

# Women of Yesterday

The Lives of Women in Hastings County  
from Pioneer Times to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century



Nov 22  
21.01

# Loyalists and the Pioneer Experience

The beginning of Belleville dates back to the 1780s. The first Loyalist settlers arrived at Adolphustown, Prince Edward County on June 16, 1784. Soon land was granted along the Bay of Quinte to families making a new home in Canada with limited resources and belongings.



Loyalist landing – Oil painting by the late Rev. Bowen Squire.

Mika Collection  
HCHS

## "Hominy Block"

Oil painting by the late Rev. Bowen Squire

Cracking corn to make coarse meal



Settlers had to be self-sufficient due to the isolation of their homes. There were times when neighbours shared tasks to ensure a community's survival. Clearing land, erecting homes and barns, and providing teachers were all part of a system of mutual dependence. Midwives for childbirth were another important necessity for a community, especially if doctors were a great distance away.



Churning butter in the homestead

Settlers kept at least one dairy cow so they would have milk to drink and butter for bread.

HCR 1625  
Hastings County Historical Society Collection



Homespun clothing and bedding, along with food preservation, were all tasks accomplished by the women of the family.

"Bringing Home the Heifer"

Oil painting by the late Rev. Bowen Squire

Cattle went out to forage for food daily





## Margaret Simpson (b. 1750s)

Margaret came to Canada from Scotland with her husband John Russell and their family in 1791. Unfortunately, John died shortly after their arrival at Fredericksburgh, leaving her a widow with young children.

In 1793, widow Margaret Russell married a widower James Simpson from Ernesttown. The couple moved their family to Thurlow Township in 1797, where they opened the first public house (tavern) in the area. After the death of her husband in 1802, Margaret Simpson became the first woman to be granted a tavern license.



Susanna and her husband J.W. Dunbar Moodie with her niece in front of Moodie Cottage ca, 1860.

HCS 9307  
Hastings County Historical Society Collection

## Susanna Moodie (1803-1885)

Emigration in the 1830s was usually a matter of necessity with settlers coming from working class and affluent families. Letters from relatives and friends encouraged newcomers to settle in the Quinte area.

Two of Canada's most important 19<sup>th</sup> century writers, Susanna Moodie and her sister Catharine Parr Traill wrote about their experiences in Canada. They immigrated with their Scottish husbands in 1832.

## Mary Breakenridge (1792-1871)

Mary Warren Baldwin was just 7 years old when her father emigrated to Canada from Ireland and settled at York in 1799. As a girl, Mary experienced the hard life of a pioneer on her father's farm.

Mary Baldwin married a law student John Breakenridge in 1816. The couple moved to Belleville where Mary later experienced a more genteel life of a socialite.

John Breakenridge died in 1828 and the widow used family influence to provide for her children.



Mrs. Breakenridge and Mrs. Murney with eight daughters

Stereoscope card ca. 1860

Mrs. Breakenridge (seated) and Mrs. Murney (seated)  
Back row: Mrs. Ridley, Mrs. McLeod, Mrs. Falkner (?)  
Seated on ground: Nina, Maria, Isabel and Nellie Murney

HCS 4310  
Hastings County Historical Society Collection

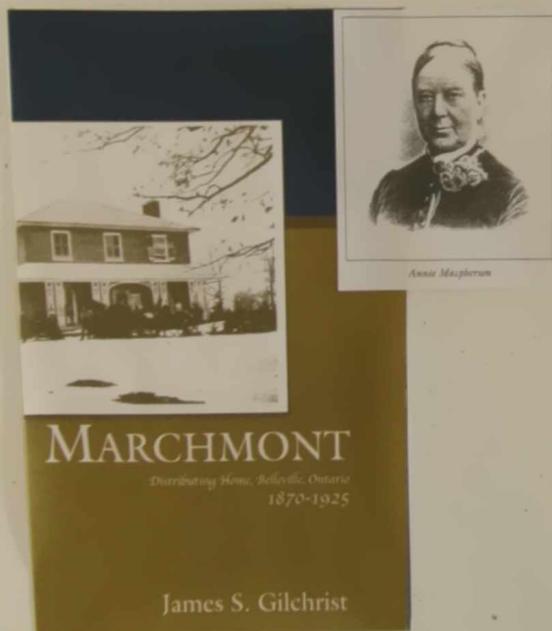
View  
21.05

# Influences on their Community

## Changing Roles of Women

With rare exceptions, women of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were dependent, first on their families, and then on their husbands with marriage.

