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# THE CABOOSE



NEWSLETTER OF THE CUMBERLAND TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY (CTHS)  
BULLETIN DE LA SOCIÉTÉ HISTORIQUE DU CANTON DE CUMBERLAND (SHCC)

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## New look! New editor! New year!

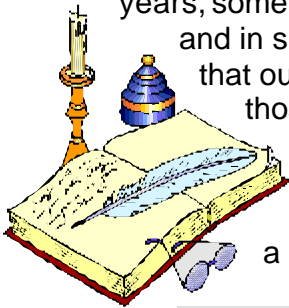
Welcome to this first issue of *The Caboose* for 2003. As it did before, *The Caboose* will feature stories of Cumberland Township that recount the past, and include new research conducted by our members. I invite readers to document and share their recollections so that Cumberland Township history will be preserved.

*Jeannie Smith, Editor*

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### Diary dialogues by Jeannie Smith

Cumberland Township has strong family roots and many people reside on land that has been passed down through generations. Over the years, some of my family kept diaries and in sharing these you will find that our lives are quite similar to those of our ancestors.



Weather, work, money, neighbours, meetings, church and family still play a large part in our lives.

*Written by my great-grandfather Dr. James Ferguson, 1838-1921, physician and coroner in Cumberland Township.*

Jan. 22, 1904: Big storm of winter; east wind and cold. Roads blocked, between 3 and 4 feet of snow.

*Written by my Father John Douglas Ferguson, DDS, 1904-1965, schoolteacher, then dentist.*

Dec. 24, 1930: Saw around Cumberland, rink, Dunnings, McKeens, down to Rangers with James Morin motoring. In evening, Sid Spratt, Annie Williams & Edwin, Hazel Waters and myself went skating in Rockland.

### **Next meeting of the CTHS...**

Our next general meeting will be held on January 8th, 2003 at 7pm at the Queenswood Heights Community Centre. Mrs. Laurie McBurney will speak on the upcoming book about Cumberland, and Mr. Gilles Séquin, manager of the heritage planners, will present the new Heritage Master Plan. Come join us, and be sure to bring a friend!

Jan. 2, 1931: In afternoon marked poplar trees which Lawrence Barnett and George Blaney should cut into stove wood. Walked out to Robert's Camp and got Jack Dale to do sleigh drive. Ottawa Y. P. down at 8:00 and 28 of us went out around concession by Hayes and Chamberlains. Had wonderful time-snow, atmosphere, etc. ideal. Saw Cumberland trim Rockland 5-2 in our rink. Fifty-five ate after at McKeen's and played games, then sang hymns then Bea and I played piano and violin.

*Written by my Grandfather John Darby Ferguson 1875-1958 preacher with the Plymouth Brethern.*

Jan. 12, 1938: Mr. W. Thomas Blaney dies at school in a.m. found by two school girls 8:30 am.

*Cont'd on page 4*

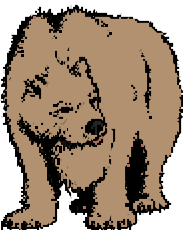


## Remember when...

*Thanks to Jean Harkness for sharing this letter written by her father Victor Dunning (1899-1991), son of G.G. Dunning.*

Have you forgotten or remember when in 1910 many tug boats ran up and down the Ottawa River dragging large booms of logs to Rockland and Hawkesbury mills? Passenger boats, The Victoria and Empress, carried passengers and freight. Excursions took place (moonlight) large picnics on Cameron's Hill. Foot ball games, dance platforms (fiddlers galore). Cameron's hill, 50 acres was a large raspberry patch, people came by rowboat from Masson to pick berries. The first ferry I remember was a scow rowed by 4 men, then an upright boiler, steam and chain driven, if the chain broke, it was quickly installed with a new link.

Mail in those days came CPR, Masson mailman hired by the year. In those days there was no transportation, farmers had to draw their produce by sleigh or wagon to By Ward Market. About 1910, there were only 3 cars in the neighbourhood. Leslie Dunning, Bill Edwards and Bill Rivington. After that in came Tmodel Fords and others. I might say here that meals on the market were 25 cents all you could eat, lodging over night was fifty cents (Elliot's Hotel). Shoes in those days sold for \$3 to \$4. Suits at Tip Top Tailors (1914) 2 pair pants, vest, coat \$19.



