



Outlook

Volume 12 Issue 4

Issue Number 225, April 2007

New committee for a new archives

By the time you are reading this you might already know about the Society's renewed efforts to get a better space for our archives. We have formed a committee that is working hard toward this goal. We hope you have heard about our recent deputations to the City and County councils to promote the idea of a regional shared records retention storage centre and new home for the archives, and also to invite their participation on our committee. Stay tuned for more news!

The Historical Society's representatives on the committee are a strong team with a lot of collective expertise:

Sharon White

Sharon White has worked as a records analyst, information management consultant, and an archivist, most recently for nine years with the government of Ontario and the provincial archives in Toronto. Her career has involved many aspects of managing information, from records facility projects to cataloguing and

preserving old photographs to training ministry staff in strategies for keeping digital records. Sharon now works part-time for the Archives Association of Ontario, where her responsibilities include managing Ontario's network of online archival descriptions. She serves on the Board of the Hastings County Historical Society as Director for Archives Projects.

Orland French

Orland French is President of the Hastings County Historical Society and a Director of the Ontario Historical Society. Following a newspaper career at the *Kingston Whig-Standard* (covering municipal politics), the *Ottawa Citizen* (as Parliamentary Press Gallery reporter and editorial writer), and the *Globe and Mail* (as a provincial affairs columnist), Orland taught journalism at Loyalist College in Belleville and the University of Regina in Saskatchewan. He currently writes and edits local history books through his company, Wallbridge House Publishing, in Belleville. Orland recently edited and wrote the Heritage Atlas of Hastings County.

Richard (Dick) Hughes

Dick Hughes was born and raised in Belleville. He served 20 years with the federal government in Belleville, Toronto and Ottawa, mainly in the areas of Customs (international programs) and Trade (industrial development and trade promotion). He then worked 18 years with the World Trade Organization in Geneva, Switzerland, advising governments, mainly developing countries, on international trade relations. Dick retired from this work in 2002 and returned to Belleville. He is Vice President of the Hastings County Historical Society and is also involved in a number of other volunteer activities.

Continued on page 4.



Who was Alexander Milton Ross?
Please see page 2.

Next Meeting

TUESDAY, April 17,

2007

Speaker

Ruth Clarke

Topic

Alderville First Nation History

Refreshments

Meeting begins at 7:30 p.m.

Monthly meetings are
held in the Auditorium of the Quinte

Living Centre

370 Front Street, Belleville

Please Note!

The Deadline for the May 2007
issue of Outlook is April 23, 2007

Belleville Doctor Travels The Underground Railroad

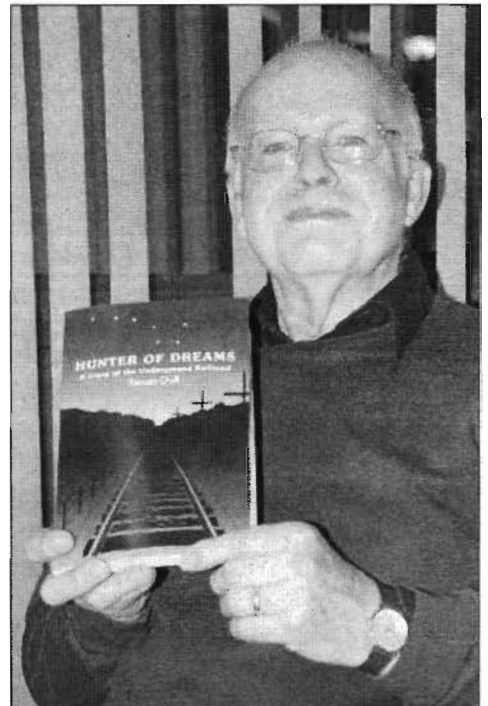
Somewhere around 1855 Alexander Milton Ross travelled from Canada West to the deep south of the United States. Ostensibly he was there in the role of naturalist but this was only a cover for his real mission, one far riskier than hiking through the woods observing bird and animal life. He was an agent for the Underground Railroad, the freedom road to Canada for plantation slaves. His "accomplices" included people like John Brown who tried to interest him in his murderous raiding activities, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and President Abraham Lincoln who requested that he covertly investigate Confederate activities in Montreal.

