

# IT'S ABOUT TIME...

Newsletter of the Port Hope Archives

History Issue ~ Spring 2009

## Extra! Extra!

### The history of newspapers in Port Hope

In February, the Port Hope *Evening Guide*, Cobourg *Star* and Colborne *Chronicle* ceased to exist when they were amalgamated into one newspaper, *Northumberland Today*. It was a business decision which ended the publication of two of the oldest newspapers in Canada. Times change, businesses change, yet the history of *The Guide* cannot be forgotten. This issue of *It's About Time* will review the history of *The Guide*, as well as other newspapers that have served the citizens of Port Hope for the last 180 years.

Any institution with a long history is bound to have a confusing and often fractured history. The history of newspapers in Port Hope is no exception. As the article reprinted below from the September 1, 1855 issue of *The Guide* demonstrates, this is nothing new.

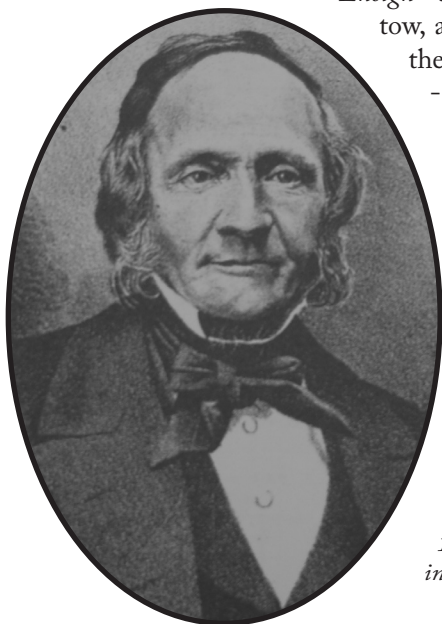
"THE PORT HOPE JOURNALS. - No less than four of these have been in operation nearly at the same time, and it must have been foreseen that some or other of them must give way. The course of their progress and decay has been on the wise. The *Watchman* was the original of all the newspapers now or recently published in the town. *The Guide* came in during a suspension of the former from pecuniary straitness (sic), and naturally took away most of the advertisements. The *Watchman* however waking from his slumber found means to start again, but had then to encounter the opposition of the *British Ensign*. These colors seem to have sustained themselves until the death of Mr. Steel, the originator of the *Watchman*, the

*Ensign* took the paper in tow, and published under the conjoint title, - heading with its own name. The sons of Mr. Steel, then started the fourth paper, the *Pilot*, and with such appearance of vigor and resolution, that the one with the double name has become

solved in that concern; the old *Watchman* is thrown out of record, and the present journal is "The British Ensign and Pilot." *The Guide* remains unaffected by any of these transmutations. There are therefore now only two papers published in Port Hope, to both of which we wish all prosperity - to the latter established more especially, as naturally needing it the most.

The above from the *Brant Herald* we give a place with a view of correcting some slight inaccuracies which it contains. Our esteemed contemporary states, that the *Watchman* was the original of all the papers published in this town. This is not the case. Journalism flourished in Port Hope long previous to the commencement of the *Watchman*. The first paper in Port Hope was the *Telegraph*, established in 1829, by a Mr. Vale. That gentleman retained the proprietorship about six months, when the establishment passed into the hands of the present proprietor of the *Guide*, who continued the *Telegraph* until some time in the year 1832. He then disposed of all his right, title and interest in the office, to Mr. Wm. Gowan, brother of the celebrated Ogle R. Mr. Gowan started the Port Hope *Warder*: but this journal we believe, did not have a very long life, and its proprietor becoming tired of the business, sold the office back to Mr. Furby who has held it ever since, now about twenty-two years. During that period, he made several attempts to establish a journal, but in every case met with indifferent success, until the establishment of the present paper, THE GUIDE, notwithstanding all the opposition it has had to contend with, is in a very flourishing condition - is a fixed fact. Last week we commenced our fourth volume, under very flattering auspices, and we trust before another volume has expired to announce the issue of our journal tri-weekly.

