

Historically Speaking

The Newsletter of the Cobourg and District

Historical Society

September 2021 — Issue 325

I hope that you have had an enjoyable summer and were able to spend quality time with friends and family.

Thank you to the members who answered our survey questionnaire, whether you would attend “in-person” meetings. The survey results were 65% YES and 35% NO, with a few email replies of “It depends”. We investigated several options for “in-person” meetings:

- The Citizens’ Forum, our regular meeting venue, would be too small for social distancing. We asked to use the Concert Hall where social distancing would be possible. Both rooms are closed to the end of year (as of this writing).
- Booking other venues (the library, local hotel space) were excellent options until we realized the extra technology required to mount an “in-person” and concurrent “online” event, would not be cost effective nor did we have the expertise to handle it ourselves.

After considering these points we expect that for the remainder of 2021 we expect to be hosting online Zoom meetings. We’ll see what 2022 brings and hope that live meetings will be possible at that time. Our exciting programme for 2021–2022 follows.

Thank you for your past support. Please connect with myself or anyone on the Executive when you have questions or comments.

Best Wishes,

Carla Jones and the CDHS Executive Team

PS - Are you a member wishing to attend an online event and have been unable to sign in? Give us a call. We may be able to help.

Temperance, Tonics or Both?

Join us on-line via **Zoom, Tuesday evening, September 28, 2021 at 7:30 p.m.**, and learn about two celebrated women and discover their connections to Cobourg.

Please register in advance for this webinar:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_HAkaIHMHRJ6PfKd-ZVZJJA

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

Robert Washburn will present Letitia Youmans, a Canadian school teacher who became an activist for the temperance movement. Youmans founded and served as the first president of the Ontario chapter of the Women's Christian Temperance Union.

Carla Jones will present Lydia Pinkham, the iconic maker and marketer of the company's famous "Vegetable Compound" and other remedies meant to relieve female complaints among other ailments.

Robert Washburn is an award-winning educator in the Journalism Program at Loyalist College, where he teaches new and emerging technologies in journalism. A practicing journalist for nearly 40 years, he is known locally for his weekly current affairs radio show, *Consider This Northumberland*, covering local politics and community life. His hyperlocal news website, <https://consider-this.ca/>, is an archive of his journalism and academic work. Washburn is a member of the James Cockburn



Society and the author of several history plays about Cockburn, the first speaker of the House of Commons and the Father of Confederation for Northumberland County.



Carla Jones, our CDHS President, joined the CDHS in 2011. She immediately volunteered to be our newsletter distributor and moved on to further roles as our Secretary and then Membership Director. Although Carla's career has been in the software business as a Sales and Marketing executive, she has enjoyed a long-time love of history.

Cobourg and District Historical Society Programme 2021–2022

All meetings start at 7:30 p.m. on the 4th Tuesday of each month except as noted below.

September 28, 2021 by Zoom

Temperance, Tonics or Both?: Presenting two women with a Cobourg connection: Letitia Youmans, famous as an activist in the Temperance movement and Lydia Pinkham, the lady behind the successful product, “Vegetable Compound” a woman’s herbal “tonic”.

October 26, 2021 by Zoom

Cobourg Ingenuity: Over 50 patents were filed by ingenious Cobourg residents between 1870 and 1918. Hear about patents and why they matter. Learn the stories of a few of our successful inventors, our dabblers and the weird!

November 23, 2021 by Zoom

To be announced

December 7, 2021 by Zoom

Canadians Under Attack December 7, 1941: An additional meeting in memory of the 80th Anniversary of the Pearl Harbour attack. Tim Cook an historian at the Canadian War Museum and member of the Order of Canada, will present.

January 25, 2022 (Expected to be an “in person” event)

Trivia Night, Social, Membership Drive: To be held at the Legion Village Pub, 111 Hibernia Street, Cobourg. Details to follow.

February 22, 2022 (Expected to be an “in-person” event)

Trent Severn Waterway: Saluting the human ingenuity and history of The Trent Severn Waterway.

March 22, 2022 (Expected to be an “in person” event)

Maureen Jennings - The Murdoch Mysteries Award Winning Author: Ms. Jennings will speak about her inspiration for the Murdoch mystery stories, her attention to historic detail and accuracy, and her role as creative consultant on the series. She would like to share her love of history and her ‘treasures’ which she hopes will enthrall others as well.

April 26, 2022 (Expected to be an “in person” event)

Rum Runners - The story of Ben Kerr and Prohibition: An exciting story of the roaring twenties in Ontario where rum runners challenged the storms of Lake Ontario to smuggle booze to the American side. Hear the story of Ben Kerr, the most notorious of the bunch, who ran his last load of booze out of Presqu'ile and ended up crushed by February ice near Colborne.

May 24, 2022 (TBA)

An “*in-person*” social accompanied with an outing or special presentation is planned. Details will be published in a future issue of *Historically Speaking*.



