



Historically Speaking

The Newsletter of the Cobourg and District
Historical Society

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Northumberland on the Nile

Ancient Egypt has long captivated the minds and hearts of enterprising and adventurous locals since before Confederation. Methodist Minister Lachlan Taylor, a Cobourg native, was one of a group of pioneering Canadians who made the journey to Egypt in the late 1850s, blazing a new trail of early travel and antiquity buying. He brought home Canada's most well-loved mummy, Antjau, which is now a highlight of the Royal Ontario Museum's Egyptian collection. Then, in the early 1900s, Port Hope resident Dr. Charles Currelly made exceptional archaeological discoveries in Middle and Upper Egypt including unearthing a New Kingdom pyramid! With the help of University of Toronto backers, he brought home a treasure trove of antiquities for the opening of his new Royal Ontario Museum in 1914. In this lively talk with a local Egyptologist, we'll explore the fascinating tales of Northumberland residents on the Nile.

Laura Ranieri is an Egyptologist, writer and the founder of Ancient Egypt Alive. Based in Port Hope she has written and presented extensively on ancient Egypt at museums and libraries across Canada and in the US. She has created and led tours to Egypt. Laura has excavated in Bulgaria at a classical Greek site and in Egypt at Amarna and South Asasif. She began her career as an actress and travel TV show host, and is passionate about story-telling and bringing the fascinating history of Ancient Egypt Alive to the general public. See www.ancientegyptalive.com for her website

Join us on Tuesday, September 26, in Victoria Hall's Citizens' Forum for a unique opportunity to learn more about Egypt. Doors open at 7:00 pm and the meeting begins at 7:30 pm. Coffee and cookies will be available before the meeting. Admission, including refreshments, is free for members and \$5 for non-members. Annual membership is \$25 for individuals and \$30 for a family. All are welcome so bring a friend!

Our Previous Meeting

To celebrate Canada's 150th birthday the Cobourg and District Historical Society presented a special program. The celebrations began with Cobourg's Town Crier, Mandy Robinson, announcing the event, flanked by Mounties. We then assembled in the Concert Hall of Victoria Hall. There we were entertained by St. Mary's Singers and the Treble-makers. Following an outstanding concert, CDHS president, Alison Torrie Lapaire, was introduced by Cobourg Councillor Suzanne Séguin and presented an illustrated history of how our current



national flag came to be. Canadian snacks and refreshments were an enjoyable end to a memorable evening.





Announcements

Applefest Street Fair

Downtown Brighton, September 23, 2017, 10 am to 4 pm

Historians Susan Brose and Dan Buchanan will have a booth located at 86 Main Street, north side. Come by and see what the historians have on display. Also be sure to visit the Brighton Digital Archives booth to see all the great work they are doing.

Vimy: The Battle and the Memorial

At Hilton Hall Heritage Centre in Brighton, Sunday, November 5, 2017, 2 pm to 4 pm

The History Guy, Dan Buchanan, will present fascinating details about the Battle of Vimy Ridge, from preparation to the battle itself. Then, look at the beautiful Vimy Ridge Memorial in greater detail to see how it came to be and why Canadians love this distant monument to a battle that happened a century ago. A guest speaker will tell of their experiences visiting the Vimy Memorial in April 2017 for the centennial celebrations.

Christmas Carol Sing

At Hilton Hall Heritage Centre, Saturday, December 16, 2017, 2 pm to 4 pm

Come join us for another good old fashioned carol sing. Ian and Sharon Graham along with some special guests will provide the music and all you need to bring is your singing voice and a love of Christmas. It's always a fun gathering where you can see neighbours and spread your Christmas spirit.

Lakeshore Genealogical Society

Upcoming of the Lakeshore Genealogical Society include:

- September: *Genealogy Finds and Frustrations*, and also a speaker from the Cobourg Public Library on *Recent Genealogical Acquisitions*.
- October: Suzanne Séguin on *Early Homes of Cobourg* (previously scheduled for June)
- November: Library Event: Military Research. LGS participation and assistance.
- December: Potluck Dinner in the Rotary Room at the Cobourg Public Library.

Meetings are on the second Thursday from 6:30-9:00 pm in the Rotary Room, Cobourg Public Library. Visitors are welcome.

