



# **Annual Report**

**2020**

# Report of the President

Richard Hughes

The year 2020 will go down in history as the Year of the COVID-19 Pandemic, when the world went into lockdown and normal operations of daily life were held in suspension. The functioning of the Historical Society was no exception.

The year 2020 began with great enthusiasm and a long list of community projects being developed by the team of directors and volunteers. Over the past years the work of the Society had surged forward, ever expanding in its projects for the entire County of Hastings and 2020 was mapped out for a continuation of several long-term programs and many new ones.

However, this all came crashing down in mid-March with the arrival on our shores of the Novel Corona Virus, referred to as the COVID-19 Pandemic. All projects involving public gatherings were suspended: the monthly Public Presentations at Maranatha, the spring Historical Bus Tours, the installation and unveiling of three new memorial historical plaques in Quinte West and one at Albert College, the annual Celebration of History Banquet, among others. The Community Archives was closed. Normally, in March 2020 there would have been an Annual General Meeting to review the operation of the Society in 2019. However, with the lockdown, and the impossibility of gathering for this meeting, the Board decided to issue the annual reports but not to hold a meeting. The Board also decided to extend its term for one more year.

This “lockdown” situation called for new approaches, fresh thinking and means of continuing to carry out the mandate of the Society and serving our members and friends, while respecting the public health rules and directives. The Board sought to keep contact with our many members and friends and continue to bring them interesting and informative information. A key form of contact and entertainment is our monthly newsletter, *Outlook*, which we were able to maintain as it was all done electronically and even the paper copies could be distributed without a gathering of people.

The very presence of the COVID-19 lockdown led to an innovative and very successful program of television videos highlighting both the historical plaques across our County and the villages they commemorated. This, too, was accomplished while following fully the directives of Health Dept. authorities for sanitation and distancing.

**Report of the Community Archives of Belleville and Hastings County**  
**Amanda Hill, Archivist**



This year has had a digital focus, with priority given to sharing the archives’ records online for people who were unable to visit us in person. Our purchase of a new overhead scanner in February proved timely, and this new piece of equipment has made it possible to start work on digitizing some of our newspaper and oversized book collections.

During the course of 2020, over 11,000 newspaper pages (570 issues) have been digitized and made available through our online catalogue, Discover. These include runs of *The Stirling Leader*, *The Deseronto Post*, and *The Weekly Ontario*. The earliest newspaper digitized so far was *The Hastings Times and Farmer’s Journal* from April 20<sup>th</sup>, 1833. You can explore the titles digitized so far at <https://discover.cabhc.ca/newspaper-collection>.

We have also photographed some of the assessment rolls in our collections, including the 1871 and 1900 rolls for Hastings County (<https://discover.cabhc.ca/assessment-rolls> - covering all the county’s municipalities except Belleville), and the Belleville assessment rolls for 1853 to 1859 (<https://discover.cabhc.ca/assessment-rolls-2>).

One long-term project we completed this year was the cataloguing of the Hastings County Historical Society’s original collection of archival material (known here as the textual records collection). These 4,400 vertical files were collected between 1957 and 2010. They have all been described in Discover at <https://discover.cabhc.ca/hastings-county-historical-society-textual-records-collection>. Now the descriptions are available online, people often request that the contents of a particular file be digitized. To date, 228 of these files contain items which have been partially or completely scanned and shared online and it is likely that this trend will continue in the future.



Although the Community Archives was closed to the public from mid-March to mid-August, we were still busy dealing with inquiries through email, telephone, and social media. As the table below shows, we actually dealt with *more* queries in 2020 than we did in 2019 and we were particularly busy in the last six months of the year.

