



# PETERBOROUGH

HISTORICAL SOCIETY | EST. 1897

Issue 493

Nogjiwanong — Peterborough

February 2023

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Peterborough Historical Society

Monthly Meetings at 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, 21 February

Speaker Don Barry

Tuesday, 21 March

Speaker Armand LaBarge

Tuesday, 18 April

Annual General Meeting

Hutchison House Museum

Heritage Luncheons

Wednesday, 1 March

12 noon or 1:00 p.m. sitting

Wednesday, 5 April

12 noon or 1:00 p.m. sitting

March Break Programs

Friday, 10 March—

Thursday 16 March

St. Patrick's Day

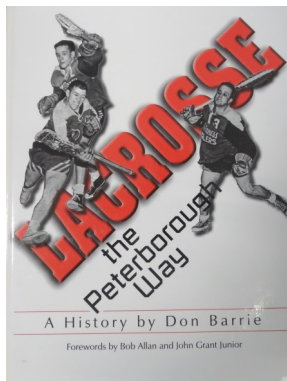
take-home meal

Friday, 17 March

pre-order 13 March

**NOTE: THE FEBRUARY SPEAKER EVENT WILL BE VIRTUAL ON ZOOM.** The speaker schedule remains on the **third Tuesday of the month; January, February, March and May at 7:30 p.m.** A question-and-answer period will follow the speaker's presentation. Attendees will be provided with the Zoom link to join meetings when they register by email to the email address provided.

## “The History of Lacrosse in Peterborough” Don Barrie



Peterborough has a long and intimate connection with lacrosse. The first lacrosse game was played in Peterborough in 1872. In 1892 the Daily Examiner gave a history of the origins of lacrosse, noting the formation of the Montreal la Crosse [sic] Club in 1860 (actually 1856), followed shortly after with the National La Crosse Association of Canada. The Examiner article noted the “retirement” of the Peterborough Lacrosse Club's prominent player and executive member, Joe Phelan. In acknowledging his contribution, club president W.E. Lech noted Phelan's “untiring services in promoting the interests of the national game.” Don Barrie, the author of *Lacrosse the Peterborough Way*, will present his extensive research on what he describes as “Peterborough's winningest sport.”

Tuesday, 21 February 2023, 7:30 p.m. on Zoom. Register to attend by sending an email note to [info@peterboroughhistoricalsociety.ca](mailto:info@peterboroughhistoricalsociety.ca) with “Lacrosse” in the subject line.

The Peterborough Historical Society acknowledges  
with thanks our partners and supporters



## Research Notes

**Alexis Johnson,  
Trent History Department, M.A. Student**



When one imagines a medieval feast, images of drunken disorder, giant turkey legs, and questionable hygienic practices often come to mind. And, although I can not argue on the surface that this isn't true, they were far more than this. My area of study is feasts during the English high and late medieval periods and their role in social interaction between the poor and the elite. Feasts were tools to exhibit and reinforce power and prestige, which went on to influence social norms. From weddings and funerals to guild meetings and church gatherings, feasts were at the core of medieval socialization. In my studies, I hope to broaden our current understanding of feasts and demonstrate the intricate ways people socialized in the medieval period. This research is significant because it will reassess the perceived mundanity of food. Showing how important it was in shaping medieval English society. It will also open the door for further research into understudied aspects of modern daily life.

Food insecurity is a growing problem in Canada, with many individuals struggling to access enough food due to rising costs. A recent survey from Second Harvest, Canada's largest food rescue organization, predicts that the number of Canadians relying on food banks and charities will increase by 60% in 2023, following a 123% increase in 2022, as reported by CTV in the article "Food banks and other food charities anticipate a 60 percent increase in demand in 2023." This issue disproportionately affects lower and middle-class individuals. My research into the connections between food, class, and charity has implications for understanding modern social interactions in food bank settings. The approach that food is a socialization tool with ties to power and prestige can inform interactions between volunteers and those accessing food banks. It can improve interactions by fostering more equitable and supportive environments for individuals experiencing food insecurity. Furthermore, studying the connections between food and class can help to uncover previously unknown or understudied factors that contribute to food insecurity and promote change.

