

Historically Speaking

The Newsletter of the Cobourg and District

Historical Society

May 2025 — Issue 356

Tammy Tells Tales

Our May meeting features dinner and a presentation of tales of Cobourg by Tammy Robinson. She will recount tales of historic Cobourg that are true, tales that may be true and others that are decidedly questionable.

Tammy has been the CEO of the Cobourg Public Library for the last 11 years and has 26 years of library experience. Prior to accepting the position in Cobourg, she worked at the Oshawa Public Library and the Toronto Reference Library. Tammy was also an instructor at Durham College in the Library Technician's Program. Prior to her career as a librarian, she spent a decade as the Archivist for the Oshawa Historical Society.



Tammy is a passionate lifelong learner who thrives on the pursuit of knowledge. She actively participates in various library and community organizations and regularly attends conferences, seminars, lectures, and webinars. Tammy is a dedicated Rotarian with the Rotary Club of Cobourg and serves on the Poet Laureate Nominating Committee for the Town of Cobourg.

Join us on **Tuesday, May 27, 2025**, at the Legion Village Pub, 111 Hibernia, for conversation with friends, an enjoyable dinner followed by an informative presentation. Details of the menu and reservation instructions are on the next page.

May Dinner & Social

Featuring Tammy's Tales of Old Cobourg

The Legion Village Pub, 111 Hibernia Street
Tuesday, May 27, 2025 - 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Sit Down Dinner, Dessert, Coffee, Tea - \$25 per person
Bar open for Pop or Alcohol (extra charge)
Featured Speaker - Everyone is welcome



Speaker Tammy Robinson is the CEO of the Cobourg Public Library.
Tammy will share a fascinating collection of stories about Cobourg's history -- some of which are undoubtedly true -- some possibly true -- and others that will leave you guessing. Come and be the judge!

MENU SELECTION

See reverse side to add your name(s) and meal choice

Turkey Meatloaf

Ground turkey herbs and spices wrapped in bacon & topped with turkey gravy. Served with Colcannon potatoes & vegetable

Fish & Chips

1 Piece Haddock fillet, hand dipped in beer batter. Served with fresh cut French fries, lemon wedge & tartar sauce

Guinness Braised Beef & Mushroom Pie

Tender braised beef, mushrooms, carrots, potatoes, celery and onions simmered in Guinness stout & topped with a golden puff pastry cap

Vegetarian Shepherd's Pie (Vegan)

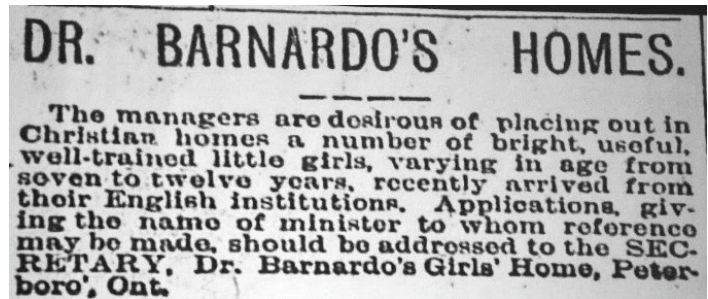
A medley of garden vegetables and vegetable gravy topped with Colcannon potatoes

If you plan to attend, **please email Carla Jones** at cgrucelajones@gmail.com **and include your name, number of attendees and your menu choice(s).** Payment via e-transfer to brianincobourg@gmail.com, or cheque mailed to P.O. Box 911, Cobourg ON K9A 4W4 or at the door with exact change.

Our Previous Meeting

British Home Children

From the late 1860s until 1948, approximately 118,000 children of various ages were sent to Canada to serve as indentured farm workers and domestics. Known as the “Home Children,” they were sent by numerous organizations, including charities such as the Bernardo Society. Although Canadians believed these children to be orphans, only about two percent actually were.



The children were sent to Canadian farms under contracts whose terms required that children be housed, fed, clothed, and sent to school. A small fee would be paid for fostering younger children. The older children would help with chores, and more extended labour would be required from adolescents. At 18, the terms of indenture were to be discharged. The



clean fresh air of a Canadian farm was seen as a far better alternative to living in the slums of a large British city.

