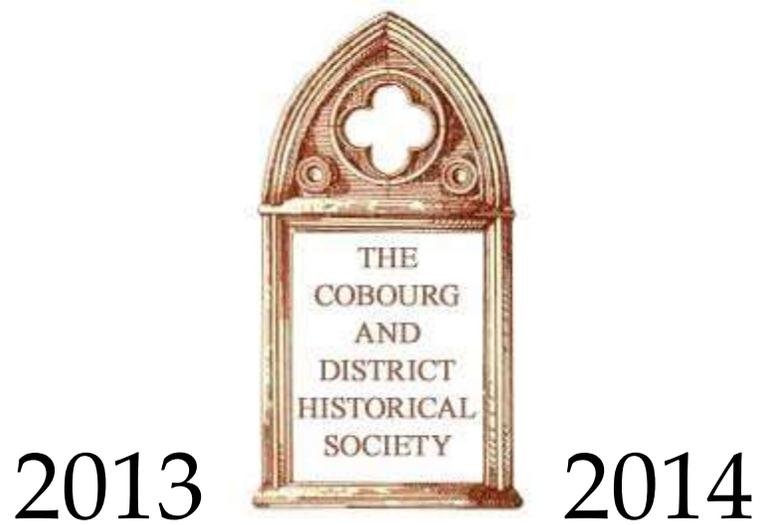


Historical Review 31



2013

2014

**The Cobourg and District Historical Society
2013-2014**

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The Cobourg and District Historical Society

Programme of Speakers 2013 – 2014

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September 2013

The History of Policing in Ontario

By Chief Kai Liu

At our September meeting we learned about the history of policing in Cobourg and gained many insights into modern police operations. Kai Liu, Chief of Cobourg Police Service, was born in Taiwan but his family came to Toronto when he was very young. Living in Regent Park, the largest government run housing facility in Canada, he decided that he wanted to be a policeman. Chief Liu moved through the ranks of the Ottawa police, served as Chief in Gananoque and become Chief of the Cobourg Police Service in 2012.

Kai provided a glimpse of Cobourg bylaws at the beginning of Cobourg policing in 1837:

- *No discharge of muskets or squibs in the city*
- *No bathing within a quarter mile of a house during the daytime*
- *Any swine permitted to roam the streets subject to capture and a fine of two shillings*
- *A fine for any household that did not have a ladder capable of reaching the eaves.*

Equipment has changed through the years from Cobourg's first police car – a 1948 black Chevrolet – to Kevlar® filled vests and Blackberry smart phones that allow instant access to information on suspected miscreants and continuous reporting to the dispatcher of the location of all officers.

The first police chief in this area was an Irishman named Cooney and in the local paper May 10, 1870 an article stated that the constabulary was called to make arrests on the occasion of a brawl at a “house of ill repute” causing the editor to comment, “Let the officers of the law do their duty fearlessly and scatter the disreputable nest.” He was not paid much, as the constable who took over from him when he went to Ireland on leave earned \$40 for an 8 week assignment. In general police were not paid well. A night constable at this time earned \$1.25 per shift.



During the 1880s an article in the Cobourg World described "Ructions on King Street" about night Constable Parkinson telling a drunk to go home and making sure that his friends saw him safely there. The drunk hit Parkinson on the head and it was not long before "Dan was testing the quality of the baton." Chief Rankin came to the constable's aid and soon "Dan was under the town clock" (Victoria Hall held the police station and cells). In 1883 John C. Ruse joined the fire brigade and then the police becoming chief in 1897 at a salary of \$400 per year. His motto was "prosecute, not persecute" and those who were apprehended knew that their punishment was well deserved.

Chief Ruse was a legend. He made his rounds on an old bicycle and may have been the first policemen to have the use of a chauffeur driven car. In 1910 four Italians unloading stone from a ship got into a fight and started shooting. They took off through Victoria Park. Chief Ruse was off duty at the time but on receiving the call took off to the office to get his wheel. Instead he was offered the use of Mr. Abbott's car and chauffeur to chase the criminal. They caught the man on D'arcy Street and as the editor of the *Cobourg World* said, September 23, 1910, "so terrific was the speed of the auto that not much more than three minutes had elapsed from the time that they left the office until they returned with the criminal."

It was while Ruse was chief that William Rourke, a night watchman in the town, died on the job, September 22, 1915 of heart failure. "About 9:20 that night he and Chief Ruse received a call to go over to Albert Street and arrest a man named Samuel Todd who had been creating a disturbance. Todd has a wooden leg and was drunk so the two officers had to practically carry him to the Town Hall. When they arrived at the lock-up door the prisoner woke up and upon realizing where he was going he put up a stout resistance. Mr. Rourke and Chief Ruse got about half way down the stairs when Mr. Ruse noticed that the weight of the man they were carrying swung to the right and Mr. Rourke had sat down on the step. The chief called Dr. Ferris who came at once but Mr. Rourke was already dead. Mr Rourke was a most highly esteemed citizen. He had been a sailor for some years and was a veteran of the Fenian raids. He had held the position of night watchman for a number of years and served the town with much ability and faithfulness."

Ruse retired in December 1936 after 53 years of service and was recognized with an armchair and a dinner given by the Town Council.

The force acquired its first car in 1948, a black Chevrolet with no identifying markings. Prior to this the police used bicycles or a taxi owned by the fire chief. William Carey from the OPP became chief until 1950 followed by Harold Pearse until 1970 and then Eugene Butler. Police training was gained on the job, and the force in 1959 was made up of: Chief Harold Pearse, Sgt. Eugene Butler and Homer Searle, constables Bob Caldwell, Lloyd Huskison, Bernard Searle, Paul Krakenburg, and Paul Pearce. Howard Lean was in charge of parking meters.

The police were housed in Victoria Hall until 1971, which “has been called historic but any serious reporter would prefer the word ‘antediluvian’. There are hopes that the ultimate renovation of the building will result in more spacious and modernized quarters for the police. Its present office is one small room, ten feet square. Its two cells are hopelessly outmoded and a full house often necessitates the lodging of prisoners in county cells. Recently the force took on another task. When the funeral home gave up the ambulance services which were unprofitable, the town purchased the ambulance and the operators are now the police who take on the task in their off hours. Much could be written about the generosity of these men to those who had no means to pay for the ambulance ride.”

In the late 1960s the municipality purchased a radio system with a base station two mobiles and two portable radios. This allowed for contact between the main office and the cruisers. Because of manpower restrictions the office was closed at 2:00 p.m. daily and the police patrolled in the town. In addition, the provincial government started the Ontario Police College in Aylmer and all officers who had not had formal training here were obliged to take courses. Now all officers receive fifteen weeks of training before being attached to a force.

In 1974 computer technology was introduced which provided access to the Canadian Police Information Service in Ottawa. All information fed into this system was available to all forces across Canada. Three clerks were trained on the system use and the offices were now open 24 hours a day. In 1985, the Cobourg Police Force had 20 officers and 7 civilians on staff. Now, we have 32 officers and 38 civilian full and part time members in the old Armouries.



October 2013

Re-enacting History with the 1st Kentucky Rifle Regiment

by Christopher Robins OCT



A bit of background: I am one of the Roseneath Robins and grew up on a farm that we have had in the family since the 1830s. I attended the West High School and have taught there since 1987. I run an historical re-enacting club and the students participate in two events a year. With ex-students, and friends and family we formed the 1st Kentucky Rifle regiments several years ago and participate in re-enactments, television shows and documentaries. This year we will appear as a second regiment, Captain Robinson's Rifle Company of the York Militia.

