

Outlook

Volume I Number 8 Issue number 138 November 1996

Next Meeting

Tuesday, November 19
1996
Auditorium
Quinte Living Centre,
370 Front Street, Belleville

7:30 Coffee
8:00 Meeting
Guest Speaker
Professor
Michael
Peterman

Topic
"Our Difficulties are not
yet at an End"
Catharine Parr Traill

A popular speaker, Professor Peterman has spoken to the Hastings County Historical Society on three previous occasions, principally on the subject of Belleville's famous pioneer writer Susanna Moodie. He is the acknowledged expert on this subject having written three books on her work. His most recent is entitled *Introducing Roughing it in the Bush*. The subject of this address will be Susanna's equally famous sister who spent much of her life in the Peterborough area and had both a son and a daughter who lived in Belleville during the 1850s and 1860s. Mrs. Traill also experimented with Spiritualism while visiting the Moodies in 1857 and 1858. Professor Peterman chairs the English Department at Trent University Peterborough where he has been on faculty since 1972.

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Stan Wiggins reminisces A trip down memory lane

by Lewis Zandbergen
It was the day of the jitney dance, Model A Fords, street dances and the Dirty Thirties. Canada was between wars and although times were tough, the simple things in life still meant

the most. The times infused the common people with a wealth which can never be measured in monetary terms and a slice of that "rich" past was recently delivered by a man who lived the stories he

told. Audience members at the Hastings County Historical Society regular monthly meeting, held Tuesday, October 15, enjoyed a visit from guest speaker Stan Wiggins, a Belleville music scene "icon"; his topic for the evening was The Commodores Orchestra.

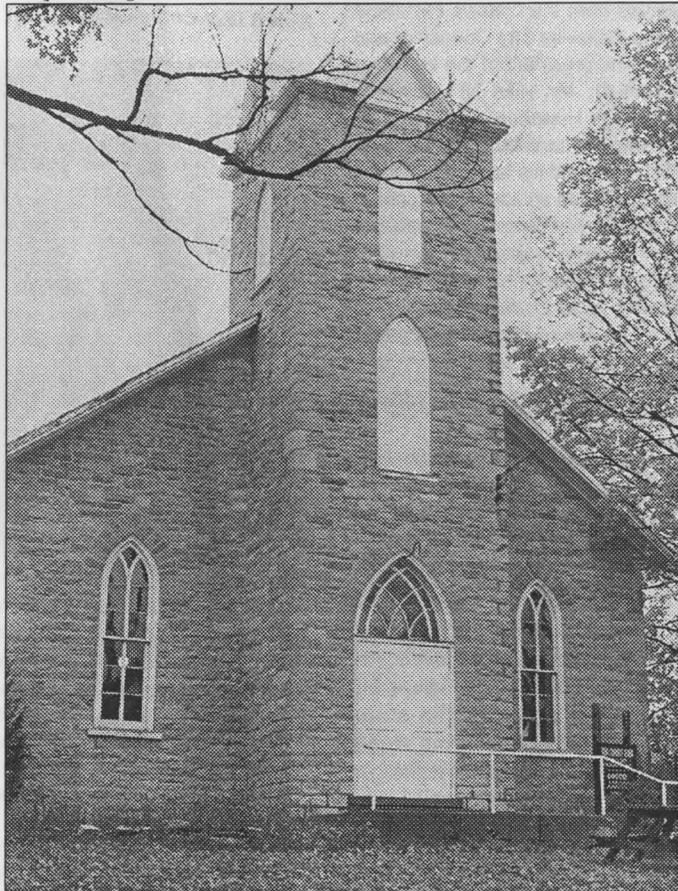
The Commodores, is inarguably the only Quinte-area band which has been part of the music scene for the past 68 years and has survived practically uninterrupted to this day. The band has continued making fine music through the eras of Elvis Presley, The Beatles, punk rock and rap, and they're still going strong.

The Commodores were formed in May of 1928 at the season opening of the Bay of Quinte Yacht Club, while Stan Wiggins was a toddler, but by the time he was 15 he was blowing his horn in the orchestra. The band took its name from a former leader of the band who was also the commodore of the Yacht Club.

Mr. Wiggins spoke of the band's history and his love of big band era and its music. Throughout his speech he coloured his remarks with personal reminiscences of the places the group played: the Oak Lake Casino, the Park Pavilion, local clubs, and the Trianon Ballroom, all gone now.

