

# Outlook

Volume 4 Number 8

Issue number 164, November 1999

## Spooky goings on in Belleville houses

by Lewis Zandbergen

The regular meeting of the Hastings County Historical Society was held on Tuesday, October 19. Our special guest speaker was Gerry Boyce, well known Belleville author, teacher, councillor and jogger. Gerry's topic was one which was sure to start the goose bumps popping and the hair on your neck bristling—ghosts, a suitable subject for a meeting so near Hallowe'en.

While declaring his own sightings of the supernatural to be elusive, Gerry nevertheless provided a night of eerie tales of Belleville's hauntings.

He began by assuring us all(?) that for the most part ghosts or spirits are friendly and that contrary to what most people assume ghosts do not "live" in cemeteries. And their visitations are not restricted to Belleville; he spoke of the reported vampires of Bangor and Wicklow, the more recent events surrounding the "appearance" of the Virgin Mary in the Madoc/Marmora area, a haunted house in Trenton, and one person's unsubstantiated tale of actually being taken aboard a "spaceship."

Moodie Cottage is perhaps the best documented local "haunt" of a spirit. And the Moodies left a good record of mysterious happenings. In the summer of 1855 the Moodies were visited by Kate Fox a celebrated "spirit knocker." According to lore, Kate could communicate with spirits through knocking on a table or other solid object. To say there were strange goings-on in the Moodie Cottage that summer is putting it mildly. Whatever spirits there are in the Moodie Cottage they have been conspicuously absent

of late although there have been a few reports of objects "moving" from one place to another in one room of the house.

On Charlotte Street, at number 11, servants in the past often reported seeing a bright light in one corner of the room and many visitors to the home reported having premonitions.

The house at 15 Highland Avenue is said to be the scene of unusual events. Taps in the bathroom turn on without human assistance and a room left unlighted will spontaneously become brightly lit.



Belleville's Riverboat House at 43 Bridge Street West. Does Captain McNabb's ghost still wander the halls?

The McNabb-Yeomans house, which is commonly known as the "Riverboat House" (which has been beautifully restored of late) at 43 Bridge Street West is also said to be the realm of a spirit. Connected with this home is the story of the only local fatality in the Mackenzie Rebellion of 1836-1837. Captain James McNabb died in a Front Street hotel when he ran through an unlighted hallway during an alarm and was impaled upon the bayonet of one of his own men. The question is: If the presence in the house is McNabb's why is he here and not in the location of the hotel?

Peter Fahey's house on the corner of West Moira Street and Murney Street is said to be visited by the ghost of its builder Peter Fahey. His apparition has been seen in a doorway according to a neighbour. The rumour is he may just be looking for his pipe which he lost during the building of the home and which was found in a wall cavity during renovations.

Please see "Orchard House" on page 2.

### Next Meeting

**Tuesday, November 16, 1999**

**Guest Speaker**

**Dr. D. Birchard**

**Topic:**

**Medical Tools of the Past**

Dr. Birchard will bring along a trunk full of examples

Refreshments at 7:30 p.m.

Meeting begins at 8 p.m.

# Orchard House the scene of eerie sounds and pounding footsteps

*Continued from page 1.*

One of the most eerie tales to come to light recently has to do with the restored McIntosh-Ridley House at 45 South Front Street. Prior to its restoration the site was studied by a student working on behalf of the group representing local architectural conservationists. This student reported many different occurrences such as his personal items being moved from where had left them and reappearing somewhere else, things falling near him, and the unnerving feeling of a "presence." Working late in the night and remembered stories that a slave named Black Bess had been buried in the basement compounded the young man's trepidations. At one point he attempted to descend the basement stairs but an overpowering feeling of terror forced him back up the stairs. Could Black Bess be protecting her last resting place? Could a young man filled with the lore of the home, working alone late at night have allowed his fears to overwhelm him? Is the house presently still experience odd happenings?

Other local houses which feature unusual events are at 21 Turnbull Street where the clanking of chains can be heard even on the stillest of nights; the Davy House where it was said Mr. Davy's wife and daughters, who were mediums, played the piano beautifully under the influence of spirits; and the Kammer house at 245 John Street where the owner has reported feelings of someone trying to get to him.

Belleville's most famous house is the one at the corner of Bridge and Dufferin—Glanmore, now a national historic site. Former owners say the building is the site of many manifestations of the supernatural. The library is said to be haunted by the spirit of a young boy and maids in residence some years ago refused to enter the room. One owner's French poodle would not stay in the hall. Reports have been made of sighting a woman seated in a rocker, which then disappeared. During the first Two Weeks in May Ghost Walk it is said the Glanmore presences made very plain their displeasure at being visited by mere mortals.

