



Historically Speaking

The Newsletter of the Cobourg and
District Historical Society

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From Forest to Farmland: Surveying Hamilton Township

Have you ever wondered as you were driving around Hamilton Township, why there are so many little roads with names like Wallace Jibb and Stu Black that dead-end at farms or why some routes like Telephone Road are not continuous or about other idiosyncrasies of our local roads? You may not know the reasons but it took George Parker's insatiable curiosity and amazing research skills to find the answers to these quirky things and much more.

George's presentation will focus on the series of events that preceded the settlement of Hamilton Township and story of what happened when the settlers arrived. We will journey with George through some very early history as it relates to his topic, learn about the decisions made by Lord Simcoe and others regarding virtually impenetrable forested land to enable settlement and the development of a template that would determine lot size, configuration and road allowances. As we journey through the process we might even become more familiar with terms like furlong, chain, statute labour and Pathmaster.

Our January meeting will be an interesting evening's enlightenment and entertainment as to why Hamilton Township looks the way it does today. Join us on Tuesday, January 26, in Victoria Hall's Citizens' Forum. Doors open at 7:00 PM and the meeting begins at 7:30 PM. Coffee and cookies will be available before the meeting. All are welcome, so bring a friend!

Our Previous Meeting

Our November meeting was the very successful Fourth Annual Trivia Quiz held in the Legion Village Pub.



Future Meetings

Tuesday February 23, 2016 , Allan Kirby <i>Historical Folk Songs from Eastern Ontario</i>	Tuesday March 22, 2016 , Ted Rafuse <i>The Ontario Car Ferry Company: Cobourg to Rochester</i>
Tuesday April 26, 2016 , Tom Holden <i>The 1878 Northumberland Atlas in Google Earth</i> and our Annual General Meeting	Tuesday May 24, 2016, Bus Trip, <i>Museum Secrets: Trenton and Belleville</i> Details to be announced

Membership Matters

Historical Review

Leona Woods has been hard at work preparing *The Historical Review* #32 for publication. She has promised to have it available on our website in early February.

Speaker Introductions

The Programme Committee requires volunteers to introduce and thank our speakers at our regular meetings. We provide the biographical information from the speakers as well as tips on crafting a great introduction and thank you! If you are willing to take on this important task at an upcoming meeting, please contact any member of the Programme Committee.

Very Rewarding Work

Our Programme Committee has been hard at work brainstorming ideas for an exciting season of speakers and events! If you have suggestions for future guests or wish to join the Programme Committee, please feel free to approach any of the members.

Be a Published Author!

The CDHS newsletter, *Historically Speaking*, needs additional contributors. If you come across an interesting article in an old newspaper, find a trunk of early photographs, research the life of a relative, have a story of hijinks as a youth in Cobourg or other material relating to the history of Cobourg we would love to include it in our newsletter. Articles can range from a few sentences to several pages. Contact Ken Strauss at ken.strauss@sympatico.ca to discuss your ideas.

Time is Running Out

Time is running to own the *1878 Historical Atlas of Northumberland County*, generously donated to the society by our member, Isabel Pankhurst. This atlas will be the topic of our April meeting. Tickets will be available at our January meeting, at \$2.00 each or 3 for \$5.00. Don't miss out on purchasing tickets. The winning ticket will be drawn at our January 26th meeting. If you are unable to be at the meeting, but want tickets, call Judith at (905) 372 7684. Tickets can be held in your name.

Announcements

Brighton History Open House 2016 is coming!

The show this year, "Riding The Rails", will explore the railway history of Brighton from laying the rails to the closing of stations in the 1970s followed by the rejuvenation of Brighton's local train station by the creation of Memory Junction Museum. The events include:

Thursday, February 18, 2016, 6:30 pm (doors open at 6 pm)

"Riding The Rails" Presentation, history stories, train songs, a train station set and pop-up speakers. And, of course, The History Guy, Dan Buchanan, providing lots of interesting details about our train history.