The highlight of the Commodores' existence had to be the years spent in their very own club—the Commodore Club, naturally—which was located at the

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The Quinte branch of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario (ACO) held its monthly historic walk on County Road #8 between Highway #62 and the hamlet of Moira on Sunday, October 20. Local ACO president Dan Atkinson led the tour through the Moira area concentrating on its historic stone houses, Luke's, the Quaker and Moira cemeteries, the Moira Schoolhouse and the Moira Community Centre, formerly the United Church. Refreshments were enjoyed in the more than 100-year-old former Methodist Church on the hamlet's eastern outskirts.

Lewis Zandbergen photo



In a short ceremony on Tuesday, October 22, Nicholas "Nick" Mika was presented with the 1995 Carnochan Award from the Ontario Historical Society. On hand for the presentation were Belleville City Councillor and local historian and author Gerry Boyce (r) and president of the Hastings County Historical Society Elizabeth Mitchell (l); Mr. Mika (c) was nominated for the award by the Hastings County Historical Society. The Carnochan Award is given to an individual who has contributed many years of service to the heritage community. Nick Mika and his late wife, Helma, devoted many years to publishing several volumes on aspects of provincial history, produced a three-volume collection of *Places of Ontario* and six titles concerning Belleville. The Mikas through their publishing company also reprinted several long lost early publications of interest to historians and researchers including Canniff's 1869 *Settlement of Upper Canada*.
Lewis Zandbergen photo

The Commodores still active

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Belleville Fairgrounds. Members of the Commodores have come and gone through the years but the names still roll easily from Stan's lips: Tony Giosefitto, Phil Huddleston, Art Kemp, Frank Howard, Jimmy Large, Reg Scriven and others left their mark on the group. Stan is justifiably proud of the group's ability to be democratic; there is no real leader as such, and decisions regarding music were always discussed among the members.

Tales of trips to play at large and small events were shared with the audience. Stan remembered a call asking for his band to replace a scheduled act which hadn't shown up. He recalled the Commodores were to play for only an hour or two but ended up playing into the wee hours of the morning. Then there was the story of a ride with whiskey bottles—one in each door pocket; you'll have to ask him about that one.

Stan laments the passing of the

era of street dances; there was a vibrancy he feels has been lost. He says, however, that the Commodores are still getting plenty of bookings and he noted, the big band sound is still very popular. During the winter season, Stan and his wife head for Florida. And what do you suppose keeps him occupied down in the sunny south? Rather than lying around in the sun enjoying his retirement years, Stan is usually out jamming with local musicians—it's a busman's holiday of sorts.

There's no doubt about it: Stan Wiggins and The Commodores remain a fixture on the Belleville scene. Stan's informative and homespun story of the band, which is fast approaching its 70th anniversary, delighted the audience. Several people stopped by to relive memories through the dozens of pictures and other memorabilia Stan had brought along. Several also took advantage of the opportunity to purchase The Commodores tapes.

Hear about Catharine Parr Traill

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He is a graduate of Princeton University (AB 1966), University of Toronto (MA 1970 and Phd 1978).

Last year he was the recipient of a Fulbright Fellowship which allowed him to spend 1995 and 1996 in the United States doing research and writing, principally at Princeton University where he lectured on Canadian Literature.

His wife, Cara, is librarian at the Peterborough Public Library and the couple has two children, Jessie and Rob, who are both at university.

Canadian writers Professor Peterman has researched and written about include Margaret Lawrence, Robertson Davies, Scott Young, W.O. Mitchell, Sara Jeannette Duncan and Isabella Valancy Crawford.

He has two new books on Catharine Parr Traill as well as the new book on Susanna Moodie.

Professor Peterman will be available at the meeting to autograph any copies you have.



On Sunday, October 27, about three dozen people, including about 25 descendants of John W. Meyers, attended the riverside unveiling of a plaque dedicated to the pioneer founder of Belleville. Short speeches were offered by Ontario Heritage Foundation director André Philpot, local author, historian and city Councillor Gerry Boyce who also chaired the meeting, Mayor Ross McDougall, Councillor Mary-Anne Sills, Hastings County Historical Society president Elizabeth Mitchell, author Jane Bennett Goddard, U.E., and Quinte Construction Association president Norm Watson. Ms. Goddard (l) and Doris Almey (r) both Meyers' descendants unveiled the plaque which is on the site of Meyers' original mills. Please see Gerry Boyce's *County News* on page 3, for more.

Our sympathy is extended to the family of the late Mildred Wanamaker. She and her late husband served as our society genealogists in the 1960s, recorded the cemeteries of Prince Edward County, offered assistance to countless historians and genealogists, and actively promoted the history of their beloved Seventh Town (Ameliasburgh).

