5), a system of writing which enabled the Cree to read almost instantly, a great boon for missionary teaching among a previously pre-literate people. And of course, all the while, Evans was promoting the Upper Canada Academy and the community of Cobourg. Whether or not this was an actual influence, we can't be certain, but the potential existed and in the 1840s, several fur traders did retire to this area.

Jacob Corrigan:

The first of these was Chief Trader Jacob Corrigan and four of his adult children who settled in Cobourg, to be followed later by daughter Ann and her husband, Chief Trader William Nourse. A widower⁷, aged 68 when this move occurred, Jacob didn't launch himself into another career but rather enjoyed retirement by overseeing the construction of a substantial 13-room brick house. Built by Frank Burnet and Sons, the house stands at what is now 458 William Street just south of the present railway tracks (Figure 6). The property, acquired from Zaccheus Burnham, ran from the Grand Trunk Railway on the north to University Avenue on the south and was bounded on the east by Ontario Street. Sadly, by 1890, the property had been mortgaged by the three unmarried daughters and had to be sold through Power of Sale. When Jacob Corrigan, Esq. died in 1844, he was buried in the church yard of St. Peter's church and an impressive vault⁸ covered his grave (Figure 7). The burial costs listed by F.S. Clench of £6 and 5 shillings obviously didn't include the cost of this vault. The three executors for his will had all been fur traders: Robert Henry, Alexander Christie and William Nourse.

⁶. One successful student was George Copway who later became a school teacher, a preacher, interpreter and author (Schmalz 1991:152).

⁷. An undocumented "tradition" recorded in *Cobourg: Early Days and Modern Times* (Spilsbury 1981:22) states that "Corrigan eloped with the daughter of the Chief after the tribe attacked and killed his brother and family." Corrigan's brother William and his wife were indeed murdered in 1832 (HBCA Biography). As Jacob Corrigan's wife Mary died in 1823 (Fowler personal communication 2006), and as there is no record of a second wife, the story has become romanticised over the years.

⁸. Although the names of the four unmarried children are engraved on the vault, all four are buried in two unmarked graves in the Heritage Cemetery of St. Peter's (Fowler p.c. 2006).

It was Corrigan's younger son⁹ William who played an active role in Cobourg's commerce. With his partner George M. Goodeve, he ran a dry goods store and then a book store on King St. (Figure 8). William was also a member of the committee "appointed [on December 6th, 1850] to place the Inhabitants of Cobourg in Communication with those in the different localities through which it is proposed the line of Railroad connecting Prescott with Hamilton" (Minute Book of the Council 1850). In 1853, as Secretary of the Board of Common School Trustees, William Corrigan's request for £50 from the Town towards a library for the common schools was successful (Calnan 1976:194). By 1865, William had been appointed a deputy registrar in the County. William became an invaluable member of Cobourg's cricket team, his athletic prowess evident during an 1846 cricket match against Bowmanville when he scored 20 runs in the first inning (Guillet 1948: 112). It is, however, the glowing obituary written for William in 1890 which reveals his acceptance into the community. The record states that "William Corrigan [was] one of our oldest and most respected fellow-townsmen....He had few faults but many excellent qualities of character, and his passing away from amongst us is deeply regretted by all, more particularly by the surviving members of the family, and a large circle of sincerely sympathizing friends" (Anon. 1890). William had never married and the male Corrigan line in Cobourg died out.

Of Corrigan's five daughters only two married: the eldest Ann to Edinburgh-born William Nourse – also a Chief Trader with the HBC – and Mary to Orcadian Robert Scollie who had been one of Corrigan's senior employees at Albany. Some or all of Nourse's children must have been in Cobourg by 1844 as Nourse advised the HBC on that date that he had authorised William Corrigan to draw on his HBC account for expenses for his children (HBCA A.311/58 fo.3). William Nourse died in Cobourg and the Scollies homesteaded in Otonabee Township.

Little is known about the unmarried daughters, Charlotte, Elizabeth, and Catherine. Within in the family they, especially Catherine, were known as exceptionally fine pianists who had taken lessons from Marie Dressler's father, Alexander von Kroeber¹⁰. In turn, Catherine shared her expertise with her niece Maggie Scollie (Fowler 2004).

