

Belleville – Aeronautics Capital of Canada?

by Richard Hughes

Well, almost! In the early years of the twentieth century, a number of enterprising entrepreneurs dreamed of becoming major industry leaders of the amazing new machines – first the automobile and then the airplane. Both were considered revolutionary inventions which would change the lives of everyone – and the dreamers were right!

In 1903, the Wright brothers achieved the first powered, controlled flight at Kitty Hawk, N.C., and just a few years later, in 1909 at Baddeck N.S., J.A.D. McCurdy piloted the *Silver Dart* to the first powered flight in the British Empire.

The local newspaper proudly announced on February 4, 1914, that, “The majority of the people of Belleville are unaware of the fact that the first and only Aeroplane Factory in the Dominion of Canada is located in Belleville.” In fact, brothers H.R. and F.N. Pollay had arrived in Belleville in 1913, had rented a shed on George Street and had obtained the technical services of F. Davidson, head constructor for the Curtis Aeroplane Company in the U.S. In just four months they had constructed a biplane, using 3000 pieces of spruce, mahogany, elm, ash and walnut, all connected with nickel-steel tubes and aeroplane cables. It was equipped with a tricycle undercarriage, two sets of main wheels and was

powered by a four-cylinder, water-cooled engine of about 50 hp.

This machine was the ultimate in aeronautical construction – light, fast, safe. The main problem of the early aircraft, engine stoppage, it was reported, “was no more than an inconvenience” as this plane could sideslip, turn right over, fall backward on its tail and be spun round and round like a giant pinwheel, after which the pilot could “quietly fly on again.”

The wonder plane was put on exhibition at City Hall in February 1914 with a special showing of moving pictures and slides illustrating the science of designing and flying aircraft, military manoeuvres with aircraft and air ships and a film with “the most thrilling scenes ever portrayed, Aeroplane racing against high-speed Motorcycle.”

A month later, a report from Toronto stated that the aircraft, the first aeroplane built in Canada, was on display on the fourth floor of Robert Simpson’s store. It announced that the factory and the Pollays’ flying school in Belleville were to be moved to Toronto. The goal of the Pollay brothers, if public support could be arranged, was to build a plane to compete in the Panama Pacific Exposition in San Francisco in 1915. This new super aircraft would have two 150- to 200-hp engines and be twice as big as the current aircraft. This is where both the Pollay brothers and their revolutionary aircraft seem to have “fallen off the radar.” Like so many other

Follow the activities of the Hastings County Historical Society online



Facebook: @HastingsHistory



Twitter: @CountyHastings



Instagram: @HastingsHistory

Website: HastingsHistory.ca

visionaries, their dreams faded while others carried the new industries to heights unimaginable in 1914.



The first Canadian-built aircraft on temporary exhibition at City Hall in Belleville, ca 1914

Photo by William Spence Clarke

CABHC HC07392



The Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment Mark 80th Anniversary of the Landing in Sicily, 1943

by Richard Hughes

The Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment received the most battle honours of any Canadian infantry regiment in the Second World War. It began with the invasion of Sicily in 1943, battling the length of Italy with the Allied forces and later, in 1945, shifting to Northern Europe, being instrumental in the liberation of the Netherlands.

At the Public Presentation on September 19, retired captain Neil Burrell teamed with filmmaker Doug Knutson of Windswept Productions to bring the story to life with a colourful narrative supported by actual film footage and priceless interviews with the Regiment's soldiers who participated in the

fighting. The original filming of the interviews was done 30 years ago and fortunately, by applying the latest technologies, Doug Knutson was able to substantially improve the video quality.

It all began on September 2, 1939, when the Regiment mobilized and began training. Only a few months later they sailed to England where they continued training, awaiting their call for the invasion of fortress Europe. In July 1943, the Regiment, along with other Allied armies, landed in Sicily and began the vicious running battles with the battle-hardened German forces.

