



Outlook

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The Eddy Thomas Story

Part 5 - By C.W. (Bill) Hunt

What sort of man was Don Thomas, the last operator of the Ed Thomas Cigar Store and its “affiliated” gambling business?

When Don died, the late Al Kelleher, the city’s first town crier, as well as a noted athlete and umpire, wrote an obituary for the *Intelligencer*. Here is what Big Al wrote:

Don Thomas (his friends called him by the nickname “Pinhead”) was raised in Belleville and was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Ed Thomas. Ed Thomas was the proprietor of the Ed Thomas Cigar Store at 182 Front Street and it was later owned and run by Don Thomas.

Before World War 2, Don played Junior baseball and was catcher and captain. During this time he obtained a rule book and became expert on the playing rules of baseball. After his junior days were over in the middle thirties, he started umpiring in the old C.O.B.L. which had teams like



**Don Thomas
in WWII**

*Photo submitted by
Bill Hunt*

Belleville, Kingston, Peterborough, Oshawa, Napanee and Port Hope. His fellow umpires were Ken Colling, Twig Woodley, Herb Pointer and Scott.

He spent five years overseas during World War 2. He spent his time over there with his buddies Jim “Snipe” Matthews, Harold “Bingo” Reid, and Walt Gerow Jr. [His nephew, Jack Ruttan, believes Don was a sniper in the artillery.]

On his return to Belleville, he went to work for his father and also helped manage the Belleville Junior hockey team with his old buddy Walt Gerow Jr.

He ran for and was elected to City Council for many years [six terms] and was on many committees. He ran for Mayor but was unsuccessful. At one time he was a valued member of the “Belleville Theatre Guild.” In 1951 he coached the Belleville Batawa baseball team with such players as Art Wright, Earl “Moose” Bush, Ken Peacock and Johnny Aquino. [He also served as President of the Kinsmen’s Club in Belleville.]

In the middle 60’s he finished his umpiring career. In the early 70’s he sold his landmark Ed Thomas Cigar Store and all his memorabilia pictures that decorated the walls of the store. He moved to England where he passed away, leaving his English wife.

Don “Pinhead” Thomas was a good citizen, a real gentleman, and a valued friend to all his many friends.

Postscript

Al Kelleher was himself elected to Belleville’s Sports Hall of Fame. As for Don Thomas, there were some colourful aspects to his personality which Al either did not know about or, more likely, chose not to include in his eulogy. We will deal with these in a subsequent article. Some are quite surprising, and even most old-timers do not know of them. Nevertheless, Kelleher’s overall assessment of Don Thomas as a good citizen and a gentleman remains valid.



Ghost Towns and Pioneer Villages in Our Backyard—HCHS Bus Tour

By Lindi Pierce

Take one very large and historic county. Add local historians in a variety of roles: a seasoned researcher and teller of tales, a think-of-everything organizer, a support team of researchers, mapmakers and desktop publishers, a fearless bus driver at home on mule tracks. Add a group of fifty local history enthusiasts. No, wait. Make that *two* groups of local history enthusiasts. Mix together, shake over a rough road or two. And you have the Hastings County Historical Society “Ghost Towns and Pioneer Villages in Our Backyard” bus tour 2013. The trips are becoming so popular that the first one sold out readily and a second trip was organized, each filling the comfortable coach to capacity.

On May 4 and June 1, the tour took the road less travelled, taking to the back roads of southern Hastings County, from Point Anne north to Sulphide, with fascinating stops in between. Like a historical version of the children’s story “The Emperor’s New Clothes,” these nine villages are distinguished by what, in many cases, they are not—and that is, visible. It took the research and narration of historian Bill Hunt to reveal their stories.

Nothing deepens our awareness of history as poignantly as wandering through a ghost town, seeing only ruins where industry once flourished. The trip was filled with experiences telling the county’s rich human, agricultural, and industrial story: seeing old sidewalks straggling past overgrown lots in Point Anne; visiting the church in Read, where a dedicated priest challenged his homesteading Irish parishioners to build a masterpiece; wandering the picturesque hilly streets of Lonsdale, an artist’s mecca where the Lazier’s nineteenth-century stone industrial complex once flourished; standing at the abandoned cement steps which once led the faithful to a church in Sulphide; viewing crumbling foundations and machinery of the Melrose Cheese factory.