Today, over 4,000,000 Canadians are descendants of these children but many are unsuspecting of their heritage. A dozen books have been written about the Home

Children and September 28 has been declared as British Home Child Day. However, most Canadians are unaware and have never considered the contributions of the children.

Marg Graham and Dianne Cosway, both residents of Trent Hills, presented details of the lives of the Home Children and their contributions to Canada. Marg has spent considerable time researching her family history, including her grandmother, Mary Mortimer, who eventually settled in Hastings, Ontario. Since retiring, Dianne has dedicated her time to researching her father-in-law, who was abandoned as an infant and sent to Canada to work as a farmhand.



New Exhibit at the Cobourg Museum

Working from the belief that we all have dreams, the Cobourg and Area Museum will be opening this season with a new exhibit, “Cobourg: A Town Built on Dreams”. The exhibit starts with a brief history of the local First Nations and ends with some dreams still to be fulfilled, stopping at historic highlights in between.

Exhibit Team member, Stanley Isherwood, notes that any attempt to cover the whole sweep of our town’s history in one exhibit would be doomed to failure. So, while just a few of our forebears’ dreams will be touched on, many will have interactive elements. For instance, you will be able to examine, virtually, dancing shoes from the Prince of Wales’ ball of 1860!

The exhibit is planned to have a run of several years with additions and updates made along the way. A “soft opening” is scheduled for Saturday, May 17, with the official opening in June. As always, there is no charge to visit.

Check the Cobourg Museum’s website for open hours: www.cobourgmuseum.ca

Recent CDHS Meetings

For those who were unable to attend, videos of our recent meetings are available online:

<i>Meeting Date</i>	<i>Link to Meeting Video</i>
September 2024	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2rYVUJdIENw
October 2024	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ZggXbyOxbM
November 2024	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aXiRv_TNk0w
January 2025	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7baHeZTTHtw
February 2025	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FIgXDHab9io
March 2025	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YitEaDWpO0U
2025 AGM	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-PrJsD0nLS4
April 2025	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yIgp4xTHuXg

Not So Sweet!

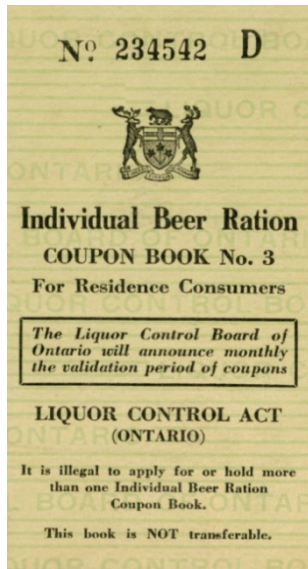
Many today complain about the high prices of groceries but at least everything is available.

During World War II, Canada implemented food rationing to manage scarce resources and support the war effort. Rationing began in January 1942, with sugar being one of the first items to be regulated. Each adult was allocated a **weekly** ration of:

- sugar: one cup (the average Canadian consumes twice that much today)
- tea: two ounces, or coffee: eight ounces.
- butter: four ounces (a single quarter pound stick)
- meat: 24-32 ounces (about four ounces per day)
- beer, spirits and wine were also rationed



Ration books were distributed by the Wartime Prices and Trade Board and included an extra



"canning ration" of 10 pounds of sugar to help with home preserving.

People got creative with substitutes; for example, bacon drippings or chicken fat often replaced butter, while honey, maple syrup, or corn syrup substituted for sugar. Those with suitable properties planted Victory Gardens. With meat shortages, root vegetables were a staple in everyone's diet, and "glazed turnips" was a popular way to make turnips palatable. The Canada Food Guide was created in 1942 to address concerns about potential malnutrition.



Despite the challenges, Canadians were generally willing participants in the rationing program since they understood the importance of supporting both the military and the British population. Frequent government advertisements urged Canadians to "Use it Up, Wear it Out, Make it Do, or Do Without."

