



# Outlook

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## Billa Flint, a Man for All Seasons

*By Bill Kennedy*

The world of Billa Flint was driven by three fundamental principles— business, religion and morality. His arrival in Belleville in 1829 at the age of twenty-five was due in part to his desire to escape the influence of his father, a Brockville merchant and hard drinker, whose sale of liquor from his store offended the younger Flint. He would find his footing in Belleville and go on to establish himself as one of Hastings County's pre-eminent citizens. Paul Kirby, Historical Society speaker at its January meeting, said that the political and social life of Hastings County could be understood by studying Billa Flint's life. Flint's house on Belleville's Coleman Street stands today, dwarfed but defiant, in the shadow of the city's new courthouse.



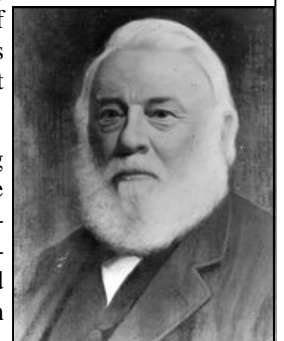
**Hon. Billa Flint and Mrs. Flint** - Community Archives of Belleville and Hastings County HC05625

Billa Flint (Billa has Welsh family origins) wore many hats during the course of his long life. He was a businessman who by 1837 had transformed the mouth of the Moira River with new wharves and warehouses, and established the province's first steam-powered sawmill. In the course of a thirty-year assault on county forests, he eventually would write, "The pine and timber of the Moira and its tributaries is fast passing away and will soon become a matter of history." In 1851, the one-and-a-half-million board feet of lumber he had cut from his vast land holdings in the Moira River valley clogged the river mouth with sawdust.

Not content to rest solely on his business achievements, Flint, who possessed no more than a couple of months' formal schooling, went on to become a Justice of the Peace, President of Belleville's Board of Police, militia officer, politician and philanthropist. The year he arrived in Belleville, he founded the city's temperance society, and later became one of the principal founders of the Canadian Temperance League. For over two decades, he served as superintendent of the Bridge Street Methodist Church Sunday school. The Madoc gold rush in the mid-1860s roused Flint's interest in mining, but in this endeavour, he had limited success. His attempt to establish a railroad between Belleville and Marmora failed for lack of the political support he needed.

Flint believed in a sound education and a Christian upbringing. Illiteracy in Belleville and its environs was extensive, and he made generous contributions towards its elimination. He also contributed to Marchmont Home, a distributing house for child emigrants from British cities. Because of his opposition to separate schools, government financing of the Intercolonial Railway and a non-elected senate, he voted against Canadian Confederation in 1865. Nevertheless, in 1867, he was called to the Senate of Canada and diligently served his country in that role until his death at the age of eighty-nine in 1894.

Billa Flint spent his life amassing wealth and using much of it for the betterment of Belleville and its citizens. At the time of his death, the *Intelligencer* wrote, "Few men have had a more prominent connection with public affairs in this district than Mr. Flint."



**Hon. Billa Flint**  
HC05626



# Memories of Memorial Arena

*By Vern Whalen*

Proudly she has stood in her place for 85 years, both solid and majestic. Shunned due to her age, she remains silent and empty. People of all ages no longer visit her as they once did. The venerable Belleville Memorial Arena was built in 1929 by a private enterprise and was named the Hume Arena after one of the shareholders. Initially, it was to have been a scaled-down version of Maple Leaf



**Memorial Arena in recent years** - Photo submitted by Vern Whalen

Gardens in Toronto. The City of Belleville purchased it in 1946 and renamed it the Memorial Arena after the local veterans of the two World Wars.

