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# THE CABOOSE



NEWSLETTER OF THE CUMBERLAND TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY (CTHS)

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## Editor's ramblings (by Jeannie Smith)

Out with the old; ring in the new! 2005 promises to be an exciting year for the CTHS. This spring, 'Murder in Navan' will be launched on the Virtual Museum of Canada's website, and the Dale's Cemetery Booklet will be ready for sale. Volunteers are welcome to help scan the CTHS collection. Keep sending letters and family histories. Early settlers of Cumberland emigrated from New France and The British Isles. United Empire Loyalists became landed immigrants in the early 1800's. After WWII, Europeans made Cumberland Township their home. The old and the new have intermingled to form strong communities and to become proud Canadians. This issue is a tribute to all of the families, old and new, who made Cumberland Township a better place to live. We are all ancestors of immigrants and we welcome new families, for they bring vitality to the community. Everyone seems to be connected, relatively speaking, and it is good to bring new blood into the gene pool! Cheers for the New Year and God bless.

### **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**

- Jean-François Beaulieu, President
- Randall Ash, Vice-president
- Robert Serré, Treasurer
- Jeannie Smith, Secretary and Newsletter Editor
- Verna Cotton, Director
- Dan Brazeau, Director
- Martin Rocque, Director

### **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](http://www.cths.ca)



The old...  
and  
the new



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

Our next meeting will be held on January 5<sup>th</sup> at the Cumberland Library on Tenth Line Road (at the Ray Friel Centre). Lori Nash will join us to talk about "the history of Queenswood Heights." Be sure to bring a friend along. Light refreshments, as always, will be served.

## Society calendar

For more information on these and other upcoming 2005 events, please contact a member of the executive committee or visit our website at [www.cths.ca](http://www.cths.ca).

Jan. 5 <sup>th</sup>	CTHS General Meeting: 7:00pm at the Cumberland Branch of the Ottawa Public Library. Our guest speaker will be Lori Nash and she'll speak about the history of Queenswood Heights
March 2 <sup>nd</sup>	CTHS General Meeting: 7:00pm at the Cumberland Branch of the Ottawa Public Library. Our guest speaker will be Angus Wilson and he'll speak about his mother, Senator Cairine Wilson.
May 4 <sup>th</sup>	CTHS Annual General Meeting

### Visited our local history room lately?

If you can't visit the local history room, visit our website at [www.cths.ca](http://www.cths.ca).

Thanks to Kathleen O'Brien for donating Genealogical Society newsletters from all across Canada. You will find these in folders on the table at the back of the history room. Joan Lancaster continues to do a great job updating the birth/wedding/obituary files.

## Contact us

If you have questions or suggestions regarding any aspect of the Society including The Caboose, our local history room or anything else of interest to you or to the Society, you may contact any member of the executive by phone or by email:

- Jean-François Beaulieu, President (841-0424) [jeanf@storm.ca](mailto:jeanf@storm.ca)
- Randall Ash, Vice-president (833-3207) [randall2620@rogers.com](mailto:randall2620@rogers.com)
- Robert Serré, Treasurer (749-0607) [belser@magma.ca](mailto:belser@magma.ca)
- Jeannie Smith, Secretary and Newsletter Editor (833-2877) [gsmith2877@rogers.com](mailto:gsmith2877@rogers.com)
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- Martin Rocque, Director ((819)776-3890) [martin.rocque@sympatico.ca](mailto:martin.rocque@sympatico.ca)



We gratefully acknowledge the receipt of a grant of \$1,500.00 from the City of Ottawa to assist us in the administration of the Society.



## What's on at the Heritage Village Museum...



The Museum is now closed for the season. Visit the City of Ottawa website for information on the 2005 season -- [http://ottawa.ca/city\\_services/culture/heritage/museums/cumberland\\_en.shtml](http://ottawa.ca/city_services/culture/heritage/museums/cumberland_en.shtml)

## Membership renewal

Membership in The Cumberland Township Historical Society is \$15 annually. This helps to cover the costs of printing and mailing six newsletters each year. Renewal forms will be included in the March 2005 newsletter as membership runs from March to March.

