

Outlook

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The Newsletter of **The Hastings County Historical Society**

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NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, September 18, 1990 at 8pm.
Doug Knutson of Windswept Productions, will give a preview run of the video he is preparing on John Walden Meyers. Place: Quinte Living Centre Auditorium, 370 Front Street, (north door), Belleville.
Coffee and displays from 7:30 pm.
Visitors and guests always welcome.

LAST MEETING

Was Trenton a 'Hollywood North'?

By JENNIFER READ
Staff Reporter

Peggy Leavey loves to surprise people by telling them that Trenton was something of a "Hollywood North" in the 1920s.

Leavey, author of a book on the city's early history as the movie-making capital of Canada, spoke to members of the Hastings County Historical Society

She recounted Trenton's illustrious but brief stint as a film production centre from 1917 to 1934, spanning the First World War and the Depression years.

"Leavey says she often surprises Trenton residents with tales of the city's film studio, which is now Bayside Dyeing and Finishing on Film Street, on Trenton's west side.

"Many people don't know that Trenton was on its way to becoming

Hollywood North in the early part of the century," she said.

Canadian National Features built the first film studio in Trenton in 1916. Between 1923 and 1934, various companies — many of which went bankrupt in less than a year — used the facility to produce not only full-length features but hundreds of government documentaries promoting the province of Ontario.

Trenton's first movie — also the first in Canada — was the *Marriage Trap*, produced in 1917. On its heels was *The Great Shadow*, which starred Tyrone Power, Sr., Leavey said.

While none of the films were box-office smashes, Leavey says the best-remembered film released was *'Carry On Sergeant'*, produced in 1928 by British cartoonist Bruce Bairnsfather.

"It cost \$500,000 to make, which was an incredible amount of money

to spend on a film in 1928," Leavey said. "And for all the lavishness, the film was called a flop and was sold only in Canada."

'Carry on Sergeant' also meant employment, however brief, for approximately 3,000 Trentonians, who were hired as extras for the film. Its opening scenes were shot in Kingston but the remainder of the drama — which depicted Canada's involvement in the First World War — was filmed at various locations in Trenton.

"Hannah Park was used quite often, as was the Gilmour Lumber Company which is now Centennial Park and the Trenton Cold Storage plant, which didn't have a roof just then due to a fire," said Leavey.

Director Bairnsfather praised Trentonians' involvement in the film as acting extras, adding they were "cheap but good."

The film premiered at Weller's Movie House; productions were also shown at the Bijou — now the Centre Theatre — on Dundas Street.

Accompaniment for the silent movies — no talking pictures were filmed at the Trenton studios — was provided by piano or pit orchestras, "which helped to drown out the noise from the projectors and the audience coughing, spitting and reading the subtitles out loud," laughed Leavey.

She says vandalism and fires have destroyed nearly all of Trenton's early feature films.

"Movies then were made on a highly combustible nitrate, and I heard that children used to get into the archives and light the films to watch them burn. I guess they made spectacular fires," Leavey said.

Sherbrooke's Historical Society keeps past on file

By Claudia Villemaire

SHERBROOKE — Did you know that you can rent a taped walking tour of Sherbrooke's North Ward?

Directing your feet up and down this residential quarter, it describes the graceful manors and stately mansions built when, as the oldtimers would say, 'a dollar went a lot further. Few could afford to build like this these days'.

Or, if walking is not your bag but touring is, the Sherbrooke Historical Society has another tape that takes you, in the comfort of a vehicle, on a grand tour of the city, hitting the high spots of heritage homes, old mill sites and visiting dams and waterways.

You might wonder how come this Society, formed in 1927 doesn't have a regular museum where objects relating to Sherbrooke's history are always on display.

But that's the secret of their success.

UNCONVENTIONAL

Rather than develop a conventional museum, the Sherbrooke Historical Society, formerly known as the Eastern Townships Historical Society, nurtured the role of guardian of the area's written history.

Today, the Society's headquarters, located in what was formerly the carriage house at *Domaine Howard*, is chock full of local newspapers, most collections dating from the first issues.

"We are guardians of local history," Louise Brunelle-Lavoie said, as we leafed through yellowed pages of early Sherbrooke Daily Records.