John Dugald Cameron:

In 1843, Chief Factor, John Dugald Cameron wrote in a letter that his daughter Elizabeth's husband, William Clouston was going down to settle on his farm at Cobourg (J.Brown 1980:193). As yet I have been unable to pinpoint where this farm was located. Whether it was a family farm or one he purchased through an intermediary while he worked in the north has yet to be determined. He further mentions that his son Ranald was working on a farm and that Clouston would be within a short distance of Ranald and his English-born wife (ibid). Shortly after writing this letter, Cameron, his native wife and daughter Margaret retired to Grafton, living first with Ranald and his wife and then in an imposing red brick house (Figure 9) which Cameron purchased from John and Mary Spalding Steele for £600 (Cole 1979:222; McBurney and Byers 1979:166).

Again, the draw to the Cobourg area is not readily apparent. However, we do know that

⁹. Joseph, the oldest of the children was sent "home" to Orkney in 1822 and disappears from the record. William also was sent "home" in 1824 but returned at some undisclosed date.

¹⁰. As von Kroeber was renowned for his intolerance of the abilities of his young students, it might have been interesting to learn what comments he might have made about the talents and "Indian-ness" of these young ladies (cf. Dressler 1934:9).

as a Chief Factor with the HBC Cameron had been in charge of the Lake Superior district from 1836 to 39. If you recall, the Methodist missionary Rev. James Evans was conducting mission work in that district in 1838. Cameron would have been responsible for Evans well-being and their contact – one man with news from the south, the other with experience and expertise in northern ways – would have been mutually rewarding. Through their inevitable conversations, Cameron may have realized that Cobourg offered opportunities, and at least partial acceptance, for his native wife and mixed-heritage family.

After their move south, Mary Cameron – the only full-blooded native¹¹ wife in the immediate area (other wives and children of fur traders had various amounts of native blood) – adapted reasonably well to her new environment. According to Cameron’s correspondence, his wife took an active interest in the farming operations of her son Ranald’s farm. In fact, Cameron noted in an 1848 letter that, “had she control over the Farm, [she] would conduct it much better than her son – she is now actually engaged in the woods making a new road for hawling [sic] out wood” (HBCA D.5/26, fo.258).

At the time of the 1852 Canadian Census, John Dugald (75) and Mary (69) were still living in Northumberland County (Grafton), daughter Margaret (41) lived with them, son Ranald (43) was still farming, and son Charles (25) was a Physician practising in the area. Daughter Elizabeth and her husband, William Clouston, remained nearby. In 1857, at the age of 80, Cameron died in Grafton (Figure 10). He had been a devoted family man and a devout Christian with a thirst for knowledge; a man who was well liked for his integrity, warmth and generosity.¹² Of interest perhaps is the wording on the four faces of the J.D. Cameron’s grave stone and on John Ranald’s. Despite John Dugald’s devotion to his wife Mary, her name does not appear on these grave stones: children Hugh, Margaret and John Ranald¹³ are listed as being the children of “J.D.Cameron, Esq., Late of the Hon. H. B. Company.” Nor is there a grave marker for Mary, and at this time I have no idea where she might be buried.

Thomas McMurray:

Thomas McMurray began his long career in the fur trade in 1799 first with the small XY Company which was absorbed by the NWCo in 1804 and then with the HBC when it became amalgamated with the NWCo in 1821. In his will of 1824, Thomas had named Jane Cardinalle, his Indian-French wife, as the mother of his six “natural and adopted children” (Duckworth 1990:141; HBCA A.36/10, 116-17), a term indicating that their union was *à la façon du pays*, ‘after the custom of the country’. Upon his retirement in 1843, Thomas McMurray, Jane and their daughter Mary moved to the Brighton area.¹⁴ Although there is not a great deal of local

¹¹. There were Mississauga (Ojibwa) natives in the area to the north of Cobourg, but would have been living a different lifestyle than Mary Cameron.

¹². Ranald was married to Selina Mary Bidwell from Colborne. Their daughter Margaret married into the Barnum family.

