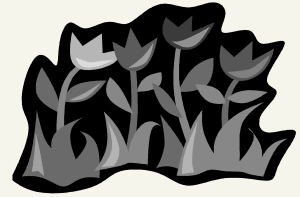


# It's About Time...



NEWSLETTER OF THE PORT HOPE ARCHIVES

**PORT HOPE OPERA HOUSE, MUSIC HALL, THEATRE: OH MY!**

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Opera House Opening,  
*London Illustrated News*  
(2008-27-3-1)



INAUGURATION OF THE NEW MUSIC HALL, PORT HOPE.—See page 105.

If you are as excited as I am about the opportunity to explore the old Opera House during Doors Open Northumberland this June; perhaps you have also pondered the history of the once-magnificent theatre.

The Port Hope Opera House (also known as the Music Hall) was opened in 1871 on the second floor of the building which is now occupied by the Royal Bank (85 Walton Street).

According to the *London Illustrated News*: “The New

Music Hall at Port Hope was opened with a concert on Tuesday, Feb. 28, and was attended by about six hundred of the elite and beauty of Port Hope. The room was comfortably filled, and the concert was a complete success. Morning dress was the order of the evening, and the large number of beauties of Port Hope looked, if possible, more bewitching in their hats and feathers than in evening dress.”

The Music Hall was written about multiple times by both locals and visitors. In a letter that was reprinted in the *Port Hope Evening Guide* – Written by Isabella Pringle to “Juliana” from the St. Lawrence Hotel, 28 Jun 1887 – “... All of Port Hope’s residents must have turned out tonight – car-

riages thronged the streets and the hustle and bustle of theatre goers dressed in their finery was most impressive and exciting. I think I have come to [the] New York of Ontario! ... The Opera House, I learned, is a busy and popular place with the townspeople and attracts artistes of great reputation.”

Despite this great praise from young Isabella, as with most businesses and buildings, the Port Hope Music Hall had periods where its popularity and reputation ebbed and flowed, a tide which eventually finished with the advent of talking pictures and the construction of the Capitol Theatre in 1930.

See “*News from the Collection*” for more!

## NEWS FROM THE COLLECTION

On Valentine's Day we received an amazing donation of hand-painted movie posters created by the Capitol Theatre, 1941-1942. While they are not in perfect condition, they tell a wonderful story of the movies shown at our own Capitol Theatre during World War II. One great example from the collection is this poster which features information about the showing of "No Greater Sin." Additional text on the poster includes: "Children under 16 not admitted - Auspices Health League of Canada" - 2nd Feature "A Date with the Falcon." "No Greater Sin" is a 1941 film about a local health official who tries to stop the spread of venereal disease in a small town. Starring: Leon Ames, Luana Walters, and Pamela Blake.

The *Capitol Theatre Movie Poster Collection* also includes:

"Two Yanks in Trinidad"

"I Married an Angel"

"The Men in Her Life"

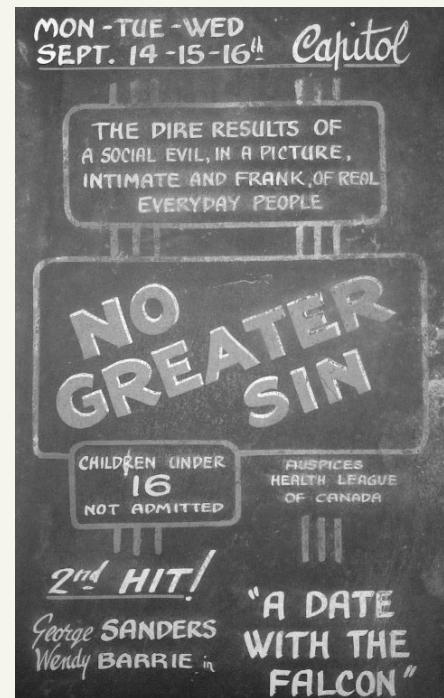
"Ship Ahoy"

"A Bedtime Story"

"Her Cardboard Lover"

"This Gun For Hire"

"Adventures of Martin Eden"



