

# HERITAGE GAZETTE

OF  
THE

TRENT



VALLEY



## HISTORY OF CHEX TV – *Part One*



*Welcome to the first edition of the online  
Heritage Gazette of the Trent Valley!*

Continuing with the pioneering work of archivist Elwood Jones and Steve Gavard, we will be bringing you stories of the history of this area through the collections of Trent Valley Archives.

It was made clear to us how much the Heritage Gazette is valued by you and with the loss of funding for a paper copy we had to look at new ways of continuing production.

The premier issue includes stories from all around the area: Part one of the history of CHEX Television which started in what is now Douro-Dummer Township, a year's record of 19<sup>th</sup> century farming in Otonabee township and the story of a popular resort on Clear Lake near Young's Point.

We are anxious to hear what you think of the magazine! You are encouraged to leave us a comment on the Trent Valley Archives Facebook page [www.facebook.com/trentvalleyarchives](http://www.facebook.com/trentvalleyarchives).

We also encourage TVA members to submit articles to the Gazette based on their own research at the archives. What interests you? What did you find among the almost 1000 fonds in our collection? Did you find an answer to your question and did it spur you to further research? We would love to hear about your discoveries.

  
Steve Guthrie,  
*Trent Valley Archives, President*

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**TRENT VALLEY ARCHIVES**

Fairview Heritage Centre  
567 Carnegie Avenue  
Peterborough, Ontario  
Canada K9L 1N1  
(705) 745-4404  
[admin@trentvalleyarchives.com](mailto:admin@trentvalleyarchives.com)  
[www.trentvalleyarchives.com](http://www.trentvalleyarchives.com)  
Elwood Jones, *Archivist*  
Heather Aiton Landry, *Associate Archivist*  
Dianne Tedford, *Reading Room Manager*  
Carol Sucee, *Librarian*

**HERITAGE GAZETTE**

Steve Guthrie, Editor  
[gazetteeditor3@gmail.com](mailto:gazetteeditor3@gmail.com)

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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# HERITAGE GAZETTE

OF THE TRENT VALLEY



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**DID YOU KNOW?**

We sell a wide range of local books, maps, photos and posters of historical and general interest; many described on our webpage. Please inquire as we always have changing stock.

*On the cover: CHEX TV announcer Bill McQuiggan does a live commercial for tea circa 1960. Virtually all local programs and commercials were live as video tape had not come into use at this time.*

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

<b>Annual General Meeting</b> April 27 Speaker: Bruce Gravel, A Century of Rotary Clubs in Peterborough	7 pm
<b>Jackson Park Tour</b> June 15 & September 7	2 pm
<b>Peterborough Perpetrators: True Crimes Tour</b> July 14 & 21	7 pm
<b>Peterborough Perpetrators: True Crimes Tour</b> August 11 & 18	7 pm
<b>Tragic Tales: Little Lake Cemetery Tour</b> August 13 & 20	3 pm
<b>New Tour: Little Lake Cemetery</b> August 31	
<b>Plant Sale</b> September 9	8 am
<b>Little Lake Cemetery Pageant</b> September 23-24	
<b>TVA: Open House</b> October 12	
<b>Ghost Walks</b> October 19, 20, 25, 26, 27	7 pm
<b>Military History Tour: Little Lake Cemetery</b> November 5	3 pm

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# SOUTH BEACH HOTEL

*in the North of Douro*



BY MICHAEL P. DOLBEY

The South Beach Hotel on the edge of Clear Lake in the north of Douro Township has been gone for almost 50 years but it is still a place of legend among old-timers in the area as a favourite watering hole. From its beginning in 1895 till the last of it burned to the ground in 1980, the South Beach Hotel passed through many owners and has many stories to tell. I developed an interest in the origin of the South Beach Hotel when I found a lifelong connection between Brian Bellasis, the son of its original owner, and Dorothy C. E. Mackie, a former owner of the property Below is what I have learned about the South Beach Hotel.

The name South Beach once referred to a natural sand beach that had formed at the outlet of a small creek that drained

into the south end of Clear Lake from a high sand and gravel till moraine less than a kilometer to the south. Aggregate extraction from the moraine has all but eliminated the stream's flow and development and hardscaping of the shoreline in the past fifty years have removed most signs of the beach. A shallow sandy lake bottom in front of today's modern houses is the only vestige of its past.

The South Beach Hotel was located on Douro Lot 25 in Concession 3, a broken lot on Clear Lake that had been purchased by John Radenhurst in 1839. After the Baldwin Act of 1849 gave townships with more than 100 resident freeholders or householders on their Collector's rolls the power to tax property for things such as

the upkeep of roads and bridges, County Sheriffs could sell Lots or portions thereof to recoup unpaid taxes. Douro Lot 25 in Concession 3 was sold to recoup taxes in 1860 and was resold several times before being owned in 1893 by Peterborough business and real estate tycoon, Thomas Bradburn, reputed at the time of his death to be the largest landowner in Peterborough County.<sup>1</sup>

## *First Logging then Steamboats*

Until the mid 1880s there was little interest in the land in the far north of Douro except by logging companies for timber rights. In 1871, the Ontario Government constructed the first lock at Young's Point connecting Lake Katchewanooka to Clear and Stoney Lakes. Within a few years

steamboats were traveling from Lakefield to Clear and Stoney Lakes, initially to service the lumber industry but later to service summer residents and the tourist trade. With the opening of the Young's Point bridge in 1885, people quickly moved into north Douro. In 1887 James Kearney built a general store just south of the bridge which became the nucleus of what is now The Old Bridge Inn.

On 30 September 1893, former Indian Army officer, Major George Montalt Bellasis, purchased all of broken Lot 25 in Concession 3 in the Township of Douro from Thomas Bradburn for \$200. George M. Bellasis was born in Hyderabad, India in 1848. He, with his parents, returned to England in about 1853 due to his father's

ill health. While on leave in England in 1882 he married Elizabeth Ellen Prowting Roberts and a son, Brian Maude Bellasis was born in India on 25 May 1884. Elizabeth died of cholera later in 1884 and young Brian was sent home to England a year or two later.<sup>2</sup>

According to the 1901 Canadian census George Bellasis, then 52, and his niece, Ethel Roberts, a spinster of 31, came to Canada in 1889. His son Brian, 16, did not come to Canada until 1893.

In 1891, George Bellasis, then aged 41, and two of his nieces, Adeline and Ethel B. Roberts, 29 and 22, and both private school teachers, were living in Lakefield. Ethel Bellasis Roberts was the daughter

of George's sister and also the niece of his widow, Elizabeth Roberts. Ethel continued to live with George Bellasis until at least 1901.

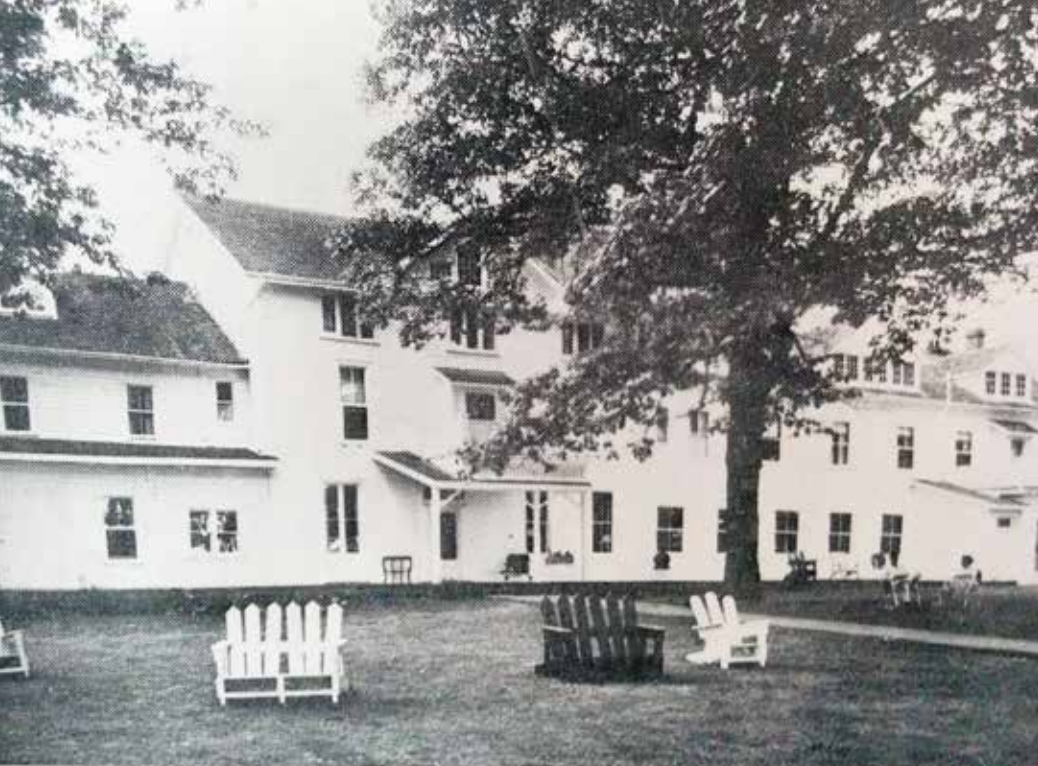
Not long after arriving in Lakefield, George Bellasis was operating the Lakefield Planing Mill that had been built by Peter Baptie in 1884. The mill was built on the Lakefield Lumber & Manufacturing Company's land and mill race owned at the time by Roland Strickland. After buying the Douro lot on Clear Lake in September 1893, Bellasis began the development of South Beach quite quickly because it was reported on 2 April 1894 that Peterborough painting contractor, Mr. Ralph Carton, "was presently engaged" painting the new Stony Lake residence of Major Bellasis.

<sup>1</sup>Dolbey, M. P. John Radenhurst – His influence on Upper Canada and the north of Douro, TVA Heritage Gazette, Vol. 25, No.3, November 2020, page xx; LRO 45, Douro Lot 25 in Concession 3; Elwood Jones & Bruce Dyer, Peterborough the Electric City, Windsor Publications (Canada) Ltd, 1987, page 39

Photo courtesy: Janice Brooks

<sup>2</sup>LRO 45 (Peterborough), instrument #4102, 1893-09-13; M. Bellasis, Honourable Company, Hollis & Carter, London, 1952; www.bellasis.net/; Obituary for George M. Bellasis, Cheltenham Looker-On, 17 December 1910.





The following year, Bellasis contracted to have a hotel built as confirmed by a lien that was placed on the property on 14 May 1895 stating that George M. Bellasis acknowledged owing “to the firm James Lillicrap & Company the sum of \$357.25 for and in respect to the erection by them of an Hotel for me on my property, being Lot Number 25 in the Third Concession of the said Township of Douro”.<sup>3</sup> The hotel was built in early 1895 by contractors E. Tate and L. Payne.

### *South Beach House*

By the end of 1895 Addie and Andrew Allen had been hired to operate the hotel which was known as Mrs. Allan’s South Beach House. On 9 October 1895 the Peterborough Examiner reported on a Social and Concert held at Mrs. Allan’s South Beach House on Monday Oct. 7th at 7 p.m. in aid of the Church of England. It lists the programme of songs, recitations and music with one song being presented by Brian Bellasis, the 11-year-old son of the owner. The report states, “The greatest praise is due to the able way in which Mrs. Allan, the popular and well-known manageress of South Beach House, handled all the arrangements ...”. A similar concert and a play were held on 21 January

1897 indicating that the Allans lived at the hotel throughout the winter. A report of a party of more than 40 people in 1896 refers to a dance floor with music provided by Scrimger’s orchestra from Lakefield, indicating that the hotel had been built with a large public space for dancing and entertainment. Reports of people who were staying at the hotel in this period suggest it might have had only six to eight rooms for rent. The Allans continued to manage the South Beach House for several years until Mr. Allan became ill and they moved into Young’s Point. It is believed that the management by 1902 had changed to Joseph & Ella Hanmer.

After the initial construction in 1895, improvements continued to be made to the hotel as reported in 1896 when stables and an icehouse were added. In early 1898 it was reported that “Mr. William McGregor is busy clearing up the grounds on South Beach, owned by Major Bellasis”, and shortly after reports referred to the place as South Beach Park. A picnic that year was held in “the grove, South Beach” and it included “an excellent programme of sports embracing, canoe races, boat races, football, and athletic games”, indicating the facilities then available. By 1904, reference was made to a wharf at which



the steamboat, Stony Lake, would convey guests direct to South Beach. Bellasis also increased his land holdings immediately south of South Beach with the purchase of the north half of the west half of Lot 24 in the 3rd Concession of Douro in 1895 and the east half of Lot 24 in the 3rd Concession of Douro in 1896.

It is difficult to establish how much business it received in these early years. Meanwhile, George Bellasis, his niece, Ethel Roberts, and son Brian lived nearby at their South Beach home throughout the year. In April 1901, a letter written by Thomas Grieve to Dr. C. M. Douglas says that “Bellasis has been on a cash year was at Paris Exhibition and is yet in Montreal”. This suggests that Bellasis had come into some money and visited the Paris Exhibition that took place in 1900. It is believed that his son Brian and niece

Ethel Roberts went with him to the Paris Exhibition. The Canadian census done early in April 1901 enumerated George Bellasis, age 52, his son Brian, 16, and his niece Ethel Roberts, 31, in Saint-Antoine ward of Montreal, Quebec. It is not known if they were living there or were returning to Young’s Point from Europe.<sup>4</sup>

### *1900 Paris Exhibition*

It is presumed that while at the Paris Exhibition George Bellasis met Adrienne Marie Louise Coste of Nice, France, who he would marry in 1904. On March 23, 1904, a settlement document was registered in the Ontario Land Registry stating that George M. Bellasis is shortly to be married to her, and that he agrees to “settle upon her” the sum of £2000 Sterling which is backed by “a certain property situated upon the shores of Clear Lake in the County of Peterborough, in the Province of Ontario, ..., consisting of two hundred and seventy five acres of land more or less with houses, stables and outbuildings thereon...”. The document was executed in France and witnessed by the British Consul in Nice. In 1904 George M. Bellasis moved to France where he married Adrienne Coste. Two years later, on 27 November 1906, Adrienne Bellasis agreed to release all claim to the above lands. This allowed Bellasis to again mortgage his Douro property, which included the South Beach Hotel, on 15 December 1906 to Edward Armour Peck, a lawyer from Peterborough. George M. Bellasis died in France on 11 December 1910.<sup>5</sup>

Possibly while the group were visiting the Paris Exhibition, Ethel Bellasis Roberts met Robert Norgrove Stuart, a widower farmer from Dauphin, Manitoba. Stuart had been born in England and had emigrated to Manitoba in about 1884. At the time of the 1901 census, he was living in Dauphin with his five children aged between 8 and 2 years. In 1903, a note in the Peterborough Examiner said, “Mr. Stewart and sister of Manitoba have come to the Point to make it their home, and are living at South Beach, Mr. Bellasis’ house”. In the

## *The Ballad of Big Bob Hill:*

### *A Story of South Beach Hotel Young’s Point, Ontario*

Sit down there, I’ll buy the beer and I’ll tell you a story through  
It’s just a tale, from the Oregon Trail, but I swear to Christ it’s true

Now Big Bob Hill was on the till and I was on the floor  
We had a few, as waiters do, 10 or 12 or more  
Cam was there, in his favourite chair and Mr. Marv was tight  
Noisy Norm was in good form; it was just an average night.