¹³. Ranald and Selina’s only son, Dugald J.R. Cameron died on February 10, 1875 aged 22 years. Whether or not this is the same Dougald Duncan Cameron who was registered at Trinity College School (TCS) in Port Hope by Mrs. Cameron of Grafton in September 1867 is difficult to determine. The TCS Registry gives the latter’s date of birth as December 2, 1852 which would have made him 22 in February of 1875. In any case, the Cameron enrolled at TCS was expelled in 1870 for “not begging Mr. Bethune’s pardon for slapping his knee in School” (Humble 1965:25). The TCS Registrar’s Book states that Cameron was “sent home for impertinence to Rev. F.A. Bethune, Trin. Term, 1870.”

¹⁴. As McMurray had a leave of absence for the two years prior to his retirement, it appears that he may have moved south at that time.

information about them, we do know that Jane and Mary were unhappy with their new way of life, but eventually became reconciled to it. The situation improved further with the arrival of Cuthbert Cumming and his wife Jane McMurray (daughter of Thomas and Jane). By 1852 the Census¹⁵ reveals that their son (and seventh child), Dugald, age 24 was working as a labourer in Cramahe Township. There is not mention of when Dugald joined them.

One possible clue as to why the McMurrays (and the Cummings) might have chosen this area may well have been Thomas' 1815 election into the prestigious Beaver Club in Montreal at the very same time that Robert Henry was elected. This men's club came into existence in 1785, established by the partners of the North West Company so that its members could socialize and embellish their fur trade exploits over copious quantities of alcoholic beverages and food (Podruchny 1998). Limited to 55 members at any one time, members had to be invited and sponsored by another member. As the members formed a close-knit group, we can speculate that McMurray and Henry met on more than one occasion and likely maintained a social connection.

Cuthbert Cumming:

The McMurrays were followed in a year or two by Chief Trader, Cuthbert Cumming who, with his wife Jane and infant son, retired to Colborne in 1843. Having been married only two years before at Fort Pic on the north shore of Lake Superior, Jane was Cuthbert's second wife. Prior to this, he had sired seven children by an Indian woman all of whom appear to have remained in the north. At the time of this second marriage, Cuthbert was 55 years old, and his bride half that at 28. Together they would produce seven more little Cummings, six sons and one daughter.

Prior to his retirement, Cuthbert took possession of 200 acres of land (Lot 29, Concession 1) just on the eastern edge of Colborne. Upon retirement they then acquired a red brick house on King Street West (Lot 512) in Colborne (Figure 11) from John and Mary Spalding Steele. In 1910, an unspecified portion of the lot was sold to the Canadian Northern Ontario Railway Company for a right of way. The house remained in the family until 1912 when it was sold to George Schaffer, a local hotelier (McBurney and Byers 1979:148). The two older sons, James Cuthbert and Thomas Wallace, farmed on land on the outskirts of Colborne, although when Wallace died in 1880 his occupation was listed as Gentleman. Younger sons, George and Ross, were both enrolled by their mother at Trinity College School (TCS) in Port Hope. George, registered as student #123, was admitted to the school in January of 1869. During the field events held on June 13th of 1870, he dislocated his arm while attempting the long jump (Humble 1965:24, 25) and left very shortly thereafter. He appears as a tall, handsome-looking young man in the back row of a school photograph taken for the 1869-70 school year (Humble 1965: Plate 1-8). In September 1873, his brother Ross (#283) entered TCS. Reading into the evidence, it appears that Ross may have been homesick as he ran away that same September. As the TCS records do not indicate that he returned to the school, he may have been educated elsewhere. (I wonder if any of the £225 fee was ever repaid to his mother?)

The oldest son, James Cuthbert Cumming married Catherine Ann Strong of Cobourg on the 9th August 1877 at Trinity Anglican Church in Colborne (Figure 12). Witnesses were his brother Wallace and J. Craig of Port Hope. Wallace married Martha Helen Maybee. George didn't marry. By an account by an old fur trade crony, Cuthbert enjoyed his retired life. A letter

¹⁵. Although the digital records of the 1852 Census list Dugald's birthplace as Ireland, the microfilmed records indicate he was born in Canada (Lindsay 2009).

dated April 12, 1846 from George Barnston to James Hargrave delights with the tale that he had accompanied John George McTavish to Swords (in Montreal) where they “found Cummings [sic] the ‘Noble Burgundy’ seated in all his breadth and Majesty, on the Hall Bench, a perfect picture of ease and contentment” (MacLeod 1947:lxvi). The two rotund men – Cumming and McTavish – held a mock sparring match when they met.

