

Outlook

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Children in need given a new start in a new land

Descendants of Dr. Barnardo's children could populate a large Canadian city

by Lewis Zandbergen

Special guest speaker at the Hastings County Historical Society's annual general meeting held on Tuesday, November 18, was educator and author Gail Corbett; her topic for the evening was Barnardo children.

She opened her talk with a quote from the writings of Susanna Moodie's *Roughing it in the Bush*: "Canada thou art a noble, free and rising country—the great fostering mother of the orphans of civilization ... thou must be great, and I will and do love thee, land of my adoption."

The concept of child immigration began with Peter Robinson and the Reverend Thomas Socket who advanced the idea of sending destitute children to Canada to serve as agricultural labourers. Several societies were set up including Children's Friend Society, which was sending children to farms between Montreal and Niagara by the 1830s. The Upper and Lower Canada Rebellions of 1837 terminated the immigration of English children.

Around 1850 the export of pauper children to the Canadas resumed once again under a plan to relieve conditions in overcrowded British cities. It wasn't until 1867, however, that a con-

certed effort was made to find homes for destitute children. Enter Thomas John Barnardo.

Doctor Thomas Barnardo's world was the world of 19th century industrialism with its attendant social advances and crushing poverty. The almost Dickensian existence of street urchins and other young victims of the "new age" was deplored by many but few had the means or the method of resolving such an issue. Poverty was a direct result of the industrial age. Farm folk began to leave farms in favour of employment in the newly mechanized world. A glut on the labour market meant



Dr. Thomas John Barnardo

most of these people ended up in poor sections of town and gradually these became ghettos.

The depth of child neglect and abuse caused by these societal upheavals was overwhelming but was brought home to Dr. Barnardo when he accompanied a child named Jamie Jarvis on a tour of London and witnessed first-hand the plight of children huddled together in alleys and on street corners.

Barnardo did not start out with his noble ideal of finding a decent home for every child living in deprived circumstances. He was a school dropout who decided he'd like to be a missionary to China. However, the problems of London's children touched him and he decided to set

up a school where street children could be educated. His first school room was an unused donkey shed. Gradually Dr. Thomas Barnardo came to realize his mission lay not in China but in his home nation.

By 1868 the first Barnardo child had been sent to Canada and each year he sent more; by the 1880s regular boatloads of boys and girls were sent to Canada to begin new lives. Each was outfitted in the best British clothes, carried a trunk with their personal possessions and a copy of John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.

The lot of most Barnardo children was a good one but there were also stories of abuse and neglect. Upon reaching adulthood some even made their way back to England.

To be sure the life of Thomas Barnardo and his work could fill volumes. Over the years between 1882 and 1939 over 30,000 children were sent to Canada under Dr. Barnardo's auspices. Gradually the system was phased out and the 1939 group, the last children to leave under Dr. Barnardo's plan, consisted of only 21 boys and seven girls. In 1960 the last office in Canada was closed and the Barnardo records were shipped to England.



From the editor's bookshelf

by Lewis Zandbergen

Soul of the River: Life in the Thousand Islands

written by Shawn Thompson published by General Store Publishing House

photographs, notes, indexed Their name in Indian, Manatoana, means "the garden of the Great Spirit." A Jesuit missionary named Poncet was probably the first white man to see them and the French name Les Mille Iles is found on a French map of 1727. Legend has it that 19th century American folk hero Paul Bunyan was responsible for creating the Thousand Islands. In a dispute over payment for digging the St. Lawrence River, Bunyan began heaving gigantic shovelfuls of rocks and dirt back into the channel he had dug; each shovelful became an island. (But we know that can't be true because of the French map.)

Soul of the River is a book dedicated to the islanders who made and still make their lives there. In detailed interviews with a number of the inhabitants of the islands, Shawn Thompson has uncovered many stories about life on the

islands; one would be hard-pressed to find a more comprehensive account of what makes the islands and its population tick. I have a feeling though, that there are probably as many stories again which Thompson has left untold.

