

# HERITAGE GAZETTE

OF  
THE

TRENT



VALLEY



NINE SHIPS PREPARES FOR BICENTENNIAL *(See page 9)*



seasonal Ghost Walks, this was TVA's first venture into stage production. We're proud of it.

Congratulations, and our sincere thanks to playwright Ed Schroeter, producers Mary and Greg Conchelos, Director Gerry McBride and all the volunteer actors and others who brought the story to life. Ed is already at work writing about their trans-Atlantic sea voyage! Let's meet again in the Market Hall next May to see what happens next!

The play, and this issue of the *Heritage Gazette*, mark the 200th anniversary, next August, of the arrival of the Peter Robinson settlers. Events are planned in Peterborough and vicinity and in Mitchelstown, Cork. In these pages are stories about *Tide of Hope* and celebrations organized by the local Nine Ships committee and Ballyhoura Development in County Cork. Archivist Elwood Jones provides the background — what was it like in Ireland when the Nagle and Ryan families left for the unknown in Canada. He turns to his favourite book of Irish history for a picture of that time and place. We'll be keeping an eye on the bicentennial plans leading up to the big event next year here in the HG.

We've also a new ongoing feature — People Ask Us, which we hope will interest and entertain.

While we plan our next *Heritage Gazette* for December, we wish you a sunny, relaxing summer here in the Kawarthas, or wherever you are enjoying it.

Steve Guthrie,  
*Trent Valley Archives, President*

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*Thanks everyone.*



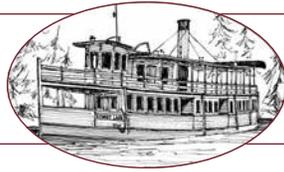
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### ON THE COVER:

Lucas Pronk (left) as the 19th-century Upper Canada politician Peter Robinson with Nathan Govier as wealthy English landowner Lord Kingston in a scene from Tide of Hope. Lord Kingston tries to impress Robinson by explaining his woes in feeding so many poor Irish families while rounding up Irish rebels, and finally attempts to convince Robinson to take them all off his hands by settling them in Upper Canada. (Photo by Suzanne Schroeter.)



### UPCOMING EVENTS

*This is our busy season for events at TVA — and we're selling a lot of tickets — fast! If you want tickets, order them ASAP so you won't be disappointed.*

#### Peterborough Perpetrators True Crimes Tour

August 23 7:00 pm

#### Ladies of Little Lake Women's History Tour

August 25 2:00 pm

#### Jackson Park Tour More than a walk in the park!

September 8 2:00 pm

#### Open House

Featuring new collection of historic Trent Severn Waterway maps/charts — Elwood Jones  
Ontario Trillium Fund Grant Recognition — MPP Dave Smith  
September 28 10:00 am

#### Downtown Ghost Walks

Costumed guides and spooky tales  
October 17, 18, 23, 24, 25 7:00 pm

#### Military History Little Lake Cemetery

November 3 3:00 pm

*Walks are \$20. Reservations are required for all tours. Private tours are available for groups of 15 or more. Advance notice required. Call 705-745-4404.*

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# Great Reviews for 'TIDE of HOPE'

BY KAREN HICKS

*Tide of Hope*, the story of the Irish who would make their way to this area two hundred years ago as Peter Robinson settlers, was "a smashing success," Ruth Kuchinad, chair of TVA's Events

Committee reports. It was a new venture for TVA and it quickly proved to be a promising one as strong advance ticket sales led to the addition of a second evening showing in May at Market Hall.

This was the first play produced by TVA, although it is no strangers to local drama! The Little Lake Cemetery Pageant has long been an annual attraction and walks and tours, particularly the fall Ghost



Walks, have entertained hundreds over the years. *Tide of Hope*, written by local playwright Edward Schroeter and directed by Gerry McBride, was presented this year in advance of next year's bicentennial of the arrival of the settlers which will be a community-wide celebration, also being commemorated in County Cork.

Two sold-out performances (more than 500 tickets sold) were held at the Market Hall;

three groups of students enjoyed special daytime presentations, donors, sponsors and advertisers were found, senior residents of Royal Gardens were treated to a preview dress rehearsal in their atrium, funds were raised for TVA and we all learned more about the history of these early settlers.

Rooted in history, *Tide of Hope* is the fictional story of Patrick Nagle and David Ryan, two of more than 2,000

one of the Peter Robinson settlers, but he has a dramatic story all his own and a connection to *Tide of Hope*. John Heffernan was a gardener on the estate of Lord George Kingston, played by Nathan Govier. Heffernan married Lord Kingston's daughter, Lady Elizabeth Kingston and the couple emigrated to Upper Canada in 1825 to escape the scandal!

The play came about because a group of local people, experienced in producing

history plays for student audiences, approached TVA last year with the play as a TVA fund raiser. A plan for two or three annual plays to commemorate the Peter Robinson settlers was discussed and *Tide of Hope* is the first offering. Producers Mary and Greg Conchelos had worked with Ed in their company Heritage Pavilion Stage from 2005 to 2011. In addition to Ed Schroeter's plays, Heritage Pavilion also produced plays by Ryan Kerr and Beau Dixon and Phil Oakley. *Tide of Hope* was produced in an earlier form in 2003 and 2004

by Heritage Pavilion and Arbor Theatre.

Given their experience, TVA was thrilled to accept the offer and Trent Valley Archives Theatre (TVAT) was born. *Tide of Hope* tells the story of the life of the settlers in Ireland up to their boarding ships at Cobh Harbour in 1825. The next instalment of the story, now being penned and already booked for the Market Hall May 26 to June 1, 2025, will tell of the crossing, the playwright says.

Meet the cast and crew and read some of the reviews on the Trent Valley Archives website. Two articles *From Archive to Page to Sage: Writing Historical Fiction* and *Tide of Hope: Irish Settlers Leave the Homeland* can be found in the March 2024 issue of the *Heritage Gazette* online.



*Left: David (Drew Mills) and Mary (Lauren Murphy) discuss emigrating to Canada with Peter Robinson (Lucas Pronk), following a chance encounter at the home of Lord Kingston. David has no choice, having earned the wrath of the Whiteboys by taking the job of rent collector for Lord Kingston. (Photo by Suzanne Schroeter)*

*Above: Carker Lodge in the townland of Carkerbeg, Doneraile. On March 11, 1823, John Hickey and some other Whiteboys set fire to the house and fired on its occupants. He was wounded, captured and executed on April 17 at Carkerbeg. Hickey's widow, Johanna, and her children came to Canada with the Robinson Settlers aboard the Star in 1825. The house was rebuilt after the fire and renamed Lissa c. 1840. (Photo and text from Mary Smith.)*

Irish brought to Upper Canada through the sponsored emigration scheme of Robert John Wilmot-Horton, under-secretary of state for the colonies, who hired Peter Robinson of Upper Canada as superintendent of emigration. Peter Robinson's job was to recruit dispossessed tenant farmers, the poor, in County Cork for emigration which included transportation, land and settlement assistance. It is a play within a play about the Ryan and Nagle families set in Mitchelstown, Cork in the spring of 1825.

The history of it is particularly meaningful for actor Elaine Day, who plays The Descendant and who is, in reality, a descendant of Peter Robinson settler John Heffernan. Not only is Elaine Day's ancestor — John Heffernan —



# IRELAND ON THE EVE *of the 1825* ROBINSON EMIGRATION

BY ELWOOD JONES, ARCHIVIST

*Editor's Note: Asked to introduce HG readers to the Peter Robinson story, Archivist Elwood Jones chose to start at the beginning, in Ireland, with his favourite book on Irish history — Old World Colony. Ed Schroeder's play, Tide of Hope, shows how conditions in 1820s Ireland described here affected families of Mitchelstown, County Cork, Munster Province.*

David Dickson studied the historical records of southern Ireland over 200 years from 1630-1830 in a book he called *Old World Colony*. The title suggests that the methods used for settling colonies in the New World, such as Virginia, were developed in Ireland. This is my favourite book on Irish history.

There is an advantage in seeing history in long sweeps of time. It is possible to discern what was important from what is interesting. Over the long term, we can observe changes in institutions, follow the impact of major disruptions. English settlers, assisted by English legislation, decrees, institutions and leadership, were dominant in Ireland, just as they were in Virginia before 1776.

For our area, this long view of southern Irish history, has added importance. In the 1820s, Irish emigrants came to Peterborough and area, a quarter century before the more famous Irish emigrations tied to the Irish famine. Dickson chose to have his long-term history separate from the Famine years of 1847-1849 to allow

a clearer insight into what happened in the 1820s where in his view the most important changes occurred.

For the most part, Dickson's story is about the people who stayed in Ireland. In trying to assess how eager the emigrants were, it is worthwhile to see that emigration was part of the history of this part of Ireland. In the 17th century, the coastal part of Munster had a thriving fishing industry tied around sardines; later, many sailed from this area as part of the fishing in the Grand Banks of Newfoundland. The agricultural goods produced in those areas close to the Blackwater and other rivers, or within close reach of the coast were exported to Dublin, England and western Europe. In many years Irish left for harvest seasons in Spain.



The main point is that those who emigrated from southern Ireland with the Robinson settlers of 1823 and 1825 were part of the wider world and not from a backward backwater. The pressure to emigrate might have been widespread, but the likelihood of emigration depended on family strategies. Those most likely to emigrate had to afford the costs of uprooting, sailing, traveling in the New World, and settling on land that would not produce in its first year.

The main characteristics that we usually associate with emigration were developed before the end of the 18th century. The hierarchy of rural architecture was well-established; the landowners were at the top, the tenants had clear leases, and the sub-tenants, gneevers and labourers were landless. Success seemed tied to security of land arrangements, and a main measure of success was whether people's income rose faster than the cost of living, or how they could weather crop failures.

There were many changes in the half century after the 1770s.

As late as 1790, south Munster and Cork were considered grazing country. Dairy farming and butter production was important on the mid-Cork highland. In 1810, the plough had returned to the low-land and the Rev. Horatio Townsend observed that in north Cork graziers and dairymen were yielding to smaller producers who were combining sheep with tillage farming. Wheat cultivation increased aided by the increased waterpower of the Blackwater and other rivers. One result was five large flour mills in northeast Cork; by the 1820s Fermoy was Munster's largest inland market for wheat and oats. With the rising cereal prices, there was a big increase in spring-sown oats. There was an export trade from Yougal and Dungarvan to Britain from the 1790s to the 1830s.

The best cultivated parts of Cork contained wheat and barley, and just west of Cork tillage and dairying were considered complementary; in 1798, on average, each farm in this area had 5.2 cows, 4.2 acres of potatoes, and 11.9 acres under wheat and oats. Along the southern coast, long dominated by barley and potatoes, wheat emerged as a cash crop, accessible to the new grist mills. In the Bandon valley there was continual growth in tillage, partly assisted by inland migration from the southern coast willing to move on marginal lands.

As tithes were tied to produce, Dickson was able to analyze changes across the region; tithe revenue nearly tripled between 1788 and 1826. This growth reflected rising prices, increased acreage under crops, the expansion of cereal production, and the extension of potato cultivation.

Corn production was ubiquitous across southern Ireland. Local farming societies spread information about new trends and supported plowing matches by 1813. Despite what authors said in pamphlets and books, Irish crop yields compared favourably with elsewhere.

