



# Outlook

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## COVID-19 Continues to Restrict Historical Society Public Events

As the second wave of COVID-19 has apparently arrived, and the appeals from health and government authorities urge continued care on the part of everyone in our community, the Historical Society will continue to withhold all public events. There will be no Public Presentations at Maranatha, and the planned public unveiling events for historical plaques in Quinte West and at Albert College remain on hold. Also, our Banquet and Celebration of Local History held annually for so many years will not be held this year.

However, the Historical Society is not hibernating like the bears or migrating like the birds. We remain very active. We are developing a number of projects, some of which can be carried out this year without public participation and some for 2021, either with or without public events. You will be kept informed of these as they take shape.

So, in these extraordinary conditions, please keep in touch with your Historical Society through our website ([hastingshistory.ca](http://hastingshistory.ca)), our social media platforms, our special historical plaques website ([hastingshistoricalplaques.ca](http://hastingshistoricalplaques.ca)) and, of course, our newsletter, *Outlook*.

Richard Hughes, President

## Kenté—Kenté Portage—The Carrying Place

By Mary-Lynne Morgan

Do you know how Carrying Place got its name? Before its current name it was called Fort Kenté and Kenté Portage and was the location of the first Christian mission/fort on the north shore of Lake Ontario.

The settlement history of Kenté likely goes back some 12,000 years. Long before European explorers such as Brûlé, Champlain, LaSalle and coureurs de bois portaged across the isthmus linking what we now call Wellers Bay to the south and Bay of Quinte to the north, the Cayugas recognized the strategic lo-

cation and had an encampment there. The Iroquois nation (comprising Mohawk, Oneida, Seneca, Cayuga and Onondaga) mainly inhabited land south of Lake Ontario, but there is significant evidence that there was a Cayuga settlement in Kenté. There is some dispute as to the exact location of Kenté. Some locate it near West Lake, and others suggest it was near the north shore of Consecon Lake. Kenté (Kenti, Kainté, Kaintie, Kainty, Quinté, Quinti, Quinte) comes from the native word for meadows. Likely the name was based on the stretch of meadow and woods between the two waterways. It should also be noted that “ken” and “quen” sound the same in French, which can account for the many different spellings.

The Sepulcians, an order of secular priests, whose role it was to recruit priests in the New World, were

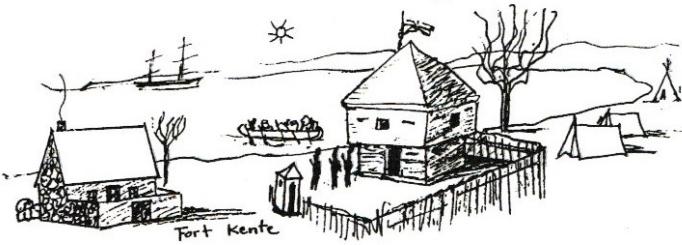
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founded by Jean-Jacques Olier in Montreal in 1644. They expanded their activities into Ontario in 1668 with several priests exploring Lake Ontario and Lake Erie. Also that year, land at Kenté was granted by Jean Talon to the Sepulcian order to establish a mission there, where they could harvest crops and wood from the land, use local fishing to provide food, and do some fur trapping to make the mission viable.

(reproduction of Galinée's map)



The earliest historical mention of Kenté was found in a 1670 map of the Great Lakes by Sepulcian priest de Galinée and a 1679 agreement of land lease “Bail de Kente” between the Montreal Sepulcians and their local partners. It was a land-lease arrangement by Mathieu Ranvier, treasurer, authorized by Dollier de Casson, Supérieur of the Montreal seminary, with Pierre Chartier, Francois Tardivet and Abraham Botté who had lived at Kenté for about ten years. According to the document, the land consisted of “woods, prairies, arable lands, buildings, fisheries in the Lake of Kenté, and the rivers of the environs, in the lake and river of Tanaouaté, and Lake Ontario from the Lake of Kenté to the Bay of Gaonion inclusively.” Fort Kenté is thought to be the first establishment by Europeans on the north shores of Lake Ontario.

Along with the 1670 map, there was also a sketch of Fort Kenté, the first time it had been mentioned on any map. What we now call Wellers Bay was noted as Lac de Kenté.

