



HASTINGS COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**Annual Report of the
Hastings County Historical Society**

2023

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Report of the President

Gary Nicoll

The most significant change in the last year for the Hastings County Historical Society was the decision of longtime President, Richard Hughes, to step down from the presidency that he had held for the last 12 years. The Society is grateful and appreciative of all the work he has done over these years, his involvement with the new Archives, the funding and production of many historic plaques that the Society researched, funded, had manufactured and installed throughout Hastings County. Richard also piloted the Society through the years of Covid restrictions. In 2023, Richard served as President for the period of January to the end of March when we held our annual general meeting. After that he has continued to serve as Past President as well as Secretary, and is staying active in the production of the Outlook newsletter.

With Richard becoming Past President, our long time serving former President and past president, Orland French retired from the board of the Society. His work is also highly appreciated by the board, and the membership of the Hastings County Historical Society.

We continued the Public Presentation program held at Maranatha in Belleville and held 9 successful presentations. The Board decided that the time was still not right to restart the yearly banquets as there were still difficulties with Covid that concerned our members. We looked at doing a bus tour, but were late in starting on this for the same reasons (concern for Covid) and were not able to attract enough interest to make it a viable project.

In January 2023, Richard Hughes presented the proposal of the HCHS participating in the celebration of the 150th Anniversary of the Belleville Cemetery. Dan Atkinson, who is president of the Belleville Cemetery as well as a board member of the HCHS met and decided to work on a joint project for this occasion. Added to events the Cemetery were working on, the decision was made to have 13 historical reenactors to play prominent former Belleville residents speak

at their gravesites to members of the public being led through a section of the Cemetery. Included were Senator Henry Corby, Susanna Moodie, Sir Gilbert Parker, Ellen Bilborough, Colonel William Ponton and Prime Minister Mackenzie Bowell. The reenactors did a tremendous job through a long day. We later used some of these actors to do an encore show at our November Public Presentation. A booklet in full color was also produced on behalf of the Cemetery and can be viewed on our website.

On August 1st, we launched our new website. We had a busy few months ahead of time working with the website designers, Snap360, to complete and verify the accuracy of the content of the site. It is up to date, both graphically and in design, and is easier to use and maintain. Our thanks to the Website Redevelopment Committee for their hard work on this project.

In 2023, we installed just one historic plaque. This was during late September in Stirling-Rawdon and honored Dr. James Faulkner. It is located at the site of the original Rawdon Township town hall, joining a war memorial for veterans of both World Wars.

The Society continues to publish its newsletter, the informative and entertaining *Outlook*. We publish 9 months a year. We want to extend our thanks to Laurel Bishop and Donna Fano who both edit and assemble the newsletter, to all the writers who submit work for publication and to Richard Hughes and his volunteers who arrange the printing and distribution by mail or hand of the printed copies and via email for the digital copies. We would like to remind our members and readers that the Outlook is open to new material from any member. If you have been researching some aspect of local history or a particular event, why not write it up and share your research through the newsletter. Our editors will help clean up any grammatical problems and suggest improvements.

The Society continued to grow in membership throughout 2023. Our finances continue to be relatively healthy, our cash on hand is down from last year because of the major expense of the new website, but this was expected. The Board is complete and energetically working on projects for the coming year. We continue to need volunteers to assist with our programs. As skills change in digitized and computer/smartphone driven communications, we need the assistance of younger members who are more confident in the use of the newer technologies.

Treasurer's Report

Dan Atkinson

The 2023 year was another challenging one for the Society due to the residual effects of Covid restrictions. Our ability to generate income was once again somewhat restricted primarily due to an inability to hold our annual gala or bus tours thus reducing our cash flows significantly. Nevertheless, the Society did manage its financial resources as best it could during the year. Our cash position at December 31 was \$27,296 compared to 2022 of \$42,900, a reduction of \$15,604 but this includes \$10,557 for our redesign of the website and \$3,450 for another in our series of historical plaques, this one in honour of Dr. James Faulkner.