There was no massive change in productivity between the 1770s and 1840s. This was possible in an era of increased productivity and growing population because of improvements in husbandry, ability to move on to inferior lands, and the increased labour force.

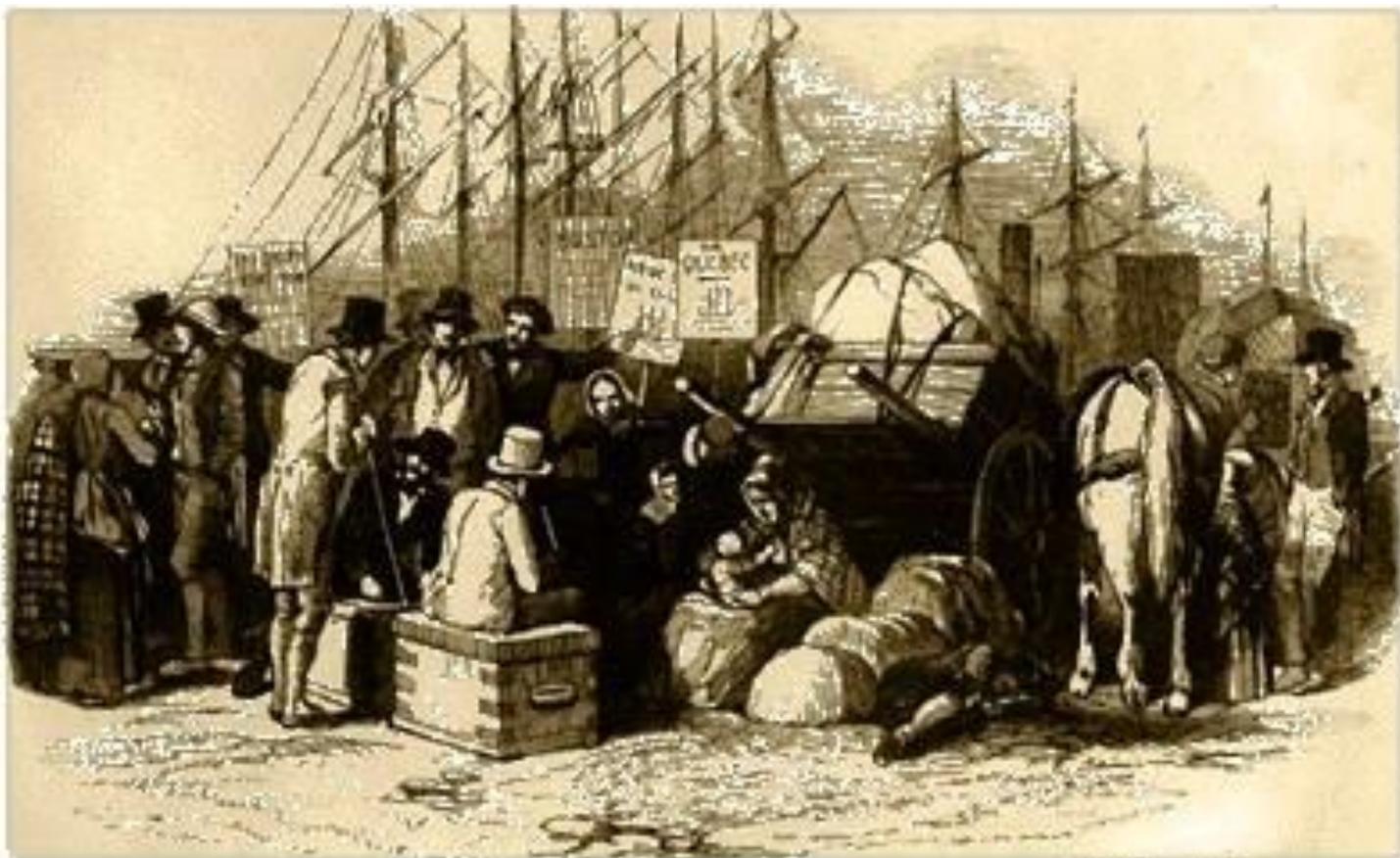
There were also changes in seeds. For example, the five favoured varieties of potatoes in the 1730s had largely disappeared by the 1780s and completely by the 1810s. This surprised Dickson, since farmers usually used the smaller potatoes from the previous crop for seed in the new crop. This happened too with wheat, barley and oats, but this may have been a

consequence of the periodic importation of grain in years of local crop failure. Fertilizers and better roads also contributed to agricultural improvement.

By 1815 the lighter Scottish swing plough replaced the wooden plough especially around Cork and points east. Dickson doubts that this happened as widely as enthusiasts suggested as there were large initial costs for farmers, and the need for blacksmiths and ploughmen to learn new skills. Even in areas such as Kerry and west Cork where the mule and spade ruled, innovations in tools were valued.

By the 1770s, the potato was becoming the main food for eleven months of the year, as oatmeal and barley became less important for summer food. Dickson says that there were several reasons for this. The economic position of the rural labourer was eroded by sluggish wages, higher rents for gardens, and smaller acreage for his family. With too little room for corn cultivation, cabbage and kale were cultivated for the May to August food supplements. Second, there were improved varieties of potatoes that were hardy, edible and easily stored. Third, during the time of war between England and France that lasted until 1815, high prices for oats driven by export demand meant that small producers were more likely to export than consume grain locally. Even so, even the lower reaches of southern Irish society could supplement their diets with items such as fish, cabbage and salted meat; in the 1820s, these were beyond the reach of labourers, rural or urban.

The population of Cork and Munster may have been about 350,000 around 1750; by 1830, 1.1 million. By various means, Dickson concludes that the population was doubling every 44 years. In colonial situations, population growth is tied to immigration. However, in this area immigration was modest. There were



*The Peter Robinson colonists departed from Cobh Harbour, Ireland, in 1825. This illustration from The Pictorial Times, 1846, is similar to that scene, but hails from the time of the Great Famine and depicts Irish emigrants about to depart on a ship called the Mersey.*  
<https://viewsofthefamine.files.wordpress.com/2013/09/mersey.jpg>

regional migrations, particularly to Cork which drew from a wider area as time passed. There was some migration to England, and in the western areas there were fishermen. In 1775, four ships sailed from Munster for the United States middle colonies, but such sailings were rare. Smallpox was less virulent, and inoculation was common after 1740. Grain imports were regular and rice and Indian meal were imported after 1801. By pre-industrial standards food supply was good even in the face of rapid population growth across the 18th century.

The English colonial strategy of the seventeenth century was aimed at “military pacification; cultural assimilation and economic development.” (497) The first was accomplished painfully, and the second ambiguously, and the third definitely. With the addition of the potato, the agrarian economy was dynamic. Socially, the class

structure was complex and income was distributed inequitably. However, by the 1820s the future of the bottom of society was bleak. Because of the cumulative effects of the previous half century rural labourers and even those with a little land lacked flexibility.

Dickson rightly notes that the 1820s, not the 1840s, was the economic and cultural divide of southern Ireland. Comparatively, there was a larger loss of population in Munster than in either 1740s or 1840s. The emigrations of the 1820s slowed the population growth of the 1830s. The political nationalism that emerged was a consequence of the compressing of two previous centuries of experience.

The backdrop of the Robinson emigrations of 1823 and 1825 to Upper Canada was a small part of the 1820s loss of population. In the long view, the factors that brought

hardships in the 1820s were entrenched. The high inflation following the wars with France, the underemployment partly related to family growth, the technical improvements, the high cost of land, were all factors that caused distress. However, wanting to leave was not enough to encourage people to leave. Having free passage and guaranteed support in the new world could do that.

*Elwood H. Jones, archivist Trent Valley Archives, can be reached at [elwood@trentvalleyarchives.com](mailto:elwood@trentvalleyarchives.com). Visitors are welcome at Trent Valley Archives, 567 Carnegie Avenue, and to its events. See the webpage [www.trentvalleyarchives.com](http://www.trentvalleyarchives.com). He is also on the board of Nine Ships 1825 Inc.*

David Dickson, *Old World Colony: Cork and South Munster 1630-1830*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 2005.

# NINE SHIPS 1825 PREPARES *for the* BICENTENNIAL

BY MARY SMITH — On Behalf of the Board of Nine Ships 1825 Inc.

*Editor's Note: Over the next year we will be looking to the Nine Ships 1825 Project for a calendar of all the special activities marking the Peter Robinson Settlement anniversary in this community.*

The development of our project has been deeply rooted in community engagement and collaboration from its inception. There is a proud history of marking this important historic event in our community. The Peterborough Canadian Irish Club, which will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2025, each year hosts a day long Irish entertainment event. The annual St. Patrick's Day Parade, engaging a diverse range of community groups and businesses has proudly been in existence in Peterborough for 21 years.

In 1975, a dedicated group of volunteers from the City and County of Peterborough organized a very successful HOMECOMING '75. This event commemorated the 150th anniversary of the Peter Robinson Irish Emigration.

In 2015, a dedicated group of individuals, including members of the Peterborough Canadian Irish Club (PCIC) and local historians, with the support of the County of Peterborough, convened to plan a commemoration of the upcoming 200th anniversary of the emigration in 2025.

The journey towards this commemoration began with the organization of the Peter Robinson Festival in 2015, the 190th anniversary of this emigration. At that time there was active participation from various local heritage organizations and featured educational displays and Irish

entertainment at Morrow Park. This event laid the foundation for ongoing community involvement and collaboration over the ensuing year.

At that time local author Patrick Leahy published a series of articles in the local newspaper, the *Peterborough Examiner*, detailing the various aspects of the Peter Robinson 1825 Irish Emigration.

Throughout this period, extensive efforts were made to engage with diverse stakeholders and cultivate connections both locally and internationally. Calls with key figures such as Amanda Slattery from Ballyhoura Economic Development in County Cork, Field Archeologist John Tierney leading the Historic Graveyards Project, and Nathan Mannion from the EPIC Museum in Dublin facilitated invaluable exchanges of knowledge and ideas.

Moreover, community forums, such as the one held at the Peterborough Economic Development Corporation office in April 2019, provided platforms for sharing plans and soliciting input from approximately 35 attendees. Ideas ranging from organizing resource listings for visitors to hosting galas with local and international dignitaries were actively discussed

during these and subsequent meetings.

While the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted our face-to-face engagements, communication channels were revitalized in late 2022, allowing for the resumption of planning efforts. The renewed collaboration between the County and City of Peterborough, the PCIC, and other stakeholders underscores our unwavering commitment to community involvement and ensures that the commemoration in 2025 reflects the collective vision and aspirations of our diverse community.

Currently, our project benefits from the partnership of more than a dozen community organizations, with representation from across the Peterborough region and they have provided letters of support.

## *The Nine Ships 1825 Bicentennial Project*

The Nine Ships 1825 Bicentennial project will include a calendar of local events and festive occasions showcasing local music, writing, arts, and theatre events and highlighting the universal experience of immigration, Irish heritage, and the two hundred years of settler and Indigenous (Mississauga) interaction.

Readers can follow the work of Nine Ships here <https://nineships1825.com>.