## Can you help?



I am searching for information on Hayes, Spratt, Armstrong and Walsh Families. I am interested to find who John Spratt (Margaret Lee) is the son of. The James E Hayes you mentioned (whose spouse and issue I did not have) is the son of William Hayes who is the son of James Hayes and Margery Spratt. I think if I can learn of the connection a huge piece of a puzzle will be solved for me.

*Maureen Mooney-Chapman*

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Carrying Place, Ontario, K0K 1L0



I was wondering if any of your members are interested in interviewing an elderly man who is very interested in genealogy and family history? I am aware that the oral history society in Prince George, British Columbia tapes interview conversations with elders of our society. Thus, thought something similar likely happens in the Ottawa area (where my father lives).

*Doug Beckett*  
[Doug.Beckett@gems3.gov.bc.ca](mailto:Doug.Beckett@gems3.gov.bc.ca)

# The old families: McVeigh history

by Gail McVeigh Hildebrandt

Gail Hildebrandt of Armstrong B.C. and Jill Dale of Ottawa found each other over the Internet while both were searching a common ancestor. That ancestor was Peter McVeigh.



Peter McVeigh and wife Elizabeth

Peter McVeigh came to Canada in the mid 1820's from Ireland. He left his wife and two children in Ireland until he could establish himself in his new chosen country. Peter found work on the Pinhey Estate near Ottawa. Records have him in their employ in 1826. After working for

sometime he purchased land in Goulbourn and then proceeded to bring his wife Elizabeth and their two children Rosanna and John to Canada. Peter later sold this property and bought land in Vars. According to an early assessment roll in 1842, Peter has the East 1/2 lot 28, concession 9 and has 2 milk cows and 2 horned cattle. By 1848 he has 50 acres cultivated, 2 horse, 2 cows and 1 young cattle and his taxes are 1.10.3 1/2 (sterling). He later bought the west side on concession 9 in 1857.

The couple had four more children in Canada - Mary Jane, Thomas, Catherine and William. Peter was well



John Flannigan McVeigh and Isabella McVeigh (nee McCallum)

respect- ed and became the Justice of the Peace. As the children grew and married they all

had land near their parents. Mary Jane married John Simpson and after he died, she married Leonard Wood. Mary taught school for a while in North Russell. Her descendents are still in the Vars area. Thomas married Emma (do not know her maiden name) and was a County Constable. In 1886 he was accidentally killed. Catherine married Henry Osborne Wood. William moved to Minnesota. Peter and Elizabeth's eldest daughter Rosanna married John Buckingham. John Flannigan McVeigh married Isabella McCallum in 1852. John ran a livery stable and an Inn. Their home still remains in the Vars area. In 1861 he was Enumerator for Cumberland and sworn in by his Father, Peter. In 1862 he became the first Post Master for Veighton (named for him). John and Isabella had thirteen children: Peter, Axylannia, John, Archibald, Hedley, Isabella, William, Laughlin, Charles, Mary, Catherine, Cora and Nora.



Isabella McVeigh with daughters Catherine and Cora

It is from this family, John and Isabella, that Jill and I have our connection.

Jill is the descendent of Axylannia (Lena) who married John Bruce. John had a contracting business and descendents of this family are still in the Ottawa area. My descendents come from William, who married Annie Poole. William was a carriage maker and they lived in Buckingham, Quebec, later moving back to Vars.

In 1904 William, his wife and their five children, moved to Edmonton, Alberta. Many of the John McVeigh children moved west after John passed away and were buried in the Patterson Cemetery, Ontario. His wife Isabella moved to Alberta to be with her youngest children. She is buried in Banff.

## The new families: revitalizing the community

By Jeannie Smith

Harry Ala-Kantti claimed that you had to live in Cumberland for 25 years before you became accepted as a 'Cumberlandite.' Harry and his wife Marilyn and their two sons Kurt and Erik were newcomers to Cumberland in 1962. The Ala-Kantti's have become a well established family in Cumberland and they are well renowned within the City of Ottawa.