We chose to be American re-enactors as there are fewer of these than British, Canadian and Native re-enactors. The uniform I am wearing is a private's uniform for the 1st Kentucky Rifle regiment, Captain Hickman's Company. We chose this unit as the group enjoys using the long rifle for target practice and we had a detailed description of their uniforms. This troop was also an enthusiastic supporter of the war in the US and so there would be lots of opportunities to participate in re-enactments. We came to admire the courage and skill of these people. The invasion of Canada by the US which conquered most of southwest Ontario from Windsor to London and resulted in the death of Tecumseh was led by the 1st Kentucky Riflemen.

The uniform is that of a Kentucky frontiersman. The linen frock coat is homespun from flax as is the shirt. The pants are heavy canvas and lighter canvas is used for the haversack or purse as the pants have no pockets or zippers. A wool felt hat is a must. The shoes are leather, either moccasins or like the present day dress shoes but the shoes were identical and your feet eventually made them right and left footed. Gaiters kept sticks and pebbles from entering the shoes. A cotton kerchief caught sweat and could be used as a bandage. Finally, the weapons included a long knife and tomahawk for close fighting and the Kentuckians were known as Long Knives by the natives. It is the long rifle that is the most distinctive though. At a time when a 30-metre shot was considered accurate with a smooth bore musket (the barrel looks like the inside of a plumbing pipe), the Kentucky rifleman could hit what he aimed at up to several hundred metres away. We shoot at 50 and 100 yard ranges.

Richard Felton has summed up the whole process of re-enacting in his book Redcoated Ploughboys. Re-enactors live in more than one century as we step back in time. The costumes, living conditions, tents, cooking, social events must all be accurate to the time and this requires research and money. Modern technology is used though for safety i.e. freezer packs to preserve food but these are kept hidden for the most part. The re-

enactors are reminded of the 'simple life' and yet what the people had to contend with was as complex as what we deal with today – climate change and crop failure, wars, political crises, financial breakdowns, disease. Re-enactors provide pools of experts to educate the public about the past, and to participate in historical documentaries, and to “live” the period to allow for a more accurate understanding of what really happened at the time.

For example, let's deal with the classic idea that soldiers fought in tight ranks because this was the European way of fighting. Actually there were several styles of fighting used by the troops and our group uses skirmishing. This involves fighting in small groups or pairs. One soldier covers the advance or retreat of his partner as they take advantage of available cover. The key reason for shoulder to shoulder fighting was the weapons. Because flintlocks are fickle, it is hard to tell who fired in a tight formation and so this always looks deadly. Soldiers also tend to bunch under fire so they can communicate. Rifles take longer to load and become dirty and fouled up so you need others around you for protection. It is the re-enactor using these weapons who brings this to light. Practical experience allows for a reinterpretation of what we previously believed.

Uniforms are another example of reinterpretation as they had to be practical. Military drill is laid out in regulations but translating the written word into the actual sometimes results in changes. The precision of the drill also depends on the amount of practice that the re-enactors can do as a group and these are not professionals. They have other jobs and interests.

Officers are usually selected by election or from within the group based on experience. AN American commander sent us out to Sackett's harbour for the Sunday afternoon battle to start the entire event. He was the host but cheerfully admitted he had no experience. Our commander, my son, followed his orders and marched us out in front of hundreds of spectators. His brother said, “What are our orders?” The answer: “You won't believe this” Again, “What are our orders?” “Follow the shade.” The problem was there was no shade because the battlefield was closely cut grass, but we went out and the skirmish began.

Other times things do not work out quite so well. After a day course in the US on Light infantry Training we participated in the Battle of Stoney Creek. Stoney Creek in Niagara

District is well organized. They decided that a lieutenant in another unit outranked ours and put him in charge of our unit. He was inexperienced though and this showed as he rewrote the enacted battles. We found out later that our unit was to be crushed and the British were to overrun the Americans and win the battle. 80 British fired on 10 of us and we got the idea that some of us should be “dying” but our officer countermanded this. Eventually, after firing for 10 minutes the British got fed up and left the field. We were ordered to die in the next volley. We all died but there were not enough British regulars left so the Americans overran them and won – so much for history.

Each of the four main re-enacting areas that are active and close enough for us to participate in have their own distinctive character: the St Lawrence and eastern Lake Ontario on both sides of the border; south-western Ontario, the northwestern district of the US (Ohio, Michigan) and the Niagara district. Often the groups do not cross over into other districts. The Niagara district is the most organized around the War of 1812. The ST Lawrence District is the least organized but has great resources. The War of 1812 re-enactment that is most knowledgeable is at Sackett’s harbour. The Flight of the Royal George was the most ambitious re-enactment and went from Bath to Kingston in 2012. The plan was an amphibious landing in longboats by our troops supported by a naval bombardment. No one was sure what time the crew should board the longboats and so we loaded at 10:30 and rowed and kept the boat steady for over 2 hours. We landed at 1:00 but there were no tall ships in sight. The battle was done, the flag raised, the troops rested and no one had thought to co-ordinate with our group so forty-five minutes later the tall ships arrived, cannons blazing. The next day we fought the Battle of Bath and a couple died near an ice cream shop. The rest retreated to a park as no one wanted to “die” on hot pavement. When we reached the park we were ordered to board the long boat but we all conveniently died before we got the beach.

The other two areas are to the west. The southwestern district puts on re-enactments that are less well scripted but well organized. They are happy to include attractions from other periods, unlike some districts. The American northwest is very hospitable. For example the organizer at Fort Meigs, Ohio, said “It is a long way for you fellows to come. Load everyone in the van, bring your guns and uniforms but don’t worry about anything else. We will give you places to stay, food, powder, whatever else. We just would like you to come to our event.”

Each re-enactment group has its own character. Our historical counterparts were frontiersmen from a settled area who were eager to fight and we replicate this attitude in our group. We like to learn and teach. As a result, we have friends on both sides of the field. Richard Feltoe is a British born IMUC (Incorporated Militia of Upper Canada) and would have been the first target of any rifleman. Natives were the hated foes of the Kentuckians but “off screen” we mingle, take classes and practice hand to hand combat skills. Each group has a private and public face and the British units tend to be much more formal than the American units. Some re-enactors are very serious and stay in role, unapproachable by the public whereas others are quite engaging. Still, accuracy of dress, weapons, and some degree of decorum must be maintained while participating in the events. You are judged by the amount of trouble you have taken to be authentic.

It is important not to use gunpowder when doing musket drill because if the musket goes off without removing the ramrod, the ramrod can become a dangerous projectile. There are injuries from time to time.

Looking the part requires considerable research. Consider the York militia. We know that uniforms might have been issued, but there is no written record of when or where they were issued. There is very little information about how rifle troops were dressed and for the capture of Detroit they dressed as natives. Green wool was the colour choice. Diaries, letters do not reveal much. Our best guess is that green jackets with red colour and cuffs would work. Next there would be white trim around the cuffs and colour but riflemen avoided white facings across the chest. The jacket looks military but blend in with the wilderness.

What type of people make up our unit? It is young (in mid 20s) while the typical unit is in its 50's. We believe that everything we do on the battlefield must be authentic and of interest to the audience. We know our drills. We know our yells. We play out or death scenes. We yell in pain when we are wounded. We play to the audience as well. We have taken workshops on Light Infantry Training, and hand to hand stage combat and in one case we practiced for two hours to stage a thirty second scene. One group member is completing a Masters degree in Fashion History, and others are studying authentic cooking, camping, dancing, gunsmithing and target shooting.

We enjoy each other's company and this is reflected in the comfortable interactions we have with the public as they want their pictures taken with us, ask questions, and what to learn. I get to be part of the best of both centuries that I live in as a re-enactor.