Freddie Coones and some other goons complained the draft was rotten  
When through the door, with an awful roar, came Dangerous Dan McNaughton.  
Have you ever been to the place unseen, when the proverbial pin was dropped?  
The silence screams and the whole world seems to suddenly come to a stop.

Don’s eyes were dazed, he looked half crazed and his feet were out of line  
He could hardly see and looked at me like a walking case of wine  
He cursed, he swore, he kicked the door and yelled with all his might  
“Set up the beers for all these queers: the Rifleman rides tonight”

But our man Bob was one the job, there were no ifs or buts  
He’s 14 stone of skin and bone and a hundred pounds of guts  
With just one clout, he knocked him out and pitched him through the door  
But back came Don, like a man half gone, and waded in for more

They hassled, they rassled, struggled and juggled “Give it to him’ someone cried  
There was no wailing, just much flailing, till they both fell down outside.  
Then as Don lay still, he said to Hill “I swear to God and the Lord”  
“When I get through with my .32, you’ll look like a punching board”

Now late at night, by the caution light, near the bridge in old Young’s Point  
There’s a man sits there, with a murderous glare and his brain is out of joint.  
From twelve to one, he oils his gun as he sits there all alone  
But what he don’t know, yet I’m sure is so, Bob takes the long way home.

By Tom H. Junkin  
Lakefield, Ontario  
Written circa 1965

Photos: Gary Jones

<sup>3</sup>LRO 45 (Peterborough), instrument #4303, 1895-05-14; William and Jane Lillicrap emigrated from England in 1853. Their son James Frederick Lillicrap was born in Canada on June 13, 1854. By 1880 the family was living in Lakefield involved in the Lumber trade. Frederick Lillicrap was a councillor for the Village of Lakefield from 1891 to 1896 and was Reeve of the Village from 1887-89.

<sup>4</sup>Lakefield Historical Society, op. cit. page 25; G. Young, op. cit. Pages 43, 44; 1901 Canadian Census. <sup>5</sup>LRO (Peterborough), Twp of Douro instruments #5335, 1904-03-23; #5677, 1906-11-27; #5755, 1906-12-15





1911 census for Douro, Robert N. Stuart, his wife Ethel B. and his three youngest children were enumerated living close to the South Beach Hotel in what is believed to be the Bellasis house. Robert was employed as a “gardener” and was possibly employed as the groundskeeper for the hotel. His obituary in 1946 said the family moved to Peterborough in 1911 and that his wife, Ethel, survived him.<sup>6</sup>

Between 1900 and 1904 little is known about the operation of the South Beach Hotel. As noted above, it appears that Joseph & Ella Hanmer were engaged to manage it, but few notices about guests were reported in the papers. The main activities recorded during this period were the use of the grounds for Father Charles Phelan’s annual picnics in support of the Roman Catholic Church.

Early in 1905 it was announced that the South Beach Hotel had been leased by William E. Brooks. William Edward Brooks was born in Harwood, Ontario on 11 January 1867. As a young man he was in the lumber trade.

*Photo courtesy: Janice Brooks*

<sup>6</sup>Canadian Census, Dauphin, Manitoba, 1901, Montreal, 1901, Douro, 1911; Peterborough Examiner, 26 March 1903; 26 February 1946. <sup>7</sup>Peterborough Examiner, 23 May 1905; 17 June 1905; 12 & 24 July 1905; 12 & 28 August 1905; 1 & 21 September 1905. <sup>8</sup>Peterborough Examiner, 1 March 1906; 7 May 1906; 2, 5, 8 & 25 June 1906; 4, 12 & 16 July 1906. <sup>9</sup>Peterborough Examiner, 16 April 1907; 4, 9 & 25 May 1907; 3 June 1907; 27 August 1907; 17 September 1907.

### Major Renovations

In March 1906 William Brooks announced that he intended to build a large three-story addition onto the South Beach Hotel. In May the changes in progress were described as follows; “The interior of the house has been completely remodeled. The partitions have all been taken down and reconstructed making the rooms larger. Paint and paper have not been spared in making the appearance of both the interior and exterior as attractive as possible. A new verandah has been erected on the north side of the hotel and other alterations have also been made. Fourteen extra rooms will be added in cottages, which Mr. Brooks is erecting on the South Beach grounds. The hotel will be open by June first for the tourist trade”. The earlier announced addition had not been built. Glowing newspaper articles continued regularly throughout the summer, and it appears the hotel was fully booked in peak season.<sup>8</sup>

In March 1907 William Brooks announced that he had let the contract for a large addition to the South Beach Hotel. In May it was announced that he was building a new cottage and dancing pavilion on the grounds near the hotel. On 3 June 1907 the South Beach hotel opened for the season “greatly improved this year in size and appearance”. The usual stream of favorable reviews was written throughout the summer and in September it was announced that Mr. Brooks of South Beach was contemplating another addition.<sup>9</sup>

On 21 June the Examiner reported that Brooks had it repainted and fitted out for use by hotel guests for everybody to sit out and enjoy themselves. At the end of the verandah a large ladies’ sitting room has been built and above it a nice balcony also one in the centre of the building above the main entrance. At the top of the building there is a look-out, where visitors can see away up the lake and get an elegant view of the surrounding country. The house has room now to accommodate about one

hundred guests. But the most important improvement of all is the dining room, which has been enlarged about three times the size of the old one, and is a fine, airy, bright room.”.<sup>10</sup>

From the start of his tenure at the South Beach Hotel, William Brooks had attempted to get a license to serve alcoholic drinks at his establishment. He was turned down in 1905 and again in 1910 and no record has been found suggesting he obtained a license before the Province of Ontario passed the Temperance Act in 1916 which brought prohibition to Ontario. Prohibition in Ontario continued until the Temperance Act was repealed and replaced by the Liquor Control Act (LCA) in 1927. The new act allowed alcohol to be purchased at government stores but not served in public places such as hotels, restaurants or bars. Finally in July 1934 amendments to the LCA provided for the sale of beer by the glass and by the bottle in licensed beverage rooms and for sale of beer and wine with meals in hotel dining rooms and restaurants which had obtained licenses. By 1935 it is probable that the South Beach Hotel had obtained a license and opened a beverage room.

Steamboats were the main transport for guests to reach the South Beach Hotel until 1911. Besides the Young’s Stoney Lake Navigation Company boats, there were several independent Peterborough steamers. In 1911 the Peterborough and Lake Simcoe Navigation Company, operating the steamer, Lintonia, from Bobcaygeon had changed its terminus to South Beach rather than Crowe’s Landing as in the previous year. This boat met the morning train from Toronto arriving in Bobcaygeon at noon and could deliver guests to South Beach by early teatime. An extension of the GTR’s line from Lakefield to Young’s Point had been discussed several times around the turn of the century but had not materialized. On 11 April 1911, the Rutherford Grimes Motor Car Line announced they were inaugurating a bus service within Peterborough and to

*Photo courtesy: Janice Brooks*

<sup>10</sup>Peterborough Examiner, 13 May 1908; 28 October 1908; 25 February 1909; 19 March 1909, 21 June 1909; 8 & 22 July 1909; 2 & 21 August 1909; 26 April 1910. <sup>11</sup>Peterborough Examiner, 11 & 27 April 1911; 30 July 1911; 7 August 1913.

Chemong Park, South Beach and other destinations using 12-seater McLaughlin Buick automobiles, for which they were exclusive agents in Peterborough. On 4 July of that year the Peterborough Medical Association announced their picnic “to be held at South Beach, Clear Lake, going out to the popular resort, in motor cars”. The use of motor cars may be of note as South Beach Hotel would be dependent on steamboat transport for years to come which limited its operating season to May through October, with most guests in July and August. William Brooks was reputed to be an excellent host and the large dining room became a favourite venue for gatherings and banquets. For

and for the fishing. There were numerous newspaper reports of monster sized muskellunge and bass being caught by visitors, many of whom were Americans from far-flung places such as Boston, Buffalo, Rochester and St. Louis. Besides the wonderful swimming beach and park like grounds, the hotel had tennis courts and sports fields. In the evenings, music and dancing prevailed. With the onset of the First World War, reports of activities at the South Beach Hotel became sparse though it was clearly still operating. By mid 1918 hope for peace was reflected in a number of dances sponsored by private groups and a report of many guests staying at South Beach. The 1919 season at South Beach started 20 May and frequent



example, in August 1913 the final event of the Canadian Horticultural Association’s annual meeting in Peterborough was a banquet at South Beach where “a splendid diner was served in the spacious dining room at the hotel, where no means had been spared to make the appearance artistic.”<sup>11</sup>

In the earliest days of the South Beach Hotel, tourists flocked to the Kawarthas to escape the summer heat of urban areas

dances organized by William Brooks with orchestras brought from Toronto became features of the Hotel season. In 1932, the Hotel was advertising Sunday Chicken Diner – only 75 cents. After 1935 the Hotel advertised an orchestra on Wednesday and Saturday nights with no charge for dancing. The opening of a licensed beverage room in 1935 probably led to a significant shift in the business model of the South Beach Hotel.



The financial viability of the South Beach Hotel is difficult to access but a review of its ownership is revealing. William Brooks leased the hotel in 1905 from George Bellasis’ representative, believed to be Edward A. Peck of the Peterborough law firm Dennistoun, Peck & Kerr. As mentioned above, Bellasis had mortgaged the property to Peck in 1906 for \$1000. When Bellasis died in 1910, the Union Trust Company Ltd. of Toronto became the administrator of his Douro property under his will. It appears that the mortgage with Peck had not been paid as stated in the original agreement and on 14 September 1913 the Union Trust Company On 20 November 1913 the Peterborough Examiner reported that William Brooks had purchased all of Bellasis’ land and the South Beach Hotel. A few days later, the Union Trust Company, as the administrator of Bellasis’ estate, sold all his Douro property, including the South Beach Hotel, to Charles Rishor, a wholesale grocer from Peterborough, for \$5300. Apparently, Brooks had not been able to keep up the mortgage payments. While Rishor assumed ownership of the property, Brooks continued to operate the South Beach Hotel, presumably leasing the property from Rishor.

When he bought the South Beach property in 1921, Charles Rishor, a recent widower, was living on London Street in Peterborough with three sons, aged between 12 and 21. According to the Rishor family, Charles Rishor had owned an island in Stoney Lake before WW1. In 1916 he acquired the use of the Bellasis house at South Beach, presumably in an arrangement with William Brooks that was not recorded in the land records. At some time during the next ten years Rishor built another house on the high ground to the southeast of South Beach In 1927 Rishor contracted a surveyor to develop subdivision plans. In January 1928 Rishor sold part of the narrow strip of land north of the South Beach Hotel to Lorne Ardiel. In February 1929, Ardiel purchased the remainder of the one-acre strip bounded by South Beach Road on

the north, Douro 3rd Line on the west, the Hotel on the south and Clear Lake on the west. Within a few years Ardiel had a T. Eaton Co. mail-order house built on the sight that he called Leidra Lodge. Ardiel had been a lieutenant-colonel with the Middlesex Militia in the First World War and was later a senior executive for General Motors, Oshawa. After acquiring the Clear Lake property, Ardiel became President of the Canada Power Boat Association and organized outboard motor-boat races and speed trials in Clear Lake at South Beach in 1931 and 1932. While some visitors to the hotel may have enjoyed the trials, a comment that they “didn’t break as many records as usual, but bust quite a few eardrums”, suggests the races did not please everyone. Much later, the Ardiel family purchased large parts of the adjacent Douro Lots 25 and 26 in Concession 4 which, in 2004, they donated to the Otonabee Region Conservation Authority. These lands are now part of the Young’s Point Conservation Area.<sup>12</sup>

By 1928 Charles Rishor had devised a separate development plan for the land in L25-C3 along the south shore of Clear Lake to the southeast of the South Beach Hotel.

After Rishor purchased the Bellasis estate in 1921, William Brooks continued to operate the South Beach Hotel for Rishor until, on 22 March 1930, Rishor sold the Hotel and virtually all the remaining Bellasis property to William Brooks By 1935, William Brooks had not paid any of the principal and only half the interest owing on the mortgage to Rishor. Rishor’s sons, as executors of Rishor’s estate, foreclosed the mortgage and took back ownership of the property and the Hotel. On 27 February 1935 William Brooks registered a Quit Claim deed in favour of the estate of Charles Rishor.

Who operated the Hotel for the Rishors between 1938 and 1945 is not known, but a note about former Canadian junior sculling champion, Jake Gaudaur, suggested that his mother was operating the South Beach Hotel in 1941. On 1

December 1945 the Hotel on a four-acre lot was sold by the Rishors to Thomas and Lydia Lawlor. For several years after the Second World War the summer business flourished when it was estimated that 75% of guests were Americans. In 1947 it was mentioned for the first time that the South Beach Hotel would now be open year-round.

### 1976 Fire

The South Beach Hotel passed through three other owners until most of the original building was destroyed by fire in 1976. The beverage room and dance floor survived and continued to operate until they too were destroyed by fire in February 1980. The South Beach Hotel property was subdivided in the 1980s and is now the site of a number of large lake-front homes.

