

Historically Speaking

The Newsletter of the Cobourg and District

Historical Society

May 2024 — Issue 348

History of the Murray Canal

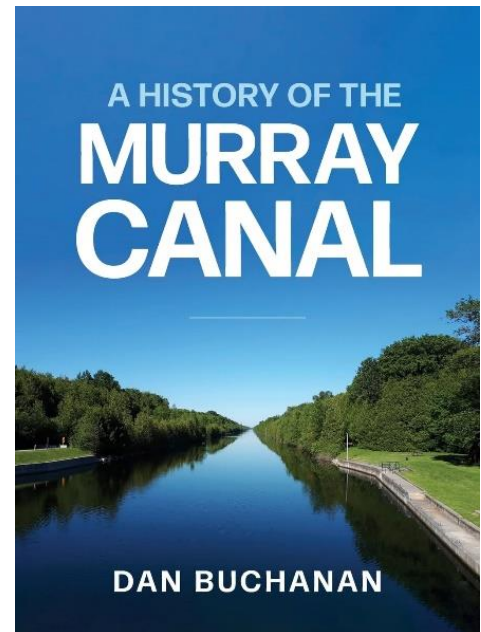
Join us as we drive/carpool our way to Brighton, Ontario's Owen Gibb Community Hall on Tuesday, May 28, to hear Brighton resident and historian Dan Buchanan, The History Guy, present the history of the Murray Canal which is a part of the Trent-Severn waterway. It is a story that is both complex and compelling.

The presentation will begin at 10:30am at The Owen Gibb Community Hall, King Edward Park Complex, 75 Elizabeth Street in Brighton. Copies of Dan's latest book – *A History of the Murray Canal* – will be available for purchase.

Following the presentation, we will meet for lunch at the Whistling Duck in Brighton (separate cheques!).

Please confirm your attendance by either an email to Brian Murphy (brianincobourg@gmail.com) or by phone to Carla Jones (289-252-1684). Let us know if you need a ride.

We look forward to hearing Dan's presentation and to having time to socialize after the presentation. We cannot provide the usual coffee and cookies but there is a nearby Tim Hortons. Please join us!



Our Previous Meeting

AGM + Show and Tell

Our April 23 meeting began with the Cobourg and District Historical Society's Annual General Meeting (AGM). Please see the **Member Matters** section of this newsletter for further details.

The AGM was followed by a Member Show & Tell for which CDHS members prepared a dozen exhibits of items of historical interest or family treasures.





Member Matters

Lifetime Membership

CDHS honoured John Draper with a Life Membership for his contributions to the Cobourg and District Historical Society over the last decade. John created our website and generously expanded and maintained it for many years. Thank you, John!

New Members

Please welcome our newest CDHS family members: Stephen and Shelagh Straughan.

Annual General Meeting

The Cobourg and District

Historical Society Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held as part of our April meeting. Members at the meeting listened to a detailed report from our Treasurer, approved the minutes of the previous AGM and elected new officers for CDHS. Contact information for our new board is on the last page of this newsletter.

George Kamphorst, our Treasurer for many years, has decided to leave his position to satisfy other commitments. Any member who would be willing to assume George's duties should contact Carla or other members of the Executive Committee. George will be happy to assist a new Treasurer in their work.

Hannah LeBlanc who has served for several years as one of our two Members at Large has agreed to assume the duties of Society Secretary. We thank Hannah for her continued work to support the CDHS.

Please join me in welcoming Keith Simpson to the CDHS Executive. He replaces Hannah LeBlanc as Member at Large (she is now our Secretary). Keith retired to Cobourg in 2015 after having practiced litigation law in Simcoe, Ontario for almost 40 years. Prior to that he taught at TCS for two years. For 25 years he was also a Deputy Small Claims Court Judge. He is an active member of the Cobourg North Shore Probus club and a local photography club. With a keen interest in history, Keith will be a valuable member of our Executive.



