

# Historically Speaking

The Newsletter of the Cobourg and  
District Historical Society

March 2013 — Issue 257

## Plows, Cows and a Harvest of Farms

In Cobourg we are surrounded by farmland, so when we welcome Gaye Hoskin, from the well-known farming family, it will be interesting to find out more about the process of how locally produced fruit, vegetables and meat actually finds its way to our dinner tables.

You don't need to live in the Cobourg area for very long before you recognize the names of local farmers like Hoskin, Burnham, Moore, Cochrane, Davey, or maybe even West and Dolley. Some local farms have been owned by the same families for generations. Gaye will give an informed historical perspective on many of the farms in the Cobourg, Baltimore and Grafton areas, with particular emphasis on the farming history of the Hoskin family.

Like everything else, farming techniques have changed over the years. As historians we are sure to enjoy learning about the past, present and future of farming in our area.

The meeting will be on Tuesday, March 26, in the usual location in Victoria Hall's Citizens' Forum. Doors open at 7:00pm and the meeting begins at 7:30pm. Please note that these times are 30 minutes earlier than last year. Coffee and cookies will be available and all are welcome so bring a friend!

## Our Previous Meeting



The February meeting was a little different from our typical meeting. Held in the afternoon rather than in the evening and at the Northumberland Mall rather than at Victoria Hall, the meeting was a screening of Leni Reifenstahl's epic 1934 film *Triumph of the Will*. Ken Prue, owner of the Northumberland Mall Theatres, gave an animated overview of the cinematic importance of the film together with a discussion of the situation in Germany and England at the time of the filming.



If there is sufficient interest, Prue has offered to screen additional movies of significant historical interest. Please let Ken and your Programme Committee know your preferences!

Northumberland Mall Theatres

**ADMIT ONE**

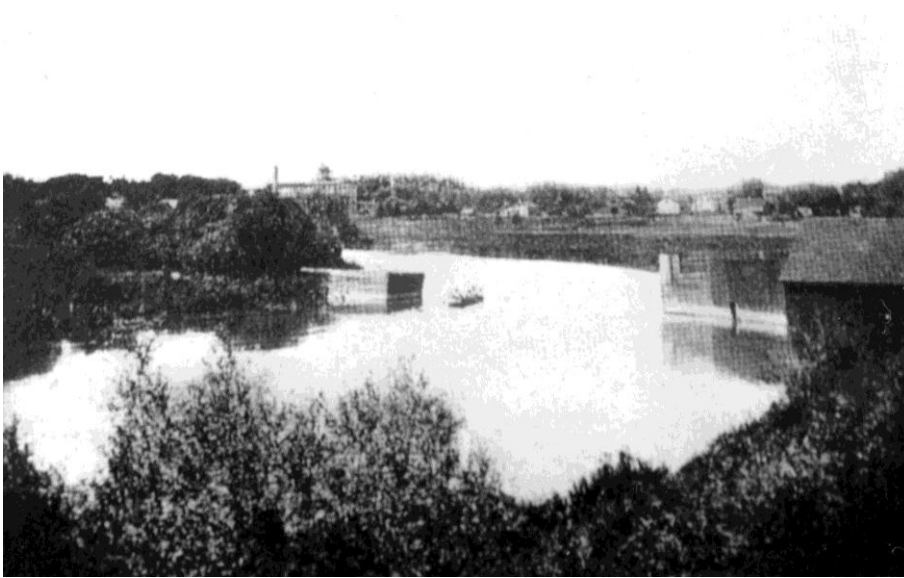
Leni Riefenstahl's "Triumph of the Will"

Tuesday, February 26 at 2pm

Cobourg and District Historical Society

## Burning Questions

Our older members recall the Cobourg of the past. In addition, many CDHS members have expert knowledge of various historical topics. To tap this wealth of expertise, our newsletter will periodically include a "Burning Questions" section and solicit everyone's answers to the questions posed. Later newsletters will include the best answers. If there is sufficient interest the topic will be discussed at a CDHS meeting.