The author begins his tale in the islands and marshes in the Kingston area. Here men and women long thought to be a less-desirable element of society, have lived their lives within sight of "civilization" as it were. Cunning in the ways of survival in the riverside marshes, generations of swamp dwellers have shunned the amenities of city life for the freedom afforded by the tenuous link between the river and the "mainland." The living was difficult and gradually the "river rats" were displaced, swallowed up by the city in its steadfast progression.

Thompson adeptly conveys the essence of these people's lives in a series of vignettes which portray island folks in a kind way but which still shows the hardships faced by many of the islanders.

Soul of the River is a sumptuous book filled with the real lives of real people. The author is generous with pictures which help bring

the tales of river rats, farmers, bootleggers, millionaires and smugglers to life. From the banks of the river near Kingston to the very real upheaval faced by citizens of the "lost villages" the author has done an absolutely splendid job of documenting the area. The book is written in a very easy-to-read manner. Islanders' memories are treated with respect and even admiration in some cases. At times the author manages an almost poetic description of the islanders and their way of life.

Yet for all its exceptional qualities, the book lacks two key elements of such an undertaking.

First, there are no maps. Maps would have added another dimension to the project by showing an island's relevance to the shoreline in stories recalling the horrors faced by those who chose to cross the ice to the mainland in winter. Maps would give an indication of relative distances not easily conveyed in words. Before and after maps would have been useful in trying to picture the devastation caused

by the removal of villages along the river in preparation for the St. Lawrence Seaway.

Second, the index, such as it is, is not satisfactory as I soon found out when a colleague asked me if there were any references to the underwater "waterfalls" where the bed of the river drops from 50 to about 200 feet; there was no quick way to find this information. There is an allusion to this St. Lawrence peculiarity on page 102. I quote: "The current of the river moves strongly past Ivy Lea, where the river narrows and drops suddenly. And so the water quickens and becomes tense there, creating strange, large, smooth eddies and whirls in the water." Needless to say, it's a spot Indians avoided. A comprehensive index should never be avoided.

Soul of the River: Life in the Thousand Islands is a book well worth reading for the fascinating stories and histories it contains but also for an eloquently painted word picture of a facet of Canadian life which has all but disappeared.

1998 is almost here! Have you renewed your membership? If not, the Society would appreciate receipt of your membership renewal as soon as possible. New members are also welcome. Please complete this form and bring it with your payment to the Society's next general meeting, or send it by mail to the **Hastings County Historical Society, P.O. Box 1418, Belleville, Ontario K8N 5J1.**

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

Postal Code _____

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES:

Individual	\$15.00 _____	Life Member	\$150.00 _____
Family	\$20.00 _____	Corporate Sponsor	\$50.00 _____
Senior/Student	\$10.00 _____	Women's Institute/ Organization	\$15.00 _____

I also enclose a donation of \$ _____ toward the work of the Society.

The Hastings County Historical Society is a Registered Charity. Official receipts for Income Tax purposes will be forwarded to you with your membership card.



County News

by Gerry Boyce

Changes and more changes - Effective January 1, 1998, there will be major changes to local municipal boundaries and names, many of them dating back more than 200 years. We escaped the regionalization trends that affected areas to the west a few years ago. Now it's our turn.

1. Prince Edward County's townships, town and villages become a single unit with a single mayor (former MPP Jim Taylor) and councillors represent the ten wards (former municipalities).

2. Lennox and Addington County municipalities combine into four municipalities and historic townships (such as Adolphustown and Fredericksburgh) become wards. County council is downsized and loses some of its functions.