The Village and surrounding area has doubled the population. Where our lovely animals roamed, now are practically wiped out, what a pity! Progress may be all right for some people, but not for me; sad are the

memories left behind. I must tell you, my dad told me at one time, a bear had appeared in vicinity; two men built a scaffold on Eldred Hayes' farm to shoot the bear. The time came, the bear in moonlight shade appeared, they shot it and to their surprise they shot a neighbour's cow! The bear meat wasn't very tasty; they had to pay for the cow. Where have the wild cherries gone that used to gum up our tongues and the butternuts that used to stain our fingers? Mostly everyone had a cow in those days and farmers had to sell their milk to a cheese factory and brought back a by product-whey for the pigs.

## We remember... the Village of Navan

*As told to Linda Dunn by Sam and Janet Rathwell in 1984*

In today's fast-paced life a lot of us go through Navan, and see only a crossroads village on the way to and from Ottawa. Few of us realize the history of this industrious farming community, which provided virtually all necessities for farmers and villagers alike.

The focal point of any rural village is the local store and Navan supported four of these when we were young.

J.T. Bradley's, Bill Clarke's, the Jackson sisters, and Walter Bickerton's. Each had a rail or cement posts for tying horses, sold general merchandise, and were located within one block of each other.

To give an example of a rural general store, J.T. Bradley's had counters along the east and west sides with a large open area in the middle. Besides providing a place for the wood stove, this open area served as the social corner for everyone—in the winter, there were rows of benches which were relocated outside during the summer. Besides the local



telephone lines, these stores became the information point for the entire community.

Behind the counters were the wares of the general store. Flour came in 98 lb. Cloth bags, sugar in 100 lb cloth sacs, salt, rolled oats, prunes and raisins in 25 lb bags. Fresh fruit and vegetables were few, although as children the two treats were the bunch of bananas hanging from the ceiling and the oranges which came in from Ottawa at Christmas.

Farm supplies such as cow salt, horse collars, halters and bits were in abundance and even dynamite in 100 stick boxes, could be purchased at Clarke's store. Everything from work boots to clothes to notions was available behind the counter. Shoplifting of course was not a problem as the storekeeper was the only one who had access to merchandise. Small paper bags, cardboard boxes and newspaper (bought for 1 cent a pound from local children) were used for wrapping.



Both farmers and villagers were largely self-sufficient. Each home in the village had small gardens, and sheds in the back to house their cow (milk products), pig (meat), chickens (eggs and meat), and wood for the stove. Most homes were two-storeys, had

an attached summer kitchen with a three burner coal oil stove, and a pump and outhouse in the backyard. In the fall, the pig was slaughtered and placed in a large barrel filled with salt, providing the family with the majority of meat for the winter. Weekly, a man with an express wagon would come door-to-door selling meat hung from a rack. Villagers would request a roast, and the salesman would slice what you wanted from the side of beef or port. Hugh Lancaster opened a butcher shop, and over the years, the selling of meat door-to-door became something of the past. Bread was also delivered by wagon and was purchased in a pan of four loaves.

Navan also had a Post Office, located from when we were young until the 1970's, in Clarke's store (run by Bill's daughter Elsie, where the Royal Bank is now located), and a cheese factory located where the Iron Works Building is today. Cheese was sold in 80 lb elm boxes, ¼" thick, 16" in diameter and 14" high, many of which were later used as footstools and storage boxes. Residents would buy 40 lb blocks of cheese, and the rest was shipped by train for re-sale in places as far away as England. The factory also enclosed the telephone exchange, which previously had been in the boarding house and operated by Mrs. Cox from a private home. Eventually, in 1921, a Royal Bank branch opened (previously, two employees from the Vars branch came to Navan two days a week for banking business in a lean-to attached to what is now Herb Deavy's house.)



There were also church facilities — an orange hall which served the Methodist community in the morning and the Presbyterians in the afternoon, and St. Mary's Anglican which was built in 1898. Another focal point of the community was the railroad station (located west and south of the village), and many people gathered there on Sundays to watch the visitors and salesmen arrive.

The first blacksmith was George Kemp, who also made carriages and express wagons until the late 1800's, when the business was sold to Alan Dillon and then Bob Rathwell. Ernest Brereton, one of Bob's employees, opened the smithy after World War I, where his son Ham's shop is today, and both generations carried on this essential service. Janet's brother, Bill Newton, ran the barbershop, and her father and mother operated both a boarding house and a machinery dealership. John Chisholm ran the



local shoe repair shop (where the Shaw Building is), followed by Mike Conway, who operated the business out of the old school. Dr. Dunning from Riceville was the local practitioner, followed by Drs. Derby and Irwin.