### ***Burning Question 1:***

The picture above, believed to be of Factory Creek, contains structures on both the left and the right banks of the creek. Is the picture actually of Factory Creek? What were the structures used for? What is the approximate date of the photograph?

### ***Burning Question 1 Answers:***

By far the most complete answer was provided by Rob Mikel. A summary of his response follows:

The photo in the newsletter is Factory Creek at its mouth – it is definitely the Woollen Mills (on the west side of the creek) in the distant centre – the creek goes left around that projection and up past the Woollen Mills on its right or on the east side. The houses are on Forth and Tweed Streets. The pond was much larger then and extended into the park that exists there. On Google maps you will see how the stream curves where the park and perhaps part of Tay Street were once part of the large pond.

The woollen mill was built in 1844 for the MacKechnie brothers from Scotland. It was later owned or operated by a number of people including Edward Winans, John Routh, William Fraser and William Rosamond. John Dick was the last woollen mills proprietor. In 1929 it became the Cooley Arms Factory. Later it was the Winchester Factory and later still it became the Cobourg Star Building. I don't see it in this picture but it just could be obscured by trees. The second building, built in 1882 for the Woollen Mills, was located to

the south of the one visible. If the building definitely wasn't there the photo would date to pre-1882. The 1882 building became the Matting Factory about 1914 and was demolished a short time ago.

The houses on the right appear to date from say the 1830s to the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. I may or may not be seeing things – I will check as I have this photo at home – but on the extreme right I can't tell if it's all trees or if there is a building poking out of the trees. If there is building it is probably the McBean/ Castle/ Crowther House and later the Cedarmere hotel. It would be in that general area.

The roofs and buildings you see on the left through the trees are on Tremaine Street. It is not in this picture but if you swung the camera full left you would see in the middle distance the Winkworth Tremaine house and later Nellie Grant Sartoris' summer house.

The fact that the old matting factory isn't visible and that there are several pre-1900 buildings that don't appear to be on Tweed or Forth Street yet indicates that it could be a *circa* 1880 photo but I would have said *circa* 1900 otherwise.

Ken Willcocks provided the following comments:

Sandford Fleming's map of 1854 shows a bridge across the creek from Fourth Street and down the west side of the creek to the lake. Was this before the present harbour was built? The creek was much deeper then and extended half-way along the existing Tay Street. In 1864 there was a severe flood because the dam at Pratt's Mill was not opened early enough to release waters slowly. The water took the bridge out on William Street and drowned two men at the King Street dam. They were found later near Cobourg and near Grafton in Lake Ontario. My suspicion is that the flood took away the bridge recorded by Fleming and we are looking at the abutments to the bridge.

**Burning Question 2:**

"I was recently given a copy of a photograph of a relative taken in Cobourg and I was wondering if anyone in your society would be able to tell me what uniform he is wearing (police?). The photo appears to me to have been taken around the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century."



**Burning Question 3:**



Is the cup pictured here from Cobourg's Arlington Hotel?

## Postcards

CDHS member Doreen West of Baltimore displayed several embroidered postcards at our January meeting. Although the cards are only about 3x5 inches, the stitched detail is amazing. One of the complete cards (larger than actual size) is pictured below together with an enlarged view of the central area.



## **In Memoriam**

### ***John Alvin McGrath***

We mourn the passing of long-time CDHS member John Alvin McGrath on February 13, 2013. He was in his 89<sup>th</sup> year. John is survived by his wife Norma McGrath and his daughter Sarah McGrath-McKinley. The funeral service was held at Calvary Baptist Church in Cobourg. Donations to Calvary Baptist Church would be appreciated by the family.



## **Membership Matters**

### ***Executive Changes***

Martha Watson, who has been responsible for Membership for a number of years, has moved to Kingston. Alma Draper has volunteered to handle membership in the interim and will stand for election to the post in April at our Annual General Meeting.