In many ways, feasts were a form of food charity. Religious feasts, discussed in Carole Rawcliffe's book *Urban Bodies: communal health in late medieval English towns and cities*, will be a core aspect of my research and demonstrate how feasts acted as a form of charity. Rawcliffe notes that feasts conducted on specific saint days were often hosted by craft guilds or pious fraternities (p. 288). During these feasts, almsgiving, the distribution of bread and other food amongst a congregation, was ordinary (p. 288). Community members experiencing food insecurity were often invited to join or given leftovers based on extensive criteria (p. 288). In this way, as an act of charity, feasts reinforced pre-existing power dynamics between different classes. Food insecurity remains an issue today, and to better understand its contributing factors, such as class, must be considered, which is where history can offer insight into modern-day issues.

## HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

If not, renew directly online at <https://phs-hutchisonhouse.ca/support/become-a-member/new-and-returning-members/>, or download and complete the PDF form and mail it with your payment. Don't miss receiving the *Bulletin*, this year's Occasional Paper, and all the other benefits of PHS membership!

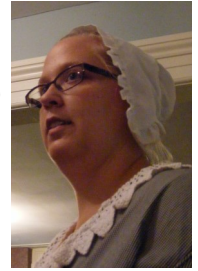
## Ways To Give

<https://phs-hutchisonhouse.ca/support/donate/>

Peterborough Historical Society and Hutchison House Museum, like all heritage organizations, depend upon donations to meet operating expenses in providing all their programs and events. Thank you for your generous support!

## Hutchison House Museum Report

Erin Panepinto



"What good is the warmth of summer, without the cold of winter to give it sweetness. "  
--John Steinbeck

As the winter marches on here at the museum, Rachel and a supportive team of volunteers have been working hard on our Pantry cleaning project. As the new year began, staff and volunteers set up tables in the Keeping Room and Harvey Connal Room to place all the artefacts out of the museum pantry. Inventory was completed, artefacts were cleaned and sorted, and the database was updated. Once the pantry was empty, the floors and walls were inspected, cleaned, swept, vacuumed, and then swept again (multiple times). Staff and volunteers then set about repainting the pantry, which hadn't been done since the museum opened in 1978. With the new facelift completed, shelving was put up again, and the artefacts were returned to their former homes. Thank you to everyone who helped staff with this arduous and time-consuming task, including Linda Chandler, Don Willcock, Bob Laing, Susan Matthews and Catherine Martin.

In addition to a facelift of the pantry, staff and volunteers also moved desks and cabinets around to improve the office space efficiency and set up a new set of shelves in the back room off the kitchen to improve the storage space on the lower floor. Be sure to stop in and say hi and see our improved spaces!

As February winds into March, we will see the return of our March Break Programs from March 10th-16th. See our website or call the office for program details. We will also see the return of the St. Patrick's Day take-home meal on Friday, March 17th. Enjoy a meal of Corned Beef and Colcannon with roasted carrots, Irish Soda Bread and a scrumptious Irish Apple Cake with custard for dessert. Experience a taste of Ireland from the comfort of your own home with a delicious take-home meal for St. Patrick's Day.

Meals will be available for curbside pick-up between 12 pm and 4 pm on March 17th, 2023. **You must pre-order your meals by March 13th, 2023.** Meals are \$25 each. For more information or to order a St. Patrick's Day meal to go, please get in touch with the museum at 705-743-9710 or [info@hutchisonhouse.ca](mailto:info@hutchisonhouse.ca).

The Heritage Luncheons will also return on Wednesday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, at 1 pm. Please call the museum office for more information or to reserve a seat.

## Notice of Annual General Meeting of Members

In accordance with Provincial authorization, 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, 18 April, 2023, at 7:00 p.m.** for the following purpose:

1. To elect Directors
  2. To appoint Auditors for the Corporation and to authorize the Board of Directors to fix their remuneration
  3. To receive the Financial Statements for 2022, 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 14 April, 2023, 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), before 5:00 p.m. Friday, 14 April 2023.**

Members who wish to attend and participate, but who have not yet provided an email address to the Society, should do so before 14 April, 2023, addressed to D. Standen, Peterborough Historical Society: [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.