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, affluent women grouped together for charitable and religious purposes to help the needy. They worked for their churches through ladies' auxiliaries.



View of Marchmont Home, ca. 1905

from "Belleville Ontario" souvenir book

HCR B3068  
Hastings County Historical Society Collection

Two local couples  
(L) Mr. & Mrs. Samuel Wilmot  
and (R) Mr. & Mrs. Hannaford

Stereoscope card view ca. 1860

HCR 4309  
Hastings County Historical Society Collection



NW 22  
21.06

# Education



SS #7 Carlow

HCF 4869  
Hastings County Historical Society Collection

## ALBERT COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY Belleville, Ontario.

Rev. J. R. Jacques, A. M., Ph. D., D. D.,  
President.

ASSISTED BY 12 PROFESSORS AND TEACHERS  
with Departments of

- |                       |                                     |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. LIBERAL ARTS.      | 6. LAW.                             |
| 2. THEOLOGY.          | 8. MUSIC.                           |
| 3. CIVIL ENGINEERING. | 7. GRAMMAR SCHOOL.                  |
| 4. AGRICULTURE.       | 5. ALEXANDRA COLLEGE<br>FOR LADIES. |
- (Mrs. J. R. JACQUES, Principress.)

**M**ICHAELMAS Term opens September  
7th, 1876; closes December 20.

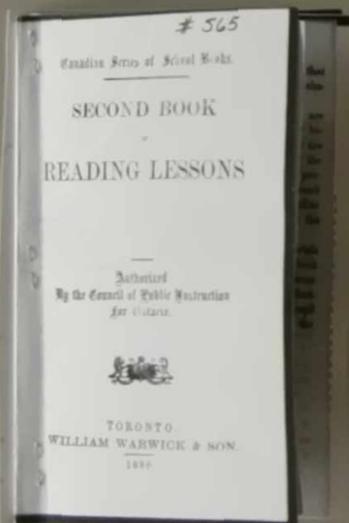
**M**MUSICAL ACADEMY, UNDER PROF. WHISH.

Superb Chickering Instruments. Tuition  
Fees for Music very low. Elegant New Din-  
ing Hall. Full Staff of Professors and Teach-  
ers. Accomplished Teacher of Painting and  
Drawing. Complete Grammar School. Im-  
provements in Buildings, &c. &c.  
Board in Dining Hall, Room Rent, Furni-  
ture, and Fuel, \$2.50 per week.  
Circulars and Catalogues sent free by apply-  
ing to President.

Ad in *Weekly Intelligencer*, 1876

Mika Collection  
Hastings County Historical Society Collection

The education of girls saw some major changes. They could attend grammar school and not be required to take Latin and Greek. They could attend the Alexandra College for ladies, part of Albert College, to earn their Mistress in English Literature or a Mistress in Liberal Arts.



This book belonged to  
Bella C. Falconer,  
Belleville, Ontario



Belleville Grammar School ca. 1869

Mika Collection  
Hastings County Historical Society Collection

**WANTED!**  
A SCHOOL Teacher for Section No. 10 in  
the Sixth Concession of Hungerford.  
JOS. GUTLAND, }  
THOMAS FINN, } Trustee  
THOS FLEMING, }  
Hungerford March 6th 1858.

NW 22  
21.07



A Group of Students at Ontario Business College, Belleville, Ont.

Belleville Ontario souvenir booklet, ca. 1905.  
 Inside cover is an inscription:  
 "Wishing Myrtle every success and  
 many pleasant remembrances of the  
 O.B.C. from her friend"  
 Tillie

HC-B-3064

## Ontario Business College

Established 1865



## St. Agnes School for Girls

This school was converted from  
 Billa Flint's villa after he died in 1894.



The Belleville Business College, Limited, Belleville, Ont.  
 SHORTHAND DEPARTMENT, MARCH 10, 1901.

## Belleville Business College

## School for the Deaf (Sir James Whitney)

The official opening of a school for the deaf in  
 Belleville was on October 20, 1870.