Based on stories of Lakefield and Young’s Point old-timers, the South Beach Hotel became a notorious drinking establishment in its latter years. Its relatively isolated location allowed it to operate with less scrutiny that more urban drinking establishments. It is said that the clocks remained on Standard Time rather than Daylight Saving Time throughout the summer, so when Lakefield bars closed, patrons would rush up the highway for an extra hour of drinking. There are stories of boats being taken from neighboring properties and South Beach clients being found uninvited in local cabins sleeping off the excesses of the previous night. It has been said that during the late 1950 and ‘60s the summer family resort trade migrated from the South Beach Hotel to the Viamede Resort on the north shore of Stoney Lake. While it may be assumed that this shift was due to the undesirable clientele of the drinking establishment, a change in the quality of the lake is another possible reason. After the Second World War, there was rapid development of cottages throughout the Kawartha Lakes and the population of towns such as Lindsay and Bobcaygeon grew dramatically. The use of soap and detergents with high phosphorus content

and sewage treatment plants without tertiary treatment to remove phosphorus led to a dramatic increase in algae growth in many lakes including Clear Lake. People raised on Clear Lake say that in the late 1950 and ‘60s the lake became green and smelly in the late summer, which probably would have had a very negative effect on the South Beach Hotel’s tourist trade. Because Viamede Resort is on the north shore of Stoney Lake and not on the main flow path of the Trent-Severn Waterway, it received less phosphorus from the upper lakes and had better water quality. Spurred by the terrible algae conditions in Lake Erie, research in the early 1970’s proved the link between phosphorus and algal growth resulting in government action to reduce the use of phosphorus in soap and detergents and to require municipal sewage treatment plants to be upgraded to include tertiary treatment for phosphorus removal. These measures, followed by, in the late 1980s, the unintentional introduction of invasive zebra mussels that filter algae from the water have resulted in the much-improved water clarity that exists today.<sup>13</sup>

The South Beach Hotel saw many changes from its conception in 1895 by Major George M. Bellasis as a summer tourist resort in a park like setting in the Kawartha Lakes. William E. Brooks leased the hotel in 1905 and greatly expanded it using his skill as a host and promotor to operate the hotel for 33 years. However, it appears that the seasonal nature of the tourist business did not allow it to earn enough to pay its debts. The addition of a dance pavilion and drinking establishment in the 1930s and ‘40s was the beginning of a transition from a tourist resort to a local entertainment establishment. While the summer tourist trade resumed after the second world war, it appears to have dwindled by the late 1960’s, possibly due to a decline in water quality in Clear Lake. The South Beach Hotel has been gone for many years, but this gem of the Kawarthas is still fondly remembered by many.

*Do you have a story you can share with us? Visit our Facebook page and let us know.*



## BECOME A MEMBER

### Annual Fees

Student.....	\$30
Single ( <i>one person</i> ) .....	\$60
Family ( <i>one mailing address</i> ).....	\$75
Sustaining .....	\$275
Institutional .....	\$300
Patron .....	\$1,000

### STANDARD BENEFITS

- Digital copy of the Heritage Gazette of the Trent Valley, three issues
- A vote at the Annual General Meeting (*one vote per membership, must be 18+*)
- Subscription to the TVA e-newsletter
- Advanced booking for public TVA tours
- Invitations to member-only events
- Up to 3 hours of research assistance from TVA staff and trained volunteers
- Free Admission and Parking at the TVA during regular hours of operation

**In addition to the Standard Benefits other memberships are entitled to:**

### Sustaining Members

- A tax receipt for \$200
- Acknowledgement in the Heritage Gazette

### Patron Members

- A tax receipt for \$900
- Acknowledgement in the Heritage Gazette

### Institutional Members

- Due to the diverse nature of the Members included in this category Membership Benefits are customized to the needs of the member
- This membership category is suitable for educational partners with students that want to use TVA facilities and groups/businesses that wish TVA to provide an archival services
- No tax receipt is given

<sup>12</sup>LRO (Peterborough), Twp of Douro instruments #7763, 1928-01-30; #7824, 1929-02-08; www.heritage-matters.ca/articles/leidra-lodge; www.winnipegarchitecture.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Eaton-Plan-Book-of-Ideal-Homes.pdf; Peterborough Examiner, 11, 13, 15 & 20 August 1932

<sup>13</sup>Private discussions with Douglas Rishor, Jeff Chalmers and Gary Jones. Kawartha Lake Stewards Association Annual reports.



BY STEVE GUTHRIE

The first Canadian Television stations, CBLT in Toronto and CBFT in Montreal went on the air in 1952. In that year, the Radio-Television Manufacturers Association of Canada expected to sell 85,000 TV sets, 95% of these were concentrated in Ontario. The average weekly household income at that time was around 60 dollars.

In 1953 Don Laurie, who was managing radio stations in Northern Ontario for the Thompson chain, was asked to become the manager of the proposed CHEX Television station, broadcasting on Channel 12 from Peterborough, under the ownership of Kawartha Broadcasting. Laurie came to Peterborough and met with business owners and community leaders to gauge the interest in and support of a local television station. They told Laurie Peterborough residents were growing tired of trying to watch snowy TV signals coming across Lake Ontario from Rochester and added they wanted to see their community reflected in TV coverage.

## *Don Laurie*

“CHEX Radio, which had gone on the air in September 1942, occupied studios in the old Peterborough Examiner building and was the only broadcasting station in the city. Now our company, having operated a successful community radio station for over 12 years was therefore granted a license to build a television station. With the advent of CHEX Television, a new era of communications began for Peterborough. I would be remiss, however, if I didn’t remember and thank sincerely the great many local industries like General Electric, Outboard Marine, Peterborough Lumber, Westclox, Quaker Oats, De Laval and many other industries and citizens who put their name on a petition to the CBC board of governors attesting to our worthiness to operate a television station”

*Photo: Trent Valley Archives CHEX Television Fonds*

# HISTORY OF

# CHEX TV

*Hugo Tapp as  
‘The Littlest Cowboy’  
on the set of  
‘The Circle 12 Ranch’*



So, Laurie took three carloads of local representatives to Ottawa to present their case to the CBC for a Peterborough television station and after several delays eventually received permission and at 8:30 pm on March 25 1955 CHEX Television went on the air, broadcasting from what was originally part of the Reilly Farm in Douro Township but now known as Television Hill.

At the same time, CHEX Radio moved in with CHEX TV ‘up on the Hill’. Radio staff announcers have always been an integral part of the television team, voicing commercials, hosting programs and working in news, sports and weather.

Bill Spenceley on live commercials “I was asked if I would like to do a Mother Parker’s commercial, ad lib. So, I said I certainly was willing to give it a try. I was told it would be done between a summing up of the late news and the weather. So,

you sit in this chair, and there’s your microphone. So I watched the monitor, in great nervousness, and I was given the cue then, and I gave a great commercial for Mother Parker’s, how delicious it was and how it would start you day beautifully. So it finished, the camera went off and I believe the producer was Fred Barrie came out and I said ‘How did it go Fred, how did I do?’ and he said ‘Very well, Bill, it went quite well. There was one problem’. And I asked him what that was and he said, ‘You sat on the mike’. And that perhaps was what all the wild waving of arms was all about while I was doing it, I thought they were cheering me”.

In the early days, programing on CHEX Television either originated with the CBC via line from Toronto or was on 16mm film or was live. The numerous American network shows on the schedule were provided by the CBC. The broadcast day was short, with CHEX going on the air at

4:30 pm Monday through Saturday and 2:30 on Sunday.

But the broadcast day was long enough, considering the amount of work the crew had to produce “live” material. For example, at the end of a network program, there could be perhaps, a live commercial, then a film commercial then back to the studio for a live show or live show intro. 30 and 60 second live commercials were kept simple: an announcer speaking into the camera while perhaps demonstrating a product, like Mother Parker’s Coffee.

CHEX ran many western movies throughout the broadcast day, but each had a live intro and extro. Announcer Hugo Tapp portrayed the ‘little-est cowboy’ perched an oversized bed who introduced the movie from the Circle 12 Ranch Bunkhouse

As time went on, the broadcast day expanded into the afternoon and then into the morning. Like all TV stations at the time, CHEX produced a number of local programs. At Christmas, “Letters to Santa” was popular as was ‘Toy Machine’ a magical device which produced toys. Like all small market TV stations, money was often tight. The toy machine was built largely of paper

CHEX produced programs to appeal to a wide variety of potential audiences. Broadcast regulations at the time called for a certain number of hours in the broadcast week to be local programing. Like local TV stations across the country, CHEX produced country music shows and teen dance programs. “Kawartha Junction” showcased local country and western musicians. The Channel 12 Dance party, hosted by Del Cray and Dave Deval featured students from local high schools dancing to recorded music and occasionally to live Peterborough bands like Dino and the Capris.

Interview or chat shows were also a staple of local television.

One early CHEX interview show of note was ‘Calendar’ hosted by Marie



Marie Callaghan show

Callaghan. Callaghan was working in a clerical position at CHEX when the job of hosting the interview show came open (it was NOT a woman’s show according to Callaghan). That was in 1956. Callaghan was host and producer of the show, tasked with booking guests and paying the bills which she did by bringing businesses on the show.

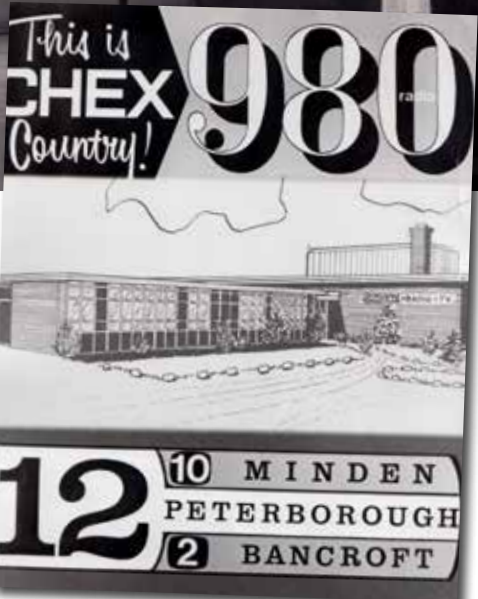
The show ran as “Calendar” till 1970 when it became the “Marie Callaghan show”. She retired in 1976 and holds the record for the longest continuous run on a single station in Canadian broadcasting, almost 22 years. It’s estimated she interviewed 20 thousand guests. ‘Calendar’ was also the first program on CHEX to be broadcast entirely in colour

CHEX featured The Afternoon Show, hosted by Sylvia Sutherland ran from 1976 to 1985. It is credited with being one of the first shows to include a book

review segment with ‘the girls: Literary fans Karen Barrett, Rosellma Sinclair and June Thexton.

### Sylvia Sutherland

“We did book review shows. Someone told me in this industry we were the first station to do book review shows on television. We ran the gamut. I did a monthly bit with St. John Ambulance, did Joe Clark, did Maureen MacTeer, we did Flora Macdonald, any politicians that come through town. Norman Elder came up to the station with a python, a huge long python and I got to know the python in the office ahead of time. He carried him in a sports bag. Anyway, elder put the python on the desk and I said “Norman the snakes going to get off the desk during the show” and he said “no, no it will be fine” and of course it slithered off the desk, and Kenny Rea was working camera for the show and Ken kept moving back. During the break



he said he thought the snake wanted to have an affair with the camera cable”

During the summer, the ‘Afternoon Show’ was replaced by “Summer Scene”. For this program, the cameras were rolled out the back door of the studio and the host welcomed guests onto a deck overlooking the Otonabee River and Trent Canal.

*Do you have a story you can share with us? Visit our Facebook page and let us know.*

