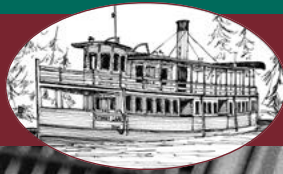


HERITAGE GAZETTE

OF
THE

TRENT



VALLEY



TIDE OF HOPE (*See page 9*)



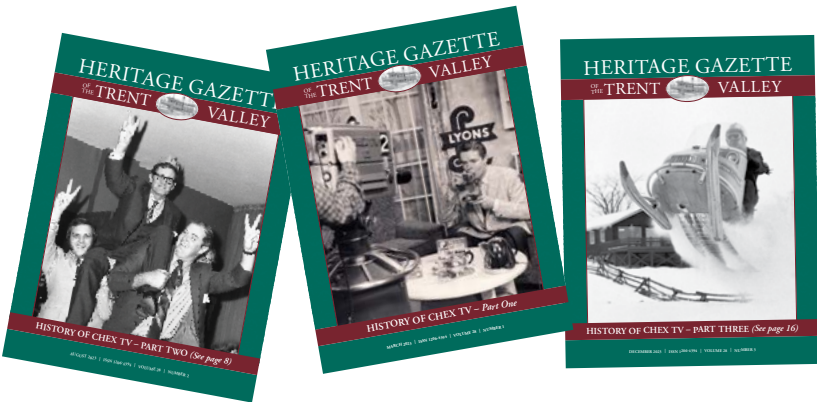
What do Canadians talk about more than the weather, eh? We were putting together this issue of the HG mid-winter — on some of the coldest days of the year. But during our labours we did note happily the arrival of Pancake Day, or Shrove Tuesday, on February 13, a mid-winter event for some, and a reminder for all, of the upcoming Easter. Winter is on the way out and spring is on the horizon — and for the young, so is a visit from the Easter Bunny, with his/her sack of pastel-coloured candy eggs and maybe a large hollow chocolate bunny (not just a treat for the children). This issue will arrive in your inbox in time for the Easter Bunny to stock up for his travels, the night of March 30.

This HG also brings treats for our readers. Volunteers and researchers are always uncovering local people who have interesting stories to tell. A Keene tinkerer was at one time thought to have been the first Canadian to construct a motor car. Close, as they say, but no cigar. Read about it here. Also, Michael Doran concludes the story of his great-uncle, Nicholas Scott, from Young's Point, who served in France in the First World War. It is good to remember. It's Part Three of a series which began in our August 2023 issue.

Our main story celebrates TVA's venture into theatre, not too much of a stretch for producers of the Little Lake Pageant, at historic Market Hall in May. We've an article from the award-winning author on how he turns the drama of history into on-stage drama. Tickets are on sale now and for teachers out there, we are still booking special classroom presentations. Details are available on the TVA website.

In closing, hardy Canadians, cheer up. Spring is on the way. Watch for the bunny.


Steve Guthrie,
Trent Valley Archives, President



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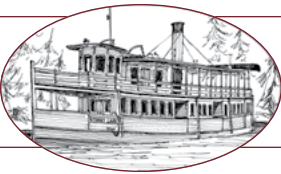
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THIS ISSUE OF THE
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Al Brunger
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Shelagh Neck.

Thanks everyone.

HERITAGE GAZETTE
OF THE TRENT VALLEY



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INTERESTED IN BECOMING A MEMBER?

See page 21 for more details on our membership.

ON THE COVER:

So many bunnies! Laurie Christensen, 1½, is looking for the real one — with the Easter eggs. She's the daughter of photographer Bruce Christensen. *Peterborough Examiner*, April 8, 1971, p. 13.



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FROM ARCHIVE *to* PAGE *to* STAGE:

Writing Historical Fiction

BY EDWARD SCHROETER

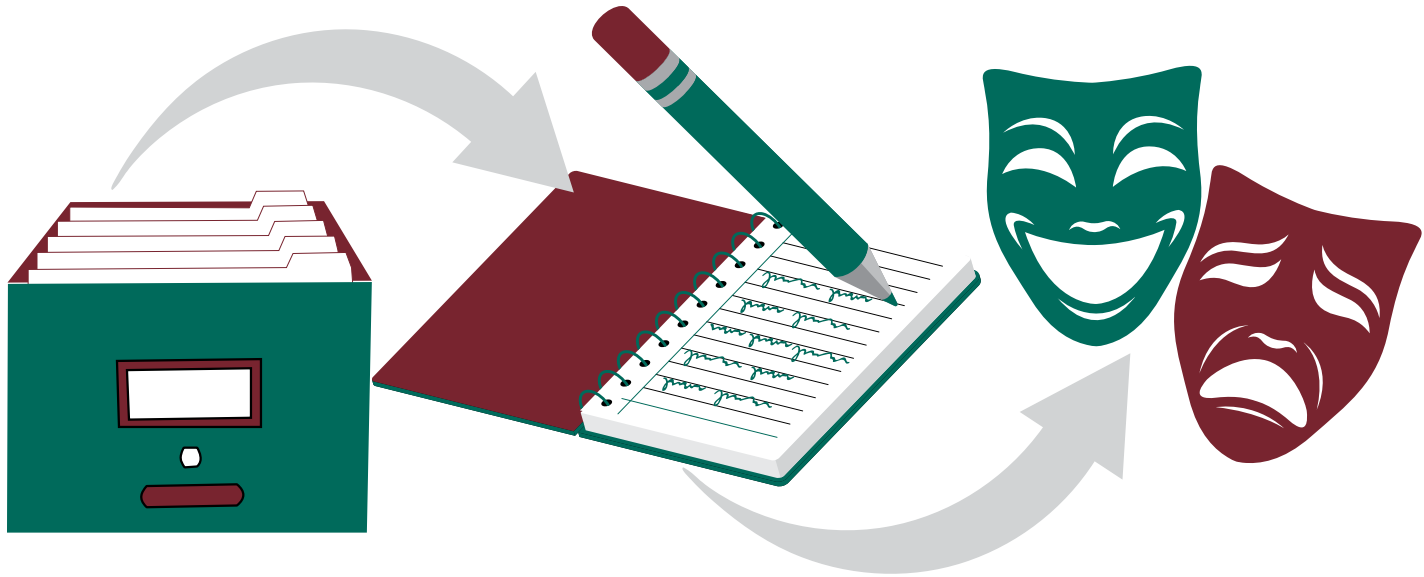
For almost 40 years, before it was fashionable, my artistic impulse has led me to challenge textbook interpretations of Canadian history by looking at the historical record from non-traditional perspectives and through an iconoclastic lens. Some of the questions that drive my writing are "Whose Truth is it?" and "Whose voice is missing?" My compulsion may come from being a bit of an outsider — the son of a German immigrant who was declared an "enemy alien" by the

Canadian government during the Second World War. Playing "soldiers" with other boys my age, I found pretending to kill Germans, Japanese, Confederates, and Indigenous people problematic. Even zapping "alien" invaders became unpalatable to me. Growing up in the history-laden village of Markham helped cement my interest in history. William Berczy helped John Graves Simcoe establish a settlement north of York, called German Mills with immigrants under the

German Land Company in the late 18th Century. German Mills later became the town of Markham. The colonists built 30 miles of roads in Markham township and cleared 24 miles of the Rouge River waterway for navigation. Mennonites began to settle in the area in 1803.

In my first professional, national-award-winning script, *Indian Heart* (1989), I examined the cultural appropriation and First Nation identity theft underlying the Canadian environmentalist, Archie Belaney (Grey Owl), who masqueraded as an Ojibwe person. My third-prize national award-winner, *Fire in the Stable* (1999), portrays General Wolfe's improbable, against-all-odds victory on the Plains of Abraham as the result of delusions born of his rheumatic fever. I try to tell these stories theatrically through fevered dreams, complicity characters and self-deluded narrators.

When I moved here to Peterborough in 1992, I found that I was living in a land with a rich history and treasure trove of stories. The opportunity to stage regional history for young audiences soon presented itself. I relished this work. My efforts have been rewarded by the Peterborough Historical Society with a Samuel Armour Award for developing regional history theatres and a J. Hampden Burnham Award for my body of regional history scripts.



The Birth of Historical Fiction

Despite my love of creating theatre, the path from recorded history to script to stage is often circuitous and recursive. The idea for a play about the Robinson immigrants first came to me in 2003 when I met Joe Corrigan, the new manager of Lang Village Museum at the time. He showed me a replica of the large scow built to transport the settlers up the Otonabee River to Scott's Plains, renamed Peterborough in 1826 after Peterborough, New Hampshire.

I started writing a script titled *The Voyage of Surgeon William Burnie* about the settlers aboard one of the nine ships, The John Barry. However, my interest was overshadowed by a notation about one David Nagle of Mitchelstown, Cork on page 125 of Carol Bennett's 1987 book, *Peter Robinson's Settlers*. According to Bennett's work, Nagle worked as an agent for a landlord, collecting rents and occasionally having to evict those who fell behind in their payments. Land agents as a group were deeply unpopular with their countrymen. When applying to come to Upper Canada, Nagle reported that the Whiteboys, an Irish secret society, were after him. He was afraid for his life and that of his wife. The Whiteboys were part of the Irish agrarian rebellion of 1821-24, opposed to exorbitant rents and church tithes. Bennett's words stirred me: "This was no idle fear."

The Ingredients of Captivating Historical Fiction

In David Nagle I found a compelling story about a character with a serious problem — serious enough to cause him to uproot himself from his beloved homeland and move a world away — somebody running for his life. Thematically Nagle and his fellow Robinson settlers seemed to me to embody the age-old human story of migration and emigration, moving to escape poverty, to escape war and terror, and to find a better life — and, of course in this case unknowingly colonizing somebody else's land. It's a Canadian story

that touches many of us, but also one that spans the planet and has been played out throughout the course of human history.

