



Outlook

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Historical Society Shutdown Continues

All programs of the Hastings County Historical Society remain in complete shutdown in order to comply with the requests of our municipal, provincial and federal authorities. We will resume activities only when it is declared to be safe for our friends and members and for our volunteers. In the meantime, we do hope that you enjoy the news and stories in the *Outlook* newsletter and on our website www.hastingshistory.ca. In the meantime, we urge everyone to follow the guidelines, stay at home, clean hands often, keep a safe distance, keep in contact with friends and neighbours and take good care of yourself.

Richard Hughes, President

The Dafoe Expedition

By Orland French, HCHS plaque-hunter

One day last summer I led a plaque-searching expedition with a friend to the wilds of North Hastings looking for John Dafoe, once one of Canada's leading newspaper editors. We went so far north that we burst through the border into Renfrew County, our next-door neighbour. Hastings is an incredibly long county!

Our search took us along Highway 62, well to the east of Maynooth, Maple Leaf and Purdy. Just east of Purdy, we turned onto Lookout Point Road, which sounded like a likely prospect. Northern Hastings is rugged country with some high hills. If you haven't been up there, take a drive and enjoy some spectacular scenery. It would be a day outing from Belleville.

Lookout Point turned out to be a scenic viewpoint looking over Kamaniskeg Lake, which happens to straddle the border of Hastings and Renfrew Counties.

My information said the Dafoe plaque should be in the little park on Lookout Point. Well, if it is, I couldn't find it. Maybe it has been obscured by trees. What I did find was another plaque, obscured by paint by some vandal, marking a tragic event on the lake 80 meters below the hill. And that was the sinking of the *Mayflower*.

The *Mayflower* was a bug-ugly flat-bottomed stern-wheeler that sank on Lake Kamaniskeg on November 12, 1912, drowning nine people. It was Canada's worst inland marine disaster at the time. However, three people were saved when they clung to a wooden casket as it drifted ashore. *Ripley's Believe It or Not*, a popular cartoon feature, gave the story the

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headline “Dead Man Saves Three!”

The object of my search, John Wesley Dafoe, had nothing to do with the marine disaster. He just happened to be born in Bangor Township near here.



The steamer *Mayflower* on Kamaniskeg Lake

Dafoe was “plaqued” by Ontario Heritage because of his writing skills and reputation as a journalist, newspaper editor and author in some of the big cities of Canada. He was editor of the *Ottawa Evening Journal* in the 1880s, and then worked on the *Manitoba Free Press*, the *Montreal Herald* and the *Montreal Star*. He returned to the *Winnipeg Free Press* as its editor until 1944. He was known as a crusading journalist, championing the League of Nations and the welfare of the Canadian West. He turned the *Free Press* into an international paper of record, and produced a number of books about the history and the economy of the West.



**John Dafoe,
renowned
Canadian author
and editor**

His influence spread way beyond the confines of his editorial office. He helped found the Canadian Institute of International Affairs, was a member of the Rowell-Sirois Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations, and was Chancellor of the University of Manitoba.

Much more information about him is available at hastingshistoricalplaques.ca, our Historical Plaques website, and through its link to the Manitoba Historical Society website.

You can find Lookout Point at: GPS co-ordinates: 45° 21' 48.77" N, 77° 41' 19.96" W (45.36333333, 77.68861111) Street address: Lookout Point Road, off Highway 62, between Combermere and Purdy.

Past-president Orland French is the plaque-hunter of the Hastings County Historical Society. His goal is to include all the historical plaques in Hastings County on the website, hastingshistoricalplaques.ca. Please take a look at the site. There is much to learn! If you have plaque-related information or wish to contact him, write to: outlook.hastingshistory@gmail.com.