November 2013

Lest We Forget

By Dave Kerr and Max Jenkins

On Tuesday November 26, 2013 Cobourg born Dave Kerr and his grandson Max Jenkins joined us at the CDHS to share their story of how they observe Remembrance Day together every year. Dave's father, Fred Kerr, and several other Cobourg men, including the late Cy Winter, a long-time member of our historical society, served together in World War II. Their presentation covered the period from WW II until the present. Max, at nine years old, is perhaps the youngest speaker ever at a CDHS meeting. Even more remarkable is the fact that he and his grandfather Dave have already observed seven Remembrance Days together!

At the conclusion of Dave and Max's presentation, members were asked if they had any war stories to tell. Judith Goulin told of her personal experiences with Cy Winter, one of the group of four Cobourg friends who went to war together. Judith vividly recalls the first time she met Cy. As he began telling her about the time he spent in Italy during WW II, tears ran down his face. She was astonished that a man could still feel such strong emotion 60 years after the war ended.

When Judith joined CDHS 12 years ago, she became fast friends with Cy and with his boyhood friend Bud Barr, both long time CDHS members. The corollary to her recollection of Cy tells of his last days: She had invited Cy and Bud to a Christmas party at her home. Cy's humorous response to the invitation was a quote attributed to Benjamin Hawkins: "If the Lord is willin' and the creek don't rise". I guess the Almighty had other plans because just a few days later Cy received news that he had a terminal illness. He died shortly thereafter. The phone call was Judith's last contact with this remarkable man.



Dave Kerr begins. I always take the day off work and Max takes the day off school so we can participate in Remembrance Day together. We park on Church Street and watch the parade. We started doing this because max loves the bag pipes. We watch the ceremony at the cenotaph and then go to the Legion where veterans and soldiers currently serving are always interested to see max and chat with him. On one occasion a couple of years ago Max wanted to go down to the beach and so we did and saw the salute. We started this tradition when Max was in grade three and we have been attending the service at the cenotaph together for seven years now. I'll give you some background as to why I feel the way I do and why I think we should never forget.

I feel the way I do about Remembrance Day because in 1940 my dad joined the Third 47th Field Battery raised in Cobourg, Belleville and Napanee mostly. I was born on September 26, 1941 when my dad was overseas. All through the war I remember my mother and my grandparents showing me pictures of my father, and I remember my mum reading a letter she got from him. A couple of the men in the second group to go overseas came by the house to get a look at me, so they could tell my dad whatever they were going to tell him.

One picture that is special is of four chaps together, the best of friends, Cork (my dad), Cackle (Al), Sam Norton, and Cy Winter. Everyone in the regiment had a nickname of some kind or other. When the war ended and the men returned home, it was obvious, even to a child like me, that there was a great deal of camaraderie in the group. They told great stories about events, about Italy for example. They didn't talk much about the casualties, the wounded, but they did talk about the great times they had.

My dad was the cook and somewhere up the coast of Italy the men got mad at him and so he said he wasn't going to cook for them anymore. They got another fellow to cook for them but six days later the entire gun crew came to dad and asked him to cook for them again. He agreed and found some chickens at a monastery. He cooked these and it was the best meal they had in months. Several men told that story so it must have been a good memory.

In 1956 Dad passed away. The Battery continued to invite mum and me to the reunions and we attended many of them. I got to know a great many men in the group and I really enjoyed attending the reunions. When I was about 19 or 20 after the church parade and a few beer, we were walking down the street with cack on one side, and Cy on the other, and one of them said, "Dave, you're not your old man, but you'll do."

A few years ago when the students no longer had the day off school to be able to go to the cenotaph, I decided that I would mark Remembrance Day with my children and grandchildren so that we could carry on the tradition of honouring the veterans.

Max Jenkins takes the next part of the evening saying, "I go to the Remembrance Day service to honour the people who fought for our freedom and died for us. My great grandfather fought in the war too so that is important to us. I enjoy doing this because I like meeting friends we know at the Legion and I enjoy watching the parade.

These are some of the medals that my great grandfather got, six of them. I like going with my grandpa to the cenotaph to honour friends and family who have passed away, not just in the war. This is a way to show my respect and also to see friends and family. I learn new things too and that is why I like to go to this ceremony. January 2014."



HISTORICAL TRIVIA NIGHT

MATCH WITS WITH OTHER HISTORY BUFFS!



Prizes, free nibbles and cash bar

Sponsored by the Cobourg and District Historical Society

Friday, November 30 at 7:30pm

Cobourg Yacht Club, 100 Third Street, Cobourg, ON

info@cdhs.ca for further information



February 2014

SLATES, POT-BELLIED STOVES, AND THE ONE ROOM SCHOOL HOUSE

By Forrest Rowden, Phill Boyco, and Doris Goheen

Rules for teachers 1872

1. Teachers each day will fill lamps, clean chimneys
2. Each teacher will bring a bucket of water and a scuttle of coal for the day's session
3. Make your pens carefully. You may whittle nibs to the individual taste of the pupils.
4. Men teachers may take one evening each week for courting purposes or two evenings a week if they go to church regularly.
5. After ten ours in school, the teachers may spend the remaining time reading the Bible or other good books.
6. Women teachers who marry or engage in unseemly conduct will be dismissed.
7. Every teacher should lay aside from each pay a goodly sum of his earnings for his benefit during his declining years so that he will not become a burden on society.
8. Any teacher who smokes, uses liquor in any form, frequents pool or public halls, or gets shaved in a barber shop will give good reason to suspect his worth intention, integrity and honesty.

Note: The teacher who performs his labour faithfully and without fault for five years will be given an increase of twenty-five cents per week in his pay, providing the Board of Education approves.



**SILENT VALLEY SCHOOL S.S. #14
HOPE TOWNSHIP**

by Forrest Rowden

As I present you with a history of one room schools and especially some of my experiences with the one I went to, I will take you back over a hundred years, and will give you my experiences of almost seventy years ago. I was born in 1940 and one room school houses had already been around for over one hundred years. There was a time when children did not have to go to school, and education was secondary to helping out on the farm. My father was one of these individuals who dropped out of school at grade 4, age 10, in 1911.

I will take you to Silent Valley SS#14 Hope Township. I started school there in 1945 as was a very privileged boy I thought. The teacher at the time, Allen Goheen asked if I could go to school a year earlier as he had his younger brother in grade one and since he was the only boy in grade one, Alan asked my parents if I could go to school half days to keep him company. I may have been the only kid in kindergarten at the time but what an opportunity for me as the next year I was at the head of my class in grade one. My sister Marie was four years older than I was, and my sister Jean was eight years older finishing grade eight and my protector. When she moved into high school i had to battle it out with no help from Marie and so I grew up fast.

School teachers came to the one room schools almost directly from grade twelve with a teacher summer course. They were very young and had to have a lot of patience, as well as being well organized. They had to teach eight different grades, all subjects every day. There was a lot of discipline and I think the teachers had eyes in the back of their heads as if you smiled the wrong way you got a smack with a ruler or had to stay in at recess.

Some of the games played at recess included "May I". "Red light Green light", scrub (baseball), fox and goo se(a winter game in the snow), Cowboys and Indians, and we

had the advantage of a large bush beside the school so a lot of energy was burned off running around that.

The most children I remember at our school was fifteen and when I graduated from grade eight there were nine students left. Families were becoming smaller.

Clothes in those days were hand me downs, patching with some minor holes that mothers mended. They were washed once a week on the scrub board, and my mother used a scrub board until 1952 when we finally got hydro and a new ringer washer. We still used the outdoor dryer, winter and summer. Hand me downs came from my cousins and the pants were always one size too big. We did get a new pair of shoes and jeans when we started school. We wore them to the barn and to school every day. No one made fun of me as all the kids were from farms and smelled the same and dressed the same. We had our Saturday night bath in a round tub on the kitchen floor and if you were the oldest you went first. I was the youngest so I was last.

