

Chair's Report

Hello, everyone! Happy New Year seems like a stale salutation amidst a Lockdown. So, having all safely navigated last spring's and its long carry-over, let's do it again with as much good cheer as we can muster.

Our Annual General Meeting on February 18 brings to a close the executive service of three members. **Marielle Lambert** is stepping back after one term. Her focus, web communications, and organizing our social gatherings were the biggest executive holes that had to be filled two years ago. Who will forget the Christmas Party at Idalia and the summer barbecue at the home of Sheilagh Fletcher and Phil Carter? Exceptional events — so badly needed before Ontario began its lockdowns.

Our Vice-Chair, **Moya McPhail** departs after three terms. What hasn't Moya influenced? Garden tours for the Foundation, fundraising for us, including our novel concert in 2019 to support the Opera House expenses, the postponed Elvis concert that she still hopes to organize in the heritage barn of Diana and John Joynt, the attempt to arrange social gatherings last spring for the Opera House that COVID shut down. For myself, the consistently careful and trusted advice has been Moya's hallmark.

Julie Mavis also departs as Past-Chair. Too much to write: we owe her three years of a professional executive salary. Hers has been amazing leadership.

Bill Bickle, Susan Carmichael and **Ian McKay** are mid-term. Ian has agreed to become our next Vice-Chair. We propose that three members be re-elected: **Hugh Parker** for one final year as Treasurer, and as Directors, **Anna Gray** (focusing on membership and fundraising) and **Susan Layard** (Advocacy, and liaison with Heritage Port Hope).

Our New Nominees:

Laura Antonik: relatively new to Port Hope, Laura is a specialist in web-based design. Currently she is the Senior Product Designer for the Info-Tech Research Group. A graduate in Fine Art from Guelph and in Art History from U of T, her extensive career has included eight years with St. Joseph's Media and in 2016 four years as the Sr. Design Director of the Globe and Mail where she oversaw the re-design of its website and led its brand development until mid-2020.

Katherine McHarg has been an active member of our chapter for several years, opening their previous home on Ellen St. for ACO's 2012 House Tour. A graduate of OCAD whose favourite wish for Port Hope would be a Port Hope museum of design, including clothing design, she will be retiring from teaching in Toronto this spring. She has been a member of the Library Board for four years, known for bringing creative ideas forward for both outreach and design elements.

Chair's Report, continued on page 2 →

Annual General Meeting

On World Heritage Day, **Thursday, February 18**, we will hold the Annual General Meeting of this chapter; by our trusted internet provider – no, not Twitter, not Facebook, not Tik Tok, but Zoom. Our Zoom invite will be sent to you in an e-blast earlier that week.



Nina-Marie Lister

Conversation and Questions/Answers will be less easy to manage than they were at last year's meeting held at St. John's Community Hall, but we will do our best.

Besides the reports from the Chair and Treasurer and a review of the activities of the last year, we will discuss suggestions for future planning and there will be an opportunity for questions.

The twin carrots for us all to reserve this occasion will be the announcement of the recipient of the Marion Garland Award, and then after a short break, the talk by our speaker, Prof. Nina-Marie Lister on Landscape as Legacy. As we had hoped to hear a year ago, her focus will be on the preservation of natural heritage features – the hottest public topic in Port Hope this past year.

Prof. Lister is the Graduate Program Director and Associate Professor in the School of Urban + Regional Planning at Ryerson University in Toronto. From 2010-2014 she was Visiting Ass. Professor of Landscape Architecture + Urban Planning at Harvard University Graduate School of Design.

She was recently named as an "inspired Educator" by the Canadian Green Building Council's excellence and leadership awards, and in 2017, Lister was nominated among Planetizen's Most Influential Urbanists.

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Proposed Slate for 2021-2022

Executive Committee

Chair

Bruce Bowden

Vice-Chair

Jan MacKay (1 year)

Treasurer

Hugh Parker (1 year, re-elect)

Secretary

Susan Carmichael

Directors

Anna Gray (re-elect)

Susan Layard (re-elect)

Bill Bickle

New Directors

Brenda Willows

Katherine McHarg

Laura Antonik

Lydia Svenningson

Advisor

Phil Carter

Committee Chairs

Antiques

& Artifacts

Peter Duck,
Sharon Hancock

Advocacy

Bruce Bowden,
Susan Layard

Communications

Marielle Lambert

Events

Marielle Lambert

Fundraising

Anna Gray,
Moya McPhail

Governance

Ian MacKay

Membership

Anna Gray

Newsletter,

Bus Tour,

Discovery Series

Patsy Beeson

Next Gen

Derek Hurlburt

Nominations

Bruce Bowden

Opera House

Julie Mavis

Projects

Phil Carter

Scholarships

Matt Desbarbieux

The ACO was incorporated in 1933 for the preservation of the best examples of architecture in the province and for the preservation of its places of natural beauty.