Manitoba and the Red River Expeditionary Force of 1870

By Bill Kennedy

Exactly one hundred and fifty years ago, on May 12, 1870, the Canadian Parliament passed the Manitoba Act creating Canada’s fifth province from what until then had been known as the Red River Colony. It was a rocky beginning. The year before, and without notice, Canadian surveyors had arrived in the vicinity of Winnipeg to begin work on land already occupied, much of it by generations of French and English Métis. This caused an uproar among the residents. No one in the colony knew why the surveys had been commissioned or their aim. In November 1869 their concerns culminated in the formation of a local Provisional Government under the leadership of Louis Riel and the seizure of the Hudson’s Bay Company trading post of nearby Fort Garry, an impressive stone fortress at the confluence of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers. This action would come to be known as the Third Métis Resistance. In response

to the provocation Prime Minister John A. Macdonald ordered an Expeditionary Force composed of British regulars and Canadian militia volunteers from Ontario and Quebec to be sent to the colony to maintain law and order until the province's designated lieutenant-governor, A.G. Archibald, arrived from Ottawa and established Canada's authority. Hastings County men like Thomas Johnston, William Dunbar and Albert Vandervoort eagerly signed on for the adventure.

The task of organizing and leading this force was given to Colonel Garnet Wolseley, a thirty-seven-year-old British officer who had served in both the Crimean War and in Canada during the 1860s tracking and defending against Fenian haphazard plans to invade the country. The Canadian venture into the west would be his first independent command, and as he says in his memoirs: "I was on my mettle, and felt that if I possessed any genius for such practical work the time had at last arrived for me to show it." The practical work included getting twelve hundred soldiers, hundreds of tradesmen and all the accompanying tons of materiel from Thunder Bay on the western shore of Lake Superior through six hundred and fifty miles of wilderness to Fort Garry. The naysayers said they'd never make it.



Colonel Garnet Wolseley

The first contingent with Wolseley and Lieutenant H.S.H. Riddell of the 60th Rifles left Toronto by train on May 21 for the trip to Collingwood on Georgian Bay and thence aboard the steamboat *Chicora* to Thunder Bay. In a subsequent report Riddell writes that "In addition to their breech-loading rifle carbines regimental officers

were allowed to carry any others [weapons] they chose, except swords; and on the day of their departure, appeared with their persons profusely decorated with revolvers and deadly-looking scalping-knives." Each officer was allowed ninety pounds of personal luggage, each man in the ranks only whatever he could carry in his knapsack. Alcohol was prohibited. Every man was allotted sixty rounds of ammunition. Few if any of them had experience in Canadian wilderness travel.

The first obstacle to their advance occurred at Sault Ste. Marie. To get around the rapids between Lake Huron and Lake Superior, the canal on the American side of the border had to be used, and as that government would not permit foreign military personnel and supplies on American soil, the *Chicora* had to be unloaded and everything carried to the Lake Superior embarkation point on the Canadian side. When finally they arrived at Thunder Bay, they were, in Riddell's words, "very much disappointed by the desolate appearance" which their landing presented. A great forest fire had only recently ravaged the area, and they had to pitch camp among blackened tree stumps.

Over the ensuing days troops and supplies including a hundred fifty horses continued to arrive. Wolseley had been led to believe that the Dawson Road stretching from the Lake Superior shore to Lake Shebandowan fifty miles west was passable, but this turned out to be false. Not only was its construction incomplete, the forest fire had made a mess of it and burned the bridges crossing its streams. Work crews and horses were assembled to repair the damage, while others were ordered to start the advance to Lake Shebandowan along the more difficult route up the Kaministiquia River with its portage around the river's towering waterfall.

Transportation would be in boats with crews of ten men and powered by oars and sails. There were one hundred and forty of these boats, each boat thirty feet long with a six-foot beam and weighing eight hundred pounds apiece. The cargo for each weighed close to two tons. Both boats and cargo would have to be carried across forty-seven portages of varying lengths, from a dozen yards to a mile and frequently in inclement weather. On average, it rained almost every other day. Once the entire force was on the move, it would be stretched out over a one-hundred-fifty-mile line of advance.

