



Outlook

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Our Summer Programs 2020

It is the long-standing practice of the Historical Society to take a break from the Public Presentations at Maranatha in June, July and August and not to issue the *Outlook* newsletter in July and August. This is to give our hard-working team of volunteers some time off during the summer. We traditionally return in September with a full slate of programs.

The summer of 2020, however, is not like past summers as this year we follow the rules and recommendations of our public health authorities and join the whole population in working to curb the spread of COVID-19.

Accordingly:

In keeping with past practice, the Society will not be holding the Public Presentations and issuing the *Outlook* newsletter during the summer;

In view of the ongoing COVID-19 situation, the Society will defer all other programs until it is completely safe for us to come together. These include the four historical plaque unveiling ceremonies that had been planned for sites in Quinte West (three) and at Albert College during the summer. Also, our programs of historical talks at retirement homes, clubs and other organizations will remain on hold;

The June issue of *Outlook* will be circulated electronically as was the case in April and May. For the members for whom we do not have an email address, we will mail to them paper copies of the April, May and June issues so they can enjoy the many historical stories in those issues.

For the fall season, beginning in September, we will be guided by our public health authorities, and when it is possible to return to our programs, we will inform you via our society website hastingshistory.ca, our social media platforms and email notices;

However, the *Outlook* newsletter will definitely resume in September, with electronic transmission for those who have chosen that format, and for those who have opted for paper copies, by mail.

As the local businesses re-open and life slowly starts to return to some degree of normalcy, we encourage you to follow the guidelines on self-isolation, social distances, hand washing and wearing a mask to keep yourself and your family safe. We look forward to seeing you—healthy and strong—when our activities resume.

Richard Hughes, President

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Website: HastingsHistory.ca

Archives from a Distance

By Amanda Hill, Archivist

Being an archivist without access to an archive might sound like a recipe for frustration and perhaps inactivity. But it turns out there is quite a lot that an archivist working from home can do during a pandemic-enforced separation from her collections.

By the middle of March it was clear that I would not be able to continue working in the Community Archives facility for very much longer. The Belleville Public Library building was soon going to be closing to staff as well as to the public. In my last week there I was able to use our new overhead scanner to digitize the 800 pages of the 1871 Hastings County assessment roll as part of a plan to start a crowdsourcing project that I could work on from home and (I hoped) sign other people up to, too.



Dark archives

Photo by Amanda Hill

March 24th, my last day in the building, was eerie: the library's lights were all off, and I was the only person there. If you've ever fantasized about having a whole library to yourself, I can report that it is not a particularly pleasant experience!



Empty Pinnacle lot

Photo by Amanda Hill

I finished digitizing the assessment roll, diverted the archives telephones to my cell, rescued the office orchid from our break room, and left the building. The Pinnacle parking lot was almost deserted, and as I drove away I was close to tears at this rapid change to my everyday working life.

It did not take long to settle into a new routine on my home computer. I set up the crowdsourcing project in my first week away from the archives. The 1871 assessment roll contains details of landowners and occupiers in Hastings, including people's names, occupations, ages and even the number of farm animals they owned. We are hoping to get the information copied out into online forms so that we can share it with the general public. There's a blog post about it at www.cabhc.ca/archives-from-home, if you would like to take part. It is interesting to see how much land people in each township had cleared for farming by 1871 and how few cows, pigs and sheep each farm possessed at that time.

Helping people with their questions is a significant part of our normal daily work in the archives, and while there have been a few email enquiries since the closure, the telephone has been almost completely silent. Until April 20th, that is, when a gentleman called to ask "How close are we to a cure for Coronavirus?"

Instead, I have been immersing myself in digital activities. I am still able to add descriptions to the Community Archives' online catalogue, Discover (<https://discover.cabhc.ca>) and images to our Flickr account (<https://flickr.com/cabhc>). This quiet time has given me a chance to add descriptions and images for the materials we transferred to Belleville from the Deseronto Archives in 2016. People are still sending in digital archival items, and there are many electronic files on our server that can be deleted and others that can be shared. In recent weeks I have been able to add digital versions of the Hastings County Historical Society's display panels to Discover. These include information on the RCAF Golden Hawks, Hotel Quinte, Women in Politics and many other topics. You can explore them all at <https://discover.cabhc.ca/display-panels>.