Unfortunately, the very trading that ensured the viability of the mission also contributed to its abandonment, along with the death in 1676 of its major financial benefactor, Monsieur de Bretonvilliers, the Supérieur of the Sepulcian order in Paris. His successor suggested that the Sepulcian sites be given either to the Jesuits or the Recollets, both of which had complained about the work of the Sepulcians. There is indication that the Jesuits would have been interested, but were never offered the sites. There appears to be no clear answer as to how the issue was resolved, other than that the Fort Kenté settlement sank into disrepair and was abandoned in 1680 for almost two

centuries until Dr. Paul Germain discovered the old documents and determined to restore the site.

He and a group of like-minded historians established the Kente Portage Heritage Conservation Society and mounted a major fundraising campaign to secure the land and build the reproduction of the fort and palisades. For a short while in the 1990s, it was a major tourist attraction in an area that needed a boost. However, Dr. Germain was unable to secure ongoing operating grants from either the Ontario Trillium Foundation or the Ministry of Culture and Recreation, and so, lacking the funds to maintain the site, it too gradually sank into decay and was ultimately abandoned completely.

The words of Quinte historian William Canniff in 1872 seem appropriate here: “The old days ... have left no memorial ... now all is in decay and rural solitude prevails.” Even as late as 1942, P.J. Robinson noted that “It was supposed that Kente might become a city of importance. Too late to be of any real value, the Murray ship canal was cut through the isthmus. The steamboat and the railway and the motor truck have rendered it useless, and Kenté and Carrying Place have again sunk back into obscurity; so much so that historians have even mistaken the situation of the place.”

Well, that assessment is not quite true today. A developer has recently purchased the land, and a new subdivision is now being built in this most historic area adjacent to Kente Portage Road.

The Kente Portage Road—the oldest road in Ontario—still survives, along with a few historic homes built in the early 1800s, such as the Miskin House, built in 1829 by Richard Miskin who married Sarah, the daughter of pioneer Asa Weller. Weller settled in the area from Vermont in 1783. Believed to be the first white Loyalist settler from America, his marriage to Hannah Marsh, the daughter of a British soldier, provided them with a substantial land grant in the Carrying Place area. He quickly developed a business hauling boats and other supplies overland between the two waterways, especially during the War of 1812 when this route became strategic. Defeated American soldiers were paraded along this route on their way to prison in Quebec after their defeat at the battle of Detroit. Weller established a wide range of businesses, including a lumber business, inn and tavern before his death in 1825.

Orland French’s *Wind, Water, Barley & Wine: The Nature of Prince Edward County* has an excellent section on the history of the Carrying Place area (pp. 79–81). The information regarding the Sepulcian or-

der and the establishment of Fort Kenté comes from research done by Dr. Paul Germain for his book *Rediscovering Kente*.

Directions to the site of the former Fort Kenté: Take Rednersville Rd to Hwy 33 (or Hwy 33 south of Trenton to Carrying Place). From Rednersville Rd turn right onto Hwy 33 and make a left at the stoplights onto Kente Portage Rd, the oldest road in Canada. If coming southbound on Hwy 33, turn right at the stoplights onto Kente Portage Rd and take it as far as it goes, to the shoreline of Wellers Bay.



## **Actinolite—A Lasting and Creative Centre**

*By Orland French*

There's a handsome marble church sitting on a hill in Actinolite, waiting for its fourth lease on life.

Troy, Bridgewater, Actinolite. All three places are, in fact, one and the same. This little village on Highway 37 north of Tweed was founded in 1853 by the lumberman and legislator Billa Flint who built sawmills on the Skootamatta River. At first the place was called Troy, then Bridgewater in 1859 when a village was laid out. The sources of the first two names are uncertain but Actinolite came along in 1895 when that mineral, a form of asbestos, was being extracted from open-pit mines in the late 1880s.

But I wouldn't suggest you go to Actinolite to look for old open-pit mines. Take time, instead, to examine the marble church, a one-of-a-kind historical structure enjoying a third life as a theatre. It is believed to be the only marble church in Canada.