Dr. Ross was born in Belleville in 1832 and lived in a residence on Pinnacle Street where the Canadian Legion now stands. His story, as told by Steven Duff to a packed house of the Society's March meeting, reveals him as a man who risked incredible dangers to save countless slaves. Duff is the author of *Hunter of Dreams*, a

book about Ross. Two slaves who escaped were Harriet Tubman and Josiah Henson. Tubman returned to the States to free more slaves and Henson, who became a minister, was the model for Stowe's book *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Henson, said Duff, was a major player in the Alexander Milton Ross saga.

Ross is credited, in part, for shortening the Civil War by six to twelve months. A woman travelling alone and crossing the border in a stagecoach at night was stopped. Found sewn into her petticoats were 82 classified documents relating to Confederate activities. On another occasion Lincoln asked Ross to go to New Brunswick as he had reason to believe a cross-border raid was in the works. Ross sailed from Boston and happened to have as a cabin mate a Confederate sympathizer who, it seems, left incriminating documents lying about. They revealed plans for a raid which Ross exposed and thus prevented.

Duff said his interest in Ross began in 1986 as the result of a



Steven Duff is the author of *Hunter of Dreams*, a historical novel that celebrates a relatively unheralded citizen of Hastings County, Dr. Alexander Milton Ross.

project of one of his history students. From the beginning he had trouble finding out anything at all about the man. Few Canadians have even heard of him. It was suggested that perhaps he was a worthy candidate for a retroactive Order of Canada and that there should be something in Belleville commemorating his achievements.

BCI War Memorial Tablets

You are invited to attend a rededication service for the War Memorial Tablets from BCI, now relocated to the main entrance of the Belleville Armoury. The service

will be held at the Armoury at 2 p.m. on Saturday, April 14, 2007.

A reception follows at the Belleville Club.

Pictures Wanted

The Society is assembling a collection of pictures to show its 50-year history.

If you have pictures of our activities, please share them with us by donating or lending them.

Bring them to a general meeting or a workshop or mail them to Gerry Boyce, 173 Bridge Street East, Belleville, Ontario K8N 1N3. If possible, provide information on the event and indicate if you are donating or lending the pictures.

Please help the Society preserve its history.

Sympathy

The Society's sympathy is extended to the family and friends of the late Lois Walkling. A life member of the Society, Lois recently donated a collection of local history books and research materials to the Society. She was predeceased by her husband Frank and daughter Janet Hoyer, a former director of the Society.

Doors will not open in 2007

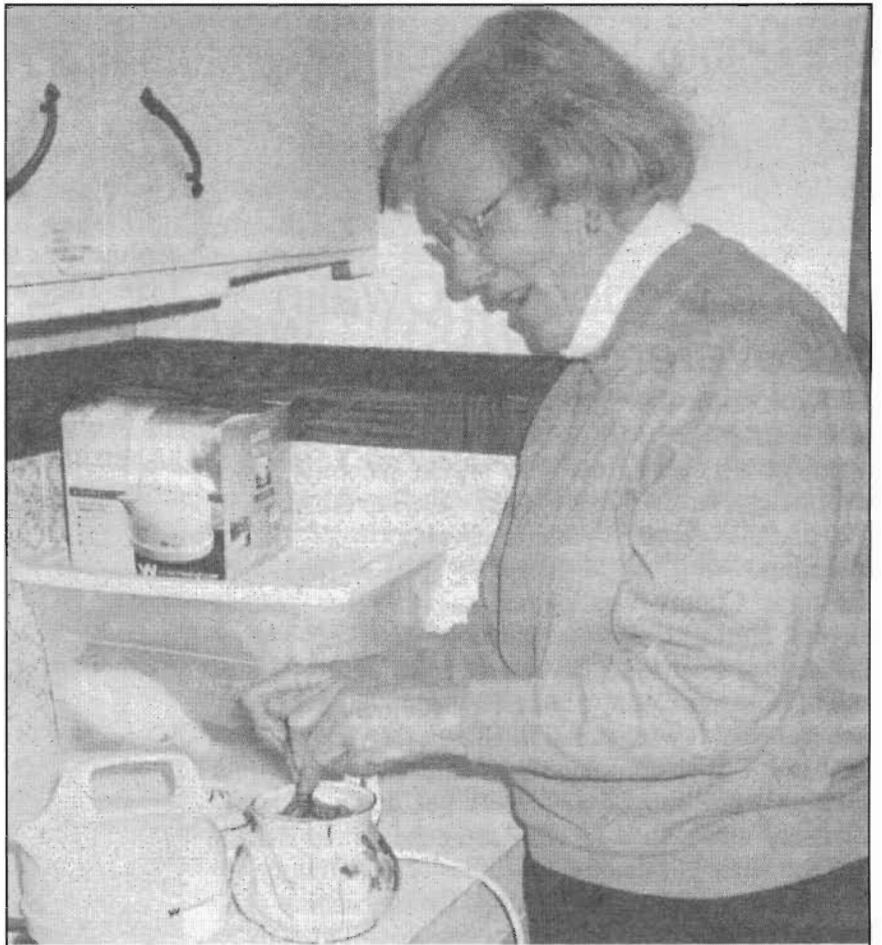
Doors Open is a provincial initiative that provides publicity to municipalities that decide to participate. Locations of heritage interest are open to the public free of charge for the weekend of the event.

