

## Some Views of Life in the 1920s

*by Richard Hughes*

We are back in the 1920s. It is time to settle in your big, comfy chair after dinner with a pipe filled with fragrant tobacco and your daily newspaper. In the background your new Stewart-Warner radio is playing your favourite music, maybe Rudy Valee with “Honey” or Al Jolson with “Little Pal.” You can hum along to the number one hit, “Tiptoe Through the Tulips.” Your radio was made right here in Belleville; the Stewart-Warner Company had established a radio production line, first housing their receivers in a large, metal cabinet but later moving to a very classy wooden cabinet manufactured by Gibbard Furniture Company. These radio sets were shipped by carloads to Western Canada and by truckload across Eastern Canada. Lovely way to spend a cold February evening by the fire.



Photo credit: Image of vintage Stewart Warner console radio courtesy of Flickr user Joe Haupt (France 1978)

Topping the local news in 1921 were reports of a “Bakers’ War” across the city. The business directory listed 14 bakers and they were dropping prices like lead weights. The three-pound loaf of bread, usually valued at 20 cents (\$3.40 today) was being offered for just 14 cents and continued to fall to 12 cents. Although they were selling at a loss, there was no sign of peace in this “war,” much to the pleasure of the consumers. The bakers ultimately met to stop the war and overnight on February 9, peace was declared and the price shot up to 22 cents.

The sports pages brought the shocking news that Babe Ruth, the great Yankee slugger was expected to sign a contract in the \$50,000 range for 1922 (almost US\$ 1 million today). He had been playing for \$20,000 a year but his recent performance would warrant the leap forward. The average worker’s salary in Canada at that time was about \$1,200 per year.

Among the ongoing stories of racial segregation in the U.S., a story from Miami told of a “negro orchestra” which had been playing at a hotel, taken by police to a suburb and put on a train bound for Columbus, Ohio. It was reported to police that the orchestra had “not conducted themselves in accordance with southern customs” in that they had mingled with white people in the parks and the leader had stepped on the floor to direct a new dance.

Locally, it was a red-letter day on April 18, 1921, when the newspaper announced that the toll

bridge to Prince Edward County was to be taken over by the province and the tolls removed. It was a three-way deal with the province paying \$35,000, Belleville coming up with \$30,000 and Prince Edward County paying in \$20,000. Great celebrations were being planned to mark the end of the era of bridge tolls.

Also on a happy note, the Ontario Legislature passed a law in 1921 to allow the issuances of marriage licences by municipalities. As the newspaper puts it, "Backward swains, who have caught a glimpse of the marriage altar, will soon not have to appear before the proprietor of a shoeshine parlor or a jeweller or an insurance agent to buy the authority to permit him to marry." In Belleville at that time there were five issuers of marriage licences: two insurance agents and three jewellers.



## Meeting at Hambly's

*by Gary Nicoll*

In researching the early history of the Belleville Curling Club, I noticed the announcements of the annual meeting of the club were advertised with date and time and the location "Meeting at Hambly's." This led to exploring what "Hambly's" was and where it was. In fact, it was for the purposes of the Curling Club members, a saloon. But it started as a bakery.


Philip H. Hambly was born in Eggbuckland Devon near Plymouth in 1809. He moved his family to Canada in 1845 settling in Belleville. He worked as a baker and took over the bakery business started by Henry Corby in a stone building on the west side of Front Street. It is now 258 Front Street. Hambly opened a bakery on these premises in January of 1850, first leasing the building and eventually purchasing it in 1863, after Henry Corby offered it up for sale. Hambly's son, also Philip H. Hambly, became a baker and they worked in the business together until Philip senior retired and became a

"gentleman farmer" in Thurlow.

An 1873 ad was published listing the business and announcing that the bakery was now also offering tea and coffee and breads, biscuits and pastry both as a retailer and a wholesaler. It was also an oyster bar and a saloon serving wines and alcohol. Philip junior expanded the offerings of the business attracting daytime business as a tea/coffee bakeshop and evening and nighttime business as a saloon. In the 1881 Census he listed his occupation as saloon and storekeeper. In 1883 Philip Hambly added a third floor to the store. By 1886 he was forced to sell the store and close the business to pay off his creditors, including his father, a total of \$7,500.00. He became a customs officer in Belleville.