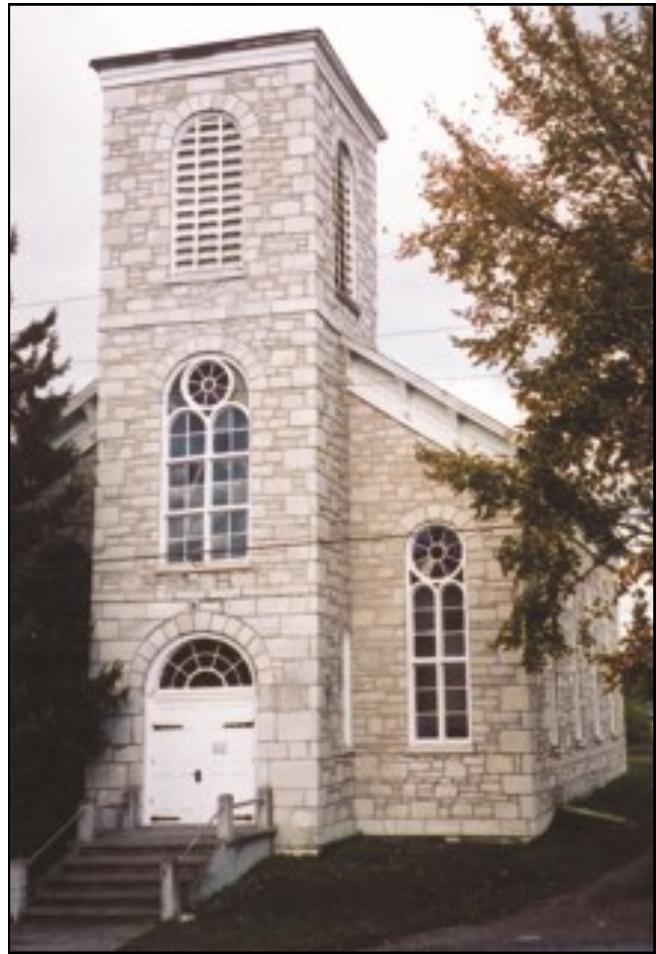
An extensive marble deposit had been discovered right in the village. Resourceful Methodists extracted the mineral to construct a beautiful and spacious Methodist church in the 1860s alongside the marble quarry. Designed to seat 500 people, the building featured a fine-toned bell in the tower and an excellent organ in the choir loft. Alas, a disastrous fire destroyed most of the community in 1889, including the church. That was the end of its first life, but since fire could not destroy the sturdy four walls, the church was restored. With church union in 1925, the congregation became part of the United Church of Canada.

As happens so often in rural churches, the congregation shrinks away until there are not enough supporters to keep the church alive. By 2005, the Actinolite

congregation had dwindled to 25 in a building designed to seat 500. The church closed its doors in 2005 on its 141<sup>st</sup> anniversary. Its second life ended.

But substantial old buildings still have value. In 2008, the Tweed & Area Arts Council (T&AAC) purchased the building and turned it into a vibrant centre for the arts. It had been doing well until this year when, like all other theatres, it was forced to close its doors once again because of the COVID-19 virus pandemic. That might be the end of its third life, but let's hope not.

Like a lot of other second-purpose churches, the church building serves remarkably well as a theatre. The Marble Arts Centre (the MAC) is blessed with amazing acoustics, a beautiful theatre setting and a studio gallery for workshops and visual arts displays.



Still, it has had its difficult moments. I remember the first time I attended a summer-time performance in the building. It was a dreadfully hot day and, in a stone structure without air conditioning, the atmosphere inside was stifling. Unfortunately, the theatre company had chosen to produce a play in which most of the performers were costumed in fur coats! An ice cream vendor was badly needed!

And now, the MAC expects to outlast the pandemic and open the doors once again to celebrate life through the arts and cultural events. The church will resume another life.

*Orland French is past-president of the Hastings County Historical Society. Actinolite is a stop on Road Trip #3: The Villages of Centre Hastings, hastingshistoricalplaques.ca.*



## Flukes of History

By Andre Philpot

*A million inputs drive forward the march of history. They are neither inevitable nor even likely. But they are what happened and they are the flukes that make our history.*

*What if history had gone another way? As we look at what happened it is hard for our minds not to wander to what might have happened instead.*

*Let's look at some of those flukes that let our Father of Confederation mould our country as he did.*

When we think of the early immigrants to Upper Canada, we think first either of poor pioneers trying only for a new start in a new world, or the Strickland girls, Catherine Parr Traill, trying to pretend that this colony could be a little England, and Catherine's sister, Susanna Moodie, determined to point out that it wasn't.