*Amanda Slattery, left, from Ballyhoura Development and historian Christy Roche met with Mary Smith of the Peterborough Nine Ships committee, in Doneraile, Ireland recently to discuss plans marking the bicentennial of the Peter Robinson settlers arrival in our area (Photo from Ballyhoura Development).*



*Aerial view of Saint George's Mitchelstown, Galty Mountains to the rear. This church, now an arts and heritage centre, had significance for the settlers from Mitchelstown (Brigown parish). Many of the settlers were baptised here, number of records still here. A commemorative concert will be held here (Photo from Ballyhoura Development).*

# IRELAND WELCOMES

BY AMANDA SLATTERY — DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

*Editor's Note: Ballyhoura Development has been working in partnership with Nine Ships to commemorate the emigration of the Peter Robinson Irish settlers to Ontario. Recently, Mary Smith met in Ireland to discuss plans for the bicentennial with Amanda Slattery.*

Ballyhoura Development undertook an initiative of engaging local community groups in exploring genealogy, local history and heritage in 2010. Through a programme called “My people, my place, my heritage” it uncovered or rediscovered

the story of the Peter Robinson Assisted Emigration Scheme; 17 communities within this area were origin points of the settlers from 1823 and 1825.

Local volunteers began diaspora

engagement work which included researching heritage graveyard transcriptions and recordings with Eachtra Archaeological Services, a genealogy research project on settlers, funded through the Department of Foreign Affairs with genealogist Dr. Paul McCotter. Efforts have been made to locate descendants in Ireland. More recently they have been facilitating descendants who have reached



# SETTLERS HOME

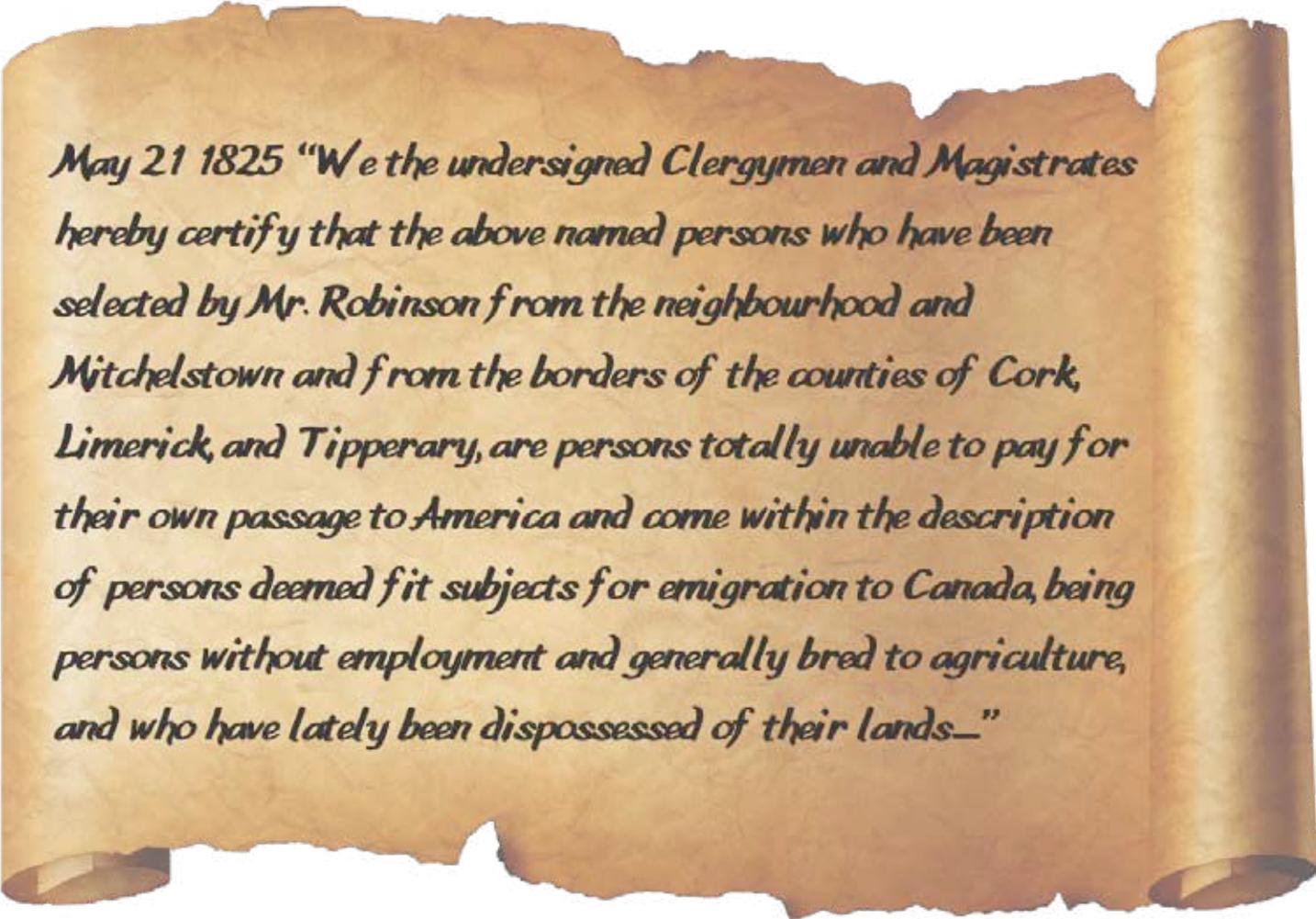
out over the years to come together online and hold zoom meetings with Development Manager Amanda Slattery, formerly Tourism and Heritage Office for Ballyhoura Development.

The Ballyhoura region takes its name from the Ballyhoura Mountains which cross from County Limerick into North East Cork. Collectively the communities and

Ballyhoura Development have planned a week-long event, September 15-21, 2025, The Ireland Canada Homecoming 2025, to mark the 200th anniversary of the emigration of settler families from Cobh, County Cork, in 1825 to what is now Peterborough in Canada.

In devising the programme we aim to try and develop itineraries and day tours within that

week that have meaning to those that attend and connect to the origin communities of the settler families. The communities here are very engaged and excited by the prospect of organising meet and greets and eagerly look forward to seeing descendants return. We have engaged with accommodation providers here also, so further to responses from the communication the official programme will be refined.



*May 21 1825 "We the undersigned Clergymen and Magistrates hereby certify that the above named persons who have been selected by Mr. Robinson from the neighbourhood and Mitchelstown and from the borders of the counties of Cork, Limerick, and Tipperary, are persons totally unable to pay for their own passage to America and come within the description of persons deemed fit subjects for emigration to Canada, being persons without employment and generally bred to agriculture, and who have lately been dispossessed of their lands—"*

The event will include day trip itineraries to the settler origin communities with meet and greets with local communities. These itineraries will also showcase the sites of Doneraile Court, Annesgrove Gardens and heritage towns of Mitchelstown and Charleville. Dual itineraries will be organised for descendants with links outside of the Ballyhoura region to afford descendants opportunities to see the villages and towns their families hailed from. The newly-commissioned *1825: The Robinson Experiment* is a theatrical production from Callback Theatre which will be premiered during the week-long event and there will be evening entertainment of music, song and dance and rambling houses. A commemoration concert in Saint Georges Arts & Heritage Centre and a memorial planting and ceremony will round off the week of activities.

Ballyhoura Development collaborates with Local Development Partnerships,

Ireland Reaching Out, Failte Ireland and local authorities within the region to highlight the strong linkages of the area to Canada and the strong ties established through this shared story.

Ballyhoura Development is a community-led local development company, and a registered charity, which works with communities, families, individuals and businesses in the Ballyhoura region of East Limerick and North Cork. Our mission is to work in partnership to develop empowered and inclusive communities that inspire and embrace new opportunities, drive positive sustainable social, environmental and economic change, and reduce inequalities, thereby making the Ballyhoura area an attractive location in which to live, do business, and visit.

The company has successfully managed, coordinated and implemented a wide range of national and European projects and programmes since its establishment

in 1989, and currently delivers over 30 programmes, focussing on three key aims of: community development, economic development and environment development. Partnership and participation are the guiding principles of Ballyhoura Development's work and activities, and a bottom-up approach is central to all of the organisation's programme delivery.

### *Relevant Links:*

Descendants of the Peter Robinson Settlers (Facebook Page)

<https://visitballyhoura.com/pages/peter-robinson-settlers-story>

Historic Graves <https://historicgraves.com/project/graveyards-ballyhoura-peter-robinson-assisted-emigration-project>

Event Form and Registration <https://www.ballyhouradevelopment.com/peter-robinson-settlers-homecoming-2025>

# 'OLD VICTORIA County'

BY ELWOOD H. JONES

Ian McKechnie and Tom Mohr, eds., *Reflections on Old Victoria County: in tribute to R. B. Fleming*, Lindsay, 2024, pp. 193, illustrated, \$40. Available at Trent Valley Archives.

The late Rae Fleming (1943-2022) believed that it was important to retain the history of the former county of Victoria, known since 1999 as the Kawartha Lakes. He knew that history could be erased by the renaming of roads and places by names unconnected to former times. He set out to collect stories which he planned to publish as a trilogy. This volume completes that trilogy.

Tom Mohr and Ian McKechnie have honoured the spirit of Rae's hope. This volume contains stories from nearly twenty people with associations with the former county and with strong interests in history. The result is an imaginative collection of stories that reflect the diversity of the people and activities of Old Victoria County.

The editors have organized the book around five themes. The indigenous peoples are recognized by some archaeological evidence and a stirring presentation of the Roy Studio portraits of Anishnabwe personalities. The second part captures biographies of two nineteenth century Blacks in Lindsay, one a barber and the other a teacher. A familiar figure, Captain George Crandall, is presented with new details. The section concludes with stories about a talented lady who raised dogs and a story of a Swedish furniture factory in Fenelon Falls.

The third section looks at buildings, boats and landmarks. Many of the memories are experiential. Two of the stories feature workers along the canals and railways. The story of memories tied to the former Bolsover School which is now a community

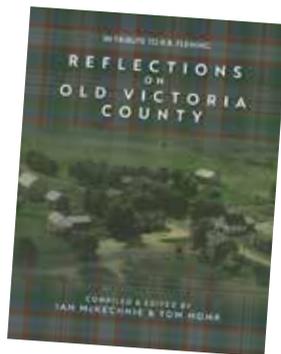
centre was evocative and captured a part of the old history that was widely shared in the schools of our youth. A story on wartime housing could have been anywhere. This story about the county's last steamboat. The story of the grain elevator in Pontypool had special significance as a reminder of when grain and railways were important to the surrounding community.

The fourth section was on the arts. I never associated E. J. Pratt, the noted poet, with Bobcaygeon but a fascinating story of interconnections is well told by Sara Walker-Howe. The artist, Thoreau MacDonald, had a surprising connection with Coboconk; great samples of his art are in the Agnes Etherington museum at Queen's University and that fixed my memory of his association with Kingston and sailing.

The final theme is Rae Fleming whose life is summarized from the perspectives of Ian McKechnie and myself that bookend the stories. Rae Fleming was a close friend and his ties to Trent Valley Archives include the archival fonds of Archie Tolmie and Rae Fleming. He was a former board member at TVA and he was impressed with our fonds on the Women's Institutes of Victoria County.

The cover design deserves mention. Argyle, Rae's long time home, is featured in a clever plaid suggestive of old Victoria County's rich agricultural setting.

This is an impressive book filled with imagination and fresh insights and unusual stories that help define history as a community activity. Rae would have seen this as vindication of his own interest.