Some statistics from 2020 (with last year’s figures for comparison)

Visits to the archives by researchers	202 (520)
Items delivered to researchers	36 (115)
Inquiries answered	444 (392)
Volunteer hours donated	1,493 (2,676)
Archival descriptions available online at <a href="http://discover.cabhc.ca">http://discover.cabhc.ca</a>	13,403 (11,476)
New accessions received	99 (124)
Images added to Flickr: <a href="http://flickr.com/cabhc">http://flickr.com/cabhc</a>	1,414 (2,848)

Views on Flickr	3,432,151 (3,687,290)
Facebook followers ( <a href="https://facebook.com/CABHC">facebook.com/CABHC</a> )	475 (397)
Twitter followers ( <a href="https://twitter.com/CArchivesBHC">@CArchivesBHC</a> )	358 (327)

## **Programs Committee**

**Jim Kennelly**

In January and February of 2020, the Society enjoyed a successful start on its series of historical Public Presentations at Maranatha. We were pleased with both the facilities and the co-operation of the staff. Attendance was steady, averaging 125 persons. However, after this strong start, COVID-19 interrupted our planned presentations for the rest of the year and the series of speakers who had been booked was suspended.

In January, Peter May of Research Casting International spoke on the development of his company based in Trenton. The restoration and preservation of paleontological specimens was presented to a large crowd.

In February, Trevor Parsons, a Director of the HCHS and PhD candidate, presented a fascinating account of the Ku Klux Klan in Hastings County in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The story of its development, spread and impact on Canada was peppered with interesting anecdotes and pictures.

## **Historical Plaques Website**

**Orland French**

In its second year of operation, the Historical Plaques website hit the road. With regular vacation travel restricted by various COVID-19 lockdowns, we decided this would be a good time to encourage “stay-cations” to study the history of Hastings County. With the technical assistance of Cogeco TV and producer J.-P. Lemieux, president Richard Hughes and past-president Orland French formed a three-man production crew to introduce armchair historians to Hastings County's Historical Plaques.

We grouped plaques on the existing website ([hastingshistoricalplaques.ca](https://hastingshistoricalplaques.ca)) in geographic communities to create “Road Trips in Hastings County”. Using five or six samples in each, we created seven “road trips” which would serve as day trips for amateur historians looking for something to do safely during the COVID crisis. The videos, each about five minutes long, are featured on Cogeco, YouTube and on the website itself. The road trips are limited to rural Hastings.

We didn't just talk the talk, we walked the walk. Or rather, we drove it. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we had to follow certain protocols. J.-P. tootled around in his Cogeco cruiser while Richard and Orland travelled in separate cars. With many businesses shut down, sometimes we had great difficulty finding a coffee or lunch in rural Hastings. But we can attest

that we had a beautiful summer; we only once had to call off a shoot.

Plaques on the website itself now number in excess of 120. They include plaques erected by the Society, by the Ontario Heritage Trust, and a number of individual sponsors. But we haven't got them all, and more are being discovered as our sleuths extend their searches through Hastings County.

Because of the videos, the website ([hastingshistoricalplaques.ca](http://hastingshistoricalplaques.ca)) is being linked through County, City and tourism sites. We should note that the website is another form of publishing. Even if you never go outside your door to look at a plaque, you can learn a lot about this community on the pages of the website.

## **Publications for Sale**

**Michelle Hutchison**

One of the several roles of the Hastings County Historical Society is that of fostering interest in the community in which we live. To that end, the Society offers for sale some 40 books, most written by local authors and historians. These publications are available in the bookstore found in the Community Archives of Belleville and Hastings County on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Belleville Public Library. Those who wish may also make purchases via the Hastings County Historical Society website. During non-COVID times, books are also displayed for purchase at the monthly Public Presentations at Maranatha. A small number of titles are also placed for sale in a few local bookstores. In order to highlight the many interesting and informative books available, a brief overview of selected publications is now being featured in the *Outlook* newsletter, which is produced nine times a year.

## **Membership Committee**

**Elizabeth Mitchell**

The statistics in this report reflect the state of memberships as of December 31, 2020. The totals include people who have already renewed for 2021, as well as those who have not yet renewed.

In spite of the pandemic, we have had a very good year in terms of memberships. We recorded 27 new memberships for 2020 and 10 new memberships so far for the year 2021. Because our membership year runs from January to December, to avoid complicated bookkeeping, anyone who joins from September to December is counted as a new member for the following year, so the 10 new memberships for 2021 actually joined between September and December of 2020. As of December 31, 2020, we have 237 memberships (214 in 2019), for a total of 290 members (264 in 2019). [Note that Family and Senior Family memberships are counted as 2 people.] Sadly, two of our Life members and one Senior member passed away during 2020. The chart below shows the numbers of memberships of each type.

