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Spring 2023

IT'S ABOUT TIME...

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PORT HOPE ARCHIVES

THE ARCHIVES IS OPEN FOR

IN-PERSON VISITS

By appointment only

Join us on Tues., Wed., or Thurs. 9 –4:30

Dr. Clara Cynthia Benson a Pioneering Canadian Chemist

On March 8th we celebrated International Women's Day, a day which recognizes the achievements of women world-wide. The PHA would like to share the story of one of Port Hope's most remarkable women, Clara Benson (1875 - 1964). Clara was born in Port Hope to Thomas Moore and Laura Fuller Benson. Thomas was a solicitor and later in his career was appointed as a Northumberland and Durham County judge. Clara's grandfather, Thomas Benson Sr., was the first mayor of Peterborough and also served as the Secretary/Treasurer of the Port Hope, Lindsay and Beaverton Railway Company.

Following her education at Port Hope High School, Clara was admitted to the University of Toronto (U of T) in 1895 to study Chemistry. In 1899, upon graduation, she became the first woman to obtain a BA in Chemistry from U of T. Clara continued her studies in Toronto until 1903 when she and Emma Baker became the first 2 women to receive a PHD from the university. Her doctoral thesis, titled "The Rates of the Reactions in Solutions Containing Ferrous Sulphate, Potassium Iodide, and Chromic Acid," showcased her early brilliance and set the stage for her pioneering work in the field.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Dr. Clara Cynthia Benson a Pioneering Canadian Chemist.....	1-2
Railroad Operations Through Port Hope.....	3
The Port Hope, Lindsay, Beaverton Railway/ Midway Railway.....	4
The Grand Trunk Railway.....	5
Chair and Archivist Report.....	6
Train Video and Contact information	7

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HOURS: The Archives is open by appointment. Please contact the Archives by phone or email to book an appointment.

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.

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COMMUNITY HISTORY HAPPENS HERE!

**PORT HOPE
ARCHIVES**



University of Toronto Archives, 2001-77-90MS

Clara faced many challenges in her academic and working career because she was a woman. During her early years at U of T she was not able to carry out library research, as it was only available for the use of male students. In 1919 Clara became a fellow of the Canadian Institute of Chemistry, but ironically was not permitted to attend the annual dinner because she was not a man. By the 1920's, Clara was well recognized for her achievements in chemistry and was listed in a joint U.S. and Canadian journal "American Men of Science". Although women had been listed as early as 1906, it was not until 1971 that the name was officially changed to "American Men and Women of Science".

Throughout her career, Dr. Benson received numerous honours and accolades. The Clara C. Benson scholarship was established in her name at the University of Toronto in

1950. In 1959, the Clara Benson Women's Wing of the University Athletic Centre was unveiled in her honour, commemorating her efforts to secure athletic space for women at the university. In 1992, the Canadian Society for Chemistry created the Clara Benson Award in recognition of her contributions to the field.

Even after her retirement, Dr. Benson remained active in her community until her passing on March 25, 1964, at the age of 88. She was buried in St. John's Anglican Church Cemetery in Port Hope, where her legacy continues to inspire future generations.

Railway Operations Through Port Hope

The idea for this newsletter article first came to Karolina and I when a film producer approached the Port Hope Archives about viewing an 8mm family film, which had been donated to the archives. This footage was of a steam engine making its last run through Port Hope. Hundreds of observers gathered outside the Grand Trunk Railway Station (present day VIA Station) and along the tracks to celebrate its final journey. We had the film digitized for the producer to be used in an upcoming CBC documentary and have provided it as part of our story. There is a link at the end of our article and we hope you take the time to view it (unfortunately there is no sound).

This newsletter focuses on just two of the railway lines. In our next newsletter we will continue the story.

Port Hope was fortunate to have four major railway lines travelling through its boundaries at one time. The transportation of goods, especially grain and lumber from northern districts, became a much more profitable business. Mail delivery and passenger travel times were shortened from weeks to days or hours. The railway development of the 1850's resulted in Port Hope's unprecedented growth in the second half of the century.

