

# HERITAGE GAZETTE

OF  
THE

TRENT



VALLEY



HAZELBRAE: HUB FOR DR. BARNARDO'S HOME CHILDREN *(See page 22)*



As we reflect on the commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the arrival of the Peter Robinson settlers in August, the Trent Valley Archives team is grateful for the hard work of volunteers, the team involved in *Crossing Over*, and everyone's welcoming hospitality to tourists and distant cousins.

The stories in this issue explore relationships between people, and between people and history. Dana Lynch, for example, uncovers an unexpected link between the Peter Robinson emigration and Hollywood, California, through correspondence between Howard Pammatt and Robert

Doman, an American Twentieth Century Fox executive. Shelley Ryan, President of the Peterborough Canadian Irish Club, celebrates the club's 50th anniversary and reflects on its deep ties to the city's Irish heritage.

We appreciate the relationship our contributors have with historical resources. In this issue, Gordon Dibb brings the life of James Thomson to light through a wide array of sources, I explore the legacy of Joseph Ayotte and his farm in Smith Township as it connects to his descendants, and Elwood Jones shares the discovery of the *Costume Concerts* broadsheet from the *Peterborough Review* (1877), along with a trove of intriguing items in "Around the Archives," including a birdwatching scrapbook, a postcard from Robert Elwood McBrien, artifacts from Gardiner Cemetery, and more.

This issue also examines Peterborough residents' relationships with places and spaces. Highlights include a revisit of the Ashburnham Railway station and reflections on the community's reaction to the demolition of Hazelbrae, the former home of Dr. Barnardo's home children.

If you have stories or memories of war veterans or local family members, records you'd like to donate to the TVA, or if you'd like to share your "nine ships" family history—even beyond the 200th anniversary—we'd love to hear from you!

As we plan the Winter 2025 edition of the *Heritage Gazette*, we hope you enjoy the beauty of the changing leaves, the return of sweater weather, and a joyful Thanksgiving and Halloween ahead.



Alicia Bertrand, M.A.  
Editor-in-Chief, Trent Valley Archives *Heritage Gazette*



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*Thanks everyone.*

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**ON THE COVER:**  
*Portrait of Barnardo child Eliza Ricketts by Nori Peter (TVA, Gail Corbett, F271). See Hazelbrae: Hub for Dr. Barnardo's Home Children on page 22.*

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Elwood Jones

# From IRELAND to HOLLYWOOD:

## An Intriguing Hollywood Connection to the Peter Robinson Emigration<sup>1</sup>

BY DANA LYNCH

This year marks the 200th anniversary of the Peter Robinson emigration to the Peterborough region. Did you know there's a Hollywood connection to the 1825 Assisted Irish Emigration to Ontario under Peter Robinson? This surprising and personal connection occurred in the mid-20th century as World War II was drawing to a close, through correspondence between Howard Pammett, a Canadian historian of and from Peterborough, and Robert Doman of Pacific Palisades, California, an American Twentieth-Century Fox Film Corporation executive, who was researching his Irish Upper Canadian ancestors. The correspondence between Pammett and Doman highlights the twin themes of not only 19th century Irish emigration to present-day Ontario but also 19th century emigration from Ontario throughout the United States. It illustrates too that there are "six degrees of separation" between any two people, that it takes only five or six contacts to connect any person to another. In Robert Doman's case, he had a keen interest in his Irish ancestors and was eager to reach out through intermediaries and learn more from a specialist such as Howard Pammett.



Howard Pammett from dust jacket of *Lilies and Shamrocks*

The correspondence began with Robert Doman contacting, however directly, E. C. Kyte, University Librarian, Queen's University.<sup>2</sup> Doman wrote Kyte seeking information about his ancestors, and Kyte then wrote Pammett in Ottawa, where he was working for the federal government's Department of Labour. Kyte knew Pammett was the author of a Queen's University M.A. thesis on the Peter Robinson emigration to Upper Canada.<sup>3</sup> Kyte explained Doman's request for information:

*"I am in receipt of an enquiry from Mr. Robert S. Doman, of California, asking for information about his family, one of the many immigrant families that came to Kingston in the summer of 1825. They sailed on the ship, 'Elizabeth' from Cork, arrived at Quebec about June 16th., 1825, and came to Kingston where they lived in tents and lost two children, Elizabeth and Robert. Have you any record of the name among your many sources of information? I have looked through your thesis, but cannot see it mentioned. However, I have not yet had time to make a thorough search of it."*<sup>4</sup>

Doman was researching his ancestors, whom he correctly believed were among the original 1825 Irish emigrants to Ontario.<sup>5</sup> In a September 26, 1944 letter, on Twentieth Century-Fox letterhead, Doman requested a copy of the thesis from Pammett, and Doman promised: *"In return for your courtesy I would be pleased to send you some autographed photographs of the stars and I also am sure I can 'wangle' [Doman's quotation marks] some passes to the Peterborough theatre for your nieces and nephews."*<sup>6</sup> Doman concluded this paragraph asking: *"Do you think there is motion picture material in the thesis?"*<sup>7</sup>

1. The source of all correspondence and photographs in this article is the Howard Pammett Fonds, Fonds 1, Volume 2, Series 2, File 10 ("Personal Letters, 1942-1946"), at the Trent Valley Archives. Many thanks to Elwood Jones, Ruth Kuchinad, Alicia Bertrand, and Madison More at the Trent Valley Archives for their assistance with this article. The information, photos, and letters mentioned in this article were also part of a display at the Trent Valley Archives for the Peter Robinson Nine Ships Bicentennial. 2. Letter from Kyte to Pammett, Sept. 11, 1944, and letter from Kyte to Pammett, Oct. 23, 1944. 3. Howard T. Pammett, M.A. Thesis, "The Emigration from Ireland to Upper Canada under Peter Robinson in 1825, including the Founding of the City of Peterborough and the Settlement of the Surrounding Townships," Queen's University, 1934. 4. Letter from Kyte to Pammett, Sept. 11, 1944. 5. Doman's ancestor, "Robert Downan [sic]," is listed as a farmer on the passenger list on the ship, *Elizabeth*, so he can be confirmed as one of the Peter Robinson emigrants from Ireland to Upper Canada. Downan's family included his wife, Eliza, 34, and his children, Ellen, Elisa, Robert, and James. He received land in Marmora, Concession 4, Lot 11 E. See the book commemorating the bicentennial of the Peter Robinson emigration to Peterborough and the Kawartha region, *1825 - 2025 Nine Ships Bicentennial Souvenir*, published by Nine Ships 1825 Inc., 2025, p. 32. 6. Letter from Doman to Pammett, Sept. 26, 1944. 7. Ibid.

Pammett sent him a copy of the thesis. It is unclear if Pammett ever answered this film question. However, the question was certainly a prescient one, especially in light of the 2024 and 2025 performances based on the Peter Robinson emigration, *Tide of Hope*, its sequel, *Crossing Over*, as well as the 2025 play, *Wild Irish Geese*.<sup>8</sup>

Doman concluded his September 26 letter by noting the following details about his family's emigration. Notably, he also corresponded with Frederick DelaFosse, Chief Librarian of Peterborough Public Library, as the Peter Robinson papers were then in the Peterborough Public Library:

*"I recently had some correspondence with Mr. DelaFosse of the Peterborough Library. He sent me the interesting information that my great-grandfather and family were on the original Peter Robinson list at the Peterborough library. Robert Dowman [sic], wife Elizabeth, and children Ellen, Elizabeth, Robert, James left Cork on the 'Elizabeth' on May 16, ['1825' is written in ink after 'May 16' in the letter]. I recently learned through Lloyd's of London that the 'Elizabeth' arrived at Quebec on July 1, 1825."*<sup>9</sup>

He concluded: *"I would be very pleased to hear from you and would be very grateful if you could accommodate me in the matter of the thesis. I have read everything I can get my hands on concerning the expedition."*<sup>10</sup> It is unclear from the Pammett-Doman correspondence why and when the change from "Dowman" to "Doman" occurred.

It is worthwhile quoting the remainder of the Pammett-Doman correspondence in full to recount the particulars of the story of Doman's family connection

8. These three plays were performed in Peterborough, Ontario, and the surrounding area. *Tide of Hope* and *Crossing Over* were performed at the Market Hall Performing Arts Centre in Peterborough, and *Wild Irish Geese* was performed at 4th Line Theatre, in Millbrook, Ontario, near Peterborough. 9. Letter from Doman to Pammett, Sept. 26, 1944. 10. Ibid. 11. Letter from Doman to Pammett, Dec. 13, 1944; letter from Pammett to Doman, Aug. 2, 1945; Letter from Doman to Pammett, Aug. 9, 1945.

to Upper Canada, and which bear on the history of the 1825 Peter Robinson emigration. The three remaining letters

in the correspondence are reproduced in their entirety below: December 13, 1944; August 2, 1945; and August 9, 1945.<sup>11</sup>



Bob Doman  
Tyendinaga to  
Hollywood in  
remarkably quick  
time of only  
120 years.

Robert Doman c. 1940s. The inscription on the back of the photograph reads "Bob Doman, Tyendinaga to Hollywood in remarkably quick time and only 120 years."



L TO R:  
 My son  
 JACK DOMAN  
 UNIV. CALIF.,  
 BERKELEY 38  
 PHI DELTA THETA  
 My wife, PEGGY  
 My daughter, SHIRLEY  
 U.C.L.A. 1947  
 ALPHA CHI OMEGA

*The Doman Family c. 1940s. The inscription on the back of the photograph reads "L to R: My son Jack Doman Univ. Calif., Berkley 38 Phi Delta Theta; My wife, Peggy; My daughter, Shirley U.C.L.A. 1947 Alpha Chi Omega."*

The following (page 7) is the letter from Doman to Pammett, December 13, 1944. Note that in the second paragraph of this letter, Doman refers to a letter that Pammett sent, date unknown, that seems to be missing and does not appear to be in the Pammett Fonds at the Trent Valley Archive.

The following (page 8) is the letter from Pammett to Doman, August 2, 1945. In this letter, Pammett exhibits further research on Doman's family history by "burrowing" from his original thesis files to add details to Doman's family story.

The following (page 9) is the letter from Doman to Pammett, Aug. 9, 1945.

The Pammett-Doman correspondence, which illustrates the numerous and fascinating historical details of the emigration of Doman's 19th century ancestors from Ireland to Upper Canada, and eventually to the United States, is part of the history of the 19th century Peter Robinson emigrants. In one sense, it can be seen as a "case study" of one of the Peter Robinson emigrant families across time. We can also appreciate the "helpful historian," Howard Pammett, as he devoted his leisure time (away from his work in the federal Department of Labour) to assisting the "persistent publicist," Robert Doman, in his search for his Irish Upper Canadian ancestors. Through their correspondence, we also witness the gratitude that Doman expressed to Pammett for his assistance.<sup>12</sup> Finally, it's interesting to consider the circumstances, some unknown, and the "six degrees of separation" that led Robert Doman to learn that E.C. Kyte, the Queen's University Librarian, was the key to contacting Pammett, who was, in the 1940s, essentially the foremost expert on the 1825 Peter Robinson Emigration from Ireland to Upper Canada.

12. As an interesting sidenote, Robert Doman, before working as a publicist for Twentieth-Century Fox, was an international news correspondent in World War I, worked for the Red Cross, and was also allegedly a "yellow" (or tabloid) journalist in 1920s Arizona. See the article by Vince Murray, "Fake News Guru," True West Magazine, Feb. 16, 2018, <https://truewestmagazine.com/article/fake-news-guru/>.



December 13, 1944

Mr. Howard T. Pammett,  
 Apt. No. 4, 59 Third Ave.,  
 Ottawa, Ont., Canada

Dear Mr. Pammett:

I want to thank you most sincerely for the Ontario Historical Society reprint of your thesis which was most gratefully received. I enjoyed it very much and have read it through from cover to cover. It gave me several items of new information which I hadn't found elsewhere in books mentioning the Peter Robinson emigrations.

I notice you mention in your letter that you have had some correspondence with other descendants of the 1823-1825 Robinson expeditions. May I ask if any of your correspondents' ancestors came from Mallow or vicinity? If so I might correspond with them.

I am puzzled that my ancestor Robert Dowman, wife Elizabeth and children Ellen, 14; James, 4; Robert and Elizabeth, 8 and 12; (in 1825) did not settle at Peterborough.

Records I have show that in 1836 (twelve years after their arrival) they patented through Peter Robinson – two years or so before Robinson died – 100 acres in Tyendinaga township, Hastings County, just outside of Shannonville and not far from Belleville.