We lived with the pressure of a fear of failure. We were at school to do well. Our parents did not have the opportunity to go to school every day like we did. I remember if we got sick we had to stay in bed all day, and so we did not get sick very often. If you had chicken pox or any other illness that kept you out of school for a week the teacher would drop the work off and you tried to keep up.

The fun times we had included visiting other schools our size to play ball. We went to Woodville the next school south of us and they had 8 girls and 1 boy on their team. We had 8 boys and 1 girl. It was a very one sided score. We also competed each year with the other one room schools at field day in some farmer's hay field that he prepared and donated for the day in a central location in the township. There would be running, broad jump, high jump and other relays and ribbons given out. I was fortunate in 1948 to be called up to the front of the school by the school board inspector and presented with a junior boys championship pin for Hope Township. I was the envy of the school. Nancy Davis was determined to win the next year and she came home with more ribbons than I did but before she could be presented with her pin by the inspector she was killed in a car accident coming home from the Roseneath Fair. It was a sad day and when you lose one person from a small class, it takes a long time to get over it.



Every year it was a tradition to have a Christmas Concert. You got to practice each day for a couple of weeks to memorize a poem, or a part in a play, or sing Christmas Carols. You would invite your parents and with no hydro, volunteers brought lanterns to hang for lights. When the night started the wood stove was stoked and the fun began. Santa Claus gave out small gifts. One night, Miss Murphy, a red headed teacher was at the front and someone from the audience called out for Norm Davis to sing a song on his guitar. He sand "Good Old Mountain Dew" and the teacher's face was the same colour as her hair to the cheers and applause of the crowd.

We had other interesting times like Armistice Day. On that day we would go for a hike, or bring a tree back to the school yard, or clean up the grounds.

Some of our mischievous events got the boys in hot water. The girls were never in trouble but they were honourable and did not tell on us even when everyone had to stay in until the teacher found out who the culprit was. In one instance we found a nest of baby garter snakes and put half a dozen in the teacher's desk before she got to school in the morning. You never saw a teacher move so fast and we had to stay in fro several recesses until someone confessed. Then we got nine straps on each hand, or you had to write out lines hundreds of times. We never told our parents that we got into trouble or we would have been punished at home too. I got the strap three times in eight years because I would not turn in my friends. Pride was everything in those days.

Every two years we got a new teacher and so I had Mr. Goheen, Miss Gibson, Miss Murphy, and Mr Munroe who was one of the grade 8 students when I was in grade 1 and my last teacher was Miss Wilson. We had a reunion ten years ago and three of my teachers were at that event.

Overall the teachers were a lot of fun and they were only 18 or 19. They had to prepare all the lessons for grade 1-8 and walked around the room with a ruler making sure students were working on what was assigned, were not cheating, and moved from one side of the room to the other teaching the students. They brought them up to the board to do work in front of the class, and writing, reading and arithmetic were drilled into you. They had a lot of patience to keep all the students busy and learning and worked with twenty two students on average a day.

The school was about twenty-five feet wide and forty feet long, the size of a small cottage, frame with clapboard or insul brick siding, two windows on each side about 3x6 and four feet inside the front door was the big box stove, and to the right of that a wood box, a shelf for lunch boxes and a pail of water with one dipper to drink out of, about the coast rack.

Blackboards were between the windows on the sides and the teacher's desk was at the front with more backboard behind it. The stove pipe went the length of the school tied about a foot from the ceiling with wire and it entered a chimney behind the teacher's desk. It was nice to sit behind the stove in the winter. It was always cold at the front of the school.

The school was cleaned by a mother who might live close by and she brought the water for the school as well. The older boys had to clean the ashes from the stove, and carry the wood. Water from the eaves was used for cleaning and washing up at noon hour. The outdoor toilets were beside the wood shed with the girls on one side and boys on the other. Half way through my schooling chemical toilets were installed and insul brick was put on the outside. There was still no hydro and on dull and rainy days you were glad you were close to a window. High school was much different. Boy, what a change.

Silent Valley School closed around 1960 along with many more and students were bussed to larger schools. The era of the one room school house came to an end. Many professors, engineers, mechanics, business people, politicians came from these one room school houses. We had great teachers and many of us went on to have great lives.

The Old Camborne School #10, Hamilton Township, was a one room school that was closed and was going to be torn down. I was involved with a group in saving this

school. In 1994 it sat empty but a grant was available to restore heritage buildings. Working with council and community members we were able to restore the school to the way it looked in 1895 when it was built. The school reopened in 1995 and many elderly students came out to celebrate. Some school houses are homes, art galleries, antique shops, cottages today but every once in a while you come across a one room school house in its original state, and then you get a sense of life for the students and their teachers in those bygone days.

S.S. #10 OSACA NORTH HOPE

by Phill Boyco

When I was in grade 2 we moved to Hope Township and transferred to SS #10 at Osaca. It was a red brick one room school house on a hill with a large locust tree, and smaller Manitoba maples spaced out evenly around its perimeter. It was built in 1873 with a page wire fence along the back and sides five foot at the cedar posts holding it up and curled down to 2 ½ feet, where everyone climbed over to escape. The boys and girls used the same entrance and mixed together unlike in the previous school where the



children were separated by sex and by a high fence. If someone was caught climbing over, he might be punished by having to de-chalk a box of blackboard brushes leaving him choking and white.

When my older brother and I arrived we were students nine and ten. In a large school you have cliques and groups and gangs but in this school we were one gang, a family of sorts. We had our similarities and differences but we were all part of Osaca school. The differences cemented us together. Our boundary stretched from Decker Hollow to the west to half way to \forest Green to the east and from Eden to the north to Prouse's Hill to the south.

Inside the school house, the teacher kept control. First there was Joan Fairclothe from Port Arthur, who was not yet twenty and tried to rule with sweetness and flare. Then there was Evelyn Bushy from Parry Sound, a robust undeterred go-getter instilling determination, tenacity and pride. And in my final year the teacher was Pat Ketchum from Port Hope, a sprig of fire and culture whose teaching was innovative and included field trips. Each young woman had a unique style teaching and disciplining. We were a frustrating group of farm kids with additional children coming from the immigrant farm workers who left the chaos of post war Europe to come, under contract, to the tobacco farms. The student numbers would swell during the tobacco harvest and then drop off when their families moved on to Welcome, Campbellcroft or Oshawa.

There were standard text books and readers for each grade and texts were used for spelling arithmetic and reading. The library was a cupboard with a collection of old books but over time, with fund-raising, these were replaced with newer more modern and relevant reading material. It was the other activities that gave us a real education though. The Junior James Audubon Club Program was the best natural science program I have come across. The Junior Red Cross Club taught us about our personal health and our lives and gave us insight into the culture of other children in other countries. The pennies that we collected were sent to those less fortunate. These activities were organized and facilitated by the student body members who were president, secretary and treasurer. Each got a little pin acknowledging their work. The best part of the week was Friday afternoon. It was set aside for creative arts: crayon and chalk drawing, tempera painting, collages and later puppeteering. The collages in the humid weather would turn a fuzzy white and then black from the mould growing on the paste and glue. Sometimes we were taught dance to the music of a donated wind-up gramophone, or we would rehearse our songs a cappella from the High Road of Song music books. Then there were the preparations and rehearsals for the concerts.

The concerts were something special. It was a night to share with the community. The planning of the Christmas Concert started in September with the selection of skits, recitals and music. It would become a polished extravaganza. To break up the mid winter blahs we had a valentine concert followed by community crokinole terminating with snacks, hot chocolate and Raleigh's fruit flavoured nectar. A highlight of one evening was the school band playing a rendition of McNamara's Band in the Spike Jones style with improvised instruments made from gallon Mazola oil cans, Old Chum

tobacco times, red sealer rings and rubber bands, hollow tubes and washboards along with an assortment of rhythm sticks and old cooking pots. The audience went wild calling for encores as never before.

