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Fall 2019

IT'S ABOUT TIME...

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PORT HOPE ARCHIVES

RESEARCHING YOUR PROPERTY

Tracing the history of your home is one of the most popular activities that our visitors participate in. In fact, over the last five years there appears to be more interest in property research than genealogy. With Port Hope's incredible abundance of lovely heritage homes most owners are interested in finding out about the history of their new old house. The year of construction and the original owners are usually the first questions they ask. The Port Hope Archives can undertake research on behalf of home owners for a fee if they are unable to carry out the research themselves. However, the detail and information is limited to the available resources for each property.

Researching the history of your house can be extremely interesting and you will learn skills that border on detective work. The process is very rewarding and provides a stronger connection with the past. When you are at the archives undertaking research you will have the assistance of the archivist and volunteers to guide you through the initial process. Our Research Area has a library of books, land records, maps, secondary resource materials, which include family and local histories and a public use computer with a database of what we hold in our collections.

Before you begin your research, gather together what you already know and what you have heard. Local legends often hold a degree of truth and those long-time residents who live close by may be able to provide you with information, stories or photographs. Look for physical clues. Your house may have a date stone on the exterior that indicates the year of construction or there may be clues in the interior. I lived in a house in Markham where the original owner had signed his name with the date on the plaster walls of the keeping room in the basement. It was very well defined and had lasted over 100 years. He probably chose this insignificant place

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PORT HOPE ARCHIVES

17 Mill Street North
Port Hope, ON L1A 2T1
porthopearchives.com
archives@porthope.ca
905-885-1673

HOURS

Monday 12:30—4:30 PM
Tuesday to Thursday 9:00-4:30
Friday 12:30– 4:30
pm
We're flexible!

MANDATE:

The Port Hope Archives exists to collect and preserve archival materials which illustrate the growth and development of the Municipality of Port Hope or which pertain in whole or in part to activities within the geographic boundaries of the Municipality of Port Hope.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Rick Sullivan, Chair
Peter Hunt, Treasurer
Bonnie Garrett, Membership
Evelyn Conn
Sue Sachs
Lois Richardson

ARCHIVIST

Marie Jones

The Port Hope Archives is a registered charity.

#83789 8675 RR0001

COMMUNITY HISTORY

knowing that there would be little change to this room in the future. You may find a signature on a basement beam or a roof rafter in your attic indicating the owner, builder or carpenter.

One of the best tools to locating information is to first begin with the land records. These records, or abstracts will help you trace the ownership of your property back to the original Crown Grant. Although they do not list buildings, careful research may produce valuable information. These records can sometimes be used to determine when a house was built by examining the increase in the sale price between transactions or with mortgages assumed. The instruments (documents) attached to each transaction can provide you with further information, sometimes including the phrase "land and premises" is found on deeds. The Port Hope Archives has over 30,000 instruments, 1000's of probates and over 8,000 photographs, which can help with your research.

LAND REGISTRATION SYSTEM

Following the end of the American Revolution in 1776 and in later years, there was a great deal of turmoil in what was once the Thirteen Colonies. Many of the families who remained loyal to the crown during this period lost possessions and property and were forced to seek refuge in Britain, Nova Scotia and Quebec. In the summer of 1783 alone, over 32,000 civilian loyalists from sea ports in New York sailed to Nova Scotia and 13,000 sailed to Quebec. The increase in population changed the dynamic of the colony and changes had to be made.

The response by the Crown was the Constitutional Act of 1791 under George III. The Act's most notable achievement was the creation of Upper and Lower Canada (Ontario and Quebec). With the creation of the two Canadas, the colonial governments were established. In 1792, John Graves Simcoe the Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada divided the province into nineteen counties, including Northumberland and Durham.

Once the counties were established, a record system for land registration was required. Land registration was necessary for a number of reasons, but most importantly, it provided proof of ownership and the opportunity to vote. With land registration in place, Simcoe was enthusiastic to settle the province. His plan was to create an ideal British society neighbouring the American republic. Devoted to the United Empire Loyalist settlers, he proclaimed in 1792 his desire to bring more settlers into Upper Canada from the American States. Simcoe believed that there were many people with hidden Loyalist sentiments still in the states.