Chair's Report, continued from page 1 →

Lydia Svenningson's ties to our chapter might be termed an example of a life-long experience, and certainly of continuous volunteer support. She is an Administrative Assistant to a school head at TCS. We will need her skills, especially as Anna's focus on membership will need a replacement soon.

Brenda Willows. I first met Brenda on our ACO tour of Southern France in the fall of 2019 - an easy way to form friendships. Brenda is a CPA, recently retired from a long career, first at McKinsey in Toronto, and then for many years in senior financial and campaign leadership work at Trent University. Again, we are looking to the future in an area where we need a steady and careful eye.

— Bruce Bowden, Chair, ACO Port Hope

The Opera House: ACO Port Hope Makes a Difference!

HopeTowns Community Ventures (HTCV) has officially acknowledged that the due diligence condition has been fulfilled and the sale of the Opera House will move forward according to the purchase agreement. The closing date is anticipated to be mid-2021.

In October 2019, this branch of ACO committed to stewardship of the Opera House's conservation by accepting the property's donation from the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC). We believed this valuable historic downtown building to be an important cultural centre for Port Hope and that its history was essential to the community. In turn, RBC believed in us to make a difference and to accept the challenge.


It is exciting. We are reusing and revaluing a heritage resource. It makes us feel good—especially one this significant to our downtown. For many of us, this project has changed how we think about preservation and what is achievable. We worried that taking on this project might be financially crippling for the organization. We concerned ourselves with every possible risk and still determined the project was worth pursuing. And then we methodically executed a step by step process to find a new owner with a similar vision for the restoration of the property and the means to achieve it.

We hope that the Opera House will have many visitors in the years to come. We wish HopeTowns Community Ventures success in their future endeavours and thank them for their commitment to heritage restoration and the Port Hope Opera House. **Together, we prove that Cultural Heritage is more than just a memory of the past; it is an active resource for the future.**

— Julie Mavis, Port Hope Opera House Committee

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Advocacy Update

Port Hope ACO Advocacy continues to advocate on several fronts for the preservation of our built and natural heritage.

Working to protect the heritage attributes of the **designated Penryn properties** is still a major focus. Our advocacy helped to persuade the Town to require Heritage Impact Assessments for the Mason Homes Phase 5 development and to hire Letourneau Heritage Consulting to review these assessments. Letourneau is also determining whether or not the Penryn lands, including the woodlot, qualify for designation as a Cultural Heritage Landscape. As many of you are aware, Mason Homes and AON have since appealed to the Local Planning Appeals Tribunal. ACO is now hoping to be afforded Participant's Status for the hearing.

Another focus is the **prevention of the use of vinyl windows** in Port Hope's designated heritage buildings. Despite the advice of both Heritage Port Hope and the Port Hope Planning Department, Council allowed the installation of vinyl windows in a building in the downtown Heritage Conservation District. Sadly, replacing the rich wooden windows with bleak vinyl has diminished the distinct character of the beautiful heritage building and detracted from the heritage integrity of the entire Conservation District. It is an affront to Heritage District building owners, local heritage contractors and craftspeople and ACO members who have devoted time, energy and resources to maintaining the quality of Port Hope's heritage assets. To make matters worse, the wooden windows could have been restored to a high standard of energy efficiency. At least they will be re-used or re-cycled, unlike the new vinyl windows which will be impossible to repair when they fail and will probably end up in landfill. This is both a heritage and sustainability loss, and it is one that ACO Advocacy does not want to see repeated. Strategies and advice will be forthcoming.

The ACO is also interested in helping to develop **new Conservation Districts** in Port Hope. Now is the moment for the Town to protect the transitioning along our entrance corridors into the Downtown Heritage District. Importantly, the existing Heritage District of Walton St. should be extended along its residential component to Toronto Rd., to protect its historical unity.

— Susan Layard, Advocacy Committee

To the Writers Among You!

Have an idea for an article that would interest our readership bearing on Port Hope, its architecture, history and connected subjects? If so, let's hear from you. The next deadline will be mid May.

