
THE CABOOSE



NEWSLETTER OF THE CUMBERLAND TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY (CTHS)

ISSN 1203-147X

Volume XXI Number 1

September 2009

Editor's message (by Jeannie Smith)

Scammed! No...I did not take a trip to Benin Republic and I sure don't want 1,465 pounds added to my waistline! Some of you may have received a weird email with my name attached to it stating that I was stranded, robbed and broke and needed funds in British currency. Thanks to technology, this email navigated itself into the system, churned up my computer, caused concern to email recipients, wreaked havoc within my email address book, and required me to answer over 50 phone calls from people who were wondering whether or not I was still safe and of sound mind! I am now off line, choosing to go email-less. So...if you need to contact me, I'm just a phone call away.

Our Society

The Cumberland Township Historical Society (CTHS) was founded in 1986. We are a non-profit, volunteer and community-based organization whose goal is to preserve Cumberland Township history.

Our newsletter

The Caboose is published six times each year by the Cumberland Township Historical Society.

Our Executive

- Dorothy-Jane Smith, President
- Jean-François Beaulieu, Vice President
- Randall Ash, Past President, Newsletter production
- Jeannie Smith, Director, Newsletter Editor
- Bill Woodruff, Treasurer
- Verna Cotton, Director
- Ross Bradley, Director
- Dan Brazeau, Website

Our address and local history room

Cumberland Branch
Ottawa Public Library
Local History Room
1599 Tenth Line Road
Ottawa, ON K1E 3E8

Our World Wide Web address

www.cths.ca



SS#5 in 1945

Cumberland Township SS #5



Left row 1 front to back: Joy Wilson, Darryl Barnett, row 2: Carol Wilson, Elizabeth Williams Kuhn, Patsy Deavy, Joan Morin Smith; row 3: Marva Barnett Lagimoniere, Wayne Barnett, Orville Brennan, Mabel Elliott, Ron Nuttall; row 4: Robert Morin, Weltha Hayes, Bill MacMillan

Next meeting of the CTHS - take note

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday, September 2nd in the Community Hall at the Cumberland Museum. The meeting will begin at **6:30 pm**. Our guest speakers include Gilles Chartrand (Edwards Mills exhibit) and John Larsen (Telegraphers). Admission to the museum is free. Be sure to bring a friend along. Light refreshments, as always, will be served.

Jeannie says 'It's time to renew the Caboose!'



Jeannie has been delivering the Caboose for seven years and while we do not want her to stop, she has forced us to agree with her. It may indeed be time for someone else to contribute their vision of Cumberland story telling. As new editor, you would decide whether the stories are best told in 3, 4, 5, or even, as today, 6 issues of the Caboose. Size and format would be your decision. The Board is ready to work with you to help you get started, give feed-back on ideas and support wherever and whenever you ask. Talk to Jeannie at your next opportunity to find out how you can help keep the stories alive. We need volunteers and we need you now.



Cumberland Heritage Village Museum's Interim Preservation Centre

Ten of our members took the opportunity offered to tour the Cumberland Heritage Village Museum's Interim Preservation Centre on July 7th. The museum curator, Glenn Charron, and his staff demonstrated steps in the preservation process and showed the range of artifacts they take care of. Here Glenn shows Bonnie Sastri, Elaine Findlay and Robert Serré one of the many garments held at the Centre; and Robert Serré and Bonnie Sastri are shown some of the maps held at the Centre.



Terry Fox commemorative plaque

On July 5th the Cumberland Heritage Village Museum unveiled their new interpretive panels for each of the buildings on the site. The Cumberland Township Historical Society sponsored one additional panel, commemorating the day Terry Fox stopped on his run in Cumberland. You will find it and an earlier memorial stone and plaque to Terry at the end of the entrance to the Train Station.



Summary of CTHS guest speaker Ethel Burch Findlay; March 4, 2009

Allan Findlay was born in November 1926 on the farm at 1805 Trim Road, being one of ten children of Ken Findlay and Annie Casey, with only five surviving. Allan's wife, Ethel Burch, whom he married in November 1951, was born and raised on the old Dave Ranger farm off Wilhaven Road east of Sarsfield Road, rented by her father, and was the



Allan and Ethel Findlay Nov. 10, 1951

eldest of three daughters, the only children of Robinson Burch and Ruby Chapman.

The Findlay and Burch families were farm people who worked hard to rise above the hardships of the depression years in the 1930s. Their houses were built in the 'old style', being log frame dwellings. Hydro came to the Findlay's in 1936 and to the Burch's in 1950. Jean Burch Alexander, the youngest daughter remembered how cold it was in their home in winter because the 'frost showed around the knot holes in the ceiling' and with no indoor plumbing, the water pails were frozen solid.