Simcoe's proclamation was circulated across the border and offered 200 acre free land grants to all who would settle the land and swear an oath of allegiance to the crown. This invitation for free land brought many American frontier families northward. By 1795, a complex system of land titles and ownership had been established in the province under the direction of the Surveyor General. The first land grants in Hope ownership were issued on August 26, 1797 to Elias Smith and Jonathan Walton, totaling 726 acres. They were able to push this number upwards, claiming children who were entitled to receive free land.

The system of land registration created in the later part of the eighteenth century is still in use today. The documents created over the last two centuries are vital to tracing the ownership of property and providing insight into the history of the property.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Winter is finally here with the early arrival of snow. The archives have been very busy over the last few months. Our annual yard sale in September was quite the event. It attracted hundreds of people and raised well needed funds for our ongoing work at the archives.

In November we held our 25th Anniversary of the Port Hope Archives at the public library, that was a great success. We had several members from the past, board representation, councillors, volunteers and members. It was a memorable evening for everyone in attendance, and a chance to catch up with old relationships.

The new year will be bringing a great opportunity for perspective board members. We will be soliciting members and encouraging them to join our team as members of the board of directors.

We would like to wish you a happy holiday season, and look forward to seeing you at our Annual General Meeting in January 2020.

RICK



25TH ANNIVERSARY EVENT

ARCHIVIST'S MESSAGE

This past summer and into the fall has been very busy with researchers to our Reading Room making it an incredible year. We have had many who travelled from out of town to unlock information about their relatives.

One such visitor from Ottawa visited us many times and became a common fixture at our research table. She spent hours researching the Walker and Inch families while pouring over Assessment Roll books, land abstracts and cemetery records. She provided us with an amazing photo of three salmon jumping the fish ladder for our Fish Migration exhibit. One week, after discussions with experts in the field, she came with a set of carefully selected tools to clean and conserve monuments at an early private cemetery where several of her ancestors were buried. She was invited to tour the farms where these early families had once lived. This is taking the art of research to a new level! I hope this will inspire some of you to take on this exciting task.

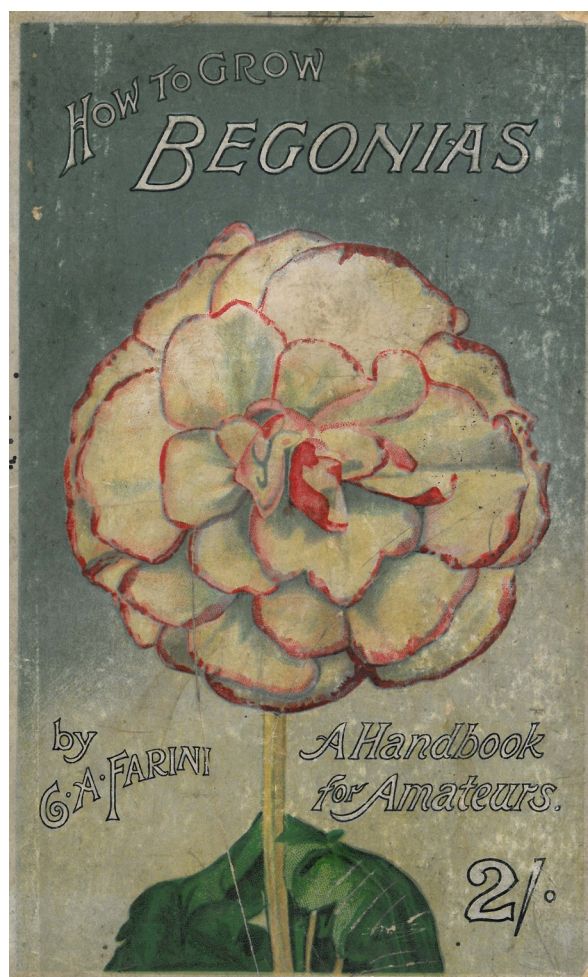
Have a wonderful holiday season!

MARIE

THE ARCHIVES NEW PHOTO BOARD



NEW TO THE COLLECTION



PLEASE JOIN US FOR OUR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

On Thur. Jan. 23, 2020, 6:30—8 p.m., Port Hope Library

Website: www.porthopearchives.com

Flickr: www.flickr.com/porthopearchives

Facebook: www.facebook.com/PHArchives

Archeion: www.archeion.ca/port-hope-archives

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/PHArchives>

Instagram: www.instagram.com/porthopearchives/

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