

# Outlook

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200  
Sidney Township  
1790 - 1990

The Newsletter of **The Hastings County Historical Society**

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P.O. BOX 1418 - BELLEVILLE, ONTARIO K8N 5J1

## Next Meeting

Tuesday, May 22, 1990 (Note change) at 8pm.

Featured Speaker: Mrs Peggy Dymond Leavey.

Author of the book, "The Movie Years" published by Mika Publishing.

Place: Quinte Living Centre Auditorium, 370 Front Street (north door), Belleville.

Coffee and displays from 7:30pm

Visitors and Guests always welcome.

The following is an article concerning Mrs Leavey and her book, "The Movie Years"

## Trenton a hot-bed of early films

By JACK EVANS  
Staff Reporter

Those interested in local history should not overlook a small, but value-packed book (or booklet) called *The Movie Years*, about the film-making operations at Trenton during the years 1917 through 1934.

The author is Trenton area housewife Peggy Dymond Leavey, who shows a commendable job on research in both depth and selection of the right material for interest, as well as a smooth, informative and highly readable style of writing.

The 96-page book, published by Mika Publishing of Belleville, also contains numerous period photographs and a wealth of popular Trenton and Quinte area names, including some who are still alive. Typical names familiar to many in the area are O.W. Larry (Augie), long-time former Trenton clerk, and Dr. Jack Farley.

The book states that the studio and

film-making operations at Trenton, for which the still-called Film Street was named, was the "only" early film making operation in Canada to last more than a year or two. But even the Trenton Studio's 16 to 17-year history was fraught with ripoffs, corruption, dissension, exorbitant spending and, finally, a tragic end and loss for many metres of film which, today, could be valued archival material.

Leavey has zeroed in accurately on a timely, interesting topic in a professional manner.

Speakers often compare making a speech to a woman's dress in that it should be "long enough to cover the essentials but short enough to be interesting." Leavey's book meets this criteria, leaving the reader with enlarged knowledge of an interesting chapter of local history, and a good read.

The *Movie Years* is available at most local book dealers. Cost is \$15.

## Can Tourist Towns Be Livable?

By Jacques Dalibard

CANADIAN HERITAGE FALL 1983

Last year, in France, I visited the Alsace city of Colmar. Its centre looked like the dream of every preservationist. There were no cars in the streets; people walked everywhere. There were beautifully restored buildings, attractive window displays, animated cafés, shaded public gardens, monumental squares.

Although it was a busy tourist town, the local inhabitants continued to use their downtown. True, luxury boutiques were aimed at visitors but most retail shops sold everyday items such as meat and vegetables and bread. The upper floors of the shops were residences, and downtown was the locals' cultural centre, the meeting place for their social exchanges. Colmar has somehow reached a satisfactory equilibrium between attracting tourists and remaining a livable place.

The question is: how can a community attract tourists while its inhabitants maintain ownership of their downtown? This is a problem which confronts Canadian communities whose dominant resource is their heritage character: towns such as Niagara-on-the-Lake, Perth, Quebec City, Lunenburg and Victoria.

At the core of the question is the perception people have of their own community. For a year after my visit to Colmar, something disturbed me. Although I had never been there before, the city corresponded exactly to the way I had always imagined it.

Then I realized that in my youth, I had seen picture-postcards of typical Alsace buildings. I had extrapolated from them: all Alsace towns were made up of such images, were they not? The people of

Colmar must have gone through a similar process. They had started to see their town in picturesque images that corresponded to the visions tourists entertained.

At the time I visited Colmar, the negative impact of this perception had obviously been controlled – or perhaps it was not yet visible. Yet, one can see the potential damage that such an approach could have. This touristic vision can be taken to extremes, and result in the freezing, or musification, of the community. A rigid adherence to "heritage" appearance can contradict the town's actual function and nature. Or, unsympathetic tourist facilities can take over large portions of the downtown centre.

When these things happen, the nature of a town eventually changes. The long-time inhabitants leave the downtown, the traditional shops are replaced by boutiques and souvenir stores, fast food restaurants come in, hotels are built, increased numbers of cars and buses are accommodated, the streets are taken over by tourists. Only too quickly, inhabitants can lose ownership of their town.

To meet the dangers of tourism, townspeople must arrive at an image of their community that is consistent with their communal sense of place and sense of continuity. To achieve this understanding a public debate is necessary, with the participation of chambers of commerce, environmental organizations, rate-payers and merchant associations, as well as the media.