Contact Patsy Beeson at pbeeson@eagle.ca

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The Happiest Days of Your Life

Education in Port Hope since 1797

By Rachel Arnaud, Port Hope Archivist

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*“...most of those occupied as schoolhouses are fitter
to be used as sheds or stables for the lower animals..”*

Education, along with so many other things, went through significant disruptions and changes over 2020, and parents have been, and continue to be put in the challenging position of trying to decide in which way their children will receive their education. In a way, we can connect with the challenges parents faced two centuries ago in educating their children, though the circumstances are very different from today's.

Did you know that in the first half of the 19th century there were only two main options for formal schooling in Upper Canada? Paying for a private tutor, or paying for private

schooling. Generations of Canadians have grown up with compulsory and publicly-funded education, but this was not always the case in our country and our town. At a time when many children were essential to running households, farms, and businesses, and literally putting food on the table, formal schooling would not have been a priority for many families. Even if parents had wanted their children to attend school, many families would not have been able to afford tuition at this time. Survival was a priority, and the early schools of Upper Canada were mainly established to further the education of the upper class and wealthy families.

The earliest record of schooling in Port Hope took place in the Smith¹ homestead, which was built in 1797 at the foot of King Street at the lake. Before the Smiths lived in the house, it was used as a private school and store, and was run by a Mr. Collins from Montreal. We don't know any more about this first school, such as how many students attended and of what ages, or what they learned. The village of Smith's Creek was still very small in these early days, with a handful of families living near the river and out in the township. It should be mentioned that despite there not

being many formal schools in these early days, it was common for families to group together to educate their children.

An act passed in 1807 established one government-funded grammar school for each of the 8 districts of Upper Canada. However these schools were only attended by wealthier families who could afford the tuition, and whose children would benefit





Students from E. Primary School, Port Hope, c1919. (Acc.#995.43.1.193)

from their classical studies. Some of these children were even sent by their families to private schools in America.

The next historical record of schooling in Port Hope was a small one-room plank schoolhouse built in 1813 on Walton Street, approximately opposite John Street; a private school for elementary-aged children. As Walton Street began to build up and the space was needed for businesses, the school was disassembled and rebuilt in the area of King Street and William Street, near St. Mark's Church².

Over the next three decades private schools and tutoring were held in Port Hope's homes, stores, and other locations. Classes were held in John David Smith's Red Store on Mill Street, a private school was opened on Cavan Street, a school was established at Pine and South Streets, and another school was established in an unnamed location by a Reverend Coghlan. Apparently due to a lack of British textbooks in Upper Canada most students had to learn out of American textbooks, which commonly looked down on British subjects and spoke harshly about the British monarchy.

Aspects of our current education system can be traced back to the School Act of 1816, which allowed each district to form its own board of education which was then responsible for textbooks, courses, and establishing school rules. Also, any community within that district with over 20 students could establish a school that would have three trustees who would be responsible for hiring and firing teachers. In 1842, Port Hope received its first government grant to help fund schools, established three school sections in the town, and appointed the Reverend John Cassie³ as the school superintendent. Port Hope wouldn't elect its own official Board of Trustees for Schools until 1848.

Another major change to education was the Common School Act of 1850, which in part allowed taxes to be collected from all properties to help fund the schools, rather than just families with children. This would help to make school an option for those who had been unable to afford it before.

An eye-opening report, created for the year 1850, is very revealing of the state of Port Hope's schools at that time. The

report shows us that there were 4 Common (public) schools by that time, with a total of 184 students attending. There were also 5 private schools noted, with 115 children attending those as well. At this time there were a total of 559 children in the town that were school age (5-16 years old), so only 51% of the local children living in the town were attending school. Only 50 of those 184 students in the common schools were female. Regarding staff, the male teachers were earning an average of £61 annually, while the female teacher was earning £29 annually. None of these teachers had received a Normal School education to be a teacher. The schools themselves were noted as all being suitably furnished, but three were in bad repair, one school was smaller than 18' x 20', and they were all one-room schools. The Port Hope Board of Trustees had the following statement to make for the year 1850:

"With all our intelligent fellow-townsmen, we have hitherto considered it disgraceful to the town that it possesses not one school house, not one building for educational purposes; and that the most of those occupied as schoolhouses are fitter to be used as sheds or stables for the lower animals, than as seminaries for the cultivation of the taste, the manners, and the mind of intelligent and rational beings... We have passed a resolution that two good schoolhouses, each 33 feet by 40 feet, shall be erected, the one at the east and the other at the west end of the town, for primary schools."

