



**Annual Report of the  
Hastings County Historical Society  
2025**

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# Report of the President

Gary Nicoll

2025 was the 68th year since the Hastings County Historical Society formed in 1957. In October of that year a small group met at City Hall and laid the groundwork for the forming of the Hastings County Historical Society. Irene Hall opened the exploratory meeting and by evening's end, temporary officers had been appointed, T.G. Wrightmeyer as President, K. M. Bird as Vice President, Mrs. Milton Robson as Recorder, Tom Ransom as Treasurer and Gerry Boyce as Publicity Director. A further meeting was held later that month, and their first public meeting was held at the Library in November. In short order, Gerry Boyce became the President and served in that capacity for many years spread over four decades.

These interested individuals that promoted the idea and nurtured it through its early meetings would be delighted to know how well they had built. Early attempts at building a local Historical Society had occurred in the 1890s and 1910s but failed to last. In 68 years, we have had probably over 100 directors, membership has grown and shrunk and then regrown. In the 1981 Outlook (issue 1 of Outlook) mention is made of 50 coming out to hear the speaker at their monthly meeting at the library. Membership is now consistently over 300 and is growing. Over the decades many large projects have been successfully tackled. But most of our efforts are quiet, steady endeavours to stir up interest in local Hastings County history.

The Hastings County Historical Society had a successful year in 2025. We organized a Bus Tour to visit Bancroft and learn more about the history of the northern hub of Hastings County. We visited the Bancroft Museum run by the Bancroft Historical Society in an old log building that belonged to the Bronson-Weston Lumber Company. We also visited the Bancroft Gem and Mineral Museum located in the old Central Ontario Railway Station. After lunch we had an extensive bus tour guided by the President of the Bancroft Historical Society to see many early buildings and sites around the town.

For nine months of the year, we held our free Public Presentations at Maranatha in Belleville. We had a presentation on Mining in North Hastings, Ian Robertson told us about the history of Camp Picton, we heard the story of the Flying Fathers, Lyle Van Clief spoke to us about his life in politics, we had re enactors tell us some of the stories uncovered by our Cemetery Tour, and we were part of the Belleville Arts Festival, doing a presentation of "Belleville in the Time of Suzanna Moodie". The Society was a supporter of a new plaque honoring the founder of Deaf Education in Ontario, John McGann. We also honoured the work of William (Bill) Hunt, who researched, wrote and published a number of local history books, by awarding him the Gerry Boyce Award. We had our second annual Cemetery Tour visiting the St. James Cemetery in June on a perfect sunny, warm, bug free Saturday morning. Seventy people came out to join the three groups that visited nine grave sites with re-enactors at each site. Mac McCarthy, Frank Dolan, Laughlin and Maud Hughes,

Ernest Finkle, Col. Angus Duffy, Norah Feehrey, the Goyer Family and others were all portrayed and their stories came to life.

The Outlook newsletter has now been published for 45 years, another remarkable success story. We had many great stories related to us in the newsletter and had a couple of new contributors telling us about the old mills and factories along the Moira River. If you have a keen interest in a story of local history, please consider writing about it and submitting it to be considered for the Outlook.

You will find information about our membership and financial situation in reports that follow in this annual report. We are maintaining our strong membership and regularly signing up new members as they get exposed to our public presentations. Our finances are solid. We have received many small donations, have had a good number of books both new and used sold through our online bookstore and at our presentations, and both our bus tour and cemetery tour were successful. The monies all help, but it really is our many volunteers that keep us financially viable. For the last 68 years, volunteers with a keen interest in local history have worked to make the Hastings County Historical Society a success, not just financially, but in our long term goal of promoting local history and preserving it for future historians, researchers, writers and those who simply want to understand what has happened in the past that has affected our lives.

## Report of the Treasurer

Dan Atkinson FCPA

The 2025 year was another good year for the Society thanks to the continuing support of the membership and the continuation of the bus tour program. Our cash position at December 31 was \$24,054 compared to 2024 of \$28,488, plus an Investment Account from the 2024 bequest of \$25,875. This leaves the Society in a very healthy cash position going into 2026. The Balance Sheet continues to show a strong position primarily because of the aforementioned Bank position, but I should also note that the Prepaids are higher this year because of a deposit for our 2026 bus tour and \$4,000 advance for our project on the UEL monument. 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 \$892. The Statement of Revenue and Expenses (or Profit and Loss) shows a decline in revenues but only because of the large donation in 2024 of \$25,000. Removing that figure from the comparatives would leave us roughly comparable year over. Total revenues are \$16,284 compared to 2024 of \$39,975 or \$14,975 excluding the donation. Total expenses are pretty much the same as last year as the Society has been careful on its expenditures given the current economic climate. The statement shows a net income for the year of

\$1,309 which is good considering how costs have risen across the board and we have done our best to keep things on an even footing.

## Membership Report

Amanda Hill

The table below summarizes the Society's membership renewals for the most recent three years (figures correct on January 5, 2026). Note that Family/Couple memberships are counted as two people in this table.