Where Robert Dowman was from 1825 to 1836 is somewhat of a mystery to me. He was not in the United States, as you suggested, I feel sure as he died about 1860 on his original 100 acres, in Tyendinaga township.

He is mentioned on the manifest of passengers of the Elizabeth, on records in Robinson's own handwriting at Peterborough Public Library. But there is no record of his having been given land in or around Peterborough, although there are old stories in the family mentioning Indian Woods, Port Hope, Smith's Mills or Smith's Falls as having been early day visiting places or homes of the family, but whether from 1825 to 1836 I cannot say.

Maybe from 1825 to 1836 he was working his farm, clearing and improving it, and did not have the money or the necessary work done which would entitle him to patent it, until 1836. Do you think such might have been the case?

Many of the Doman's are living in Ontario today, the descendants of James Doman (Robert Dowman's son) especially. My grandfather removed to Michigan from Shannonville in 1862 with his family.

I wrote to the Peterborough Public Library to see if C. D. Jephson, Mallow magistrate or notable who "okayed" the emigrants, had made any notation concerning Robert Dowman on the back of the latter's sailing certificate or passage ticket. Have not heard so far. I note in your book that you mention that only about 75 out of 400 passage tickets had such notations on the reverse side, giving information that might be interesting.

Is there any way of finding out what members of the 1825 party stayed behind at Kingston, Montreal or Coburg, instead of going on to Peterborough. Or of learning the names of those who went up into Lanark county, around Smith's Falls, where the 1823 expedition settled along the Ottawa or Mississippi?

I ask because I have a feeling that Robert Dowman may have stayed at Montreal, Kingston or Coburg because his wife had just given birth to a son, my grandfather, either at or coming into Quebec; moreover, she lost a son or daughter coming over. She was said to have been near death from the double shock so it may have been that the reason why the Dowmans did not go on to Peterborough with the rest of the party was because of the very weak condition of Robert Dowman's wife, Elizabeth.

We are having very warm weather here now, unseasonable in fact, after a no-summer-at-all summer of fogs that lasted all day.

My daughter is back at UCLA, in her third year. She is an Alpha Chi Omega. My boy graduated in 1938 from California at Berkely. He was a Phi Delta Theta there. He is now a certified public accountant; took his "mental" for the navy as ensign but now must pass his "physical."

We are all busy here at the studio on quite a program of pictures. A Bell for Adano is in production; A Tree Grows in Brooklyn and The Keys of the Kingdom are finished. You may have seen "Wilson". Adults go for it but the bobbysocks stay away. "Laura" is doing exceptionally well at the box office. Laurel and Hardy have started on "The Bullfighter" which should be their funniest in years.

Best wishes to you and family,

Sincerely,  
 Robert S. Doman

Robert S. Doman, 527 Ocampo Drive,  
 Pacific Palisades, California.

Howard T. Pammett,  
Apt. #4, 59 3rd Ave.,  
Ottawa, Canada,  
August 2, 1945

Dear Mr. Doman,

I have delayed writing to thank you for the three passes to the local Elgin Theatre until I could consult my thesis notes and see what additional information I might obtain on your ancestors. I have just returned from three weeks' holidays in the Peterborough district, and while there spent an afternoon burrowing among the files from which I developed my History of the Peterborough Settlement.

Robert Dowman came from the town of Mallow in Cork County. He is listed as a farmer, 34 years of age. There is a letter of recommendation in the Peterborough Library files which reads as follows:

*"To: C.D.O. Jephson, Esq.,*

*Monday*

*Dear Sir,*

*My father and I beg to recommend the bearer Robert Dowman labourer to you as an honest poor man. He has got four children and his wife."*

*I remain,*

*Your Obligated and Humble Servant,*

*Rich. Sarviant."*

This letter was written at Mallow either late in 1824 or early in 1825. Jephson was one of the local English "gentry" landowners who picked out a considerable number of the persons selected to go on the "assisted emigration" under Robinson to Canada. Sarviant was probably one of the less important landowners of the neighbourhood. Jephson acted on this letter, and the records for Robt. Dowman indicate that he was "recommended by Mr. Jephson of Mallow."

The ship records (EMS. "Elizabeth") indicate that Dowman's wife Eliza was also 34 years of age. Their children at the start of the trip were: Ellen—Fourteen Years, Eliza—twelve years, Robert—8 years, James—4 years. One child was born at sea to the Dowmans, but the name is not indicated.

Robinson's assistants kept records of each family for six quarter-years after the people reached the Peterborough district, which gave the amounts of rations issued, and other items of general interest. Dowman's family was given the following rations:

1st quarter (July—Sept. 1825) (85 days)—247 lbs. 14 oz. meat (salt pork) and same weight of flour (you will observe that they didn't starve!)

(They are listed as 1 man, 2 women, 1 child over 7, 1 child under 7, 1 child born at sea) (The girl Ellen is considered a "woman")

2nd quarter (Oct—Dec. 1825)—333 lbs. 10oz. flour, 242 lb. 10 oz. pork (One child died in this quarter, but name not given)

3rd quarter (Dec.—March 1826)—330 lbs. flour, 240 lbs. pork.

4th quarter (Apr.—June 1826)—337 lbs. flour, 245 lbs. pork

5th quarter (July—Sept. 1826)—no record of the family, for some reason.

6th quarter (Sept.—Nov. 1826)—239 lbs. flour, 177 lbs. pork. (one child listed as born in this quarter, name not given)

(After Nov. 1826 no more rations were issued, as the emigrants were supposed to have harvested a crop in 1826 to support themselves.)

The emigrants are listed by townships, giving the lots on which they were settled in the autumn of 1825. Oddly enough, however, Robert Dowman did not settle on a lot near Peterborough, and hence his name is not recorded in the settlement records for the district. That is possibly

why you were not able to find any trace of him among the "420 families" of Irish settlers given land around Peterborough. He probably spent the winter of 1825-26 and the following summer in the town of Peterborough at some kind of work, since he drew rations at the Peterborough office until Nov. 1826.

I took one further step and looked for Dowman among the lists of flats given to the Irish emigrants, confirming them in their title to land after they had performed the settlement duties. These are registered in the Ontario archives in Toronto. I found that Robert Dowman had been given his flat on June 2, 1836, for the north half of lot 1 in the first concession of TYENDINAGA township. This township is not in the area around Peterborough, and I was not able to find out just where in Ontario it is. I believe, though, that it is between Rice Lake and Lake Ontario—but this is a point you could check through the Provincial Department of Lands and Forests, Parl. Buildings, Toronto. They would be able also to give you further particulars of this lot of land and Robert Dowman's occupancy of it, when he sold it, etc.

On the above facts, my guess is that Dowman and his family may have either stopped off on this land on their way from Coburg to Peterborough in summer of 1825, or gone out to settle on it in the autumn of 1826 when rations stopped. I lean to the first alternative, since Dowman did not draw a lot in the Peterborough district when they were being handed out. He could easily go to Peterborough once a month to get his rations, by boat or trail.

I hope that the above information will be interesting to you in filling out the picture of your Irish ancestors, at least the time they spent in Canada. It still does not explain how they got from TYENDINAGA to Hollywood in the last century!

Yours sincerely,

Howard T. Pammett.

p.s. let me know if I can be of any further assistance.



August 9, 1945

Mr. H. T. Pammett,  
Apt. 4, 59 Third Ave.,  
Ottawa, Canada,

Dear Friend Pammett,

You have no idea how pleased I was to get your letter of August 3 which reached me yesterday. It was very thoughtful of you to spend part of your holidays in Peterborough looking up the records and to follow through at Toronto. I feel I owe you a real debt of gratitude.

I must congratulate you on your thoroughness in obtaining what is very probably every last scrap of information in the matter. I must say that if history hadn't made such an appeal to you, you would have made an ideal Associated Press journalist or foreign correspondent or a less interesting FBI expert. I was formerly a newspaper man myself and I can appreciate the professional touch you have given this search. (I was with the NY Herald, Paris edition, as a war correspondent in the last war; with the NY Evening Sun from 1909 to 1914; International News Service traveling around Europe, etc. Now, however, am an advertising department juggler of catchlines, publicity and exploitation at 20th Century-Fox.) And when gasoline comes more freely and you take that trip to California be sure to look me up here at the studio and I shall be delighted to see you get some of the very good food at our studio Cafe de Paris while watching the stars. We can also drive around the 300-acre lot to see the standing sets, visit the stage interiors and

other points of interest. (Yes, we have a marvellous research library here, too.)

I was very glad to get the letter from Richard Sarviant to C.D.O. Jephson. The name Sarviant gives me something more to work with in the patient search I am making at Mallow. I have found that Robert Dowman, evidently the father of the emigrating Robert Dowman, was buried in the Anglican Church of Ireland churchyard at Mallow in 1805, which ties in perfectly with family tradition. There was a mixed marriage back there and the "Eliza Dowman", 34, of Mallow was born Eliza Upington; there being a number of Upingtons still near Mallow. The Dowmans, however, are all in Dublin and I cannot make a definite connection with them so far.

Speaking of the Jephsons being the "gentry" of Mallow in 1825; they are still lords of the manor there and just this week I received a letter from a Cork Archeological Society Journal subscriber, Mr. Williams, who tells me that "after the death of old Lady Atherton Norreys at Mallow Castle a distant American member of the family, Mrs. Mounteney Jephson, lately came in for the property and has come to live at Mallow castle where she has been entertaining returning American aviators and showing them the old castle records which somehow escaped the civil war burnings of 1920 at the time the public records office in Dublin went up in flames with all its precious records."

C.D.O. Jephson, I understand, was the owner of Mallow Castle in 1825 and I find the name goes back to Cromwellian land-parcelling times with one Capt. Jephson

engaging in a bloody internecine fight with some of his pals at Dublin. I have written Mrs. Jephson and also the agent of the Jephson estates in Mallow. However, I am afraid that I won't have much luck. I am very content in having your providentially full report, which is a most unusual bit of luck which seldom happens, I understand, to the amateur genealogist prowling around his family tree.

By the way, your search ties in very nicely with records I already have. Tyendinaga township is in Hastings County, Ontario, not more than seven miles from Belleville, Ont. The Doman lot one, concession one, which you mention was three miles north of Shannonville, a village seven miles east of Belleville.

I have carefully read the printed summary of your 500-page book which you so kindly sent me and which I have gone through a dozen times and I agree with you that Robert Dowman undoubtedly made his first settlement on the land at Tyendinaga in 1825-26, obtaining title in 1836 after doing his clearance and settlement work over a period of 9-10 years.

Old family report states that "Robert Dowman's wife Eliza, nearly died aboard ship. An old Irish woman applied a mirror to her lips to see if she were still alive. Ellen, the daughter, was 'quite a young lady' and John (my grandfather) was six weeks old when the family went on into Canada."

So evidently my grandfather was born at sea and his mother, 34 years old, nearly died of grief over the loss of one of her children at sea, childbirth at about the

same time, with typhus or ship fever and seasickness thrown in for good measure. (Seasickness, alone, would be about all I could handle; but then our ancestors were certainly rugged citizens.)

Evidently the family stopped six weeks at Kingston with the others. Our family always preferred city life or to be near a large city so I imagine that Robert Dowman may have taken the boat from Kingston to Belleville and wagon or small boat to Shannonville. Of course, he could have been one of those in “the white tents on the beach at Cobourg”, mentioned by Guillet, I think. Robert may have wanted to be near Peter Robinson who lived in Kingston; I understand the first macadamised road in Canada and maybe North America was from Napanee to Kingston, completed in 1836-7. So Robert could have preferred to be near Lake Ontario and the main Kingston-York road; near the grist mills at Bellville and Napanee; near Peter Robinson at

of the Anglican church but had wives who were members of the R.C. church; this accounts for our family split to this day. (My son is a member of the Mother Church, Christian Scientist).

I also imagine that after her narrow escape from death at sea, Eliza Dowman, mother of the family, was so ill that she may have lingered on at either Kingston or Cobourg after the other settlers went to Peterborough to put in that first tough winter on their new acreage. Robert Dowman probably would have stayed with her. I understand Peter Robinson did not spend all his time at Peterborough but made his home at Kingston. Quite possibly Robert Dowman and family stayed there until Elizabeth, his wife, recovered; possibly they did not go to Cobourg at all but went directly to Shannonville-Tyendinaga township via Belleville. As I mentioned before, the old report has it that “when John (the baby born at sea) was six weeks old, the family went on into Canada.”

get as close to Kingston and the lake as he had lived in Cork at nearby Mallow which, of course, is not far from the inland waters of Cork Cove.

