



Outlook

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The Carriage House Cooperage New Life for an Old Craft

By Bill Kennedy



Peter Bradford and Marla Cameron addressed the Society's January meeting on the craft of barrel making. Their Carriage House Cooperage in Prince Edward County is one of only two in the entire country. You can attend a demonstration of their work during "Maple In The County" in March. *Photo: Nick White*

There was a time when as many as thirty-two cooperages plied their trade between Toronto and Kingston. Today there are only two in the entire country. One in British Columbia and one right next door to us in Prince Edward County. But if you think the craft of making barrels by hand one at a time is hanging by a thread pay a visit to The Carriage House Cooperage on Gilead Road near Bloomfield and talk to the owners Peter Bradford and Marla Cameron. Their knowledge and passion

(Cont'd. on page 6)

Hastings County Historical Society 2011 Annual Report

By Orland French

Thanks to the able assistance of Vice-President Richard Hughes, I was able to take a "holiday" from some of my presidential duties in 2011. However, this was only because I was very busy as chair of the Unlock The Archives Capital Campaign, which required great amounts of time and energy on the part of many volunteers. I will deal with the details of the campaign in a separate report.



HCHS President Orland French

The Historical Society continues to grow in enthusiasm and vigour. We have ten energetic directors who attack their tasks with hearty zeal. Attendance at our

(Cont'd. on page 2)



Millie the Moose

Millie poses for a photo shoot in the vicinity of O'Hara Mill near Madoc where she's been hanging out over the winter.

O'Hara Mill volunteer

Peter Sporning tells us that she's been a regular sight along Highway 7. For a look at the O'Hara Mill project in which Peter has been involved for many years see his article and photos on page 4. A year ago he and O'Hara Mill volunteer Dave Little were the Society's guest speakers.

President's Report *(Cont'd. from page 1)*

at our general meetings, which we now call "special presentations" to encourage public participation, generally fills the meeting hall at the Quinte Living Centre. We have been blessed with a steady parade of interesting speakers on fascinating topics, or the other way around, thanks to the concerted efforts of Program Director Anne Rector.

For the tenth year in a row, we have held an annual banquet which was a sell-out and, as usual, was enthusiastically received. Complicated events only seem smooth and easy if they are well-organized, and this one was one of the best we have ever enjoyed. Richard Hughes and his banquet team can take full credit for that. Our guest speaker was Senator Mike Duffy, formerly a journalist on CTV, who strongly endorsed our goal of creating a community archives.

The banquet raised about \$8,000 for the archives capital campaign, the most ever realized for this event. This was largely due to the sales prowess of Bill Hunt, who hunted down and harassed business donors until they purchased a \$250 sponsorship of a banquet table. He has never met a door he couldn't open! Bill Kennedy has been doing such a good job on the *Outlook* newsletter that we doubled the number of pages for him to fill. The *Outlook* is now eight pages and Bill welcomes all contributions of articles or photos.

Treasurer Mike Shaw has been keeping the books straight and at year's end reported that the Society had in excess of \$25,000 in its bank account, outside of what it has raised for the archives. One of Mike's favourite hobbies is dealing with banks (his other favourite corporation is Bell Canada) so his duties give him plenty of opportunities to pursue his pleasures. (Note the heavy sarcasm.)

Our very own Town Crier, Bruce Bedell, promotes the Society through traditional means in the newspapers. However, he has made himself available in Crier Costume a number of times for cheque-presentation ceremonies for the archives campaign. People are beginning to think he is the campaign's official mascot.

Elizabeth Mitchell continues to keep track of our

growing membership while Diane Sule diligently takes minutes at our meetings and tries to make sense of convoluted motions. Mary Jane Throop has been assuming a larger role in the archives as photo collections manager and workshops leader, as Gerry Boyce eases off somewhat in his position as heritage advisor. John Lowry has been forcing his way through the jungle of information technology towards creating a new Society website.

With all of these people doing such a wonderfully creative and competent job, I decided that, after 10 years as president, I should step aside. I served notice at the executive meeting in December that I would not run again for the executive, although in my role as past-president I would continue to work on the capital campaign.

I also strongly urged a review of the Society's constitution to limit the number of years an individual can be in one position on the executive, or on the executive for any number of consecutive years. I will be looking at that in my "retirement".

This has been a satisfying decade as I have seen the Society grow in numbers, enthusiasm and creativity. I appreciate all the assistance that has been rendered by a large number of volunteers.

Orland French
President

Editor's Note: The 2011 annual report can be read in its entirety on the Historical Society website.