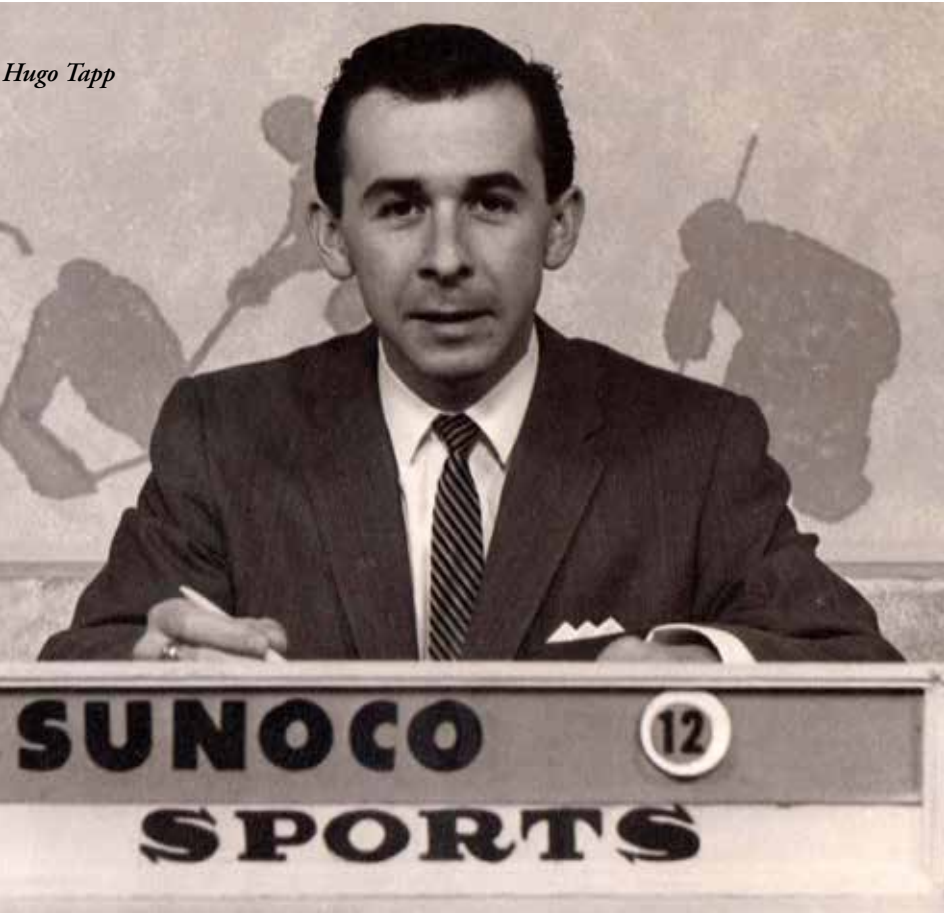


Photo: Trent Valley Archives CHEX Television Fonds

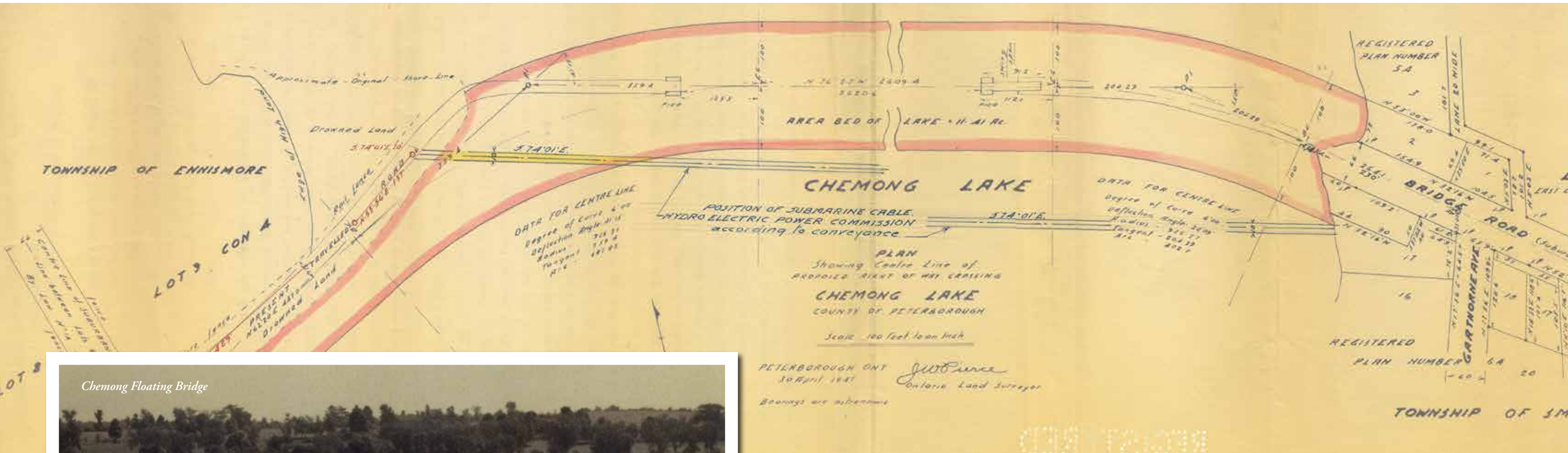
Photos: Trent Valley Archives CHEX Television Fonds



# A HISTORY OF James A. Gifford Causeway ACROSS CHEMONG LAKE

BY ELWOOD JONES

Trent Valley Archivist Elwood Jones was contacted by Selwyn Township for historical input on the construction of the causeway. This will enable a commemorative plaque telling the story of the project to be erected onsite.



Chemong Floating Bridge

Photo courtesy: Earl Mills. TVA Fond 1971-1972003

## The Floating Bridge

In February 1844 the District of Colborne paid £26 sterling for local settlers to provide a scow and ferry boats across what was then called Mud Lake between Galt's Landing in Ennismore Township and Edminson's Landing in Smith Township. The earliest tolls for crossing were: "For a span of horses and one wagon, the toll was one shilling. For a single horse, with or without a wagon, the toll was sixpence; for a yoke of oxen, ninepence. Pigs, calves and

passengers were charged two pence each; horned cattle, three pence."

A joint stock company, formed in 1854, intended to build a gravel road from Peterborough to Ennismore that would cross Mud Lake by a bridge; but this failed to gain enough support.

Still people liked the idea. The scow could not operate during the winter so crossing the lake on the ice was the only option. The first floating bridge was built in 1869-70 by William Trennum and then towed

into place; the total cost was about £3,500. The bridge opened on May 24, 1870, Queen Victoria's birthday.

Subsequent floating bridges were built east of the first floating bridge, which was near present-day Chemong Park. The original bridge when rebuilt in 1901 and now included a swing bridge for the passage of boats, provided and erected by Hamilton Bridge Works of Hamilton. At this same time, Mud Lake was beginning to be better known as Chemong Lake.

Map: TVA F90 Land Records Ennismore 4207 Chemong Causeway Plan



## Facing the limitations of the floating bridge

The wooden floating bridge was now thought to be getting more dangerous and the costs of maintenance and replacement of timbers were rising.

Traffic on the floating bridge increased as farmers found Peterborough to be the market town for local produce and as the source for farm machinery and building supplies. As well, there was significant population growth in the area, and the weight of farm implements, trucks and cars put added pressure on the narrow bridge. There was also population growth as people were more willing to commute to work and pleasure. As well, there was growing interest in building cottages and recreation facilities. Ennismore by 1947 had 65 cottage lots already occupied, and four fifths were owned by Peterborough families.

To meet this growing demand the provincial government offered to pay 75% of infrastructure costs for highways and bridges. Since at least 1934, Ennismore Reeve James A. Gifford advocated the need to replace the floating bridge with a bridge and causeway. The 25% costs remaining after the government grant could be met by support from Peterborough County, the townships of Ennismore and Smith and the City of Peterborough, and by private donations.

The Chemong Bridge Deputation which went to Toronto in 1946 included Otonabee Township Reeve Peter Mather and Gifford, D. A. Maciver, county engineer; Peterborough Alderman R. S. Cotton; Sherman J. Rowe of the Allied Labor Council; Alex Sollitt of the Motor League; and James J. Dorris, Chamber of Commerce.

In 1947, the projected total cost to build the bridge and causeway was \$233,333. County Council supported the project but lacked support from some townships. Smith township was concerned that the value of their cottage properties would be

affected by cheaper costs in Ennismore. Others were concerned that losses would be passed on to ratepayers. Some thought it was better to upgrade a road around the south end of the lake through Fowler's Corners. The project had to overcome concerns about the water flow, the avoidance of stagnation, the provision for access for boats and the passage of vessels transiting the Trent Canal through the lake.

Negotiations had to be made with both the provincial and federal governments. The province granted a land patent to the County of Peterborough for the area to be covered by the causeway in June 1947.

The building project was expected to cost \$233,333 of which the Ontario Department of Highways would pay 186,666.40. The City paid a fixed \$10,000. Ennismore township would pay

3/11 of the remaining costs; the county, 8/11. At the end, the Chemong Causeway cost \$255,058 of which the Province paid 80% (up from promised 75%).

## The Chemong Causeway

The last automobile crossed the floating bridge on July 7, 1948. Construction began at the Smith end of the causeway in March 1949. At the peak of construction, trucks were moving 1,900 tons of rock a day.

There were 8,000 spectators when the Chemong Causeway officially opened on June 23, 1949.

Boats were able to pass through the swing bridge, but until the early 1950s the controls for opening the bridge were manual. In 1973-74, the high level

concrete bridge was built and even tall boats could sail through the opening. Beginning in 1913, several projects were undertaken to improve the Causeway, now the James A. Gifford Causeway, to include wider lanes for vehicle traffic, and pathways for bicycles and pedestrians. As well, the project included improvements to shoreline protection and fish habitat.

The funding for the new projects was provided by the Government of Ontario and the Government of Canada. For further information see Clare F. Galvin, *The Holy Land: A History of Ennismore Township*, and the James A. Gifford fonds at the Trent Valley Archives.

*Do you have a story you can share with us? Visit our Facebook page and let us know.*

Photo: Earl Mills



Photo: Steve Guthrie



## The Peterborough and District Pathway of Fame is now accepting nominations for the upcoming 'Class of 2023.'

If you know of someone - a friend, a family member, or someone you respect in the community deserving of permanent and lasting recognition in the arts and humanities, please submit a nomination. The Pathway also encourages groups and organizations to consider nominating a deserving individual in any of the following categories:

**Visual Arts**

**Dramatic Arts**

**Literary**

**Entertainment / Musical**

**Cultural Betterment**

**Community Samaritan**

**Community Builder**

**Media**

A one-page nomination form can be downloaded as a pdf from: [ptbopathwayoffame.ca/nominees](http://ptbopathwayoffame.ca/nominees).

Your nominee just may get to walk The Pathway of Fame and show friends and family their unique, personalized stone marker inlaid into the Pathway at Del Crary Park that denotes their impact on the community.

Deadline is April 30th.

*The Pathway of Fame is a grassroots, not-for-profit organization, and their archives are entrusted to the care of Trent Valley Archives.*



# WEIR DIARY 1884

BY ELWOOD H. JONES

*John Graham Weir (1844-1925) farmed in Otonabee township, just a few miles southeast of Peterborough. He kept a diary from 1880 to 1925, and the remarkable 45 years of diaries are in the Trent Valley Archives. This was a farmer's diary that captured everything that was important in how he managed his farm, but it also noted the various employees he had, usually one or two at a time. The diary noted his connections with the community which included neighbours,*

*the many contacts in Peterborough, and members of the family. Weir's farms were near the intersection of what is now Highway 7 and the Old Keene Road.*

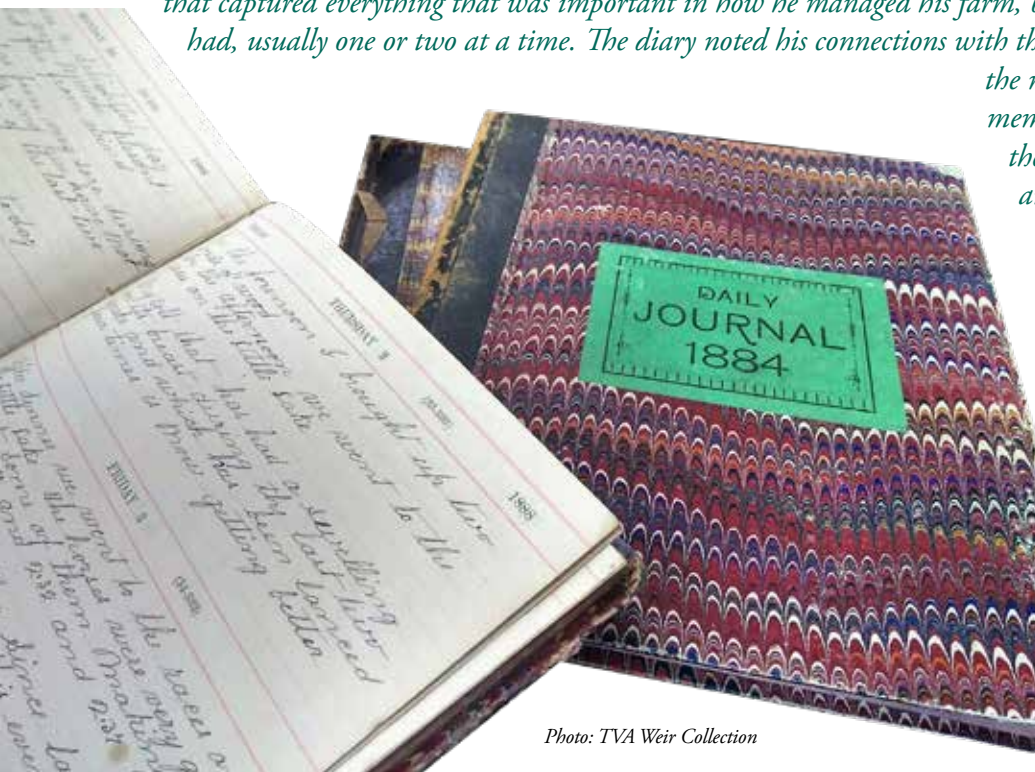


Photo: TVA Weir Collection

The blank diary that he used for all but one year was published by Brown Brothers. Except for 1882 (8" x 13"), the pre-printed hard-cover diaries measured about 6.5" x 8", and each page covered a six-day week. Some years have printed pages much in the style of almanacs that include postage rates, list of banks and other information. The calendars for the year and for the months are also pre-printed. The front part of the diaries were used as a diary, while the last pages of volume are accounting pages where the owner could keep track of his expenses and receipts.



Lovina and John Graham Weir

Weir's diary entries for 1884, the year in which he turned 40, began on Monday, January 7 as his gang "commenced to thresh this morning in the frame barn here and got along very well all day. We had enough men and two to spare." The next day they were still threshing, "At noon today we finished threshing in the frame barn and after dinner we moved to the far barn but the snowstorm was so great we could not thresh any. We all came back to the house and the men played dominoes until bedtime." They had a brief opportunity the next day but the snowstorm "still prevailed." On Thursday, the 10<sup>th</sup> they faced three feet of snow but "We got started to thresh about nine o'clock and did very well for the remainder of the day." On Friday, "We finished threshing in the far barn about sundown and all this afternoon the windstorm was fearful. And tonight we had a particular job to get the mill home from the far barn. After tea, threshers went home and left their mill here on the yard." Dixon and Kent took their mill away the following Monday.

During the next week he went to town nearly every day. On the first day, though, they took the fanning mill to the far barn and cleaned wheat. On Tuesday he took wheat to town and got some made into flour and the rest sold for \$1.06 per bushel. That same day he had some of his oak sawn into planks at Rogers' mill in Ashburnham. On Wednesday he took some White Russian Wheat to market and returned with the rest of his oak planks. On Thursday he took a load of barley to Calcutt's Brewery which he sold for 64 cents a bushel. On the same trip he took "the old sow to Curtis." Curtis Brothers ran a brickyard on the Warsaw road. On Friday, he took a load of barley to market and sold it to Green for 65 cents a bushel.

On Saturday, "I went to town with a load of barley and I sold it to H. Calcutt at .65 per bushel and his brewer Harry Neil tried to do me out of \$10 on a load delivered on Thursday and did cheat me out of over two bushels on the load today. I guess I don't sell any more there."