Visiting these ghost towns, tour participants heard stories of homesteading and industry, vision and courage, the rise and demise of communities. In Shannonville, a sun-bleached frame building by the river is distinguished as Hastings County’s oldest house. Near Deseronto, WWI and II flying aces were trained; a WWI hangar still stands in the village where the Rathbun family presided over a lumbering boom town until 1913.

Each of the tours offered something different. On the May 4 trip, Jackie Gilbert recounted the Point Anne of the 1940s and 1950s, the well-serviced company town of the Canada Cement Company. On June 1, step-on guide Dale

regaled passengers with stories of farming, politics and personalities in Tyendinaga township. A visit to the 1868 Methodist church in Lonsdale presented an opportunity to talk with artist Michael Rutland, rebuilding the windows of the dignified little church in time for the annual summer service. A delightful couple in Sulphide boarded the bus with display panels illustrating the village’s heyday when Nichols Chemical produced sulphuric acid for uranium extraction, an astonishing story given the total absence of any trace of the huge plant which once spread over their country acreage.

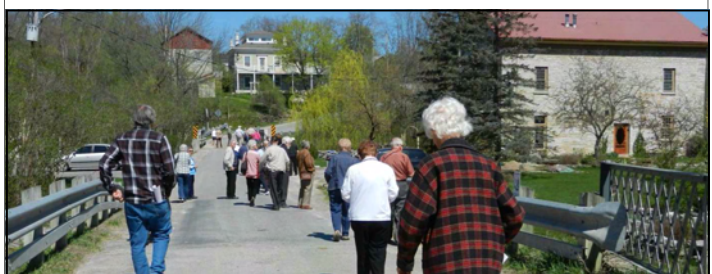
Lunch at the hospitable Melrose United Church, perfectly timed pit stops, and a comfortable air-conditioned coach rounded out the delights of the day. Thanks to tour guide Bill Hunt, administrator Mary-Lynne Morgan, driver Dave Towill, Donna Fano and the Archive Angels for all their work.

And the best news? Next spring’s bus tour is already scheduled: “More Ghost Towns and Pioneer Villages,” telling tales of places west of Highway 37. Book early for this event in support of HCHS.



Bill Hunt gave an excellent background of the lost villages. The photo below shows the tour group proceeding to the Lazier Grist Mill.

Photos - Donna Fano



Belleville Public Library

By Donna Fano

On June 27, 2013, a group of Farley Mowat fans gathered in the evening by the library fireplace to honour Farley Mowat with a caricature, displays of his life in Belleville and book collection. The caricature by Susan Moshyniski was commissioned by John Lowry and donated to the library. The artwork now hangs over the fireplace on a permanent basis. The caricature features Mowat in a kilt, waving a pen in the air, with Corby Library in the background.

Donna Fano created three display panels of Mowat's life in Belleville and his achievements. One of the panels describes the connection between Claire and Farley Mowat and Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf (SJW). The couple donated a deaf pup, Alice, to SJW in 1972. Alice became somewhat unique—a dog who could understand some ASL signs.

Unknown to each other, both John and Donna had a strong interest in the Mowats, and both had corresponded with them. When Donna heard of the event planned at the library, she volunteered to create displays incorporating her research on Farley Mowat. As Mowat had been born and had lived in Belleville, both John and Donna wanted to see Farley honoured in his home town. Not many Bellevillians are aware of this connection. The display panels are now hanging in the seminar room on the second floor of the library, should anyone wish to view Farley Mowat's history.



Susan Moshyniski and John Lowry stand with the caricature of Farley Mowat

Photo - Doug Knudson

Rosemary Ryer (left), who looked after Alice at SJW, stands in front of one of the displays prepared by Donna Fano.

Photo - Doug Knudson



Fifty Years of Walking Around Belleville

By Nick White & Anthea Weese

This year's Jane's Walks, in honour of Jane Jacobs, continued a tradition of walking tours of Belleville. It has been nearly fifty years since the *Intelligencer* announced on August 26th, 1963, that the Hastings County Historical Society would hold its first "experimental Walking Tour."

The event must have been successful as the Walking Tour of Lower Front Street held on September 1st was followed by six additional walks in October and November of the same year.