After Gerry finished his presentation which was excellently accompanied by slides, he invited audience members to contribute. Several related stories of spirit manifestations but the most interesting of all was Dr. Ken Douglas' account of a presence in a house he lived

in on Mount Pleasant Road. The home had apparently been built on the foundation of John W. Meyers house. During a vacation trip, the house was looked after by a friend of the family's who reported hearing footsteps during one check of the house. He ran for a friend to whom he described the events and upon returning both men heard the sounds. There was also the sound of moaning and many feet pounding on the floors. The story has some basis in fact for on April 4, of 1814 (during the War of 1812) Meyers and his wife were seriously abused by four drunken troopers of the 19th Regiment of Dragoons. Meyers' wife Polly never completely recovered from the attack and died two years later. The story that the Meyers' housekeeper was so badly beaten she succumbed to her injuries has led to speculation it is her ghost which filled the second storey of the house with the moaning.

The evening came to a close all too soon for the audience would gladly have listened to many more tales from the beyond.



Orchard House on Mount Pleasant Road. The building sits on the site of John W. Meyers' home, the scene of a brutal attack on Meyers and his wife and servants during the War of 1812.

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If you'd like to join, please complete this form, or a photocopy of the form if you wish to save the newsletter, and bring it with your payment to the Society's next general meeting (third Tuesday of each month except June, July, August and December), or send it by mail to the Hastings County Historical Society, P.O. Box 1418, Belleville, Ontario K8N 5J1.

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Family	\$25.00 _____	Corporate Sponsor	\$ 50.00 _____
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Senior Family	\$20.00 _____		

I also enclose a donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ toward the work of the Society.

*The Hastings County Historical Society is a Registered Charity. Official receipts for Income Tax purposes will be forwarded to you with your membership card.*

# County News

by Gerry Boyce

**A quiz** - Can you name Hastings County's two most famous citizens from the 19th Century? Think about it. (pause and think) The odds are that many of you identified Sir Mackenzie Bowell and Susanna Moodie. If you did—or even if you didn't—you'll be interested in new publications relating to these famous Canadians.

ish courts, etc. Almost 70 political cartoons highlight Bowell's role as Prime Minister from 1894 to 1896 and explain in a humorous/serious way the nature of the Manitoba School issue. To quote Betsy, these cartoons "represent public opinion at the time, and convey the history of these events as well as anything that



Supporters of Sir Mackenzie Bowell saw this as the way he had been treated by his successor, Sir Charles Tupper.  
(From the Bowell scrapbooks in our Archives.)

Sir Mackenzie Bowell is the subject of a 69-page booklet by Betsy Boyce. It's a greatly expanded version of a pamphlet she prepared in 1985 to accompany a series of slides of political cartoons from the Bowell Family scrapbooks in our archives. (This slide kit was used in schools.) This year Betsy revised the text, Beth Green matched the commentaries to the cartoons in the scrapbooks, Elizabeth Mitchell edited the publication and Lewis Zandbergen did the spiral binding. Entitled *Mackenzie Bowell's Government and the Manitoba Schools*, the pamphlet describes a crisis in Canadian politics—a crisis involving relations between English and French, Protestant Orangemen and Roman Catholics, Liberal and Conservative political parties, several contestants for the post of Prime Minister, the governments of the province of Manitoba and the Dominion of Canada, Canadian and Brit-

was written about it then or later." The spiral-bound booklet sells for only six dollars and will be available at the Society's November meeting.  
Susanna Moodie is the subject of a 178-page book by Professor Michael Peterman, head of the English Department of Trent University. Mike is well known to many of our members, because of several entertaining talks at our meetings. *Susanna Moodie: A Life* is an excellent biography. I finished the book in a single reading and heartily recommend it. Mike has written "both a readable and serious biography" which gives readers "an understanding of Moodie as author, public figure, person and emigrant to this country."<sup>1</sup> It's available at W&R Greenley and other leading bookstores for \$14.95.  
Another book that promises to be a rewarding Christmas gift