3. Northumberland County sheds Murray Township, which becomes part of the new City of Quinte West.

4. Hastings County loses the village of Frankford and Sidney and Thurlow Townships. The former two join Trenton and Murray to become wards in Quinte West. Sidney loses its claim to be "the Ontario township with the oldest, continuous local government." Thurlow becomes Ward 2 in an

expanded City of Belleville, in effect reforming the single municipality which existed before the separation of Belleville from Thurlow in 1836. That section of Belleville (west of Sidney Street) annexed some years ago from Sidney Township remains part of Belleville. Belleville Council will press ahead in 1998 with plans to see either additional land in Sidney added (perhaps to the western boundary of the Quinte Conservation property adjacent to the Wallbridge-Loyalist Road) or a larger City of Quinte created. Such an enlarged city (as envisaged by historian W. C. Mikel more than 50 years ago and described in an earlier column in *Outlook*) might include Quinte West as well as other land.

5. There are significant changes in central Hastings. The new municipality of Centre Hastings is created from the former Village of Madoc and Township of Huntingdon. The village of Tweed and the Townships of Hungerford and Elzevir and Grimsthorpe become the Municipality of the Township of Tweed. Marmora and Lake Township come together with the Village of Deloro, ending the independent status of Ontario's smallest village. The Village of Stirling and the Township of Rawdon unite to form Stirling-

Rawdon.

More changes are certain to follow in the next few years as municipalities look for solutions to downloading and other issues.

My kingdom for a map. I have yet to see a printed map showing the "new" Hastings County and surrounding area. If any reader knows where one can be obtained, please call me at 968-5023.

Thanks for the memories - There will be fewer local politicians in 1998. Voluntary departees include at least three with special interest in county history. Evan Morton steps down as deputy-reeve in Tweed. Evan has been, and remains, the moving spirit behind the successful Tweed Heritage Centre and writes an informative and interesting column in *The Tweed News*. André Philpot retires as reeve of Marmora Village. André is the author of *A Species of Adventure* (the story of the Marmora Ironworks), the key participant in the Marmora Historical Foundation, a past chair of the Hastings County Mu-

seum Board, and a recent member of the Ontario Heritage Foundation. And I'm stepping down after six years as alderman and councillor in Belleville.

Congratulations to Jack Arthur, a former president of our society, who will serve as first mayor of Quinte West. *The Trentonian* refers to Jack as "King Arthur" and the councillors as "Knights of the Round Table."

Congratulations also to Reeve Marian Bastedo of Stirling-Rawdon, chair of the Hastings County Museum Management Board.

Are there other members (past or present) of our society (or other local historical societies) who will see service in public office in 1998? Let me know at 968-5023 so we can recognize them.

Let's hope that municipalities, school boards and other public bodies remember to take proper care of their records, especially as these bodies combine. These records are essential to a proper understanding of our history and future councils and boards, as well as historians and genealogists, will need them.

Newsmakers in brief

The Trent Port Historical Society raised more than \$2,000 for the restoration of Trenton's Old Town Hall at its fourth annual dinner and auction.

The Trent Port Historical Society's November meeting was held at the Air Force Museum on RCAF Road where members viewed restoration work on the Halifax bomber.

Stirling writer, historian and researcher Lewis Zandbergen was the guest speaker at the November meeting of the UEL Association.

Award-winning writer, historian and former Hastings County teacher Aureen Richardson of Warkworth was saluted by Jennifer Bell (*The Intelligencer*, November 16) for her writing and heritage endeavours.

The Madoc Historical Foundation's Heritage Centre on Durham Street South was officially opened on November 8. Congratulations.

Evan Morton knows how to attract readers to his weekly column in *The Tweed News*. A column on repair to display mannequins was entitled "Nudes."

A Heritage Belleville (LACAC) Research Group is preparing displays and tours of Belleville's historic sites. Members are John Bessin of Belleville, Peter Kellett of Trenton and Angela Rowan of Stirling. They also offer tours of City Hall until the end of February. Call 968-6481 for tour information.

Finally from the *Bancroft Times*: "Well", says the philosopher of Folly, "I won my case against that fellow who took my house away from me. My lawyer's going to move into it next week." Season's Greetings and see you in 1998.