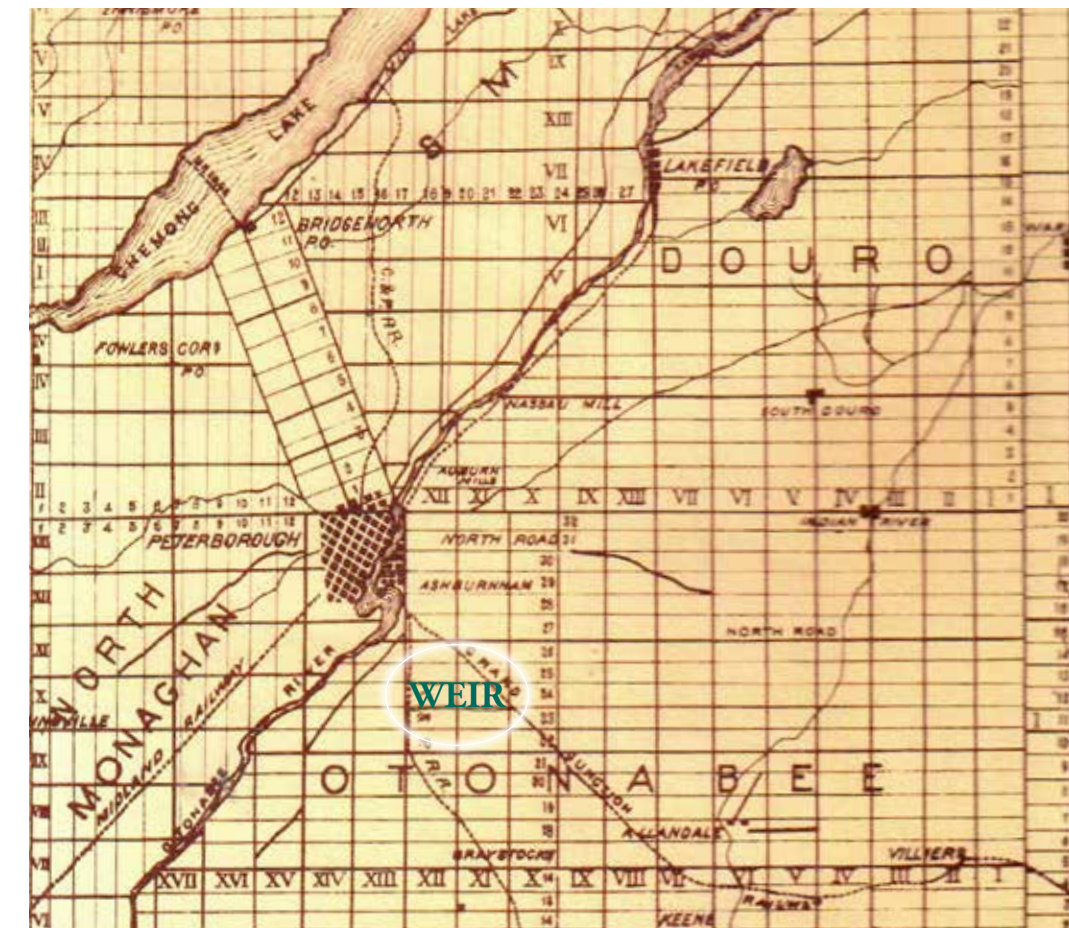
Map: Weir location 1880

The weather was very cold and on Tuesday was -20 degrees, and there was wind and snow on a few days but by Friday the weather was very pleasant. On Wednesday, Willie was shovelling snow from the "door yard." From Wednesday to Friday Mr. and Mrs. McGuire and Louis were visiting the Weirs; on Thursday they went to town and back. On Saturday, "Four of us went skating".

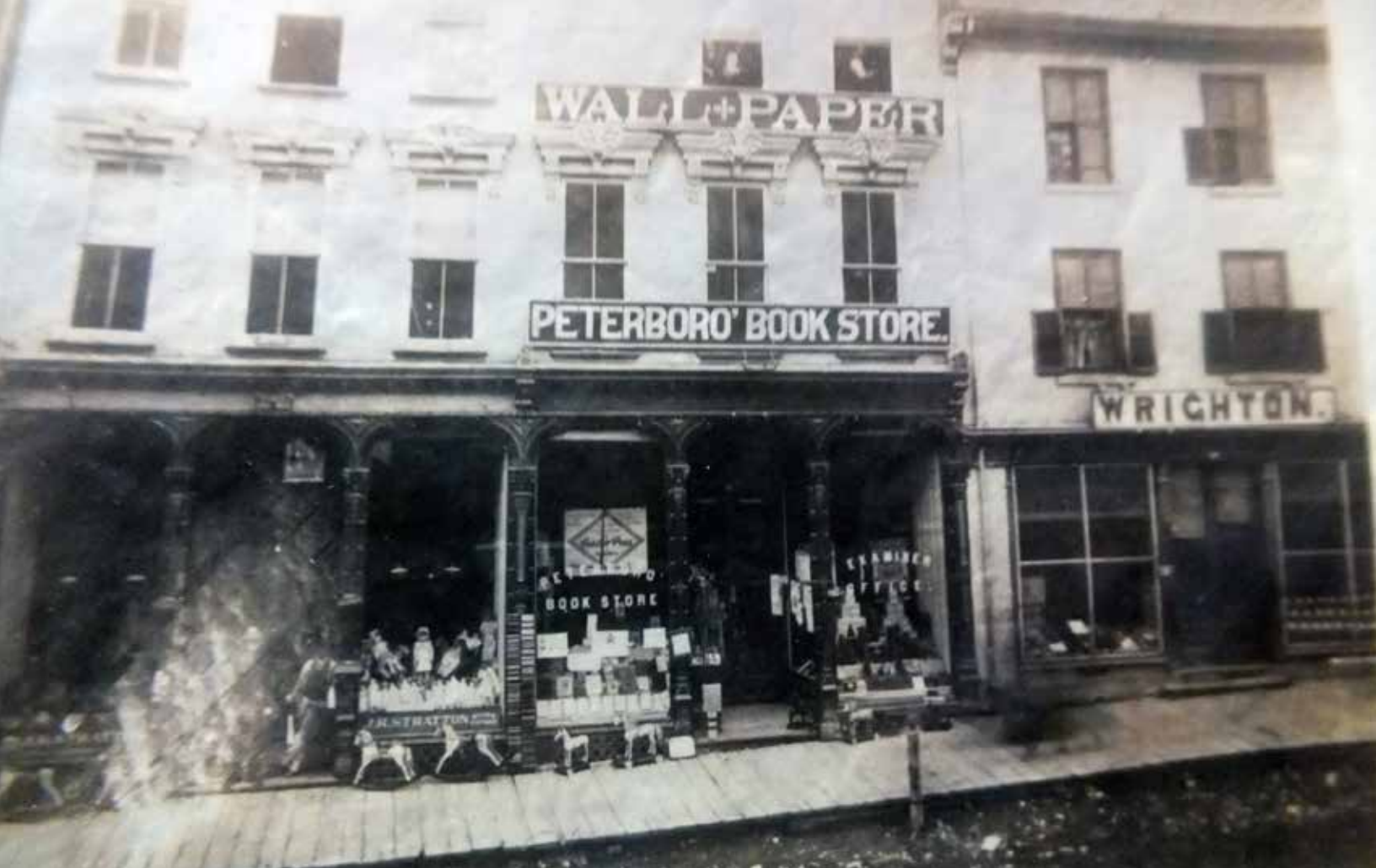
On Monday, they cleaned all their barley, kept 40 bushels for seed, and took the rest to town. "This finished my barley of last year." He sold 256 bushels for \$153.38. The next day was a stormy day. Weir "went with the horses and cutter to take the school teacher to school but could not get further than the gate. Got the horse down, broke the cutter and with difficulty got home." The new teacher, Miss Geary, was boarding at Mrs. Galvin's. A train got stuck at Redmond's cut, and Weir was among those who helped dig the train out.

## More Construction

Weir was interested in fixing the stairs and hall and William Downer was in charge of this project. On Wednesday, he and Downer went to town with the horses and sleigh even though "The roads were terrible drifted and heavy with snow all the way." They returned with Downer's tool chest and lumber. On Thursday, "William Downer and I commenced to move the stairs and hall partition this morning in the front part of the house." Downer worked on the stairs on Saturday and Monday. On Tuesday, "William Downer and I finished the carpenter work of the stairs and hall at noon today and I took him and his tool chest to town. I brought home the sand and lime to plaster the walls." On the following Monday, 4 February, he went to town for more plaster. On Thursday, "Lovina and I went to town for wallpaper and paint for the hall and dining room." Mrs. Baxter who on Tuesday had come







from Fenelon for the Orange meeting and then came to the Weirs helped Lovina and Weir wallpapering on Friday and on Saturday morning. He was working in the house on Tuesday and Wednesday, too.

Other things happened during this fortnight of home improvement. Willie McGregor was doing chores on January 24. Overnight the temperature dropped to 30 below and reached 10 below by Friday noon. Weir commented, “Willie McGregor did not make his appearance today. I guess he is froze all over his nose and face. May the Lord help an Irishman comes to this place.” On the 29<sup>th</sup> Willie returned to work “after his sick spell.” On February 5 and 6 Willie was drawing wood from the swamp which they cut with the “circular saw” on the Wednesday afternoon. On Thursday, “Willie and I were putting a load of hay on the horses stable and cleaning some oats in the far barn in the forenoon.” On Friday and Saturday, “Willie was drawing sawed

wood over to [the other house] where he lives.” On Tuesday, February 12, “Willie McGregor was not working today, being late at the [Bible Christian] tea meeting last night, I supposed he was sleepy this morning (of course he will say he was sick).”

The Weirs had some outings during this cold stretch. They went to town a few times. On February 9, “Lovina and I went to town tonight and I stayed at the County Orange Lodge meeting till about twelve “o’clock.” On Sunday, they went to church, and “In the evening we went to the Bible Christian tea meeting and lecture by Rev. George Webber. The lecture was entitled ‘William of Orange’. The church was crowded.”

On Wednesday, the 13<sup>th</sup>, Weir attended a night meeting of the R. B. Preceptory.

There were February visitors. On February 22, for example, “William Tennyson and

Annie and Mrs. Joy came out to skate and they three with Lovina. Mary Jane and I had a splendid time from three o’clock till dark skating.” Mary Jane and her two children returned home on Monday, February 25, having visited the Weirs for three weeks.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, Lovina and Weir visited Robert Weir, who had a house full of visitors. “We went to hunt foxes and some went to spear fish and a few went to Pigeon Creek to skate. The hunters and fishers got naught but trouble for their pains and the skaters got naught but pains for their trouble, the ice was rough and the snow had to be shoveled off the ice.” After Robert Weirs, they went to James Elliott’s and then returned home.

On February 25, “Willie and I cleaned the remainder of our wheat and I sold it at Rogers mill for .75 per bushel. There was about 83 bushels, almost brought home sixty two dollars and twelve cents.”

Photo: Peterborough Examiner Office private photo.

On March 1, Lovina and Weir skated at the “ice at the railroad field.”

After dinner on March 3, “we commenced to cut wood with the circular saw and we only got well started when McGregor who was driving let the horses go too fast and the tumbling shaft being very hard froze it broke and it breaking caused a cupping iron to break.”

### Excursions

From Wednesday to Friday, March 5 to 7, the Weirs had their best excursion of the season. They went to Cavanville to visit James Tinney’s family, and then to Bethany to visit Mr and Mrs. Reynolds. On Thursday afternoon, “I and Fred went to the skating rink. At night we all went to the revival meeting. I learned a good deal on the rink this afternoon.” On Friday they went to James Elliott’s for tea and then came to Peterborough “and went to the skating carnival. It was really a splendid entertainment and lasted till half past ten o’clock. We got home at half past eleven.” “We had a splendid visit.”

For the next three weeks, March 8 to 25, Weir and Willie McGregor were “drawing posts from the swamp.” All day on the 13<sup>th</sup> William and Burt Downer helped cut the logs into firewood with the circular saw, and Willie hauled them to firewood storage.



Photos: TVA F696\_018 and TVA F696\_006

March 19 seemed a typical day. “Willie and I were cutting wood in the swamp in the forenoon. In the afternoon it was storming, first rain and then snow. I was painting chairs and campstools and the woodwork of the camp beds. In the afternoon I cut 60 cedar posts and ¾ cord of wood.”

On Saturday afternoon, March 15, “Lovina and I went to the ice near the G.J.R. to skate. We went two hours and a half very pleasantly. Lovina skates very well and I have got so I can skate backwards pretty nice and forwards as well.”

Weir was busy in the weeks before Easter, April 13. On April 5, he went to town with 20 quarters of pork, and sold all but one quarter. He sold hind quarters for ten cents a pound; fore quarters, for eight.

On April 7, Willie and he were shovelling snow on the road opposite Galvins and Duffus so “teams could pass with loads from Burnhams to town.” Although roads were generally dry, in this stretch the snow is as deep as 36 inches.

On Tuesday, he took a load of hay to Wilton Tennyson; it weighed 1,970 pounds. After tea he went over to Mr. Petries to “run off some lime to plaster his parlour.” On Wednesday, he took a load of hay to market; it weighed 1,310 pounds, and he sold it to Mrs. Martin for \$9 per ton. “I went to Mr. Hazes in town and had my dinner.

Afterwards I went to Pennington Alexander’s sale and “I bought a colt for sixty dollars. It has very pretty eyes and head but it’s as wild as a deer.” The next day, he and Willie took a load of hay to town; it weighed 2,730 pounds and Shambo bought it for \$8 a ton. And they brought home the colt. In the afternoon, they took a load of hay to William Hamilton; it weighed 2,560 pounds. On Friday, he and Willie took another load of hay to town, weighing 1,850 pounds, and sold it to a stranger at \$9 per ton, for \$8.25. On Saturday he rose at five o’clock and took a load of hay to market which he sold to “Payton the pump maker” for \$9 a ton; it weighed 2,230 pounds, for \$10. In the afternoon Willie took a load of hay to C. Young, which also sold for \$9 a ton.

The week after Easter he was still selling, mostly hay. On Monday he took 2,400 pounds of hay to market and sold it George Lipsett for \$9 per ton. In the afternoon, he took a bag of oats and 1,000 pounds of hay to Fawcett, while Willie took a load of straw to Lipsett. On Wednesday he took a load of hay, 2,330 pounds, to market which he sold to John Alfred. On Thursday, Willie took a load of hay, 2,310 pounds, to William Cocks; and after dinner “he took a half ton to John Armstrong in ‘Skibberean.’” On Friday afternoon he took a load of hay to “Old Mr. Walsh the tile maker.” On Saturday he sold loads of hay to Andy Fawcett of Ashburnham and to D. Lundy, each at \$9 a ton. These loads were 2,240 pounds and 2,740 pounds respectively.





A new worker, James Burgess from Allandale, arrived on Easter Monday. He were digging a drain to let water out of the cellar for most of the week. On Friday, “Willie was digging at the cellar drain and got hole through under the foundation before sundown sufficient to let out all the water.” Burgess was “moving the remains of the straw stack into the barnyard.” Burgess quit work after less than a week. Willie spent Saturday “digging the small garden in the forenoon and in the afternoon he washed and varnished the small harness.”

