

Rescue of a Moose from the Icy York

Gerry Boyce died last fall but his legacy lives on in a book called *Historic Hastings Volume Two*. It will be posted soon as an on-line resource through the website of the Community Archives of Belleville and Hastings County.

<https://www.cabhc.ca>

In the meantime, here's an excerpt provided to the book by Karla Thompson of Bancroft:

One day a moose fell through the ice on the York River at Slabtown (northeast of Bancroft). "When the four rescuers (Dan Gabourie, Ivan Schutt, Mervin Kuno and Curtis Foster) reached the exhausted moose, they tried to get it up on the ice by putting a rope around its neck. During this process, two men fell into the icy water. Mervin had to cut a wedge in the ice to give him traction. Then Mervin and Curtis pulled the other two men out of the icy waters. They ended up cutting a channel to shore and walking the moose to shore. Mervin said, 'Let's all rub it fast to get its circulation moving.'" The moose seemed to know they were helping it, so it stood there for four hours before it walked off into the bush. The ice had worn the hair off of the moose's neck and when they saw it a year later, the hair on its neck had grown in white."



Visiting Belleville in 1846

by Richard Hughes

When we drive the length and breadth of Belleville today, we find a busy and dynamic city of 56,000 people spread along the scenic shores of the Bay of Quinte and following the Moira River many kilometres to the north. But what if you were an adventurous pioneer arriving in Belleville for the first time in 1846? What would you encounter?



Richard Henry Bonnycastle
Wikimedia Commons

This was the situation for Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Richard Henry Bonnycastle who was a military engineer and served in many battles and occupations by British troops in the early 1800s. At Kingston, he oversaw the fortification of Fort Henry and during this time, he traveled by boat from Kingston to Belleville and carefully noted his observations and expressed some attitudes of the times.

Starting his story as the steamer entered the Bay of Quinte, he observed, "The Bay of Quinte, in fact, on both the main shore and on Prince Edward is one unvaried scene of the valor of the

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husbandman; for the forest is rapidly disappearing there, and the luxuriance of the scenery in harvest can only be compared with the best parts of England. It is, indeed, a glad and a rich country.

"The Lake of the Mountain and the Indian Village of Tyandinaga are the lions of this route: the former, a singular crater full of the purest water, on the summit of a hill of some altitude without any apparent source, but overflowing in a stream sufficient for mill purposes and very deep; the latter the seat of the Mohawks, already mentioned.

"The vessel calls at several settlements, and stops for the night at Hallowell or Picton, for the village has both names. This is a most picturesque locality in a nook of the bay, with undulating hills and sharp ravines, a handsome church and other public edifices and a large and thriving population. But we must for the present keep on board the steamer, and, after sleeping there, go on to Belleville, leaving Fredericksburgh, Adolphus Town and many others in the Midland, to coast the Victoria district, and enter the charming little retreats in this pleasant bay to be described more at leisure.

"Belleville, the county town of the Victoria district, is situated on the shores of this bay, and, from an insignificant village in 1837, has risen in 1846 to the rank of a large and flourishing town, the main street of which surprised me, not a little by its extent, the beauty of its buildings, and the display of its shops. I mounted the hillside which overlooks it, and there saw three fine churches, the English, Roman Catholic, and Scotch places of worship, a large well built court-house and jail, and some pretty country-houses. I should think that Belleville has nearly four thousand inhabitants; and, as it is the outlet of a rich back country, and on the main road from Kingston to Toronto, it will increase most rapidly. The worst feature about Belleville in 1837 was that it was the focus of American saddle-bag preachers, teachers and rebelliously disposed folks; but I am told that most of these uneasy loafers have left it,

and that its character has improved wonderfully. What a nuisance are peddling, meddling politicians of the lowest grade? Wherever they plant their feet, a moral pestilence follows. These fellows won't work, for the voluntary principle in preaching or teaching pays better, and does not cost so much trouble. It is surprising with what facility, in England, as well as in Canada, a saddle-bag doctor of divinity takes his degree, and becomes possessor of the secrets and director of the consciences and household of the small farmer."

It appears Sir Richard Bonnycastle was very impressed with the scenery and the developing town, full of praise for what he witnessed, but as a staunch Englishman of the time and most likely adherent of the Church of England, had little patience for the newly arrived Americans, who most likely, would have been Methodist.