Further reading about the Whiteboys and the conditions in Ireland confirmed my suspicion that Nagle's story would make a dramatic play — for me at least. Some playwrights and screenwriters love large-cast epics that have great lift and span decades or continents. Not me. Biography — a character's story — set against issues with which our modern society is still grappling is essential to my creative process. I like to write small-cast, claustrophobic, intense, almost suffocating plays about characters in conflict, who are



Left page: Kenn Gibb (left), Emily Niedoba (centre) and Phil Oakley (right) pose for a scene from the 2003 draft of *Tide of Hope*. Photo by Carol Pearson courtesy of the Peterborough Museum & Archives. Above: Screen snip of an announcement about the first incarnation of the *Tide of Hope* script. *The Heritage Gazette of the Trent Valley*, Volume 8, Number 1, May 2003.

struggling and who often have a significant tragic flaw. I had to fill in a lot of missing details about Nagle’s life. The characters are based on real people but have been fictionalized to some extent — enough that the play should be considered a work of historical fiction.

So, in the middle of writing my William Burnie script, retitled *Below Decks*, I switched course, abandoned it, began writing Nagle’s story, and retitled it *Crossing Over*. I wrote a straightforward, linear narrative that was produced in May 2003 at the Heritage Pavilion on the grounds of the Peterborough Museum and Archives. I wondered whether old-world rivalries and conflicts would “cross over” to the new world. I was still dissatisfied with my script.

I changed the play so that two high school students working on a history project discover their family histories and retell their stories as a class project., It was retitled *Artifice and Artifacts*, and produced by Arbor Theatre for a May 2004 school tour. It met



An early depiction of agrarian rebels in early 19th century Ireland from *The Pictorial History of England: Being a History of the People as well as a History of the Kingdom, Vol. 5* (1849), by George Lillie Craik and C. MacFarlane. PUBLIC DOMAIN. A group known as the “White Boys” played a prominent role in the 1820s.

with some success, but I was still unhappy with the script. I was still searching for a captivating dramatic structure.

The Backdrop of the Play: Conditions in Ireland in 1825

The play is set in the spring of 1825 on the road to Mitchelstown, County Cork, Munster Province, Ireland, 27 years after the 1798 uprising against English domination for a united, independent Ireland. As the script tells the story of David Nagle, it also explores the conditions in Ireland that would have influenced him and 2,500 others to join Peter Robinson’s 1825-assisted Irish immigration program to Upper Canada.

The sting of the defeat of the Irish uprising was mitigated by rising prosperity thanks to England’s 22-year war against Napoleon and its War of 1812 against the United States. England became dependent on Ireland for grain crops, cloth, and soldiers. It was an era of relative prosperity. Some social historians describe this as a

proto-capitalistic period in Irish history, their research revealing that increasing numbers of Irish workers were defining their goals in entrepreneurial terms such as “gaining independence.”

The situation changed dramatically in 1815 with England’s defeat of Napoleon. Suddenly, England no longer needed Ireland’s products. Irish grain prices plummeted. Flour mills and textile manufacturers closed. This, combined with overpopulation, the harvest failures of 1816-17 and 1821-22, the drought in 1818 and the fever epidemic of 1816-19, resulted in chronic unemployment, poverty, starvation, and sporadic rebellion. The situation was exacerbated by a sharp increase in unemployment due to the decommissioning of many Irish soldiers who fought for the English as redcoats. The poverty was severe. People were living in ditches.

By 1822 the Blackwater River district, and indeed much of Ireland, was in open insurrection, called the Irish Agrarian Rebellion by some. The Irish agrarian rebels known in some regions as Whiteboys and in others as Rockites, fought pitched, daylight battles with the Landlords’ garrisons. They had spies everywhere, watching English garrisons and on the estates of the landlords. The Cork City jails were filled with rebels and thieves. Many were sentenced to hanging.

The Whiteboys and Rockites were members of secret societies that used acts of violence, property damage, and murder to address inequalities in Irish society. Between mid-1821 and the end of 1824, there were 93 murders in six counties attributed to or inspired by the agrarian rebels. Rockites targeted landlords who were members of the Protestant gentry. Captain Rock (and the Rockites) were responsible for up to a thousand incidents of beatings, murder, arson and mutilation in the short time they were active.

Their resistance is seen by some as a response to systemic injustices that left them with limited avenues for peaceful advocacy. The lack of political

representation for the Catholic majority and the entrenched power of the Anglo-Irish landlords and gentry made it challenging for the rural population to bring about meaningful reforms through conventional methods.

The Grievances of the Agrarian Rebel Movement

The Whiteboys were motivated by a series of grievances rooted in socioeconomic disparities and religious tensions. At the heart of their discontent were issues related to land, rent, and the imposition of steep tithes by the Protestant Church.

One of the primary grievances driving the Whiteboys was the unequal distribution of land. The majority of the population, Catholic, faced land tenure systems that favored Protestant landlords, many of whom acquired their land through English colonization. Large estates were often controlled by a minority, leading to tenant farmers working small plots under oppressive conditions. The disparity in land ownership fueled economic inequality, creating a breeding ground for discontent.

In addition to unequal land distribution, the Whiteboys protested against unfair rent practices imposed by landlords. Many tenant farmers were burdened with exorbitant rents, leaving them in perpetual poverty. The landlords, often absentee, had little regard for the well-being of their tenants. This economic exploitation exacerbated the socio-economic divide, contributing to a sense of injustice and frustration among the rural population.

Another significant source of discontent for the Whiteboys was the imposition of tithes by the Protestant Church of Ireland. Tithes were a form of tax levied on agricultural produce, and the burden fell disproportionately on Catholics, who made up the majority of the population. This system exacerbated religious tensions, as it seemed to favor the Protestant minority at the expense of the Catholic majority. The resentment towards these tithes became a rallying point for the Whiteboys in their quest for agrarian reform.



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

The Genesis of the Robinson Immigration

At about this time, the British Government in the person of Robert John Wilmot-Horton, the under-secretary of state for the colonies, developed a scheme to bring peace and prosperity to Ireland through the sponsored emigration of thousands of dispossessed tenant farmers. Their continued presence blocked agricultural improvement.

Wilmot-Horton had obtained the government's consent to a small-scale, experimental scheme for sending emigrants to Upper Canada. While he was creating the program, he met Peter Robinson from Upper Canada, and hired him as his superintendent of emigration.

Wilmot-Horton deliberately introduced his scheme in the Blackwater River valley of County Cork, a region where there was no tradition of emigration and where the Insurrection Act was in force. He sent Robinson there in the spring of three successive years. If nothing else, Robinson proved for Wilmot-Horton what a single personable interviewer with a few key introductions could accomplish.

On his first visit to the Blackwater Valley, Robinson found that many were willing to equate assisted immigration with transportation. In 1823 Robinson sailed from Cork with 568 individuals, bound for

the military and Lanark settlements in the Bathurst District of Upper Canada.

A second immigration was postponed in 1824 due to government delays. In 1825 Robinson took 2,024 immigrants to the Newcastle District. The would-be 1825 immigrants needed sponsorship even to get on a list. Robinson was besieged by applicants in every town and stated that there were 50,000 vying for 2,000 places. After the difficult task of selection in 1825, Robinson was satisfied that his candidates were “a better description of people than those taken out in [18]23 altho' they are wretchedly poor” — poverty being one of Wilmot-Horton's firm pre-conditions.

The Tide of Hope

I have written about some of the history behind the script and of the play itself, but this article is not the end of any of these stories.

Historical knowledge and works based on it, fictional or scholarly, continue to evolve as we discover and learn more.

Although I had set aside this script some two decades ago out of the need to deliver it for production and to write more material for Arbor Theatre school tours and Heritage Pavilion Stage school tours, I never abandoned it. It was just unfinished. In 2022 I was inspired to dust it off by

a series of 2019 *Peterborough Examiner* articles by Elwood Jones about the Irish settlers who left violent rural rebellion behind to come to Peterborough as well as the forthcoming bicentennial of the Peter Robinson immigration in 2025. By then I had become curious about people's interest in and dedication to their family histories and ancestors as well as the modern fascination with genealogy and lineage (e.g., Ancestry.com, 23and Me genetic testing). It seemed to me to be a longing for connection. Some new themes for the script emerged.

I am glad that Trent Valley Archives has provided an opportunity to improve this script. I believe the *Tide of Hope* is timely and relevant to current audiences for several reasons. I hope that it will

contribute to the current impassioned national and international conversations on immigration, migration, refugees, displaced persons, colonialism, and newcomer settlement on the traditional lands of the original, Indigenous inhabitants. The 2025 bicentennial of the Peter Robinson Irish settlement in the county, which provided the critical mass for the development of Peterborough County, seems to be an opportune time for community reflection on these topics.

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Below: Lindsay Wilson and Paden Gilbooley (right) in a scene from Trent Valley Archives Theatre's Tide of Hope. A public performance of the play will be staged May 16, 2024 at The Market Hall Performing Arts Centre. (Photo by Suzanne Schroeter with thanks to the Peterborough Museum & Archives.)

TIDE of HOPE

Irish Settlers Leave the Homeland

BY EDWARD SCHROETER

When Trent Valley Archives launches its new dramatic history theatre initiative and fund-raiser with a production at Market Hall in May, it is a natural next step in its evolution as a theatre producer, following on the heels of its ghost walks, historical tours, presentations, publications, and beloved Cemetery Pageant.

The popularity of the Cemetery Pageant inspired some new and current TVA

as the representative of the TVA Events Committee. Our mission is to bring regional history to life on stage while raising funds for TVA and increasing awareness of it. It is hoped that the Market Hall production will raise the profile of TVA, especially among teachers, increase membership, advertising sponsorship, donations, publication sales, and attract more volunteers.

I volunteered my script, *Tide of Hope*, a prequel to the Peter Robinson immigration story. It follows David Nagle, an Irish land agent and rent collector who must flee to Upper Canada with the Peter Robinson settlers of 1825 in an attempt to escape the wrath of Irish rebels fighting against English tyranny. The play commemorates the bicentennial of the Peter Robinson immigration of 1825 while opening a dialogue about immigration, refugees, migrants, and European settler history.