Many of its features and minor peculiarities were memorable: the roof and floors of solid wood and the narrow walkways to the dressing rooms; the solid steel vertical girders which supported the arena and were a visual impediment to the fans; the team benches of three rows and the tiny penalty box, not large enough by today's standards; the high boards along the side and the non-Plexiglas screens back of the goals; the lack of Plexiglas barriers along the side boards so that fans were easily hit by pucks or high sticks (fans could and did grab hold of passing players); the analogue clock high in the north end which would easily skip a few precious seconds; the large picture of Queen Elizabeth beside the clock; the original bench-style wooden seats which could cram in an extra derriere (later replaced by somewhat dangerous folding seats); the

commercial billboards hanging high in the rafters; the press boxes on each side of the ice surface (one was always Jack Devine's own gondola); the standing-room rails at each side and in the north end; the original bell that clanged prior to the siren to signal the end of a period; the overhead hanging electrical heaters installed in the 1960s; the very best skating ice (bar none) in the area.

The history of the Belleville McFarlands will be forever linked with the Belleville Memorial Arena. For about five years in the late 1950s, the Macs dominated the Belleville sports scene. Allan Cup Champions in 1958 and World Champions in 1959, they put the city on the hockey map of Canada. Commemorative murals of those two teams now grace the front of the building. On Friday nights, thousands crammed into the Memorial as Belleville took on Whitby, Kingston, Cornwall and Pembroke. Names such as Bell, Benoit, Crawford, Hildebrand, Brown, Marineau, Guidolin and Menard became household names. As a youngster, I remember the nights in the third period when the smoke-filled arena would shake as fans burst into "More Macs More." How Belleville loved its McFarlands!

Before the Macs, there were other intermediate and senior teams and generations of Junior B hockey teams that provided entertaining hockey at Memorial. Senior hockey came back for a while with the Mohawks in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The Junior B Bobcats brought junior hockey back to the forefront at Memorial in the 1970s, and to an extent, the interest generated can be credited with the arrival of the Belleville Bulls, albeit at the new Yardmen Arena.

Many skaters with well-known local family names have graced the ice of Belleville Memorial Arena such as the Hulls, Goyers, Crawfords and Meaghers. One would be remiss if figure skating was not mentioned, for it was here that future professionals Peggy and Jane McCutcheon first skated.

Many will remember Friday nights in the summer when professional wrestling came to the arena. The grunts and groans, the cheers and boos rang through the rafters. Memorable were the bouts between fan favourite Whipper Billy Watson and villain Gene Kiniski or the classic midgets led by Little Beaver.

Other summer entertainment included amateur boxing and music concerts. One summer, I recall the legendary Don Messer and His Islanders played to a packed house. I wasn't there, but I was at the Quinte Hotel's Green Door when singer Charlie Chamberlain ventured in for a quick drink between

Advertisement submitted by Vern Whalen

sets at the show in the arena.

Memories of the Memorial are not complete without those of a personal nature. My first official minor hockey games were played there on Saturdays in the 1960s. Who can forget the busy turmoil at the Market Square area on those days? Besides the minor hockey at the arena, there was the Farmers' Market and traffic around Loblaws on nearby Pinnacle. Games were short, maybe 40 minutes, and the players often scraped the ice between games. "Old Smitty," the iceman, flooded the ice every few hours with his "barrel-on-two-wheels" contraption filled with hot water. Most of the time we just dressed in the stands or corridors. Later in life, it was the thrill of playing late-night hockey in the Gas House League that lured me to Memorial. There was nothing quite like an eleven o'clock game and the "99 Steps to the Queen's" for a couple of cold ones.

My saddest memory of the Memorial was the night a teammate died suddenly in one of the dressing rooms just after a game. Fiori Goegan, a 48-year-old former Belleville Mac succumbed to a fatal heart attack. "Goegie" had come out of retirement to play with his son Mike, who was on our team.

This is now the fourth winter that no one has skated on ice at the Memorial, ever since the refrigeration unit gave up. The arena is viewed by some as a lumbering dinosaur and by others as a facility rich in history and heritage. Memorial Arena has become a political football that no one wishes to touch. With an election looming in 2014, she may be impossible to ignore, for while she sits silent and empty, awaiting a decision on her future, the ghosts of past hockey glories and feats echo throughout her proud and massive structure. Let us hope that her future does not rest solely in her past.

She needs to be made useful again.