Source: An extract from the Daily Intelligencer April 3, 1847

TEMPERANCE HOUSE.

THE Subscriber begs leave to inform his friends and the Public, that he has removed, from his OLD STAND, to the *Basement* Story of the

VICTORIA BUILDINGS,

For the purpose of keeping what is commonly called an

EATING HOUSE.

Where he will afford *CHEAP LUNCH*, from One Penny to Six Pence, & *FULL MEALS*, from Six Pence, to Nine Pence, agreeable to the will and wish of Travellers.

He therefore hopes from his long experience in business, in the Town of Belleville, that his friends will give him a call and go satisfied.

MARTIN RYAN.

Belleville, March, 1846.
N. B. Cash paid for Butter, Cheese, Eggs, &c.

CABHC HCM03027



It's Reading Time Again

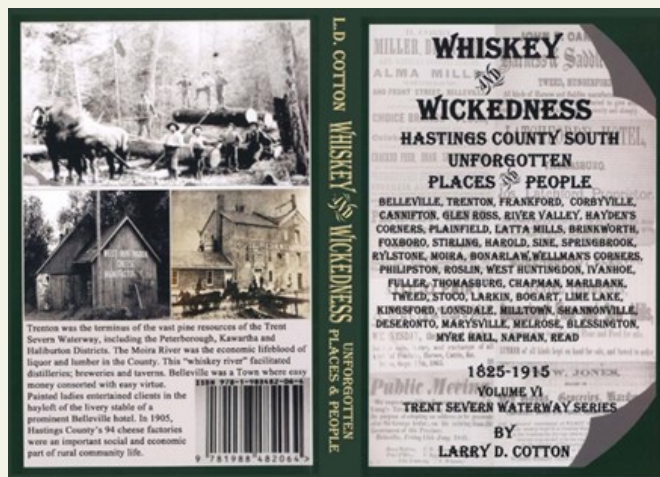
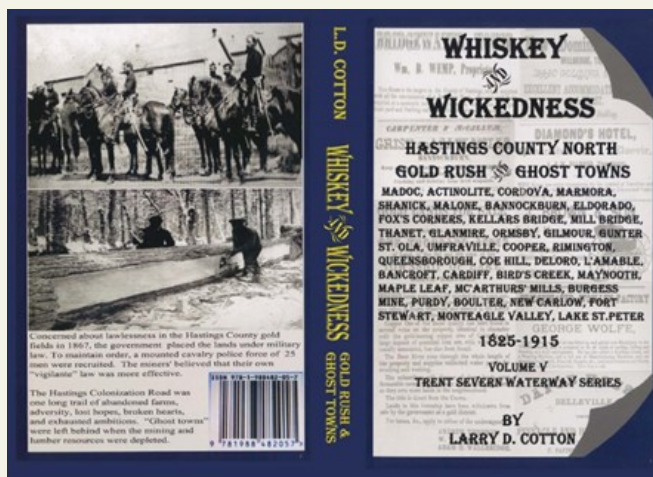
by Michelle Hutchison


Could it be? Is that the smell of spring in the air? Why not grab a good book and read while waiting for the first blooms to break through the soil? May we suggest:

Violence, murder and mayhem! Alcohol was king; whiskey ruled. Ghost towns, even ghostly sightings; once thriving communities that sprang up but quickly became "lost towns." Gold fever, the gold rush and the con men who came along with the rest of the hopeful crowd. River drivers came to towns along the rivers, wild and full of pent-up energy from long months in relative isolation. Homes burned and were lost before help could arrive. Death was always close by. Drawing on newspaper accounts and research, author Larry D. Cotton draws vignettes of what might be called the seedier side of life in Hastings County during the 19th and early 20th centuries. *Whiskey and Wickedness Hastings County South* and *Hastings County North* are part of the author's Trent Severn Waterway series. The books illustrate not only the differences between the two parts of the County but also the similarities. There is a common theme of violence, drinking, mischance and maiming. Life was difficult and strong drink seemed to be one way to cope. This often resulted in domestic disputes and tragedy. Fights led to murder. Casualties came with both gold and logs and even day-to-day life. Police had trouble policing and, in some cases, the police themselves were the problem with lax practices and corruption. Tales of lawlessness abound. The many maps and photographs tell their own stories. Prepare yourself for the worst ... and the best.

