



# **Hastings County Historical Society**

## **Annual Report 2015**

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### **Report of the President**

**Richard M. Hughes**

The year 2015 has been a series of amazing successes in every aspect of the Society's projects and activities. The large and active team of volunteers: the directors, committee chairs, committee volunteers and project volunteers have all brought skills and energies to a wide range of projects all aimed at achieving the central goals and objectives of the Society. These goals are to promote and encourage research into the history of Hastings County, including the cities of Belleville and Quinte West; to provide information and education on our history; to promote events and activities related to our history; and to participate as a full partner with the Community Archives of Belleville and Hastings County in all aspects of its work.

This year the Society completed the largest project ever undertaken in its long history; namely, the Capital Campaign to create the Community Archives, under the leadership of Orland French. The Society delivered to the City and County a cheque for \$251,000 to furnish and equip the new Community Archives which is now in the final stages of the physical renovation work. Earlier the Society had contributed over \$14,000 to this project for a total participation of \$265,000. In this project the Society is a full, legal partner with the City and County.

All other projects in 2015 exceeded previous years in reaching out to more and more residents of our region and bringing to them our great heritage. The main annual fundraising event is the Banquet and Celebration of Local History which this year featured TV Ontario's Steve Paikin. The largest attendance and the highest levels of fundraising were achieved in 2015. Again this year the Society ran two Historical Bus Tours both of which were fully sold out months before the tours. These have proven to be an annual highlight with many of our members and friends.

Our main vehicle for bringing local history to the wider population is found in the eight monthly public presentations, bringing dynamic guest speakers and a wide range of topics. Due to increasing participation, we moved in 2015 to the modern, comfortable and larger facilities of Maranatha on College Street in Belleville. A spectacular launch event in January featured Sir John A. Macdonald in person, (through a re-enactor) on his 200<sup>th</sup> birthday, attracting over 260 people. The average attendance through the year was around 100-120 persons and drawing many new "fans" to the Society's programs.

This year the Society celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Maple Leaf Flag by producing a 15- page booklet, written by Director Bill Kennedy. This colourful and interesting booklet was provided to every school in Hastings County, five copies each, with the goal of both informing young people and possibly arousing interest in history. Also this year the Society participated in a number of public events, including Canada Day, Hastings County Farm Show and O'Hara Mill Heritage Days.

In 2015 we developed a new and dynamic website to bring the news of the Society to the world. Within this project we have instituted a system for transmitting important and timely news to members through special email announcement. Also, there is an online bookstore with the possibility of making purchased through PayPal, thus providing the service to friends at a distance. The Society has long maintained one of the finest newsletters, *Outlook*, of any historical society in the province. In 2015 it continued its tradition of fascinating stories, announcements of coming events and news items. These newsletters are provided to every school in Hastings County. Many members and friends have commented on how they look forward to receiving their monthly newsletters. Finally, the Historical Society can report a fully successful financial year with the accounts in excellent shape.

## **Report of the Vice-President**

### **Vern Whalen**

During the President's absence, the Vice-President prepared and chaired the meeting of the Board of Directors and operated the Public Presentation in February. The Vice-President also assisted the President in other matters during the year as requested.

## **Report of the Secretary**

### **Mary-Lynne Morgan**

The role of Secretary is one of the well-defined roles on any Board. Throughout 2015 (my second year in this position) I attended all regular and special meetings of the Board of Directors, took minutes, sent those minutes electronically to all Board members and ex-officio members and attended and compiled a written report of each monthly public presentation. I also maintain an up-to-date list of the Board members' email addresses and phone numbers. Once approved by the Board, the minutes and the monthly reports were filed at the Heritage Centre for archival purposes. As Custodian of the seal of the Society and of all books, papers, records, correspondence, contracts and other documents belonging to the Society, I can report that these items are all filed in the Society's office at the Heritage Centre and will be transferred to the Historical Society offices in the new Community Archives facilities sometime in 2016.