In April every year, the Archives and Records Association Scotland runs a Twitter campaign to allow archives around the world to share information about their service through a daily theme with the tag #Archive30. Taking part without physical access to collections was a little more challenging than usual, but with more than 15,000 digital images in our online collections, there are plenty to choose from. It

was an enjoyable way of connecting with other archives from around the world and feeling a little less isolated.

Many archives are asking people to write diaries, take photographs, or otherwise make a record of their COVID-19 experiences. I have been adding relevant Belleville and Hastings webpages to the Internet Archives' Wayback Machine, but would also be interested in gathering other local COVID-19 materials. Do bring things in to the Community Archives once we are open again, or you can of course email electronic items to us any time at archives@cabhc.ca. Memories will soon fade and it is important for us to record what life was like here in this unique period. I look forward to seeing all our visitors and volunteers again soon!



Panic in Hungerford Township—Smallpox

Edited by Richard Hughes

In the 1800s, deadly pandemics and epidemics were a constant threat and cause of repeated panics across Ontario. Cholera pandemics from 1830 to 1860 brought death and widespread misery to the young settlements. Smallpox, a viral disease, spread across the province at various times decimating families and leaving those who survived with terrible disfigurement.

The Hungerford Smallpox Epidemic in 1884 was traced to the arrival of an immigrant boy from Liverpool who was placed on a farm by the local priest. He became ill and infected the whole family. The good neighbours in the French Settlement of Hungerford Township generously assisted the family, and they also became infected with the disease. At this time, an itinerant farm labourer who had assisted in the threshing bees, moved on to the Stoco area; he fell ill and died. The infection spread as more families fell ill, and kindly neighbours came to assist them. By early November, 16 persons had died and many were very ill with the disfiguring disease.

Fear and panic spread across the sparsely settled township: a family lost 7 members in 10 days; 3 other families lost a total of 16 members; in another family the mother and father died leaving 4 orphans.

By mid-November the local doctor recognized the disease as the much-dreaded smallpox, and an urgent appeal was made to the Provincial Board of Health. They sent Dr. Peter Bryce to Tweed who worked

with the village doctor, Dr. T.E. Pomeroy, to establish a local board of health. They systematically vaccinated the population and established isolation hospitals at Stoco and Marlbank and banned all movement of people and goods by rail or road from the infected area. Many in a state of panic tried to escape using backroads; however, these were all patrolled by a team of sanitary police who turned them back. No one could board a train without a medical certificate. Across the township public meetings were forbidden and schools closed.

These measures were successful in bringing the epidemic under control but not before about 200 persons were afflicted, many scarred by the disease for life, and 60 persons had died. The community suffered social disruption and economic losses. Many families buried their loved ones on their farms in unmarked graves, unable to give proper funerals.

The tragedy of Hungerford made a significant contribution to the development of effective public health systems in Ontario as described in the April 2020 *Outlook* article, "How the Hungerford Smallpox Epidemic of 1884 Advanced Medicine" by Orland French.

As a footnote, The World Health Organization conducted smallpox eradication programs through the 1960s and 1970s leading to a declaration in 1980 of a world free of smallpox.

Material for this article was provided by Mr. Evan Morton, Curator, Tweed & Area Heritage Centre.



The Other Pandemics in Quinte

By Richard Hughes

The year 2020 will go down in history as the year of the great COVID-19 pandemic, and stories of the personal isolation and disruption of our lives will be passed on for generations to come. The same was the case for 1918, the year of the Spanish flu. However, there have been other pandemics which are now relegated to the history books.

