

Next Meeting

**Tuesday,
November 21,
1995**

*Wharf Street Debating Club,
South Front Street,
Belleville*

**Please note change of
meeting location**

7:30 Coffee

8:00 Meeting

Guest Speaker

Eugene Lang

Eugene Lang is well known throughout Belleville and Hastings County for his dedication to and encyclopedic knowledge of classical music. For almost 40 years he wrote, produced and narrated classical music programs for CJBQ. He is currently producing and narrating a classical music program for CJLX 92.3 FM.

Eugene is also a trustee on The Hastings County Board of Education, a director of the Quinte Arts Council and is active in many community organizations. In April of this year he was awarded the Ruth Burrows Volunteer Award.

But Eugene has a lighter side as evidenced by his 48 years of service as a director of the Wharf Street Debating Club, a ribald and raucous institution unique in Canada.

For over 70 years candidates for local political office have faced a noisy heckling and witty audience in the clubhouse on South Front Street. Eugene will share his memories of some of the club's more colourful and hilarious moments.

The early history of the club, dating back over 80 years, will be briefly dealt with by Belleville author C. W. Hunt.

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Outlook

The Hastings County Historical Society

Three generations of Deacon shirts

by Jean Williams

On October 17, 1995 members of the Hastings County Historical Society heard Fred Deacon describe his family's business through three generations. Diane Zegouras introduced the speaker, a man well known throughout Belleville as well as Hastings County, where he twice served as chairman of the Board of Education. For thirty years he was president of the Deacon Shirt Company, later known as Deacon Brothers Ltd. Since the closing of the family business Fred has been human resources manager for the Peterborough County Board of Education.

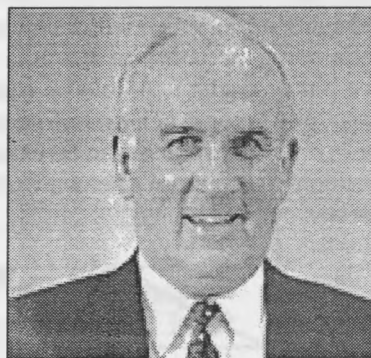
To begin his presentation Fred described his family members from the time his grandfather was born in 1869. His great grand-father was the first post master in Kingston and fought in the War of 1812. He explained that the Deacon and Finkle family were related.

In the first generation Fred's grandfather William opened a retail store on Front Street in 1897 where made-to-measure dress shirts were produced. In 1903 he opened the Deacon Shirt Company on Coleman Street and was joined by his brother who returned from Chicago. Thus the first "Deacon brothers"! At this time shirts were sold for \$6.00 a dozen.

In 1904 Fred's father joined the firm which once more moved to Front Street. The company manufactured military shirts and then moved into sports wear. Reg Hinchey joined them as designer. His garments were sold on Fifth Ave. in New York City

and were worn by Ginger Rogers in movies. Always the company aimed for quality material and soon were selling outerwear made of Grenfell fabric named for Sir Wilfred Grenfell.

During this time Bill Finkel founded the Bell Shirt and in 1936 John Deacon left his singing career in New York and joined the company. Hence the second generation of "Deacon Brothers". The



Fred Deacon

Kathy Everson photo courtesy Community Press

company began to sell shirts made of viella, a blend of wool and cotton mixed together to make one thread. The fabric was woven in Scotland and was ideal for shirts.

During World War II, the company made parkas for the army as well as electrically heated flying suits which were worn in the Battle of Britain. In 1941 the Dundas St. plant was built and the company was involved in cold weather clothing for the American army. After the war they expanded into cold weather clothing including parkas made first for Prince Philip

and later the Queen. The business grew from coast to coast with the backbone being the independent menswear store.

In 1958 Fred's father died and his Uncle John became president. A year later Fred joined the sales side of the business. In 1961 Fred and his uncle had a difference of opinion about the future of the company and in the end Fred bought his uncle's share in the business.