Belleville participated in 2005 and 2006 but owing to a lack of volunteers, decided not to participate for 2007. We would like to re-ignite the initiative and have Belleville participate in the 2008 event.

While this may sound far away, we need to have our money and our first ten sites lined up before November 15 of this year to participate next year. As it can take time to co-ordinate with interested sites and to raise funds, it would be important to form a volunteer committee for Doors Open as soon as possible.

Representatives from Heritage Belleville will be at the next Hastings County Historical Society to discuss the issue and, hopefully, round up some volunteers.

For more information, please attend the next Hastings County Historical Society meeting or contact Stanley Jones at 613-849-5931 or by E-mail at <heritage_belleville@citybelleville.com>.



Our Archive Angels work hard at our Monday afternoon workshops in the Hastings Heritage Centre. But they also pause in mid-afternoon for tea, cookies and the chance to share their archival discoveries. The camera catches Luella Parkhurst as she demonstrates the ancient art of tea preparation. An Archive Angel since March 2002, Luella has worked on a great many projects - helping to arrange and catalogue the VanBlaricom collection, the Ponton Papers, maps, education files, Women's Institute papers, railway photos, and the *Quinte Weekly News* collection of more than 20,000 photos and negatives (1986-1992). Previously, Luella was a valued member of Heritage Belleville.

photo by Gerry Boyce

Girls on skates scorch their admirers

It seems ice-skating was a popular pastime for young girls in Belleville a century and a half ago. One observer of the scene was so enthralled he submitted the following report to the local newspaper.

"On the ice hundreds of young girls, every one of whom is pretty, or certainly looks pretty tonight, and of whom many are strikingly handsome - all alike set off with every device that can aggravate their charms - sway and flit about through the mazes of the crowd, seldom singly, but holding the



Skaters circa 1870s.

hand of either a laughing companion or of some favored cavalier. The most intricate and graceful evolutions are accompanied with an ease of which it would be hard to say whether it excites the greater wonder or admiration. These coquettish damsels scorch their admirers with a general blaze of scarlet - which is the ruling colour - mercifully toned down, subdued and harmonized by rich, soft, dark furs. Black eyes sparkle, blue eyes softly gleam, each casting wicked and exasperating glances.

"There are 'affairs' without end. Now and then a fall happens and there is a glance of an ankle, perhaps a momentary glimpse of an inch or two or more, then lost in enviously voluminous loads of feminine knickerbockers of scarlet cashmere."

Whew!

The Obnoxious Minorities & Canada's Revolving Governments

The April 13, 1864, issue of the *Belleville Hastings Chronicle*, which billed itself as "A Political, Commercial and Literary Journal," reported that Canada's political history was one of ever revolving govern-

Prince Madoc Ad Owain discoverer of Alabama

Did you know that Madoc Township was named in 1820 after Prince Madoc Ad Owain Gwynedd. He might have been a mythical Welsh celebrity who, nevertheless, was reputed to have sailed to Alabama in 1170 and thus discover America over 300 years before Columbus.