By-the-by we were almost forgetting the other faux pas of our contemporary. Mr. Steel, formerly proprietor of the *Watchman*, we are happy to inform our contemporary is "alive and kicking" and we are right glad further to state, is likely to be for many years to come. Mr. Steel edits the



William Furby (1799-1881) came to Port Hope in 1826.

Source: Belden Atlas, 1878

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*Pilot* and it is owned by his son and brother.”

The above article shows in 1855 the number of Port Hope papers were confusing people, the history is no easier to follow in 2009. An attempt has been made here to summarize the history of newspapers in Port Hope.

*The Port Hope Telegraph and Newcastle Advertiser*, was a continuation of Vale's paper. It was printed every Tuesday “at Port Hope, Newcastle District, Upper Canada by William Furby, Proprietor.” Furby had agents for the paper in Kingston, Murray, Darlington, Colborne, York, Monaghan, Peterborough, Cavan and London. He sold the paper in 1833.

*The Warder* was established in June 1833 by William B. Gowan after he purchased the *Telegraph* from Furby. It was also known as the *Warder & Constitutional Advocate*. By 1835 it was titled the *Port Hope Warder and Constitutional Advocate, Newcastle District Land, Merchantile and General Advertiser*.

The *Port Hope Gazette and Upper Canada Independent Examiner* began publication on March 15, 1836, and it continued to at least September 1837. Its proprietor and publisher was William Furby.

*Port Hope Gazette and Durham Advertiser* was established in 1844, and was published every Saturday morning by Furby. This paper continued through 1845, and by 1846 had ceased to be printed, as indicated in *Smith's Canadian Gazetteer*.

By May 1847, Furby had established *The Durham Commercial Advertiser* and was published every Saturday morning. By September that same year, the name had changed to *Port Hope Commercial Advertiser*. The new *Advertiser* continued into 1849.

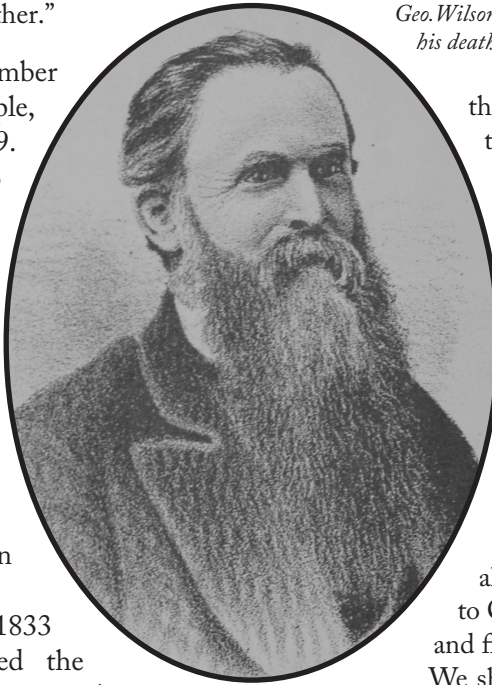
*The Guide* made its debut to the people of Port Hope on August 21, 1852. The second issue of the paper gave Furby's reasoning for why he chose to create *The Guide*. An excerpt reads:

“The proprietor having ceased to print the “*Watchman*” ... respectfully presents to his friends and fellow-citizens of Durham and Port Hope and of Canada generally a new Paper with a new name inscribed thereon.

The Press that has so long and patiently watched may surely, in all meekness be permitted to become a “GUIDE,” without discourtesy to a contemporary *Pilot* or *Leader*, although the former may rank as an official organ.

In the conduct of this Paper, we earnestly desire to guide our Canadian fellow-citizens to own and employ as many “Locomotives” on land as they have “Steamers” on their waters. They at length have become fully sensible of the local as well as national value of Rail Roads....

It shall ever be our study to advance the interests of



Geo. Wilson purchased *The Guide* in 1875 and operated it until his death in 1905.

