



Historically Speaking

The Newsletter of the Cobourg and District
Historical Society

April 2020 — Issue 312

Based on the advice from the Town of Cobourg and the HKPR
District Health Unit, Cobourg and District Historical Society meetings



are cancelled until further notice. We will email updates as the
situation changes. Visit <https://www.cobourg.ca/en/covid-19> for
information from the Town of Cobourg.

Future Cobourg Historical Society Programs

Date	Speaker	Topic
March 24, 2020 	Leigh Barnum	The Barnum Family History
April 28, 2020 	Dave Patterson	The Extraordinary Number of Indian Gifts to the World
May 26, 2020 	Randy Barber	Wine and Cheese social at the Loft Discussion of Churchill followed by screening of <i>The Darkest Hour</i>

Websites

Our remaining meetings for this season are cancelled but there is an enormous amount of historical material online to enjoy. For hours of reading pleasure visit some of the following sites to enjoy fascinating, Cobourg-related, historical material:

- Video about the restoration of Victoria Hall: youtube.com/watch?v=a-OF2lpcXs8
- Cobourg Museum Foundation: northumberlandheritage.ca
- Cobourg History: www.cobourghistory.ca/
- Ontario cemetery records: ocfa.islandnet.com/
- Ontario Historical Plaques: www.ontarioplaques.com
- Architectural Conservancy of Ontario: aontario.ca
- 1878 Northumberland County Atlas in Google Earth:
www.lakeshoregenealogicalsociety.ca/history-area/maps/northumberland1878

If you are interested in Cobourg's government, both current and historical Council minutes, bylaws and other material is searchable at: cobourg.civicweb.net/Portal/VirtualLibrary.aspx

If silly stories of the paranormal amuse you watch: youtube.com/watch?v=FtSAScE7vbU

Don't forget that the Cobourg and District Historical Society website (cdhs.ca) has all CDHS newsletters since 2010, many issues of *Historical Review* and hundreds of vintage Cobourg related postcards.

Commemorating our Fallen Heros

Randy Barber

John Fairhurst, Charles Wilson, Elmer Hutton, Samuel Angrove, James Sweetman; names we may not recognize but all were Cobourg men who made the supreme sacrifice in WWI. One hundred and six years ago they marched to a brass band from downtown Cobourg to the train station, where they said goodbye to their loved ones for the final time. Between 1914 and 1918 they fought in France and Belgium in support of the Mother Country against the Huns. Their young lives were cut short in the trenches along with thousands of other Allied troops.

To commemorate their lives and efforts in the cause of freedom, their names will live forevermore in the New Amherst community because of a partnership between the Town of Cobourg and the builder. Residential streets within the grid bear their names for posterity, ensuring our everlasting gratitude for their final sacrifice.

To learn more of these men, I recommend reading *Memories From a Grey Wooden Box* written by local historian and CDHS member Gerry Brown. Through a mix of facts and fiction Mr. Brown pays homage to many of these men and others from our community and what it was like to live here during the war years.

My family and I are proud to make our home on Elmer Hutton Street, knowing that the young man who died so long ago, is remembered in perpetuity. We applaud this initiative and hope that other streets within the community will also bear names of other Cobourgians who marched off to war so long ago.

The Pedleys and the Congregational Church

Leona Woods

When sorting through a box of old photographs recently, Verna McLean came across a photo labelled “Rev. Charles Pedley’s Grave, Cold Springs Congregational Church”. As always, there is a story behind a photo.



Reverend Charles Pedley was a man of considerable influence. He was born in England in 1820 and died in Cold Springs at the age of 51 in 1872. He and his wife emigrated to Canada in 1857 and Charles became the minister of the Congregational Church in St. John’s, Newfoundland.¹ Pedley was an excellent preacher and his church in Newfoundland was very successful. He loved the colony and its people and wrote a *History of Newfoundland*, a significant work capturing the colourful stories of the place. After seven years, he moved to a

¹ Congregational Churches were independent of each other, and were self-sufficient in terms of finances and governance

church in Guelph, and then in 1866 to Cold Springs. Life was challenging. He did not earn much money, was unemployed between churches, and had seven sons to raise alone after his wife died.