But there was a lot more to it. Yes, in Upper Canada there were Royalists and there were Loyalists. There were Aristocrats, Gentlemen, and Paupers, bickering and trying to resolve not just their own futures in the New World, but also who would be best to govern the future of that world. And there were self-styled politicians and powerful clerics with ancient prejudices to play out in a place where it would have been better to start with a clean slate.

In 1820, a bumper crop of later-to-be distinguished immigrants stepped off ships at Montreal to help shape the future of Upper Canada—a first great industrialist, Charles Hayes; and an Irish Catholic bent on promoting his kind, Anthony Manahan; and our future rebel, William Lyon Mackenzie; and lastly, a boy called John A. Macdonald.

All four were destined to struggle with their new colony and on occasion with each other. Through their adventures, successes, and as often, through their failures and tragedies, they all left an indelible mark.

And some good stories as well. What these gentlemen all had in common was that they were all born elsewhere and came to what seemed a sparse colony to seize the opportunity it offered, whether in saving souls, driving commerce, or enjoying patronage, or any mixed-up combination of the above.

Before they started anew in Upper Canada, there had been something else in common. There had been an arduous, long, and dangerous crossing of the wide Atlantic. Young John Alexander Macdonald had endured a trying crossing to arrive in Montreal after a voyage of six weeks at sea. To be blunt, he was lucky to have made it, and we are lucky that he did. Such are the flukes that make history.

John, aged five, and his extended family were aboard a deteriorating ship, *The Earl of Buckinghamshire*. She was a ship of perhaps 100 feet, with a burden of 593 tons. She had been crafted at Montreal in 1814, but was destined to survive less than a decade. She had been built as “a fully rigged ship,” which means she was moved by any number of square-rigged sails on three masts. It was too early for steam to be common.

The *Buckinghamshire* had 36 below deck cabins for first and second class, and open space for as many steerage passengers as could be brought aboard. Her practice was to transport as many immigrants as she could without her owners being caught and prosecuted for breaching the few safety laws of the day. Like most of her kind she was designed to do the job, make some money, and keep going until she fell apart or sank.

What she was not designed for was comfort. Steerage passengers were serviced by only two outhouses balanced precariously over her stern. Wise travellers were advised “to cut their hair short” and to set their affairs in order before embarking. The average passenger mortality in those days could exceed ten percent.

It is not certain how many squeezed into *The Earl of Buckinghamshire* for the Macdonalds’ trip. A year later, however, we do know that the deteriorating vessel is reported to have wallowed into Montreal with an unbelievable 606 settlers aboard, under a Master Johnson. That total required jam-packing in a manner similar to a slave trader’s tactics, and earned her the epitaph of a “coffin ship.” Even at about \$30.00 a head, it had no doubt been a profitable journey. Ships were not supposed to last for ever, but while they did, they were expected to lavishly repay

their investors.

Even the best passages had risks enough. Seasickness, fever, storms, delay and therefore slim rations were your expected companions. Contact with the bottom was not.

It has been said that there is no sound more instantaneously recognizable and terrifying to those aboard a ship than the grating of a reef below. Whether you have sailed for decades on the seven seas, or this is your first day aboard, you will know at once the meaning, “*We are lost.*”

Although young John Macdonald seems to have slept through it all, his voyage aboard *The Earl of Buckinghamshire* had come near to suffering that fate. While carrying the Macdonalds, and under the guidance of a supposedly knowledgeable pilot, she went fast aground on a sandbar. Stuck and at danger of breaking up, and after being ignored by other ships, she was at last towed off by an Irish vessel. The rescuer little knew that his valour would change the history of Canada by saving, among others, the kid who would become her first Prime Minister.

As for *The Earl of Buckinghamshire*, she was sailed on long after she was fit for the passage. Within two years the ship was wrecked, apparently lost to the Atlantic with the usual hold full of unfortunates dreaming of a new world that they would never reach.

Our Industrialist, Charles Hayes, had at a record speed, spent and lost a fortune setting up an Irontown at Marmora. This November is the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his arrival. Hayes’ Irontown was completed with two enormous blast furnaces, mills, mines at Blairton and a growing village. But it was before railroads, before canals and before really anything like a good road. And the problem was how do you get the supplies in and the iron products out from so far back in the bush. Within five years, the Works had gone into receivership with Anthony Manahan appointed as a manager.