In the 1850's the Port Hope Lindsay and Beaverton Railway (later referred to as the Midland railway) ran north, north west and the Grand Trunk Railway (GTR) ran west to east. Both lines were under construction at the same time. The Grand Trunk was completed first and opened in Oct.1856 connecting Port Hope and Hope Township to Toronto and Montreal. In 1878 the Midland

Railway was completed, having reached its final destination, Midland. Today many of the railway beds that were once laid with tracks have a new use, as walking and cross country ski trails.



The Port Hope, Lindsay, Beaverton Railway/ Midway Railway

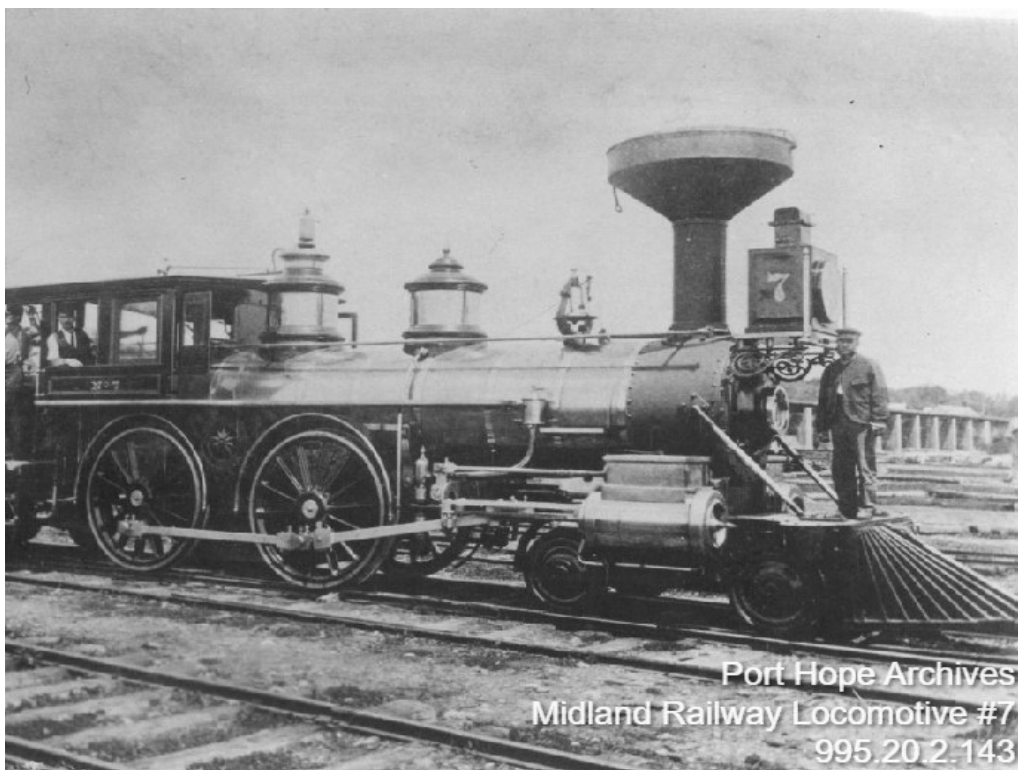
The idea of a railway line running from Port Hope to Peterborough was first introduced in the mid 1840's when a group of Port Hope businessmen formed a company for this purpose. The business plan was complicated and expensive. Funds for its construction were being raised primarily through the sale of shares in the railway company. Contributions came from Port Hope, Hope Township, a loan from the province, and residents who purchased individual shares. When Peterborough backed out from the arrangement the charter was amended to the Port Hope, Lindsay and Beaverton Railway with Midland as the proposed end point.

Construction of the road bed began in Port Hope in 1854 with the first tracks being laid across Walton St. in Sept. 1856. The first section to Millbrook was opened in Nov. 1856 and in early 1857 Lindsay was online. By 1871 it had reached Beaverton, but it was not until 1878 that the line was fully opened to Midland, its end of line.