Groups and individuals interested in heritage have an important role to play in this process. They must communicate their community's history to the rest of the citizenry. This can be done



through walking tours, newspaper articles, publications of local history, school presentations, exhibitions, shop window displays, re-enactments, theme days and public lectures. The information must be accessible, stimulating, usable — in short, a part of everyday life. In this way, the town's image will be based on historic realities rather than on thematic notions of heritage that are superficial, gratuitous, foreign and/or conventional.

Once a community perceives its true sense of place and sense of continuity, it is easier to determine the proper use of the traditional downtown. Local governments play a central role, of course, in determining the function of downtown. But the view of the citizens must be reflected, and public participation is again the best means to arrive at a proper balance.

Tourism must be made a part of this urban planning; it cannot be encouraged without control. Tourism planning means more than simply attracting and accommodating visitors. It means ensuring that tourism benefits the local population as a whole — not just a few operators. Very little thought has gone into this subject and there are no recipes. Every community, therefore, will have to devise its own strategy.

One thing, however, is certain: the decisions cannot be made only in terms of financial considerations; they must, most importantly, take into account the community's quality of life.

Tourism is one of the greatest growth industries in the world. It is a bandwagon upon which many Canadian communities now feel inclined to jump.

Few, however, have considered all the consequences. The '60s saw the destruction of many downtowns through "slum" clearance and urban renewal. The '70s saw the destruction of more downtowns through economic booms and business development. We have to hope that the late '80s and the early '90s won't see the destruction of the rest of our downtowns through either misplaced tourist development or musification. We should keep in mind that tourism, like fire, can be a good servant, but a bad master. ♦

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Jacques Dalibard, Executive Director of Heritage Canada, lectures widely in North America, Europe and the Middle East. In Canada, he has been instrumental in bringing together preservation professionals, initially as the first chief restoration architect with the Canadian Parks Service, and later as a founder and president of the Association for Preservation Technology and ICOMOS Canada.



Pictured above is the committee which put together the Hastings's Historical Society book "Saluting Sydney Township on its Bicentennial", (left to right) Gerry Boyce, Lewis Zandbergen, Kathy Karkut, Bob Gay and June Sine.

## Book details Sidney's (Sydney's) history

By JENNIFER READ  
Staff Reporter

**TUCKERS CORNERS** — A capacity crowd learned this week there are two ways to spell Sidney Township — but the traditional spelling is favored locally.

Local historian Gerry Boyce told the April meeting of the Hastings County Historical Society his booklet on the history of Sidney Township's 200 years is scheduled to be published May 15, the anniversary of the township's first inaugural meeting in 1790.

Boyce said Sidney — named for Lord Thomas Townshend of

Sydney — may have had its spelling changed by new Canadians "who perhaps wanted to indicate their independence from Britain."

He said the booklet, an 80-page magazine format, will detail the township's rich history from 1790 to the present day.

Sydney has the oldest continuous local government in Ontario — an achievement recognized by Premier David Peterson during a recent visit to Sidney.

Boyce said Loyalist first settled in Sidney in 1787 near the mouth of the Moira and Trent rivers. They sought a local government similar to that they had known before the American Revolution and in 1790 elected moderator John Walden Meyers — the founder of Belleville — a clerk, constable, fenceviewers and pathmasters.

This form of government — which met once a year — existed until 1850, when councillors were empowered to levy taxes, said Boyce.

And that format has remained virtually unchanged to this day, he added.

Boyce quizzed Sidney councillors and other members of the audience on their knowledge of the township with a slide show of 38 buildings and landmarks.

"Sydney has a wide variety of faces — it's predominantly rural but is attracting more industry and is growing economically."

Boyce's booklet will be published the day of the bicentennial re-enactment of Sidney's first inaugural meeting.