It was a warm atmosphere warmed up by a rather new rectangular box stove, a low-boy furnace shielded by a metal guard on three sides, a good place to dry wet mittens and socks. During the day the stove was fed split maple and beech wood two feet in length. Sometimes the cod liver oil capsules that we were given each day ended up in that stove and the place smelled of burned gelatin and fish oil. There was an occasion when someone would conceal a 22 calibre rifle shell in the wood so that when it heated it would make a dull pop and a puff of smoke would mushroom through the gaps. Those weren't the only puffs of smoke. Tobacco and cigarettes weren't readily available or affordable, and so the boys would experiment with leaves from various trees, stalks of different plants, stolen pencil shavings from the pencil sharpener, loaded with graphite pencil lead, and even tightly rolled paper. The best paper was the pages from the Toronto phone directory. The experiments took place in a spot across the street, well concealed under the overhanging branches of a wild apple tree and screened from view by tall grasses of golden rod and milkweed. The after effects were something else.: faces blackened from sooty smoke, eyes red, and the worst taste in your mouth you could imagine. It wouldn't be washed away by food, and did we every stink, hair, clothes, and even our breath.

In the spring as the mud turned to firm clay it was back to baseball. We played rotation ball or boys against girls. In small county schools there was gender equality and the girls would win as many times as the boys. The test was being able to thrown, catch, hit and run bases. Girls were always the winners in the verbal confrontations. Our teams were out to win but we couldn't beat the reigning champs as their teacher was the umpire. The umpire made up the rules as the game was played. For example, our pitcher George connected with a ball driving it far beyond a previous hit but was called OUT for hitting an "unsafe ball", because it had been hit across county road 65. The two runners that ran to the next base were called out as well. When an argument ensued the umpire (she) threatened the Osaca team with forfeiture for opposing her ruling. The same approach applied to field days and when the predetermined winners from North and South Hope lost the events were cancelled together with the Hope Township baseball playoffs.

S.S. #10 had many memories that it shared with other schools: public speaking contests in the Campbellcroft Community Hall, and combined music concerts orchestrated by our itinerant music teacher, Mr. Stuart. An enjoyable memory was when Osaca combined to do a music rehearsal with Elizabethtown and during a pause, "the Oak Hills Boys" (brothers Ron and Gary Settington) played their guitars and sang their own rendition of "The Robinson Crusoe Story", a poem from their reader. My proudest moment occurred when playing baseball against Beach Hill School. It was after 4 p.m. and the parents were waiting to take us home to do chores. I was the relief pitcher and it was the last inning. Ross, the first baseman said, "O.K. Phil Val, do your stuff". Three pitches, three pop ups, three catches by Ross, three outs. We won, and we went and did our chores. My most embarrassing moment was getting up to sing and finding out my voice had changed and the squawks were not my Johnny Ray vocal.

There are volumes of memories and stories in, from, and about the one room school house. Each school has its own tales to tell but many of them have been laid to rest now.

Quote from S.S. #10 Christmasing:

"...the heavy oak door made from local hemlock groaned with a rasping thud, was closed, the brass key thrust the dead bolt into the Corbin lock, That was the end yet there was a new beginning."

"History makes us what we are today. It prophesises the future; but, memories and folk stories are where we flourish."

PINE GROVE S.S. #7 HOPE TOWNSHIP

by Doris Goheen

One of my earliest memories when I was six years old in March 1945 was when all the contents of our house in Newcastle were packed in the back of a borrowed truck and my mum, dad brother and I were in the cab pulling away from the only home I knew. My grandfather had died and we were mobbing to the farm five miles north of Port Hope on the fifth concession of Hope Township. I was leaving my grade two class of twenty-five to thirty students. My next memory is of standing beside my older brother at the mailbox down the lane from what had previously been my grand[parent's] home waiting for a group of what looked like grown-ups coming up the road to meet us and walk us a half mile west to Pine Grove South School S.S. #7 Hope. There were only ten to twelve students at the school at that time. Such a small school was like a family and we genuinely cared about each other. Some of the students were as old as sixteen and they seemed to be speaking a different language. One word I still remember is "yarsh" for "yes".

When the big bell on top of the school rang the situation got worse. I found myself seated on a little bench seat beside the biggest boy in the school. He was about sixteen years old and terrified me. There must have been a seat shortage at the time because the situation was soon rectified.

You entered the school from the north and walked along a narrow hall that had the boy's cloakroom on the right and the girl's on the left. Inside the classroom at the back and to the right was a very large silver coloured furnace. It was at least four or five feet in diameter and pipes were strung across the top of the ceiling from one end to the other. At the front of the classroom was a step up to a stage that projected out about four feet making it possible to reach the blackboard



which stretched from the left to the right across the front. On the right side of the stage was the piano and on the left side was the teacher's desk.

Pine Grove S.S. #7 passed through the usual stages of log frame and brick. The log school was on Lot 5, Concession 4 not far from the saw mill that ran from 1840-1870. The second school was of frame construction and was on the lot where the present school is situated. This lot was bought in 1856 and that is likely the year the frame school was built. The present school was built in 1873 and closed in 1966. The section borrowed \$534 for eighteen months to finance it. Robinsons took over the mill on Lot 4 in Concession 5 and 400 acres in the vicinity in the 1860s. A son, Albert Robinson painted pictures of the log and frame schools. On the back of the picture of the log school is a map showing the location of both schools. (*The History of Hope Township* by Harold Reeve, 1967).

My grandfather attended Pine Grove School and later became a trustee. When my Dad finished at Pine Grove he went to the high school but lit the furnace at Pine Grove on his way to Quay's Crossing to catch the train to Port Hope.

The war was still on when my brother and I started at Pine Grove and most of the able bodied male teachers had gone to war. Grade twelve students were allowed to take a six week summer course and then start teaching. We had one of those teachers from March to June of my first year. I was in grade two and my brother was in grade four but had not yet learned to write and so the teacher taught both of us cursive writing at the same time. When the Inspector, Mr. Carlton, came and discovered that she had taught me to write so early he scolded her and announced that I would never write properly.

The most exciting thing that year was when a widow lady who had a small gas station was allowed to have a boy from the Cobourg training school come and live with her to help her out and one day he showed up at the school with a dead skunk and began to chase us. We scattered in all directions but ended up back at the school at the end of the day. On V Day I remember cheering with all the others in the cloakroom as I put on my coat and headed home for the rest of the day to celebrate the end of the war. I also remember the victory gardens that we grew to support the war effort and the bags of milk week pods we collected to be used to make airplane tires.

The next year we had a fully qualified teacher form teachers college and the men were slowly coming home from the war. Miss Northey's boyfriend was still in uniform when he dropped her off at the school and we were told to keep working but we kept

sneaking peaks at her sitting on his knee at the back of the room. After Miss Northey, Ruth Mills was the teacher for the rest of my time at the school. The highlight of our year was always the Christmas concert and practice began in October. The boys brought in lumber from the woodshed to extend the stage. Wires were strung from which to hang curtains. Several of us walked to the Barwick's house to get carpet to soften the sound of our footsteps on the stage. The first year my brother and I sang a duet, "Look for the Silver Lining", and I remember recognizing my dad's hands when he played Santa Claus. The money from the concert was used to buy wonderful things like a record player so we could dance during the noon hour to songs like The Tennessee Waltz. Families would visit concerts at Dale Corner and Bethel Grove as well, and in conversation decide which one was the best.