Allan walked to SS#10 on Innes Road west of Frank Kenny but in winter he hitched his dog up to a sleigh and arrived a bit earlier to put the wood on the stove and tie his dog up in the woodshed. The dog was a bit cross, so only Allan was able to fetch wood without being bitten! Dorothy Scharff Hare was Allan's Grade 2 teacher in the one room school that housed about twenty students, all at differing grade levels. Christmas concerts were very popular.

Allan's schooling ended at Grade 8, when he was fourteen, but his education continued in the 'hard knocks of life' as he hauled gravel from McMillan's pit with a team of horses, and completed chores on the farm. Allan's grandfather, Bill Casey bought the old Petrie farm off Old Montreal Road, and Allan remembers visiting the large homestead that overlooked the Ottawa River. Allan loved the animals and once teased the old ram endlessly, so that it 'rammed' its way through the barn door! After working long hours during the week, the farm people looked forward to musical gatherings and dances and Allan started to play guitar, along with his Casey cousins.

Allan, as was his father, was a natural mechanic who could fix anything that was broken. After working on the farm and in the gravel pit, he went back to school to earn his mechanic's license and worked in this trade until he retired.

Ethel went to the one-room SS#9 at Beckett's Creek, a log building where Doris Cotton Reid taught. Ethel attended Continuation School at SS#5 in Cumberland and graduated with a diploma when she was seventeen. She lived with her aunt Victoria Burch, in a wood frame house east of St. Mark's Anglican Church on Old Montreal Road, when she started work, then she moved to Ottawa to begin a forty year career in banking. Ethel continued her studies at university in the evenings.

Growing up in the Depression Years was not easy. Material goods were scarce, as was money, but farmers always had enough food. City relatives would spend summers on the farm, to help with the harvest, but also to enjoy the plentiful bounty. Nothing was thrown away, everything was saved and recycled. Clothing was either home-made, or hand-me-downs, with mother's worn out dresses being altered into outfits for children.



Dorothy, Jean Burch Alexander, Lorna, Eleanor Burch Servage, Ethel Burch Findlay

During the war years rationing of goods was exercised. Farm people could manage with the rationing of butter and meat, but sugar and gasoline rations were tough. Hundred pound sugar and flour cloth bags were ripped apart, bleached, resewn and transformed into underwear, towels, aprons and quilt pieces. Nothing was wasted. Farm wives found it difficult to conserve sugar when they needed it to preserve berries and make pickles, jams and jellies. Farmers had a hard time rationing gasoline for the machinery, so had to improvise and invent new vehicles. Tires, coffee, tea and molasses were all scarce as they were imported. No new farm machinery was available as all efforts were put into making materials to win the war.

Winters were cold, but enjoyable as people skated, skied and drove the cutters behind a one-horse open sleigh. Indoors, the old farm houses were warmed by the wood stoves and families played board games, cards and danced to music. With electricity not delivered to farms in the eastern area of Cumberland until the early 1950s, radios were operated on batteries. When the packages of batteries ran out, car batteries, which were not needed in winter due to hazardous driving conditions, transmitted the radio waves. The cars were stored in the shed and the horse and cutter was the only means of winter transportation. Families enjoyed listening to Saturday night hockey games and prize fights. Once, old Joe Kinsella, a neighbour to the west, walked over to the Burch farm to listen to the radio. He was always in the habit of smoking his pipe. Upon his return home, as usual, he inserted his pipe into his back pocket and began his walk home. To his surprise, the wind flared up quickly and the smoldering pipe lit up and set fire to his pants! Needless to say, old Joe quickly lay down in the snow, rolled around to quench the fire and continued his journey home!

Up until the early 1950s, two garbage dumps were situated south of the village off the Fifth Line (Dunning Road) in the gully south of the present arena. William Henry Kinsella rode his bicycle, with its sidecar, down to the village from his home on Wilhaven. He liked to gawk at the women and once looked so longingly at Rita Legault that he toppled, bike and all, into the dump!