A most amazing achievement was the Regiment's assault on Mount Assoro. Occupied by heavily armed German forces entrenched in the castle and village at the top, it was decided that the only possibility was to scale the 1320-foot cliffside at night to surprise the enemy. Carrying heavy equipment along narrow, winding goat trails up the steep cliff, in total quiet and darkness, the Regiment was successful, though at heavy cost, including the loss of its commanding officer, Lt. Col. Bruce Sutcliffe. This was a major gain for the Allies as they pushed further into Italy. These intense battles continued until 1945 when the Regiment was deployed to Northwest Europe and played a key role in the liberation of the Netherlands.



Speakers Neil Burrell (left) of the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment Military Museum and Doug Knutson of Windswept Productions

The story of the Hasty P's, as they are affectionately known, is brought to life in the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment Military Museum in the Belleville Armouries. Comprehensive exhibits tell the story of the Regiment and its battles through uniforms, weapons, medals, equipment and an impressive

model of Mount Assaro, showing the assault and battle. For opening hours and details see their website, <https://www.theregiment.ca/>. The story of the Regiment is told in full detail by author Farley Mowat in his book, *The Regiment*.



Two-Time Winners

by Gary Nicoll



Last year the Community Archives of Belleville and Hastings County included this photo on its facebook page. In the Club History on the Quinte Curling Club website, there is mention that Ladies Curling began in the 1890s in Belleville and that Ladies Curling had their own division by the 1913/14 curling season. The Belleville Curling Club was one of four clubs that were members of the Ladies Ontario Curling Association, the other clubs being Toronto, Kingston and Peterborough. They played in an annual competition for the

McFadden Silver Tankard Trophy gifted by the President of the Ontario Curling Association. In 1914 and 1915, the first two years of its awarding, the Tankard Trophy of the Ladies Ontario Curling Association was won by two Ladies teams from the Belleville Curling Club. This is a photo that shows both teams. It appears from the scoring that it was the practice for two teams to be awarded the trophy. In both these years the winning teams were from Belleville.

The Belleville Curling Club formed in 1867 and closed in the midst of the Great Depression in 1934 at its location on George Street just north of Dundas Street East. In 1957, curling returned to Belleville with the opening of the Quinte Curling Club in its current location on Bridge Street West in the old agricultural fairgrounds.

Getting back to this great old photo, from left to right, the first team was skipped by Mrs. Geen, the members from left to right are Mrs. Lillian Marshall, Miss Gertrude Price, Miss Wanda Riggs and Mrs. Geen. The second team showing a XV logo, was skipped by Mrs. W. Cook. The members from left to right are Mrs. W. Cook, Mrs. W. Mikel, Mrs. Allen and Miss Helen Wallbridge.

The photo was taken in front of C. R. Banks shop in Peterborough at 212-214 Charlotte Street, an automotive and bicycle shop. It happened to be next door to the entranceway and narrow hall that led back to the Peterborough Curling Club at 216 Charlotte Street which was set in behind a number of stores. This club in Peterborough was where the Tankard was held in 1915.

The photo, originally a black-and-white one, has been colorized. It is a great photo, showing curling outfits, including sweaters and ankle-length skirts and tams. The brooms appear to be just traditional household straw brooms.

You will recognize a number of the family names: Geen as in Geen's Pharmacy; Wallbridge, the name of a well-known downtown store at the time and one of the owners of Belleville Business College; Mikel—her husband was Treasurer of the City of Belleville, a past president of the Belleville Curling Club, and eventually Mayor of Belleville in 1925 and 1926; Riggs, a large, well-known family whose home is still one of Belleville's outstanding historic homes on the southeast corner of Bridge Street and George Street in east end Belleville. The husbands of both Mrs. Cook and Mrs. Allen were skips in the men's division of the curling club, curling being a family sport even back then.