From Lake Shebandowan they headed southwest for

Rainy Lake and Rainy River, then north through Lake of the Woods to the Hudson's Bay post of Rat Portage (now Kenora) and west along the treacherous Winnipeg River to Lake Winnipeg. Once on Lake Winnipeg they could pretty much count on smooth sailing straight to Fort Garry.

Wolseley had calculated that once on Lake Shebandowan, it would take a boat forty days to reach the fort. This timing was critical as the British contingent of nearly four hundred men had orders to return to Toronto before freeze-up. What he didn't know, however, was whether or not he was going to face hostile opposition that would derail his plan. It had been reported that the Fenians had a gunboat on Lake Superior that could threaten the base camp at Thunder Bay, and should Riel decide to mount an offensive against the Expeditionary Force, it would be easy for a hundred of his followers to ambush them along the Winnipeg River. Much later it would come to light that Riel had refused to consider the plan to wreak havoc among the force by releasing logs into the fast-flowing Winnipeg to damage and capsize the boats.

Wolseley's luck held, and he arrived at Fort Garry as scheduled on August 24, ninety-five days after his Toronto departure, without having lost a single man to sickness, injury or death only to find the fort abandoned. Riel had crossed into the United States and his Provisional Government had gone into hiding. This did not sit well with any number of Expeditionary Force soldiers, who after their travail through the wilderness, living on salt pork and biscuit, were spoiling for a fight, wanting especially to avenge the Métis execution of Ontarian Thomas Scott at Fort Garry earlier in the year. The history books tell us that for a time the force that had been sent to ensure law and order instead made life miserable for many Red River colonists with their drunken brawls on Winnipeg streets and unauthorized house searches looking for Riel. The French Métis were particularly vulnerable. One man, Elzear Goulet, who had been a member of the court martial which sentenced Scott, tried to escape pursuing soldiers by jumping into the Red River to swim to the opposite bank but was stoned until he sank and drowned. It would be another fifteen years before Louis Riel would forfeit his life in the struggle for Métis rights.

Note: This article is based on research conducted by the writer for his forthcoming book "On the Plains of Heaven" that tells the story of an interracial Red

River family during the period of The Third Resistance, a seminal event in Canada's history.



HCHS 2020

Bus Tour Cancelled

Regretfully, but to no one's surprise, we have had to cancel the 2020 HCHS bus tour, **Treasures of Quinte West**. Refund cheques have been mailed out to anyone who purchased tickets for this year's trip. If all goes well, we will run the same tour next May (2021), so watch for details early next year. In the meantime, stay isolated, stay safe and stay healthy!

Mary-Lynne Morgan, HCHS Bus Tour Coordinator

Pandemic Rages Across Quinte ... Again

By Richard Hughes

As we in Quinte live with the extensive economic and social disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, and as we hear of the tragic loss of lives in other parts of our province, country and around the world, it is often recalled that we have never seen anything like this in our lifetime. This is true. However, COVID-19 is not the first pandemic to strike Quinte and bring almost total shutdown of our city and county.

In 1918, the most devastating pandemic in history, the Spanish flu, raged across Europe and the other continents before reaching our shores with the ships carrying soldiers returning from the horrors of the First World War. In total, Spanish flu killed about 50 million people including 50,000 in Canada. Unlike COVID-19, the Spanish flu attacked young adults and the very strong, rather than the elderly and people with reduced immunity.

The first signs of the Spanish flu appeared in early

October 1918, and people were warned by the Medical Officer of Health to stay at home if any signs of flu appeared—that mingling with other people would cause the germs to be scattered by sneezing. Despite this, within days, the full ravages were being felt; staff at local businesses were severely depleted; and *The Intelligencer* and the Post Office cautioned that the newspaper and the mail could not be delivered on time. At the G.T.R. yards, locomotives sat idle at the roundhouse as crews were too sick to operate the trains.