In 1832 a cholera pandemic, which had its origins in India, spread across Europe and was carried on immigrant ships to Canada, hitting Montreal and Quebec very hard. Cholera is a bacterial infectious disease of the intestines acquired by consuming water or food contaminated with the bacterium *Vibrio cholerae*. It

brings serious diarrhea and dehydration; people can die within hours. In contrast, both COVID-19 and the Spanish flu are viral infections.

It arrived in our region, taking about a dozen lives in Picton and more in Kingston; however, anticipating its arrival in Belleville, local magistrates posted armed guards at the entrances to the village, turning away strangers. No steamboat or sailboat was allowed to land cargo or persons at Belleville harbour. As a result, the pandemic bypassed Belleville. A small hospital that had been rapidly built at the corner of Victoria and Church Streets to care for cholera patients was not used.

Another cholera pandemic spread across Asia and Europe in the 1850s, killing hundreds of thousands of people. Belleville was not as fortunate on this occasion and many lives were claimed. The clearest indicators of the extent of the deaths are found in the burial records of churches. St. Thomas Anglican Church, which would have experienced 25 to 30 annual burials, had 80 in 1854. St. Michael's Church, which averaged 40 burials per year, experienced 118 in 1854 and a further 77 in 1855. (Other details of this pandemic are not available to this researcher at this time as the Community Archives and Public Library are closed due to the current pandemic.)

It was in that same year, 1854, that a British doctor, James Snow, who had been treating patients in London, noticed the prevalence of cholera in an area served by a community pump. He convinced the authorities to close the pump, and the spread of the disease decreased. This was the first link of cholera to drinking water. It was only in 1880 that scientists established the cause of cholera as a water-borne bacterium mainly in drinking water which was related to unsanitary sewage systems.

Related to the cholera pandemics, there had been long-standing concerns in the 1800s about the sources of Belleville's downtown drinking water as the flow of water would have been from the East Hill area where three cemeteries were located adjacent to churches. This had been clearly identified by author Susanna Moodie in her 1853 book, *Life in the Clearings Versus the Bush* where she described the view from the hilltop location of St. Thomas Church. She said, "Churches and churchyards occupy the hills from whence they obtain their springs of fresh water, - and such delicious water! They do not at present feel any ill-consequences arising from this error in judgement; but the time will come, as population increases, and the dead accumulate, when these burying-grounds, by poisoning the springs that flow

through them, will materially injure the health of the living." It was not until 1874 that the town passed a by-law banning burials within the town, leading to the establishment of the current Belleville cemetery.

These pandemics and the understanding of their cause led to widespread improvements in the sanitation systems (sewage and garbage) and in water supply systems. Cholera is virtually non-existent now in the more developed countries, but continues to cause sickness and deaths in the poorer regions of the world.



Controlling Infectious Diseases at OIDD

By Donna Fano

The Ontario Institution for the Deaf and Dumb (OIDD), now Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf, had its share of invading infectious diseases such as mumps, measles, chicken pox, scarlet fever, typhoid fever and diphtheria in its early history.

Gibson Hospital, the school's hospital, was built in 1894 to separate the sick students from the main school building. Previously, the school's infirmary was located at the back of the building, and its outdoor entrance was accessed by the kitchen staff, sick patients and medical staff. This was not an ideal situation. Also, with the increasing enrollment, more space was needed for ill patients than what was available in the infirmary.

La Grippe (another term for the flu) appeared periodically. In one particular case, it left more than 70% of the entire school sick in February, 1899. Many of the students were confined to their beds. At that time, everyone lived in the same building until 1914 when separate residences were built.

Robert Mathison, superintendent of OIDD from 1879 to 1906, noticed that when the students returned to school after the Christmas vacation, epidemics of the infectious diseases such as measles, chicken pox and mumps occurred. By mid-January, the hospital would be full of ill students. In 1901, a new rule was set up that students were not permitted to go home at Christmas and had to remain at the school for the whole year. Parents were allowed to take their children out of school, but were not allowed to return them until the fall semester. Parents could visit them at Christmas at the institution. The parents often stayed at Hotel Quinte during their visit to the town.