I have read a report somewhere that there were fourteen Protestant families in the Peter Robinson expedition which a minister visited on the beach at Cobourg. Having been brought up in the Anglican church I wonder if Robert Dowman did not find kinship with these families who may have not all of them gone on to Peterborough but have settled nearer the water front on Lake Ontario.

You ask me how the family got from Tyendinaga to Hollywood in the short space of time of 120 years. Well, the second generation of Dowmans seemed to have been tremendously impressed by the coming of the railroad from Montreal to York via Kingston, Napanee, Shannonville and Belleville. Both surviving sons of the emigrating Robert Dowman – namely my grandfather, John, and his brother, James, not only became railroaders but initiated their sons and grandsons into the business.

My grandfather, John, was a railroad contractor most of his life, traveling much himself with his sons including my father, John; but raising and educating a large family at Bay City, Michigan, when the John Domans came from Tyendinaga in 1862. Since the 1870s there has been no contact with our James Doman descendants, but in the past two years (since the genealogical bug bit me so badly) I have resuscitated that branch and its present day twigs. Although the James Doman descendants are living both in Ontario and Michigan there evidently have been no contacts between the two branches in sixty or seventy years. However, I guess that’s the way with most families. The third element of the family: the Ellen Doman descendants (she was the 14-year-old girl who emigrated)—I have traced all of her second husband’s descendants, the Taunt family; but the Malloys, descendants of Ellen’s first husband, are doing their best to elude me although very recently I came upon their hideout near Detroit. Thus most of the original Dowmans are still in Ontario and Michigan. I guess I’m just a stray lone

wolf who came to California straight from five years in Paris, France and other European points after stopovers in Detroit and New York when I was a newspaperman.

I have written to the managers of the Center, Imperial and Elgin theatres regarding some more passes for you and I hope they come through.

If there is anything I can do for you out here please let me know.

In writing to Mallow I have mentioned your book to several persons there but so far I have failed to find anyone at Mallow who ever heard of the Peter Robinson expedition, although 24 families came from there.

By the way, if you ever have your thesis printed at full length please let me know as I would like to purchase a copy. The summarized printed version was very interesting to me and I have interlined and underlined about every paragraph in it. Thanks a million for forwarding it.

\*\*\*\*

Well, here at the studio we are still sitting around waiting for the war to end and also for our strike to end. The strike has been going on now for six months. The studio is strictly in the middle: caught in a jurisdictional dispute between two AF of L unions.

Picture production goes on as usual as the union which is not striking is seeing to it that picture-making continues. As for the war: everyone around here has the radio going full blast but to date no reply to the Hirohito offer.

Well, I will bring this lengthy letter to a close. Again thanking you for your unusual kindness and with best wishes to your family, I am,

Sincerely,

Sincerely,  
*Robert S. Doman*

Robert S. Doman, 527 Ocampo Drive,  
Pacific Palisades, California.



## 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 starting 2025

### Patron Members

- A tax receipt for \$900
- Acknowledgement in the Heritage Gazette starting 2025

### 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 archival services
- No tax receipt is given

“Since the 1870s there has been no contact with our James Doman descendants, but in the past two years (since the genealogical bug bit me so badly) I have resuscitated that branch and its present day twigs.”

Kingston who evidently helped him get a good location near Belleville; and, as you say, he probably went each quarter to Peterborough via Rice Lake and the river to get his provision allotments. Did he have to sign for them ... make his mark or signature? Kingston evidently was an attraction; my grandfather, born at sea, married Ann Shaw of Kingston whose father, Robert Shaw, was an itinerant school-teacher traveling around the countryside on horseback teaching on a 50-pound-a-year salary or bonus from the government. Both Robert Shaw and Robert Dowman were born members

The Tyendinaga farm was close to the Lake Ontario water-front properties taken out by the original loyalists from the USA and probably was offered Robert Dowman by Peter Robinson so he could be near Belleville (Myer’s Creek of those days) and medical aid. And quite probably Robert did not want to be too far away from his patron Peter Robinson and the biggest city in Canada: Kingston, the capital; to say nothing of the conveniences of being very close to the Montreal-York post road with frequent mail service. I can very definitely see that Robert shied away from “life in the bush” around Peterborough and tried to

# Sláinte to 50 Years:

## THE PETERBOROUGH CANADIAN



## IRISH CLUB *from '75 TO '25*

BY SHELLEY RYAN, PRESIDENT  
OF THE PETERBOROUGH  
CANADIAN IRISH CLUB

Isn't it grand to think that on September 30, 1975, the Peterborough Canadian Irish Club was formed after a couple of meetings and the Homecoming 75 celebration, which commemorated the 150th anniversary of the Robinson emigration to our region in 1825. At the time, there wasn't an Irish Club in Peterborough, but the renewed interest in Peterborough's Irish

heritage during Homecoming 75 inspired John Corkery. He became the Club's first president, which began with over 200 members and had the support of the Irish Ambassador, James Flavin. Three of these charter members are still living: Shirley O'Grady and Sean and Eileen Dunne.

The Irish Club's objectives have been the same since the beginning: to preserve and promote our Irish heritage while fostering friendships and goodwill among our members and members of other

organizations. The Club also strives to sustain and strengthen relations between the people of Canada and the people of Ireland.

The Club has organized countless events, commemorations and celebrations promoting Irish culture and heritage over the past 50 years, including Irish Festivals, Irish musical groups and bands, Comhaltas (the largest group promoting and preserving traditional Irish music), Club picnics and other member gatherings, bus trips to Grosse

Ile and beyond, guest speakers, a Cairde newsletter, and an annual St. Patrick's Day celebration. Although the Club does not run the Peterborough St. Patrick's Day Parade, it has supported it since its inception 25 years ago, entering a float into the parade every year and encouraging its members to take part.

The Irish Club has also supported special commemorative projects over the years. Although the Homecoming Monument unveiled at Millennium Park was erected

by the 1975 Homecoming Committee, it has been overseen by the Club ever since. An Irish Famine Monument was also erected at Del Crary Park in 1997 to commemorate the victims of the great famine in Ireland between 1847 and 1850 on the famine's 150th anniversary. It reminds visitors of the suffering and determination of those who had to leave Ireland, their homeland, and the impact they had on the community. In 2000, the Irish Club also installed interpretive panels in Millennium Park,

which display historical information and illustrate the Irish heritage that continues to thrive in Peterborough.

As a point of interest, several of our members are descendants of the 1825 Peter Robinson emigrants. Given this connection to the emigration, it is wonderful that the Club is celebrating its 50th year and participating in the 200th anniversary of the Peter Robinson Emigration at the same time. It's an exciting and special year that will be remembered for years to come. ▶



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1) John Corkery, the first President of the Peterborough Canadian Irish Club. Image Credit: The Peterborough Canadian Irish Club. 2) Members of the Peterborough Canadian Irish Club reenacting the landing of the Irish settlers during the plaque unveiling naming the ballroom at the Red Oak Inn the "Peter Robinson Ballroom" during the summer of 1980. Left to Right (Back Row): John V Mober, Mrs. Vasey(?), Doug Vasey (Peter Robinson), Bill Jordan (Adam Scott), Paul Crough, Patti Crough, Shelley Ryan (Mober), Colette Mober. Left to Right (Front Row): Bernadette Mober, Morgan Crough, Mat Crough, Lelsie Crough, Tom Mober. Image Credit: The Peterborough Canadian Irish Club.

3) Musicians Playing During the Peterborough Canadian Irish Club's Irish Festival in 1988. Image Credit: The Peterborough Canadian Irish Club. 4) Philis Vail, the Peterborough Rose of Tralee for 1985. Peterborough was represented in the Rose of Tralee International Festival for many years, but a Peterborough Rose has only been crowned the Rose of Tralee once, in 1982. Her name was Laura Gaine. Image Credit: The Peterborough Canadian Irish Club.



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To recognize the Irish Club's 50th Anniversary, the Club hosted several events during the Nine Ships 1825 Bicentennial Commemoration Week of August 1-10, 2025. The week began on Friday, August 1, with the unveiling of a plaque attached to the Homecoming 75 monument in Millennium Park in Peterborough, which marked the Irish Club's 50th anniversary and the Bicentennial of the Peter Robinson Irish Emigration. In addition to Irish Club members, dignitaries from the local community and the Irish diaspora attended the unveiling, including Vice Consul General Cahal Sweeney from the Irish Consulate in Toronto and Bishop Daniel Miehm of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Peterborough. Violinist Albert Moher, a talented Irish Club member, provided background music.

The celebrations continued the next day, Saturday, August 2, at the Grand Irish Gathering. Over 200 guests, including the aforementioned dignitaries, gathered inside the new Canadian Canoe Museum to celebrate the Club's 50th anniversary with an evening of good food, great music, and the company of Irish friends from near and far. The evening featured performances from Janet McCue and Healing With Drums, Irish Dancers from the Kelly School of Dance, Kathy and Jane Young, and the entertaining and energetic band Hunt the Hare, which had people on their feet late into the night.

Later in the week, on Wednesday, August 6, the Club chartered a boat from Liftlock Cruises for a Historic Boat Cruise down the Otonabee River. The first Bicentennial Week event to sell out, the cruise followed the same route the Peter Robinson Emigrants would

have taken on the final stretch of their journey to Peterborough in 1825. Featuring commentary from historian Don Willcock and live music from the Kitchen Party Band, the cruise was a memorable experience for Irish Club members and out-of-town visitors alike.

The success of the Irish Club reaching this 50th anniversary milestone is a credit to so many Executive and Board members, as well as members who believe that preserving our Irish heritage is important. Thank you to all of you for your commitment, support and endless hours spent ensuring that the Peterborough Canadian Irish Club will continue to thrive for the next 50 years and beyond.

The Irish Club would also like to acknowledge their appreciation to the board of Nine Ships 1825 Inc. for their contributions and endless hours ensuring that the special events organized by the communities celebrating the 200th anniversary of the Peter Robinson Emigration from Ireland in 1825 were known far and wide. Thank you to Nine Ships for the support and generosity you gave to the Irish Club as we celebrated 50 years. Thanks to your efforts, memorable events were held over the summer, which recognized our Irish ancestors and continued to promote our Irish heritage.

*The Irish Club welcomes new members. An annual single membership \$15/year or \$30 for 3 years. A family or couple membership is \$25/year or \$50 for 3 years. Membership or other inquiries can be made at the peterboroughcanadianirishclub@gmail.com. You can also follow the Club on Facebook @Peterborough Canadian Irish Club.*



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5) A flyer for the Peterborough Canadian Irish Club's 3rd Irish Festival on June 2 and 3, 1989. Image Credit: The Peterborough Canadian Irish Club. 6) Peterborough Canadian Irish Club President Shelley Ryan, Charter Member Shirley O'Grady and member Debbie Hough in front of the plaque that was unveiled on August 1, 2025, at the Homecoming 75 monument in Millenium Park. Image credit: Linda Cardona. 7) The monument and plaque erected by the Peterborough Canadian Irish Club in Del Crary Park in 1997 to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the great famine in Ireland. Image Credit: The Peterborough Canadian Irish Club.

8) The crowd inside the Canadian Canoe Museum at the Grand Irish Gathering on Saturday, August 2, 2025. Image Credit: The Peterborough Canadian Irish Club. 9) The Peterborough Canadian Irish Club's float in the 2015 St. Patrick's Day Parade. Image Credit: The Peterborough Canadian Irish Club. 10) Peterborough Canadian Irish Club Members Pam Gash, Frank Gash and Maureen Crowley in historical dress for the historic boat cruise on August 6, 2025. Image Credit: The Peterborough Canadian Irish Club.

