

Historically Speaking

The Newsletter of the Cobourg and
District Historical Society

March 2015 — Issue 272

Restoration of an Ore Car

Ken Willcocks, Vice-President of the CDHS, will be the guest speaker at our March meeting. Willcocks has had a varied career including work on the prototype of the Land Rover at the Rover Motor Car Company in England, Civil Defence Co-ordinator and Superintendent of the St. John's Ambulance, Commanding Officer of the Hastings & Prince Edward Regiment and owner of the Sword Motel in Bancroft and the Best Western in Cobourg.

From the mid-1800s to the early 1900s the Crossen Car Company was a major manufacturer in Cobourg. Among their lesser known products were the ore cars used to transport iron ore from the mine near Marmora to Cobourg. In an 1881 accident several of these cars were sunk in the Trent Narrows just west of the present bridge on Highway 30. Ken will tell the fascinating tale of the recovery of the remains of the sunken cars and his work to restore a car and display it in Cobourg.

The meeting begins at 7:30pm on Tuesday, March 24. Everyone is encouraged to arrive early to enjoy coffee, tea and cookies. Take this opportunity to reconnect with members you haven't seen recently, catch up with friends, and introduce yourself to a new member. This is a meeting not to be missed. Visitors are welcome at a charge of \$5 per person including beverage and treats.

Our Previous Meeting

Historical Atlases for Ontario

CDHS members braved a cold and blustery evening to hear Peter Wilson, the guest speaker at our February meeting, discuss Ontario historical atlases and his efforts to revive them. The golden age



of atlases was the late 1870s. At that period a number of publishers traveled around the province soliciting property owners and others of stature to pay to include information

on their families and holdings. Since the charge for subscribing to an atlas often exceeded the cost of a typical house at the time it is not surprising that most properties were not included. For their subscription fee the publisher prepared pen and ink drawings of their buildings and wrote, often laudatory, biographical material on the owner and his family. The atlases provide valuable genealogical information and have become much sought after with prices for copies in good condition fetching hundreds or even thousands of dollars. Due to demand, several atlases have been photographed and republished in facsimile form. Peter has added a twist to the business of republishing by including properties that were not in early editions and even some that were built long after the original atlases were published. His company, Fifth Line Press, has published a new atlas of Durham and Northumberland Counties and is currently working on publication of an atlas of York County.

Success!

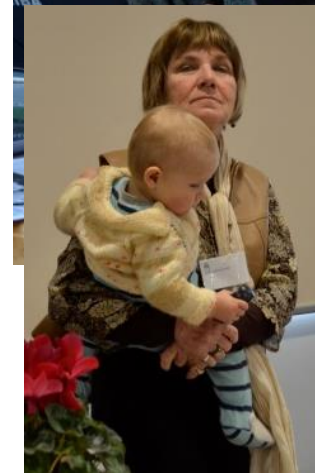
Recently the Cobourg and District Historical Society inaugurated an event called Spotlight on Local History, held at the Cobourg Public Library. Its purpose was to bring together the various local groups that are connected with history in order to establish better communication and to serve as a means to communicate with the public about what we do.



There were nine other groups present in addition to our society: Architectural Conservancy of Ontario-Cobourg and East Northumberland Branch (ACO), Cobourg Heritage Advisory Committee/Town of Cobourg Planning Services, The Cobourg Museum Foundation (Sifton-Cook), Cobourg Public Library (Local History Room), Doors Open Northumberland, Hamilton Township Heritage Committee, Lakeshore Genealogical Society, Northumberland County Archives and Cobourg Yesteryears.



The Rotary Room was buzzing with visitors investigating their family trees, reminiscing about the Cobourg of their childhood, asking about old buildings, discovering places they didn't know existed like the library's Local History Room



and signing up for membership in groups that interested them. We received upwards of 150 visitors over Saturday and Sunday. The other participating groups felt that the event achieved our goals and hope that Spotlight of Local History will become an annual event.



Future Meetings

Our remaining meetings for 2015:

Tuesday, April 28 Annual General Meeting <i>Photo Quiz: How Well Do You Know Cobourg?</i> Victoria Hall, 7:30pm	Tuesday May 26 Tea, Tipples and <i>Long Lost Letters</i> with special guest James Cockburn Meet at 66 King, Cobourg, 7:00pm (Note the different venue and earlier than usual starting time!)
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Membership Matters

In Memorium

Cobourg and District Historical Society member Thomas David Parken passed away peacefully in his 84th year at Peterborough Regional Health Centre on Wednesday, February 18. He is survived by his wife Elizabeth, a son, two daughters, numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren and several siblings. Interment was at Cobourg Union Cemetery. Donations to the Northumberland Hills Hospital would be appreciated by the family.



New Members

We would like to welcome Robert Nicol and Tony Rayment who have recently joined CDHS.

Congratulations!