"The Society is dedicated to interpreting local history and events," Lavoie explained. "Of course, we do exhibitions but they are an interpretation of our history using the documentation and some objects to present a particular topic."

So, visitors to the museum find an exhibition which often depicts such things as the development of hospitals in the city or the growing textile trade around the turn-of-the-century. Interpretation is the key word in any project so documents on display are backed up by some objects such as photos which graphically portray Sherbrooke's earliest days and how the city grew and changed.

WIDESPREAD MANDATES

"When the Society was formed, there were only two others in the Townships and at that time, their mandate really covered a widespread territory," Lavoie explained. But almost every county has their own society now so the name was changed to the Sherbrooke Historical Society in 1989.

Now priority is preserving the documented history of the region and its first families as well as the heritage buildings which are found throughout the city.

The historical society is working on a project right now that involves the first building used by Dr. Noel as a hospital.

We know it as the Hotel Dieu today, but this institution was first

housed in Dr. Noel's own home, a building that is still intact, but could be threatened with demolition in the foreseeable future, Lavoie said.

"The Historical Society is pulling all the stops it can to save this building," Lavoie added. "That's just one example of our priorities."

Sixty-three years is a long time to be collecting historical documents and records. Their present location is filled to the ceiling and requests for genealogical research are a daily fact of life.

HISTORY FILLED

"Can you imagine the history we have contained here," Lavoie asked.

Newspapers long defunct are carefully maintained in huge folders. A person might find the report of a train wreck in Richmond nearly a century ago or the tale of cattle thieves operating near Cookshire in the early 20s.

Business reports, trade and travel are all there. One can follow industrial development, housing construction, accident reports arrival and departure of local personalities and families and of course, follow the course of justice and local authority through the years.

TOWNSHIPS WEEK—FRIDAY, JULY 27, 1990



ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVANCY
OF ONTARIO Inc.
Quinte Region Branch
1990 Series

SIDNEY TWP
Sunday, Sept 16. 2:00 p.m.

Celebrate Sidney's bicentennial with this visit to its old, prosperous, and comfortable homesteads and other historic buildings. Lovely scenery and prehistoric sites too.

Meet 2 pm at Municipal Offices.
Tucker's Corners Wallbridge-Loyalist Rd.
Tea & cookies about 4 pm. at Town-ship Hall.

Three buses - \$ 2 charge -
Maps & info for everyone.

Everyone is invited.
Info: (613) 969-0734. 476-7221.

"GROWING UP IN CASHEL"
TOWNSHIP 1925 - 1930
BY: JOHN WANNAMAKER

Come September and Douglas and I are back in school. Instead of a quarter mile to walk to school it was two miles. Instead of the few kids at Salem, here our one room was filled with thirty three, some contrast to the well disciplined Salem kids seemed to me like outlaws, ready to fight at the drop of the hat. The first day at school for me was a sad experience. If Mr. Washburn Van Dusen at Salem was stern, Mr. Ernie Gunter at Gunter school was ruthless. From the first hour we realized there would be no kindness or compromise between teacher and pupils. Most of our work was done on slates with scratchy slate pencils. We didn't bother to keep water handy to clean off the slate when it was filled up. It seemed to be the custom to spit on the slate and many would just rub it off with their shirt sleeve.

Although I was only in my second year in school, one of the first things I had to learn and recite were the names of all the townships in Hasting County. Naming off these twenty-four townships was by far the most difficult task I had faced in school. However, it was accomplished and we went on to the even more difficult problems found in arithmetic.

"BILL"

William David Hanthorn was born on his parents' farm, six miles north of Coe Hill, Ontario, on June 18, 1904. He was always "Bill" to his family and his many friends. Farming was very difficult there. The land was hilly and only partially cleared. Also, there were stones and boulders to contend with. Bill and his brothers and sisters attended the Gilroy School, about 1 mile through the woods. The Hanthorn farm and two others were at the end of a road a mile in from the main road from Coe Hill to Bancroft, no. 28, I think it is now. The three families were all related, so the young people were all first cousins. We all grew up together and, after chores were done, had a wonderful time inventing things to do, or places to go, exploring the nearby woods and caves.