Harry Ala-Kantti was the Architect for numerous city buildings including the Alta Vista Library and a joint venture for the Provincial Courthouse, Walter Baker Memorial Centre and the Ruth Dickerson Library, The Cumberland Town Hall, Cumberland YMCA/YWCA, Navan Arena, and area schools Riverview, Meadowview, Dunning-Foubert, Queenswood, Emily Carr Middle School and Fallingbrook Community Elementary School. Harry was chairman of the Cumberland Group

Committee on Scouting and later became a member of Scouts Canada Headquarters, Board of Directors. He was chairman of the Cumberland Local Advisory Committee on Architectural Conservation.

Marilyn has been a tireless volunteer working in schools, libraries and with choirs. Kurt, now married and living in Cumberland Village with his wife Carla and new son Alexander, has been a dedicated Beaver Leader, chair of the Cumberland Group Committee and choir director. Erik, his wife Lori and their children Aleisha, Jesse, Ashley, Brandon and Abby share the family home with Harry and Marilyn.

Marilyn was instrumental in establishing a library in Cumberland. Previous to 1977, Cumberland paid a levy for residents to use the Gloucester Library system. Marilyn, along with Carleton School Board Trustee Chuck Wills presented a brief to Township Council requesting library services within the Township. Council agreed and Marilyn was part of the first Library Board in January 1978. Marilyn was Vice-Chairman for the Public Library Development Committee of the Eastern Ontario Regional Library System. She was a founding member of the Riverview Home and School Association and served on the Executive for many years. Marilyn kept busy helping in the library and directing the choir. Marilyn loves to sing and has been a member of the Ottawa Choral Society for many years. She is proud to be directed by Kurt in St. Mark's Anglican Church Choir and Harmonia Choir. Marilyn's grandchildren presently attend the New Rural Cumberland School which is housed in the Riverview Building. Harry has given input into the plans for the new school which will replace Meadowview in Navan.

The Ala-Kantti's contributed immensely to the quality of life in the area by invigorating the old established Cumberland families with new ideas and energy.

Harry and Marilyn are now part of the 'older generation' of Cumberland residents but the family continues to renew itself with the births of Brandon, Alexander and Abby.

## Blending the old and the new families

by Jeannie Smith

Amable Faubert was the first person to venture into trade and commerce in Cumberland in 1801. Early settlements in Cumberland Township centered around the General Store where folk would come to purchase dry goods, to chat with the 'locals' and check for mail at the Post Office. Storekeepers often passed the business down to younger family members. Stores in the township were owned by the Dunnings, Wilsons, Griers, McCallums, McDonalds, Allans, McKeens, Lancasters, Simpsons, Bradleys, and numerous other families.

George Gibb Dunning, born in Cumberland in 1810, established the first Post Office in the village in 1844. Later, he opened a store on the old Indian trail that ran just south of the river. Donald MacMillan, in 1846, had the contract to build the road from Cumberland to Danis and it was completed in 1850 when Archibald Petrie was Reeve.



Dunning's store on Queen Street, Cumberland Village

Walter Dunning bought the general store in Cumberland in 1890. His son, Leslie took over the store when he returned from fighting overseas in WWI. John and Betty Dunning operated the family general store from the late 1940's until its sale in 1975. John was a fifth generation descendant of Abijah Dunning who, together with Amable Faubert, founded Cumberland Village and who named it after his birthplace, Cumberland, in England. During Conservative Prime Minister Borden's term (1911 - 20) the Post Office was moved from the Dunning Liberal stronghold to a store across the street owned by J.D. Ferguson, (a Conservative!) In 1919 R.J. Kennedy bought the store

and it became the Kennedy family home. The Post Office was moved to McKeen's store, which later became Lancaster's. After valiantly serving in the Navy in WWII, John applied to become Post Master and his contract was accepted and the Post Office returned to Dunning's Store. The original boxes were



still in the storeroom so it was relatively easy to re-establish the mailroom. In 1953, the store was renovated to become

part of the IGA chain and the Post Office was moved to the Northeast corner at the back of the store. In 1974, John sold the store to retired RCMP Ray Walberg and the Post Office was moved to a new building on Dunning Road where John and Betty worked full time.

