



Speaker Series 2021-2022

Speakers for the fall and winter monthly meetings are being arranged and a schedule will be circulated when available. At this time, we are unable to predict when we will return to in-person meetings but hope that it will be sooner rather than later in the coming year. In the meantime, we look forward to keeping in touch virtually in as many ways as we can.

The Program Committee is eager to hear suggestions for topics or speakers from members; please do not hesitate to speak up. Address any suggestions or comments to Dennis Carter-Edwards, Program Chair: info@peterboroughhistoricalsociety.ca.

Stay safe and stay healthy!



Flowers at Hutchison House

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.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Peterborough Historical
Society

Monthly Meeting
To be temporarily
replaced by PHS Talks

Hutchison House
Closed to the public

From the President ...**Bob Taylor-Vaisey**

I am honoured to be the incoming President of the Peterborough Historical Society. Before all else, I wish to recognize the outstanding leadership of Professor Dale Standen over the last three years.

Dale led a number of PHS reviews: the Society bylaws, the Trust fund, our strategic plan - and shared considerable insights into the development of our new website, our financial procedures and our organizational structure. We are grateful that Dale has agreed to continue as Secretary.

In addition, it is important to recognize Paul Lumsden's years of commitment to PHS as its Treasurer. Paul wore many hats, not least of which was the Property Manager for Hutchison House Museum.

We have three new members on the Board: James Cullingham, Peter Eatson and Lou MacClellan. Lou will take up the position of Treasurer, James will head the new Advisory Council and Peter will lead the development of a Marketing and Communications strategy.

The last year has been challenging with Zoom meetings galore and the disappointment of not having in-person meetings. There is some good news, however. The transition to a virtual world has given us new insights into different approaches to what we do, and this is no more apparent than in the great strides made by Erin Panepinto, Curator/Manager of Hutchison House Museum, and her team.

The next year will be exciting as we design and implement new initiatives and launch the new website.

The Board cannot do everything on its own. We need your input. Please do not hesitate to contact me at bob.taylorvaisey@gmail.com with your thoughts.

Have a safe summer as we continue to face the impact of the pandemic!

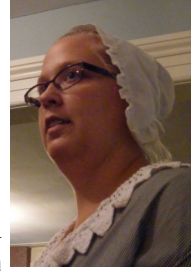


A new look in the parlour

Whist, anyone?

Hutchison House Report

Erin Panepinto



"To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow." — Audrey Hepburn

As spring winds its way into summer, the gardeners at Hutchison House Museum have been putting in many hours, working within the current COVID-19 restrictions, in getting the gardens ready for the summer season. In April alone, they put in over 60 hours, weeding, pruning, spreading compost, preparing flowerbeds and working around the new walkway project that is currently underway. THANK YOU so much to the wonderful volunteers who are working hard to prepare the gardens for the summer. When restrictions permit, please take a walk around to see the results of their labour.

While the Museum remains closed to the public (at the time of writing this report, stay-at-home orders are extended to June 2), we have been having a bit of fun online. Since February, members, volunteers and followers of our social media channels had been having fun playing 'I Spy' online. Each week, we have posted a picture on our Twitter, Instagram and Facebook pages of a room in the Museum that includes an added hidden modern object. Catharine Dibben and Karen Toole won gift certificates for the heritage luncheons for finding all thirty objects, and Rhonda Murphy a gift certificate to Scottish Tea for finding 10 objects. Thank you to everyone who played; for the curious, the answers are posted on our website.

We were also fortunate this year to have had a group of Museum Management and Curatorship students from Fleming College create an online Escape Room featuring the Doctor's office. It is 1840 and there has been an accident outside Doctor Hutchison's house. You rush into his office to fetch supplies for him when one of his children locks you in the room! Solve the clues to escape from the room and get the doctor his supplies! Challenge yourself with the harder version or try your hand at an easier one. Links to the Escape Room are located on the News and Events page of the Hutchison House Museum website.

While Hutchison House Museum is not able to accommodate Day Camps at this time, we would like to bring the Museum to you! Staff have prepared instructional videos and material kits for three of our most popular day camp programs: Kaleidoscopes, Marionettes and Crazy Quilt Squares. Links to instructional videos are located on the Hutchison House Museum YouTube channel and on the News and Events page on our website. Material kits are available for purchase at a cost of \$15 each or two for \$25. Also available are previous Camp Kits: Teddy Bears, Bookbinding and Fairies and Toadstools. For inquiries, please contact the Museum office at 705-743-9710.