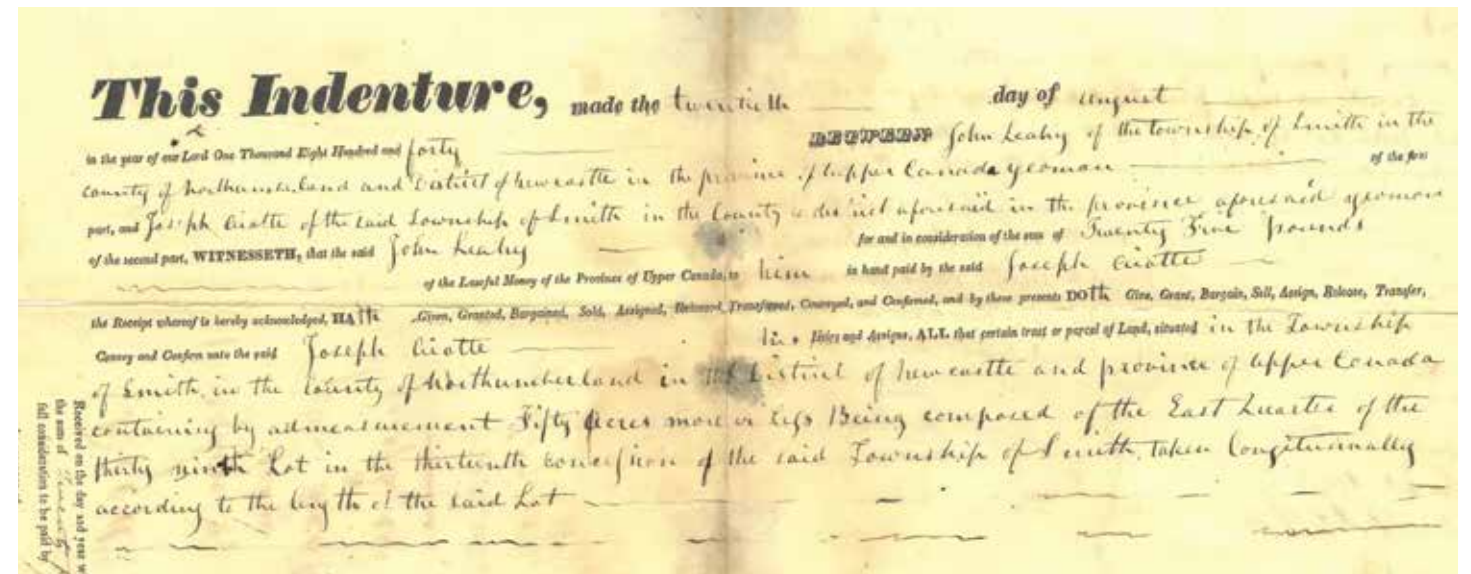


BY ALICIA BERTRAND

# The AYOTTE FAMILY FARM in SMITH TOWNSHIP

Joseph Ayotte was born on April 11, 1809 in Champlain, Lower Canada (Quebec).<sup>1</sup> He was part of a migration to Upper Canada (Ontario) during the timber trade. Timber was rafted from Quebec up the St. Lawrence River to Peterborough and the Kawarthas via the Trent waterway. The timber trade in the area boomed once dams were built, making it easier to traverse the waterways. The *Peterborough Examiner* notes Ayotte came to Smith township as a teenager sometime before 1830.<sup>2</sup>

1. *Find a Grave*, "Jean "Joseph" Ayotte", Find a Grave", online at <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/241873121/jean-%22joseph%22-ayotte>  
 2. Peterborough Examiner, "Peterborough's French connection", *Peterborough Examiner*, Aug. 1, 2015. [https://www.thepeterboroughexaminer.com/life/peterboroughs-french-connection/article\\_4379ca95-ee60-5cef-83b0-8108e2272124.html](https://www.thepeterboroughexaminer.com/life/peterboroughs-french-connection/article_4379ca95-ee60-5cef-83b0-8108e2272124.html)

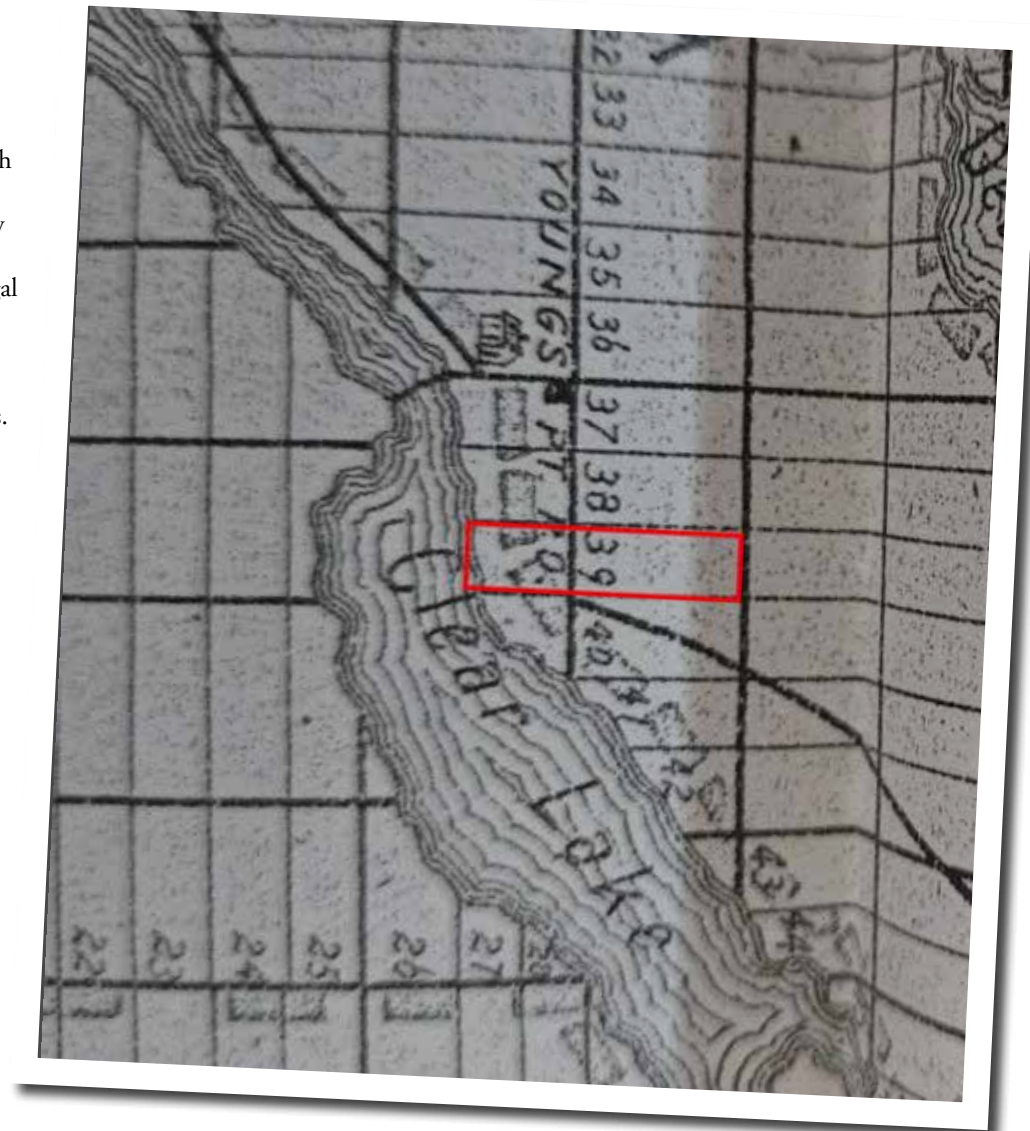


Opposite page: Ayotte Cabin, Lang Pioneer Village, Lang (Photo by Alicia Bertrand, 2025). Above: Snippet of Land Deed Transfer, Delledonne Fonds 30, Volume Series F, File 331 available at the Trent Valley Archives (TVA). Below right: Lot 29, Concessions 12 and 13, Young's Point. The Ayotte family-owned land. Source: County of Peterborough map, *Illustrated Historical Atlas of Peterborough County 1825-1875* / A.O.C. Cole, general editor. *The Peterborough Historical Atlas Foundation Inc.*

In 1840, Ayotte purchased a 50-acre plot of land from his father-in-law, John Leahy, on Lot 39, Concession 13 in Smith township for £25.<sup>3</sup> According to the *Peterborough Examiner*, Ayotte built a saw mill, water wheel, and wagon wheels on the farm as well.<sup>4</sup> Ayotte signed all his legal papers with his "mark", an X. Although he was illiterate, like many French Canadians in the region at the time, he was industrious. He built a lasting farm, business, and family that continues to own the land in Young's Point to this day.

Ayotte married Mary Ann Leahy and had nine children. He initially built a small cedar log cabin on the lot, which served as the family home until a larger house was constructed. The original cabin continued to be used as a cottage. Due to its historical importance to the community, it was moved to Lang Pioneer Village. If you visit, the small size of the cabin gives you an idea of why he had to build a bigger house for

3. TVA, *Land Deed Transfer*, Delledonne Fonds 30, Volume Series F, File 331; Michael Chappell, "The Ayotte Family of Young's Point", *The Lakefield Herald*, January 26, 2024, pgs. 5-6. 4. *Peterborough Examiner*, "Peterborough's French connection".



88  
POLLING SUB-DIVISION, NO. 4  
Comprising all Lots and parts of Lots in the Twelfth, Thirteenth, Fourteenth, Fifteenth, Sixteenth, Seventeenth and Eighteenth Concessions.

NAME.	Con.	Lot.	Other Description.	Post Office Address.
Allan William.....	18	B 28.....	Tenant.....	Halls' Bridge
Armstrong William...	16	s h 26.....	Tenant.....	"
Anglesey Richard.....	13	e h 36.....	Owner.....	Youngs Point
Ayotte Joseph, jr.....	13	w q 39.....	Owner.....	"
Ayotte George.....	13	e h of w h 39.....	Owner.....	"
Ayotte Peter.....	12	B 39.....	Tenant.....	"
Ayotte Louis.....	12	B 40.....	Owaer.....	"
Ayotte Baptiste.....	13	e q 39.....	Joint Tenants.....	"
Ayotte Francis.....				
Ayotte Joseph, sr.....	13	e q 39.....	Owner.....	"
Bianco William.....	16	B 33.....	Owner.....	Bridgenorth



his nine children. Joseph and Mary Ayotte had the following children:

- Joseph Ayotte Jr. (1837–1911)
- Elizabeth Ayotte (1840–1912)
- George Ayotte (1845–1910)
- Mary Ann Ayotte (1845–1943)
- Louis Ayotte (1849–1915)
- Peter John Ayotte (1852–1907)
- Betsie(?) Ayotte (1853–?)
- John Francis Ayotte (1854–1929)
- Jean Baptiste Ayotte (1858–1935)

In September 1851, Ayotte purchased

another 50 acres from William Pye. In the 1861 Canada Census, the Ayotte farm consisted of two properties. Fifty acres were listed under his wife, Mary Ann. This land consisted of six acres of pasture and 44 acres of woods. The west side of Lot 39, Concession 13, was valued at \$176. The farm listed under Joseph Ayotte consisted of 150 acres. Twenty-two of which were under cultivation, 34 ½ under crops, 10 under pasture and 83 ½ were woods. This property was valued at \$600. The farm grew “fall wheat” and “spring wheat”, peas, oats, potatoes, turnips, and hay.<sup>5</sup>

By 1884, Ayotte had severed the farm lot for his numerous children. In the *Business Directory and Book of Reference for the Town and County of Peterborough, 1883-1884*, Joseph Sr. lived on the east quarter of Lot 39, Concession 13, Joseph Jr. lived on the west quarter of the lot, George lived on the east half of the west half of the lot, Francis and Baptiste were tenants on the east quarter of the lot, while Peter and Louis lived on Concession 12, Lot B39 and B40.<sup>6</sup>

On her 90th birthday, Joseph Ayotte Jr.'s wife, Bridget (née O'Brien), daughter of a

Peter Robinson immigrant, described life on the Ayotte farm. Ayotte Jr. and Bridget tilled the land with the help of oxen, as horses were too expensive.<sup>7</sup> Harry Ayotte, one of Ayotte Sr.'s grandsons, reminisced about “old Joe” trying to teach him French as a child.<sup>8</sup>

Ayotte leased the property to his son Peter on December 1, 1888, on the condition that the elder Ayotte live on five acres for the next five years in his house and continue to have access to the orchard, barn and stable. The TVA holds the original Will and Farm Lease of Joseph Ayotte, including the lease of the farm to his son in the Delledonne Fonds, Volume Series F, File 319.

Joseph Ayotte died on February 7, 1896, of old age. He was 87 years old. He died in Smith, Peterborough County. He was buried in Saint Mary's Roman Catholic Cemetery in Young's Point.

His grandchildren continued the farming tradition in Young's Point. Joseph P. Ayotte, his grandson through Peter, ran a dairy farm on Lot 39, Concession 12. The TVA Delledonne Fonds holds some farm receipts, including a 1909 promissory note to the Premier Cream Separator Company in Toronto for \$25.