Congratulations to the CDHS Programme Chairperson Alison Torrie-Lapaire and her husband Geoff on the birth of their first son. The 8 lb, 14 oz Nicolas Ralph Lapaire was born on March 5.

Membership Renewal

CDHS memberships are from April to April. It would be appreciated if you were to renew your membership early. If you have not renewed prior to our Annual General Meeting in April you will not be able to vote in the election of officers. A membership form is attached to this newsletter if you received it by email. The form can also be downloaded from our website at http://cdhs.ca/images/CDHS_Membership_Form_2015.pdf.

Please mail your dues and membership renewal form to Alma Draper, 10 Madison Street, Cobourg, ON, K9A 5R2 or bring it to the next meeting.

Look Through Your Bookshelves

This season we will once again feature our popular sale of history-related books. Please look through your bookshelves for any books you no longer want and make room for others you may want to buy! Your generous donations will assist with our historical society's operating costs.

Finding Bev

Judith Goulin

A few years ago I gave a presentation at one of our CDHS meetings about General Foods and Kraft. One of the sidebar stories I talked about was the irony of Beverly Archer winning first prize in a jam-making contest sponsored by “The Foods” as part of their 50th anniversary in Cobourg. I guess the judges expected “Bev” to be a little grey-haired grandmother. They were very surprised when a young man named Beverly from Trent University stepped up to the podium to accept his prize. End of a funny story ... or so I thought.

This year, the Sifton-Cook Heritage Centre’s theme is Industry and Commerce. I offered to be a



part of the research team, especially since I already had collected lots of data on the early food production in Cobourg about Douglas Packing Co., famous for inventing and marketing Certo. [Douglas Packing later became General Foods, then Kraft.] In looking at the Certo era of my research, Stanley Isherwood, the very capable director of this summer’s presentations, suggested that maybe we should try to find this Beverly Archer guy. Maybe we could even get a photo of him, Stanley hoped. I thought Stanley was an optimist. O me of little faith! When I Googled Beverly Archer, it was my turn to be surprised. There are several Beverly Archers in existence, both male and female. I discovered that one of the Beverlys is a man who lives in Cobourg just down the road from me and is about the right age to have been a university student in 1969. Eureka!

I picked up the phone. Cold calls are always difficult, but what did I have to lose? My theory, developed over time, is that I have about ten seconds to state my case in order to get someone’s attention before he hangs up from what he thinks is an annoying sales call. So, my two-second opening was: “Would you happen to be the Beverly Archer who won the Certo contest in 1969?” His “yes” was music to my ears! I’ll never doubt Stanley Isherwood’s faith again!

Mr. Archer very kindly sent me newspaper clippings and photos about his jam victory that will be used by Sifton-Cook in their upcoming season.

A host of fascinating local history presentations await you at the Sifton-Cook Heritage Centre this season, but don’t take my word for it. Come and see for yourself. For location and hours, check their website at <http://cobourgmuseum.ca/>

Announcements

Bible Christians Wanted!

The Bible Christian Church was a Methodist denomination founded by William O'Bryan around 1815. Do you have any ancestors who were Bible Christians? Dr. Janet Few, an expert in the history of Bible Christians, would like to know so that she can incorporate your ancestors into her talk later this year sponsored by the Lakeshore Genealogical Society in Cobourg.

Please contact Judith at jgoulin@hotmail.com or (905) 372-7684 so that she can forward the names.

Lakeshore Genealogical Society Meetings

On Thursday, May 14, Peter Johnson will speak on "The War of 1812 Veterans Graveside Project: Honouring Heroes". LGS meetings are from 6:30-9:00pm in the Rotary Room, Cobourg Public Library and visitors are welcome.

Port Hope Historical Society

The Port Hope Historical Society will hold their Heritage Fair on Sunday, May 3, from 10am to 4pm at the Lion's Centre, Thomas Street, Port Hope.

Algonquin Park Culinary Experience

Whitby historian and author Rory MacKay is organizing several "Algonquin Park Historical and Culinary Experiences" this summer which will be based at the Mad Musher Inn. The events will include presentations on the history and archaeology of Basin Depot, Sligo, logging, an Opeongo Murder together with historical meals. For details phone (613) 637-2820 or visit <http://madmusher.com/>

CDHS Website Additions

A number of volumes of the *CDHS Historical Review* are now available on the CDHS website at <http://cdhs.ca/resources/historical-reviews>. Additional volumes will be added if there is sufficient interest. A series of interviews were conducted by students of Cobourg District Collegiate Institute West as part of the CDHS Archives project *Cobourg's Veterans: An Oral History*. This project preserved the remembrances of local area veterans for the benefit of future generations while furthering the appreciation of our history by the students. This project was made possible through a generous grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. The recordings of more than twenty hours of interviews are now available at <http://cdhs.ca/resources/veteran-interviews>.

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