"No Greater Sin" Movie Poster, 1941  
From: *Capitol Theatre Movie Posters Collection* (2013.5)

## ARCHIVIST'S MESSAGE

Erin Walsh, B.A.H., M.I.S.T



*We cannot live only for ourselves. A thousand fibers connect us with our fellow men.*

-- Herman Melville

Spring has finally sprung! After a long, cold winter it's about time for a sparkling new community project courtesy of the Port Hope Archives! Starting this spring the PHA will be conducting video interviews with

local citizens; collecting memories of downtown Port Hope. After completion, the project will be available online and in the archives for future generations to enjoy! The project, entitled "Our Memories: Downtown Port Hope" will highlight for just how special our downtown area is now, and always has been. With the support of our

incredible community we believe the Port Hope Archives can create and maintain a great visual document detailing the history of the various businesses, and buildings, that have made up our charming downtown over its tumultuous history. Through fires and floods Port Hope's downtown remains the symbol of the town's love of heritage,

and commitment to retaining its original character for future generations.

It is this passion we are looking to document. If you are interested in participating please have a look at the insert in this issue or contact us at 905-885-1673.

Happy Spring!

*Erin*

## NOTES FROM THE CHAIR...

One of the things I enjoy most about Port Hope is its citizen's devotion to and willingness to share in its history – of the main town centre, of the rolling farmlands and smaller municipal centres that surround it, of the various industries, activities and events that have shaped the course and evolution of this area. On one weekend alone, we saw the annual Float Your Fanny race down the very chilly Ganaraska River – celebrating the grit and stamina of townspeople over a natural disaster that occurred over 30 years ago, the 9<sup>th</sup> annual ACO Port Hope Antiques & Artifacts Auction – raising funds to assist in restoration activities, and the annual Port Hope & District Historical Society Heritage Fair – where various history related groups from the region exhibit. The crowds were out in full force at each of these festive events, and as the saying goes “a good time was had by all”. I found the Heritage Fair especially interesting – so many groups with similar interests and enthusiasms, each one generously sharing with attendees.

A central plank of the Archives mandate is community outreach and inter-cooperation with other like-minded organizations in the region. To this end we participate in numerous exhibits throughout the year, and our Archivist speaks regularly to groups around the municipality – from the Port Hope Public Library to Roseglen Seniors to Probus Clubs. We welcome the opportunity to share resources and knowledge with the community at large and other historical groups, and hope they in turn feel the same.

Over the last few months members of our Board have participated in the Downtown Revitalization Project's Community Visioning Forums. We feel it is vital to be part of the process of this important project – given our physical proximity to the Downtown area, and the fact we hold so much of Port Hope's history within our walls.

Speaking of sharing, in this newsletter you will see information about our newest endeavour – our very own Oral History Project. I hope that members will consider carefully and if you know of people in the community who should be part of this project please encourage them to step up to be interviewed.

*Pam*

### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

*May 11th — Port Hope Archives Spring  
Open House, 12-4pm*

*Come on over and tour **YOUR** community archives! Check out items from our collection, and take some time out to ask our archivist a question or two!*

### **BOARD MEMBERS WANTED!**

*If you're interested in preserving the history of your community, have fund-raising experience, or any other skills you think might benefit the PHA Board of Directors, contact us at [archives@porthope.ca](mailto:archives@porthope.ca), by phone: 905-885-1673, or just drop by!*



CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE!  
WWW.PORTHOPEARCHIVES.COM

## PORT HOPE ARCHIVES

17 Mill Street North  
Port Hope, Ontario  
L1A 2T1

Phone: (905) 885-1673  
E-mail: [archives@porthope.ca](mailto:archives@porthope.ca)  
Website: [www.porthopearchives.com](http://www.porthopearchives.com)  
Twitter: [www.twitter.com/PHArchives](http://www.twitter.com/PHArchives)

### 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.*

### Donations:

All donations of \$25 or more are eligible for a tax receipt.  
The Port Hope Archives is a registered charity.  
Charitable Registration  
#83789 8675 RR0001