While Cuthbert may have been enjoying the good things in life, a walk through the cemetery at Colborne’s Trinity Anglican Church reveals that at least one aspect of Jane Cumming’s life was like that of many women in that time period. Jane’s older sister Mary, who had become the wife of John Matheson of Murray at some point, died and was buried in Colborne (Figure 13). Was she helping her sister Jane with the children? Or was Jane looking after her? The answers are buried with them. Seventeen months later, Jane’s father died followed soon after by Jane and Cuthbert’s four-year-old son Walter. Their only daughter Jane died in 1851, a mere 16 months old (figure 14). Ten years later, in 1861, their four-year-old son Dougall died. Old Cuthbert lived to be 83, dying in 1870 after being paralyzed for one and a half years. Son Wallace died from consumption (tuberculosis) in 1880 at age 33 and his wife Martha joined him in 1882, just 35 at the time. Passing away at age 35 in 1895, George outlived his mother by two year’s, although he had suffered from Grave’s disease for three years prior to his death. A story repeated in many 19th century families.

Comments:

The men of the fur trade continued to enjoy a social life in their new surroundings, welcoming each other into their homes and enjoying visits with their old fur trade colleagues who were travelling in the area. Trips to Montreal were an added bonus. The wives and children, on the other hand, may have held a different view of all this. As their voices were seldom heard, and particularly so for the women, I would like to learn what the social climate was like for that period. As to how “Indian” any of the wives and children appeared, we have virtually no evidence as there are few photographs. Certainly, the photo of George Cumming shows virtually no evidence of his native heritage. Hopefully more photographs will come to light as I continue my research. While the children of these families appear to have assimilated well into southern society and gained acceptance on an individual basis, we are still reminded that the mothers built tepees or that, in Cuthbert Cumming’s example, “abandoned a native “wife” in the Red River country some years before” [retiring to Colborne] (Argyris 2000:150). The “otherness” of their lives is still apparent a century and a half later. This otherness, and the fur trade families who settled in Port Hope will comprise future research.



Figure 1: Victoria College (formerly Upper Canada College)
Courtesy of the Cobourg Public Library.



Figure 2: Minaker House. Former location of Robert Henry's bank on the southeast corner of King and Church Streets, Cobourg (now burnt down).
Courtesy of Cobourg Public Library.



Figure 3: Home built for Francis Burnet, Jr. 163 Ontario Street, Cobourg.
Courtesy of the Cobourg Public Library.



Figure 4: Interior of William Burnet's store. 380-34
Courtesy of the Cobourg Public Library.

ΔU σρ <λ>. ▽б.σ ▷L б ρ <λ>,
б Δ^<σ\ ΔC C <λ>> C ▷N"Δ.σλ> ▷C
ρ"R ▷Uα*. Γ"γ' <Δ.λ\ σαρ^бΔ.ο,
Γ"γ' Δρ 9б> σρ^9σU>, σρ^ρ.δ"<Lδ'
▷Uαο, Δσρ Δρ ▽Γ^Nδρο
▽ Δρ ΛLρ"▷' Γα ▽ Δρ <λ> Δ.ρ× Γα
C Δρ V"ρ"▷', б"ραο ▷"▷ σρ^9σU>.

Figure 5: Example of Cree syllabics used in a story.



Figure 6: Corrigan House at 458 William Street.
Photograph Ron Oberholtzer.



Figure 7: Jacob Corrigal's vault in the churchyard of St. Peter's Anglican Church, Cobourg. Photograph Cath Oberholtzer.



Figure 8: 1849 Newspaper advertisement for wallpaper at Goodeve and (William) Corrigal's store.



Figure 9: Cameron home (on left) on County Road 2 in Grafton. Courtesy of the Cobourg Public Library.