Find both of these fine books, along with many others at the Hastings County Historical Society bookstore, housed at the Community Archives in Belleville.

300 pages/book
\$20 each






PUBLIC PRESENTATION


By journalist and author

GORDON PITTS



Iron and Rust – The Mixed Legacy of Madoc’s Uriah Seymour

When Yankee ironmaker Uriah Seymour arrived in Hastings County in the mid-1830s, a little settlement already existed on Deer Creek, north of Moira Lake. His mine and furnace would be the catalysts for the growth spurt that laid the foundation for the modern village of Madoc. But the story has an ambivalent theme: a brave innovator ends up as a historic might-have-been.

 **Tuesday, March 21, 2023**
7:30 p.m.

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

Everything Old Is New Again: The Story of 232 Front Street

by Connie Carson

An old run-down building in the downtown district of Belleville at 232 Front Street has been transformed! A knowledgeable group of investors has taken on the redevelopment of this 160-year-old property, renamed Building Life.

In the 1860s, George Neilson, who owned a house on John Street, purchased a lot on Front Street, named it the Neilson Block and built The Neilson Theatre and Arts Company. His block's other notable tenants included the Penitentiary

Warehouse, the Anderson Coal Company, George Roche Hatter and Furrier, and The Dominion Art Gallery. An ad in the City Directory announced, “The New Dominion Gallery of Art, Neilson’s Hall, Belleville has now been furnished with the latest styles of Scenery and Furniture. A First Class Artist has been engaged to colour Photographs in all the Fashionable Styles. Arrangements have been made from Paris to receive all the new and latest Scenery styles every month for Photographic purposes.”

Research has turned up various unique office suites in the building over a period of 50 years, including an Accoucheur (Male Midwife), Oculist (Eye Specialist), and Aurist (Ear Specialist). Many lawyers, doctors, realtors, businesses and residential tenants occupied the premises.

There is insufficient data confirming renovations, additions and improvements to the exterior of the building. Still, there is evidence it underwent many transformations before it was purchased by the Gordon Estate under the Women's Christian Association in 1927 and sold to Metropolitan Department Stores. Everyone called it the "Met," and this small but mighty store carried over 40 sections of merchandise, including men's and ladies' fashions, cloth material, footwear and even goldfish and birds! Customers were as varied as their social status because of the eclectic store's inventory. The throngs of shoppers were as diverse as the merchandise they purchased.

A savvy shopper could find everything from soup to nuts including pitchforks, shovels, sprinklers, wrenches, saws, dolls, model cars and everything in between at this versatile location. Well-known and cherished Belleville resident Hilda Daley worked as the head cashier and then office manager from 1952 until the store closed its doors in 1974. She stayed on for two more years when it changed to Encore Mart and retired two years later. Hilda described it as "an out-and-out good variety store." There was an oiled hardwood floor and a raised office area in one corner of the building, plus a second floor that was not used. The store was open till 9 p.m. on Friday nights and closed Wednesday afternoons and Sundays. The staff consisted of four full-time and two part-time employees.

It was my favourite shopping spot as a young mom in the late '70s because I could pick up almost anything on my way home from work. The location was convenient, and the store was well laid out and very organized. Their favourite saying was, "YOU CAN ALWAYS FIND IT AT THE MET" – and I did! This treasure trove of "everything" was a fixture on Front Street from 1929 to 1974.

In 1978, local entrepreneur Gerry O'Shaunessy purchased the Metropolitan building and created a multilevel shopping, business and residential centre. He started a new boutique shopping and

entertainment trend, all under one roof in downtown Belleville.

A list from the 1990 Belleville directory shows the following businesses at the Maze Mall: Jerky Johns Jean Joint, Licence Bureau, Sam the Record Man, JR Switzer Construction, Quinte Learning Center, Credifax Services, EMS Associates, TJ's Property Connection, Nicholson Accounting, Bel O Sol Suntan Studio, Risk-Q, LHM Insurance Agency, and Dominion Mercantile. At one time, there was even a Maze Mall Laundromat! The Maze Mall operated successfully for over 15 years, but fell into disrepair and closed.

As a teenager growing up in Belleville, my favourite haunts at this mall were Jerky Johns, J&P Jeans and Sam the Record Man. My friends and I spent countless Saturday afternoons checking out the endless supply of records and trying on all the latest fashion in jeans. We then continued our conversations over a big plate of fries and gravy at the Cosy Grill, where Louis always made room at the back for a noisy bunch of teenage girls.



