



UPCOMING EVENTS

PHS Monthly Lecture
at 7:30 pm

Tuesday, 15 May
"Slave Narratives Transcribed by Susanna Moodie" Speakers **Michael Peterman** and **Molly Blyth**,
"Peterborough Public Library,
7:30 p.m.

Heritage Luncheon
May 2
12:00 and 1:30 p.m.
Cost \$15.00
Advance tickets
required

Rhubarb Spring Fling
Wednesday, May 23
Sittings at 1:00 p.m. and
2:00 p.m.
Advance tickets \$7 per
person

Hutchison House 40th anniversary celebration Open House,
Sunday May 27, 1-4 pm.

Issue 447

May 2018

PETERBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY MONTHLY MEETINGS.

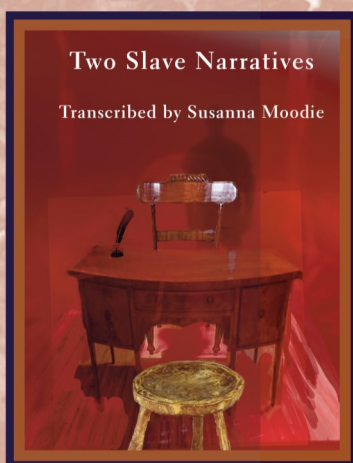
The monthly meetings and lectures are on the **third Tuesday of the month; September, October, November, January, February, March and May** at **7:30 p.m., Peterborough Public Library, Friends of the Library Community Room, downstairs.**

"SLAVE NARRATIVES TRANSCRIBED BY SUSANNA MOODIE"

Tuesday, 15 May 2018, Peterborough Public Library, 7:30 p.m.
All welcome.

Susanna Moodie

MARY PRINCE AND ASHTON WARNER



Edited by Molly Blyth and Michael Peterman

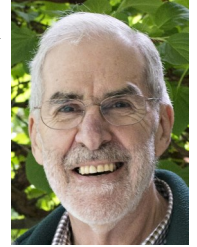
The May meeting of the Peterborough Historical Society will feature a lecture and book launch. Prior to emigrating to the Peterborough area in 1832, Susanna Moodie was associated with the Anti-Slavery Society in London and published two anti-slavery tracts. Speakers **Molly Blyth** and **Michael Peterman**, editors of a forthcoming book, *Mary Prince and Ashton Warner: Two Slave Narratives Transcribed by Susanna Moodie*, will discuss their research and discoveries. Copies of the book will be available for purchase at the event.



Opening Day May 24, 1978

From the President ...

Dale Standen



Given the weather in March and April we may wonder whether spring will ever come. Only the recent Garden Show and preparations for the garden at Hutchison House signalled the imminent change of season.

The thought of soon having to confront my own garden moved me to peruse Suzanne Bailey's *For the Love of Flowers: The Story of the Peterborough Horticultural Society 1861-1996*. Perhaps the choices of earlier generations of Peterborough residents could inspire. Bailey's delightful history mentions numerous flowers and plants that were popular over the years, most of which reflected British tastes that dominated Peterborough's culture until recent decades and have by no means disappeared. At its first annual show in 1861, the Horticultural Society offered prizes for the best roses, dahlias, balsams, asters, verbenas, pansies, petunias, hollyhocks, phlox and numerous other varieties.

Part of the impetus for the Horticultural Society, as in other communities in Ontario, was the desire of the "most influential and cultured of the citizens" to beautify their surroundings, an understandable goal in face of the grubbiness of early industrial towns. The small band of elite gardening enthusiasts, like those in other volunteer cultural organizations, lamented the failure of large numbers to embrace their vision. They persisted. In the 1880s the Society championed the public parks movement and, with modest support from county and city, took on the beautification and improvement of the Court House Park (later Victoria Park) and at the turn of the century Central Park (later Confederation Square). They did the same for little bits of public property here and there around town.

The Society's efforts over the decades betrayed a strong vein of local boosterism. Beautification, the Society argued, would aid growth by attracting people and their businesses. A century and a half before the city's current branding exercise the Society offered its own civic slogan: "Picturesque Peterborough." Victorian, perhaps, but certainly less costly than the current branding exercise!

The Society had grand visions for Peterborough. One project conceived in 1914 was an ambitious scenic drive "to advertise the advantages of the city," and make Peterborough "the beauty spot of Ontario." The route would "begin in Central Park, and link Jackson Park, the downtown area, Little Lake Cemetery, the Lift Lock, Nicholls Oval, Inverlea Park and the Teacher's College." Rome was not built in a day and the Horticultural Society, through its steady contributions, can claim some credit for the city's ongoing plans to extend and improve its parks and riverfront.