ADVERTISEMENTS. 141

P. H. HAMBLY,



**Bread & Biscuit Baker,**  
**PASTRY COOK & CONFECTIONER,**  
 Would say to his friends and customers from all parts that he  
 is now prepared to furnish

**HOT TEA AND COFFEE,**

**OYSTERS,**  **OYSTERS,**

Wholesale and Retail at prices defying competition.

**CAKES, BISCUIT AND PASTRY,**  
 Of all description made to order.

**OLD WINES, &c., &c.,**  
 Having been established for twenty years or so, must speak  
 for themselves.

PHILIP H. HAMBLY.



The photograph of the two-storey building is from 1864. There is a small passageway north of the bakery and then the Anglo-American Hotel. The other photograph is in 1985 showing the well-remembered Greenley's bookstore, and north of it the Kresge's building that replaced the Anglo-American Hotel. A decorative facade and the two distinctive bay windows on the second floor were added in 1892.

Hambly's was popular and operated for 36 years as a leading baker and then a gathering place in the heart of downtown Belleville. When you review articles mentioning Hambly's, you find that many organizations used it as a place to hold annual meetings and that it was popular for lunch and as a tearoom during the daytime.



Meeting at Hambly's was a thing to do in the 1870s and 1880s.

*Image courtesy of the Community Archives of Belleville and Hastings County left HCM00568 right HC01442*



## FREE PUBLIC PRESENTATION

BY JENNIFER LYONS,  
MANAGER OF MUSEUM  
SERVICES

**Since your last visit...  
what's been happening at Glanmore National Historic Site**

The last 14 months have been a whirlwind of activity at Glanmore. Find out about community celebrations, location shoots, restoration projects and new acquisitions. Plus some exciting things on the horizon, too!

**Tuesday,  
March 19, 2024  
7:00 p.m.**



Maranatha Church Auditorium  
100 College Street West, Belleville  
Enter by main front doors

## It's Reading Time Again

by Michelle Hutchison



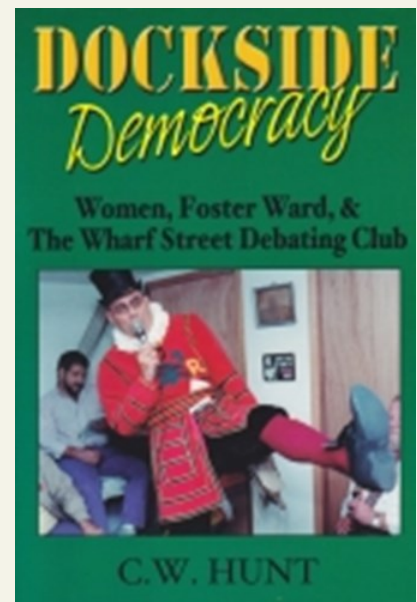
Take heart! The time will spring ahead and spring is on the horizon! More daylight means more time for reading. May we suggest ....

They came to the Quinte area as United Empire Loyalists. Hard work and incredible entrepreneurial skills created a business empire that spanned generations. The Graham family left its mark, not only in business but also in the political arena. Some became mayors and others entered provincial politics. The Grahams were also well known for their philanthropic ways. The reader might be surprised to learn of the many familiar local landmarks which were built by the Graham family. Not the least of these are the Bay of Quinte Golf and Country Club, and of course the beautiful Montrose Inn, both found on Old Highway 2 in Quinte West. Not wanting the storied past to be lost in the sands of time, author Susan Graham Kinsella spent many years cataloguing and verifying the richness of her family's history. The result is *Montrose*, local history bound by family ties.

**239 pages    \$25**

Rich in working class roots, Belleville's Foster Ward, popularly known as "The Wharf," has a diverse and storied past. Perhaps one of its best known icons was the Wharf Street Debating Club. *Dockside Democracy*, authored by master storyteller C.W. (Bill) Hunt, spins us a tale of folk, some famous, some infamous, who walked the planks of the club. What began as a refuge for the working man is perhaps best remembered for its pre-election "bun feeds," where those who thought to govern the city were grilled and roasted. In these pages, we are treated to stories of some of the most colourful characters in Belleville's history and we are spellbound by their exploits.