Finally, new to the Museum are two student assistants. Anne Heughan, a student with École catholique Monseigneur-Jamot, began a virtual Co-op position with us on April 27. Anne has taken over our Social Media channels and is translating the pre-recorded versions of our 19th Century Daily Life and 19th Century Christmas programs into French. Starting on May 17, we also have Sam Hutchison from the Museum Management and Curatorship program at Fleming, who will be starting her 12-week internship. Because of the stay-at-home restrictions, she will spend her first few weeks working on research projects online. We hope that we will all be together to start our Scottish Tea season in July.

At the time of writing this report, the Museum remains closed to the public. Please call the office or visit our website for updates on reopening.



A new path around
Hutchison House

PHS Talks

“The Many Working Lives of Robert Romaine”

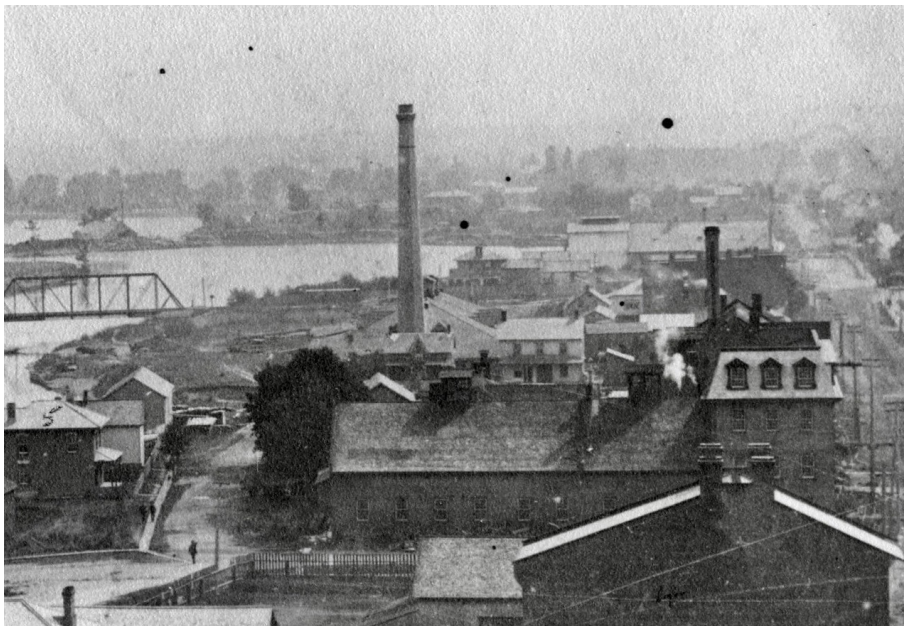
The May PHS Talks featured an engaging presentation on Robert Romaine – a prominent Peterborough businessman. Drawing on his extensive knowledge of Peterborough’s business history, Ken Brown delivered a fascinating account of this little-known figure – printer, bookbinder, editor of the *Peterborough Review*, inventor, entrepreneur and producer of the famous Romaine Map of 1875. Clearly, Robert Romaine was a man of many parts.

Born in Quebec City in 1820, Robert Romaine entered the printing business, becoming the printing supervisor for the *Canada Gazette*. In 1834, he introduced the steam press, the first in Canada. In 1853, he moved to Peterborough with his brother-in-law Thomas White where he set up a bookbinding and stationary business and began publishing the *Peterborough Review*. Not content with the daily routine of selling, he turned his inquisitive mind to farming practices and designed a “steam driven rotary digger” which he patented in 1854. The original drawings for this ingenious device still exist and a later version of his invention was endorsed by Sandford Fleming. Romaine served on City Council in 1874 and actively promoted a municipal water scheme to guarantee safe drinking water and a fire suppression capability. Previously, he had joined with John Carnegie to establish the Peterborough Gas Company that provided the first street lighting for the city.