### ***Meeting Changes***

Meeting attendees will have noticed a number of changes. Most obviously, the meetings start 30 minutes earlier than previously – the doors open at 7:00pm and the meetings start at 7:30pm. To the delight of many there is decaffeinated coffee and muffins/cookies before the meeting. To help to get everyone acquainted there are name tags. Please leave your tag in the box as you leave the meeting.

It is time to start weeding your bookshelves. If you have books of historical interest that you no longer want, perhaps another CDHS member would like to own them. These books will be sold at the March and April CDHS meetings. Please bring your books to the March meeting, so you will have room on your bookshelves for new purchases!

Proceeds from this book sale will be directed to high school history awards in memory of Cath Oberholtzer. Thank you in advance.

### ***Transportation to Meetings***

We are trying to determine which members would appreciate a ride to our meetings. We have two volunteer drivers and I'm sure there are others who would be willing to drive. Anyone who would like a ride or is willing to drive others should call Judith Goulin at 905 372 7684. Judith is coordinating this transportation initiative.

# Announcements

## ***The Ballad of D'Arcy McGee***

Mark Finnan and a talented group of musicians will present the colourful and somewhat mysterious life of D'Arcy McGee, Father of Confederation, through lively narrative, music and song. The performance is on Friday, March 15, at the St. Andrew's United Church, 137 Old Danforth Rd., Grafton. Tickets are \$10.00.

## ***Heritage Fair***

The Port Hope and District Historical Society will host a Heritage Fair on Sunday, April 7, from 10am-4pm at the Port Hope Lions Centre, 28 Thomas Street in Port Hope. This event is part of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of the Port Hope society. Phone 905-885-2981 for further information.

## ***Antiques and Artifacts Auction***

The Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, Port Hope Branch, is sponsoring an antiques and artifacts auction on Sunday, April 7. The event will be held at the Town Park Recreation Centre, 62 McCaul Street in Port Hope. A tag sale and auction preview will be at 10am followed by the auction at 1pm. For further information phone 905-885-1116 or visit [www.acoporthope.ca](http://www.acoporthope.ca)

## ***Archives Summer Hours***

For the summer months of June, July and August, the Northumberland County Archives will be open to the public from Monday to Thursday and every other Friday from 1:00pm to 4:30pm.

## ***Archives Open House***

On Saturday, April 6 from 1-4pm, the Northumberland County Archives will host an Open House to celebrate its first anniversary and the Province-wide Archives Awareness Week. The event will be held in the archives rooms of the C. Gordon King Centre at 200 Ontario Street in Cobourg. Visitors will have the opportunity to explore the archives' storage facilities, learn about what the archives does and view many of the historic treasures in the collection. For further information phone 905-372-3329 x2242.

## ***Doors Open***

Doors Open 2013 will be on June 1-2. Many historic facilities in Northumberland County will be open this year. For detailed information visit <http://www.northumberlandtourism.com> or use <http://tinyurl.com/cdwy3dt> for a direct link to the schedule.

## Websites

There are many websites with great Cobourg-related historical material. Visit any of the following:

Cobourg Museum Foundation: [northumberlandheritage.ca](http://northumberlandheritage.ca)

Snippets of Cobourg history and current happenings: [www.hardscrabble.ca](http://www.hardscrabble.ca)

Cobourg History: [www.cobourghistory.ca/](http://www.cobourghistory.ca/)

Ontario cemetery records: [ocfa.islandnet.com/](http://ocfa.islandnet.com/)

History of Great Lakes travel: [www.maritimehistoryofthegreatlakes.ca/](http://www.maritimehistoryofthegreatlakes.ca/)

Cobourg and Peterborough Railway: [www.harwoodmuseum.ca](http://www.harwoodmuseum.ca)

## CDHS Executive for 2012 – 2013

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