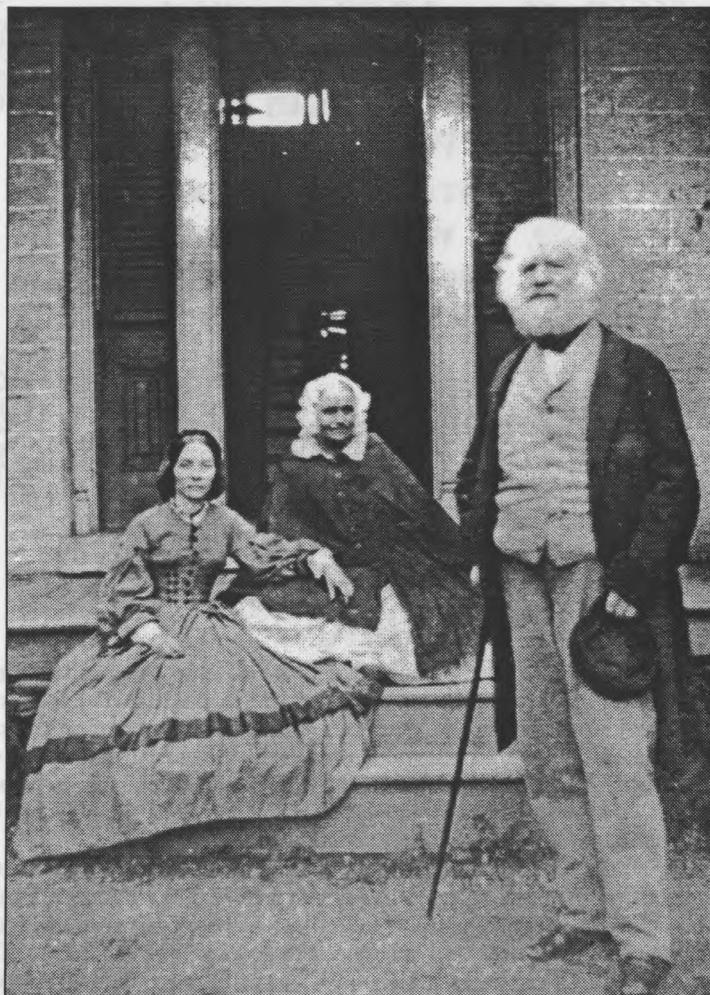
will be Charlotte Gray's *Sisters in the Wilderness*. A resident of Ottawa with family ties in Belleville, Charlotte is the author of a recent biography of William Lyon Mackenzie King's mother. Research for her new book on the Strickland sisters (including Susanna Moodie) brought her to the Belleville Library earlier this year. Charlotte will be speaking on *Sisters in the Wilderness* at the Peterborough Public Library on Tuesday evening, November 30. For information, contact Gerry at 968-5023.

**Held over** - Because of the late publication of *Outlook* in October, we are holding over the contest with the Toonie prize. If you know why the new Sir Mackenzie Bowell plaque at the Belleville Cemetery is wrong, contact Gerry at 968-5023 or 173 Bridge Street East, Belleville K8N 1N3. The draw will take place at the November meeting.  
The 1816 plan for a town at the

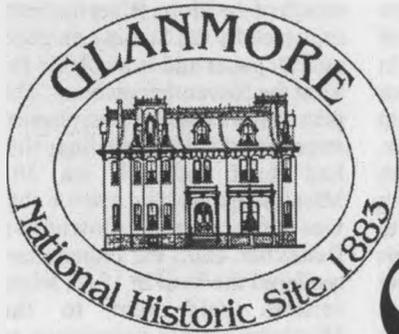
mouth of the Moira River has been reprinted by the Society on good quality paper and is available for \$3 at the November meeting. The plan shows existing paths, planned streets, and the 49 buildings that had been erected on the Mississauga Indian reserve that was to become downtown Belleville. Until the Indians surrendered the land in 1815, white settlers paid rent to the Mississaugas for permission to build.

Thanks to Lottie (Wallbridge) Green for giving the Society copies of her brother's books: the diaries of Thomas Nightingale. These diaries (edited by the late Mac Wallbridge) provide information on farming and gold mining in the local area.  
**Still wanted:** Information on local haunted houses, ghosts and unusual happenings. Contact Gerry at 968-5023.

<sup>1</sup> Mike Peterman's letter to Gerry Boyce, October 6, 1999 in response to a phone call of congratulations.



Susanna and John Moodie and a niece in front of Moodie Cottage shortly after Kate Fox produced the mysterious knocks on the sidewalk formed of large limestone flags. (One of two rare photographs purchased for \$10 each by Hastings County Historical Society from a Montreal art dealer around 1961.)