Obviously, Navan was a busy industrious community, a vital link for rural residents, and the local businesses left today, such as the feed store and the Red and White, still carry some of the traditions of this quieter, less rushed society.

*This article is from scrapbooks compiled by Mrs. Lawrence Barnet (Annie Watson), mother of Mrs. Joan Lancaster. The scrapbooks are on the shelves of the CTHS History Room at the Ray Friel Centre Library.*

#### **Obituary**

##### **February 1921**

Dr. James Ferguson, aged 83 years, of Cumberland, Ont., one of the oldest physicians of the Ottawa valley and brother of Lady Douglas Cameron, died last week at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Lorne Kennedy (Susie), Cumberland, Ont. (now Heritage Restaurant). He was born at Caledonia Springs, receiving his early education there, later attending McGill University, graduating in 1861 with the degree M.A. In 1865 he finished a postgraduate course at New York in medicine and surgery, attaining high honours. Of the graduates of 1865, who completed their course with Dr. Ferguson, only two survive. He had practised in the Cumberland district for about 60 years and for a number of years was coroner of Russell County.

In 1863, Dr. Ferguson married Miss Susanna Rice McLaurin of Riceville, Ont., who predeceased him sometime ago (1918). Surviving him are two sons, A.P.C. Ferguson (Cecil), Pharmacist in Rockland, Ont., and J.D. Ferguson, Cumberland; one daughter Mrs. L. A. Kennedy; one brother, John C. Ferguson, Niles City, Michigan, U.S.A. and one sister, Lady Margaret Cameron, wife of Sir Douglas Cameron of Vancouver and formerly Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba. (1911-16).

## **President's notes**

Members of the Society met to brainstorm ideas for the year ahead. Mrs. Susan Flemming talked about the Home Children at the November meeting. A meeting was held on November 21st to establish a positive network between the City of Ottawa and area historical Societies. Letters were sent to 26 local elementary schools to inform them of our presence and activities.



## **Diary dialogues** (cont'd from page 1)

Jan. 7, 1939: Rise 7 AM Dull Go to Post Office. Purchase raisins .25, sugar .12, butter .23, citron .07. Visit Lorne Barnett, leave him book to read. Nettie sends him bread & celery. Arla comes for it.

Jan. 27, 1939: Nice am turns duller temp. zero. Rise 6:15 AM Get fires on. Go to feed the cows, milk and separate cream, breakfast after finding & watering hens. John Dale (lived at north end of Faubert St., green house now at museum) comes at 8:30 to kill our calf with Fred. I help hoist it up on pulley. Calf in good order. Nettie writes Douglas. I hear Mrs. G. Adams slept well last night, they have a nurse. Read several chapters from Bible. Take dry cedar wood to Mrs. A. E. Walsh. Prayer at night after reading.

Feb, 3, 1941: Rise 7 mins. To 7 AM. Do morning chores. Go for mail send letter to John Sommerville about wood. Walk to Thos.

McNeely's house to enquire for cow hay. Call at Alex Garvock's house. Mrs. Walsh calls to pay rent \$10 (apartment in stone house, now Heritage). Fred cutting ice on river to sell. Baker from Sarsfield calls.

Nettie goes calling in afternoon on Mrs. C. Fraser & Mrs. A. Garvock & Mrs. T. Watson.

Feb. 23, 1943: Mild Spring like Temp 26 above. Rise, fire up, feed cows & calf, milk and separate cream. Go to Post Office no mail. Nettie comes home on 2PM bus from Ottawa. I meet the bus. Go to WWDunning Store and procure new ration book from Catherine Dunning. Baker calls, W. McKeen & Mrs. Alfred Moreau call here today.

Feb. 15, 1944: I attend a Village Council meeting at R J Kennedy's at 8PM V. Dunning, C. Spence, R J Kennedy & myself.

Mar. 19, 1945: Quite mild goes up to 52 above. Rise about 8:30 AM make breakfast, porridge, start housework. Go to Post Office. Fred goes to Ottawa with Art Hanson. Barnett & Sharpe children gather sap for Fred. I have a busy day cooking, washing dishes, sweeping, sawing wood, reading, writing, praying. Little girl fetches PM Journal. I just hear a Robin, I saw one today!

Feb. 18, 1948: Go to Hattie Dunning's house for poles for quilting. Carry them to "Chestnut Cottage" where next Red Cross meeting is to be. Phone rings, call for Legaults. I have to go over for Mrs. A. Legault. At 1:30 PM I go to a Farmer's meeting in Maple Hall. Chief speakers are J. McRae, Mr. Larose, Mr. Jolie, N. Edwards. A Priest and myself are asked to speak at close of mtg.