On May 4, 2013, trailed by around 150 explorers, Orland French led the **Meet Me at the Four Corners** walk—a celebration of downtown with a poke into history, an introduction to present downtown uses and culture, and an exploration of issues and possibilities for the future.

Orland fed the walkers a diet of juicy historical tidbits along the downtown Front Street route, and was joined by downtowners such as restaurateur Paul Dinkel and Funk & Gruven's Mike Malachowski who introduced the crowd to the charming courtyard alley behind their establishments. Richard Courneyea discussed his family's decision to "put their money where their mouth is" and to make the move to living downtown, above his Richard Davis store.

Returning to the market, Don Wilson told how, with the participation of his grandchildren, seven generations of Wilsons have now been market merchants in downtown Belleville. That's a story in itself.

The second walk, **Back Side for Your Backside**, was an accessible fitness trip following the Riverfront Trail along the Moira River.



Orland leading an enthusiastic troop through the downtown core. Some of the buildings date back to the 18th century.

Photo - Kim Stinson

Led by fitness expert Ashton Calnan, geologist Hannah Chittenden, and BDIA executive director Sarah Tummon, around 50 participants explored downtown's back side—the buildings on the west side of Front Street and the east side of Coleman Street.



The second Jane's Walk incorporated history and fitness along the Riverfront Trail. *Photo - Marianne Scott*

Guest speakers included the Greenleys, erstwhile book-sellers, and Shane Ross, owner of The Old Firehouse restaurant, who discussed the history of their buildings. There were lots of stories, including how the former Eddie Thomas Cigar Store (now Earl & Angelo's) hosted a 30-year-long gambling game on the second floor. Police department insiders would tip off the gaming room in advance of any police raids. There were two house rules: answer phone calls immediately, and don't spit on the floor.

As the leaders wrapped up the walk, one participant declared it to be "fabulous, nobody wanted it to end." And another observed, "History and fitness, life doesn't get any better!"



The third Jane's Walk took place the next day on the Bay-shore Trail. *Photo - Nick White*

The third Jane's Walk, titled **Down by the Bay**, was held the next day. Led by landscape architect Kevin Tribble, a designer of the city's widely used Bayshore Trail, and Doug Moses, previously the city's director of Parks and Recreation, the walk started at the boat launch at the end of South George Street and proceeded eastward along the bay to the CN memorial.

Talks along the trail featured an eclectic mixture of topics: the geological history of the land, its evolving ecology since the settlement of Belleville and the challenges of building the trail and the hopes for its future extension. After great views of the turtles sunbathing in the artificial ponds, the walk ended at the CN monument with stories from Belleville's days as a major railway centre.



Celebrating Canada Day in Belleville

Story & pictures by Nick White

The 2013 Canada Day exhibit the Society and Community Archives presented at the Tom Gavey Pavilion in Zwick's Park was a brilliant success.

The nineteen volunteers worked really hard. They handed out 393 "Find the Picture" quiz forms and gave out approximately 500 prizes!



The welcome signs that were placed strategically around Zwick's Park

Although we do not have an exact count of the number of visitors to our exhibit, we estimate there were approximately 800 people who came through—that's about 1 in 8 of those attending the event.

We made a number of changes in 2013, dropping the treasure hunt and introducing two new puzzles/games. The "Find the Picture" quiz was very popular and appealed to all ages, from the very young who had to have the questions read to them to "old-timers" who were part of some of the events on the poster boards. And the quiz wasn't easy; we had forty display boards containing around 150 images.

It was great to see visitors (especially younger people) reading the stories on the poster boards and discussing them with our

volunteers, with their friends and other visitors.



Al Cleary and John Lowry with HCHS banner in front of the pavilion

In addition to the forty posters and the map puzzles, we had a display of local history books, a video display of the Hotel Quinte booklet and a display of 2012 activities and upcoming 2013 events.

Our thanks, not only to those who staffed the exhibit, but to the Belleville Canada Day Committee and to all those volunteers who worked so hard in the weeks before to put all the pieces together!



It was a very busy Canada Day!



Notes from the Archives... On the Move!