At the age of 24 Fred became the fourth president. In 1963 brother Don joined the company in 1968 brother Eric became the new designer. Thus the third generation of "Deacon Brothers". With modernization and new vision they expanded - down filled garments and viella shirts shipped to the U.S. And all the time the company had very fine employees, one of whom worked for 55 years, another until she was 80.

In 1985 began a connection with Alex Tilley and Tilley Endurables, with the manufacture of safari jackets and vests with hidden pockets.

Then came the advent of clothes made in the Orient, with the emphasis of trade with the orient. How could the Canadian manufacturer complete? In 1987 Deacon Brothers ceased making shirts and in 1990 decided to go out of business. Fred illustrated his talk with many photographs, and left us on an optimistic note. Eric Deacon is now manufacturing in Ottawa and he has two sons. A fourth generation in the future?

Fred Deacon was thanked by president Elizabeth Mitchell.

From the editor's bookshelf

by Lewis Zandbergen

Good For What Ails You

by Jim Cameron
published by General Store
Publishing House
219 pages, illustrated, glossary,
endnotes, bibliography

I remember the very first
"old" book I bought. It was at
an auction sale in Stirling
around 1960 and I remember



I paid the princely sum of 25
cents for an 1898 book about
animal husbandry and home
remedies. Although I fre-
quently pored through the book
reading remedies for things like
dandruff and other ailments,
I'd bought the three-inch thick
volume for its layered "man-
nequins" of horses, cows and
sheep. Whether I had thoughts
of becoming a veterinarian or
not I cannot remember—but I
still have the book in my col-
lection.

One of the remedies for dan-
druff which struck me as be-
ing rather drastic, was to
shampoo the hair and then
rinse with turpentine. I don't
know if it had the power to
rid the scalp of dandruff or
not but I can't imagine go-
ing out on a date with your
lady after a hair treatment
like that. Smoking was defi-
nitely out. No wonder they
sold so much hair tonic in the
"good" old days.

Old home remedies are the
main feature of *Good For
What Ails You* although the
author has thrown in a bit of
family history and a few old
pictures from the family al-
bum to add to the nostalgia.
Also included are several
chapters about various doc-
tors, a farmers' section and
even a section on the promo-
tion of good health written
by a minister. The latter was

medical advice freely laced
with Biblical philosophy.

Whether any of the remedies
actually worked or not is a
moot point. Although some
modern medicines are cer-
tainly derived from very an-
cient preparations used in one
form or another by our ances-

tors,
cer-
tain of
the
home

remedies contained in the
pages of this book are guar-
anteed to raise goosebumps
and cause fits of laughter,
which is after all the best
medicine.

"Put equal quantities of rum
and sweet oil into a bottle, and
before using shake them well
together. This mixture should
be applied with a soft brush to
the roots of the hair every
night; it should be tried for a
month at least before any im-
provement can be expected."
I suppose after a month with-

out any improvement, you
could always resort to drink-
ing the solution and forget
about the dandruff—live
with it.

There were several rem-
edies for freckles. "One of
the best things for freckles
is to apply sour buttermilk at
night, let it dry on the face
overnight and wash off in the
morning." or "Crush some
strawberries and rub them
over the face at night just be-
fore going to bed." I suppose
a spinster could always try
the first while the second
might appeal more to a mar-
ried lady; the thought of
climbing into the marital bed
with the odour of sour but-

termilk wafting from your
life's partner probably didn't
go over well with married
couples.

This is one book you won't
read from cover to cover (un-
less you're a reviewer) but it
will provide you with a
glimpse into the past and
home remedies which really
aren't all that far removed
from our generation. Liber-
ally illustrated with photos,
line drawings, woodcuts, and
examples of turn-of-the-cen-
tury advertising for items
which have since faded from
most newspaper pages, *Good
For What Ails You* is guaran-
teed to bring a smile to your
face.