Our First Meeting

The scan below shows the attendee register of the first CDHS meeting on May 1, 1980. Note the many familiar names!

Historical Society Meeting May '80

NAME.	ADDRESS	PHONE
ISABEL PANKHURST	111 ...	372-6176
Janet Ruggison	249 ...	372-7040
JOAN JOHNSON	...	372-2467
Janie	2-4711
Lyn	542-1111
Louise	307-3799
Frank Jamell	...	
Allison	372-1737
Charlotte McHorne	...	372-2027
Ed M	372-2722
Anne Flindall	...	372-4787
Louise Connolly	...	372-2004
Jennifer Hagen	...	372-9928
Fenghi Field Fisher	...	372-5444
Kris	372-6142
Kay	372-7192
Dorothy	372-2122
ANGUS V READ	...	372-2014
DOUGLAS N TAIT	...	
Betty Tait	...	
Lesley	372-8762
Dorothy	372-6117
Joan Coulter	...	
Mr + Mrs. J. Nicholl	...	372-2117
Mrs Mrs. G. A. Hagen	...	372-2004
Peter	372-2876
Barbra Lang	...	372-7407
Kathleen Lang	...	
Martin Lang	...	
Peter	372-2315
...	...	372-9472
Leone Kutzko	...	372-1111
Laurel	372-2022
diane Kennedy Barr	...	372-2022
EDRIC P. HAYNE	...	372-4911
Valerie	372-2022

Family History Event

by *Wendy Bannon*

Lakeshore Genealogical Society and Cobourg Public Library co-hosted the Family History Event on Saturday April 6th in the Rotary Room at the Cobourg Public Library. The event was well attended.

Of special interest to many participants was the presentation “The Rice Lake Trading Post”. Guest speaker, archaeologist Dr. Robert Pearce, put the 2+ pandemic years to good use. He had read a written comment made in the 1890’s by Ontario’s first archaeologist, David Boyle. “Old Bay House”, a trading post at the mouth of the Otonabee River “forms an interesting episode in the local annals and should be written” and guest speaker Bob Pearce did just that, and shared his study with us.

Established in 1796 at the mouth of the Otonabee River, what became known as the Rice Lake Trading Post was a fascinating story as it documents both the historical and genealogical aspects of the surrounding region in the 1800’s while touching on many topics, including the American Revolution, War of 1812, Mackenzie Rebellion, North West Company... and more.

Closely tied to this story and it’s people was the formation and growth of the Rice Lake Reserve (now Hiawatha First Nation), and the Otonabee Township in Upper Canada.

Dr. Pearce documented the history and genealogical connections with the Herkimer brothers, their uncle Major Charles Anderson, Chief Paudash, Widow Harris and Tom.

The location was visited by Albert, Prince of Wales in 1860 and he was gifted 13 beautiful articles made from the women of Hiawatha First Nation. This artwork has been on display at the Royal Summer Home on the Isle of Wight. Recently, these gifts were on loan for display at the Peterborough Museum.



We also were privileged to view six paintings by Reginald Drayton of the scenes of the village and the Rice Lake Trading Post. They were brought to the meeting by a local collector.

With special thanks to LGS volunteers and the participants from CDHS who promoted this special event and were on hand to welcome participants.

Rev. Robert D. Brooking and His Family: Travels, Trials and Tribulations of An Itinerant Methodist Missionary

by Robert J. Pearce

The life of an itinerant Methodist missionary was filled with travels, trials and tribulations. This was certainly exemplified by Rev. Robert D. Brooking (1813-1893) and his family. Robert went from England to Australia and Africa then back to England then to Upper Canada then to Prince Rupert's Land [Manitoba] and then back to Upper Canada, all in service to the Methodist Church. He retired and died in Cobourg. En route, he had two wives and four children whose own lives were equally eventful. Rev. Brooking was significant enough to have entries in the Dictionary of Canadian Biography and in books about Methodism in Canada, but they tell only a small part of the story.

