

Historically Speaking

The Newsletter of the Cobourg and District
Historical Society

September 2018 — Issue 298

Major James Morrow Walsh

On Tuesday, September 25, we will welcome back Brian Porter for another outstanding presentation. Last October Brian and his wife excited our members with a re-creation of a speech by Sir John A. MacDonald. This time Brian will wear an original 1873 Northwest Mounted Police uniform and provide insights into the life and times of Major James Morrow Walsh.

Born in Prescott, Ontario, Major Walsh was one of the original nine officers of the NWMP set up by Sir John A. Macdonald in 1873. He endured the Great March West in 1874 and set up Fort Walsh in the Cypress Hills in 1875. His real claim to fame was meeting and befriending Sioux Chief Sitting Bull in 1877, when thousands of Sioux came to Canada after the defeat of Lt. Col. Custer. Walsh's headquarters became the Wood Mountain post, among Sitting Bull and 5,000 Sioux. During this time, Walsh was famous in the American press as "Sitting Bull's Boss". In reality Walsh was unable to fulfill his orders to convince Sitting Bull to return to the United States. The Canadian government decided that Walsh's friendship with Sitting Bull was an obstacle to the Sioux's return to the United States and in 1880 he was transferred to Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan. Soon after his transfer he took health leave and returned to Ontario. He reluctantly resigned his commission three years later.

Join us for Brian's presentation on Tuesday, September 25, at Victoria Hall. Doors open at 7:00 pm for coffee and cookies before the meeting begins at 7:30 pm. Admission, including refreshments, is free for members and \$5 for non-members. Annual membership is \$25 for individuals and \$30 for a family. All are welcome so bring a friend or two!

Our Previous Meeting

The Way We Were

For our meeting in the Victoria Hall Concert Hall we were joined by Dianne Brock of Cobourg Yester-years together with representatives from The Sports Hall of Fame, The Lakeshore Genealogical Society, The Architectural Conservancy, The Sifton



Cook
Museum,
The
Cobourg
Library



and Northumber-land County Archives and a number of private collectors. The event was well attended and, with dozens of mementoes, a challenging computer based history quiz and cash bar, was enjoyed by all.



Future Meetings

<p>Tuesday, October 23, 2018 Citizens' Forum, Victoria Hall, 7:30pm</p>	<p>Christopher Dummit <i>Unbuttoned: The Secret Life of William Lyon Mackenzie King</i></p>
<p>Tuesday, November 27, 2018 Citizens' Forum, Victoria Hall, 7:30pm</p>	<p>Dan Buchanan <i>38 Hours to Montréal</i></p>
<p>Tuesday, February 26, 2019 Citizens' Forum, Victoria Hall, 7:30pm</p>	<p>Gerry Brown <i>Armistice 18 Historical Fiction Novel</i></p>
<p>Tuesday, March 26, 2019 Citizens' Forum, Victoria Hall, 7:30pm</p>	<p>Judith Goulin <i>Jackson and Jex: Renowned Cobourg Builders</i></p>
<p>Tuesday, April 23, 2019 Citizens' Forum, Victoria Hall, 7:30pm</p>	<p>Annual General Meeting TBA Cobourg Sports History</p>
<p>Wednesday, May 15, 2019 Citizens' Forum, Victoria Hall, 7:30pm</p>	<p>Hugh Brewster, Moderator A Panel to Debate: <i>The Secret Diaries of Susanna Moodie</i> End of season social event</p>

Announcements

Lakeshore Genealogical Society

On October 11 former CDHS President Allison Torrie Lapaire will present a history of “The Canadian Flag”. Lakeshore Genealogical Society meetings are on the second Thursday of each month and are held in the Rotary Room, Cobourg Public Library, 200 Ontario Street, Cobourg and starts at 6:30pm. Visitors are welcome.