By mid-October, the schools were closed, all public meetings banned, and churches and theatres closed. Family worship at home was encouraged by the Belleville Ministerial Association. With as many as 2000 people ill with the flu, and the hospital crowded, many doctors and nurses fell ill working to their limits, totally fatigued. Members of the community were asked to help. The Salvation Army and the Y.M.C.A. formed volunteer auxiliaries to assist the doctors and nurses and to visit the sick. This army of volunteers delivered soup and food prepared at the High School in the Domestic Science Kitchen; made sure the ill had enough coal to keep themselves warm and checked to make sure they were receiving treatment. The firemen were called upon to visit all residents of apartments above the businesses in the downtown to see if assistance was needed. However, in Sidney and Thurlow Townships, medical assistance was almost impossible to obtain.

Later in October a professor of Botany at Queen's University developed and tested a vaccine which was used by the Belleville Medical Officer of Health at a clinic set up at the Y.M.C.A. By the end of October, the pandemic in Belleville had passed its crest, and by early November it was clear that conditions were improving. The month of October had seen about 47 deaths from the flu in the city. By November 9th, the closure of schools, churches and theatres was lifted, and activity in the community resumed. People who had borrowed books from the Corby Library were requested to return them.

Two days later, on November 11, 1918, the First World War ended with widespread celebration and joy across the Quinte district.

This information is drawn from the book "Belleville in the First World War" by Laurel Bishop. This book follows the daily progress of life in Belleville and the Quinte District during the First World War as reported extensively in the Belleville Intelligencer. The

book is available at the Community Archives and at Chapters.



Belleville General Hospital

CABHC HC06291

Jacob Hart Bell and His Round House

By Lois Foster

Because of the COVID-19 virus, my source of research, the Community Archives, is closed, so my research of the 1990s on this topic will have to do. The part about the Round House in this story is almost incidental, the Round House being depicted on only surveyor Haslett's 1845 Plan of Belleville on lot 5, on the east side of Pinnacle Street near the harbour.

This story is mostly about the Bell family, starting with William Bell, our noted pioneer of the Belleville area. From Gerry Boyce's *Historic Hastings*, I found William popping up in nearly every section of his book, so I have picked out the parts I need. William Bell was born in County Tyrone in Ireland. He had been a British soldier in the American Revolutionary War who settled near the mouth of the Moira River, where he opened a small trading post in the summer of 1787, supplied with goods by Kingston merchant John Ferguson. By 1796 he was also teaching a Mohawk school paid for by an English missionary society, his salary being 30 pounds a year in addition to a house. The school closed in 1802 when the Mohawks could not supply the minimum number of scholars: six. Local preparation for the eventuality of war had begun as early as 1798 when John Ferguson was named Lieutenant of a proposed Hastings County Mi-

litia. His trading associate, William Bell, was appointed as Adjutant. Bell arranged for settlers to meet for platoon exercises, so with the outbreak of war in June 1812, his local militia responded so well that they were ordered to Kingston. The fort was so well fortified that the Americans did not attack. By the end of the war Bell had been promoted to Lieutenant Colonel.

For me, the best thing about William Bell was his habit of saving every order, letter and note he ever received. They are now called the “Bell Papers” and are on microfilm. On Reel one, Item 20, is a letter to William Bell written in January 1813. In it, William’s nephew, Jacob Hart Bell, can tell you in his own words about himself:

Dear Uncle – I have been in search of you this two years since I left Ireland. ... I have been in the U.S. until about four months ago when I came to Canada to Montreal. Through Mrs. Grant, who by means of her son-in-law, a gentleman who lives in Kingston, I have been informed where you live. My trade is a millwright and I have been 2 years married [to Rebecca] but have not any children. I could have done very well in the U.S. and got great encouragement but on the wars being with Great Britain every British subject was obliged to leave it or otherwise swear allegiance to the country, which I did not choose to do. ... I am now working to a Mr. Gray about 5 miles from Montreal. I believe you are the person I am in search of, however if you should not be the gentleman I allude to, I hope you will excuse the liberty I have taken. [signed] Jacob H. Bell

Direct to Jacob Bell, millwright, Care of Mr. Henry Forrest, Montreal [note by Wm. Bell] answered Feb. 6, 1813.