John and Betty Dunning's contribution to the community was very significant. Not only was John Post Master for 38 years, he was Fire Chief for the village from 1956-1964 being instrumental in forming the Cumberland Volunteer Fire Department. He served on the Township School Board for four years, organized Minor Hockey where his three sons played and helped create The Cumberland Curling Club on land donated by his father on Cameron Street, near the ferry. John was active in the Cumberland Lions Club, serving as Charter President in 1967, and later as District Governor in 1973/74. He was Promotional Chairman for Lions International, Ontario, Quebec & Labrador District in 1974. John was awarded the Canada Centennial Medal for service to his community in July 1967.

The store's ownership was transferred from the hands of the Dunning Family into those of newcomers – the Walbergs, who ran the store for a year. Between 1975 and 1979 Gerry Seguin owned the business as 'S & S' Seguin and Sons.

In spring 1979, John Haddad was leafing through a real estate flyer searching for a business and a home for his wife Afifa and young family. John was spellbound by a picture of the 'S & S Foodliner', Dunning's old store in Cumberland. He decided to buy it and become a storekeeper. John, a teacher of English Literature, met Afifa at the high school where they both taught in Lebanon. After their marriage, John and Afifa came to Canada in 1975 to study at the Ottawa University; Lebanon had been devastated by the war. The Canadian government opened up

immigration policies enabling John and Afifa to become landed immigrants and shortly afterwards, citizens of Canada.

Stores were not open on Sundays in June 1979 when John drove to Cumberland along Old Montreal Road. He had never driven east of Orleans and upon entering Cumberland, he was captivated by the impressive architecture of the store. The apartment on the second floor made the business more attractive and John and Afifa took possession in September. Both brilliant students with no experience in retail, they knew that they could meet the challenge and succeed as business people. Cumberland residents welcomed the Haddads, a bit skeptically at first, but soon offered encouragement and the newcomers became accepted as part of the fabric of the community. John was determined to succeed. He educated himself in store management. He worked long hours and contributed to community causes: Scouts, Lions Club, churches, community associations, hockey and broomball organizations. John's ability to learn quickly, to assimilate into Canadian culture without losing his Lebanese identity and his openness to take a risk and try new methods, made him the success he is today.

The Haddads renovated the interior of the store. Pete Lalonde built new shelves and renewed electrical wiring and plumbing. New refrigerators were installed and modern displays and a check out counter were added. David Hanson, grandson of Victor Dunning, meticulously refurbished the exterior of the store in 2002. Haddad S&S has become the hub of the village. It has become more than a convenience store. It is a gathering place for villagers, a congregating spot for 'The Coffee Club' and a centre of communication for young and old. John produces the best garlic bread in the area! Maison Cuisine is the supplier for John's bakery and his other specialty is fresh cold meat and



John & Art Watson and Fred & Doug Ferguson on the step of GG Dunning's Store & Post Office, Cumberland Village

cheese. It was a black day for Cumberland in 1998 when John had to end his career as a butcher. After 20 years of cutting cold carcasses of meat, John developed severe arthritis in his hands. His steaks were renowned in the area and residents were saddened when they could no longer buy his top quality meat for their barbeques.

John and Afifa worked together to build up their business. They distinguished themselves with a top quality product, first meat, then bread. They added excellent service, faithful, friendly employees and a passion for dealing with people. "I knew I could be a successful businessman. It is more than selling things. I love people; I educated myself because it was quite a shift from what I had worked at in Lebanon. We live in this community and also earn our living from it. There is stiff competition from the big food stores but the little guys can always accommodate."