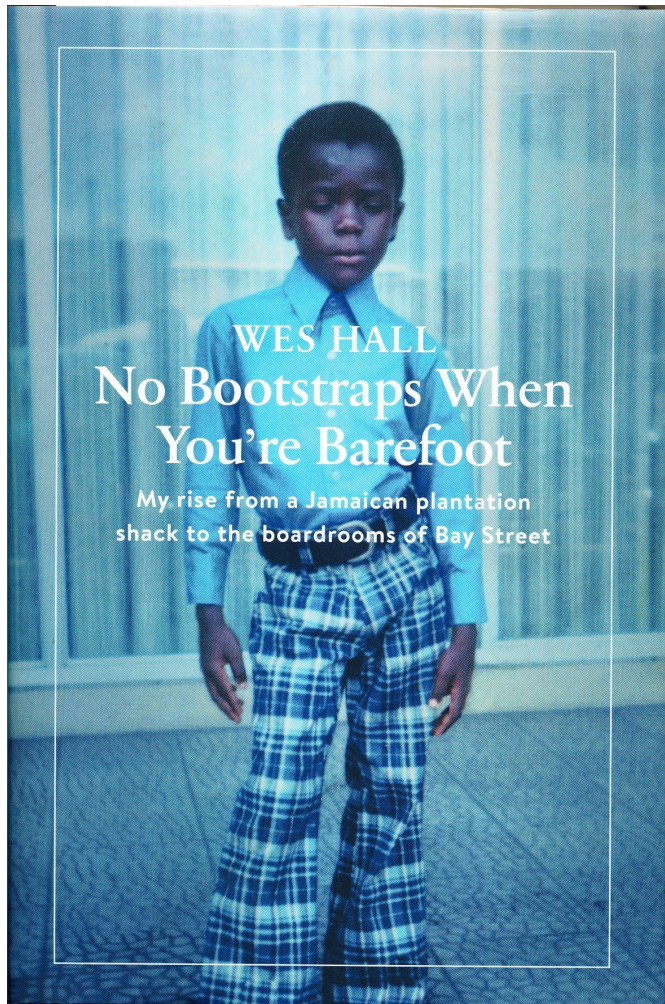
All reports, documents and other materials for the AGM will be posted when available in advance on the website of the Peterborough Historical Society: [www.phs-hutchisonhouse.ca](http://www.phs-hutchisonhouse.ca).

## PHS Previous Month's Meeting "100 Years of Rotary in Peterborough"

Service clubs have and continue to play an essential role in supporting our community. This was clearly evident in the January presentation by Bruce Gravel on the history of the Rotary Club. Drawing on his research for a history of Rotary in Peterborough, prepared as part of the centennial celebrations of the Rotary Club in Peterborough (1921-2021), he highlighted the extensive range of projects funded and undertaken by the members of the Club. Many of these will be familiar such as the Rotary Trail, Camp Kawartha on Clear Lake, the Outdoor Adult Gym at Beavermead and the Education Centre at the Riverview Park and Zoo. Other Rotary initiatives may be less well known, such as the more than 3,000 homemade masks prepared during Covid-19, Community Day of Service for yard work and painting refresh, sorting at the Food Bank and providing milk to underprivileged children. Rotary sponsors the annual Spelling Bee among area elementary schools and the Canada Day essay contest in which students write about why they are proud to be Canadian. Rotary also firmly commits to internationalism with many worthy charitable undertakings supporting children and communities in need. The Rotary motto – Service Above Self – embodies the spirit that inspires members to give back to their community. Bruce Gravel noted a social side to the Club activities and mentioned some of the more humorous incidents gleaned from reading back issues of the Examiner. With the help of staff from the Trent Valley Archives, extensive records have been preserved and will be a permanent record of the people and projects that have made a difference in the lives and well-being of Peterborough. Copies of the history are available at TVA, Chapters, and through the Club.