Thoughts on winter

Winter was the time, wrote Anna Jameson, a visitor from Britain in 1838, "for balls in town and dances in farmhouses and courtships and marriages ..." From her window on a Toronto street she watched the sleighs go past—carriage sleighs, market sleighs, or handsome cutters mounted on high runners driven fast by young sporting bloods or by officers from the local garrison. What Mrs. Jameson like best was the wood sleighs, hauling maple, birch, pine, oak logs into town to stoke innumerable fireplaces ... on top of the woodpile might be a couple of deer, frozen stiff, their antlers projecting out over the sides, and, sitting on top of it all, the driver with his blanket wrapped around him, fur cap pulled down over his ears, a vast scarlet scarf adding a gay dash of colour.

From *The Illustrated History of Canada*, Lester Publishing 1991



Your County Museum

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



Christmas fast facts

- Poinsettias are native to Mexico and became widely distributed in North America after 1833 as a Christmas plant. White and pink varieties became available after 1923.
- The tradition of Christmas trees developed in medieval Germany from the trees used in plays about the Garden of Eden. The tradition caught on in England after 1841 when the royal family (Queen Victoria and Prince Albert) began to set up a Christmas treat for their children. Albert imported the tree and its ornaments from his native Germany.
- Popular 19th century gifts were slippers, jewellery, gloves, cologne, scarves and handkerchiefs, figurines, candy and books. (Sounds familiar!)

Children's day

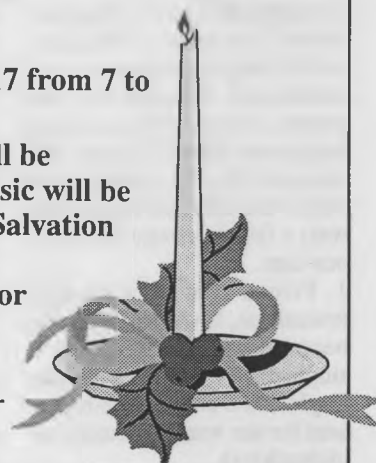
December 14 from 1 to 4 p.m. Stories, crafts and music
\$2.50 for children
\$4 for adults.
 Only groups need to pre-register.



Mistletoe and holly were imported to Canada by the end of the 19th century

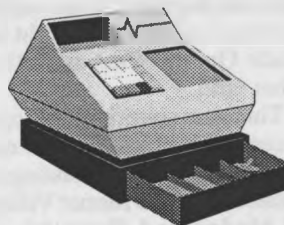
Yuletide Candlelight Tours

December 11 to 17 from 7 to 8:30 p.m.
 Refreshments will be available and music will be provided by the Salvation Army Band.
 Admission is \$5 for adults and \$2.59 for children.
 Please call to pre-register.



Save your supermarket register tapes!

The museum has signed up for another year on the Save-A-Tape program with Ultra Food and Drug and A&P. If you send us your register tapes from either of these two stores, the museum receives



one dollar for every \$450 in tapes. This year we raised almost \$400. In 1998 we would like to reach the \$1,000 maximum. Please keep your tapes for us and tell your friends and neighbours.

Season's Greetings

Christmas cards have their origin in the 18th century practice of school children producing "Christmas Pieces" of their best writing on quality paper to show their progress from the beginning of the year. The first modern Christmas card was produced in 1843 for Sir Henry Cole in England. He commissioned an artist to make cards in order to reduce the time needed to write to all of his friends and relatives at Christmas.

Where holiday customs originated

Deck the halls with bows of holly! The lively carol describes one of the oldest customs of the season.

The ancient druids believed holly branches protected them from evil spirits. When placed in the home, these branches provided a warm haven for the sylvan spirits. In time, the practice became associated with the holiday season.

The yule log has been associated with Christmas in many countries. This custom goes back to the Norsemen, who used it as a symbol of the rebirth of the sun at the winter solstice; the word yule is actually Norse for December. The yule log is always lit with a piece from last year's log, and in many countries, wine is poured on it as a blessing.

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

It is edited and produced by Lewis Zandbergen.

Anyone wishing to submit articles or information can contact the editor at 613-395-3022, Fax 613-395-4695, or E-mail lewzan@connect.reach.net

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