



# IT'S ABOUT TIME...

## THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PORT HOPE ARCHIVES

**THE ARCHIVES IS OPEN  
AGAIN FOR  
IN-PERSON VISITS**  
By appointment only  
Join us on Tues., Wed. or  
Thurs. 9 –4:30

In light of the current geopolitical situation, the Port Hope Archives would like to announce that we are in full support of Ukraine during this time of hardship.

Some of you may know that in the last few years house and property research has surpassed family research at the Port Hope Archives. Susan Layard has been one of the most enthusiastic and has allowed us to include her article in this newsletter. It tells the story of her adventures in researching properties.

### NOTES FROM THE LISTING PROJECT- by Susan Layard

I am a member of a Heritage Port Hope Sub-Committee which has been formed to research Port Hope properties for possible listing on the Town's Heritage Register. To be eligible for listing, properties must demonstrate at least one of Design Value, meaning significant physical heritage attributes, Contextual Value, meaning significant visual, functional, or historical connections to its surroundings and Historical Value, meaning, in my view, that the property tells a good story. In other words, we don't just want to determine, for instance, that a building has beautiful wooden six-over-six windows or is the perfect example of a Port Hope Ontario cottage. We also want to find out about how the building fits into its surroundings and about the stories of the people who were involved in its construction or who actually lived there.

I must tell you that I am a neophyte at this type of research, so I decided that, in order to be able to examine the house close up, I should choose, for my first investigation, a property that belonged to friends who already wanted their house designated. Normally, we are not allowed to tell the homeowner that we are considering their home for the Register until after we have determined that the minimum criteria can be met. This, of course, has meant that my research on subsequent properties has required a certain amount of stealth and subterfuge. In order to view the properties, I have found it advisable to pretend that I am just passing by on my daily walk, and in order to stop long enough to ascertain its heritage features, I have needed to feign a stone in my shoe, a cramp in my leg or untied shoelaces.

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#### Port Hope Archives

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**HOURS: The Archives is open by 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.'*

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

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Marie Jones, Acting Archivist  
Lindsay Fler, Acting Archivist  
Rowan Palleske, Archival Assistant

*The Port Hope Archives is a registered charity. #83789 8675 RR0001*

### COMMUNITY HISTORY HAPPENS HERE!

*The Port Hope Archives acknowledges that we are located on the traditional territory of the Mississauga Nations.*

By the way, if you do see me wandering around your neighbourhood, don't worry. Listing a property on the Port Hope Heritage Register does require the homeowner's permission and, unlike designation, there are no strings attached with the exception that it will take a little longer than usual to acquire a permit should you wish to have your house demolished.

As I have with all my investigations, I began the research into my first property with a visit to the Port Hope Archives to meet Marie Jones, the Archivist at the time and a fellow member of the Listing Sub-Committee. She is also a member of HPH proper and an expert in this type of research. (Of course, nowadays we usually meet on Zoom and our work has frequently been curtailed.) I am, however, continuing to check out possibilities while on my daily walks.

Marie told me that I must first determine the year the house was built. She then brought out a document which I believe is one of the Town's most precious primary source treasures - Port Hope's 1874 Panoramic Bird's Eye View Map by Herman Brosius. It is a wonderful, hand-drawn snapshot of Port Hope in 1874. If the building under investigation can be found on this map, we know that it is pre-1874.

Fortunately, we were quickly able to find the house I was researching on the map, and I naturally thought that I was off to a great start. Marie then directed me to the other Port Hope survey maps available in the archives where I discovered the name of the original owner of the land on which the house was built and the fact that there were no buildings on that land in 1853. I was thrilled! In a very short time, I had found concrete evidence that the house had been built somewhere between 1853 and 1874. Marie then suggested that I check through the archival files already compiled on various houses in Port Hope to find out if someone else had already done at least some of the research for me. Sometimes, these files are thick with information either collected by homeowners or taken from some of the lovely books written about Port Hope heritage properties. In the case of my house, however, there was only one small photograph taken in the 1970's. So much for the research being done for me.

Marie then said that the next step was to take a look at the Land Registry books. There are 19 Land Registry books in the archives, and they detail all the property transactions that took place from the early 19th century to the second half of the 20th century. The books are a bit daunting because they are filled with photocopies, seemingly produced when the photocopier was first invented, of original handwritten documents, and they are therefore very challenging to read especially for those of us who rarely see anything that isn't typed anymore. Even finding the correct book and page for the property under investigation takes a few steps. You need to look up your property in the Town Rolls to determine the Plan and Lot Numbers, and then check another sheet to find the correct Registry book.

Once you arrive at the correct page, you will be able to see each time your property was bought and sold, bequeathed and/or mortgaged, along with, of course, the selling price. I soon discovered, however, that in the case of my first investigation, there were in fact two such pages, in very different sections of the book and with very different information. As a result, piecing everything together was, according to Marie, much more time-consuming than usual. It turned out that the property had been in dispute from 1853 until 1915, which explained the two parallel entries. The original landowner, a former Port Hope Mayor no less, had sold the property to one individual even though he had already mortgaged it to someone else. According one of the entries in the Land Registry books, the property was then sold again in 1866 for virtually the same price that was paid for it in 1853, so I could at least conclude that the house had probably not been built before 1866. I had therefore pinned down the date to between 1866 and 1874. I seemed to be getting closer. Marie then suggested that I take a look at the Collector's and Assessment Rolls. These are beautiful but somewhat fragile documents that do require a great deal of care in handling. (The gloves and mask that I always carry around today would have definitely been helpful.) The rolls are organized alphabetically by town resident, but I learned quickly that it was helpful to also search through by street name as well, even though this is a much more labour-intensive process. Oh how I wished for the 'Sort' feature on my computer.