The play is geared to the general public and students in Grades 6 to 12. It is scheduled for May 15 and 16 at the Market Hall Performing Arts Centre in Peterborough, ON. There will be two performances for school groups on Wednesday, May 15 at 10 am and 1 pm. Teachers can book their classes by email at trentvalleyarchives theatre@gmail.com. Admission is \$250 for a class of 25 students. Teachers may request up to five free seats for themselves and up to four volunteer chaperones at the time of booking.

The public performance is at 7:30 pm, May 16. Tickets are \$30 per person or \$40 for table seating, plus applicable service charges. They are available from the Market Hall Performing Arts Centre website: <https://tickets.markethall.org/eventperformances.asp?evt=357>.



TRILLIUM GRANT FUNDS BUILDING REPAIRS

TVA has recently received for a 2023 Capital Funds grant of \$10,100 from the Government of Ontario's Trillium Foundation. The funded project is the ongoing maintenance and renovation of the TVA premises in the Fairview Heritage Centre (FHC) on Carnegie Avenue.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The work has already begun and will be finished in the

spring, well within the 12-month period of the Capital grant. Trent Valley archives is very grateful to the Ontario Trillium Foundation for this financial assistance, which will address community needs by repairing and renovating its premises in order to improve their functionality, safety and security for many years to come.



WALTER REDPATH BUILDS a CAR

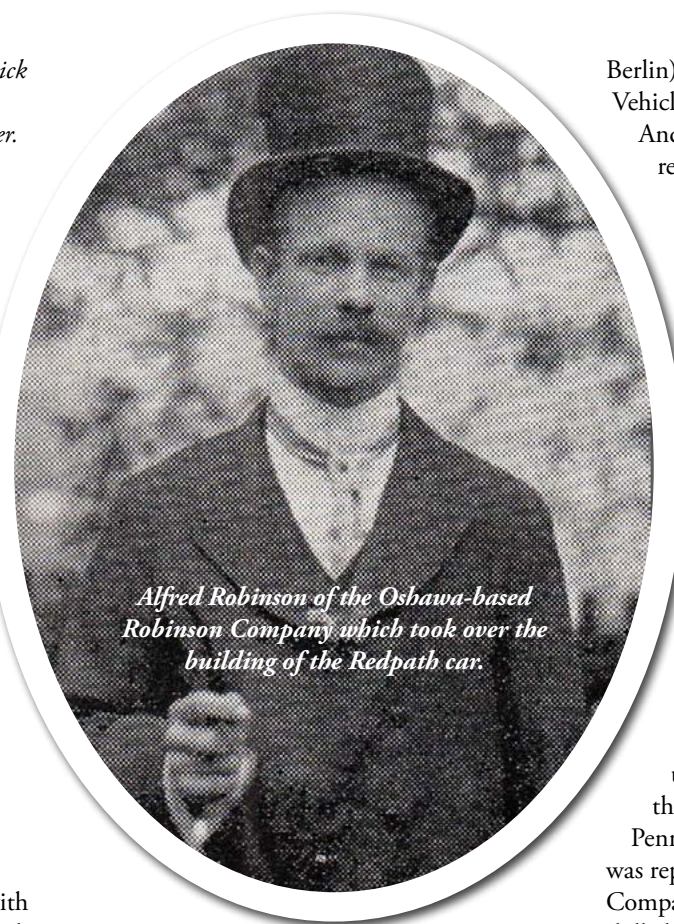
It's Not 'The' First, but 'A' First

BY STEVE GUTHRIE

Editor's note: TVA volunteer Mae Derrick came across a story about the Redpath Messenger in the Peterborough Examiner. She also went online and found a Wikipedia entry which included links to other newspaper articles. These led HG Editor Steve Guthrie to reach out to the Canadian Automotive Museum which provided further information.

The turn of the 20th century saw an explosion in interest in technology, including the idea of self-propelled vehicles. Land transportation at this time was restricted to horse-drawn, road-bound equipment and railways powered by steam locomotives. Inventors, engineers and craftsmen around the world experimented with various propulsion systems included steam, electricity and the internal combustion engine.

One of the first successful Canadian attempts to build a "motor" started with a farm-boy from Keene. Walter Redpath was born on the family farm on the 5th Line of Otonabee. Described by his family as a "dedicated tinkerer and metal worker," Redpath left the farm as a teen



Alfred Robinson of the Oshawa-based Robinson Company which took over the building of the Redpath car.

and moved to Omeme where he opened a machine shop and foundry in partnership with a Captain Evans. In the late 1800s, he moved to Kitchener (then known as

Berlin) and set up the Redpath Motor Vehicle Company with a new partner, Andrew Reid from Toronto. Reid was responsible for the wooden bodywork and Redpath for the mechanicals.

Their first car, the 1903 Redpath Messenger, was powered by an imported one-cylinder Di Dion-Bouton engine with a two-speed transmission and shaft drive from the engine to the rear wheels. This was an engineering breakthrough when most of the nascent automobile industry was using chain drive, as used on bicycles and motorcycles. Although heavier and more complex, shaft drive was considered to be stronger and ended up being the industry standard. The first car to use shaft drive in North America was the 1901 Autocar, built in Ardmore Pennsylvania. Back in Berlin in 1905 it was reported the Redpath Motor Vehicle Company was having trouble attracting skilled workers. It folded in 1905 after completing only a handful of cars.

The Robinson Company of Oshawa, which had supplied Redpath with bodywork, tops

and fittings, now took over manufacturing but only completed a few cars when the factory was destroyed by fire. This was at the time that the McLaughlin Carriage Company, also of Oshawa, formed an alliance with Buick to build automobiles and Ford Motor Company of Canada built its first Model C in 1905. After the loss of his factory, Redpath moved to Toronto where he continued his work as an inventor.

A restored Redpath Messenger exists at the Canadian Automotive Museum (CAM) in Oshawa. It came from the family of Alfred Robinson, owner of the Robinson company who partnered with Redpath in the second factory. But was the Redpath Messenger Canada's "first" motor car? In an email, Dumaresq de Pensier, Exhibit and Project Coordinator with the Canadian Automotive Museum says:

"The Redpath goes down the path of many, *many* early Canadian cars, beginning as a single tinkerer's experiment, before acquiring just enough funding for that same tinkerer to realize that mass-manufacture of an automobile was a daunting prospect. It's certainly not the only early Canadian car model to come under new ownership, and it's not even the only contemporary vehicle to be built in a more modern factory, only to have that same factory destroyed by fire.

"It even has the uneasy distinction of being one of numerous early Canadian cars falsely claimed as 'the first ever,' for many years it was incorrectly identified by the CAM as being the second gas car ever made in Canada, but we've since learned it's barely in the top 10."

So, tinkerer Walter Redpath of Keene's car may not have been "the first" Canadian vehicle, but, more than 100 years old, it still sits proudly to be admired in the Canadian Automotive Museum in Oshawa today.

Top right: Herb Robinson, grandson of Alfred, at the wheel of the unrestored Redpath Messenger. Bottom right: The 1903 Redpath Messenger in the collection of the Canadian Automotive Museum (Photo courtesy Canadian Automotive Museum).



BY SHELAGH NECK

DIVING INTO *the* DNA POOL

Exploring Genetic Genealogy

Have you hit a brick wall in your family tree? Have you already DNA tested or are you considering testing to further your research? I took that plunge many years ago, never dreaming that I would end up developing a passion for genetic genealogy.

Genetic genealogy is the use of biological information to trace family members through time. It essentially allows us to cross reference our ancestors' paper trails with the genetic material they have passed down to subsequent generations.

Some of you may be searching for an ancestor who disappeared from the historical paper trail. Then there are those with a story about being related to a specific person that has been passed down through generations. Perhaps you have found a birth record that indicates your ancestor was illegitimate? Are you or a parent an adoptee hoping to find biological family members? Whatever the case may be, many of us have already begun the journey of exploring DNA testing, the newest tool in a genealogist's toolbox.

Scientific advancements coupled with modern technology have made it possible to connect those who were adopted, abandoned or separated from their birth/

extended families, even without physical records. Since 2017, I have had the pleasure of using genetic genealogy to provide answers for people who have been unable to find them anywhere else. No two cases have been the same and some have certainly been more difficult than others. I typically recommend people test with Ancestry DNA, as it has the largest database (as of September 2022 it was reported that it contained more than 22 million people). Ancestry's website claims to be able to find relatives up to 10th cousins and can tell you where your ancestors may have lived dating back 500 to more than 1,000 years ago. Without much expense, you can test from the comfort of your own home, submit your sample by mail and in approximately six-eight weeks, you can begin your journey.

As the majority of my cases have been those of adoptees or people with NPEs (Not Parent Expected, or when DNA reveals undiscovered parentage), it is imperative that an autosomal DNA test be used. This type of test analyzes both maternal and paternal lines. After results have come in, I begin the task of grouping each match to determine which branches the tester has in common with other shared matches. Previously, it was necessary for me to figure

out which parent each match was related to, but recently Ancestry has provided a much-appreciated upgrade and now sorts matches into "Parent 1" or "Parent 2," thereby eliminating this task. Each DNA match is measured by the amount of centimorgans (cM) of DNA shared on a number of segments to the tester. Such a measurement can predict the possible relationship the matches may be to each other.

Unless an adoptee is fortunate enough to find a close family member already in the database, most DNA matches simply point us in a particular direction and serve as a jumping off point from which to start building a "mirror tree." This type of tree is used as a technique by genetic genealogists to help identify a missing common ancestor by creating a tree based on the DNA matches, building it out and then down, trying to determine where the tester may fit in. That being said, many Ancestry DNA customers are not genealogists and some have provided very little to no information about their own family trees or have decided to keep them private, but that doesn't have to be a dead end for an experienced genetic genealogist.