Item 23: Letter to Colonel Bell from Kingston, Dec. 3, 1813

Dear Uncle – I hope you will excuse any seeming neglect in not writing sooner but I really have been so much hurried that I can hardly find time to eat my victuals. I have nearly finished the building that I was about undertaking when you were here last. ... It would oblige me very much, if it did not put you to any inconvenience, to enquire among your neighbours if any of them could let me have 10, 15 or 20 bushels of potatoes, 4 or 5 cheeses and a firkin of good butter. If any of them can let me have them, will you write to let me know the price and what you think would be the best way of sending them down. I will

send the money by the first safe opportunity when I know how much it comes to – There is nothing new here except that we are not in quite so much dread of the Americans as we have been some time ago. It is said that there are 5000 men between Cotte du Lac and Prescott on their way up but whether the account is authentic I cannot say. I suppose it is needless for me to say anything about the battle of Chateaguay as I dare say you have heard all the particulars before this. Mrs Bell [Rebecca] sincerely joins with me in compliments to you, my aunt and the children. I remain, Yours sincerely, Jacob H. Bell, Kingston, Dec. 3, 1813.

Jacob sent a short note to his uncle from Kingston on November 7, 1814, telling how very busy he has been and that he had a pair of wheels at the blacksmith shop for him. I thought Jacob’s excuses for not writing to his uncle were a bit overdone until I read some research by Carolyn Goodfellow at the Library and Archives Canada re War of 1812, Payroll, Pension Records 1812–1815. There are records in 1815 of Jacob’s many letters and petitions claiming pay due him of 94 pounds for work performed by him in Quebec and in Kingston in erecting barracks as Acting Master Carpenter & Overseer of Works during the war. He tried again in 1823 in a petition to the Earl of Dalhousie praying to be paid for his work during the late war.