Our sympathy also goes to the family of the late John "Jack" Pitman of Charlotte Street, Belleville, who supported the society for many years.

County News

by Gerry Boyce

Meyers Plaque - The players were mostly different from the 1959 event, but the aim was the same: to celebrate the life and accomplishments of Captain John W. Meyers, U. E. On a beautiful Sunday afternoon, October 27, the Ontario Heritage Foundation erected a plaque in Meyers' honour at the site of Meyers' original 1790 mill on the bank of the Moira River in Belleville. Belleville's Parks and Recreation Department and Heritage Belleville Committee co-sponsored this event. Family historian and author Jane Bennett Goddard, U. E., spoke on Meyers' importance to the British cause in the American Revolution and his importance locally as a founder of Sidney Township and Belleville. Marmora Village Reeve and historian André Philpot brought greetings from the Ontario Heritage Foundation. Other participants were Belleville Mayor Ross McDougall; Councillor Mary-Anne Sills, council liaison with the Parks and Recreation Department; Norm Watson, president of the Quinte Construction Association; and the Reverend Michael Pollesel of St. Thomas Anglican Church. Quinte MPP Doug Rollins, who was unable to attend, sent a scroll of appreciation. The plaque was unveiled by two of Captain Meyers' descendants Jane Bennett Goddard and Doris Almey. President Elizabeth Mitchell brought greeting from the Hastings County Historical Society and reminded participants that the society had sponsored the dedication of the earlier plaque to Meyers in 1959. This writer was pleased to have chaired both the 1959 and the 1996 dedication ceremonies.

Heritage meeting - Heritage

groups in the Quinte Area were brought together on October 26 when our society sponsored a workshop in the Belleville Public Library. Participants from a dozen groups met under the chairmanship of our president, Elizabeth Mitchell, to consider ways of working together more closely. Two immediate results were decisions to prepare a directory of Quinte heritage groups and to meet in February to consider joint activities. Given reduced provincial financial support, such co-operation is essential.

New book - The 17th century was a time when the French ruled this area. The Champlain Society (in co-operation with the Government of Ontario) has shed new light on this period with a new book edited by Cornelius J. Jaenen, a professor of history at the University of Ottawa. The 322-page book is similar in format to 15 earlier books in the "Ontario Series," including Guillet's *The Valley of the Trent* and Preston and Lamontagne's *Royal Fort Frontenac*. It contains a series of extracts from French explorers, government officials and others describing the limits of the colony, the nature of the countryside, and early exploration. Consider these quotations by Intendant Jean Talon (October 4, 1665): "... the climate, which by reason of its great cold causes apprehensions about living in the country, is for all that so salubrious that one is rarely ill and ... one lives long here. ... the land, very uneven by reason of its mountains and valleys, is overloaded with trees which make it one forest which, in my opinion, chokes beautiful and rich production. The fertility for cereals is apparent to us by the abundant harvests which the cleared and cultivated lands

yield each year ..."

And this quotation from Sieur de Combes (1609): "The Kingdom of Canada ... is slightly colder than France ... there are to be found certain apples, marvellously large and filled with a certain sweetness which is very delicate and can intoxicate just as well as does wine."

There is also reference to Samuel de Champlain's trip through the area in 1615, Father Fenelon's mission to the Iroquois on the Bay of Quinte commencing in 1668, and the establishment of Fort Frontenac (Kingston) in 1673.

Tweed explodes - Explosions at the Tweed Works of the Ontario Powder Company were the subjects of recent articles by Evan Morton in the "Heritage Herald" column in *The Tweed News*. The first explosion on August 22, 1903, killed three employees, pieces of their bodies being "found in all directions." Then on February 4, 1908, a dozen buildings of the rebuilt and enlarged Ontario Powder Works "were blown to atoms." According to Evan, "The worst explosion occurred in the building where the blasting gelignite cartridges were made. The company had just started the manufacture of this powerful explosion ... 50 per cent more powerful than ordinary dynamite." Windows were shattered as far away as Stoco and Madoc and "windows rattled and buildings shook as far away as Napanee." Property loss in Tweed was over \$25,000 and it was a miracle that no one was killed.