By Sharon White

During the past summer, Belleville's City Council approved a proposal to relocate the Community Archives to dedicated spaces within the Belleville Public Library building, instead of moving us to the former Irish Hall on Church Street. As your Archivist, I am delighted with this change of location. It will offer a better preservation environment for the archival records and comparable useable space in a busy and more central site. There will be cost savings and operating efficiencies for both the Library and the Archives (and hence for our taxpayers) by sharing the one building, and our visitors will be able to access a broader range of related services at a single location.



Library C.E.O., Trevor Pross, looks forward to welcoming the Community Archives in the Library building. "The idea makes sense in so many ways," he says. "It will present us with many opportunities for developing and strengthening our partnership."

The Archives will occupy the north half of the second floor in the Library building—approximately 6,000 square feet. There will be a separate room for the Historical Society office and Archive volunteers. Renovations will be carried out to create the required Archives spaces, including installation of a new heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system. Some spaces on the third floor will be prepared for potential future expansion.



Belleville Public Library

Photo from Library Website

Plans will be presented to the Archives Advisory Committee and partners soon. We anticipate that the move will be completed in about a year's time. There will be many stages along the way—from architectural drawings and construction, to more detailed planning of how we will operate in the shared building, and preparing the archival materials for the move.

Regular updates about the move will be provided in *Outlook* and on the Archives website at cabhc.ca. Questions, comments, and suggestions are always welcome! And please get in touch if you would like to join our wonderful team of volunteers who are helping with preparations for the move and our ever-expanding public service operations.

Celebrating 100 Years of Marmora Town Hall

Story and Photos by Nick White

The Community Archives and Historical Society prepared an exhibit for the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Marmora Town Hall held on the 3rd of August.

The handsome building (pictured to the right) was rescued from being a derelict and renovated in 1913. It still retains the features of that time, including extensive pressed tin tiles on the walls and ceiling. And they're

planning for the future: the tile roof, new in 2008, has a 100-year life expectancy!



Warden Rick Phillips (pictured left with Reeve Terry Clements) was there to present congratulations and a commemorative plaque from Hastings County and enjoy the exhibits, lunch and of course, the cake.

The exhibits of Marmora's history assembled by Marmora civic staff were fascinating, as were the drawings by school children of how they imagined the village to be 100 years ago and 100 years in the future. But the show stoppers were (1) a video shot in the 1920s showing the village and including parades and a re-enactment of the fire that burnt St. Agnes Church; and (2) entertainment by Marmora resident John Davidson.



Admitting to be two years younger than the Town Hall, John (pictured to the right), a farmer for 61 years until he retired, entertained the audience with stories, poetry and rhymes that he learnt as a young man in the 1920s.



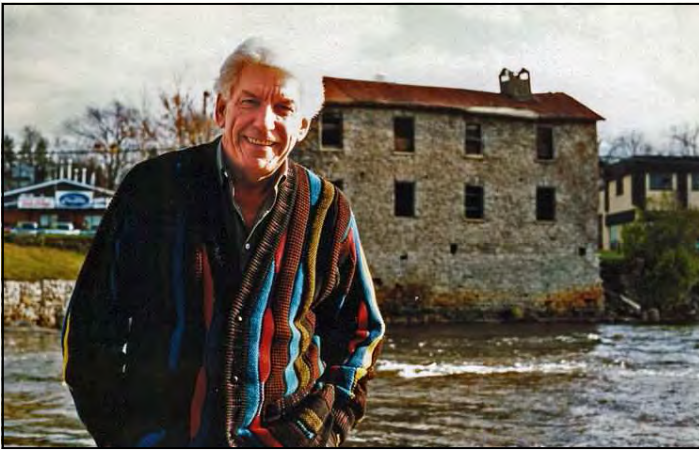
Our exhibit (pictured left with Archivist Sharon White) featured 19 images of Marmora from the HCHS collections at the Community Archives. Congratulations to Marmora and Lake, and municipal staff (especially Typhany Choinard) for organizing the event and inviting us—we always appreciate the opportunity to participate in our local history!

You can view the images we exhibited and listen to some of John's recordings at the Heritage Centre in Cannifton.