The Official Programme, 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention  
 of the Ontario Christian Endeavor Union,  
 Belleville, October 10-12, 1905.

HC-B-3064



Deaf Mute Girls Signing "Hears: My God, to Thee" at the Institution.

Nov 22  
 21.08

# Occupations

By joining together, women experienced the power of collective action and the joys of sisterhood.



Clerks in the General and Ladies Furnishing Department of Jonas Bargman & Co., ca. 1911

This store was located at 474-476 Front Street (McNabb Towers site today)

HC# 4865  
Hastings County Historical Society Collection

## Kimball's Belleville Directory, 1884-1885

Belleville Business Directory, Page 115, under "Millinery"

Miss J.B. Mackenzie, East Pinnacle

Page 116, under "Music Teachers"

Miss Bessie O'Carronn, east Octavia above Bridge West

Miss Mary Russell, North Dundas near Front St.

Mme S. Tourgis, George near Forin

Advertisement p. 87, under "Ornamental Hair Work"

Mrs. S. Tugnett, east Front above Bridge

APRIL 2, 1877

### OSTRICH PLUMES.

THE undersigned, having had fourteen years' experience in Feather Dressing and Straw work, would respectfully announce that she is still prepared to do all kinds of

#### STRAW WORK.

and makes a speciality of cleaning and coloring Ostrich Feathers.

Feathers Dyed all Colors, including a beautiful black.

KID GLOVES cleaned and Dyed to look as good as new. Charges moderate.

Residence—Henry Street, opposite Pringle's Factory, West Belleville.

MRS. BAIN,  
Belleville, March 13th, 1877.

**HARD TIMES**  
AND  
**LOW PRICES.**  
MRS. ABHTON.  
Sole Agent of the  
EUROPE AND MONTREAL  
FOR THE FALL TRADE,  
at rates which she feels confident will warrant her, in supplying the public at prices that will compare favorably with any house in Canada, Scotland, or England.  
DIRECT IMPORTATIONS OF  
Broadcloths, Cassimeres, Pilots, Beavers, Doeskins, &c., &c.,  
always secure the best quality of Goods at the LOWEST PRICES.  
Her Stock being constantly replenished, she keeps on hand, gowns, and skirts, and makes repairs on the goods, all the best and latest styles.  
REMEMBER THE "OLD STAMP" opposite J. Lewis' Hardware Store, and  
September, 1884. 63a

### FEATHER & STRAW WORK.

THE only real Feather Dresser in Belleville is MRS. TUGNETT, who, after ten years' experience in England, can dye Ostrich Feathers any shade of color, and

CLEAN AND CURL TO LOOK LIKE NEW.

STRAW HATS made over in the latest style.

KID GLOVES CLEANED AND DYED BLACK.

#### Millinery and Dress Making

done in the same establishment.

CUTTING AND FITTING DONE.

Ladies attended at their residences, by

Mrs. MUMFERTY.

Address:  
South Lower Bridge,  
near Spiller's Hotel,  
Coleman Street,  
March 12. 1885. 300.3a Belleville.

21.09

Single women could teach school and be domestic servants, although they had to quit work if they married.

Married women could run shops and small businesses, or take in domestic work like laundry. Millinery and dressmaking were two occupations that any community needed.

Many women struggled to make ends meet if they were single, widowed or had been deserted by their husbands.



Gilbert Horatio Winsor and Christine M. Irwin  
 This couple were both teachers who married in 1914.  
 HC# 4690  
 Hastings County Historical Society Collection

A FEW BOARDERS can be accommodated in a convenient locality, if a private house, where no other boarders are kept. Enquire at this Office.  
 Oct. 27, 1876. 41

**Mrs. Reid,**  
 TEACHER of Music, theory and practice also of English, French, and Drawing. Class Room, one door west of the Post Office, upper floor. 41

MISS FRITH,  
 Milliner and Dressmaker!  
 Corner of Front & Bridge Street.  
 BEGS to intimate to the Ladies of Belleville and Vicinity that she has received her new Stock of Fashionable Millinery Goods, Dress, Cap, and Cloak Patterns, suited for the season. She flatters herself that she is now prepared to suit the most fastidious tastes, both as to the superiority of her articles and elegance of finish. She possesses the facility for doing a very large amount of work on short notice, and at reasonable prices. Bonnets, Caps, and Head Dresses of the most FASHIONABLE STYLES. Always on hand, and made to order. Cloaks, Dresses, &c., Cut, Fitted and made where required, or Cut and Fitted to accommodate customers. A call is respectfully solicited.  
 Belleville, Nov. 18th, 1861. 14

Dw22  
 21.10

# Health & Welfare

## Mary Ella Holden (1832-1859)

Threats to women's health included childbirth, and diseases like consumption (TB) and influenza (epidemics).



