



**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Peterborough Historical  
Society**

**Monthly Meeting**  
To be temporarily  
replaced by PHS Talks

**Hutchison House**  
will once again  
be open to the public,  
Monday-Friday  
10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
Appointments are required

**NOTE:** Due to COVID-19, the PHS monthly meetings and lectures this year are replaced by **PHS Talks**, a series of virtual presentations posted on the Hutchison House YouTube page. Notices of the talks will be publicized in the usual manner, and summaries of each talk will be included in a subsequent *Bulletin*. The aim is to post a talk on the **third Tuesday of each of the months of September, October, November, January, February, March and May.**

**“THE PETERBOROUGH HOUSE OF REFUGE AND CARE FOR THE  
ELDERLY IN THE EARLY 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY”**

**Dennis Carter-Edwards**

Dennis Carter-Edwards is a graduate of Trent University and was a Research Historian with Parks Canada for 36 years, finishing his career at the Trent-Severn Waterway NHSC. A regular speaker on historical topics and frequent performer at the Trent Valley Archives Little Lake Pageant, Dennis is currently researching treatment of vulnerable seniors at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. His talk will examine the construction and operation of the Peterborough County House of Refuge from its opening in 1907 to 1920. Institutional care of the elderly dominates today's headlines and the talk promises to be of both historical and current interest.



**To be posted on YouTube, 16 March, 2021:**

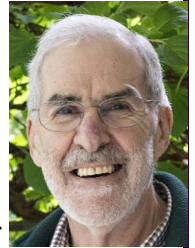
[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQvUNc56VBwk9xVqN\\_Lqnyg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQvUNc56VBwk9xVqN_Lqnyg)

The Peterborough Historical Society acknowledges with thanks the support of the City of Peterborough, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport of Ontario, and the Community Foundation of Greater Peterborough.

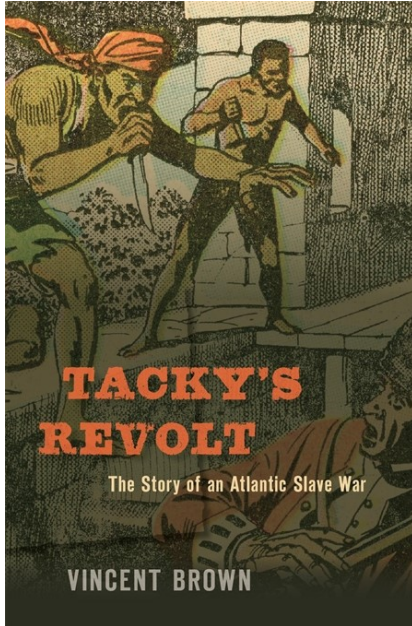


## From the President ...

## Dale Standen

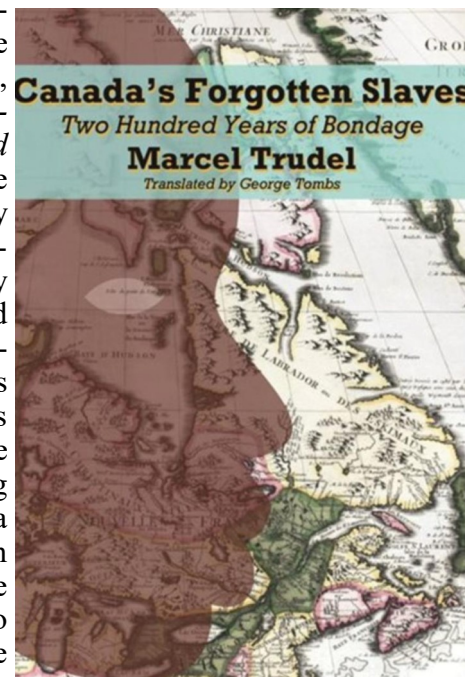


February is Black History month in Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom. It serves as an invitation to tune in to some of the special virtual programs about Black history, or to consult the extensive literature already available.



At the beginning of the month, I attended a webinar sponsored by the University of Toronto's Faculty of Arts and Science to hear Professor Vincent Brown of Harvard University talk about his recent book, *Tacky's Rebellion*. It is a study of the slave revolt in Jamaica in 1760-61, the largest in the British Atlantic colonies in the eighteenth century. I learned a lot. Tacky and his co-insurrectionists possessed a skilled military culture from their Coromantee community of origin in the Gold Coast. Forty percent of one large group of insurrectionists captured and transported to Kingston were women. The revolt should be considered a major conflict within the Seven Years' War; it reverberated throughout the Atlantic world, one consequence of which was to bolster the abolition movement. This is crucial history, and it is not limited in its importance to Jamaica. It is also Canadian history, brought to us by immigrants from Jamaica whose past becomes part of the Canadian story.