Membership year	Number of members (previous year)
Memberships already renewed for 2026	43 (60)
People with 2025 memberships	86 (89)
People with 2024 memberships	32 (54)
Life members	54 (54)
Total	215 (257)

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

Membership type	Number of memberships 2024-2026 (previous year)
Corporate	1 (2)
Family/Couple	43 (54)
Individual	83 (83)
Organization	1 (2)
Total (including 54 Life members)	182 (195)

Seventeen new members were welcomed in 2025, with another eight new members so far for 2026.

## Report of the Community Archives

Amanda Hill

New additions to the Community Archives in 2025 included two deliveries of materials from the [Belleville General Hospital Auxiliary](#) (2025-108), an organization founded in 1938 and still very active today.

We also received the [Grace Morton collection](#): materials relating to the life of a one-room-school teacher who worked at Wellman's Corners and Allan's School in Hastings County (2025-105).

The Archives was proud to be part of the Belleville Arts Festival, assisting with research for a collaborative exhibit at the John M. Parrott Gallery on the *Life in the Clearings: Susanna Moodie's Belleville* exhibit in November.

**Some statistics from 2025 (figures for 2024)**

Visits to the archives	450 (517)
Items delivered to researchers from the vaults	203 (233)
Queries answered	633 (633)
Volunteer hours donated	2,407 (2,300)
Archival descriptions available online at <a href="http://discover.cabhc.ca">http://discover.cabhc.ca</a>	17,041 (17,036)
Items online at the Internet Archive: <a href="https://archive.org/details/cabhc">https://archive.org/details/cabhc</a>	6,575 (6,529)
New accessions received	119 (125)
Talks presented	3 (5)
Images added to Flickr: <a href="http://flickr.com/cabhc">http://flickr.com/cabhc</a>	1,164 (896)
Views on Flickr	2,566,423 (2,332,376)
Facebook followers at <a href="facebook.com/CABHC">facebook.com/CABHC</a>	755 (724)
Bluesky followers at <a href="cabhc.bsky.social">cabhc.bsky.social</a>	1,067 (785)

## Report of Programming/Speakers Committee

Trevor Parsons and Jim Kennelly

The Programs and Speakers Committee delivered a full and successful schedule of public programming over the past year under the direction of Jim Kennelly and Trevor Parsons. Each talk was held at Maranatha Church on College Street in Belleville on the third Tuesday of each month except July, August, and December.

A total of nine public talks were organized featuring a diverse range of speakers, including historians and researchers, a clergyman, a journalist, and a former MP and cabinet minister. Each talk was widely attended and received many positive reviews from members of the public.

21 January – A History of Mining in Hastings County by Gary Nicoll

18 February – When Belleville Was a University Town: The Rise and Fall of Albert University, 1866–1884 by Trevor Parsons

18 March – The Irish of Hungerford by Jim Kennelly

15 April – Camp Picton: Wartime to Peacetime by Ian Robertson

20 May – Richard Nixon on the Bay of Quinte by Thomas Harrison

17 June – Praying and Playing: The Flying Fathers by Tim Shea

16 September – Reflections on a Life in Politics by The Hon. Lyle Vanclief, PC

21 October – A Stroll Through St. James Cemetery

18 November – Belleville in the Age of Susanna Moodie by Richard Hughes and Gary Nicoll

## Report of the Outlook Newsletter Committee

Richard Hughes

An important component in the Historical Society's annual list of programs is the Outlook newsletter. The goal in publishing the Outlook is to bring to our members and friends and to the wider public a broad range of news, coming events and local, historical stories. The Outlook is made available in printed, paper form and in an electronic version, with the decision on which to receive is made by the individual members.

The Outlook is published nine times each year, circulated close to the first of each month, except July, August and December. The team involved in the production and distribution of the Outlook

comprises ten or more persons. Each month's Outlook begins with the announcements, stories, news items, etc. being prepared by a wide range of sources/authors and assembled and edited by Richard Hughes.

Then the package of material is sent to Donna Fano who decides on the order and layout of the material in the 8-page format of the newsletter. Concurrently, the list of recipients is maintained and printed by Amanda Hill and the envelopes are prepared by Michelle Hutchison. It is then sent to the printer and when ready is picked up by Gary Nicoll who divides the printed newsletters and corresponding envelopes into packages which he delivers to our volunteer folders and mailers, Peter Rooke and Ed. Harmon. The electronic version is issued by Amanda Hill.

The Outlook team always welcomes historical stories and news items from the public and from other historical organizations in the community.

## Report for AGM 2025 Publications for Sale

Michelle Hutchison

The Hastings County Historical Society (HCHS) offers over 40 books for sale. These books have been penned by numerous local authors and historians and describe the life and times of our predecessors. As an organization, it is our mandate to share this rich history of the County of Hastings. This collection of books may be viewed by shopping in person at our bookstore, located in the Community Archives of Belleville and Hastings County on the second floor of the Belleville Public Library. Several books are also displayed 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, with on-line payment available. Arrangements can then be made for delivery to the purchaser. A small number of titles are also placed for sale at select local bookstores.

We also have some gently used books which are offered for sale at a reasonable price. As well, a number of used reprints of Belden's Atlases have come into our possession within the last year and may be purchased by interested buyers. Prices will vary depending on the condition of the individual atlas. 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 continue to be strong as efforts to promote local history continue.