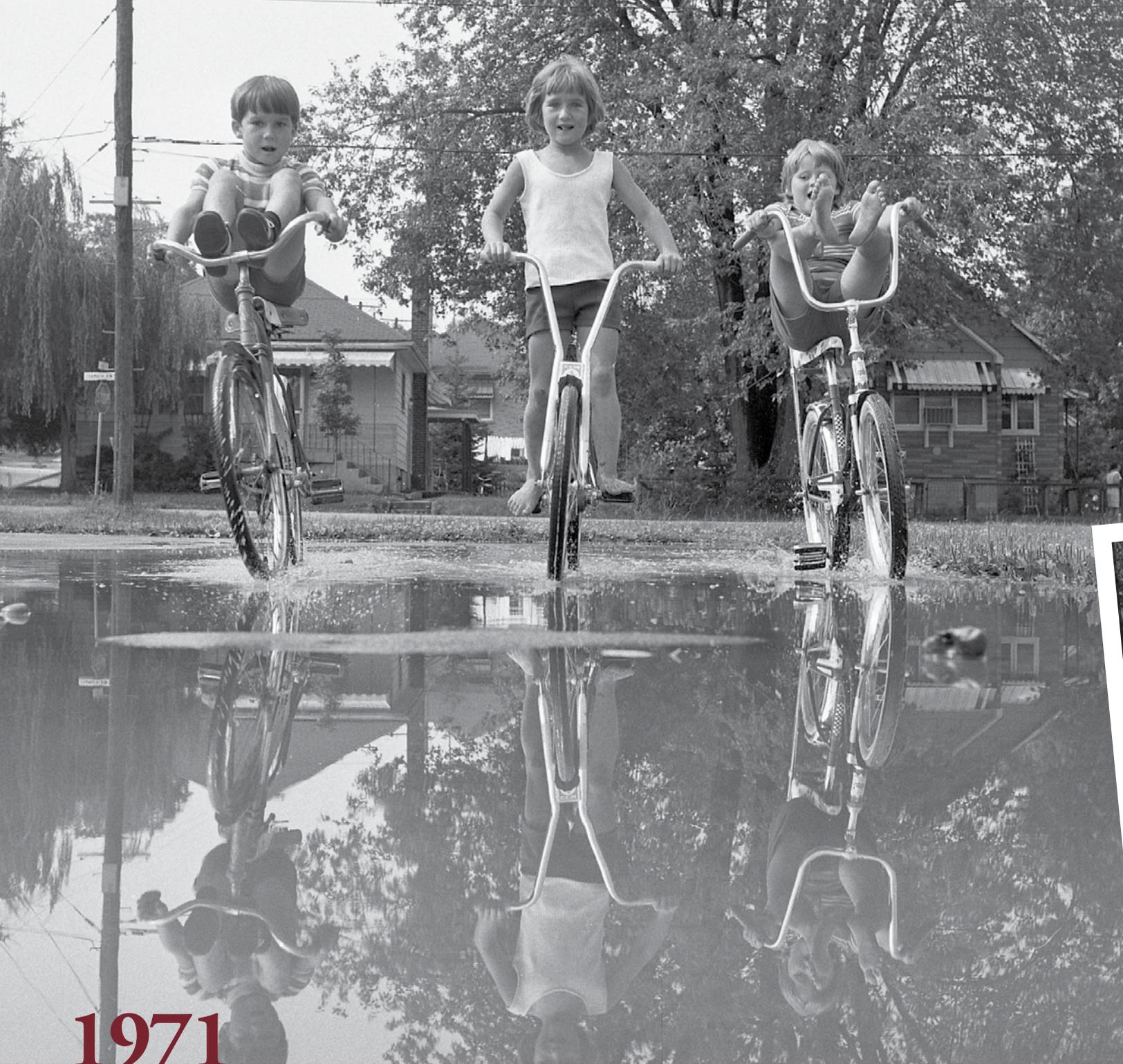
## TVA SEEKS ARCHIVAL ASSISTANT

TVA has obtained funding to engage an independent contractor as Archival Assistant to our archivist, Elwood Jones. The position had been posted, but hiring had not been concluded at the *HG* publishing deadline.

The successful candidate will provide archival assistance for up to 12 hours weekly, at an hourly rate of \$20/hour to a minimum of 200 hours. We were looking for a college or university graduate in programs related to history, public history, archives or library science, with experience working with archives or with web applications. General knowledge of archival concepts and standards, including Rules for Archival Description, and willingness to continue professional development and interest in local history are also required qualifications.

The successful candidate may, among other tasks, process, arrange and describe archival documents such as photographs, films, maps, newspapers and manuscript material, some of which may be digital, audio-visual or microfilm and create finding aids using Excel and Word software. They would also write or present reports related to archival experiences to be posted on the web page or submitted to the *Heritage Gazette of the Trent Valley*, assist researchers and answer queries. They would be supervised by Dr. Jones who would also mentor elements of archival practice, explain methods and monitor projects.

Funds for this new role have been provided in memory of the late John Merriam, a dedicated TVA archives volunteer.



1971

# EXAMINER

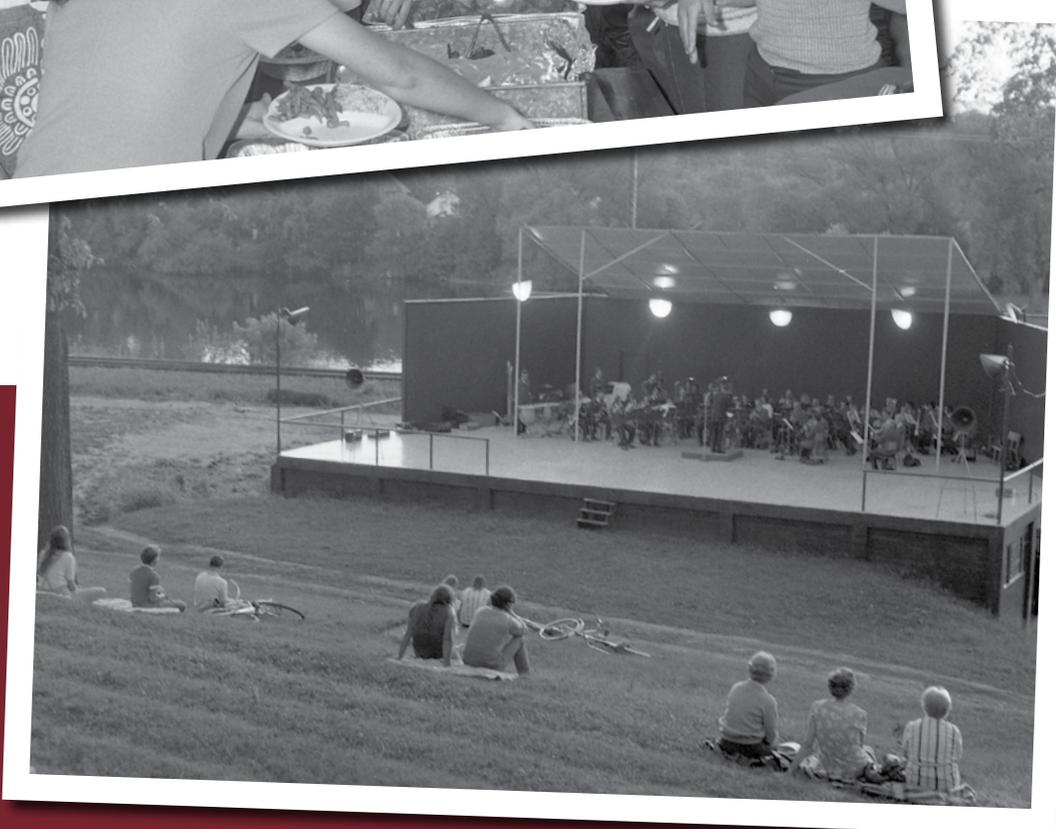
## *Summer Photo Feature*

July 27, 1971: Puddle-Promenading Pedal-Pushers (p.9): Although summer rain is a bit of a setback when school is out it does have its advantages after the rain stops and the puddles remain. Riding over their own reflections are Paul Ridley, 9, Terri-Lyn Ridley, 6 of Brown St., and Liseann Beaulne, 7, of Brown St.

July 14, 1971: B.C. Students' View of Our City: 'Beautiful Homes But No Mountains' (p.17): Students from British Columbia, in Peterborough for an exchange visit, had a full day Tuesday despite the vagaries of the weather. After meeting Mayor Douglas Galvin at a city hall reception, they took a bus tour of the city. This gave them an appetite for an outdoor supper at the Fairmont Street home of John Christie, a teacher at Crestwood Secondary School, who organized the visit here.



June 6, 1971: Phew! What A Scorcher (p. 3) (2 ¼): Katie Smith in a bikini, on the Examiner roof, near the revolving thermometer.



July 30, 1971: Outdoor Concert (p.9): A soft seat and a beautiful view make listening to the Peterborough Civic Concert Band that much more pleasant. The band is holding a series of concerts at Nicolls Oval where the audience can lie on the grass and be serenaded beside the Otonabee River.

August 25, 1971: Ford Shows Off '72 Models To The Press, Jan Mennell on a 1972 Mustang.

July 21, 1971: Greg Sanck (Snack?) of Kawartha Drive shows what an 11-year-old boy looks like after finger-painting. Greg was participating in Friday's art workshop, part of the arts and Water Festival held at Point Charles on Little Lake.



August 12, 1971: It's a long way up when you're very small, (p.8) but the view is great from the top of the little Ferris wheel. Greg Miller, 6, left, and Marcus Bell, 8, both from Marmora, look after three-year-old Lisa Miller and they all hold on tight. (Taken at the Peterborough Exhibition).



July 18, 1971: Hire-A-Student Needs Customers (p.6): Jeannette Sleeman hangs laundry and Anne Thompson paints a fence.