Source: Belden Atlas, 1878

the People of Canada, and especially of the County of Durham and Port Hope, satisfied that with their advancement our own is inseparably connected. We desire all things that they should become grate and prosperous, worthy of the scion from which they spring; that Agriculture, Manufacture, Commerce and Education, should flourish; that they and their descendants should enjoy the fruits of their labour under the protection of pure and simple Laws, framed by honest senators, so that in all future ages, people abroad may point to Canada as the abode of virtuous, happy and flourishing people....

We shall at all times be ready and thankful to receive written or verbal communication on Agriculture or other local matters, carefully avoiding the insertion of news not well authenticated, or discreditable to private character. If by these observances we can earn the good opinion and friendly support of our readers we shall be grateful, and should our Paper fail to convince, it will at least we trust insure us the respect of our opponents.”

William Furby retired from *The Guide* in March 1856, in favour of the partnership of his son George M. Furby and Hugh Crea. George remained with *The Guide* for another two years. Hugh Crea kept *The Guide* until about 1862 when the paper was purchased by two brothers, Wm. S. Johnston and James Soules Johnston.

William Johnston had worked for the *Iroquois Chief* and the *Cornwall Economist*. When William moved to the *Toronto Globe*, James was the sole proprietor. James' health began to fail and he sold the paper. James died of consumption on January 6, 1871 at the age of 28 years.

By 1870, the paper was owned and being printed by C. Blackett Robinson & Co. with R. C. Grant as editor and manager.

Robinson sold the paper to A. Fleming in September 1871 and Fleming had the paper until November 22, 1873.

Robinson was once again at the helm on November 29, 1873. But not for long, as Harry M. Moody acquired the paper in February 1874. Moody published it until March 13, 1875.

On March 20, 1875, George Wilson published his first issue of *The Guide*. It was under Wilson that *The Guide* became a daily paper in 1878. The paper remained in the Wilson family until 1959 when George's grandson Ralph Choate Wilson (aka “Guidey”), sold the paper to A.B. “Peter”



Schultz.

Following Mr. Schultz's death, *The Evening Guide* was sold to Hugh Murray. On January 31, 1970 the last paper was printed in Port Hope. In 1971, the paper was sold to Northumberland Publishers and later, controlled by Southam, a subsidiary of Hollinger Inc. and currently, Sun Media, a wholly owned subsidiary of Quebecor Media Inc.

*The Guide* may of had longevity, but it was not without competition. The *Watchman* established by John Steele in 1850 was printed until 1855. Furby printed the paper for the first two years, when he did not have his own paper.

By 1855, a newspaper by the title *Pilot* was under way, with John Steele, formerly of the *Watchman* was editor. The paper was owned by his brother and son. The paper was not in circulation by the time the 1856/57 directory was printed.

In the summer of 1856, The *British Standard* newspaper was started by J. W. James, late of Newcastle. *The Guide's* editorial staff took it upon themselves to mention this paper on August 30, 1856:

"We have been looking over the first number of the *British Standard*, a paper calling itself conservative, just started in this town by Mr. James, -- formerly of the *British Ensign*. Our contemporary presents a very neat appearance; and the man who handles the quill, whoever he may be, does his work in good style. In politics, it is fully as ministerial as four or five columns of Government advertisements could be expected to make it. We wish the *British Standard* all the success of which it is deserving."

In 1857, the *Port Hope Atlas* started and was edited by Charles Roger. This was followed by the *British Canadian* in 1862, established by Hugh Cameron of Montreal. This paper eventually became known as *The Port Hope Times and County of Durham British Canadian* under J. B. Trayes, and eventually, *The Times*. From 1860-63 the *Messenger* was in business under Mr. Hayter, but he moved the paper to Millbrook in 1863. In the 1860s, the *Valuator* was published

by Thomas Galbraith, but it had a short-lived run.

In 1880, the *Weekly News* was established by W. T. R. Preston. It printed from the Stevenson Building on Queen Street. In the Dodd's Directory for 1880, the *Weekly News* described itself as such:

"The paper is Liberal in politics, yet independent in everything and neutral in nothing. Alive to the local interests of the town and country, and giving condensed news from all parts of the world. Efforts will always be made to make it a First Class Family Journal."

The *Weekly News* was published every Friday, until it was purchased by George Wilson in 1883.