REGISTER HERE

Yes, it is that time again

1996 is fast approaching! The society would appreciate receipt of your membership renewal as soon as possible. New members are also welcome. Please complete this form and bring it with your payment to the Society's annual meeting or send it by mail to the

**Hastings County Historical Society,
P. O. Box 1418, Belleville, Ontario K8N 5J1**

Individual	\$15 _____	Life Member	\$150 _____
Family	\$20 _____	Corporate Sponsor	\$50 _____
Senior/Student	\$10 _____	Women's Institute/ Organization	\$15 _____

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

Whisky and Ice - Watch for the publication this month of *Whisky and Ice* by our executive member C.W. Bill Hunt (not to be confused with his son Bill who writes for *The Intelligencer*). The book is a sequel to *Booze, Boats, and Billions* and deals with Ben Kerr of Hamilton, a rum runner during the American Prohibition. The story has Quinte connections as Bill makes clear in a splendid article "Return of the Rum Runners" in the fall issue of *County Magazine*. The issue also contains articles on Hyatt Canning of Cherry Valley and early Prince Edward County photographers. Hats off to Steve Campbell for this excellent quarterly (including his own humorous article on photo radar, an aspect of recent Ontario history).

Hastings County provides the setting for *Away*, Jane Urquhart's third novel, published in 1993 by McLelland & Stewart. *Away* explores a family's complex and layered past, mostly in the Madoc/Queensboro area in the 1860s. The reader will be interested in references to Orange-Catholic rivalry, Moira Lake (not a lake for fishing because the corpses of slaughtered Iroquois produced flesh-eating fish), and Colborne ("a real hell hole"). She refers to our Gold Rush: "a chattering, laughing, wagonful of whores from Montreal appeared ... proudly brandished pickaxes and pans." Jane cautions that the book is fiction and some geographical locations "are either a product of the imagination or have been worked on and transformed by the imagination." This may explain why Elzevir Township is sited in Northumberland County. In short, an interesting and un-

sual approach to history.

CANADA REMEMBERS. A Thanksgiving weekend parade (including vintage military vehicles) and an outdoor religious service highlighted the Hasty P's celebrations. Veterans Week (November 4 to 12) and Remembrance Day observances will continue the program.

Did you know?

1. The Canadian Forces Band traces its history to 1939 when the Royal Canadian Air Force Band was organized in Trenton to support the Royal Visit of King George VI. In 1940 this volunteer band was officially designated as a full-time regular force band and moved to RCAF Station Rockcliffe in Ottawa.
2. There are four heritage markers in front of the main building at Sir James Whitney School, Belleville. The most recent went up in October to mark the school's 125th anniversary. This must be a record number of plaques for any school.
3. A new plaque honours Susanna Moodie. The Douro Historical committee and the Ontario Heritage Foundation erected it to mark the Douro homestead, about 1.6 kilometres north of Lakefield.
4. Artist Stephen Snider recently completed his largest piece of work: a 30-by-60 foot mural on the back of the former Theo's Restaurant building in Trenton. It depicts an early market day at the old Town Hall.
5. The Madoc Historical Foundation held a successful "Fall Splendour Shunpikers Car Rally." First prize for the most questions answered correctly—a gift certificate from Wingle Inn B and B in Palmer

Rapids—went to Jan Mason and Susan Traynor.

6. Belleville City Council is considering what to do with the steam locomotive in Zwick's Park. An asbestos problem has led to the locomotive being covered with an orange tarpaulin. The Parks and Recreation Department has sought public input and assistance and council may decide on November 13 what the engine's future will be.

7. Thurlow Township Hall in Cannifton is no longer the seat of municipal government. Township officials have moved from the 1853-vintage building into the more commodious former office complex of Corby Distilleries at Corbyville.

Wanted ...

1. Information on Grimsthorpe Township and the Gilmour Gold Mine by Michael Dawber of Box 1010, Snow Road Station, Ontario K0K 2R0.
2. Genealogical information on James Geddes m. Clarissa Skinkle; David Smith m. Leonora Williams; Benjamin Smith; Samuel N. Smith;

Thomas D. Appleby m. Mary Jane Smith, by Carol Martzowka, 707 Piper Drive, Saginaw, Michigan, USA, 48604.