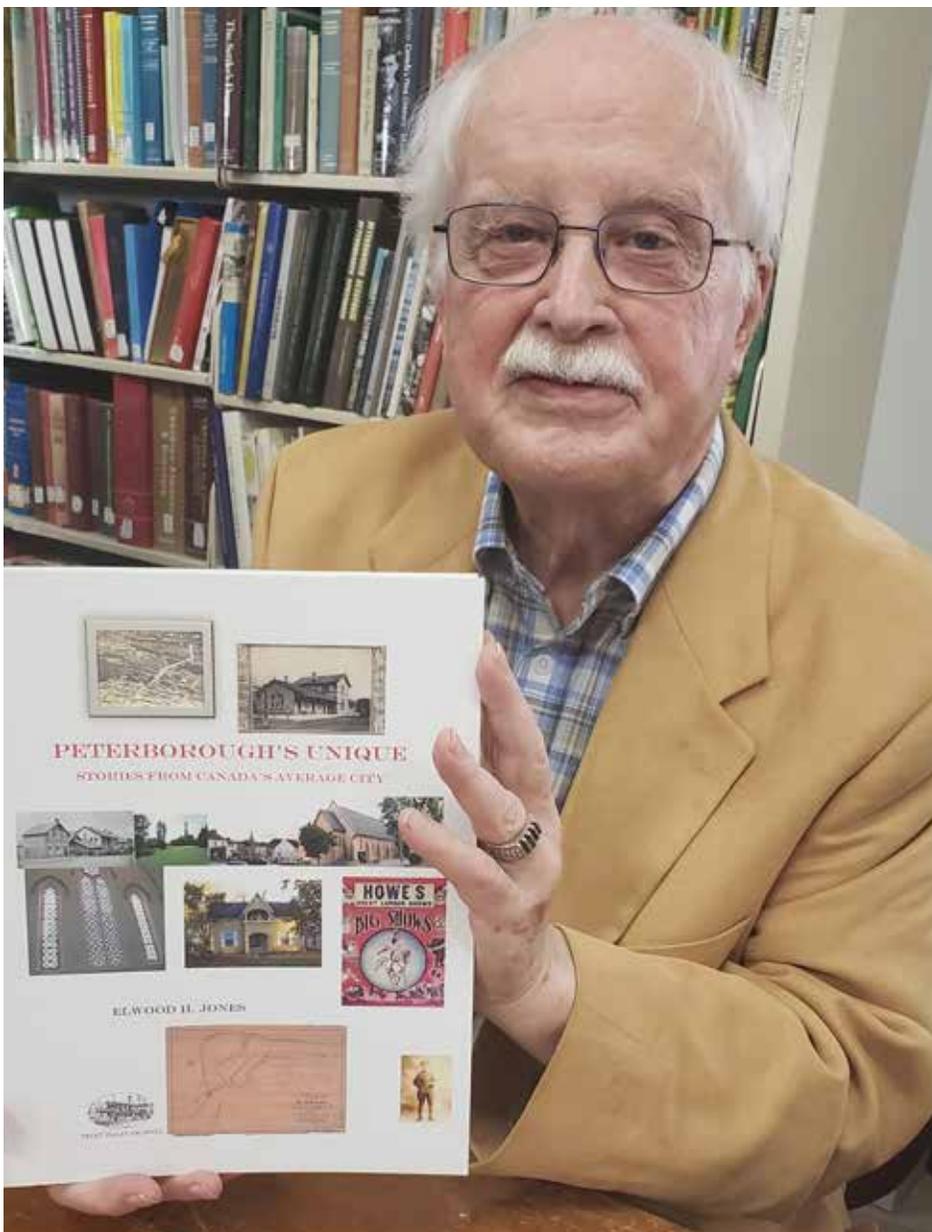


▲ August 6, 1971: Just When You Get Some Confidence ... S-P-L-A-S-H (p.9): Dave Abramsky (left) of Gordon Ave. started his run well enough, but he turned his head towards instructor Harold Townsend to ask what he should do next when he lost his balance and got somewhat wet. Water skiing instruction was given by the city recreation department during a two-day learn to water ski clinic. The instruction was held on Little Lake Thursday and today. Water skiers learned the proper handling of skis, signals between skier and boat driver, correct types of ski equipment and boating and skiing safety.

◀ July 8, 1971: Lack Of Sailboating His Big Concern (p.20): Richard Soper (left) pushes off from Curve Lake. Photo by Bruce Christenson.

BY KAREN HICKS

# ‘PETERBOROUGH’S UNIQUE’ *More Columns from Elwood Jones*



Fans of Elwood Jones, Archivist at Trent Valley Archives, and there are many, will be pleased that his recent compilation of columns, *Peterborough's Unique*, has just been published. It contains fifty columns, some of which have appeared in the *Peterborough Examiner*, and it is a sequel to his 2009 *An Historian's Notebook*.

Readers interested in the Peter Robinson settlers will want to read the first column of *Peterborough's Unique* about Peterborough's original group to arrive in 1818, the Cumberland Settlers. Also known as the Milburn Colony Settlers, they are commemorated with the Smithtown Monument atop the hill at the corner of Stewart Street and Parkhill Road. Family names of these 100 settlers who were assigned lots on what is now Chemong Road include Dixon, Lee, Smith, Milburn, Walton, Stephenson and Wilson.

There is more about Peterborough history later in the book — *Walking from Holiday Inn to Canadian Canoe Museum*, inspired by a 1976 city plan for a tour Elwood designed which he appears to be contemplating updating. We're always looking for new walking tours at TVA, so watch for this one. Much has changed downtown since the 1970s, not least of which is the most recently opened Canadian Canoe Museum!

In between, there is the story of a foundry and machine shop on Reid Street, between Murray and McDonnel, a major manufacturer of specialized parts for

sawmills and other specialized operations during Peterborough's industrial heyday of the 1850s. Other chapters contain stories of sport, which is a "central theme" of the book, and commerce, work and jobs, military activities, architecture and stained glass, the city's first market hall from 1889 and the first city-owned hall in 1951. Tales of misery and triumph, stories of real people.

In his introduction to *An Historian's Notebook* Elwood writes: "I have been obsessed off and on for thirty years about housing styles. Why do local builders choose the designs that they do? Why do cities look different" so any book of Elwood's will talk about architecture and this one offers a look at a London Street property in *Mr. Howson builds a house*, which still stands. In a profile of *Margaret Bird, the widow of Bethune Street*, he illustrates the value of memoirs to historians and archivists in telling stories of past lives. They also tell us how earlier residents supported themselves, in this case precariously, and illustrate that the generosity of Peterborough neighbours is of long standing.

The well-known are also to be found within its pages — Pauline Johnson, John Carnegie and Queen Victoria. Look for collapsing buildings, life in wartime, bankruptcy and murder.

The book takes its title from its early description and definition as "Canada's average city." Elwood notes: "No other place was average. The place was a diverse town. The stories in this book capture aspects of that diversity."

*Peterborough's Unique, Stories from Canada's Average City*, is Elwood's sixteenth book. Like the chapters of this one, they reflect his wide-ranging interest in the diverse stories and lives that make up a community.

This latest collection of columns costs \$60 and is available from Trent Valley Archives or online here: <https://trentvalleyarchives.com/shop/peterborough-unique/>.



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Family (one mailing address).....	\$75
Sustaining .....	\$275
Institutional .....	\$300
Patron .....	\$1,000

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- 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 starting 2024

#### Patron Members

- A tax receipt for \$900
- Acknowledgement in the Heritage Gazette starting 2024

#### 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

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# IRISH ORIGINS *of* WILLIAM JOHNSTON

BY ELWOOD JONES, ARCHIVIST

*Editor's note: We get a lot of requests for information from researchers and genealogists. Our volunteers try to answer every query, relying on their expertise and TVA collections. We thought this one was timely due to the Irish flavour of this issue of the HG! It also notes some useful TVA resources for Irish research.*

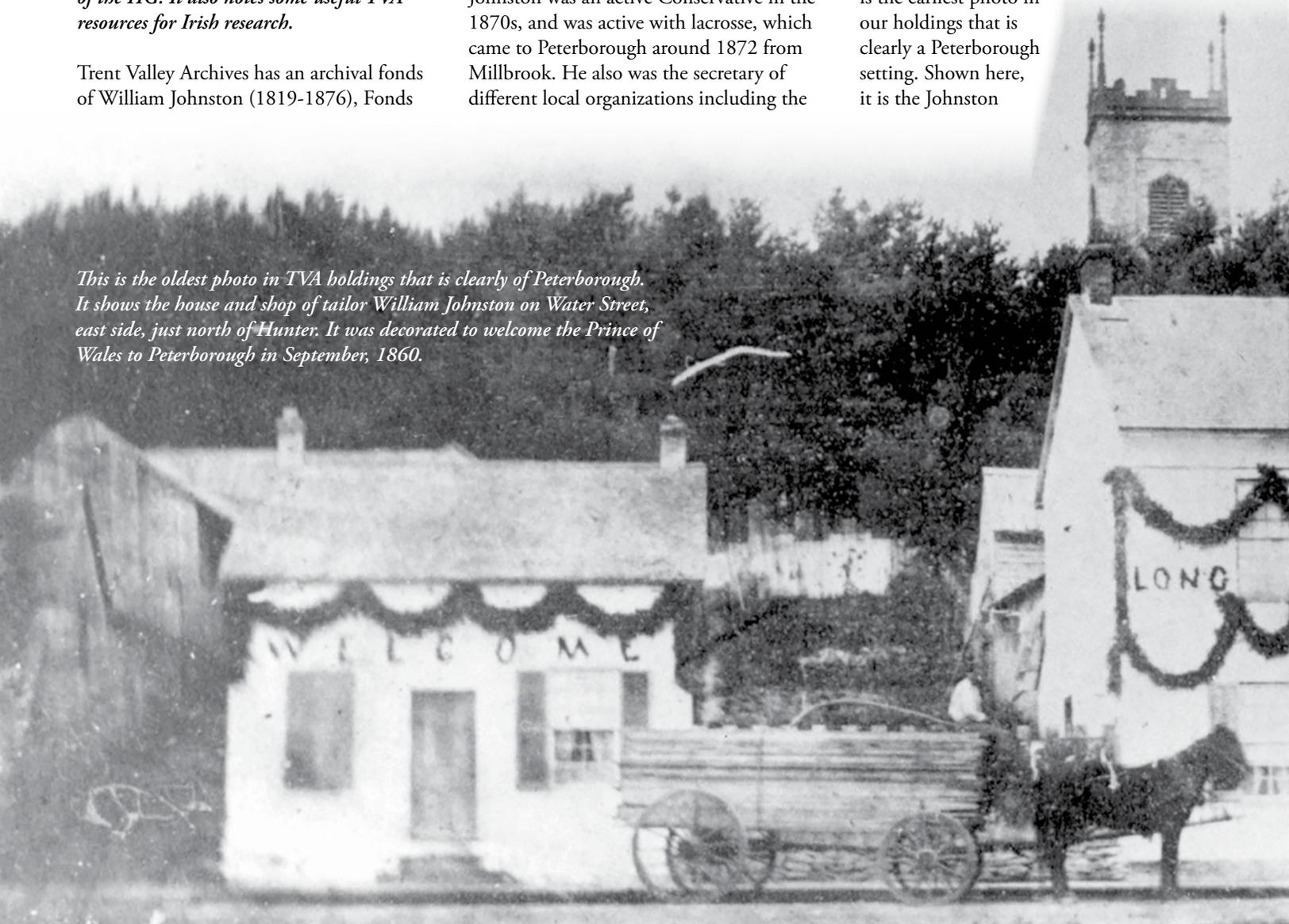
Trent Valley Archives has an archival fonds of William Johnston (1819-1876), Fonds

172. Johnston was a tailor who came from Millbrook to Peterborough where he and his brother George set up on Water Street, on the east side just north of Hunter. His correspondence, especially to his son, is most interesting and it is clear that Johnston was an active Conservative in the 1870s, and was active with lacrosse, which came to Peterborough around 1872 from Millbrook. He also was the secretary of different local organizations including the

school board. His brother, a great singer, served as the police chief.

We received a query asking if we could share the photo in Johnston's papers, which is the earliest photo in our holdings that is clearly a Peterborough setting. Shown here, it is the Johnston

*This is the oldest photo in TVA holdings that is clearly of Peterborough. It shows the house and shop of tailor William Johnston on Water Street, east side, just north of Hunter. It was decorated to welcome the Prince of Wales to Peterborough in September, 1860.*



house and shop decorated to welcome the Prince of Wales to Peterborough in September 1860. Our descendant also wanted to know if we had information about his wife Jane Mitchell whose parents emigrated from Fermagh county and about the village of Drum Monaghan from which Johnston emigrated. We found a little information on where she was from.