The desire to compete with the *Guide* did not disappear in the twentieth century. The *Times* lasted for the first couple of decades and then disappeared.

In 1981, the James family, owners of the Bowmanville paper, started the *Independent* in Port Hope. This appeared to be a response to Northumberland Publishers starting a paper in Bowmanville. The *Independent* was bought out in 1988. Copies of the *Independent* are available at the Archives.

In 1999, a different type of paper was started. The *Port Hope Town Crier* was started by local residents who believed Port Hope deserved a better newspaper. The purpose was to ensure Port Hope and Hope Township were served by a strong, independent and intelligent press. The Committee was concerned about the declining quality of the *Evening Guide*.

*The Crier* received overwhelming support from residents and businesses, and received national attention for challenging Southam and for its editorials. It printed its last issue on June 22, 2000. The last issue was a public forum with letters written by readers of all ages.

Throughout the fifteen months *The Crier* was printed, it remained loyal to the idea of an improved *Evening Guide*. When the *Evening Guide* was threatened with the possibility of another new owner, *The Crier* stepped aside to concentrate on saving the *Evening Guide*. At that time, the community wrote, and the *Evening Guide* survived - for another nine years.

*The Committee in 1999, left to right: Bill Edwards, Denis Smith, John Miller, Mike Wladyka Jr., Sandy Segal, Deirdre Poole, Farley Mowat, Peter Gabany, Daniel Christie and Rod Stewart.*

*The Archives has a complete set of The Crier and the corporate records.*

2003-42-2678



**Archivist's note:** The PHA has a variety of archival items related to newspapers in Port Hope, including the Wilson's letter books, a signed copy of the last paper off the press in January 1970, issues of the *Watchman* from 1852 and the Priestley Collection of Furby Papers.

## COMING EVENTS

### OPEN HOUSE, APRIL 4, 10 A.M. TO 4 P.M.

Join the Port Hope Archives on Saturday, April 4 between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. to celebrate Archives Awareness Week. A silent auction and a Heritage Hunt are also planned, in addition to a display.

### SILENT AUCTION

Items have been donated by local merchants and members of the Archives. Please be sure to take a look at the selection of items when you visit the Archives for the open house. Items will be posted at [www.porthopearchives.com](http://www.porthopearchives.com) as they become available.

If you have something you would like to donate to the auction, such as gift certificates, items, services, etc., please contact Krista at 905-885-1673 before April 2.

### HERITAGE HUNT

A Heritage Hunt, similar to a scavenger hunt, has been planned for elementary school children, using buildings, architectural features and Port Hope's history. Forms will be available April 4 at the Archives, the Mary J. Benson Branch of the Port Hope Public Library and Port Hope Tourism Office. Children are encouraged to complete the hunt with an adult and return their answers to the Port Hope Archives on April 4, before 4 p.m. When forms are returned children are eligible to enter their name in a draw to win a great prize. Every child that returns their completed form will be given a small prize. This activity may be done as a family, and each child will still have the chance to enter their own name.

### YARD SALE, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 8 A.M. TO 12 P.M.

The Archives will be holding its annual yard sale on September 26. The yard sale will be held in the parking lot of 11 Mill Street North (Ron Good's Law Office) from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. The Archives will be accepting good-quality items for donation and volunteers are needed to help on the Friday and Saturday. If you are interested in volunteering or donating, please contact the Archives.

## E-mail Addresses

Do you have an e-mail address the Archives can use to send you updates and notices between newsletters? If so, please send an e-mail to the Archives at [archives@porthope.ca](mailto:archives@porthope.ca). We have some e-mail addresses and some of them are no longer current, so if you have changed your e-mail address, please update the Archives. Thanks!

## *It's About Time...*

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## HOURS

WEDNESDAY TO FRIDAY

10 AM TO 4:30 PM

SATURDAY

10 AM TO 4 PM

CLOSED EACH DAY 12 PM TO 1 PM

## JOIN US

Annual Memberships to the Port Hope Archives are available to everyone. For more information visit or call the Archives.

Household \$25

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## DONATIONS

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## OUR 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.*