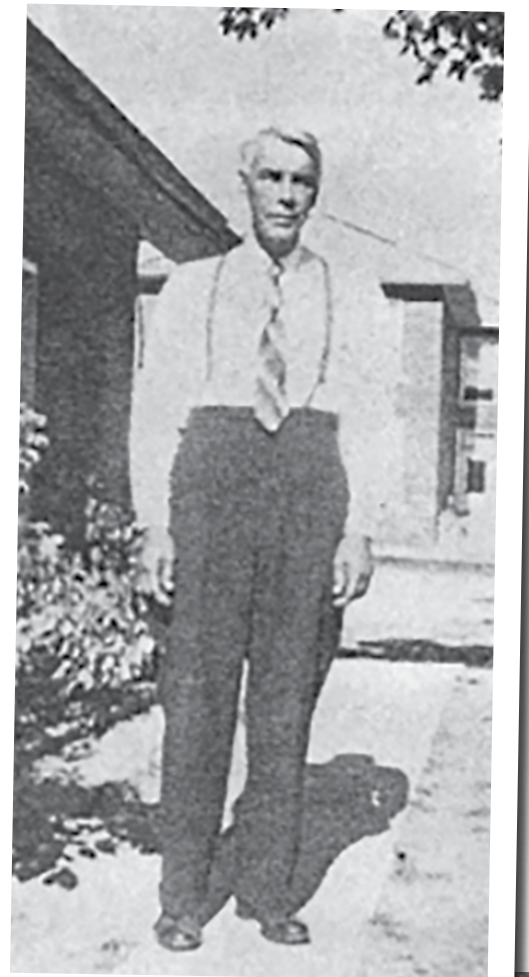
The farm must have been prosperous. Ayotte was the only one of his family in Young's Point who owned a radio in 1931, and he purchased a piano for \$250 in 1924.<sup>9</sup> The TVA has a receipt from the Pedlar People Ltd. in Oshawa, a sheet metal stamping operation and hardware store, for nails, wood, and other materials Ayotte purchased for \$116.19. By 1931, Ayotte's farm was valued at \$3000 and had an 8-bedroom house on the land. Ayotte held turkey raffles, dances, corn bees, and dinners at the farm.<sup>10</sup> The Ayotte descendants continue to enjoy the Ayotte farmland when headed to the cottage on Clear Lake. The original Ayotte cabin was moved to Lang Pioneer Village and houses

the timber exhibit in honour of the impact of the timber drive and its people, including Joseph Ayotte Sr., who stayed in the Kawarthas and Peterborough area from Quebec.

*The author would like to thank Debbie Ayotte for contributing documents on the Ayotte family history.*

*Opposite page top left: Canada, City and Area Directories, 1819-1906, "Business Directory and Book of Reference for the Town and County of Peterborough, 1883-1884", (Peterborough: Times Printing Co., 1884), pg. 88. Opposite page top right: Promissory Note to Premier Cream Separator Company", Delledonne Fonds, Volume Series F, File 318. Opposite page bottom: TVA, "Promissory Note to Premier Cream Separator Company", Delledonne Fonds, Volume Series F, File 318.*

*This page top: Harry Henry Ayotte. This page bottom: Ayotte headstone naming Joseph, Bridget, John Francis, Harriet and Stanley.*



344 764 5-14

This note is given (with or without others) for a **\$25.00**

**PREMIER CREAM SEPARATOR**

Size: 12 No. 152767

Name: Joseph P. Ayotte

P.O. Youngs Point

Lot: 39 Con. 12

Township: Smith

Owner of: 10/10 Acres

Renter of: 10/10 Acres

Agent: A.B. Dwyer

659-661 King St. West  
TORONTO, Nov 26 1909

On or before the First day of Nov 1909 for value received

I promise to pay to **THE PREMIER CREAM SEPARATOR Co. or Order**, at their Office in Toronto, the sum of Twenty Five Dollars, with interest at Ten per cent. per annum after due till paid.

I also agree to furnish further security, satisfactory to you, at any time if required. If I fail to furnish such security, or if I make any default in payment of this or any other note in your favor, or should I dispose or attempt to dispose of my land or any part thereof, or of my personal property, the whole price shall thereupon become due and payable to you, and the other parties of the same, and suit therefor may be immediately entered, tried and finally disposed of in any Court having jurisdiction where the office of THE PREMIER CREAM SEPARATOR Co. is located; and you may retake possession of the machinery or property for which this note is given, or any property substituted therefor without process of law, and at any time thereafter without notice to me may sell the same at public auction or private sale, the proceeds thereof, less proper charges of retaking possession and sale, to be applied on account of the amount of the purchase price and interest then unpaid; such sale or right to sell shall in no way effect or limit my liability for the amount thereof, and for the full purchase price, or payee's right to sue for and recover from me the amount thereof and the said full purchase price and interest, even that in the event of such sale I shall receive credit on account as before provided, and shall thereafter be liable to pay the balance only. Upon such sale, if any my right to possession and delivery before and after full payment and all my other rights and claims thereto shall forever cease. Subject to these provisions I am to have possession and use of the said goods at my own risk of damage or destruction from any cause whatsoever, but the title thereto is not in any event to pass to me until full payment of the purchase price, interest, costs, and charges.

I acknowledge receipt of a true copy of the bargain made for the property for which this note is given.

B.R. 2/13 Lgr.

The above blanks must be filled in carefully and correctly



5. Library and Archives Canada, 1861 Census of Canada, Roll: C-1067, page 28, Image 650. 6. Canada, City and Area Directories, 1819-1906, "Business Directory and Book of Reference for the Town and County of Peterborough, 1883-1884", (Peterborough: Times Printing Co., 1884), pg. 88.

7. "Mrs. Joseph Ayotte Recalls Old Days in Douro and Smith", *The Evening Examiner*, Vol 62, No. 115, November 16, 1928, pg. 1. 8. J. Alex Edmison, *Through the Years in Douro 1822-1967 (Peterborough County)*, (Peterborough: Centennial Committee of the Township of Douro, 1967), pg. 193. 9. TVA, "Receipt for piano from Margaret J. Haynes", Delledonne Fonds, Volume Series F, File 318; Library and Archives Canada, 1931 Canada Census; Folder Number: T-27289; Census Place: Peterborough West, Ontario, Canada; pg. 1. 10. Aileen Young, *Yesteryear at Young's Point: "where the Kawarthas began"* (Custom Printers, Renfrew, ON)

# Finding DOURO'S JAMES THOMSON

BY GORDON DIBB

The earliest reference found to date regarding James Thomson is an 1830 census record for Douro Township, where a James Thompson is listed as either owning and/or occupying Lot 15, Concession 7. This is likely the Mr. Thompson that Samuel Strickland mentions in correspondence to the Hon. Peter Robinson, dated April 10, 1831, concerning his disappointment in not having been granted Lots 18 and 19, Concession 7, Douro Township.<sup>1</sup>

Thompson ever owned or occupied this particular lot, which would suggest that Howard Pammett made a mistake in the transcription or James Thomson ignored his location ticket and squatted upon an adjacent lot that he preferred.

A map drafted by F. P. Rubidge for N. H. Baird's 1835 Trent Waterway Survey shows a house belonging to an individual named Thompson to the immediate north of Crawford's Mill in Lot 15, Concession 7.

This James Thomson was likely James Thomson of Earnshaw, who is named in a will made by Lieutenant Colonel John Caddy, late of the Royal Artillery, as residing in the Newcastle District of Upper Canada in 1833. The stamps on the will suggest that it was originally filed in the Registry Office at Dunse in Berwickshire shortly before John Caddy and his family returned to Upper Canada to take up residence in Douro. This suggests Thomson and Caddy both resided near Dunse and were either related or very close friends. In the will, James Thomson and John Carnegie of Peterborough were trusted to be "Tutors and Curators to any of my children that may be under age at the time of my death."

This Mr. Thomson was likely the same individual James Logan met during his travels in Upper Canada in early August 1836.<sup>2</sup> While on a steamer crossing Lake Ontario from Oswego, New York, Logan met a "Mr. Thomson from Berwickshire, with whom I was acquainted and his brother-in-law Mr. Howden."<sup>3</sup> He subsequently travelled from Cobourg to Peterborough with Mr. Thomson. During his nine days in the Newcastle District, Logan visited Thomson's friends, Messrs Traill, Carnegie and Cunningham.<sup>3</sup>

In 1838, the Selby Mill and associated buildings, including a house intended for a tavern were placed on the market. The attached advertisement appeared in the Cobourg Star, 9 May 1838.

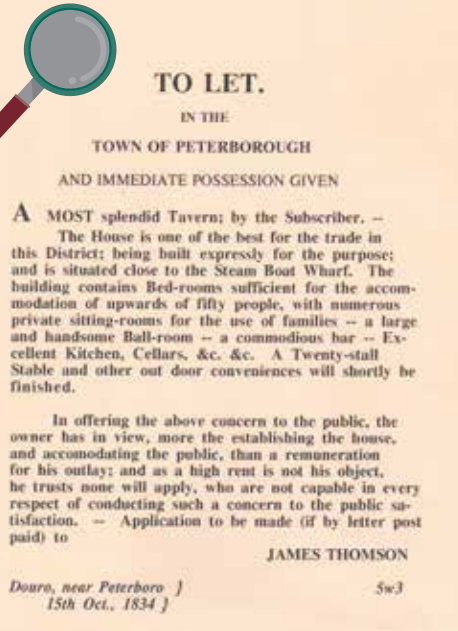
The above advertisement ran in the *Cobourg Star* from mid-October through December 1834. The tavern appears to be an upscale establishment for the town and the owner was likely able to risk capital on speculative ventures. This is likely the tavern shown on T. F. Rubidge's 1835 Trent Waterway survey map, which was located on the west side of the Otonabee River near the Hunter Street Bridge.<sup>4</sup>

Although James Thomson is not included in the list of subscribers for St. John's Church in Peterborough, the plan of church pews shows Thomson owning pew number five.<sup>5</sup> Pews sold for £25. This suggests that Thomson was financially secure and had high social standing.

The Patents Branch of the Ontario Land Office has an office copy of the late 1830s patent map of Douro township. On this map, it is noted on Lot 17 Concession 8 that James Thomson had been granted frontage along this lot on June 2, 1835.<sup>6</sup>

The Douro assessment for January 1840 listed James Thomson residing on Lot 9, Concession 8, which at the time was owned by Walter Crawford. Thomson's assessment was £72, and he had no livestock.<sup>7</sup>

On August 29, 1840, James Thomson purchased Lot 16, Concession 6, in Douro from the Canada Company for £75. A month later, he sold this lot through his attorney, Stafford Kirkpatrick, to Patrick Kelly, a yeoman of Douro, for £200. Thomson was listed as a merchant living in Florida.<sup>8</sup>



*James Thompson's advertisement in the Cobourg Star describing his tavern for sale, published on May 9, 1838.*

In a list of "Settlers Placed on Douro Crown Lands Purchased from the Canada Company (1829-1835) James Thomson is listed as having purchased Lot 16, Concession 6. There is no evidence that

1. J. Alex Edmison, ed., *Through the Years in Douro, 1822-1967*, Peterborough, A. D. Nelson, 1967, 234 2. James Logan, *Notes of a Journey through Canada, the United States of America and the West Indies*, Edinburgh, Fraser & Co. 54 North Bridge, 1838, 44 3. Ibid. 44-45 4. Section 30B of Rubidge's map of the Otonabee River. 5. See F. M. Delafosse, ed., *Centenary History of St. John's Church Peterborough 1827-1927*, Peterborough, Review, 1927 and Elwood H. Jones, *St. John's Peterborough*, Peterborough, Maxwell, 1976, 20. 6. Archives of Ontario lists the original as being on file at Patent Branch No. 13. 7. Assessment for Douro, January 1840, on mfm reel B-77-030 9 of 11, Trent University Archives. [this is also in Trent Valley Archives.] 8. Registry Office, Memorial of Deed, No. 6052 and 6053 dated 29 August and 28 September 1840.

# GRAND COSTUME CONCERTS

## at the BRADBURN OPERA HOUSE, 1877

BY ELWOOD JONES

Recently, eleven months of the Peterborough Review for 1877 was donated to Trent Valley Archives. The folded up volume had been used to insulate walls and was in good readable condition. But tucked into the volume was a 8" x 17" broadsheet, containing an extraordinary promotion for Costume Concerts that would be playing at the Bradburn Opera House (located next to what is now the Market Hall at Peterborough Square). It ran on Thursday and Friday evening, 24 and 25 January, and on Saturday afternoon, "for the benefit of Schools." It was expected that 200 voices and instruments would be featured in the presentation.

The program was in three parts. The first part consisted of 25 songs with young singers. The second part recreated a Greek scene, "Festival of the Rose." The third part was "Mr. Y's celebrated and entirely original Serio-comic Dramatic Medley of the "Songs of Nations." Tickets for the evening were 25 cents; and 10 cents for the matinee. The program was designed by J. W. Youmans, and between the parts James Ormond played "swell songs" created by him. This seemed to be a vaudeville event but it seems too early for that to be.