Robert was born on the River Tay in Tavistock, Devon, England in 1813. In his early twenties he attended the Theological Institute (College) in Richmond, London, and was ordained as a Minister in 1839. His first posting was to Western Australia, but he was only there a short time and was then sent to the Gold Coast, West Africa (the British colony on the Gulf of Guinea, now Ghana). Aside from ministering there, he demonstrated his skills as a handyman by constructing mission buildings and repairing machinery. He became ill and returned to England. In November 1843 he married Elizabeth Ashton, in Bideford,



Devonshire. The newlyweds went to Robert's posting back in Africa, but again he became ill and they returned to England. An internet webpage for the Accra Diocese, Methodist Church of Ghana notes that the Accra Church attained Circuit status in 1841 with Rev Robert Brooking as the first Superintendent and that he was there in 1840-42, part of 1843, and 1844.

Big news came in 1847, when Robert and Elizabeth were told to pack their satchels – they were being sent to Upper Canada. His new posting was at the Rice Lake Mission (now Hiawatha First Nation), on Rice Lake in Otonabee Township, Peterborough County. He then had a posting to the Wesleyan Methodist Mission on the St. Clair River where he worked among the local First Nations, and then he returned to Rice Lake.

The Brooking's daughter Mary Jane was born at the Rice Lake Mission on 09 December 1849.

In a letter he wrote in October 1851, Rev. Brooking lamented about the great uncertainty he always lived with, never knowing exactly where he was going to be sent for his next posting. He had received instructions in the spring of 1849 to make preparations to go to Prince Rupert's Land to work among the Cree in the vast Hudson Bay territory. He and Elizabeth sold off all their possessions and prepared to move, but then he received another letter that he was to stay at Rice Lake. Months passed and the exact same thing happened again. Perhaps feeling somewhat frustrated, Rev. Brooking wrote back to his superiors in Toronto that he would like to go to the West Indies to work among the "great number of runaway slaves fleeing there from the southeastern States". The response to that request was denied, and he was told to prepare to go to Prince Rupert's Land in the spring of 1852. So, what happened next – he was instead sent to work among the Chippewa at Sarnia in 1852 and 1853. All of this was happening while he and his wife had a young toddler.

By 1854, the Brooking family were sent to Prince Rupert's Land – the enormous area defined as all lands draining into James Bay and Hudson Bay and encompassing almost all of what are now Manitoba as well as parts of Saskatchewan, Alberta and Nunavut. Robert and his wife Elizabeth, who was also active in missionary work, were posted to the Methodist missions established at the Hudson's Bay Company's outposts at Oxford House, Norway House and York Factory (all in present-day Manitoba). For a period of time, Robert served as Chairman of the Wesleyan Methodist Church's entire Hudson Bay District.

When they arrived at Oxford House in 1854, Robert "started out as a manual labourer and his forte was building things – houses, schools, fences, boats and so on". When Rev. Hurlburt left, Brooking and "his equally committed wife" took over the missionary work. On one occasion Robert lamented that "good potatoes here is merely a relative term; what we call good here would only be considered fit for the pigs in Canada". However, on another occasion he praised the locals for providing a feast of beaver, rabbit and venison.

By 1860 the Brookings were back in Upper Canada, with Robert being posted at Rama on Lake Couchiching. Hardship struck in 1862 when his wife Elizabeth passed away. She was interred on Chief Island, Lake Couchiching, Rama. Her tombstone, one of the most elaborate there, was subject to a major restoration project in 2019.

"Sacred in the memory of Elizabeth the beloved wife of the Rev. Robert Brooking who died the 4th of May 1862 aged 46 years.