Bill's family lived in Coe Hill, for several years, where his father had a blacksmith shop. It was before cars were plentiful, so Joe Hanthorn was kept busy. Bill and the other children had some of their education at the Coe Hill school, too.

Bill learned the blacksmith trade from his father. He also learned to work in the woods, cutting logs for the saw mills. Most of the farmers and their sons worked at this in winter-time for extra income.

It must have been in 1922 or 1923 that Bill's family moved to Carrying Place, where his father started a blacksmith shop. Bill helped in the shop and, also, tried trapping muskrats, etc. Bill did work as a lineman for the Bell Telephone company for several months in the early '30's. His group was laid off probably because of the Depression, and Bill came back to the Carrying Place.

As cars became more plentiful, Bill took a course in automobile mechanics, then took over a garage in Carrying Place. When school buses began to be used, Bill and his wife provided several buses and each one drove a school bus. The garage and the buses are still the family business.

For years, Bill Hanthorn has written many stories of his experiences, an autobiography of his earlier life and short stories and poetry. He seemed to be blessed with the ability to write very entertaining accounts of his experiences. This is an ability that seems to be handed down to some family members from our mutual grandmother, Anna Leveridge, 'your loving Anna'.

Bill Hanthorn passed away on July 3rd. He was always a jolly person, with a ready chuckle. He enjoyed people and everybody felt better when he was around.

(-prepared by his lifelong friend and cousin, Marjorie, Mrs Gerald Trounce.)

Editors' note: We are planning to "retire" from editing this newsletter effective January 1, 1991. We'd love to hear from someone who wishes to get an early start into editorship. Please call us, Mike or Janet Hoyer, at 968-5609.

The Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, Quinte Branch will hold its "Third Sunday Walking Tour" in Marmora on Sunday October 21. Meet at the Memorial Building on the south-west corner of Highway 7 and 14 at 2 pm.

Main Street Means Business

■ In about a year from now, Heritage Canada's contract with Industry, Science and Technology Canada will be completed. This 1984 agreement gave the Main Street Canada programme the means to expand from seven to seventy communities across the country, and to help revitalize these communities by "promoting business and industry development" in their downtown cores.

Heritage Canada is well into the next phase in the Main Street programme, a phase which will see more partners and a more market-driven approach. A campaign with the theme, "The Heritage Canada Main Street Programme Means Business," launched in June, offers a direct invitation to communities across Canada to join the Main Street network. No more than twelve communities will be selected this year.

The Main Street Canada approach is quite simple. In short, it is a community-based process for economic, social, cultural and environmental development. The impact begins downtown and can grow to include an entire town, city or region. For \$50,000, per year, Main Street's proven revitalization process will provide the framework, the expertise and the technical know-how to develop a broadly-based community vision. It will also translate this vision into strategies, actions and results. The community provides a



local revitalization coordinator and office.

In practical terms, the Main Street process, over a three-year period, helps a community meet its revitalization objectives by:

- Facilitating local workshops and seminars to create a revitalization vision and strategies.
- Sponsoring a Resource Team to assist in the analysis of local opportunities and constraints.
- Creating a community-based action plan built on the proven Main Street approach.
- Training a local coordinator and local leaders in revitalization techniques.
- Supplying the community with a wide range of revitalization reference materials.
- Providing full-time professional programme supervision, qualified consultation on a variety of specific problems and a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system.
- Assisting each community to show visible improvement in the first year.
- Undertaking a mid-project evaluation.

- Furnishing each community with a wrap-up report, project evaluation and strategies for sustained development.

The programme's forte is its ability to build on local strengths and resources. Public involvement provides community leaders with the political support necessary to sustain long-term strategies.

Impressive Results

The results have been impressive. Main Street communities have used this process successfully to reverse economic and physical decline; many have been able to tackle the problem of rural depopulation. Moreover, Main Street communities have filled vacant storefronts, stimulated private investment, restored buildings and revived community pride and initiative. With the help of the Main Street programme, "Main Street" does indeed mean "business" on scores of main streets from coast to coast.

If your community would like to be considered for the Main Street programme, contact: Heritage Canada, Box 1358, Stn B, Ottawa, Ont., K1P 5R4 (613) 237-1066.

6 IMPACT July 1990

Master of ceremonies Chris Almey — a sixth generation grandson of Meyers — told those at the dedication Meyers "has given Belleville and Sidney much to be proud of."