## When Furs Tamed the Canadian Winter

### Part 2: Woodley Furriers, the Modern Era

*By Richard Hughes*

In Part 1 last month, we followed the establishment and development of the Woodley Furrier business at 273 Front Street from its founding in 1904 by George T. Woodley to the retirement of the founder in the 1930s. Those were the glory days of trading in fur pelts and in-store manufacturing when both men and women sought the warmth and luxury of fur coats, hats and accessories.

The business passed to the second generation of Woodleys when George's son Russell took control, assisted by brothers Harold (Twig) and Arthur (Bud). While the market for men's voluminous full-length coats of muskrat, beaver and raccoon decreased over the years, owning a sleek fur coat, hat and muff remained the ultimate dream of many women. To possess a shimmering coat of natural muskrat or Persian lamb dyed in elegant tones of grey or black, was the ultimate status statement for Belleville's style-conscious woman. Accordingly, while Woodley's grew and expanded, competitors,



including Grant Ashley at Front Street and Victoria Avenue and Joe Delaney on Campbell Street, sought to enter the trade, first working with established furriers and ultimately opening their own



**An extravagant display of fine fur coats tempts the passer-by in the mid-1970s** *Photo submitted by Doug Woodley*

shops.

In the mid-1950s, Woodley's passed to the third generation, to Doug Woodley, who had learned the fur trade from the bottom up in the factories of Toronto's Spadina Avenue. Doug had the opportunity to gain from the generations-old Spadina Avenue fur trade which was then dominated by Jewish manufacturers, many of whom had escaped Nazi Germany. Greek immigrants were another force in the Toronto fur trade at that time. They also had brought their skills from the old country after World War II.

Times were prosperous for Woodley Furriers! Front Street was the crowded business centre of the region with no less than eight department stores and six shoe stores, and the demand grew for both furs and a wider line of fine ladies wear. Front Street throbbed with the activity of wall-to-wall shoppers, particularly on Friday nights and Saturdays. It was the social centre of the city with friends and neighbours physically and literally "bumping" into each other in the stores and on the streets. Doug remembers fondly the "fraternity" of downtown businessmen who gathered daily at 10:00 a.m. at the Belmont Restaurant for their coffee. Don Leslie of the famous shoe store, Irv Shulman of Milady Shop, lawyer Louis Maraskas of Maraskas & Hurley, Harold Cunningham of Pollock Shoes, Jack

Morgan from McDougall Insurance and "Red" Mavety of Maher Shoes led that group.


With more women driving cars, a market for the shorter "car coat" length affected the demand for the traditional full-length coat. Also, while men's fur and felt hats had long been a mainstay for Woodley's, women's millinery became a lucrative part of the business, sometimes employing a dozen extra staff around the Easter period. Women relegated their dark, heavy winter wear to the closets and mothballs, and proudly showed off their colourful spring outfits topped off with bright and often flower-bedecked millinery. However, even this trade was soon caught up in the passage of time. Traditions of the older generation were relegated to the dustbin, and youth adopted very liberal clothing styles and became fascinated with bouffant hairstyles. At the same time, there was a relaxation of the requirement for women to cover their heads in church. All of these changes taken together almost dried up the millinery business.

In the mid-1950s, Woodley's took a giant step forward by adding the adjacent store and opening The Coach Room (previously occupied by McKeown's Drug Store), featuring women's dresses and accessories. While Doug Woodley continued the long-established fur business, his wife, June, operated the ladies wear shop. In the early 1980s, after almost 80 years in business, the store passed to the fourth generation of the Woodley family when son



**Racks of luxurious furs in the 1970s** *Photo submitted by Doug Woodley*

Dan took over the operation.

While the passion for luxurious furs, long considered the best antidote to the brutal Canadian winter, underscored years of growth and business success for four generations of the Woodley family, the 1980s saw the rise in animal rights activism with demonstrations against the use of furs for clothing. Business declined, and Woodley Furriers ultimately closed their doors, as did all other furriers in the city. It would be a very debatable question if the shift from warm, elegant, graceful fur coats to the current polyester and nylon ski jackets could be described as  progress. In any event, the question is academic, as the fur business in Belleville has been relegated to history.