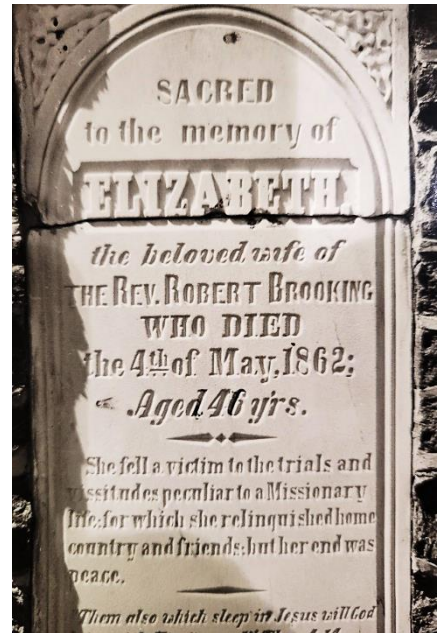
She fell a victim in the trials and vicissitudes as peculiar to a Missionary life for which she relinquished home, country and friends, but her end was peace.

“Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him” 1 Thess. 4:14

Cairn erected by St. Paul's United Church in 1882

Robert Brooking was not a widower long. Just seven months after his first wife died, he married in December 1862 his second wife, Martha Grace Worden, who was born in England in 1831. They would have three children.

Robert stayed at Rama for a short time after his second marriage, and daughter Lucy was born there in 1863. But then he was once again sent to the Rice Lake Mission, which in 1860 had been renamed Hiawatha. He then alternated years between the Methodist missions at Hiawatha and Roseneath/Alderville in Alnwick Township, Northumberland County. He performed a variety of marriage and funeral services at both places between 1868 and 1881. In that interval, Robert and his second wife Martha had two more children, both born at Hiawatha, Adelaide in 1868 and Robert Elijah in 1870. At the time of the 1871 Census, they were at Hiawatha, but in the 1881 Census they were in Alnwick Township beside Alderville First Nation.



Robert performed services not only for the mission church at Alderville, but also for the neighbouring Methodist church in the village of Roseneath, and at the affiliated charge in nearby Centenary Church, Alnwick Township, which was a red brick structure built in 1866. New churches were built during this period at Alderville (1870), Hiawatha (1871) and Roseneath (1880) and there is a strong probability that Robert had a hand in designing and building some, or all three, of them. There are specific references to Robert helping in the design of the Roseneath Methodist church (built in 1880, opened in 1882); it had a red brick façade whereas the Hiawatha and Alderville churches were white wooden frame buildings. While in Alnwick Township, Robert also officiated at funerals at both Alderville Cemetery and Roseneath Centenary Cemetery.

[Note: Roseneath Methodist (now United) Church (with no cemetery) is located in the village of Roseneath, while Centenary Church (with a cemetery) is located on County Road 18 about 5 kilometres west of Roseneath. Alderville Methodist (now United) Church is located in Alderville (just south of Roseneath) and the Alderville Cemetery is located west of it on County Road 18.]

Shortly after the time of the 1871 Census, daughter Adelaide at only age 3 died of dysentery at Hiawatha.

Throughout the 1870s and 1880s, while at both Hiawatha and Alderville/Roseneath, Robert's duties at the churches were closely tied to the local schools as well. In fact, at the time of the 1881 Census when living in Alnwick Township, the Brookings had a boarder named Camilla Sanderson, age 35, school mistress. An essay written about 1887 by a student from Alderville Public School listed all of the missionaries and school teachers who had served at Alderville, noting "Miss Sanderson", and that "Rev. Robert Brooking was here for a long time" and "liked by everyone". A memoir written by a later minister at Roseneath included a quote from a man from Alderville who recalled that Rev. Brooking "was loved by everyone, young and old alike". That same memoir also stated that when Rev. Brooking moved to Alnwick Township, there was no church in Roseneath so the "white people and Indians worshipped together" at Alderville until Brooking helped to build the church at Roseneath in 1880.