**Allan Findlay, Doug Taylor, Ron & Harold Edwards
Helen Edwards, Arn. Findlay, Les Taylor, Bob Edwards
Verna Findlay, Myles Edwards, Douglas Findlay**

Burte Fitzpatrick, Gerry Deavy, Marion Galloway, Allan Findlay, Evelyn McNamarra, Harold Edwards, Myles Edwards 1943/44



The Findlay couple has contributed countless volunteer hours to Cumberland Township over the past five decades. They were inducted into the old tyme country music "Wall of Fame" for Ottawa-Carleton. Allan has entertained with his band 'The Moonlighters' at nursing homes, anniversary dances and celebrations, always willing to carry and set up the heavy equipment and travel throughout the area in all sorts of weather. Ethel has been a member of the Cumberland Women's Institute, is very active in St. Andrew's United Church, has been on the Cumberland Home Support Board, Cumberland Township Agricultural Board and was the first female President of the Navan Fair in 1971-72. The Findlays seek only the

welfare of their community, asking nothing in return but a happy, safe place to live.



SS#10

Letitia McCullough Russell taught Dirk, Jane and Beppie (Betty) de Snayer at #10 and used an Eaton's catalogue to teach them English words. Jane de Snayer and Elaine Russell Findlay tied for third place in the Township Music Festival's "Solo for Girls 10 years

of age" category in 1959. Tish Russell left #10 in 1958 to teach in Eastview.

From #10 to #1!

In 1961, six year old John Peter Penning immigrated to Canada with his parents Abraham and Mary and younger sister Adriana (Van Munsteren). The Pennings enjoyed living on their hobby farm in Vlaardingen, Holland, Netherlands but Mary's parents, Dirk and Jane de Snayer, urged the family to move to Canada. Bram worked as a stationary engineer in Bells Corners while Mary worked as a seamstress in Ottawa. After the couple had managed to save \$15,000, Bram Penning and Dirk de Snayer bought the farm of Leslie and Mary Edwards in 1966. Dirk de Snayer died suddenly in 1967 and Mary and Bram Penning took over the farm, working tirelessly side by side, and raised their children John, Adriana, Heidi and Susan.



After reading Jeannie Smith's interview with John Penning, you will learn the meaning of this article's title "From #10 to #1!"

What brought the Penning Family to Cumberland?

"We moved from 449 McLeod Street, Ottawa, to the farm on Frank Kenny (Eighth Line). We bought this farm from Mr. Leslie Edwards. The connection was through my grandfather, Dirk de Snayer (mother's father) who worked for Mr. Edwards as a hired hand in 1958/59 before renting his own farm in Stittsville in 1960. My grandfather and my dad bought the farm together as partners in 1966 (200 acres for \$50K). Mr. Heinz Rolling bought the farm from dad in 1981. Once I had graduated from medical school, dad was pretty sure I wasn't going to make farming my primary vocation. The place is now called Lower Saxony riding stables.

Have you any recollections of attending SS#10?

My first day at #10 was February 14th 1966. I remember the date well because I received no valentines that year, being there for the first day. Fortunately the school, on the corner of Frank Kenny and Innes, was only one mile from our house. I remember trudging through snow half way up to my knee that first day. I was in grade 5 and my sister Adriana was in grade 2. Mr. Bud Beech was the teacher, and our French teacher was a young woman named Miss Nadia Smith (later Mrs. Breathwaite, who later taught my son Garret in grade 1 at Riverview). I am afraid we weren't very nice to young Miss Smith. It was frustrating for her.

What were the names of some of your classmates at #10?

Elgin Scharfe became my best buddy at #10. We did the usual 10/11 year old stuff like shoot our pellet guns, ride bikes, general mischief on our farms. Others in grade 5 were Anne Bakker, Debbie Bertram, Carl Hodges, and Donna Findlay. In the grade 6 row on my right were Harry Hodges, Gerry Deavy, Gail Scharfe. I remember Mr. Beech ran a pretty tight ship. Guess he had to. My school record and reputation of being the "class clown" followed me from my Percy Street P.S. in Ottawa. He watched me closely but was always fair. I definitely was ADHD as a youngster (they hadn't invented that medical term yet, they just thought I was a bit too energetic and disruptive at times). I remember in class Elgin Scharfe asked Mr. Beech what would happen if a bird got caught up in the blades of a helicopter? I immediately blurted out that "you would have shredded tweet". The whole school roared with laughter. Mr. Beech did not appear amused. Mr. Beech awarded a mint fresh 1966 Silver dollar to the student in each grade that had the highest academic standing at the end of the year. Adriana spent hers fairly quickly but I still have mine to this day. I plan to keep it and pass it on, as a reminder of #10. It was a great unique experience.

What other memories do you have of school days in Cumberland?