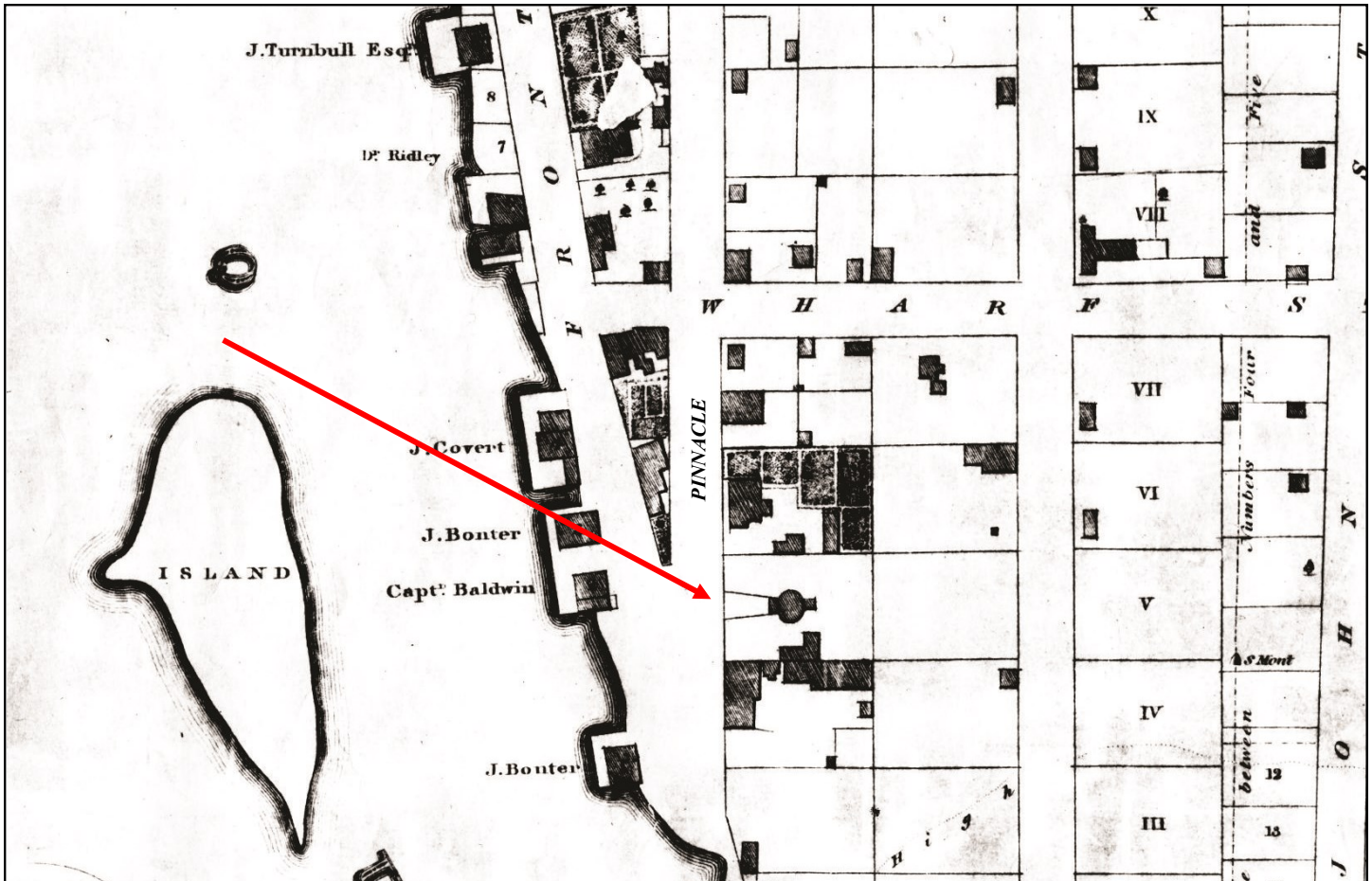
On the microfilm of the Township Papers for Belleville, there is a letter of Jan. 14, 1820, to the Surveyor General from J H Bell asking to be located on lot no. 5 on the east side of Pinnacle Street. He was also busy working as a carpenter. By 1840 he had finished constructing his round-shaped building for an inn, and the masonic lodge members were holding their meetings there. The Belleville Town Minute Book recorded on page 52 that on March 4, 1840, in the town elections for the lower ward, Jacob H. Bell received the highest vote, but there was a protest by four citizens who said that the lot for which Jacob H. Bell claimed the freehold was not issued as yet, so Alexander O. Petrie was elected in his place. In August the town paid Bell 15 shillings for assisting in running out the lines of the market lots, and later appointed him the pound keeper.

On September 23, 1840, Jacob’s dear wife, Rebecca, died and was interred in the St Thomas Church cemetery. John and Daniel Crysdale seemed to be managers of Jacob’s inn at times and part owners. In the 1853 Assessment Roll, Mrs Buckley was a tenant in the Round House owned by Jacob Bell on lot 5. In

1854 they sold the inn. John and Jacob moved to Napanee as carpenters, and Daniel went back to his carpentry trade in Belleville. Jacob Hart Bell died at the age of 74 in Napanee and was buried beside his wife, Rebecca, on January 26, 1856.

According to MacRae and Adamson in their book *The Ancestral Roof*, on page 24, octagonal-plan buildings have been erected in every age. These

houses had the reputed benefits of having less wall for the space contained and of being able to be heated centrally by a furnace. Depicted in the book is the plan of a brick house of 1837 in Maple, Ontario, and a stucco house ca. 1840 in Mount Pleasant. By 1874, Jacob's Round House with covered entranceways and wide driveway does not appear on any map. I would guess it had been a stucco house; if made of grout or brick, it might have lasted longer.



Section of Haslett's 1845 Plan of Belleville showing east side of harbour and Round House on east side of Pinnacle Street. Wharf Street is now St. Paul Street.

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