Trent Valley Archives has some remarkable Irish records of which the most treasured are the Casey Blackwater papers which were printed in about 50 copies, over several volumes in the 1970s. Casey gathered printed records and books related to the Blackwater valley, but copied the whole books in which such references were found.

As well, we have Samuel Lewis' remarkable two volume work, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland* published in London in 1839 and containing historical and statistical descriptions of nearly every geographic feature in Ireland.

Drum Monaghan, from which William Johnston emigrated, was described as "a market-town in the parish of Currin, barony of Dartry, county of Monaghan, and province of Ulster, 2 ½ miles (N.) from Cootehill, on the road to Clones, from both of which it has a pennypost: the population is returned with the parish. It occupied rather an elevated situation near Leysborough lake. In the vicinity is a quarry, from which the stone used in building the chapel of ease was obtained. It is a constabulary police station, and has fairs on the first Tuesday in every month. A chapel of ease to Currin church was built by a grant of L830 from the late Board of First Fruits, in 1828. Here are two Presbyterian meeting-houses, a school and a dispensary. — See Currin."

The entry for Currin is more extensive, and contains the villages of Drum and Scotshouse, and had 7, 180 inhabitants. The parochial church was at Scotshouse and had a glebe of 60 acres received from the Board of First Fruits in 1828. There were three private schools and six Sunday schools.

The topographical dictionary is a remarkable resource that deserves to be consulted by Irish descendants whose ancestors emigrated before 1850.

## A LETTER WRITER SAYS:

*A letter writer says 'thanks,' TVA!*

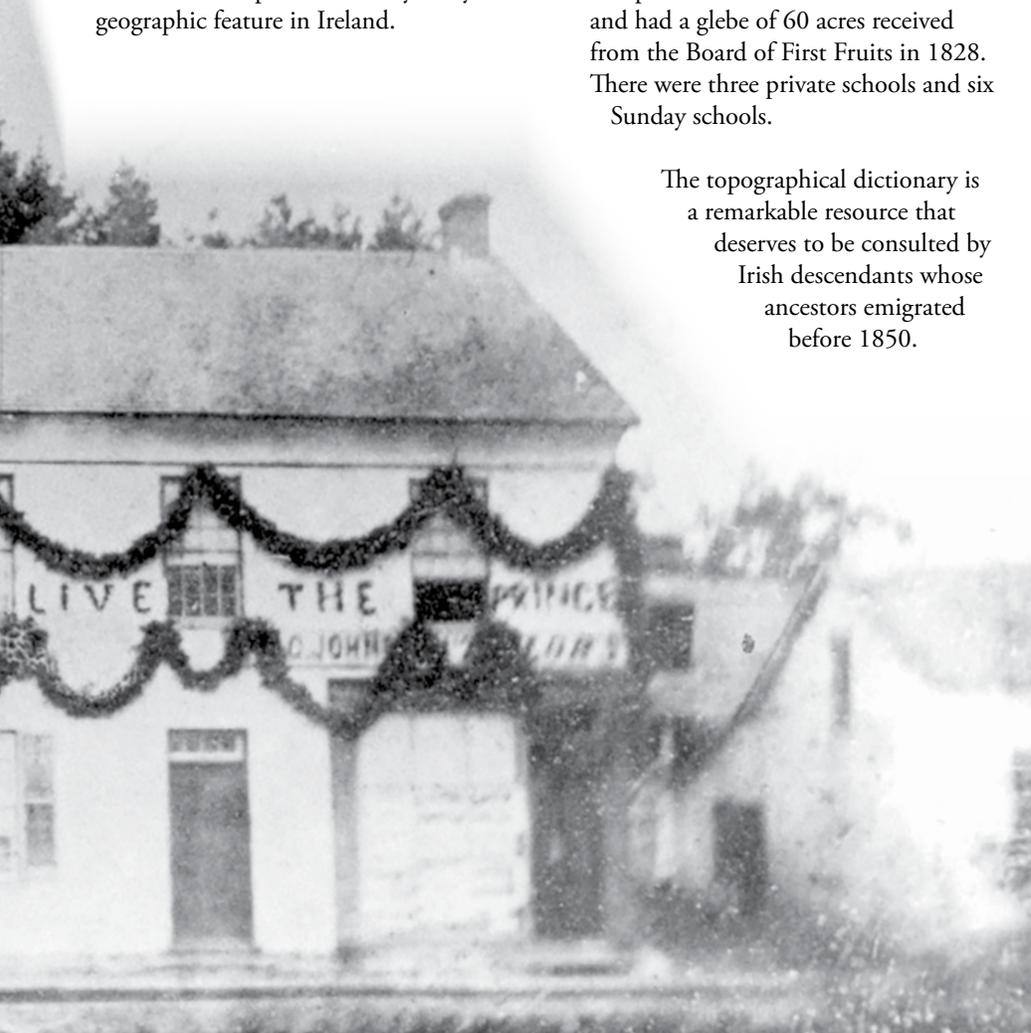
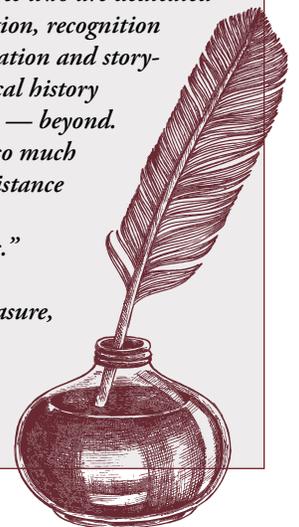
*Our volunteers love helping researchers and genealogists at our Reading Room on Carnegie Avenue. They know our TVA collections well and can quickly find what is needed to answer those hidden research questions.*

*A researcher, Sheila M. Young of Ottawa, visited in June with questions about her family history which she has been researching since 1981. Reading Room Manager Dianne Tedford found records she needed. She discussed the Boer War with volunteer Alan Brunger who had visited South Africa, and Elwood Jones scanned photos of her family album, which were particularly significant to her mother, Joan, who knew the names from her genealogy research in census and ship list records, but not the faces.*

*Sheila's thank-you note to Dianne, Alan and Elwood reads, in part:*

*"Our lives are richer because of valuable institutions and people like yourselves who are dedicated to conservation, recognition and presentation and story-telling of local history and in turn — beyond. Thank you so much for your assistance and shared enthusiasms."*

*It was our pleasure, Sheila!*



# HOW DID PETERBOROUGH GET ITS NAME? *It's Not What You Think*

BY KAREN HICKS

This is the fourth issue of the new digital *Heritage Gazette* and while this is a new publishing medium for TVA, it is built upon the more than 25 years of the print magazine. This is a valuable, and interesting print history that we thought we should celebrate in the digital *HG*. At the same time, we thought our readers would be interested in some of the questions we're asked at TVA. Thanks to TVA member Gillian Holden for the idea! Not surprisingly, some questions are repeated, off and on, over time. Like this one. How did Peterborough get its name?

Twenty years ago, the August 2005 issue of the *Heritage Gazette* devoted four pages to the question, taking its cue from Letters to the Editor in the January 1903 issue of the *Peterborough Daily Review*!

Peterborough was to be amalgamated with Ashburnham and became a city in 1905. The August *Heritage Gazette* was marking the 100th anniversary of the amalgamation. The letters, written during amalgamation, offer suggestions on what the new city should be named. There's no byline on the 2005 article, but credit is given to Don Courneyea for compiling the information. The decision was made to retain the name of Peterborough for the new municipality which had been Scott's Plains.

What were the suggestions? Otonabee or Alexandra, or, cheekily offering the last name of one of the letter writers, Culverwell! Was it to be described as "The Waterpower City" or "The Electric City," as favoured by Archivist Elwood Jones for his 1987 book *Peterborough, the electric city: An illustrated history*.

In passing, one letter writer expressed, as fact, the common view of how Peterborough was named. On January 14, 1903 the writer, "PETERBOROUGH," said: "It was the desire of those present to perpetuate the name of the gentleman who had been instrumental in bringing to this vicinity a large number of emigrants, known as the 'Peter Robinson Emigration of 1825,' and his subsequent labours in allotting the families to their future homes in the village and surrounding townships. After several suggestions the name of 'Peterborough' was unanimously adopted."

He was corrected, when the letter appeared in the August 2005 article, by the editor of the *Heritage Gazette*, TVA Archivist Elwood Jones, who put it even more clearly and forcefully in *An Historian's Notebook* in 2009 (18).

"Peterborough was named for Peterborough, New Hampshire."

The name for this community, and those of neighbouring Keene and Ashburnham, was chosen by The Hon. Zacheus Burnham who had grown up in New Hampshire near Peterborough, Keene and Ashburnham. He was the surveyor of the District of Newcastle, north of Rice Lake. He and his family owned most of Ashburnham.

The reason it is so commonly and incorrectly thought that Peterborough is named for Peter Robinson is because of Dr. Poole's report in his *The Early Settlement of Peterborough County* (1867). Poole suggests the name was chosen at a meeting in February 1826 which followed a visit of the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Peregrine Maitland, and illustrious guests including John Beverly Robinson, attorney-general of the province and brother of Peter Robinson, Zacheus Burnham, Captain Rubidge, Peter Robinson, Frances Stewart and others.

Poole writes: "It was soon after, that at a meeting of a few gentlemen residing in the vicinity, the name of 'Peterborough' was selected for the future town, in compliment to the Hon. Peter Robinson, to whose exertions in promoting the settlement of the neighbouring townships they felt so much indebted. The selection was at once ratified by general consent



and ‘Scott’s plains’ ere long ceased to be associated with the prosperous town.”

However, Elwood notes, the use of “Peterborough” as the name for this community had been in use for several months before this meeting! Perhaps Poole is referring to a different meeting. In any event, the Hon Zacarias Burnham, as the surveyor, had full authority to choose the name — which he did.

Frances Stewart in *Our Forest Home* “believed Peter Robinson would accept the new name as a compliment, and he certainly did. However, the name was chosen before she expressed this opinion (19).”

Interestingly, the name “Horton” was also considered which would have honoured Robert Wilmot Horton, Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, who favoured and promoted group immigration of poor Irish as settlers to benefit the colonies.

The Indigenous name of Nogojiwanong, meaning the place at the end of the long rapids, was not considered.

It would be uncommon, Elwood notes, for a community to be named for someone’s first name. To honour Peter Robinson would be to rename the city “Robinson,” the family name.

“Hon. Zacheus Burnham, drawing on his New Hampshire roots, chose the name Peterborough, and the name was readily accepted; at one level, it was also a tribute to Peter Robinson (19).”



Photo by Yvonne Hollandy

## MAINTENANCE WORK COMPLETED

BY ALAN BRUNGER

TVA has recently finished a project made possible by a 2023 Capital Funds grant of \$10,100 from the Government of Ontario's Trillium Foundation. The project is part of the ongoing maintenance and renovation of the TVA premises in the Fairview Heritage Centre (FHC). We reported on this in the *HG*, March 2024.

The FHC, which celebrates its 25th Anniversary this year, comprises the old Fairview Public School (built in 1895), the 1970s addition to the school, which dates from its acquisition by Smith Township as its Municipal Building, and the Annex, a portable classroom acquired in 2010, to contain the archives of the Peterborough Examiner.