Here and there - George Fleming writes in *The Community Press* that the accounts ledger of the Ivanhoe Public School (Huntingdon SS No. 12) from 1891 to 1944 records the purchase in 1929 of a school flagpole from Albert Clements for \$2. ... the Marmora Historical Foundation is aiming to raise \$5,000 for the Library Enhancement Fund through the sale of envelopes to be sealed in a time capsule within the new library

addition in a chest brought to Canada by a Scottish "home boy" ... the Bancroft "New Beginnings" Genealogy Group is being organized ... Dr. Charles M. Godfrey of Madoc has received the Order of Ontario; he is the author of a 1979 Mika book entitled *Medicine for Ontario: A History ...* thanks to Eugene Lang, Belleville School Trustee, antiquarian and musicologist for pointing out errors in recent publications by Oxford and Cambridge University presses (including a photo incorrectly identified as the Belleville High School and a population figure for Belleville of 62,700) ... the RCAF Memorial Museum has been very successful in its fund-raising efforts; recent donations included \$10,000 from the Bomber Harris Trust and \$30,000 from Sidney Township.

There's still time to win - I welcome suggestions as to what the municipal map of Hastings County (including Belleville and Trenton) will look like in 2000 A.D. The person who submits the most interesting and imaginative prediction will receive FREE an autographed copy of my *Eldorado: Ontario's First Gold Rush* (value \$21.55) in time for Christmas reading or giving. Send your predictions (written or sketched) to Gerry Boyce, 173 Bridge Street East, Belleville, Ontario K8N 1N3 by November 15. We reserve the right to reproduce your comments or drawings in the January 1997 issue of *Outlook*.

An odd story - The Bancroft Times reruns this story from August 1906: "The ballast train on the C.O.R. (Central Ontario Railway) ran over a sheep one morning last week and ground it into mince meat. A little later on, a heifer wandered onto the track and disputed the right-of-way with the engineer, but the latter had a through ticket and wouldn't stop, and the remains of poor bossy were buried by the roadside. A flock of geese next hove into sight, and four of the feathered bipeds were mercilessly slaughtered. The pilot of the engine was covered with wool, hair, and feathers."



Your County Museum

257 Bridge Street East, Belleville, Ontario, K8N 1P4 (613) 962-2329

Christmas at Glanmore

Experience the Victorian elegance of Glanmore at Christmas. Festively decorated for the Yuletide Season, Glanmore offers a refreshing break from the hustle and bustle of this busy time. Bring family and friends and discover how Christmas was celebrated in years gone by. The museum is open from 1 to 4:30 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday.

Cedar wreath making workshop

Sunday, December 1,

In this annual workshop, participants create a festive natural wreath for their homes. Children accompanying participants will be making crafts and enjoying refreshments. Please bring two



wire hangers and a pair of garden shears. Fresh cedar and festive red ribbon will be provided. The cost is \$20, GST included, per participant, and accompanying children will be admitted for \$2.50. Call 962-2329 to preregister.

Bridge at Glanmore

Monday, November 25, 1 p.m.

The Museum Auxiliary is inviting everyone to bring friends to play bridge. Refreshments will be served. The cost is \$5 per person or \$20 per table. Reservations for tables of four only. Call Ann at 966-7478 for information and reservations.

Sawyer portraits identified

Hastings County Museum is pleased to announce that it has identified the subjects of three William Sawyer portraits which had hitherto been unknown. Museum volunteer Lois Foster identified the two portraits of the couple as Dr. Rufus Holden, a mayor of Belleville in 1864-1865, and his wife Elizabeth. The other portrait was identified as Benjamin Fairfield Davy, first mayor of the town of Belleville in 1850.

We are still looking for Sawyer's portrait of Billa Flint.

Christmas special events.

NEW!
Glanmore

Candlelight Tour

December 18, at 7 and 8:30 p.m. Enjoy a special evening Christmas tour. Refreshments will be served. Please call 962-2329 to preregister.



Yuletide at Home

Sunday, December 15

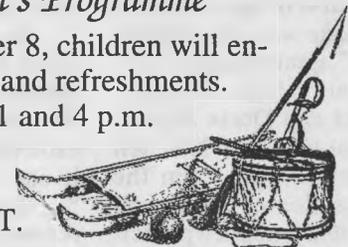
This event is hosted by the Hastings County Museum Auxiliary. Guests will enjoy traditional holiday refreshments and a relaxing visit in the serene Victorian surroundings. Drop in between 1 and 4 p.m. The cost is \$4 for adults and \$2 for children; GST is extra

Children's Programme

Sunday, December 8, children will enjoy crafts, stories and refreshments.

Drop in between 1 and 4 p.m.

The cost is \$4 for adults and \$2 for children, plus GST.



Outlook is published monthly for the Friends and Members of the Hastings County Historical Society

Mr. and Mrs. B. Wright
5 Sunset Drive
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K8N 1Y4

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