## Update from Glanmore National Historic Site

*By Lindi Pierce*

### News-worthy Artifact

This issue, we are featuring an artifact which will resonate for anyone following the story of the Department of National Defence expropriation of the Meyers family farm, land granted to Captain John Walden Meyers over 200 years ago in recognition of his service to the Crown.

The Glanmore National Historic Site collection contains a powder horn which once belonged to Captain Meyers. The artifact was donated to the museum over thirty years ago by a collector who realized its significance to the community.

Powder horns were made of waterproof cattle horns, capped with wood or metal plugs, which kept gunpowder dry and safe from accidental detonation. The Meyers powder horn is fitted with a pine plug, and a wooden stopper.

Meyers's name and the date are carved into the horn. This remarkable piece of local history is preserved at Glanmore for generations to come.

### Restoration Update

Restoration projects continue at Glanmore. The breakfast room structural repairs were completed in early 2013, and ceiling lath and plaster were consolidated. Over the winter, conservator Ian Hodgkinson has determined the original decorative theme of the room, working his way down through eleven layers of paint and wallpaper, to find the delicious cream and tan colour palette. In January, painter Kirk Tischbein began work,

and the change is dramatic. When the project is completed, a reproduction picture rail will be reinstalled, and an 1880s brass chandelier from Dundurn National Historic site will be hung from a reproduction plaster medallion.

### Museum Events

"Restoration Retrospective," a look at restoration projects at Glanmore NHS over the past forty years, will be the topic of four special Heritage Week tours at Glanmore, February 17 through 21. Daily at 2:00 p.m., well-informed docents will highlight steps that have been taken to restore the house to its original 1883 grandeur.

If you haven't seen Glanmore in a few years (or ever)—plan to pay a visit!

### A Cordial Invitation to Join "Friends of Glanmore"

New volunteers are always welcome at Glanmore. A wide range of opportunities is available. "Friends of Glanmore" assist with children's programs, work as tour guides or collections volunteers, assist with general duties and special events and enjoy participation in a welcoming group

## Heritage Belleville

invites everyone to attend

### their ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE

as we celebrate **Ontario Heritage Week** in the  
City of Belleville

The event will take place on

**Thursday Feb. 20, 2014**

Belleville Public Library

& John M Parrot Art Gallery

354 Pinnacle St., Belleville

3rd floor meeting room

Doors open 6:00pm

Presentation 6:30pm

**Special Guests:** include Retired City Editor  
**Chris Malette** of The Belleville Intelligencer  
"Celebrating 35 Years of Belleville's History"

Plus: **Bruce Bedell** Official Town Crier  
& more to be announced!

Admission is free! All are welcome!

Refreshments will be available.

For more information contact: Jeremy T.

Davis, Heritage Belleville Vice-Chair

613-847-4133 or email:

jeremytylerdavis@yahoo.ca



# **Hastings County Historical Society Annual Bus Tour**

## **Ghost Towns & Pioneer Villages In Our Backyard - Part II**

Come away for the day and  
learn more fascinating stories  
of disappearing villages  
and the heroic tales  
of pioneers in our region.

**Saturday, June 7, 2014**

Bus departs 8:30 a.m. from northeast parking area of  
Bayview Mall, off Bridge Street East

**Cost \$65. includes lunch**

**Tickets: call Mary-Lynne Morgan at 613-961-7091**

Last year we sold out two buses by mid February

---so don't delay---get your tickets today!





## ***Notes from the Archives ... On the Move!*** *By Sharon White*

An important part of getting ready for moving the Archives from the Heritage Centre in Cannifton to the Belleville Public Library building involves preparations with the archival materials. We have to know what we have, where it is now, and the exact shelf location where it will be after the move.

During 2013, we made a good deal of progress with the photographs and pictures from the Historical Society's archives. Laurel Bishop has done an amazing job of entering descriptive information for about 10,000 items into the archives' database. She is now reviewing each photo—revising or adding to the descriptions where necessary, identifying related material and duplicates, and making recommendations about possible reorganization.