These two new schools were built as octagonal-shaped structures; one was built in the area of Little Hope and Sullivan Street, and the other in the area of Elgin and McCaul Street. Port Hope's William Barrett, who built the Octagon House still existing today on Martha Street, was in favour of this unique design. Octagonal buildings were popularized by American phrenologist Orson Squire Fowler in the 1850s as being more spacious, easier to light, heat, and cool, and promoting a better quality of life due to their shape.

By 1856 the Trustees also decided to open a United Grammar and Common School at the corner of Walton and Cavan Street, with 5 schools rooms located on the upper floor of the building, at the top of a narrow stairway.

At this time, children paid over 3 shillings per quarter to attend the primary schools in town, 5 shillings to attend elementary school, and up to 25 shillings for higher studies. It was established that all students would attend class from 9am-12pm and 1pm-4pm each weekday.

The original plank schoolhouse built around 1813, now on King Street, unfortunately burned down sometime after 1856, while under the management of its teacher, Mr. Erskine. This teacher was then moved to the west octagon school at Little Hope and Sullivan, and it also promptly burned down. Mr. Erskine was fired by the Board of Trustees, and the west octagon was never rebuilt. To replace the plank school, however, another school was opened at Ward and Elgin Street and used until the East Primary School was built in 1868, and the west Octagon school was used until the West Primary School was built in 1873.

The history of our local education doesn't end here... this article will be continued in our next newsletter. Stay tuned!

¹ Elias Smith. ² Then known as St. John's. ³ The Presbyterian minister.



The Simple Matter of Where to Put a Statue

Once upon a time there was no soldier statue in front of the Town Hall. And what is now grass and trees in front of the building was formerly the Market Square. In fact a weighing machine stood just where the statue is now, to weigh joints of beef or sides of ham bought at the market. Arnott Craik, in his *Little Tales of Old Port Hope*, tells how the statue came to be there.

Lt. Colonel Arthur Williams, a local favourite son, shortly after having distinguished himself for gallantry at the Battle of Batoche, tragically took ill and died soon after, and it was decided to raise a commemorative statue to him. Well known and liked far beyond his home town, subscriptions for the statue poured in from all over. £1000 was voted by Parliament where he was an MP, and private donations came from the Prime Minister, the Governor General and countless others. Hamilton McCarthy, leading sculptor of the day, was commissioned to undertake the work and by the late spring of 1889 it was nearing completion.

But where to put it?

Then as now, Port Hope wasn't a place to let such a question pass for lack of appropriate ventilation. The makers of these little wire supports for exhortative ("Save Our Trees") or declarative ("I'll Walk a Mile for – whatever") lawn signs must flourish here as nowhere else in Canada.

The Williams Memorial Association, headed by William Craig, Sr., with secretary R.H.Holland, met on May 9th and decided the site would be the intersection of Walton and Pine Streets. The statue on its pedestal would face down the steepest part of the Walton Street hill, reminiscent of the high hill at Batoche down which Williams had plunged, leading his men into battle.

The Association applied to Council for permission to erect the statue on this site. But, surprise, Council was agreed that Walton and Pine was not the most appropriate site. Perhaps they considered the possibility that the adjacent Catholic church, on the strength of Williams' actions at Batoche against their co-religionists, the Métis, might well have wished him toppled down the hill. For whatever reason, Council was of one mind that that site wouldn't do, but of two as to which would. Most councillors favoured the Market Square — a people place — but others opted for the Agricultural Park across town.

Then yet another suggestion was forthcoming. From New York, Joseph S. Smith of the old Port Hope founding family, wrote offering to donate to the town a sizable piece of land, conditional on its being used as a small public park containing the Williams statue. It was very close to the spurned Walton and Pine Street site and stretched up Hagerman Street to Bruton on the north, and Baldwin on the west. It even had an appropriate steep hill. Nowadays well built up, in those days this land was described as "one of the most attractive little natural parks in town." The Board of Trade, at a meeting on June 12th, strongly favoured this proposal, but for some inexplicable reason the offer was never seriously considered by anyone else.

Instead, a week later the subscribers to the monument decided to have a meeting to consider the matter. The majority chose the Agricultural Park, and the correspondent for the local *Guide* was in warm accord (bear in mind that in the late nineteenth century

industries clustered the river bank beside the Town Hall and the busy Midland railway ran close behind it). He envisaged a scenario for the statue such as that for General Wolfe on the Plains of Abraham — one that was peaceful and remote, the Agricultural Park being Port Hope's nearest approximation.