Rationing did not end with the end of war since Britain remained in desperate straits. Canadian rationing finally ended in 1947 and unleashed an unprecedented demand for goods of all types.

Chocolate Cake

- 6 tablespoons chicken fat
 - 2 tablespoons margarine or other shortening
 - 1 cup sugar
 - ¼ cup cocoa
 - 1 egg
 - 1/3 teaspoon salt
 - 1 teaspoon vanilla
 - 1 ¾ cups flour
 - 1 teaspoon baking soda
 - 1 cup buttermilk or sour milk
1. Cream fat and shortening until soft.
 2. Add sugar and beat until creamy.
 3. Add rest of ingredients and beat a minute.
 4. Bake 30 minutes in shallow pan fitted with heavy waxed paper, in moderate oven
 5. Cool and frost.

ORANGE BREAD

1-3 cup sugar	3 teaspoons baking powder
4 tablespoons shortening	½ teaspoon salt
1 egg	3 tablespoons grated orange rind
2 cups sifted flour	¾ cup orange juice

Cream shortening and sugar. Add egg, mixing thoroughly. Sift flour, baking powder and salt together. Add alternately with orange juice. Do not over mix. Fold in orange rind. Bake in an 8x3½x2½ inch loaf pan in a 350 degree F. oven for one hour.

Potato Spice Cookies

Potato Spice Cookies come through without any sugar at all for what with the molasses and raisins or dates, they can afford to dispense with it. Heat one cup molasses and into it stir one cup shortening until melted. Add 1 ½ cups hot riced potatoes, then ½ teaspoon salt, 2 cups flour, 2 teaspoons baking powder, ½ teaspoon baking soda, teaspoon cinnamon, and ½ teaspoon each cloves and nutmeg all sifted together. Then add ½ cup chopped dates or raisins. Mix well and drop by half teaspoons on oiled paper spread on baking sheet. Bake at 325° F. from 10 to 12 minutes.

Ration Cookies

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
 - 1 teaspoon cinnamon
 - 1 teaspoon nutmeg
 - 1 teaspoon salt
 - ½ cup chopped nuts
 - ½ cup chopped dates
 - ¾ cup seedless raisins
 - 1 teaspoon baking soda
 - 5 tablespoons milk
 - 2 eggs
 - 1 cup brown sugar, firmly packed
 - 1 cup melted bacon fat
 - 1 teaspoon vanilla
 - 2 cups uncooked rolled oats
1. Sift together the dry ingredients, except the oats and brown sugar. Stir in the nuts, dates, and raisins.
 2. In a separate bowl, beat the eggs and add the brown sugar and melted fat.
 3. To the egg mixture, add the milk and dry ingredients alternately. Then add the oats and vanilla, mixing the dough thoroughly.
 4. Drop the dough from a teaspoon onto greased baking sheets.
 5. Bake cookies 12 to 15 minutes at 375° F.

This recipe yields about 60 cookies.

Victory Cake

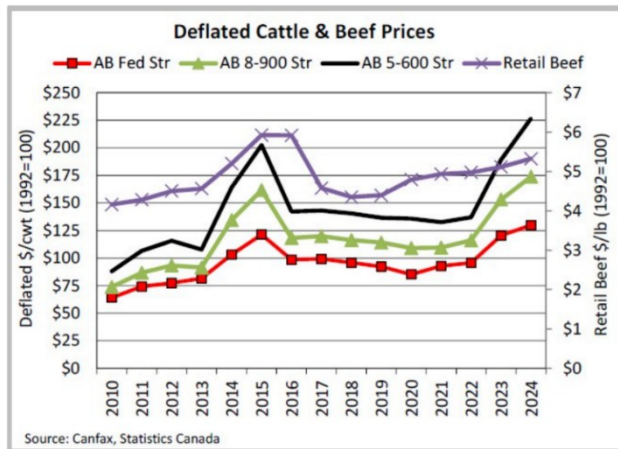
3 cups sifted flour	1 cup white corn syrup
4 teasp. baking powder	3 eggs (separated)
½ teasp. salt	1 cup milk
¾ cup shortening	1 teasp. vanilla
½ cup sugar	

Cream shortening and sugar. Add ½ cup corn syrup gradually. Combine beaten egg yolks with above. Sift together flour, salt and baking powder. Add alternately with milk. Combine remaining ½ cup corn syrup with beaten egg whites and fold into batter. To remove air bubbles, sharply tap pans of uncooked batter on hard surface several times. Bake in greased layer pans at 375 degrees—if loaf tin is used, bake at 350 degrees.