Our next task will be to physically move the photographs into archival enclosures and boxes that will provide a better preservation environment for them. The boxes will be numbered and placed on new metal shelves (now at the Heritage Centre, donated by the Belleville Public Library). Each shelf will also be numbered, and the various numbers recorded in the database.

Many other volunteers are doing similar tasks on other photograph collections. Ann Butryn has been cataloguing the photo albums and adding a great deal to our understanding of them. A project with the *Intelligencer* negatives is being carried out by Marney Black, Diane Sule, Elizabeth Mitchell, Donna Fano, and others from time to time—they are placing the negatives into Print File negative sleeves and producing electronic lists of the subjects, dates, and other information. This work has been underway for over a year and will likely continue for decades to come, as the *Intelligencer* negative collection spans forty-three years and contains about one million images. All negatives for the year 2000 have been catalogued.

This behind-the-scenes activity is going on while regular public service operations continue, and photos are retrieved for research or scanning. It is a challenging but necessary task to establish "intellectual and physical control" over the collections, so that we can tell what we

have, how much shelf space it will occupy, and where it will live in our new home.



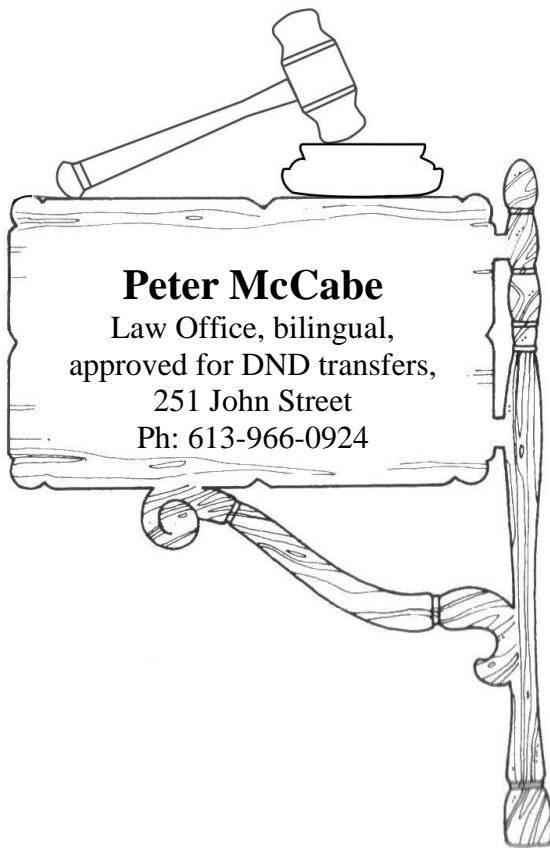
**Diane Sule and Marney Black celebrate the completion of cataloguing one year of pictures in the *Intelligencer* negatives collection.** *Photo by Nick White*

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## Deadlines for Submission to the March *Outlook* Newsletter

**Feb. 26** - Final submissions of articles and photos for the March *Outlook* newsletter are due. Early submissions are most welcome.

**Mar. 5 to 7** - *Outlook* newsletter goes to the printer.

**Mar. 10** - Newsletters are picked up and the preparations for mailing are done by Archive Volunteers on the same day.



Submissions can be made online to **outlook.hastingshistory@gmail.com**  
Donna Fano - *Outlook* Editor

## HASTINGS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY DIRECTORS

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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, Donna Fano, can be reached at the email address below, **<outlook.hastingshistory@gmail.com >**



## Hastings County Historical Society Presentation

**Special Guest Speaker:**  
**Fireman Mark Shannon**

**Topic: A History of the Belleville Fire Department**

Hear the amazing stories of the founding of the Belleville Fire Department, its early development, the changing technologies and major battles with fires.

**Date: Tuesday, February 18, 2014**

**Time: 7:30 p.m.**

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

**Bring a friend!**

**Website: [www.hastingshistory.ca](http://www.hastingshistory.ca)**

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Member Designation