They closed down # 10 for the 66/67 academic year and we were bused to Riverview where I attended grades 6, 7 and 8. Teachers were Mr. Hanes in 6, Mr. Russell in 7 for part, then Mr. Zinck, and in 8 we had Mrs. Rivington and Mr. J.R. Thomas. I continued with my exuberant demeanor, finding it difficult to stay still and concentrate for too long, except for the subject of science which I loved. Mr. Russell and Mrs. Rivington were two public school teachers that sincerely tried to give me some positive and constructive criticism. Most teachers were pretty well hard line and gave me hell for being disruptive

but Mrs. Rivington sat down with me a couple of times and said, "John you are a bright boy with a lot of energy, if you try hard to focus on your studies and stay out of trouble, you can be a doctor if you want to." Mr. Thomas taught science in grade 8 and it was great! He awarded me 100% on my final exam and wrote the comments. "100%, very good John! Now how about making your behaviour match that?" That kind of rang home with me.

Mr. Wilfred Sharkey was my bus driver for grades 6, 7 and 8. He didn't like it when things got out of hand too much so he had me sit in the front seat pretty well all the time, so he could keep an eye on me. It was fun plowing through the drifts of snow. I remember once we got stuck and one of Gertie Hodge's boys, Jack, who was older than Allan and Brian, pulled us out with the Cockshutt 550.

Did you find elementary school rather boring?

Yes, elementary school was pretty boring, except I knew I absolutely loved science since the first class in grade 2 with Mrs. Stevens. I even remember the lesson about the "anatomy of a flower" and also I loved health studies. High School grades 9, 10, 11 were spent at Gloucester and 12/13 at Colonel By. Actually grade 11 was the split year where the two schools were in the same building. Farm kids were used to getting up early so we went from 07:30 - 12:30. That was 1970/71, the year of the record snow fall; great for ski-doing in the afternoons. My grade 11 and 13 biology teacher, Mr. John Ganness was a great source of encouragement. He gave me extra stuff to learn to keep me interested. We stayed in touch. He helped me with my application to med school and we played some tennis once in a while.

Did you participate in extra-curricular activities?

I had to do chores after school so sports were not an option. However, I did play guitar and enjoyed listening to music, huge Beatles fan.

When did you decide to become a doctor?

I first declared to my mother that I was going to be a doctor when I was in grade 2, having been inspired by my grade 2 science studies and the TV show Dr. Kildare. My mom and I were walking through a department store and I noticed a really cool doctor's bag with neat stuff in it and of course Dr. Kildare on the cover. I told my mom then and there that I was going to be a doctor and that it would be a good idea for her to buy me the Dr. Kildare bag so I could

start learning. I know we were very short of money in those days and even the \$2.75 that it cost would have been substantial for our weekly budget. She didn't even hesitate. She said something like "well you are never too young to start learning something useful." I remember being impressed by her obvious conviction that she thought that my statement of wanting to be a doctor wasn't totally "off the wall." I knew she felt that I could do it. That was important to me in ways I probably didn't even realize at the time.

My motivation first and foremost was that I seemed to have an insatiable curiosity for how science all works and the human body in particular. I wanted to do something that would be helpful to others, something that mattered. I knew I had to do something active, i.e., not sit in an office at a desk all day. So anesthesiology is the perfect mix for me. It is the medical specialty most based on physiological / anatomical principles with lots of pharmacology and lots of activity and excitement at times. It is one of the few specialties where what you do for the



John, Abraham and Mary Penning

patient in the next few moments can make a difference between life and death. It is much more than just putting people to sleep. We do pain medicine, critical care and our work in the operating room is different almost every day. I have lots of opportunity to teach the medical students and residents.

Were there significant people who influenced your life?

Until adulthood my parents were the most significant people in my life. Through their love and support

they gave me enough self-confidence and encouragement to believe I could be a success. My parents are proud people and have an incredible work ethic. It is true that in some part I wanted to do something that would measure up in their eyes as well.

Louise and I married in 1983. Since that time she has been clearly the most important person in my life. She herself had a pretty stellar career in hospital administration that culminated as the corporate director for Health Records at The Ottawa Hospital in 1998. She retired from that position in 2004. Even though I didn't always realize it at the time she made very significant sacrifices along the way so I could have the time to devote to my career and its obligations. She is the most kind, loving person I have ever known. While other doctors and texts have taught me about the science of medicine and life, Louise has been my greatest teacher about the art of being human, compassionate, etc. To be a good doctor, healer of any kind or even to be just a very good friend one has to have knowledge of the self, to understand personal strengths and weaknesses, biases, misconceptions and frailties. Louise points these out to me every day and has been the person who has helped me the most with understanding myself so that I, in turn, can be a better doctor, teacher, and person."

