



Historically Speaking

The Newsletter of the Cobourg and
District Historical Society

September 2013 — Issue 259

Chief Kai Liu

The 2013-2014 season will begin on September 24 as we welcome a prominent and interesting speaker: Kai Liu, Chief of Cobourg Police Services. Chief Liu's presentation will include the most current information about Constable William O'Rourke who died while on duty in 1915. The ongoing research on O'Rourke will culminate with his name being added to the Memorial Wall in Ottawa for officers who died in the line of duty. Liu will also speak on the history of policing in Cobourg and show us some interesting artifacts from the police department. He is eager to meet Cobourg citizens, so let's turn up in great numbers to greet him. We can look forward to a very interesting evening.

The meeting will be in the usual location in Victoria Hall's Citizens' Forum. Doors open at 7:00pm and the meeting begins at 7:30pm. Coffee and cookies will be available before the meeting. All are welcome so bring a friend!

Our Previous Meeting

An Evening with Rob Mikel

Our "Social Evening" was held at the historic Villa St. Joseph. This famous building, currently operated by the Sisters of St. Joseph as a retreat, was once home to President Ulysses S. Grant's daughter Nellie Grant Sartoris Jones. Noted local historian Rob Mikel talked about *Lost Cobourg: Buildings that were*. Rob not only presented stories of local buildings that have been lost to fires or the wrecker's ball but showed dozens of photographs to help recreate the Cobourg of years past. After a fascinating talk everyone enjoyed sweet and savoury delights while discussing Rob's presentation.



Our Next Meeting

Reliving History

Our October meeting will feature Chris Robins who will speak briefly about the overall War of 1812. He will then present a fascinating account of being a “living history re-enactor” and his adventures re-enacting the War of 1812.

Filming “*Our Memories: Downtown Port Hope*”

Erin Walsh, Archivist, Port Hope Archives

We cannot live only for ourselves. A thousand fibers connect us with our fellow men.

– Herman Melville



Walton Street, Port Hope, circa 1940

Several years ago the PHA was generously gifted with a digital camcorder. Initially, we were unsure of what to do with the donation, but soon enough we were struck with the idea to document stories of the town.

After a lot of brainstorming and planning, in March 2013 staff and volunteers at the PHA began a special new project: “*Our Memories: Downtown Port Hope.*”

The goals of the project are: To gather first-hand accounts of historic Port Hope businesses in the downtown core; document individual memories of downtown events/buildings; create a visual

document highlighting the vibrant past and present of Port Hope's Downtown area; share memories to the world online – and in the archives – for future generations.

To-date we have interviewed eighteen Port Hope residents, young and old, current and past business owners, long-time citizens and even a municipal councillor!

The original videos range in length from 15 to 90 minutes and have been totally dependent on how chatty the interviewee was feeling that day. The lengthier interviews (four so far) have been edited to shorter clips that are being periodically uploaded to our new YouTube channel:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/PHArchives>

It is our hope that these memories of downtown Port Hope will create a vivid portrait of how our picturesque main street has changed (or stayed the same!) over time.

The Port Hope Archives is located at 17 Mill Street North, Port Hope. You can contact the archivist at 905- 885-1673 or archives@porthope.ca. Visit www.porthopearchives.com or <http://facebook.com/PHArchives> for more information.

Membership Matters

Time to Renew Your Membership

CDHS memberships expire in April. If you have not yet renewed, you can pay at our September meeting. Dues are unchanged from last year at \$10.00 for students, \$25.00 for individual memberships and \$30.00 for family memberships.

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.

Membership Cards

Everyone who paid their dues at the April meeting can get their new membership cards from Alma Draper at the September meeting.

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 4:

To the right is a photo of Joseph Henry ("Harry") Smith who is the great-grandfather of Alison Torrie Lapaire of Cobourg. Does anyone recognize the distinctive collar/sash that he is wearing?



Announcements

A Spirit Walk

The Backwoods Players will perform *A Spirit Walk*, the story of the Rebellion of 1837, at the Pickering Museum Village on September 13, 14, 20 and 21. For tickets or additional information visit the museum's website at <http://www.pickering.ca/en/museum.asp> or phone 905-683-8401.



Vintage Film Festival



This year's Vintage Film Festival, October 25, 26 and 27, will feature an all Alfred Hitchcock program. Visit their website at <http://www.vintagefilmfestival.ca> for further details of the festival and ticket information.

Sifton-Cook Heritage Centre

The Sifton-Cook Heritage Centre, operated by the Cobourg Museum Foundation, will be open until October 14. Hours are 10am - 5pm on Saturdays and Holiday Mondays and 1pm - 5pm on Sundays. Exhibits include a working antique model railway and details of the railway's relationship to Rice Lake and the Blairton Iron Mine near Marmora. For further information visit <http://northumberlandheritage.ca/>

Victoria Hall Open House

The Victoria Hall Volunteers invite you to their Open House at Victoria Hall on Saturday October 26, 2013 from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. Victoria Hall was built in the 1850s and is central to the history and architecture of Cobourg. The dedication and hard work of volunteers, generous donations from individuals and corporations, and government grants resulted in its magnificent restoration and reopening in 1983. Learn more about Victoria Hall and the volunteers who fundraise to preserve its historical significance. Tours begin at 2:00 to be followed by a complimentary tea.



Marie Dressler Birthday Celebration

The Marie Dressler Birthday Celebration is Sunday, November 3rd at the C. Gordon King Centre (Cobourg Library building). Birthday cake and tea will be served at 1:30pm after which Antonio Sarmiento will introduce the Dressler hit film *Tugboat Annie* (1933) with the question "Did Dressler save Hollywood?" The celebration will end with draws including breakfast for two at the Buttermilk Café and the Dutch Oven; lunch for two at the Oasis Bar and Grill and a VIP Tour of Victoria Hall with dessert for four at Meet at 66 King East. Tickets are \$8.00 at the door.



Port Hope House Tour

The 48th Annual Port Hope House Tour, sponsored by the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario will be on Saturday, October 5 from 10:00am to 4:00pm.



This year, the welcome mat is out at ten intriguing properties including charming cottages, imposing mansions, two “contemporary-meets-vintage” condos and a landmark church. All locations are on the west side of the river and conveniently walkable. Tour tickets are \$25. Visit <http://www.acoporthope.ca/> for a preview of the tour and to purchase tickets. Tickets can also be

purchased from Quinn’s Blooms (Cobourg), Acanthus Interiors (Port Hope), Johnston’s Greenhouse (Peterborough) and Hanley’s Shoes (Whitby). Email to housetour@acoporthope.ca for questions.

Websites

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

Cobourg Museum Foundation: northumberlandheritage.ca

Snippets of Cobourg history and current happenings: www.hardscrabble.ca

Cobourg History: www.cobourghistory.ca/

Ontario cemetery records: ocfa.islandnet.com/

History of Great Lakes travel: www.maritimehistoryofthegreatlakes.ca/

Cobourg and Peterborough Railway: www.harwoodmuseum.ca

Cobourg area heritage resources: <http://www.cobourg.ca/links1.html>

Architectural Conservancy of Ontario: <http://www.arconserv.ca/>

CDHS Executive for 2012 – 2013

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