The internet provided information about J. W. Youmans: *J. W. Youmans' compilation of juvenile songs [microform] : songs of the school room, nursery, &c., &c., &c. : also the beautiful cantata, "Festival of the rose", or, "A day in Arcadia", as performed at his popular juvenile concerts was published in 1861 in Montreal.*

It looks as if Youmans had a pattern that he took to many places over many years, and always depended on the support of a youth choir. Still, many elements of vaudeville were developed well before the 1880s.

*Bradburn Opera House Grand Costume Concerts Advert, 1877*



# Hazelbrae: HUB FOR DR. BARNARDO'S HOME CHILDREN

BY ELWOOD JONES

*Editor's Note: Elwood Jones was inspired to revisit this article, its opinion piece, and his earlier commentary, first published in the Heritage Gazette, Volume 12, Number*

*1, May 2007, pg. 31, after he presented "Dr. Barnardo and the Peterborough Connection" at Activity Haven on September 8, 2025. As one of six discussions about unique Peterborough topics, Hazebrae, Dr. Barnardo's first receiving home in*

*Peterborough for "home children", was one of Peterborough's demolished gems.*

*Note that the following article has been edited since its original posting.*



Roy Studio postcard featuring interior and exterior photographs of Hazelbrae (TVA, Gail Corbett, F271).

## BARNARDO HOME IS BEING RAZED BY CONTRACTORS

Hazel Brae is Being Torn Down by  
George Martin and Herbert Doig  
OPENED JUNE 1883  
Home, After Serving for 39 Years, Was  
Closed in 1922

*Peterborough Examiner*  
28 December 1931

The pick-axe and crowbar of the wrecker are being applied in rapid, hammering strokes against the stout, weather-beaten, brick walls of Hazel Brae, and another of Peterborough's splendid old landmarks is being swiftly demolished.

The dust of over half a century sweeps up about the workmen as they attack the thick walls of the old structure, which still retains some touch of its past splendor. Beams fall, ceilings give way as the destroying tools dig in, and the dust clouds rise high like a pall about the grand old building.

Memories cling about the place. Memories of spirited horses, drawing gay equipages and fair ladies, prancing up through the driveway, arched with spreading elms and maples, to its door of hospitality.

Then, later, memories of ringing, girlish laughter and the soft tones of English voices. Memories of the hundreds, if not thousands, of orphan girls who found this house a haven of comfort during the more than thirty years that it served as the Barnardo Home.

Intent only on the job of wrecking, the workmen wait not for musing, but briskly tear out the heavy oak timbers, knock them free of the dust of time, and load them aboard a truck, which bears them away to be thrown up in a growing, ungainly pile. Perhaps someday these same timbers will be used in other homes, not so fine nor so large, again ring to the joys and tears of human life.

How old Hazel Brae is, no one in the city seems to know for certain. But its history goes right back to the city's babyhood. It



Barnardo children arriving in Peterborough (TVA, Gail Corbett, F271).

was once the home of Alexander Smith, a prominent banker in the town. In 1883, it was purchased by Hon George A. Cox and given to the Barnardo Home Society. This marked the founding of this society in Canada, which is part of the Empire. In June 1883, it was dedicated to providing a home for girls, orphans and others without parental control. These girls, fresh-faced and eager, came to Canada as wards of the Barnardo Home Society to start their new life in the Dominion. Year after year, hundreds of girls came to Hazel Brae, stayed awhile, received training, and then went out across Canada. Mothers and grandmothers now look back upon the old mansion as their first pleasant memory of this country.

In May 1922, after serving for 39 years as a home for Barnardo girls, the house was closed forever, a new residence for the girls being opened in Toronto.

Real estate men came and looked upon the great sweeping size of Hazel Brae with the idea of purchasing it. They admired the beautiful grove of trees that graced its grounds, the large garden and the bountiful orchard of apple and pear trees. Too big, they said. And through the years, the place was given over to swift decay and then to ruin.

Little more than a month ago, it was

sold by the Barnardo Home Society to George Martin and Herbert Doig for demolition. Five hundred dollars, it is said, was the price. The Examiner was informed that the heating system alone in the building cost \$3,000.

The wreckers are making quick work of their job and in a few short weeks, Hazel Brae will be no more than a memory.

## Remembering Peterborough

E. H. D. Hall

*David Carley sent the following observation on the Peterborough Examiner story that appeared in the diary of E. H. D. Hall, December 29, 1931, as it was transcribed by Grace Reinhard, who also commented in brackets.*

A notice in yesterday's Peterborough Examiner states that Hazel Brae, or the Barnardo Home as it was known latterly, is being torn down. One sentence of the article reads, "How old Hazel Brae is, no one in the city now seems to know for certainty. Dad's question is "Who was asked?" With a little bit of trouble, he says, the date could be discovered. Why didn't the writer of the article consult the Registrar at the Courthouse?"

Hazel Brae is a fine old residence, well-built with thick walls and heavy oak timbers. It



Plan of Lot 1/Broken Lot 15, Concession 1 showing the Hazelbrae house and property (TVA, Gail Corbett, F271).

was the home for many years of Dad's sister and her husband, Alexander Smith, and their fine family of children. Unfortunately, Mr. Smith died very young from a stroke, possibly brought on by worry. He had gone to Quebec to negotiate a deal in square-timber; his wife and child were with him. Prices were low, and things did not work out as he had hoped. It was thought that the disappointment and worry brought on the stroke from which he never recovered. He had been a successful banker until he gave that up to deal in timber.

The architect of Hazel Brae was Mr. John E. Belcher. Hazel Brae was built by Alexander Smith. As the Examiner reports, "Memories cling about the place. Memories of spirited horses, drawing gay equipage and fair ladies prancing up through the driveway arched with spreading elms and maples to its door of hospitality."

After Mr. Smith's death, Dad went to live with his sister and remained till he went west in 1882. The children, who are grown to middle age, still tell about the pranks they

played on their Uncle Harry. There was a chair with very wide, flat arms and they would crowd into it on his approach, when he would pretend not to see them and sit on the lot. This chair was useful too when turned upside down for playing house.

The governess, Miss Veal, formed classes and during her stay with Mrs. Smith took pupils outside the family, thus beginning her career as a schoolmistress before going to Toronto, where she carried on a very successful and excellent private school for girls.

In 1883, it was purchased by Hon George A. Cox and given to the Barnardo Home Society. This marked the founding of this society in Canada, which is part of the

Empire. In June 1883, it was dedicated to the purpose of providing a home for girls, orphans, and others without parental control. In May 1922, the house was closed forever, a new residence for the girls being opened in Toronto.

Real estate men came and looked upon the great sweeping size of Hazel Brae with the idea of purchasing it. They admired the beautiful grove of trees that graced its grounds, the large garden and the beautiful orchard of apple and pear trees. (Dad planted many of the apple trees.) Too big, they said, and through the years the place was given over to swift decay.

Little more than a month ago, it was sold by the Barnardo Home Society to George Martin and Herbert Doig, to be wrecked \$500, it is said, was the price. The Examiner was informed that the heating system alone cost \$3,000.

*The following appeared in Elwood Jones, Historian at Work, Peterborough Examiner, 24 March 2007.*

## Hazelbrae: hub for Dr Barnardo's home children

Elwood Jones

From 1883 to 1922, Hazelbrae was the first Canadian home for over 10,000 girls who emigrated from England to Canada. Dr. Thomas Barnardo led a successful child rescue agency which operated widely in England, and still does. Part of his vision was to send some of these children to Canada, where their prospects for a useful future would be higher than if they remained in England, especially if they stayed in the squalid neighbourhoods where they had been raised. If they came to Canada, they could be placed with foster parents, who would be monitored, and they might be used as domestics or hired farm labourers. Children were considered an asset in Victorian Canada, but families that had no children, or very few, welcomed the opportunity to have someone to help with farm chores either inside or out. Dr. Barnardo's organization, which assisted 30,000 children to Canada, was the largest of the many agencies organizing the major child emigration of over 60,000 children to Canada.

Hazelbrae had a distinguished history even before the Barnardos. Edward Caddy, a public lands surveyor and artist, sketched the house at the top of Conger's Hill in 1839. The property, roughly bounded by Parkhill Road, Chemong Road, Barnardo Avenue and the river, was owned by John Hall and Moore Lee, the owners of Peterborough's government mill. The property passed to John R. Benson, the town's first merchant, in a public auction in 1837 and remained in his family until 1872, when this part of the property was purchased by Alexander Smith.

Sheriff Conger appears to have built the first grand home on this site. Conger was Peterborough's first sheriff, 1841-56, and was a sometime MPP and mayor. He died of tuberculosis in 1864, at the age of 60. He offered the house for sale in 1861, and the advertisement was still running in July 1863. His home, "Terrace Hill Cottage",

was occupied by the Hon Sidney Smith, then Postmaster General of Canada, who had a law office on the northwest corner of Hunter and Water streets. "The House is large, convenient and in excellent state of repair. The grounds attached — an entire block of two acres — are beautifully laid out, forming one of the most agreeable residences in Upper Canada."

Alexander Smith, a banker, built Hazelbrae on the top of the hill before 1872. The property passed to Robert Nicholls, the banker and merchant, and was in his estate when he died in November 1883. His widow, Charlotte Nicholls, sold the property to T.G. Hazlett, Samuel Dickson's son-in-law, in June 1884, and it was in turn sold to George A. Cox in 1888. Title to the property passed to the Barnardo Homes only in 1918, near the end of its remarkable connection to Peterborough.

George A. Cox was impressed with the reputation of the Barnardo Homes for assisting orphans and neglected and destitute children. When in 1883 he heard that the Rev. F. Fielder had brought the first contingent of 70 boys to Toronto, Cox went to Toronto and offered to provide a suitable Peterborough home for the enterprise. Fielder came to Peterborough and quickly accepted Cox's offer of a

house and land for Barnardo's orphan and destitute girls. Cox worked with Charlotte Nicholls and T. G. Hazlett to enlarge and prepare Hazelbrae. Fielder's preferred choice had been Moira Hall, which Charlotte Nicholls was converting to Peterborough's first general hospital.

The first group of children destined for Hazelbrae arrived July 22, 1884. Their train stopped as it crossed the laneway from George Street to the front of Hazelbrae on the hill overlooking the Midland railway line that is now part of the Rotary trail. The children (which included some boys) had only a short walk to their new Canadian home. The preparations had been completed, and the following day, a grand lawn and garden party was held at Hazelbrae. Dr Barnardo came to town the following month, and Peterborough people packed into the Bradburn Opera House to hear Dr Barnardo talk about his work in the "rescue of human wrecks from the seething sea of London misery." "The work had begun with one homeless boy in 1865, and by 1883, the Barnardo Homes were helping 1300 children a year. There had been some criticisms, but he noted that the more general feeling in 1883 was that "there was room in this broad Dominion for every soul likely to become a good and industrious citizen."

The *Peterborough Examiner* described the building in 1884:

*The building is thus laid out for use. On the left of the wide entrance hall is the private parlour of Mr. and Mrs. Duff, who in consideration of the social sacrifices their position entails, are entitled to the seclusion and comfort this well-furnished and comfortable room admits of. Facing the entrance is the dining room for the staff, and to the left end of the staircase hall is the secretary's office, and to the right of the hall, is entered by two doors, the capacious, well-lit playroom, the former drawing room of the residence. The kitchen has been converted into a dining hall for the children. Opening off this is an annex, added by Mr. Cox, fitted up as a lavatory, where the youngsters perform their toilets. In the second story are the staff sleeping rooms, and a portion is used for a dormitory. This, together with the third story, is fitted with neat little single cot beds, sufficient to sleep 150 children. Each cot is neatly made up, the covering being a grey blanket, with spotless pillows, etc. To a lad or girl, whose memories go back a few months to the time when softest couch was under a cart or archway, in a coal bin, or in the more sheltered but more repulsive squalor of a lodging house, these comfortable beds will be the incarnation of princely luxuriousness — a realization of something which, to*

View of the gardens at Hazelbrae (TVA, *Electric City*, F50 5.024).



their one-time wretchedness, seemed as unattainable as to the Scriptural Dives, is "Abraham's bosom." The staff of servants required is only two girls, a large share of the work being done by the orphans, who are thus practically initiated into the mysteries of housekeeping. Hazelbrae is only a temporary home for the orphans. As soon as possible, they are placed in situations or adopted, and thus make room for fresh arrivals.