The Balance Sheet continues to show a strong position primarily because of the aforementioned Bank position but I should also note the Prepaids are down this year because of ongoing book sales of two publications – the Commodores and Belleville in the First World War (now in its second printing). Other than that, we have no liabilities of note – in fact we have HST still to be received from the Federal government in the amount of \$3,451.

The Statement of Revenue and Expenses (or Profit and Loss) shows a decreased level of operations because of the above-noted restrictions on our fund raising. Total revenues are \$9,826 compared to 2022 of \$16,822. Much of this difference was a grant of \$5,000 in 2022 which was paid back to the City having been erroneously given to our organization originally. Total expenses appear to be considerably higher but the two expenditures noted above - the website redesign and the plaque totaling \$14,007 account for the difference. All other expenses are pretty much in line with prior years.

The statement shows a net loss for the year of \$13,793, all of which is attributable to the two major expenditures. We do not anticipate a repeat of this situation in 2024 but nevertheless will closely monitor our expenses in relation to the funds coming into the Society.

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Membership Report

Amanda Hill

The table below summarizes the Society's membership renewals for the most recent three years (figures correct at December 31, 2023). Note that Family and Senior Family memberships are counted as two people in this table.

Membership year	Number of members
Memberships already renewed for 2024	58
2023 memberships	94
2022 memberships	82
Life members	50
Total	284

The types of membership purchased in these years fall into the following categories:

Membership type	Number of memberships (2022-2024)
Corporate	1
Family	12
Individual	18
Organization	5
Senior	71
Senior Family	54
Total (including 50 Life members)	211

Thirty-seven new memberships were granted in 2023, with two new members so far in 2024. In contrast, there were only six new members in 2022, when the Society's monthly presentations did not begin until September, due to pandemic restrictions.

Donations given in addition to membership fees are listed below for each year.

2024	\$380
2023	\$410
2022	\$525

Elizabeth Mitchell, the Society's long-time membership secretary, passed away in July 2023. She kept excellent records and is much missed. If you have any questions about the status of your membership, please email info@hastingshistory.ca.

2023 Annual Report

2023 has been the first full year without any pandemic closures of the Community Archives since 2019. Once again, our behind-the-scenes work has been focused on digitizing local newspapers and sharing them online. Our account at the Internet Archive at <https://archive.org/details/cabhc> now holds 5,789 digitized items (up from 3,250 at the end of 2022).

Leah Blackwood, a Masters student from the University of Toronto, was with us from May to August and worked on a variety of projects. These included cataloguing [Shirley Sutherland's research materials and Chisholm family collection](#), and helping to digitize and share the 100 rolls of newspaper microfilms loaned to us by the Madoc Public Library. Paul Simon, a student from Mohawk College, also helped with this task and with the digitization of [The Quinte Scanner](#) newspaper.



We have also been busy with outreach activities, including:

- our monthly newsletter *The CABHC Patch*
- reading room display case exhibits
- social media updates
- talk for Deseronto and District Historical Society
- talk for John M. Parrott Gallery Brown Bag Lunch series
- tour by Loyalist College students
- assisting with the development of the Hastings County Historical Society's new website

Some Community Archives statistics from 2023 and previous years

	2023	2022	2021
Visits to the archives by researchers	436	326	290
Items delivered to researchers from the vaults	179	140	44
Queries answered	567	563	544
Volunteer hours donated	2,076	1,778	1,376
Archival descriptions available online at http://discover.cabhc.ca	16,532	15,704	14,716
New accessions received	121	101	103
Talks presented	3	4	1
Images added to Flickr: http://flickr.com/cabhc	596	1,053	1,006
Images on Flickr	16,137	15,541	14,488
Views on Flickr	2,120,482	2,823,121	3,339,300
Items on Internet Archive (https://archive.org/details/cabhc)	5,789	3,269	1,248
Views on Internet Archive	118,683	62,475	13,626
Facebook followers (facebook.com/CABHC)	719	685	642
Instagram followers (@carchivesbhc)	65	13	0
Threads followers (@carchivesbhc)	10	-	-

Programmes Committee 2023

Jim Kennelly

The Programmes of the Society continued to be held at Maranatha Church on College Street in Belleville on the 3rd Tuesday of the month. In September, we began to have our programmes begin at 7:00 PM.

