



# PETERBOROUGH

## HISTORICAL SOCIETY | EST. 1897

### UPCOMING EVENTS

Peterborough Historical  
Society

Monthly Meeting  
by Zoom  
Members must register

PHS Zoom Meeting  
at 7:30 p.m.  
Tuesday November 16  
Speaker: Janette Higgins

Hutchison House  
Museum

Games Night  
at the Museum  
Every third Thursday of the  
month  
6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Heritage Luncheons  
on November 3  
and December 1

Hearth Cooking Workshop  
on Saturdays  
November 6, 13 and 20

Christmas Market and  
Snowflake Tea  
Saturday November 27, and  
Sunday November 28

Charles Dickens's  
*A Christmas Carol*  
in the Keeping Room  
Saturday December 11 from  
2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Dylan Thomas's  
*A Child's Christmas in Wales*  
and Stuart McLean's  
*Polly Anderson's Christmas*  
Party  
Sunday December 12 from  
2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Issue 480

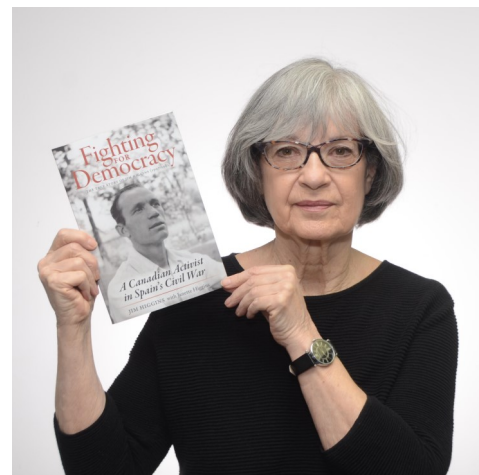
November 2021

**NOTE:** This season's monthly meetings and speaker series will remain virtual but will revert to our regular schedule on the **third Tuesday of the month: September, October, November, January, February, March and May at 7:30 p.m.** The meetings will be conducted on Zoom with a question and answer period following the speaker's presentation. Attendees will be provided with the link to join meetings when they register by email to the email address provided.

### "Fighting for Democracy: A Canadian Activist (from Peterborough) in Spain's Civil War"

Janette Higgins

Jim Higgins was an English orphan who migrated to Canada for farm work in Saskatchewan in 1928. The Depression of the 1930s triggered his activism in the causes of social equality and democracy. In the polarized climate of the time, he joined 1700 other Canadian volunteers to fight fascism in the Spanish Civil War. In 1941, he settled in Peterborough, married, raised a family and continued working in the union movement to further workers' rights. **Janette Higgins** is Jim's eldest daughter, a writer who grew up in Peterborough and edited her father's memoirs, providing a fascinating insight into a life both ordinary and extraordinary.



**Tuesday, 16 November 2021, 7:30 p.m. on Zoom. Register to attend by sending an email note to [info@peterboroughhistoricalsociety.ca](mailto:info@peterboroughhistoricalsociety.ca) with "Higgins" in the subject line.**

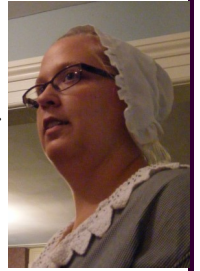
Copies of *Fighting for Democracy* can be purchased from the Hutchison House Museum Bookstore for curbside pick-up: \$23.00: 270 Brock Street, Peterborough. For arrangements, phone 705-740-2600, 705-743-9710, or email: [info@hutchisonhouse.ca](mailto:info@hutchisonhouse.ca), or [info@peterboroughhistoricalsociety.ca](mailto:info@peterboroughhistoricalsociety.ca). Copies may also be purchased at Happenstance Books and Yarns, 44 Queen Street, Lakefield, 705-652-7535.

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.