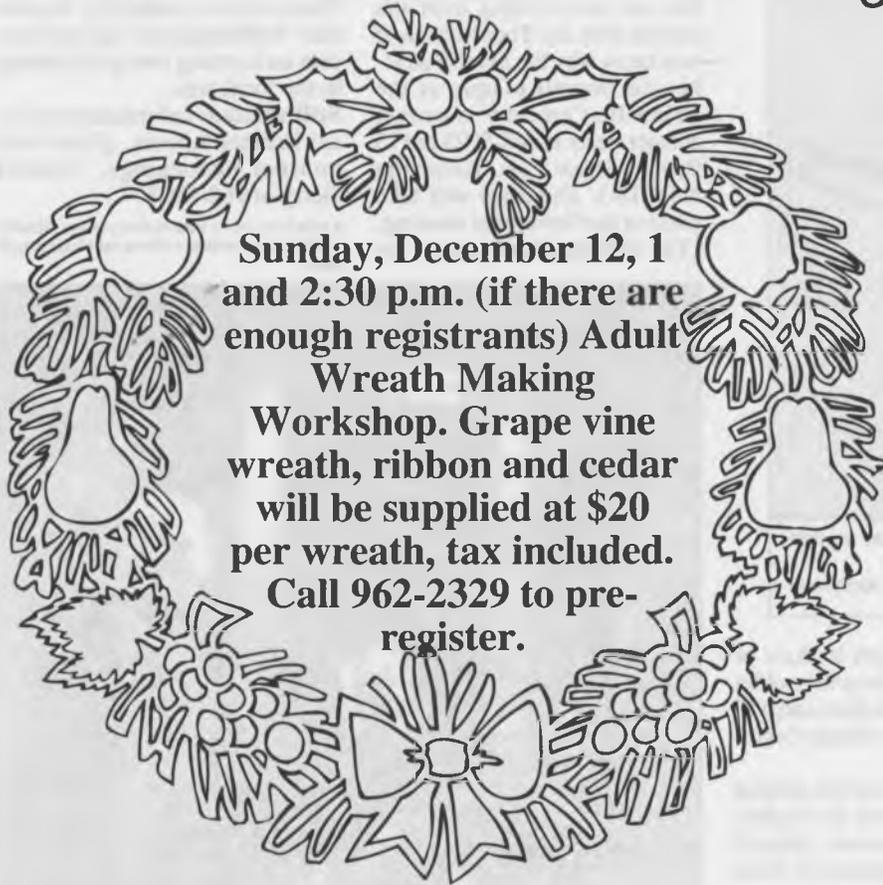


# GLANMORE

National Historic Site

257 Bridge Street East,  
Belleville, Ontario K8N 1P4

## Please Join us for Christmas Public Programming



**Sunday, December 12, 1  
and 2:30 p.m. (if there are  
enough registrants) Adult  
Wreath Making  
Workshop. Grape vine  
wreath, ribbon and cedar  
will be supplied at \$20  
per wreath, tax included.  
Call 962-2329 to pre-  
register.**

**Sunday,  
December 19, 1  
until 4 p.m..  
Children's program.  
Festive activities  
and refreshments.  
Thursday,  
December 16 and  
Monday, December  
20 from 7 until 8:30  
Yuletide  
Candlelight Tour.  
Refreshments  
served. Admission  
\$5 for adults; \$2.50  
for children. Call  
962-2329 to pre-  
register.**

### Glanmore update

Site restoration continued this fall with the waterproofing and repointing of the masonry on the northwest corner of the building. The location of the original sidewalk was determined through an archeological study completed in 1998 and historical research by the museum staff. We were provided with construction details by the head of Landscape Architecture, Department of Canadian Heritage (Ontario). The sidewalk has been excavated and plans are to have it completed this fall.

Our non-lending reference library has seen considerable growth in the last ten years and now contains approximately 500 volumes relating to our building, our collections and museological theory. It is currently located in the curator's office and is catalogued according to the Dewey Decimal System. Books and journals have been acquired through the National Library Book Exchange, through donations and through purchases. The library is used extensively by staff for exhibit development, conservation and program planning. Volunteers, students and researchers also make use of it. We are very grateful and extend our sincere thanks to museum librarian Jean Williams who has been managing our library since 1997.

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Outlook is published for the friends and members of  
the Hastings County Historical Society.

It is edited and produced by Lewis Zandbergen.

Anyone wishing to submit articles or information may contact the editor  
at 613-395-3022, or E-mail [lewzan@reach.net](mailto:lewzan@reach.net)

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**PLEASE NOTE!**

**The Deadline for the January issue is December 20, 1999**

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mailing label