**198 pages    \$10**



You may find these two fine books, along with many others, at the Hastings County Historical Society bookstore located at the Community Archives on the second floor of the Belleville Public Library. Check out our on-line bookstore at [hastingshistory.ca](http://hastingshistory.ca)





# **The Story of Dr. James Albert Faulkner**

## **February Public Presentation**

*by Richard Hughes*

At the February Public Presentation at Maranatha, Trevor Parsons, PhD. Student, brought the story of the life and times of Dr. James Albert Faulkner. He described the early years of the 1900s which were times of discovery and rapid advancement in medicine and Dr. Faulkner was very much involved. Born near Stirling, the son of a doctor, Faulkner took up the family tradition, studying medicine at McGill. There he showed his dynamism, being active in the debating, historical and scientific societies. In 1907, he married Helen Vermilyea and they had four children, one son, George, becoming the third generation to study medicine.

As a family physician during the Great Depression, Dr. Faulkner learned that payment often came in the form of beef, eggs, poultry and even cordwood. Faulkner also followed in his father's footsteps in entering the theatre of politics. His father had run unsuccessfully some years earlier, and Dr. Faulkner entered the election contest in 1934. Voters, living through the Depression, were ready for change and gave the Liberals a resounding victory, including success for Albert Faulkner.

Dr. Faulkner was appointed Minister of Health but his desire to bring about major improvements in the health system was very restricted as the Depression had put extreme strains on resources. Among his challenges was a woman in Bracebridge who claimed to have discovered a cure for cancer and had successfully treated thousands. This led to a long battle as he insisted on knowing the ingredients so they could be scientifically tested and she staunchly refused. It turned out they were burdock root, Indian rhubarb, sheep sorrel and the inner bark of slippery elm.

Dr. Faulkner also sought to improve the treatment of mental illness. At that time, the approach was a "moral treatment" which emphasized kindness and respect; however, there were all too frequent cases of abuse and cruelty to patients. Faulkner established a Department of Neuro-Pathology which sought treatments for mental illness, with emphasis on research and a new Mental Health Act in 1935. Dr. Faulkner championed several health initiatives including the mandatory sterilization of milk, rural health clinics, treatment of alcoholism and drug addiction as medical conditions, among others.

In the 1937 provincial election, after a blistering campaign as Faulkner defended his many achievements and his adversaries attacked on a wide range of issues, the Liberals were returned to power in Queen's Park. Dr. Faulkner, however, was narrowly defeated. In recognition of his experience and skills, he was appointed chairman of the Old Age and Pensions Board and Mothers' Allowance Commission. He served in this position for seven years, until his death in 1944.

*Footnote: On September 23, 2023, the Hastings County Historical Society unveiled a memorial plaque to honour Dr. Faulkner, near his birthplace at the village of Harold, in the Municipality of Stirling-Rawdon.*



**Bob Mullin, Mayor of Stirling-Rawdon and Warden of Hastings County unveils plaque while Gary Nicoll, Shelby Kramp-Newman, our MPP for Hastings Lennox and Addington and Trevor Parsons look on.**

*Photo by Richard Hughes*



## Early Lumbering Days in Hastings County

*Prepared by Richard Hughes*

Local history can be told as a factual series of dates and events, but it truly gains life and vitality when it is told as a story by the people who actually lived it. A very early storyteller was J.E. Walmsley who was a prominent citizen, militiaman, wholesale and retail grocer in the second half of the 1800s and mayor of Belleville for three terms, 1894–96. He related the tales of the beginnings of the lumber trade to J.J.B. Flint, son of lumber baron Billa Flint, who composed the following story for the *Daily Intelligencer* on May 31, 1919.

“Canada had in early history a fringe of settlement along the lakes and rivers where towns and villages have sprung up. Immense forests covered the land. Government surveyors ran lines around vast areas of timbered land. The government granted many of these to intending lumberers. They were called limits. Power was given to cut the trees paying certain small rates to the government. These limits created very many extremely wealthy lumbermen.

“Having secured a limit the licensee dispatched to Quebec Province a man who hired a large number of French habitants who accompanied him to the woods. This was expensive and occupied much time, as of course, no railways existed. Reaching the limits, trees were cut and sawn into logs which were laid one upon the other and the spaces between snugly filled in with clay, moss, etc. A roof of logs made, windows made, in the centre a great platform was built of logs and filled with earth. On these the great fire was made, by means of the fire strong black tea, fat pork, bread and potatoes were cooked and the men with tin pans and basins helped themselves to food. Berths were made in rows, blankets thrown in and the bed made.