It is good to be in Peterborough now that spring is here (one hopes). In the spirit of the Horticultural Society, you may wish to volunteer a little time to help prepare and maintain the historical garden at Hutchison House Museum. Phone 705 743-9710.



Graham Hart presents the J. Hampden Burnham Award to the Quaker Oats Fire Descendent Families Committee for the establishment of the Quaker Fire Memorial in Millennium Park.

Downtown in the 50s and 60s: Boyhood Memories as History

At the April meeting of the PHS, Fred Gariepy engaged a large audience in an energetic and entertaining account of his recollections of boyhood in downtown Peterborough. His focus was roughly 1955 to 1965, underscoring how much has changed by capturing a world that no longer exists.

There were many evident differences from today. Imperial pounds, gallons, feet and inches defined our measurement of things. The cool toys for boys were dinky toys, Meccano sets and Lionel O-Gauge electric trains. Saturday afternoon was movie time at the Capitol, Odeon and Paramount on George Street. In the evening the national anthem, a newsreel and cartoon preceded the occasional double feature. Radio spread pop culture through local CHEX and CKPT, and American pop direct from stations in New York and Chicago. One cent could buy candy, and a dime a comic book. Urban knowledge was necessary for survival strategies, such as knowing that the United Co-op store sold a coke for five cents instead of six cents elsewhere.

These and other details of daily youthful life are no trivia: Gariepy underscores how they reflect significant social change. Downtown then was much more a centre of life. Gas stations (service stations then) were plentiful before environmental and safety regulations. Before the malls and burbs spawned by the automobile, downtown was the shopping centre with grocery, department and specialty stores: Buehlers, Loblaws, A&P, Dominion, Cherney's, Zellers, Woolworths, Kresge's, Eaton's, Silver's shoes (with a foot x-ray machine), Black's clothiers, and many others. People dressed up a little to go downtown, a dying vestige of Victorian dress comportment. Pool rooms, like cafes earlier in the century, were seen as sinful dens where boys' morals were at risk.

For youth, Peterborough Collegiate and Vocational Institute was an anchor in life, joined by the Carnegie Library and the YMCA pool (no bathing suits allowed). PCVS consumed weekdays and was a profound influence. The dress code for boys demanded collared shirts and short hair, the latter rigorously (and ultimately futilely) enforced against Beatlemania. Gariepy and fellow students who worked summer jobs improving city streets were dubbed "Roads Scholars" by Mayor Stan McBride. The Grade 13 Departmental Exams were the moment of truth, the exit from a boy's world. Looking back, Gariepy closed by praising the importance and dedication of his PCVS teachers in his life, a sentiment shared by many in the audience.

Among the attendees who offered lively and extensive questions and comments, one suggested that we need a young girl's perspective on that era. Absolutely!

In addition to his lecture, Fred Gariepy produced a number of illustrated copies of his text for any in the audience who wished one, first come, first served.

Amidst loud applause, the Society President thanked Fred Gariepy for so successfully bringing alive an important era in downtown Peterborough.

Dale Standen



Fred Gariepy
thanked by Dale Standen

Hutchison House Report

Gale Fewings



Officially, across the province May is Museum Month. Hutchison House is hosting numerous events this month. On Wednesday, May 2nd, we have another Heritage Luncheon. There are still tickets available for the 12:00 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. sittings, with advance booking only.

Our rhubarb patch is showing great promise for the coming season. Even with the cold, rainy, April weather the leaves are springing out of the ground. This bodes well for our ninth annual Rhubarb Spring Fling scheduled for Wednesday, May 23rd. We are taking reservations for advance tickets at \$7 per person and there will be a very few tickets available at the door for \$9 per person. Patrons will enjoy fresh rhubarb pie and ice-cream with tea or coffee. Sittings will be held at 1:00 p.m. & 2:00 p.m.