Once Charles settled in Cold Springs, though, he flourished. He took on the Congregational Church in Cobourg as other preachers had done before him. This church was located on the south side of King Street in the current parking lot of William Academy. Charles made these churches self-supporting¹ and grew his congregation which consisted of many well-known families in town, including the Fields.

Reverend Pedley was well respected within the church organization and was scheduled to open the Congregational Church Union Conference shortly before his early death.

Four of Charles's sons became preachers and Reverend Hugh Pedley's career eclipsed his father's. Hugh was the minister of the Cold Springs and Cobourg Congregational Churches from 1877-1887. He married Elizabeth Field, the eldest daughter of Corelli Collard Field, a merchant who was the mayor of Cobourg in 1886. Hugh was an outstanding, idealistic preacher who attracted large crowds to hear his optimistic sermons. He believed, as did his father, in the unification of the churches, and he saw this unification as the first step in social reform. After spending ten years in Cobourg and Cold Springs, Hugh took up ministries in Winnipeg and Montreal. He was elected to many positions within the church hierarchy, always working for unification. He died in 1923, two years before his dream of a United Church of Canada became a reality.

An excerpt from the *War and the New Earth* sermon preached by Rev. Hugh Pedley, D.D., in Emmanuel Congregational Church, Montreal, Sunday evening, May 30th, 1915 is typical of the tone of his sermons:

The book of Revelation, while it has many tragic aspects, is not a tragedy. A tragedy always has a mournful outcome. It ends in sadness. So the play of Othello finishes with the death of Desdemona, and the suicide of Othello. The play of Hamlet ends with the taking off of the distraught Ophelia, and the melancholy Dane himself. But the book of Revelation with its great drama of human history, with its references to war, famine and pestilence, with its description of fierce beasts and malicious devils brings us at last to a sight of the new heavens and the new earth, the new Jerusalem:

Pondering Pandemics

Judith Noel Goulin

It's a staycation for the nation here in Canada, but not the one that any of us would have chosen. Practically the entire world is in a time out, a major detention unlike anything we might have experienced in high school. Little by little, both locally and all across Canada, our freedoms have been taken away from us: freedom to go to work, to worship, to roam, to eat out, go to parties, to get a haircut, even to play in parks. We must line up, keep our social distance, sanitize our hands and perhaps even wear gloves and masks. But in reality we are probably not in bad shape in the midst of this cataclysmic 2020 World COVID-19 Pandemic. How are we doing in Cobourg and all over the country? Thus far, in Northumberland County, there is little sickness and only one death. *[As this newsletter "goes to press" on April 17, 2020, there are 14 confirmed cases in Northumberland County and 1 death but no new cases have been reported since April 1. Ontario has 9,525 cases with 564 new cases reported **today** alone. There are now 30,095 confirmed cases in Canada, 9,729 recoveries, 1,195 deaths. The United States has 690,279 cases, 57,125 recoveries and 36,118 deaths.]*

So, taking everything into account, we are faring quite well, it seems. Canada's death rate has not been as high as that of many other countries. Medical care is in good shape, thanks to all tiers of the medical profession who are working very long stress-filled hours. Many Canadians are working from home. We can still obtain groceries and other necessities. In this, the 21st century there is still much to be grateful for, even in the midst of the pandemic. Assuming that none of us had contracted the virus, we can all survive shaggy-haired isolation for a while.

To give some perspective, let's look back to see what was going on in the world a hundred years ago. In 1918 Spanish Flu roared into Canada and much of the world with the force of a tsunami. The flu arrived first in the port cities: Quebec City, Montreal and Halifax, then spread westward across the country.