Image from Wm. Sawyer's portrait, painted along with her husband in 1855, on the occasion of their marriage.



### CLEMENT SISTERS OF BELLEVILLE

Front: Dr. & Mrs Rufus Holden, Hon. & Mrs. Billa Flint  
Rear: Mr. & Mrs. Harrison, Mr. & Mrs. Nathan Jones, Mr. & Mrs. Ezra Holton

HC84411  
Hastings County Historical Society Collection



Mary Ella Smith (1832-1859) married James Clement Holden in 1855. After a very brief married life, Ella died of consumption on October 2, 1859. She was just 27 years old.

**THE GREAT ENGLISH REMEDY.**  
SIR JAMES CLARKE'S  
**Celebrated Female Pills.**  
PROTECTED BY ROYAL LETTERS PATENT.

*Prepared from a prescription of Sir J. Clarke, M. D., Physician Extraordinary to the Queen.*  
This invaluable medicine is unfailing in the cure of all those painful and dangerous diseases to which the female constitution is subject. It moderates all excess and removes all obstructions, and a speedy cure may be relied on.

**TO MARRIED LADIES**  
It is peculiarly suited. It will, in a short time, bring on the monthly period with regularity. Each bottle, price \$1, bears the threefold stamp of Great Britain, to prevent counterfeits.

In all cases of Nervous and Spinal Affections, Pain in the Back and Limbs, Fatigue on slight exertion, Palpitation of the Heart, Hysterics, and Whites, these Pills will effect a cure when all other means have failed, and although a powerful remedy, do not contain iron, calomel, antimony, or any thing harmful to the constitution. Full directions accompany each package. Sole Agent for the United States and Canada, JOB MOSES, (Late J. C. Baldwin & Co.) Rochester, N. Y.

Scoville & Mason, Newcastle, U. S. A.  
N. B.—\$1.00 and 8 postage stamps purchased to any authorized Agent, will insure a bottle of the Pills by return mail.  
For sale by all Druggists. 523-0000

W1122  
21.11

## First Hospital and Home for the Aged

Mrs. Harriet Jacques, wife of the principal of Albert College, appealed to the women of Belleville to unite and form an organization to help the needy.

The Women's Christian Association was formed on November 18, 1879, with Mrs. Jacques as President. When the W.C.A. registered their charter at Toronto on June 2, 1880, there were 80 members. The charter gave the organization the power to build a hospital and home for the needy.

Mrs. Jane C. Jones, the wife of a prominent businessman, Nathan Jones, was elected President after the death of Mrs. Jacques in April of 1880.

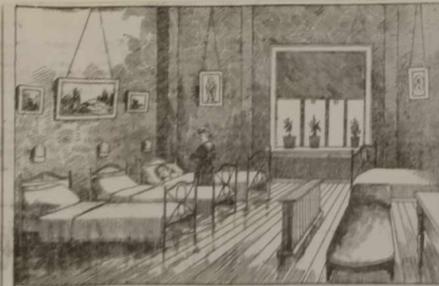
Despite criticism and lack of support from city officials, the press, and local citizens, the W.C.A. overcame all obstacles to reach their goal.

On July 20, 1886, the new building was officially opened.



Home for the aged and a new hospital building

Mika Collection  
Hastings County Historical Society Collection



FEMALE PUBLIC WARD.