Another of my ventures into Canada's Black history is a re-reading of the book by the late historian Marcel Trudel, translated in 2011 with the title *Canada's Forgotten Slaves: Two Hundred Years of Bondage*. He first published the



book in 1960 as *L'Esclavage au Canada Français*, and I first read it fifty years ago. In 1960, the book's appearance challenged the prevalent Canadian smugness of assumed moral superiority over Americans whose history is so deeply scarred by Black slavery. In fact, the practice of slavery and human bondage in various manifestations was world-wide prior to the nineteenth century, including in Canada. Trudel documented about 4,200 slaves spread over 200 years in New France and early Quebec before slavery was abolished in the British Empire in 1834. Almost two-thirds of these were Indigenous, with the remaining one-third being Black. The overwhelming majority of slaves were employed as domestics, of which there was a chronic shortage in the colony. There was nothing like plantation slavery in Canada. As was common everywhere, most slaves in New France were captives in war. Most were women and children who could be trained to domestic service. Most were captured and sold by Indigenous allies of the French: Indigenous captives from the trans-Mississippi west, and Blacks from the bordering British colonies. After 1763, the proportion of Blacks increased as American merchants brought their slaves with them following the cession of Canada to Britain, and Loyalists brought their slaves after the American War for Independence. Records suggest that slaves were disproportionately hospitalized, and life expectancy was perhaps half that of free colonials. Recently, Trudel's account has been criticized for interpreting the condition of slaves in Quebec to have been not much worse than that of lower classes generally, and in some cases not much worse than that of their owners. Thanks to Trudel's exhaustive documentation, there is opportunity for much reinterpretation.

There exists a rich and fascinating history of Blacks and other minorities, waiting to be explored. Black History Month provides a welcome reminder that there is much to learn, and many opportunities to do so.



## PHS Talks February “These Are a Few of My Favourite Things”

For the February **PHS Talk**, Curator/Manager Erin Panepinto shared stories of some of her favourite artefacts from Hutchison House Museum. More than mere curiosities, these tangible objects from the collection shed light on the lives and times of the residents of the house. A locket with a picture of Sandford Fleming, cousin of Dr. Hutchison who lived for a period at the house, and his wife Jeannie (nee Hall) offers a unique talking point to discuss the unusual courtship of this prominent Canadian engineer. One of the most significant items in the collection is the set of medical records that document the practice of Dr. Hutchison, in particular the birth registry which provides names, payment and circumstances of each birth. Medical records are rare for this period and his lecture notes while a student in Scotland, case studies and birth data provide an insight into medical practice in Peterborough and area.

Not all of Erin's favourite artefacts were donations from descendants. A few were actually dug up from the grounds or recovered when the house was restored. The addition of an accessible entrance necessitated excavation which revealed a midden with bits of china, bottles and other castoffs that now form part of the Museum's collection. When the Museum was restored, pieces of china were discovered under the floor boards which upon investigation could be matched with pieces found in the midden. Not all objects have a direct link to the family or the house but nevertheless are representative of the period and lifestyle of the residents. The cradle rocker is a rare example of this type of furniture and underscores the time women spent child rearing. Martha Hutchison spent nearly a third of her married life pregnant and coping with infants. Well illustrated with numerous pictures, Erin's talk of her favourite things gives us hope for a time not too distant when we can once again visit Hutchison House Museum and see these “favourite things” in person.

**Dennis Carter-Edwards**

**View Erin's talk on the Hutchison House YouTube channel:**  
[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQvUNc56VBwk9xVqN\\_Lqnyg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQvUNc56VBwk9xVqN_Lqnyg)



Erin and Bob examining artefacts found in the grounds around Hutchison House



Cradle Rocker



## Peterborough Historical Society

### Notice of Annual General Meeting of Members

In accordance with the provisions of the Declaration of Emergency under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Peterborough Historical Society will be held by means of a **ZOOM webcast meeting on Tuesday, 20 April 2021, at 7:00 p.m.** for the following purpose:

To elect Directors

To appoint Auditors for the Corporation and to authorize the Board of Directors to fix their remuneration

To receive the Financial Statements for 2020, reviewed by Tim Nicholls, Chartered Accountant

To transact such other business as may properly come before the meeting.

Only paid-up members of record at the close of business on 2 April 2021, will be entitled to attend and vote at the meeting. **If you will be attending by joining the Zoom meeting, register by responding by email to: [dstanden@trentu.ca](mailto:dstanden@trentu.ca).** Several days prior to the AGM meeting date, an email will be sent to **registered eligible members of record** with the link and password enabling them to join the meeting at the scheduled time.