In my generation the Spanish Flu was just another line in my high school history text. Truth be told, it would probably not be a question on the final exam so there was no need to memorize a date or waste time thinking about it.

When time and maturity joined hands my thinking changed, because the Spanish Flu touched my family personally, tragically. The Flu Epidemic *did* matter, as does all history. The highly contagious Spanish Flu was a devastating and previously unknown form of

influenza, that prevailed between 1918 and 1920. This international pandemic took the lives 55,000 Canadians. The majority of those who died were between the ages of 20 and 40, still in the prime of their lives. For many families there would be no next generation.

The Spanish Flu invaded the Timmins area in 1918, when my father was not yet two years old. Timmins Museum Director-Curator Karen Bachmann relates that: "In order to make sure that the Flu didn't spread too much, the town decided that there would be no big gatherings of people. So like today, businesses, schools and churches were closed, but only for a few months that fall. With the situation easing a bit, in an era when almost everyone went to church, the churches were re-opened for Christmas services, but were closed again right after that.

But at Christmas there was no joy in the Noel family. My father Charles grew up without a mother, a fact my mother tossed out one day to my teenage self. It took a long time to realize why my father never talked about his childhood.



My father's mother, Lea Noel, the woman I would never call Grandma, died of the Spanish Flu a month before Christmas in 1918.

Between September and December of that year the flu stole 120 people in the Timmins area from their families. Grandmother Lea was 24 years old. She left behind my grandfather, my father, not yet two years old, and his three

siblings, ranging in age from five years to two months.



A hundred years ago, men went to work while women stayed home to keep house and raise the children. What then does a widowed man do when he is left alone with four young children? My grandfather had no family in Timmins, since he had gone there alone to find work. Lea, however, had family there: older sisters and her parents who ran a boarding house. Together they managed to care for three of the children while my grandfather worked but the nursing infant created a real dilemma. Another solution for her care had to be found quickly. A neighbour had just

suffered the heartbreaking deaths of her two very young children from influenza. At the time the woman was still nursing her younger one so she offered to take in the motherless baby and nurse her. Eventually, my grandfather gave his permission for the neighbour family to adopt the baby.

The fallout from the Spanish Flu as it relates to my family history is devastating. The child care arrangement at the boarding house could not last forever, because everyone was busy dealing with their own lives, especially Lea's parents running a business. Another child died of diphtheria. In time, my grandfather moved to Windsor to look for work. He sent for his son Charles, but the other child, a daughter, remained in Timmins. Later, she lived with her father and brother for just a short time before she married. So the Noel family, wrenched apart by two deaths, and an adoption, were never to live together as a family again.

How many Canadians will die of COVID-19 in 2020? We are living history right now, but this chapter isn't over yet. Across Canada there must be thousands of families with stories like mine about the Spanish Flu, told by descendants like me. In this age where we crave information, there will be myriad books written, films produced and more information on the Internet than we can absorb, but who will tell our families' stories? Us.

Perhaps you need a project during your staycation. Rather than a detention, look at this time as an opportunity. Think about writing your own stories so that your descendants will know what happened in your family during the COVID-19 pandemic in Canada in 2020.

Member Matters

The Cobourg and District Historical Society customarily holds its Annual General Meeting as part of our usual April meeting. There we elect officers, report on CDHS finances and review the year's highlights. Due to COVID-19 the planned meeting is impossible. Therefore the current officers have agreed to serve until we can again have meetings. If you have any concerns with this decision or want a financial report prior to our AGM, please contact our President, Leona Woods, or our Treasurer, George Kamphorst. Their contact information is on the last page of the newsletter.

All 2019-2020 memberships will be extended to compensate for cancelled meetings. Unfortunately, we have no way to deliver Leona's cookies!

A Different Century, a Different Mask



Announcements

Canceled!

All events that are normally listed here have been postponed or permanently cancelled. Most organizations have websites so verify event status prior to making your plans.

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