As for William Lyon Mackenzie, he would become Upper Canada’s premier newspaperman, and both its most loved and loathed. He wrote glowingly of the Hayes Marmora Ironworks but at the same time bemoaned Charles Hayes’ conservative politics. By 1837 Mackenzie had turned into our leading rebel.

Twenty-four years after these four arrived, by another series of flukes, Macdonald squared off against our Irishman Anthony Manahan. Although Manahan had

become the manager of the Ironworks at Marmora, the works there were dormant. Manahan was still running a merchant house in Kingston, and eager to supplement his income by patronage or politics. The two things were very much alike.

Charles Dickens dismissed Kingston during his 1842 visit, with the glib observation that “one half of it appears to be burnt down, and the other half not to be built up.” Nevertheless, it was becoming important as the Capital of the newly United Canadas.

In 1841, Upper and Lower Canada had been united as the Province of Canada with a single Parliament sitting at Kingston as capital. With two chambers, the elected Legislative Assembly and the appointed Legislative Council, and the continuing power of the British appointed Governor General, co-operation was hard to find, and in 1844, a second election was called.

Now, in that election, Mr. Anthony Manahan was to have the unintended distinction of setting John A. (later Sir John A.) Macdonald on his great political path. Macdonald appeared to be a novice. The young lawyer had only just won a seat in local government the year before. He now offered to step up to Parliament.

His opponent, Anthony Manahan, had won a legislative seat before, and was not without powerful friends. To most he appeared to be the favourite, although he was considered rather “loutish” and “rough around the edges.”

Elections were, in those days, several day affairs fueled by free whisky, and with public open voting. It was a style that favoured our future father of confederation. He seemed to know by instinct that elections are not usually the best place to be too specific. The bands played, the louts yelled and the flags flew. While his opponent, Anthony Manahan, argued vociferously for his beliefs, the young Macdonald showed a patient, friendly, and imperturbable calm.

Slowly, Macdonald’s demeanor began to prevail and, as the crowds settled down into a drowsy fatigue, the tide of support inexorably flowed his way. Quite simply, the young lawyer was charming, and so much more likeable than his strident opponent.

As the week wore on, Manahan began to realize he was about to lose. And worse, he thought, to an amateur. In reality he was facing a young politician of prodigious abilities. Macdonald knew that getting elected was the art of being liked and that political power could only be exercised if you won.

*"Here was something more than soothing speech; here indeed, was the genius of a Mark Anthony....Every day the contest lasted saw his popularity grow and that of his opponent decrease, till, at length, a day before the polls closed, the latter (Manahan) rushed out of the field in despair, while in the midst of the wildest enthusiasm at the close Mr. Macdonald was carried through the city on a chair, the victor by an overwhelming majority of votes."*

*Collins, J.E. Rose Publishing Company. 1883. Life of Macdonald, pp.56 on .*

Anthony Manahan had seen the inevitable, and though he didn't officially withdraw, he sulked off. John A. Macdonald won 275 "shout-outs" to 42.

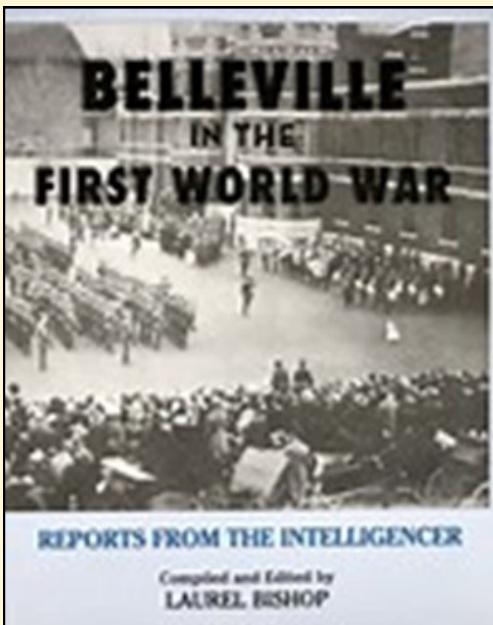
They may not have really known what he stood for, but the electorate could, at any rate, have been forgiven for choosing the personable young lawyer over the begrimed man. Manahan simply had been outplayed. Bad luck, I suppose, for Marmora.