The ongoing need for renovations to the FHC has been regularly addressed over the years. The current, Trillium Foundation-funded project included the following urgent needs:

Capping of the chimney of the old school both to sustain its brickwork and to reduce the entry of debris and wildlife.

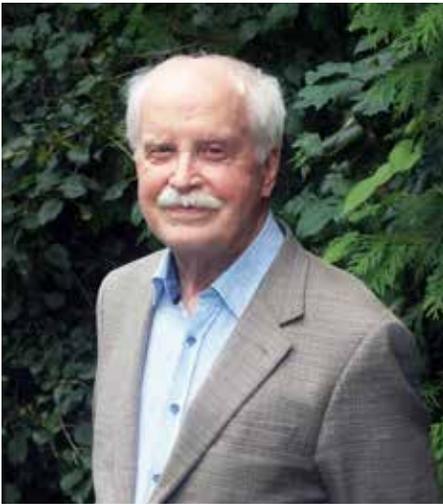
Repairing of the interior, north wall of the school to conceal the hole left after the removal of air conditioning unit.

Installing Gutter Guard on the eaves trough of both the school and the addition to prevent accumulation of debris.

Undertaking several electrical renovations both inside and outside the FHC. Inside installations were additional LED strip lighting in the school basement, two ceiling fans in the school, a wireless switch at the south entrance to improve staff safety, and new covers on junction boxes, outlets and switches. Outside installations were a LED porch light on the Carnegie Avenue entrance and two floodlights on the Annex to improve safety in the parking lot.



Trent Valley archives is very grateful to the Ontario Trillium Foundation for this financial assistance, which will address community needs by repairing and renovating its premises in order to improve their functionality, safety and security for many years to come. The official recognition event of this Trillium Capital grant will be on Saturday, September 28, at 10 am in the TVA when MPP Dave Smith and Trillium representatives will attend. All are welcome.



BY ELWOOD JONES, ARCHIVIST

*Editor's Note: TVA has newly acquired a set of Trent Canal plans from 1918-1922, which is the earliest complete set we now have. The 23 charts complement other charts in our collection. The acquisition is highlighted here in advance of a presentation Archivist Elwood Jones will make at the annual Open House in September, in conjunction with a Trillium Foundation recognition event, attended by MPP Dave Smith.*

The Trent Valley Archives has an interesting array of documents related to the Trent Canal, now officially the Trent Severn Waterway. These are in addition to the newspaper records which we have. The 1895 birds-eye map in the Reading Room illustrates the importance of the river and the canal bypassing the town. We have the Eason photographs that inspired Robert Reid to produce *The Trent-Severn Waterway, 1907-2021, Then & Now*.

Our library has several publications related to the canal, and the local histories of Peterborough, Campbellford and local townships. James T. Angus, *A Respectable Ditch: A History of the Trent Severn Waterway 1833-1920* (1988) remains a major guide. Ed Guillet, *The Valley of the Trent*, (1957) was a landmark book. The tradition of policy studies began with the Commission of Conservation study by C.D. Howe and J.H. White, *Trent*

*Watershed Survey* (Toronto 1913) and we have several other reports.

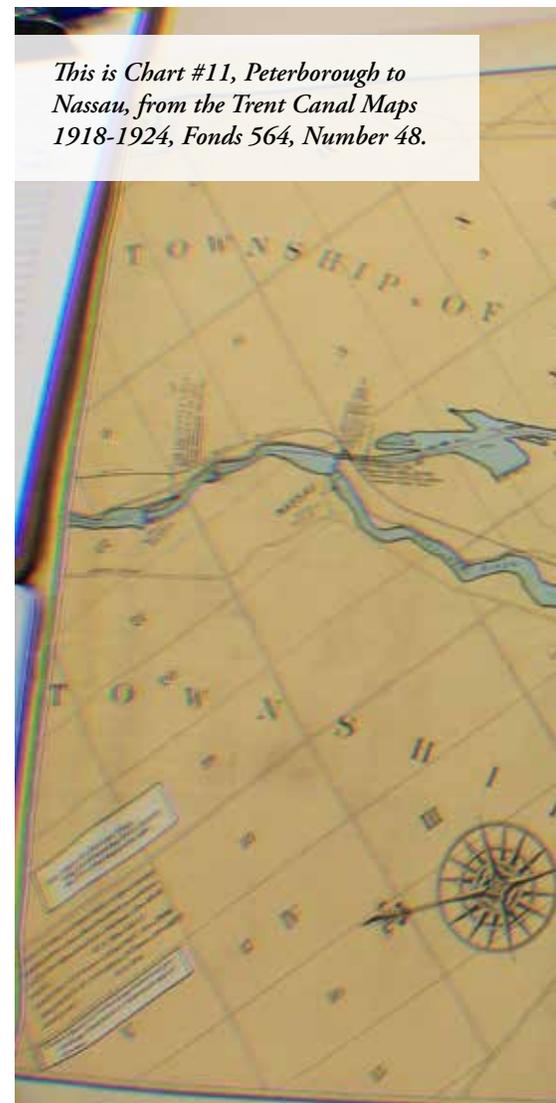
### *Trent Canal Maps 1918-1924*

Complete series, Maps 1 to 19 and unnumbered; 4 inches to 1 mile generally. The charts for 1918 are signed by A. L. Killaly [numbers 1-11]; those for 1923 are signed by Killaly and D. R. Eason; Those for 1923-24 are signed by Eason. Some are undated and some are based on old plans.

1. Index plan for Charts
2. Chart No. 1 Trenton to Frankford
3. Chart No. 2 Frankford to Glen Ross
4. Chart No. 3 Glen Ross to Hickory Island
5. Chart No. 4 Hickory Island to Campbellford
6. Chart No. 5 Campbellford to Trent Bridge
7. Chart No. 6 Trent Bridge to Hastings
8. Chart No. 7 Hastings to Rice Lake
9. Chart No. 8 Rice Lake
10. Chart No. 9 Rice Lake to Bensfort Bridge
11. Chart No. 10 Bensfort Bridge to Peterboro
12. Chart No. 11 Peterborough to Nassau
13. Chart No. 12 Nassau to Lakefield
14. Chart No. 13 Lakefield to Young's Point
15. Chart No. 14 Young's Point to Burleigh
16. [Chart No. 14 A Stony Lake] available in the Upper Stoney Lake fonds]
17. [15] Burleigh Falls to Buckhorn
18. Chart No. 16 Buckhorn to Gannon's Narrows (Buckhorn Lake)
19. Chart No. 17 Gannon's Narrow to Bobcaygeon
20. Chart No. 18 Bobcaygeon to Fenelon Falls (Sturgeon Lake) 2 inches = 1 mile
21. Chart No. 18A Sturgeon Point to Lindsay
22. Chart No. 19 Fenelon Falls to Laidlaws
23. Simcoe, Balsam Lake Division Plan Showing Route between Balsam Lake and Lake Simcoe
24. Plan of Lakes Simcoe and Couchiching
25. Plan Showing Lake Couchiching and Georgian Bay

### *Trent Severn Waterway Maps 1970-1985*

- a. Peterborough to Buckhorn, 1970, 2023, 3 sheets
- b. Buckhorn to Bobcaygeon including Chemong Lake, 1971, 5 sheets
- c. Peterborough to Buckhorn, 1985, sheets 1 and 2 of 3
- d. Buckhorn to Bobcaygeon, small craft nautical chart, 5 sheets, 2007 edition
- e. Bobcaygeon to Lake Simcoe, small craft nautical chart, 3 sheets, 2007
- f. Couchiching Lock to Port Severn, small craft nautical chart, 2006, 2 sheets
- g. Georgian Bay, Port Severn to Parry Sound, ditto, Canadian Hydrographic Service 2007, 5 sheets



Trent Valley Archives has other maps produced elsewhere in our collections.

The report from the Department of Railways and Canals has a description of the Trent Canal System 1925 (Ottawa, King's Printer, 1925) and notes that a canal on this route had been advocated since 1827. There is a description of the charts recently received at Trent Valley Archives on page 8.

"A set of eleven lithographed navigation charts of the route from Trenton to Nassau, on the Otonabee River, with an index plan, may be obtained from the Superintendent, Trent Canal, Peterborough, Ontario, on payment of the sum of \$3.50, postage additional.

"There are also thirteen black and white printed charts and plans which, with the

lithographed set, completely cover the route from Trent to the Georgian Bay. The latter charts may be obtained from the Superintendent, at 45 cents each, postage additional."

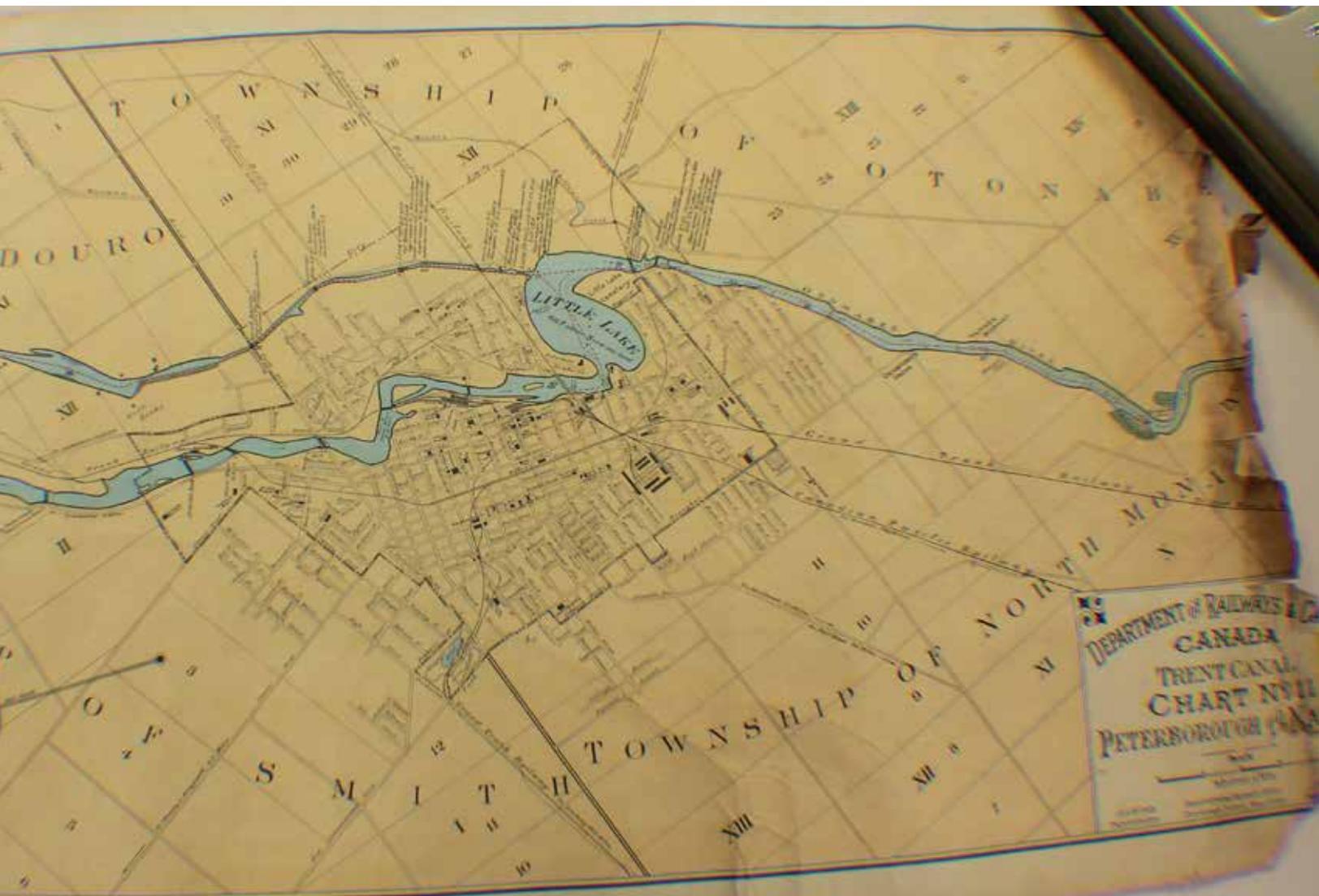
On September 28, Trent Valley Archives will host an Open House featuring these items related to the Trent Canal. The most exciting new acquisition is a set of some 23 charts for the Trent Canal in the period from 1918 to 1923. This is a complete set and complements our other collection of canal charts.