John Penning devoted himself to his studies, managing to earn 80%+ averages from grades 9 to 12 and was an Ontario Scholar in Grade 13 at Colonel By High School where he was also awarded top student in Physics, Chemistry and Biology for academic achievement, interest, effort and attitude. He received an award from the Cumberland Women's Institute for being top graduate in Russell County.

John graduated with a degree in Science in 1975 and in Medicine 1980 from the University of Ottawa. He interned at the Ottawa Civic Hospital 1980/81, and earned his FRCPC Anaesthesia in June 1987. John was awarded a Research Fellowship (Basic Science) with Dr. T.L. Yaksh, Department of Anaesthesiology, University of California, San Diego - July 1989 - June 1990.

Dr. John Penning continued to excel in his studies. He earned the Health Research Personnel Award Fellowship, 1988/89 and 1989/90 (Ontario Ministry of Health). He was awarded the McLaughlin Fellowship in Medicine in 1989/90 but declined because of the foundation's requirement that no other award could be concomitantly accepted during the same time.

Dr. John Penning, a member of the Department of Anesthesiology since 1988, was one of three physicians to receive the 2009 Award for The Ottawa Hospital Physician Clinical Recognition. The awardees come from physicians who nominate colleagues for their contributions towards all aspects of hospital and academic life. The Ottawa Hospital is the amalgamation of the General, Civic, Riverside and Grace Hospitals, therefore they award 3 such awards per year. Dr. Penning was instrumental in the development of the Acute Pain Service and through his dedication and care, patients experience improved pain control. John continues to ensure that analgesic delivery systems are safe and that



John and Louise

equipment is perfect to prevent complications and human errors. Due to his excellent organization and strong persuasive skills, other provincial hospitals are eager to copy The Ottawa Hospital's Acute Pain Guidelines.

Dr. Penning has had numerous articles on pain management published and has made presentations at national meetings, and managed to maintain a full clinical anesthesia practice. He is well regarded as a teacher by his medical students and residents and other members of staff.

John and Louise Penning have three sons, Derek, Garrett and Richard.

Read more about the Penning Family in the January 2005 Caboose on page 5 and 6.



AN INCREDIBLE STORY: William Cameron Edwards Mills replicas

By Gilles Chartrand

Sometimes reality exceeds fiction. How else could I describe the unfolding of this story.



It started in the Fall of 2003 because of anti-flu shots in the basement of the St-Joseph Nursing Home in Rockland. During the 30 minutes "side effects" waiting period, Mrs. Vianney (Madeleine) Laporte disclosed to me that she had some color photos of "miniatures" of old buildings dating back to the Edwards Mills era. My curiosity just shot through the roof! The very next day I visited her expecting to see photos of small replicas of some buildings. My heart nearly stopped. There were seventeen color photos of maquettes, mostly done to scale, representing a large variety of buildings of this historical period. I told her that it was a shame that these maquettes were no longer around.



Another shock... she told me that all these were "sleeping" in the basement of her brother-in-law, Mr. Dollard Laporte's home in Hull, Québec and that he was EXPECTING my call. I called him. I drove to Hull. I almost fell down when I discovered this historical treasure. Mr. Laporte told me that these were done as a hobby on a ten year period in the 70's, by memory and by looking at photos in books. There were over 100 items all over his basement. As he had moved away from Rockland in the 40's, his children didn't know Rockland at all. He was 85 and so afraid

to die leaving these behind to be given away as possible play objects to kids that he did something incredible.

He GAVE everything to me PLUS 11 paintings (pastels) of different historical places in Rockland, and he even signed a document confirming this "miraculous" gift. Some of the maquettes are: the large Mill and the Pump House (1868), the small Mill (1885), the Town Hall (1890), the wooden Arena (1895), the Dry Dock (1885-1890), portions of the one km. dock, the giant drying warehouses, the Empress, a luxury cruise boat, tug boats, barges and houses for the Mill employees.

These were moved to Le Centre culturel La Ste-Famille for public display. It took me eight hours to prepare the display. Later, all the items were screwed down onto plywood sheets to be moved around easily for parades or exhibits.



Actually, most of the replicas are on display in the Cumberland Township Museum until October then will possibly be installed in the huge lobby hall of the brand new Clarence-Rockland Recreational and Cultural Complex in Rockland.

My dream would come true with the construction of a Museum in Clarence-Rockland to display the COMPLETE collection of the historical treasure left by M. Dollard Laporte. Other people would be glad to safeguard historical objects for the future generations by having the "new" Museum acting as GUARDIAN for their historical treasures.

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