"In addition to founding Belleville and being instrumental in founding Sidney Township, Meyers helped make the area a multicultural one by freeing his black slaves," said Meyers.

Alexander called Meyers a "man of vision."

"We are paying tribute to a great Canadian. He was a churchman, a judge, and a humanitarian. By allowing Belleville to become a fact, he has helped contribute to what makes Ontario important — its small towns, with their record for history, service, decency and integrity."

The graveside dedication was flanked by a guard of honor and band from CFB Trenton. Dignitaries included Quinte MPP Hugh O'Neil, Minister of Mines and Culture and Communications, Hastings-Prince Edward MP Lyle Vancilief, Sidney Reeve Tom Nobles, Thurlow Reeve George Beer, Belleville alderman Doug Crosbie, Bishop Allan Read of the Diocese of Ontario and United Empire Loyalist Quinte Branch president Russell Sills.

Following the unveiling, police escorted the entourage through city streets to Lions Park on Station Street in Belleville at the site where Meyers erected his first sawmill in 1790.

Alexander also attended that ceremony and was piped in by members of the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment.

And on the banks of the Moira River on a warm, sunny afternoon, participants could look about and imagine how the site looked 200 years ago when Meyers — who arrived in Belleville with aspirations of being a farmer but was quickly embroiled in the American Revolution — built his sawmill, brewery, a house for his family and founded the industry that sparked the growth of the community of Loyalists that grew into Belleville.

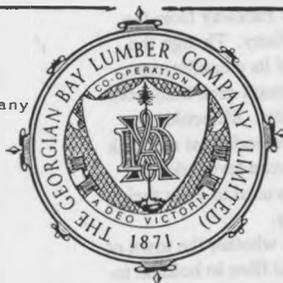
Festivities carried on at a dinner at the Ben Bleecker auditorium. Guests included Roy Bonsteel, host of CBC's *Man Alive*, Jane Bennett Goddard (co-chairman of the event

SEVERN PUBLICATIONS LIMITED

A DEO VICTORIA
The story of the Georgian Bay Lumber Company
1871-1942

by James T. Angus

Severn Publications Limited,
810-405 Waverley Street,
Thunder Bay, Ontario, P7B 1B8



Designated No. 2 in the Ontario Heritage Foundation's Local History Series, *A Deo Victoria* is for the general reader, especially those interested in local history and in gaining an understanding of the resource communities that were crucial to the development of Ontario's frontier regions. The book is a business history of the Georgian Bay Lumber Company, a firm that had a powerful impact on the development of the Georgian Bay District. In focusing on the fortunes of the owners, James T. Angus provides a window on the entrepreneurial ethic behind the general expansion of resource industries in the late nineteenth century. The book is supplemented with annotated photographs and illustrations.

More than just a first-rate business history, this book is a social history of the various people — from the lumber barons to the First Peoples of the Dokis Reserve — whose lives were tied to the harvesting of the Georgian Bay area forest. From the Foreword by Richard M. Alway, Chairman of the Ontario Heritage Foundation.

Retail price \$25.00

Lt.-Gov. Alexander unveils stone honoring city's founder

By JENNIFER READ
Staff Reporter

The resting place of Belleville's founder — and the first moderator of Sidney Township — has finally been recognized.

Capt. John Walden Meyers is buried at the Sidney Loyalist Burying Grounds at White's Cemetery on Highway Two east of CFB Trenton. Saturday, dozens — many of them descendants of Meyers — gathered to watch Ontario Lt.-Gov. Lincoln Alexander unveil a memorial stone to permanently mark Meyers' grave.

It was the kickoff to a day of history, marking both Belleville's founder and the 200th anniversary of Sidney Township, the longest continuing municipal government in Ontario.

with Almey), author of "Hans Waltmeyer", Mary Beacock Fryer, author of "Loyalist Spy", a work about Meyers, and Gwen Smith, United Empire Loyalist Association.

Toasts were raised to Meyers by the approximately 200 guests at the dinner, half of whom were direct descendants of the city's founder.

Family members also signed a petition that will be sent to the provincial government asking that Meyers — whose middle name has several variations — be officially known as John Walden Meyers.