If you are thinking of diving into the DNA pool, my advice to everyone is to be

open to anything. Your DNA may uncover mysteries that have been hidden for generations. Back in 2018, I offered to take on an adoption case for a friend. I logged into ancestry to view the DNA matches and was shocked to find a full brother already in the database. I immediately reached out to him and was told that he absolutely had no idea that his parents (then unwed) had given up their first child for adoption. In fact, he admitted that the only reason he had even tested was because a friend had gifted it to him and was insistent that he confirm whether he was "really Irish" before he went ahead and got a tattoo!

Some testers aren't so lucky and their closest match may only be categorized as a 2nd to 3rd cousin. This can still be considered a decent match to work with and solve your family mystery. In 2022, I was asked to find the biological father of a deceased adoptee that had not DNA tested. Instead, a daughter took a DNA test and I used her results to determine who her biological paternal grandfather was. Through Ancestry's prediction of a 2nd to 3rd cousin match, I was able to narrow down a generation of a family that lived

in Scotland. From there, I used the ScotlandsPeople website to determine the subsequent generations' births/marriages/deaths. Looking at the male family members of that branch, I built out a tree that included each of their wives' families. When I found other DNA matches that also contained some of those wives' ancestors (triangulation), I could then narrow my search further to the children of that particular couple. Continuing to research, I found documentation that confirmed one of their sons had left the UK in 1907 bound for Canada and had lived in the very city where the adoptee's birth mother was living the year the adoptee would have been conceived.

One of my most difficult cases would be that of an adoptee who was of French-Canadian descent. Not only did I have to translate all the documents into English, but there were a large number of children born to each ancestral couple (more than ten in each family). Additionally, two sisters had married two brothers that happened to be their first cousins. This obviously skewed the

numbers we use to determine relationships by not expanding the gene pool beyond two branches of the same family. Furthermore, the biological father of the adoptee was himself an adoptee, which meant that the DNA matches were leading me to a family surname that was no longer being used by that person following his own adoption.

As incredible as the science of using DNA is, I like to think of it as the center piece of a large jigsaw puzzle. In order to finish building around that piece, it is also necessary to have the ability to tap into a large number of resources. Archival records such as newspapers, census documents, birth and marriage registrations, obituaries, city directories and voters' lists can be key to acquiring those remaining pieces. The current movement of digitizing historical records from all over the world and making them accessible to people via the internet, can make it possible to gather all of those remaining pieces and complete the puzzle without ever having to leave home.

OPP HONOURS SHELAGH NECK

Shelagh Neck, author of an article in this edition of the *Heritage Gazette*, and a long-time TVA board member, recently received a commendation from the OPP which recognized that her sleuthing helped unite the cremated remains found in Peterborough County which were turned into the force in 2017 with family members in the U.S.

In June of 2022, Shelagh replied to an OPP appeal on Global TV for information about a box found in a storage container near Stoney Lake. OPP said the box contained the cremated remains and paperwork identifying Samuel Wilson from Rainsville, Alabama, born in March 1941. With her experience as a genetic genealogist and family history researcher, Shelagh "thought I could figure this out."

She began her research immediately, beginning with a family tree and determined that the deceased's widow was still living. "Once I had the name of Samuel Wilson's widow, I was able to locate her through public records in a genealogical database rather quickly, although that information was from six years prior and she had relocated to another state after Samuel's death."

With Shelagh's help, the OPP were able to assist with the family's wishes regarding Wilson's remains. No further details about the incident are being released.



Shelagh Neck received an OPP Commissioner's Commendation — and "is highly commended for her public spirited actions."

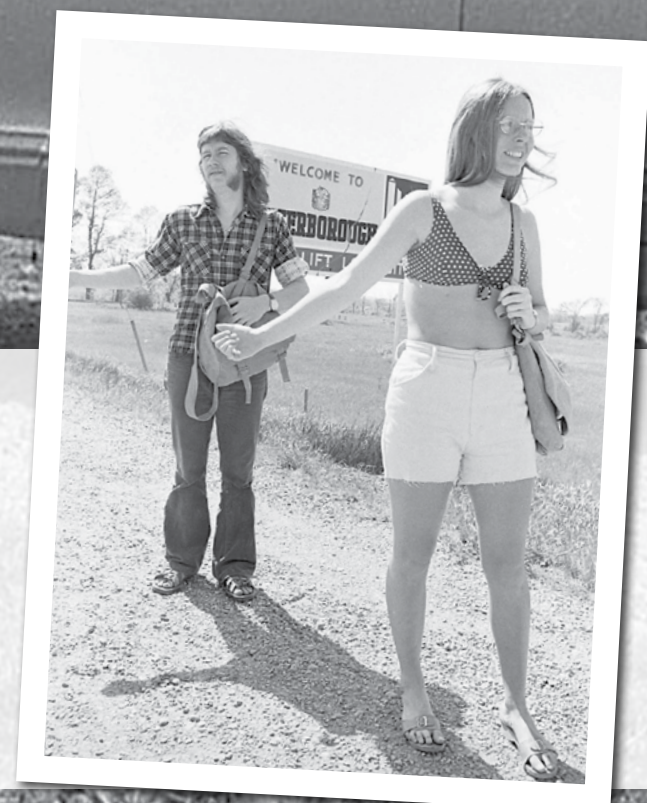


1971-72

EXAMINER

Spring Photo Feature

Main photo: Beavermead Park Opens: Some of the first families to take advantage of Peterborough's inner city camping grounds were the Malowans and the Grimes from the Port Colborne area. Work is continuing at the park to prepare it for more summer visitors. Inset left page: Country Fair Tea: Dorothy Campbell of Brampton seems to be asking her hostess, Mrs. Robert Cooper of Bridgenorth what she sees in the tea leaves. They attended the Lakevale Presbyterian Church's Country Fair Tea at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Fowler on the weekend. Inset bottom right: Most Obey Law — City A Hitch Hiker's Haven: Most hitch hikers find the Peterborough area very pleasant to travel through. Mike Fortin of Drummondville, Quebec, waits by the highway for a lift, with Lorraine Ogilvie of Toronto.





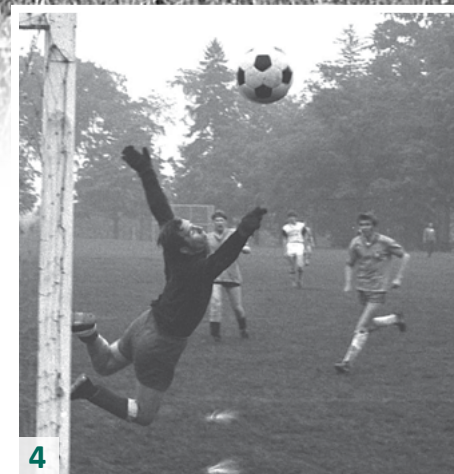
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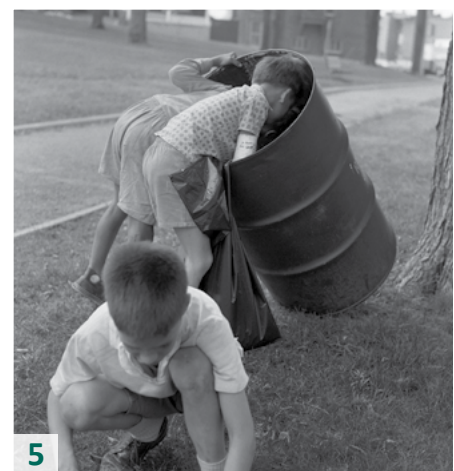
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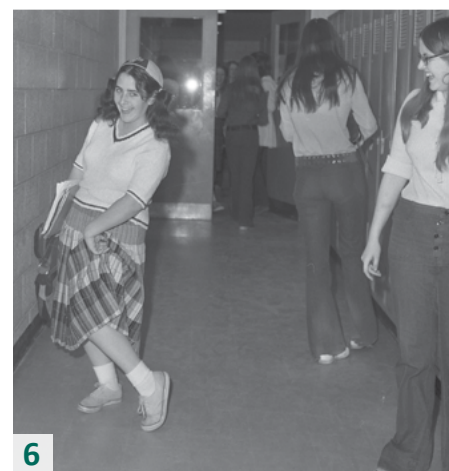
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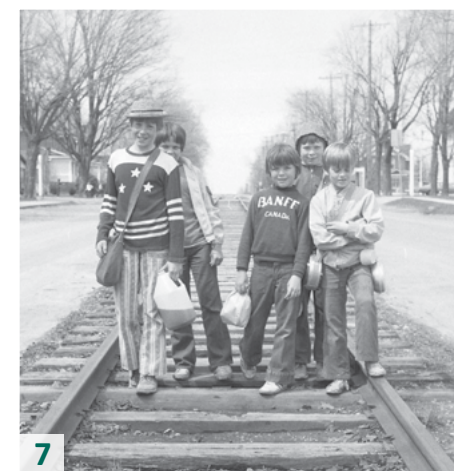
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7

1. Beavermead Park provides a quiet place in the sun for a young Peterborough couple. Laurie Manley, 15 and Roger Brown, 18, enjoy the sun.

2. Flowers For City Streets: Artificial flowers used last year have reappeared on George St. Ted Quick, parks dept. employee, places flowers in a high basket.

3. Cash Deposit: Brutus, a 14-month old St. Bernard, learned his lesson in obedience school so well that he even knows how to deposit money for his 17-month-old mistress, Tanya Lynn Feeley. Photo was taken by Don White in the downtown branch of the Bank of Nova Scotia Friday. Makes Spectacular Save: Gordon Tate, goalkeeper for McCarthy and Johnson was forced to make several spectacular saves, but still lost to Kiwanis Club, 4 to 1. Photo by Joe Erdelyi.

4. Makes Spectacular Save: Gordon Tate, goalkeeper for McCarthy and Johnson was forced to make several spectacular saves, but still lost to Kiwanis Club, 4 to 1. Photo by Joe Erdelyi.

5. Inner City Camp Starts: Tommy Ellis (left), Kevin Tyler and Bruce Clark, all 11 years old were enthusiastic about their part in the YMCA Inner City Camp pollution pick-up yesterday. They filled their green garbage bags in no time and went back for more. Tommy and Kevin thought they'd be thorough and clean up the garbage cans in the park while they were at it. Reaching bottom was the hard part. Ken Mennell photos.