YMCA Information Wanted

A committee at the Cobourg YMCA is working to chronicle YMCA Northumberland's history. If you can provide any information on the YMCA in Cobourg for years prior to 1948 Tracey Dafoe would appreciate hearing from you. You can contact Tracey at

tdafoe@ymcanorthumberland.com

New Book about Cobourg



Robert Mikel, THE authority on the history of Cobourg's people and architecture, recently launched his latest book, *Cobourg: The Spirit of the Place* to excellent reviews. Copies of this new book will be available at our September meeting for \$40 including HST. For additional information and orders, email info@lighthousepress.ca

Cricket in Cobourg

Cobourg was a regular stop for cricket teams touring Canada from England and the United States in the latter half of the nineteenth century, including a couple of powerhouse English sides. Can anyone provide further information on this topic? Please contact Alison Lapaire if you can help.

Canada 150 Celebrating Our History

The Summer That Never Was

by Judith Goulin

That Canadians love to talk about weather is almost as Canadian a trait as saying “eh?”. When it comes weather reporting in the media, do you think that perhaps there might be some hyperbole? Weather information is replete with phrases like the coldest temperature, the lowest wind chill figure, the most centimetres of snow, the hottest day of the year, not to mention the highest UV number. The first paragraph of the Meteorological Oath decrees that everyone who is employed in any facet of the weather business must report all weather in superlatives.

It is September already but many of us are wondering when summer will begin. Is 2017 really the year without a summer? We did experience an inordinate amount of rainfall in the spring and early summer that resulted in flooding, but the sun did shine sometimes. The ruin of our exceptionally beautiful Victoria Beach was a reminder of the high level of Lake Ontario that made the beach literally disappear. Our gardens did not fare very well and it remains to be seen whether our farmers will reap an abundant harvest.

We did not invent the moniker The Year Without a Summer. It has already been taken, because of what happened in 1816. This phrase, coined in Canada, refers to the aftermath of the global impact following the eruption of Mount Tambora in Indonesia in 1815. In this case no exaggeration was needed. Mount Tambora’s eruption really was the most cataclysmic in recorded history, greater than Krakatoa, the yardstick that many people use inaccurately to compare volcanic eruptions.

Mount Tambora spewed 50 cubic kilometres of volcanic rock, ash and dust high into the atmosphere. Because some of these particles were suspended in the air for long periods of time, they blocked out the sun’s light and warmth. After the particles drifted over Canada, {Upper and Lower Canada at the time}, wild weather patterns prevailed in the east. In the spring of 1816, snow was slow to disappear. Snowfalls in May were common but even so, the foot of snow that fell on Quebec City in one June day is incredible. A Halifax newspaper described June as “A tolerable month of March”!

Summer was cold, replete with the failure of some crops, including the crucial first wheat that was sown. Because of the scarcity of wheat, the price of flour went sky high. After a cold snap in July, the rest of the season in eastern Canada {Upper and Lower Canada} was quite seasonal. Although hay and fruit crops failed, there were successful crops of potatoes, peas, barley, oats and some wheat that year. The winter of 1817 lasted until May, leaving 20 per cent of the population without food or fuel. In spite of this, eastern Canada fared not too badly, but in other parts of Canada, the after effects of the eruption of Mount Tambora were varied, lasting through seasons, even years.

In Manitoba, where settlement was in its infancy, the cold spell in June 1816 killed off the big three grain crops: barley, wheat and oats. The following two summers brought cold and drought. Without grain to bake bread, and bread was a staple food, settlers had to do without. Newfoundlanders suffered profoundly from food shortages, poor weather and isolation from the rest of the country.

On the other hand, there are journalists who believe that 1816, *The Year Without a Summer* is not a forceful enough description of the aftermath of Mount Tambora, because some Canadians were robbed of more than one season in the 1816-1818 period. The post-Tambora period, they contend, could more accurately be enshrined in Canadian history as *The Years Without* or as *The Years Without, For Some*. This might not even be an exaggeration.

So, did we here in Ontario have a year without summer? We are certainly all talking about it. It is weather after all and we are Canadian. To say we did not have a summer is a gross overstatement, but like the weather reporters whom we criticize, let's use hyperbole and state irrefutably that we did not have a summer in 2017! Although our farmers no longer have a pot-bellied stove in a general store where they can sit around and talk about the weather, they can be seen sitting in Tim Hortons. Listen carefully and you'll hear them saying, "Yep, we sure didn't have a summer this year. It's the worst year ever".