I was also asked to provide minutes of and a report on a gathering of representatives from historically focused cultural groups in Hastings County, held in May at the Stirling Farm Town facility. In addition, as HCHS Secretary, I worked closely with the President to review and update the HCHS Constitution and Bylaw to conform with new Ontario regulations for not-for-profit corporations which take effect in 2016. I prepared the final, completely revised By-law #1 which was submitted to the Board for ratification at its December 2015 meeting, and will be submitted to the general membership at the next Annual General Meeting.

## **Report of the Treasurer**

### **Grant Harrison**

I accepted the position of Treasurer as of January 1, 2015, replacing Mike Shaw, after he performed 11 years of long and excellent service. I have served on numerous Boards of Directors over many years, usually as a result of my profession as a Chartered Accountant, and I would say, without qualification, that this is the most amiable group of people with whom I have ever served.

One of the highlights of 2015 was the presentation of a cheque in the amount of \$251,000 to the City of Belleville as the Society's contribution to

renovate the second floor of the Belleville library building to accommodate the Community Archives.

The number of members and related membership revenue continue to increase. Membership fees for 2015 totaled \$ 9,078, compared to \$5,332 in 2014 and \$4,040 in 2013, an increase of over 100% in two years.

Two bus tours to Kingston in 2015 generated ticket sales of \$ 6,930, with expenses of \$4,701, resulting in a net profit of \$2,229. This compared to net profits of \$3,347 in 2014 and \$3,392 in 2013.

The annual banquet and celebration of local history for 2015 achieved ticket sales of \$10,010 and dinner sponsors \$5,125, for a total of \$15,135. Relating expenses were \$6,067, resulting in a net profit of \$9,068. This compared to total revenue of \$12,770 in 2014, and expenses of \$7,098 in 2014, which resulted in a net profit of \$5,672 in that year.

With increased membership, together with postage increases, costs of our newsletter, *Outlook*, continue to increase. Costs of production and mailing of the letter during 2015 totalled \$3,990, compared to \$2,945 in 2014 and \$2,282 in 2013.

Full details of the financial operations of the Society are presented in the financial statements, provided separately.

## **Publicity: Media and Print**

### **Mary-Lynne Morgan**

The central responsibility is to prepare and transmit to all media outlets notices of upcoming monthly public presentations and special events of the Hastings County Historical Society and to prepare and transmit reports of special events and activities. This activity requires an ongoing updating of email contact lists, since media outlets continue to be even more highly concentrated. Several local outlying newspapers have disappeared altogether or have been consumed in larger conglomerates. In general, as the number of local media staff continues to shrink, the demand for very specific ways of submitting information increases, especially for the various print media and recently Quinte Arts Council weekly calendar of events. In the latter part of the year, we were able to reconnect with the publication,

*Snap'd* which provided excellent photo coverage of the banquet and the November public presentation, thereby increasing public awareness of the work of the HCHS to a broader general public.

Articles were submitted for several issues of the HCHS *Outlook* and Quinte Arts Council *Umbrella*. Email notices were sent out for each monthly public presentation, the bus tour, the annual banquet and other special events to all area weekly and daily newspapers, quarterly magazines, and various selected websites, as well as all area radio/TV outlets. Since media outlets are required by law to provide Public Service Announcement space, I always sent brief PSA format notices as well as longer descriptive articles to get our information into Coming Events listings both in print and on radio and local TV. This broader coverage has led to a continuing increase in the attendance at monthly public presentations and the annual bus tour over the past year.

## **Programs**

### **Vern Whalen**

In 2015 the Historical Society moved its Monthly Public Presentation events to the Maranatha Centre which provides a modern, spacious facility with excellent parking area and electronic facilities. The numbers of attendees have grown substantially recently necessitating the larger facilities. In 2015 the Monthly Public Presentations included:

**January** – To mark the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birthday of Sir John A. MacDonald, Brian and Renee Porter portrayed Canada's first Prime Minister and Lady Macdonald. This initial presentation at Maranatha was attended by close to 260 people, by far the Society's biggest gathering ever.