“Log stables were built and the work of cutting

began. Long saws worked by two men were used. The great trees selected and marked for cutting. Now, terrible waste of lumber took place. The market for logs was in foreign countries. There was no home market in early days. It, therefore, became necessary to prepare the great timbers of fifty and sixty feet in length for shipment at Quebec in large timber ships made for the trade. It was deemed necessary to cut and shape the fallen trees into square timbers. To do this involved vast quantities of choicest wood to be cut from the round trees and wasted. Once squared by a large axe, called a broad axe, the timbers were drawn by oxen or horses to a river or lake and deposited upon the ice to await the spring thaw. This process involved immense toil and a great deal of danger. The country was generally comprised of masses of rock, often of swamps through which roads had to be made. Timber being scattered, a road had to be made frequently to every piece cut.

“When the ice melted, then the driving down the rivers and lakes commenced. In this process consisted the greatest danger, many an adventurous Frenchman losing his life in endeavouring to break a jam formed by the furious water hurling the great sticks in all directions, often forming a jam of fifteen or twenty feet high of timbers above together in a mass. It required much experience to break a jam. The point was, if possible, to get out the key log, which first obstructed the passage and upon which the timbers piled one upon the other. The river would be roaring in great waves. Iron dogs [a mechanical device for gripping], ropes, hand spikes, etc., were used and it was a joyful moment when the jam broke and the timbers were full running down the river. To get the key log was a matter of great danger because when the jam broke the whole force of the river was exerted driving the mass of timbers.

“Many miles of foaming river and rapids had to be passed. Frequently copper dams [coffer dams] would be built where there were rapids and rocks. The dam would hold a large quantity of water and when broken would carry the timbers

over the rapids.

"At the mouth of the Moira the great timbers would be formed into cribs. That is one layer of timber placed on another and bound together with withes, which were young saplings of certain kinds of tough wood [usually willow shoots], which would be crushed by a machine and could then be used as ropes to tie the timbers together, the upper tier upon the lower tier. Earth and timbers on the centre of the crib formed the cook's kitchen. Great oars, thirty feet long would be made to steer the crib. When all the cribs were ready a steamer towed them down the bay and river until the St. Lawrence rapids came in sight. The steamer then left the crib to its fate and went

away. Soon the stream forced the crib into the rapids. Here was something more terrible and dangerous than the trip on the river. The great white waves would hurl the crib in all directions. Frequently rocks would break the crib to pieces and men and much timber would be lost. Arriving at Quebec the timbers would be grasped by machinery and forced into two holes or ports in the bow of the ships and dragged into the hold and there to remain until it reached its destination."



The lower Moira River jammed with logs; Belleville City Hall in background, 1900

*Image courtesy of the Community Archives of Belleville and Hastings County HC04050*



## Get On Board – Historical Bus Tour

Mark your calendar – Saturday, May 4 – your Historical Society is preparing a special full-day outing. As the warm weather returns and nature is in full bloom, we are traveling to the historic city of Kingston to visit some amazing sites with guided tours.

Recently, the luxurious *Titanic*-era ship, the *Keewatin*, was brought to the Marine Museum of the Great Lakes at Kingston and we will have the opportunity to see this amazing ship, and tour the museum.

We will also tour the Murney Tower Museum which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Of the original 14 towers Britain built in Canada, 9 still exist. Of these 9, 3 are in Kingston, there is one at Fort Henry, one in the downtown harbour opposite City Hall and the Murney Martello Tower fortification we will visit, now a major museum facility operated by the Kingston Historical Society. And, we will visit and tour Kingston City Hall which is a nationally designated heritage site, built when Kingston was the capital of the united province of Canada.

A pleasant feature on this occasion is the special arrangements that have been made for lunch. We have arranged with the very popular Pan Chancho Bakery to provide a full lunch menu from which each person will choose from eight sandwich options, eight salad options, six desserts and eight drinks. When you purchase your bus tour ticket, you will be given the menu and can choose your personal preferences in each category. We will have our lunch at the very busy and entertaining city hall farmers' market area.

Now is the time to book your ticket and join us for a very pleasant outing. The price for the full day outing, museum tours and lunch is \$80. Tickets are available at the Community Archives, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Library Building and at our monthly Public Presentations at Maranatha.



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