THE INTELLIGENCER, Thursday, April 19, 1990

### PROGRAMME FOR THE COMING MONTHS

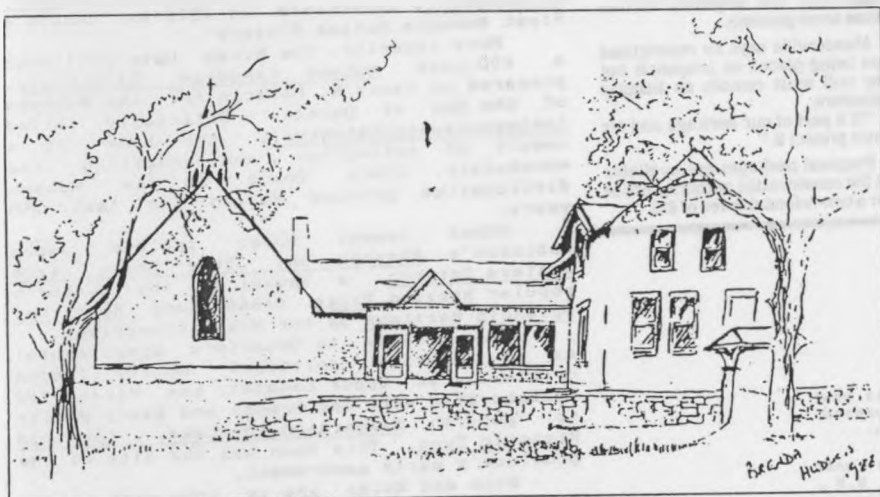
#### Back to the future

The public is invited to the re-enactment of the first Sidney Township meeting, held May 15 1790. Students of Bayside Secondary School will re-enact the meeting, while current councillors carry out a present day meeting. The event — to be held May 15 at 7:30 p.m. at Bayside Secondary School — is sponsored by the Sidney Township bicentennial committee. It marks the launching of the publication of the bicentennial history of the township, which is sponsored by the Hastings County Historical Society. (966-8330)


Thursday May 17, 7:30pm. St Thomas' Church. Dr Shelley Saunders, Associate Professor of Anthropology, McMaster University, will speak on "What's READ in the Bone?." She will describe how the research will proceed this summer on the remains excavated last summer.

ACO of Ontario, Quinte Branch, will hold its third Sunday Walking Tour in Barriefield on Sunday, May 20. Meet at St Mark's Church on highway 15 in Barriefield at 2pm. Tea and cookies at 4pm. No charge. Everyone welcome. For information: 969-0734, 476-7221

## History lives as Madoc congregation plans 125th anniversary



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST ANGLICAN CHURCH, MADOC

1790  1990

**"HANS WALTMEYER"**  
The Heritage of Captain John Walden Meyers, U.E.

**JANE BENNETT GODDARD, U.E.**  
P.O. Box 10, Grafton, Ontario K0K 2G0

**The Captain John Walden Meyers Family Bicentennial Celebrations**

March 29, 1990

Mr. Jack Arthur, President,  
and Members,  
The Hastings County Historical Society,  
P.O. Box 1418,  
Belleville, Ontario.  
K8N 5J1

To the President and Members,

The Committee and Members of the Captain John Walden Meyers Bicentennial Celebrations wish to inform the President and Members of the Hastings County Historical Society of their celebration on Saturday, July 21, 1990, when the family descendants will be holding two outdoor commemorative ceremonies, followed by a gala family dinner, to be held at the Ben Blecker Auditorium, in honour of the 200th anniversary of the arrival in Meyers' Creek (Belleville) of their patriarch.

Prior to the dinner, two events are planned to take place: 1) a memorial gathering of family and other interested persons at the Sidney Loyalist Burying Ground (Highway #2, east of CFB Trenton), at 3.30 P.M., whereby the site of the hitherto unmarked graves of the Meyers-Blecker family, (the wooden original markers long since gone), will be viewed, and His Honour, Lieutenant-Governor Lincoln Alexander will be asked to unveil a newly erected memorial stone by the family; 2) a second gathering at 5.00 P.M., at the site of the Meyers' Mill and former milling complex, to be attended by the various historical, municipal, military and governmental agencies and societies, and any other appropriate persons or groups.

You are cordially invited to attend both the Sidney Cemetery and Meyers' Mill ceremonies, at 3.30 P.M., and 5.00 P.M., and we would appreciate a few words on behalf of the Society at both events.

Thank you,

*Jane Bennett Goddard, U.E.*  
Jane Bennett Goddard, U.E.,  
and  
Captain Christopher Meyers Akmey, U. E., C.D.,  
Committee Co-Chairmen.

R.S.V.P.

P.S.: There will be a display table at our dinner, showing any remaining artifacts from Captain Meyers' career or era. If your organization has any pertinent items to loan for the evening, or illustrations please allow us to display them. Any items of value would be encased in locked cases. Thank you.