The rest, as they say, is history. John A. Macdonald, the survivor of the Atlantic, and the victor over both Manahan, and by chance, was off on a 40-year adventure of accomplishment as Canada's most powerful political player.



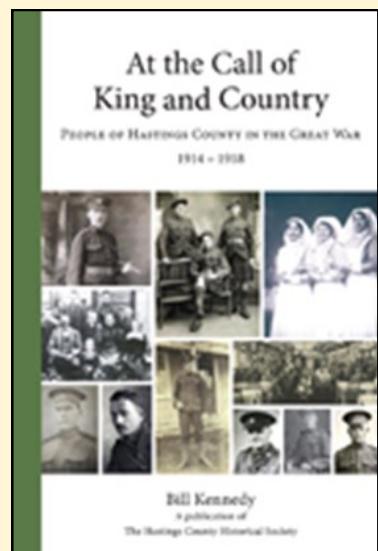
## It's Reading Time Again By Michelle Hutchison

With the return of cooler weather and continued COVID-19 restrictions, it is a great time to catch up on some good reading.



We recommend a book published by the Hastings County Historical Society with a fascinating and informative local story, *Belleville in the First World War: Reports from The Intelligencer*, compiled and edited by Laurel Bishop. It recounts in the language of the day how the men, women and children of the Home Front met the challenge of a war that would bring changes they could not have imagined.

**262 pages, \$30.**



August 4, 1914. Canada was at war. Canadian men and women raced to enlist, to do their part, and the residents of Hastings County were no different. *At the Call of King and Country: People of Hastings County in the Great War*, by Bill Kennedy, tells true and sometimes poignant stories about local people who answered the call of duty. These were men and women from our own community whose sacrifices were made to secure the freedom we enjoy today.

**78 pages, \$20.**

Pick up your copy of these two fine books at the Community Archives in the Library/Archives building, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.

# 1920 Brought Another Wave of the Flu

By Laurel Bishop

The people of Hastings County had no sooner rung in the new year of 1920, than they read in their copies of *The Weekly Ontario* about the arrival of an influenza epidemic in Chicago, the suggestion being made that Canada would be the next port of call. All provincial boards of health were carefully preparing for the worst, concentrating on hospitals, nurses, volunteers and volunteer home workers; in other words, the same resources they had relied on during the deadly Spanish flu epidemic in the fall of 1918, just over a year earlier.

Some doctors felt the illness was not influenza at all, but simply plain grippe. Nevertheless, by Friday morning on February 20<sup>th</sup>, the Board of Health in Belleville had banned "all meetings in churches, lodges, schools, theatres, dance halls, poolrooms, indoor skating rinks, and all public gatherings or amusements ... on account of the prevailing influenza epidemic." So many children were already ill at home that the ban made little difference in school attendance.

The main characteristics of the disease were the same as those of the Spanish flu of a year previous. Victims were relatively young and healthy. Treatment for the symptoms was for the sufferer to go home and go to bed, staying there until the chills, headache and nausea had disappeared. To ignore this advice could result in "the need for the family lawyer instead of the family physician."

Many families had to struggle by themselves in caring for sick loved ones. By February 19<sup>th</sup>, the Belleville Hospital was full, and professional nurses were no longer available. The editor of *The Weekly Ontario* anticipated that hundreds of patients would be in dire need of medical care within a few days. Emma McGee, a nurse-in-training at Belleville General Hospital and popular member of the staff soon succumbed to the disease.

The C.P.R. took the precaution of providing their employees with tablets to make a gargle, and offered inoculation to any worker wishing it.

By March of 1920, the number of cases had been reduced to 350, and according to Dr. Yeomans, Medical Officer of Health, most of the cases were mild. At a meeting of the Board of Health, it was decided that the ban on meetings in churches, schools, poolrooms and places of amusement be lifted at 12 o'clock midnight on Saturday, March 6<sup>th</sup>. Thus, churches were the first

to open. The following week, schools enjoyed a good attendance. Poolrooms, many of which had been renovated during the ban, were in action. Theatres were fully operational. Another wave of the pandemic was drawing to a close.