John has been storekeeper in this red brick building longer than any other owner. His wife, Afifa, works alongside of him in the store and also is a Professor at Ottawa University, teaching Arabic. They value education and their two older daughters graduated from Ottawa University. Lara is an Occupational Therapist and Dena works in the Government. Tanya is in highschool. All three girls attended French immersion and were raised in Cumberland Village. Cumberland is proud to have John Haddad and his family as residents. In 2003, John received the Queen's Jubilee Award in recognition of his community involvement. He has also received plaques from The Community Association, from The Scouts and awards from The City of Ottawa for his dedication and commitment to improve life in Cumberland.



The Haddads: Dena, Tanya, Afifa, John and Lara

Haddad S&S emits that 'down home feeling' and newcomers feel welcome when they are received by John and his family. The building is still a focal point in the village but it is the storekeeper who makes people want to return. Well done John and Afifa!

## The industrious Dutch call Cumberland 'Home'

by Jeannie Smith

I knew that I was in for a treat when I set up the interview with the Pennings but I had no idea how pleasant a time I'd spend chatting with Abraham and Mary. Their little log home beside a snow-covered forest off Wilhaven Drive provided warmth. Mary offered me hot coffee and deliciously sweet cookies and I settled down comfortably to listen to Bram tell me with the story of their emigration to Cumberland.

Dirk de Snayer had been a successful manager of a large farm near Rotterdam in Holland. When the farmland was sold to the city, Dirk and his wife Jane decided to immigrate to Canada where they heard that plenty of farmland was waiting to be worked. Many Dutch families had made Canada their home after the war. Smits, Toonders, Staal, Bakker, Van Munsteren, Vandenhanenberg, Vandenharm, Beimers, Huismans, Snippe, Vos, Molenaar, Tabak, Nooyen, Heimstra, Ruhland, van den Hakker...all Dutch families willing to work hard and make Cumberland Township an agricultural oasis.

In 1958, Dirk began to work for Leslie Edwards who had taken over the running of his father William Edwards' farm. Leslie's brothers Ernie, married to Bertha MacEachern and Norman, married to Florence Kennedy were also Cumberland Township farmers. Some of the de Snayer children had emigrated with 'Dick and Jane.' Back in Holland, their daughter Mary and her husband Bram Penning were intrigued with the news of Canada that they read in the letters from the de Snayers. The Pennings decided to join their family in Canada. Bram left a lucrative job as a mechanical engineer. They were not searching for a better life, because things were pretty good in Holland in 1961, but the desire to be with family and the urge to take a risk, seek adventure and experience a challenge beckoned Bram, Mary and their small children John and Adrianna, to Canada.

The Pennings lived on a small hobby farm in Holland where they tended 50 chickens, 30 rabbits and a vegetable plot. In Canada, Bram worked as a sheet metal worker, installing furnaces and later as a stationary engineer and at Computing Devices in Bell's Corners. Mary worked as a seamstress in downtown Ottawa and the couple managed to save \$15,000. Dirk de Snayer suggested that they buy a hobby farm together. Leslie and Mary Edwards decided to sell the family farm. Their daughter Joan had moved to Navan to become the wife of farmer Don Rathwell and their son Bill chose to work at EB Eddy's in Hull with his Uncle Ron. Leslie was more than pleased to sell his farm to Dirk de Snayer and Bram

Penning. Unfortunately disaster struck in 1967. The de Snayers paid a visit to their homeland after an absence of nine years. Dirk took sick on the trip home. Dr. I.F. Kennedy was called to the old red brick farmhouse on Frank Kenny Road at the end of Wilhaven Drive but was unable to save Dirk. The strong Dutch farmer had succumbed to a massive heart attack. His wife Jane moved closer to Cumberland and their daughter Mary and her husband took over the farm.