Dr Barnardo returned to Hazelbrae in July 1890. He had been concerned that at times the girls had been left without adult supervision in the house, or in the distant outhouses, milking cows. Hazelbrae was usually home to about 25 to 30 girls and the staff.

The maintenance of Hazelbrae proved difficult. George A. Cox, the great benefactor, moved to Toronto shortly after Hazelbrae came to Peterborough. Moreover, he seems to have been upset with how the Annersleys, whom he considered friends, lost their jobs. The Roman Catholic church had gone to court because it felt many of the children who had had Roman Catholic parents were being raised as Methodists. Raising local funds was more difficult in this climate. The Barnardo Children had been warmly welcomed to Peterborough, and for the most part, despite great difficulties and some complaints about how the children were treated, the history of Hazelbrae seems to have matched its expectations.

In England, Barnardo's is still very active in child welfare. The Barnardo children left countless descendants, many in the Peterborough area. Hazelbrae, though, ceased operations in 1922. The Canadian government was pressured to stop child emigration because labour unions complained that such emigration drove down the wages other workers could demand. As well, Canada was developing systems for looking after Canadian orphans and destitute children, and people such as Charlotte Whitton and other social workers thought priority should go to Canadian social welfare developments. The buildings at Hazelbrae were dismantled over the years, and in 1941,

Dr. Barnardo's Homes in London, England, sold the entire property to Morley Shaver of Peterborough. O'Carroll Avenue was carved out, and a subdivision was soon developed. A nearby street is named Barnardo Avenue, but otherwise, there is little to remind us that Peterborough was once an important stop in the lives of more than 10,000 girls.

### Afterthoughts

Murray Paterson told me years ago, and again recently, that Hazel Brae was dismantled to the foundations around 1931 or 1932. However, finding articles in the newspaper is like finding needles in a haystack: you need a magnet or equivalent. The front pages of newspapers in the 1930s usually started 15 or 20 stories on the front page. It has the advantage of getting your attention piqued very quickly. The disadvantages are without number. Murray Paterson wrote many memories of growing up on George Street, north of Parkhill, in the 1930s and 1940s and published his very solid and readable book of memories, *The Golden Days of Yesteryear*, in 1998. His memories of the Barnardo site are on pages 127-8. His brother watched the building being torn down while he was restricted to his bedroom at 748 George Street, and over the weeks Queen Alexandra School came into view. Murray remembers playing in the cement rooms of the basement in the late 1930s, and he learned to ski on the long, graceful laneway from the house down to George Street, now marked by the green sign erected by Ivy Sucee and the Hazelbrae-Barnardo Memorial Group. On the Barnardo Street side, the hill was steep and unwooded, and perfect for tobogganing, at least in those days of little vehicular traffic. Over the years, the ravines and gullies of his childhood have been filled in for parking lots and streets.

The newspaper account of the razing of the buildings struck me as very placid. How easily people of 1931 accept the real estate judgment that some buildings were too large. Had the building survived until Trent University came in the 1960s, it would have been a sure-fire hit for the Peter Robinson campus. There were no regrets about the loss of such an important building.

What should we know about George Martin and Herbert Doig? The 1937 street directory lists George H. R. Martin living with his wife Amelia on the west side of Monaghan, one house south of Lansdowne. Twenty years later, the Sears store would be built here as the start of Lansdowne Place. Martin was the proprietor of Peterborough Auto and Building Wreckers, which sold used parts

for all makes of cars and trucks, replaced auto glass in sedans, and sold used building materials. At the time, he was the only dealer in used auto parts. A dozen years earlier, George H. Martin was working for McDonald Lumber Company, George and Rink, living at 104 Aylmer.

In 1937, Herbert F. Doig and his wife Charlotte were market gardeners on the

south side of Cameron Street, just east of Monaghan Road. The Martins and the Doigs were neighbours. In the 1925 street directory, Herbert Doig is listed at the same location but is described as a general dealer. John Doig, living on High Street, was described as a junk dealer. In the classified section of the 1925 directory, the junk dealers were Herbert Doig, D. Florence and Sons (with their yard on Bethune south

of Simcoe), A. Low (at 385 Bethune) and George Stevens (at 364 Mark Street, by the old railway yards). Doig must have been interested in the furniture and equipment, but in 1937 might have been more interested in what could be saved from the gardens, because the Examiner description suggests the gardens were fabulous. Grace Reinhard notes that her father, E. H. D. Hall, helped plant some of the fruit trees.



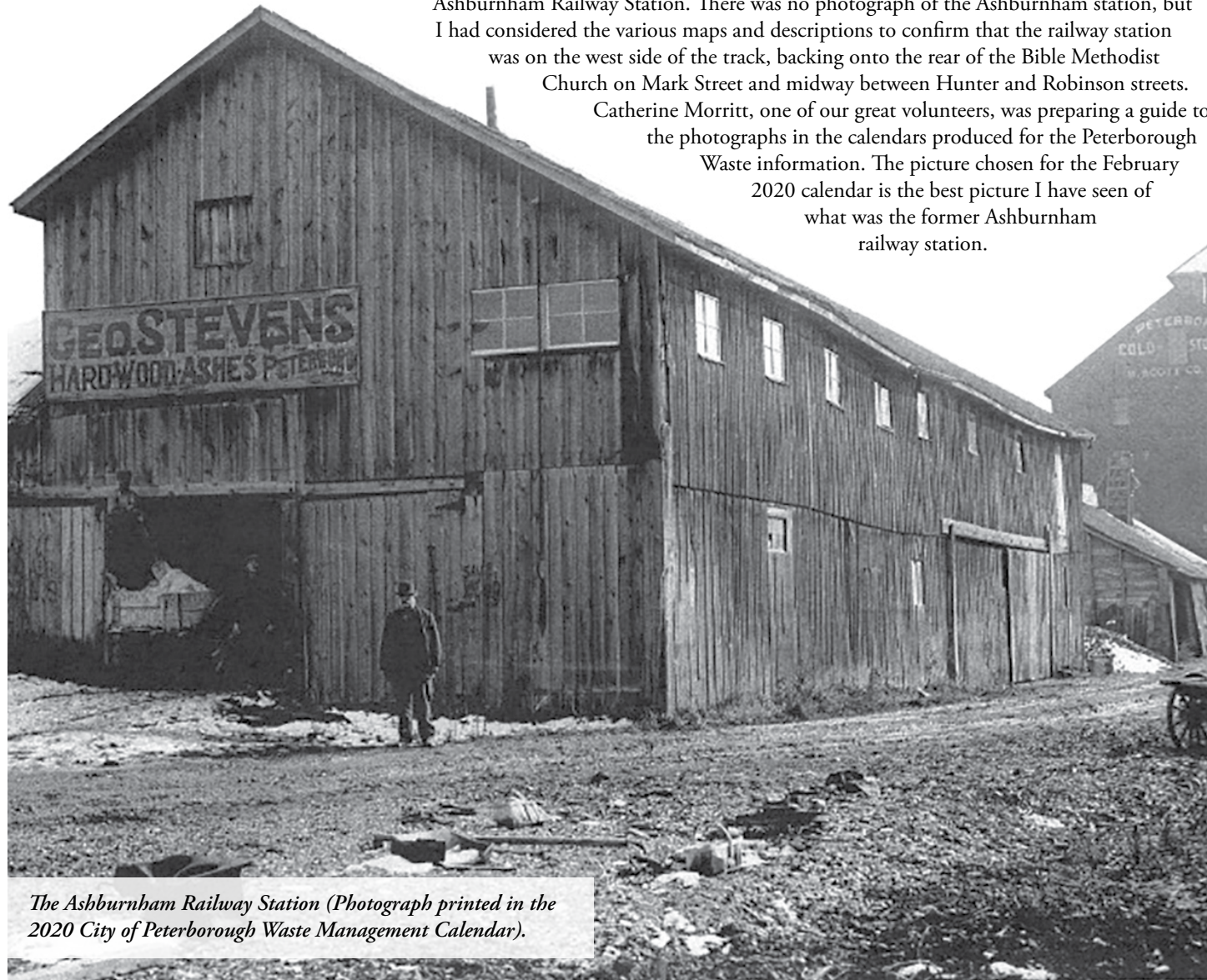
Barnardo Children Outside Hazelbrae (TVA, Gail Corbett, F271).

# THE ASHBURNHAM RAILWAY STATION REVISITED

BY ELWOOD JONES

In the Heritage Gazette of the Trent Valley, November 2017, I wrote about the Ashburnham Railway Station. There was no photograph of the Ashburnham station, but I had considered the various maps and descriptions to confirm that the railway station was on the west side of the track, backing onto the rear of the Bible Methodist Church on Mark Street and midway between Hunter and Robinson streets.

Catherine Morritt, one of our great volunteers, was preparing a guide to the photographs in the calendars produced for the Peterborough Waste information. The picture chosen for the February 2020 calendar is the best picture I have seen of what was the former Ashburnham railway station.



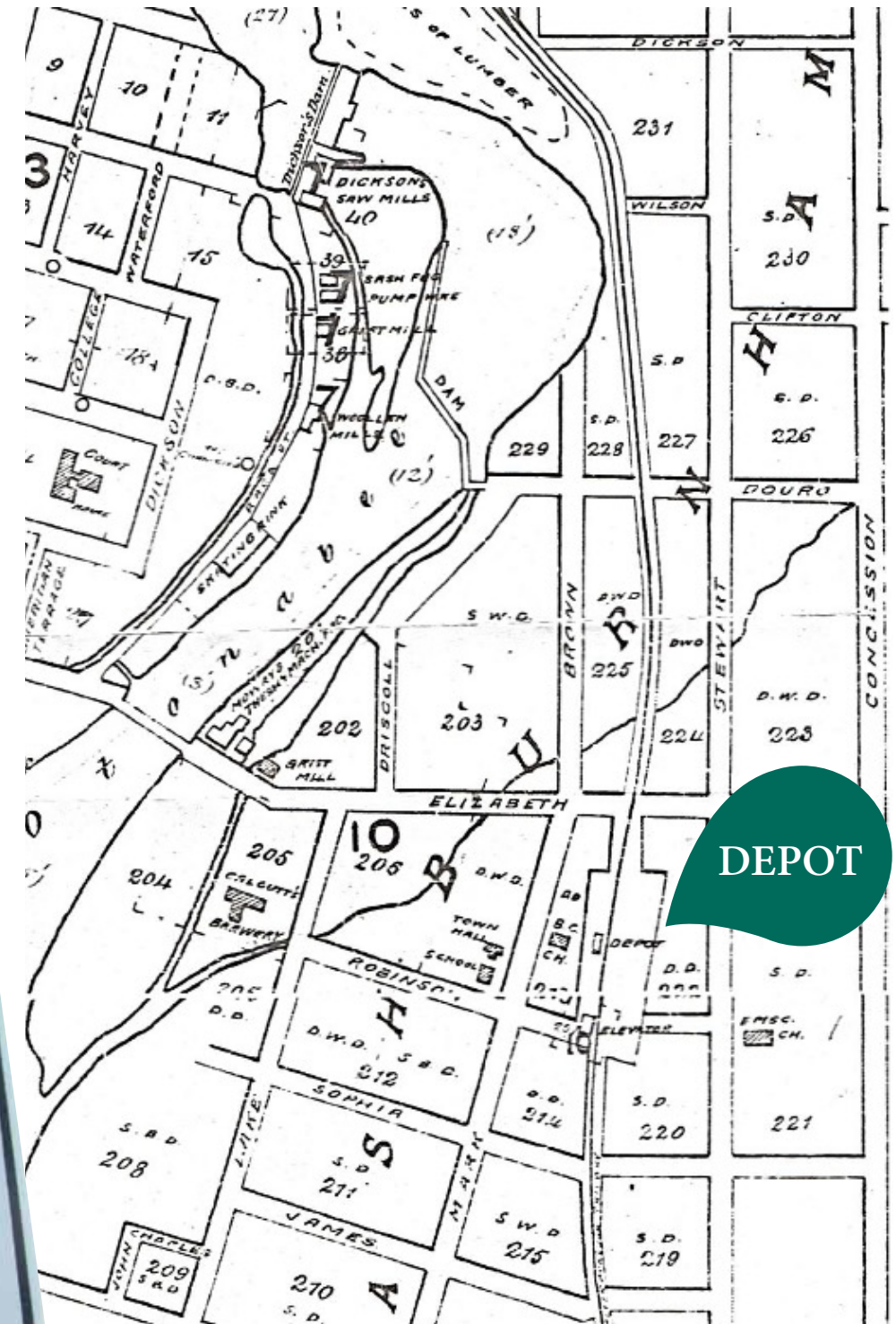
The Ashburnham Railway Station (Photograph printed in the 2020 City of Peterborough Waste Management Calendar).