January: Marc Seguin, local marine historian and author, delivered an engaging and informative presentation on **Where Have All the Lighthouses Gone**, an exploration of the location of the lighthouses that contributed to the development of the Bay of Quinte.

February: Gordon Pitts, author and local historian, presented a fascinating look at **Gold, Greed and Power: The Trials of A.F. Wood.**

March: Gordon Pitts, author and local historian, followed his previous presentation with **Iron and Rust: The Mixed Heritage.** The development and early history of the village of Madoc was well portrayed.

April: Steven Lindsay-Maracle, historian and researcher of the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte, was well-received as he captivated his audience with the **History of the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte.**

May: Sheila Reesor, historian and PHD candidate, presented an informative and engaging look at **The Alyward Murder, Trail and Hangings in Belleville in 1862.**

June: Sean Scally, researcher and documentarian, presented his documentary on **The Iron Masters of Upper Canada**, a colourful and engaging documentary film on the Iron Industry in Marmora.

September: Neil Burrell, HPE Regiment historian, delivered a gripping and inspiring look at **The Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment: 80th Anniversary of the Sicily Landing in 1943.** The amazing story of the Regiment's heroism, sacrifice and luck held the audience in awe.

October: Three short presentations: Downtown Belleville by Connie Carson, Murder in Lonsdale by Jim Kennelly and The Belleville Curling Club by Gary Nicoll provided a new concept on how we might do some presentations in the future. The format was well received.

November: Another new format was used with four presenters: Richard Hughes, Bill Kennedy, Gary Nicoll and Debra Tosh. They dressed as their characters and delivered the story of four prominent Bellevillians who now reside in Belleville Cemetery. Respectively, they were **Mackenzie Bowell, Billa Flint, Samuel S. Lazier and Charlotte Sills.**

The *Outlook* Newsletter

Laurel Bishop and Donna Fano, Editors

We were able to publish the 28th volume of our 8-page illustrated newsletter *Outlook*, issues 366 to 374, January to June and September to November. Besides informing readers of Hastings County Historical Society news and upcoming events, we attempt to educate and entertain through the stories we publish. Examples of topics our writers have covered this past year are Belleville in 1846, Ladies' Curling in the nineteenth century, early Belleville potteries and the new museum at the Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf. We encourage the contribution of articles by both members and non-members of the Society.

Publications for Sale

Michelle Hutchison

We are fortunate to have had numerous local authors and historians that have penned books describing the life and times of settlers in Hastings County. In an effort to share this rich history, the Hastings County Historical Society (HCHS) offers over 35 books for sale. Those who wish to peruse the books by shopping in person may do so at the bookstore, located in the Community Archives of Belleville and Hastings County on the second floor of the Belleville Public Library. We select a number of books to display and offer for purchase at the monthly Public Presentations at Maranatha Church.

For those unable to visit the bookstore in person or who prefer the on-line shopping experience, the HCHS website offers another option to view the selection under the bookstore tab. Arrangements can then be made for delivery to the

purchaser. A small number of titles are also placed for sale at select local bookstores. The Outlook newsletter, published nine times per year, features a brief overview of some of the interesting and informative books that are available. Book sales have been increasing year over year as efforts to promote local history continue. We had a strong increase in sales in 2023.

The New Logo and Website

In 2022 the Board of Directors decided that the time was right to modernize and completely update the Society's logo and website, bringing them up to 21st Century standards and appearance. We changed most items in the fall of 2022 and over the first 6 months of 2023, including the major change, our new website. We have a few more items to update. The response to the new logo and look has been positive.