Warm weather was all about baseball. We would hurry to finish lunch to get outside. For a time there were only seven of us so we played move-up. Once a year we played Canton and Welcome and Welcome always won. When we weren't playing ball we were playing house in the cedar trees behind the school or in the creek in the warm weather. When noon hour was over the big bell at the top of the school rang and we hurried back. Once a year there was a field day and we got together at the Bickle farm at Canton. A travelling music teacher came one a week and her husband gave my brother violin lessons while she taught the rest of us to sing in parts. Because our school was located at the top of the hill and backed onto the woods, in the winter our noon hours were spent sleigh riding on the hill. Some years there were huge drifts and the ditches were full of snow. If you jumped into a ditch you would go a long way down through the snow and have to be pulled out of the hole.

We only had a small cupboard of books in the school and it did not take long for a good reader to get through all of them. One a year a big blue wooden box of books came from the Ministry of Education for a few weeks and that was like Christmas. Because there was no television our entertainment was listening to the radio or reading. Christmas presents and birthday presents were books and we would take them to the school to trade once we finished reading them.

Because my grandfather had built a new home on the farm and had electric lights and a bathroom when there were not the norm, the teacher usually boarded at our house. One teacher from Roseneath lived with us and taught my sister Barbara in grade one. At the end of the year, Miss Braithwaite sat Barbara on her knee and said she no longer had to

call her Miss Braithwaite, she could call her Helen. My sister replied that Helen no longer needed to call her Barbara; she could call her Goheen.

In a one room school house the teacher taught mostly to the grade ones teaching them to read and to the grade eights getting them ready for the high school entrance exam. The other grades managed on their own working through text books, reading and practicing. I would take the books home and work each night to get finished before the end of the year. The teacher would let me teach the younger children. I was able to get my degrees at night and through distance education, in part because of the skill of working independently that I learned at Pine Grove.

I did a lot of supply teaching in the early years and was asked to teach in a one room school in Brinley north of Cobourg. I did not get the call until quite late and arrive after the school day had started. Everyone in the school of about twenty-five students aged six to fourteen had their books open and were working on where they had left off the day before.

As a millennium project, the retired teachers of Northumberland County decided to write a book called *School Days in Northumberland* and I wrote the section on Pine Grove School, researching the rolls at the KPRDSB and interviewing people who attended or taught at the school. Ethel Hawkins wrote an excellent book on the history of Canton and had a good section on Canton School in it. Newspaper articles that people had saved, anecdotes, and pictures poured in and found a place in the pamphlet.

I will close with a short quote printed in the Port Hope Guide under Canton News at when Pine grove closed August 30, 1966:

The strains of the last Post played by Sergeant Jim Inwards, the lowering of the nation's flag for the last time and the tears of many in a crowd of over two hundred former pupils and their families marked the end of an era during which the "little red school house" was the major factor in public education in Hope Township. Pine Grove School was closed forever Saturday morning during the course of a reunion picnic held on the grounds.

March 2014

From Certo to Kraft:

Almost a Century of Food Manufacturing in Cobourg

By Judith Goulin

It all started out with one small fact that I was told about blind taste testers at General Foods. Were they really blind? Then there was a fascination with the little red building that looks like a Greek temple on Ontario St. just north of the tracks. I started asking questions. What was there before the industrial buildings surrounding the little building? What is The Foods? What's pectin? Questions led to more questions and countless former employees of the industrial complex that developed between Ontario and William Sts. told me their stories. This history should be told by those who lived it, not by people like me who came after. I'm still a newcomer here after 12 years, but I used a lot of good research material in print and interviewed a lot of people. However, I still consider this as a work in progress, so if you have corrections or additions, please let me know before this presentation is published in our Historical Review. So sit back, get comfortable and come with me on a journey tonight so I can tell you some of the fascinating things I discovered.

So in the beginning, 1909, there were two women who had something in common:

Emma Eliza Fanny Skiles and Elizabeth McNaughton. They both owned land on the



west side of Ontario St., just north of the tracks. At that time there were several houses scattered over the site. A company called Provincial Steel wanted land, so they purchased a total of 15 acres from the ladies, and began building.

You probably recognize this little building. This was the office for Provincial Steel Company, the first industry to occupy the site you may know as General Foods or Kraft. It is in the Classic Revival style, most popular in Ontario between 1830 and 1860, but since this building was built in 1909, it shows that the style was still popular into the 20th century. There were no architecture police to say “You can’t.” Victoria College, built in 1836 is another Cobourg example of Classic Revival. This one fits the time period of 1830-1860.

This little office building was built by men with the surname Jex. At the turn of the last century and beyond, The Jex name was well-known in the building trade in Cobourg. A search of the Jex name produced Jex Furniture Factory, Jex Brothers Bricklayers and Martin Jex and Co. Lumber . Three outstanding identical houses on the north side of Albert St. immediately east of the Cobourg Library were built by Jex men. You may know Jex Lane in Cobourg.

This Classical Revival building demonstrates the pride that Provincial Steel had in their new enterprise. The Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, ACO Cobourg branch talks about how significant it is, because: “It represents an integral part of Cobourg’s industrial heritage.”

The Town of Cobourg has placed the property on the Municipal Register of Heritage Properties. The owners of the property have developed a comprehensive rehabilitation plan and some conservation work has been done. There have been some discussions between the ACO and the owners of the property regarding the long-term maintenance and occupancy of the building, however nothing has been finalized as of March 2014.

Provincial Steel only manufactured steel in Cobourg from 1909 to 1914. Then the plant was acquired by the Imperial Munitions Board that used the plant facilities to store nitrate of soda for use in ammunition shells for the First World War. The nitrate was transported a few blocks away to another building at the south end of Second St where it was loaded into shells to provide ammunition for the First World War. It later became the Bird-Archer factory that manufactured chemicals used in water treatment.

What happened next led to the beginning of a food facility in Cobourg which was to last for almost a century. It was 1919, the war was over, and buildings in Cobourg were vacant. When the Imperial Munitions Board put the building up for sale, it quickly attracted the attention of Robert Douglas of Rochester, who owned the New York State

Fruit Company. This company was regarded at one time as the world's largest manufacturer of vinegar to supply canning factories. Robert Douglas bought the buildings in order to bring his business across the lake to Canada. It was more economical,, tax wise, to manufacture products in Canada for the Canadian and British markets. The daily ferry service from Rochester to Cobourg was convenient and there was a ready supply of apples because there were apple orchards stretching from Bowmanville to Trenton.

Douglas Packing Company began here with vinegar, but Robert Douglas had other products in mind too. Douglas was a brilliant, enterprising, chemist who had a theory that commercial jams could be made to gel more reliably and quickly with the addition of a single, somewhat elusive ingredient — pectin. He knew, as did many generations of women who made jam, that putting apples in their jams helped them set, but it didn't always work. And maybe the women didn't even know what it was in apples that helped their jams. The trick was to figure out how to extract pectin from apples and Robert Douglas did.