232 Front Street after steel cladding had been removed from the façade.

Photo by Gerry Fraiberg CABHC

The Building Life concept will improve the historic streetscape of Front Street, restore a landmark to its original charm and contribute to the growing revitalization of downtown

Belleville. As we stroll along our historic downtown core, let's take a moment to cherish our memories of days gone by and visualize our promising future.

Note: These stories are excerpts from the books, *Memories of Belleville* and *More Memories of Belleville* by Connie Carson. Available at the Chamber of Commerce Log Cabin, 5 Moira St. West and at

<http://memoriesofbelleville.squarespace.com/>



The Bastards of Madoc Township

by Orland French

A.F. Wood, entrepreneur, politician, and general merchant, built a career as an outstanding citizen in Madoc in the mid-1800s. Turns out he was a rascal, for he populated the area with a generation of bastards.

Alpheus Field Wood

CABHC HC02102



But not in the way you might think.

Author Gordon Pitts told the story to an audience of the Hastings County Historical Society on February 21, admitting with a mischievous smile that he might be among the bastards of Madoc.

What happened was this: A. F. Wood was an influential power and emerging political star in pre-Confederation Ontario. He was Madoc Township Reeve and Warden for Hastings County, and he used a truckload of cash from his prosperous general store to invest in the Eldorado Gold Rush. One of the powers he picked

up as a perk from his political positions was the right to issue marriage licences. As an agent he received \$2 per licence and \$4 went to the government. At least, that was the plan.

Unfortunately, he ran out of printed marriage licences, or whatever. He began issuing handwritten receipts acknowledging that so-and-so and such-and-such were lawfully married. He said later, when the scandal broke, that he figured people would turn the notes in for legitimate marriage certificates. This would be important. Since A. F. Wood's handwritten notes were not registered with the government, neither were the marriages. Of course, Wood had also not passed on any money to the government nor did people realize the notes were, like their children, illegitimate. There was no official record of the marriages.

In legal terms, they didn't exist, although in spiritual and moral terms the wedding unions were every bit as legitimate as pieces of paper from the government.

Since many of these couples were prolific in the bedroom, there were soon dozens of little bastards running around Madoc Township. Families tended to be large in the 1800s. Pitts questioned whether this illegitimacy would be transferable from generation to generation, in which case he might be one of these Madoc bastards. As would many of his neighbours.

The master storyteller relates this true tale in *Greed, Gold and Power*, one of a series of local historical books he has written from his home in Pitts Landing, just east of Madoc on Moira Lake. As a former financial writer with the *Financial Post* and the *Globe and Mail*, he has also written a number of substantial tomes chronicling business circles in modern-day Canada. Other books in his local series include *Who Killed Charlie St. Charles?* and *The O'Haras: Lives and Legacies of a Pioneer Family*.

Mr. Pitts will be returning to the HCHS on March 21 for another presentation at Maranatha. He will be bringing a number of books for sale.



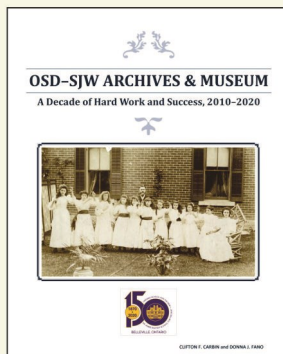
SJW History Booklets for Sale

Since 2021, Dr. Clifton F. Carbin of Burlington and Donna J. Fano of Belleville have co-authored eight historical booklets, ranging from 24 to 32 pages, about the Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf since its founding in 1870.

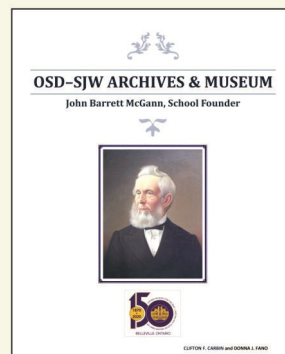
The booklets are available from Donna for \$15.00 each plus \$5.00 for postage/handling = \$20.00. Or you can pick them up from her for just \$15.00 each. They are also available at the Community Archives of Belleville and Hastings County, 254 Pinnacle Street, Belleville.

E- transfer is available through an email address as shown below. Bank drafts are also accepted, payable to *Ontario Deaf History Projects*. No personal cheques, please.