By Wednesday several people began to plough sod.

On Wednesday, Weir went to the dentist, Joseph Pentland, to have “a tooth filled and one drawn.” On Friday he had the dentist draw another tooth. Weir was cutting tops off poplars along the laneway on several days. On Thursday, he went to Charlie McDonald’s sale and bought a ten month colt for \$35 and a cow for \$38.50, and brought them home.

Weir spent all of a windy Monday, April 21, sawing for James Galvin. He said he was nearly blinded from the sawdust in the wind getting in his eyes.

### Plowing Time

On Tuesday, “Willie and a team commenced to plough this morning.” Lovina and Weir went to town after dinner and took a plough to Mr. White’s to get a handle in it and “I took him 390 lbs of old metal. I got the plough home with me and a dozen plough points and soles.” Willie “finished ploughing the small field south of the far orchard. Lovina brought out our tea to the far barn.” On Friday, Willie was ploughing in the field “next to Lynches.”

On Wednesday, Willie and Weir “with two teams took four loads of hay to town and brough home twenty bushels of seed peas.” He bought the peas at Wrighton’s store house for 80 cents a bushel. On Thursday he planted 15 bushels of seeds north of the far barn. After finishing with planting the peas, Weir sowed wheat on Friday and

Saturday “east and north of the log barn.” On Friday, he commented, “I never saw the ground in such good sowing order so early in the season.” The ground was very dry.

On Saturday, “Willie was ploughing and picking stones. I was sowing wheat east and north of the log barn. By the last day of April, Weir “was sowing peas in the little field south of the orchard.” On May 1, “Willie and I were working this forenoon in the far field with two teams. In the afternoon I was sowing in the same field and Willie was ploughing in the field south of the orchard. Mr. Green and his man came and put in about four hundred grafts in the apple trees.”



On May 5, Lovina and Weir went to town; “I took the old mower to town to get it repaired.” Weir noted that it had “Rained last night and today is calm and warm. This is the first good growing weather.” Willie was still gang-ploughing and removing stones, this time in the field in front of the house. On Tuesday, Weir was in that field “taking off stones and sowing peas.” Willie McGregor “was ploughing the orchard at his house for to plant potatoes.”

On Wednesday, May 7, Weir “took the young mare ‘Glen’ and mated her with Graham and Fair’s horse ‘Enterprise.’

The next day, Willie took his young mare ‘Hobby’ to mate with ‘Enterprise.’ Weir returned home by Thomas Rea’s and bought eight bags of potatoes at 75 cents a bag. On Wednesday, Willie was drawing out manure in the orchard in the afternoon. On Thursday afternoon, both were working in the garden, sowing melons, parsnip and beets. There was lots of rain during these days, and Weir did chores when the rain was heaviest. On Friday, both were cleaning oats in the far barn.

Saturday was market day. Weir took a load of oats which he sold to McBain for 37 cents a bushel. Willie took a load of hay to Mr. Owen.

On Monday, May 12, Mr. and Mrs. Tinney visited in the morning. Weir “took a load of straw to Fitzgerald’s livery stable and a load of oats to McBain.” Willie was ploughing.

On Tuesday, Willie and Weir went to town with a load of oats for McBain and a load of straw for “McIntyre of the Oriental for three dollars.”

On Wednesday, Weir was “ploughing and preparing potato ground. On Thursday, “Willie and I went with two teams to help James Duffus to get his crop in the ground.” Willie’s wife ran away on

Wednesday, and Willie went looking for her a couple of times, and the following Thursday “Willie was at home with his wife in the forenoon.”

On Saturday, May 17, Weir took a load of oats to McBain, and “two quarters of veal, one to Tom Harper and one to Porter Bros.” “Willie took a load of straw to Bob White and in the evening a load of hay to George Lipsett and left it in the wagon in the yard and got home with the horses at three o’clock in the morning on Sunday.”

On Monday, Weir went to town with Lovina and Mrs. Baxter and “unloaded the hay that Willie left at Lipsett’s.” Willie went to Duffus to plough and in the evening Weir “gang-plowed in the hollow in front of the house.”

On Tuesday, “Willie went to find his wife after he helped me to put on a load of hay. I took a load of hay to Wainright at nine dollars per ton. In the evening Willie and I cleaned a load of oats.” Weir took the oats to McBain on Wednesday; “Willie was ploughing for himself.”

### Victoria Day

On Thursday, Weir “went to sow for James Duffus and finished about teatime.” On Friday, Weir took oats to Wrighton and Willie took hay to William Wand. “In the evening we were cleaning and drawing oats from the other barn home to the granary.” They were still cleaning oats the first part of Saturday, and Weir took a load of oats to McBain.” It was still May 24, the Queen’s birthday, Lovina and Weir “went to see the sports and the drill shed grounds. We had our tea at the Morgan House and at night we went to see the fireworks. There was truly a splendid display. The balloon ascension was the first I’ve ever seen.”

The diary entries are sparse over the next two weeks. On May 28, “John Armstrong brought his colt here to pasture.” He also noted on Saturday, May 31, “We went to town in the wagon and I bought ten bags

of potatoes for Willie McGregor at .75 per bag,... Willie McGregor rolled 13 acres of barley and two acres of peas today.”

Between June 2 and June 16, William Wand had four men working on the Weir verandah.



John Fulton began working for Weir on June 2, and on his first day rolled the pea field in the morning and drawing cedars after. Willie took a load of straw to town. Several days were spent drawing cedar from the new land home, picking stones or drawing manure. On June 20, Johnny Fulton quit. “He is too cross and bad tempered with horses and he wants money to spend, not work.” His last day was June 27.

Willie was away doing his statute labour on June 19 and 20. Michael Galvin was helping draw out manure from the barnyard from June 17 to 19. For several days, Peter McGregor, Willie’s brother, filled in around Weir’s place. On June 28, Peter went to help “Uncle William Graham” build a bridge on his laneway. On June 18, Weir noted that “At seven in the evening I attended a school meeting to make arrangements for a picnic at Idlewyld.” On June 26, “Lovina and I and

John Fulton went to the school picnic at Idlewyld. We had a very pleasant time. The river contained 75,000 logs which greatly retarded the speed of the ‘Whistlewing’ but we arrived at Ashburnham about ten o’clock at night. Everyone was pleased.” July was a month of diversity.

On July 3, Mr. Owen’s man Murphy came out before dinner to put in a new force pump and repair three others. We got all done before tea and afterwards we went to the Strawberry Festival at the Methodist church. Willie was shingling the log barn until noon. Peter was hoeing potatoes. We had a swarm of bees at ten o’clock.” On July 9 they hived a swarm of bees.

Photo: TVA F696\_030

Photos: TVA SearsRobuck 1900





Willie and Peter were around all month. Willie went to town to get new clothes on July 5 and then after dinner was ploughing. Willie and Weir were ploughing sod with two teams on July 7. On July 11, they “were moving a fence from the pasture around the barley.” On the 14<sup>th</sup> “Willie was mowing in the field at the brickyard all day.” Mowing was his main activity for some days.

On July 9, “Peter and I were harrowing and sowing buckwheat on the ground that we ploughed after we had cut the hay off.” On the 11<sup>th</sup>, Peter was raking hay with the horserake. Later “we were drawing in hay.” On the 14<sup>th</sup>, “Peter was hoeing corn and I was cutting the grass around the fences with the scythe.” The next day, Peter was cutting the odd thistles in the pastureland. On July 15, after Weir had returned from town with a load of shingles, “we were putting up hay in caps.”

Photo: TVA F696\_041

July 18 was an unusual day. “I had a busy time for about two hours this morning to prevent the blood from escaping from a vein in the cut foot of John Armstrong’s colt and afterwards I had to go to his place and tell him which took nearly all the forenoon. Willie was mowing. Peter was raking hay. In the afternoon, I repaired a cart wheel with 9 spokes. 3 fellows and I set the tire and had a good job.”

August was a time for relaxing interspersed with the necessary work around the farm. On 29 July, after three acres of rye, Lovina, Weir and four others (Mrs. Reynolds, and Fred, “old Richard Johnston” and Henry Johnston “went to the Back Lakes”. They took the train to Lakefield and the steamboat to Juniper Island, which they reached after dark.

## A Time to Reap

By the following Monday, 4 August, they were back at the farm. They started cutting barley, “It was badly down and the three of us had to mow with scythes in the far field.” The next day they were ploughing until dark “at the end of the lane.” “James Elliott and Catherine were here today.”

On 11 August, there were seven men “drawing in barley.” The other four were Wilton Tennyson, Patsey Sullivan, A. Orr “and a fellow from Cobourg named John Allen.” “We got a splendid days work done. We had two teams drawing in and a team tramping in the mow.” The next day they worked until ten and then all went to town. Weir and Lovina came home with shingles and after tea Weir “finished cutting the barley.”

On 13 August, Wilton Tennyson, Willie and Weir “were fitting up things until noon and then after dinner we were drawing in barley.” “Peter and Maggie only got back from town tonight being away since yesterday morning.”

A) Orr and Mina Weir were married at Robert Weir’s on 14 August.

On Saturday, all the neighbours were ploughing, but Weir was “working at the new addition to the other house.” Willie took a load of hay to Walsh, “the tile maker,” and then brought home 20 bushels of laths from Hilliard’s mill and half a bushel of hair from the tannery.

On Monday, 18 August, “Willie McGregor finished reaping the wheat. Wilton Tennyson helped us to bind wheat. There were three of us binding. Very hot all day – the mercury up to 98 in the shade. We trained three colts to reap, they gave no bother.”

There are no diary entries for the next ten days. Then on Friday, 29 August, Weir “commenced to plough in the little field south of the far orchard. Willie was threshing oats with the flail to feed the horses. Peter was harrowing the summer fallow – very warm weather today.” On Saturday, “Willie finished ploughing the little field and ploughed the remainder of the day – the field where the peas were at the far barn. Lovina and I went to town. Peter was harrowing the barley ground.”

With the start of September, attention turned to harvesting, and neighbours. On the First, “Willie and a team was at Sullivan’s threshing. Peter and I were binding oats. In the evening Michael came here with their mill to thresh.” As well, “Old Mr. Decker came here today to secure the bargain about renting the farm.” On the next day there were several helpers: “a man from Galvin and from Duffus, John Sullivans, Wilton Tennyson, David Scollie and John Martin.” However they lost time for “want of some spikes. At noon, I let one of them have a horse and buggy to go to town for spikes.” On 3 September, “Willie

and Peter went to James Duffus to thresh.” Weir and Wilton were drawing in peas. Weir was excited the next day. “Today we finished our harvest and we have been just two months harvesting since we commenced our hay. We never got done so early in the summer with any harvest since I commenced to farm for myself.”

On Saturday, 6 September, Weir “took a load of wheat to market today and sold it to Clegg for .89 per bushel.”

On Monday he took a load of “first class spring wheat” to town, and the best price was .89 per bushel. After dinner he took a load of hay to A. Mitchell, “the sewing machine agent.” He commented that “Tom Gray and wife were at Willie McGregor’s yesterday and of course they were drunk as usual and Willie was not fit to work today.” On Tuesday, Weir took a load of wheat to Clegg and Willie a load of hay to “Nelson at Ashburnham tannery.”

## Camping Trip

Then began another holiday. On Tuesday, “At 11:30 Lovina, I, Wilton Tennyson and wife went in the train to Lakefield and then got our canoes at Gordon’s in Lakefield and started for Stoney Lake. Wilton caught two very large salmon at the mouth of the third line creek across from Sandys Point.”

Weir’s narrative continued. “Yesterday we had a fair wind all the way up from Lakefield to Stoney Lake narrow. We camped last night at Boschink camping ground and after breakfast we came on up to Young’s Bay. Set up our camps and went swimming at two o’clock...” On Thursday, “At six this morning, Wilton and I arose and after washing ourselves in the still warm waters of Young’s Bay we went trolling for maskinague. We got back to camp at 9:30 to partake a splendid breakfast of fresh salmon, smoked ham, boiled potatoes, bloughney, sausage from Matthews packing house, with tea, coffee, pies, cakes, biscuits, fruitcake, preserves, pickles, and plenty of cold spring water and after all that – two hours to read while laying in camp beds.” That night, “We

went for a sail on the smooth clear waters among the lovely islands of upper Stoney Lake. Nothing to disturb the laugh and song as we glide along the beautiful course below but we returned to camp and to retire.”

On Friday, “we pack up and come to Sandy Point and after dinner we all go across Clear Lake and at the mouth of the creek we catch some more salmon and Maskinange and camp on Pompeydore for the night.” On Saturday they “packed up and started for home. We had a fair wind down Clear Lake and such rough water we were never in before. We had a splendid time from when we left Peterboro.”

On Monday they all went to Forepaugh’s Circus. The Adam Forepaugh circus was among the most important circuses of the day, and Peterborough was an easy stop as it was so well served by the Midland Railway and the Canadian Pacific Railway. It claimed to be the largest in the world, and the only circus coming to Canada that year. A star of the show was the “Sacred Royal Siamese White Elephant”. Other highlights included 25 elephants, a “Huge Roman Hippodrome”, ‘trained wild beast show,’ a museum, giants and dwarfs, and a “sublime street pageant”. The advertisement mentioned the half mile racing track, which had recently opened at the Driving Park, and soon the home of the Peterborough Exhibition.

One of the projects at the farm was the building of a line fence in the swamp adjacent to Jim Jackson’s farm. On Wednesday, September 17, “Willie, Peter, Wilton Tennyson, Jacques Tennyson and myself and team went to build the line fence between Jim Jackson and me. I had the posts and poles ready since last winter and we took the wire, staples and nails with us and all the necessary tools. The swamp was very dry and the horses and wagons could go anywhere through it and we very near finished 35 rods.” The next day, “I went to town for some barbed wire to finish the line fence in the swamp between Jackson’s and my land. The swamp is as dry as a cork. I and Wilton were each ½ day and three of us and Wilton yesterday with our team.”



That same day, “Willie commenced to plough in the back field next to Galvins. Peter was cutting corn in the orchard.” On Friday Willie was ploughing and Peter and Weir “were raising potatoes in the orchard.” He had a good crop of potatoes and the weather this week was “splendid weather for raising potatoes.” Willie was still ploughing on Monday and Tuesday. Peter was doing chores and Weir went to town and got glass for the hall window.