Longtime Members Pass Away

Roy Bonisteel



Roy Bonisteel is shown standing in front of Meyer's Mill. He is a descendant of Captain Myer. *Photo by Doug Knudson*

The Historical Society lost a dear, longtime friend with the passing of Roy Bonisteel on August 16. Mr. Bonisteel began his illustrious career in journalism and television with his hometown newspaper, rising to host the "Man Alive" program on the CBC for 22 years. He was awarded a litany of national awards and honours, including the Order of Canada. But he never forgot his roots and kept a keen interest in local history and heritage. He was an active participant in the Historical Society's first annual banquet and kept up contacts over the ensuing years. His contributions to our community and to our Society will long be remembered.

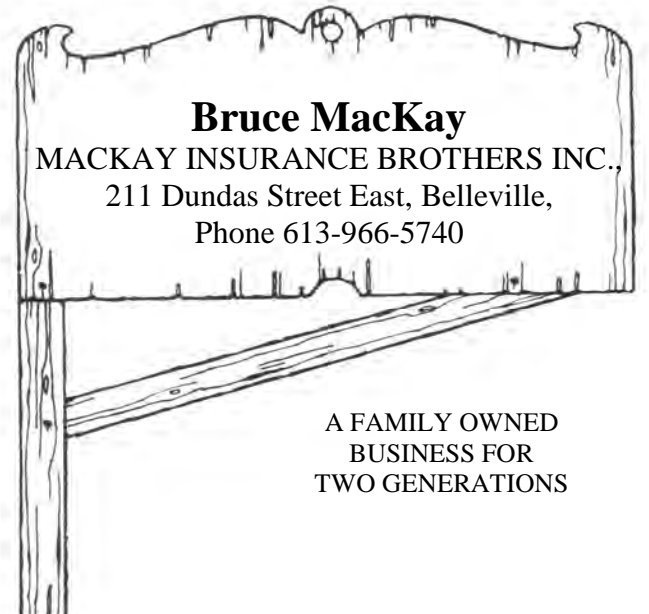
Rev. J. William LAMB

Obituary – from "the star.com"

LAMB, Rev. J. William - November 8, 1930 - June 10, 2013. Dearly beloved husband of Gina Lamb; beloved father of Alex Onyemenam; Grandfather of Obi, Ife and Chike (the "lights of my life") went peacefully home to his Saviour. Minister, Psychotherapist, Historian and Author. There will be no visitation prior to the service. Memorial service at St. Giles Kingsway Presbyterian Church on July 4th at 5 p.m.



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Notice of Temporary *Outlook* Editor for October Issue

Submissions to October *Outlook* can be directed to Bill Kennedy (outlook.hastingshistory@gmail.com) for this issue only. Donna Fano, *Outlook* editor, will be tied up during the month of September with a family event.



Hastings County Historical Society Presentation

Special Guest Speaker:

Topic: Heather Hawthorne of the Ontario Ministry of the Environment will be speaking on **The Fascinating Heritage and History of the Deloro Mine Site**. There will be a documentary video on the history of gold mining and arsenic production at Deloro and the major project to clean up this site.

Date: Tuesday, September 17, 2013

Time: 7:30 p m

Location: Quinte Living Centre Auditorium
 (North Corner Door)
 370 Front Street, Belleville

Bring a friend!

Website: www.hastingshistory.ca

Email: president@hastingshistory.ca

Deadlines for Submissions to the October *Outlook* Newsletter

Sept. 25 - Final submissions of articles and photos for the October newsletter are due. **Please send any submissions to Bill Kennedy before this date if possible.**

Oct. 2 - October *Outlook* newsletter goes to the printer

Oct 7 - Newsletters are picked up and preparation of newsletters are done by Archive Angels for mailing.

A copy of the newsletter will be sent to the contributors of stories to the

Outlook for final proofreading prior to the print date.

Donna Fano - *Outlook*



HASTINGS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY DIRECTORS

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Outlook Co-editor	Laurel Bishop
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Heritage Centre Phone No.	613-962-1110

Hastings County Historical Society is based at the old township office in Cannifton. Please address mail to 154 Cannifton Rd. North, General Delivery, Cannifton, ON, K0K 2K0. *Outlook* is published eight months of the year for members and friends of the Society. The editor, Bill Kennedy, can be reached at the below email address,

outlook.hastingshistory@gmail.com

Member Designation



Hastings County Historical Society

Annual Banquet and Celebration of Local History

Guest Speaker:

The Hon. Sheila M. Copps, PC, OC

Topic: We Are Nobody's Babies

The Progress of Women in Canadian Politics



Six women have risen to Premier positions in Canadian politics. The Hon. Sheila M. Copps helped pave the way. A combative and controversial advocate for women in Parliament and politics, she was the first woman appointed Deputy Prime Minister of Canada. As Heritage minister, she was always a strong advocate of Canadian nationalism and defender of our history. The title of her topic is taken from her book, *Nobody's Baby*.