Even in the fall, when the students arrived with their trunks, staff took care to fumigate their clothes by

putting formaldehyde in the trunks and sealing them for a period of time. It may have been in the form of formalin, a fumigating powder, which would have been sprinkled between layers of clothes. All parcels sent to the children at school were also fumigated.



Gibson Hospital, built in 1894, continues to stand behind the SJW Main School. OSD-SJW Archives

On one occasion, a letter arrived at the school that had not been treated. An infection broke out, so all mail was fumigated in the following years.

From 1870 to 1917, it was discovered 43 students had died at the school from infectious diseases for which there were no vaccines or proper medication for treatment. There were more that died at the school but their names have not been compiled yet.

The pupils were not spared from the Spanish flu in 1918 even with the restrictions on travel enforced.

The school was hit hard with six dormitories filled with ill pupils. Only the very ill were sent to the school hospital. Most received the mild form of the flu and there were no fatalities.

In the early 1930s, students were allowed to go home for Christmas. At first, only the oldest students were sent home, but gradually the rest of the school population was allowed to go in the following years.

In 2010, five young students were discovered buried at the Belleville Cemetery in the Institution Lot. They had died from infectious diseases at the school. Their bodies were not taken home by the parents who had not the means to do so. An infant, who only lived one day, was found buried together with the students. His father was a deaf printing teacher at the school and the school allowed him to bury the infant there. Their graves were not marked with a tombstone, and they were forgotten. Provincial Schools Branch (PSB), which runs the provincial Deaf and Blind schools under the Ministry of Education, erected a tombstone (Section D, Row 16, graves 1-6) in their memory in 2013. A dedicating ceremony with the tombstone took place on May 30 that year with PSB, Student Parliament, and representatives from Deaf organizations in attendance.

Information for the article comes from *Deaf Heritage Canada* by Clifton Carbin, *Deafening* by Frances Itani, and *The Canadian* issues.



Dedication of Institution Lot, May 30, 2013

Photo by Donna Fano

Customized Plaque Tour of Quinte West

By Orland French

Roy Bonisteel was always a great storyteller, and he's still got a place to sit you down and tell you tales of Quinte West. Roy, a renowned broadcaster, writer and favoured son of Hastings County, has passed away but his spirit lives on. Day after day, rain, sunshine, snow or cloud, Roy sits on a park bench at Quinte West's Trent Port Marina, ready to read aloud from an open book. A plaque nearby provides details of his life.



Roy Bonisteel

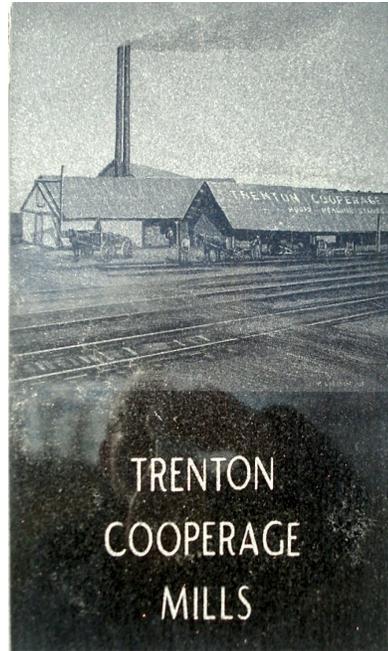
It's a great place to start your personalized historical plaque tour of Quinte West. Roy's plaque and garden are on Cresswell Drive close by the Quinte West Municipal Centre. Linked by a pathway is the Hugh O'Neil Friendship Garden, a tribute to former Liberal MPP Hugh O'Neil who died in 2015. One of his major local achievements was the Afghanistan Repatriation Memorial in Bain Park, next to CFB Trenton. For that he received the Canadian Forces Medallion for Distinguished Service, the highest military recognition for a civilian.

From this point, you'll need your walking shoes and your car to visit other plaques in Quinte West. You can find all these on the Historical Plaques website hastingshistoricalplaques.ca. If you have a portable device to link to the website, you can carry it along and follow its directions.