On Wednesday, 24 September, Robert Weir and Fred came and the following day Robert, Lovina and Weir went to Ottawa for the Ottawa Ex. They left Peterborough at 12:15 and reached Ottawa at 7 o’clock, and after walking around “got lodging in a respectable private house for \$1.50 each.” Mr and Mrs McCloud provided board and bed for the eight people from Peterborough. The diary entries for the next few days are blank. The Peterborough Review reported that Charles D. Moore, of Peterborough, was a winner at the Ottawa Ex.



*Hired Help Trouble*

We seldom hear about the house servants, but Weir was quite clear about one servant. On 29 September, he commented, “We had a hard job to get ‘Marg’ up this morning and she was no use when she did get up. She sulked for an hour after she came down stairs and we had all the cows milked and horses taken care of, chores all

done and came in expecting the breakfast was ready. Marg was just commencing to cut the meat for breakfast – that was too slow. Marg had to pack up and ‘get.’”

The Weirs made another trip to Stoney Lake on 6 October. “This morning Edward Bowie and Mrs. Bowie, Lovina and I started for Stoney Lake and we went to town in the wagon and from there to Lakefield in the cars and from Lakefield in canoe to Sandy Point where we camped that night; going up on the water we had a fair wind. Edward had a sail on his canoe and it skipped along without a stroke of the paddle.” The Bowies were visiting all of October and for a week or so went to visit “some of his old neighbours.” They returned to London at the end of the month but were back in Otonabee in December.

On 15 October, “Willie was at Galvin’s threshing till



noon and in the afternoon he took a quarter day to attend the Irish

concert.” As part of their 22<sup>nd</sup> successful season the Grand Hibernica and Dublin Dan Comedy Co. featuring six “great comedians” played at the Bradburn Opera House on 15 and 16 October.

Willie spent a lot of time in bed over September and October and his brother joked that Willie should sell his clothes and “buy blankets for he has slept a good deal during the last six weeks.” [23 October]

During October and November Weir and his employees were working on the other house, and eventually built an addition to it. On 10 November, he and Willie “went with two teams around to the Old Cobourg railroad for two loads of cedar to use in the foundation of the addition we are going to build to the other house.” On 12 November “we finished putting in the rest of the posts and sleepers and erected some of the studding.” The next day, “We framed and put on all the rafters and put up some studs.” Then they boarded the roof and did other work. On 17 November, Wilton Tennyson came “to help us to shingle the new part that we are building to the other house.” They were also working on a woodshed at this house, and by 4 December were shingling it.

*Visitors*

There were breaks during this time. Willie’s mother arrived from Ireland and Willie did not work that afternoon. Weir purchased 5,000 cedar shingles from Hilliards mills for ten dollars in July and in November bought another 4,000 shingles plus “a lot of scantling and flooring.” Joe Detcher was the clerk at Hilliards.

Weir described November as “splendid weather for working. The ground is too hard to plough but is thawing out the last two days. The colts and cattle are out on the pasture yet.”

There were several visitors in December. On the first, Mr. and Mrs. McKee visited and Mrs. S. Elliott, Weir’s niece, and husband and child came. The next day, “Mr. Brown, the Superintendent of schools” came “for dinner and after dinner I went with to our school to see how the pupils conduct themselves at the examination. I never seen pupils acquit themselves so ignorantly.” On the 4<sup>th</sup>, he went to the Orange Lodge for the election of officers, and the meeting lasted past midnight. On the 6<sup>th</sup> he took a plough to be repaired at Whyte’s foundry. On the 11<sup>th</sup> he went to town to get Dobbin shod. On the 12<sup>th</sup> he and Lovina went to the funeral of Tim Buck. On the 15<sup>th</sup>, after dinner, he and Lovina “went to town for a cutter ride.” On the 17<sup>th</sup> “Visitors are here tonight and I had nine cows to milk and feed which kept me busy.

One special event on the 16th was the lecture by Mr. Chiniquy “in the Methodist church.” This event at George Street Methodist Church was sponsored by the Orange Lodge. His lecture title, “The effects of Romanism on Canada’s future” was well received by Weir. Chiniquy was a former Roman Catholic priest sharing what he had learned about the Roman Catholic church, and Protestants loved to hear his message.

E. E. Bowie was visiting for the last two weeks of December. They did some visiting but Bowie was in Otonabee to prepare his place for sale; he gave Weir permission to cut the wood off five acres. Lovina and Weir spent the days around Christmas in Fenelon Falls with Mary Jane and Robert Baxter. On the way back had a visit at Robert Weir’s.

This was an eventful year. Mixed farming was more complex than we sometimes believe, and the more so in the age of horses. The seeding and threshing and harvesting were at the heart of the farming, for sure. However, the building and repairing of buildings and landscaping were very important this year. There were countless trips to town, to sell goods at market or directly to customers, as well as to purchase



food and supplies, and to service the horses, the ploughs and the vehicles. The farm had nine cows, at least four horses, some pigs. Weir had usually two farm labourers. As well, he had many draws to the surrounding rural community, helping with farming operations, hosting several visitors, and attending meetings for the local school, church and the Orange Order. Other farmers may have been similarly occupied, but thanks to a most useful diary one is able to gain a closer understanding of that pre-automobile world.

We are able to add flesh to that world because Weir’s diaries contained pages for keeping track of his financial transactions. Often Weir had activities that never got mentioned in the main narrative, but mostly Weir adds clarity to what he was doing in town or in transactions with workers and neighbours.

*Income and Expenses*

In mid-January, he was selling wheat at one dollar a bushel; he paid Mason, the grocer \$1.50 for layer raisins, bought a broom for 25 cents, paid one dollar for

his Examiner subscription, and paid \$3 for pew rent. Layer raisins are made from Muscatel grapes. According to the Grocers Encyclopedia for 1911, “The clusters are cut from the vines when thoroughly ripe and placed on wooden trays in the vineyard... When they have wilted sufficiently, an empty tray is placed over the full tray and a quick movement their positions are reversed, so that when the top tray is removed the ‘raw’ undersides of the clusters are exposed to the sun. After the completion of the drying process, the raisins are dumped into ‘sweat boxes’ holding about 150 pounds each, and are thus delivered to the packing house. One of the next steps is the sorting. The finest ‘clusters’ are packed in 5, 10 and 20-pound boxes, but the greater part of the crop is stemmed, seeded and packed in 1-pound cartons.” The next steps relate to sorting, removing stems and removing seeds. Besides the Examiner, Weir had annual subscriptions to the Review and to the Montreal Witness.

On the 18, he paid a toll for ten cents, and 70 cents to the blacksmith, in addition to some purchases that included a file for 25 cents.



On Saturday, 19 January, he was quite busy. He sold barley to W. H. Wrighton as well as Henry Calcutt, paid for Post Office box no. 530, one dollar for the year. At [R. B.] McKee and [R. S.] Davidson, he purchased 120 lbs of nails (\$3.90), 27 lbs of wire (\$2.70), staples and skates for \$1.75. The next week he bought more nails, and went to T. G. Hazlitt for lumber for stairs (\$3.20). He also bought “stove pipe cylinders” from Hutchinson, the tinsmith (\$1.50). He also got the money that he felt Calcutt’s employee had shortchanged him.

Monday, 28 January, he settled notes from William Drummond that had come due (\$200). He settled his account since April with Dr. Halliday (\$13). He also purchased plaster from William E. Whitehair, and paid money for the blacksmith and lumber and sundries. On 31 January he paid William Downer \$7 for work he had done on Weir’s stairs.



Saturdays were busy days for Weir, much of the time spent around the farmers market. On 2 February, he paid \$5 towards Willie McGregor’s wages. In town, he paid \$4.50 to [R. W.] Muncaster for work on Willie McGregor’s clock, and also went to Ewing for repairing the Weir clock (\$1). Robert D. Ewing was a photographer in Peterborough in the 1860s, but this must be a different Ewing. That same day he paid G. Youngs \$4.25 and Erskine \$1.15 and for “mitts & socks” \$5.40. M. Bain paid him \$1.50 “for Dan horse.”

Photo: TVA F696\_042

On Tuesday he gave Lovina \$5, paid 70 cents for the Bible Christian tea, and went to D. Belleghem for a table and chairs, for \$6. On Thursday he was back in town to get paint from M. Meillar, a hardware merchant, a pair of laced boots from McAleers [McAuliffe?]. He also paid his brother-in-law, Wilton Tenneson, “in oats for sawing oak”: 15 bushels free and 30 bushels at 34 cents a bushel.

On Saturday, 9 February, he paid \$50 to William Drummond, which was the balance on notes. He paid Walter Dickson \$36 for threshing. He bought coal from James Stevenson for \$2.88 and seven gallons of coal oil from McFarlane Wilson, at the China Shoppe. There were many small expenses in February.

During the brief holiday in March to visit James Tinney in Cavanville and Mr. Reynolds in Bethany the Weirs had expenses of 85 cents, and spent 50 cents for tickets to Peterborough’s skating carnival. Later in the month they bought tea from John Troop: five pounds for \$2.25. They spent money for the blacksmith and for mending tins.

G. M. Roger, who among other things had a green house on London street paid Weir \$29.07 for 761 ½ bushels of carrots. He then gave Lovina \$1.50, Jim Dolan \$7.50. He also gave Dolan \$1.75 for cloth to repair his pants. He paid Willie McGregor on wages \$5.60 in pork; in March he was selling pork hind quarters for ten cents a pound and front quarters at eight cents. Later he gave McGregor flour valued at \$2.75 and boots at \$5.50, also for wages. On March 29, he bought soap and pickles from W. Mason, and spent money with M. Meillar with hardware and sundries and “to Mr. Richardson for lecture book” 75 cents.

During April he sold a few loads of hay as well as oats, clover and timothy. He rented land to pay his dental bill with Joseph Pentland, the dentist. He paid wages to Willie McGregor and Jim Burgess. He took one load of hay to “Old Mr. Walsh the tile maker.” One unusual entry, Weir charged George Street wood dealer, James Galvin, for a day spent cutting wood.

Weir does not always mention what he paid. For example, in May, he mentioned getting eight bags of potatoes from Thomas Rea for 75 cents a bag; but there is no reference in the account pages. Later in the month he got salt, corn and flax from Joseph Flavelle by the farmers market for \$3.88, and he got maple sugar from T. W. Robinson across the street from Flavelle for 45 cents. For 21 May the diary only noted that Weir took a load of oats to McBain but the accounts page is silent on that. A few days later he took more oats to McBain, and then he and Lovina went for tea at Morgan House, at the corner of Hunter and Water; tea cost 50 cents, but no special mention of the selling price of oats which probably sold at the going rate 37 cents per bushel. At the end of May he received \$122.80 from McBain for oats. He also settled his mortgage interest, \$100, with James Best, the dry goods merchant at 390 George.

On the other hand, he made purchases that did not appear in the main diary. On 17 May he sold calfskins for \$1.60 to someone unknown. On 12 May he bought groceries from John Cameron, a grocer at 392 George; it is not clear what he got for two dollars.

During the first week of June there were no diary entries, but there was considerable activity in the accounts pages. Notably he sold hay to D. Lundy and John Alford and straw to Tobias Fitzgerald. Later he sold meat to Robert T. Wainwright, a butcher at 460 George, who paid six dollars on account. Later in the month he sold more hay to William Johnston, a law clerk for A. P. Poussette, and to J. Z. Rogers, the canoe builder.



Cemetery Pageant sketch of the Weir Diaries

In mid-month he received \$122.48 from the Ontario Bank, and then paid one dollar to Edmund Wand who was in Ashburnham by the Hunter Street bridge who had built his verandah; the final verandah payment was on 14 August. That was balanced by \$103 he received from the Grand Trunk Railway for building a fence.

In late July and early August, Weir went to the “Back Lakes”, notably Juniper Island and Stony Lake, with the Reynolds and the Johnstons; his expenses were \$5.25. Interestingly, he sold milk to George W. Hall, a grocer on Simcoe Street for \$3.50. Earlier references in the diary suggested all his milk went to Keene. In this year he received \$120.40 on 6 December from the Keene Milk Factory.

During September, his diary entries were quite complete, but there was little activity on the accounts pages, mainly tied to his fishing trip at Stoney Lake with Wilton Tennyson and his wife. On 6 September he received \$48.06 for a load of wheat sold to Charles Clegg, a Peterborough miller. And he bought a colt from John Armstrong, a neighbour, apparently for about \$75, of which \$40 was paid on 8 September. Weir seems to have a pattern of settling

accounts at the middle and end of the month. He purchased six photos from P. H. Green at 426 ½ George Street for three dollars. He also had loans with A. P. Poussette and James Best; Best’s began in March and the interest and compound interest were settled in early December. During the year he also lent money, notably to E. E. Bowie, which was settled in December.

At the end of November he acquired his copy of Mulvany’s History of Peterborough for \$10.75.

Christmas spending came in December. Weir purchased a “stand and glass” which was a mirror from Belleghem. He got bed blankets and comforter from Levy, a weaver at Auburn Woolen Mills, for \$4.60. A picture card cost ten cents. It looks as if they had geese for Christmas and turkey for New Years.

There is much to learn from John G. Weir’s year. He was extraordinarily busy with chores around the farm, and with organizing his farming routines. His diary was usually done at the end of the day, around 8 p.m. His day seemed to begin with sunrise and most of the chores were

done before 9 a.m. when he expected breakfast to be served by the house servant. Weir worked with neighbours on projects where more than one person made sense. The horses that powered the circular saw required assistance. There are times when he planted on the farm of James Duffus, but that might have been tied to health issues at the Duffus farm. However, threshing was always a community activity.

When making improvements around the house, he hired William Wand to do the most important jobs tied to the verandah and porch but he was quite willing to do some of the plastering and painting jobs. He and his hired hand built the fence, which entailed some logistics with respect to cedar fence posts and the purchase and stringing of barbed wire.

In 2022, parts of the Weir diary were turned into a dramatic sketch presented as part of the Trent Valley Archives Little Lake Cemetery Pageant. The roles of John and Lovina were played by Mike Edwards and Mona Wilkes-Edwards.