All reports, documents and other materials for the AGM will be posted when available in advance on the website of the Peterborough Historical Society: [www.peterboroughhistoricalsociety.ca](http://www.peterboroughhistoricalsociety.ca).

Dated at Peterborough this 19th day of February, 2021.

**Dale Standen, President  
By order of the Board**

As last year, to confront the public health impact of COVID-19, and to avoid risks to the health and safety of our staff, volunteers and members, the meeting is being held as a completely virtual meeting, to be conducted via live webcast. The meeting will not take place in a physical location. It is intended that participants will be able to communicate adequately during the meeting.

To participate with both audio and video, eligible members will need access through a computer or other device with camera and microphone and the required minimum technical capabilities (most computers, laptops and tablets for the past several years should be adequately equipped). In order to join the meeting quickly and easily, it is advisable to download the free version of ZOOM beforehand and consult the website: <https://zoom.us/>.

After the April *Bulletin*, all further communication regarding the AGM will be by email. Members who wish to attend and participate, but who have not yet provided an email address to the Society, should do so before 2 April 2021, addressed to D. Standen, President, Peterborough Historical Society: [dstanden@trentu.ca](mailto:dstanden@trentu.ca).

**Annual General Meeting Guest Speaker  
The Honourable Jeff Leal  
“The State of Politics in Ontario and Canada”**

We are pleased to have the Honourable Jeff Leal as our guest speaker at the AGM of the Peterborough Historical Society in April. Born and educated in Peterborough, a graduate of Trent University and the University of Windsor, Jeff devoted more than three decades to public service in Peterborough and its region. Elected City Councillor from 1985 to 2003, he was elected Member of Provincial Parliament from 2003 to 2018, finishing his career as Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs with cabinet responsibilities for Small Business. A highly respected community leader, Jeff Leal is well-positioned to reflect on several decades of political history in Ontario and Canada.

Jeff Leal's talk will follow the Zoom business meeting of the AGM scheduled for 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, 20 April 2021.



**Daffodil Spring Tea**

Welcome Spring with an afternoon tea.  
Enjoy a selection of sweets and savories,  
served in the Keeping Room.

April 17 and 18, 2:00 to 3:30 pm.  
\$25.00 per person prepaid.

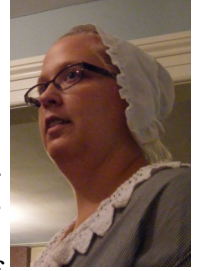
Please call Hutchison House to make your reservation:  
705-743-9710.  
Space is limited. COVID-19 observations will apply.





## Hutchison House Report

Erin Panepinto



“There will always be a class of emigrants who, for the sake of becoming the proprietors of land will locate themselves in the backwoods, far from the vicinity of towns and villages, who have little money to expend, and who are glad to avail themselves of so wholesome and so necessary a luxury at no greater cost than their own labor.

With the assistance of the children and the females of the house, a settler may, if he have a good sugar bush, make several hundred weight of sugar in a season, besides molasses and vinegar. Many a stout boy of fourteen or fifteen, with the aid of the mother and young ones, has made sugar enough to supply the family, besides selling a large quantity. In the backwoods the women do the chief of the sugar making; it is rough work, and fitter for men; but Canadians think little of that. I have seen women employed in stronger work than making sugar.”

Catharine Parr Traill, on making maple sugar (*The Female Emigrant's Guide*)

As the cold and dreary winter begins to fade and warmer weather takes its place, it's that time of year: maple sugaring season! Every year towards the end of February through the middle of March, with days above and nights below 0 degrees, the sap starts to flow through the maple trees and it's time to tap.

Maple syrup was first made by the Indigenous peoples of North America and quickly adopted by the European settlers who would later improve and refine collection techniques. The sap collected from the trees became an excellent source of concentrated sugar, as cane sugar had to be imported from the West Indies. Maple sap can only be collected during a short period of the year and the process is very labour intensive and time consuming. Its produce can be used to create a variety of sweets: maple sugar, maple syrup, maple sugar sweets, maple vinegar, maple beer and maple wine. Maple sugar can be used as a healthier alternative to processed sugar.

The process for making maple syrup is simple: bore a hole in the tree, insert spout, collect sap - and boil, filter and bottle. Forty litres of sap are required to create one litre of syrup. The sap must boil to a specific temperature; too low and the water content will be too high, too high and you will end up with maple taffy (I learned that the hard way). Depending on how much sap you start out with, boiling can take several hours and require a large amount of wood.