As many of you will know, Port Hope and Cobourg were rivals, but they were also the only towns with ports on Lake Ontario that had railways leading to the northern districts. Port Hope had its Midland line and Cobourg had The Cobourg and Peterborough Railway that ran across Rice Lake on its way to Peterborough. In 1861 with the collapse and eventual destruction of the bridge over Rice Lake the line ceased to exist. Port Hope benefited from this disaster as a spur

line was run off the Midland line to Peterborough allowing for the increased transport of goods.

In 1959 the last steam locomotive #5575 travelled the line from Port Hope to Millbrook in a symbolic ceremony marking the end of an era. Hundreds of people were gathered along Walton St., Lent Lane and Ontario St. to witness the occasion.



Port Hope Archives
Midland Railway Locomotive #7
995.202.143

The Grand Trunk Railway

In 1845 The Toronto and Kingston Junction Railway held a meeting with the residents of Port Hope in order to sell them on a project that would allow the railway company to run a line from Toronto to Kingston, thus passing through Hope Township and Port Hope. It was not until 1851 that Kingston granted permission for a survey to begin along the proposed route. In 1852 The Grand Trunk Railway (GTR) purchased the rights from the smaller Toronto and Kingston Junction Railway with plans to connect Montreal to Toronto. The biggest obstacle would be the valley of the Ganaraska River. This took several years of planning and development. The (Prince) Albert Viaduct was constructed in 1856 and measured 1856 feet in length and sat upon 56 piers. The piers had an average height of 30 feet and were made of white brick with stone foundations. On Oct. 13, 1856 the first steam locomotive travelled across the bridge. On Oct. 27th the first passenger train, with its six cars, made the journey from Toronto to Montreal with a short stop at the Port Hope Station on Hayward St.

Port Hope is proud to have retained its lovely Italianate style station, an important reminder of our history. Thirty four stations were built by the GTR between 1853 and 1857 between Montreal and Toronto and only eight remain today in Ontario. The railway line was later absorbed by the Canadian National Railway. In 1978 the station building was under risk of closure and demolition with the introduction of Via passenger services. Several stakeholder groups became involved in the rescue and were successful in their bid to retain the station. The structure was restored to its former appearance and today maintains the original walls of local limestone, the original interior elements of wooden floors and wainscoting, and the ticket

master's bay. Four lovely chimneys are present on the low pitched gable roof. The station was officially recognized as a significant heritage property in 1987 under the Ontario Heritage Trust and has a Heritage Foundation Easement on it, which allows for its protection.



CHAIRS REPORT

After what seemed like a long snowy winter, spring is here. The “Canada 150” tulips, we planted in the front garden in 2017, are now about 10 inches tall. It will be interesting to see if any of the blooms have the original red and white colouring this year.

We have had a busy few months at the archives. We have continued working with the Municipality of Port Hope and the County regarding our proposal to transition to the Northumberland County Archives and Museum (NCAM). I would like to thank all of those members who responded to the poll we carried out in March. The results indicated that 86% were in favour of joining NCAM. There are still a number of steps involved in the plan and this month we are seeking council’s approval on several items. The PHA will keep you informed as information becomes available.

Thank you for your continued support!

Marie

ARCHIVIST’S REPORT

This winter season has been incredibly productive for us at the Port Hope Archives. We embarked on an extensive project of digitizing films for the CBC documentary, which kept us occupied . In addition, we provided our services to Office Linx, a local company, in selecting the perfect photo for their stunning new mural.

We were also fortunate to welcome back a dedicated volunteer who worked tirelessly on cataloguing the historic Port Hope dairy bottles. Moreover, we successfully completed the transfer of documents to the Ontario Archives for the year 2016 ,wrapped up all our probates and have been working away at identifying a series of Port Hope Homes, people and places from different donations.

As we look forward to the upcoming warmer months, we are delighted to see a steady flow of researchers making their way to the Port Hope Archives. We anticipate an even greater number of visitors during the summer, as we continue to provide invaluable resources and insights into our rich cultural history.

Karolina

Last Steam Locomotive Video

Are you interested in seeing the steam locomotive making its last run through Port Hope?

Click on the link or photo below.



Video Website: <https://youtu.be/WLO4MQOqJdU>

The Archives is open by appointment. Please contact us at least 1 business day in advance to book your appointment today.

PORT HOPE ARCHIVES

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