At the time of the 1881 Census, Robert Brooking and family were living just north of the Alderville Reserve in Roseneath. Their immediate neighbours (i.e., those listed before and after them in the census) were a diverse mixture of persons of varied ancestry (English, Irish, Scottish, Welsh, German), occupations (farmer, teacher, carpenter, blacksmith, labourer, merchant, shop keeper, carriage maker, physician, seamstress) and religions (Methodist, Wesleyan Methodist, Episcopal Methodist, Church of England, Baptist, Presbyterian, Spiritualist). Local gatherings must have sparked quite interesting conversations!

Sometime in the mid to late 1880s, Robert Brooking retired, and he, his wife and daughter Lucy moved to Cobourg. They were enumerated there on Anne Street in the 1891 Census as Robert age 79, retired Minister, Martha age 60, and daughter Lucy age 27, single, school teacher. Although Robert was no longer standing at the pulpit, he and Martha were active at the Cobourg Methodist Church (now Trinity United Church) and Martha was a member of the Division Street Methodist Church Woman's Missionary Society Auxiliary.

Robert passed away in Cobourg on December 2 of 1893, age 80 years nine months. He was interred at Cobourg Union Cemetery.

His obituary was printed in local newspapers, and also was entered into the official minutes of the Methodist Church Bay of Quinte Conference (which included Cobourg). It stated:

"In addition to his labour as pastor, teacher and guide in things spiritual, his mechanical skill was constantly called into use for the general good. On one mission in Ontario, he

built a good mission house entirely with his own hands and superintended the building of both church and school-house, the proceeds of a bazaar held on the spot being the only money available to pay for the stone. He also built a church in Africa, largely with his own hands.”

Widow Martha Brooking and her spinster daughter Lucy remained in Cobourg, and were listed there in the 1901 Census, as Martha age 71, widow and Lucy age 36, school teacher. Martha died in Cobourg in 1909 and was interred beside her husband at Cobourg Union Cemetery.

Daughter Lucy Worden Brooking ran a private school from her mother’s house on Anne Street in Cobourg in 1896. A photograph of her was featured in exhibits at the Cobourg Public Library and Art Galley of Northumberland. She relocated to Toronto to teach at St. Margaret’s College, The Haven and Prison Gate Mission. She eventually became Superintendent at the Alexandria Industrial School. She passed away in 1948.

Camilla Sanderson was the 35- year-old school mistress living with the Brookings at the time of the 1881 Census in Alnwick Township. She went on to be Superintendent at The Haven and Prison Gate Mission in Toronto, instructing underprivileged women and women at risk. This was the same school that Lucy Brooking also taught at, suggesting that Camilla might have recruited Lucy to teach there.



Robert and Martha Brooking’s only son, Robert Elijah Hoole Brooking, was born at Hiawatha in 1870 and he, like his father, had quite an eventful life. He moved to the United States at age 18, enlisted in the army, became a veteran of World War I as a military hospital sergeant, settled in Los Angeles, obtained a college degree, married, had a son also named Robert and spent the latter years of his life in California as a salesman. He died on May 7, 1962, and was interred at Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery, San Diego with a military marker. He is listed on the U.S. Army Veterans Legacy Memorial webpage.

Robert and Elizabeth Brooking’s daughter Mary Jane was born at the Rice Lake Mission (now Hiawatha) in 1849, went west to Prince Rupert’s Land with her parents and then returned to what is now Ontario, first at Rama and then Hiawatha. At Hiawatha she married twice, was the mother or stepmother of 13 children, and became affectionately known to everyone as

“Minnie” and “Grannie”. Her second husband, who had previously been married and had four children, was Robert Paudash (1843-1928). He was the son of Hiawatha Chief Mosang George Paudash (1818-1893), and Robert himself would later (1892) succeed his father as Chief. Robert and Minnie’s son George Paudash (1888-1969) would also serve as Chief.