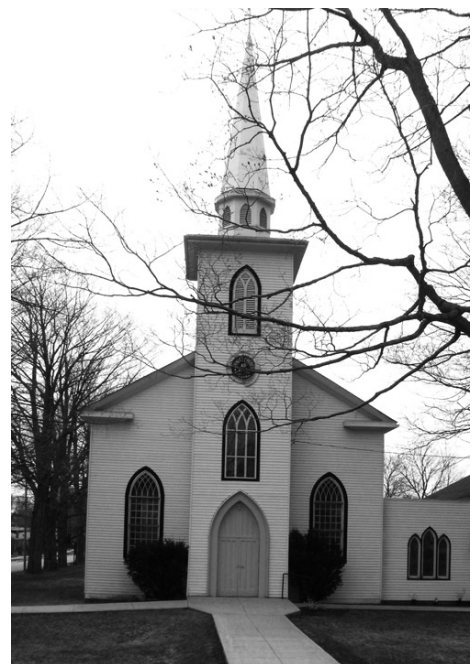


Figure 10: Gravestone of John Dugald Cameron in St. George's Anglican Church cemetery in Grafton.

Photograph Ron Oberholtzer.



Figure 11: Cumming House on King Street West, Colborne. Photograph Cath Oberholtzer



Right: Figure 12: Trinity Anglican Church, Colborne. Photograph Cath Oberholtzer



Left. Figure 13: Mary McMurray Matheson gravestone in Trinity Anglican Church cemetery, Colborne. Photograph Ron Oberholtzer.

Right: Figure 14: Gravestone of Cumming children in Trinity Anglican Church cemetery, Colborne. Photograph Ron Oberholtzer



Acknowledgements:

Many people have facilitated this research and in particular I would like to thank Viola Lyons, Anne Lindsay, Rob Mikel, Cheryl Barlow, Libby Seekings and Richard Randall for their help.

References

Anonymous

1890 Obituary for William Corrigan. *Saturday Morning Post* May 3, 1890.

Argyris, Eileen

2000 *How Firm a Foundation: A History of the Township of Cramahe and the Village of Colborne*. Erin, ON: Boston Mills Press.

Baskerville, Peter

1976 The Entrepreneur and the Metropolitan Impulse: James Grey Bethune and Cobourg 1825-1836. Pp.56-70 in *Victorian Cobourg: A Nineteenth Century Profile* edited by J.Petryshyn. Belleville: Mika Publishing.

Brown, Craig, ed.

1987 *The Illustrated History of Canada*. Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys.

Brown, Jennifer S.H.

1980 *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Families in Indian Country*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.

Calnan, David

1976 Postponed Progress: Cobourg Common Schools 1850-1871. Pp.182-202 in *Victorian Cobourg: A Nineteenth Century Profile* edited by J.Petryshyn. Belleville: Mika Publishing.

Clark, A.J.

1932 Earliest Missionary Letters of Rev. John Douse. *Ontario Historical Society Papers and Records* XXVIII:41-46.

Cole, Jean Murray

1979 *Exile in the Wilderness: The Life of Chief Factor Archibald McDonald, 1790-1853*. Toronto: Burns & MacEachern.

— 2003 Personal communication.

Dressler, Marie

1934 *My Own Story*. Little, Brown and Company.

Duckworth, Harry, ed.

1990 *The English River Book: A Northwest Company Journal and Account Book of 1786*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Haldimand's History Committee

1997 *Memories of Haldimand Township: When the Lakes Roared*. Erin ON: Boston Mills Press.

Humble, A.H.

1965 *The School on the Hill: Trinity College School 1865-1965*. Port Hope: Trinity College School.

Fowler, Donald

2004 Personal communication.

2006 Personal communication.

Guillet, Edwin C.

- 1948 *Cobourg – 1798-1948*. Oshawa: Goodfellow Printing.
Landon, Fred
1932 Earliest Missionary Letters of Rev. John Douse. *Ontario Historical Society Papers and Records* XXVIII:47-70.
Lindsay, Anne
2009 Personal communication.
MacLeod, Margaret Arnett
1947 *The Letters of Letitia Hargrave*. Toronto: Champlain Society.
McBurney, Margaret and Mary Byers
1979 *Homesteads: Early buildings and families from Kingston to Toronto*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
Miller, James Roger
1996 *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
Mitchell, Elaine Allan
1977 *Fort Timiskaming and the Fur Trade*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
Podruchny, Carolyn
1998 Festivities, Fortitude, and Fraternalism: Fur Trade Masculinity and the Beaver Club, 1785-1827.
Rafuse, Ted
1997-98 Failed Prophecy: The Men of the Cobourg & Peterboro' Rail Road Company. *Historical Review* 15:36-52.
Schmalz, Peter S.
1991 *The Ojibwa of Southern Ontario*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
Van Kirk, Sylvia
1980 *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur-Trade Society, 1670-1870*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press.
Wallace, W.Stewart, ed.
1934 *Documents Relating to the North West Company*. Toronto: The Champlain Society.
Whalen, Scott
2000 Buying a Ticket Off the Farm: The early days of education. Pp.93-99 in *Rolling Hills of Northumberland: A county history* edited by Orland French.Cobourg: County of Northumberland.