Feb. 15, 1952: We listen on Radio to funeral service for Our Beloved King George VI at Ottawa 3PM and at England 6 PM. Nettie & Fred go for a drive in car to near Green's Creek (new highway!). I stay and keep house, rest and play piano. After supper we again listen to Radio for messages from London England about the King's funeral service.

Feb. 29, 1956: Imperial Oil Ltd man brings oil, Mrs. W. McRae brings us a lemon pie. I fill wood box, put water in reservoir on range. Go to meeting in the Public School. Inspector speaks. I come home about 10 PM. Mar. 2: Go over to McRae's for water (our pump is out of order!).

Mar. 11, 1958: I take 9:30 AM bus (Colonial Coach) to Rockland. I go to Barber Shop, get my hair cut .75. I go to Provincial Bank, make a deposit. I walk down to Bus Station on Main Street, wait for 11:00 AM bus home.

## Un Noël émouvant

*The following is an excerpt from the book *Les sillons de ma vie*, written by our past president Jean-Noël Dessaint. Mr. Dessaint's book chronicles his life as a farmer, a father and a leader in his community of Sarsfield, in Cumberland Township.*

*Currently, *Les sillons de ma vie* is available in French, only. The Society plans to publish the book in English this year.*



La veille de Noël suivant le décès de ma mère, je suis allé à la messe de minuit, accompagné de mon père. Après la messe, nous sommes retournés à la maison, mon père éclairant le chemin à l'aide de son fanal.

Une fois entré dans la maison, il alluma la lampe à l'huile, attisa un bon feu dans le gros poêle Findlay qui dominait dans la cuisine et s'assit à la table près de moi. Il m'annonça qu'il y avait un cadeau pour moi. Il se leva, passa à la salle à manger et revint avec un magnifique gâteau décoré de jolies roses en sucre sur lequel quelqu'un avait écrit «Joyeux Noël». Je n'avais jamais vu d'aussi beau gâteau. Comme il n'y avait aucune femme dans notre maison, je me demandais d'où pouvait bien venir ce chef-d'œuvre. Qui avait pensé à m'offrir un gâteau à mon septième anniversaire? Après m'avoir laissé languir quelque temps, mon père me révéla que le gâteau venait de nos bonnes voisines, les Sœurs du Sacré-Cœur et que c'était Sœur Thérèse qui l'avait livré, à mon insu, plus tôt dans l'après-midi.

Le gâteau fut dégusté vers deux heures trente du matin. Ordinairement, nous l'aurions accompagné d'un bon verre de lait que nous avions en abondance; les boissons gazeuses étaient encore inconnues chez nous, tout comme le café. Mais pour mon père, il y avait mieux que du lait et il nous servit un petit verre de vin au raisin fait à la maison.

Ce bon matin de Noël, papa et moi sommes montés dans nos chambres, l'âme réjouie. Momentanément, nous avons oublié nos peines et nos cœurs étaient gais. Nous avions l'habitude de réciter le chapelet avant de monter nous coucher et souvent, mon père récitait la dernière dizaine, les bras en croix. La plupart du temps, nous nous endormions le cœur gros en versant des larmes. Mais pas ce soir-là!

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#### Editor's choice

River Song; by Phil Jenkins, 2001

It was the route of explorers and fur traders, the premier entry point for Europeans emigrating to Canada. River Song sails the history of the St. Lawrence and features tales of war, trade, hope, disappearance and triumph.

A Few Acres of Snow; by Robert Leckie, 1999

This saga of the French and Indian Wars provides an outstanding historical survey of life in the New World after 1492 and charts the long, savage conflict between England and France in their quest for supremacy in pre-Revolutionary America.

Ottawa Past & Present; by A. Ross, 1927

Here is an excellent account of early explorers on the Ottawa River, settlers in Carleton County, the building of the Rideau Canal, origins of street names of Ottawa, plus many interesting bits of Ottawa history.

Contact Jeannie Smith at 833.2877 to borrow these books.