6. Wet Head, Is not Dead: A return to the early 1950s was the theme of Spirit Week at St. Peter's High School Tuesday. Girls in bobby socks and knee-length skirts roamed the halls in search of boys with crew cuts and a school letter. Connie Richards pauses to model attire typical of that decade.

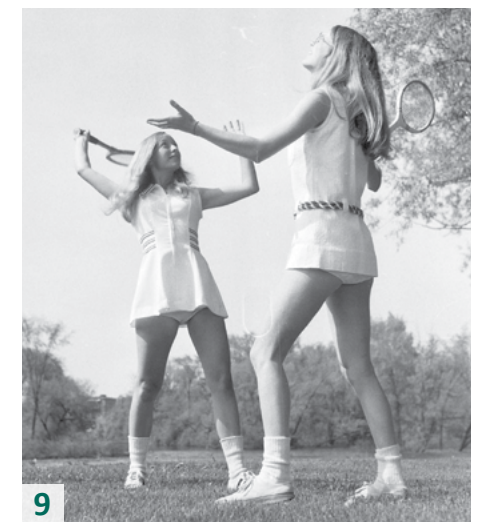
7. Lindsay — "Making Tracks": In the spring ... young boys' fancy turns to the great outdoors and these Lindsay lads are literally making tracks for a place on the town's outskirts for a springtime visit with nature and time out for a snack along the way. They took a direct route — the Lindsay-Haliburton railway line.



8

8. Winning Poster: Dr. Don Curtis, vice-president of the Peterborough Lakers Lacrosse Club and George Campbell, (left to right), pin up the winning poster in the joint project between the Lakers Lacrosse Club and the Community Schools Program. The contest was open to all elementary school students from Grade 4 to Grade 8 and more than 2000 posters were turned in. Each student who entered a poster will receive a pair of tickets to a Lakers' game, and the winner will receive a pair of season tickets.

9. Tennis for Two: Registration for the junior division of the Quaker Tennis Club is at 7 p.m. June 9 at the clubhouse north of Hunter Street Bridge in East City. The junior membership is \$6 and entitles boys and girls from 8-16 years of age to play on the courts, with instruction available every morning. Alec Bell and Don

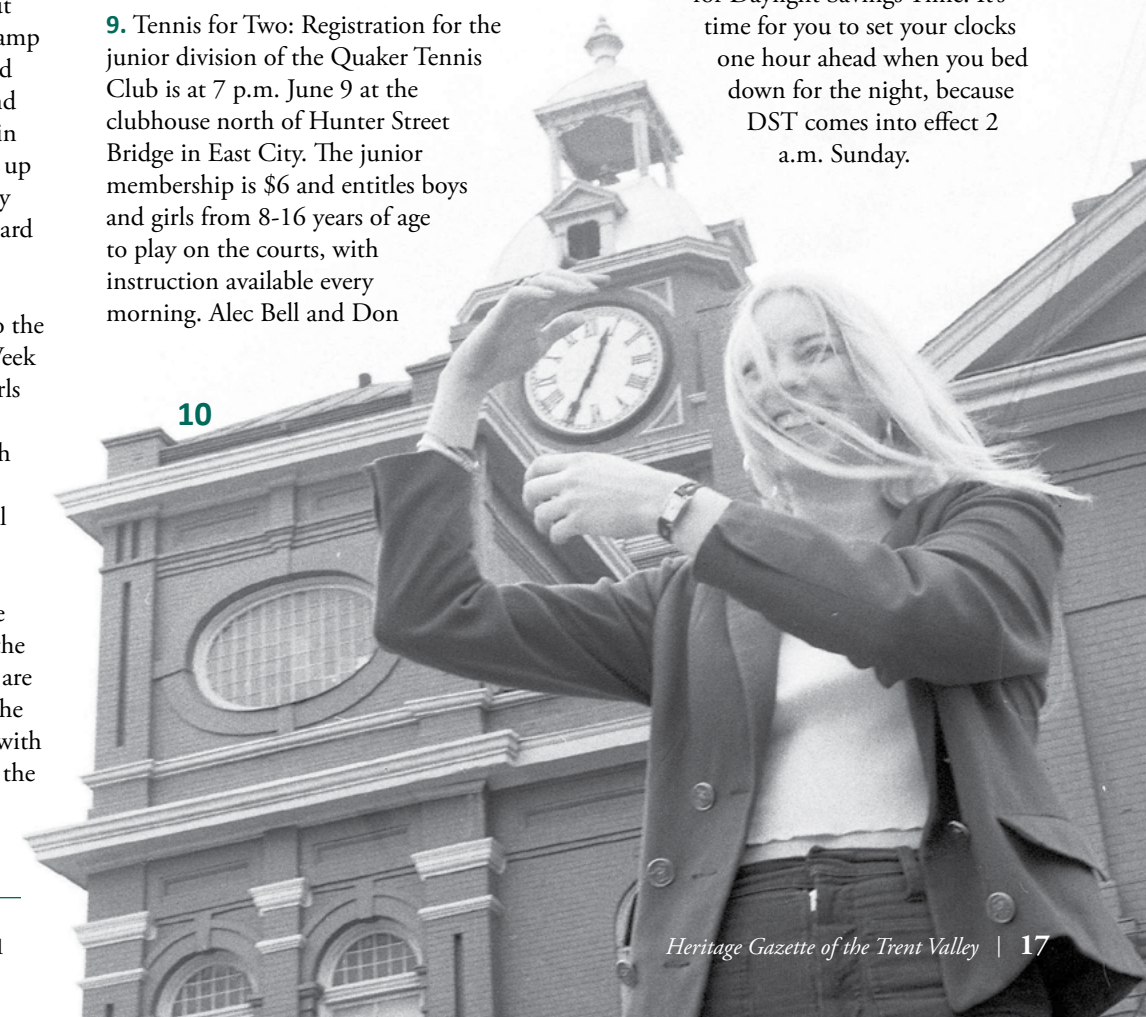


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Mackie, two of the better senior players, are featured instructors. Staff photo by Ray Brown.

10. Set Your Clock Ahead Tonight. The Market Hall clock says it's 12:35 p.m. and lovely Chris Pohle agrees ... or does she? According to Miss Pohle's calculation, the time is 11:35 a.m. Or, maybe, it's 1:35 p.m. Please Chris, tell us the time! Of course, the Crestwood Secondary School's Miss Pohle is telling you it's nearly time for Daylight Savings Time. It's time for you to set your clocks one hour ahead when you bed down for the night, because DST comes into effect 2 a.m. Sunday.

10



LIBRARIAN DE LA FOSSE and the PROBLEM of DEACCESSION

BY ELWOOD JONES, ARCHIVIST

The policy of the Trent Valley Archivist has been to keep whatever is donated provided it is not discarded or returned during processing. However, there are occasions when it is deemed that material is no longer to be retained in an archive — this is called deaccessioning.



Archives need deaccession policies so that donors can be assured of the long-term fate of materials they entrust to the archive. Unclear deaccessioning policies have caused concern because donors might be deterred from donating their archives. Historically, deaccession has been an issue in Peterborough. Here's how some deaccessioning issues were resolved by one particular librarian. In 1897 the Peterborough Historical Society received donations for its museum, then held in the Inverlea House. These were transferred to the public library with the opening of the Carnegie library and the closing of the Inverlea House. However, at some point, now clear in this attached letter, librarian Frederick de la Fosse sought permission to remove museum items from the library to make room for library materials.

Peterborough had no museum at that time but some of the museum items were cared for in a house near the library and eventually went to the new Peterborough Centennial Museum which opened in 1966. Other items were returned to people that de la Fosse considered descendants of the donors of the artifacts. Several were given to St. John's Church, and perhaps other churches.

One item, the former tower clock at St. John's Church, was in the library museum as it was transferred from the church to make room for the People's Chime. De la Fosse offered it to the Royal Ontario Museum which accepted the clock on the understanding it was in pristine condition. I first saw the clock at Fort George in Niagara where it was surrounded by War of 1812 artifacts. The clock returned to St. John's in

1976 as part of the church's sesquicentennial celebrations and is still there.

The issue remained. Peterborough Arts Foundation had been organized to receive donations to the museum and to ensure they would not be deaccessioned as earlier donations had been. When the Peterborough Arts Foundation folded and left its records to the Peterborough Historical Society the question emerged again. The library set up a committee to review recommendations for deaccessioning and it included two members of the PHS.

Over the years, the museum has made accessions which were accepted by the Trent Valley Archives. These included the city waterworks books and the records of the Nicholls Trust which had established city parks at Nicholls Oval, Jackson Park and Inverlea.

Clearly, in 1940, there was no deaccession policy for the library and de la Fosse decided that the support of the chairman of the library board might be all the authority he needed. He makes those arguments in this interesting letter which was in the Peterborough Mechanics Institute records which are now in the Trent Valley Archives.

This letter comes from the Peterborough Mechanics Institute and Peterborough Public Library Fonds 1065. It provides fascinating details of librarian F.M. de la Fosse's research into the connection between the Peterborough Museum and the Peterborough Public Library and how he resolved the deaccessioning conundrum.

F. M. DELAFOSSE
Librarian and Sec. Treasurer

Public Library

Peterborough, Ont.
Nov 28th 1940

Frank Hickey Esq.
Chairman Public Library Board
Peterborough

Dear Sir,
In accordance with the desire of the Board I have searched through the records of the Library detailing with the past thirty years and also the records that we hold in books kept by the late Peterborough Historical Society.
I have found many interesting details concerning the Museum both in the Society's papers and in the Minutes of our Board meetings.
For the clearer comprehension of the matter I have made notes which are appended herein of all that I could find in our own Minute books.