An article from the *Peterborough Examiner* about this Tankard event reads as follows:

"The weather clerk is a gallant gentleman. He provided perfect weather for the Ladies' Tankard Tournament yesterday and to-day. Weather outside, smiling as the faces of a winning rink, and bright as their eyes and ice inside of perfect quality. The tournament attracted about forty outside lady curlers, including camp followers from east and west as far as Kingston and Toronto, and south as far as Belleville; and a good field of entries of local ladies—two rinks of lady curlers—ten rinks altogether. The ladies put up a splendid sample of the "roarin' game," though the roarin' was subdued and ladylike. It was to be expected that the ladies from their familiarity with the T and the more professional swing of the broom, would score heavily, but the scoring was in spots—hollow victories and decisive defeats.

On the whole, however, the ladies curled well and with genuine sportsmanlike good nature. There were none of the "spats" with which ladies are wont to relieve the dull monotony of social intercourse. The games came under the critical eye of the gentlemen curlers to a large degree. The foyer of the rink was crowded with gentlemen spectators, with of course as many noses as possible flattened against the glass, watching the scene; and it was well worth watching the ladies who, attired in sweaters of different hues, presented a picturesque ensemble, and their animated and graceful movements made a charming moving picture. The results of the play were rather a disturbance of the provincial center of gravity, Toronto, the hub, being decidedly displaced. The Belleville belles were the belles of the ball— they captured the Tankard."

The accomplishments of these two teams in 1914 and 1915 are quite noteworthy. Perhaps worthy of acknowledgement by the Belleville Sports Hall of Fame.



It's Reading Time Again

by Michelle Hutchison

Fall has officially arrived and soon we will have frost. Time to cuddle up in front of the fire with a blanket and a good book. May we suggest the following, new to Hastings County Historical Society bookstore shelves?

Imagine post-Second World War in the Netherlands. The country and its people, struggling to recover from the devastation of German occupation and the ravages of war. The prosperity that Holland had enjoyed prior to the war was slow to return and, for some, it did not return at all. An already large population continued to grow, further challenging the fragile economy. How was a government to cope? How could they ever rebuild? Beginning in 1947, the Dutch government offered financial support to those individuals and families wishing to emigrate, and this paved the way for some 200,000 new immigrants to come to Canada.

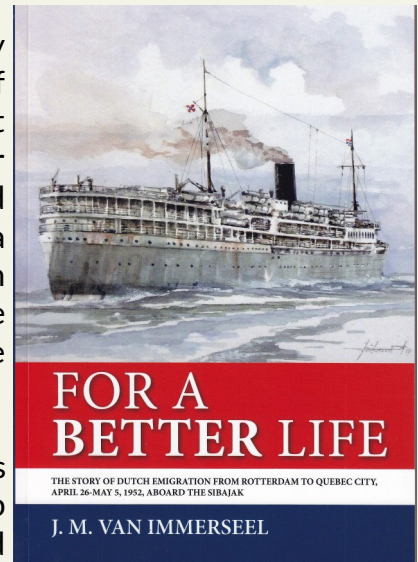
This is the story of one voyage to Canada. The *Sibajak* began its maiden voyage on April 26, 1952 with 998 souls aboard. The ship arrived at Quebec's port on May 5 and the newly arrived continued from there to their sometimes far-flung final destinations. Author J.M. van Immerseel was a child, 3 years of age, when his family made the journey. Over the years, he wondered about the fate of those fellow travellers who were brave enough or desperate enough to take a chance in a new land. What was life like before leaving Holland? Why take the risk of leaving the known for the unknown? Would they find acceptance; would they be welcomed? What was it like, learning a new language, new customs? Would they find prosperity? Was Canada a "promised land"? They needed strength; they needed resilience. Family, always important, became their anchor. What was, for some, a grand adventure, was, for others, a sorrow. The many photographs provide a treasure trove of memories.

Twenty-one stories; twenty-one different experiences. Twenty-one different reasons for taking that chance. Perhaps it was an escape; perhaps it was to follow a dream; perhaps it was to create a better opportunity for their children. No matter what the reason for their decision, everyone aboard the *Sibajak* hoped *For a Better Life*.

500 pages \$40

Also includes a complete passenger list.

Find many fine books in the Hastings County Historical Society bookstore at the Community Archives on the second floor of the Belleville Public Library.