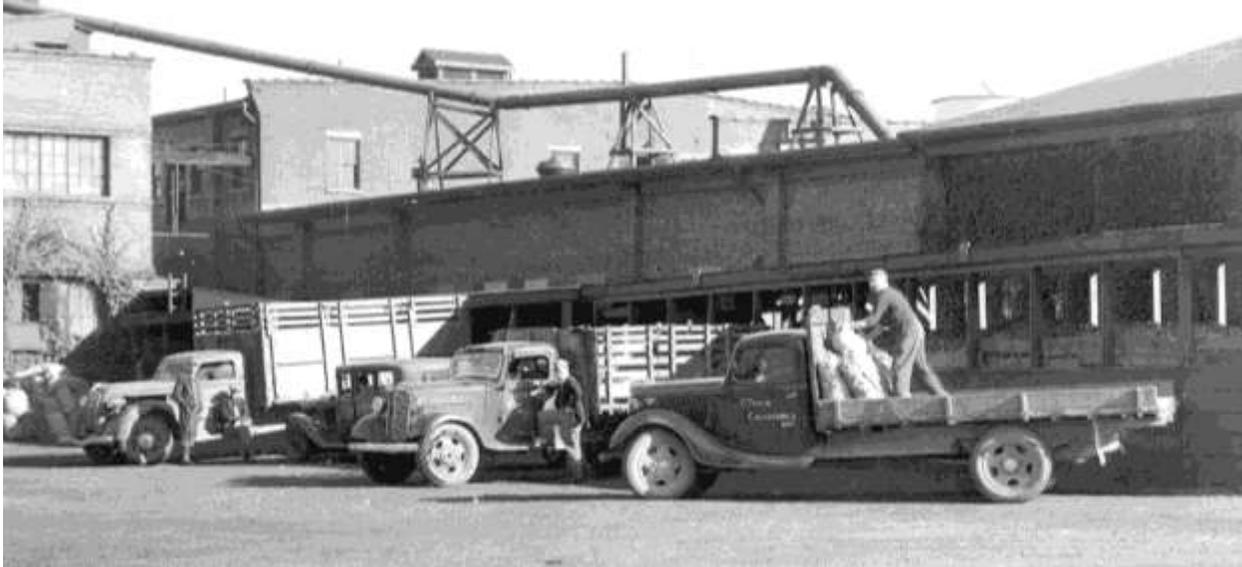
At first he only marketed pectin to the canning trade, but being a good businessman, by 1923 he was bottling pectin for the retail market — the jam makers. He called it Certo. So while Robert Douglas didn't actually invent the wheel, he did set things in motion as you will see because Certo revolutionized the tedious somewhat unreliable chore: Now, jam could be made more quickly and would always set.

There's a story, and it might only be a story, of how Certo got its name. Bottled pectin was ready to be marketed but the company hadn't come up with a good name yet. Then along came Margaret. Margaret was a maid, but not just any maid. She worked in the Douglas family home. One day she said to her boss, so the story goes: "Mr. Douglas, why don't you call it Certo, because it makes fruit certain to gel." Eureka! The name Certo was born! I can only hope Douglas increased her wages!

The company changed its name from Douglas Packing to Douglas Pectin. They had 40 employees. All the Certo to supply the Canadian and British retail market was manufactured here.

Local farmers lined up along Ontario St. to deliver their wagon loads or truckloads of apples to the plant. Workers extracted the apple pulp for pectin and made vinegar from

the juice. At first pectin was sold to local canneries and the apple cider vinegar was shipped in barrels to Canadian and British canneries. Apples were shoveled into vats to be washed, passed along conveyers to grinders, then dropped into the press where the cider was extracted. The remaining apple pulp went to cookers. Pectin was extracted after the second pressing.



Notice the lettering on the delivery truck: "C Timlin Cold Springs". Cliff Timlin was the father of Ewart Timlin who still lives in Cold Springs. This photo is c. 1940.

One year, early on, there was so much cider was left over from the process that was going to go to waste so the company decided to give it away. This was so popular with the locals that the plant was overrun with cars and carriages and people on foot carrying jugs and bottles and cans. Good intentions but too popular and too unwieldy. So this practice was stopped.

After that, excess cider was poured down the drain and apple residue was spread in a woods on company property behind the Ontario St. buildings. This new food source attracted pheasants. They soon became very tame or high on fermented apples. Then came the poachers under cover of night because these tame pheasants were easy targets. You can probably guess what happened next! The company had to hire guards to keep the poachers away!

Because Certo was a revolutionary new product during the 1920s, it needed to be promoted.

To assist the homemakers who might be having trouble with their jams and jellies, the company invented Jane Taylor Allen. Think of her as the Dear Abby of jam-making. But here is the irony.

Although the target market was certainly “the little housewife” Jane Ann Taylor was one of the company’s male chemists. Jane Ann was bogus. Her or his job was to convince the little woman to buy Certo and then train her to follow the exact directions on the bottle for best results.

Robert Douglas died in 1929 without a successor to carry on his thriving business. So the successful Douglas Pectin Co. was sold to the Postum Cereal Co.

Now you all know the story of Kellogg, the Corn Flake guy, an early promoter of healthy food, but the fact that there was another guy named Post who was doing the same thing is not as well-known. It happened that **Post** was a patient in a holistic sanitarium run by Kellogg in Battle Creek MI . Post liked the Corn Flakes he was served, but not the coffee. Taking a page out of Kellogg’s book he created his own product: a drink which he named Postum.

He promoted Postum as a healthy alternative to coffee, because it ‘s caffeine free. It is a roasted beverage, made from wheat bran, molasses and malto-dextrose from corn. Postum became very popular during World War 1 when coffee was rationed. It’s not a big seller today but it does remain very popular as the drink of choice among Mormons, because they don’t drink coffee. Today, it’s only available in Utah and other Mormon centres.

Post went on to develop cereals. Then in 1914 he shot himself, so much for healthy living!!! but unlike Robert Douglas, who had no successor, Post had a daughter waiting in the wings to carry on the burgeoning Post food business. Margaret Post had worked with her father and she became a shrewd business woman.

It was an era of corporate growth by acquisition of other companies, one that as we know continues. It’s the name of the game.

Over time the Postum Company continued to expand, acquiring many companies including Jell-O, Swans Down Flour, Minute Tapioca, Baker’s Chocolate, Sanka, Maxwell House, LaFrance Bluing and Birdseye. Remember Clarence Birdseye? He pioneered frozen foods. In the U.S., Postum Company’s growth led to the formation of a

new company General Foods. Remember that Douglas Pectin had been sold to Postum, so in 1929, Douglas Pectin Co. of Cobourg, the Certo makers, became General Foods.

The main entrance to the plant was moved from Ontario St. to William St. and this building became the new front office.

As General Foods continued to expand in the U.S., additional products besides pectin were manufactured here at the Cobourg plant: Kool-Aid, Sun Up, Tang, Post Cereals, Minute Rice, Cool Whip and Gaines Dog Food. With each new product line, came a necessary plant expansion. Tang was created here in Cobourg.

Over the years, products came and went. You may remember Gaines Dog Food, but might not recall some other products made in Cobourg, that weren't very successful and have disappeared from grocery shelves: like LaFrance Bluing, Sun Up Instant Breakfast Drink, Tuffy, Quench, Sanka, Awake, D-Zerta and Swan's Down Flour. The little Classic Revival front office building was re-purposed to manufacture bluing.

Although Maxwell House was owned by Postum, then General Foods, it was never manufactured in Cobourg...but I came across an interesting coffee story I'd like to tell:

Back in the 1890's the Maxwell House Hotel in Nashville Tennessee began serving a delicious blend of coffee. Teddy Roosevelt was a guest at the Maxwell House in 1907. He loved the coffee! One morning when he was asked if he'd like a second cup of coffee, he said: "Yes, it's good to the last drop!" ...Another eureka moment! A slogan was born!

General Foods, or just The Foods, was a significant presence in Cobourg for nearly 70 years. They were the town's biggest employer. At one time 1 in 10 Cobourg residents worked at The Foods. The town thrived as General Foods grew. Many former Foods employees spoke of *The Foods family*. This family culture was prevalent not only in Cobourg but was pervasive throughout the company's plants. Management treated them well, so it was a good and happy place to work. The family atmosphere resulted in contented employees who took pride in their work.