## Hutchison House Report

Erin Panepinto



The Christmas Season is upon us and Hutchison House Museum volunteers will host their annual Christmas Market on Saturday November 27 and Sunday November 28 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Due to COVID-19, the Market will look a little different this year. In addition to the Empire Cheese orders, we will be offering some of our most popular items for pre-ordering as well. While some limited shopping will be available, there will be a maximum of 4 visitors in the sale room at one time. Be sure to order ahead to ensure that you get the items you hope for. There will be NO Attic Treasures available this year. Thank you for your patience. The deadline for all advance orders is Friday November 18, 2021.

In addition to the Christmas Market, Hutchison House Museum volunteers will host a Snowflake Tea on Saturday November 27 and Sunday November 28 with sittings at 1:00 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. Enjoy a light tea with Christmas treats by the fire in the Keeping Room; the cost for this event is \$15 per person. There is limited seating and pre-registration and payment is required. Items for sale at the Christmas Market will be available during the Tea. Tours will not be available during this event.

Tickets are also available now for our annual Fireside Stories events. Mark your calendars for Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* in the Keeping Room by firelight on Saturday December 11 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. We will be listening to a recording of the 1939 Campbell Soup radio show presented by Orson Welles and starring Lionel Barrymore as Ebenezer Scrooge. A choice of dessert, tea and coffee will be served. The cost for the event is \$20 per person or \$30 if you book the Sunday December 12 event as well. On Sunday, enjoy Dylan Thomas's *A Child's Christmas in Wales* and Stuart McLean's *Polly Anderson's Christmas Party* from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Seating is limited for both events.

The House will also host another Games Night on November 18<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. There is limited space so be sure to pre-register to ensure a table.

For more information or to reserve your seat for any of these events, please contact the Museum office at 705-743-9710.



Snowflake Tea  
November 27 and November 28



Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*  
December 11



## Hutchison House Museum Mystery Artefact

What am I?

I am made of wood, but in the past, I have also been made of whale ivory or metal.

People who practice this craft still use me today.

I am adjustable and I rotate.

Answers in the December issue of the *Bulletin*.

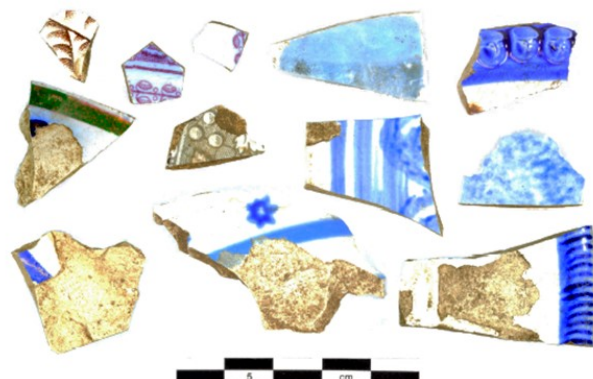


## PHS previous month's meeting:

### "The Archaeology of Nassau Mills: The Abandoned Plaster House in Context"

The October lecture by James Conolly and Kate Dougherty underscored the old adage that what we think we know is not always true. The entrance to the Symons Campus of Trent University appears to be a "pristine" green and natural setting. As our speakers clearly showed, nothing could be further from the truth. The construction of a paved pathway from the residences on Water Street necessitated an archaeological investigation. During the excavations of "the old plaster house" at Nassau Mills during the seasons of 2017 and 2018 and the complementary historical research, the findings revealed a dramatic and constantly evolving structure that was part of a dynamic industrial and residential landscape. Following detailed analysis of the more than 35,000 artifacts uncovered and careful assessment of the structural remains of the building, the authors presented a convincing chronological history of the evolution and occupation of the building. Using standard archeological procedures, the speakers showed how each layer of the stratigraphy revealed a different chapter in the story of this humble but significant building. Striking historical images were used to show how complex the site is, with lumbering, hydro, canal and railway links, bridges, dams and roadways all leaving their impact both visible and below grade on this important cultural landscape. The speakers acknowledged there is much more to do and learn from future excavations and are hopeful that future years will see more work on the site. The site begs for an interdisciplinary approach with historians, archaeologists, biologists, conservators, genealogists and not least exhibitors who can present this fascinating story to the public with plaques, displays and future talks.