**February** – Research Assistant, Amy Cowie, presented the amazing story of the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte.

**March** – Author Paul Kirby gave his usual interesting presentation, this time on his book, *Trail of Broken Hearts, Surveying, Building and Settling the Hastings Colonization Road*.

**April** – The Archive Volunteers presented a series of fascinating Stories from the Archives. Presenters were well-prepared and gave colourful, interesting accounts of the historical stories they discover in the course of their volunteer work at the Archives.

**May** – Society director Jim Kennelly presented the amazing stories of the settlement of Tyendinaga Township.

**September** – Long-time Society volunteer, editor of the newsletter, *Outlook* and former teacher, Donna Fano, gave a heart rending story on the history of Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf. This was our first presentation telecast by Cogeco.

**October** – Archivist and former teacher Neil Smith provided an illustrated presentation on Albert College's 145 year history.

**November** – Society member and film producer Doug Knutson presented his film "*Last Day of School Final Tour of BCI & VS.* John Lowry presented his collection of BCI memorabilia for the attendees to see and admire. Long-time society director, historian and former teacher, Gerry Boyce capped the night off with his personal memories of the once memorable school. The night garnered our second largest turnout of the year at close to 200.

To say that our first year at Maranatha was successful would be not be sufficient. It was fantastic. Book-ended by the January and February turnouts, the other nights average well over 100 in attendance.

## **Education Committee**

### **Bill Kennedy**

This past year being the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Canada's maple leaf flag the Education Committee's main project for 2015 was the preparation of a series of Canadian flag celebratory events. These included large colour posters of the flag's history for use at various Hastings County events, the publishing of a 3,500 word colour booklet on the subject and a Power Point presentation scheduled to be made to the Society in February 2016.

Donations towards the cost of the booklet's publication were received during the Society's annual banquet in October and at its monthly public events. Five copies of the booklet have been sent to each school in Hastings County. Presentations to the schools on the history of the origins of the flag are being considered for 2016.

Sales of the Society's "*At the Call of King and Country: The People of Hastings County in the Great War, 1914 - 1918*" written by Bill Kennedy and published by the Society continued throughout 2015 and have covered the cost of the book's production. During the year the EC chair made presentations on the content of the book to Belleville and area organizations.

## **Outlook Newsletter**

**Donna Fano, Editor**

**Laurel Bishop, Co-editor**

The year 2015 marked the publication of the 20<sup>th</sup> volume of *Outlook*, the illustrated newsletter of the Hastings County Historical Society, and in particular, the publication of the 300<sup>th</sup> issue, which appeared in the month of September. Following the practice of previous years, we, co-editors Donna Fano and Laurel Bishop, produced nine issues in the months January to June and September to November.

A variety of features filled the eight pages of *Outlook* each month, keeping HCHS members up to date on planned events, including the move of the Archives to the library building in 2016 and the content of past public presentations such as those given this fall on Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf, Albert College and BCIVS. Each issue saw the inclusion of two or three historical articles on such varied topics as the businesses of Reid's Dairy and Barbers Flowers; King George High School in Stirling; Belleville opera houses; circuit riders in the Bay of Quinte; the Christmas display of Santa's Workshop and Rawdon Township Cenotaph machine guns. A regular feature entitled "On the Home Front" followed the events taking place in Belleville and vicinity during the year 1915 of the First World War.

Dates of newsletter publication are presently set to allow members to receive adequate notification of the next public presentation. In addition to paid members, *Outlook* newsletter is sent to all schools in Hastings County and to twenty retirement and nursing homes in the Hastings area.

## **Exhibits and Displays**

Over the years the Society has prepared a large collection of display material, mainly poster sized panels of historical photos, for use at major public events in the city and county. In 2015, the Society participated in Canada Day at Belleville's Zwick's Island, Hastings County Farm Show in Tyendinaga Township, O'Hara Mill Heritage Day at Madoc and at Bridge St. Church anniversary event. The goal is to both inform and arouse popular interest in local history. Many people visit these displays and ask questions of our volunteers on local history.