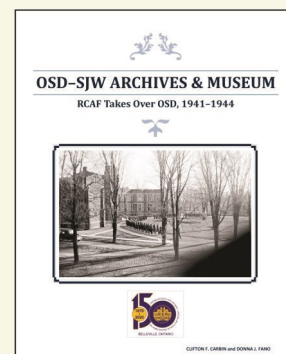
Please use osdsjwarchives@gmail.com to direct your questions to Donna.



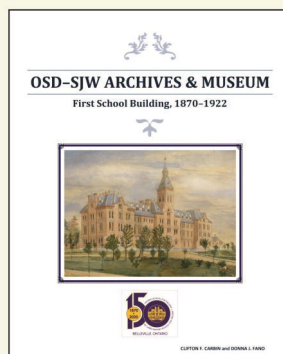
**#1 Ten year Set Up of the
OSD-SJW Archives and Museum**



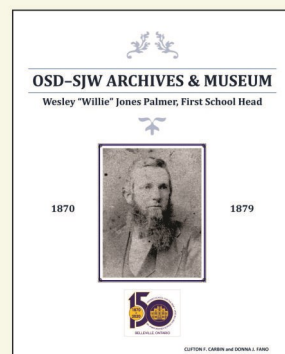
**#2 School's Founder,
John Barrett McGann**



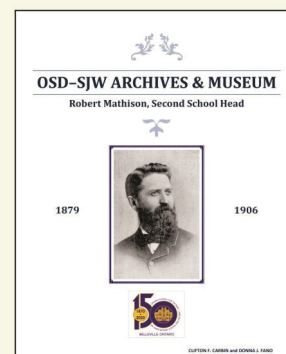
**#3 RCAF Takeover of School
from 1941-1944**



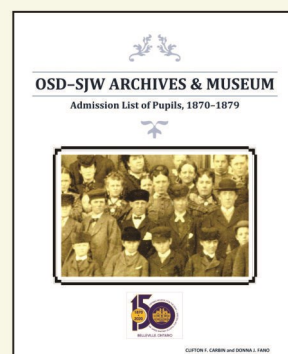
#4 First School Building 1870-1922



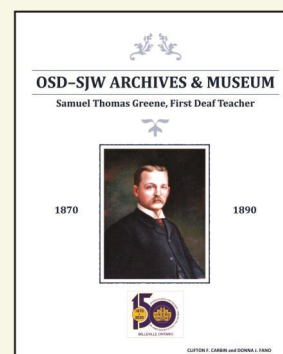
**#5 First School Head,
Wesley Jones Palmer**



**#6 Second School Head,
Robert Mathison**



**#7 List of First Ten Years of
Student Admissions**



**#8 First Deaf Teacher,
Samuel T. Greene**

Annual General Meeting of the Historical Society

Each year the Historical Society, as an incorporated, non-profit organization is required to hold an Annual General Meeting to report to the membership on its activities during the past year, to hold elections for the Board of Directors for the coming year and to bring any proposals it considers appropriate to the membership. This year, the AGM will be held as the first activity at the Public Presentation at Maranatha on Tuesday, March 21. The full report along with the financial report will be available three weeks before the meeting, that is by February 28 on the Society's website and in paper form at the Community Archives.



Entertainment While We Await Spring's Arrival

There will be plenty of cold, chilly, damp days until the welcome warmth of spring arrives with the songs of birds and the colours of the tulips. Until then, here is an idea for some interesting local, historical entertainment—you can enjoy the large number of videos which the Historical Society and YourTV Quinte has available on YouTube.

The 25 five-minute films, Road Trips in Hastings County, can be enjoyed on YourTV Quinte YouTube. Simply click on "playlists" and go down until you see the green icon with the words Road Trips in Hastings County. These can prepare you for some fun outings in our own Hastings County backyard during the coming spring and summer.

There are 16 recordings of historical presentations by excellent speakers on a wide range of local, historical topics, originally Zoom broadcasts, which you can find at Hastings County Historical Society YouTube.

For a quiet afternoon or evening of truly local entertainment, check out YouTube!



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Hastings County Historical Society has its offices in the Library/Archives building at 254 Pinnacle Street, Second Floor, Postal Code K8N 3B1. *Outlook* is published nine months of the year for members and friends of the Society. Submissions can be sent to:

outlook.hastingshistory@gmail.com