Barney Moorhouse, editor of the *Times Traveller* in the *The Bancroft Times*, quotes from North Hastings School Inspector Mackintosh's 1903 report, covering 109 schools. The average salary of the 24 male teachers was \$351.68 and that for the 99 female teachers was \$283.94. Most schools had suitable seats and desks. Mackintosh noted; "When so much money and pains are being extended in the construction and furnishing of commodious, well-planned, well-built, and attractive private residence, and when such an extraordinary amount of intelligence and care is being given to the housing of the horses, cattle, and other domestic animals, it is surely not too much to hope that the buildings in which the children of the country spend the greater part of their waking hours should be, at least, sanitary, comfortable, and somewhat attractive in their appearance and surroundings."

The Society's sympathy is extended to Nick Mika, Belleville author and publisher, on the death of his wife Helma. Helma was Nick's partner in every way. Together they authored numerous books, many relating to the history of our area. Together they published a wide variety of new volumes on Canadian history and reprinted a vast number of important heritage books. Together they were longtime supporters of our Society. Together they silkscreened the first advertising posters for the Hastings County Museum in 1961 and were donors of books for draws at many society meetings. We remember and celebrate Helma's life.

The Society's sympathy is also extended to the family of Winnifred (Winn) Donaldson. Winn was a longtime supporter and volunteer worker for our Society and the Hastings County Museum. She was an enthusiastic, friendly and caring individual. This writer also has many happy memories of her participation in BCIVS adult classes at the Quinte Living Centre.



Your County Museum



257 Bridge Street East, Belleville, Ontario, K8N 1P4 (613) 962-2329



Yuletide at Home

Sunday, December 17

This event is hosted by the Hastings County Museum Auxiliary. Guests will enjoy traditional holiday refreshments and a relaxing visit in the serene Victorian surroundings.

Drop in between 1:00 and 4:00 p.m. Cost is \$4 adults and \$2 children plus G.S.T.

Christmas Special Events

Punched Tin Ornaments

Sunday November 26

In this adult workshop participants will create punched tin Christmas ornaments. Tin angels were used to decorate tree tops as early as 1850. A variety of ornament patterns will be available to participants. Patterns are cut from tin and decorated with holes created by nail punching. Please bring garden gloves. All materials provided. Cost is \$20 G.S.T. included. Call 962-2329 to preregister.

Cedar Wreath Making

Sunday, December 3

In this annual workshop participants create a festive natural wreath for their home. Children accompanying participants will be busy creating pin-prick gift tags, paper chains, and quilled snowflake ornaments, watching movies and enjoying refreshments. Please bring two wire hangers and a pair of garden shears. Fresh cedar and festive red ribbons provided. Cost is \$20, G.S.T. included, per participant and accompanying children are admitted free of charge. Call 962-2329 to preregister.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMME

Sunday, December 10

Children will enjoy puppet show, Christmas stories and make a traditional cornucopia that can be filled with holiday treats. Refreshments will be served.

Drop in between 1 and 4 p.m. Cost is \$4 adults and \$2 children plus G.S.T.

Christmas at Glanmore

Experience the Victorian elegance of Glanmore at Christmas. Festively decorated for the Yuletide season, Glanmore offers a refreshing break from the hustle and bustle of this busy time. Bring family and friends and discover how Christmas was celebrated in years gone by. The Museum is open from 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday.

Congratulations to our dedicated volunteers!!

The staff of the Hastings County Museum is pleased to announce that three of our volunteers received 200 hour pins.

Congratulations and thanks go to Ann Cuddihy, Debbie Crouse and Margaret Hainer for all their hard work.

Carolling

Wednesday, December 13

Co-sponsored by the Belleville General Hospital. Participants will meet



at the front doors of the hospital at 7:00 pm. for refreshments and the tree of lights ceremony then carol through the neighbourhood ending at the Museum



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