Spanish Flu, 1918

Cobourg Websites

For many years there have been three major websites devoted to Cobourg's history: Cobourg and District Historical Society (<https://cdhs.ca/>), Cobourg History (<https://cobourghistory.com/>) and the Sifton-Cook Heritage Centre (<https://www.cobourgmuseum.ca/>). Now there are only two but that is great news! Over the Summer, John Draper – developer of the Cobourg History website, long-time CDHS member and our own webmaster – has merged our two websites. There is also a new site search tool at the bottom right corner of our updated home page.

The <https://cobourghistory.com/> site will remain online until all Google searches have been updated to come to the merged <https://cdhs.ca/> site.

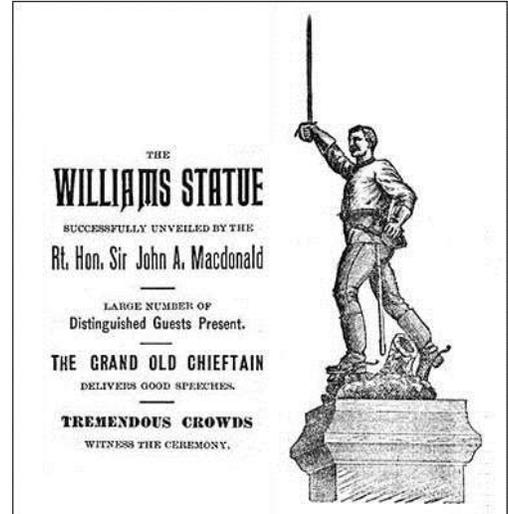
This merger and enhanced capability puts far more Cobourg historical material into a single place for more traffic to our site and potentially more new members.

Visit <https://cdhs.ca/> to explore the additional content and capabilities!



Not Just Elsewhere

Across Canada – Halifax, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg and Victoria – there have been demands to destroy statues of Canada’s civic, political and military heroes. Statues and even gravestones have been desecrated by vandals with little effort by authorities to prosecute the criminals. This movement is now closer to Cobourg. Port Hope’s Council has requested a report on whether the statue of Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur T. H. Williams, a local hero, should be removed. The statue has stood near the Port Hope Town Hall for almost 150 years. Williams was a military hero and prominent Port Hope resident who operated an estate farm, owned a bank and was elected to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario representing Durham East. Due to Williams fame and service to Canada, his commemorative statue was unveiled by Sir John A. Macdonald on September 12, 1889, while thousands of admirers watched.



To learn more about Lieutenant Colonel Williams there are several websites with detailed information. See <http://www.porthopehistory.com/colwilliamsstatue/> and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Batoche for more information on Williams.



Vaccination Riots!

Today, many consider mandatory vaccination for COVID to be controversial. In previous epidemics strong opinions on vaccination were also prevalent. For example, in the Summer of 1885 Montréal was fighting smallpox. A smallpox vaccine, based on the less virulent cowpox, was first tested by Dr. Edward Jenner in 1796. Jenner's results were successful and became widely known from his 1798 publication of *An Inquiry Into the Causes and Effects of the Variolæ Vaccinæ*. Having shown that cowpox could protect against smallpox, Jenner devoted the rest of his life to teaching the world how to perform vaccinations and proving that they were safe and effective.

Montréal's smallpox epidemic began in early 1885 when a conductor on the Grand Trunk Railway arrived in the city with the disease and sought treatment at several locations. As what was known as the "Red Death" spread, Montréal began a voluntary inoculation program, but French-Canadian residents resisted. Some feared the vaccinations were dangerous. Some did not understand how contagious the disease was. Some believed rumors that city vaccinators were going into bedrooms and tying down children to be vaccinated. Some religious groups even called the smallpox shot the Biblical "mark of the beast".

By the end of the summer Montréal had recorded over 3,000 smallpox deaths out of a population of about 225,000 at the time (a similar rate in Cobourg would be equivalent to

SMALL-POX RIOT.

French Canadians at Montreal Mob the Health Office and Police Station.

MONTREAL, Que., Sept. 29.—Last evening a disgraceful anti-vaccination riot broke out among the French-Canadian population. The first indication of trouble was noted in the afternoon when the city council cut down the appropriation for vaccination from \$5,000 to \$2,000, and three French-Canadian aldermen announced that the city was on the eve of a riot. This proved only too true, for about 7 o'clock a howling mob surrounded the East End branch of the health office and completely wrecked the building. After the mob smashed the health office they turned their attention to the central police station, and soon had all the windows there reduced to atoms. Revolver shots were freely fired at the police, and to scare them the officers fired over heads, only to be received with jeers and laughter. The constables now charged the mob, clubbing them right and left, and succeeded in dispersing them, but not before they had managed to wreck the greater portion of the court-house windows which are opposite the city-hall. The mob now broke up into different bodies and proceeded to wreck the windows of the Herald office, the windows of residences of the medical health officer, the chairman of the finance committee, and the public vaccinators. A number of arrests were made, and the city is in a state of great excitement. The opening of the Theater Royal has been indefinitely postponed owing to the small-pox epidemic, there being at least 4,000 cases of the disease in the city.

perhaps 250 local deaths). Montréal's Board of Health moved to make vaccinations compulsory on September 28, 1885. The *Montréal Gazette* reported:

It does not mean that people are to be seized and manacled and so vaccinated by force," he said. It means that the vaccinator will go to the door of a house and ask for proof that all [residing there] are vaccinated." If not and they refuse to be vaccinated, they would be fined.