Saturday, February 20, 2016, 10 am to 4 pm

Open House: Local historians will be there to chat and you can see many interesting displays about local history. A very old and very special artifact from Memory Junction Museum will be on display! As always, enjoy the Heritage Tea, provided by the three Women's Institutes (\$5.00 a plate).

Sunday, February 21, 2016, 2 pm (doors open at 1:30 pm)

An encore performance of "Riding The Rails" as on Thursday night - once more with feeling!

Click here to download the poster for [Brighton History Open House 2016](#).

Port Hope Heritage Fair

The Port Hope Historical Society will sponsor a Heritage fair on Sunday, May 1, 2016 from 10am to 4pm at Lion's Centre, Thomas St., Port Hope. For further information phone (905)885-2981 eMail info@porthopehistorical.ca.

The New Year's Levee: A Uniquely Canadian Tradition

Alison Torrie Lapaire

A lovely tradition familiar to many Cobourg residents is the annual New Year's Day Levee. The annual reception is held at Victoria Hall, which is of course Cobourg's Town Hall, on January 1st of every year. The levee in Cobourg is part of a wider tradition across the country where government leaders welcome citizens and celebrate the opportunity of the year ahead. Levees are held by the Governor General, the Lieutenant Governors of the provinces, the military, several municipalities and some religious groups. They mark the start of the new year and give a chance for the public to greet their representatives. Any citizen of any age is welcome to attend and many families have made it a tradition to attend together every year.

The history of the levee dates back to the late 1600s and early 1700s in France when King Louis XIV made it a custom to receive his male subjects in his bedchamber first thing in the morning. This practice, called "Levee du Soleil", which is French for "the rising of the Sun", eventually spread across Europe.

By the 18th century, Great Britain and Ireland held levees that were formal court receptions hosted by the sovereign or their representative in the early afternoon. And in North America, levees were held by the governor on behalf of the monarch. And while today families and children are welcomed at the modern levee, back then only men were received at these events. It was actually during the Second World War that levees first became open to women as well as men, as they were attended by female officers of the armed forces.

What is particularly interesting is that the levee has become a really uniquely Canadian celebration and is rarely seen outside of Canada these days. And it was in Canada that the levee became associated with New Year's Day. The fur traders had a tradition of paying their respects to the master of the fort, who was their government representative, on New Year's Day. And this is the custom that was subsequently adopted by the Governor General and Lieutenant Governors as well as other municipal officials who host levees today. The earliest levee on record in Canada was held on January 1, 1646 in the Château St. Louis. The Governor of New France took the opportunity to not only wish a happy new year to his subjects, but also to inform his guests about important news from France and the state of colonial affairs. The subjects who attended the levee were, in turn, expected to renew their pledge of allegiance to the crown. In colonial times, the guests were treated to wine and

cheeses from France. As wine didn't travel particularly well across the ocean, it was often heated with alcohol and spices to mask its cloudiness and sour taste.

The tradition of a New Year's Day levee was carried on by British colonial governors in Canada, who replaced the wine with whisky which travelled better, but was still mixed with goat's milk, nutmeg and cinnamon to improve its taste. As previously mentioned, the tradition of a New Year's Day levee has become almost entirely a Canadian observance. Those attending the annual New Year's Day levee in Cobourg have the chance to exchange new year' greetings and best wishes with friends and neighbours, and with representatives of the municipal government. And while the somewhat more boisterous parties of colonial times have been replaced with more formal receptions of the present-day, they are still a really unique Canadian tradition to mark the holidays and the new year.

Websites

There are many websites with great Cobourg-related historical material. Visit any of the following:

Cobourg Museum Foundation: northumberlandheritage.ca

Snippets of Cobourg history and current happenings: www.hardscrabble.ca

Cobourg History: www.cobourghistory.ca/

Ontario cemetery records: ocfa.islandnet.com/

Ontario Historical Plaques: www.ontarioplaques.com

Architectural Conservancy of Ontario: <http://www.arconserv.ca/>

1878 Northumberland County Atlas in Google Earth:

<http://www.lakeshoregenealogicalsociety.ca/history-area/maps/northumberland1878>

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