## Historical Bus Tours

### Bill Hunt & Mary-Lynne Morgan

Once again, the Bus Tour Committee consisted of two people: Bill Hunt (research and commentary) and Mary-Lynne Morgan (advertising, ticket sales and general administration.) This pairing worked very well, as Bill loves to research the various communities and organize resource people, and Mary-Lynne is most at home doing the administrative chores to support the trip. The team approach proved especially useful on the day of the trip when Bill was free to concentrate on his commentary, and Mary-Lynne handled ticket taking, payment to the lunch providers, and generally kept the trip on a tight schedule. Bill's exhaustive research provided the basis for the hand-out booklet that was given to each ticket holder on the day of the trip. It included the itinerary, maps, details on each location and archival photos.

In honour of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Sir John A. Macdonald's birth, our 2015b trip was entitled "***In Search of Sir John A...***" We found him in various locations in Prince Edward County, Lennox and Addington County and Kingston. Once again we sold out two 56-passenger buses. Some of the credit for this may lie in extended and early advertising. Verbal announcements at the November and January HCHS public presentations, coverage in the Outlook and QAC *Umbrella*, and email notices to the various area print, broadcast and online media generated such a demand that the original bus tour for May 23 was sold out in mid-January and the second tour (June 6) was sold out a month later. Although we probably could have sold out another bus, we decided two trips was enough.

In addition to Bill's exhaustive research and entertaining commentary, we visited several locations where expert resource people spoke or took us on interesting guided tours: Old Hay Bay Church, Picton Court House, Bellevue House and Kingston City Hall. Due to increasing bus costs and the extra per-person costs involved with visiting these locations, our profit for the 2015 trip was actually lower than in recent years, but still netted the Society over \$2,500. These trips continue to be a major source of funding for the Society's work and projects.

At the end of each tour, we asked those who attended which they would prefer for 2016: to complete the third Ghost Towns tour, focussing on the mining and lumbering communities north of Madoc (Gilmour, Bannockburn,

Eldorado, Bancroft) or a trip based in Peterborough area visiting the lift locks, the Canoe Museum and the Petroglyphs. The voting on both trips produced a tie so Bill and I canvassed the Directors at the June Board meeting to ascertain their preference. The choice was to finish the examination of Centre Hastings towns and villages. Hence the tour for 2016 will be "***Exploring Centre Hastings: Tales from the Backwoods***"

Due to recurring problems with the sound system on the first bus, Franklin Tours assigned us a brand-new bus emblazoned with the green, black and white logo of the "Cobourg Cougars" for our second trip. Wherever we stopped, passersby were amazed at who disembarked from that bus! Not what they were expecting!!! As a result of these recurring sound system problems, I purchased a portable microphone for Bill's use during the trips in years to come, which should lessen his anxiety considerably en route.

## **Website Development**

### **Orland French**

The world is ours -- the Hastings County Historical Society has gone international. With our interactive website, we are able to communicate instantly with anyone anywhere on the globe. We are beginning to attract queries – with dollars attached – from Europe about our activities and our "products". This marvelous two-way window on the world is found at [www.hastingshistory.ca](http://www.hastingshistory.ca). The website, designed by OSM Networks and developed by our volunteers, offers much more than information about the Historical Society. Anyone in the world with access to the web can seek historical information about our Society and our geographical area, buy a membership, order a book or express a point of view. While the website has features to serve our members, it also promotes the interests of the Society to a much broader audience. It can:

- offer reports with photos on presentations to the Society
- carry feature items and short articles on historical activities of interest
- carry a picture portfolio of members and events
- offer a sales catalogue of books and publications
- deliver an instant news flash to all our members simultaneously
- deliver an electronic version of the *Outlook* newsletter to our members
- allow cross-commentary from members

- sell memberships
- offer PayPal services for all financial transactions
- retain an electronic membership list for other Society purposes

The website was set up through Orland French who implemented a number of these features. At year's end, Tim and Cynthia Fort undertook training to take the website and develop it further in 2016. The website is capable of many more features that will appear over time and will become a major tool in the promotion and development of the Society. The creation and development of the website is full recognition that in this digital world, an active and nurtured website is an essential element of every modern organization. My thanks to the Board for supporting the creation and development of this website.