The end result is very rewarding and the process is easy to do in small batches on the stove top. If you have access to a maple tree, children or grandchildren will enjoy this sweet treat!

Beginning 22 February, Hutchison House Museum will once again be open to the public, Monday-Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Appointments are required and contact information must be provided. For more information on the museum's COVID-19 protocols or to make an appointment, please contact the office at 705-743-9710 or by email: [info@hutchisonhouse.ca](mailto:info@hutchisonhouse.ca).



## Voices of Peterborough's Past "Cottage Season is not Far Away!"

Amidst the cold and Covid, here is a historic view of Stony Lake spring cottage season from its earliest era, 1888. Members of the William Brownscombe family can be seen on the deck of the "Cruiser". William is dressed for work. Robert McWhinnie, perhaps not so much.

When the first Brownscombe cottage was built on Island 3 in August 1886, attractions such as John Holmes' Burleigh Falls Hotel, the Mount Julian Hotel, the glorious scenic canoe-camping opportunities and the spectacle of 100 workers building the first Burleigh lock brought sufficient traffic to support two daily steamboat runs north from Lakefield. The "Fairy" met the first morning GTR train from Peterborough for a 9:30 a.m. departure, with the "Cruiser" heading north up Clear Lake a half-hour later. A *Peterborough Review* article dated 21 August 1886 advised that there were then over 300 campers about the lake, several evening concerts recently on offer, and a Sunday church service held on Ice House Point, Gin Island.

An early September 1886 cruise of Stony lake observed the new construction: the Brownscombe/McWhinnie cottage just below Burleigh falls, the Henderson/Bell cottage on the Julian shore, Strickland cottages near Fairy Lake, Edwards and Roger on Juniper, Griffin on Eagle Mount, Graham on Grassy Island, the Hall/Ferguson family at Boschink, T. Cox at the east part of Horseshoe and "Mr. Zac Burnham's pretty white frame house" on the Dummer shore. And miles of wilderness beyond. Property prices were escalating. Juniper had cost \$100 in 1883 for 100 acres. W.G. Ferguson paid \$45 for his 10-acre island in 1887.

"Stillness reigns. The echo of the loon's weird hoot and the faint whir of the laboured flight of the crane intensify the silence. As the canoe glides quietly along through a maze of islands, the eye dilates with pleasure."

So it was reported on 9 September 1886. A new version of those days will return soon.

**Ken Brown**



Steamboat "Cruiser", Brownscombe Island, Stony Lake, spring 1888.  
(Source: Brownscombe family album; photographer unknown)



*Close-up:* Carrie Brownscombe holding son Ernie (born April 1888); crew, her father-in-law William Brownscombe, then Robert McWhinnie and wife Tillie (nee Brownscombe) and their two daughters Olive and Ethel. At Brownscombe Island (Island #3), Stony Lake, spring 1888.



**PETERBOROUGH  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY**

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## Peterborough Historical Society seeks volunteers

The PHS seeks volunteers to contribute to its volunteer Board and/or to committees that undertake its several programs and responsibilities. There are opportunities for a range of leadership skills and interests: community collaboration, member engagement and recruitment, financial oversight, legal oversight, human resources, program development, philanthropy/fundraising.

The PHS owns and operates Hutchison House Museum, which depends upon, and provides many opportunities for, volunteers with varied interests and skills to assist with its operations and programs.

We depend upon active people who want to do something different and interesting, and to join others in contributing to a worthwhile community enterprise. Give us a call and let's talk about your interests.

Peterborough Historical Society: 705-740-2600

Email: [info@peterboroughhistoricalsociety.ca](mailto:info@peterboroughhistoricalsociety.ca)

Hutchison House Museum: 705-743-9710

Email: [info@hutchisonhouse.ca](mailto:info@hutchisonhouse.ca)

## Occasional Paper now Available

The PHS Occasional Paper for 2021 is now available and is being distributed to PHS members. Author Don Willcock tells the fascinating story behind the Peterborough War Memorial whose sculptor, Walter S. Allward, also designed the famous Canadian War Memorial at Vimy Ridge in France. Members receive a copy as a benefit of membership: for non-members the price is currently \$6.00 plus postage. Copies may be ordered by phone, 705-740-2600, or by email, [info@peterboroughhistoricalsociety.ca](mailto:info@peterboroughhistoricalsociety.ca).

Peterborough Remembers Its Fallen:  
The City and County Citizens' War Memorial

Don Willcock



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AN OCCASIONAL PAPER PUBLISHED BY THE  
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