- Minute Book No. 1**
Page 61 — Mr. E.H.D. Hall asked to secure the services of a capable man to place the exhibits in shape in the library.
Page 84 — \$100 appropriated for purchase of Museum cases
Page 126 — No additional help from Carnegie Trust for the Library
Page 200 — Mr. Hay to be paid a salary of \$100 per annum for his work as curator and to provide an inventory of the exhibits.
Page 211 — Museum to be cared for for \$50 a year. Mr. Hay died in 1917.
Page 248 — Exhibits removed from their first quarter in the Library in order to make room for the new Children's Library.
Page 255 — Mr. Clarke given general supervision of the Library
Page 255 continued — \$25 given to Mr. Clarke for expenses.
Page 262 — \$25 again given to Mr. Clarke. Mr. C. says it is too little for the work.
Page 265 — Miss Knapp to be paid \$1 an evening for services in keeping the Museum open for visitors

The entries given above show everything of importance that is recorded in our minutes of May 1919. After that date little interest was taken in the Museum by the public owing to the fact that what available space was left was taken by the Red Cross Society and the Museum suffered by having cases and exhibits of all descriptions piled indiscriminately together.
Having gone through the files of the Victoria Museum and of the Historical Society I have been helped to arrive at the fairly clear solution of how the Museum came to rest in the rooms of the Public Library.
A request came from the officers of the Historical Society for room for the exhibits owing to the unsuitability of the quarters at Inverlea Park, which had been handed over to it by the trustees of Mrs. Nicholls property, Messrs Richard Hall and Chas. McGill.
By far the larger portion of the items in the Museum were either given to the Society or purchased outright. The birds, beasts and reptiles for instance, were bought from the late Mr. Elcome and the cases that house them were fully paid for also by the society. The price paid was \$233.
\$100 was paid in cash and the remaining amount was realized by this Committee on a joint note with the Bank of Montreal. This was in 1898.
I find that the Museum was insured in the Caledonian Insurance Co. for \$1000 and was insured for an extra \$500 afterwards. I am taking this from the Company as to whether the extra \$500 was paid.
The Hist. Society tried to obtain grants from the Ontario Government, from the County, and from the City and the Minutes unfortunately end shedding no light on the matter.
There is a library of books mentioned in one of Mr. Hay's letters. These consist of several hundred volumes, small, dirty, and for the most part valueless, which came from pupil of the old Grammar School. Many of them were the property of Mr. Richard Birdsall. I have kept these for many years separate from the other books in the Library.
The few items that were marked as distinctly loaned were placed on exhibition many years ago and most of the owners must long since have died. They have never been asked about, but, nevertheless, they have to be held in trust by the Library.
I have looked through the Cash books and can find no record of any salary ever being received by Mr. Hay. He worked gratuitously and hard to provide the city with something to be proud of in the days to come, and there can be no question as to the value of a great portion of the material that he collected. In order to preserve the fruits of his labours will such time as the city is in a position to provide better means of housing, where it can be looked after properly, I would respectfully suggest that the practicability of loaning certain portions of the Museum as aids to education be gone into. If your verdict is favourable it will not only afford us space that we greatly need, We shall obtain space that is really needed, and above all but we shall be freed from the anxiety of having items disappear, cases broken, and articles damaged or destroyed.
I believe that there can be no dispute concerning loaning things that really belong to the Library, and those that we have to take care of as a trust can be guarded in a far more efficient manner than has hitherto been possible.
I enclose with this letter two or three documents that will tend to throw additional light on the matter.

I remain
Yours very truly
F.M. de la Fosse
Peterborough Mechanics Institute and Peterborough Public Library F 1065, file 43
TLS, Q

QUAKER FIRE TOPIC OF AGM

Held to the Fire is a new book about the tragic explosion and fire at Quaker Oats in 1916 that killed 24 workers, written by Matthew Flagler, great-grandson of Dennis O'Brien who perished in the fire. The fire burned for four days and levelled the Hunter Street plant.

Matthew Flagler will be the guest speaker at the Trent Valley Archives Annual General Meeting, to be held at Highland Park on April 25. The public is invited to the presentation,

which is free. Copies of Matthew's book will be available for sale. The talk will be followed by a brief, members-only business meeting.

Those of us at the Heritage Gazette thought it might interest readers to know a little more about how TVA operates as a volunteer-run regional archive. The Annual General Meeting is an opportunity for TVA members to hear the president, Steve Guthrie, review the highs and lows of

the past year at TVA and consider annual financial reports. If there is a vacancy on the Board of Directors, which operates TVA between annual general meetings, officers are nominated from the floor, or are presented by a nomination committee of the board, this year made up of Madison More and Al Brunger and are elected by the membership. There are currently three vacancies and Al and Maddie are currently recruiting potential new board members.

The officers of the board, president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer, are elected by the board at the first board meeting after the AGM.

The TVA board of directors consists of nine members. It meets monthly, usually the third Thursday of the month, at present by Zoom, to discuss the day-to-day business of the archives.

Organizationally, TVA has an archives side, with volunteers under the leadership of Archivist Elwood Jones who work on the various collections and assist with research queries. TVA also has a "business side," juggling many activities with the main goal of raising, managing, and accounting for the funds required to operate the archives. These activities include fund raising activities such as historical walks, tours, pageants, talks and plays. Other tasks include building maintenance, record keeping and complying with regulations governing non-profit corporations.

Work in between monthly board meetings is conducted by the Executive Committee,

made up of the past-president, president, secretary and treasurer of the board.

Several committees submit reports at the monthly meetings. Most active is the Events Committee, chaired by Ruth Kuchinad, which is responsible for creating TVA's program of historic walks and tours, tracing Peterborough stories in city neighbourhoods and at Little Lake Cemetery and Jackson's Park, and other locations. A team of volunteers researches, writes and leads these interesting and entertaining events, which are a major part of TVA's fund-raising efforts.

Events Committee volunteers are currently drawing up the summer/fall 2024 schedule of events. TVA is presenting *Tide of Hope*, a play about the lives of the Peter Robinson settlers in Ireland, written by Ed Schroeter, in May at the Market Hall. There are more details elsewhere in the HG. The Events Committee also organizes interesting Zoom talks for members through the winter, which is an incentive for TVA supporters to become members!

Another major committee is the Grants Committee, chaired by Al Brunger. Last year TVA received a Trillium Fund grant to scan and upload photos from the Peterborough Examiner collection, described in the August 2023 issue of the Gazette. Al Brunger reports on a recent Trillium Fund grant for maintenance work on our building elsewhere in this magazine. Most grants that TVA is eligible for provide funding for specific projects rather than operating costs. So, each grant represents a completed project, usually an archival or maintenance one. Other volunteers are active in the Archives, Publications, Building, Membership and Volunteers committees. TVA also has a library and bookstore, and volunteers produce the Heritage Gazette.

In addition to preparing the *Tide of Hope* play for audiences this spring as a fund raiser, TVA is actively recruiting volunteers for the Delta Bingo, which for a few hours of volunteer time monthly, generates needed revenue for many local non-profit organizations. These are new ventures for TVA, but exciting and potentially very rewarding ones.



BECOME A MEMBER

Annual Fees

Student.....	\$30
Single (one person)	\$60
Family (one mailing address).....	\$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

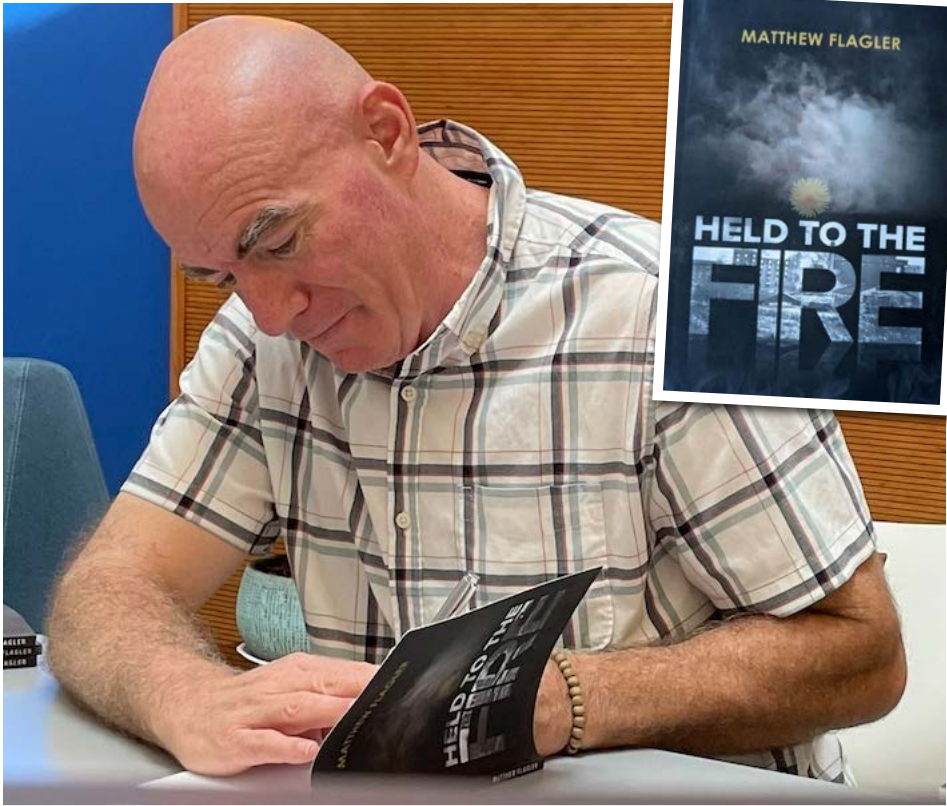
- A tax receipt for \$200
- Acknowledgement in the Heritage Gazette starting 2024

Patron Members

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

Institutional Members

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



Author Matthew Flagler signs copies of his recently-released book, *Held to the Fire*.

A Young Soldier's Path to War THE JOURNEY *of a* YOUNG SOLDIER

BY MICHAEL DORAN

Editor's Note: This is the third, and final, instalment of the story of Nicholas Scott, a young soldier, born in 1894, and his journey from Young's Point to his death in France, during the First World War in May 1917. It is written by his great-nephew Michael Doran. The previous two instalments, appeared in the August and December 2023 issues of the Heritage Gazette



The area between the Canadian and German front line trenches was called No-Man's Land and these troops appear to be moving forward to consolidate gains. They are not under fire as they are 'bunched up' and are carrying all their equipment including rifles with fixed bayonets. Inset: Nicholas Scott. Photo courtesy Frank McMahon.