Where is the Beef?

Ken Strauss

Today's grocery store prices for beef are widely considered astronomical but how do they



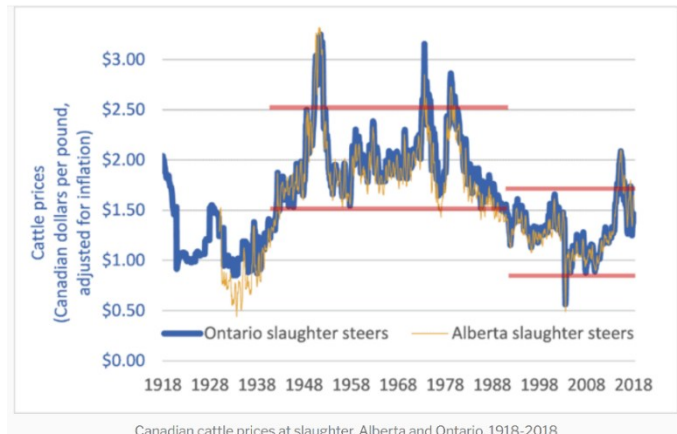
compare to historical prices? Canfax, a service of the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, in conjunction with Statistics Canada produced the summary of recent price trends to the left. Contrary to the perceptions of most, inflation adjusted retail prices are actually lower today than they were in 2015-2016!

The graph below shows the inflation adjusted prices for beef since 1918. Beef is now only

about half that of the peaks of 1948 and 1975!

Canadian annual beef consumption is now about 35.8 pounds (11 ounces per week) per person. This is far less than the weekly WWII ration allowance of 24-32 ounces per person per week which included beef, pork, chicken and lamb.

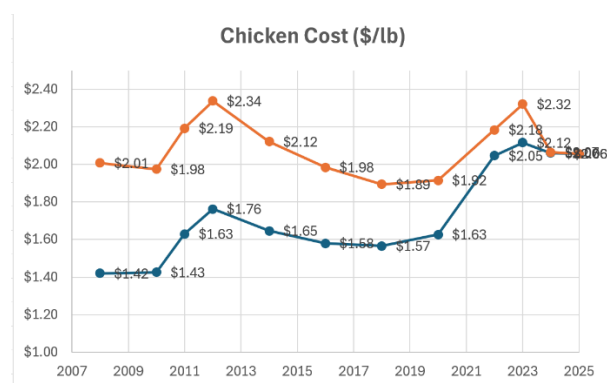
Unlike beef, Canada's chicken production is controlled by a supply management scheme and has less variation in prices than beef. See



graph to the left for the recent history of Ontario wholesale prices for live chickens. The blue line shows the actual prices and the orange line represents CPI adjusted prices with 2025 as the base year.

For further information see:

<https://lpi.ca/news/2024-year-in-review-and-2025-outlook/>



<https://www.darrinqualman.com/canadian-cattle-prices/>

<https://agriculture.canada.ca/en/market-information-system/rp/index-eng.cfm><https://lpi.ca/news/2024-year-in-review-and-2025-outlook/>

Member Matters

New Members

Please join me in welcoming our newest CDHS member: Lynda Ghent.

Annual General Meeting

At our April AGM new CDHS officers were elected. Updated names and their contact information is on the last page of this newsletter.

I encourage everyone to individually thank Carla Jones for her years of service to CDHS. She has served on the CDHS Executive since 2012. Carla has been tireless as Secretary, Vice-President and President, planning our programs, organizing events and personally presenting on Cobourg's history to our Society.

Announcements

Cobourg Museum Foundation Needs Volunteers!