PUBLIC PRESENTATION

By HCHS Board Members

CONNIE CARSON, JIM KENNELLY & GARY NICOLL

A Selection of Stories

Three of the Historical Society's Board members will take to the stage this month to share their research and recollections on the topics of Downtown Belleville, murders in Tyendinaga Township, and some history of the Belleville Curling Club.

 **Tuesday, October 17, 2023**
7:00 p.m.

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



Dr. Faulkner Historical Plaque

by Gary Nicoll

On September 23, 2023, a beautiful sunny Saturday morning, a small group of local politicians and members of the Hastings County Historical Society gathered on the site of the old stone building that served as an office for Rawdon township until the 1960s, at Harold.

Dr. James Faulkner was being celebrated with this new plaque to honor a lifetime of work, primarily in the medical field, but also for some remarkable work in a short period in the midst of the Great Depression serving in the government of Ontario. He was born in 1877 and graduated from McMaster with an MA before training at McGill University in Montreal and training at the Royal Victoria Hospital. He established a medical

practice in Foxboro and then in Belleville and worked as the Medical Officer of Health for Thurlow Township for 27 years.

In 1934, Mitch Hepburn and a revitalized Liberal Party of Ontario were elected to form a government to try to help Ontario deal with the economic Depression the country was caught up in. Dr. Faulkner was made the Minister of Health. Although forced by economic restraint to make some cuts in his department, he strove to help the most vulnerable. This was decades before Medicare was introduced in Canada. Dr. Faulkner organized "Medical relief" in the form of free travelling clinics across Ontario to help some of those needing assistance.

He worked through his Ministry to codify the mandatory pasteurization of milk. He also took a lead in an effort to modernize the psychiatric hospitals in Ontario with a new "Mental Health Act of 1935."

His work was taking lessons learned in long years of medical practice and using the Ministry of Health to improve and modernize the services it provided. We have grown accustomed to the changes he made and think of them as old and/or obvious. But they were new for the times. He actively worked at using the governing power of being a member of the provincial parliament and a minister of the government to make changes for the betterment of Ontarians.

The plaque notes that he was the first member elected in Hastings County to be appointed as a minister. He served from 1934 to 1937 when he lost the second election he ran in, a surprising result at the time. He was then appointed as chairman of the Old Age Pension and Mothers' Allowances Commission. Dr. Faulkner died in 1944 in Toronto.

Trevor Parsons, a Phd candidate and former director of the Hastings County Historical Society, spoke eloquently about these things, and much of the above material is from his fine speech.



Bob Mullin unveils the plaque while Gary Nicoll, Shelby Kramp-Newman and Trevor Parsons look on.

Photo by Richard Hughes

We were honored to have Bob Mullin, the Mayor of Stirling-Rawdon and Warden of Hastings County there who spoke of how Dr. Faulkner took office in the Depression and the challenges he rose to in those difficult times. Shelby Kramp-Newman, our Member of Parliament for Hastings Lennox and Addington also spoke to the group. She expressed her admiration for individuals like Dr. Faulkner who worked at leaving a legacy for the future through their efforts to improve life for those

they served. She reminded us that we can do the same in our lives.



Remembering Peter C. Newman

On September 7th 2023, Peter C. Newman died in Belleville. Peter was 94 years old. He died of complications resulting from Parkinson's disease. He was an outstanding Canadian journalist and author of some two dozen books on Canadian politics and Canadian history. There have been many obituaries about Peter's life and accomplishments. We simply want to add to these stories, a note of thanks for Peter C. Newman's assistance as "Honourary Capital Campaign Chairman" in the drive to raise the money needed to complete the funds for the Community Archives of Belleville and Hastings County. We will remember him for the same work that most Canadians know about, but we especially are thankful that he gave us a hand in reaching the goal of \$1,000,000.00 for our Capital Campaign. The "Unlock the Archives" that he participated in capped off a very ambitious program of fundraising led by our then President, Orland French.