## **Membership**

### **Elizabeth Mitchell**

At the end of December 2015, we had a total 292 members. This is up from the year-end total for 2014, when our number of members was 279. The total includes 173 memberships that have been renewed for 2016, as well as 82 memberships for individuals, families, and organizations that have not yet been renewed. Our cut-off month for membership renewal is March, at which time those who have not renewed will be deleted from the list.

There are 26 new memberships during 2015, the same as last year. An overwhelming number responded to the membership renewal form in the November *Outlook*. We have also been receiving membership payments through PayPal, and thanks to this form of payment now available on our website, we gained a Life member in Germany, a tourism student interested in Canada and Hastings County. The breakdown is as follows:

37 Life memberships (31 in 2014)

33 Individual memberships (32 in 2014)

18 Family memberships, counted as 2 people, for total of 40 people (20 Family memberships in 2014)

64 Senior memberships (age 65+) (48 in 2014)

47 Senior Family memberships, counted as 2 people, for total of 66 people (44 Senior Family memberships in 2014)

4 Non-profit organizations

1 Corporate membership

We have given 23 one-year complimentary memberships for the year 2016, as of the beginning of January. These include 19 Banquet table sponsors for the 2015 banquet; plus 4 Archives Advisory Committee members.

### **Publications for Sale**

The Society maintains an extensive list of historical books by local authors for sale to the public. About 40 titles are available including hard and soft cover books, booklets, maps and posters. This is a central activity of the Society, bringing the stories by local historical authors to the public. In addition, the Society publishes stories of local people, places and events, including in the recent past, *Point Anne History of a Cement Factory Town*, *At the Call of King and Country* and the booklet, *A Short History of Canada's Flag*. These publications are available at the Cannifton Heritage Centre, at the monthly Public Presentations at Maranatha and on the website bookstore. In this last outlet, payment can be made by PayPal, assisting purchasers at a distance.

### **County Liaison**

#### **C. W. Hunt & John Lowry**

During 2015 we met with and carried out projects with a number of areas of Hastings County which can be summarized as follows: We met in June with Bancroft Mayor Bernice Jenkins and Councillor Mary Kavanagh to discuss the work of the Society and to suggest that it would be of interest to our members to have more stories of Bancroft area in our newsletter, *Outlook*, possibly during 2016. Discussions were also held with Cathy Jones of the Marmora historical group and suggested that it would be of interest to our members to have the history of Marmora Secondary School and possibly other topics on the early history of that very interesting area. Discussions were also held with members of the historical community in Tweed and Madoc with a view to having more information on the early histories of their areas in our newsletter.

Society director John Lowry acting for the Society took the lead in a project to restore two German MG08 machine gun "war trophies" which have been situated on either side of the Rawdon Township Cenotaph at Harold for close to 100 years. The project was carried out jointly by the Stirling-Rawdon Historical Society and the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 228 Stirling. Funding was provided by the Legion with input by the Society.

In the Spring of 2015 the two weather-aged guns were removed from their original concrete pads. They were then sandblasted to remove layers of old paint and corrosion and the necessary metal repair work was completed. The guns were then painted in period-correct colours, new wooden handles installed and returned to their original position flanking the newly cleaned cenotaph. A re-dedication service by the Legion on October 23 with over 100 members of the public present. In addition, a Remembrance Day service was held at the cenotaph on November 11 for the first time in a number of years thanks to the renewed interest in the cenotaph.

----- End of 2015 Annual Report -----