Not far away, if you search diligently, you will find a plaque commemorating the passage of Samuel de

Champlain and a war party of 500 Huron Indians on the way in 1615 to attack the Iroquois in what is now northern New York State. The attack was unsuccessful; Champlain was injured and the Hurons driven back. The plaque is at 19 Quinte Street, tucked in behind the northeast corner of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 110. Look for a flourish of flags and a military cannon.

Still within walking distance is a cairn dedicated to the Trenton Cooperage Mills, on the waterfront on Cresswell Drive. For decades the James family shipped local and County apples to Britain from this site on the waterfront. The cooperage mills were a leading Trenton industry, where barrels to ship the apples were made. Thanks to Eban James for this monument.



Trenton Cooperage Mills

Several blocks to the west (take your car), you'll find a monument to Hollywood North, home of one of Canada's earliest and longest-running film studios. It's at the corner of Film Street and Shuter Street. The studio produced a number of quality films over 17 years, including *Carry On Sergeant*. To see a complementary 80-foot mural on the film industry, drive over to Dundas Street West and Fraser Park Drive in downtown Trenton. In this area you will find restaurants and coffee shops, so it's a good place to take a lunch break. Across the street from the mural, you'll find the Civic Memorial Tree, a crimson maple planted to commemorate the civic spirit of the citizens of the City of Quinte West in the ice storm of 1998.

Walk west from here along Dundas Street West to



Hollywood North mural

the old post office at Albert Street, where the stone tower and post office door has been preserved. Examine the surface of the wooden door and you'll see that it has taken a pounding, literally, over the years. The tower door became the ceremonial door, to which various military units would come looking for the keys to the city. The base commander would pound the pommel of his sword on the door three times, creating three distinct indentations.

Return to your car and drive to the top of Mount Pelion, a drumlin with a high viewpoint overlooking the City, the Trent River and the Bay of Quinte. It is very likely that Samuel de Champlain viewed the area in 1615, but he wouldn't have had an easy path to the top.

To reach the observation tower, drive to the north end of Maclellan Avenue in the hospital area. At the end there is a one-way lane leading up the face of the hill to a parking lot. Ignore the "No Exit" sign. There is an exit, another one-way lane leading down. However, at the parking lot you are still well below the crest of the hill. A sturdy observation tower was built in 2000, and is accessed via a first-class walkway that includes 101 steps. The peak of the hill is 117 metres above sea level, or 181 feet above the Bay of Quinte.

From the top, the views are worth the effort of the climb. To the north, you will see the Trent River curving into town under Highway 401 and a railway bridge, while beyond you can see the beginnings of the Trent Waterway system and an array of other drumlins and glacial deposits. To the south lies Prince Edward County, while below are spread Trent Port and the mouth of the Trent River. CFB Trenton is in the far distance to the east.

When you descend the narrow lane down to Dufferin Avenue, make your way back through the centre of town to Dundas Street East. Follow it to CFB Trenton, then turn right onto RCAF Road and drive to Bain Park. There you will find one of the most significant memorials in this area, the Afghanistan Repatriation Memorial. This is a place of contemplation and tribute to the Canadian soldiers who lost their lives in the Afghanistan war.

Standing as a sentinel to the memory of our fallen soldiers, a solitary silhouetted soldier faces the memorial. This soldier represents military colleagues standing in mournful tribute while watching over the two granite maple leaves of the memorial.

There are other plaques in Quinte West and more are planned to be added in the near future. As you leave

Bain Park, if you have time, drive north a kilometre or so to the National Air Force Museum of Canada. It's well worth seeing, maybe even to come back another day.

Orland French is HCCHS past president and the webmaster of hastingshistoricalplaques.ca.



Afghanistan Repatriation Memorial



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Website address:	www.hastingshistory.ca
Community Archives	613-967-3304
Hastings County Historical Society	613-962-1110

Hastings County Historical Society has its offices in the Library/Archives building at 254 Pinnacle Street, Second Floor, Postal Code K8N 3B1.

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outlook.hastingshistory@gmail.com