The Shady Side of Our History

Over the years local author C.W. (Bill) Hunt has collected stories about gambling joints, houses of ill repute, crooked politicians, opium dens, and other nefarious activities, just the kind of stuff we love to read about. In future issues of *Outlook* he will be sharing with us some of these stories. As many of our readers know Bill has written extensively about the rum running days in these parts, particularly in his books "Booze, Boats and Billions" and "Whiskey and Ice."

Thanks to All of Our 2011 Archive Supporters!

It was great to see so many people at our special event (hosted by Volunteer Extraordinaire Lois Foster) held on December 19th to honour the many people who volunteer their time and talents for the Archives.

High on this list are the “Archive Angels” – those who come to the regular “workshops” at the Archives in Cannifton to work with the archival materials and assist researchers. Eight new volunteers joined us in 2011 to help with this work. Active volunteers at the start of 2012 are Laurel Bishop, Marney Black, Gerry Boyce (a.k.a our “Archangel”), Breanna Brethour, Al Cleary, Jeanne Delaney, Kieran Delaney, Adele Dibben, Donna Fano, Lois Foster, Lorna Garbutt, Bill Kennedy, Katharine Mills, Elizabeth Mitchell, Bobby-Jo Morris, George Pearce, Lindi Pierce, Annis Ross, Erin Ryan, Diane Sule, Mary Jane Throop, and Nick White. Beth Green also helps us occasionally but no longer comes every week.

Our appreciation also includes the members of the Society’s Board and all those who are helping with the fundraising efforts and staff the downtown campaign office at 208 Front Street. These people are doing great work in supporting the archives and raising funds and awareness for the new building. Society President Orland French and Vice-President Richard Hughes (who also chairs the Archives Advisory Committee) deserve special mention for their leading roles in the Society’s “Unlock the Archives” fund raising campaign.

A wonderful afternoon, good company, good cheer, and seasonal fare helped us celebrate the accomplishments of our volunteers in 2011 and prepare for a busy new year.

Sharon White—Archivist
City of Belleville, County of Hastings



Standing left to right: Bruce Bedell, Vera Morton, Sharon White, Bill Kennedy, Mary Jane Throop, Anne Rector, Lindi Pierce, Hazel Lloyst, John Lowry, Katharine Mills, Laurel Bishop, Marilyn Hughes, Adele Dibben, Mary-Lynne Morgan, Bill Hunt, Kay Manderville, Lorna Garbutt, Doug Wilson, Mary Wilson, Sylvia French, Kieran Delaney, Orland French, George Pearce, Bobby-Jo Morris, Jeanne Delaney, Gerry Boyce, Richard Hughes, Al Cleary, Annis Ross, Ruth Boyce. Seated at front: Lois Foster, Donna Fano, Elizabeth Mitchell, Beth Green, Erin Ryan, Breanna Brethour.

Not in the picture: Nick White (the photographer) and volunteers not able to attend: Diane Sule, Marney Black and Michael Shaw.

O'Hara Mill Homestead And Conservation Area

The O'Hara Mill

by Peter Spurring

Tucked into the gently rolling terrain of Central Hastings, just northwest of the Village of Madoc, this 85-acre heritage site has endured a roller-coaster ride of good intentions ever since the property was first purchased by the Moira River Conservation Authority (now Quinte Conservation) from the O'Hara Family in 1954. Governmental budget restraints over the years have seen this diamond in the rough almost close its doors on more than one occasion. It wasn't until 2005 when an interested group of occasional volunteers, the Friends of O'Hara Mill, formed the O'Hara Mill Volunteers Association that good things started to happen. We are an incorporated non-profit



The new stone dam can be seen in the background. The flume and the waterwheel are to the right up against the mill.

organization dedicated to maintaining and improving this vibrant little corner of our local history.

A key industrial site in the early settlements of North America was the sawmill with its up-and-down, or reciprocating frame saw. An excellent example is the saw at O'Hara Mill. It is an English Gate upright frame saw. It is believed to be the only surviving and working saw of this type in Canada, and one of only a handful on the continent. This mill was built

around 1850 and operated continually by the O'Hara family until 1908, sporadically for another



O'Hara Mill in operation in the 1880s. The gentleman in the foreground with the white beard is James O'Hara Sr. This photo is believed to have been taken by James O'Hara Jr.

20 years, then shut down permanently in 1928.

The most unusual feature of the mill itself is that it has survived at all through many years of neglect, and surprisingly, no vandalism. The mill was partially restored in the late 1950s and operated occasionally as a tourist attraction until 1971 when it was once again closed to remain a static display. Then, in 2001, four volunteers including myself



This view of O'Hara Mill before the new dam was installed demonstrates the force of the water in the stream.

undertook to restore the mill back into operation. Ninety-five percent of all the original parts and building were there, and although it has taken sev-

eral years, the mill is now running like the proverbial sewing machine.