Unfortunately, there was nothing in the Collector's and Assessment Rolls which helped me to further narrow down the date that the house was built, but they did help me establish that I was following the correct entry in the Land Registry book. In the end, I resorted to a beautiful book entitled York County Mouldings, to determine from the building's window casements and trim that the house was probably built in the late 1860's rather than the early 1870's. Going back to the Land Registry book, I was then able to determine that the house was sold to a Port Hope grocer in 1891 and that it remained in that family until 1948. I was then able to confirm this information by looking at online census records for 1851 to 1921 (not for the faint of heart - it seems that our governments have never been very good at collecting statistics) and the various Port Hope Directories found online and in the archives. Interestingly, though, the poor fellow (well, very rich, actually) who held that old mortgage never did get his money back although not for want of trying, and there is a record of the son of the original landowner trying, in 1915, to sell the property even though he didn't own it.

### **Does this property demonstrate Design Value?**

Fortunately, the heritage features of this property were written up by Phil Carter for one of the Port Hope House Tours, so I had a great deal of help with determining this. The house is representative of the 1.5-storey front-facing gable house seen often in Port Hope, and the craftsmanship of the mouldings and window casements of this house appears to be of a particularly high quality for a home of its size, the house still has wooden windows although only one of them is six-over-six. The old, interior staircase is also notable.

### **Does the property demonstrate Contextual Value?**

The house is certainly similar in age, design and scale to others on the street. It is also connected historically to the house next door through the original landowner and his family.

### **Does this house tell a good story?**

Well, it is not quite murder and mayhem, but the story does contain a former Port Hope mayor and some rather suspicious land dealings. Perhaps, however, I should let you be the judge of this.

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### **The Great Flood of 1980**







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On March 25<sup>th</sup>, 1980, Port Hope would be forever changed. The forecast warned of heavy precipitation in the afternoon and through until the evening, and resulted in one of the many great floods of the Ganaraska River in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in Port Hope.

Occurring incredibly quickly, the flood devastated the downtown area, but the townspeople rallied by using sandbags to reroute the water while the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority (GRCA) was monitoring the dams at Garden Hill, Ball's Mill, and Port Hope. Water levels rose to 3 ft above street level on Walton Street and Queen Street and cars were seen floating down the flooded streets. The old fire hall and service station endured immense damage in the form of a massive hole in its corner and other locations such as the Torville Terrace also sustained substantial damage.

The overall total cost was determined to be \$10M at that time, and Port Hope endured incredible loss and damage as a result of the flood. This includes the loss of several historic buildings including the old fire hall on Walton Street (which was 150 years old at the time). Other non-historical buildings were also lost during this flood, including the Sears mail-order office on Ontario Street, Durham Motors, and the service station on the corner of Mill and Walton.

The devastation wrought by this flood prompted many changes. Port Hope Mayor, Bill Wyatt, appealed to the province to declare Port Hope a disaster zone, and received provincial funding to be put towards recovery efforts. With this funding, the GRCA was able to purchase the property along the riverbank. Extensive remediation efforts were made, including utilizing that property to create a green-space that would improve the Ganaraska River's flow capacity and prevent ice jamming in the future. This allowed and continues to provide greater ecological resilience and reduces the likelihood of mass destruction caused by flooding in future years.

From 1980 on, "Float Your Fanny Down The Ganny", a 10 km. race down the Ganaraska River, has become an annual tradition in Port Hope. Every spring hundreds of spectators gather along the route to cheer on enthusiastic participants. Travelling in canoes, kayaks and crazy crafts they brave the icy waters, as they make their way to the finish line at the Barrett Street Bridge. The popularity of Float Your Fanny continues, and is being held this year on Saturday April 9<sup>th</sup>.

## ARCHIVIST MESSAGE

I am back at the archives once again, filling in for Rachel while she is on family leave. After several openings and unexpected closures during the past two years, we are happy to be open again and I hope that this continues for many months. At the end of 2021 we received a large donation of over 4,200 photographs from Robin Long. This is an interesting and varied collection of images created from the 1860's to modern day. The Long Family's multigenerational passion for photographing and collecting imagery of Port Hope has led to this historically and rare collection of photographs. We hope that some of you will take the opportunity to visit us to view some of these photographs.

**Marie**

The Port Hope Archives has reopened for in-person research visits on Tues., Wed. and Thurs. Here's what we're doing to ensure your visit is as safe as possible:

- Appointments must be made a minimum of 1 business day in advance for either the morning or afternoon option. Please contact us to book your appointment at **(905) 885-1673**.
- In preparation for your visit, staff will gather materials for your research needs in advance.
- Maximum 2 visitors in the building per appointment.
- Please ensure that you wear a face mask, sanitize, and sign in using our guest register upon arrival at the Archives.
- Contactless payment by debit or credit is available.

*If you're not able to visit us in person, we are happy to do research on your behalf.*

# PORT HOPE ARCHIVES

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