After leaving municipal politics, Romaine focused on new business opportunities. He established a brick factory on property that now serves as a parking lot for No Frills. The plant measured 100 feet by 130 feet and was reputed to be the largest of its kind in the province. It attracted the interest of the long-established brick manufacturing firm of Mark Curtis but a courtesy visit by Curtis was rebuffed and Romaine escorted him off the premises. Romaine borrowed heavily for this new venture, obtaining loans from his partner John Carnegie and from the Carnegie/Hilliard marriage settlement. Using clay obtained from the banks of the Otonabee River below town, the venture failed to dominate the crowded brick market and within a few years, Romaine lost both the paper and the brick works to his creditors. Undaunted, he drew on the political connections of his brother-in-law Thomas White who was Minister of the Interior in Macdonald’s government; he obtained a patronage position as Chief of Stationary and later a position in the federally owned printing establishment. He died in Ottawa in 1892.

Perhaps Robert Romaine’s greatest legacy is the map of Peterborough that he produced in 1875 based on the earlier survey work of two local surveyors. The 1875 Romaine map remains an invaluable archival record of Peterborough and a fitting legacy of this Peterborough businessman.

Dennis Carter-Edwards



Romaine Brickworks chimney and surrounding area, mid-1880s
(Peterborough Museum and Archives)

A Different Past

Jim Higgins with Janette Higgins, *Fighting for Democracy: The True Story of Jim Higgins (1907-1982)* (Victoria: Friesen Press, 2020)

We are accustomed to historical biographies of notable people: politicians, professionals, the rich and famous, and generally members of the ruling classes whose activities dominate the historical record. Rarely do we encounter the unmediated voices of ordinary people whose perspectives, if recorded at all, are usually interpreted through the eyes of the established elite.

Fighting for Democracy is a welcome exception. Largely a memoir, it is the story of Jim Higgins, “A Canadian Activist in Spain’s Civil War,” as the subtitle notes, but also a great deal more. In 1941, Higgins settled in Peterborough, married and raised a family. The book is edited by his eldest daughter, Janette Higgins, a writer and editor who grew up in Peterborough and assembled accounts written and recorded by her father in 1939 and 1977. She has provided an important prologue and epilogue along with essential notes on her editing.

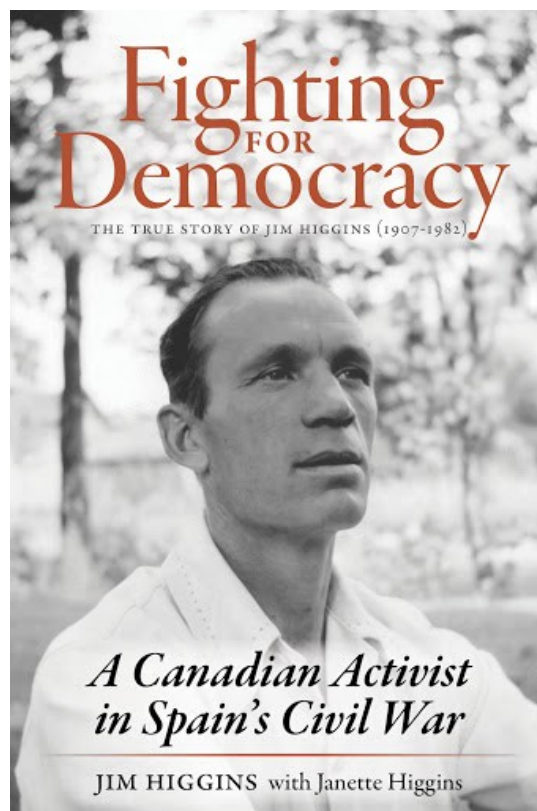
English-born and orphaned, Higgins, in 1928 at age 21, immigrated to Saskatchewan for farm work. The Depression years that followed triggered his activism in the cause of equality and democracy, and against the exploitation of workers. The catastrophic failure of unregulated free market capitalism led many to explore radical alternatives: corporate and fascist models on the political right, and cooperative, socialist or communist models on the left.

The Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939, was a proxy for the polarized political and social environment of the 1930s. General Francisco Franco, supported by Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, emerged as leader of a reactionary military revolt aimed at overthrowing the left-leaning Popular Front republican government. Thousands of volunteers in support of democracy and assorted left-leaning ideologies travelled to Spain to help defend the Republic. Jim Higgins was one of 1700 volunteers from Canada who formed the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion, or “Mac-Paps.”