In truth, our summer wasn't too bad. Clearly, when compared with the hardships our Canadian ancestors had to endure in the early 1800s we have little to complain about.

Sources Cited

Canada History magazine August-September 2016 issue

Various Internet sources

How Well Do You Know Nunavut?

by Judith Goulin

If you are unable to begin a sentence with “Last month when I was in Nunavut” read on. Having recently met an Inuit woman now living in Cobourg, I realized how limited my knowledge of this part of our country was. As a Canadian it is embarrassing to admit that Moosonee is the farthest north that I have traveled. I learned a lot from my new Inuit friend, Sue.

Test your knowledge of Nunavut with this quiz:

- 1) What year did Nunavut officially become a territory of Canada?
2000 2005 1999 1995
- 2) From what other territory was it separated?
Yukon Baffin Island Northwest Territories
- 3) What does Nunavut mean?
Eskimo Inuit our land frozen land
- 4) Name the capital of Nunavut.
Frobisher Bay Iqaluit Cambridge Bay Baker Lake
- 5) What tower in Cambridge Bay was recently demolished?
Bell Tower Frobisher Tower LORAN Tower Inuksuk Tower
- 6) What are the official languages of Nunavut.
Norwegian English Danish Inuktitut French
- 7) What animals are not found in Nunavut?
musk ox deer polar bear caribou moose
- 8) What two symbols are featured on the flag of Nunavut?
Igloo polar bear northern lights star inuksuk
- 9) Until recently, on what main street in Cobourg was a Nunavut flag flying?
Ontario Elgin University Division
- 10) What country is due east of Nunavut?
Iceland Greenland Norway Sweden

Answers are on page 11 of this newsletter

Burning Questions

Some of 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. Please forward your answers to the Editor of *Historically Speaking* at ken.strauss@pebblebeach.ca

Burning Question #10

Does anyone know the date or recognize the event pictured in the photograph taken in front of Victoria Hall?



Ore Car Day

George Parker

On July 7, the Town of Cobourg presented “Iron Ore Car Day”, as part of the Canada 150 celebrations. One of the activities on offer near the site of the full-size ore car replica, was the opportunity for the public to build their very own 8½ -inch long model of one of the cars, complete with its distinctive side-tipping action. One hundred fifty model “kits” were prepared – the same number of ore cars which James Crossen and A.E. Munson built for the railway, starting in 1867.



It took each of the 30 “Iron Ore Car Day” participants about an hour to put together their cars, with everyone very pleased with their efforts. So with plenty of kits still available, two subsequent ore-car-building sessions were held at the Sifton Cook Heritage Centre. CDHS members Caroline and Earl Arsenault, Judith Goulin and two members of the dive team who retrieved ore cars from the Trent River. Brian McCroden and Bob Thomson, were thrilled to take home their completed ore cars at the conclusion of the August 27 session (pictured above). With parts for about 100 “kits” still available, no doubt there will be more ore-car-building sessions held in the future!

Nunavut Quiz Answers

1) 1999; 2) Northwest Territories; 3) our land; 4) Iqaluit; 5) LORAN Tower; 6) English, Inuktitut, French; 7) deer ; 8) Moose; 9) Division; 10) Greenland

CDHS Executive for 2017 – 2018

President	Alison Torrie Lapaire	alisontorrie@gmail.com (905) 269-8094
Past President	Judith Goulin	jgoulin@hotmail.com (905) 372-7684
Vice-President	Leona Woods	leonawoods@sympatico.ca (905) 372-7624
Secretary	Carla Jones	cgrucelajones@gmail.com (289) 252-1684
Treasurer	Vacant	
Membership	Marie Jones	mahughesjones@gmail.com (905) 885-2859
Programme Chairperson	Vacant	
Programme Committee Members	Carla Jones Marie Jones Diane Chin Leona Woods Judith Goulin Art King Gerry Brown Alison Torrie Lapaire	cgrucelajones@gmail.com mahughesjones@gmail.com dianemchin@gmail.com leonawoods@sympatico.ca jgoulin@hotmail.com artking69@gmail.com blackcat21@sympatico.ca alisontorrie@gmail.com
Members-at- Large	Gerry Brown Diane Chin	blackcat21@sympatico.ca (905) 372-3984 dianemchin@gmail.com (289) 435-2015
Newsletter Editor	Ken Strauss	ken.strauss@pebblebeach.ca (905) 377-9854