J. B. G.



Quinte Branch  
of  
the Ontario  
Genealogical Society

## Letters

Dear Madam:

Please find enclosed a cheque for 1990 membership with the HCCHS. It is a very educational Society to belong to. Also, I enjoy the Marchmont Home peoples' life. T'was whatever way the cookie would crumble what kind of a home they get into. I have a sister-in-law who was one of them. As a small girl, she was helping with the milking. Granted, she had, and still has, a temper, and the farmer smashed her over the arm and broke it with the milk stool. That was nothing to what our next door neighbour did to two boys he had. The ten year old was beaten and worked unmercifully. The man with the bad feet was a bit bigger and they made him wear the younger boy's boots which were too small and they got infected. At Mount View, there was a store besides the school and the boy went in there after limping one and a half miles. The owner saw him coming from his limping and gangrene was setting in. Of course, he informed the authorities. It was nip 'n tuck whether he even lived. The farmer was never more allowed any more of those children, and he was fined \$500. The authorities even had it permanently put in the law books. Please forgive me for relating these sad stories but they haunted me all my life as I was only their age and it seemed to sink in. Of course, I knew of numerous ones who were treated like their own. One was put through for a pharmacist by his former employer and some girls were well looked after and married the employer's son.

Also, I inadvertently wrote on both sides of the paper. I've enjoyed two dinners at your HCCHS place and met some lovely people.  
Sincerely,  
Pearl Herrington

The Quinte Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society strives to bring together and assist all those interested in pursuits of family history. It was formed on 14 June 1980, and was designed to cover the Bay of Quinte area, particularly the Counties of Prince Edward, South Hastings and East Northumberland.

Meetings of the Quinte Branch are regularly held in the Educentre at Bloomfield in the evening of the second Tuesday of the month from September to June. The meetings are open to the public and visitors are invited to attend.

The Quinte Branch Library, also located at the Educentre, is open on Tuesday afternoons from 1:00 to 4:00 pm. For hours and days of operation in the summer months, watch for announcements.

The Searchlight is published four times per year. Members are encouraged to submit queries and articles.

The Quinte Branch has connections with twenty six other branches in Ontario through the Ontario Genealogical Society. The membership includes persons from across North America and Australia. This resource should not be overlooked by researchers.



# Station Street mill drawing attention from possible saviours

By JENNIFER READ  
Staff Reporter

Help preserve part of Belleville's heritage.

Hundreds of residents pass by the old stone mill on Station Street every day. Those who give it a second glance probably don't realize the dilapidated structure may someday crumble into the Moira River.

But the Moira River Conservation Authority is trying to ensure that the property — near the site where Belleville founder John Walden Meyers built his first sawmill — will remain one of the city's landmarks in years to come.

The authority is accepting proposals from private and public firms to renovate the mill, said manager David King.

Kay Manderville, who sits on a

joint committee of authority members, city hall officials and members of the public, says there has been "some positive interest shown in renovating the mill."

"Five firms have picked up proposal packages from the conservation authority, and there is still plenty of time for others to pick up one and submit completed proposals before the June 20 deadline," said Manderville.

Among groups which have picked up packages are Belleville's Chamber of Commerce and Toronto developer Brian Magee's firm Teddington Ltd., now renovating the former Cablevue-Intelligencer building on Front Street.

Manderville said the proposals must contain plans, cost analysis and architectural drawings for the committee's perusal.

Once all proposals have been submitted, the committee will

evaluate them and make recommendations to the authority and city council.

The authority owns the mill, but has leased it to the city for more than two decades. Manderville says the long-term lease expired several years ago and the two parties have continued the arrangement on a year-to-year basis.

If a development proposal for the mill is accepted, Manderville says the authority, city and development firm will negotiate further lease arrangements.

Manderville says no restrictions are being placed on proposals but the mill must remain an historic structure.

"It's part of our heritage and we must protect it."

Proposal packages are available at the conservation authority office for a non-refundable fee of \$25.

## Super Citizens - the Mikas

Nick and Helma Mika are truly Super Citizens. At a time in life when many people have retired, the Mikas remain very active — researching, writing, and publishing.

Their company, Mika Publishing, continues to bring out books on Canadian history, several of particular interest to the local area. Shortly before Christmas, they published Peggy Leavey's The Movie Years, subtitled A Nostalgic Remembrance of Canada's Film-making Capital: Trenton, Ontario, 1917-1934. This well-illustrated, 95-page book tells the story of movie-making at Trenton, including the production of Carry on Sergeant, advertised in 1928 as "Canada's First Mammoth Motion Picture".

More recently, the Mikas have published a 450-page Mohawk Language Dictionary, prepared by David R. Maracle for the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte. Officially titled kontewennawehstahkwa, the book is a result of collection and compiling the vocabulary lists found in the Mohawk dictionaries printed during the last 150 years.