The biggest threat remaining to the continued operation of the mill was the alarming disintegration of the old millpond dam, and thus the supply of water to the mill. So, in 2010, we managed to raise enough funding, and in partnership with Quinte Conservation, six of our volunteers have rebuilt



This photo shows the interior of the mill with visitors watching the reciprocating saw frame turn a log into planks using water power.

Photos by Peter Sporring

the dam to today's engineering standards. It has been faced with vintage limestone very similar to the foundation of the mill. With continued care and interest, this significant old piece of engineering history should now provide enjoyment for generations to come. These restoration efforts can be seen in our website Gallery at www.ohara-mill.org.

A Public Event March 31 & April 1, 2012

Carriage House Cooperage & 66 Gilead Distillery

The Carriage House Cooperage and 66 Gilead Distillery will both be open for Maple In The County, March 31st and April 1st of 2012. The 66 Gilead Distillery will be open for tastings with a special recipe created by owner Sophia Pantazi. The Carriage House Cooperage will be doing barrel demonstrations on the old silo pad of the farm. Both establishments will be welcoming visitors for the first time in 2012 at the address of 66 Gilead Rd., RR#2, Bloomfield, from 11:00 to 4:00 p.m. on both days.

An Eventful Year Takes The Society Over 500

Starting in 2010 with information supplied by Gerry Boyce and from copies of *Outlook* we have put together a database of the events that the Society has organized or in which it has participated.

2011 was another a very "eventful" year for the Society. In addition to launching the "Unlock the Archives" campaign and conducting the regular business of the Society, the Society's volunteers organized and/or participated in 16 other events during the year.

Adding those 2011 events to those in the database gives a total of 501 events! And I'm sure that we have not captured everything.

Lists of most of these events can be seen in the tables under the "Our History" section of the Society website.

Information about events held since 2007 can be read on-line by viewing the corresponding copy of *Outlook*.

The website has generated a number of enquiries from people asking for more details about some of these events so we have started a pilot project to make the early editions of our newsletter available on-line. Thanks to Diane Sule (sorting) and Erin Ryan (scanning) we now have the first five years of *Outlook* available on the Society's website.

Nick White

500+

Carriage House Cooperage *(Cont'd. from page 1)*

for the work offers promise of continued life for this old and honourable vocation.

Peter had always been interested in woodworking and after twenty-five years of managerial positions in the automotive industry he decided to follow his dream of becoming a cooper. But where to find a teacher? After some false starts he located an old-timer in Kansas City, Missouri who said he'd teach him. He had learned the trade fifty years ago in Japan. They've been down to see him a couple of times each summer these past few years and are beginning to close in on the completion of the seven year apprenticeship program.



The lifespan of a barrel is about five years. After that you can cut them in half and use them as flower planters.

Barrels are made from a variety of woods with white oak being the most popular. Ash and hickory are also used. It is not uncommon for a local farmer to call The Cooperage to say he is cutting down an oak or hickory and could they use it. The trees Peter and Marla use are usually over two hundred years old and they use only cut trees. They do not go into a forest marking trees to be felled.

The wood for any given barrel is not mixed. For example, the wood from an oak cut in Stirling will not be mixed with wood from an oak cut in Prince Edward County. Like grapes for wine, where a tree grows will mark the wood with its distinctive character and this will impact the product that goes into the barrel be it wine, spirits or pickles. If a barrel is to be made of oak the wood used in the firing process will also be oak and the temperature of that fire must be the right temperature. It is the heat that

‘toasts’ the barrel, not the flames. It is a critical step in the process for it affects the barrel’s contents.

Depending on the wood a barrel can cost anywhere from \$550 to as high as \$1,200. It takes a day to make one barrel. Historically coopers made their own tools and while on one of Peter’s recent visits to Kansas City his teacher gave him some of the tools that his grandfather had used. Peter was overwhelmed by the gesture and asked what he could do in return. The teacher replied, “I just want you to do it right.”

Their website is www.thecarriagehousecooperage.com

You can also read about The Carriage House Cooperage in the Winter 2011-2012 edition of Watershed magazine.

HCHS Treasurer’s Report for 2011

By Michael Shaw, Treasurer

Once again I am pleased to report that financially, the Hastings County Historical Society has had a very good year.

This year the banquet provided net revenue of \$8,047.76 and Bill Hunt's bus tour brought in \$827.38. The banquet proceeds (\$8,000.00) have been placed in the Archives Fund.

We were able to transfer a total of \$189,679.00 out of our operating accounts into a special Archives Fund account at CIBC. This makes it look like we lost \$144,000.00, but on our regular operations not related to the new Archives our financial position has essentially not changed.