Hastings County was named in 1792 for Francis Rawdon-Hastings, Baron Rawdon, Earl of Moira. Hence, too, the Moira River and Rawdon Township, both in Hastings County. Lake Township has echoes of a martial past. It was named in 1822 after Viscount Gerard Lake, British commander-in-chief in Ireland when the Irish Rebellion of 1798 was put down. Faraday Township was named in 1857 after the famed British scientist Michael Faraday, the father of field theory.

There was a time when Hastings County school children were expected to know the names of all the Townships by heart. That would be a history lesson in itself!

New archives committee

Continued from page 1.

Mary Jane Throop

Mary Jane Throop is a volunteer in the area of collections records management at both the Hastings County Historical Society archives and Glanmore National Historic Site. She previously worked as an assistant archivist for the City of Ottawa Archives and the Township of Cumberland. As well, she has provided archives consulting services on an engineering firm's project. Mary Jane has been a member of the Archives Association of Ontario since 1994.

From your committee so far: Sharon White, Orland French, Dick Hughes, and Mary Jane Throop

Roster of speakers

April 17 "What We Hold Dear," Alderville 1st Nation history, Ruth Clarke

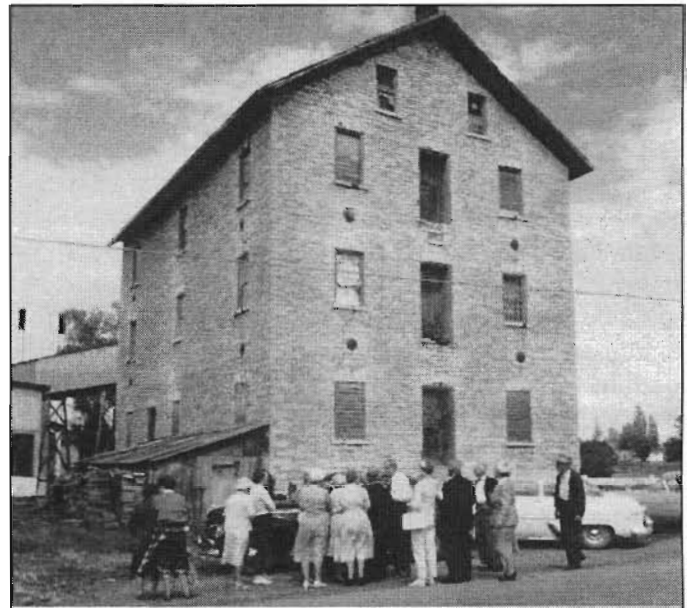
May 15 "Meyers Rebellion," & other Meyers books, Connie Brummel Crook

September 18 TBA

October 16 HCHS 50th anniversary

ments. Between 1841 and 1863 there were 14 governments formed with an average lifespan of 19 months. The longest was a Cartier-MacDonald triumph of three years and nine months and it ended in 1862. The shortest was the Brown-Dorion government of August 1858. They were elected on August 2 of that year and resigned three days later.

"Positions in government have been left vacant," said the *Chronicle*, "from pure inability to find anyone willing to run the risk of losing his seat in the House should he join in with the obnoxious minorities."



Historic Tour

Over the years, the Society has become famous for its tours, with recent ones being organized by C.W. (Bill) Hunt. Our first local tour was a joint venture of the Society and the Lennox and Addington Historical Society in the summer of 1960. We visited the Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory and Shannonville. Tour members are seen in front of the historic Shannonville Mill, centre of the controversial and now-resolved dispute involving the Turton Penn Lease. photo by Gerry Boyce

Hastings County Historical Society is based at the old township office in Cannifton.

Please address mail to General Delivery, Cannifton, Ontario K0K 1K0

Outlook is published in January, February, March, April, May, September,

October and November for the friends and members of the Hastings County Historical Society.

It is edited by Bill Kennedy and produced by Lewis Zandbergen.

Anyone wishing to submit articles or information may contact the editor at Bill Kennedy, at 613-962-5991, or E-mail <kennedypec@aol.com>

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