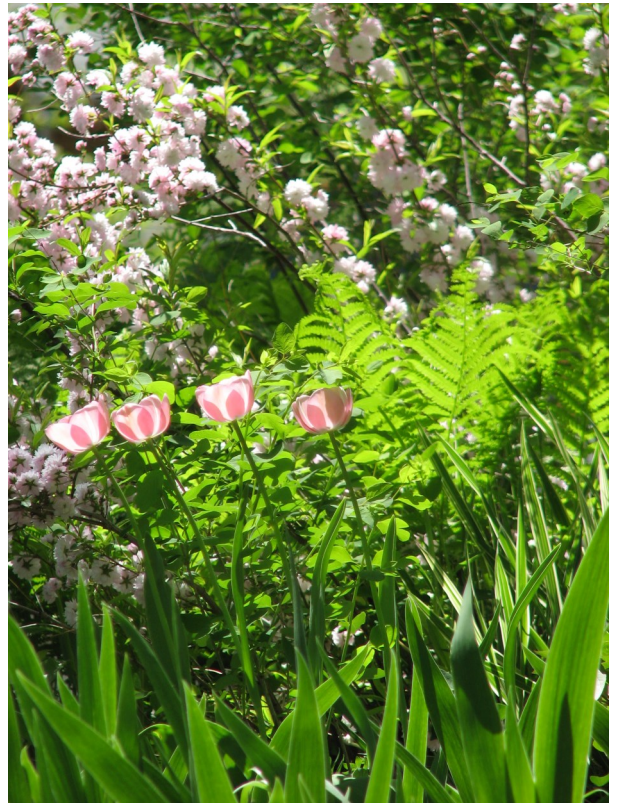
Rhubarb might be a favorite pie plant, but it suffers from an identity crisis. Sunset's *"New Western Garden Book"* describes rhubarb as an "uncommon vegetable" that's used as a fruit in sauces and pies. *"Joy of Cooking"* is even less polite, saying "Only by the wildest stretch of the imagination can rhubarb be included in this [fruit] chapter, but its tart flavor and its customary uses make it a reasonable facsimile, when cooked, of fruit."

To arrange for tickets or for more information on our coming events, please call the Museum office at (705) 743-9710. For an up-to-date list of Hutchison House Museum events, please visit our website at www.hutchisonhouse.ca. During the month of May, the Museum office is open Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

On Sunday, May 27th from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., we will celebrate the 40th Anniversary of Hutchison House Museum with an Open House. The afternoon will feature refreshments baked on the cooking hearth, tours of the house and gardens, as well as hands-on activities for young and old alike. We're creating an exhibit and slideshow to honour all of the volunteers who have kept us going for the past forty years. We truly could not do it without them! To help us celebrate the occasion, special guests will bring greetings at a short program beginning at 2:00 p.m. It promises to be a very delightful afternoon with old friends and new ones, too. Everyone in the community is welcome to attend.



Opening Day May 24, 1978



Looking forward to Spring at Hutchison House





**PETERBOROUGH
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

Phone: 705-740-2600
info@peterboroughhistoricalsociety.ca

**Hutchison House
Museum**

270 Brock Street
Peterborough Ontario
K9H 2P9

Phone 705-743-9710
info@hutchisonhouse.ca

Websites:
hutchisonhouse.ca

peterboroughhistoricalsociety.ca

The Bulletin
Editor: **Jodi Aoki**
Publisher: **Marilyn
MacNaughton**

Bulletin (ISSN 1484-5983)

Voices From Peterborough's Past Wartime Housing and Wartime Movies

From time to time historical research uncovers a gem. More often, it can lead to mysteries.

In doing research at the National Archives of Canada – looking for material on the history of movie-going in Peterborough – I came across a bit of a gem: a National Film Board of Canada photo with the description: “Tenants at a wartime housing estate enjoy movies in the staff house lounge.” It was dated “September 1943, Peterborough, Ont.” The photographer was unknown.

The faces in the photo look like people I might have known when I was growing up in Peterborough. For years after my mother came home with me from the hospital I lived in a wartime house in the west end, at 716 Victory Cres. But that was in April 1944, a little over six months after the photo was taken.

As a quick way of solving a housing crisis caused by industrial expansion, the federal Wartime Housing Ltd. constructed prefabricated houses (without cellars) in several areas of Peterborough beginning in 1941. Applicants for the houses had to be “engaged in vital war work” as well as in need of “suitable quarters.”

Meanwhile, the NFB had mounted a travelling exhibition campaign, sending projectionists and films around the country in an effort to both support the war effort and boost national unity through public information (or, you might say, propaganda).

Who are the people in the photo? (Significantly, a majority are women, and a few youngsters.) Why were they there? What were they watching? They do seem to be highly amused. What or where was the “staff house lounge”? Maybe they were there to watch the 17-minute NFB film *Wartime Housing*, which was released that year – and has a section on Peterborough’s Burnham Point development. (The film is readily available on the NFB website.)

Still, for the moment at least, the mysteries remain.

Robert Clarke



National Archives Canada PA-169731