A former supply minister at both Hiawatha and Alderville/Roseneath wrote in 1956 that when he preached at Hiawatha in the 1930s and 1940s, he often stayed with “Grannie” [Minnie], and enjoyed hearing her stories. One of those was as follows:

“When Grannie was a young woman, she kept company with a young white man. Her parents objected to the match and she gave him up, saying ‘I will marry the first young man who offers’. A young Indian named Anderson heard this and courted her. He died and she married another native of Hiawatha called Paudash”

Mary Jane “Minnie” Brooking Anderson Paudash passed away of 20 December 1941. Her obituary, printed in the *Peterborough Examiner*, noted that she was the “oldest lady in Hiawatha and one of its best loved residents”. Writers have noted she tended to the poor and sick, concocted her own home-made medicines, and acted as midwife to deliver over two hundred babies.

Each member of the Robert Brooking family had unique and eventful lives. There is apparently so much more to tell. This article has been written on the basis of information in the Robert Brooking Fonds at Trent University, and a variety of books and articles easily available on the Internet, but without the benefit of consulting countless documents including diaries which are curated at the United Church of Canada Archives in Toronto, or documents including transcripts of those diaries filed with the www.brookingsociety.org.uk. One wonders what more those pages might reveal about these remarkable people...

Photo Credits:

Photos 1 and 2 – Robert Brooking Fonds, Trent University Library and Archives

Photo 3 – Cobourg Public Library/Cobourg and District Historical Society

Triumph of Neglect

Port Hope Council recently approved a heritage permit for the demolition of Block 2 of Port Hope's historic Nicholson File Factory. This will allow Cavan Street to reopen soon. Cavan Street has been closed most of this year as a precautionary measure to ensure that there are no injuries due to the deterioration of the former file factory.

The factory has been an important feature of Port Hope's downtown for almost 170 years. About 1853 the Globe Manufacturing Company built the first parts of the building. There were several extensions since then. However, the building has been unused and decaying for decades. The Town of Port Hope considered redeveloping the file factory in 2009 but then decided to give other projects priority. A few years later the derelict factory was the target of several drug busts.

In 1901 the Globe File Factory was sold to the Nicholson File Company of the United States. A new factory building was opened on Peter Street in 1955. Nicholson File was taken over by Cooper Industries in 1972 but remained in Port Hope until NAFTA enabled moving their operations to Mexico.

The photo below shows boxes of the file factory's products from happier times.



Cobourg Museum Foundation News

The Board of Directors of the Cobourg Museum Foundation is pleased to announce the addition of Diane Chin to their Board. At this month's Annual General Meeting Diane was elected to the Board for a two-year term joining the following who were re-elected: Joan Chalovich, Mary Dunphy, Allan Seymour, Ken Willcocks and Leona Woods.

Diane is eminently qualified as a former high school teacher, school librarian and school principal. She has served as a Park Interpreter at Presqu'ile Provincial Park researching local history and until recently served as Chair of the Victoria Hall Volunteers. She is currently a member of the Program Committee of the Cobourg and District Historical Society, Chair of the Architectural Conservancy Ontario and sits on the National Council of the National Trust for Canada. On top of all that, for the past two summers, Diane has been a Guide for the Cobourg Museum.



Following the AGM, announcement was made of the new name under which the museum will be opening in May, and the corresponding new logo. The new name, the **Cobourg & Area Museum**, was chosen to make clear just what the facility is about, sharing the stories that make up the history of Cobourg and area.



Since it opened in 2012 the museum operated as the Sifton-Cook Heritage Centre, recognizing the early contribution of two of the founding members of the Foundation, John Cook and David Sifton. Their names will still be recalled as the old stone building they helped restore will be named **The Sifton-Cook Exhibit Hall**.

The museum's Opening Day on May 18 will recall the relatively quiet beginnings as well as that long awaited first opening, when the Concert Band of Cobourg played, the Town Crier cried and a re-enactment troop gave a military salute. This year may be a little more restrained, but there will be speeches (short), a flag raising and cake! Gates open at 11am, and everyone is invited!

CDHS Executive for 2024 – 2025

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