**Dennis Carter-Edwards**



Nassau Mills Artifacts



**PETERBOROUGH  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY**

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**The Bulletin**

Editor: **Jodi Aoki**  
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**Voices of Peterborough's Past  
ACKERMAN, Benjamin Franklin**

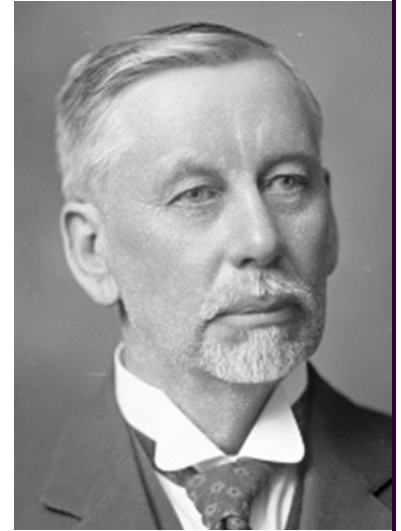
Born: 17 August 1850 in Prince Edward County,  
Ontario;  
Died: 19 September 1933 in Peterborough,  
Ontario;  
Interred: Little Lake Cemetery, Peterborough,  
Ontario.

At 13 years of age, Benjamin Franklin Ackerman moved to Norwood, Ontario, and went into harness-making, possibly as an apprentice to his brother Isaac Newton Ackerman. After several years in Norwood, he set up business on his own in Port Perry, Ontario. By 1892, Ackerman's operation was so successful that it needed larger facilities; he moved his family and business to Peterborough where he built a four-storey factory on the northwest corner of George and Dalhousie streets. In 1911, the B.F. Ackerman & Son Co. constructed a large factory and warehouse in Regina, Saskatchewan to serve Western Canada.

"B.F." and his wife Frances Charlotte (née Lumsden) had five children: Estelle (1876-1938) who married Sydney Taylor Medd (1871-1947); William Clarence (1878-1969), the "Son" of the company name; Edna Jennie (1883-1940) who married Rolland McLelland Waddell (1880-1930); Charles H. (1888-1962); and Arthur Ross (1893-1916). The family attended George Street Methodist Church, and B.F. was a long-time member of Peterborough's Board of Education.

By 1914, the Ackerman company was reputed to be Canada's largest wholesale manufacturers of saddlery, harnesses, and horse equipment. It was a significant supplier of such items to the Canadian military during the First World War.

In 1933, B.F. Ackerman died, but his Peterborough factory operated until 1950, moving from harnesses and saddles to footwear, leather goods, and work clothes. The building is currently named "The Harness Factory" and contains several businesses.



Photograph: Peterborough  
Museum & Archives

**Don Willcock**

**Winter Lecture Series: A Brief Summary**

The lineup of speakers for the winter lecture series promises interesting and informative new insights into the history of our community. In January, Ken Brown will explore in detail the connection of Sir John A. Macdonald to Peterborough dispelling some myths and offering new information. In February, Wendy Darby will discuss the archives at Lakefield College and the fascinating collection in this hitherto unknown source of local history. In March, Michael Chappell will provide a background on the history and determined efforts of a dedicated group of volunteers to preserve the historic Old Stone Mill House in Lakefield. The April AGM speaker will be announced in a future issue of the *Bulletin*. To finish off the winter session, in May, Dennis Carter-Edwards will explore the origins of the city's water works that developed in the latter part of the nineteenth century, both for health reasons and to provide adequate fire protection. The Society is hopeful that we can renew in-person lectures at our regular meeting room at the Lion's Club but details will be provided as health and safety measures are clarified over the winter.

**Dennis Carter-Edwards**