Mayor Neil Ellis (left), Honourary Capital Campaign Chairman Peter C. Newman, Capital Campaign Chairman and Society President Orland French, and Tyendinaga Township Reeve Rick Phillips celebrate the launch of the Society's fundraiser with "Unlock Your Archives" keys at its grand opening on Front Street, Belleville on May 26, 2011.

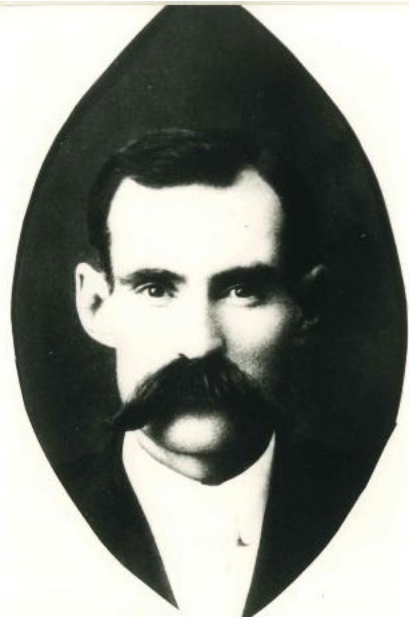


Can You Identify These Men?

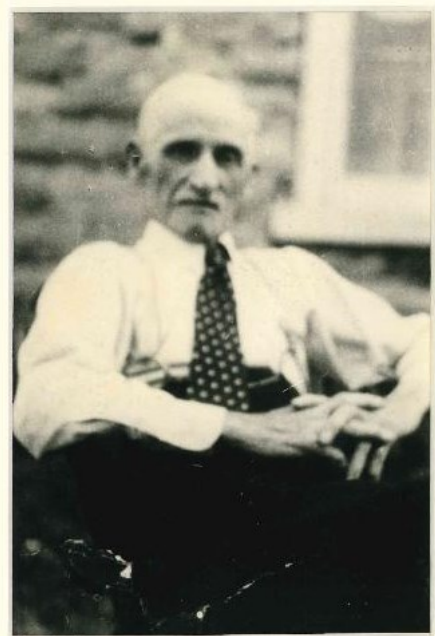
The Madoc library needs help in identifying these men. Each held the position of Reeve of Huntingdon. The response can be made to:

archives@cabhc.ca

or by calling CABHC at 613-967-3304.



ca late 1800s



ca 1920



Note to Authors—By submitting material to be printed in the *Outlook*, the author confirms that he/she holds both legal and moral rights to the material, and grants permission to the Hastings County Historical Society to use this material in print and/or electronically. The opinions expressed in articles submitted to the *Outlook* are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Hastings County Historical Society, its Board or its members.



HASTINGS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

DIRECTORS & OFFICERS

Officers

President	Gary Nicoll
Vice-President	TBA
Treasurer	Dan Atkinson
Secretary	Dick Hughes

Directors

Ted Bradford	Connie Carson
Michelle Hutchison	Stanley Jones
Jim Kennelly	Steve Young

Ex-officio:

Dick Hughes (Past-President)
Amanda Hill (Archivist)

Sub-committees

Bus Tours	TBA
Exhibits	Stanley Jones
Gerry Boyce Award:	Dan Atkinson
	Jim Kennelly
	Gary Nicoll
Historical Plaques Website	Orland French
Membership	Amanda Hill
Outlook Newsletter	Editor Laurel Bishop
	Editor Donna Fano
Outlook Distribution	Dick Hughes
	Michelle Hutchison
Plaque Projects:	Dick Hughes
Programs/Speakers	Jim Kennelly
Publications for Sale	Michelle Hutchison
Publicity (Print Media)	Jessica Turner
Social Media	Ted Bradford
Relations with Other Heritage Orgs.	Gary Nicoll
Website	Heidi Rooke
Website Development	Amanda Hill
	Stanley Jones
	Steve Young
Community Archives	613-967-3304
HCHS Email	president@hastingshistory.ca

outlook.hastingshistory@gmail.com