*Do you have a story you can share with us? Visit our Facebook page and let us know.*



# Lost in the WOODS

BY HEATHER AITON LANDRY

Late this past year, we were contacted by Amy Tedford, whose office is on the site of Canadian General Electric. She asked us about an old foundation that can be seen in the woods across from the site along Monaghan Road. Amy wondered what this structure was and if we knew anything about it, since she had heard rumours of a mansion in the woods.

At first, I assumed that she was referring to ruins left by the second most expensive fire

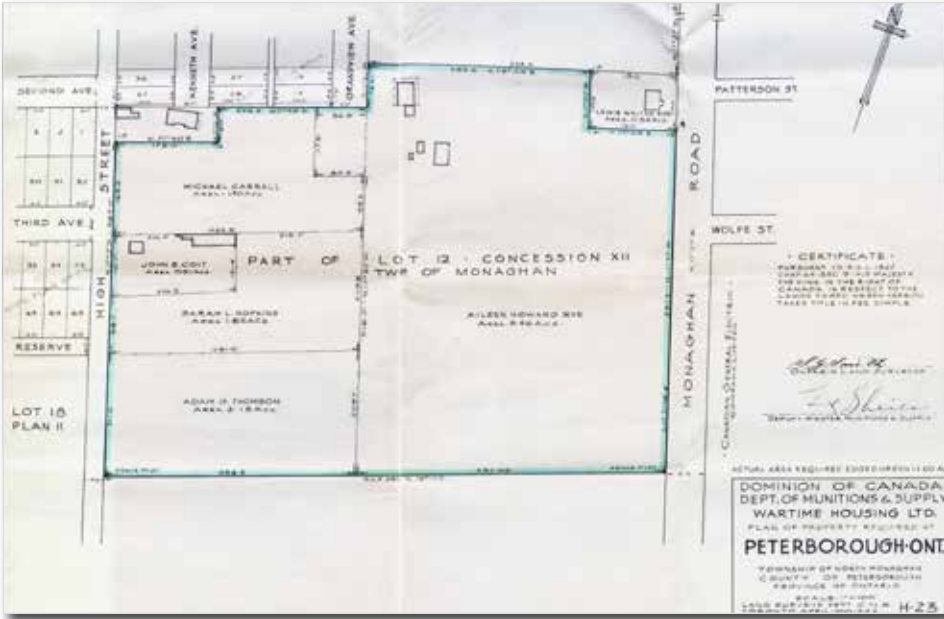
and just south of Prince of Wales School. In late 1945, the Department of Veteran's Affairs converted this complex to a 250-bed hospital that specialized in the treatment of tuberculosis. The \$1.5 million fire began in the basement and all 32 men of the local fire department were called in to fight the blaze. The hospital was successfully evacuated, but the fire destroyed the whole complex except for two walls farthest from Monaghan Road, a smokestack, and the elevator frame. No plans were made to

Aerial photographs will tell you that there have been many structures in and around the CGE parking area. A search of the city directories confirms this, and moreover provided the name of the owner of the home, the ruins of which Amy saw in the woods. They were the ruins of a mansion, or at the very least a large and spacious home, built in 1895 for local merchant Hugh Waddell. The residence was known as "Beechfield," and was designed by Toronto architect C. H. Acton Bond. Beechfield was a substantial estate. It was surrounded by pine trees and accessed by a circular driveway, and included stables and a gate house in addition to the main dwelling.

Hugh Waddell was born in South Monaghan. His parents, Robert Waddell and Sarah McClelland, came from County Down, Ireland, and were among the earliest settlers in the township. They arrived about 1835, and operated a post office from their farm on Lot 1 Concession 4 for a few months in 1836. By 1846 Robert Waddell was a local magistrate, and operated a store on the corner of his property by 1860. He served as postmaster again from 1861 to 1873, and the family acquired numerous properties in South Monaghan in addition to the original farm.

Hugh Waddell appears on a voters list as a farmer in South Monaghan in 1863. He married Mary Waddell (possibly a distant relative) of County Down, Ireland, in Kingston in 1878. The successful mercantile business enabled the couple to purchase, in October 1894, the lot upon which Beechfield would be built.

Hugh Waddell died suddenly in 1911 while his son, Roland, was on honeymoon in Europe with his new bride, Edna Ackerman. Consequently, Roland inherited



*This plan shows the area annexed by the Wartime Housing Corporation for the DVA Hospital as found in F60 Peterborough County Land Records. Also note other structures, the remains of which have perplexed generations of Prince of Wales students who have used the woods as a shortcut on the way to school.*

in Peterborough history, the DVA fire of 1946. In order to house workers assigned to special projects at CGE, Wartime Housing Corporation built a boarding house complex across the road, on the west side of what was then Monaghan Avenue,

rebuild the hospital, and inpatients were moved to Trenton and to Toronto's Christie Street Hospital.

Upon receiving this photograph from Amy, however, we decided I was mistaken.



*This photo, sent to us by Jason Ribeiro of BWXT, shows the location of Beechwood. Note the absence of the water tower (built 1957), and the presence of the addition to Prince of Wales School (built 1951).*

the house. An avid curler, he was president of the Peterborough Curling Club, honorary president of the Millbrook Curling Club, and the donor of the annually awarded Waddell trophy. He died in January 1930 at age 49 from pneumonia. His death certificate lists his occupation as "gentleman," and his obituary states that he



*Beechfield, as pictured in Standards of the Highest: from Edison to GE Canada, Peterborough, 1891-1991*

was also a lawn bowler, a boater, a member of St. Andrew's united Church, Past Master of the Corinthian Lodge, and member of the Peterborough Golf and Country Club and the Peterborough Club.

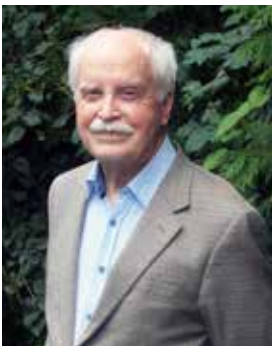
Roland and Edna Waddell had two sons, Hugh and Arthur (known by initials R.C.A., or his nickname, "Bunt.") The younger Hugh Waddell, born in 1912, grew up in the family home on Monaghan Road, but moved around the time of his marriage to 488 Hunter St. He was a successful businessman, and was secretary treasurer and general manager or the B.F. Ackerman offices and owner of the local Canadian Tire franchise—originally on Water St., then on the corner of Sherbrooke and George where it remained until 1999, the same year that he passed away. Hugh Waddell was also mayor of Peterborough from 1952-1953, as well as former chairman of Police Commission, and former chairman of the Board of Trent University.

Waddell sold the property to CGE in 1952 and by the late 1950s, the home was being used by the marketing staff of CGE's Motor and Control Department and later the Wire and Cable Section. By 1960, the City Directory lists the address of Beechwood (1093 Monaghan Road) as that of CGE parking lot.

For aerial photographs of this area and other parts the County, visit <http://madgic.trentu.ca/airphoto/>

References: General Electric Canada, (Stewart McLaren, ed.), Standards of the Highest: from Edison to GE Canada, Peterborough, 1891-1991; Craw, G. Wilson, The Peterborough Story: Our Mayors 1850-1851; Cole, Jean Murray, South Monaghan: The Garden of Eden; thanks to Andrew Elliott, Elwood Jones, Don Willcock





*Archivist's Corner*

Every day brings new discoveries and fresh insights. No two days are the same. Often our new donations are quite small, consisting of a handful of documents or photos, or often just one item. Others are quite complex collections consisting of correspondence, reports, photos, computer discs, posters and maps.

Our aim is to create a summary document, which we call a scope and contents report, for each of our fonds, which now number over 1,000. It is amazing to consider that the cumulative rescuing of documents covers all parts of Peterborough county and areas from the whole Trent Valley region and includes surprising insights.

Some of our collections require a lot of effort over several years. It must be 14 years since Alice and Don started indexing the immense county land records [Fonds 60] and the end is in sight.

We have several volunteers and a current employee tackling aspects of the Peterborough Examiner fonds. Pat is scanning and captioning photos from 1972 [series C2]. Mae is working on an index to the photos of notable people [series B2]. I think someone is indexing the photos in series B1, as well. John is tackling the Examiner sports desk records [series E1] which Pat organized a few years ago. Sue and Wendy and Gary are putting negatives into preservers and have completed 1976 and have started 1977. Maddie has shared some of the photos on Facebook, and Heather and Dianne handle queries from members and others. Mary is placing clippings into file folders so that researchers can use clippings that were kept in small envelopes. Over the years we have had some 40 volunteers working on aspects of the Peterborough Examiner. It is all very exciting and sometimes just routine. However, we value the work all of the volunteers and staff have done.

Some of the recent donations have provided guessing games for people in the reading room. We received photos that were taken during the demolition of the Lakefield Cement factory; funeral notices from 1875-1916; vintage photos of Morrow Park, Quaker Oats and a site tentatively considered to be the construction of the Ackerman building (now known as the Harness Factory); a copy Gordon Diplock's artistic map of Stoney Lake, 1949; photos of Henry Parnell and family; an ambrotype from the 1870s; a war diary kept by Frank C. Roberts while serving in France during World War I; an invitation to join a Moonlight Cruise on the Water Lily steamer in 1901.

The papers for the Quaker Park Tennis Club, which celebrated its centennial in June, thoroughly cover its activities from 1970, and measure two cubic feet. These are being processed. We have some related materials in the Montgomery fonds as Jean Montgomery was an instructor at the club. As well, TVA has photos of the courts in the 1940s in the Jenkinson fonds. These sources were used in Christopher Dummitt's recent brief history of the club, and this book can be purchased at Trent Valley Archives. It would be nice to find archival items predating 1970. Contact the archivist at [ejones55@cogeco.ca](mailto:ejones55@cogeco.ca).

Elwood Jones, *Archivist*  
[ejones55@cogeco.ca](mailto:ejones55@cogeco.ca)

**GREEN ROUTES**

*by Rosemary McConkey*

Trent Valley Archives is pleased to announce a plan to publish books to mark the beginning of our recognition of the importance of the Peter Robinson assisted emigration experiment that had a profound effect in east central Ontario, an area centred on Peterborough.

Green Routes, by Rosemary McConkey, suggests that these experiences were Irish, largely agricultural, and extensive. The first route was from areas of southern Ireland to Cork, and then the crossing of the ocean to Montreal, and then west mostly by water, to Peterborough. Then the immigrants were dispersed to hundred acre lots in several townships. The settlers prospered in this new world and their descendants followed new routes that took them short distances and long distances, as far afield as the United States, and new opportunities.

It is now 200 years since the first settlers reached the Ottawa valley and nearly 200 years until the larger group reached the Peterborough area. This book is a call to recognize the importance of these settlers and their descendants, but it is also a reminder that these experiences should be honoured in historical research and in special events to mark the bicentenary.

Rosemary and Peter McConkey have spent years getting immersed in the sources and the stories tied to the Peterborough emigration. Rosemary shares some of her favourite stories, some centred in the 1820s, but others that take us across time.

Copies of Green Routes can be ordered through Trent Valley Archives at a cost of \$30.00

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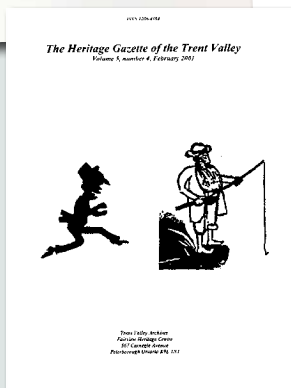
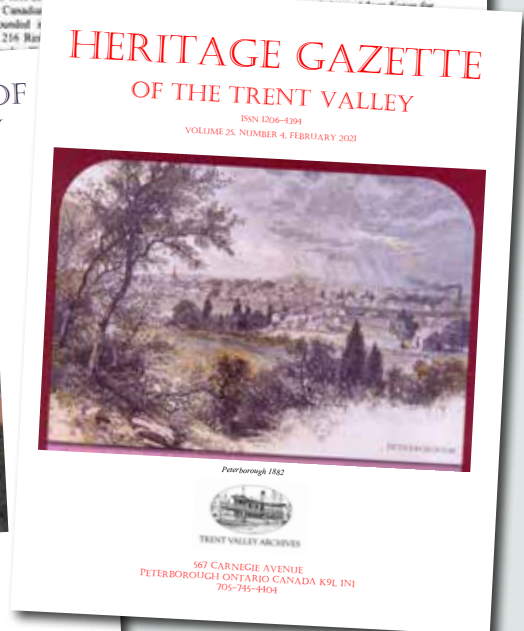
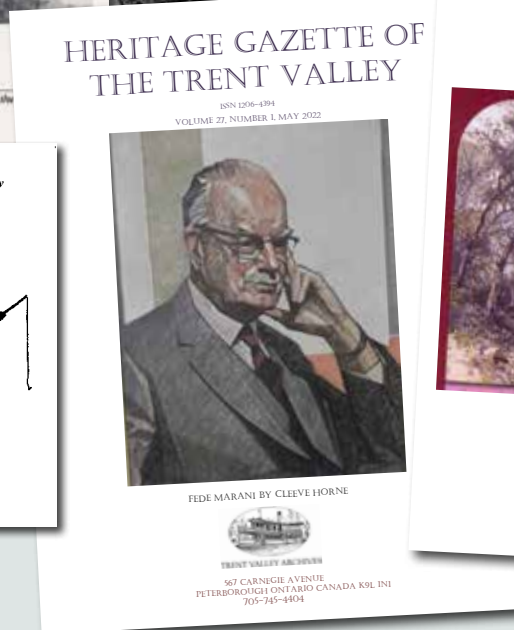
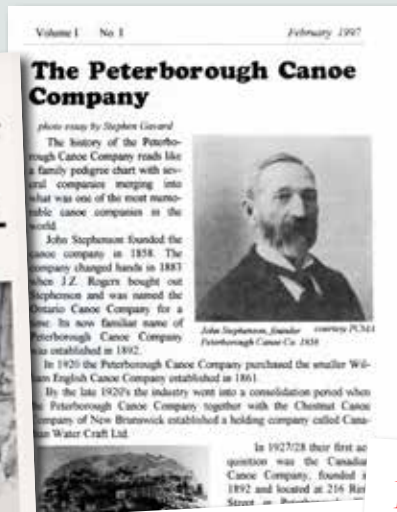
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# A look back at the HERITAGE GAZETTE

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OUR FIRST  
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567 Carnegie Avenue  
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