Many of our members like to renew in person at our monthly Public Presentations, usually between November and March. Since we have not been able to gather in person since February 2020, we were concerned because a number of people had not yet renewed their 2019

memberships, and furthermore, we wondered if those with current 2020 memberships would remember to renew for 2021. In early November we sent out a reminder letter with a membership form to all those who had not renewed for 2021. The response was overwhelming! We had a deluge of mail in November and December. Many people even sent generous donations along with their membership cheques. By December 31, only about 30% of our members had not yet renewed for 2021, compared with about 75% of members who had not renewed for 2020 at the end of December 2019.

We decided to extend the complimentary one-year memberships for our Banquet sponsors for the coming year. Many of these people and businesses have supported us year after year, so the *Outlook* arriving in their mail every month will remind them that we are still active and continuing to spread the word about Hastings County history.

### Membership Statistics as of December 31, 2020

	Number of Memberships	Number of Members
Corporate members	0	0
Complimentary	22	22
Individual memberships	30	30
Family memberships (2 persons)	19	38
Non-profit organizations	4	4
Senior memberships (65+)	67	67
Senior Family memberships (2 persons)	44	88
Life members	51	51
<b>Total</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>300</b>

### Outlook Distribution Committee

**Elizabeth Mitchell**

As of December 31, 2020, we had 362 names on our *Outlook* distribution list. This includes 238 personal members, 58 schools, and 66 places that receive courtesy copies. Courtesy copies are those that go to local media, retirement and nursing homes, government offices, politicians, museums, historical societies, and libraries.

At the beginning of the pandemic we had to make a decision about how to deliver the April and subsequent issues of the *Outlook*. We couldn't have our usual newsletter folding and envelope stuffing work party at the Archives. Although Mr. Print was deemed an essential service and was not shut down, we weren't sure about the safety of picking up the newsletters. (Our volunteers are in the most "vulnerable" age group.) Of our 122 members who prefer paper copies of the Outlook, 56 have email, so we temporarily switched them to email delivery. The remaining 66 who have no email had to wait until COVID restrictions relaxed, and we could

send them the April, May and June issues together. In September we went back to regular mailing of paper copies to those who prefer them.

Having the *Outlook* available electronically to those who request it has cut down greatly on both printing and mailing costs. At the end of 2020 we had 118 members who had opted for email delivery, and 122 who prefer paper copies. As well, 10 recipients of courtesy copies asked for electronic delivery, making a total of 128 copies that do not have to be sent by regular mail. Two of our Non-profit Organizations (Bay of Quinte Yacht Club and Heritage Belleville) have asked if they could have both email and paper delivery. No problem! This gives them two ways of making our newsletter available for their members to see.

Hastings County schools account for 80 copies. This includes 34 public elementary and secondary schools, plus the Hastings & Prince Edward School Board office; and 18 separate elementary and secondary schools plus the Algonquin & Lakeshore Catholic District School Board office. Public and separate high schools get 3 copies each, addressed to the Principal, the Librarian, and the History Department. Elementary schools get one copy each. All these go to the Board office on Ann Street for delivery through the school board courier system.

In addition, we mail the *Outlook* to six independent schools: Sir James Whitney, Belleville and District Christian School, Quinte Mohawk School, Trenton Christian School, Albert College, and Quinte Christian High School.

According to my calculations, as of December 31, 2020, we required approximately 260 paper copies of the *Outlook* for members, courtesy copies, and schools. Under normal circumstances, we like to have a number of extra copies in order to have some available at the Community Archives and to take to the monthly Presentations for visitors to pick up. During COVID restrictions, we probably only need about 280 copies to meet our present needs.

#### **The Board of Directors as at December 31, 2020**

President:	Richard Hughes	Directors:	Jonathan Chircop
Vice-President:	Stanley Jones		Gary Foster
Secretary:	Trevor Parsons		Gerry Fraiberg
Treasurer:	Dan Atkinson		Diane Godbout
			Jim Kennelly
Ex-Officio:			Gary Nicoll
Historian	Gerry Boyce		Steve Young
Archivist	Amanda Hill		
Past-Pres.	Orland French		