### Board of Directors:

Pam Robinson, Chair  
Marielle Lambert, Vice-Chair  
John Bennett, Treasurer  
Dave Doherty, Secretary  
Barbara Coleman  
Evelyn Conn  
David Elliott

### HOURS:

Tuesday to Friday 1:00pm—5:00pm  
1st Saturday (October to May) 9:00am—1:00pm  
OTHER TIMES BY APPOINTMENT

## From the Photo Database ...



Port Hope Flood Postcard, 1909

**PHA 2009-16-1-3155**

This photo and others can be found in our Flickr photostream:  
**[www.flickr.com/photos/porthopearchives](http://www.flickr.com/photos/porthopearchives)**

Description: B&W photograph of the aftermath of the 1909 flood. Taken by "Byers" on Queen Street facing north onto Walton Street. The flood, which occurred in the wee hours of February 24th, 1909 It was caused by a build-up of ice at Corbett's dam and excessive rain, both forming a swollen river. The river ravished the downtown, destroying two bridges, cutting off residents in the eastern portion of town from the businesses in the west for many hours, isolating the American Hotel on Walton Street, and sending giant ice floes corraling down Walton and Queen Streets.



# “OUR MEMORIES: DOWNTOWN PORT HOPE” ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

**Have you ever owned a business in Port Hope? Help us document YOUR stories of downtown Port Hope and share them with the world online - and in the archives - for future generations!**

If you would like to participate in the project and have your memories recorded please contact us:

PORT HOPE ARCHIVES  
17 MILL STREET NORTH  
PORT HOPE, ON L1A 2T1  
PHONE: 905-885-1673  
EMAIL: [archives@porthope.ca](mailto:archives@porthope.ca)  
WEB: [www.porthopearchives.com](http://www.porthopearchives.com)

PORT HOPE



ARCHIVES

# PORT HOPE



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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Memories Wanted!

#### Port Hope Archives announces first Oral History Project

Port Hope is fortunate to have a vibrant and picturesque downtown. It is one of the jewels of our community.

The Port Hope Archives is expanding on our mandate of collecting and preserving the growth and development of Port Hope. Accordingly, this spring the Archives will embark on an oral history project highlighting the historical evolution of downtown Port Hope.

We at the Archives feel it is essential that memories of downtown Port Hope be recorded for researchers of the future to have a ready-made resource on the buildings, businesses, and events that challenged and inspired the area over time. Video testimonies are one of the most engaging ways of capturing memories and recollections. In an effort to form a visual record of Port Hope's downtown businesses and buildings, the Port Hope Archives invites citizens to document personal stories in an oral history project entitled "**Our Memories: Downtown Port Hope.**"

Interested participants will be interviewed and recorded for inclusion in the project. Each interviewee will receive questions in advance so they can make notes of specific stories to tell. After interviews are conducted, each video will be broken down into shorter clips to post online. The end result will be a series of videos documenting various memories of Port Hope's downtown from both past and present perspectives. We are most especially interested in hearing from long time residents of both Ward One and Ward Two (formerly Hope Township), and owners and employees of Port Hope businesses, buildings, and industries.

There are several goals for the project: to gather first-hand accounts of historic Port Hope businesses in the downtown core; document individual memories of downtown events and buildings; create a visual document that highlights the vibrant past and present of Port Hope's downtown area; and show your memories to the world on the internet – and in the archives – for future generations.

Our community has changed tremendously over the years, and yet we are fortunate in that it has in many ways remained the same. We ask that when you walk down the streets of downtown Port Hope think about what has changed, what has remained, and what you remember. If you have memories you would like to share please contact the Archives to get involved in the project. Thirty minutes of your time could help document the history of our downtown for future generations.

For more information on how to participate in "Our Memories: Downtown Port Hope" contact the Port Hope Archives.

*The Port Hope Archives is located at 17 Mill Street North, Port Hope. Contact the archivist at (905) 885-1673 or [archives@porthope.ca](mailto:archives@porthope.ca); visit [www.porthopearchives.com](http://www.porthopearchives.com) or <http://facebook.com/PHArchives> for more information.*