We are seeking enthusiastic volunteers to welcome visitors and guide them through our exciting new exhibits. Your commitment of just three hours a week would be greatly appreciated. No prior experience is necessary – just bring your passion for history and community! If you are interested, please email us at info@cobourgmuseum.ca.



CDHS-LGS Joint Event

The Cobourg and District Historical Society and the Lakeshore Genealogical Society will hold a joint event in the Cobourg Library from 11:00–3:30 on May 3. Dan Buchanan will provide a presentation on the story of the Murray Canal at 2:00pm. Further details are on the next page of this newsletter.

Hastings County Historical Society

Richard Nixon on the Bay of Quinte In 1957, then Vice President Richard Nixon took an unexpected trip to the Bay of Quinte. Join us to hear Dr. Thomas Harrison recount this often overlooked aspect of local and American Presidential history. Tuesday, May 20, 2025 at 7pm, Maranatha Church Auditorium, 100 College Street West, Belleville. Admission is free.

Trent Valley Archives Theatre

Trent Valley Archives Theatre is producing a fundraising sequel to last year's hit play *Tide of Hope! Crossing Over* will be performed at the Market Hall Performing Arts Centre in Peterborough on the evenings of May 29, 30 and 31 at 7:30pm and the afternoon of May 31 at 2pm. The play follows a family aboard an emigrant transport ship as they set sail for their new life in Canada. Visit <https://tickets.markethall.org/eventperformances.asp?evt=433> for further details and to purchase tickets.



**Attend all
day for free!**

Family History Research Information Day



**Everyone
Welcome!**

**Saturday, May 3rd
11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.**

Need help with family research? Either local or from a distance, drop by the Rotary Room, Cobourg Library between 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

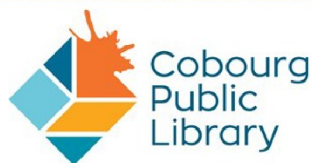
Lakeshore Genealogical Society & Cobourg Library invite you to learn about your community. The Cobourg & District Historical Society & Northumberland County Archives and Museum will also be there to assist.

Join us at 2:00 p.m. for a special presentation
(in-person or register to attend by Zoom)
by Dan Buchanan on

A History of The Murray Canal

Dan Buchanan is a genealogist and historian, the author of four books including *A History of The Murray Canal*. Known as the "history guy," Dan is involved in many organizations and projects in the Brighton area related to history and heritage. Much of his work is available on his website: www.danbuchananhistoryguy.com

Event is **FREE** - but registration for the afternoon session is suggested. To register, please email: LGSregister@gmail.com



Cobourg Public Library

200 Ontario Street
Cobourg, Ontario K9A 5P4 | 905-372-9271
www.cobourg.library.on.ca



A Brief History of the Harwood Memorial Park

The Harwood Memorial Park was established in 1925 as a memorial to the citizens of Harwood who served in the military of World War 1(1914-1918). Many veterans returned but with great sadness, nine brave Harwood soldiers were killed in Europe.

Lt. James Alps
Pte. Percy Anderson
Pte. Baker
Pte. Burret Bell
Pte. Edgar Graham
Pte. Clifford Hutchinson
Gnr. Harry Robson
Gnr. Alexander Young
Pte. T. Bruce Drope



"We Stand On Guard For Thee"

The community mourned at this time and decided that a lasting commemoration be established. The Campbell family graciously donated the land for the Harwood Memorial Park. Special Memorial Gates were erected. Over the years numerous family events, sport games, picnics, etc. have taken place in the Park. Now, after 100 years, the Memorial Gates need restoration and hopefully with community support this will be accomplished.

"Save the Date" - Saturday, July 19, 2025 for the Anniversary of the Harwood Memorial Park. Plans are underway for a recognition of our Park in the village of Harwood. If you would like to volunteer and contribute with the Anniversary as well as the Gates Project, please be in touch. More details will follow during the year.

Information contact: harwoodhall@hotmail.com

5424 FRONT STREET, HARWOOD | SAT. JULY 19, 2025

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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