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#### The Society executive

- Jean-Francois Beaulieu, President and Webmaster
- Robert Serré, Vice-President
- Carole Proulx-Lafrance, Secretary-Treasurer
- Robert Dessaint, Director
- Verna Cotton, Director
- Randall Ash, Director, Newsletter
- Jeannie Smith, Director and Newsletter Editor

#### Society calendar...



- |   |   |
|---|---|
| January 8 <sup>th</sup>                 | General meeting; 7pm:<br>Queensview Community<br>Centre   |
| January 13 <sup>th</sup>                | Joint meeting of CTHS and<br>the Cumberland Heritage<br>Village Museum Board; 7pm:<br>Town Centre |
| February 22 <sup>nd</sup>               | Community Builders Awards<br>Night; RJ Kennedy Community<br>Centre                                |
| February 27 <sup>th</sup>               | Heritage Day  |
| March 5 <sup>th</sup>                   | CTHS General meeting; 7pm:<br>Queensview Community<br>Centre                                      |
| May 8 <sup>th</sup>                     | Ottawa Heritage Fair; Cattle<br>Castle, Lansdown Park   |
| May 24 <sup>th</sup> & 25 <sup>th</sup> | Heritage Power Show, and<br>'Doors Open Ottawa'   |
| May 27 <sup>th</sup>                    | CTHS Annual general<br>meeting; 7pm: Queensview<br>Community Centre                               |

For more information on these and other upcoming events, please contact any member of the executive committee.

## Significant dates in Cumberland Village and Township history

1801	First settler arrived in Cumberland – Abijah Dunning (1744-1819)
1807	Amable Foubert arrived at Cumberland; he erects a trading post
1815	First settler arrives in Bearbrook – James MacRae
1817	First store established in Cumberland by a son of A. Dunning
1822	First appearance of steamboats on Ottawa River
1824	First church in the township built in Cumberland Village – “Old Kirk’
1826-32	Rideau Canal construction period meant an impetus to the growth of the river settlement. The Cumberland ‘Treasure’ was buried sometime during this period.
1828	Prescott-Russell voted Incumbent Donald MacDonald (Independent) voted to the Assembly of Upper Canada.
1840	Log Schoolhouse built on Stillwell property, 3 miles east of Cumberland Village
1842	Cumberland Educational Committee formed
1844	Cumberland Post Office established; GG Dunning, first Post Master
1846	First settlers arrive in Navan, one of whom was F. McCullough
1847	Statute labour required by law commences
1850	Municipality of the four townships formed (January)
1850	Cumberland Township separates to become a unique municipality (December)
1851	Cumberland Township divides into five wards
1854	Cumberland Town Hall built on a lot donated by William Wilson
1857-63	Cumberland Village known as Osborne
1861	Arrival of Dr. James Ferguson – sole M.D. in the entire area for many years
1864	Construction of a secondary school in Cumberland serving the whole of Russell County
1866	Abolition of the five-ward system
1867	Village of Sarsfield first established
1886	Ottawa River Navigation Co. buys the steamer “Empress”, the most popular of the passenger vessels to regularly stop at Cumberland’s wharf
1899	Another Township Hall is built at Leonard near the CPR station
1902	Statute labour abolished and replaced by a 50-cent tax
1904	Statute Labour returns

## Significant dates in Cumberland Village and Township history

1909	Canadian Northern Railway constructed 500 feet north of Cumberland's Main Street (Old Montreal Road)
1912	Statute labour abolished – an amendment to make property owners pay by Working according to their property evaluation
1914	Four room Continuation School built in Cumberland, replacing the school that burned in 1912 (school met in Maple Hall during construction)
1920	'Old Highway 17' was paved
1921	Township Council asks the Provincial Transportation Minister for its share in assisting road maintenance
1926	Cumberland Wharf renovated
1931	Cumberland Council passes regulation prohibiting automobile speed in excess of 20 mph in the village and 30 mph in the country
1932	Fire in Cumberland destroys Gospel Hall (where Plymouth Brethren led by Dr. James Ferguson met), Watson's 'Cumberland Hotel' and a garage; grass fire started at Laframboise yard
1933-34	Canadian Northern Railway abandoned
1936	Railway tracks taken up
1949-52	TransCanada Highway built on route of railway bed.

The Cumberland Township Historical Society (CTHS) was founded in 1986. It is a non-profit, volunteer and community-based organization whose goal is to preserve Cumberland Township history. Our office is in the Local History Room of the Cumberland Branch of the Ottawa Public Library. Our address is:

Cumberland Township Historical Society (CTHS)  
Cumberland Branch, Ottawa Public Library Local History Room  
1599 Tenth Line Road  
Ottawa, ON K1E 3E8

And we're on the world wide web at:

[www.storm.ca/~jeanf/index2.html](http://www.storm.ca/~jeanf/index2.html)