The *GF Personnel Booklet* of 1937 stated: "We want this business to be conducted in an efficient manner and in a spirit of friendliness, to the mutual advantage of employees, management, stockholders and consumers." This ongoing philosophy was evident in a

1955 copy of the corporate newsletter, *Generally Speaking*, issued by Head Office. It was folksy and friendly in the extreme, rather than business oriented. It reported social events at its various plants: bowling and golf tournaments, news about employees' hobbies. There were even birth and wedding announcements from employees' families. The plant managers at The Foods played an exemplary role in community service in Cobourg. For example: in churches, serving as school trustees, members of the hospital board, Scouting, United Way, Rotary and Chamber of Commerce.

In 1969 General Foods celebrated its 50th anniversary in Cobourg. They counted the Cobourg plant's history from 1919 when Robert Douglas began making vinegar and pectin here. At that time, 1969, 600 employees of General Foods in Cobourg manufactured a greater variety of packaged products than any other General Foods plant in North America. They produced 20 famous grocery brands in 130 flavours and varieties.

The plant managers pulled out all stops for the anniversary. They invited the entire community to Victoria Park for a *Birthday in the Park* party with singing and dancing and a parade along King St. led by Bobby Jimby [A Place to Stand] They also invited everyone to tour the plant that year.



Beverly Archer in later years

Another part of their 50th celebration was a jam-making contest — no doubt to promote their historic product, Certo and of course it was geared to “the little woman.” Beverley Archer won first prize. Management probably expected some little old lady with a family recipe handed down for generations. But imagine the surprise when Beverley showed up to collect the prize because *she* was a he! Beverley was a 22-year old Biology student at Trent University. Perhaps he was a poor student who needed money or maybe he just liked making jam! It must have been good because he beat 200 other contestants.

This is a stereotype standing on its head! In the 20's, the little women jam makers unwittingly took advice

from the fraudulent Jane Taylor Allen, a man. The women may have been surprised to learn that they were really taking advice from a man, but in the 60s the men at The Foods must have been just as surprised to learn that their stereotypical little woman, Beverley, who won the contest, was a guy!

Another interesting chapter in the history of The Foods in Cobourg has to do with their blind taste testers. We think of blind taste testers as being blindfolded, but at The Foods the taste panel was literally blind. The company was assisted by an employment officer from CNIB who located candidates for the job. Six or seven blind people were hired initially to be on the taste panel but after a six-week training,, two people were cut. Candidates had to have a grade 12 education and be non-smokers. They were not permitted to bring their guide dogs to the plant because their presence would not be appropriate in a food facility.

Helen Steel Quigley is a blind woman who was hired as a taste tester in 1975, the year the program began. This is how she described her job:“ The taste panel prepared samples of finished products off the line. We tasted three samples of a product and compared them with a control sample. We were the quality control people.” Helen recalls that they tasted nearly all the products: cereals Shake and Bake, Kool-Aid, Jell-O and Tang. After each tasting session, they had to clean up. Then after a half hour break they began the next tasting session. Helen worked a 35 hour week. She remembers it as a fun job with good pay and benefits. During her employment, the members of the taste panel were featured in a television commercial where they demonstrated how they performed their taste testing. Helen liked the fact that it showed that blind people could be employed.

But The Foods also had another group of taste testers...dogs!!! General Foods maintained the Gaines Dog Kennel in Centreton, on Centreton Rd. where 100 dogs were kept. Twice a daily, the dogs were fed Gaines Dog food products, often being presented with two or more choices of food. Their reactions to the food were carefully observed to see which product they chose first and which one they consumed the most. Regular blood and stool samples were taken and iron and calcium levels were monitored. The dogs were under the care of a Port Hope veterinarian. After this facility ceased to operate, in the 1980's some local people adopted the canine food taste tester dogs from the kennel.

In its heyday in the 70s in Cobourg, The Foods employed 1,000 – 1,200 people.

In the 80's, the winds of acquisition winds blew again. Philip Morris bought both General Foods and Kraft. A long chapter of The Foods in Cobourg came to a close when General Foods became Kraft General Foods. Later, Kraft dropped General Foods from its name and became Kraft Foods Inc. Soon after General Foods became Kraft, the tasting operation was moved to La Salle Quebec and the blind taste testers became unemployed.

Some former Foods employees speculate that when the dangers of cigarette smoking became very public in the 80's that Philip Morris decided that it was time to diversify and that a food corporation would improve its public image, not to mention its corporate bottom line.

Although Kraft was bought by Philip Morris, the status quo of the well-known and popular Kraft name remains on its many well-known products. After all who would buy Philip Morris cheese or feed their kids Philip Morris Dinner? Kraft is the second largest food and beverage company in the world. They have 220 manufacturing plants around the world. Who is number one? Nestle!

You will recall that General Foods corporation got bigger and bigger over the years with its many acquisitions and had experienced phenomenal growth since its humble beginnings ... but Kraft is a another giant. It's a sure bet that at any given time we all have some Kraft products in our kitchens. The German surname "Kraft" means strong, courageous. The beginning of the Kraft Company really was like the television commercial that you may remember: one man, James L. Kraft who delivered his cheese by horse and wagon. He was the son of a Canadian farmer, but he emigrated to Chicago where he began selling cheese in 1903. With the help of his four brothers, James Kraft's Company grew quickly and innovatively. They understood the value of advertising and were the first to use colour ads.

But let's talk about Kraft in Cobourg: just because The Foods became Kraft, it doesn't mean that the plant began manufacturing Cracker Barrel Cheese or Kraft Dinner or countless other Kraft products. Production continued by and large with the same products as General Foods had manufactured here. There were about 1000 employees

when Kraft took over. At first The Foods management remained in place, but after a time Kraft moved some of their own people here.

While I've been told that after The Foods became Kraft, that the family spirit so pervasive in the company disappeared but it is worth remembering that General Foods was a huge presence in Cobourg for a very long time. That sense of family had a long time to grow and develop two generations. And Kraft was only here for 18 years. Think of it in terms of a family getting a new stepfather and how much time might have to pass for new relationships to take hold.

Kraft was regarded as a good corporate citizen of Cobourg. Around 2006, Kraft approached Northumberland United Way and together they established Food 4 All Warehouse that provides food to food banks. Kraft donated huge amounts of their products to the warehouse, as well as food to 45 school breakfast programs around the county.

In 2008, the Kraft Corporation closed its doors and a Cobourg food industry that had lasted close to a century is no more. What did this mean for the town of Cobourg? Three hundred and eighty people lost their jobs and a huge manufacturing facility was emptied.

Wendy Gibson, Economic Development officer for the town of Cobourg, had this comment: "In general terms Kraft contributed thousands of dollars to our local economy both by employees spending their wages here as well as United Way contributions, Chamber of Commerce and other organizations throughout Cobourg."

The entire 69-acre facility was sold to private enterprise for \$2.6 million. Some of the buildings are rented but the facility is by no means full. Northumberland County, in turn bought some of the buildings from the new owners. Among their current tenants are United Way, Food 4 All Warehouse and Emergency Medical Services.

The year Kraft shut down, 2008, the company paid \$632,276 in taxes to the town of Cobourg. In 2013, with the facility only partly rented out, the town only received \$189,874 in taxes. The manufacturing of products formerly produced here by Kraft went to other Kraft plants, both in U.S. and Canada.

And so, after close to a century of food production in Cobourg, Certo, General Foods and Kraft that were so much a part of Cobourg's heritage are gone. The final chapter of this history has been written.

June 2014

Peterborough Lift Lock Cruise

On Tuesday, June 3, members of the Historical Society enjoyed a Lift Lock Cruise along the Trent Severn Waterway, and also toured the Peterborough Museum and Archives.



The featured exhibition is “Stories of Sacrifice” and includes artifacts, images and archival material that chronicles the Great War and its impact on Peterborough. The rain lifted and the sun came out. This was a good end to a successful year.