Isabelle Hughes, who is now managing the Archives Fund financial account, reports that the Fund balance at the end of 2011 is \$220,224.13. To this can be added \$2,718.72 which we can claim as an HST rebate.

All of the above is made possible by the hard work of many people and they deserve our thanks and congratulations.

I would like to thank our 2011 President Orland French, all the Board members, Gerry Boyce and many others who have made my job a pleasant one.

Editor’s Note: The full Treasurer's report can be found on the Historical Society website.

Unlock The Archives Campaign

With great expectations we opened a Campaign Headquarters on Front Street in May and hired a campaign co-ordinator. Our goal: to raise an additional \$400,000 for the Community Archives. It has been a tough assignment. By year's end we had reached less than a quarter of our goal.

Our headquarters at 208 Front Street has been generously provided free by the building's owner, Maurice Rollins. We have used it as main street office to promote the campaign to the public.

We have been fortunate to retain a well-known national literary celebrity, Peter C. Newman, as our honorary campaign chair. Peter moved to Belleville last winter and has embraced the opportunity to get involved with the Historical Society.

Our campaign first canvassed our members, then expanded to local business, larger corporate presences in the community, and individuals who have personally or through their families, held a large stake in the community.

A separate bank account has been established for the archives fund, administered by a volunteer Archives Treasurer, Isabel Hughes.

The stipulated home of the archives, the former Irish Hall on Church Street, was purchased in 2009 by the city and the county. Work has been proceeding on architect's plans, and in doing so it has been discovered that the cost of preparing the building will be higher than expected. At the end of the year, City Council voted another \$300,000 for the capital campaign (\$150,000 in each of 2012 and 2013) and County Council has been asked for another \$150,000.

The anticipated cost of the project is now \$1.5 million, including the original purchase price. While this seems expensive, it is much less than the cost of creating a brand new building.

Fund-raising will continue in 2012.

Orland French
Chair

Hockey Night In Belleville



Historical Society Program Director Anne Rector is shown here with her husband Kelly Reid. They, along with other Society members, were guests of Investia Financial Services for a Belleville Bulls hockey game in January at the company's Yardman Arena suite.

Anyone For Opera, Circa 1913!



What with the New York Metropolitan Opera's 2011-2012 season well underway we thought it would be interesting to provide our readers with a look at what was playing at Belleville's Griffin Opera House back in 1913 when the best seats in the house cost twenty-five cents.

This picture shows the front page of a four-page brochure that contained more photographs of the production inside.

The February 2011 issue of *Outlook* featured a story and photo about the Griffin Opera House. At the time it was the third largest in the province and cost \$20,000 to build.

Our Sporting Life on Display Archives of Ontario Exhibit HCHS at 208 Front Street



The Historical Society is hosting a new Archives of Ontario exhibit at its Capital Campaign HQ at 208 Front Street, Belleville. It's all about sports of yesteryear and includes skating, hockey, boxing, calisthenics, swimming and football.

The figure skater on the left is Canada's Karen Magnussen, triple gold medal world champion in 1973. The picture was part of an advertisement for Beehive Golden Corn Syrup. The photo, top right, will interest Leaf Fans. They are shown here in the Stanley Cup final of 1942. After losing the first three games to Detroit Red Wings they went on to




win the next four games and the championship! *Beleaf* it or not!

Included in the display is a letter from Conn Smythe telling Leaf management that it would be "greatly appreciated if you would instruct your players to stand at attention during the national anthem and to refrain from chewing gum and any other movements during the ceremony."

A bit of trivia: When and where did the Toronto Blue Jays play their first game, what was the weather like, who were their opponents, and who won the game? Don't Know? Stop by the exhibit and find out.

The display includes a photo of a young Gordie Howe signing autographs for admiring young fans and a circa 1910 one of the Picton Collegiate girls' calisthenics class.



Hastings County Historical Society Presentation

Special Guest Speaker:

Nick Gromoff

Senior Archaeologist and Owner of
Ground Truth Archaeology

Topic: The Recent Dig at the new
Court House Facility in Belleville

Hear Amazing Stories of the Findings in the Excavation in
Downtown Belleville for the New Courthouse

Date: Tuesday, February 21st, 2012

Time: 7:30 p m

Location: Quinte Living Centre Auditorium
(North Corner Door)

370 Front Street, Belleville

Everyone Welcome, Bring a Friend

Visit Our Website: www.hastingshistory.ca

HASTINGS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY DIRECTORS

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Hastings County Historical Society is based at the old township office in Cannifton. Please address mail to General Delivery, Cannifton, ON, K0K 2K0. *Outlook* is published eight months of the year for members and friends of the Society. The editor, Bill Kennedy, can be reached at email <kennedycounty@gmail.com>

MEMBER ADDRESS