Much of what follows relies on the War Diary account of the activities of the 18th Canadian Infantry Battalion¹ from a couple of days before Nicholas Scott arrived in the theatre of war until a few days after he was killed, interleaved with two of Nicholas's letters to his family and some newspaper accounts of the allied military activities. The War Diary summarized very briefly the activities of the Battalion each and every day, each entry being signed off by a superior officer. Because they are so witnessed, it's reasonable to assume that they are accurate.

Once the 93rd Battalion arrived in Britain, it was split up within a few months, with members being assigned to several different battalions. Nicholas was in "C" Company of the 93rd Battalion and was transferred to the 18th Canadian Battalion, 4th Canadian Infantry Brigade, 2nd Canadian Division, on 15 September 1916. No records could be found that prove he was transferred from "C" Company of the 93rd Battalion to "C" Company of the 18th Battalion, but it is reasonable to assume that such a transfer was easiest for everyone concerned, and therefore most likely. This assumption aligns well with the diary's chronological account of "C" company's position during a raid in which Nicholas is known to have participated and its position at the time he was killed. Two things are certain: 1. There are only four Companies in the 18th Battalion, "A", "B", "C" and

"D"; and 2. From his letter of 4 April 1917, we know that Nicholas was not in Company "B". His friends the Gooleys and many others of the 93rd, also ended up in the 18th Canadian Infantry Battalion.

His war record shows that Nicholas arrived "in the field" in France on 3 October 1916 with the 18th Battalion in "Reserve" at Sausage Valley, Somme at the time. On that date, 66 ORs arrived as "reinforcements" and he was likely one of them. (Note the military's use of the term "reinforcements" rather than replacements, which was probably more accurate.) He arrived only eighteen days after the start of the Battle of Courcellette, in which Canadians demonstrated the method and value of the "creeping barrage", in conjunction with tanks for the first time. With this tactic, Canadian artillery would rain down thousands of shells on enemy wire and trenches for a set length of time, then lift the cannons to extend the range another 90 metres. With the assistance of tanks, the Infantry would follow the barrage as it lifted, clearing the enemy trenches. (See the letter of Pte. Harold White in Appendix I about following the barrage up to Vimy Ridge on 9 April 1917.) The following day, 24 ORs were reported "Killed in action", with another 78 wounded and 11 missing, but with the Battalion in Reserve, these may have been casualties unreported since the start of the battle of Courcellette. The War Diary

is chilling, September's account naming only those officers killed, wounded or missing during the month, but making no mention at all of the names or number of casualties among the ORs. At two years into this senseless war, it had become obvious to those in command that it would be a war of attrition, that the cost in ORs' lives would be enormous, and that those numbers might best be kept hidden from family back home as much as possible. There would be no hiding the losses of the privileged upper ranks, though.

Although he had missed the bloody battle of Courcellette, there would be no shortage of opportunities to experience "going over the top" in the coming months. A good indication of this may have come around the middle of the month of January 1917. On the night of the 17th and 18th the Battalion was holding front line trenches while the 20th and 21st Canadian Battalions raided enemy trenches, netting 100 prisoners. Although it was a major raid, only 14 casualties were sustained. The story was written up in the Peterborough Examiner under the headline "Canadians Excel in Trench Raids — Germans Taken Thoroughly by Surprise by Invasion of Their Trenches In Daylight by Canadian Battalions."² A few days later, on the 19th, the battalion was stationed at the Canadian Training Area in Haillcourt and began intensive training which would

1. War Diary of the 18th Canadian Battalion, Library and Archives Canada: <https://recherche-collection-search.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/home/ord?app=fonandcol&IdNumber=1883227&q=War%20Diary%2018th%20Canadian%20battalion%20canadian>. 2. *The Peterborough Evening Examiner*, Wednesday, 7 February 1917, page five.



continue until the 12th of February. Apart from physical training and route marching, including a march to billets in Auchel, via Marles-les-Mines and Lozinghem on the 30th, there was specialist training, attack training and drills in communications and respirator use. On the 7th there was another route march from Auchel to Lozinghem, [Burbure], [Rimbert] and back to Auchel, at total distance of about 8 km. On the 9th, there was more training by specialists in bombing, machine guns, scouting and reconnaissance and communications and on the 12th the battalion marched back to Haillicourt. Prominent among all of these activities was training almost daily in bayonet fighting, perhaps in preparation for some close fighting imminently.

**ORIGIN OF THE BAYONET
Weapon First Used by Troops
Out of Ammunition**

The bayonet, which the quidnuncs before the war said was an obsolete weapon, has proved its great value in the movements of the British. Its name comes from that of Bayonne, a little town in the Basque country in France, but cheek by jowl with Spain, down

in the far corner of the Biscay. There it was first manufactured.

The story of its invention illustrates the old proverb about the motherhood of necessity. A Basque regiment, having run out of ammunition and wishing to sell their lives dearly, took the suggestion of one of their number that they should fix their long belt knives to the ends of their muskets and charge therewith and try to break through the ranks of their enemies.

This they did — the first bayonet charge in history — and their success in extricating themselves from a very warm corner showed the value of the new weapon and led to its manufacture and adoption by every country and army in the world.³

Life in the Front Line Trenches

By March 1917 Nicholas was no doubt well acquainted with the misery and danger of life in the front line trenches, and on the 21st began his tenth turn on the front line, each turn lasting an average of four days and as many as six. On the 23rd he was involved in a raid on enemy trenches in

which seven of his comrades were injured, but there were no deaths. Twelve days later in his letter of the 4th of April, he mentioned the raid, but gave no indication of any personal injuries:

The following letter was received by Mrs. Stephen Scott, Young's Point. Ont., from her son, Pte. Nicholas Scott, who is now with the 18th Battalion in France:

Somewhere in France [Bois des Alleux, near Mont St. Eloy, France],

April 4th, 1917.

My dear Mother,—Here I am again as large as life and twice as natural. Well, mother, it is quite a while now since I wrote you before, but still such things will happen some time. I never had much news to tell you, but have a little now. I had a big day and night with Will Scott [William Scott, his second cousin] last night. He is fine. Just the same old Will. We certainly had a great chat about poor old Chandos. Roy [Coones] was with us too. He is a sergeant now. I met a whole bunch of the old boys this time out. Charlie [Dwyer], the post's lad, Bert [Watley] and a great many more, but have not met [Oswald] yet [this might refer to Richard Oswald Wedlock]. I had a letter from Sam Dunk. He is all right again. I also had one from Jack Gifford. He is still in England.

Well, mother, I received another one of your great parcels yesterday. Many many thanks for them all. It is not very long ago since I got two: one was in a round tin box, the other was in a cardboard box. The cake was a little broken, but I tell you it went good just the same. The one I got yesterday was in a long tin box. It was certainly in great shape.

Well, mother, I have been getting the old Examiners all O.K. There is some nice letters in them from the boys at the front. I suppose you are all moved up on your new farm. Tell father to not work too hard. I may be home to help him dig the

potatoes yet. Hope you are not worrying about me, for I am just the same little boy, and as happy as can be, for I know I will come home safe some day, and, if not, I will have done my bit, and that's what I always wanted to do, do or die.

Well, mother, I was over with a bunch to see old Fritz, and I tell you he gave us a pretty hot reception, but not any hotter than we gave him. I was the only 93rd boy out of our company that was over. There were three out of "B" Company, and only one of them was wounded [So Nicholas was not in "B" Company]. There was eight out of our company went over. Six of them were wounded, D. Mallick and myself being the two lucky ones, but I have been very lucky ever since I enlisted. [He must have misspelled the name "Mallick"; no one with that surname served in the Canadian military in WW I.]

Well, mother. I think I will soon have to close for this time, thanking you again for all your lovely parcels and the money also. With kindest love to all, I remain your loving son,

Pte. Nicholas Scott.⁴

On the 1st of April, the 18th Battalion began training near Estrée Cauchy over a taped-off replica of enemy terrain to be captured in an upcoming battle. The training was repeated on the 2nd and on the 4th of April, while two platoons of "D" company dug "jumping off" trenches, Nicholas wrote his letter home. In his letter, Nicholas is the model of discretion: He had been through those two rounds of special training near Estrée Cauchy, so he would have known that a battle of some importance loomed. That would come early on the morning of Easter Monday, the 9th of April. A final rehearsal of the attack over the terrain replica of Vimy Ridge was done on the 6th.

The Battalion rested on the 7th and on the 8th, Easter Sunday, there was a rendezvous of the 4th Canadian Infantry Brigade at Bois des Alleux. Starting at 7:45 p.m., all

twelve platoons of the four companies, comprising approximately 600 men, began to move into position in the jumping-off trenches, picking up bombs and shovels en route. "A" company was in position at 2:20 a.m. the morning of the 9th, "B" company at 2:25 a.m., "D" company at 3:40 a.m. and "C" company at 3:45 a.m., all of them in readiness for zero hour, 5:30 a.m.