We have added 35 collections since the first of the year of which we should note:

1. NHL Hockey cards for 1953-54; zoo train on first day

2. Collection of railway books and atlases
3. Memoirs of Ernest Ferguson and wife
4. Frederick Griffin war correspondent and career at Toronto Star
5. St. John's Ida cemetery
6. Senator Ida Fallis speeches
7. Maple Leaves banner
8. YNAS map selection (which includes the Trent Canal charts mentioned above)
9. Letter from Helen Haultain concerning W. H. Rackham
10. 23 photos from Michael Neary showing construction of Hunter Street bridge (different photos than in the two previous collections)

*Archivist Elwood Jones is a founding member of Trent Valley Archives. He is also a Historian and former columnist with the Peterborough Examiner. ejones55@cogeco.ca.*



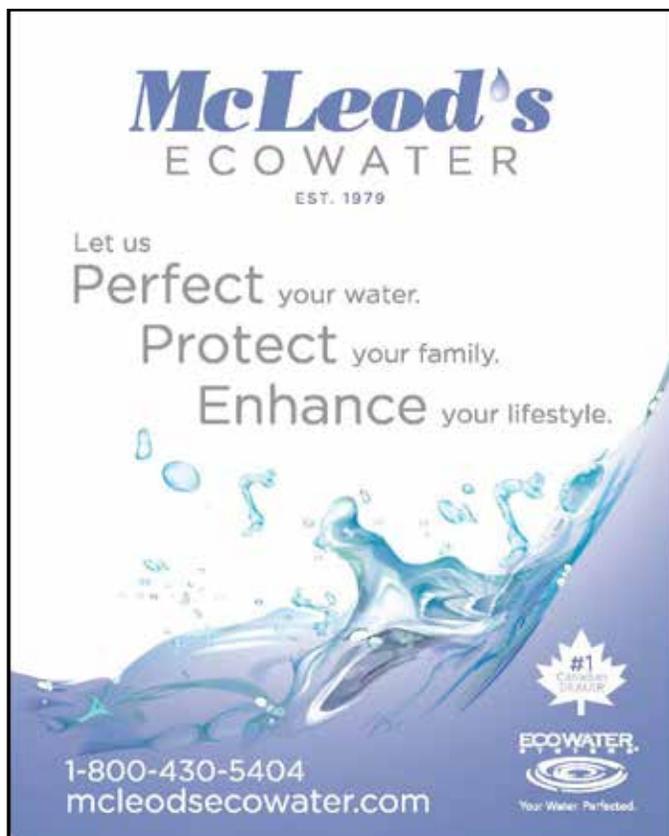


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## NEW DIRECTORS JOIN TVA BOARD

Trent Valley Archives welcomed two new members to the Board of Directors at the Annual General Meeting held on July 11. Joining the board are **Cyndie Paul-Girdwood** and **Harry Huffman**.

The AGM was originally scheduled to be held at Highland Park on April 25 but was postponed, in part due to a delay in obtaining the annual financial reports.

Leaving the board after long service are Ruth Kuchinad who continues as volunteer chair of the Events Committee, Reading Room Manager Dianne Tedford and a major contributor to the Little Lake Cemetery Pageant, Shelagh Neck.

Cyndie Paul-Girdwood brings a great deal of related experience to the TVA board of directors. She has served as curator of Hutchison House and Barnam House Museums, and taught history at Campbellford District High School. She is a Trent University history graduate and has a museum technology diploma from Algonquin College. As a teacher, she introduced her students to historical research and has had a personal interest in family/local/Canadian history/genealogy for many years.

Originally from Queenston, she is a long-time resident of the area and is an experienced board member and community volunteer.

Harry Huffman's family has lived in the area for generations and he also has a special interest in genealogy and local history. A native of Peterborough, he is descended from the Stewarts, Tully and the Huffman families and he has written a history of the Huffman family of builders. A TVA member for more than 10 years, he has volunteered for Little Lake Cemetery and Avenues tours and written about local history.

His work career began as an accountant in the family construction business, which he followed with decades in automobile sales and leasing and real estate sales. He retired in 2022. He has volunteered with Rotary for more than 20 years.

There are still vacancies on the TVA Board of Directors. If you are interested in serving, please contact board president Steve Guthrie at TVA. Monthly board meetings are held the third Thursday of the month via Zoom.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION.

# THE PUZZLE OF *Macdonald* and *Mrs. Hall*



BY KAREN HICKS

Local researcher Ken Brown has a new book out exploring the interesting and little studied connection between a local widow, Elizabeth Hall, and perhaps Canada's most intriguing prime minister, Sir John A. Macdonald! How did these two people meet and what was their relationship? Other writers have touched on it. Will this book explain it all?

One point is clear, their relationship is bound up with the history of the Hall's property. The book is subtitled: "Brought together by Beavermead Farm, Peterborough." It is a unique Peterborough story.

The book traces the political and business relationship between George Barker Hall, "a mill owner, politician, lawyer, and country judge" and the prime minister who met in 1844 in Montreal, elected to the second parliament of the Province of Canada. Both were politically conservative, newly married and away from home and probably at least knew of each other before that meeting. Hall left politics three years later and correspondence confirms the two men were great friends.

Ken Brown has been writing about Peterborough history since 2001. His other titles include *The Invention of the Board Canoe*, *The Peterborough Potteries*, *The Canadian Canoe Company and the Early Peterborough Canoe Factories* and *The Many Working Lives of Robert Romaine*. It was through his main research interest, Peterborough industrial history, that Brown, an accountant, met a descendant

of the Hall family who encouraged him to explore the family relationship with Sir John A. Macdonald and the Hall property, Beavermead Farm.

In the winter of 1857-58 both John A. Macdonald and Elizabeth Hall's spouses died. Macdonald had been married for 12 years to "the constantly ailing Isabella," while Elizabeth Hall, and her four children, the youngest only a few weeks old, discovered that then-Judge George Barker Hall had left "a substantial accumulation of mortgage and other indebtedness" and "conflicting and unclear" legal instructions, "foretelling a messy estate administration."

Elizabeth D'Olier Hall was born in Ireland in 1824. Her father, Reverend Richard D'Olier, her mother, Charlotte, and an aunt arrived in Kingston in 1832, then to Peterborough where the reverend was to establish St. John's Anglican Church. John

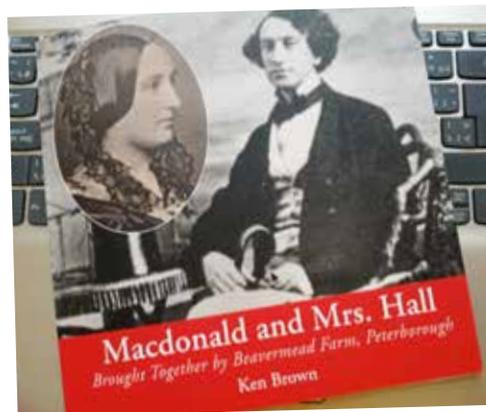
Hall, father of George Barker Hall, was a major donor to the church fund, and when his first wife died in 1833, he married Jane Lennon, Elizabeth D'Olier's aunt, making Elizabeth and George step-cousins.

Macdonald became a great help to the widowed Elizabeth Hall through her difficult financial times and for the remainder of her life, which ended in 1865 at the age of 41. His support of her children, financially and with job opportunities, continued for the next 20 years. He was particularly helpful to Elizabeth's widowed daughter, Charlotte, who lived in Ottawa.

What was the relationship between Hall and Macdonald? Was it a romantic one? Ken Brown concludes there are still unanswered questions and some loose ends still do not tie up.

Separate to this intriguing main story, is the amount of detail the author has turned up about Peterborough in the mid 1800s — who the "important" people were, the neighbourhoods they lived in and developed. How business and industry were created and grew. There is also a separate history of 471-acre Beavermead Park from 1861 when John A. Macdonald took it over to today when it abuts the new Canadian Canoe Museum.

*Macdonald and Mrs. Hall* is available at several area locations, including Trent Valley Archives. It sells for \$25.



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## TIDE of HOPE GREAT SUCCESS FOR TVA!

*Tide of Hope*, a play written by Ed Schroeter, was a fund-raising project of Trent Valley Archives. It was presented twice to audiences at the Market Hall Theatre in May, once for students and the dress rehearsal was held for Royal Gardens residents. It is a prequel to next year's celebration of the 200th Anniversary of the arrival in Peterborough and Eastern Ontario of the Peter Robinson Settlers from Ireland. A continuation of the story of the Nagel and Ryan families is planned for Market Hall in May 2025. (All photos by Suzanne Schroeter unless otherwise noted.)

1. Playwright Ed Schroeter leads a post-play Q. and A. with audience members.

5. Michael Ketemer (*The Musician*) adds colour and atmosphere playing throughout the production. Photo taken at the dress rehearsal.

2. *Tide of Hope* cast and production team. (Left to right) Brogan McKellar (Stage Manager in the play), Carling Dulder (Lady Margaret/Midnight), Drew Mills (David), Lauren Murphy (Mary), Paul Baines (Patrick), Marilyn Robinson (Stage Manager), Lucas Pronk (Peter Robinson), Nathan Govier (Lord Kingston), June Govier (Elizabeth), Gerry McBride (Director), Michael Ketemer (Musician), Elaine Day (The Descendent).

6. Peter Robinson and Lord Kingston discuss the merits of the Robinson settlement project and who should be chosen to travel to Ontario. Photo taken during dress rehearsal at Royal Gardens.

7. Director Gerry McBride and Stage Manager Marilyn Robinson lead a production meeting on stage at the Market Hall Theatre.

8. David and Mary (the Nagels) consider their grim future in Ireland.

9. Director Gerry McBride.

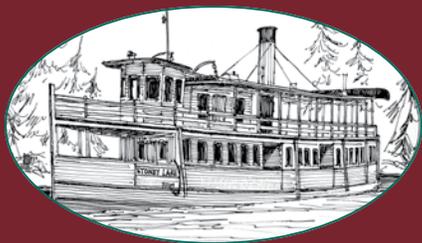
10. Stage Manager Marilyn Robinson.

11. Playwright Ed Schroeter.

12. Producer Greg Conchelos.

13. Producer Mary Conchelos.

4. It's a full house at the Market Hall for Opening Night.



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