Besides the public wards there are five rooms, four private and one semi-private, all of which have been furnished by the benevolence of individual friends. Three of them are memorial rooms, and we do not think any more delightful way could be taken to remember the dear friends who have gone Home than by thus trying to make the sick and suffering as comfortable as possible. The honor of being the first to furnish a private room belongs to a band of young ladies, called, "The Happy Workers," in connection with Bridge St. Church. The sum of \$5.00 per week is charged for these rooms. In the private rooms, the patients have the privilege of the attendance of their own physician if they so desire, in which case they must pay him for his attendance. If they have no preference the doctor on duty for the month looks after them without charge.

Article from *Daily Intelligencer*, Jan. 13, 1890



MISS GORDON, Lady Superintendent.



MRS. R. J. BELL, Secy.



MRS. J. J. B. FLINT, Treas.

Nov 22  
21.12

# Sports & Leisure Time

The Bay of Quinte is a long and narrow body of water with many bays, inlets and coves. Water was used commercially to transport cargo and passengers as well as for recreational sailing and racing.



Leisurely canoe ride, ca. 1910-1915

JCH 9563  
Lettman Album  
Hastings County Historical Society Collection



New 20  
21.13

May 15, 1915

A meeting held this date at four o'clock in the afternoon in the Council Chamber, City Hall for the purpose of forming a Ladies Bowling Club.

The following Ladies were present:

Miss Col. R. Quinn	Mr. Dickson
Anderson	Appay
Butler	Wicks
Porter	Miss Turner
Boyle	Pratt
Edout	Reyno
Good	Hallgren
Johnson	Cook C
Johnson	

Mr. Fitchie & Col. Lajies were also present representing the gentlemen's Bowling Club.

Minute book of the Belleville Ladies Bowling Club

Hastings County Historical Society Collection



1920 BHS girls basketball team

HC# 4605 and 4606  
Hastings County Historical Society Collection

During the 1880s, Belleville was bicycle crazy and many racing events took place in the region. Women enjoyed the pastime of bicycling and they even had a modified skirt to allow freedom of movement.



Couple with bicycles and wearing boater hats, ca. 1890s

HC# 5427  
Hastings County Historical Society Collection

Nov 22  
21.14

## Leona Kathleen Riggs (1903-1994)

Leona Riggs was born into a family of professional musicians. Her grandfather, W.B. Riggs, came to Belleville in 1881 to be bandmaster of the Oddfellows Band. Leona's father, Leo B. Riggs, was an accomplished pianist and organist, who started playing piano at age 4.

Leona gave music lessons from her family home at 21 Queen Street in the late 1920s. She was also choir director for John Street Church (1933-fire in 1936) and at Bridge Street Church (1937-1951).

Leona Riggs was a driving force behind the Community Concert Association, a supporter of the performing arts and a key member of a citizens group formed to establish a Ballet School in Belleville.

Leona's legacy continues today with educational scholarships and support for the Arts.

Image of a young Leona about 5 years old

Riggs Collection  
Hastings County Historical Society Collection



Leona Riggs with her mother Mabel Kathleen (DeGuerre) Riggs. Mabel Riggs was a graduate of the Toronto Conservatory and a professional vocalist who taught voice at the old Albert College.

Riggs Collection  
Hastings County Historical Society Collection

Nov 22

21.15

# Dressed for the Photographer

Nineteenth century history comes alive with the first era that could be recorded photographically. Images of ordinary people and family portraits provide clues to the past and fashions of the day.



J. H. FORD, PHOTOGRAPHER, BELLEVILLE, ILLINOIS



NO. 16-24



## Choices

The *Daily Intelligencer*, Tuesday February 25, 1890, had an article with wonderful insight on women's issues and changing ideas on their role in society. The original article appeared in the Atlanta, Georgia newspaper, the *Constitution*, and was reprinted in Belleville's newspaper. Below are excerpts from this article.

### A WOMAN'S SOUND PLEA

#### MRS. DR. FELTON'S VIEWS ON WOMEN AS WAGE EARNERS

"In my opinion the day will come when women will be experts in the healing art, and draw the pay proportionate to the service."

[on store clerks] "If women must work they should be paid for it . . . when they are pressed into service by hunger and want, do, for pity's sake, stop twaddling about their place at home, and check the sneers that make the duty harder and the work more unpalatable."

"This thing of marrying for a home has done more to make unhappiness than hard work at some trade will ever do for women. One is mental suffering, unreleased forever, while the other takes only a good night's sleep to cure it."

New 22  
2/16