Mary and Bram worked side by side. They were a support to each other, raising a son John and three daughters, Adrianna, Heidi and Susan. "I let her do her thing, and I did mine," Bram said. "I could not have accomplished what I did without the help of my wife who worked right beside me." Bram was \$75,000 in debt. He had never plowed fields, planted crops nor mown hay but he was determined to read, to research and to reap the best harvest he could. Many local residents predicted that The Pennings would fail and lose the farm but Bram only worked harder and persevered to produce some of the best crops in the area. Lester Edwards, Errie's son, credited the Dutch immigrants for the improvements that they made in Canadian agriculture. He claimed that the Dutch introduced innovations to farming: spraying crops, artificial fertilizer, tile drainage and a willingness to put forth hard effort. Local farmers, especially Lester Edwards, motivated Bram to excel. Some had little faith in his ability to succeed but he did not get discouraged. He was more determined than ever and in four years he had doubled production on his dairy farm. Mary and Bram were exhausted from the hard work and there was little money

to spare. Mary banked the baby bonus for her children's education. Bram attended seminars and made continual improvements, bought new machinery that improved efficiency, speed and output on his 200 acres. Bram received awards for the Best Breeding Interval for Russell County. He won trophies from the Dairy Herd Improvements Association. He constantly improved his business by building new silos, adding pipelines and increasing his herd of cattle.

Bram was a member of the Crop & Soil Association as well as Director of the Federation of Agriculture.

The Pennings assimilated into the community very quickly. To relax after hard work on the farm, the Pennings enjoyed socializing with neighbours. Music

making with Wes Hodges on fiddle, Norm Garvock, Les and Len Deavy on guitar and Bram on accordian was plentiful.

The Pennings had been approached by members of the Dutch community to send their children to Dutch schools and to attend the Dutch church but they preferred to integrate their family into the Cumberland community. "If I had wanted to stay Dutch, I would have stayed in Holland," states Bram.

The Penning children helped on the farm after school but they chose careers other than farming. John is a top-notch medical doctor, an anesthesiologist with the Ottawa Hospitals and a Professor at the University of Ottawa. Adrianna was a Manager in the Bank of Nova Scotia and she now runs a riding stable alongside her husband, Fred Vanmunsteren's farm. Heidi is a researching autism at Queen's University. Susan has a Bachelor of Commerce Degree and works in the Bank.

In 1981 Bram sold the farm to Heinz Rohling and worked for him until 1986 when he joined the John Deere Team and sold farm machinery for John Williams. He continued to give 101%, working extra hours on straight salary and becoming a top seller of heavy equipment.



Abraham Penning is one of Cumberland's colourful characters. He is incredibly smart, a high achiever who strives to be perfect. He has beaten cancer. He continues to be innovative. After 1500 hours labour, he has built a meter high replica of a ship that he sailed on in his youth. His basement is a haven for creativity. There is a mini museum of all things Dutch. There is a collection of old tapes

with a reel-to-reel recorder that Bram has reconditioned. There are nine grandchildren of whom Mary and Bram are extremely proud. Things still remain to be done though. Bram and Mary must record their stories of life in Holland during WWII. Neither of them have any regrets for leaving Holland. They turned a new page in their lives and never looked back. Holland now is filled with people who are "aggressive, living so close together," says Mary. Turkish immigrants are moving into Holland to work at the jobs that the Dutch no longer wish to do! "Life was not a bowl of cherries here in Canada. It was hard work, but I'd do it over any day!" chuckles Bram. No greater lesson could have been taught...hard work, commitment to family and a passion for living. Thanks Mary and Bram for a lovely chat.

# The ABC's of Happiness

- Aspire to reach your potential
- Believe in yourself
- Create a good life
- Dream about what you might become
- Exercise frequently
- Forgive honest mistakes
- Glorify the creative spirit
- Humour yourself & others
- Imagine great things
- Joyfully live each day
- Kindly help others
- Love one another
- Meditate daily
- Nurture the environment
- Organize for harmonious action
- Praise performance well done
- Question most things
- Regulate your own behaviour
- Smile often
- Think rationally
- Understand yourself
- Value life
- Work for the common good
- X-ray & carefully examine problems
- Yearn to improve
- Zestfully pursue happiness

Robert Valett  
 "Prescriptions for Happiness"