Events — Hour by Hour

The War Diary for the month of April 1917 and its Appendix 1 give a good account of what happened from zero hour, summarized here:

The objective of the 4th Canadian Infantry Brigade was to capture and consolidate the German Front and Support trenches comprising about 700 yards of the German front. The 18th and 19th Battalions formed the front line of attack and would follow a "creeping barrage" set up by the Canadian Artillery, Stokes and machine gun fire. The 18th put three platoons in front, sending four waves at the enemy; "B" Company on the right, "C" Company centre, "A" Company left and "D" Company in Reserve (4th wave). Promptly at 5:30 a.m., the Artillery, Stokes and machine gun barrages opened and the Battalion began to move from the jumping off trenches toward the German front line, meeting little resistance. After three minutes the barrage would lift and the leading wave would capture the German front line, with the first line of Moppers-up left to deal with the trench. Meanwhile, the first and second waves would continue to follow the barrage and at eight minutes the barrage would lift again and the German support line would be captured. This was done with little difficulty. Meanwhile, the enemy barraged No-Man's Land for about 15 minutes and then shelling became indiscriminate. At 32 minutes the barrage would lift and the leading wave would capture the "Black

Objective", followed by the second and third waves. The fourth wave was to enter the Black Objective or hold back, as necessary. The enemy support line would then be captured (done with little difficulty). By 6:05 a.m. Battalion Headquarters had received word that the Black Objective had been captured and was being consolidated. Casualties to that point were slight, given the magnitude of the operation. An act of "conspicuous gallantry" was performed by Sergt. E. W. Sifton of "C" Company, who single-handedly attacked a machine gun crew, bayoneting all of them but being killed by one of the dying Germans (he was awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross). At 10:50 a.m. Headquarters received a message from Major W. J. Gander, then senior officer in the line (two others had been killed), reporting that consolidation of the objective and reorganization of the Battalion had been completed. The approximate casualties for the 18th Battalion for the whole operation were two officers killed, four more wounded, 40 ORs killed and 120 wounded.

The battle was well covered in the Peterborough Examiner, the following being an excerpt of one of several stories printed:

A GLORIOUS VICTORY
(By Stewart Lyon, Special Correspondent of the Canadian Press.)
CANADIAN HEADQUARTERS IN FRANCE (via London), April 9.—The crest of the Vimy Ridge has been carried. The strongest defensive position of the enemy on the western front has been captured by the army of Sir Douglas Haig, and the Canadian corps was given the place of honour in the great event, being strongly supported by some of the most famous of the British formations. The attack was preceded by a bombardment which continued for several days, and in which guns of the heaviest calibre, formerly used on only the biggest battleships, took part. The results, as

3. *The Peterborough Evening Examiner*, Tuesday, 6 February 1917, page two.

4. *The Peterborough Evening Examiner*, Monday, 7 May 1917, page seven.

revealed by aerial observation, were a repetition of the battle of the Somme. Airplanes, flying low, could find only shapeless masses of churned-up earth where the enemy first line had been.

By Saturday afternoon [Thélus], the chief village held by the enemy on the ridge, and lying west [sic; Thélus is actually about 2 km east] of Neuville-St. Vaast, was pounded out of all recognition, only two houses remaining. Prisoners taken told of heavy enemy losses. Even in the deep dugouts, where the Germans had hoped to be reasonably safe in that rain of death, no safety was to be found anywhere. In a desperate attempt to blind the eyes of the attacking army the Germans on Sunday endeavoured to destroy our observation balloons.

Saturday night our guns continued the work of devastation under conditions which made a spectacle that was majestic and awe-inspiring. A full moon in the east lit up the countryside with mellow beams on the horizon, while the flash of the guns made a continuous play like that of the Northern Lights in the Dominion, or distant sheet lightning. This was sharply broken now and again by a column of reddish-yellow flame where, on the ridge, high explosives were bursting.

The gunners, with tireless energy, continued the cannonade through Easter Sunday. On Monday morning came the supreme moment, that in which our infantry was called upon to go out and reap the fruit of months of preparation. They had endured, unwaveringly, the answering fire of the enemy, which, however, was not comparable to ours. Some, impatient to be at the foe, had gone out on small wars of their own, and it is recorded that in one of the individual encounters in No Man's Land a Canadian, meeting a German,

pursued after emptying his revolver ineffectively at him. The Canadian cast about for some other weapon. The only one within reach was his steel helmet, and with the sharp edge of that he killed the armed German.⁵



Nicholas Scott.
Photo courtesy
Frank McMahon.

The Battalion spent another four days on the front line before closing out one of the most illustrious months in Canadian military history.

On the 4th of May, a day before going back on the front line, Nicholas wrote a final letter to his sister Mary in which, surprisingly, he makes no mention of the huge battle in which he was certainly involved and apparently got through unscathed.

Following is a copy of the last letter received by Miss Mary Scott, of Young's Point from her brother, Pte. Nicholas Scott of the 93rd Battalion, who was killed in action on 8th May: [There is good reason to believe this date is wrong and that the actual date was 7th May. See below.]

Somewhere in France, [Paynesley Tunnel]
May 4th, 1917.

My Dear Sister,—Just a few lines in answer to your most kind and welcome letter just received a few days ago. Was indeed glad to hear you were all well, as this leaves the little boy at present; thank God for it.

Well, Mary, I wrote to mother and Rose [another of his sisters] last week, so I guess you will be beginning to think I am not going to write to you at all. I think I will have more time to write now for a while as I have a new job. I am stretcher bearer now, so I won't be so busy. All I have to do is just dress whoever gets wounded in our platoon, or perhaps a few more if I happen to be near them at the time, so you will see that there is quite a change in me since I came over here. You know, Mary, when I was at home I would almost faint if I saw a bit of blood, but now I can tie up a man that is half blown to pieces and don't mind it at all. The only thing that's wrong is that I can't kill any more Germans, as I don't carry any rifle nor bombs any more, but still I think I have done my share of that. If every one kills as many as I have, we will surely soon win the day. Well, Mary, I don't have to carry the wounded on the stretchers

you know, so it is a little easier job. Our other stretcher bearer got sick a while ago, so I took his place. He is in England now in the hospital.

Well, Mary, I got all those nice pieces you sent me out of the paper. That was quite a piece about when the war is over.

I also got the letter you put in of mine, also the picture Rose sent me, and forgot to tell her in the letter I sent her the other day. I also got Stephen's and Maggie's and Michael's letter [three more of his siblings, Michael being the author's namesake maternal grandfather]. Will answer them very soon now. I may write them any day now, but will not be able to send them for a few days.

Well, Mary, I suppose you are all busy putting in the garden. Put in lots, for I think I will be home for Christmas, and you know how fond I am of vegetables. I suppose Dad and Stephen have all the crop in by this time. Tell them to not work too hard.

Well, Mary, Joe [Gooley] and Anthony [Downing, probably] are fine I haven't heard from Dan [Joe Gooley's brother] or Lewie [probably Lewis John Drain] lately, but I guess they are having good times. Oh, yes, Mary. I got my parcel from the ladies of the Red Cross Society. Many thanks for it. You thank them all for me until I get back and remember me to every one of them, and to all my old chums. Well, dear sister, I think I have told you all for this time, so with love to dad and mother and all the rest of you I remain,

Your loving brother,

PTE. N. SCOTT.⁶

The 18th Battalion returned to the front line on the 5th of May. Their position was heavily shelled on the 7th and five ORs were killed, with thirteen wounded. There was



A number of patriotic civilian organizations called Auxiliary Services, including the YMCA, the Knights of Columbus and the Salvation Army, supplied services to the army like canteens, hostels, and comforts like films and sporting goods. Here a YMCA canteen behind the lines offers tea and snacks to troops who are not serving on the front lines.

no mention in the War Diary of casualties on the 8th of May, and on the 9th, "C" company moved into support, again with no mention of Battalion casualties.

Sad News to Report

Having participated in the famous battle for Vimy Ridge and survived, Nicholas was killed less than a month later. Officially, he was killed on 8 May 1917, but the evidence points to his actual date of death having been the 7th of May 1917, along with four others, during daytime. His "Circumstances of Death" record shows his approximate position at the time of his death as about 1.6 km south of Méricourt and 1.6 km west of Acheville, France. The map coordinates point to a patch of ground roughly 50 by 50 metres square (see Appendix II). This is about 2.9 km east-north-east of the closest point of the front line's position northwest of Farbus on the 10th of April 1917, the line of frontage they won from the Germans in the battle of Vimy Ridge. The War Diary does not give any indication of the Battalion having moved to the


northeast between that date and the night of 8th/9th May 1917, so it's unclear why Nicholas was so far from the 10th of April front line when he was killed. A map of the area, updated to 24 December 1917, shows the position of his death to have been an open area surrounded by friendly trenches ("Quebec", "Twelfth Ave.", "Totnes" and "Toast" trenches), so if those trenches were established in the month after the Vimy victory, it's possible that he may have been trying to get from one of the trenches to another over open ground when he was hit.

At the 100th anniversary commemoration for Nicholas at the Cenotaph, Centennial Square, Peterborough, Frank McMahon, reciting family lore, described Nicholas's last moment:

Joe Gooley had just finished his watch and was relieved by Nicholas. Soon after, the area Nicholas was patrolling was bombed and Nicholas was killed. His death certificate, signed by W. P. Eastwood, simply states "Killed in Action".⁷

5. *The Peterborough Evening Examiner*, Tuesday, 10 April 1917, page five.

6. *The Peterborough Evening Examiner*, Saturday, 2 June 1917, page 13. 7. Frank McMahon. Address to attendees assembled at Confederation Square, Peterborough. 7 May 2017. Nicholas Scott is Frank's uncle.



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His “Circumstances of Death” record shows no place of burial, only that his company was in the trenches east of Vimy when he was killed in action. His only marker is the inscription on the Vimy Memorial.

A hand-written note in his military records shows that Nicholas was eligible for two campaign medals of the British Empire, The Victory Medal and The British War Medal. Both medals were sent to Nicholas’s father, Stephen; the Memorial Plaque and Scroll and the Memorial Cross were sent to his mother Julia. The author hopes these mementos are held safely by someone in the family.

This is a very condensed version of the story of the path taken by Nicholas Scott leading up to and during his time in the 93rd Battalion in WW I. A forthcoming book will provide much more detail.

Michael Doran was born and raised in Peterborough, lived in the GTA for almost thirty years and retired back to Peterborough in 2007. On his father’s side, he is descended from Martin Doran, a Peter Robinson settler who immigrated with his family to Canada in 1825 and on his mother’s side he is descended from John Leahy, another Peter Robinson settler who immigrated with his family to Canada in 1823. Michael has an Honours Bachelor of Science degree from Trent University, an MBA from the Schulich School of Management and a Chartered Financial Analyst designation.



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