It was reported that in the month of February of 1920, there were more than 20,000 cases of influenza and pneumonia in Ontario with 2300 deaths. This compared favorably with the total death count in October, 1918 of more than three thousand in the province. As reported in *The Weekly Ontario* on that disastrous scourge, "A generation or perhaps many generations will elapse before it comes again in the deadly form in which it came in the year of 1918."

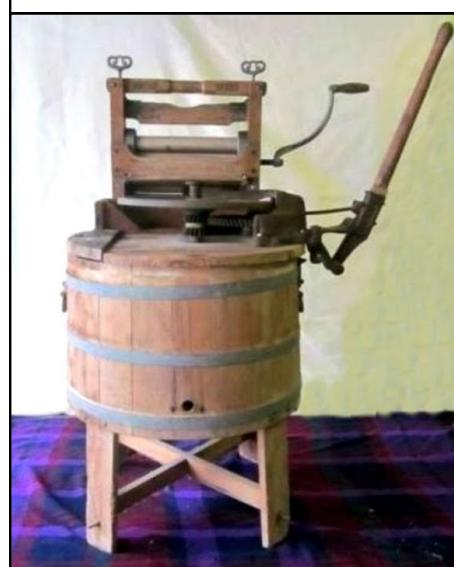
## Daily Life at Home – 1915

By Richard Hughes

Monday morning, a new week begins, except today we are at home, and it is September, 1915. As the war rages in Europe, like every other Monday morning, this is laundry day, often referred to as Blue Monday. Up until recently the laundry was done using a large washtub with a sturdy washboard. But the Sunlight Soap Company has offered a way to cut the labour in half. With the five-cent bar, you first soap up the garments, then roll them up to soak for a while and then rinse thoroughly. Sunlight soap does the scrubbing instead of you.

However, modern times are here, and the Maxwell

Washer Company offers a machine operated by hand. In their ad, they tell the husband, "Don't let your wife bend over a washtub. That causes backaches and serious illnesses caused by chills. So it urges you to get your wife to the dealer and see this great machine which also features a wringer. And, when the washing is done, Smith Hardware on Front Street offers an electric iron.



The ad says they are not fancy, but are good! Cost \$2. That ad also invites readers to bring to the store their old razors which can be made over and sent to the boys overseas.

Now down to the housework, and the Gillett Company suggests their Gillett's Lye is the solution for removing grease and rust from frying pans. Turning to the stove, the McClary Company states their new Pandora stove has a coal-saving firebox. Hopefully, one of the kids has been assigned the task of keeping the coal scuttle full and another one the task of cleaning out the ashes. But it remains for Mother to do the stove blackening and polishing—keep that stove spic and span.

With the laundry out of the way, Tuesday can be the day for making preserves. Being September, the fruit is at the market. First of all, scrub the canning jars with Lawrason's Snowflake ammonia. It removes all grease and leaves no soapy taste. Then make sure you have a large quantity of sugar. Both Redpath and Lantic offer it in 20- and 100-pound bags. Your fruit, done up in Mason jars, and your jams will be ready to go to the cellar for the long winter ahead.

On Wednesday, we might do some grocery shopping, stopping by Davies for butter at 30 cents/lb, some cooked ham at 34 cents/lb and for supper, 3 lbs of sausages for 25 cents. How about a treat, some marshmallows from Charles Clapp at 40 cents/lb? And, maybe some Wrigley's gum, like the gum being shipped to the troops overseas, as gum steadies the nerves and aids appetite and digestion.

As we reach Thursday, and with the arrival of September, it is time to purchase some fall clothing. At McIntosh Bros. the very stylish middies and waists are on sale at 59 cents. Also, for the ladies, the newest rustproof corsets are in stock. Buy Canadian corsets as the war tax adds 50% for imported corsets. And for the style leaders in our community, Sinclair's are offering ladies' suits from \$9.50 to \$15. Not to forget the men, Quick and Robertson offers suits for those on a rigid economy at \$7, or if you have a "handsome income," buy a luxurious outfit for \$25.

It has been a busy week so far, but with fall approaching, there will be lots to do getting ready for the colder weather—order in the coal and make sure the stovepipes are clean and firmly in place.

*Note. To bring the prices into line with 2020, multiply by 20. One dollar in 1915 would be equal to \$20 today. Information drawn from advertisements in the Intelligencer, September 15, 1915.*

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

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