This photo shows the building on the footprint of the Ashburnham railway station as seen from the west, or Mark Street, side, which would have been the back of the railway station. There is an addition on the other side, which would have been where the passengers were served. The photo shows George Stevens, the “Ash King of Ashburnham,” beside the building. The sign reads “Geo. Stevens Hardwood Ashes Peterboro.” In the distance past a shed that was still standing in the 1970s is the cold storage plant, “Peterborough Cold Storage W. Scott Co. Ltd.” Trent Valley Archives has the blueprints for the cold storage plant and the building became the main site of the Montgomery Brothers storage facility which included two other buildings on the south side of Robinson, still standing. The Scott building had a serious fire in the 1960s and a new warehouse building replaced it. After Frank Montgomery died the city acquired the building and demolished it with a view to straightening Robinson Street in this area, a project still not undertaken.

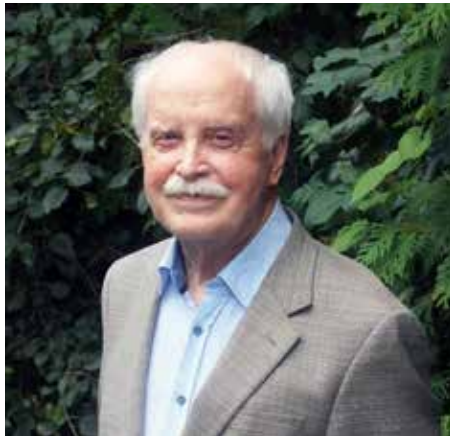
The 1882 Goad insurance plan shows the “Depot” location. Elizabeth Street was renamed Hunter Street in 1905 when Ashburnham was annexed by Peterborough. The Methodist Church

(formerly the Bible Christian Church) is shown directly beside the Depot. In 1928, the new Mark Street Church was built at the corner of Mark and Hunter.

The 2017 article is still worth reading and it is on the Trent Valley Archives website. Click on Publications/Heritage Gazette and choose the PDF for the November 2017 issue.



Left: Ashburnham Railway Station historical plaque installed by the Peterborough Historical Society. Above: The 1882 Goad insurance plan showing the “depot” location.



BY ELWOOD H. JONES

### 1. Robert Elwood McBrien

Someone left a postcard in the TVA mail box, probably because of the name Elwood. The postcard was a view of St. John's Anglican Church, around 1905 when the spruce trees planted several years earlier were looking mature, and the ivy planted by Canon Beck's second wife, Margaret, fully covered the tower above the window. The card was postmarked 23 September 1911, which was shortly after the People's Chime was installed in June, Peterborough's gift for the coronation of George V. The writing was very brief. On the message side, "From Daddy to Elwood xxxx" and on the address side it read "Master Elwood McBrien, Belleville P.O. Ont. D&D Institute."

The D & D Institute was the "Deaf and Dumb Institute" in Belleville, a name that was used from 1870 to 1912. It is now known as the Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf.

We searched the street directories of the period for the McBriens and discovered that his father was Taylor McBrien, who worked at the William Hamilton Manufacturing Co. on Reid Street, near Murray, and later became a blacksmith. The family home was at 340 ½ Water Street in 1912 and 274 ½ McDonnell in 1923. By 1944, father and son (and his wife, Blanche) lived at 485 McDonnell. At this time, R. Elwood was a draftsman at Canadian General Electric (CGE). His father was William Taylor McBrien (1871-1946).

R. Elwood was born near Campbellford, 23 November 1900 and died 20 July 1970. At age seven, he became deaf from spinal meningitis and attended the School for the Deaf, 1911-1917, and then attended Belleville Collegiate, 1917-1918, and Peterborough Collegiate, 1918-1921. He received his B.A.Sc. from the University of Toronto in 1925. He was a draftsman for "a metal fabrication factory" and then had a long career in CGE, 1928-1969. While at CGE he designed major components for

hydro-electric projects in Canada, Brazil and New Zealand.

He is considered one of the founders of the Canadian Association of the Deaf in 1940, "protecting and promoting the rights, needs and concerns of the Deaf." In its first years, the Association provided scholarships for students to attend Galludet University in Washington D.C. The Association also succeeded in getting schools used for military purposes in World War II to be returned to their former uses.

This is a remarkable story made accessible by one skimpy postcard. Another reason we need archivists.

### 2. Canadian Census for East Central Ontario, 1842-1991

The TVA has a good run of the microfilm copy of the personal censuses for 1842 to 1911, with the printed guide to those censuses. Our list is filed in Fonds 1227 Canada Census. We also received several volumes related to the profiles for Peterborough and area in 1986, 1991 and 1996.

While it is true that much of this is available online, it is important to be

able to visualize what is available. People may want to use Collections Canada, but the microfilm backup would also be useful.

### 3. World War II in progress

Michael Parnell was fascinated by two newspapers he found dated 10 and 13 April 1942. The papers contained reflections on the war. One of the newspapers comments on the war in the Pacific, but also shows the Allied line of communication to Burma (now called Myanmar). Sports fans will be interested in the communications' coverage of the third game of the Stanley Cup when the Detroit Red Wings took a commanding 3-0 lead in the best-of-seven matchup (the Leafs won the Cup in seven games). The April 13 newspaper featured Lord Louis Mountbatten as chief of the Commando raids. Trench coats were the style at Eatons department store at the time. When lonely newspapers arrive, I always wonder why the paper was kept. Nothing obvious here. Michael wondered how the papers fit into the unfolding war story. Here we are stuck between McArthur vowing to come back and the May naval and air battle of the Coral Sea. Interesting, for sure.

### 4. Colon Smith

A small collection of receipts, membership cards and ephemera provides insight into one of the downtowns of Durham. There are also four postcards of Campbelltown, Scotland, a guide to wireless radio, and a Toronto street and railway guide.

### 5. Gardiner Cemetery Ephemera

Items from the Gardiner Cemetery include an unusual Bible. The Phinney Bible of 1845 was published in Cooperstown, New York, now famous as the home of the Baseball Hall of Fame. However, Joseph Smith of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) fame, used an 1842 Phinney Bible while developing the Mormon Bible. The company produced 138 editions of the Bible between 1822 and 1848 when the company moved

to Buffalo. Bibles are usually valued for the records of family births, marriages and deaths. This Bible has some such information about the Gardiner, Matchett, and Burns families. There are also funeral notices, interesting large photos of Mr. and Mrs. James Laidly and the largest tintype photo that I have seen.

### 6. Bird watching in Toronto, 1940-1944

I am hoping to learn more about the bird watcher who compiled two fascinating scrapbooks of bird watching columns written by ROM's James L. Baillie, Jr. in the Toronto Telegram and Hugh M. Halliday in the weekly Star. The columns are neatly mounted in chronological order, the two ornithologists side by side. One interesting column for 19 April 1941 lists the birds that visit Toronto, listed by date they're likely to appear and the number of years since about 1920 they have appeared in Toronto. In March 1942, there were 70 million waterfowl in North America based on census counts in the USA, an increase of five million in the half decade. It seemed that more liberal hunting rules were not expected if the aim is to keep steady. Our volunteer creating a finding aid for these scrapbooks noticed that the cardinal had newly arrived in Toronto. One wonders if a close study of these columns would give us a good understanding of our changing world. In May 1942, Baillie claimed 50 species of birds were seen.

I am amazed at the variety of materials that come into the archives. There is always something new!

### 7. Grand Costume Concerts at Bradburn Opera House, 1877

Recently, eleven months of the Peterborough Review for 1877 was donated to Trent Valley Archives. The folded up volume had been used to insulate walls and was in good readable condition. But tucked in to the volume was a broadsheet, 8" x 17", containing

an extraordinary promotion for Costume Concerts that would be playing at the Bradburn Opera House (located next to what is now the Market Hall at Peterborough Square). It ran on Thursday and Friday evening, 24 and 25 January, and on Saturday afternoon, "for the benefit of Schools." It was expected that 200 voices and instruments would be featured in the presentation. The program was in three parts. The first part consisted of 25 songs with young singers. The second part recreated a Greek scene, "Festival of the Rose." The third part was "Mr. Y's celebrated and entirely original Serio-comic Dramatic Medley of the "Songs of Nations"". Tickets for the evening were 25 cents; and 10 cents for the matinee. The program was designed by J. W. Youmans, and between the parts, James Ormond played "swell songs" created by him.

This seemed to be a vaudeville event but it seems too early for that to be.

The internet provided information about J. W. Youmans:


*J.W. Youmans' compilation of juvenile songs [microform] : songs of the school room, nursery, &c., &c., &c. : also the beautiful cantata, "Festival of the rose", or, "A day in Arcadia", as performed at his popular juvenile concerts was published in 1861 in Montreal.*

It looks as though Youmans had a pattern that he took to many places over many years, and always depended on the support of a youth choir. Still, many elements of vaudeville were developed well before the 1880s.

### 8. Peterborough Normal School, 1931

The TVA continues to receive materials related to the Peterborough Normal School. The yearbook for 1931-32 has an interesting list of the masters and instructors, as well as their photo portraits. The masters were J. A. Bannister, Principal; A. J. Madill, Nature Studies; C. H. Edwards, on temporary leave;

Sir James Whitey School for the Deaf in Belleville



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TVA volunteer Gary Johnston standing next to the plaque on the side of the building at the corner of Water and Simcoe Streets where Government House once stood during the Peter Robinson's Peterborough walking tour on Friday, August 8. (Image credit: Linda Cardona)

A. Macdonald, Reading, Science of Education and Literature; J. V. McIntyre, Mathematics and Grammar; and M. H. Park, Geography and History. There were also six instructors: A. F. Hagerman, Manual Training; J. A. McKone, Writing; Miss E. MacVannel, Household Science and Hygiene; Miss M. R. Rannie, Music and Physical Training; Miss A. L. Going, Art; and Miss E. M. Munro, Library Science. The 13th staff member was Miss B. Latimer. Several have degrees in pedagogy, which is now known as education; B. Paed and D. Paed, and the latter used the honorific Doctor.

**9. The Irish Arrive and Peter Robinson's Peterborough**


Two of the Trent Valley Archives historical walks sparked by the Bicentennial of the Peter Robinson immigration included Government House, the large log cabin that was the administrative centre for the Robinson immigrants.



Elwood Jones leading the Peterborough Robinson's Peterborough walking tour on Friday, August 8, 2025 as part of Nine Ships 1825's Bicentennial Commemoration Week. Image Credit: Linda Cardona.

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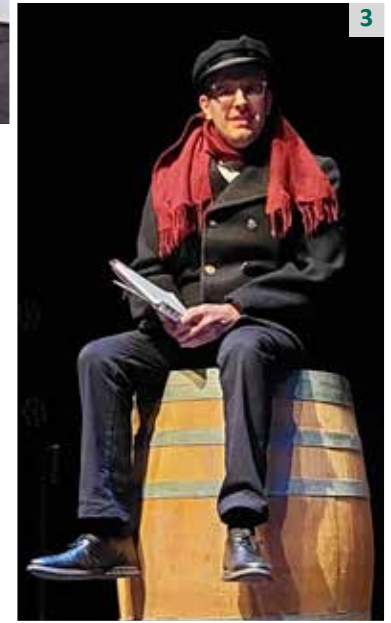
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# CROSSING OVER:

## *Commemorating the Bicentennial of the Peter Robinson Emigration*

On May 29, 30 and 31 2025, The Trent Valley Archives Theatre staged *Crossing Over*, the sequel to 2024's *Tide of Hope*. The play was a huge success, welcoming over 1,000 people to the Market Hall Performing Arts Centre in Peterborough and surpassing the revenue generated from *Tide of Hope*. It commemorated the Bicentennial of the Peter Robinson Emigration to our region in 1825, and many descendants of the original emigrants attended the performances, including Leslie White and Edris Snipes, direct descendants of Peter Robinson himself. Trent Valley Archives Theatre is planning a third (but unrelated) play for 2026 titled *The Kid from Simcoe Street*.



1. Cahal Sweeney, the Vice Consul General of the Irish Consulate in Toronto, at the May 30 performance of *Crossing Over*, pictured with Peter Robinson (Lucas Pronk).

2. The Cast of *Crossing Over*.  
3. *Crossing Over*'s narrator, John Keleher (Justin O'Brien).  
4. Siblings Tim (Kaza Hesselink) and Elinor (Kalla Tahon) causing trouble aboard

the *John Barry*.  
5. A full house for the May 30 matinee performance of *Crossing Over*.  
6. A scene on the deck of the *John Barry*.