Waterfront Statue Planned

Cobourg Council has approved providing \$5,000 towards the installation of a waterfront statue of Fern Blodgett. Fern was a radio operator on a Norwegian merchant ship during the Battle of the Atlantic in World War II. Due to the danger of the job women were not allowed to serve on Canadian or American ships in wartime. To circumvent the restrictions Blodgett managed to get herself accepted by a Norwegian Captain. For much more on Fern and the planned statue see John Draper’s report at <https://www.cobourgblog.com/news-2018/statue-of-wartime-female-sparks-planned/>

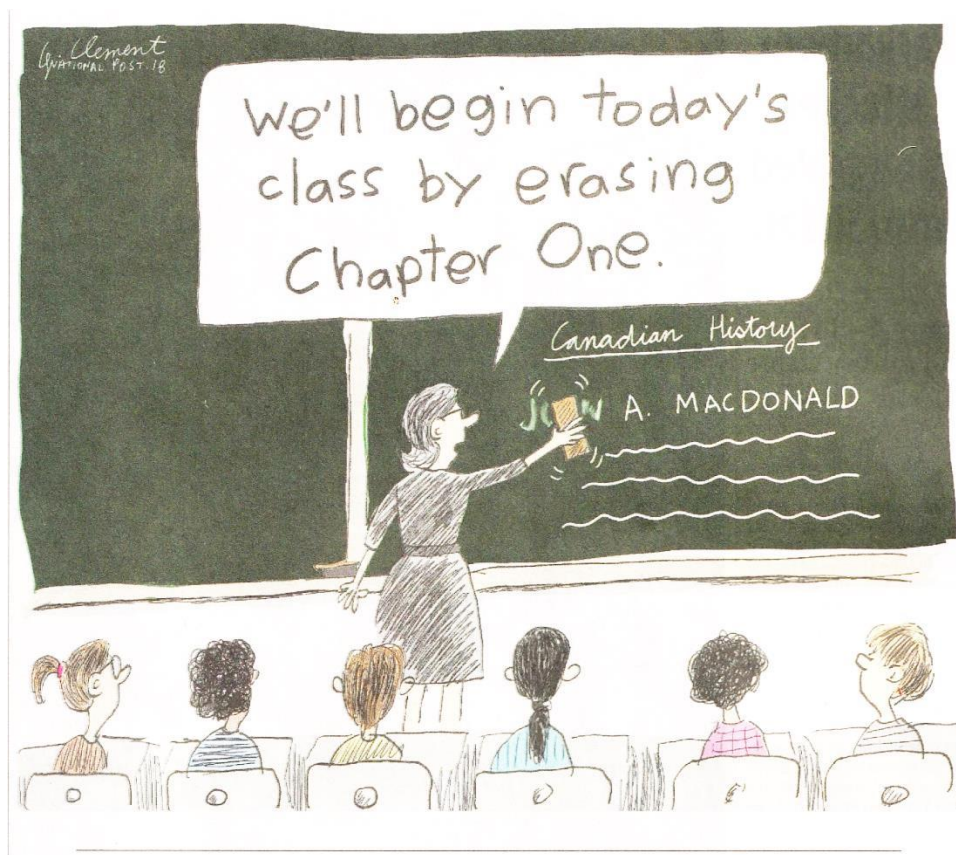


Brampton Historical Society

Cobourg’s appeal as a historical tour destination has made its way to Brampton! With help from CDHS member Rob Hunter the Brampton group choose to travel eastward. A sold out bus with 55 members came to Cobourg on this year’s field trip. Rob, working with Brampton Historical Society President Michael Avis, arranged visits to Victoria Hall and the Marie Dressler House. Their lunch was at St. Peter’s church catered by the Dutch Oven. Hopefully this will be the start of many more tourists visiting our beautiful and historic town.

***Damnatio Memoriae* Continues**

The sanitising of Canada's history continues apace. Ottawa's Langevin Block, named after Sir



Hector-Louis Langevin who was an ardent federalist and a Father of Confederation, is now called "The Office of the Prime Minister and the Privy Council". The Langevin Bridge in Calgary has been renamed and is now called "The Reconciliation Bridge". Even in Cobourg there have been calls to rename Cobourg Harbour's Langevin Pier (sometimes called the "West Pier").

There have been calls to rename Toronto's Ryerson University which was named after the famous educator Egerton Ryerson. The University of Victoria has removed the name of Joseph Trutch, British Columbia's first lieutenant-governor, from one of its dormitories. The dorm now has the memorable name of "Lansdowne Residence #1".

The City of Victoria packed up the bronze statue of Sir John A. Macdonald that formerly stood in front of their City Hall and replaced it with a small plaque. The Law Society of British Columbia removed a statue of the province's first chief justice, Matthew Begbie, from its foyer.

When will the destruction of our history stop?

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