Date: Saturday October 26, 2013

Location: Travelodge Hotel Ballroom

Social Hour 6 pm - Dinner 7 pm

Tickets \$65.

**Tickets available at Quinte Arts Council,
36 Bridge St E. Belleville,
and from Richard Hughes 613-961-7772**

Visit Our Website: www.hastingshistory.ca

Coming Events Fall 2013

September 17 (Tuesday): The Historical Society presents Heather Hawthorne of the Ontario Ministry of the Environment speaking on The Fascinating Heritage and History of the Deloro Mine Site. There will be a documentary video on the history of gold mining and arsenic production at Deloro and the major project to clean up this site. Quinte Living Centre auditorium, 370 Front St. at 7:30 pm

October 15 (Tuesday): Hastings County and the Great War, 1914-1918. To commemorate the centennial of the beginning of WWI in 2014, the Historical Society is researching the military service of twelve Hastings County men and women who served in that conflict. Society Director Bill Kennedy will recount some of their personal, frontline experiences, as documented in letters, army records, newspapers, family histories and photographs. Quinte Living Centre Auditorium, 370 Front Street at 7:30 PM.

October 26 (Saturday): Annual Banquet and Celebration of History at the Travelodge Hotel, Belleville. Special Guest Speaker, former Deputy Prime Minister of Canada and Minister of Heritage, The Hon. Sheila Copps will bring "We're Nobody's Babies: The Changing Scene of Women in Canadian Politics." Tickets \$65. will be available at the Quinte Arts Council, 36 Bridge Street East, Belleville and from Richard Hughes, 613-961-7772 or rmhughes@cogeco.ca

November 19 (Tuesday): Ed Burt of Ocean Scan will speak on efforts to recover the remains of *HMS Speedy* which sunk in 1804 off Presqu'ile Point. Hear amazing stories of his decades-long efforts to lo-

Coming in October 2013 **Point Anne History of a Cement Factory Village**

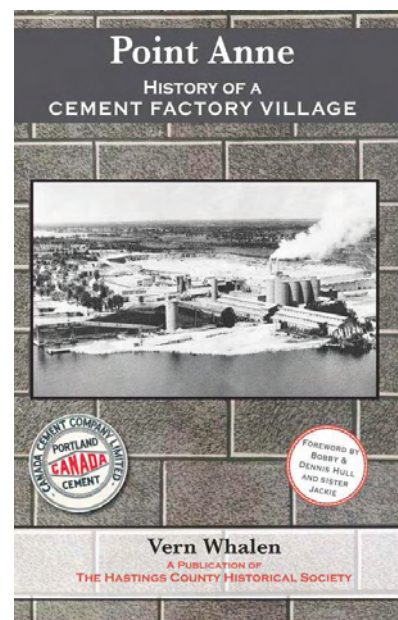
By Vern Whalen

Forty years ago the last puffs of white smoke billowed from the stacks of the Canada Cement Lafarge plant at Point Anne. Through 65 years of cement production, the village had grown to a tight-knit community, full of life and activity.

A definitive history of the village, tracing its early development, the arrival of the cement industry, the dynamic families, the tragedies and the heroes. An examination of the special nature of life in a company town, the active social life and the amazing sporting achievements.

Available at:

Hastings Heritage Centre, Cannifton, ON; Quinte Arts Council, 36 Bridge St East, Belleville, ON; Rolufs Camera and Travel, Front Street, Belleville, ON; Bayview Variety (Freeflow), Old Highway 2, East; Metering Support Services, Point Anne (Old Catholic School); Napanee Beaver office, Napanee, ON; vern.whalen@yahoo.ca and Vern Whalen 613-968-9618.



125 pages with nostalgic map and over 100 historical photos

Price \$20.00

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