One half of Higgins’ memoir focuses on his experiences in Spain but it is not primarily a military narrative. As with accounts of his life before and after the war, the thread of his narrative is his personal commitment to equality, democracy and justice. He was no wild-eyed radical. His activism focused on political and labour union organization, in Saskatchewan before the war, and in Peterborough after 1941. This, combined with participation in the Spanish Civil War - made illegal by Canada in 1937 - attracted surveillance by the RCMP for 45 years, at least until 1980, two years before his death.

Fighting for Democracy is a portrait of an ordinary man with extraordinary compassion for the underprivileged and an unfailing devotion and loyalty to family, friends and colleagues. A personal story of commitment, courage and defiance, the book is a window on a previous turbulent era.

Copies of *Fighting for Democracy* are available for purchase through curbside pickup from Hutchison House Museum Bookstore: \$23.00. For arrangements, phone 705-743-9710 or 705-740-2600, or email: info@hutchisonhouse.ca or info@peterboroughhistoricalsociety.ca.



Dale Standen



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The Bulletin

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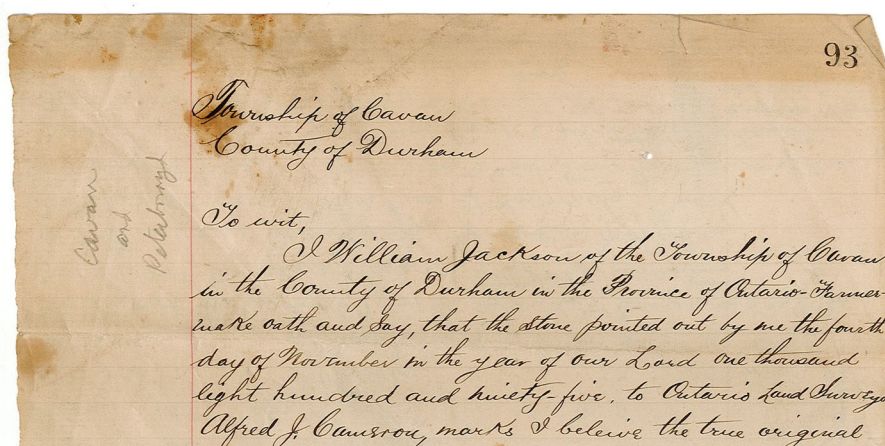
Bulletin (ISSN 1484-5983)

Voices of Peterborough's Past On the Intricacies of Surveying the Nation...

Ontario Land Surveyor Alfred Cameron was born in Peterborough in 1864, the son of Scottish immigrants. He practiced throughout Peterborough County, the United Counties of Northumberland and Durham and beyond; many will know his map, "Map of the Town of Peterborough and Village of Ashburnham," published in 1896, as copies exist in archival repositories throughout the region. Along with Alfred's survey reports, located in the Cameron family papers at Trent University Library and Archives, are a few other notable survey reports made by local inhabitants attesting to the locations of posts and markings from earlier times. One of these, sworn in intriguing descriptive detail before Cameron in the Town of Peterborough in 1895, attests to the location of an age-old survey line on "said lot twenty-two" in the Township of Cavan:

*"I William Jackson [farmer] of the Township of Cavan... make oath and say, that ...I put up the present stump fence in the same place where the former old rail fence was standing, that parts of said old rail fence are still to be seen in the original position that some years previous to putting up said stump fence, my father (who was the first owner of said lot twenty-two, from the Crown) planted said stone in the presence of James Huston [surveyor] and myself, that he (my father) pointed out to us a small rotted part of a wooden post and said it was all that remained of the original post, that he (my father) removed said rotted wood and planted said stone exactly in the same place as the said rotted wood, that said stone was in about the centre of said stump fence, that said stone has never to my knowledge disturbed, that said stone was never to my knowledge disputed...
Sworn before me this 16th day of November 1895 A.D.
at the Town of Peterborough, Alfred J. Cameron, Ontario Land Surveyor"
(Cameron family fonds, Trent University Library and Archives)*

Jodi Aoki



The beginning lines of a survey report sworn at the Town of Peterborough by William Jackson of Cavan, 1895
(Cameron family fonds, Trent University Library and Archives)