## Black History Month Reading



To honour Black History Month this February, I read Wes Hall's *No Bootstraps When You're Barefoot: My rise from a Jamaican plantation shack to the boardrooms of Bay Street*. Although the title suggests a rags-to-riches plot worthy of a Horatio Alger novel, Hall's immigrant autobiography serves up a far more nuanced reflection than a simple parable. Hall is clearly proud of his achievements but blowing one's own horn, as is so often the motive of autobiography, is not the prime purpose. Underlying his narrative is an astonishment with the most improbable course of his life and a curiosity to explain it.

Wes was born in St. Thomas parish, the poorest in Jamaica. His father lived elsewhere. When he was eighteen months old, his mother abandoned him and his two siblings, an infant brother and a four-year-old sister, whom she left alone in their plantation shack. A passerby notified their grandmother, who took them in, adding to the several other orphaned children of relatives she was caring for. His mother, who had hooked up with a better-off man in a better-off parish, visited her children infrequently but took Wes back when he was eleven years old. Shockingly mean and cruel, she frequently beat Wes, abused him emotionally and turned him out when he was thirteen.

For two years, Wes imposed upon adult relatives and acquaintances for shelter and scrambled to find menial jobs. He learned to embrace whatever opportunities presented themselves. His father, who had emigrated to Toronto, where he had settled into a stable relationship and steady employment, had kept in touch over the years and occasionally sent money to his mother and grandmother to help sup-

port Wes. When Wes was fifteen, his father sent for Wes to join him. His stepmother received him warmly, but his strict disciplinarian father was less easily pleased. Wes went out on his own when he was eighteen.

Wes worked at several things: restaurant work; applied to the police academy (rejected); poultry processing (too revolting); shipping and receiving for a pharmaceutical company; overnight security guard. His diligence in the latter job led to his promotion to supervisor. That's when he encountered serious, groundless racist complaints from other supervisors. On a tip from a friend, he moved to a job in the mail room of the Stikeman law firm. This was the fortuitous first step along a remarkable path of entrepreneurial success that led to the highest corporate offices on Bay Street.

How to explain this career success? A grandmother in Jamaica who loved him unconditionally; a love of school and learning; opportunism and confidence born of experience; diligence and hard work; a religious faith instilled by his grandmother and reinforced by embracing Jehovah's Witnesses; an endearing marriage and family life; a remarkable intelligence both mental and social; luck. Wes Hall recognizes all these factors, especially his grandmother's influence and luck. In Canada, he successfully navigated the ubiquitous shoals of racial discrimination, often through fortuitous encounters with non-discriminating white associates. However, because he understands that not all are so lucky, he has launched several initiatives to clear the path to success for other black Canadians.

Wes Hall's eloquently written story reminds us of the importance of immigrant experiences to understand Canada and its history better. I highly recommend this book.

**Dale Standen**



**PETERBOROUGH  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY**

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**The Bulletin**

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**The Peterborough Historical Society  
Board of Directors**

Are you looking for a unique volunteer leadership opportunity? The Board of Directors of the Peterborough Historical Society offers opportunities for the cultivation and application of leadership skills and interests in the following areas:

- governance
- community collaboration
- member engagement and recruitment
- marketing
- financial oversight
- legal oversight
- human resources
- program development
- writing, editing and publishing
- philanthropy/fundraising

The Society depends upon energetic, active people who want to do something different and exciting and join others in contributing to a worthwhile community enterprise. All experience and expertise are welcome: business, not-for-profit, public service, education, heritage, trades, professions, and hobbies. The community's history is inclusive.

The Peterborough Historical Society is one of the oldest in Ontario. It provides a monthly speaker series, publishes a monthly *Bulletin* and an annual historical paper, presents annual heritage awards and engages in community outreach. It owns and operates Hutchison House Museum, an acclaimed historic house museum that offers a wide range of school and public programs and events illuminating local history.

Explore the PHS website for further information: [www.phs-hutchisonhouse.ca](http://www.phs-hutchisonhouse.ca).

Expressions of interest and further inquiries should be directed to Kathryn Matheson, Chair, Nominations Committee, c/o Peterborough Historical Society: 705-740-2600; Email: [info@peterboroughhistoricalsociety.ca](mailto:info@peterboroughhistoricalsociety.ca). Postal address: 270 Brock Street, Peterborough, ON, K9H 2P9.



Hutchison House Museum  
January 2023