Primary sources:

1865 Directory for Northumberland and Durham: Gazeteer and Directory.

HBCA (Hudson Bay Company Archives)

A.11/58 fo.3 Headquarters Records

D.5/26, fo.258 Governors' Papers

Trinity College School Archives

Applications for Admissions.

May 2009

Spring Social *and* A Hong Kong Diary Revisited - The Family Remembers.

On May 26, 2009 the Cobourg and District Historical Society held the final meeting of the 2008 - 2009 season. Members gathered in **Edward's Room** at **Meet At 66 King East** for a Spring Social. An informal atmosphere was provided by cabaret style seating and live keyboard music.

Providing the music was *pianist Shelagh Purcell* from nearby Baltimore. Ms. Purcell also spoke to us about her own personal history project, a book that she and her three sisters have produced, based on the letters and diaries of their father Lieutenant Leonard B. Corrigan POW and to which the sisters have added their own memories of their father.

Shelagh and her sister Pat Turcotte came upon their father's diaries and other papers when they were clearing the house after his death. Originally they made two scrap-books of the diaries and letters and included newspaper clippings and family photos and mementos to tell their father's story. These interesting scrapbooks, which formed the basis of the book, were brought to the meeting to share with our members. Shelagh also read some extracts from the book, *A Hong Kong Diary Revisited - The Family Remembers*.

Lieutenant Corrigan was part of 'C Force' which consisted of two infantry battalions from Manitoba, the Winnipeg Grenadiers and the Royal Rifles of Canada, and a Brigade Headquarters. These troops, in total less than 2000 men, were offered to the British Government by Canada to assist and strengthen the Hong Kong Garrison as a show of force directed at the Japanese. The troops were, in reality, not fully trained but it was thought they would have plenty of time to train while performing their garrison duties. However just twenty-two days after arriving in Hong Kong they found themselves in a fierce, bloody and unwinnable battle alongside the British and Indian troops as Japan attacked the Colony. The first attack took place only eight hours after the Japanese strike on Pearl Harbor in December 1941. The allied forces fought bravely for eighteen days but were forced to surrender on Christmas Day 1941.

Those troops who survived were imprisoned in camps for the duration of the war and those who survived the camps were not liberated until the surrender of the Japanese on August 15, 1945. Lt. Corrigan's diaries are an interesting record of life in the Officers' Camp. Although not subject to the extreme privations and forced labour that the other ranks had to endure, nevertheless it was a period of adversity requiring mental fortitude, patience and invention.

After Ms. Purcell's reading of some extracts from her father's diaries David Gregory, Past CDHS President, thanked her for presentation and for bringing a little known but important part of Canada's history to life. The members then enjoyed tea or coffee and a selection of tasty hors d'oeuvre and petit fours while Shelagh Purcell played a selection of tunes from the 1930s and 40s on her keyboard.

Libby Seekings

Sources: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Hong_Kong

Further Reading:

A Hong Kong Diary Revisited - The Family Remembers

Edited by Mik Bergerson, Kathie Carlson, Shelagh Purcell and Pat Turcotte.

Published 2008 by Frei Press P.O. Box 38 Baltimore ON K0K 1C0.

C Force to Hong Kong - a Canadian Catastrophe by Brereton Greenhous

Published by The Canadian War Museum 1997.

The Battle for Hong Kong, 1941-1945 Hostage to Fortune

by Oliver Lindsay with the memories of John R. Harris

To be published later this year (2009) by McGill-Queen's University Press

Websites about the Battle of Hong Kong:

Canadian War Museum - Online Exhibition

http://www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/exhibitions/newspapers/operations/hongkong_e.shtml

<http://www.hongkongwardiary.com/>

The owner of this site has also published a book

Not The Slightest Chance: Defence of Hong Kong 1941 by Tony Banham UBC Press 2004