Still, uneasy crowds began to form the afternoon of the 28th. Three French Canadian city council members uttered the most incendiary threat to burn the city and shoot all who favor vaccination being made compulsory," the *Detroit Free Press* reported.

The riot was reported across Canada and the United States under such headlines as, **MONTREAL'S MAD MOB**".

At about 7pm, a howling mob" attacked a branch office of the health department and wrecked the building," the *Philadelphia Inquirer* reported. The crowd, growing in size, then marched to city hall. A few policemen were on duty, but the mob drove them out of their way like sheep."

A remarkable feature in the riot was the utter collapse of the police force and the proof of its inability to deal with the mob," the *Montreal Gazette* reported. The rowdies went about their work with a nonchalance which showed their indifference to the presence of the police."

The crowd turned next to the central police station. Revolver shots were freely fired at the police," the *Boston Transcript* said. To scare the men, the police fired over their heads only to be received by jeers and laughter."

Montréal's mayor was sick at home when he got word of the protest but he directed that the bells of the Notre Dame cathedral ring out the alarm for policemen from the various stations of the city to muster" at the central police station, the *Montreal Gazette* reported.

The mayor and the Chief of Police headed to the health office, which was again under attack. When the chief tried to rush inside through the mob, he was knocked down with a blow from a stick and kicked till nearly insensible," the *Gazette* said. Finally, a large group of policemen arrived. The constables charged the mob, clubbing them right and left, and succeeded in dispersing them."

By 1 a.m. Montréal was again quiet.

Member Matters

New Members

Please join me in welcoming three new families as CDHS members:

Peter and Virginia
McLaughlin

David and Mary Jane
Broughton

Frank and Patricia
Godfrey

Membership Renewal

It is membership renewal time. Even through the pandemic we incur costs that include: hosting of the Zoom webinars, our website, honorariums to our speakers, production of promotional materials and contributions to permanent historical features that are part of our town. We have kept the membership fee the same as last season: Individual Membership: \$30 and Family Membership: \$50

- If you wish to pay by e-transfer, please send to the Membership Chair, Brian Murphy: brianincobourg@gmail.com
- If you wish to pay by cheque, please make your cheque payable to the Cobourg and District Historical Society and mail it to:

CDHS Membership Chair
P.O. Box 911, Stn Main
Cobourg. ON K9A 4W4

Thank you for your continued support of the Cobourg and District Historical Society!

Farmer Randy

Hundreds of books of historical interest were donated to CDHS by the estate of the late Eric Winter, Cobourg's Poet Laureate. CDHS Vice President Randy Barber organized a table at a recent Cobourg Farmers' Market. Several boxes of books were sold, visitors to the Market learned about CDHS and we now have some new members.



Announcements

Hastings County Historical Society

The Hasting County Historical Society has suspended their regular monthly meeting due to COVID. Instead they are offering a series of local historical documentary films on YouTube. The films include *Ritchie's Folly – The Central Ontario Railway*: The story of building the railway in the 1880s and a man's personal obsession with this project. *Moving Mountains – Blairton Iron*: The story of the Marmora Iron Works, the trains, the entrepreneurs and the hidden secrets of this project. *The Man Behind the Name*: The story of master craftsman, Herb Ditchburn builder of the finest wooden boats in the world – a Muskoka legend. *Sons of the Waves – HMCS Trentonian*: The story of a Royal Canadian Navy ship in the Second World War, its crew and the townspeople from its namesake – Trenton, Ontario – who supported the ship and its crew from afar. *Glanmore National Historic Site of Canada – A Victorian Treasure in Our Midst*: A virtual tour video featuring highlights of the original 38-minute DVD, created to increase accessibility. Click and enjoy all of these videos at <http://bit.ly/2MoVYDp>

Sifton-Cook Heritage Centre

The Sifton-Cook Heritage Centre is now open Friday and Saturday 10-5; Sunday 1-5. Their 2021 theme is "*The Heinous, the Heroic & the High Flyers*" featuring a fascinating selection of characters from Northumberland County's past. They look forward to welcoming you!

Road Trips

If you are tired of staying at home but not yet ready to venture into crowds, a road trip might be what you need. For a selection of road trips to visit various local historic sites visit <https://hastingshistoricalplaques.ca/road-trips-map>

Peterborough Historical Society

Like many historical societies, the Peterborough Historical Society has suspended their in-person meetings and placed their videos on YouTube. To view a variety of interesting presentations visit <http://www.peterboroughhistoricalsociety.ca/events.php>

CDHS Executive for 2021 – 2022

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