Other recent books include James Robinson's Strange but True Tales from Eastern Ontario, a sequel to the author's popular Amazing Tales (1988), and Kingston, Splendid Heritage by the Mikas themselves.

As a prelude to Ontario's bicentennial as a distinct political entity (known originally as Upper Canada), the Mikas also collaborated with Joy Ormsby and Nancy Butler to publish Niagara-on-the-Lake, the Old Historic Town. This town was the site of the province's early government.

Nick and Helma are in love with their community, province and country. Since Nick's arrival here in 1949 and Helma's in 1951, they have worked to understand the country and its history. The beginning of Mika Publishing in the early 1960s helped them to share their enthusiasm with other Canadians, from coast to coast.

Their publishing ventures have led to extensive travel. To research The Historic Mills of Ontario (1987), they drove 8,000 kilometres (5,000 miles) collecting information and taking pictures.

Between them, the Mikas have written and illustrated more than 30 books and published

countless others, many of them reprints of significant 19th century history sources. They have reprinted county atlases, Pioneer Life on the Bay of Quinte, William Canniff's History of the Settlement of Upper Canada, with Special Reference to the Bay of Quinte, and other valuable sources available at reasonable price to historians, genealogists, and students. (As a railway buff, I especially treasure their volumes on local and national rail history). Nick estimates that the company's total production is nearing the half-million volume mark.

The Mikas have been longtime supporters of the Hastings County Historical Society. In the early 1960s, their company silkscreened the first posters advertising the Hastings County Museum on Church Street. More recently, they have donated dozens of books as draw prizes for our meetings. In appreciation, the Society formally recognized Nick as its first Patron.

When the company celebrated 25 years of publishing in 1987, writer Frank Jones featured them in his Toronto Star column under the heading, "Couple's history books a 'monument to Canada'". He concluded his column: "Helma and Nick Mika, in my book, are two of Ontario's Super Citizens. Their achievement in publishing dozens of invaluable history texts from their small plant in Belleville with few academic or financial backups is incredible, and deserves recognition".

Hats off to Nick and Helma.

Gerry Boyce  
March 29/90

## Letters

Dear Gerry Boyce:

I read with interest your letter in the Toronto Star this past Sunday. I'm sorry that I don't have that picture you wanted. Instead, your letter reminded me that I should write to you.

I am working on a biography of one of Sidney Township's most famous (in my estimation) — Jean Isabel Gunn, Jean I. Gunn, R.N., O.B.E., L.L.D., was Superintendent of Nurses at the Toronto General Hospital from 1913 to 1941. I hope to have her story published after completing it as a doctoral thesis for the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (Toronto). Meanwhile I am trying to find out about her and her family in Sidney Township.

Your name and address was given to me when I was in Bayside (in 1983) enquiring as to Jean Gunn's childhood education. I have drawn a blank on any data about her growing up in Sidney Twp. My unconfirmed data suggests that she attended Bayside Public School, Belleville High School and taught in Madoc prior to 1902 when she entered the School of Nursing at the Presbyterian Hospital in New York City. The confirmed findings are that she graduated from Albert College in 1901, was given a piece of the farm land in 1923 and is buried in the Belleville Cemetery. Perhaps while you and Anne Rector were working on the government history you came upon some information about the Gunn family. Or because of your knowledge of the area and the people you may have some suggestions where I can obtain facts about her Belleville area life.

In 1983 I spoke with Robert Amesse, librarian, Sidney Twp. and Mrs. K. McCall, secretary, Bayside Public School. I've written the editor of the Belleville Intelligencer; Albert College; and the Ontario Ministry of Education.

What little I know is that Jean's parents, Donald and Ellen Kerlie Coons, had the farm on Lot 24, Broken Front of Concession I in Sidney Township from 1898 onward. Prior to this, in 1882, (according to Jean's birth registration) Donald Gunn was a Station Agent. Apparently at some time he was a hero of the area when he prevented a train accident.

My chapter on Jean Gunn before she entered nursing training sorely lacks evidence of her growing up in Sidney. Do you have any suggestions of where I should look or to whom I should write?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

*Natalie N. Riegler*

Natalie N. Riegler, RN, BN, MPH, MA,  
3 Dromore Crescent,  
Willowdale, Ontario,  
M2R 2H4.

### NEW MEMBERS

We would like to welcome the following new members:

Mrs Marilyn Harry - Trenton  
Miss Heather Hendry - Belleville  
Mrs Laura Bush - Trenton