Meantime, regardless of this decision, the Williams Memorial Association was still pursuing its own agenda. It had now moved away from its Pine and Walton choice and at a meeting on July 8th it agreed with the majority of councillors that the Market Square was the most appropriate setting. The statue would be central, and seen by all. But that market weighing machine would have to be moved from its existing site, and on July 29th the Association's request to have the scales moved came before a special meeting of Town Council.

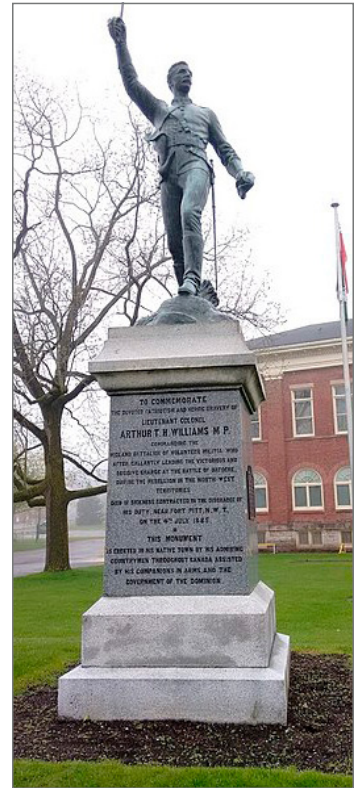
The *Guide* correspondent was appalled. An article by him appeared immediately prior to the Council meeting, blasting the Market Square as the worst site in town. If the Agricultural Park were not to be the site, he demurred, grasping desperately at straws, he had another idea: this was the corner of the Base Line [Dorset Street East], and King Street; in other words, at the top of the steps across King Street from the Bluestone House. Placed there, the *Guide* insisted, the statue would be central, and visible from the harbour and the railways (a little unlikely, but still, nice try).

But he was too late to change the decision. At the Town Council meeting all were in accord with the idea of the Market Square site, the only objection being whether the statue shouldn't be placed behind the building, presumably where the stone Craig's fountain now is, rather than in front, as some feared that with the constant winter river floodings the statue might be damaged by large blocks of ice washing down Queen Street. But this objection was overruled.

The scales were ordered moved and the site for the statue before the Town Hall was dedicated to that purpose, bringing the controversy to an end.

And when the statue finally went up the *Guide* allowed that it made a grand appearance, adding, in a last mis-spelled swipe, "even in the unappropriate site in which it is placed."

— By Patsy Beeson



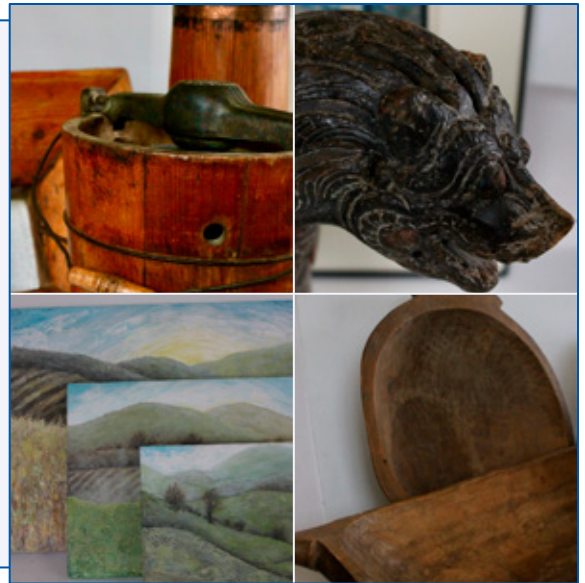


Going, Going, Gone! On-Line Auction

Stay tuned for our upcoming spring online auction tentatively set for April 2021. As always, we'll have some pretty exciting and unique offerings, so be sure to bookmark our website for updates!

Some samples of what 's upcoming include: Canadiana, mid-century designer furniture, books, original Canadian art, textiles, art glass and pottery, cultural artisanal goods including First Nations and overseas communities, house and garden goods and much, much more! We'll be posting more pictures to our Facebook and Instagram pages regularly over the next few months, so you're sure to see something you love and it's all in support of ACO's ongoing efforts to preserve our architectural history!

acoporthope.ca/events/antiques-artifacts-auction



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Membership Renewal Form

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Individual: \$40

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